

# THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF VETERANS

December 2015

**T**oday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported a 5.0 percent national unemployment rate for all Americans (16 and over) for December 2015. This rate has remained unchanged from the rate reported in November 2015. Total veteran unemployment increased to 4.8 percent in the same period. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment increased to 5.7 percent in December 2015. This trend varies, however, by different veteran demographic factors.

With respect to age, the youngest cohort of post 9/11 veterans (ages 20-24) decreased to a 6.1 percent unemployment rate in December 2015. During this period, younger veterans were unemployed at a lower rate than their non-veteran peers of the same age group. Of the total 173,000 unemployed post-9/11 veterans ages 20 and over, 32 percent have been unemployed for less than five weeks and 68 percent have been unemployed for five weeks or more.

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced a decrease in unemployment, from 7.2 percent in November 2015 to 4.6 percent in December 2015. By comparison, the unemployment rate for total female veterans (all cohorts) decreased to 2.9 percent. These figures are in between the 4.1 percent unemployment rate reported for their non-veteran female counterparts. Total male veteran unemployment (5.0 percent) is slightly higher than the national veteran rate. The post-9/11 male veteran unemployment increased to 5.9 percent (a 2.3 percent increase from November 2015).

African-American post-9/11 veterans saw a monthly increase in unemployment to 6.5 percent. This rate is lower than the 7.6 percent unemployment rate of their non-veteran African American counterparts. Hispanic post-9/11 veterans experienced a monthly decrease in unemployment, decreasing to 4.8 percent. Readers should be cautioned, however, that data on specific veteran subgroups can vary widely from month to month.

## Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America based on BLS data released on January 8, 2016. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending December 2015.

**TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES**

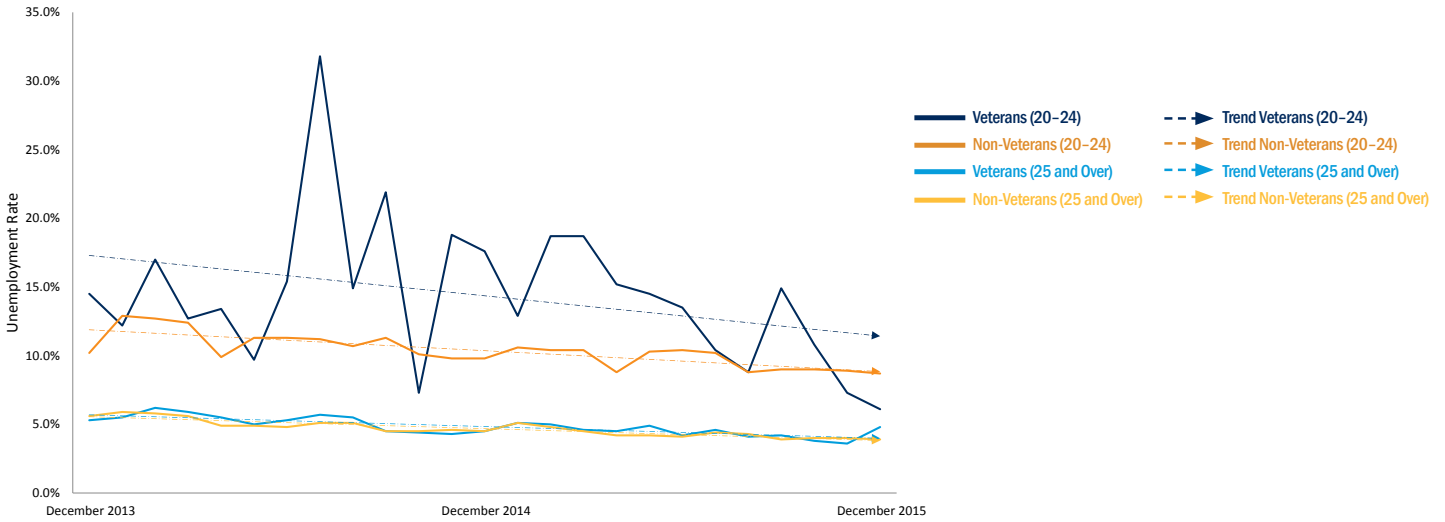
	Rate of Unemployed December 2015	% Change from November to December	Number of Unemployed December 2015	% Change from November to December
All Americans (16 and over)	5.0	0.0	7,904,000	-20,000
All Americans (18 and over) <sup>1</sup>	4.7	0.0	7,262,000	-35,000
All Veterans	4.8	+1.2	514,000	+123,000
Gulf War Era II (Post-9/11) Veterans	5.7	+1.5	173,000	+42,000
Gulf War Era I Veterans	5.0	+1.9	135,000	+53,000
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans	3.4	0.0	76,000	0
All Nonveterans	4.7	-0.1	6,748,000	-158,000

**TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR VETERANS AND NONVETERANS**

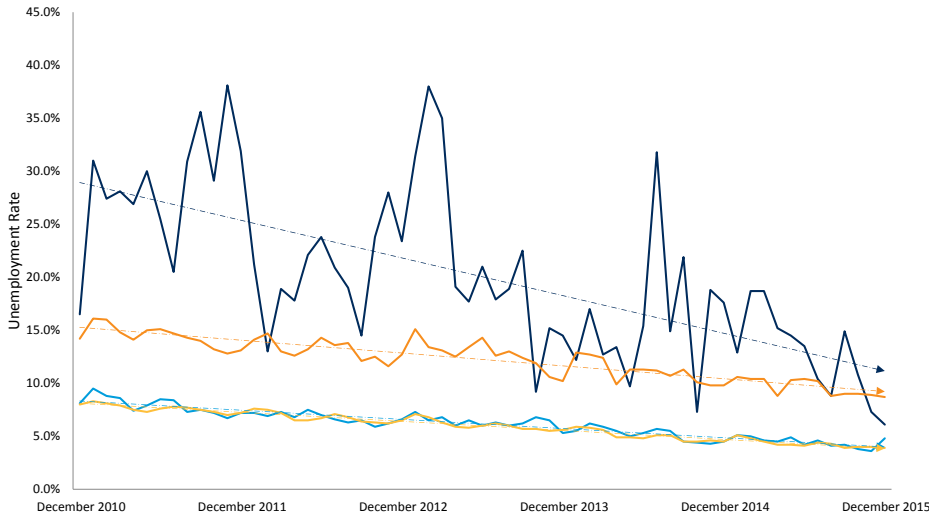
Category	VETERANS		GULF WAR ERA II		NONVETERANS	
	Rate December 2015	% Change (+/-)	Rate December 2015	% Change (+/-)	Rate December 2015	% Change (+/-)
20-24	6.1	-1.2	6.1	-1.2	8.7	-0.2
25-29	6.5	+1.8	6.5	+1.8	5.4	-0.6
30-34	8.3	+2.4	7.0	+1.9	4.7	+0.1
35-39	6.3	+3.2	4.9	+1.6	3.9	-0.1
40-44	5.7	+3.0	8.7	+3.0	3.9	+0.3
45-49	4.0	+1.2	4.8	+1.7	3.7	+0.3
50-54	3.9	+1.0	0.2	-3.0	3.5	+0.5
55-59	3.7	+0.5	0.3	-	3.0	-0.4
60-64	5.1	+0.3	12.4	-	2.7	-1.1
65 years and older	3.1	-0.4	-	-	3.4	-0.3
Male	5.0	+1.5	5.9	+2.3	4.7	+0.1
Female	2.9	-1.6	4.6	-2.6	4.1	-0.3
White	4.3	+1.2	5.9	+2.0	3.9	+0.1
Hispanic or Latino	5.5	+1.0	4.8	-0.2	5.8	-0.2
African-American	6.9	+1.4	6.5	+1.0	7.6	-1.3
Asian	5.5	+3.8	-	-	3.8	+0.1

<sup>1</sup> **NOTE:** Although the BLS reports the national average for those 16 and over, in Table 1 we also include the average for those 18 and over to make a more accurate comparison to the total veteran population. Table 2 is for the population of 20 and over. Gulf War Era II (September 2001-present), Gulf War Era I (August 1990-August 2001), Vietnam Era (August 1964-April 1975), Korean War (July 1950-January 1955), World War II (December 1941-December 1946), and other service periods (all other time periods). Veterans who served in more than one wartime period are classified only in the most recent one. Veterans who served during one of the selected wartime periods and another peacetime period are classified only in the wartime period. The minority-by-gender unemployment rates are not displayed due to small sample size and are more appropriately displayed as annual averages.

**FIGURE 1: 2-YEAR OUTLOOK**

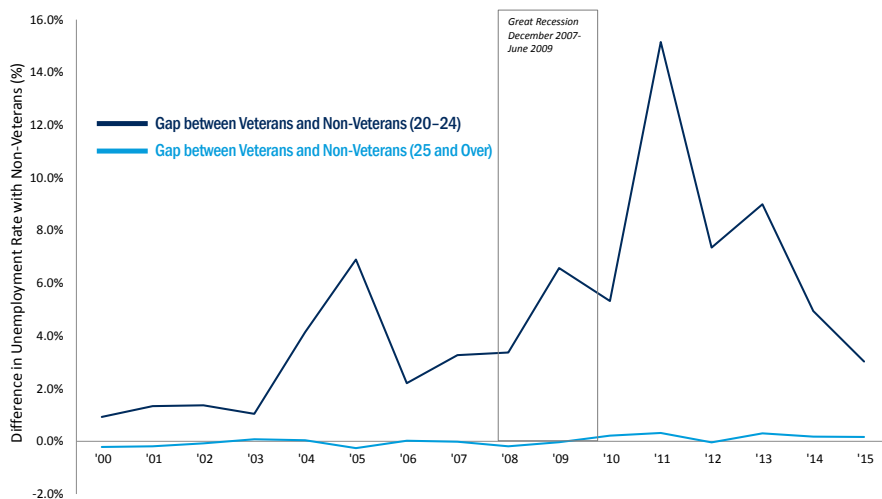


**FIGURE 2: 5-YEAR OUTLOOK**



**FIGURES 1 and 2** depict the monthly unemployment rates for veterans (ages 20-24 and 25 and older) and non-veterans. Overall, the unemployment rates for all veterans show a gradual improvement (decrease) since 2010, though they remain higher than their non-veteran counterparts. Veterans aged 24 or younger have experienced the highest unemployment, however, this difference has decreased steadily over five years and shows recent signs of convergence with the unemployment rate of veterans 25 years and older (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 3: DIFFERENCES (GAPS) BETWEEN THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR VETERANS AND NON-VETERANS**



**FIGURE 3** depicts the differences in annual rates of unemployment between veterans (ages 20-24 and 25 and older) and non-veterans. The difference—or gap—has varied year-to-year and must be considered with caution in the context of broader economic trends, such as the recession that lasted from 2007 to 2009. Starting in 2006, the unemployment gap between the youngest veterans and non-veterans increased sharply to a peak gap of 15.2% in 2011. This gap has declined steadily since then, nearing pre-2004 levels.