Veterans in Texas: A Demographic Study
2021 Update

The Texas Workforce Investment Council prepared this updated report to detail the demographic characteristics of the veteran population in Texas. While there is much comparative national data in the full report, this summary document focuses mainly on the data and analysis devoted to Texas veterans. Estimates from the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), the most recent data available, were used for this demographic report update.

Estimates indicate that approximately seven percent of the civilian population 18 years and older in Texas were veterans in 2019. Many veterans have received extensive training in the military and possess valuable technical skills, leadership abilities, and the numerous soft skills (such as time management, team orientation, strong work ethic, etc.) that are in high demand by employers. These attributes make the veteran population a valuable resource for Texas employers and the Texas economy. The Texas workforce system must ensure that veterans are prepared for employment following their military service and that employers have access to every available skilled worker.

The Texas Veteran Population

A greater percentage of Texas veterans were White (62 percent) and African American (14.8 percent) compared to nonveterans (43.2 percent and 11.8 percent, respectively). Approximately 19 percent of the Texas veteran population was Hispanic.

Percentages of Male and Female Texas Veterans by Period of Service

Period of Service	Male		Female		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Gulf War Era II	297,432	82.6%	62,460	17.4%	359,892
Gulf War Era I	183,936	82.7%	38,454	17.3%	222,390
Vietnam	396,522	95.8%	17,501	4.2%	414,023
Korea	51,871	96.5%	1,861	3.5%	53,732
World War II	16,613	95.7%	752	4.3%	17,365
Other	389,325	88.0%	53,108	12.0%	442,433
Total	**1,335,699**		**174,136**		**1,509,835**

Source: 2019 ACS PUMS (microdata)

Percentages of Texas Veterans and Nonveterans 18 and Older by Education Level

Education Level	Veterans	Nonveterans
Less than high school graduate	4.6%	16.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	23.1%	26.7%
Some college or associate's degree	40.4%	29.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	32.0%	27.7%
Civilian population age 18 years and over	**1,509,835**	**20,091,315**

Source: 2019 ACS PUMS (microdata)

While female veterans made up only 11.5 percent of the total Texas veteran population, the female veteran population has grown considerably over time. These changes can especially be seen when period of service is considered. 17.4 percent of Gulf War Era II veterans and 17.3 percent of Gulf War Era I veterans are female in Texas.

While the Texas veteran population is younger than the U.S. veteran population, it is older than the nonveteran population in the state. The median age of a veteran in Texas is 50, whereas the median age of a nonveteran is 35. An analysis of the time period in which a majority of Texas veterans served in the military partially explains the age difference between the veteran and nonveteran populations, with the greater number of Texas veterans from earlier periods of service inflating the average age of the veteran population.

The veteran and nonveteran populations also differ according to education level. At every level of postsecondary education, a greater percentage of the veteran population has attained that level of education compared to the nonveteran population.

Characteristics of the Veteran Labor Force

United States

Unemployment data for the veteran population in Texas is limited. However, national data can be used to approximate veteran employment in Texas. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicate that in 2019, the unadjusted unemployment rate was 3.0 percent for veterans and 3.6 percent for nonveterans.

Differences in unemployment rates are observed when veterans' eras of service are considered. From 2008 to 2017, the unemployment rates of Gulf War Era II veterans have been greater than for nonveterans. This difference between the rates of Gulf War Era II veterans and nonveterans increased from 2009 to 2011. In 2011, the annual unadjusted unemployment rate for Gulf War Era II veterans was 12.1 percent. By 2018, Gulf War Era II veteran unemployment and nonveteran unemployment was equal at 3.8 percent. In 2019, veteran unemployment was lower for Gulf War II veterans than for nonveterans for the first time (3.5 percent to 3.6 percent, respectively). The unemployment rates of Gulf War Era I veterans have paralleled the rates of nonveterans, but have been lower. In 2019, Gulf War Era I veteran unemployment was 2.6 percent.

Texas

The veteran population of Texas is not evenly distributed across the state. Similar to findings at the national level, counties with large populations generally have the largest numbers of veterans. Harris County, the most populous county in the state, is home to 157,761 veterans. The counties with the largest numbers of veterans in 2019 were Harris, Bexar, Tarrant, Dallas, Bell, El Paso, Travis, Denton, Collin, and Williamson. Almost half of the state's veteran population resided in these 10 counties.

In Texas, approximately 49 percent of veterans (747,187 individuals) were labor force participants in 2019. These veterans accounted for 5.2 percent of the state's total workforce. The unemployment rate for veterans is lower than the state average. In 2019, the unemployment rate was 3.5 percent for Texas nonveterans and 3.2 percent for Texas veterans.

In 2019, the median age of a veteran labor force participant in Texas was 49. Approximately 47 percent of employed veteran labor force participants were between the ages of 35 to 54. Approximately 22 percent of the veteran labor force was between the ages of 55 to 64. Fifteen percent of the veteran labor force participants in Texas were 65 or older.

Veteran labor force participants held various jobs in numerous industries throughout Texas. Approximately 63 percent of veteran labor force participants in Texas were employees of private, for-profit companies in 2019. Approximately 22 percent were federal, state, or local government employees, and nearly 10 percent were self-employed.

Twenty industries employed approximately 30 percent of the veteran labor force in Texas. The industry that employed the greatest percentage of veterans was construction.
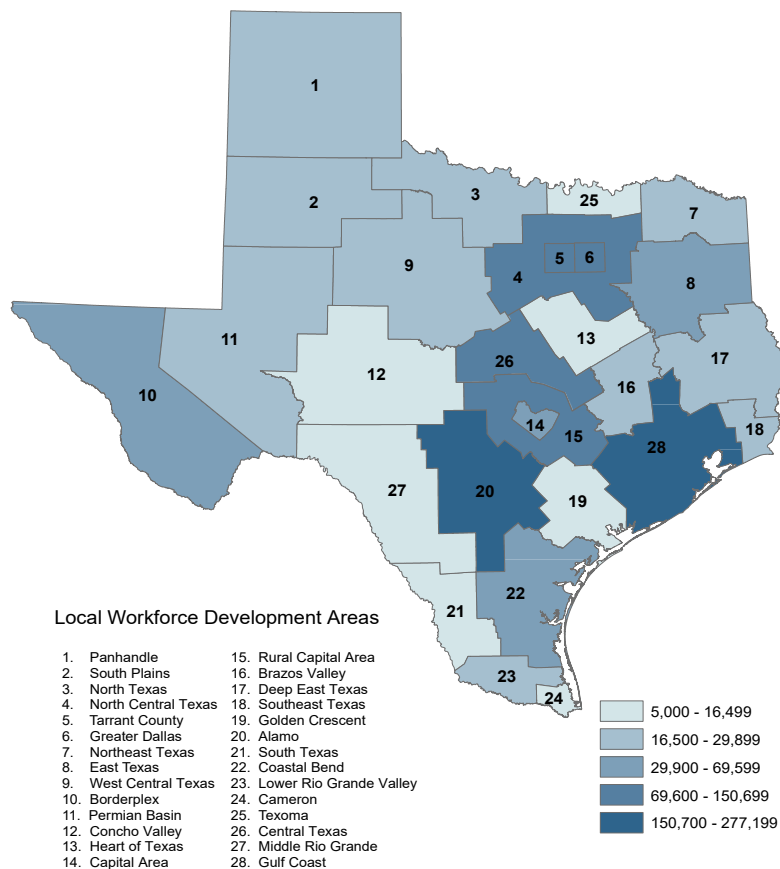
In Texas in 2019, employed veterans earned an average salary of $64,277 (inflation adjusted for 2019). However, salary differences exist within the veteran population based on numerous demographic factors. On average, male veteran labor force participants earned $66,190 whereas female veterans earned $50,896. Salaries also varied depending on level of educational attainment. Average salary generally increases with higher levels of educational attainment. The highest average yearly salary was earned by veteran labor force participants with a master's degree or higher. Veterans with an educational attainment level below the ninth grade tend to be associated with lower annual wages.

Veterans in Texas by Local Workforce Development Area

Local Workforce Development Areas

1. Panhandle
2. South Plains
3. North Texas
4. North Central Texas
5. Tarrant County
6. Greater Dallas
7. Northeast Texas
8. East Texas
9. West Central Texas
10. Borderplex
11. Permian Basin
12. Concho Valley
13. Heart of Texas
14. Capital Area
15. Rural Capital Area
16. Brazos Valley
17. Deep East Texas
18. Southeast Texas
19. Golden Crescent
20. Alamo
21. South Texas
22. Coastal Bend
23. Lower Rio Grande Valley
24. Cameron
25. Texoma
26. Central Texas
27. Middle Rio Grande
28. Gulf Coast

Legend:
- 5,000 - 16,499
- 16,500 - 29,899
- 29,900 - 69,599
- 69,600 - 150,699
- 150,700 - 277,199

Source: 2019 ACS PUMS (microdata)

Top 10 Industries Employing Texas Veterans

Industry	Number	Percent
Construction	75,450	5.0%
Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities	43,382	2.9%
Elementary and Secondary Schools	42,379	2.8%
National Security and International Affairs	33,781	2.2%
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, and Specialty Hospitals	31,841	2.1%
Computer Systems Design and Related Services	23,652	1.6%
Restaurants and Other Food Services	20,856	1.4%
Truck Transportation	20,249	1.3%
Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	17,338	1.1%
Investigation and Security Services	15,504	1.0%

Source: 2019 ACS PUMS (microdata)

Observations

The analyses presented in this study illustrate the veteran population according to age, educational attainment, reported disabilities, and other factors. Compared to nonveterans, the veteran population tends to be older, more educated, White, and male. However, data also indicate that female veterans make up a greater percentage of the veteran population for later periods of service.

The veteran population is a valuable resource for Texas employers and the Texas economy. The data sets provided in this demographic study are presented to assist policy makers and program planners in the design and implementation of relevant programs and services.