

Overview

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that employment rose by 559,000 in May, and the unemployment rate declined by 0.3 percentage point to 5.8 percent. Notable job gains occurred in leisure and hospitality, in public and private education, and in health care and social assistance.¹ For veterans, unemployment decreased to 4.1 percent in May. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment decreased from 5.1 percent to 4.0 percent in May. Of the total 379,000 unemployed veterans ages 18 and over, 23 percent have been unemployed for less than five weeks and 77 percent have been unemployed for more than five weeks. The average length of unemployment is 37 weeks (the median is 21.4 weeks). The overall unemployment trend varies by different veteran demographic factors, however, some more than others.

With respect to age, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans ages 18-24 decreased from 12.7 percent to 12.3 percent in May. The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans ages 25-34 decreased from 7.0 percent to 4.0 percent in May. During this period, post 9/11 veterans ages 18-24 were unemployed at a higher rate than their nonveteran peers of the same age group (10.1 percent) and post 9/11 veterans ages 25-34 were unemployed at a lower rate than their nonveteran peers of the same age group (5.6 percent).

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced an increase in unemployment, from

5.7 percent to 6.9 percent in May. Similarly, the overall unemployment rate for female veterans (all cohorts) increased to 5.5 percent. By comparison, female nonveterans have an unemployment rate of 5.1 percent. Total male veteran unemployment saw a monthly decrease in unemployment from 5.4 percent to 3.9 percent. The post-9/11 male veteran unemployment decreased from 5.0 percent to 3.5 percent in May.

Black or African American post-9/11 veterans saw a monthly decrease in unemployment to 3.2 percent. This rate is lower than the 9.0 percent unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts. Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin post-9/11 veterans experienced a monthly increase in unemployment to 6.0 percent. This rate is lower than the 6.8 percent unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts. Asian or Asian American post-9/11 veterans had a monthly decrease in unemployment to 4.3 percent in May. This rate is lower than the 5.6 percent unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts. Readers should be cautioned, however, that data on specific veteran subgroups can vary widely from month to month.

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>

Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America based on BLS data released on June 4, 2021. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending May 2021.



| UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR: | April 2021 | May 2021 | Change (+/-) | Annual Averages 2020 |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------|--------------|----------------------|
| All Americans (18 and over) | 5.7 | 5.4 | -0.3 | 7.9 |
| All Veterans | 5.2 | 4.1 | -1.1 | 6.5 |
| Post-9/11 Veterans | 5.1 | 4.0 | -1.1 | 7.3 |
| Gulf-War I Era Veterans | 5.2 | 3.9 | -1.3 | 4.8 |
| WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Era | 4.1 | 3.2 | -0.9 | 6.7 |
| All Nonveterans | 5.7 | 5.5 | -0.2 | 8.0 |

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR VETERANS

| Demographic Category | April 2021 | May 2021 | Change (+/-) | Annual Averages 2020 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------|--------------|----------------------|
| 18-24 | 12.7 | 12.3 | -0.4 | 14.6 |
| 25-34 | 7.0 | 4.0 | -3.0 | 8.8 |
| 35-44 | 2.2 | 3.5 | +1.3 | 5.8 |
| 45-54 | 5.5 | 3.3 | -2.2 | 5.0 |
| 55-64 | 6.5 | 5.3 | -1.2 | 6.5 |
| 65 and older | 3.6 | 3.4 | -0.2 | 6.4 |
| Male | 5.4 | 3.9 | -1.5 | 6.5 |
| Female | 4.4 | 5.5 | +1.1 | 6.7 |
| White, Anglo, Caucasian | 4.9 | 3.8 | -1.1 | 6.1 |
| Black or African American | 4.5 | 5.1 | +0.6 | 7.5 |
| Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin | 6.0 | 4.9 | -1.1 | 7.4 |
| Asian or Asian American | 10.7 | 2.1 | -8.6 | 5.1 |

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR POST-9/11 VETERANS

| Demographic Category | April 2021 | May 2021 | Change (+/-) | Annual Averages 2020 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------|--------------|----------------------|
| 18-24 | 12.7 | 12.3 | -0.4 | 14.6 |
| 25-34 | 7.0 | 4.0 | -3.0 | 8.8 |
| 35-44 | 2.0 | 3.2 | +1.2 | 5.9 |
| 45-54 | 3.2 | 3.1 | -0.1 | 5.4 |
| 55-64 | 7.7 | 3.8 | -3.9 | 5.2 |
| 65 and older | 4.4 | 2.6 | -1.8 | 12.5 |
| Male | 5.0 | 3.5 | -1.5 | 7.4 |
| Female | 5.7 | 6.9 | +1.2 | 7.2 |
| White, Anglo, Caucasian | 4.9 | 3.6 | -1.3 | 7.0 |
| Black or African American | 4.1 | 3.2 | -0.9 | 6.8 |
| Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin | 3.9 | 6.0 | +2.1 | 8.7 |
| Asian or Asian American | 5.2 | 4.3 | -0.9 | 6.7 |

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR NONVETERANS

| Demographic Category | April 2021 | May 2021 | Change (+/-) | Annual Averages 2020 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------|--------------|----------------------|
| 18-24 | 10.0 | 10.1 | +0.1 | 14.6 |
| 25-34 | 6.2 | 5.6 | -0.6 | 8.4 |
| 35-44 | 5.4 | 4.8 | 0.0 | 6.4 |
| 45-54 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 0.0 | 6.4 |
| 55-64 | 4.7 | 4.3 | -0.4 | 6.8 |
| 65 and older | 4.8 | 5.4 | +0.6 | 7.6 |
| Male | 6.1 | 5.9 | -0.2 | 7.8 |
| Female | 5.3 | 5.1 | -0.2 | 8.2 |
| White, Anglo, Caucasian | 4.9 | 4.8 | -0.1 | 7.2 |
| Black or African American | 9.6 | 9.0 | -0.6 | 11.5 |
| Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin | 7.4 | 6.8 | -0.6 | 10.4 |
| Asian or Asian American | 5.5 | 5.6 | +0.1 | 8.7 |

NOTE: Although the BLS reports the national average for those 16 and over, the tables above include only those that are 18 and over to make a more accurate comparison to the veteran population. Post-9/11 are of the Gulf War Era II (September 2001-present). Other periods of service include 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). 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.