

GBA PLUS

- The Government of Canada places the highest priority on ensuring Veterans and their families have the services they need.
- Since 2016 there have been mandatory requirements for GBA Plus in Budget proposals, Memoranda to Cabinet, Treasury Board submissions, and regulatory packages. Every time a new program, policy, service, or initiative is developed, a Gender-based Analysis Plus lens is applied to ensure that our benefits and services meet the diverse needs of all Veterans and their families.
- At Veterans Affairs Canada, GBA Plus also includes considering additional intersecting factors such as service branch, rank at release, length of service, deployments, Regular Force or Reserve Force, and time since release, as we know these factors play a key role in Veterans' lived experience and its impacts.
- VAC's Supplementary Information Tables provides highlights of our GBA Plus capacity and GBA Plus results (gender and diversity) impacts by VAC programs and is published annually on the VAC website www.veterans.gc.ca.

WHEN PRESSED:

Q1 – What is Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) doing to assist staff in the implementation and mainstreaming of a GBA Plus lens to the work of the Department?

VAC is continuing to implement the VAC GBA Plus Strategy with a focus on changing the culture and raising awareness to integrate GBA Plus into the design from the outset of all new initiatives. The department created its own GBA Plus policy in 2023 to reinforce the shared commitment across all functional areas from research, to policy, to service delivery, to audit and evaluation. This work includes supporting GBA Plus training for all staff at all levels and refreshing the departmental GBA Plus Network.

Q2 – How is VAC ensuring all staff have access to continuous GBA Plus training materials and resources?

VAC has a GBA Plus page on the VAC internal website, VAC@work, that supports staff by providing a one-stop-shop approach to accessing GBA Plus training materials including the mandatory *Introduction to GBA Plus* course, resources, best practices, a GBA Plus Compendium, a VAC specific GBA Plus policy and a GBA Plus Step-by-Step Guide.

Q3 – How is VAC working interdepartmentally with other government departments to enhance GBA Plus?

VAC is represented on an Interdepartmental GBA Plus Committee led by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada which allows VAC to connect with other departments and learn about best practices happening across the federal Government. VAC also encourages staff to join the broader resource and knowledge base of an online GBA Plus Community of Practice for the Government of Canada which can be accessed through VAC@work, important GC Sites, and GC Connex.

Q4 – What work is being done to acquire the data needed to complete GBA Plus?

VAC is collaborating with Statistics Canada to use the information from the 2021 Census of Population to gain valuable information about Canada's Veteran population. Additionally, the 2022 annual VAC National Client Survey contained gender, Indigenous, and visible minority indicators, which allows VAC to disaggregate and analyze responses by subpopulation. Fieldwork for the 2024 VAC National Client Survey was completed in September 2024 and the results will be available for analysis and reporting by the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Q5 – What planned initiatives are currently underway to enhance GBA Plus capacity across VAC?

A departmental GBA Plus Policy has been developed that confirms VAC's commitment to mainstreaming GBA Plus. The policy details how the Department will continue to integrate GBA Plus principles into every aspect of its work. Additionally, VAC-specific GBA Plus job-aids (GBA Plus Step-by-Step Guide) has been developed and piloted that will aid staff in applying a GBA Plus lens to their work. Tailored GBA Plus training for VAC Policy Analysts took place in December 2023 and June 2024.

Q6 – What is VAC doing to make the application of GBA Plus more transparent?

Our Departmental Plan and Departmental Results Report provides Parliamentarians and Canadians with information on the Portfolio's plans and priorities based on our strategic outcomes (Departmental Plan tabled in Parliament in the spring of each year), and the Portfolio's performance over the last fiscal year based on commitments made in our previous Departmental Plan (Departmental Results Report tabled in Parliament in the fall of each year). The Supplementary Information Tables are part of the Departmental Plan and the Departmental Results Report and highlight our institutional GBA Plus capacity, as well as GBA Plus results (gender and diversity impacts) by program.

BACKGROUND — GBA PLUS

Veterans Affairs Canada has been completing GBA Plus on all Budget proposals, Memoranda to Cabinet, Treasury Board submissions, and regulatory packages since 2016. This mandatory requirement came into force following the report from the Auditor General of Canada on GBA (2015), and other reports by the Public Accounts Committee and Committee on Status of Women (2016).

Our commitment to supporting the diverse needs of our Veterans and their families can be found in a number of areas and is reflected in the latest [Departmental Plan](#), [Departmental Results Report](#) and [GBA Plus Supplementary Information Tables](#) published on the VAC website, www.veterans.gc.ca

1. The Office of Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans was established in July 2019 and formally announced in March 2020 to identify potential barriers and helps to address systemic issues specific to women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans and to advance gender equality, diversity and inclusion for all Veterans.
2. The Policy and Research Division, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Branch has the departmental functional responsibility for Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) and the shared responsibility to implement the departmental 2020 Gender-based Analysis Plus Strategy and the 2023 GBA Plus Policy. This is done by supporting the development and accessibility of tailored training and resources for VAC employees; encouraging the collection of disaggregated data for research, planning and evaluation purposes; leading the departmental GBA Plus Network; and building departmental capacity in applying an intersectional lens when designing programs, policies and services.
3. In April 2020, the Veterans Affairs Canada GBA Plus Strategy was released. This Strategy outlines six Pillars for further mainstreaming GBA Plus across the Department. VAC continues to advance this important work.
4. The Department is modernizing its Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines and the Table of Disabilities. The improvements to the Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines will allow decision makers to make more rapid decisions on the entitlement aspect of a Veteran's application. New Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines for certain conditions will streamline decision-making, reducing the number of handoffs. The modernization of the Table of Disabilities will ensure it is up to date and reflect the most current health evidence and best practices in assessment to support Veterans. This modernization will simplify sections within the Table of Disabilities making it more user friendly. A Gender Based Analysis Plus is being applied to the modernization of the Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines and Table of Disabilities chapters to ensure that these tools consider the diverse health related experience of Canadian Veterans.

5. In September 2021, VAC added a team dedicated to processing disability benefits claims from female applicants/Veterans. This team is working to ensure we can systemically address the current barriers and close the gap in processing times for female and male applicants.
6. The 2020 and 2022 biannual VAC National Client Survey contained gender, Indigenous, and visible minority indicators which allows VAC to disaggregate and analyze responses by subpopulation. The 2022 Survey also found that participants' overall satisfaction with life dropped noticeably since 2020. This is in line with findings from Statistics Canada on overall health impacts during the same timeframe. Furthermore, Indigenous and visible minority respondents are generally less satisfied and less well-off compared to their counterparts. Fieldwork for the 2024 VAC National Client Survey was completed in September 2024 and the results will be available for analysis and reporting by the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The final report will be published to Library Archives Canada by March 31, 2025.
7. The Canadian 2021 Census of Population contained a Veteran Identifier that will continue to enable the Department to gain valuable information about Canada's Veteran population. According to the 2021 Census, nearly one in six Veterans are women. Women Veterans represent the fastest growing segment of Veterans in Canada. VAC is in the process of an initiative that will link VAC program data to Census and other sources of data at Statistics Canada in order to fill in our administrative data gaps. With these linkages we will have a better understanding of who is, and who is not, using VAC services and benefits. Taking a phased approach, we will begin by conducting a disaggregated analysis of all Veterans who are/were in receipt of a VAC benefits and/or services over a five-year period. We will compare these results with the overall Veteran population to analyse for trends and gaps. In later phases we will look at analysis of specific programs linked to Statistics Canada Data.
8. The *Veterans' Well-being Community Health Needs Assessment* combined evidence from existing Veteran reports with new data collected through Veteran and stakeholder engagement, and Veteran interviews and focus groups with equity-deserving groups of Veterans including Women Veterans; 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans; Indigenous Veterans; Black and racialized Veterans.
9. VAC is ensuring that research funded by the Department conforms to principles of Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER). These guidelines will inform how we design, conduct, and report findings to ensure equitable representation of women Veterans and underrepresented groups in our research initiatives.
10. Through the Veteran and Family Well-being Fund, we support innovative projects and research including those that respond to the needs of diverse groups of Veterans including women, 2SLGBTQI+, homeless, and Indigenous Veterans. Research projects funded through the Veteran and Family Well-being Fund are

required to adhere to SAGER principles, and funding decisions take into consideration the impacts of projects across sub-groups of the Veteran population.

11. The Modernization of Sex and Gender Information Practices at Veterans Affairs Canada, in compliance with the government-wide Treasury Board Secretariat policy direction, complements GBA Plus by outlining best practices for collecting, using and displaying information related to sex and gender. We continue to explore and develop ways to recognize gender diverse Veterans who wish to have their identity factors changed in our systems and acknowledged by our employees.
12. The Department remains committed to ensuring that our policies are informed and developed through an intersectional lens including the application of frameworks such as GBA Plus in decision-making. The Department will continue the review of program policies (GBA Plus Strategic and Program Policy Review initiative). This initiative is on an ongoing cycle and will continue in fiscal year 2025-2026.