

October 2013

# The Employment Situation of Veterans

Today the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that for October 2013, the national unemployment rate representative of all Americans (16 and over) changed little, increasing slightly to 7.3% (compared to 7.2% in September 2013). The employment situation representative of all veterans has worsened, increasing from 6.5% in September 2013 to 6.9% in October 2013. For Gulf War Era II veterans (post-9/11 generation), the unemployment rate remained essentially unchanged, decreasing slightly from 10.1% in September 2013 to 10% in October 2013. Most notably, the employment situation of the youngest post-9/11 veterans (ages 20-24) improved by 13.3%, decreasing to 9.2% in October 2013. Importantly, veterans ages 20-24 are experiencing unemployment at a rate that is currently 2.7% lower than that of their non-veteran peers of the same age. In terms of unemployment duration, approximately 93.8% of unemployed post-9/11 veterans ages 20-24 have been unemployed for more than five weeks. Of the 244,000 unemployed post-9/11 veterans ages 20 and over, 26.2% have been unemployed for less than 5 weeks, 27.5% for between 5 and 14 weeks and 46.3% for 15 weeks or more.

The unemployment situation of female post-9/11 veterans has remained at 11.6%, unchanged from September 2013 to October 2013. For comparison, female non-veterans are currently unemployed at a rate of 6.3%. The unemployment situation of male post-9/11 veterans improved slightly, decreasing from 9.7% in September 2013 to 9.5% in October 2013. For comparison, male non-veterans are currently unemployed at a rate of 6.5%. The 9% unemployment rate experienced by African-American post-9/11 veterans is lower than that of their non-veteran counterparts, at 12.1%. Hispanic post-9/11 veterans have an unemployment rate of 15.3%, higher than that of their non-veteran counterparts at 7.9%.

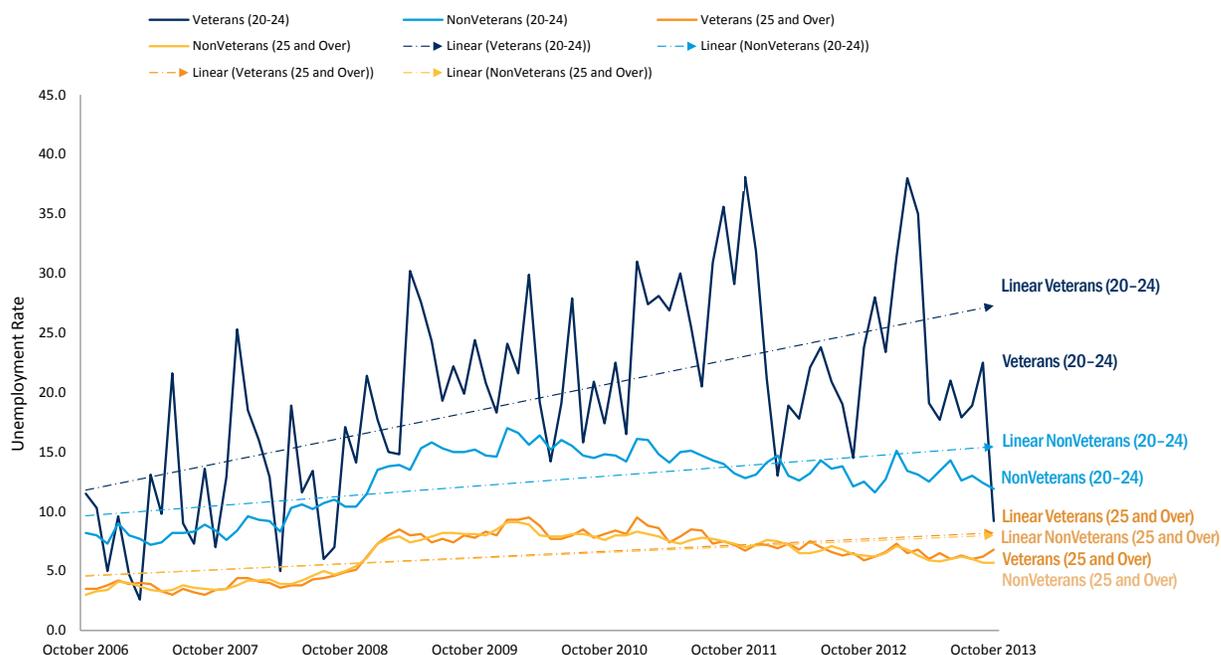
## Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America, based on BLS data released on November 8, 2013. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending October 2013.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 October 2013	% Change from September to October 2013	Number of Unemployed October 2013	# Change from September to October 2013
All Americans	6.8	0.0	10,358,000	-87,000
All Veterans	6.9	+0.4	750,000	+42,000
Gulf War Era II (Post-9/11) Veterans	10.0	-0.1	246,000	+2,000
Gulf War Era I Veterans	6.4	+0.9	165,000	+23,000
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans	6.4	+0.9	180,000	+25,000
All Nonveterans	6.8	0.0	9,608,000	-130,000

Category	GULF WAR ERA II (POST-9/11) VETERANS				NONVETERANS			
	Rate October 2013	% Change (+/-)	Number October 2013	# Change (+/-)	Rate October 2013	% Change (+/-)	Number October 2013	# Change (+/-)
20-24	9.2	-13.3	16,000	-18,000	11.9	-0.5	1,819,000	-104,000
25-29	14.4	+1.1	86,000	+6,000	7.4	-0.4	1,195,000	-78,000
30-34	7.3	-4.3	50,000	-28,000	6.3	+0.2	1,012,000	+32,000
35-39	10.1	+3.0	28,000	+9,000	5.5	-0.1	830,000	-5,000
40-44	10.6	+6.0	28,000	+18,000	5.1	-0.3	792,000	-58,000
45-49	2.1	+0.8	4,000	+1,000	5.5	+0.2	852,000	+25,000
50-54	11.6	+4.2	20,000	+7,000	5.4	+0.2	868,000	+25,000
55-59	11.4	+7.0	12,000	+8,000	5.0	-0.1	696,000	0
60-64	-	-	-	-	5.4	0.0	477,000	+5,000
65 years and older	-	-	-	-	4.7	0.0	292,000	-4,000
Male	9.5	-0.2	187,000	-2,000	6.5	-0.2	4,546,000	-153,000
Female	11.6	0.0	56,000	+3,000	6.3	0.0	4,287,000	-11,000
White	10.6	-0.4	196,000	-8,000	5.5	-0.1	5,984,000	-141,000
Hispanic or Latino	15.3	+2.7	45,000	+10,000	7.9	+0.2	1,790,000	+26,000
African-American	9.0	+1.5	36,000	+8,000	12.1	-0.2	2,012,000	-24,000



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 October 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): 1.4% better in October 2007, 9.2% worse in October 2009, 15.9% worse in October 2011, and 2.7% better in October 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.

- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rolls out Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) and the housing first model:** With fall upon us, October’s Employment Situation takes a hard look at the “housing first approach.” The “housing first” model has been around since the 1990’s, but is now being recognized as a national model implemented by the VA. The model seeks to house the chronically homeless — defined as those with mental or physical disabilities who are homeless for at least a year or four times within three years — before providing them services such as substance abuse, psychiatric treatment or employment help. The housing first approach has had nearly double the success rate of keeping the chronically homeless in housing, compared with models that require that they first comply with treatment or other conditions. With the Oct. 1 start date of over 300 VA funded SSVF programs, “housing first” opportunities will now be afforded through VA programs in every state in the US. Details about the SSVF program are available online at <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>.

- National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), October 2013:** “Because We Are EQUAL to the Task,” is the NDEAM’s theme for this year. This month, employers from around the country will partner with local nonprofits and educational institutions to promote hiring persons with disabilities. The NDEAM campaign emphasizes that it is what people can do at work that matters. NDEAM promotes positive employment outcomes for people with disabilities, and what they can do when encouraged and supported. In 1945, when Congress enacted this legislation, it was primarily a response to the many World War II veterans who returned home with disabilities. In 2001,

the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), an office under the U.S. Department of Labor that specifically addresses policies that impact the employment of people with disabilities, assumed responsibility for leading nationwide recognition of NDEAM. For more information, visit <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>.

- Lack of financial literacy may trigger veteran homelessness:** According to the American Journal of Public Health, veterans are just as, if not more, likely to end up homeless not simply because of military stressors but also due to a lack of financial skills. While post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries and drug abuse have been established as contributing factors to the homelessness problem, the financial literacy study lists money mismanagement as another dangerous pitfall. Additionally, a special issue of the American Journal of Public Health, that was developed with help from the VA, (and its National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans) found that homeless veterans are six times more likely to consider suicide than those with stable finances. In an editorial published with the research findings, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki and Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, said their hope is that the work will increase public focus on the problem. “Homeless veterans — all homeless Americans — must not remain our invisible citizens,” they wrote. “What they need are permanent places to live, jobs, education and quality health care.” For more information, visit <http://www.stripes.com/news/study-lack-of-financial-literacy-may-trigger-vets-homelessness-1.248524>.

**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.