

Today the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that although overall unemployment rates had decreased for all Americans, there was a slight increase for veterans from 6.6% in August to 6.7% in September 2012. The unemployment situation of Gulf War era II veterans (post-9/11 generation) has improved from last month, decreasing from 10.9% to 9.7%. The youngest post-9/11 veterans continue to experience the highest unemployment rates, with those in the 20-24 age range experiencing a 14.5% unemployment rate (compared to 12.1% for non-veterans) and those in the 25-29 age range experiencing an 11.5% unemployment rate (compared to 8.7% for non-veterans). Of the 202,000 unemployed post-9/11 veterans age 20 and over, 58% have been unemployed for 15 weeks or more.

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced a significant increase in their unemployment rates, which rose 7.8% from August to September (12.1% to 19.9%). For male post-9/11 veterans over this same period, unemployment rates decreased by 2.6% (10.6% to 8.0%). Both male and female post-9/11 veterans have unemployment rates that are higher than those of their non-veteran counterparts, currently at 7% for both genders. Unemployment rates decreased significantly for Hispanic post-9/11 veterans from 12.1% to 7.2%, while they only decreased slightly for African-American post-9/11 veterans from 14.7% to 14.6%. While Hispanic non-veterans have a higher unemployment rate than Hispanic post-9/11 veterans at 8.6%, African-American non-veterans have a lower unemployment rate, at 12.5%, compared to African-American post-9/11 veterans.

Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America, based on BLS data released on October 5, 2012. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending September 2012.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	August 2012	September 2012	Change (+/-)	September 2011
All Americans	7.9	7.4	-0.5	8.6
All Veterans	6.6	6.7	0.1	8.1
Gulf War era II (Post-9/11) Veterans	10.9	9.7	-1.2	11.7
Gulf War era I Veterans	5.8	6.6	0.8	7.2
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans	5.2	5.3	0.1	6.7
All Nonveterans	8.0	7.4	-0.6	8.6

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.

Tables below (Gulf War Era II and Nonveterans) are for population ages 20 and over. (1) Rates are not shown where base is less than 35,000.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR GULF WAR ERA II (POST-9/11) VETERANS				
Category	August 2012	September 2012	Change (+/-)	September 2011
20-24	19.0	14.5	-4.5	35.6
25-29	16.6	11.5	-5.1	13.6
30-34	7.1	8.9	1.8	6.9
35-39	8.1	8.4	0.3	5.8
40-44	2.2	4.5	2.3	14.6
45-49	10.0	13.2	3.2	1.9
50-54	3.2	3.7	0.5	(1)
55-59	1.8	1.6	-0.2	(1)
60-64	18.1	11.2	-6.9	7.4
65 years and older	(1)	(1)	-	(1)
Male	10.6	8.0	-2.6	11.1
Female	12.1	19.9	7.8	14.7
White	9.2	8.5	-0.7	11.0
Hispanic or Latino	12.1	7.2	-4.9	16.4
African-American	14.7	14.6	-0.1	16.8

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR NONVETERANS				
Category	August 2012	September 2012	Change (+/-)	September 2011
20-24	13.8	12.1	-1.7	14.0
25-29	9.0	8.7	-0.3	10.1
30-34	6.9	6.9	0.0	8.5
35-39	6.8	6.6	-0.2	7.7
40-44	6.5	5.9	-0.6	7.0
45-49	6.7	5.6	-1.1	7.1
50-54	6.2	5.6	-0.6	6.3
55-59	5.9	6.0	0.1	6.3
60-64	5.8	5.2	-0.6	6.3
65 years and older	6.5	6.0	-0.5	6.7
Male	7.3	7.0	-0.3	8.1
Female	7.9	7.0	-0.9	8.3
White	6.7	6.3	-0.4	7.1
Hispanic or Latino	9.1	8.6	-0.5	10.1
African-American	13.7	12.5	-1.2	15.2

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.

- **Ameren Corporation** is a *Fortune* 500 company with \$23 billion in assets that currently has 600 veterans in its workforce of 9,300. Ameren has pledged to add 200 more veteran jobs as part of the public-private initiative **Joining Forces**. For more information, visit http://www.thetelegraph.com/opinion/editorials/article_6cf14962-0206-11e2-b3b6-0019bb30f31a.html.
- In communities across the U.S. the initiative **Hiring Our Heroes**, created by the US Chamber of Commerce, has continued to hold job fairs to hire military veterans transitioning into the civilian population. **Hiring Our Heroes** has a network of 1600 state and local chambers and other strategic partners from the public, private and non-profit sectors. For more information, visit <http://plymouth.patch.com/articles/veterans-saluted-at-military-job-fairs-across-the-us-2407aff6>.
- On Sept. 26, 2012, **Milicruit**, a recognized leader in virtual career fairs, hosted a virtual career for veterans and military spouses, with over 40 corporations participating. The goal of the career fair is to find jobs for at least 10,000 veterans and military spouses by the end of 2013, and in just six months, employers have already hired more than 8,075 veterans and military spouses. For more information, visit <http://www.sacbee.com/2012/09/18/4830743/milicruit-hosts-virtual-job-fair.html>.
- Army News Service reported that the revamped **Transition Assistance Program (TAP)** and **Operation Boots to Business: From Service to Start**, a pilot program launched by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at SU and the U.S. Small Business Administration, will begin at Fort Sill, Okla., this month. Boots to Business has already been successfully piloted with the Marine Corps. For more information, visit <http://vets.syr.edu/army-news-service-reports-on-operation-boots-to-business-and-transition-assistance-program-tap/>.
- The **Society of Manufacturing Engineers** has completed a pilot program, with approximately 15 service members, that are helping veterans validate military experience and translate it into civilian credits. The program, **Military-to-Civilian Skills Certification**, has a goal of validating credentials of 500,000 veterans. To learn more, visit <http://www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/bank-of-america/archive/2012/09/solving-the-manufacturing-skills-gap/261978>.
- The **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** has approved \$28.4 million in grants to fund 38 projects in 25 states and the District of Columbia that will provide transitional housing to homeless veterans. Among these projects, 31 will provide temporary housing to homeless veterans with the goal that they will retain the residence as their own. The grant aims to help close gaps in the various veteran populations, which include women with children, Indian tribal populations and veterans with substance abuse and mental health issues. As of 2011, there were 67,495 homeless veterans (down 12% from 2010, 76,000). The plan is to eliminate homelessness by 2015. To learn more, visit http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/GPD/GPDProgram_press_release_09192012.pdf.

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

While the employment rate of veterans and military families has been improving for some, the unemployment situation remains unresolved. There is an urgent need to replicate best practices in veteran employment, leverage existing programs and create additional customized employment programs that will address the issues and challenges facing our veteran community. Over the next five years, more than 1 million service members will transition to civilian life. Employers need to be prepared to provide the right supports as they transition into the work force. Resources such as the “**Guide to Leading Policies, Practices & Resources: Supporting the Employment of Veterans & Military Families**,” published by IVMF, combine academic research grounded in human resources and organizational behavior with practical experiences of employers, to highlight leading practices in the employment of vets and military family members and detail resources situated in both the public and private sector, positioned to support employer efforts to cultivate and nurture a strategic approach to veteran employment. To learn more, visit <http://vets.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/guidetoleadingpractices1.pdf>.

In addition to best practices, there are numerous training, certification and career development resources that veterans and employers need to be aware of and leverage. An example is the **Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)**, which offers up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed veterans. Participants must attend full-time in order to receive up to one year of assistance equal to the monthly full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty program (\$1,564 effective, Oct. 1, 2012). The Department of Labor will offer employment assistance to every veteran who participates upon completion of the program. Learn more about VRAP eligibility and application process at <http://benefits.va.gov/vow/education.htm>.

The resources, initiatives and benefits highlighted above showcase opportunities for veterans transitioning into the workforce. Although the situation has improved for some, many are still struggling to find meaningful employment. We must continue to create awareness and join forces to address the issues and challenges faced by the veteran community as they reintegrate into the civilian workforce.