

# I'm housed.... Now what?

A discussion about  
unemployment and the Veteran  
population



# Overview of Topics

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- Statistics pertaining to unemployment
- Stigma of hiring Veterans
- Current Veterans Health Administration (VHA) programs
- Incentives for employers to hire Veterans
- Current projects

# What You Should Know

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Statistics about Veterans and unemployment

# Demographic Information

- “In 2013, 21.4 million men and women, or 9 percent of the civilian non-institutional population age 18 and over, were veterans.”
- Veterans from WWII, Korea, and Vietnam accounted for nearly half of the total veteran population (9.8 million).
- 2.8 million veterans served during OEF/OIF/OND, 30 percent of which are reported to be current or past members of a reserve component



# Bureau of Labor Statistics

## 2013 Report

- Percentage of unemployed Veterans has actually declined from 7.0 to 6.6 percent since 2012

Veteran Status	2012			2013		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>TOTAL VETERANS</b>						
Civilian non-institutional population.....	21,183	19,368	1,815	21,397	19,173	2,225
Civilian labor Force.....	11,006	9,884	1,122	10,975	9,565	1,410
Participation rate.....	52.0	51.0	61.8	51.3	49.9	63.4
Employed.....	10,233	9,204	1,029	10,253	8,940	1,313
Employment-population ratio.....	48.3	47.5	56.7	47.9	46.6	59.0
Unemployed.....	773	680	93	722	625	97
Unemployment rate.....	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.9</b>
Not in labor force.....	10,177	9,484	693	10,422	9,608	815

Table A. Employment status of civilian non-institutional population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service and sex, 2012-2013 annual averages

# Bureau of Labor Statistics

## 2013 Report

- How does this compare with the civilian population's unemployment rate?

Veteran Status	2012			2013		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>NON-VETERANS</b>						
Civilian non-institutional population.....	213,211	93,425	119,785	215,339	94,850	120,489
Civilian labor force.....	142,017	71,493	70,524	142,391	72,114	70,277
Participation rate.....	66.6	76.5	58.9	66.1	76.0	58.3
Employed.....	130,817	65,692	65,125	132,189	66,712	65,477
Employment-population ratio.....	61.4	70.3	54.4	61.4	70.3	54.3
Unemployed.....	11,200	5,801	5,399	10,202	5,402	4,800
Unemployment rate.....	<b>7.9</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>6.8</b>
Not in labor force.....	71,194	21,933	49,261	72,948	22,736	50,212

Table A. Employment status of civilian non-institutional population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service and sex, 2012-2013 annual averages

# Bureau of Labor Statistics

## 2013 Report

- Are there any noticeable differences amongst the newly returning Veterans?

Veteran Status	2012			2013		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>GULF WAR-ERA II VETERANS</b>						
Civilian non-institutional population.....	2,566	2,136	2,837	2,837	2,259	579
Civilian labor force.....	2,071	1,774	297	2,286	1,879	407
Participation rate.....	80.7	83.1	68.9	80.6	83.2	70.3
Employed.....	1,866	1,606	259	2,081	1,713	368
Employment-population ratio.....	72.7	75.2	60.2	73.3	75.8	63.6
Unemployed.....	205	168	37	205	166	39
Unemployment rate.....	9.9	9.5	12.5	9.0	8.8	9.6
Not in labor force.....	496	362	134	552	380	172

Table A. Employment status of civilian non-institutional population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service and sex, 2012-2013 annual averages

# Common Misperceptions about Veteran Workers

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The Stigma of Service



# Resistance: Is There a “Growing Problem?”

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- Persistent media narratives and headlines describing Veterans as “dangerous” individuals or “ticking time bombs” are contributing to a negative stereotype for the population, specifically newer veterans
- High-profile stories are gaining national attention in media outlets

# “Experts: Vets’ PTSD a Growing Problem”

## BENJAMIN COLTON BARNES

- *Veteran OIF, 2007-2009*

Accused of opening fire on a park ranger in Mount Rainier National Park, Washington



## ITZCOATL OCAMPO

*Veteran OIF, 2008*

Suspected in the murder of 4 homeless men in California

# “Experts: Vets’ PTSD a Growing Problem”



- “It’s important to note, experts said, that the two cases represented the extreme end of a spectrum of behavior signifying difficulties faced by returning troops, and some experience little difficulty, if any.”

- “What we don’t want to do is stigmatize veterans by saying they’re walking **time bombs**,” said Elspeth Ritchie, chief clinical officer for the Washington D.C. Department of Mental Health and a former U.S. Army Colonel. “They’re not.”

*From that same article....*

# “Police Get Help with Vets Who Are Ticking Time Bombs”

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- “The Justice Department is funding an unusual national training program to help police deal with an increasing number of volatile confrontations involving highly trained and often heavily armed combat veterans.”
  - Kevin Johnson, USA Today reporter



- Training is a response to police stand off involving Joshua Eisenhower, an Army Staff Sergeant and Veteran of multiple tours

# Quotes About the Suspects

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- “...believed he suffered from PTSD... was emotionally unstable, vindictive and anger-prone... owned many knives and guns.”

*-Barnes*

- He was a bit more serious...seemed like there was something on his mind. He seemed really depressed and down, and things in his life weren't looking that well.”

*-Ocampo*

- “Under psychiatric care...”

*-Eisenhauer*

# An “In Depth Briefing”

- Reports that 1 in 3 returning veterans “suffer” from PTSD
- “Blackouts, flashbacks, night terrors, and sudden rages are common among veterans... PTSD has been cited as a factor in many acts of vets running amok...”
  - 20 January 2012, *The Week*



# The Facts: Findings from Bureau of Justice Statistics

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- Percentage of veterans in federal and state prisons has steadily declined over past 30 years
  - 140,000 total Veterans incarcerated
  - Comprises of ~10% of total prison population
- 62% of Veterans incarcerated were discharged honorably
- 1 in 5 Veterans incarcerated reported exposure to combat during their service
- Veterans overall had shorter criminal histories than nonveteran inmates, and majority were first time offenders

# Mental Health Histories in Combat and Non-Combat Vets

- Mental health histories showed few differences between combat and non-combat Veterans

	Combat	Non-Combat
<b>Any Mental Health Problem:</b>	52%	55%
<b>Recent history of mental health services:</b>	31%	30%
<i>Mental health therapy in year before arrest:</i>	20	22
<b>Symptoms of mental health disorders:</b>	40%	45%
<i>Mania disorder:</i>	33	40
<b>Estimated number of inmates:</b>	25,400	102,100



# Veteran Inmates vs. General Population

## Percent of Inmates in Prison

	State		Federal	
	Veteran	Nonveteran	Veteran	Nonveteran
<b>Any mental health problem:</b>	54.40%	56.50%	42.90%	45.00%
<b>Recent history of mental health services:*</b>	29.90%	23.60%	20.70%	13.00%
Told had disorder by mental health professional:	11.6	9.2	9.6	4.9
Had overnight hospital stay:	8.5	5.1	3.6	1.9
Used prescription medications:	23	17.4	16.1	9.6
Had professional mental health therapy:	21.1	14.4	11.4	8
<b>Symptoms of mental health disorders:**</b>	44.70%	49.70%	35%	40.20%
Major depressive episode:	23.3	23.6	17	15.9
Mania disorder:	38.1	43.8	31.2	35.5
Psychotic disorder:	13.6	15.6	5.7	10.6

\* In year before arrest or at any time since admission

\*\* In 12 months prior to interview

*From Bureau of Justice Report*

# Updates Since Publication

- Number of Veterans present in prison population and local jails has risen from 140,000 (2004) to 223,000 (2007)
- Despite differences in the numbers, veterans continue to comprise of approximately 9.4% of the total prison population



- No other statistical data available at this time.

# Current Programs Available

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Therapeutic Supported Employment Services  
at the VA Illiana Health Care System

# Transitional Work/Compensated Work Therapy

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- **What is Transitional Work/Compensated Work Therapy (TW/CWT)?**
  - Transitional Work program is a work for pay program that targets individuals who are actively seeking competitive employment.
  - TW/CWT program partners with the Department of Veterans Affairs, other government entities, and community employers by contracting jobs so that individuals enrolled in programming can obtain tangible work experience

# Compensated Work Therapy/Incentive Therapy

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- What is Compensated Work Therapy/Incentive Therapy (CWT/IT)?
  - Incentive Therapy is a work-based program that targets individuals with chronic psychiatric or physical disabilities who are seeking participation in constructive, daily activities
  - The goal of the program is to engage individuals in therapeutic treatment interventions through the bolstering job hardening skills, vocational development, time management, and personal accountability

# Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence

Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR) House est. 2001



- In 1996 with the addition of the Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PRRTP), the movement was away from long-term domiciliary care and towards short-term rehab care.
- The CWT/TR is a work-based PRRTP offering a 24-hour therapeutic setting for Veterans involved in TW/CWT.

# Supported Employment

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## ● What is Supported Employment (SE/CWT)?

- Supported Employment is a VA program that targets individuals with a serious mental illness (SMI) on disability who are wanting to return to the complete work force in a part-time or full-time capacity.
- The goal of the program is to assist individuals in obtaining and maintaining employment through the development of vocational assessment plans (VAP), job readiness skills, advocacy, and job hardening skills.

# Eligibility for TSES Programs

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Any Veteran with a desire to work who has a diagnosed serious mental illness (SMI), substance use disorder, homeless, or experiencing socioeconomic hardship



# Enrollment Process

## ○ Interested Veterans must:

- Obtain a consult from their mental health provider
- Have a desire to return to the workforce & improve vocational skills
- Be willing to engage in the development of a individual rehabilitation plan
- Obtain a medical clearance to work



# Peer Support

- Peer support occurs when individuals with the same or similar issues provide assistance and derive help from one another
  - This can manifest in groups, organizations, or individual providers
- Peer Specialists are providers with documented mental illness and/or substance use disorders who have demonstrated successful management of symptoms
  - Encourage others to successfully engage in treatment activities by sharing their personal experience, instilling hope, and promote recovery
  - Defined competencies and are trained to utilize their life narrative to promote recovery in others



# Peer Support

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- Descriptive studies have shown that individuals in a Peer Support capacity are better able to:
  - Empathize
  - Access social services
  - Respond to client strengths/desires
  - Demonstrate tolerance, patience, flexibility, and persistence
- More than 20 states of Medicaid reimbursement for Peer Support Services

# TSES Team

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# What's In It for Employers?

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Incentives for hiring Veteran Workers

# Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

- WOTC is a Federal tax credit available to employers who hire and retain individuals from target groups with significant barriers to employment
- Annually, employers have claimed approximately \$1 billion in tax credits via the WOTC program
- There is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire to claim the tax credit



# Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

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- Depending upon the target group hired, employers are able to receive up to 25% (if the individual works at least 120 hours) or 40% (if the individual works at least 400 hours) of the new employee's first year salary in tax credit
  - Each target group does have a maximum tax credit allowable, so the credit received may be capped at less than 25-40%
  - <http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/wotcEmployers.cfm>

# Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

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## ◉ Who Qualifies for this tax credit?

- Veterans
- TANF Recipients
- SNAP (Food Stamp) Recipients
- Designated Community Residents
- Vocational Rehabilitation Referral
- Ex-felons
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Recipients





# Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

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## ● **How do I apply?**

- Complete page 1 of IRS Form 8850 by the day the job offer is made.
  - Complete page 2 of IRS Form 8850 after the individual is hired.
  - Complete ETA Form 9061 or ETA Form 9062 if the employee has been conditionally certified as belonging to a WOTC target group by a state workforce agency, Vocational Rehabilitation agency, or another participating agency.
  - Submit the completed and signed IRS and ETA forms to your state workforce agency. Forms must be submitted within 28 calendar days of the employee's start date.
- States may accept applications via mail, fax, or e-mail or may have an automated WOTC process for electronic submissions.
- Contact your state WOTC Coordinator to determine which method is preferred for submission.
- John Waters: 312-793-2913 or [john.m.waters@illinois.gov](mailto:john.m.waters@illinois.gov)

# State of Illinois Tax Credits

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## Veterans Job Credit

- Use IL Schedule 1299 to apply
- December 31, 2012 through December 31, 2016
  - 10% of qualified wages paid during the taxable year to an employee who is a “qualified veteran”
    - Not to exceed \$1,500 per year
  - 20% of qualified wages paid during the taxable year to an employee who is a “qualified unemployed veteran”
    - Not to exceed \$5,000 per year



# State of Illinois Tax Credits

## ○ Veterans Job Credit

- “Qualified Veteran” – an Illinois resident who meets the following criteria:
  - Member of the Armed Forces of the U.S (including reserve components) or of the IL National Guard
  - Served on Title X orders in support of Operation Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom
  - Honorable Discharge (validated by Service Record DD Form 214)
  - Hired on or after 1 January 2007
  - Employed a minimum of 185 during the tax year



# State of Illinois Tax Credits

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## ○ Veterans Job Credit

- “Qualified Unemployed Veteran” – an Illinois resident who meets the following criteria:
  - Member of the Armed Forces of the U.S (including reserve components) or of the IL National Guard
  - Served on Title X orders on or after 11 September 2001
  - Honorable Discharge (validated by Service Record DD Form 214)
  - Hired on or after 1 June 2012
  - Was unemployed for a total of 4+ weeks during the 6 week period preceding the date of hire
  - Employed a minimum of 185 during the tax year
    - OR 31 days if the employee was unemployed 6+ months preceding the date of hire

# State of Illinois Tax Credits

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## Ex-Felons Jobs Credit

- Use IL Schedule 1299 to apply
- For tax years beginning on/after 1 January 2007
  - 5% of qualified wages paid during the taxable year to an employee who is a “qualified ex-felon”
    - Not to exceed \$1,500 for total years claimed



# State of Illinois Tax Credits

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## ◉ Ex-Felons Job Credit

- “Qualified Ex-Offender” – an Illinois resident who meets the following criteria:



- Has been convicted of any crime in IL or any other jurisdiction, excluding offenses of a sexual nature
- Incarcerated in an IL adult correctional center
- Hired within 3 years of release

# Federal Bonding Program

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## ○ What is fidelity bonding?

- Insurance for employers that guarantees the honesty of a persons work
- Bonds range from \$5,000-\$25,000 for the first 6 months from hire with no deductible
  - Additional coverage can be purchased when the initial bond expires
- Protects employers from any act of stealing by a worker, to include:
  - Theft
  - Larceny
  - Embezzlement
  - Forgery
- Does NOT provide coverage for poor workmanship

# Federal Bonding Program

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## Who Is Eligible for Bonding Services?

- Any at-risk job applicant is eligible for bonding services, including: ex-offenders, recovering substance abusers (alcohol or drugs), welfare recipients, persons having poor financial credit, economically disadvantaged individuals who lack a work history, individuals dishonorably discharged from the military, etc.
- Anyone who cannot secure employment without bonding
- All persons bonded must meet the legal working age set by the State in which the job exists
- Bonds can be issued to cover already employed workers who need bonding in order to (a) prevent being laid off, or (b) secure a transfer or promotion to a new job at the company
- Bonding coverage can apply to any job at any employer in any State



# Federal Bonding Program

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## ● If seeking a bond:

- Visit your local Workforce Development Center
- Contact your State Bonding Representative
  - Mr. John Waters (Illinois)  
Bonding Services Coordinator  
312-793-2913 or  
[john.m.waters@illinois.gov](mailto:john.m.waters@illinois.gov)
- Or call: 1-877-872-5627



# Current TSES Projects

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# What's Coming for TSES

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- VA Center for Applied Systems Engineering (CASE) pilot program
  - Partnering with VA CASE to develop a proposal for a work contract with super employer Caterpillar in Peoria, IL for the purpose of training employees/managers on work reintegration practices
  - Supports Federal hiring initiatives
- First community based contracts with employers for Danville facility
  - University of Illinois (pending)
  - Auto Zone Distribution Center (pending)
  - City of Danville (pending)