

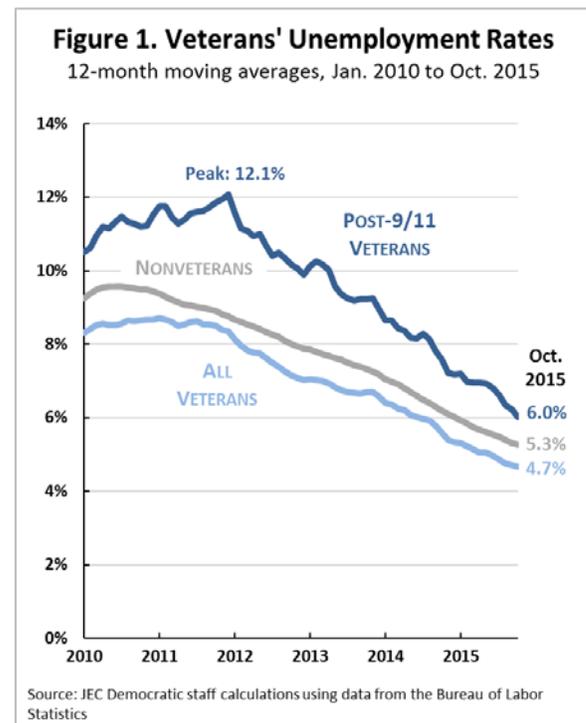


10 Key Facts about Veterans of the Post-9/11 Era

“Across our country, veterans who fought to protect our democracy around the globe are strengthening it here at home. Once leaders in the Armed Forces, they are now pioneers of industry and pillars of their communities.”

-- President Barack Obama, Presidential Proclamation - Veterans Day, 2014

- 1. Post-9/11 veterans make up nearly 18 percent of the total veteran population.** Over 3.7 million veterans have served in the post-9/11 era.¹ The Department of Veterans Affairs projects that their share of the total veteran population will grow to 32 percent by 2043.² Post-9/11 veterans make up the largest share of the veteran population in Alaska (28.4 percent) and Virginia (25.2 percent) (see **Table 1**).
- 2. Four in five post-9/11 veterans are working or actively searching for work.**³ Recent veterans have a significantly higher labor force participation rate than the overall veteran population because most post-9/11 veterans are in their prime working years (see **Table 2**).⁴ Males and those ages 25 to 54 years old are most likely to be in the labor force.⁵ Overall, post-9/11 veterans who served in Afghanistan and/or Iraq have a lower labor force participation rate (78.2 percent) than post-9/11 veterans who served elsewhere (83.1 percent).⁶
- 3. Post-9/11 veterans face a somewhat higher unemployment rate than nonveterans.** The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans averaged 6.0 percent over the past 12 months. Over the same period, the rate for nonveterans averaged 5.3 percent (see **Figure 1**).⁷ The overall unemployment rate for veterans across all service periods averaged 4.7 percent.⁸ The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans has fallen steadily since peaking at 12.1 percent in 2011. Veterans who served in Afghanistan have a higher unemployment rate (10.5 percent) than veterans who served in Iraq (7.1 percent) and veterans who served elsewhere (7.8 percent).⁹
- 4. The falling unemployment rate understates the challenges facing recent veterans.** One out of every two service members (53 percent) faces a period of unemployment after leaving the military, according to an analysis by the Department of Veterans Affairs.¹⁰ However, most find work within six months.¹¹ High rates of physical and psychological injuries and the stigma associated with the negative effects of combat zone experience can present hurdles to finding and sustaining employment for some veterans.¹²



5. **More than one in four post-9/11 veterans in the labor force have a service-connected disability.** Of the nearly 2.5 million post-9/11 veterans in the workforce, 28 percent report having a disability resulting from their military service.¹³ However, of those post-9/11 veterans with a service-connected disability, 75 percent are in the labor force – either having a job or looking for one.¹⁴ Veterans with lower disability ratings are more likely to be in the labor force: 84 percent of those with a disability rating of 50 percent or less are in the labor force, compared with 67 percent of those with a disability rating of 60 percent or more.¹⁵
6. **Post-9/11 veterans earn more than their nonveteran peers.** Unlike veterans of earlier eras, post-9/11 veterans typically earn more than nonveterans with similar demographic characteristics.¹⁶ In 2013, the median earnings of post-9/11 veterans were about 11 percent higher than the median earnings of their nonveteran peers.¹⁷ The earnings premium persists across age groups, generally growing with age.¹⁸
7. **The share of female veterans who served post-9/11 is more than double the share who served before 9/11.** Over 725,000 female veterans have served in the Armed Forces since September 2001.¹⁹ The average unemployment rate over the past 12 months for female post-9/11 veterans (6.7 percent) is higher than for male post-9/11 veterans (5.9 percent). It is also higher than the average unemployment rate for women who are not veterans (5.1 percent).²⁰ While male veterans' employment is more evenly distributed across industries, over 70 percent of female post-9/11 veterans work in one of four major sectors: government; education and health; professional and business services; and retail trade.²¹
8. **Military service reduces employment disparities for some minority veterans.** African Americans and Latinos have higher unemployment rates than whites in the nonveteran population. However, those racial and ethnic disparities in unemployment are smaller among post-9/11 veterans (see **Figure 2**). Moreover, while recent veterans are generally more likely to be unemployed than nonveterans, African Americans who served on active duty since 9/11 face a lower unemployment rate (9.5 percent) than African Americans who are not veterans (11.3 percent).²²
9. **An estimated 1.5 million veterans and their dependents have used GI bill benefits to further their education.**²³ Three in ten (30 percent) post-9/11 veterans have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 45 percent have attended some college or earned an associate's degree.²⁴ While veterans can transfer education benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill to their dependents, 92 percent of veterans who participate use the benefits for their own education.²⁵
10. **Young veterans face high rates of unemployment, poverty and homelessness.** Post-9/11 veterans ages 18 to 24 years have an unemployment rate that is more than double the rate for post-9/11 veterans ages 25 years and older. At 16.2 percent, their unemployment rate is also higher than that of similarly aged nonveterans (12.5 percent).²⁶ More than one in ten (11.3 percent) veterans ages 18 to 34 lives in poverty. Poverty is even higher among disabled young veterans.²⁷ According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, the homeless rate among young veterans is more than double the rate among nonveterans the same age.²⁸

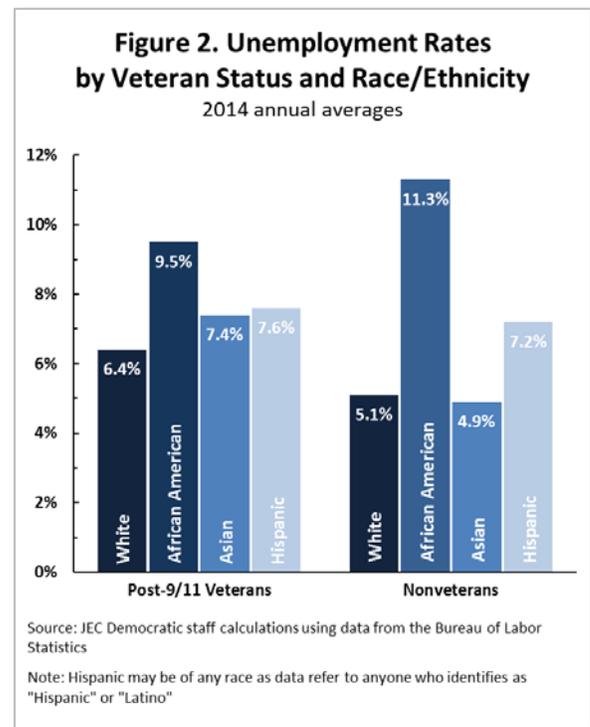


Table 1: Veterans' Economic Data by State, 2014

	All Veterans			Post-9/11 Veterans		
	Percent of Adult Population in State	Number in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Percent of All Veterans in State	Number in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Alabama	9.5%	170,000	5.6%	17.6%	50,000	7.9%
Alaska	14.1%	47,000	5.9%	28.4%	17,000	7.5%
Arizona	10.9%	285,000	5.7%	15.6%	64,000	6.6%
Arkansas	9.5%	83,000	6.0%	14.4%	20,000	14.2%
California	6.3%	871,000	7.4%	15.2%	209,000	10.1%
Colorado	10.5%	232,000	5.9%	17.7%	59,000	8.5%
Connecticut	7.0%	92,000	4.2%	10.4%	16,000	12.9%
Delaware	9.9%	32,000	6.1%	11.4%	7,000	9.8%
District of Columbia	5.1%	15,000	7.5%	14.8%	3,000	4.1%
Florida	10.3%	806,000	5.0%	14.5%	190,000	4.8%
Georgia	9.7%	405,000	7.6%	18.5%	98,000	10.4%
Hawaii	9.6%	49,000	5.1%	18.0%	13,000	12.7%
Idaho	10.9%	58,000	2.3%	15.0%	13,000	4.0%
Illinois	7.3%	343,000	7.0%	13.8%	85,000	8.3%
Indiana	10.0%	258,000	5.6%	13.5%	52,000	10.0%
Iowa	9.6%	125,000	4.2%	10.7%	22,000	4.2%
Kansas	10.2%	117,000	6.8%	18.1%	34,000	12.2%
Kentucky	9.0%	135,000	4.6%	13.4%	29,000	10.8%
Louisiana	9.2%	170,000	3.1%	12.0%	30,000	6.0%
Maine	11.8%	62,000	5.0%	11.9%	12,000	7.2%
Maryland	8.9%	222,000	8.5%	20.3%	60,000	11.9%
Massachusetts	7.3%	171,000	4.7%	12.3%	41,000	11.9%
Michigan	9.1%	289,000	6.3%	8.9%	44,000	6.8%
Minnesota	8.8%	176,000	4.9%	10.0%	30,000	11.1%
Mississippi	9.1%	97,000	3.9%	13.6%	22,000	6.0%
Missouri	11.0%	239,000	5.7%	12.4%	55,000	2.2%
Montana	12.4%	48,000	5.8%	15.5%	12,000	3.8%
Nebraska	9.7%	74,000	4.1%	13.4%	15,000	5.2%
Nevada	12.1%	135,000	7.1%	17.2%	37,000	6.8%
New Hampshire	10.8%	61,000	3.8%	11.5%	11,000	1.5%
New Jersey	5.8%	165,000	7.9%	9.1%	26,000	12.0%
New Mexico	11.8%	81,000	5.3%	13.7%	21,000	9.3%
New York	5.9%	392,000	5.8%	12.5%	86,000	8.1%
North Carolina	9.5%	366,000	5.2%	14.3%	78,000	7.2%
North Dakota	9.1%	31,000	1.4%	15.7%	7,000	2.3%
Ohio	9.2%	395,000	3.1%	11.8%	79,000	4.6%
Oklahoma	10.5%	157,000	4.0%	17.7%	46,000	2.1%
Oregon	11.7%	168,000	7.1%	14.5%	39,000	10.1%
Pennsylvania	8.9%	410,000	4.7%	11.5%	88,000	7.8%
Rhode Island	8.8%	34,000	5.9%	11.1%	6,000	10.2%
South Carolina	11.0%	192,000	3.5%	16.4%	52,000	3.6%
South Dakota	10.8%	38,000	3.7%	14.7%	9,000	3.9%
Tennessee	11.2%	282,000	4.5%	16.5%	60,000	5.0%
Texas	8.5%	927,000	4.1%	19.4%	253,000	5.2%
Utah	7.0%	77,000	4.9%	19.1%	23,000	6.8%
Vermont	9.3%	22,000	2.2%	8.7%	2,000	2.3%
Virginia	12.5%	508,000	3.2%	25.2%	174,000	3.6%
Washington	11.7%	324,000	6.4%	16.5%	69,000	11.4%
West Virginia	10.7%	67,000	4.9%	12.3%	16,000	11.1%
Wisconsin	9.3%	209,000	4.1%	11.4%	42,000	2.5%
Wyoming	12.4%	31,000	4.3%	18.2%	9,000	4.4%

Source: JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

Notes: Data are 2014 annual averages. Veterans are men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and were not on active duty at the time of the survey. State-by-state data for post-9/11 veterans are based on unpublished data from the Current Population Survey. These estimates are reported without margins of error, which may be large for post-9/11 veterans' data due to the small population of these veterans in many states. Caution should be used in comparing post-9/11 veterans' unemployment rates across states and over time. "Adult" refers to those 18 years old and over.

Table 2. Veterans Demographic Characteristics, 2014

	All Veterans	Post-9/11 Veterans	Nonveterans
Sex			
Male	90%	80%	44%
Female	10%	20%	56%
Age			
18-24	1%	7%	14%
25-54	35%	86%	54%
55 years old and over	64%	7%	33%
Race/Ethnicity			
White	84%	77%	79%
Black	12%	15%	12%
Asian	2%	3%	6%
Other race	3%	5%	3%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	7%	13%	16%
Education (25 years old and over)			
Less than a high school diploma	5%	1%	12%
High school graduate, no college	31%	23%	29%
Some college or associate degree	35%	45%	26%
Bachelor's degree or higher	29%	30%	33%

Source: JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.
Notes: Data are 2014 annual averages. Veterans are men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and were not on active duty at the time of the survey. Educational attainment data include those 25 years old and over. All other data include those 18 years old and over.

Sources

¹ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2015. When available, reported data are as of October 2015.

² Department of Veterans Affairs, [Table 2L: VETPOP2014 Living Veterans by Period of Service, Gender, 2013-2043](#). The number of post-9/11 era veterans is projected to be 4.7 million in 2043. It includes those who will have served between September 2001 and September 2019.

³ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2015.

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) Table 2A: Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2014 annual averages (March 18, 2015).

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) Table 2A: Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2014 annual averages; Table 2B: Employment status of men 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2014 annual averages; and Table 2C: Employment status of women 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2014 annual averages (March 18, 2015).

⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) Table 10: Employment status of Gulf War-era II veterans 18 years and over by location of service, August 2014, not seasonally adjusted (March 18, 2015).

⁷ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2015. 12-month average through October 2015.

⁸ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2015. 12-month average through October 2015.

⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) Table 10: Employment status of Gulf War-era II veterans 18 years and over by location of service, August 2014, not seasonally adjusted (March 18, 2015).

¹⁰ Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), (January 2015). According to the analysis, 53 percent of veterans experience an unemployment spell within 15 months of separating from the military.

¹¹ Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), (January 2015).

¹² USC School of Social Work - Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families, [Exploring the Economic and Employment Challenges facing US Veterans](#) (May 2015).

- ¹³ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) Table 7: Employment status of veterans 18 years and over by presence of service-connected disability, reported disability rating, period of service, and sex, August 2014, not seasonally adjusted (March 18, 2015).
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), pg. 68, (January 2015).
- ¹⁷ Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), pg. 68, (January 2015). Median earnings of post-9/11 veterans were \$39,294 in 2013, \$4,030 more than the median earnings of the nonveteran population adjusted for differences in demographic characteristics.
- ¹⁸ Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), pg. 69, (January 2015).
- ¹⁹ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2015.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) Table 5: Employed persons 18 years and over by industry, class of worker, sex, veteran status, and period of service, 2014 annual averages (March 18, 2015).
- ²² JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Current Population Survey: Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) (March 18, 2015).
- ²³ Department of Veterans Affairs, [Fact Sheet: VA Making Progress to Improve Service for Veterans](#) (October 2015).
- ²⁴ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) Table 3: Employment status of person 25 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and educational attainment, 2014 annual averages (March 18, 2015).
- ²⁵ Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), (January 2015).
- ²⁶ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014](#) Table 2A: Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2014 annual averages (March 18, 2015).
- ²⁷ JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the 2014 American Community Survey (1-year estimates).
- ²⁸ National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, [Frequently Asked Questions](#). “Young veterans” refers to those between the ages of 18 and 30 years old.