

Veterans in Texas: A Demographic Study

2016 Update



Following consultations with the Texas Veterans Commission, 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 primarily on the data and analysis devoted to Texas veterans.

Estimates indicate that 8.2 percent of the civilian population 18 years and older in Texas were veterans in 2014. 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 (66.9 percent) and African Americans (13 percent) compared to nonveterans (45.7 percent and 11.8 percent, respectively). Approximately 17 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	245,487	80.4%	59,845	19.6%	305,332
Gulf War Era I	292,991	83.3%	58,739	16.7%	351,730
Vietnam	501,588	96.3%	19,272	3.7%	520,860
Korea	115,285	97.5%	2,956	2.5%	118,241
World War II	62,107	96.5%	2,253	3.5%	64,359
Other	125,442	92.1%	10,760	7.9%	136,202
Total	1,342,900		153,824		1,496,724

Source: 2014 ACS microdata

While female veterans made up only 10 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.

While the median age of a veteran in Texas is 63, approximately half of the estimated 22,000 Texas residents separating from the military in fiscal year 2015 were 24 years old or younger. It can be expected that a large percentage of them will seek civilian employment.

The median age of a nonveteran is 42. 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 educational attainment, a greater percentage of the veteran population has achieved that level of education compared to the nonveteran population.

Percentages of Texas Veterans and Nonveterans 25 and Older by Education Level

Education Level	Veterans	Nonveterans
Less than high school graduate	6.0%	19.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	23.6%	25.3%
Some college or associate's degree	41.3%	28.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	29.1%	27.7%
Civilian population age 25 years and over	1,465,557	15,566,932

Source: 2014 ACS microdata

Characteristics of the Veteran Labor Force in Texas

Unemployment data for the veteran population in Texas is limited. However, national data can be used to approximate veteran employment in Texas. In 2014, the national annual unemployment rate of nonveterans between the ages of 18 to 24 was 12.5 percent. For veterans between the ages of 18 to 24, the annual unemployment rate was 16.2 percent. Between the ages of 25 to 34, the annual unemployment rate was 6.5 percent for nonveterans and 7.7 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 2014, 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 2014, Gulf War Era II veteran unemployment was 7.2 percent and nonveteran unemployment was six percent. The unemployment rates of Gulf War Era I veterans have paralleled the rates of nonveterans but have been lower. In 2014, Gulf War Era I veteran unemployment was 4.2 percent.

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 187,235 veterans. The counties with the largest numbers of veterans in 2014 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 (813,594 individuals) were labor force participants in 2014. These veterans accounted for 6.5 percent of the state's total workforce. The unemployment rate for veterans is lower than the state average since the Texas veteran population is older than the nonveteran population in the state. In 2014, the unemployment rate was 5.9 percent for Texas and 5.5 percent for Texas veterans. However, differences in unemployment do exist within the veteran population. For example, Gulf War Era II Texas veterans had a 5.2 percent unemployment rate in 2014, compared to 7.2 percent for U.S. veterans from the same service period.

In 2014, the median age of a veteran labor force participant in Texas was 45. Approximately 43 percent of veteran labor force participants were between the ages of 35 to 54 (the largest age-specific group). Approximately 23 percent of the veteran labor force was between the ages of 55 to 64. Approximately 16 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 62 percent of veteran labor force participants in Texas were employees of private, for-profit companies in 2014. Approximately 24 percent were federal, state, or local government employees and nearly seven percent were self-employed.

Twenty industries employed 51 percent of the veteran labor force in Texas. The top five industries employing veterans employed more than 25 percent of the veteran labor force in Texas, as can be seen in the table to the right.

In 2014, Texas veteran labor force participants earned an average salary of \$55,844 (inflation adjusted for 2014).

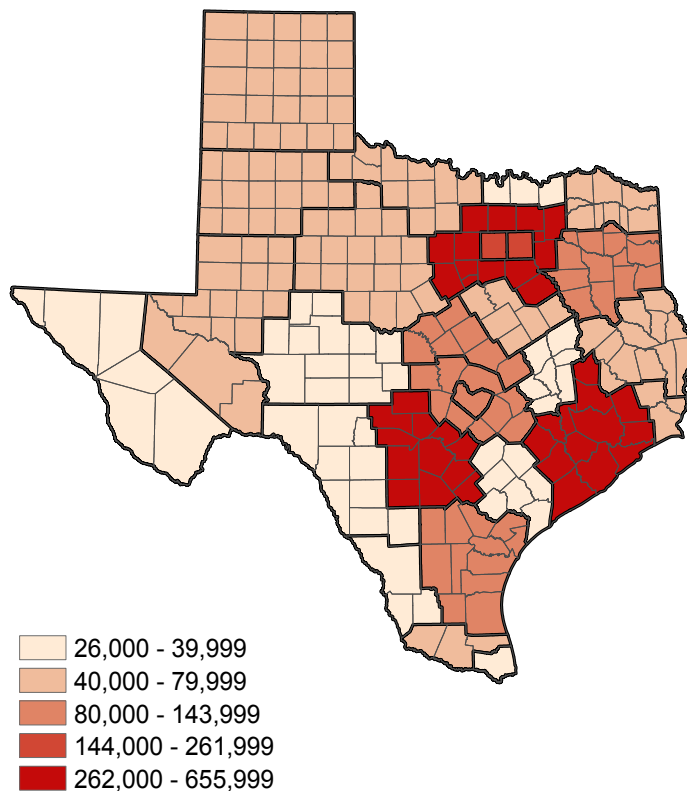
However, salary differences exist within the veteran population based on numerous demographic factors. On average, male veteran labor force participants earned \$57,328 whereas female veterans earned \$44,287. Salaries also varied depending on level of educational attainment. Veteran labor force participants with a high school diploma or equivalent earned an average yearly salary of \$39,166. 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.

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.

Veterans in Texas by County



Source: U.S. Veterans Affairs VetPop2014 projections

Top 10 Industries Employing Texas Veterans

Industry	Number	Percent
Construction	63,266	7.8%
National security and international affairs	47,481	5.8%
Hospitals	35,636	4.4%
Justice, public order, and safety activities	35,416	4.4%
Elementary and secondary schools	32,260	4.0%
Support activities for mining	24,913	3.1%
Restaurants and other food services	19,565	2.4%
Computer systems design and related services	16,720	2.1%
Truck transportation	15,690	1.9%
Architectural, engineering and related services	15,286	1.9%

Source: 2014 ACS microdata