SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE *for* VETERANS *and* MILITARY FAMILIES
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THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF VETERANS

November 2014

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported a 5.8 percent national unemployment rate for all Americans (16 and over) for November 2014. This is unchanged from the national unemployment rate reported in October 2014. Total veteran unemployment remained unchanged at 4.5 percent in the same period. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment decreased from 7.2 percent to 5.7 percent in November 2014. This trend varies, however, by different veteran demographic factors.

With respect to age, the youngest cohort of post 9/11 veterans (ages 20-24) experienced the greatest jump in unemployment to 18.8 percent in November 2014 (a 11.5 percent increase from October). Younger veterans are unemployed at a rate 9.0 percentage points higher than their non-veteran peers of the same age group. Of the total 162,000 unemployed post-9/11 veterans ages 20 and over, 27 percent have been unemployed for less than five weeks and 73 percent have been unemployed for more than five weeks.

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced an unemployment rate decrease from 11.2 percent in October to 8.1 percent in November 2014. By comparison, total female veteran (all cohorts) unemployment increased from 5.5 to 5.9 percent. These figures are higher than the 5.0 percent unemployment rate reported for their non-veteran female counterparts. Total male veteran unemployment (4.4 percent) is below the national veteran rate and below the national average. The post-9/11 male veteran unemployment decreased to 5.3 percent (a 1.0 percent decrease from October 2014).

African-American veterans, especially those in the post-9/11 generation, saw a monthly decrease in unemployment to 8.5 percent. This rate is lower compared to the 10.0 percent unemployment rate of their non-veteran African-American counterparts. Hispanic post-9/11 veterans experienced a monthly decrease in unemployment to 7.3 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 December 5, 2014. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending November 2014.

TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

	Rate of Unemployed November 2014	% Change from October to November	Number of Unemployed November 2014	% Change from October to November
All Americans (16 and over)	5.8	0.0	9,110,000	+115,000
All Americans (18 and over)[1]	5.4	+0.1	8,316,000	+48,000
All Veterans	4.5	0.0	492,000	+12,000
Gulf War Era II (Post-9/11) Veterans	5.7	-1.5	162,000	-26,000
Gulf War Era I Veterans	2.3	-0.5	63,000	-13,000
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans	5.1	+1.3	127,000	+30,000
All Nonveterans	5.5	+0.1	7,823,000	+35,000

TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR VETERANS AND NONVETERANS

	VETERANS		GULF WAR ERA II		NONVETERANS	
Category	Rate November 2014	% Change (+/-)	Rate November 2014	% Change (+/-)	Rate November 2014	% Change (+/-)
20-24	18.8	+11.5	18.8	+11.5	9.8	-0.3
25-29	9.4	+0.7	9.4	+0.7	6.4	+0.1
30-34	3.0	-5.7	2.9	-5.4	5.2	-0.4
35-39	4.2	-0.3	6.2	-3.0	4.3	+0.2
40-44	2.9	-0.8	5.0	-5.5	4.1	-0.2
45-49	2.0	-1.8	0.3	-2.2	4.0	+0.2
50-54	4.7	+1.7	1.0	-1.9	4.0	+0.1
55-59	4.9	+1.0	-	-	4.1	+0.4
60-64	6.0	+1.0	14.6	-	4.1	+0.5
65 years and older	3.9	+0.5	-	-	4.8	+0.3
Male	4.4	+0.1	5.3	-1.0	5.3	+0.5
Female	5.9	+0.4	8.1	-3.1	5.0	-0.4
White	3.6	-0.2	4.2	-1.4	4.3	+0.1
Hispanic or Latino	5.0	+0.9	7.3	-0.2	6.1	+0.2
African-American	8.3	0.0	8.5	-6.5	10.0	0.0
Asian	6.6	+5.6	9.7	-	4.5	-0.5

[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

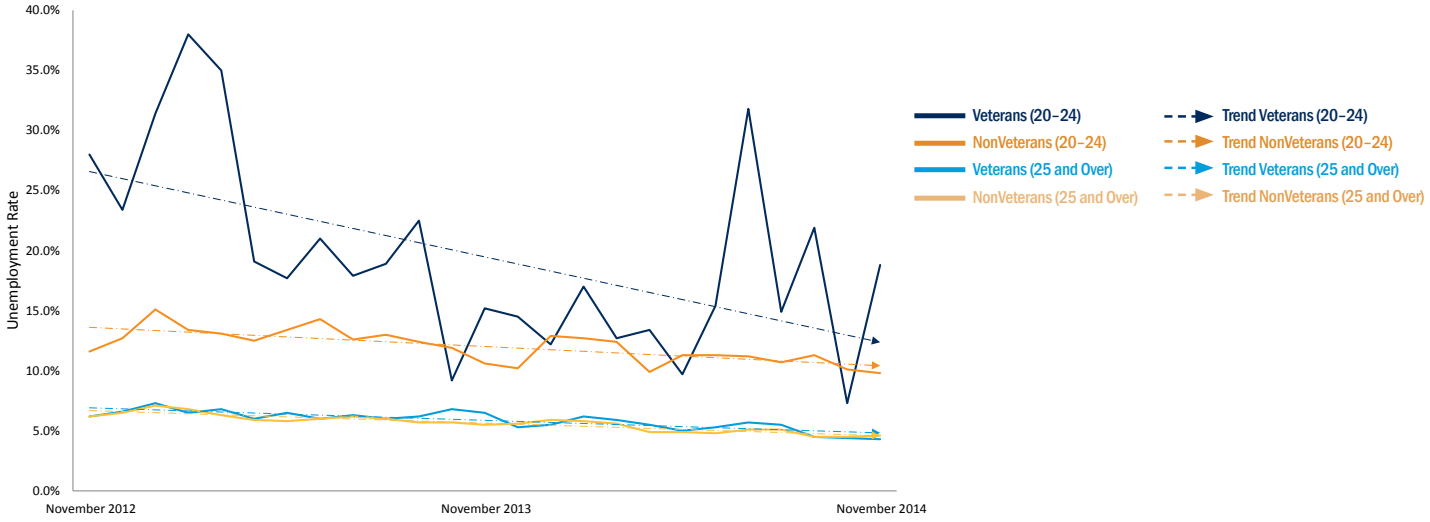
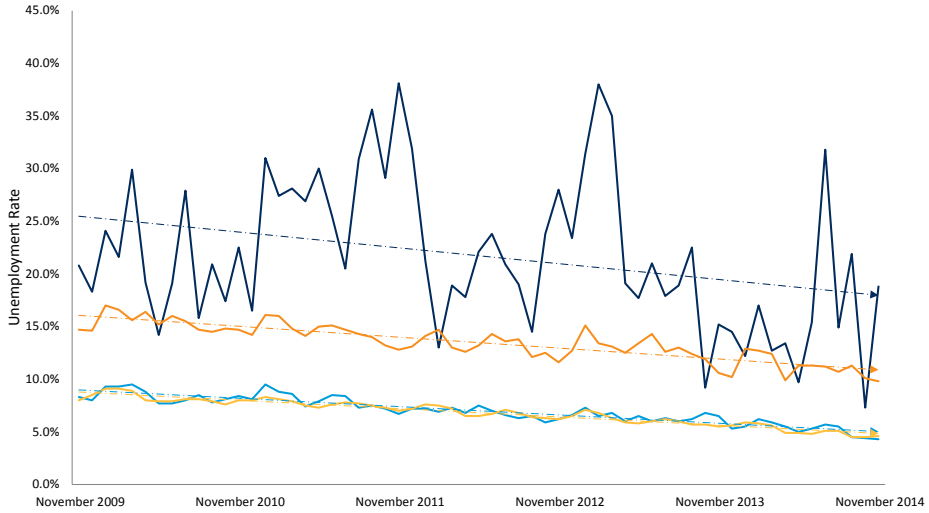


FIGURE 2: 5-YEAR OUTLOOK



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

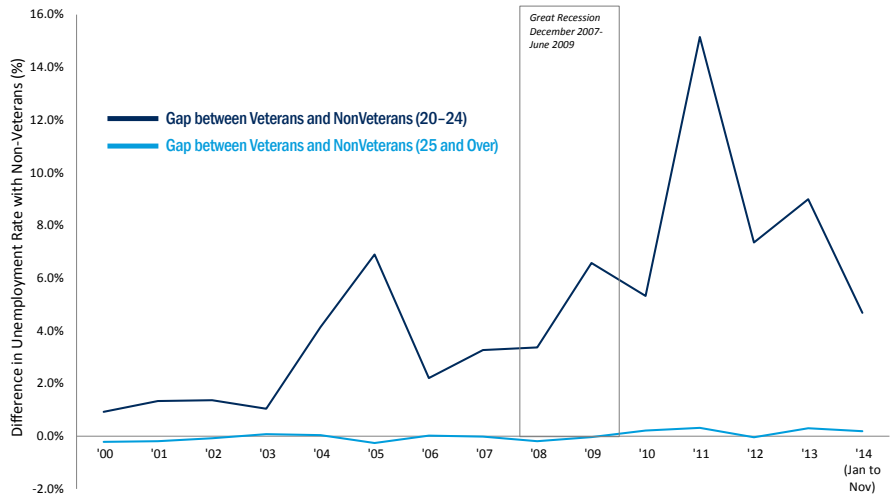


FIGURE 3 depicts the *differences* in annual rates of unemployment between veterans (ages 20-24 and 25 and older) and non-veterans. The difference—or gap—has varied year-to-year and must be considered with caution in the context of broader economic trends, such as the recession that lasted from 2007 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.