

NATIONAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION

TOPIC 1: ECONOMY

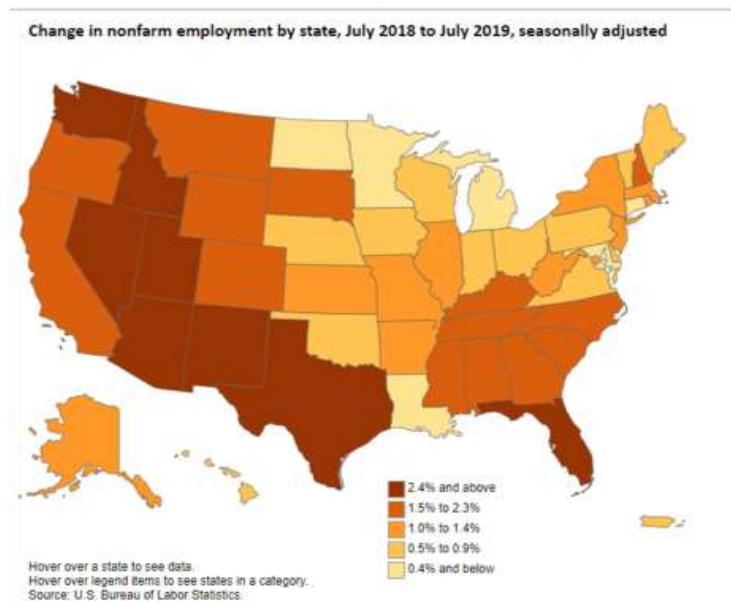
The unemployment rate declined to 3.5 percent in September, and total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 136,000, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Employment in health care and in professional and business services continued to trend up.

This news release presents statistics from two monthly surveys. The household survey measures labor force status, including unemployment, by demographic characteristics. The establishment survey measures nonfarm employment, hours, and earnings by industry

Household Survey Data

In September, the unemployment rate declined by 0.2 percentage point to 3.5 percent. The last time the rate was this low was in December 1969, when it also was 3.5 percent. Over the month, the number of unemployed persons decreased by 275,000 to 5.8 million.

Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rate for Whites declined to 3.2 percent in September. The jobless rates for adult men (3.2 percent), adult women (3.1 percent), teenagers (12.5 percent), Blacks (5.5 percent), Asians (2.5 percent), and Hispanics (3.9 percent) showed little or no change over the month.



Among the unemployed, the number of job losers and persons who completed temporary jobs declined by 304,000 to 2.6 million in September, while the number of new entrants increased by 103,000 to 677,000. New entrants are unemployed persons who never previously worked.

In September, the number of persons unemployed for less than 5 weeks fell by 339,000 to 1.9 million. The number of long-term unemployed (those jobless for 27 weeks or more) was little changed at 1.3 million and accounted for 22.7 percent of the unemployed.

The labor force participation rate held at 63.2 percent in September. The employment-population ratio, at 61.0 percent, was little changed over the month but was up by 0.6 percentage point over the year.

The number of persons employed part time for economic reasons (sometimes referred to as involuntary part-time workers) was essentially unchanged at 4.4 million in September. These individuals, who would have preferred full-time employment, were working part time because their hours had been reduced or they were unable to find full-time jobs.

In September, 1.3 million persons were marginally attached to the labor force, down by 278,000 from a year earlier. (Data are not seasonally adjusted.) These individuals were not in the labor force, wanted and were available for work, and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months. They were not counted as unemployed because they had not searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey.

Among the marginally attached, there were 321,000 discouraged workers in September, little changed from a year earlier. (Data are not seasonally adjusted.) Discouraged workers are persons not currently looking for work because they believe no jobs are available for them. The remaining 978,000 persons marginally attached to the labor force in September had not searched for work for reasons such as school attendance or family responsibilities.

Establishment Survey Data

Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 136,000 in September. Job growth has averaged 161,000 per month thus far in 2019, compared with an average monthly gain of 223,000 in 2018. In September, employment continued to trend up in health care and in professional and business services.

In September, health care added 39,000 jobs, in line with its average monthly gain over the prior 12 months. Ambulatory health care services (+29,000) and hospitals (+8,000) added jobs over the month. Employment in professional and business services continued to trend up in September (+34,000). The industry has added an average of 35,000 jobs per month thus far in 2019, compared with 47,000 jobs per month in 2018. -3- Employment in government continued on an upward trend in September (+22,000). Federal hiring for the 2020 Census was negligible (+1,000). Government has added 147,000 jobs over the past 12 months, largely in local government.

Employment in transportation and warehousing edged up in September (+16,000). Within the industry, job growth occurred in transit and ground passenger transportation (+11,000) and in couriers and messengers (+4,000).

Retail trade employment changed little in September (-11,000). Within the industry, clothing and clothing accessories stores lost 14,000 jobs, while food and beverage stores added 9,000 jobs. Since reaching a peak in January 2017, retail trade has lost 197,000 jobs. Employment in other major industries, including mining, construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, information, financial activities, and leisure and hospitality, showed little change over the month. In September, average hourly earnings for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls, at \$28.09, were little changed (-1 cent), after rising by 11 cents in August. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have increased by 2.9 percent. In September, average hourly earnings of private-sector production and nonsupervisory employees rose by 4 cents to \$23.65.

The average workweek for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls was unchanged at 34.4 hours in September. In manufacturing, the average workweek and overtime remained at 40.5 hours and 3.2 hours, respectively. The average workweek of private-sector production and nonsupervisory employees held at 33.6 hours.

HOUSEHOLD**DATA****Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted**

[Numbers in thousands]

Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	SEP 2018	SEP 2019	SEP 2018	SEP 2019	SEP 2018	SEP 2019
Unemployed	131	157	98	122	33	35
Unemployment rate	3.9	4.5	3.5	4.0	6.0	7.0

The national unemployment rate is 3.4 percent (September 2019). Gulf War II veterans unemployment rate is 4.5 percent.ⁱ Currently, the unemployment rate for Gulf War II women veterans is 7.0 percent (up from 3.4 percent in September).

TOPIC 2: MEETINGS

On Monday, October 21st, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division attended a meeting at the Brookings Institute with a focus on employment for military spouses.

On Monday, October 21st, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division attended the Institute for Veterans and Military Families' Onward to Opportunity (O2O) Skillbridge program at Fort Belvoir. O2O is a private-public partnership complimentary to the TAP program that trains veterans and servicemembers on how to find civilian jobs, as well as enter training pathways for professional certifications.

On Wednesday, October 23rd, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division participated in a Veterans Service Organization briefing by the Department of Homeland Security focused on the Enhanced Hiring Act Legislation, to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to appoint noncompetitively a qualified veteran to a position in the competitive service.

On Thursday, October 24th, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division attended a briefing by DoD MILGEARS. MILGEARS is a new tool (powered by Credentialing Opportunities On-Line - COOL) that assists service members connect their military occupation, career goals, interests and credentials to chart customized career pathways.

On Thursday, October 24th, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division attended a discussion hosted by Verizon and Women Veterans ROCK. The event will feature distinguished veterans who will share their stories and speak to the successes and challenges that women servicemembers and veterans face today.

On Friday, October 25th, the National Veterans Employment & Education Division organized its first state education advocacy call between Veterans Education Success and grassroots as part of

the LJAF education advocacy grant. Recent state legislative updates were discussed as well as building out standard operating procedures to contact Department leadership.

TOPIC 3: EMPLOYMENT

Governor Announces Local Workforce Development Boards to Receive Veterans Performance Incentive Awards

Gov. Ron DeSantis announced today three Local Workforce Development Boards are being awarded Veterans' Performance Incentive Awards for their diligent work of providing employment and training opportunities to thousands of veterans. The three Local Workforce Development Boards being recognized for this achievement are CareerSource Central Florida, CareerSource Flagler Volusia and CareerSource Polk.



“Florida’s workforce is better because of the valuable contributions veterans provide in a variety of careers across the state,” said Governor DeSantis. “I applaud the important work these Local Workforce Development Boards are doing to connect veterans with meaningful employment after serving our country.”

The Veterans Performance Incentive Award is awarded to Local Workforce Development Boards in three categories by local workforce development area sizes: large, medium and small. A review committee comprised of representatives from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, CareerSource Florida and the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training reviews the nominations and selects the awardees.

The Veterans Performance Incentive Award is awarded to Local Workforce Development

“Governor Ron DeSantis understands the great level of skills, leadership and experience that veterans offer Florida businesses,” said Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Executive Director Ken Lawson. “Providing assistance and connecting veteran job-seekers with available resources to find a job will remain a priority for Florida.”

“The CareerSource Florida network is honored to help connect military veterans with rewarding careers or train for new opportunities,” said CareerSource Florida President and CEO Michelle Dennard. “On behalf of our board of directors, I extend sincere congratulations to CareerSource Central Florida, CareerSource Flagler Volusia and CareerSource Polk for this special recognition of their innovative efforts over this past year to provide exemplary service to veterans and their families.”

“A vibrant economy with low unemployment, coupled with the lack of a state income tax and mild winters, brings many veterans and their families to Florida,” said Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs Executive Director Danny Burgess. “To keep them here, we offer unique benefits such as in-state tuition rates for veterans and their families using the Post-9/11 GI Bill, several layers of property tax exemptions, expanded veterans’ preference, and extensive benefits, licensure and fee

waivers for many activities and occupations. We are proud of the work that CareerSource is doing to help ensure Florida is the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.”

The CareerSource Florida network employs more than 150 veteran employment specialists, who are also veterans themselves and are dedicated to helping veterans find employment.

TOPIC 4: VETERAN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

The U.S. Air Force (50th Space Wing) issued the following news:

Approximately 30 Schriever Airmen volunteered to help military veterans during the 21st annual Homeless Veteran Stand Down at the Colorado Springs City Auditorium, Colorado, Oct. 15.

Lt. Col. Michael Schriever, 2nd Space Operations Squadron director of operations and military assistance coordinator for El Paso County Homeless Veteran Coalition, said Schriever Air Force Base has supported the coalition since 2008.

According to EPCHVC, they execute their mission through three primary programs: transitional housing initiative, homeless veteran stand down and ongoing homelessness community prevention efforts.

"There are multiple things our coalition works toward," Schriever said. "Throughout the year we offer outreach to homeless veterans or support for veterans who may be headed for homelessness. We receive a couple of grants, and we receive assistance requests from other organizations."

During the event, veterans can get hot meals, haircuts and dental work according to Schriever. "There was also an Army veterinarian available to take care pets, winter clothing were supplied and they can get registered up in the [Department of Veterans Affairs] database to provided further assistance," he said.

Schriever said they gained access through the VA to the government's surplus system of items this year. "Our team here ordered \$25,000 worth of boots, coats and winter clothing from the government surplus system and were handed out to the veterans at this year's stand down," he said.

Maj. Robyn Burrell, 310th Operations Group Standardization and Evaluation flight chief of standardization, and first-time volunteer, said she thinks it is important to show veterans in the community that Front Range service members care.

"My experience volunteering has been great," she said. "I got to work with a veteran named Oscar and it's interesting to hear his take on life."

Events such as this provide local service members a chance to connect with their local community.

"Having the footprint of our Airmen at the event shows our willingness to be in the community and show how much we care," he said. "Service to your country is honorable and a great thing to do, but service to your fellow person is just as honorable and important."

In addition to providing service, Airmen also had a chance to talk with the veterans about their military experience.

Volunteers from Fort Carson, Peterson AFB, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command were also on site to support.

"These military veterans have knowledge and experiences to share," Schriever said. "The difference is, they are people who need a helping hand and at some point, we all may need someone to help us out, listen, or connect with us. This program makes that possible."

TOPIC 5: CAREER FAIRS & ROUNDTABLES

This week, work continued on The American Legion's upcoming hiring events to be staged in Fort Carson (CO), Aurora (CO), JBLM (WA), King George (VA), Fort Meade (MD), Lexington Park (MD)

Peterson AFB, CO

October 23, 2019, 10am - 1pm

The Club at Peterson

260 Glasgow, Bldg. 1013

Peterson AFB, CO 80914

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE MILITARY SPOUSE HIRING FAIR

10 a.m.-1 p.m. | Hiring fair

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)

[More information](#)

Camp Pendleton, CA

October 24, 2019, 8am - 4pm

Pacific Views Event Center

202850 San Jacinto Road

Camp Pendleton, CA 92058

CAMP PENDLETON CAREER SUMMIT

1-4 p.m. | Career fair

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)

[More information](#)

Bethesda, MD

October 24, 2019, 7pm - 9pm

USO Bethesda

4565 Taylor Road #83

Bethesda, MD 20815

BETHESDA MILITARY SPOUSE HIRING RECEPTION

7-9 p.m. | Networking reception

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)

[More information](#)

The mission of The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission is to take actions that affect the economic wellbeing of veterans, including issues relating to

veterans' education, employment, home loans, vocational rehabilitation, homelessness, and small business.

TOPIC 6: SMALL BUSINESS

COFC Strikes a Blow to VA-Verified VOSBs and SDVOSBs

In an article by John Mattox stated: A few months ago, GAO confirmed that where VA uses GPO as its buying agent, it still must comply with the Rule of Two in 38 U.S.C. 8127(d). After VA took corrective action, however, another bid protest was again filed, but this time in the Court of Federal Claims (COFC).

Surprisingly, there, the Court concluded differently, finding that GPO was not required to set aside the procurement for SDVOSBs or VOSBs, despite acting on VA's behalf. In so doing, it has weakened the Rule of Two.

Before a dive into the Court's decision, let's discuss some background. For this acquisition, VA sent a requisition to GPO to procure suicide prevention gun locks. (VA justified using GPO because it wanted information, related to its Veterans Crisis Line, printed on the locks and on labels affixed to the locks; it also wanted wallet cards to accompany the locks.)

Veterans4You protested (initially to GAO) the solicitation's terms because VA had not given priority to veteran-owned small businesses—contrary to the Rule of Two statutory mandate in 38 U.S.C. 8127(d). GAO, stressing 38 U.S.C. 8128(a), sustained the protest and recommended corrective action. Only days after the GAO decision, VA submitted a new requisition to GPO for the imprinted gun locks, labels, and wallet cards. There, VA requested that GPO “to the maximum extent feasible” set aside the procurement for CVE verified SDVOSBs and VOSBs. GPO responded that it did not have authority to set aside the procurement, but it would “accommodate the spirit of VA's request.”

To that end, GPO included in its bid list verified SDVOSBs and VOSBs which were registered with GPO to ensure that they had a chance to submit a proposal. It also included other GPO vendors which had veteran affiliations. Yet, the new solicitation was issued on an unrestricted basis.

<http://smallgovcon.com/u-s-court-of-federal-claims/cofc-strikes-a-blow-to-va-verified-vosbs-and-sdvosbs/>

TOPIC 7: EDUCATION

Why federal spending on veterans education benefits has soared nearly 250 percent

Federal spending on veterans' education benefits grew nearly 250 percent over the span of 10 years, an increase largely attributed to one veterans program: the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Post-9/11 GI Bill comprised roughly \$11 billion in federal support for veterans' education benefits in 2017, according to a new study from the Pew Charitable Trusts. That's more than four times the amount spent in 2017 on all seven other federal programs dedicated to veterans education, which amassed a total of \$2.5 billion in federal spending.

In comparison, numbers adjusted for inflation show that total spending on veterans' higher education programs reached nearly \$4 billion in 2007 — before the Post-9/11 GI Bill took effect.

“The federal government has long provided resources to help veterans and their dependents pursue higher education,” the study said. “The 2009 implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill significantly increased the amount of support available by providing funding for tuition, housing, and other educational expenses.”

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, approved by President George W. Bush in 2008, offers service members and veterans who have served active duty for at least 90 days since Sept. 10, 2001 payments for tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance and a stipend for textbooks and supplies for up to 36 months.



Length of active duty service dictates what percentage service members and veterans qualify for. Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, tuition at public universities is covered at the in-state tuition rate. Meanwhile, up to \$24,476.79 is covered at private institutions during the 2019-2020 academic school year. This number typically increases a bit annually.

Housing benefits are also provided, an amount calculated using the Department of Defense’s Basic Allowance for Housing, or BAH, rates for an E5 with dependents based on the cost of living where the school’s main campus is located. The Forever GI Bill approved in 2017 will modify this compensation so the stipend is instead calculated based off the location of the campus a student takes most classes. This change is expected to take effect in December.

Those attending school only online qualify for \$894.50 in their monthly housing stipend. Additionally, the Post-9/11 GI Bill covers up to \$1,000 in books and supply fees each year. Service members and veterans may transfer the Post-9/11 GI Bill to dependents — under certain conditions. If a service member has already completed six years of active duty service and can complete an addition four after the Department of Defense approves a transfer, dependents are eligible to receive the benefit instead. However, active-duty Purple Heart recipients may transfer the benefit to dependents at any point. Although federal spending on Post-GI Bill benefits have grown, federal spending on other veterans higher education programs has shrunk since 2009. Pew’s analysis found that \$4.6 billion was spent on other veterans programs in 2009, versus \$2.4 billion in 2017.

These programs include the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, and the Survivors’ and Dependents’ Educational Assistance Program. Pew’s data are adjusted based off of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Price Index to accommodate inflation, and represent constant 2017 dollars.

The GI Bill originated as a benefit for veterans after World War II following the passage of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 and has since been modified several times, including in 2017 when President Donald Trump signed the Forever GI Bill.

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Week Ending: 10/25/19
