

References

Data Points

- Oklahoma has the 13th highest concentration of veterans per capita in the nation (as of 2019).^{1, 2}
- In 2018, Oklahoma had the 10th highest veteran suicide rate in the nation.^{3, 4}
- In 2018, Oklahoma had the highest* suicide rate among young veterans (aged 18-34) in the nation.⁵
- From 2014 to 2018, young veterans had the fastest growing suicide rate among Oklahoma veterans.¹
- In 2018, the suicide rate among young veterans in Oklahoma was 75.8 per 100,000—65% higher than the national average for young veterans (45.9 per 100,000).³
- In 2020, more than a quarter (25.7%) of Oklahoma veterans who sought out VA services were diagnosed with a mental illness.⁶
- Oklahoma vets who died by suicide were less likely than the general population to have a history of suicidal thoughts, plans, or previous attempts (as compared to all Oklahoma citizens).⁷
- Physical health and financial problems are more commonly implicated in Oklahoma veteran suicide (as compared to all Oklahoma citizens).⁸
- Young Oklahoma veterans who died by suicide disproportionately have job issues implicated as a contributing factor (as compared to all young Oklahoma citizens and older veterans).⁹
- Oklahoma veteran poverty and disability rates are higher than national veteran averages.¹⁰

* In 2018, Montana and Nevada had higher calculated young veteran suicide rates than Oklahoma (77.3 and 111.1 per 100,000, respectively—as compared to 75.8 per 100,000). However, these rates were considered by the VA to be unreliable due to a small population size (fewer than 20 deaths). Montana and Nevada were therefore excluded from consideration, leaving Oklahoma as the state with the highest reliable young veteran suicide rate.

¹ Statista (2021). U.S. veterans, by State 2019. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/250329/number-of-us-veterans-by-state/>

² U.S. Census Bureau (2020). NST-EST2019-01: Table 1. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2019/national-state-estimates.html>

³ U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (2020). Oklahoma Veteran Suicide Data Sheet. <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2018/2018-State-Data-Sheet-Oklahoma-508.pdf>

⁴ U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (2020). State-level Veteran Suicide Data—State Data Appendix. https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2018/2005-2018-State-Data-Appendix_508.xlsx

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Northeast Program Evaluation Center (2021). FY 2020 National Mental Health Data Sheet: National, VISN, and VAMC Tables. [Report forthcoming].

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021). National Violent Death Reporting System. <https://wisqars.cdc.gov:8443/nvdrs/nvdrsDisplay.jsp>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau (2020). American Community Survey: Veteran Status (TableID: S2101). <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=oklahoma%20veteran&tid=ACSST1Y2019.S2101>