

ANALYTICAL REPORT

based on the results of a survey of representatives of civil society organizations providing support to veterans in the Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions within the framework of the project

“REINTEGRATION OF VETERANS THROUGH EMPLOYMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND ADVOCACY”

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SUMMARY

This analytical report was prepared by the Charitable Organization “Rokada” Charitable Foundation in cooperation with the CSO Bevar Ukraine, with support from CISU, the organization through which the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs finances and supports civil society projects in the field of international development and partnership, as part of the project “Reintegration of Veterans through Employment, Capacity Building, and Advocacy”. The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the activities of pro-veteran organizations in the Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions. In particular, it examines which categories of the population receive support and in what numbers, as well as how organizations facilitate the employment and professional adaptation of veterans. It also analyzes the key challenges related to organizational resilience, including technical and material resources, staffing capacity, and training and skills-development needs that could help strengthen organizations’ capacity and scale up their activities. In addition, the report focuses on partnership-building practices with various actors, including local self-government bodies, state and civil society organizations, business, and other partners. Special attention is given to the advocacy work of organizations supporting veterans. The findings make it possible to formulate practical recommendations for strengthening their capacity and developing the veteran support system for veterans and their families.

The Charitable Organization “Rokada” Charitable Foundation has been operating since 2003, providing support to people facing difficult life circumstances who need help to restore a life of dignity. In its early years, the Foundation focused on working with refugees and asylum seekers from more than forty countries, including Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria, and Iran, gradually building expertise in social support, integration, and the protection of human rights.

After the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022, the organization rapidly scaled up and transformed, becoming a national humanitarian and social actor with an extensive regional presence. The Foundation significantly expanded its program portfolio, operational capacity, and partner networks, enabling it to provide comprehensive support to people and communities affected by the war.

Today, Rokada operates in 17 regions of Ukraine, bringing together over 600 professionals and providing multisectoral assistance to internally displaced persons, returnees, veterans, people with disabilities, older adults, women, children, and other vulnerable groups, while also supporting communities that have been systemically affected by the war.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO – Civil Society Organization

CO – Charitable Organization

LSGB – Local Self-Government Bodies

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

EC – Employment Center

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
METHODOLOGY	6
ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITIES AND NEEDS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING VETERANS	7
1.1 PROFILE AND TYPOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONS	7
1.2 FOCUS OF ORGANIZATIONS' ACTIVITIES: TARGET GROUPS AND SERVICES	9
1.3 EXPERIENCE IN ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES	19
1.4 CURRENT CAPACITY AND SUPPORT NEEDS	21
1.5 PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION	28
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	33

INTRODUCTION

As the number of veterans in Ukraine continues to grow, it is becoming increasingly important to strengthen civil society organizations that support veterans as a key element of civil society, ensuring comprehensive support for veterans as they return to civilian life. The adaptation of demobilized servicemen to peacetime conditions and the restoration of their social activity is accompanied by a range of challenges. Among the key ones are restoring psychological balance, minimizing the risks of social isolation, and raising public awareness of veterans' needs, professional competencies, potential, and opportunities for self-realization in civilian life.

In this context, civil society organizations play an important role as providers of support and as a communication platform with representatives of local self-government bodies, communities, and business circles, as well as advocates for the interests of the veteran community. They can facilitate access to psychological, social, legal, and educational assistance, help build an environment of mutual support, and act as agents of change at the community level. In addition to providing services, such organizations are actively involved in advocating for veterans' rights, developing inclusive policies, and strengthening the capacity of local communities to respond to new social challenges.

At the same time, civil society organizations are increasingly becoming key partners of the state in implementing veteran policy at the local level and ensuring support for veterans and their family members. The growing demand for such services is accompanied by the need to strengthen organizations' resource base, develop partnerships, and create conditions for their sustainable operation.

In this regard, conducting a survey of civil society organizations that support veterans is an important step toward a deeper understanding of their needs, identifying barriers to their work, and uncovering opportunities for development. The findings of the study will help shape a more effective, veteran-responsive policy, strengthen the role of civil society, and inform the development of practical solutions and support programs that meet the real needs of the veteran community.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to assess the capacity and key areas of work of pro-veteran civil society organizations, as well as to identify the main problems that reduce the effectiveness of employment and advocacy programs. The findings are intended to build an evidence base for designing targeted interventions, strengthening organizations' capacity, and increasing their influence on policies and practices in the field of veteran support.

Primary data collection took place from March 17 to May 1, 2026. A total of 42 representatives of the non-governmental sector took part in the survey.

The survey covered civil society organizations that support veterans and whose activities are based in and/or extend to the Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions, including regional centers as well as small towns and rural communities.

The study used a quantitative data collection method, specifically an online questionnaire (CAWI). The main research tool was a standardized questionnaire that was openly available for anyone to complete. Respondents filled out the questionnaire independently, at a time convenient for them. The questionnaire included closed, open, semi-open, and scale-type questions. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. At the same time, respondents could **voluntarily leave** their contact details to take part in further stages of the research and in the competitive selection process within the project.

A **convenience sampling method** was used: the questionnaire was openly available with no prior screening of respondents. Some participants joined the survey through a "snowball" approach, with the link being passed from one respondent to another within a professional or social network.

It should be noted that the survey results are not representative of the entire country and reflect only trends in the activities of veteran-focused organizations in the Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions. At the same time, the sample has a clearly defined target focus: all respondents confirmed that they work directly with veterans and their families. Since the activities of the surveyed representatives of the civil society sector are focused on the veteran community as the key group of beneficiaries, this ensures a high level of validity of the data obtained and full alignment with the purpose of the analysis. Overall, the study's findings provide useful insight into current trends, challenges, and practices in supporting veterans at the level of civil society organizations and are expert in nature.

In some questions, the sum of responses exceeds 100%, as respondents were able to select several answer options at the same time.

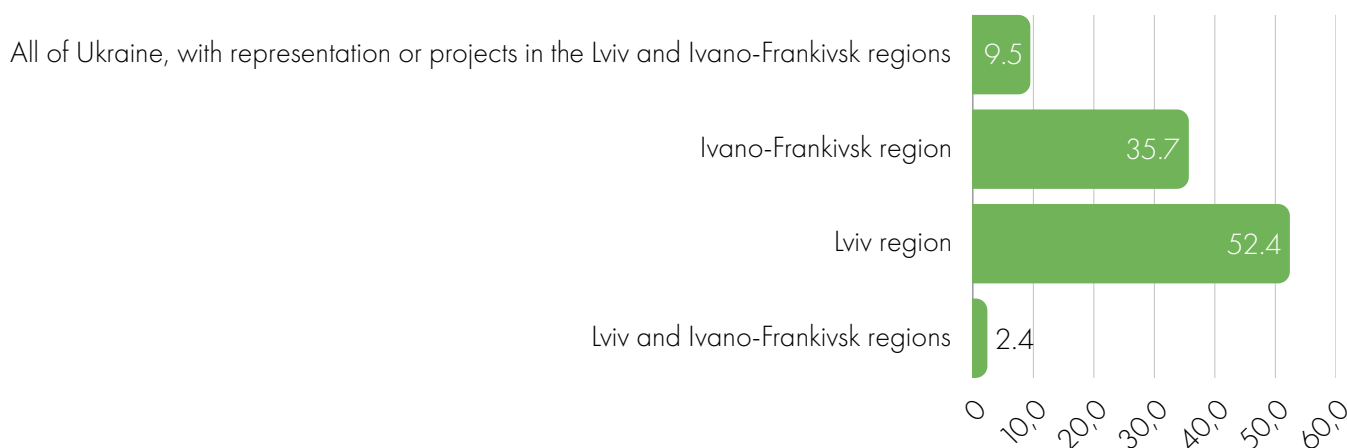
In this report, veteran-focused (pro-veteran) civil society organizations are understood as public associations, charitable foundations, and other civil society institutions whose activities are aimed at supporting veterans, their family members, and the families of Defenders of Ukraine who are missing or have died. Such organizations provide counseling, psychological, social, legal, and other assistance, promote the adaptation and reintegration of veterans and the development of the veteran community, and protect the rights and interests of veterans and their loved ones.

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITIES AND NEEDS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING VETERANS

1.1 PROFILE AND TYPOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONS

In total, 42 pro-veteran civil society organizations (hereinafter referred to as CSOs) took part in the survey. 52.4% of respondents operate in the Lviv region, and 35.7% in the Ivano-Frankivsk region. In addition, the survey included veteran-focused associations whose activities extend across the whole of Ukraine (9.5%) and organizations that operate simultaneously in the Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions (2.4%).

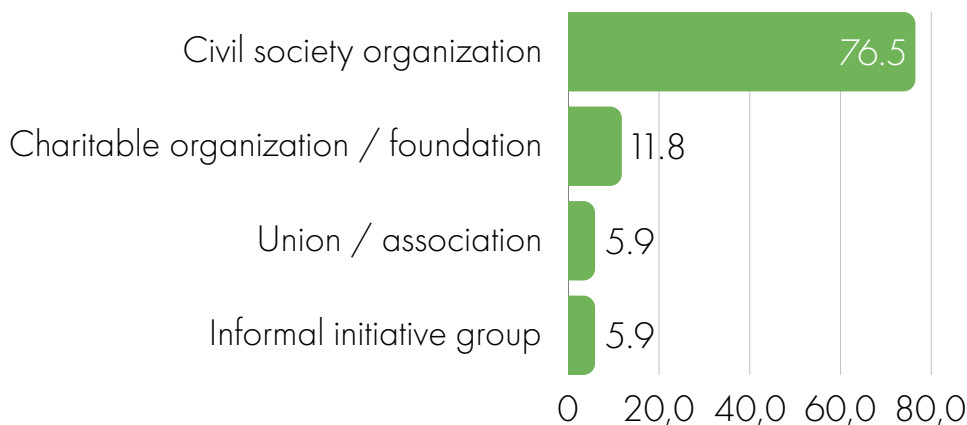
Which territories does your organization's activity cover?



In most cases, respondents report that their organization is registered in the regional centers of Ivano-Frankivsk (26.2%) and Lviv (16%). At the same time, the majority of civil society organizations supporting veterans report that their registered location is in rural or settlement communities.

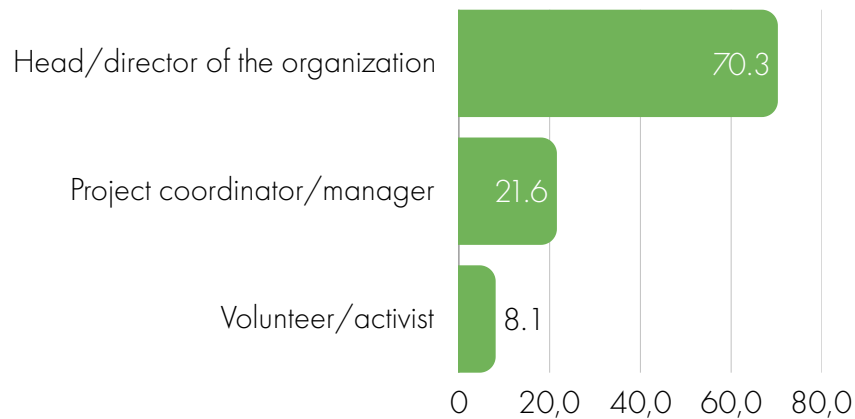
Among the surveyed associations, civil society organizations predominate (76.5%). Charitable organizations and foundations account for 11.8% of respondents, while unions/associations and informal initiative groups are represented to a lesser extent, at 5.9% each. This suggests that their representatives tend to seek to operate within the formalized civil society sector, which opens up broader opportunities for participation in grant programs, partnerships, and project implementation.

What is your organization's legal status?



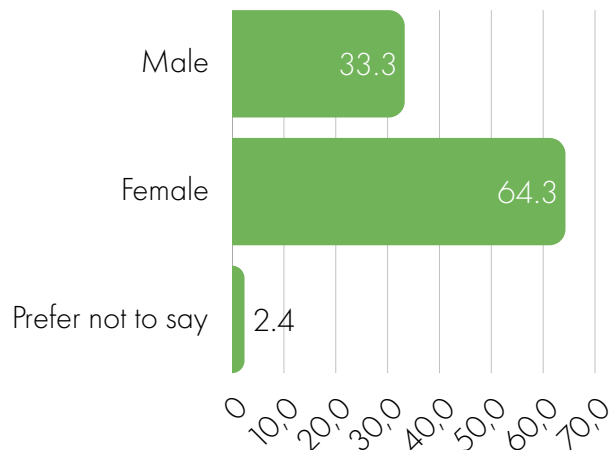
The questionnaire was completed mainly by representatives of organizations' management (70.3%), while volunteers and activists accounted for only 8.1%. This distribution suggests that the survey results largely reflect a management-level perspective on organizations' activities, capacities, and needs.

What is your role in your organization?



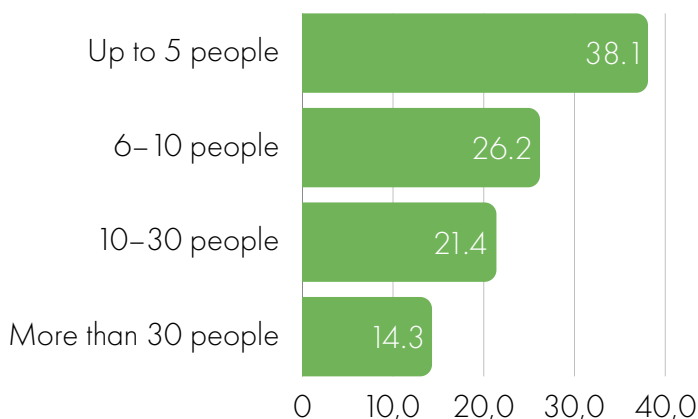
64.3% of respondents are women, while men make up only about a third of the sample (33.3%). This ratio confirms the high level of women's engagement in veteran-focused communities and points to their key role in the management, coordination, and operational processes of organizations.

Gender distribution of respondents:



The age structure of respondents is fairly varied, though there is a noticeable skew toward middle age (52.4% are aged 40–49 and 21.4% are aged 50–59). Only 7.1% of respondents are young people aged 18–29, which may indicate a lower level of their involvement in the activities or management processes of veteran-focused organizations.

How many people are regularly involved in the activities of your organization/initiative (team plus active volunteers)?

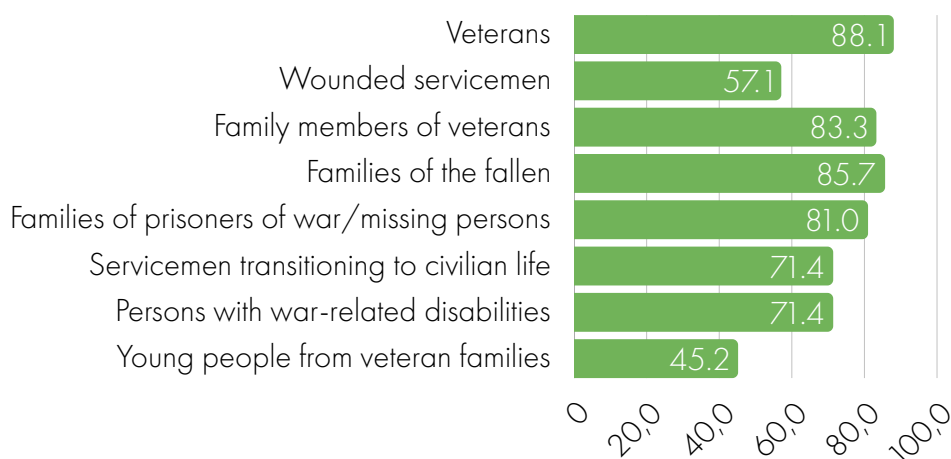


1.2 FOCUS OF ORGANIZATIONS' ACTIVITIES: TARGET GROUPS AND SERVICES

All study participants indicated that their organization works with veterans and their family members. This increases the accuracy of the study's findings, since the data were provided by professionals who work directly with the veteran community.

Most often, surveyed organizations direct their support toward veterans (88.1%), families of the fallen (85.7%), and family members of veterans (83.3%). The categories least covered by support include wounded servicemen (57.1%) and young people from veteran families (45.2%), which may point to potential gaps in the comprehensiveness of assistance and the need to strengthen targeted programs for these groups.

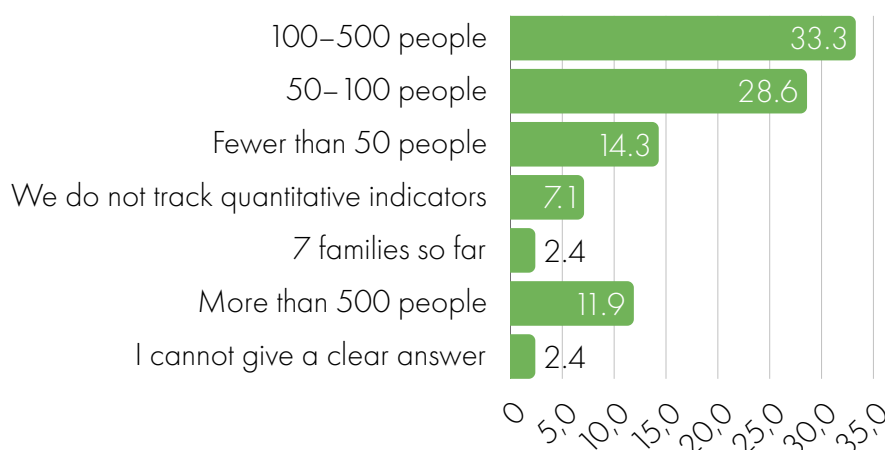
Who does your organization mainly support?



The largest share of surveyed organizations (33.3%) reports providing support to between 100 and 500 people annually. Another 28.6% of respondents work with a smaller number of recipients, between 50 and 100 people.

Overall, participants' responses show considerable variation in the scale of organizations' activities, ranging from local initiatives to more established organizations with broader reach.

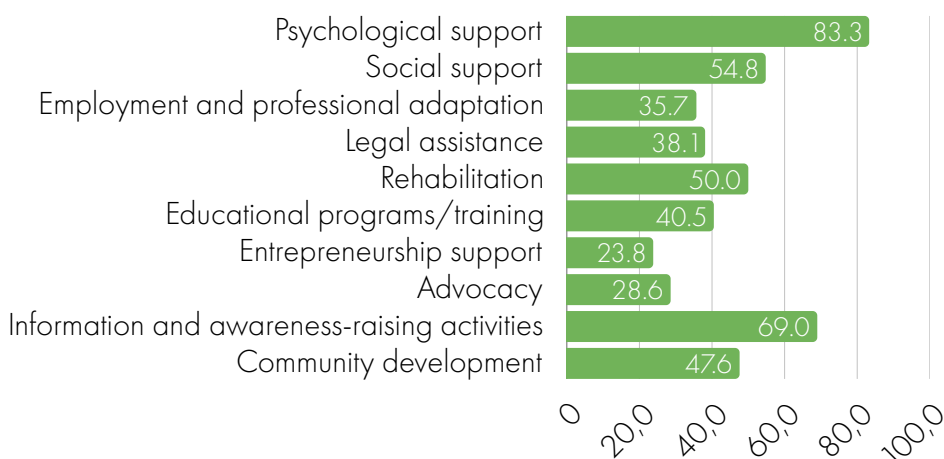
How many veterans and veteran family members does your organization support (reach) annually?



For the most part, surveyed organizations focus on providing psychological assistance (83.3%), information and awareness-raising activities (69%), and social support (54.8%). At the same time, there is a systemic shortage of sustainable development programs aimed at building the economic resilience and independence of beneficiaries. In particular, only 23.8% of respondents reported providing entrepreneurship support, and only 35.7% reported employment and professional adaptation activities, indicating insufficient attention to long-term reintegration tools.

Involvement in advocacy activities (28.6%) is one of the lowest indicators among all areas of work, pointing to a systemic weakness in protecting rights and interests. This shortage of advocacy capacity significantly limits organizations' ability to act as active agents of influence on state policy and to participate in developing strategic decisions. As a result, the sector remains primarily a service provider rather than an initiator of structural reform.

What are your organization's main areas of activity?

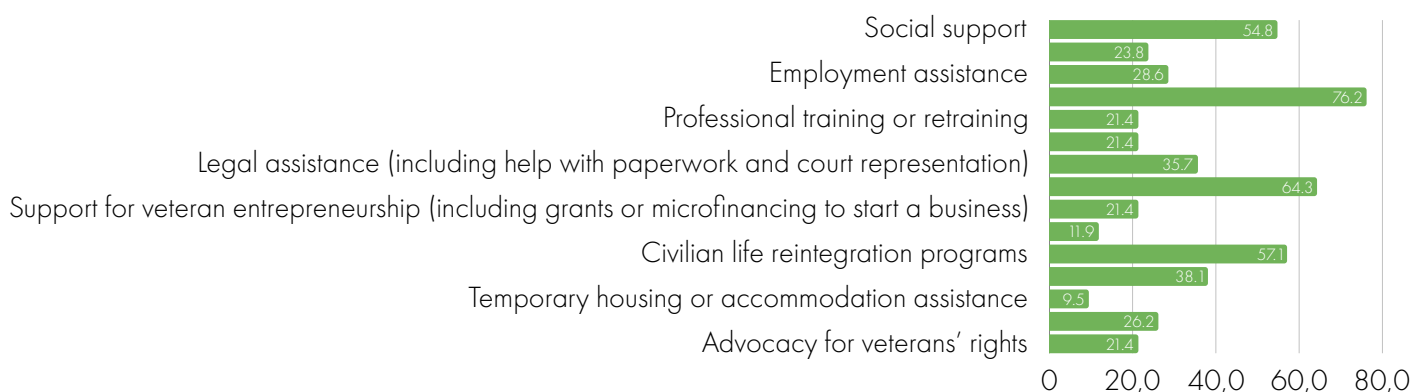


The most common forms of support provided directly to veterans are psychological assistance (76.2%) and information and advisory support regarding state programs and benefits (64.3%). A significant share of organizations also implement civilian life reintegration programs (57.1%) and provide social support (54.8%). At the same time, respondents least often help with finding temporary housing or accommodation (9.5%) or take on the role of organizing networking events and meetings with employers (11.9%).

Overall, the responses reflect an imbalance in the areas of assistance and show that the overall system of veteran support remains incomplete. Organizations mostly help veterans “leave the war behind” through psychological support and information provision, but much more rarely provide tools for “entering civilian life”, particularly in the areas of employment, career development, and housing stability.

The low level of advocacy for veterans’ rights (21.4%) shows that most organizations focus on helping veterans adapt to existing conditions rather than influencing the system and changing those conditions. In the absence of a strong advocacy component and the development of economic integration areas, support risks remaining short-term and reactive.

What kind of support does your organization provide to veterans?

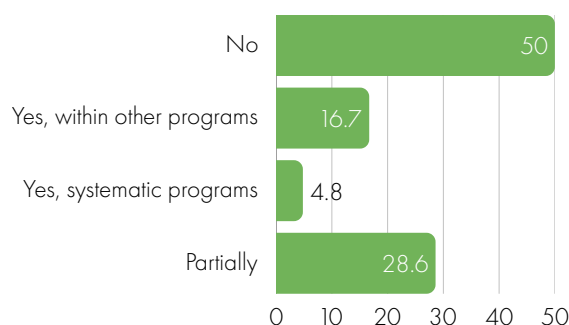


Half of the surveyed organizations (50%) stated that they do not have any dedicated programs or areas of work focused on veteran employment. Another 28.6% reported that their employment-related activities are fragmentary in nature.

At the same time, 16.7% of respondents integrate employment components into other programs, and only 4.8% have systematic, dedicated projects in this area.

The tendency toward partial or integrated forms of support suggests that employment is regarded more as a supporting component than as a strategic area of activity.

Does your organization have separate programs/areas specifically focused on veteran employment?



Respondents were asked to specify what kind of assistance their organization provides for veteran employment. The most common practice is cooperation with the state employment service, where organizations act as intermediaries in communication between veterans and employment centers, and also involve them in information and training activities.

"We cooperate with the employment center and the Hart veteran space, as well as with local entrepreneurs. We invite employment center staff to provide training and introduce veterans and their family members to programs (grants, business plans, and projects)".

"Within the project and under a memorandum signed with the Lviv Regional Employment Center, we provide consulting on employment, sole proprietorship registration, self-employment, participation in grant programs, and business plan writing".

Mentoring support in the job search is also provided, covering the full support cycle, from psychological assistance to resume writing and interview preparation. More advanced organizations also assess employers' readiness to hire veterans, which makes it possible not just to search for vacancies but to systematically increase business readiness to hire veterans and support their subsequent workplace adaptation, developing internal onboarding and support protocols for new employees.

"Developing adaptation policies for businesses, conducting audits of companies' readiness to hire veterans, and training programs to strengthen management skills for veteran entrepreneurs".

"We provide veterans with free career support through professional consultants, from resume writing and interview preparation to job searching and communicating with employers. Support continues until actual employment is achieved, taking into account the veteran's experience and needs".

Some respondents focus their efforts on supporting veteran-owned businesses. This assistance can include help with writing business plans and registering as sole proprietors, support during participation in grant programs (information and technical assistance), and promoting the development and visibility of veteran businesses through fairs, opportunities to showcase products and services, consulting support, and encouragement to start one's own business.

"We are developing a platform for business growth, including organizing a Veteran Business Fair, helping with grant writing when needed, and cooperating with the Lviv City Council business support center".

"Information support and consulting. Increasing competitiveness and helping people start their own businesses".

"We have a farm where we encourage the creation of small farming operations".

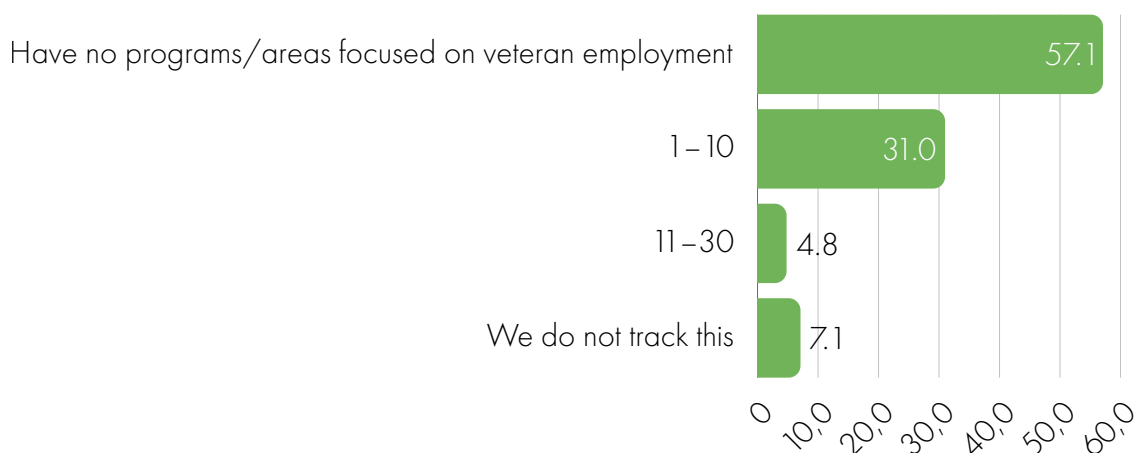
Some organizations support veterans' professional adaptation through retraining and new skills-development programs. Particular attention is given to training in digital professions and support in obtaining a driver's license, which increases veterans' competitiveness in the labor market.

"Retraining, training in IT and digital professions. Obtaining a driver's license for future employment".

Overall, participants’ responses point to a gradual shift by some organizations from acting as intermediaries in the job search toward comprehensive employment support, including the development of veteran entrepreneurship or assessment of employer readiness, although these efforts remain fragmented for now. At the same time, many organizations continue to work within the basic model of cooperation with Employment Centers, which, despite its accessibility, has limited effectiveness in delivering sustainable employment outcomes.

Most surveyed organizations report modest results in veteran employment: 31% helped place between 1 and 10 veterans, while only 4.8% placed between 11 and 30 people. At the same time, 7.1% of organizations reported no veteran placements at all over the past year.

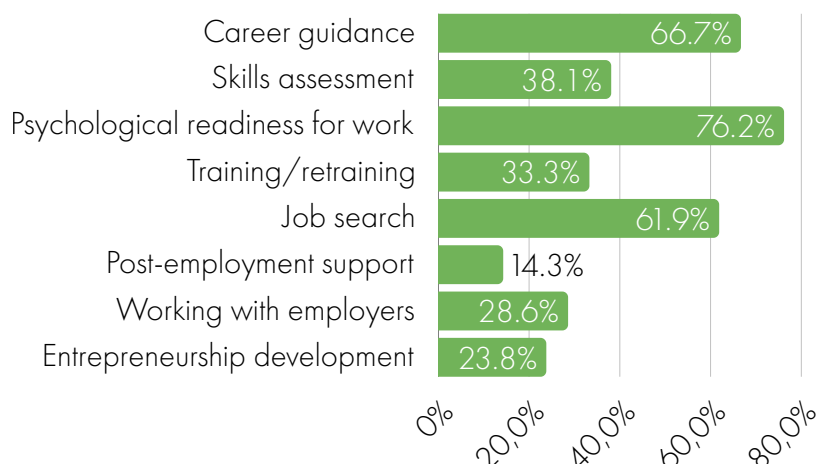
How many veterans were employed with your organization’s support over the past year?



The vast majority of surveyed representatives of the non-governmental sector focus their efforts on the initial stages of employment: 76.2% work on psychological readiness for work, 66.7% conduct career-guidance activities, and 61.9% help with job searches. About a third of respondents also work on skills assessment (38.1%) and training or retraining (33.3%), indicating only partial coverage of tools to improve veterans’ competitiveness in the labor market.

At the same time, the stages related to long-term integration remain the least developed: post-employment support (14.3%), cooperation with employers (28.6%), and entrepreneurship development (23.8%). The lack of direct communication with employers and the absence of post-employment support create risks in which even high-quality psychological preparation of a veteran fails to translate into sustained employment.

At which stage of employment do you mainly work?

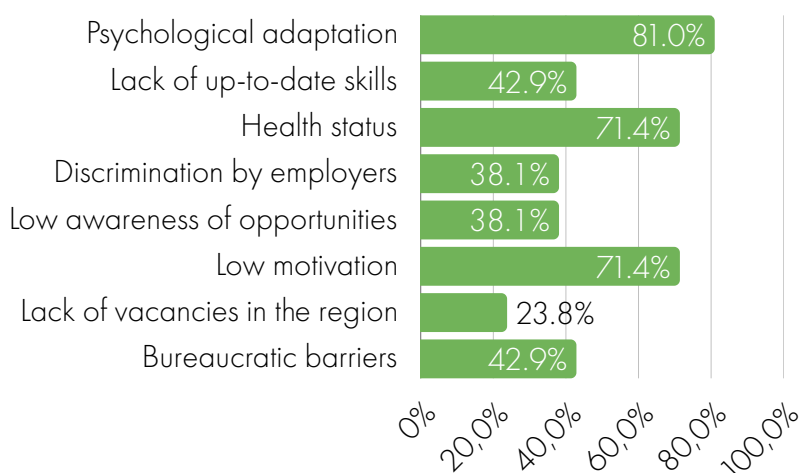


According to respondents, the most common barriers to veteran employment are difficulties with psychological adaptation (81%), health status (71.4%), and low motivation (71.4%). Together, these factors suggest that effective professional reintegration requires a preliminary or parallel stage of recovery as a basic precondition for returning to employment.

A significant share of organizations also report a structural gap between veterans' existing competencies and labor market needs (42.9%), which is further complicated by bureaucratic barriers (42.9%). Another notable problem is the level of bias on the part of employers (38.1%), which, combined with veterans' insufficient awareness of opportunities (38.1%), creates a closed cycle of limited access to employment opportunities.

Overall, the findings highlight that effective reintegration requires comprehensive approaches that combine psychological support, skills development, and employment support, complemented by measures to overcome labor-market-level barriers.

What are the main barriers to veteran employment that you observe?



Respondents' answers show that barriers to veteran employment are mostly overcome through individual, flexible, and unsystematic approaches.

"We work comprehensively, in a multimodal way, together with social partners, and help with adaptation and rehabilitation when needed".

"We use a range of methods, from appeals and personal conversations to complaints and meetings with regional leadership. We provide counseling and support to veterans and their family members".

Among the responses provided, individual career and psychological support for veterans dominates, including counseling, motivational support, adapting skills to labor market requirements, and developing skills to cope with stressful situations.

"We overcome these barriers through individual career support for veterans: we help update and adapt skills to market requirements, provide training and counseling, and inform veterans about current employment opportunities"...

"Psychologist consultations, introductions to successful veteran-owned businesses, and communication in all areas where difficulties arise".

"We overcome veteran employment barriers through a comprehensive approach that combines psychological, physical, and social rehabilitation. In particular, at our farm we carry out recovery through interaction with animals, hippotherapy, which helps improve psycho-emotional state and reduce stress and anxiety levels".

Many organizations also report direct engagement with employers, through negotiations, personal contacts, and awareness-raising work on the specifics of employing veterans.

"We hold negotiations with community leaders to motivate enterprises to hire veterans".

"Drawing on my own business experience and the needs of individual employers, I personally handle recruitment, explanation, and support during employment, in cooperation with the regional employment department..."

"...we run training programs for enterprises and entrepreneurs on the topic 'Rules and knowledge for communicating with veterans and their families after demobilization from combat zones'".

"Developing programs aimed at supporting employers in creating decent working conditions and adapting to veterans. The adaptation program includes audits that comprehensively assess companies' level of awareness and readiness to employ veterans: conducting surveys and analyzing workplace climate, analyzing operational processes, analyzing the hiring process, and developing recommendations for shaping veteran adaptation policies/improving existing processes".

In summary, the responses show that existing practices for overcoming veteran employment barriers are mostly unsystematic and depend on individual organizations' initiative, pointing to a lack of unified approaches and a need for their further institutionalization. Current approaches include preparing veterans for employment (psychological support, skills development, interview preparation), working with employers (training, awareness-raising, assessing hiring readiness), using informal employment channels, and supporting self-employment through the development of veteran entrepreneurship.

Among narrow-profile specialists in the field of adaptation, the ones most often engaged by surveyed organizations are specialists in psychological support for veterans (38.1%) and social support (33.3%), reflecting an orientation toward basic and crisis-level support.

At the same time, expertise directly related to employment and economic integration is significantly limited: only 19% of teams have experience in business consulting, and only 4.8% each in career guidance and HR/recruitment. This points to insufficient staffing capacity to implement veteran employment support programs.

It is also worth noting that 9.5% of organizations have no specialists with relevant expertise at all, which may affect the quality and comprehensiveness of the services they provide.

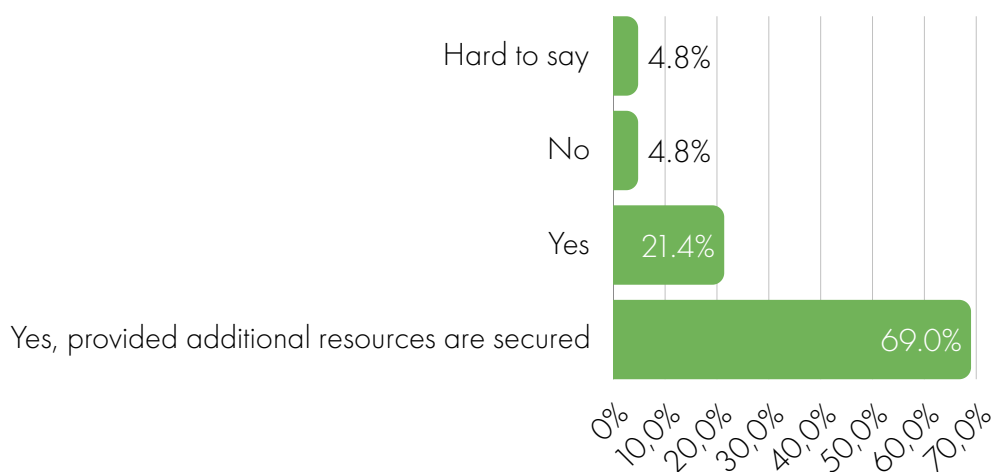
Does your team include specialists with experience in:



The vast majority of respondents (69%) stated that they plan to expand their range of support areas only if additional resources become available. Another 21.4% of organizations already intend to expand their activities in the near future, while the share of those who do not plan any changes (4.8%) or are undecided (4.8%) is small.

Overall, the results show that the sector is dynamic and development-oriented, but its further expansion depends significantly on access to financial, human, and program resources.

Does your organization plan to expand its range of veteran support areas in the near future?



Requests for expanding activities vary widely, but are most concentrated in the areas of economic integration, psychological support, and rehabilitation.

In particular, many respondents point to the need to develop employment and career support programs, including retraining, mentoring, entrepreneurship development, and support for veteran businesses. There is also a specific call to strengthen legal assistance and systematic support for veterans, particularly those with special statuses (internally displaced persons, missing persons, released from captivity).

"Our organization does not currently offer, but considers important and plans to introduce, training programs (in particular, retraining courses in computer literacy and web design). At the same time, given sufficient resources and donor support, we aim to introduce such initiatives in the future".

"We see a need to introduce mentoring programs and practical training courses for veterans and their family members, in particular in social media management, marketing, product promotion, and business development. Such programs would help veterans develop veteran businesses more effectively, acquire new skills, and expand opportunities for economic self-realization".

"We specifically want to move toward legal support for veterans and families with prisoner-of-war or missing-person status, and support for veterans upon their return".

There is also a high level of demand in the area of psychological and comprehensive rehabilitation, including family support, rehabilitation and support programs, and the creation of specialized rehabilitation spaces. Some organizations emphasize the need to develop infrastructure for the long-term recovery and socialization of veterans.

"Our organization currently does not have the capacity to fully carry out activities for veterans, particularly for people with disabilities, but considers this area extremely important and plans to develop it. We aim to create a safe and comfortable space at our farm for rehabilitation, cultural, and social activities that will support psychological recovery, socialization, and a return to active life. In particular, we plan to organize gatherings, recreational, and therapeutic activities involving interaction with animals, which has a positive effect on emotional wellbeing. However, at present we lack the appropriate infrastructure, in particular a facility or café equipped for the comfortable stay of veterans, including people with disabilities. That is why developing such a space is a priority for us".

"Our organization currently works mainly with the wives and partners of servicemen, creating a space of support and mutual understanding for them. At the same time, we see a critical need to introduce a dedicated training track that would help women build a healthy relationship with their partner after service, particularly in cases involving injury, prolonged time at the front, or the return to civilian life. This means practical knowledge and skills: how to provide support without losing themselves; how to understand changes in behavior and condition; how to maintain connection under difficult circumstances. This is important not only for the wellbeing of women themselves, but also for the successful reintegration of veterans, since it is often the partner who becomes the first point of support after return. We aim to develop systematic training that combines psychological support, education, and community, and that becomes a long-term contribution to the resilience of military families".

There is also demand for the development of social and educational initiatives, ranging from training programs and outreach work to organizing leisure activities and family recreation, which is seen as an element of support for psychological resilience.

“Organizing family recreation for veterans and their families”

“Runs training programs: 1. Psychological rehabilitation of the veteran’s family; 2. Psychological reintegration of the veteran into civilian life. 3. Training for civilians and employers: ‘Rules and recommendations for communicating with veterans and their families’”.

Overall, the findings show that the sector’s future development is largely linked to a shift from isolated, one-off services toward comprehensive, long-term, and cross-sectoral models of support for veterans and their families.

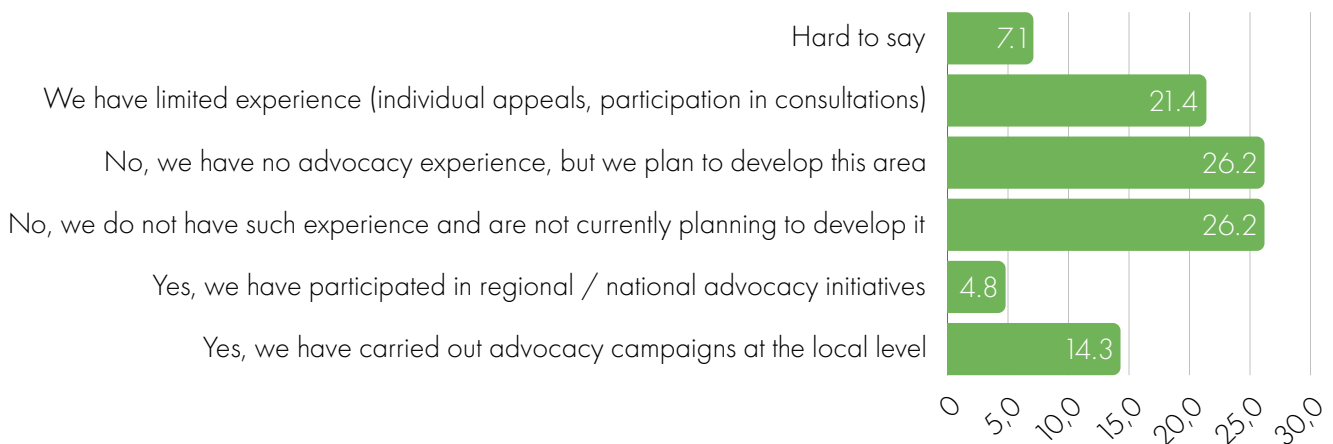
1.3 EXPERIENCE IN ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Nearly one in five respondents reports having advocacy experience (14.3% at the local level and 4.8% at the regional or national level).

In contrast, 21.4% have only limited advocacy experience, and more than half of surveyed organizations either do not engage in such activities (26.2%) or currently have no plans to develop them (26.2%).

Overall, these responses point to a fairly low level of institutionalization of advocacy in the sector and limited participation by organizations in policymaking and the protection of the veteran community's rights. At the same time, the presence of a share of organizations planning to develop this area (26.2%) creates potential for gradually strengthening the sector's advocacy capacity. Strengthening this particular group through training and partnership could be key to transforming the sector from a mere service provider into an influential participant in shaping state and local veteran policy.

Does your organization have experience in advocacy activities?

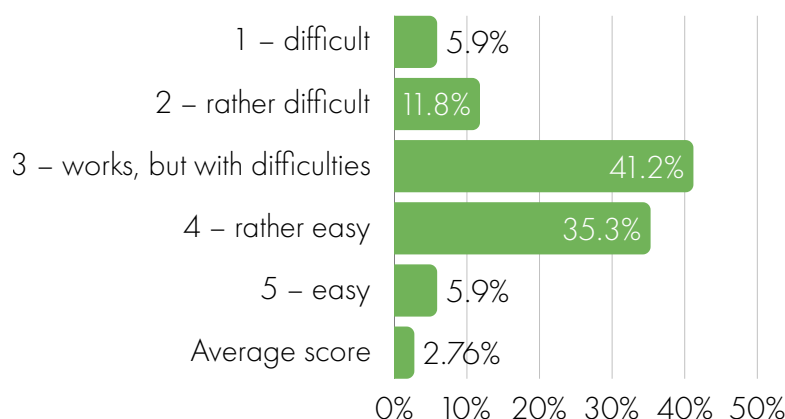


The largest share of respondents (41.2%) report that advocating for their needs at the local/regional level "works, but with difficulties". This suggests that advancing initiatives is not an automatic process and requires organizations to invest significant time and expertise to overcome resistance or system inertia.

Another 11.8% rate the process as rather difficult, and 5.9% as difficult, together accounting for nearly a fifth of organizations with a negative experience. At the same time, 35.3% of respondents believe advocacy is rather easy, and only 5.9% consider it easy without significant difficulties.

The average score (2.76 out of 5) reflects a below-average level of capacity among civil society organizations for advocacy processes. Overall, the findings suggest the presence of basic channels of interaction with local and regional actors, but with persistent systemic barriers that hinder organizations from fully representing their interests.

How easy is it for your organization to advocate for its needs and interests at the local/regional level?

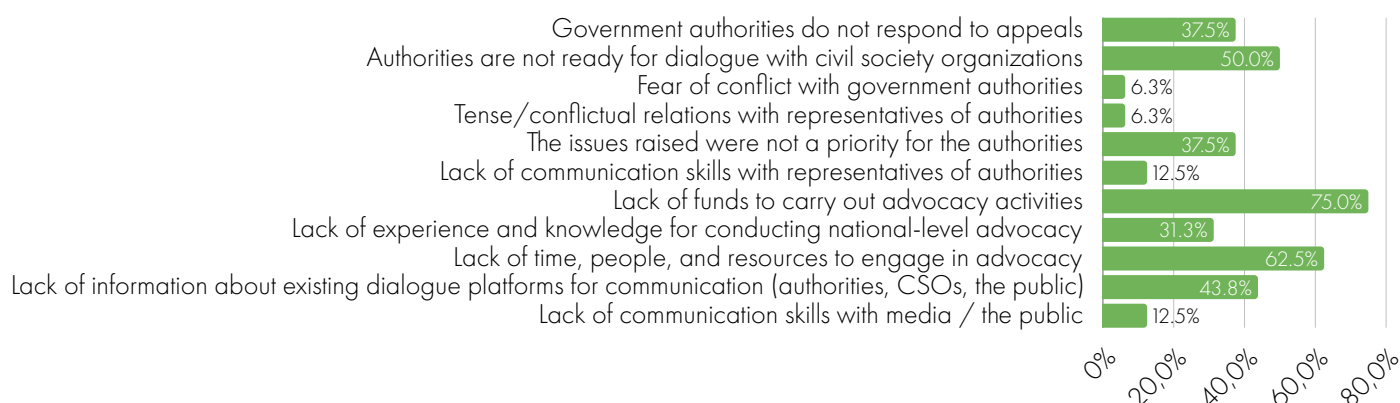


The most critical barrier to advocacy work is lack of funding, cited by 75% of organizations. A significant share of respondents also point to a shortage of time, human, and organizational resources for running advocacy campaigns (62.5%).

Other important systemic constraints include insufficient openness to dialogue on the part of government authorities (50%) and a lack of information about existing dialogue platforms (43.8%). In addition, 37.5% of organizations report that authorities do not respond to their appeals, and that the issues they raise do not match the priorities of government institutions.

Overall, the findings show that the main challenges in advocacy relate not so much to organizations' motivation as to limited resources, insufficient institutional support, and weak integration into dialogue mechanisms with authorities.

What difficulties have arisen during your advocacy activities?

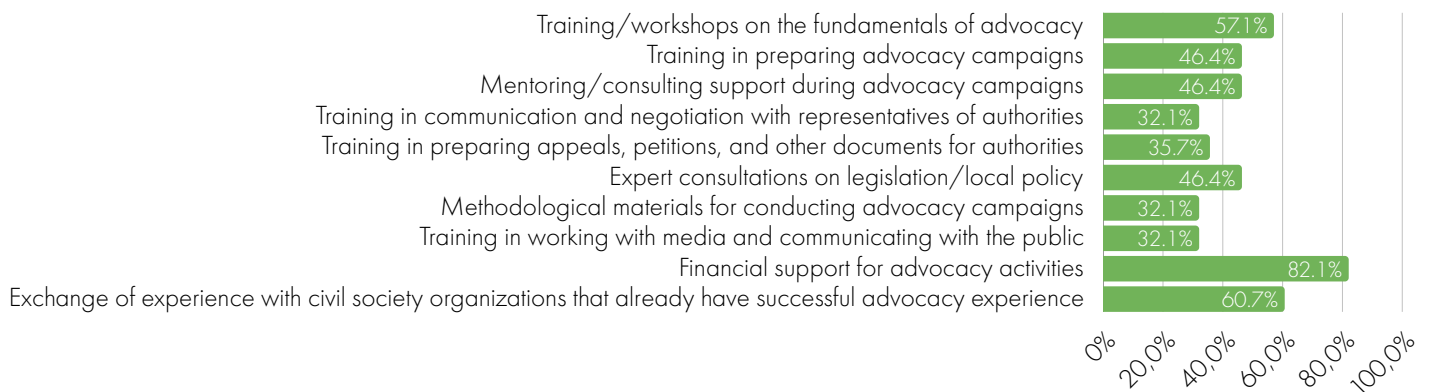


The key condition for strengthening organizations' advocacy capacity is access to financial resources, cited by 82.1% of respondents. There is also strong demand for exchanging experience with organizations that already have a successful advocacy track record (60.7%), pointing to the need to introduce practice-oriented and peer-to-peer learning in the sector.

More than half of respondents need basic training in the fundamentals of advocacy (57.1%), indicating an insufficient level of systematic knowledge in this area. A significant share of organizations are also interested in mentoring and consulting support during advocacy campaigns (46.4%), training in preparing such campaigns (46.4%), and expert consultations on legislation and local policy (46.4%).

Overall, the responses highlight the complexity of organizations' needs, which combine financial support, basic training, and practical support, pointing to the need for a systematic approach to developing the sector's advocacy capacity. The most effective support model in this area would combine grant funding with long-term mentoring programs to help organizations move beyond purely service-oriented activities and become influential actors in local and national policy.

What kind of assistance/support do you need to strengthen your organization's advocacy capacity?

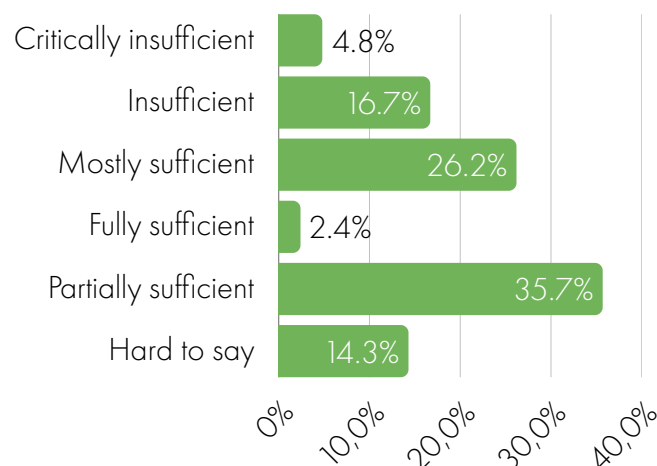


1.4 CURRENT CAPACITY AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Study participants were asked to assess their organization's capacity to meet the needs of their target groups. 35.7% of respondents rate their capacity as partially sufficient, and another 26.2% as mostly sufficient.

At the same time, one in five organizations reports limited capacity: 16.7% consider it insufficient, and 4.8% consider it critically insufficient.

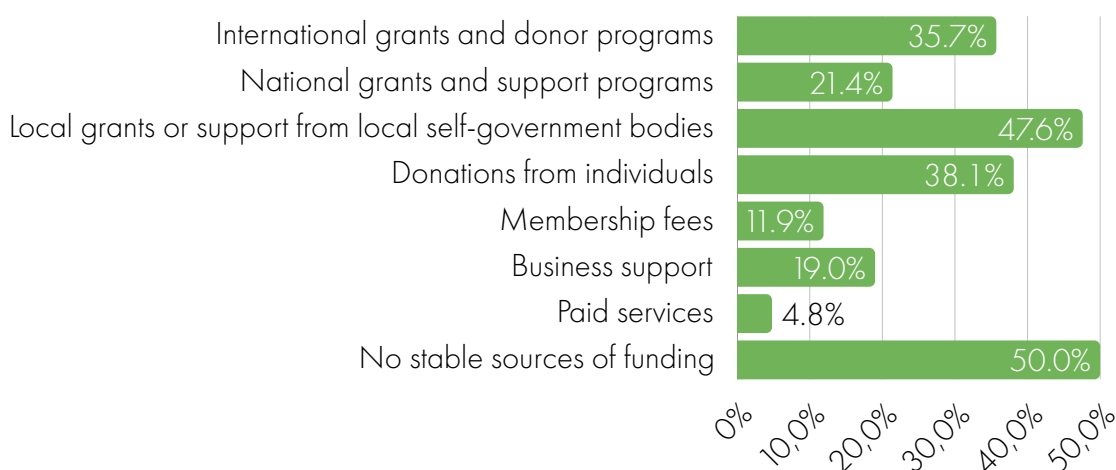
How would you rate your organization's current capacity to meet the needs of its target groups?



The most common sources of resources among surveyed pro-veteran organizations are local grants or support from local self-government bodies (47.6%) and donations from individuals (38.1%). International donor programs also play a notable role in funding activities (35.7%). At the same time, national grants and state programs are used by only a fifth of surveyed organizations (21.4%).

It is worth noting that 50% of organizations report having no stable sources of funding, which is a key risk to their long-term capacity and sustainability.

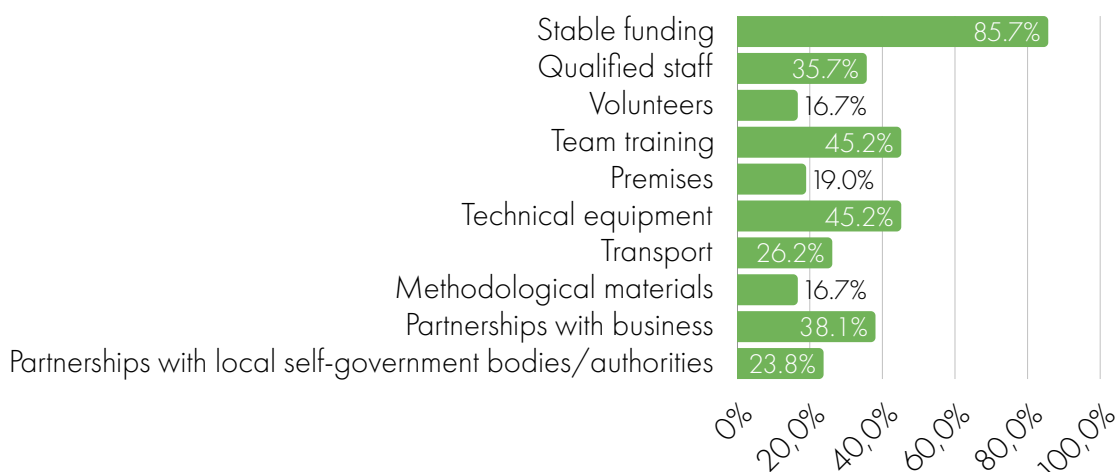
What are your organization's main sources of funding?(Multiple answers possible)



85.7% of respondents cite a lack of stable funding as the main challenge to their work. Other significant shortages highlighted by CSOs include the need for team training (45.2%) and technical equipment (45.2%), as well as qualified staff (35.7%) and partnerships with businesses (38.1%).

Responses from civil society organizations point to a comprehensive resource deficit: financial instability combined with staffing and technical limitations and insufficient cooperation with business and local self-government bodies. Together, these factors significantly constrain organizations' institutional resilience, their capacity for long-term planning, and their ability to scale up veteran support programs.

What resources does your organization lack most?



The vast majority of respondents (83.3%) identified grant funding as the most needed form of support. One of the priority requests is also institutional support, in particular covering administrative costs (54.8%) and help in attracting partners (54.8%).

This distribution of responses highlights the need for multi-pronged support, where funding for targeted programs should be accompanied by strengthening organizations' operational foundation and expanding their partnership ecosystem.

What forms of support is your organization interested in?



The most common communication channel for veteran-focused organizations remains social media, used by 90.5% of respondents. Informal and offline channels for disseminating information also play an important role: personal contacts ("word of mouth") are used by 78.6% of organizations, and community events by 69%. This reflects a strong reliance on direct interaction and local communities.

At the same time, the least common way of disseminating information is communication through partner organizations and veteran hubs (19%).

What tools or communication channels does your organization already use to spread information about its activities?

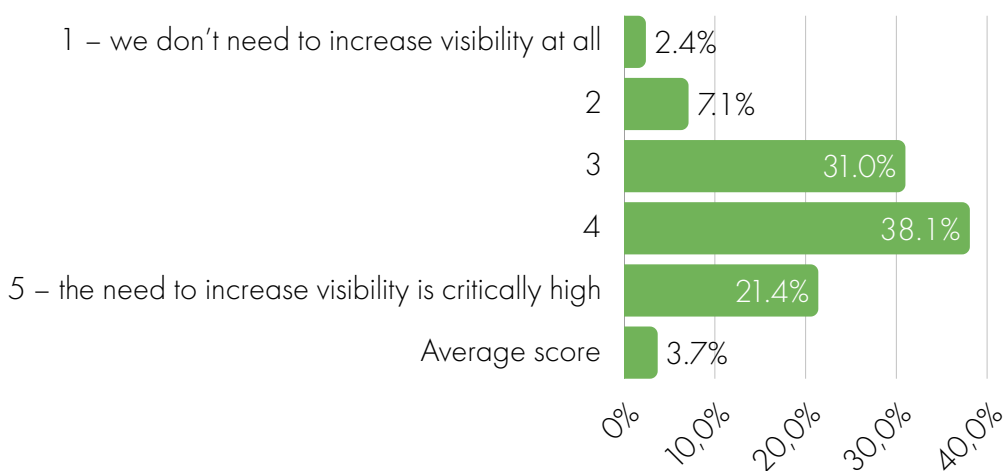


Most respondents rate the need to increase visibility as high (38.1%) or critically high (21.4%), reflecting an understanding that public visibility is key to attracting donors, new partners, and greater trust from the veteran community.

At the same time, the share of those who do not feel a significant need to increase visibility is small (9.5% combined for ratings 1–2).

The average score (3.7 out of 5) reflects a persistent need for greater visibility among surveyed CSOs. While the importance of this area for attracting investment and scaling up services is already clear to most, this rating suggests there is still room to introduce more systematic communication approaches and develop organizational branding.

Rate your organization’s need to increase the visibility of its activities and achievements on a scale of 1 to 5

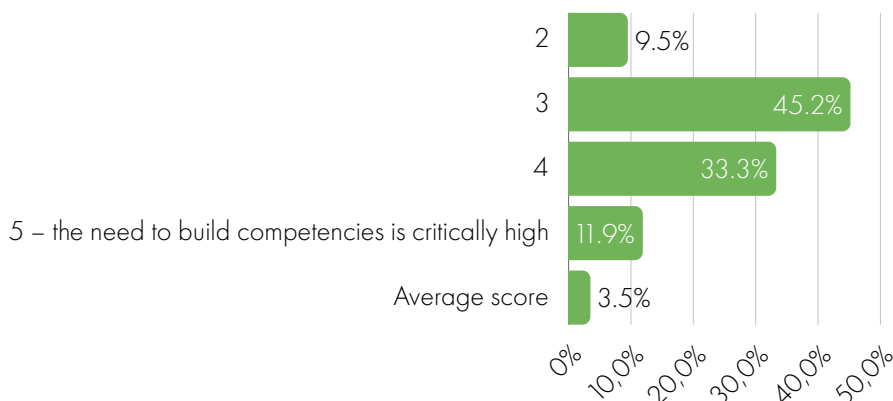


Study participants were also asked to rate their team’s need to strengthen competencies for the effective implementation of projects, on a five-point scale (where 1 means “we don’t need to build competencies at all” and 5 means “the need to build competencies is critically high”).

11.9% of respondents rated the need as critically high, giving the maximum “5 points”, while no respondent indicated a complete absence of need for professional development. Most study participants (45.2%) rated the need to build competencies at “3 points”.

The average score was 3.5, indicating a demand for strengthening competencies, though without a pronounced critical shortage.

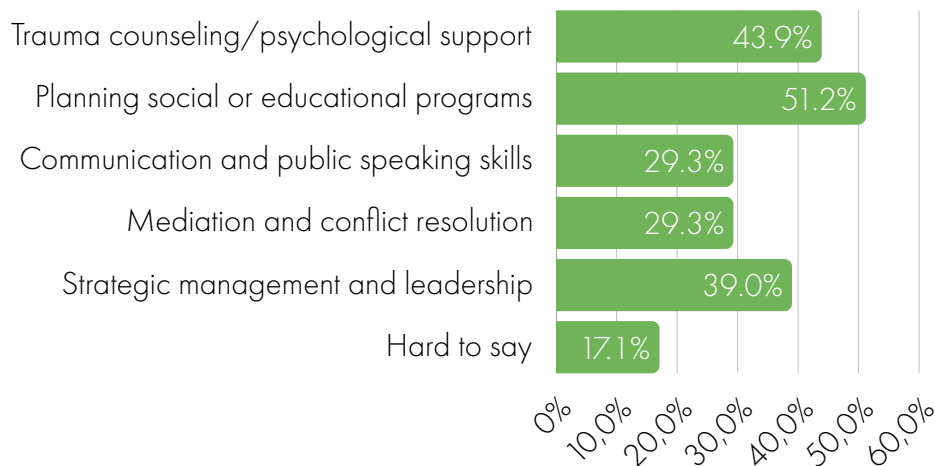
Rate your team’s need to build competencies for the effective implementation of projects on a scale of 1 to 5



The most in-demand skills among members of pro-veteran organizations are planning social and educational programs (51.2%) and trauma counseling and psychological support (43.9%), reflecting the specifics of working with the veteran community and the need for relevant professional expertise.

At the same time, a significant share of organizations need to strengthen their management competencies, particularly in strategic management and leadership (39%), pointing to a demand for institutional strengthening and the development of the sector's organizational capacity.

What specific skills does your team need to work effectively with veterans?

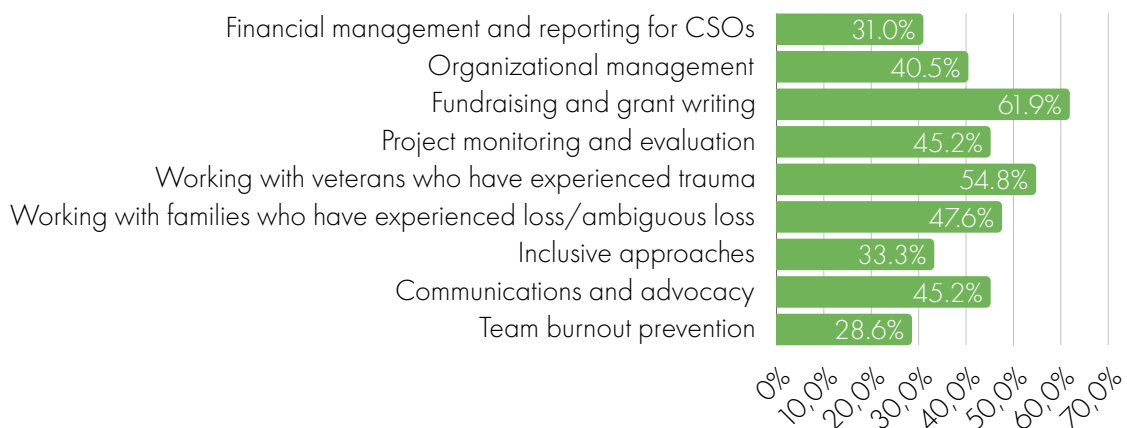


According to respondents, the most relevant topic for training and workshops is fundraising and grant writing (61.9%). There is also strong demand for topics related to the specifics of working with target groups: working with veterans who have experienced trauma (54.8%) and supporting families who have suffered loss (47.6%).

At the same time, a significant share of organizations are interested in developing management and analytical skills, particularly in organizational management (40.5%), project monitoring and evaluation (45.2%), and communications and advocacy (45.2%).

Thus, the responses reveal a steady trend toward comprehensive demand for training that combines strengthening financial resilience, management capacity, and the development of specialized knowledge for working with veterans and their families.

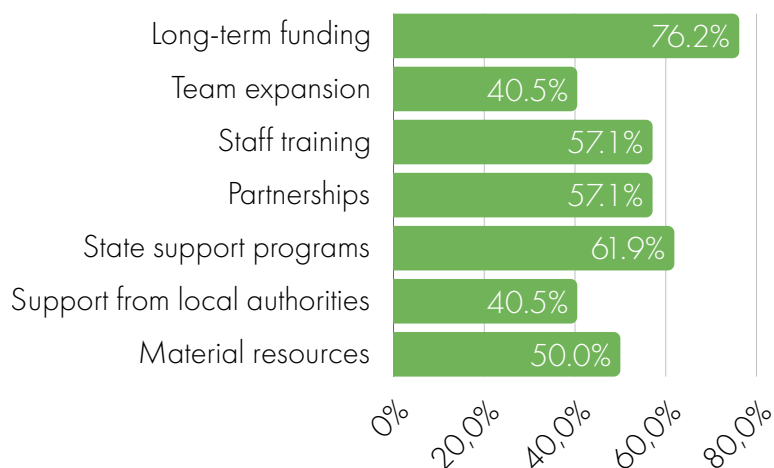
What training topics or workshops do you think would be most relevant and useful for your organization?



The vast majority of respondents identify long-term funding (76.2%) and state support programs (61.9%) as the main factors for scaling up their organization’s activities.

More than half of respondents also emphasize the importance of staff training (57.1%) and partnership development (57.1%), pointing to the need to simultaneously strengthen both internal organizational capacity and external cross-sectoral cooperation to ensure the sustainable development of veteran initiatives.

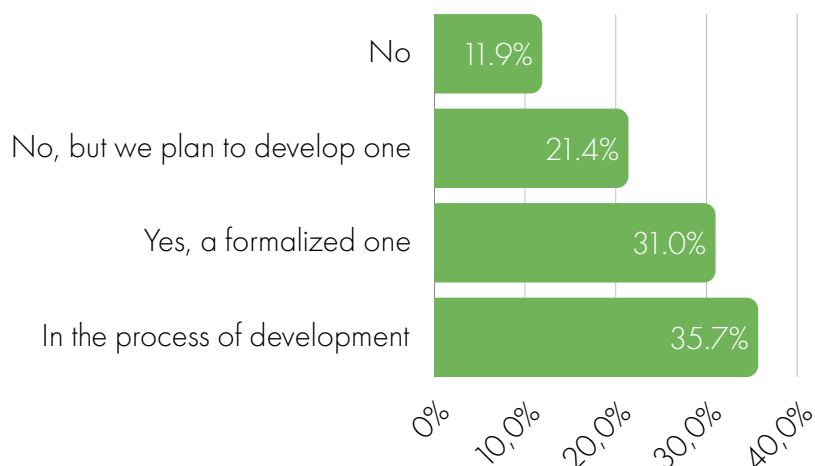
What would help you most to scale up your activities?



31% of surveyed organizations already have a formalized development strategy, and another 35.7% are in the process of developing one. 21.4% only plan to do so, which points to demand for strategic planning and an awareness of its importance.

Thus, more than half of study participants are in the process of gradually developing a strategic approach in their organizations’ work.

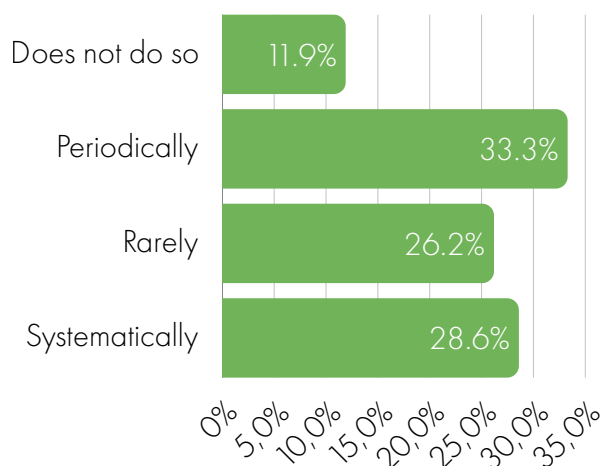
Does your organization have a development strategy?



28.6% of respondents report systematically collecting and analyzing data on the results of their activities. At the same time, a significant share of pro-veteran associations conduct such monitoring only episodically: 33.3% periodically and 26.2% rarely. Another 11.9% do not collect or analyze data at all.

Overall, the responses reveal a limited level of adoption of monitoring and evaluation processes among veteran-focused organizations, which may limit their ability to assess the effectiveness of their own work, make informed management decisions, and demonstrate results to donors and partners.

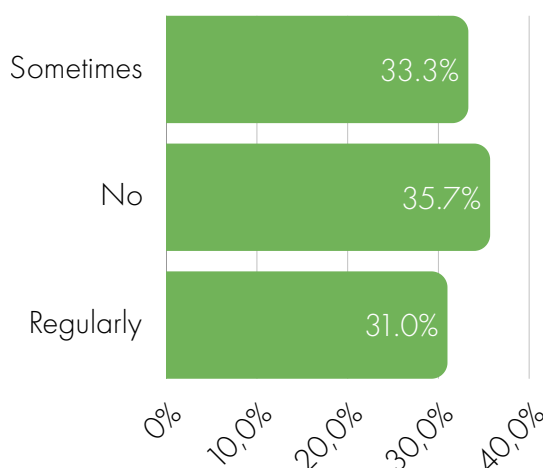
Does your organization collect and analyze data on the results of its activities?



31% of surveyed organizations report preparing analytical or donor reports regularly. At the same time, 33.3% of respondents prepare such materials only occasionally, and another 35.7% do not prepare reports at all.

This means that more than two-thirds of respondents lack a systematic approach to documenting the results of their work. Overall, this situation may limit organizations' transparency, their accountability to donors and partners, and their ability to attract funding and scale up successful practices.

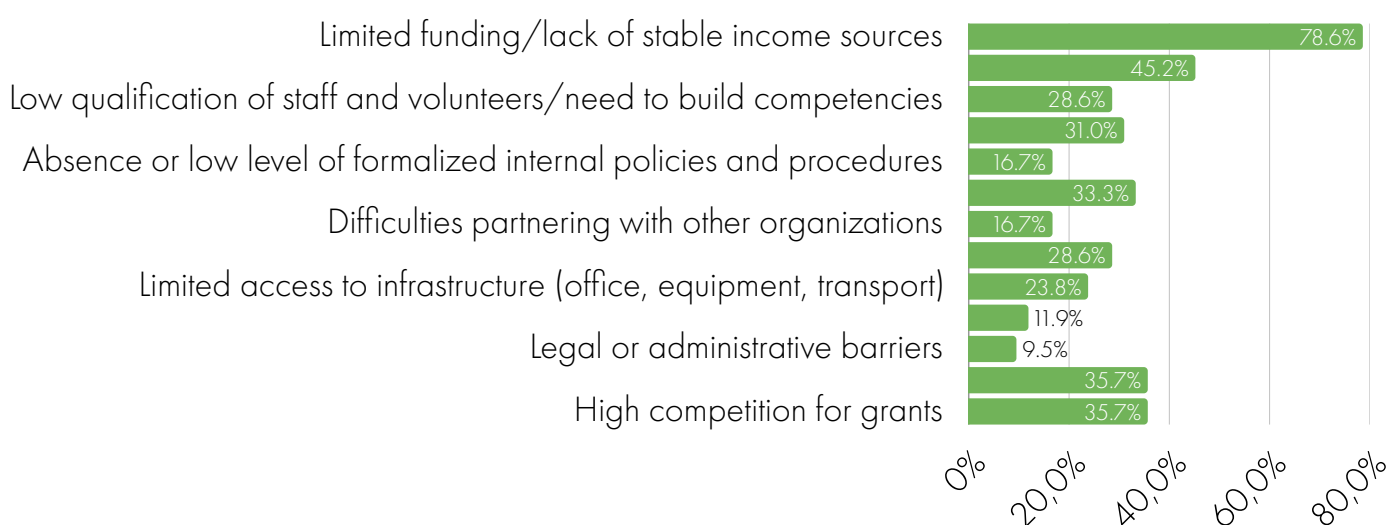
Does your organization prepare analytical or donor reports?



For 78.6% of respondents, the main factors limiting their organization's development are limited funding and the lack of stable income sources. The situation is further complicated by strong competition for grant resources (35.7%) and a lack of fundraising experience (35.7%), which significantly narrows opportunities to attract funding. Staffing challenges are also significant: staff and volunteer shortages (45.2%), team burnout (31.0%), and the need for professional development (28.6%).

At the same time, according to respondents, the factors with the least impact on organizational development are low visibility of activities (11.9%) and legal or administrative barriers (9.5%).

What are the main challenges limiting your organization's development?



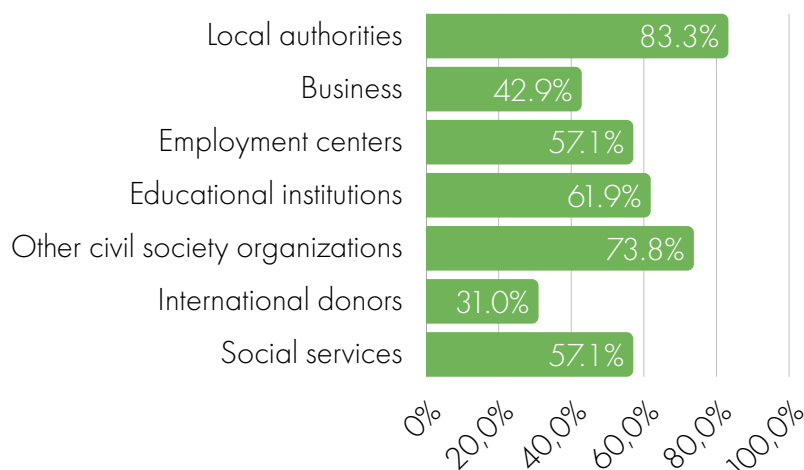
1.5 PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION

Surveyed organizations most often cooperate with local authorities (83.3%) and other representatives of the civil society sector (73.8%), pointing to an established network of horizontal and vertical ties and deep integration at the community level.

Cooperation with educational institutions (61.9%), employment centers (57.1%), and social services (57.1%) is also significant, reflecting an orientation toward comprehensive veteran support, including in the areas of education, employment, and social support.

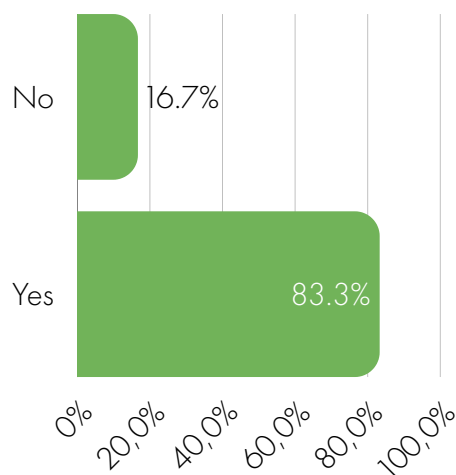
At the same time, cooperation with business is less developed (42.9%), which may limit opportunities for veteran employment and the development of entrepreneurial initiatives.

Which of the following institutions/organizations do you already cooperate with?



The vast majority of respondents (83.3%) report that cooperation with other organizations/institutions on veteran employment issues helps address veteran employment challenges. At the same time, 16.7% of organizations see no positive effect from such cooperation.

Does cooperation with other organizations/institutions help with veteran employment issues?

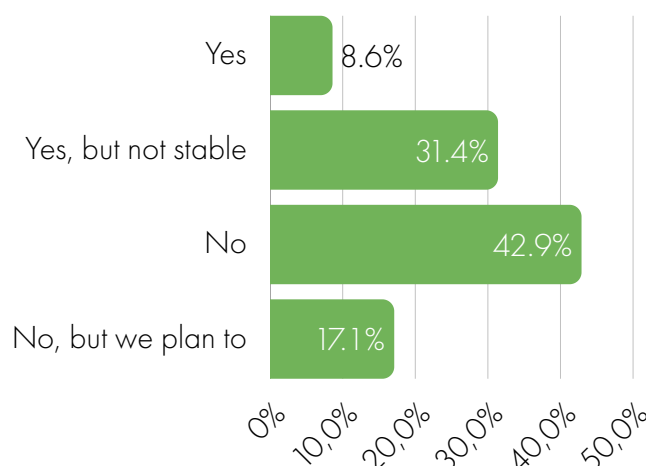


The majority of respondents (42.9%) have no established cooperation with employers at all, and another 17.1% do not currently cooperate with employers but plan to develop such partnerships in the future.

By contrast, only 8.6% of surveyed veteran-focused organizations have stable cooperation with employers, while 31.4% report cooperation that is not stable, suggesting it is situational or project-based in nature.

These responses show that partnerships with employers remain a weak link in the system of veteran employment support and require targeted development and institutional strengthening.

Does your organization have stable cooperation with employers?

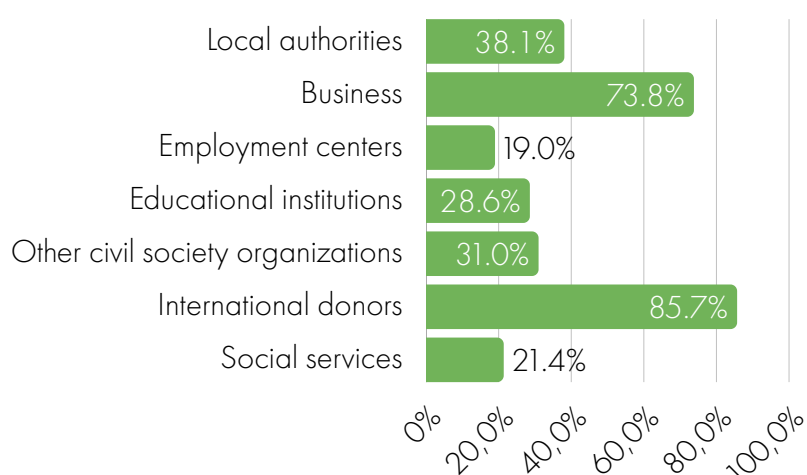


Respondents show the highest interest in cooperating with international donors (85.7%), underscoring the need for external funding and greater institutional resilience. Cooperation with business ranks second in priority (73.8%), reflecting demand for developing veteran employment, supporting veteran entrepreneurship, and expanding economic opportunities.

Other proposed areas of cooperation received a lower level of relevance among study participants, which may indicate that partnerships with these actors already exist or are partially established.

The survey results show that international donors and business are priority areas for partnership development. A significant share of organizations are also interested in strengthening cooperation with local authorities, civil society organizations, and other institutions in the social sphere.

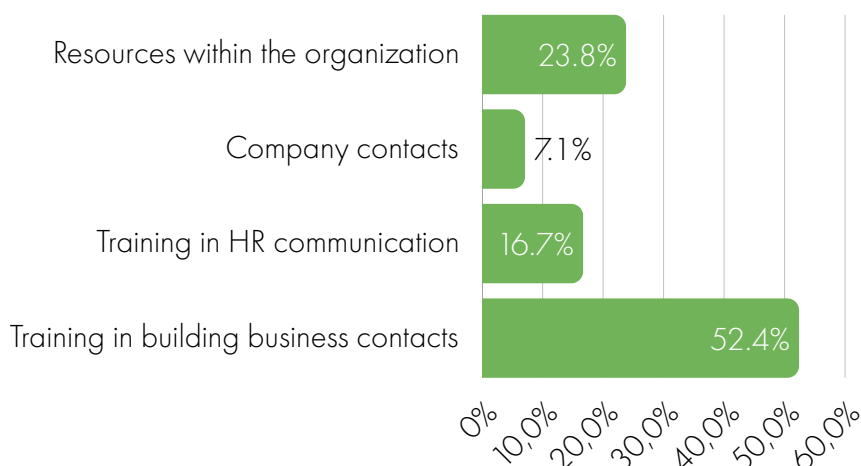
What partnerships would you like to establish/strengthen?



According to survey participants, the most needed form of support for effective cooperation with business is training in building business contacts, cited as a need by 52.4% of respondents. At the same time, the least pressing issue turned out to be a lack of company contacts (7.1%).

This distribution of responses suggests that the key barrier is not access to business as such, but a lack of practical skills and competencies for building sustainable and effective partnerships.

What support do you lack for effective cooperation with business?



Among the unmet needs of veterans in the region, representatives of the civil society sector most often mention needs related to psychological rehabilitation, social adaptation, and employment.

“Psychological rehabilitation and adaptation of veterans to civilian life; the need to better promote a healthy lifestyle (addiction prevention); veteran employment and support in starting their own business”.

“Employment after loss of health, without physical strain, possibly a quota for the number of veterans employed”.

“Professional retraining of veterans, employment support, development of veteran entrepreneurship, mentoring programs for starting a business, and long-term psychological support and social adaptation for veterans and their families”.

Some respondents point to a lack of comprehensive, long-term support programs that combine psychological recovery, physical rehabilitation, socialization, and support in returning to civilian life.

“In our region, the need for comprehensive veteran rehabilitation, combining psychological recovery, physical activity, and social adaptation, remains insufficiently covered. In particular, there is a lack of accessible spaces where veterans, including those with disabilities, can safely spend time, restore their emotional state, and gradually return to active life. Informal rehabilitation programs are also underdeveloped, in particular those involving interaction with animals (hippotherapy), which have proven effective in reducing stress and anxiety levels. In addition, there is a need to create conditions for socialization by organizing joint activities, gatherings, and a supportive environment where veterans can feel part of a community. A further ongoing challenge is insufficient awareness of employment and self-employment opportunities, along with a lack of support in transitioning to civilian life”.

Some representatives of surveyed CSOs report limited development of services for veterans' families, families of the fallen, and partners of servicemen, indicating a need for a more family-oriented approach in veteran policy.

"A lack of systematic psychological support for veterans and their families together, rather than only individually for servicemen. No training programs for wives/partners on how to interact after a return from the front, injury, or traumatic experience. A lack of services supporting the reintegration of the family as a whole system. Limited opportunities for professional adaptation and employment (both for veterans and their partners)...Social isolation of wives/partners of servicemen and a lack of programs to restore their social life. No systematic recognition of partners as a separate target group in veteran support policies. Insufficient inclusion of military families' voices in decision-making at the community and state levels"

Among the changes to policies or programs (local, regional, national) called for by representatives of the civil society sector is a request to introduce a comprehensive family-oriented approach that takes into account the needs not only of veterans but also of their wives, partners, children, and the families of fallen servicemen. In particular, respondents note the need for institutional recognition of servicemen' wives and partners as a separate target group for such programs, and their active involvement in the adaptation process.

"Institutional recognition of wives and partners of servicemen as a separate target group in state and local support programs. Including a family-based approach (veteran + family) in reintegration and psychosocial support policies. Developing and funding training programs for partners on interacting with servicemen after their return from the front. Expanding access to free or partially subsidized psychological support services for military families. Creating professional retraining and employment programs for wives/partners of servicemen. Ensuring accessible childcare services as part of military family support policies. Institutional support for civil society organizations working with military families (grant programs, partnerships with authorities). Involving representatives of this community in advisory bodies at government institutions. These changes would allow a shift from ad hoc support to systemic solutions and would significantly strengthen the effectiveness of our work at the community level".

There are also views on the value of developing, at the community level, programs for psychological rehabilitation, counseling support, professional adaptation, and veteran entrepreneurship, combined with expanded cooperation and coordination with local self-government bodies to ensure more systematic and sustainable support.

Overall, the responses confirm that veterans' needs in the region are complex and require a transformation of the support system toward a cross-sectoral, person-centered approach. Critically important areas remain economic reintegration through labor market adaptation and entrepreneurship support, as well as ensuring basic guarantees (housing, healthcare, legal support), which require coordinated efforts by the state, business, and civil society.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study, it can be concluded that surveyed pro-veteran organizations are actively engaged in supporting veteran employment, but their activities are mostly focused on basic services, information provision, counseling, and occasional individual support. At the same time, the survey data clearly show that the main barriers to employment are complex and systemic in nature.

Focus of activities

Organizations work with a range of beneficiary groups, with significant attention given to veterans and their families. The main focus is on psychological preparation and career guidance, while skills assessment, training and retraining, and entrepreneurship development remain areas of low coverage. Work with employers, post-employment support, and systematic engagement with the labor market are implemented to a limited extent and are mostly one-off in nature. At the same time, organizations already play an important intermediary role between veterans, businesses, employment services, and communities, although this function is not yet sufficiently institutionalized.

Recommendation: introduce an individual veteran support model ("veteran case management"), and strengthen psychological adaptation programs after employment. It would be worthwhile to develop work with employers as a separate area of veteran employment support, in particular through awareness-raising activities, developing HR communication, and building practices for adapting veterans within work teams.

An important direction for strengthening CSO capacity could be developing their role as intermediaries between the veteran, the employer, and government structures. Within training and advocacy components, it would be worthwhile to strengthen organizations' skills in:

- collecting and analyzing data on veteran employment barriers;
- building an evidence base for local and regional advocacy;
- preparing advocacy and analytical materials on the veteran labor market;
- building partnerships with business and developing negotiation skills;
- developing systematic models of engagement with employers rather than only case-by-case support.

It would also be worthwhile to develop and implement comprehensive support programs for veterans and their families using a family-oriented approach.

Material, technical, and organizational capacity of CSOs

The key challenges for veteran-focused organizations are limited stable funding, staffing resources, technical equipment, and access to institutional support. Half of organizations have no stable sources of funding, which significantly limits their ability to plan long-term, develop programs, and scale up their activities.

Recommendation: introduce institutional support models by providing long-term grant funding, covering administrative costs, providing technical equipment, and developing organizational strengthening programs. Support the diversification of income sources through social entrepreneurship and local philanthropic programs.

Needs for improving advocacy practices

Advocacy work by pro-veteran organizations is mostly unsystematic in nature: most have only basic or fragmentary experience, and a significant share do not engage in advocacy at all. Even where individual practices exist, organizations face systemic barriers, primarily a lack of funding, resources, and skills, and insufficient openness on the part of government authorities. This reduces the sector's ability to influence policymaking.

Recommendation: it is necessary to comprehensively strengthen organizations' advocacy capacity by combining financial support, basic training, and mentoring support. It is also important to develop sustainable dialogue platforms with authorities and ensure systematic exchange of experience between organizations, so as to turn advocacy from an occasional practice into a regular tool for influencing policy.

Demand for raising the visibility of pro-veteran organizations

Communication by pro-veteran organizations is mostly based on social media, personal contacts, and local events, while the use of partner channels and veteran hubs remains significantly limited. At the same time, most organizations recognize their own insufficient level of visibility and the need to strengthen it, indicating a demand for a more systematic communication presence.

Recommendation: it would be worthwhile to strengthen organizations' communication capacity by developing a strategic approach to visibility: introducing branding elements, expanding partner information channels (including with hubs and CSOs), and supporting professional skills in communications and digital promotion.

Demand for developing and systematizing policies and internal procedures

Veteran-focused organizations are gradually moving toward strategic planning, but this process is not yet complete and remains uneven. At the same time, there is a low level of systematic data collection and analytical reporting, which limits organizations' ability to assess their own effectiveness and demonstrate results to donors. The main barriers to development are financial instability, staff shortages, and insufficient fundraising experience, while management and analytical practices remain insufficiently institutionalized.

Recommendation: strengthen the institutional capacity of pro-veteran organizations by introducing basic standards for strategic management, monitoring, and evaluation, and by developing skills in preparing analytical and donor reports. It would also be worthwhile to introduce systematic support programs in fundraising, team management, and financial sustainability, including through training, mentoring, and support in attracting long-term grants.

Need to build partnerships

Pro-veteran organizations demonstrate a well-developed network of cooperation with local authorities, the civil society sector, and social institutions, but cooperation with business remains insufficiently systematic. This limits opportunities for veteran employment and the development of economic initiatives. At the same time, there is strong demand for expanding partnerships with international donors and business, reflecting the sector's orientation toward strengthening financial resilience and the economic integration of veterans.

Recommendation: strengthen institutional mechanisms for partnership between pro-veteran organizations and business by developing the necessary practical skills (in particular, building business contacts), introducing training and mentoring programs, and creating stable platforms for interaction. It would also be worthwhile to expand cooperation with international donors as a source of long-term support and development of the sector's organizational capacity.

Needs for training and strengthening the competencies of pro-veteran organization staff

Surveyed representatives of pro-veteran organizations show a steady demand for building professional and management competencies. Most respondents rate the need for skills development as moderately high, reflecting an awareness of the need to strengthen organizational capacity for effective project implementation. The highest demand is for training in social program planning, psychological support for veterans, fundraising, project monitoring and evaluation, and strategic management.

Recommendation: develop comprehensive programs that combine specialized skills for working with veterans, management competencies, and practical knowledge in fundraising and project monitoring and evaluation. It would also be worthwhile to introduce mentoring programs, experience exchange, and long-term team support to strengthen the sector's institutional capacity.

Employment skills gap and weak HR capacity among CSOs

The study identified a lack of up-to-date skills among veterans, combined with a critically low level of HR/recruitment competencies and career guidance capacity within CSOs. This means that organizations do not actually fulfill the role of a professional intermediary between the veteran and the labor market, limiting themselves to information provision and general support.

Recommendation: strengthen CSOs' internal capacity in the field of veteran career guidance and employment: developing HR and recruitment competencies (skills assessment, help with job selection, career counseling, etc.). Support the establishment of a dedicated veteran support specialist role (case management), guiding the veteran from identifying career goals to workplace adaptation.

Labor market, employers, and discriminatory barriers

The study shows that some organizations report discrimination by employers, while others report a lack of vacancies in their regions. At the same time, CSOs' work with employers is mostly one-off and not institutionalized, confirming a systemic gap between the CSO sector and the labor market.

Recommendation: support the development of CSOs as intermediaries between veterans and employers. Fund programs for working with business: HR training for employers, anti-discrimination practices, workplace adaptation for veterans, and development of partnerships with companies. Separately, support advocacy initiatives aimed at reducing structural employment barriers.

Thus, the study's findings show that effectively addressing veteran employment challenges requires a comprehensive approach that combines psychological support, social adaptation, skills development, and engagement with employers. The practical experience of pro-veteran organizations shows that the most effective support models are those focused on veterans' individual needs and on building partnerships at the community level.

In this regard, civil society organizations should develop the following approaches in their work on veteran employment issues:

- a comprehensive combination of psychological support, social adaptation, and career support;
- an individual approach to each veteran, taking into account their experience, health status, and motivation;
- mentoring support at all stages of employment;
- cooperation with employment centers, business, and local authorities;

- outreach work with employers on adapting veterans within work teams;
- development of veteran entrepreneurship and self-employment;
- creating platforms for networking, experience exchange, and communication with employers;
- using local partnerships and personal contacts to find employment opportunities;
- conducting training, retraining, and new skills development;
- building a supportive environment and communities for veterans and their families.

In addition, the study's findings highlight the need for institutional strengthening of the civil society sector through:

- treating veteran employment as a distinct analytical and advocacy area that combines data on barriers with CSO institutional capacity (a data-to-policy approach);
 - developing an "CSO as labor market intermediary" model, in which organizations act as a connecting link between veterans, employers, and government institutions, rather than only providers of individual services;
 - strengthening CSO capacity in critical gap areas: basic HR and recruitment skills, career guidance and skills assessment, communication and negotiation with employers, and understanding of labor market logic and business needs;
 - institutionalizing work with employers as a separate area of activity, including overcoming discrimination and building practices for adapting veterans in the workplace;
 - introducing training and mentoring programs to convert CSOs' practical experience into an evidence base for policy (collecting, systematizing, and analyzing data on employment barriers);
- supporting integrated programs that combine psychological assistance, motivation building, and employment skills development as a holistic process of veterans' economic integration.