



## Veteran Tickets Foundation Online Survey Report

September 1, 2015

### Veteran Ticket Foundation Mission

Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix) is dedicated to giving back to all branches of currently-serving military, veterans and their families, and to the immediate families of those killed in action. Our mission is to give tickets to sporting events, concerts, performing arts and family activities aimed at improving mental welfare and enriching the lives of our U.S. military service members and veterans. Attending these events reduces stress through entertainment, strengthens family bonds, builds positive, life-long memories and encourages service members to stay engaged with American life and local communities.

### The Importance of Reintegration in the Military

Reintegration into family and community is a commonly discussed issue among the military community today. The majority of veterans have served during wartime, and must return to their families, civilian and American life after their deployments and enlistments. These reintegration periods are often stressful and long. Some of the most common issues for military personnel during reintegration include problems relating to family and civilian life, feelings of isolation and depression, difficulty building a new identity outside of the military and communication problems.

In a 2009 study of returning Iraq and Afghanistan by the Department of Veteran Affairs, as many as 56% of veterans reported difficulties in “social functioning, productivity, community involvement, and self-care domains.”<sup>1</sup> Reintegration is a foremost concern to the VA because trouble reintegrating is widely reported by veterans who develop PTSD. The problems our military face when reintegrating are not limited to the individual service member but have wider repercussions. VA physicians have stated,

“Regardless of PTSD status, however, Iraq-Afghanistan combat veterans faced challenges in multiple domains of functioning and community involvement after deployment. Left untreated, these problems could have deleterious effects not only on the individual but also on his family, community, and society as a whole.”<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, reintegration concerns are not limited to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. PTSD and depression symptoms are still a concern for Vietnam Veterans 40 years later, showing that poor reintegration and readjustment have lasting effects.<sup>3</sup>

The VA encourages veterans to foster strong relationships and stay active in activities to promote mental welfare. Reintegration pamphlets encourage engaging in shared interests and fun activities with

family members.<sup>4</sup> But for the most-part service members are on their own as they come home to their families and struggle to rejoin their communities and American life. In fact, a 2013 report by the Institute of Medicine states that there is a lack of data and research to determine the effectiveness of readjustment and support programs.<sup>5</sup>

Vet Tix believes that attending sporting events, performing arts and family activities with family members provides essential reintegration opportunities for currently-serving military and veterans. As stated by our members and through extensive research it is our conclusion that these events have a multifaceted impact which improves quality of life and mental welfare. More information regarding our impact and research can be viewed on our website at [www.VetTix.org/impact](http://www.VetTix.org/impact).

### About the Survey

In April of 2015 Vet Tix initiated our first survey for veterans\* enrolled in our program. Vet Tix only verifies name, address and military service. We do not capture demographics in member accounts. The purpose of this survey was to gather data on veteran event attendance and record member demographics. Vet Tix wanted to discover the frequency and type of events members were attending. We also wanted to measure our impact on event attendance, and if perhaps veteran demographics were relevant to using our services.

Users were given ability to answer questions online from May through August 2015. All responses were anonymous. A small, non-monetary incentive was given for responding. Members were allowed to skip questions. We had an overwhelming response with over 28,000 respondents, making the Vet Tix survey one of the largest veteran surveys of the year.

\*Please note: The term veterans is used throughout this report refer to both current service members and discharged veterans as a group, unless otherwise stated.

# Survey Results

## Survey Summary

Vet Tix has shown definitive impact on increasing veterans' ability to attend events and engage in their communities.

### Increased event attendance

- The majority (57%) of Vet Tix members state they attended zero to two events per year prior to joining.
- After Vet Tix the largest segment (40%) reported attending three to six events per year.

### Attendance Barriers and Motivators

- Prior to Vet Tix, cost was the overwhelming barrier (79%) for not attending.
- Finding events of interest and increased comfort level were significantly more important motivators once the cost barrier was removed.

### Member Demographics

- Majority of Vet Tix members (80%) are at a higher stress risk level, being either currently-serving or living with a service-related disability.
- Indicators point to the majority of members having a lower income level at time of service. Almost half were enlisted. Enlisted service members are the lowest paid grades.
- Majority of members (53%) have four or more family members, which elevates financial burden of event attendance.

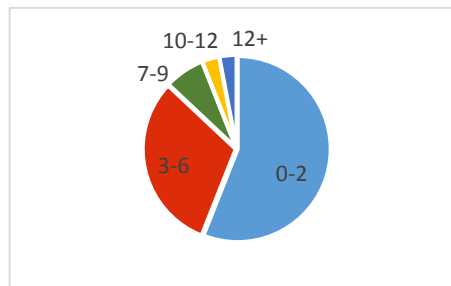
## Survey Questions

Over 28,500 Vet Tix members responded to the following questions:

### Events Attended per Year

#### Prior to Vet Tix:

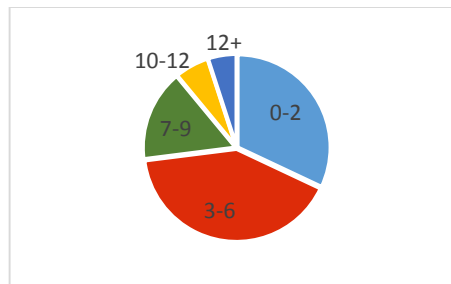
- 0-2 – 57%
- 3-6 – 30%
- 7-9 – 7%
- 10-12 – 3%
- 12+ – 3%



### Events Attended per Year

#### After Vet Tix:

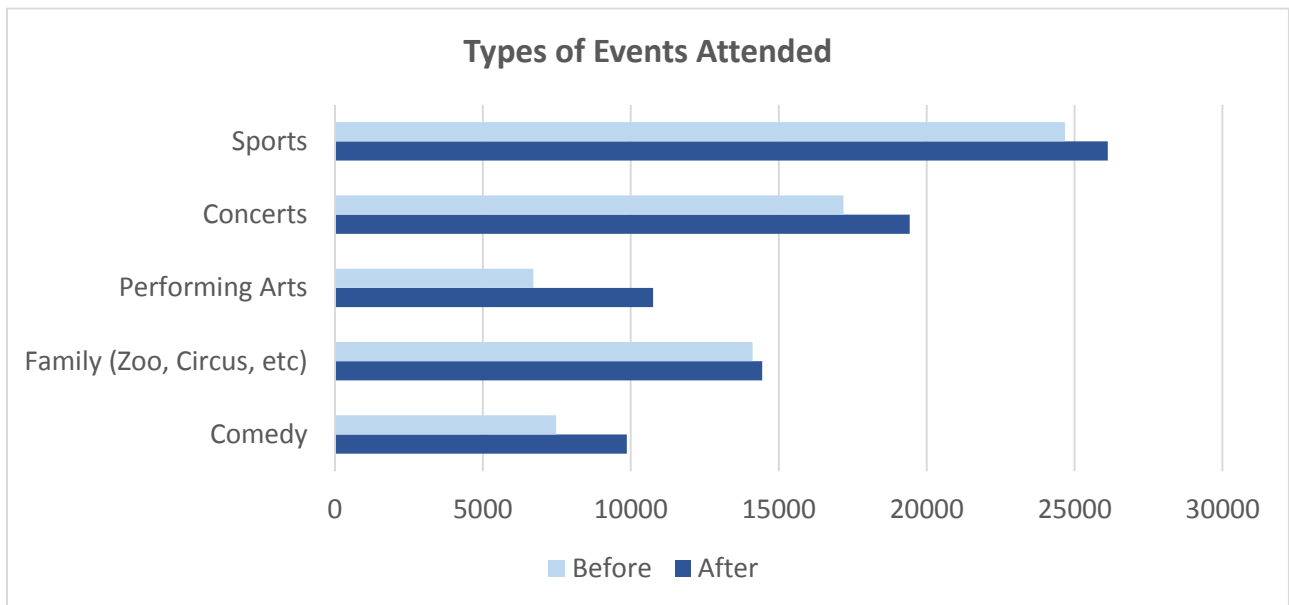
- 0-2 – 33%
- 3-6 – 40%
- 7-9 – 16%
- 10-12 – 6%
- 12+ – 5%



The majority of respondents, stated that they attended **zero** to two events per year prior to Vet Tix. After joining Vet Tix we show a significant increase in event attendance. With using Vet Tix's service,

there is a 10% increase in members attending events three to six times a year, making it the largest segment of attendance. The number of veterans attending events seven or more times a year has doubled!

This is great news. Social and community activities are key factors in good mental health according to psychologists. They are mentioned as important aspects of the military reintegration process, both from deployments and post military service by the Departments of Veteran Affairs and Defense. Vet Tix services significantly improved veterans attendance to social and community activities.



Not surprisingly, sports is the most popular event type. With Vet Tix event attendance increased across all event types. The biggest event impact was for performing arts events, for which event attendance almost doubled after joining Vet Tix.

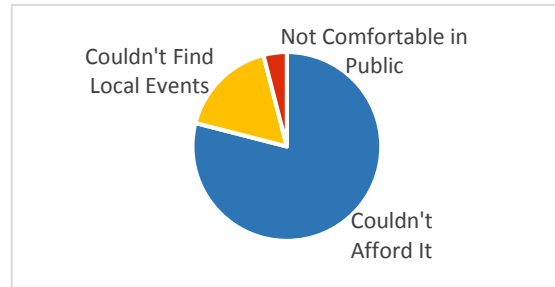
Many studies point toward performing arts events attendance as eliciting a wide range of positive effects: they promote socialization, spark intellectual and creative centers and even speed healing. All these effects are desired outcomes for our veteran community.

We can conclude from this question that joining Vet Tix allows veterans to be more diverse in their events choices, which leads to a larger social and mental impact.

**Biggest Reason for Not Attending Events**

**Prior to Vet Tix:**

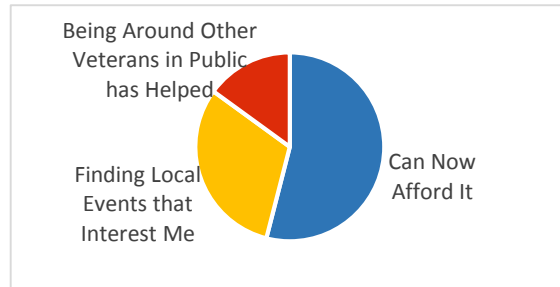
- Couldn't Afford It – 79%
- Didn't Find Local Events that Interested Me – 17%
- Not Comfortable in Public – 4%



**Biggest Reason for Attending Events**

**After Vet Tix:**

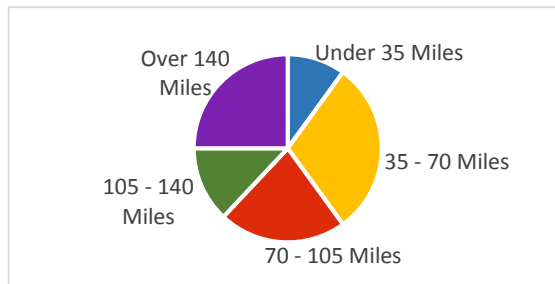
- Can Now Afford It – 53%
- Finding Local Events that Interest Me – 32%
- Being Around Other Veterans in Public has Helped – 15%



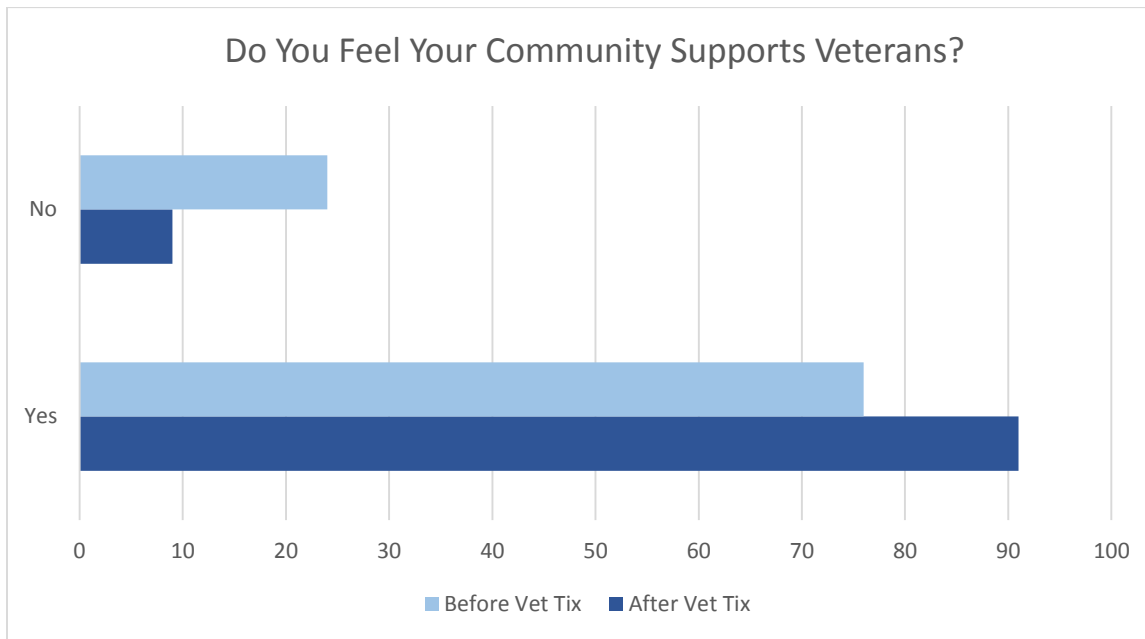
We discovered that without Vet Tix, active duty military and veterans are not attending events because they cannot afford them. Affordability remained the largest factor in now attending events. Surprisingly, being able to find events that interested members and being more comfortable attending events with veterans have much larger impact on attending once financial barrier is removed. This shows that Vet Tix services are not limited to their financial benefit, but that we provide valuable assistance to veterans in initiating and promoting community engagement.

**Furthest Distance Willing to Travel to Attend a Vet Tix Event:**

- Under 35 Miles – 10%
- 35 – 70 Miles – 30%
- 70 – 105 Miles – 22%
- 105 – 140 Miles – 13%
- Over 140 miles – 25%



We were also surprised at the distance Vet Tixers stated they are willing to travel to events. 60% of respondents stated they would drive over 70 miles to an event.



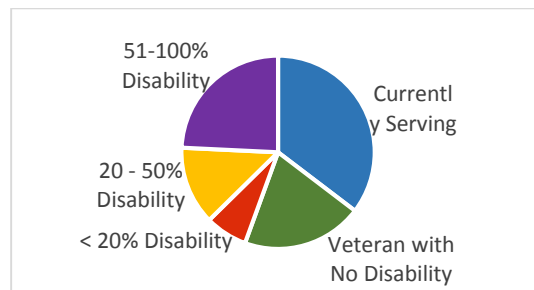
The majority of veterans reported they believe their community did support veterans prior to Vet Tix. Vet Tix still had a significant impact improving how veterans view their community support. Having a positive view of their communal support is integral in promoting a positive identity as an American veteran.

**User Demographics:**

Over 25,000 verified Vet Tix members responded

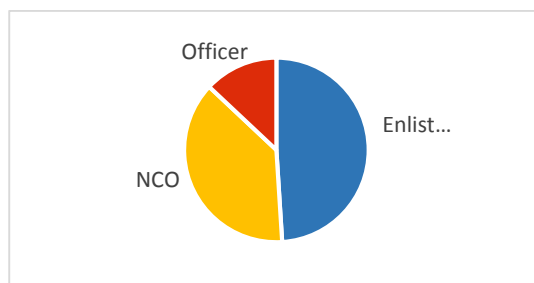
**Current Military Status:**

- 35% Currently-Serving
- 20% Veteran with No Disability
- 7% Veteran with less than 20% VA disability Rating
- 13% Veteran with 20% - 50% VA Disability Rating
- 24% Veteran with 51 - 100% VA Disability Rating



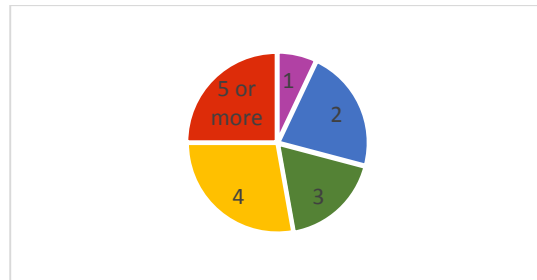
**Service Rank:**

- 49% Enlisted
- 38% Non-Commissioned Officer
- 13% Officer



**Number in Household:**

- 1 – 7%
- 2 – 22%
- 3 – 18%
- 4 – 28%
- 5+ – 25%



The vast majority of members are either currently-serving or have a disability rating from their service. 45% of members have some VA disability rating. Half of users were enlisted. Only a small 13 percent of Vet Tix users were officers. 71% of Vet Tix members have three or more people in their household. 53% of Vet Tix users have four or more in their household. This is significant statistic because many sporting events and concerts are \$500 or more for a family of four.

These preliminary demographics suggest that the average Vet Tixer is at a high level stress (currently-serving or living with disability). Additionally the average Vet Tixer, at least at time of service, had a lower income (enlisted rank) but has a higher financial responsibility with a large household. Vet Tix will need to conduct further polling to verify current conclusions.

**Conclusions**

Vet Tix’s 2015 survey conclusions are that we are having an impact on an underserved military community that is at a higher risk for mental and emotional problems and which is struggling to utilize the VA advice to be involved in their communities.

The 2015 Vet Tix survey shows that we are providing a valuable tool to the veteran community to engage in relationship building and community involvement, two key factors in reducing depression and PTSD symptoms. Vet Tix services improved both frequency and diversity of event attendance, which are important factors in improving well-being. By providing veterans opportunities to attend events with family, Vet Tix promotes socially active lifestyles for veterans which are essential for successful reintegration processes.

We will be conducting another survey in 2016 directed at further evaluating attendance and mental welfare impact.

Footnotes:

<sup>1-2</sup> Nina Sayer Ph.D., Siamak Noorbaloochi Ph.D., et al. "Reintegration Problems and Treatment Interests Among Iraq and Afghanistan Combat Veterans Receiving VA Medical Care" PsychiatryOnline.org, June 2010, Volume 61 No. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Price Ph.D., "Findings from the National Vietnam Veterans' Readjustment Study," U.S. Department of Affairs, <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/research-bio/research/vietnam-vets-study.asp>, January 2014.

<sup>4</sup>"Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Families of Military Members," Department of Veteran Affairs: National Center for PTSD, March 2014.

<sup>5</sup> "Evidence-Based Diagnostics and Therapies and Long-Term Forecasts of Needs Among Steps Necessary to Ease Iraq and Afghanistan Service Members' Readjustment to Post-Deployment Life," Institute of Medicine's Committee on the Initial Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Military Personnel, Veterans, and Their Families, NationalAcademies.org, March 26,2013.