

February 2012

The Employment Situation of Veterans

Today the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported a decline of overall unemployment rate at 8.3%. However if you look at the population 18 and over, there was a slight increase in the month-to-month unemployment rate of job seekers in the U.S. For the period ending January 2012, 8.6% of all those looking for work were unemployed, as compared to 8.1% of job seekers in December 2011 (not seasonally adjusted percentages, population 18 and over). As to the employment situation of veterans, 7.5% of the nation's veterans were unemployed in January. This represents a slight decrease from December 2011 (7.7%). The unemployment situation of the post-9/11 generation of veterans has improved as compared to December. 9.1% of those veterans who have served since 2001 were unemployed in January 2012, down from 13.10% in December. The youngest post-9/11 veterans continue to experience the highest unemployment; those 18-24 years of age are unemployed at 20.2% (compared to 15.8% for non-veterans), down from 31.0% in December 2011. Post-9/11 veterans ages 25-34 are unemployed at a rate of 10.5%, down from 13.3% in December. The overall unemployment rate for female post-9/11 veterans (17.3%) is higher compared to female non veterans (8.10%). The unemployment rate for male post-9/11 veterans has improved since December 2011, the rate has lowered (7.7%) compared to male non veterans (9.30%)

Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data released on February 3, 2012. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending January 2012.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	JANUARY 2012	DECEMBER 2011	CHANGE (+/-)	ANNUAL AVERAGES 2011
All Veterans	7.50	7.70	-0.20	8.30
Post-9/11 Veterans	9.10	13.10	-4.00	12.10
Gulf War I Veterans	6.40	5.60	0.80	7.00
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans	7.20	6.40	0.80	7.60
All Americans	8.60	8.10	0.50	8.70
All Non-Veterans	8.70	8.10	0.60	8.70

NOTE: Population is 18 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 period are classified only in the wartime period. (1) Rates are not shown where base is less than 35,000.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR POST-9/11 VETERANS				
Category	January 2012	December 2011	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2011
18-24	20.20	31.00	-10.80	30.20
25-34	10.50	13.30	-2.80	13.00
35-44	3.20	4.40	-1.20	6.00
45-54	5.90	7.70	-1.80	4.10
55-64	4.90	18.70	-13.80	7.80
65 years and older	(1)	(1)	0.00	6.70
Male	7.70	11.90	-4.20	12.00
Female	17.30	21.60	-4.30	12.40
White	8.40	12.30	-3.90	11.40
Hispanic or Latino	10.60	11.90	-1.30	17.00
African American	10.60	17.80	-7.20	14.30

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR NON-VETERANS				
Category	January 2012	December 2011	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2011
18-24	15.80	14.40	1.40	16.10
25-34	9.60	9.10	0.50	9.30
35-44	7.60	6.90	0.70	7.30
45-54	6.90	6.50	0.40	7.00
55-64	6.40	5.70	0.70	6.50
65 years and older	6.00	6.50	0.00	6.40
Male	9.30	8.70	0.60	9.30
Female	8.10	7.60	0.50	8.20
White	7.90	7.10	0.80	7.70
Hispanic or Latino	11.40	10.80	0.60	11.20
African American	14.10	15.10	-1.00	15.80

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.

- **The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** launched a website, **VA for Vets** that provides a variety of tools to job-seeking veterans, with the goal to recruit more veteran applicants. Tools offered by the site include a military skills translator and access to career coaches that will provide support with interview preparation. By interlacing the tools, the VA creates a total support package to help prospective veteran hires navigate the bureaucracy that comes with applying and accepting a federal job. To learn more about the VA's initiative, go to: <http://www.vaforvets.va.gov>
- **The Department of Defense (DOD)** redesigned the online component of the **Transition Assistance Program (TAP)**, creating a **Virtually Enhanced Transition Assistance Program (VTAP)**. Launched in early 2011, VTAP first provided a limited release of an online DOD Career Decision Toolkit and TAP Virtual Learning Seminars, which offer virtual resources enabling users to tailor their transition experiences. Although the virtual learning opportunities are primary being marketed to Service members, spouses and family members are allowed to participate in the online sessions and utilize the site's resources. VTAP is currently in its Beta Release and is being provided for demonstration purposes only. DOD is also modernizing TurboTap.org and is working to engage service members through social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. To see a demonstration of VTAP, go to: <http://www.acceptance.virtualltap.org/home>.
- **The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA)** and the **Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)** have joined forces to develop the **Gold Card Initiative**. The program provides post-9/11 era veterans with intensive and follow-up services necessary to their success in today's job market. Eligible veterans can present their Gold Card at any One-Stop Career Center to obtain enhanced intensive services including up to six months of follow-up, job readiness assessment, referral to job banks, and much more. To learn more about the Gold Card program, go to: <http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html>
- On December 29, a **Department of the Army** execution order was signed, creating a new mandate that soldiers planning to leave the Army must begin the transition process at least one year before their separation. The order is part of recent Army efforts to expand its transition assistance. Other results of the efforts include a new toll-free call center for transition assistance, offering transition advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A new website or virtual ACAP Center will also be available soon to transitioning soldiers. To learn more about this new order, go to: <http://www.military.com/news/article/army-news/new-order-strengthens-armys-transition-assistance.html>
- **Comcast Corporation** launched "**Hire A Veteran On Demand**," a pilot program with the goal to ease the transition of returning soldiers by connecting them to jobs. The program posts video profiles of returning soldiers who are looking for work that will be available to prospective hiring managers and recruiters for 90 days after the initial posting date. To read more about this new program, go to: <http://www.boston.com/Boston/businessupdates/2012/01/comcast-launches-hire-veteran-service/48mThSLHizBk1ZGCqv48w0/index.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.

Outlook

Several factors affect the employment situation of veterans in the United States. The U.S. Government Accountability Office recently completed a study on homelessness among women veterans, finding that data on the characteristics of homeless women veterans is limited to those who have been in contact with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and that barriers exist when trying to access and utilize veteran housing. The limited VA data indicate that the number of homeless women veterans has more than doubled, from 1,380 in 2006 to 3,328 in 2010. These data cannot generalize the total population of homeless women veterans, but it does offer insight into some characteristics of the women. For instance, many of the women lived with their minor children and over one-third had disabilities.

Homelessness affects unemployment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, veterans served in homeless programs have higher unemployment rates (ranging between 20% and 25%) compared to veterans in general (8.1% in 2009). Economic instability disproportionately affects women veterans: incomes are lower and unemployment rates are higher than their male counterparts. Female veterans also face higher rates of unemployment than civilian women. The National Center on Family Homelessness is conducting a qualitative study on unemployment and underemployment among Chicagoland women veterans. The goals of the study are to compare male and female veteran unemployment and underemployment, understand the dynamics of homelessness among unemployed female veterans, and to explore effective service interventions for female veterans. The VA has committed to ending homelessness among all veterans by 2015 and funds several programs to house homeless veterans. Though these programs have expanded in recent years, it is unknown whether they are meeting the housing needs of all homeless women veterans. To reduce and eradicate homelessness amongst veterans, researchers suggest that the employers engage and support the VA and other veteran homeless preventive programs by hiring, training, and assisting homeless veterans find meaningful employment as a way out of poverty and homelessness.