

February 2014

# The Employment Situation of Veterans

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that for January 2014, the national unemployment rate representative of all Americans (16 and over) worsened slightly, increasing to 6.7% (compared to 6.6% in January 2014). The employment situation representative of all veterans has worsened slightly, increasing from 5.6% in January to 6.3% in February 2014. For Gulf War era II veterans (post-9/11 generation), the unemployment rate has worsened slightly, increasing from 7.9% in January to 9.2% in February 2014. The employment situation of the youngest post-9/11 veterans (ages 20-24) worsened by 4.8%, increasing from 12.2% in January to 17.0% in February 2014. 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. Of the 223,000 unemployed post-9/11 veterans ages 20 and over, 27% have been unemployed for less than 5 weeks, 27% between 5 and 14 weeks and 46% for 15 weeks or more. In terms of unemployment duration of unemployed post-9/11 veterans ages 20-24, approximately 66.7% have been unemployed for more than five weeks.

The unemployment rate of female post-9/11 veterans has increased from 6.8% in January to 9.9% in February 2014. For comparison, female non-veterans are currently unemployed at a rate of 5.9%. The unemployment rate of male post-9/11 veterans worsened, increasing from 8.2% in January to 9.0% in February 2014. For comparison, male non-veterans are currently unemployed at a rate of 7.2%. The 12.3% unemployment rate experienced by African-American post-9/11 veterans is higher than that of their non-veteran counterparts, at 11.7%. Hispanic post-9/11 veterans have an unemployment rate of 12.1%, higher than that of their non-veteran counterparts at 7.9%.

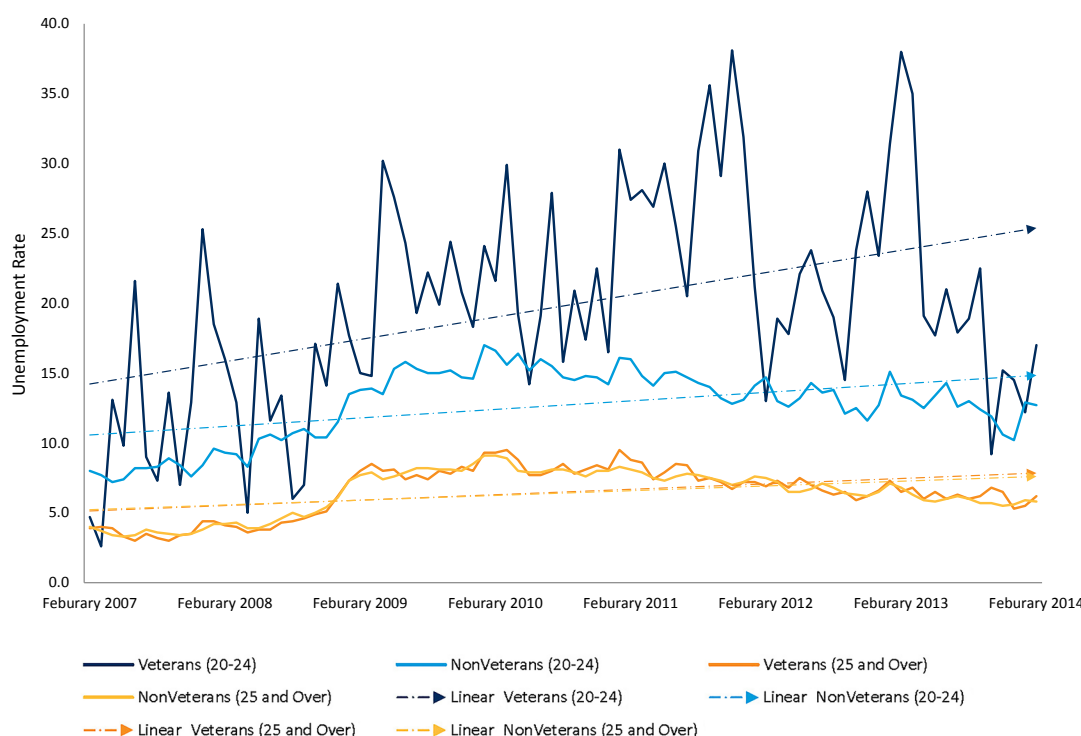
## Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America, based on BLS data released on March 7, 2014. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending February 2014.

TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	Rate of Unemployed February 2014	% Change from January to February	Number of Unemployed February 2014	% Change from January to February
All Americans	6.9	0.0	10,539,000	+61,000
All Veterans	6.3	+0.7	684,000	+85,000
Gulf War Era II (Post-9/11) Veterans	9.2	+1.3	223,000	+34,000
Gulf War Era I Veterans	4.6	-0.9	128,000	-27,000
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans	6.5	+2.1	184,000	+64,000
All Nonveterans	6.9	-0.1	9,854,000	-25,000

**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 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	GULF WAR ERA II (POST-9/11) VETERANS				NONVETERANS			
	Category	Rate February 2014	% Change (+/-)	Number February 2014	# Change (+/-)	Rate February 2014	% Change (+/-)	Number February 2014
20-24	17.0	+4.8	24,000	+8,000	12.7	-0.2	1,936,000	-34,000
25-29	18.8	+5.0	98,000	+26,000	7.8	+0.1	1,280,000	+11,000
30-34	7.1	+1.2	51,000	+11,000	7.0	+0.2	1,143,000	+43,000
35-39	5.7	-0.8	19,000	-2,000	5.9	-0.1	885,000	-12,000
40-44	5.6	+1.0	13,000	+2,000	5.1	-0.1	791,000	-11,000
45-49	-	-	-	-	5.6	+0.3	851,000	+38,000
50-54	6.7	-4.2	13,000	-9,000	5.4	-0.2	859,000	-32,000
55-59	2.8	-2.4	3,000	-3,000	4.7	-0.2	638,000	-22,000
60-64	15.3	-	-	-	5.1	-0.1	467,000	+7,000
65 years and older	-	-	-	-	4.4	-0.7	286,000	-43,000
Male	9.0	+0.8	183,000	+23,000	7.2	0.0	5,037,000	+8,000
Female	9.9	+3.1	40,000	+11,000	5.9	-0.2	4,099,000	-63,000
White	8.6	+0.5	162,000	+15,000	5.7	-0.1	6,331,000	-58,000
Hispanic or Latino	12.1	+3.8	44,000	+16,000	7.9	-0.7	1,813,000	-155,000
African-American	12.3	+3.8	44,000	+12,000	11.7	-0.4	1,944,000	-40,000



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 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): 6.7% worse in February 2008, 5.0% worse in February 2010, 1.7% better in February 2012, and 4.3% worse in February 2014. 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.

- U.S. Department of Labor Announces \$900,000 in Homeless Reintegration Veterans Homelessness Grants:** On February 4th 2014, the U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez announced the awarding of two grants for a total of \$900,000 that funds services provided by Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS). Grants of \$450,000 each were awarded to Advocates for Human Potential and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. The grants are being awarded through the department’s Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program that will develop and maintain the National Veterans Technical Assistance Center. The center provides technical assistance to HVRP grantees, potential applicants and the public; researches grantee best practices; conducts employment-related research on homeless veterans; facilitates grantee training sessions; and performs outreach to the employer community to increase job opportunities for homeless veterans. For more information on HVRP grants, contact Cassandra Mitchell at 202-693-4570. For more information, visit <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/vets/VETS20140151.htm>.
- House Passes GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act:** On February 4th, 2014, the House of Representatives passed a new bill that would improve benefits and services for veterans. Congressman Bill Flores (R-Texas) authored several bills that are included in what is called the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act. The goal of this new legislation is to provide service men and women with employment resources and career opportunities once they’ve completed their service. Flores stated that the new act will “ensure that veterans know exactly what benefits they’ve earned while serving in the military and how they can most effectively be used.” This act will expand educational opportunities for veterans who want to go to college out of state, allowing them to

pay in-state tuition rates. The new bill will also provide directors of veterans’ employment and training programs with certain performance requirements, and it will allow them to monitor state and local workforce agencies regarding those programs. For more information, visit <http://www.kxxv.com/story/24633781/house-passes-gi-bill-tuition-fairness-act>.

- Bush Hosts Summit on Helping Veterans Transition:** On February 19th 2014, the George W. Bush Institute in Dallas, Texas gathered over 350 service providers, government leaders, veterans and families of veterans to introduce the institute’s Military Service Initiative, including focused efforts on improving the post-service life course of America’s veterans and their families, specifically in the areas of employment, education, wellness, housing, and women veterans. One topic discussed was efforts that must be made to end the stigma attached to post-traumatic stress disorder. President Bush said some veterans are reluctant to seek help and employers often don’t realize that the condition can be treated: “As a result of public misunderstanding, employers sometimes cite it as a reason for not hiring vets.” Bush said his institute has been working with the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University on a study of the issues affecting veterans who have served since 9/11. Bush said full results of the study will be released this spring and that the information will help employers understand what veterans have to offer, noting that both veterans and employers have a hard time translating military experience. For more information, visit <http://www.bushcenter.org/>.

**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.