

10-1-2010

Research Brief: Maine Labor Market Activities of Veterans

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

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Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Labor and Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information, "Research Brief: Maine Labor Market Activities of Veterans" (2010). *Center for Workforce Research and Information Documents*. Paper 286.
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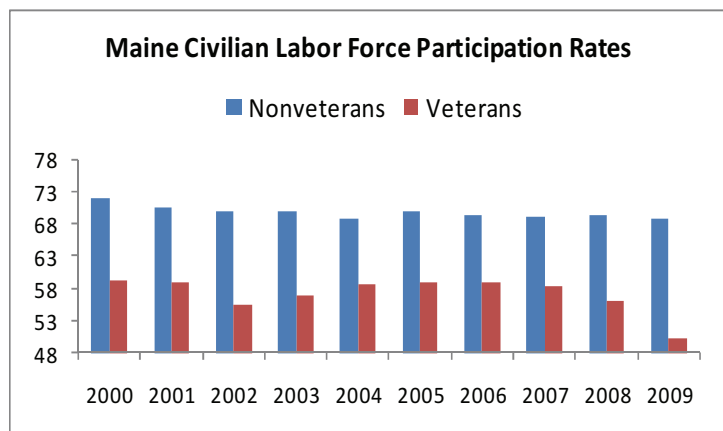


October 2010

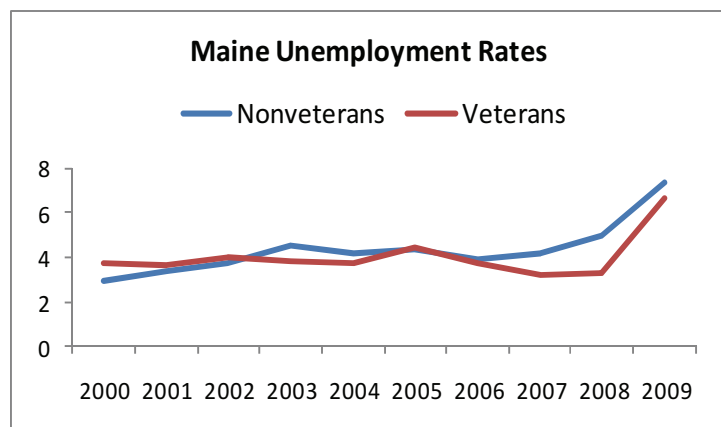
Maine Labor Market Activities of Veterans

The Current Population Survey (CPS) defines veterans as men and women who have previously served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and who were civilians at the time they were surveyed. According to CPS data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2009 there were 141,000 veterans ages 20 and over in Maine; 71,000 were in the labor force. In a separate section, American Community Survey (ACS) data is used to provide more detail.

Labor Force Participation-CPS data indicates that veterans in Maine have consistently participated in the labor force at a lower rate than the nonveteran population. In 2009, 50.3 percent of the veterans were active in the labor force compared to 68.8 percent of the nonveteran civilian noninstitutional population. In part, the lower rate of veteran participation is due to the age distribution of the veteran population. Veterans are older, on average, than nonveterans (see ACS data below). Labor force participation drops as individuals age beyond the prime working years.



Unemployment Rate-Maine veterans lately have recorded an unemployment rate below the nonveteran statewide average. The Maine unemployment rate for all veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces was 6.6 percent in 2009 according to the CPS compared to a nonveteran unemployment rate of 7.3 percent. However, ACS data presented below indicates that younger veterans recorded a relatively high unemployment rate for 2009.



From the American Community Survey

More detailed data concerning veterans is available from the ACS. The ACS differs slightly from the CPS due to methodologies and timing of the surveys. In addition, the CPS statewide count is for veterans 20 and over while the ACS counts veterans 18 and over for population and 18 to 64 for labor force.

In Maine, veterans are predominately male, and over 60 percent of the veterans are 55 or older. In part, this reflects the characteristics of veterans who served during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam era.

Maine Civilian Population Aged 18 and Over for 2009

Age	Veterans				Nonveterans			
			Total				Total	
	Male	Female	Number	Percent	Male	Female	Number	Percent
18 to 34 years	6,950	784	7,734	5.8	126,129	132,954	259,083	28.4
35 to 54 years	33,085	4,485	37,570	28.4	156,179	195,045	351,224	38.6
55 to 64 years	31,814	1,342	33,156	25.1	57,753	91,857	149,610	16.4
65 to 74 years	24,737	785	25,522	19.3	26,319	56,161	82,480	9.1
75 years and over	27,185	1,091	28,276	21.4	10,406	58,137	68,543	7.5
Total	123,771	8,487	132,258	100.0	376,786	534,154	910,940	100.0

The ACS provides estimates of labor force by age for veterans (ages 18 to 64). Veterans under the age of 35 participated in the labor force at about the same rate as veterans 35 to 54 years of age; however, younger veterans had a much higher unemployment rate.

Labor Force Status of Maine Veterans for 2009

Labor Force Status	Age		
	18-34	35-54	55-64
Population	7,734	37,550	33,156
Labor Force	6,739	32,405	19,518
Participation Rate	87.1%	86.3%	58.9%
Employment	5,641	30,468	18,042
Unemployment	1,098	1,937	1,470
Unemployment Rate	16.3%	6.0%	7.5%

Source: American Community Survey.

The high unemployment rate for veterans aged 18 to 34 may be accounted for in part by the higher unemployment rate normally experienced by younger workers. However, the unemployment rate for young veterans (16.3 percent) was also higher than the unemployment rate for young nonveterans (10.5 percent).

