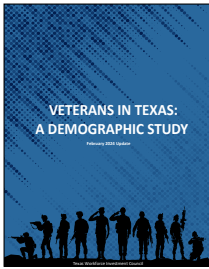


Veterans in Texas: A Demographic Study

2024 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 2021 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 2021. 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 (61 percent) and African American (14.3 percent) compared to nonveterans (42.9 percent and 11.7 percent, respectively). Approximately 20 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	426,163	82.6%	89,598	17.4%	515,761
Gulf War Era I	371,233	85.3%	63,775	14.7%	435,008
Vietnam	469,587	95.9%	19,844	4.1%	489,431
Korea	58,087	97.2%	1,690	2.8%	59,777
World War II	16,135	95.4%	780	4.6%	16,915
Other	3,134	92.8%	243	7.2%	3,377
Total	1,344,339		175,930		1,520,269

Source: 2021 ACS PUMS (microdata)

While female veterans made up only 11.6 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. For example, 17.4 percent of Gulf War Era II veterans and 14.7 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 58, whereas 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.

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

Education Level	Veterans	Nonveterans
Less than high school graduate	3.6%	14.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	23.7%	28.2%
Some college or associate's degree	40.3%	29.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	32.3%	28.4%
Civilian population age 18 years and over	1,520,269	19,897,938

Source: 2021 ACS PUMS (microdata)

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 2021, the unadjusted unemployment rate was 4.4 percent for veterans and 5.3 percent for nonveterans.

Differences in unemployment rates are observed when veterans' eras of service are considered. From 2008 to 2017, the unemployment upward and downward trend has been consistent where the unemployment rates of Gulf War Era II veterans have been greater than the 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). During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, unemployment reached its highest in about a decade with 8.1 percent for nonveterans, 7.3 percent for Gulf War Era II veterans, and 4.9 percent for Gulf War Era I. The end of 2021 the BLS data shows that the unadjusted unemployment rate was 5.3 percent for nonveterans, 4.6 percent for Gulf War Era II veterans, and 3.5 percent for Gulf War Era I veterans.

Texas

Veterans in Texas by Local Workforce Development Area

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. Bexar County was home to 162,004 veterans passing Harris County, the most populous county in the state with 153,601. The counties with the largest numbers of veterans in 2021 were Bexar, Harris, 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 (770,385 individuals) were labor force participants in 2021. These veterans accounted for 5.4 percent of the state's total workforce. The unemployment rate for veterans is lower than the state average. In 2021, the unemployment rate was 5.7 percent for Texas nonveterans and 5.4 percent for Texas veterans.

In 2021, 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 61.5 percent of veteran labor force participants in Texas were employees of private, for-profit companies in 2021. Approximately 23.6 percent were federal, state, or local government employees, and nearly 10 percent were self-employed.

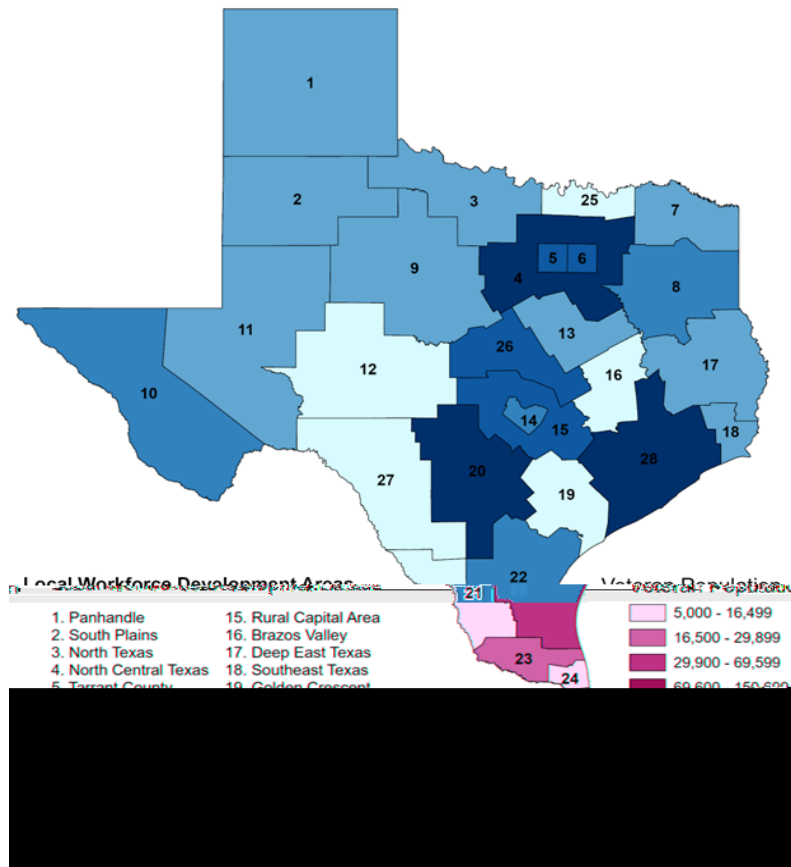
Twenty industries employed approximately 30 percent of the veteran labor force in Texas. The industry that employed the greatest percentage of veterans was construction.

In Texas in 2021, employed veterans earned an average salary of \$63,283 (inflation adjusted for 2021). However, salary differences exist within the veteran population based on numerous demographic factors. On average, male veteran labor force participants earned \$65,919 whereas female veterans earned \$45,245. 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.

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.



Source: 2021 ACS PUMS (microdata)

Top 10 Industries Employing Texas Veterans

Industry	Number	Percent
Construction	75,180	4.9%
National Security and International Affairs	44,082	2.9%
Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities	43,385	2.9%
Elementary and Secondary Schools	38,123	2.5%
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, and Specialty Hospitals	33,510	2.2%
Computer Systems Design and Related Services	23,956	1.6%
Truck Transportation	22,347	1.5%
Restaurants and Other Food Services	21,782	1.4%
Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	17,935	1.2%
Colleges, Universities, And Professional Schools, Including Junior Colleges	15,504	1.0%

Source: 2021 ACS PUMS (microdata)