



NC Justice Center

*Opportunity
and prosperity for all*

A PROFILE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA

Veterans face unemployment as they transition to the civilian labor force.

Nationally, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans has increased over the year.

- From October 2010 to October 2011, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans increased by nearly 2 percentage points to 12.1 percent from 10.6 percent.¹
- In October 2011, 859,000 veterans from all wars and other service periods were without jobs. This is roughly equivalent to 171 brigades of the U.S. Army. To put that number in perspective in September 2009, there were 23 combat brigades deployed in Afghanistan.²

Veterans in North Carolina have fared better than the nation but continue to experience persistent joblessness.

- In 2010, 8.2 percent of all veterans in the state were without jobs while the rate for the nation is slightly higher at 8.5 percent.
- Veterans without jobs often face challenges in connecting with jobs and can even face discrimination.³

Unemployment in North Carolina is driven by the lack of jobs and the continued loss of jobs even during the official economic recovery. Current projections suggest that employment levels nationally will not reach the pre-recession peak until early 2014.⁴

- North Carolina has a jobs shortfall of 515,000 that is the number of jobs that will be needed to reach pre-recession employment levels.⁵
- Since the official recovery began in June 2009, North Carolina has experienced job growth in only ten months.⁶
- The loss of state and local government jobs in the recovery period have dragged down total employment. From August to September alone North Carolina lost 13,700 jobs in state and local government.⁷
- For veterans, the loss of public sector jobs due to federal and state level budget cuts will represent a significant challenge. National data shows that post-9/11 veterans were twice as likely to work in the public sector as were nonveterans.⁸

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table A-5. Employment Status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of services, and sex, not seasonally adjusted.

² A brigade of the U.S. Army is comprised of 5,000 soldiers. Troop Levels in Afghanistan from New York Times, Infographic, October 1, 2009. Accessed at: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/10/01/world/middleeast/afghanistan-policy.html?ref=world>

³ Examples of these stories in North Carolina can be found: <http://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/content/career-advice/military-transition/soldier-struggling-with-unemployment.html> and <http://fayobserver.com/articles/2011/10/02/1115996?sac=Home>

⁴ <http://usmayors.org/79thAnnualMeeting/documents/USCMpressreleasemetreport062011.pdf>

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2011.

⁶ Data includes up to September 2011.

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2011.

⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 20, 2011. Employment Situation of Veterans: News Release.

Unemployment insurance provides families who have lost a job through no fault of their own with resources to meet basic needs.

- The average weekly benefit amount of unemployment insurance paid in 2010 was \$298.⁹ For the average worker, this represents just 38.6% of their wages before job loss.
- In North Carolina, the average monthly unemployment insurance payment represents only 32 percent of a basic budget for a family of three.¹⁰
- Recent national data from the American Community Survey found that unemployment insurance benefits kept 3.2 million Americans out of poverty in 2010.¹¹

Extended unemployment benefit programs currently supported with federal dollars will expire on December 31, 2011.

- Federal legislation established the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program and allowed states to receive full federal funding for the Extended Benefits (EB) program. Together, the federal EUC and EB programs provide 34 to 73 weeks of assistance after state unemployment programs (in North Carolina that is 26 weeks) have been exhausted.
- In January 2012 alone, estimates by the National Employment Law Project found that 69,700 North Carolinians will be affected by the loss of unemployment benefits.¹² Many thousands of North Carolina's veterans and jobless workers will face significant financial challenges without this modest support.

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⁹ ESC, Monthly Activity Report, January 2011.

¹⁰ The Living Income Standard includes elements of a basic budget—housing, food, child care, transportation, and health care—necessary to make ends meet in North Carolina and was updated by the NC Justice Center for 2010.

¹¹ American Community Survey, 2011.

¹² National Employment Law Project, October 2011. Hanging by a Thread. Accessed at: http://nelp.3cdn.net/68172c0cee6bd3e294_czm6iiviu.pdf