



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

**Post-9/11 veterans make up nearly 19 percent of the total veteran population.** Over 3.9 million veterans have served in the post-9/11 era.<sup>1</sup> The Department of Veterans Affairs projects that their share of the total veteran population will grow to 32 percent by 2043.<sup>2</sup> Post-9/11 veterans make up the largest share of the veteran population in Alaska (28.8 percent) and Virginia (28.4 percent).<sup>3</sup>

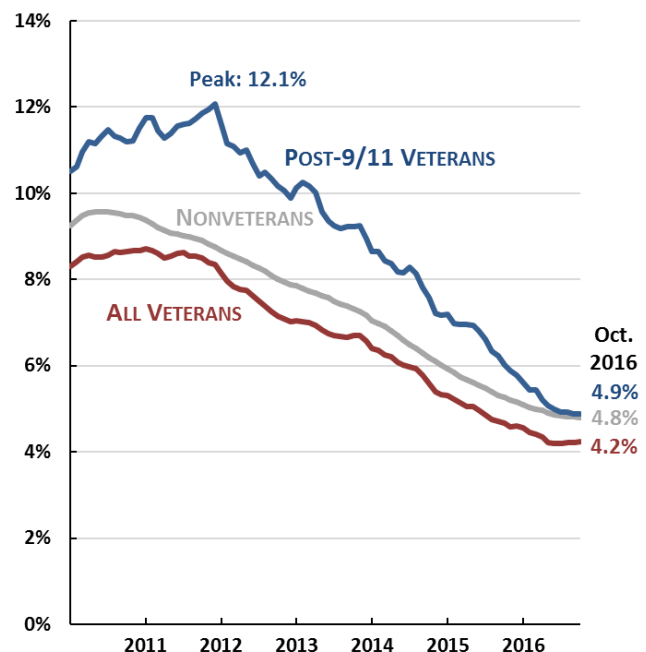
**Four in five post-9/11 veterans are in the labor force.**<sup>4</sup> Recent veterans have a significantly higher labor force participation rate than the overall veteran population because most post-9/11 veterans are in their prime working years.<sup>5</sup> Male veterans and those ages 25 to 54 years old are the most likely to be in the labor force.<sup>6</sup> Overall, post-9/11 veterans who served in Afghanistan or Iraq have a lower labor force participation rate (78.6 percent) than post-9/11 veterans who served elsewhere (85.0 percent).<sup>7</sup>

**Post-9/11 veterans are unemployed at about the same rate as nonveterans.** The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans averaged 4.9 percent over the past 12 months (November 2015 to October 2016). Over the same period, the average rate for nonveterans was only slightly lower, at 4.8 percent.<sup>8</sup> The overall unemployment rate for veterans across all service periods averaged 4.2 percent.<sup>9</sup> Since peaking at 12.1 percent in 2011, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans has fallen faster than the rates for nonveterans and the overall veteran population (see **Figure 1**).

**The jobless rate for post-9/11 veterans varies across states.** Last year, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans ranged from a low of 1.1 percent in Delaware and Iowa to a high of 14.3 percent in Massachusetts (see **Appendix Table**). The unemployment rate was also above 10 percent in Kansas (14.0 percent), California (10.6 percent) and Minnesota (10.5 percent).

**The falling unemployment rate understates the challenges facing recent veterans.** More than half of service members (53 percent) face a period of unemployment after leaving the military, according to an analysis by the Department of Veterans Affairs.<sup>10</sup> However, most find work within six months.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 1. Veterans' Unemployment Rates**  
12-month moving averages, Jan. 2010 to Oct. 2016



Source: JEC Democratic staff calculations using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

**One in three post-9/11 veterans has a service-connected disability.** Of those post-9/11 veterans with a service-connected disability, 73 percent are in the labor force.<sup>13</sup> Veterans with less severe disabilities (as measured by their disability rating) are more likely to be in the labor force: 85 percent of those with a disability rating of 50 percent or less are in the labor force, compared with 62 percent of those with a higher disability ratings (60 percent or higher).<sup>14</sup>

**Post-9/11 veterans out-earn their nonveteran peers.** Unlike veterans of earlier eras, post-9/11 veterans typically earn more than nonveterans with similar demographic characteristics.<sup>15</sup> In 2013, the median earnings of post-9/11 veterans were about 11 percent higher than the median earnings of their nonveteran peers.<sup>16</sup> The earnings premium persists across age groups, generally growing with age.<sup>17</sup>

**More than one in six post-9/11 veterans is a women** (see **Table 1**).<sup>18</sup> The average unemployment rate last year for female post-9/11 veterans (6.4 percent) was higher than the rate for male post-9/11 veterans (5.7 percent). It was also higher than the average rate for female who were not veterans (5.0 percent).<sup>19</sup>

**Nearly 1.7 million veterans and their dependents have used GI bill benefits to further their education.**<sup>20</sup> Under the Post-9/11 GI bill, veterans can transfer education benefits to their dependents. However, 92 percent of veterans who participate use the benefits for their own education.<sup>21</sup> One-third of post-9/11 veterans have a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 44 percent have attended some college or earned an associate’s degree.<sup>22</sup>

**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 13.0 percent, their unemployment rate is also higher than that of similarly aged nonveterans (10.9 percent).<sup>23</sup> Roughly one in ten veterans between the ages of 18 and 34 years lives in poverty. Poverty is even more common among disabled young veterans.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup>

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Veterans, 2015**

	All Veterans	Post-9/11 Veterans	Nonveterans
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	91%	82%	44%
Female	9%	18%	56%
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	1%	7%	13%
25-54	35%	85%	53%
55 years old and over	64%	7%	33%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	84%	79%	78%
Black	12%	14%	13%
Asian	1%	2%	6%
Other race	3%	4%	3%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	7%	14%	16%
<b>Education</b>			
Less than a high school diploma	5%	1%	12%
High school graduate, no college	30%	21%	29%
Some college or associate degree	35%	44%	26%
Bachelor's degree or higher	30%	34%	33%

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

Notes: Data are 2015 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.

## Appendix Table: Veterans' Unemployment Rates by State 2015 Annual Averages

	All Veterans			Post-9/11 Veterans		
	Number in Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Number in Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	<b>10,757,000</b>	<b>495,000</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>2,913,000</b>	<b>168,000</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
Alabama	189,000	6,000	3.1%	71,000	3,000	4.6%
Alaska	46,000	2,000	4.3%	17,000	1,000	3.9%
Arizona	244,000	9,000	3.7%	59,000	2,000	4.0%
Arkansas	103,000	5,000	4.7%	26,000	2,000	6.4%
California	902,000	62,000	6.8%	253,000	27,000	10.6%
Colorado	225,000	8,000	3.5%	80,000	2,000	2.0%
Connecticut	97,000	4,000	4.6%	19,000	-	1.4%
Delaware	34,000	1,000	3.6%	8,000	-	1.1%
District of Columbia	15,000	1,000	7.7%	4,000	-	3.1%
Florida	784,000	43,000	5.4%	199,000	13,000	6.7%
Georgia	384,000	19,000	4.9%	83,000	7,000	7.8%
Hawaii	54,000	1,000	2.5%	17,000	-	2.5%
Idaho	63,000	2,000	4.0%	14,000	1,000	9.2%
Illinois	338,000	17,000	5.0%	79,000	5,000	5.8%
Indiana	238,000	6,000	2.4%	54,000	1,000	1.4%
Iowa	131,000	2,000	1.9%	33,000	-	1.1%
Kansas	99,000	6,000	6.1%	22,000	3,000	14.0%
Kentucky	137,000	8,000	5.6%	43,000	3,000	5.9%
Louisiana	171,000	8,000	4.6%	42,000	2,000	4.7%
Maine	61,000	3,000	4.5%	13,000	-	3.0%
Maryland	251,000	18,000	7.2%	83,000	8,000	9.7%
Massachusetts	160,000	9,000	5.3%	29,000	4,000	14.3%
Michigan	275,000	15,000	5.3%	49,000	1,000	2.2%
Minnesota	197,000	11,000	5.5%	42,000	4,000	10.5%
Mississippi	101,000	6,000	6.2%	26,000	1,000	4.7%
Missouri	244,000	12,000	4.8%	61,000	4,000	7.3%
Montana	52,000	3,000	5.2%	15,000	1,000	3.8%
Nebraska	76,000	3,000	3.4%	23,000	1,000	3.8%
Nevada	125,000	7,000	5.8%	39,000	3,000	7.7%
New Hampshire	65,000	2,000	3.7%	18,000	1,000	4.1%
New Jersey	182,000	10,000	5.4%	44,000	1,000	1.4%
New Mexico	96,000	5,000	5.5%	30,000	2,000	6.7%
New York	387,000	14,000	3.7%	86,000	4,000	5.2%
North Carolina	398,000	13,000	3.2%	98,000	8,000	8.0%
North Dakota	33,000	1,000	2.8%	11,000	1,000	4.7%
Ohio	398,000	13,000	3.3%	103,000	4,000	4.0%
Oklahoma	167,000	5,000	3.2%	50,000	1,000	3.0%
Oregon	158,000	9,000	5.6%	39,000	3,000	6.8%
Pennsylvania	413,000	19,000	4.7%	94,000	3,000	2.9%
Rhode Island	33,000	2,000	5.8%	8,000	1,000	9.5%
South Carolina	205,000	9,000	4.4%	58,000	5,000	8.7%
South Dakota	39,000	1,000	2.5%	10,000	-	1.4%
Tennessee	244,000	10,000	4.2%	68,000	3,000	3.8%
Texas	967,000	41,000	4.3%	314,000	16,000	5.0%
Utah	87,000	2,000	2.6%	28,000	1,000	2.2%
Vermont	22,000	1,000	3.9%	3,000	-	8.8%
Virginia	491,000	19,000	3.8%	200,000	9,000	4.5%
Washington	268,000	10,000	3.8%	73,000	3,000	4.1%
West Virginia	64,000	3,000	5.1%	16,000	1,000	5.7%
Wisconsin	214,000	8,000	3.6%	51,000	3,000	5.6%
Wyoming	30,000	1,000	3.3%	9,000	-	4.8%

Source: JEC Democratic staff using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Notes: "-" indicates number rounds to 0 when rounded to the nearest thousand. Data are for civilians 18 years and over. 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.

## Sources

- <sup>1</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2016. When available, reported data are as of October 2016.
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey for 2015.
- <sup>4</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2016.
- <sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2015](#) Table 2A: Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2015 annual averages (March 22, 2016).
- <sup>6</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2015](#) Table 2A: Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2015 annual averages; Table 2B: Employment status of men 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2015 annual averages; and Table 2C: Employment status of women 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2015 annual averages (March 22, 2016).
- <sup>7</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2015](#) Table 10: Employment status of Gulf War-era II veterans 18 years and over by location of service, August 2015, not seasonally adjusted (March 22, 2016).
- <sup>8</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2016. Comparisons are based on 12-month averages because data are not seasonally adjusted.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> 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.
- <sup>11</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), (January 2015).
- <sup>12</sup> 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).
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), pg. 68, (January 2015).
- <sup>16</sup> 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.
- <sup>17</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), pg. 69, (January 2015).
- <sup>18</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, as of October 2015.
- <sup>19</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2015](#) Table A: Employed status of the civilian noninstitutional population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, 2014-2015 averages (March 22, 2016).
- <sup>20</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs transmitted via email correspondence dated October 27, 2016.
- <sup>21</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, [2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report](#), (January 2015).
- <sup>22</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2015](#) Table 3: Employment status of person 25 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and educational attainment, 2014 annual averages (March 22, 2016).
- <sup>23</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Employment Situation of Veterans – 2015](#) Table 2A: Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age and period of service, 2015 annual averages (March 22, 2016).
- <sup>24</sup> JEC Democratic staff calculations based on data from the 2015 American Community Survey (1-year estimates). Table B21007: Age by veteran status by poverty status in the past 12 months by disability status for the civilian population 18 years and over.
- <sup>25</sup> National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, [Frequently Asked Questions](#). “Young veterans” refers to those between the ages of 18 and 30 years old.