Employment Situation of Veterans 2017

Briefing by the Bureau of Labor Statistics
March 21, 2018
Where do the data come from?

- The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a joint program between the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Census Bureau.
- Voluntary; about 90% response rate.
- Approximately 60,000 households; about 100,000 individuals age 16 and over are interviewed each month.
- Between 8,000 and 9,000 veteran respondents age 18 and over per month.
- Data are tabulated for veterans ages 18 and over.
How do we define veterans?

- **Veterans** are men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and were civilians at the time of the survey. Members of the Reserve and National Guard are counted as veterans if they have ever been called to active duty by a Presidential Order.

- **Nonveterans** are men and women who have never served on active duty in the U.S. military.

- Because the gender and age profiles of veterans and nonveterans are so different (most veterans are men, most recent veterans are young), it is best to compare veterans and nonveterans of the same gender and age groups.
Periods of Service

Data about veterans are available by these periods of service:

Gulf War era II = Sept. 2001 - present
Vietnam era = Aug. 1964 - April 1975
Korean War = July 1950 - Jan. 1955
World War II = Dec. 1941 - Dec. 1946

“Other service periods” are the dates outside the war periods mentioned above:

May 1975 - July 1990
Jan. 1947 - June 1950
Feb. 1955 - July 1964
Nov. 1941 or earlier

Note: Veterans may have served anywhere in the world during these periods of service.
Chart 1. WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam-era veterans are the largest group of veterans in the population


Chart 2. Veterans and nonveterans have very different age distributions

Chart 3. Veterans, Gulf War-era II veterans, and nonveterans have very different gender compositions

Chart 4. More than half of 370,000 unemployed veterans in 2017 were age 45 and over

Percent distribution

- 35 to 44: 19%
- 45 to 54: 19%
- 55 to 64: 17%
- 25 to 34: 24%
- 18 to 24: 4%
- 65 and over: 16%

NOTE: Totals may not add to 100 because of rounding.
Chart 5. Unemployment rates of male veterans and nonveterans by age

Unemployment rate

Chart 6. Unemployment rates of female veterans and nonveterans by age

Chart 7. Unemployment rates of male and female veterans by age

Chart 8. Unemployment rates of veterans and nonveterans continue to trend down

NOTE: The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force.
Chart 9. Gulf War-era II veterans were less likely to be unemployed for 27 weeks or longer than total veterans or nonveterans in 2017

Long-term unemployed (percent)

Total veterans
Nonveterans
Gulf War-era II veterans

NOTE: The percent long-term unemployed is the proportion of the unemployed looking for work for 27 weeks or more.
Chart 10. Labor force participation rates of veterans and nonveterans

The labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population that is in the labor force. The labor force includes the employed and people not working but actively seeking a job.

Chart 11. Employment-population ratios of veterans and nonveterans

Employment-population ratio (percent)

NOTE: The employment-population ratio is the proportion of the population that is working.
Chart 12. Veterans are much more likely to work for the Federal government than nonveterans

NOTE: “Other workers” includes persons employed in agriculture, the self-employed, and unpaid family workers. Totals may not add to 100 because of rounding.
Chart 13. Male Gulf War-era II veterans were more likely to work in service occupations and less likely to work in sales and office occupations and in production, transportation, and material moving occupations than male nonveterans.

Chart 14. Female Gulf War-era II veterans were more likely to work in management and professional occupations than female nonveterans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Type</th>
<th>Female Gulf War-era II veterans</th>
<th>Female nonveterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, professional, and related occupations</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and office occupations</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Service occupations include a wide variety of professions including healthcare support, protective service, food preparation and serving, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, and personal care and service.

Additional questions are asked of veterans on topics such as service-connected disability, current or past membership in the Reserve or National Guard, and location of service for Gulf War-era II veterans.

Typically 1 respondent per household. In the veterans supplement, the interviewer asks to speak with the veteran and contacts up to 2 extra times to reach him or her before accepting a response from another household member.

Collected every 2 years since 1985; has been conducted annually in August since 2009 (except in July 2010).

Co-sponsored by the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
Chart 15. Service-connected disability status of Gulf War-era II veterans, August 2017

- Veterans with a service-connected disability: 41%
- Veterans with no service-connected disability: 54%
- Disability status not reported: 5%

NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans are those who served anywhere in the world sometime since September 2001. Totals may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Chart 16. Labor force participation rates of Gulf War-era II veterans are affected by presence and degree of disability

Chart 17. Veterans with a service-connected disability are more likely to work for the Federal government than veterans with no disability or nonveterans

NOTE: “Other workers” includes persons employed in agriculture, the self-employed, and unpaid family workers. Totals may not add to 100 because of rounding.
Chart 18. Gulf War veterans (1990-present) who served in the Reserve or National Guard had higher a labor force participation rate than veterans who were never members.

Chart 19. Gulf War-era II veterans 18 years and over by location of service, August 2017

NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans are those who served since September 2001.

Chart 20. Among Gulf War-era II veterans, labor force participation rates and unemployment rates were not statistically different regardless of location of service

Highlights from the 2017 data:

- The unemployment rate for Gulf War-era II veterans edged down to 4.5 percent in 2017. The jobless rate for all veterans declined to 3.7 percent.

- The unemployment rate for male veterans fell to 3.6 percent in 2017, and the rate for female veterans changed little at 4.1 percent.

- Among the 370,000 unemployed veterans in 2017, 59 percent were age 25 to 54. About 37 percent were age 55 and over and 4 percent were age 18 to 24.

- The unemployment rate of veterans varied across the country, ranging from 1.7 percent in Maine and Vermont to 7.3 percent in Rhode Island.
Tabulated veterans data available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

- **General Info on Veterans:** CPS Webpage
  - [https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#vets](https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#vets)

- **Monthly data by period of service for 18+:** Employment Situation news release (table A-5)
  - [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t05.htm](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t05.htm)

- **Monthly and Quarterly data for other characteristics:**
  - [https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#vets](https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#vets)

- **Veterans supplement data (i.e. August 2017):** Employment Situation of Veterans news release

- Unpublished tables available upon request
Contact Information

Jim Borbely
(202) 691-6385
borbely.james@bls.gov

Andrew Blank
(202) 691-5106
blank.andrew@bls.gov

cpsinfo@bls.gov or (202) 691-6378