

Overview

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that employment rose by 916,000 in March, and the unemployment rate edged down to 6.0 percent. Job growth was widespread in March, led by gains in leisure and hospitality, public and private education, and construction.¹ For veterans, unemployment decreased to 5.0 in March. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment increased from 5.9 percent to 6.1 percent in March. Of the total 452,000 unemployed veterans ages 18 and over, 17 percent have been unemployed for less than five weeks and 83 percent have been unemployed for more than five weeks. The average length of unemployment is 31.7 weeks (the median is 19.5 weeks). The overall unemployment trend varies by different veteran demographic factors, however, some more than others.

With respect to age, the youngest post-9/11 veterans' (ages 18-24) unemployment rate increased from 7.5 percent to 15.1 percent in March. The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans' ages 25 to 34 increased from 6.0 percent to 8.0 percent in March. During this period, veterans (ages 18-24 and 25-34) were unemployed at a higher rate than their nonveteran peers of the same age group.

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced a decrease in unemployment, from 9.0 percent to 3.8 percent in March. Similarly, the overall unemployment rate for female veterans (all cohorts) decreased to 2.9 percent. By comparison, female nonveterans have a higher unemployment rate (5.7 percent) compared to female post-9/11 veterans. Total male veteran unemployment saw a monthly decrease in unemployment from 5.4 percent to 5.3 percent. The post-9/11 male veteran unemployment increased from 5.4 percent to 6.5 percent in March.

Black or African American post-9/11 veterans saw a monthly decrease in unemployment to 5.0 percent. This rate is lower than the 10.0 percent unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts. Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin post-9/11 veterans experienced a monthly decrease in unemployment to 6.2 percent. This rate is lower than the 8.1 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 April 2, 2021. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending March 2021.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	February 2021	March 2021	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2020
All Americans (18 and over)	6.5	6.1	-0.4	7.9
All Veterans	5.5	5.0	-0.5	6.5
Post-9/11 Veterans	5.9	6.1	+0.2	7.3
Gulf-War I Era Veterans	3.5	4.5	+1.0	4.8
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Era	4.7	4.4	-0.3	6.7
All Nonveterans	6.5	6.2	-0.3	8.0

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR VETERANS

Demographic Category	February 2021	March 2021	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2020
18-24	7.5	15.1	+7.6	14.6
25-34	6.0	8.0	+2.0	8.8
35-44	5.9	4.4	-1.5	5.8
45-54	3.2	3.6	+0.4	5.0
55-64	7.2	4.9	-2.3	6.5
65 and older	4.9	3.7	-1.2	6.4
Male	5.4	5.3	-0.1	6.5
Female	6.1	2.9	-3.2	6.7
White, Anglo, Caucasian	5.3	5.0	-0.3	6.1
Black or African American	6.6	5.4	-1.2	7.5
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	9.6	5.8	-3.8	7.4
Asian or Asian American	3.8	—	—	5.1

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR POST-9/11 VETERANS

Demographic Category	February 2021	March 2021	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2020
18-24	7.5	15.1	+7.6	14.6
25-34	6.0	8.0	+2.0	8.8
35-44	6.7	4.1	-2.6	5.9
45-54	2.8	3.0	+0.2	5.4
55-64	5.5	5.9	+0.4	5.2
65 and older	8.7	—	—	12.5
Male	5.4	6.5	+1.1	7.4
Female	9.0	3.8	-5.2	7.2
White, Anglo, Caucasian	6.1	6.3	+0.2	7.0
Black or African American	5.7	5.0	-0.7	6.8
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	7.6	6.2	-1.4	8.7
Asian or Asian American	7.0	—	—	6.7

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR NONVETERANS

Demographic Category	February 2021	March 2021	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2020
18-24	10.8	10.8	0.0	14.6
25-34	6.8	6.9	+0.1	8.4
35-44	6.0	5.4	-0.6	6.4
45-54	5.3	4.8	-0.5	6.4
55-64	5.7	4.7	-1.0	6.8
65 and older	5.1	5.2	+0.1	7.6
Male	7.0	6.6	-0.4	7.8
Female	6.0	5.7	-0.3	8.2
White, Anglo, Caucasian	5.8	5.4	-0.4	7.2
Black or African American	10.4	10.0	-0.4	11.5
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin	8.8	8.1	-0.7	10.4
Asian or Asian American	5.1	6.0	+0.9	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.