

The Employment Situation of Veterans

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that for December 2013, the national unemployment rate representative of all Americans (16 and over) improved, decreasing to 6.7% (compared to 7.0% in November 2013). The employment situation representative of all veterans has improved slightly, decreasing from 6.7% in November 2013 to 5.5% in December 2013. For Gulf War era II veterans (post-9/11 generation), the unemployment rate has improved slightly, decreasing from 9.9% in November 2013 to 7.3% in December 2013. The employment situation of the youngest post-9/11 veterans (ages 20-24) improved slightly by 0.7%, decreasing from 15.2% in November 2013 to 14.5% in December 2013. Importantly, veterans ages 20-24 are experiencing unemployment at a rate that is currently 4.3% higher than that of their non-veteran peers of the same age. In terms of unemployment duration, approximately 68.4% of post-9/11 veterans ages 20-24 have been unemployed for more than five weeks. Of the 174,000 unemployed post-9/11 veterans ages 20 and over, 14% have been unemployed for less than 5 weeks, 33% for between 5 and 14 weeks and 53% for 15 weeks or more.

The unemployment rate of female post-9/11 veterans has decreased from 10.0% in November 2013 to 2.3% in December 2013. For comparison, female non-veterans are currently unemployed at a rate of 5.7%. The unemployment rate of male post-9/11 veterans improved, decreasing from 9.8% in November 2013 to 8.4% in December 2013. For comparison, male non-veterans are currently unemployed at a rate of 6.5%. The 5.1% unemployment rate experienced by African-American post-9/11 veterans is lower than that of their non-veteran counterparts, at 11.2%. Hispanic post-9/11 veterans have an unemployment rate of 5.3%, lower than that of their non-veteran counterparts at 7.9%.

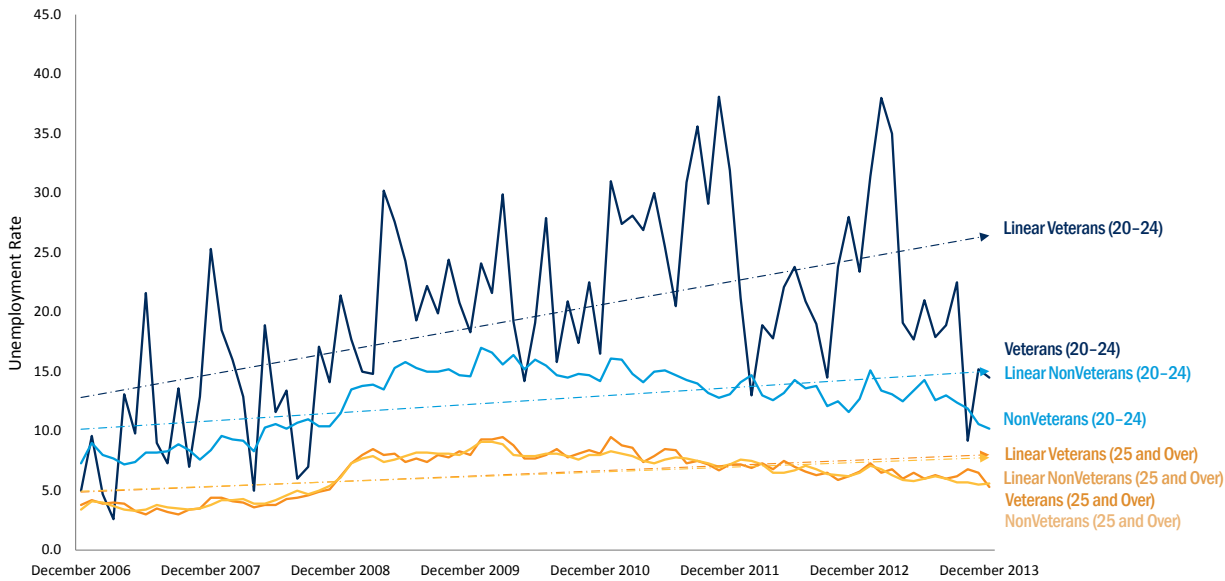
Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America, based on BLS data released on January 10, 2014. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending December 2013.

NOTE: Table 1 is for the population of 18 and over and will not be the same as the overall BLS reported numbers which report data for those ages 16 and over. 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.

TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	Rate of Unemployed December 2013	% Change from November to December 2013	Number of Unemployed December 2013	% Change from November to December 2013
All Americans	6.3	-0.1	9,601,000	-245,000
All Veterans	5.5	-1.2	588,000	-136,000
Gulf War Era II (Post-9/11) Veterans	7.3	-2.6	178,000	-63,000
Gulf War Era I Veterans	4.8	-1.8	127,000	-48,000
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans	5.6	+0.3	149,000	+5,000
All Nonveterans	6.4	0.0	9,012,000	-110,000

TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	GULF WAR ERA II (POST-9/11) VETERANS				NONVETERANS			
	Category	Rate December 2013	% Change (+/-)	Number December 2013	# Change (+/-)	Rate December 2013	% Change (+/-)	Number December 2013
20-24	14.5	-0.7	19,000	-2,000	10.2	-0.4	1,553,000	-71,000
25-29	10.4	-4.2	64,000	-29,000	7.3	-0.1	1,178,000	-20,000
30-34	5.7	-3.3	38,000	-22,000	6.3	0.0	1,021,000	-4,000
35-39	6.2	+1.4	19,000	+5,000	5.8	0.0	872,000	-6,000
40-44	3.5	-0.8	8,000	-1,000	5.1	+0.1	781,000	+6,000
45-49	1.6	-3.6	3,000	-7,000	5.0	-0.4	772,000	-61,000
50-54	9.8	-2.1	17,000	-4,000	5.1	+0.1	812,000	+9,000
55-59	5.9	-5.1	6,000	-5,000	4.9	+0.3	666,000	+33,000
60-64	-	-	-	-	5.1	+0.4	459,000	+47,000
65 years and older	-	-	-	-	5.1	+0.5	321,000	+29,000
Male	8.4	-1.4	163,000	-28,000	6.5	+0.2	4,516,000	+67,000
Female	2.3	-7.7	11,000	-35,000	5.7	-0.2	3,919,000	-107,000
White	7.6	-2.6	143,000	-44,000	5.4	+0.1	5,872,000	+83,000
Hispanic or Latino	5.3	-9.5	20,000	-36,000	7.9	0.0	1,793,000	-33,000
African-American	5.1	-2.6	18,000	-11,000	11.2	0.0	1,818,000	-17,000



The gap in the rate of unemployment experienced by veterans and non-veterans in the 20-24 age group has varied month-to-month and must be considered with caution in the context of longitudinal trends. (Gap = difference in monthly rate of unemployment between veterans and non-veterans). Since November 2006, the trending unemployment gap between veterans and non-veterans in the 20-24 age group has increased; that is, the unemployment situation of veterans in the 20-24 age group has grown, on average, increasingly worse relative to their non-veteran peers (of equivalent age): 16.9% worse in December 2007, 3.7% worse in December 2009, 18.8% worse in December 2011, and 4.3% worse in December 2013. Although there have been recent improvements, one must examine this result in the context of the demonstrated volatility in unemployment rates for this group. The gap remains significantly higher as compared to pre-2004 levels, suggesting that veterans in this age demographic continue to experience employment challenges that are meaningfully different relative to their non-veteran, age group peers.

Related Policy, Legislation and Initiatives

The following policies, programs and initiatives have been proposed or enacted within the past 30 days. This list is not all-inclusive, but instead is designed to offer a “snapshot” of recently announced government, industry and community-based efforts positioned to positively impact the employment situation of veterans in America.

- New Career Workshop open to Military:** In December 2013, three states participated in a comprehensive three-day workshop called “Offbase Transition Training.” Sponsored by the National Guard, Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Services, WorkForce West Virginia, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves and the WV Military Connection, this three-day forum included topics such as finding employment, translating military skills to work skills, answering tough interview questions, navigating the Internet and using social media in job searches. This workshop was open to current and former military members and their spouses. Professionally-trained facilitators facilitated the topics. In addition to interviewing techniques, attendees learned about labor market conditions, how to prepare resumes and cover letters. Participants were provided with an evaluation of their marketability relative to the job market and received information about veterans’ benefits. More workshops are proposed to be funded in January 2014. For more information, visit <http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/x1926358089/New-career-workshop-open-to-military>.
- How Entrepreneurs Can Prioritize Veteran Recruitment:** Timothy Green the Director of Strategic Outreach for the US Department of Labor’s VETS stated that it isn’t the veteran’s lack of skills that is the challenge of securing employment but matching veterans to the jobs themselves. Employers present straightforward questions on applications that might not adequately capture the translation of the military experience to civilian positions. The challenge is to get CEOs, HR staff and entrepreneurs who are in positions to hire veterans to speak the same language. Organizations are using new methods like digital interviewing, career discovery and strengths identification to help veterans better understand their experience in order to match them with the right jobs. Employers can take advantage of hiring tax credits. The ultimate business case for veteran recruitment in addition to talent availability, ease of access to talent, and technology solutions is to increase interaction. “Organizations of all shapes and sizes need to step up and tackle the problem of veteran recruitment. The time is now for making veteran recruitment a priority and finding new ways to enable these brave men and women to tell their story,

match their skills and translate their school of experience into key roles on your team,” says Mark Newman founder and CEO of HireVue, a digital interviewing and interaction platform. For more information, visit <http://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2013/12/17/how-entrepreneurs-can-prioritize-veteran-recruitment/>.

- Sacramento State Offers Support to Veterans:** According to the California Department of Veterans Affairs, 40,000 veterans a year are expected to return to California from military service. Those service members add to the numbers that already rank California as the most populous state in the nation for returning veterans. Many of these veterans are beginning their post-military lives at California State University, Sacramento, and at the campus’s Veterans Success Center, a resource and drop-in center for the university’s student-veteran population. Many of the staff, who are fresh from military service themselves, guide the college’s student-veterans through the maze of admissions, advising on benefits such as the GI Bill and other programs. Beth Erickson, a professor and part of the administration at CSUS, leads the Veterans Leadership Initiative states: “The class, held in partnership with the Veterans Success Center, mixes classroom instruction, team building and practical job-seeking skills to help student-veterans translate their military experience and leadership skills. When you’re in the military you’re told what to do. Then you go to college and they say ‘Take what you want.’ Veterans have to redefine their own identity.” The center is successful because of the students themselves: veterans helping veterans. For more information, visit <http://www.sacbee.com/2013/12/15/6003483/job-front-sacramento-state-center.html>.

NOTE: The above is provided for information only. The listing of a given policy initiative or program does not imply an endorsement from the IVMF or Syracuse University.