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The Employment Situation of Veterans: March 2015

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Recommended Citation

Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University, "The Employment Situation of Veterans: March 2015" (2015). *Institute for Veterans and Military Families*. 139.
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THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF VETERANS

March 2015

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported a 5.5 percent national unemployment rate for all Americans (16 and over) for March 2015. This remains unchanged from the national unemployment rate reported in February 2015. Total veteran unemployment decreased to 4.9 percent in the same period. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment decreased from 6.7 percent to 6.5 percent in March 2015. This trend varies, however, by different veteran demographic factors.

With respect to age, the youngest cohort of post 9/11 veterans (ages 20-24) remained at 18.7 percent in March 2015. Younger veterans are unemployed at a rate 8.3 percentage points higher than their non-veteran peers of the same age group. Of the total 182,000 unemployed post-9/11 veterans ages 20 and over, 36 percent have been unemployed for less than five weeks and 64 percent have been unemployed for five weeks or more.

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced an unemployment rate increase from 4.0 percent in February 2015 to 6.8 percent in March 2015. By comparison, total female veteran (all cohorts) unemployment remained at 5.7 percent. These figures are higher than the 4.7 percent unemployment rate reported for their non-veteran female counterparts. Total male veteran unemployment (4.8 percent) is below the national veteran rate and below the national average. The post-9/11 male veteran unemployment decreased to 6.4 percent (a 0.8 percent decrease from February 2015).

African-American post-9/11 veterans saw a monthly decrease in unemployment to 7.1 percent. This rate is lower compared to the 9.8 percent unemployment rate of their non-veteran African-American counterparts. Hispanic post-9/11 veterans experienced a monthly increase in unemployment to 8.1 percent. Readers should be cautioned, however, that data on specific veteran subgroups can vary widely from month to month.

Demographics & Trends

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America based on BLS data released on April 3, 2015. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending March 2015.

TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

	Rate of Unemployed March 2015	% Change from February to March	Number of Unemployed March 2015	% Change from February to March
All Americans (16 and over)	5.5	0.0	8,575,000	-130,000
All Americans (18 and over) ¹	5.4	-0.3	8,379,000	-410,000
All Veterans	4.9	-0.4	535,000	-43,000
Gulf War Era II (Post-9/11) Veterans	6.5	-0.2	184,000	-6,000
Gulf War Era I Veterans	3.5	-0.2	100,000	-7,000
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans	4.9	-0.3	119,000	-7,000
All Nonveterans	5.5	-0.2	7,844,000	-368,000

TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR VETERANS AND NONVETERANS

Category	VETERANS		GULF WAR ERA II		NONVETERANS	
	Rate March 2015	% Change (+/-)	Rate March 2015	% Change (+/-)	Rate March 2015	% Change (+/-)
20-24	18.7	0.0	18.7	0.0	10.4	0.0
25-29	8.9	-1.0	8.9	-1.0	6.0	0.0
30-34	7.0	+1.5	6.5	+1.0	5.6	+0.2
35-39	3.0	-0.4	0.7	-1.4	4.2	-1.1
40-44	4.5	-0.2	4.3	-0.8	4.5	0.0
45-49	1.9	-0.5	1.0	-0.2	3.7	-0.5
50-54	6.0	-0.6	5.9	-2.6	4.0	-0.2
55-59	3.8	-0.4	7.8	+4.3	4.2	-0.5
60-64	5.1	-1.6	3.6	-	4.1	+0.2
65 years and older	4.3	-0.2	-	-	3.5	-1.2
Male	4.8	-0.4	6.4	-0.8	5.6	-0.4
Female	5.7	0.0	6.8	+2.8	4.7	-0.2
White	4.5	0.0	6.0	-0.1	4.5	-0.3
Hispanic or Latino	6.5	+1.8	8.1	+3.7	6.4	-0.4
African-American	6.8	-3.2	7.1	-3.5	9.8	+0.1
Asian	1.7	-1.3	-	-	3.0	-1.1

¹ **NOTE:** Although the BLS reports the national average for those 16 and over, in Table 1 we also include the average for those 18 and over to make a more accurate comparison to the total veteran population. Table 2 is for the population of 20 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 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.

FIGURE 1: 2-YEAR OUTLOOK

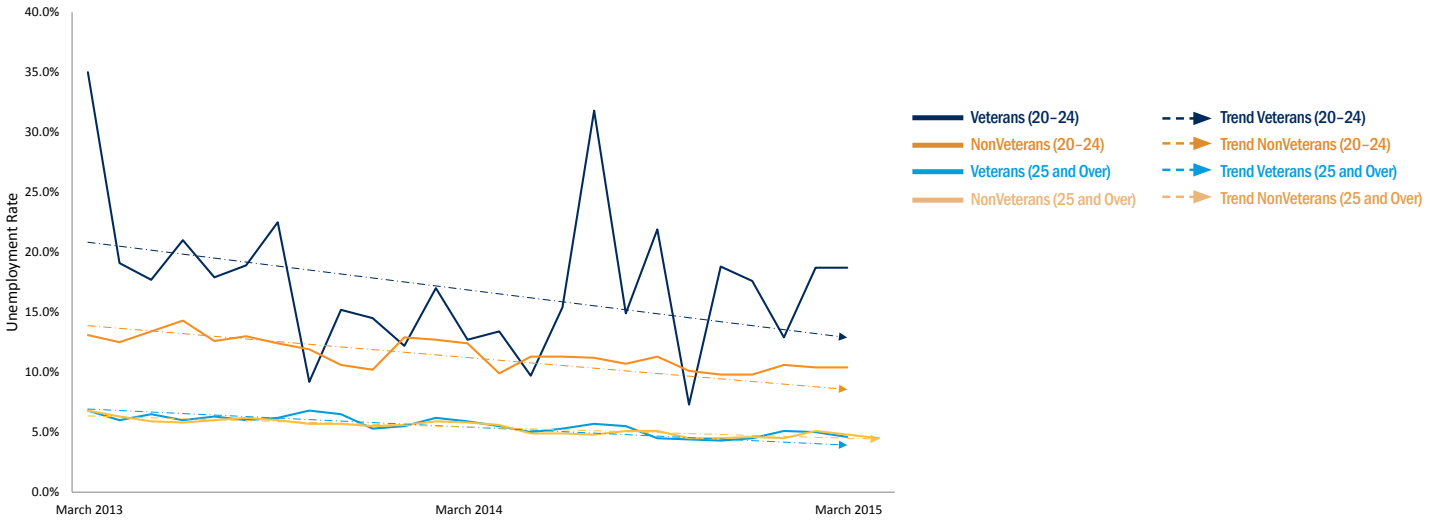
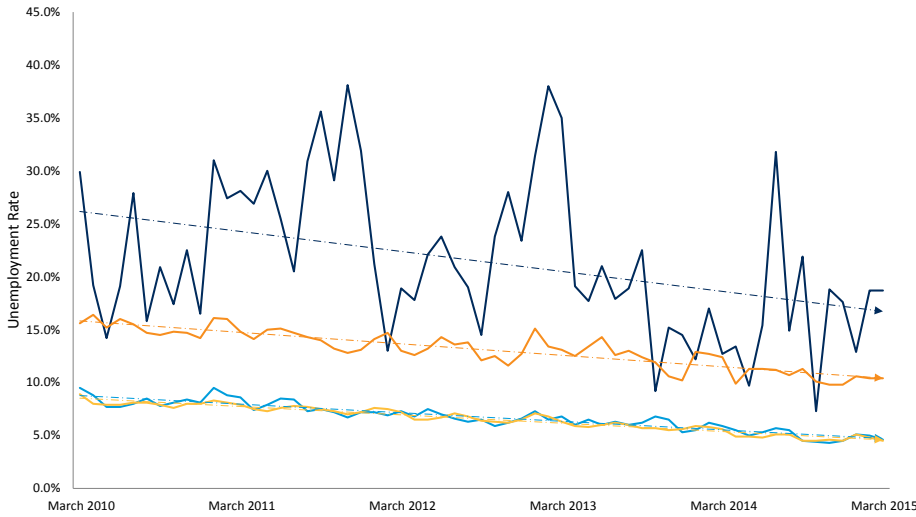


FIGURE 2: 5-YEAR OUTLOOK



FIGURES 1 and 2 depict the monthly unemployment rates for veterans (ages 20-24 and 25 and older) and non-veterans. Overall, the unemployment rates for all veterans show a gradual improvement (decrease) since 2009, though they remain higher than their non-veteran counterparts. Veterans aged 24 or younger have experienced the highest unemployment, however, this difference has decreased steadily over five years and shows recent signs of convergence with the unemployment rate of veterans 25 years and older (Figure 1).

FIGURE 3: DIFFERENCES (GAPS) BETWEEN THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR VETERANS AND NON-VETERANS

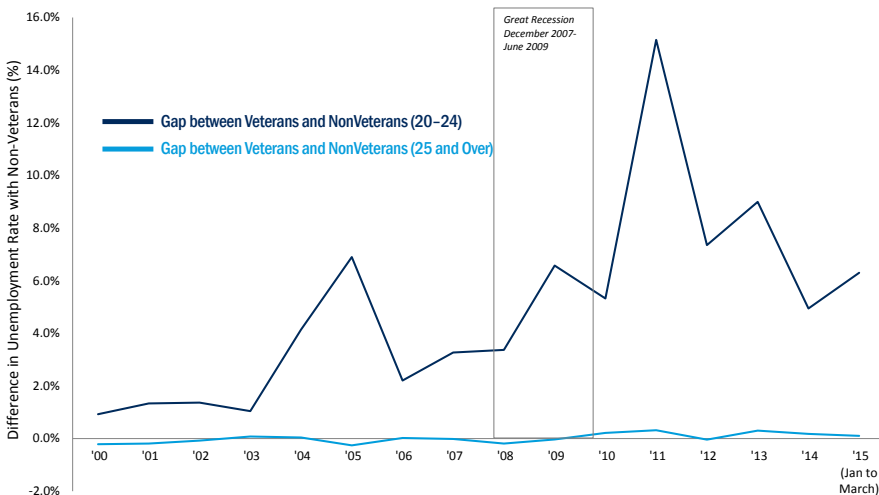


FIGURE 3 depicts the differences in annual rates of unemployment between veterans (ages 20-24 and 25 and older) and non-veterans. The difference—or gap—has varied year-to-year and must be considered with caution in the context of broader economic trends, such as the recession that lasted from 2007 to 2009. Starting in 2006, the unemployment gap between the youngest veterans and non-veterans increased sharply to a peak gap of 15.2% in 2011. This gap has declined steadily since then, nearing pre-2004 levels.