

Overview

On March 6th, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that *employment edged down by 92,000 in February, and the unemployment rate changed little at 4.4 percent. Employment in health care decreased, reflecting strike activity. Employment in information and federal government continued to trend down.*¹ Among veterans, unemployment decreased from 4.5 percent in January 2026 to 4.1 percent in February 2026. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment also decreased from 5.9 percent in January to 4.8 percent in February. Unemployment patterns vary across veteran demographic groups.

Across age groups, unemployment among veterans varies. For veterans aged 18-24, the unemployment rate decreased from 12.8 percent in January to 9.4 percent in February and remains slightly above the nonveteran rate (9.0 percent). Among veterans aged 25-34, unemployment decreased from 7.0 percent to 6.3 percent and is higher than the nonveteran rate (5.1 percent). For veterans aged 35-44, unemployment decreased from 5.1 percent to 3.8 percent and is slightly above the nonveteran rate (3.3 percent). Among veterans aged 45-54, unemployment decreased from 4.3 percent to 3.7 percent and is equal to the nonveteran rate (3.7 percent). For veterans aged

55-64, unemployment increased from 2.8 percent to 3.1 percent and remains below the nonveteran rate (3.5 percent). Among veterans aged 65 and older, unemployment increased from 3.6 percent to 4.0 percent and is above the nonveteran rate (3.7 percent).

The unemployment rate for female veterans decreased from 5.9 percent in January to 5.2 percent in February and remains higher than the rate for nonveteran women (4.4 percent). The unemployment rate for male veterans decreased from 4.3 percent to 3.9 percent and remains below the rate for nonveteran men (4.9 percent).

The unemployment rate for Black or African American veterans decreased from 8.1 percent in January to 5.4 percent in February and is lower than the unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts (7.8 percent). The unemployment rate for Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin veterans increased from 2.3 percent to 6.6 percent and is higher than the unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts (5.4 percent). However, readers should be cautioned that data on specific veteran subgroups can vary widely from month to month.

¹ https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empst_03062026.pdf

Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America based on BLS data released on March 6, 2026. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending February 2026. BLS also provided revisions to January 2026, and the tables below incorporate those updated January figures.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	Jan. 2026	Feb. 2026	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2025
All Americans (18 and over)	4.5	4.6	+0.1	4.1
All Veterans	4.5	4.1	-0.4	3.5
Post-9/11 Veterans	5.9	4.8	-1.1	3.6
Gulf-War I Era Veterans	2.6	3.0	+0.4	3.2
Vietnam Era and Earlier Periods	4.0	3.2	-0.8	4.6
Other Service Period Veterans	3.3	3.7	+0.4	3.2
All Nonveterans	4.5	4.6	+0.1	4.2

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR VETERANS

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	Jan. 2026	Feb. 2026	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2025
18-24	12.8	9.4	-3.4	9.0
25-34	7.0	6.3	-0.7	5.0
35-44	5.1	3.8	-1.3	3.3
45-54	4.3	3.7	-0.6	3.2
55-64	2.8	3.1	+0.3	2.6
65 and older	3.6	4.0	+0.4	3.9
Male	4.3	3.9	-0.4	3.3
Female	5.9	5.2	-0.7	4.6
White, Anglo, Caucasian	3.8	3.6	-0.2	3.3
Black or African American	8.1	5.4	-2.7	5.0
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	2.3	6.6	+4.3	4.0
Asian or Asian American	3.7	2.8	-0.9	2.7

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR POST-9/11 VETERANS

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	Jan. 2026	Feb. 2026	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2025
18-24	12.8	9.4	-3.4	9.0
25-34	7.0	6.3	-0.7	5.0
35-44	5.3	3.9	-1.4	3.3
45-54	6.6	3.5	-3.1	1.9
55-64	2.3	6.0	+3.7	3.2
65 and older	-	0.5	-	0.2
Male	5.5	4.2	-1.3	3.4
Female	7.5	7.6	+0.1	4.8
White, Anglo, Caucasian	4.3	3.7	-0.6	3.2
Black or African American	12.3	7.4	-4.9	6.1
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	3.5	9.1	+5.6	4.6
Asian or Asian American	5.4	3.9	-1.5	3.6

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR NONVETERANS

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	Jan. 2026	Feb. 2026	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2025
18-24	8.7	9.0	+0.3	9.4
25-34	5.3	5.1	-0.2	4.3
35-44	3.6	3.5	-0.1	3.3
45-54	3.3	3.7	+0.4	3.0
55-64	3.7	3.5	-0.2	2.9
65 and older	3.2	3.7	+0.5	3.3
Male	4.8	4.9	+0.1	4.3
Female	4.3	4.4	+0.1	4.0
White, Anglo, Caucasian	4.0	3.9	-0.1	3.6
Black or African American	7.3	7.8	+0.5	6.8
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	5.5	5.4	-0.1	5.0
Asian or Asian American	4.3	4.9	+0.6	3.6

NOTE: Although the BLS reports national estimates for civilians ages 16 and over, the tables above are limited to ages 18 and over for comparability with the veteran population. "Period of service" identifies when a veteran served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces (not the location of service). Post-9/11 veterans are classified as Gulf War era II (September 2001-present). Gulf War era I covers August 1990-August 2001. Vietnam-era and earlier wartime veterans are a combined category that includes Vietnam (August 1964-April 1975), the Korean War (July 1950-January 1955), and World War II (December 1941-December 1946). "Other service periods" includes 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. A dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000). Minority-by-gender unemployment rates are not shown due to small sample size and are more appropriately presented as annual averages.