

# Working on Behalf of Veterans, Military Communities, and Their Families



Abt Associates understands the **challenges facing military service members and their families**—from deployment to reintegrating into the community, reconnecting with family, obtaining meaningful employment, and coping with psychological and physical conditions and disabilities.

## Depth of Experience

Our extensive experience providing policy and programmatic solutions on issues affecting veterans and their families makes us well-suited to meet the demands of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Defense. In the past five years, Abt has conducted over 40 high-profile, large-scale studies with a primary focus on veterans.

These projects have yielded important information to inform federal health care policies and program development and have resulted in peer-reviewed publications in top-tier scientific journals. Informed by on-the-ground involvement with local and national programs, our research amplifies our evidence-based technical assistance capabilities, and the evidence we gather drives dynamic solutions.

## Our Specialties

- Epidemiological research
- Mixed-mode surveys
- Quasi-experimental studies
- Clinical outcomes studies
- Evaluation program technical assistance
- Health communications
- Health information technology

## Recent Project Highlights

### Long-Term Health Outcomes of Vietnam Veterans

Abt, survey experts from Abt SRBI, and clinicians from New York University's Department of Psychiatry designed, implemented, and reported on a reassessment of a nationally representative cohort of Vietnam veterans first evaluated in the 1987 National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study. Veteran health was assessed using a self-report health survey, telephone survey interview, and diagnostic mental health interview.

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We achieved a 79% response rate, and conducted complex longitudinal survey analyses to address research questions. This study provides critical information on the long-term psychological and physical health effects of war-zone stress exposure, not only for Vietnam veterans but also for a new generation of U.S. veterans returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. To date, seven manuscripts reporting study findings have been published. *Client: VA.*

### Studying the Impact of Deployment on Families

Abt and the Millennium Cohort Study team at the Naval Health Research Center, and academic partners from the Center for Child and Family Health and New York University, are conducting a large-scale survey to understand the consequences of deployment, especially to Iraq and Afghanistan, on military families. Abt is conducting complex survey data analyses to assess the impacts of deployment on 1) mental and physical health of spouses and children; 2) social relationships between service members, spouses, and children; and 3) association between family member and service member outcomes. The study will also identify vulnerability and resilience factors for deployment-related outcomes for spouses and children of service members. *Client: DoD.*

### Women's Overall Mental Health Assessment of Needs (WOMAN) Study

To date, women Veterans' mental health research has focused on PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). As a result, little is known about the prevalence and impact of other mental health symptoms and conditions that may be prevalent and appropriate targets for gender-specific interventions. Abt SRBI interviewed over 6,000 women Veterans to collect essential gender-specific data needed to inform the VA's efforts to expand mental health resources for women Veterans and assure their access to and engagement with these services. *Client: VA.*

## Cancer Care for Veterans Compared to Private Sector Care

Abt conducted this evaluation of the full spectrum of VHA cancer care, from prevention to end-of-life care, in collaboration with investigators from Harvard Medical School. Care and outcomes of approximately 100,000 VA patients were compared with a private sector group and, within the VA, between the Veterans Integrated Service Networks and VA Medical Centers. The study included multiple ancillary analyses. To date, sixteen manuscripts reporting study findings have been accepted for publication. *Client: VA.*

## Employment Training Solutions for Veterans with Disabilities

As the number of veterans with disabilities grows and the natures of their physical and/or psychological disabilities become increasingly complex, understanding how to best meet these needs becomes more urgent. Abt's study on supporting the transition to civilian employment for veterans who are disabled explores the expanded use of technology-based learning and will identify possible interventions for a full-scale implementation and rigorous evaluation. *Client: DOL.*

## Supporting the Effort to End Veteran Homelessness

Abt provides technical assistance and training for approximately 380 grantees of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, directly contributing to the program's success in ending and preventing homelessness for veterans and their families. Abt develops training curricula, trains new grantees, provides technical assistance, conducts national webinars and regional meetings, analyzes data and produces quarterly and annual national reports, and supports the VA SSVF program office. Abt also has developed best practices standards and assisted the VA in designing and implementing the "SSVF University," an online learning platform hosted on VA.gov to support grantee compliance with SSVF program requirements and practices. *Client: VA.*

Abt also supports efforts to end homelessness among veterans through Vets@Home, a technical assistance initiative designed to support communities in their efforts to meet federal goals for ending veterans' homelessness. Abt provides technical assistance, training, and tools tailored to individual community needs to support development of effective and efficient homeless crisis response systems for veterans. *Client: HUD.*

## Gauging the Extent of Veteran Homelessness

SSVF grantees use local Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) to collect client data and monitor SSVF effectiveness as part of local homeless crisis response systems.

HUD and VA partnered on the development of HMIS by engaging Abt to develop HMIS specifications, data standards, and reporting requirements. Since 2004, Abt has maintained data collection specifications and protocols for HUD and VA and provides ongoing support on data collection to VA's SSVF grantees and HMIS database personnel. *Client: VA.*

## Annual Homeless Assessment Report

Since 2002, Abt has developed the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), a report to the U.S. Congress that provides nationwide estimates of homelessness, including information about demographic characteristics of homeless persons, service use patterns, and the housing capacity. AHAR provides the official federal estimates of homelessness, a comprehensive profile of people experiencing homelessness, and longitudinal analyses. By leveraging AHAR analysis and documenting evidence-based approaches, Abt supports HUD's strategic goal of ending veteran homelessness. *Client: HUD.*

For more information, please visit our website:  
[abtassociates.com/veteransresearch](http://abtassociates.com/veteransresearch)

## Contact

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**Abt Associates** is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 40 countries.

