



# Army Pulse Survey

*Spotlight on Barriers To Service*

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# Army Pulse Survey Summary



## OVERVIEW OF THE ARMY PULSE SURVEY

The Army Enterprise Marketing Office (AEMO) conducts regular research on the opinions of potential recruits between the ages of 16 and 28. The Army Pulse Survey (APS), with approximately 600 respondents each month, is conducted online by a private partner firm on behalf of AEMO. The survey provides a snapshot of important factors affecting people's likelihood to join the Army. Such factors include current events, perceptions of the Army, the economy, and civic engagement. The Army uses this information to understand potential obstacles to recruiting and to develop marketing programs to address these challenges.

## DEVELOPING THE LIST OF POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SERVICE

The list of 16 barriers to service in the Army Pulse Survey (APS) drew from existing military recruiting research, particularly from Joint Military Advertising; Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies (JAMRS), the official Department of Defense program for military advertising market research; AEMO research. The three top barriers identified by JAMRS – possibility of physical injury/death, possibility of emotional/psychological harm, and leaving friends or family - were excluded from the final list to allow for greater differentiation amongst other barriers, many of which Army marketing may have greater influence.

## EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

Maximum Difference Scaling (max-diff) is a research method used in the Army Pulse Survey (APS) to measure how strongly people feel about different barriers to joining the Army, relative to one another. Quite different from surveys that simply ask, "how important are each of the following barriers," which can often result in them all being equally important, this methodology forces participants to make choices among different barriers. Survey participants were presented four options at a time, from a total of 16 possible barriers. Of these four options, they were asked to choose the largest barrier to joining and the smallest barrier to joining. They were asked this same question 20 times with different barrier combinations each time. The result is a set of scores (preference and index) that show the relative order and importance of each of the 16 barriers tested.

The preference share indicates the relative importance of a barrier compared to the others. A higher percentage shows that it is a more significant barrier. If all barriers were the same, they would each have an equal preference share.

The index provides a way to understand how much each barrier affects potential recruits. It is determined by comparing the preference share of each barrier. The index is calculated using unrounded numbers, and the top barrier's index is determined using its preference share.



# Barriers to Service



## Survey Question Wording:

*“Now we would like you to imagine that you were thinking of joining the Army. On the following screens you’ll see different reasons why people might not want to serve in the Army. On each screen, imagine you were thinking of joining the Army and choose the one that would be the biggest barrier to you joining and the one that would be the smallest barrier. As you go through these screens, you will see that the reasons for not serving will be repeated, but in different combinations. This is to make sure that we truly understand your thoughts about the different reasons why people may choose not to serve in the Army.”*

| OVERALL BARRIERS TO ENTRY  |                  |                 |
|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Rankings   | Preference Share | Index (100 Avg) |
| 1. I’d be putting the rest of my life on hold.   | 21%              | 332             |
| 2. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the Army.  | 13%              | 215             |
| 3. I don’t trust Army leadership based on the way they’ve handled recent events or missions.   | 10%              | 152             |
| 4. Living conditions, such as living on a base, would be difficult.  | 7%               | 120             |
| 5. I’d be assigned a job that doesn’t tap into my interests, passions, or skills.  | 7%               | 105             |
| 6. They require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and I don’t want to do that.  | 6%               | 103             |
| 7. I’d have little control over where I’d be assigned to work.   | 6%               | 91              |
| 8. I might be stuck reporting to someone who is not competent or supportive.   | 5%               | 82              |
| 9. The Army is placing too much emphasis on “wokeness”—in other words, diversity/equity training, marginalizing those with conservative views, etc.  | 5%               | 74              |
| 10. The people in the Army are not like me—I’d have trouble relating to them or fitting in.  | 5%               | 73              |
| 11. The Army doesn’t pay as well as other jobs I can get—even considering signing bonuses, free health care, etc., the overall compensation is less. | 4%               | 62              |
| 12. Most of the people in the Army are of different races, ethnicities, or gender than me—I’d be in the minority.                                    | 3%               | 47              |
| 13. The skills I’d learn wouldn’t help me later in my career of interest when I leave the Army.  | 3%               | 46              |
| 14. I wouldn’t have much job security.   | 2%               | 36              |
| 15. It would take too much time to get promoted.   | 2%               | 31              |
| 16. The job I’d have wouldn’t be creative or challenging enough for me.  | 2%               | 31              |



# Barriers identified by youth were largely similar across regions



| NORTHEAST (n = 284)   |             |                 |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Top 10 Barriers   | Pref. Share | Index (100 Avg) |
| 1. I'd be putting the rest of my life on hold.  | 21%         | 330             |
| 2. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the Army.   | 14%         | 218             |
| 3. I don't trust military leadership based on the way they've handled recent events or missions.  | 10%         | 161             |
| 4. Living conditions, such as living on a base, would be difficult.   | 7%          | 115             |
| 5. I'd be assigned a job that doesn't tap into my interests, passions, or skills.   | 6%          | 97              |
| 6. They require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and I don't want to do that.   | 6%          | 93              |
| 7. I'd have little control over where I'd be assigned to work.  | 6%          | 89              |
| 8. I might be stuck reporting to someone who is not competent or supportive.  | 5%          | 78              |
| 9. The military is placing too much emphasis on "wokeness"—in other words, diversity/equity training, marginalizing those with conservative views, etc. | 5%          | 77              |
| 10. The people in the Army are not like me—I'd have trouble relating to them or fitting in.   | 5%          | 73              |

| SOUTH (n = 747)   |             |                 |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Top 10 Barriers   | Pref. Share | Index (100 Avg) |
| 1. I'd be putting the rest of my life on hold.  | 19%         | 312             |
| 2. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the Army.   | 13%         | 213             |
| 3. I don't trust military leadership based on the way they've handled recent events or missions.  | 9%          | 140             |
| 4. They require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and I don't want to do that.   | 8%          | 124             |
| 5. I'd be assigned a job that doesn't tap into my interests, passions, or skills.   | 7%          | 115             |
| 6. Living conditions, such as living on a base, would be difficult.   | 7%          | 110             |
| 7. I'd have little control over where I'd be assigned to work.  | 6%          | 92              |
| 8. I might be stuck reporting to someone who is not competent or supportive.  | 5%          | 83              |
| 9. The military is placing too much emphasis on "wokeness"—in other words, diversity/equity training, marginalizing those with conservative views, etc. | 5%          | 78              |
| 10. The people in the Army are not like me—I'd have trouble relating to them or fitting in.   | 5%          | 73              |

| MIDWEST (n = 321)   |             |                 |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Top 10 Barriers   | Pref. Share | Index (100 Avg) |
| 1. I'd be putting the rest of my life on hold.  | 24%         | 392             |
| 2. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the Army.   | 11%         | 183             |
| 3. Living conditions, such as living on a base, would be difficult.   | 9%          | 139             |
| 4. I don't trust military leadership based on the way they've handled recent events or missions.  | 8%          | 126             |
| 5. I'd have little control over where I'd be assigned to work.  | 6%          | 99              |
| 6. They require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and I don't want to do that.   | 6%          | 94              |
| 7. I'd be assigned a job that doesn't tap into my interests, passions, or the skills I want to pursue.  | 6%          | 94              |
| 8. I might be stuck reporting to someone who is not competent or supportive.  | 5%          | 81              |
| 9. The military is placing too much emphasis on "wokeness"—in other words, diversity/equity training, marginalizing those with conservative views, etc. | 5%          | 76              |
| 10. The people in the Army are not like me—I'd have trouble relating to them or fitting in.   | 5%          | 73              |



# Similarly, there are no differences in the order of barriers among non-Hispanic White youth compared to all other youth

| NON-HISPANIC WHITE YOUTH (n = 840)  |             |                 |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Top 10 Barriers   | Pref. Share | Index (100 Avg) |
| 1. I'd be putting the rest of my life on hold.  | 21%         | 340             |
| 2. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the Army.   | 12%         | 190             |
| 3. I don't trust military leadership based on the way they've handled recent events or missions.  | 10%         | 159             |
| 4. Living conditions, such as living on a base, would be difficult.   | 8%          | 130             |
| 5. I'd be assigned a job that doesn't tap into my interests, passions, or skills.   | 7%          | 110             |
| 6. They require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and I don't want to do that.   | 7%          | 109             |
| 7. I'd have little control over where I'd be assigned to work.  | 6%          | 95              |
| 8. I might be stuck reporting to someone who is not competent or supportive.  | 5%          | 85              |
| 9. The military is placing too much emphasis on "wokeness"—in other words, diversity/equity training, marginalizing those with conservative views, etc. | 5%          | 78              |
| 10. The people in the Army are not like me—I'd have trouble relating to them or fitting in.   | 5%          | 76              |

| NON-WHITE YOUTH (n = 847)   |             |                 |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Top 10 Barriers   | Pref. Share | Index (100 Avg) |
| 1. I'd be putting the rest of my life on hold.  | 20%         | 323             |
| 2. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the Army.   | 15%         | 242             |
| 3. I don't trust military leadership based on the way they've handled recent events or missions.  | 9%          | 144             |
| 4. Living conditions, such as living on a base, would be difficult.   | 7%          | 108             |
| 5. I'd be assigned a job that doesn't tap into my interests, passions, or the skills I want to pursue.  | 6%          | 99              |
| 6. They require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and I don't want to do that.   | 6%          | 96              |
| 7. I'd have little control over where I'd be assigned to work.  | 5%          | 85              |
| 8. I might be stuck reporting to someone who is not competent or supportive.  | 5%          | 80              |
| 9. The military is placing too much emphasis on "wokeness"—in other words, diversity/equity training, marginalizing those with conservative views, etc. | 4%          | 69              |
| 10. The people in the Army are not like me—I'd have trouble relating to them or fitting in.   | 4%          | 69              |



# Male and female youth identify with similar barriers, although females perceive discrimination as a greater barrier compared to male youth

| MALE YOUTH (n = 787)  |             |                 |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Top 10 Barriers   | Pref. Share | Index (100 Avg) |
| 1. I'd be putting the rest of my life on hold.  | 22%         | 349             |
| 2. I don't trust military leadership based on the way they've handled recent events or missions.  | 9%          | 150             |
| 3. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the Army.   | 7%          | 119             |
| 4. Living conditions, such as living on a base, would be difficult.   | 7%          | 118             |
| 5. I'd be assigned a job that doesn't tap into my interests, passions, or the skills I want to pursue.  | 7%          | 113             |
| 6. They require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and I don't want to do that.   | 7%          | 111             |
| 7. I might be stuck reporting to someone who is not competent or supportive.  | 6%          | 96              |
| 8. I'd have little control over where I'd be assigned to work.  | 6%          | 95              |
| 9. The military is placing too much emphasis on "wokeness"—in other words, diversity/equity training, marginalizing those with conservative views, etc. | 5%          | 85              |
| 10. The people in the Army are not like me—I'd have trouble relating to them or fitting in.   | 5%          | 80              |

| FEMALE YOUTH (n = 900)   |             |                 |
|--|-------------|-----------------|
| Top 10 Barriers  | Pref. Share | Index (100 Avg) |
| 1. I'd be putting the rest of my life on hold.   | 20%         | 316             |
| 2. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the Army.  | 19%         | 307             |
| 3. I don't trust military leadership based on the way they've handled recent events or missions.   | 10%         | 154             |
| 4. Living conditions, such as living on a base, would be difficult.  | 8%          | 121             |
| 5. I'd be assigned a job that doesn't tap into my interests, passions, or the skills I want to pursue.   | 6%          | 97              |
| 6. They require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and I don't want to do that.  | 6%          | 94              |
| 7. I'd have little control over where I'd be assigned to work.   | 5%          | 87              |
| 8. I might be stuck reporting to someone who is not competent or supportive.   | 4%          | 69              |
| 9. The people in the Army are not like me—I'd have trouble relating to them or fitting in.   | 4%          | 66              |
| 10. The military is placing too much emphasis on "wokeness"—in other words, diversity/equity training, marginalizing those with conservative views, etc. | 4%          | 63              |