Comparisons of Post-9/11 Veterans Experiencing Perceived Underemployment
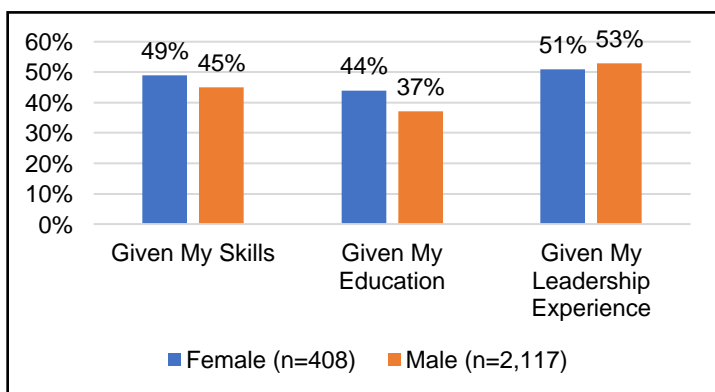
Data were collected through Wave 8 of the Veterans Engaging in Transition Studies (VETS) Survey that was implemented by Penn State University researchers in collaboration with the Wounded Warrior Project, The Heinz Endowments, May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, and The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation. The online survey was administered between March 2023 and April 2023 as an extension of The Veterans Metrics Initiative: Linking Program Components to Post-Military Well-Being (TVMI) study and Wave 7 of the VETS survey. During the TVMI longitudinal study, six waves of data were collected from almost 10,000 post-9/11 veterans who separated from military service in 2016. Of the original sample, 3,514 veterans voluntarily chose to participate in the VETS Survey.

Perceived Underemployment is defined as the involuntary discrepancy between a worker's education, skills, pay, or time and a worker's desired employment. The TVMI and VETS survey items asked about perceived underemployment in three domains: **skills**, **education**, and **leadership experience**. The accuracy of perceived underemployment has been validated by objective measures of underemployment (e.g., average occupation salary and education level) using data from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET).

Overall perceived underemployment (i.e., any of the three domains) was reported by 60% of veterans at Wave 8 (6 ½ years after separation from the military). Within the domains, 53% of veterans reported being underemployed given their leadership experience followed by the skills (46%) and education (38%) domains. These findings are similar to underemployment reported at Wave 6 and Wave 7.
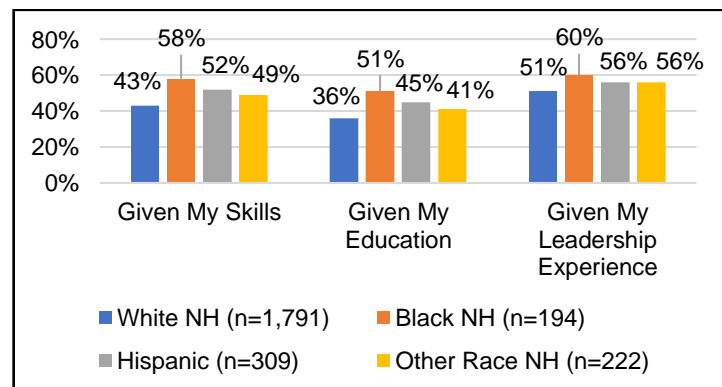
Perceived Underemployment by Gender

By gender, overall perceived underemployment was similar between female veterans (59%; n = 408) and male veterans (60%; n = 2,117); however, some differences were found within the three domains.
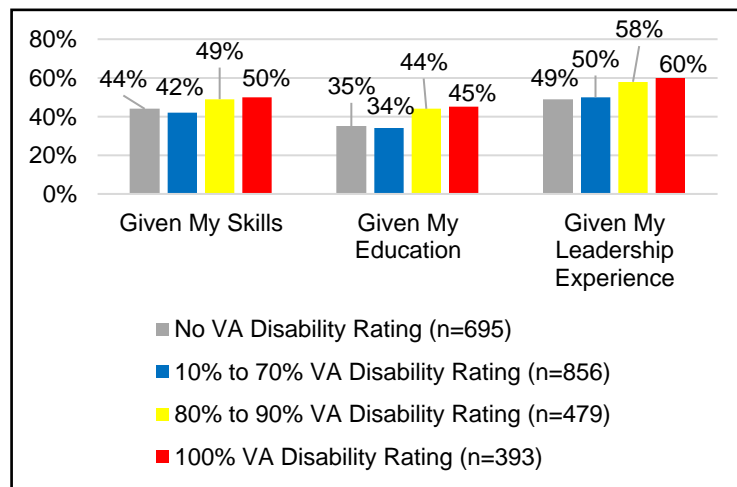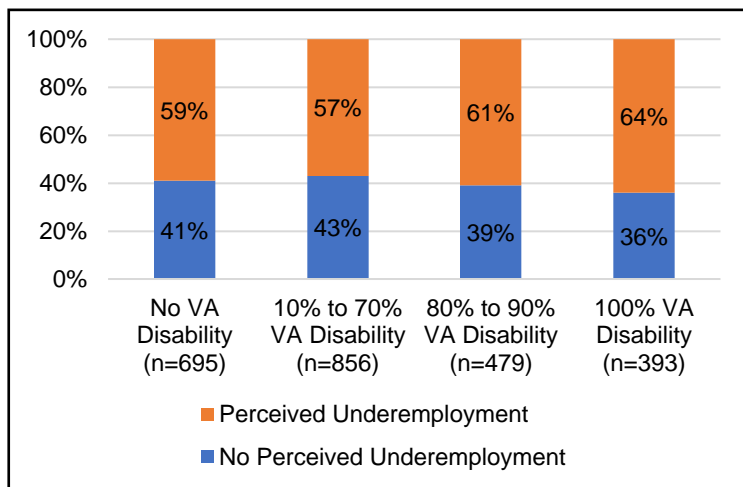

|	Given My Skills	Given My Education	Given My Leadership Experience
Female (n=408)	49%	44%	51%
Male (n=2,117)	45%	37%	53%

Perceived Underemployment by Race/Ethnicity

By race/ethnicity, Black non-Hispanic (NH) veterans (69%; n=194) had the highest overall perceived underemployment followed by Hispanic (64%, n=309) and Other race NH (63%, n=222) veterans, while White NH veterans had the lowest (57%, n=1,791) perceived underemployment. Differences between the three domains were found.

	Given My Skills	Given My Education	Given My Leadership Experience
White NH (n=1,791)	43%	36%	51%
Black NH (n=194)	58%	51%	60%
Hispanic (n=309)	52%	45%	56%
Other Race NH (n=222)	49%	41%	56%

Perceived Underemployment by VA Disability Rating

Perceived Underemployment by Comorbid Anxiety and Depression Classification
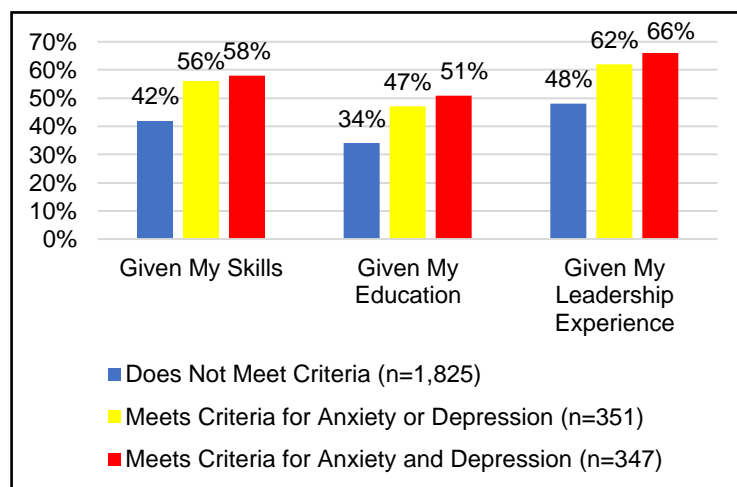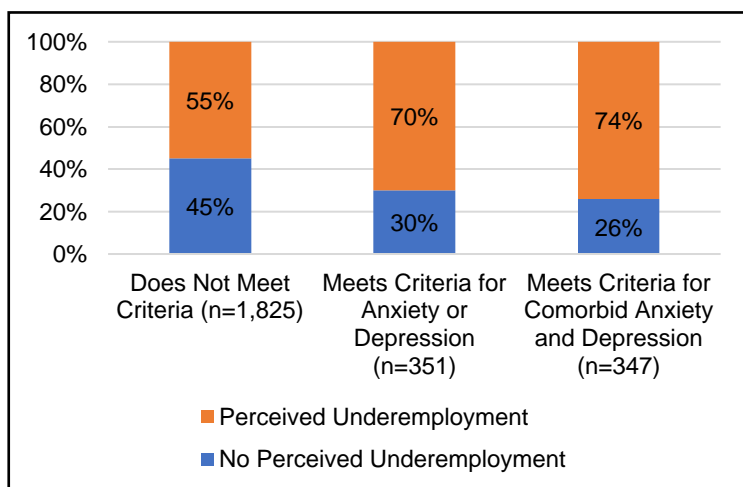
Other TVMI/VETS Resources on Perceived Underemployment

Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State. (2023). *Addressing Pennsylvania's worker shortage by leveraging veterans* [Policy brief]. https://veteranetwork.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/VETERANetwork_PAPolicy1-Infographic_2023nov6.pdf

Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State and Institute for Veterans and Military Families. (2023). *Mitigating underemployment among transitioning Post-9/11 veterans* [Policy brief]. https://veteranetwork.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/PSU_Mitigating-Veteran-Underemployment_OCT-2023-FINAL.pdf

Davenport, K. E., Morgan, N. R., McCarthy, K. J., Bleser, J. A., Aronson, K. R., & Perkins, D. F. (2022). The subjective underemployment experience of post-9/11 veterans after transition to civilian work. *Work, 72*(4), 1349-1357. https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-210029

Rudi, J. H., Morgan, N. R., McCarthy, K. J., & Perkins, D. F. (2021, November). *VETERANetwork program fact sheets.* Perceived underemployment among post-9/11 veterans. Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State. https://veteranetwork.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/FINAL-VETERANetwork-Underemployment-Informational-Sheet-16Nov2021.pdf