Veterans in Texas: A Demographic Study
2019 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 indicate that seven percent of the civilian population 18 years and older in Texas were veterans in 2017. 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 successfully transition to employment following their military service so that employers have access to every available skilled worker.

The Texas Veteran Population

A greater percentage of Texas veterans are non-Hispanic whites (60.1 percent) and African Americans (14.3 percent) compared to nonveterans (37.2 percent and 11.9 percent, respectively). Approximately 19 percent of the Texas veteran population is Hispanic.

Percentage 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	257,210	82.3%	55,198	17.7%	312,408
Gulf War Era I	181,136	81.0%	42,462	19.0%	223,598
Vietnam	411,211	95.9%	17,721	4.1%	428,932
Korea	67,380	97.1%	1,995	2.9%	69,375
World War II	27,590	95.8%	1,223	4.2%	28,813
Other	421,523	88.7%	53,546	11.3%	475,069
Total	1,366,050		172,145		1,538,195

Source: 2017 ACS microdata

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

Education Level	Veterans	Nonveterans
Less than high school graduate	4.9%	17.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	23.3%	26.4%
Some college or associate's degree	41.2%	30.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	30.6%	26.5%
Civilian population age 18 years and over	1,538,195	19,405,173

Source: 2017 ACS microdata

While female veterans made up only 11 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. Almost 18 percent of Gulf War Era II veterans and 19 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 51, whereas the median age of a nonveteran is 31. 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. In 2018, the annual average unemployment rate of nonveterans between the ages of 18 to 24 was eight percent. For veterans between the ages of 18 to 24, the annual unemployment rate was 8.2 percent. Between the ages of 25 to 34, the annual unemployment rate was 3.9 percent for nonveterans and 4.1 percent for veterans. For the other age categories, the unemployment rates were similar.

Differences in unemployment rates are observed when veterans' eras of service are considered. From 2008 to 2018, the national unemployment rates of Gulf War Era II veterans have been greater than for nonveterans. 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. The unemployment rates of Gulf War Era I veterans have paralleled the rates of nonveterans, but have been lower. In 2018, Gulf War Era I veteran unemployment was 2.8 percent.

Texas

The veteran population of Texas is not evenly distributed across the state. Similar to the 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 156,803 veterans. The counties with the largest numbers of veterans in 2017 were Harris, Bexar, Tarrant, Dallas, Collin, Travis, Bell, El Paso, Denton, and Montgomery. Over 40 percent of the state's veteran population resided in these 10 counties.

In Texas, approximately 54 percent of veterans (783,175 individuals) were labor force participants in 2017. These veterans accounted for 5.7 percent of the state's total workforce. The unemployment rate for veterans is lower than the state average. In 2017, the unemployment rate was 4.5 percent for Texas and 3.5 percent for Texas veterans. However, differences in unemployment do exist within the veteran population. For example, Gulf War Era II Texas veterans had a 5.3 percent unemployment rate in 2017.

In 2017, the median age of a veteran labor force participant in Texas was 43. Approximately 46 percent of employed veteran labor force participants were between the ages of 35 to 54. Approximately 21 percent of the veteran labor force was between the ages of 55 to 64. Approximately 12 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 61 percent of veteran labor force participants in Texas were employees of private, for-profit companies in 2017. Approximately 25 percent were federal, state, or local government employees and nearly 10 percent were self-employed.

Twenty industries employed 35.6 percent of the veteran labor force in Texas. The industry that employed the greatest percentage of veterans was construction.
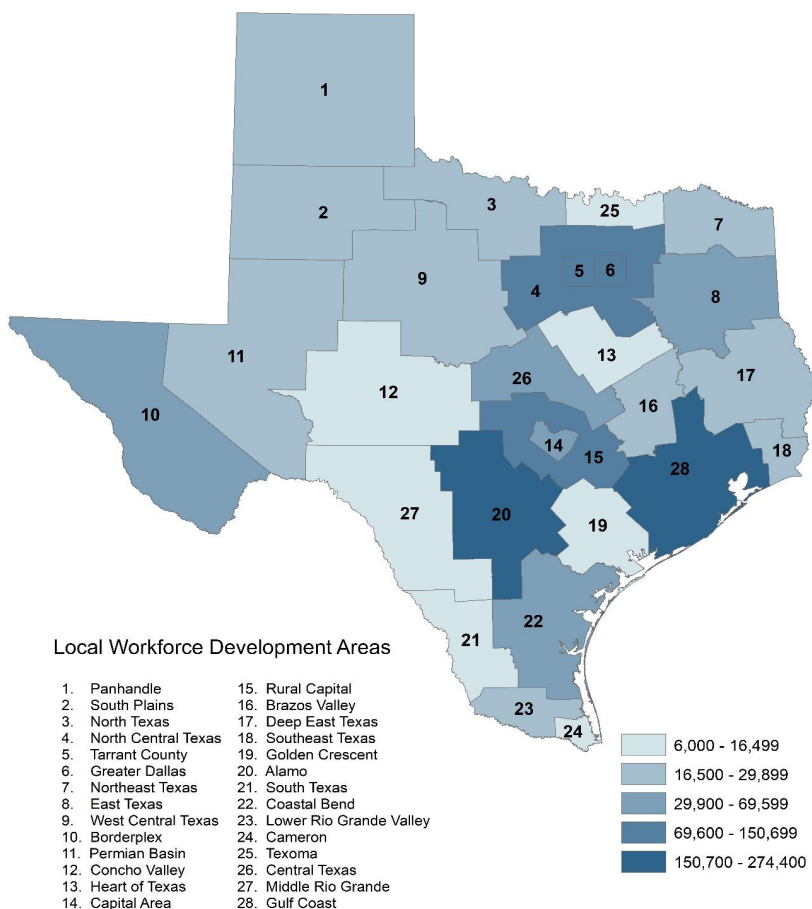
In Texas in 2017, employed veterans earned an average salary of $60,012 (inflation adjusted for 2017). However, salary differences exist within the veteran population based on numerous demographic factors. On average, male veteran labor force participants earned $62,014 whereas female veterans earned $45,892. Salaries also varied depending on level of educational attainment. Veteran labor force participants with a high school diploma or equivalent earned an average yearly salary of $45,135. 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 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
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

	6,000 - 16,499
	16,500 - 29,899
	29,900 - 69,599
	69,600 - 150,699
	150,700 - 274,400

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017

Top 10 Industries Employing Texas Veterans

Industry	Number	Percent
Construction	73,315	4.8%
National security and international affairs	55,584	3.6%
Hospitals	47,680	3.1%
Justice, public order, and safety activities	47,109	3.1%
Elementary and secondary schools	39,203	2.5%
Support activities for mining	36,780	2.4%
Restaurants and other food services	33,062	2.1%
Computer systems design and related services	23,060	1.5%
Truck transportation	22,130	1.4%
Architectural, engineering, and related services	19,977	1.3%

Source: 2017 ACS microdata

Observations

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.

Veterans offer employers the skills, knowledge, and experience that Texas businesses need to thrive. These individuals can strengthen the current and future Texas economies and are a valuable resource for Texas employers. The Texas workforce system must ensure that employers have access to every potential skilled worker.