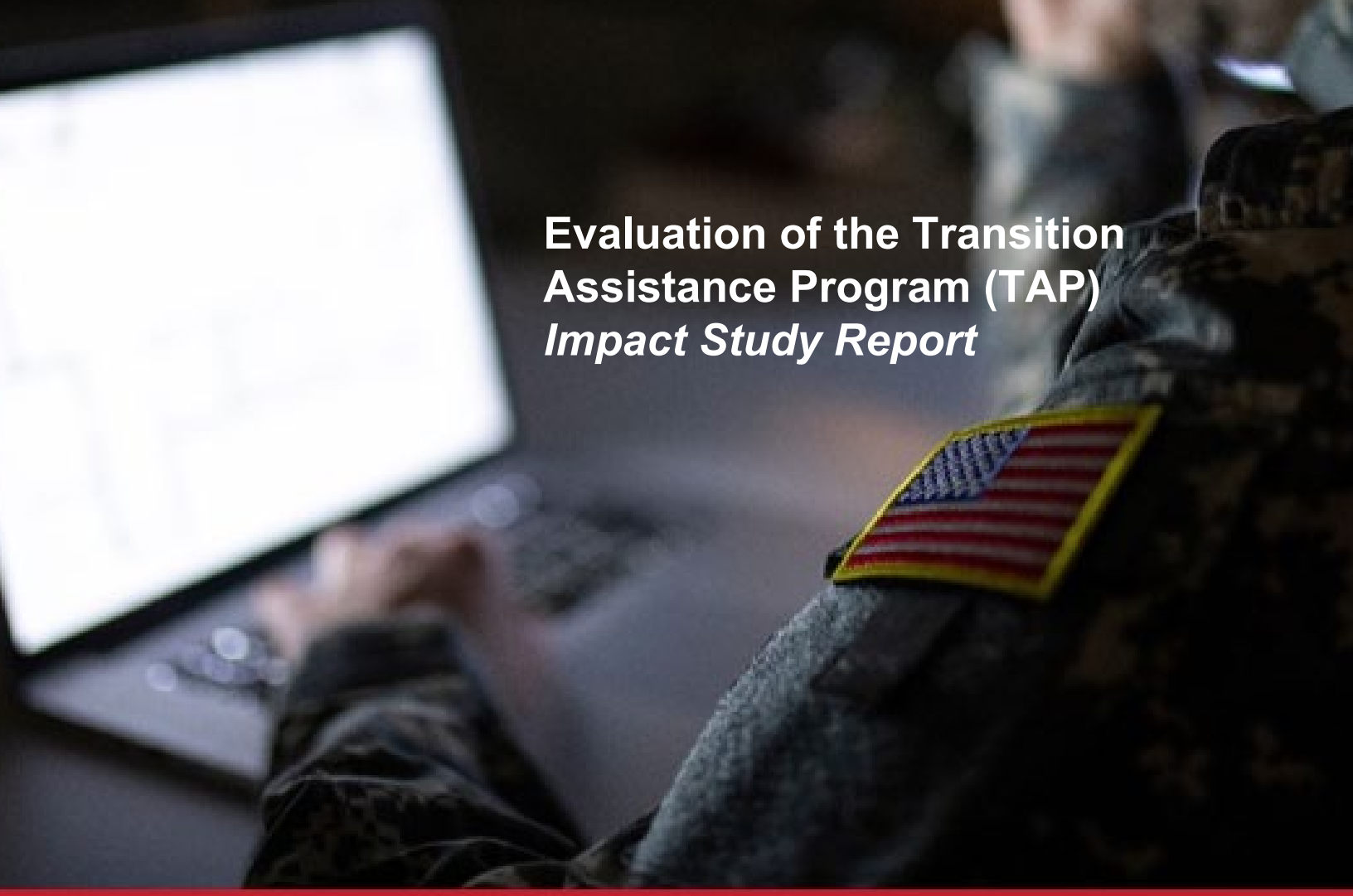

Evaluation of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
Impact Study Report

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Contents

Table of Exhibits

List of Acronyms

CRS	Career Readiness Standards
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
ENPP	Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot
ITP	Individual Transition Plan
FEIN	Federal Employer Identification Number
MOC	Military Occupational Classification
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NDNH	National Directory of New Hires
OEMA	Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis
PSM	Propensity Score Matching
RSV	Recently Separated Veteran
TAP	Transition Assistance Program
TGPS	Transition Goals, Plans, Success
TSM	Transitioning Service Member
UI	Unemployment Insurance
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VEI	Veterans Employment Initiative
VETS	U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service

Executive Summary

Transitioning from military service to civilian life creates many competing priorities, an adjustment to a new way of life, and the need to make major life decisions (Stull et al., 2020). For many, entering the civilian job market poses a substantial challenge. Transitioning service members (TSMs) face organizational and societal barriers when transitioning from the military, such as negative experiences with support services, perceived limited access to transition resources, workforce stigma (including the presumption of mental health issues), and a lack of comparable civilian certifications (Keeling et al., 2018; Stern, 2018). Personal barriers also exist and include physical, mental, or emotional trauma; a lack of planning and initiative; difficulty effectively communicating military experience to hiring managers; limited civilian professional networks; and self-esteem and identity issues that come with losing one's military identity (Keeling et al., 2018; Stern, 2017; Stern, 2018).

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and its federal partners[1] established TAP to help prepare separating and retiring Service members to successfully transition to civilian life. TAP prepares Service members to succeed with the transition process and obtain post-separation employment by helping them translate their military skills to the needs of civilian employers.

In 2012, TAP was revised in response to mandates from the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (VOW Act),[2] recommendations of the Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI) Task Force, and feedback gathered from participants and facilitators. This redesign, known as "Transition Goals, Plans, and Success" (Transition GPS), was introduced in January 2013 and fully implemented from October 2014 through June 2019.

Transition GPS provided a 5- to 7-day standardized curriculum to inform TSMs about the transition process, introduce benefits for which they are eligible, and guide them in concrete next steps. Transition GPS included four main elements:

- *Pre-Separation Counseling*. A TAP counselor would meet with a TSM to conduct a needs assessment and develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP).
- *Core Curriculum*.
  - A 1-day workshop provided by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) that included an introduction to transition resources, a financial planning course, and completion of the Military Occupational Classification (MOC) Crosswalk – a tool designed to help TSMs match skills learned in the military to potential civilian careers.

[1] TAP is the result of an interagency partnership between the U.S. Departments of Defense, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, and Education; the U.S. Office of Personnel Management; and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

[2] VOW (Veterans Opportunity to Work) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, Pub. L. No. 112-56 (2011) https://www.congress.gov/112/plaws/publ56/PLAW-112publ56.pdf

  - A 3-day DOL Employment Workshop focused on job seeking that included emerging best practices in career development and addressed the unique challenges that TSMs face (e.g., workforce stigma, a lack of civilian certifications).
  - A 1-day briefing by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) where TSMs learned how to apply for VA benefits and connect with the VA for future assistance.
- *Optional Training Tracks*. Two-day courses focused on higher education, career and technical education, or entrepreneurship.
- *Capstone Event*. Final procedure where a commander (or designee) verified that the TSM completed the required components and met the Career Readiness Standards (CRS). TSMs who did not meet the CRS were referred for additional assistance.

TAP has been preparing military personnel for the transition to civilian life for over 30 years; however, it has not been evaluated using a rigorous method. Previous evaluations consisted of process evaluations (Apperson, 2017; Keeling et al., 2018), outcome evaluations (Barton et al., 1995; Silva, 2011), or qualitative studies of TSM perceptions of the program (Baker, 2016; Bartee, 2018). DOL's Chief Evaluation Office contracted with ICF to evaluate the impact of TAP on the employment and wages of recently separated Veterans. The study used a quasi-experimental design with a matched comparison group of non-participants.

This report presents the study's findings on the impact of Transition GPS (the redesigned TAP program; 2014–2019) on employment and wages. It presents the estimated impacts of participating in Transition GPS up to 36 months post-separation. The report details the relationship between when a TSM completed the program and subsequent labor market outcomes. It also reports how the components of the core curriculum and supplemental courses relate to the outcomes.

About the Evaluation

The evaluation addressed two main research questions:

1. What is the impact of the Transition GPS program on employment-related outcomes for Army TSMs who participated in Transition GPS compared to Army TSMs who did not participate in Transition GPS?
2. Among participants and non–participants of Transition GPS, are there specific subgroups, such as women, racial/ethnic minorities, or persons with disabilities, for whom employment-related outcomes differed following separation?

To understand the impact of Transition GPS on employment-related outcomes, we compared the outcomes for TSMs who participated in Transition GPS (treatment group) to TSMs who did not participate (comparison group). We used an analysis – propensity score matching – to create a comparison group that was statistically equivalent on measured, observable participant characteristics. This included demographic and military career characteristics:

- *Demographic characteristics* – age, gender, race and ethnicity, marital status, number of dependents younger than 18 years of age, level of education prior to joining military, and disability status at separation

- *Military career characteristics* – pay grade at separation, military occupational specialty, base assignment at separation, number of deployments, years of service, and type of discharge

Once the groups were formed, we compared the outcomes between the groups using statistical models to determine program impacts. The study also explored *Transition GPS participation characteristics* and how they were related to employment and wage outcomes.

The evaluation used two sources of administrative data. The U.S. Military Academy at West Point's Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA) database provided information on TSM demographic characteristics, military characteristics, and Transition GPS participation. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) provided wage and employment outcome data. The study includes outcome data for up to 36 months post-separation.

Study Population

For this study we defined program participation based on TSMs' completion of the DOL Employment Workshop. Although other components of Transition GPS provide valuable transition tools, the DOL Employment Workshop is the component of Transition GPS that provides job search, application, and readiness training, making it the logical choice as a focal point for estimating the impact of Transition GPS on post-separation employment outcomes.

The study included two groups:

- ***Transition GPS Participants.*** The treatment group consisted of all Army TSMs who completed the DOL Employment Workshop between October 1, 2014, and June 30, 2019.
- ***Transition GPS Non-participants.*** The comparison group consisted of all Army TSMs who did not complete the DOL Employment Workshop prior to separation from the military and were separated between October 1, 2014, and June 30, 2019.

The Transition GPS group included 238,819 TSMs and the Transition GPS non-participant group included 50,139 TSMs, for a total of 288,958 TSMs prior to analysis. The sample was predominantly male (86 percent) with the majority of TSMs being ages 34 or younger (77 percent) and having only a high school diploma or the equivalent (76 percent) at Service entry. The racial/ethnic composition of TSMs was primarily White (58 percent), with smaller percentages of Black (22 percent), Hispanic (13 percent), and individuals of other races (7 percent). Only 18 percent of the sample had a reported disability. The military pay grade included enlisted (E), officers (O), and warrant officers (W),[3] with half being enlisted with 1 to 4 years of service (E–1 to E–4) and over half (80 percent) with less than 6 years of military experience.

[3] Warrant officers are specialized expert leaders that manage, maintain, administer, and operate military equipment, support activities, or technical systems.

Findings

How Does Participation in Transition GPS Impact Employment and Wages?

TSMs who completed Transition GPS had better employment outcomes than TSMs who did not complete the program.

Transition GPS participants obtained work significantly[4] faster than non-participants, with larger percentages finding jobs in the 1st quarter post-separation (80.9 percent vs. 80.0 percent, respectively).[5] They also had significantly higher rates of employment at 12 months post-separation (79.2 percent vs. 78.7 percent) but not at 6 months post-separation (84.0 percent vs. 84.4 percent).

Transition GPS participants had higher rates of employment retention.

For TSMs who were employed at 6 months post-separation, a significantly higher proportion of Transition GPS participants were employed at the same job at 12 months (59.0 percent vs. 56.0 percent) or at any job at 12 months (67.4 percent vs. 65.3 percent) compared to the non-participant group.

Transition GPS participants experienced fewer quarters without employment at 36 months post-separation.

No significant differences were found between the groups in quarters without employment at 12 months post-separation. However, non-participants were not employed for more quarters (3.22) than Transition GPS participants (3.11) at 36 months post-separation. This finding was significant.

Participation in Transition GPS was not associated with higher wages post-separation.

On average, employed Transition GPS participants earned significantly less than employed non-participants across time (Exhibit ES-1). However, the differences between the treatment and comparison groups decreased over time. Transition GPS participants earned $1,974 less at 6 months post-separation; $1,505 less at 12 months post-separation; $1,362 less at 24 months post-separation; and $1,238 less at 36 months post-separation.

Transition GPS participants had a smaller wage change between the 1st and 5th quarters.

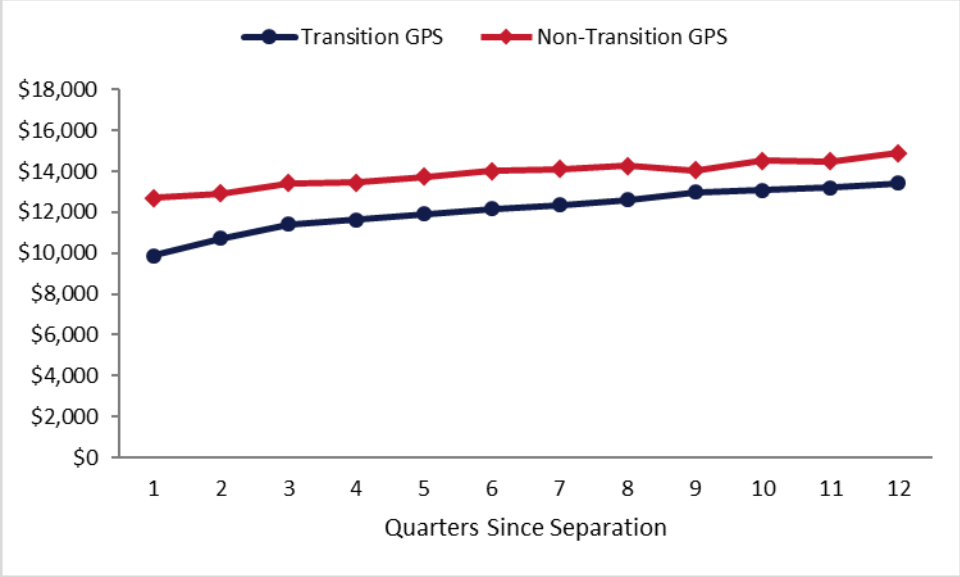
On average, Transition GPS participants' adjusted wages were significantly lower ($9,193) than non-participants' adjusted wages ($9,676) at the 5th quarter post-separation (after adjusting for

[4] Significance of this descriptive result was determined using a z-test for proportions ($p < .001$).

[5] Since we were working with data from the population of Army TSMs, we found many statistically significant findings for small group differences because of the large sample size. However, it is important to note that a 1-percentage-point difference in a binary outcome would be the equivalent of 2,890 TSMs in the overall sample. What this means is that even though the estimated differences may be small, the magnitude of the difference may be valuable. Where possible, we report standardized effect sizes that can be interpreted without influence from the sample size (i.e., some statistically significant findings yielded small effect sizes and some more moderate or large, suggesting differences may have practical significance).

their wage in the 1st quarter post-separation). Non-participants' wages grew more between the 1st and 5th quarters post-separation, compared to Transition GPS participants' wages.

Exhibit ES-1. Wages for Transition GPS Participants and Non-Participants by Quarter Since Separation, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
Note: Differences between the groups were statistically significant in each quarter ($p < .01$)
Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Are There Any Differences in Outcomes Among Subgroups?

We explored differences in outcomes for the following subgroups: gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, and military rank (pay grade). The subgroup findings mirrored the findings from the main analyses. Exhibit ES-2 presents differences in the employment and wage outcomes by subgroup (see Technical Supplement, Appendix H for results by the interaction of race and gender).

Time to Employment

On average, Transition GPS participants got a job significantly faster than non-participants for several subgroups. Men; Black TSMs; TSMs with a reported disability; TSMs without a reported disability; and TSMs in pay grades E–1 to E–4, E–7 to E–9, and W–1 to W–5 found jobs faster than TSMs in the comparison group. When examining findings by race and gender, Black men and Black women who participated in Transition GPS found jobs faster than other TSMs who did not participate in Transition GPS (84.4 percent of Black men and 79.9 percent of Black women found work in the 1st quarter).

Employment and Employment Retention

TSMs who did not participate in Transition GPS had higher employment rates at 6 months post-separation than Transition GPS participants for many of the subgroups, except for TSMs in pay grades E–1 to E–4 and O–1 to O–3 and TSMs

with no reported disabilities. At 12 months post-separation, Transition GPS participants had significantly higher employment rates than non-participants for all men; Black TSMs; White TSMs; TSMs without a reported disability; and TSMs in military pay grades E–1 to E–4, E–7 to E–9, O–4 to O–10, and W–1 to W–5. All other significant findings favored the comparison group.

When exploring findings by race and gender, men who participated in Transition GPS had significantly higher employment rates at 12 months than non-participants for Black TSMs and White TSMs. In fact, Black men who participated in Transition GPS had the highest employment rate
(85.3 percent) of all TSMs. All other findings favored the non-participants. No significant differences were found for Black women.

When findings were explored by subgroup, a significantly higher proportion of Transition GPS participants who were employed at 6 months post-separation were employed at the same job at 12 months compared to TSMs in the non-participant group. This included all men, as well as Black TSMs; Hispanic TSMs; White TSMs; TSMs with no reported disabilities; and TSMs in all pay grades, except E–5 to E–6 and E–7 to E–9. As with 12-month employment, larger proportions of Black TSMs who participated in Transition GPS remained at the same job (76.9 percent) compared to all other racial and ethnic groups. The non-participant group had significantly higher retention for all women and TSMs of other races.

Time Spent Without Employment

Transition GPS participants spent fewer quarters without employment at 12 months and 36 months post-separation than non-participants for several subgroups. Men; Black TSMs; TSMs of other races; White TSMs; and TSMs of all pay grades, except E–5 to E–6, had fewer quarters with no employment than non-participants.

Wages

For all but one subgroup, Transition GPS participants' wages were significantly lower than non-participants' wages at each follow-up period. Transition GPS participants in the E–1 to E–4 pay grades (early career staff) earned $334.16 more than non-participants at 24 months post-separation and $546.39 more at 36 months post-separation.

Wage Change From 1st Quarter to 5th Quarter

When compared to non-participants, Transition GPS participants experienced smaller wage growth between the 1st and 5th quarters post-separation for nearly all subgroups. The differences between Transition GPS participants' and non-participants' adjusted wages were significant for all subgroups except TSMs with disabilities and TSMs in the E–1 to E–4 pay grades.

Exhibit ES-2. Summary of Differences in Outcomes Between Transition GPS Participants and Non-participants by Subgroup, 2014–2021

	Gender	Race and Ethnicity	Disability Status	Military Pay Grade
	Time to employment • Men ⇓ • Women ⇔	Time to employment • Black ⇓ • Hispanic (any race) ⇔ • Other races ⇑ • White ⇔	Time to employment • With disabilities ⇓ • No disabilities ⇓	Time to employment • E–1 to E–4 ⇓ • E–5 to E–6 ⇑ • E–7 to E–9 ⇓ • O–1 to O–3 ⇔ • O–4 to O–10 ⇔ • W–1 to W–5 ⇓
	Employment (6m) • Men ⇔ • Women ⇓ Employment (12m) • Men ⇑ • Women ⇓ Retention at same job • Men ⇑ • Women ⇓	Employment (6m) • Black ⇔ • Hispanic (any race) ⇓ • Other races ⇓ • White ⇓ Employment (12m) • Black ⇑ • Hispanic (any race) ⇓ • Other races ⇓ • White ⇑ Retention at same job • Black ⇑ • Hispanic (any race) ⇑ • Other races ⇓ • White ⇑	Employment (6m) • With disabilities ⇓ • No disabilities ⇓ Employment (12m) • With disabilities ⇓ • No disabilities ⇑ Retention at same job • With disabilities ⇔ • No disabilities ⇑	Employment (6m) • E–1 to E–4 ⇑ • E–5 to E–6 ⇓ • E–7 to E–9 ⇓ • O–1 to O–3 ⇑ • O–4 to O–10 ⇔ • W–1 to W–5 ⇔ Employment (12m) • E–1 to E–4 ⇑ • E–5 to E–6 ⇓ • E–7 to E–9 ⇑ • O–1 to O–3 ⇓ • O–4 to O–10 ⇑ • W–1 to W–5 ⇑ Retention at same job • E–1 to E–4 ⇑ • E–5 to E–6 ⇓ • E–7 to E–9 ⇔ • O–1 to O–3 ⇑ • O–4 to O–10 ⇑ • W–1 to W–5 ⇑
	Unemployed (12m) • Men ⇓ • Women ⇑ Unemployed (36m) • Men ⇓ • Women ⇑	Unemployed (12m) • Black ⇓ • Hispanic (any race) ⇔ • Other races ⇑ • White ⇔ Unemployed (36m) • Black ⇓ • Hispanic (any race) ⇔ • Other races ⇑ • White ⇓	Unemployed (12m) • With disabilities ⇔ • No disabilities ⇔ Unemployed (36m) • With disabilities ⇔ • No disabilities ⇑	Unemployed (12m) • E–1 to E–4 ⇓ • E–5 to E–6 ⇑ • E–7 to E–9 ⇔ • O–1 to O–3 ⇓ • O–4 to O–10 ⇓ • W–1 to W–5 ⇓ Unemployed (36m) • E–1 to E–4 ⇓ • E–5 to E–6 ⇑ • E–7 to E–9 ⇓ • O–1 to O–3 ⇓ • O–4 to O–10 ⇔ • W–1 to W–5 ⇓

	Gender	Race and Ethnicity	Disability Status	Military Pay Grade
	Wages (6m) • Men ⇓ • Women ⇓ Wages (12m) • Men ⇓ • Women ⇓ Wages (24m) • Men ⇓ • Women ⇓ Wages (36m) • Men ⇓ • Women ⇓	Wages (6m) • Black ⇓ • Hispanic (any race) ⇓ • Other races ⇓ • White ⇓ Wages (12m) • Black ⇓ • Hispanic (any race) ⇓ • Other races ⇓ • White ⇓ Wages (24m) • Black ⇓ • Hispanic (any race) ⇓ • Other races ⇓ • White ⇓ Wages (36m) • Black ⇓ • Hispanic (any race) ⇓ • Other races ⇓ • White ⇓	Wages (6m) • With disabilities ⇓ • No disabilities ⇓ Wages (12m) • With disabilities ⇓ • No disabilities ⇓ Wages (24m) • With disabilities ⇓ • No disabilities ⇓ Wages (36m) • With disabilities ⇓ • No disabilities ⇓	Wages (6m) • E–1 to E–4 ⇓ • E–5 to E–6 ⇓ • E–7 to E–9 ⇓ • O–1 to O–3 ⇓ • O–4 to O–10 ⇓ • W–1 to W–5 ⇓ Wages (12m) • E–1 to E–4 ⇔ • E–5 to E–6 ⇓ • E–7 to E–9 ⇓ • O–1 to O–3 ⇓ • O–4 to O–10 ⇓ • W–1 to W–5 ⇓ Wages (24m) • E–1 to E–4 ⇑ • E–5 to E–6 ⇓ • E–7 to E–9 ⇓ • O–1 to O–3 ⇓ • O–4 to O–10 ⇓ • W–1 to W–5 ⇓ Wages (36m) • E–1 to E–4 ⇑ • E–5 to E–6 ⇓ • E–7 to E–9 ⇓ • O–1 to O–3 ⇓ • O–4 to O–10 ⇓ • W–1 to W–5 ⇔
	Wage change Q1–Q5 • Men ⇓ • Women ⇓	Wage change Q1–Q5 • Black ⇓ • Hispanic (any race) ⇓ • Other races ⇓ • White ⇓	Wage change Q1–Q5 • With disabilities ⇔ • No disabilities ⇓	Wage change Q1–Q5 • E–1 to E–4 ⇔ • E–5 to E–6 ⇓ • E–7 to E–9 ⇓ • O–1 to O–3 ⇓ • O–4 to O–10 ⇓ • W–1 to W–5 ⇓

Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

Notes: ⇑ TGPS had significantly higher outcomes; ⇓ TGPS had significantly lower outcomes; ⇔ No significant differences between the groups. Direction of outcome (i.e., higher/lower) does not equate to favorable/unfavorable.

Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Are Outcomes Related to When a TSM Completed Transition GPS?

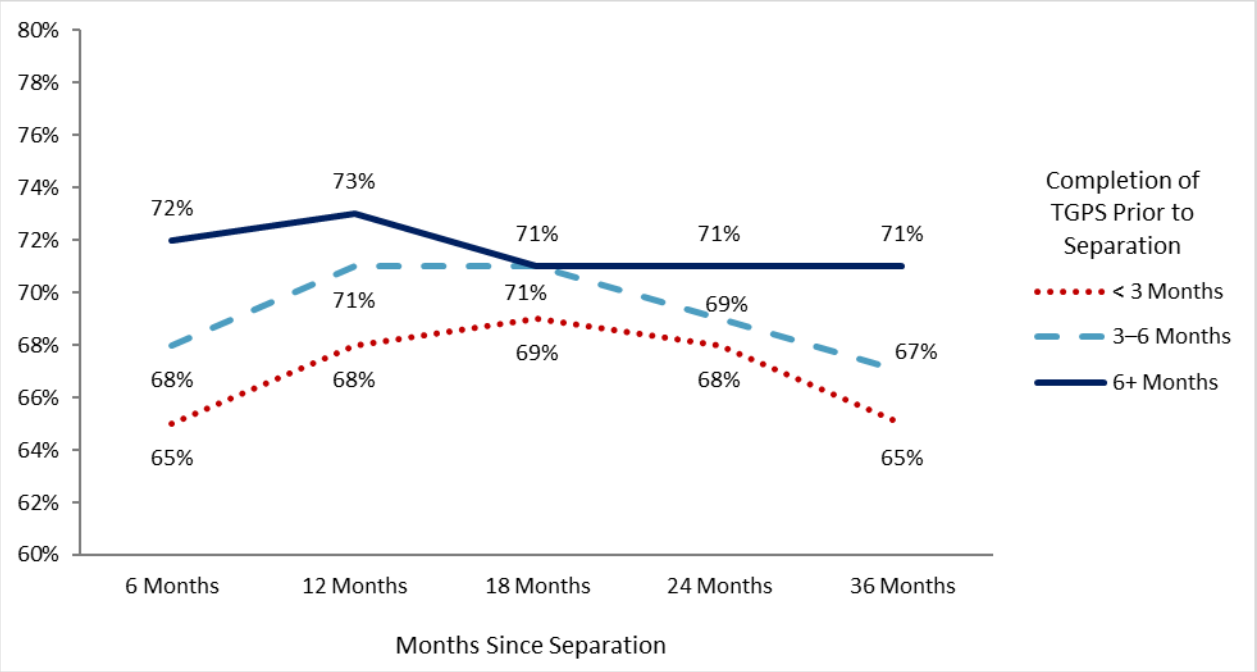
Most TSMs completed Transition GPS earlier in the year before separation (more than 6 months before separation). We explored the relationship between Transition GPS completion and employment and wages at 6, 12,18, 24, and 36 months after separation. TSMs who completed Transition GPS more than 6 months before separating had higher employment and

wage outcomes than TSMs who completed the program closer to separation (Exhibits ES-3 and ES-4).

Exhibit ES-3. Median Monthly Wages by Time From Transition GPS (TGPS) Completion to Separation, 2014–2021

Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit ES-4. Average Employment Rates by Time From Transition GPS (TGPS) Completion to Separation, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Are Outcomes Related to Transition GPS Components?

Although Transition GPS was mandatory, TSMs could be exempted for the following reasons: confirmed employment, confirmed education/training enrollment, participation in the retiring Service member transition program, retirement with 20 years' armed forces service, pending unit deployment, or prior participation in TAP. We found that out of the total number of TSMs in our study (N = 288,958), less than 10 percent (n = 26,059) completed all core components.

We examined the relationship between completion of the components of Transition GPS and outcomes. First, we examined the individual core DOD and VA components. We restricted the sample to TSMs who completed the DOL Employment Workshop (treatment group). We then assessed the relationship between completion of each individual component of Transition GPS and labor market outcomes. Completion of the VA Benefits Briefing was positively related to employment while the DOD Financial Planning Course was positively related to employment retention. Completion of the VA Benefits Briefing and DOD Financial Planning Course were also positively associated with wages.

For our next analysis, we restricted the sample to TSMs who completed all core components of Transition GPS (n = 26,059). We examined the relationship between outcomes and completing one of the three supplemental tracks. Completion of the Higher Education supplemental course was associated with lower employment and wages. Completion of the Career and Technical Training track was positively associated with employment at 24 months post-separation and non-significant at all other times. TSMs who completed the Career and Technical Training track

had the greatest wage gains. There were no significant relationships between completion of the Entrepreneurship track and employment or wages.

Discussion

Our evaluation found that Transition GPS participants obtained work faster than non-participants. They also had higher rates of employment at 12 months post-separation and had higher rates of employment retention. The employment outcomes were favorable for Transition GPS participants in several subgroups. We found that Black men who participated in the program found jobs faster than non-participants. Black men also had the highest employment rate at 12 months post-separation. We found favorable employment outcomes for TSMs in the early career military pay grades as TSMs in the E–1 to E–4 pay grades had higher employment rates at both 6 months and 12 months post-separation. However, we did not find higher employment rates among women and TSMs with reported disabilities.

Although Transition GPS participants had favorable employment outcomes, they earned less than non-participants as evidenced by the differences in adjusted wages. It is possible this may reflect the need for TSMs to find basic financial stability and build upon civilian connections before finding more suitable and sustaining opportunities elsewhere, as found in the literature (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic may also be influencing the study's findings. The time period for our study was 2014 to 2019. However, we tracked employment and wage outcomes for 36 months post-separation. For TSMs who left the military between 2017 and 2019, their outcomes include the time period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The national unemployment rate jumped from 3.7 percent in 2019 to 8.1 percent in 2020, with the total Veteran unemployment rate increasing from 3.1 percent to 6.5 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). The national labor force participation rate for Veterans also decreased from 49.2 percent to 48.3 percent. In our study, employment increased slightly for most groups from 6 to 18 months post-separation and declined 24 and 36 months post-separation. The decline may reflect the lower employment rates in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our study focused on the Transition GPS time period. Since that time, TAP was revised according to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2019. The U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) introduced its own strategic modifications to TAP, including one-on-one counseling and a curriculum for military spouses. Although the timeline and length of the program changed, the core curriculum content remains. It may be possible that our findings for the core components of TAP would still be relevant under the current version of TAP.

1. Introduction

Each year, large numbers of personnel leave the U.S. military. In 2021, 156,689 Service members transitioned out of the military, with 58,836 personnel leaving the Army – the largest Service branch of the U.S. military.[6] This transition process is a holistic journey that transcends career change and potentially affects many domains in the life of a Veteran and his or her family (Stull et al., 2020). For many, the transition to civilian life poses a substantial challenge. Transitioning service members (TSMs)[7] face societal, personal, and organizational barriers while preparing to return to civilian society and entering the civilian workforce. The transition process can involve difficult and conflicting emotions surrounding the reintegration process, including the return to normal life, relationships, and society, and some Service members are unprepared to manage these difficult experiences (Kester & Philips, 2017; Mitchell, 2017; Stern, 2018). Additionally, transitioning back into civilian life requires TSMs to relearn independent decision-making processes, which can contrast with the collective mindset they have become accustomed to during their time in the military (Hart, 2018; Morin, 2011). Given these barriers, finding employment is often one of TSMs' greatest hurdles (Keeling et al., 2018; Stone & Stone, 2015).

Although leadership, management, and organizational skills are capabilities that are well developed in many Service members, some TSMs have difficulty translating their experiences in a way that enables employers and hiring managers to quickly make the connection to civilian employment (Stern, 2018). In a survey on Veterans' well-being, Edelman (2018) found that 49 percent of Veterans reported difficulty with finding employment in their chosen field, and 58 percent said they had trouble finding employment at the level they desire. Major hurdles included negative experiences with support services; lack of planning; perceived limited access to transition programs; and various types of stigma, including the presumption of mental health issues (Keeling et al., 2018; Stern, 2018).

The **Transition Assistance Program (TAP)**, a joint effort of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal agencies,[8] is a vehicle to prepare separating and retiring Service members to successfully transition to civilian life. TAP prepares Service members to succeed with the transition process and obtain employment post-separation by helping them translate their military skills to the needs of civilian employers.

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[6] 2021 Demographic Profile of the Military Community
https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2021-demographics-report.pdf

[7] A *transitioning service member* (*TSM)*, as defined by the DOL Employment and Training Administration, is a Service member in active duty status (including separation leave) who participates in employment services and is within 24 months of retirement or 12 months of separation. A *recently separated veteran (RSV),* as defined by 38 USC § 4211(6), is any Veteran during the 3-year period beginning on the date of such Veteran's discharge or release from active duty.

[8] TAP is the result of an interagency partnership between the U.S. Departments of Defense (DOD), Labor, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, and Education; the U.S. Office of Personnel Management; and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

DOL's Chief Evaluation Office contracted with ICF to evaluate the impact of the TAP on the employment and wages of Veterans separating between 2014 and 2019 when the program was substantially revised.

Challenges Facing Transitioning Service Members

Just as all Service members assimilate into military life and culture, all will eventually undergo a process of reintegration as they return to civilian life. This is true regardless of rank or reason for separation. This process of returning to civilian life is known as *transition*.[9] Transition is a personal journey for each Veteran because, "every transition has complexity, and individuals respond with great variety to the challenges that they present" (Robinson et al., 2017, p. 2). Finding timely and sustainable civilian employment presents a pivotal transition challenge with implications not only for financial stability, but also access to housing, access to healthcare coverage, food security, and physical and mental well-being.

Civil–Military Gap and the Emotional Transition

A review of the literature on Veteran reintegration found that recently separated Veterans (RSVs) have difficulty going from an "all-encompassing" collectivist military culture in which they develop intense bonds to an individualist civilian culture in which they may have very few close bonds (Cobb, 2022). This civil–military gap (Collins, 1998) can create a sense of difference or alienation for RSVs, leading to perceptions of disconnection from family and civilian life (Demers, 2011; MacLean & Kleykamp, 2014; Mitchell, 2017). Differences in communication styles may make early interactions with civilian colleagues and peers difficult (Hanlan, 2022). In focus groups and interviews, RSVs report missing the organizational hierarchy and time structure that came with military life (Bartee, 2018; Keeling et al., 2018). RSVs may also express frustration that civilians do not understand military culture, reinforcing a continued communication gap when hiring managers and colleagues lack a cursory knowledge of military skills, culture, and structure (Demers, 2011).

In a qualitative study with 17 Iraq and Afghanistan war Veterans, Demers (2011) found that Veterans tended to hold themselves to a higher standard than civilians, which also posed some difficulty in their readjustment to civilian life. Because some may have come to expect a certain level of respect within the military, they experienced an unexpected challenge when they returned home (Demers, 2011). Furthermore, Veterans may be unprepared to deal with difficult emotions during the reintegration process, which can further complicate their civilian relationships (Mitchell, 2017). This "culture shock" of returning to civilian life can have real consequences across mental health, behavior, employment, and homelessness among Veterans (Hanlan, 2022).

Adjustment to the Civilian Workforce

The challenges experienced by TSMs as they reintegrate into the civilian workforce have been widely documented in the research (Stern, 2017), but finding employment is often regarded as

[9] *Transition,* as defined by U.S. Code 32 CFR § 88.3, is the preparation and process for moving from active duty service to the civilian sector.

one of the most difficult hurdles (Keeling et al., 2018). Approximately 70 percent of all post-9/11 Veterans reported finding a job to be one of their greatest challenges (Stone & Stone, 2015), and 53 percent found that it took longer than expected (Shiffer et al., 2017). In addition, 49 percent reported difficulty finding employment in their chosen field, and 58 percent had trouble finding employment at the level they desired (Edelman, 2018).

Transitioning to civilian employment involves not only searching for employment but also learning how to adjust to workforce cultures. Each civilian workforce has its own culture, and these cultures are often quite different from what a Veteran experienced during active duty (Cobb, 2022; Economic Systems and Westat, 2020). Forty-one percent of TSMs reported that it was difficult to fully professionally assimilate (Zoli et al., 2015). Yet a study of employed TSMs and RSVs found Veterans working in the civilian workforce to be "high functioning individuals who enjoy their jobs and enjoy working for their organizations, contrary to negative stigma that is sometimes associated with veterans" (Hammer et al., 2017, p. 507). Exhibit 1-1 summarizes common obstacles faced by TSMs in the civilian workforce.

Exhibit 1-1. Barriers to Readjusting to the Civilian Workforce

Sources: Demers, 2011; Hall et al., 2014; Keeling, et al., 2018; MacLean & Kleykamp, 2014; Mann, 2012; Mitchell, 2017; Morin, 2011; Stern, 2017; Stern, 2018; Zoli et al., 2015

Skills Transfer

A meaningful transition to the civilian workforce requires finding an environment where there is a match of both technical (hard) and interpersonal (soft) skills, yet many TSMs have trouble translating their military skill sets into civilian language. These issues have been widely documented in the literature (Hall et al., 2014; Mann, 2012). Although leadership, management, and organizational skills are common among the Veteran population, employers often have a difficult time understanding how those skills relate to their civilian environments. At the same time, TSMs tend to have difficulty "telling their story" and relating their experiences in a way that enables employers and hiring managers to quickly make the connection (Stern, 2018).

Finding the "Right" Civilian Career

A positive employment outcome is not only about ensuring that a TSM or an RSV has a job, but also that their first job after military service puts them on a path toward a sustainable civilian career. Veterans report that deciding on a career path is a major challenge during transition (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016). Although 53 percent of RSVs reported finding a job within the first 3 months of separating from the military, 44 percent of employed Veterans were found to have left their first civilian job within 1 year, with 61 percent of these Veterans leaving in pursuit of better opportunities (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016). The study also found that 31 percent of Veterans accepted their first job after separation "to make ends meet and never intended to stay" (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016, p. 13). This may reflect the need for TSMs to find basic financial stability and build upon civilian connections before finding more suitable and sustaining opportunities elsewhere. It may also reflect the trial and error often needed for a Veteran to find his or her "place" in the civilian workforce (Stern, 2018).

About the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

Since 1992, Service members separating from all branches of the armed services had the opportunity to participate in TAP. TAP was established through the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 1991. The program is jointly administered by the DOL, the DOD, and the VA. In the beginning, TAP consisted of four main components: (1) pre-separation counseling, (2) a DOL employment workshop, (3) an optional briefing on federal Veteran benefits, and (4) the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (GAO, 2014).

Beginning in 2012, TAP went through substantial changes due to the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (VOW Act).[10] In response to the VOW Act requirements, the DOD-VA Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI) Task Force.1 was created to improve the existing TAP. The VEI Task Force renamed the new TAP curriculum **Transition Goals, Plans, and Success (Transition GPS)**. The VOW Act and VEI Task Force:

- Expanded the **Individual Transition Plan (ITP)** and introduced a needs assessment as a mandatory component of pre-separation counseling.
- Added a requirement to complete a 12-month post-separation budget as part of the **Financial Planning Workshop**.
- Added a unit on translating military skills to civilian employment, known as the **Military Occupational Classification** (**MOC) Crosswalk**, designed to help TSMs identify applicable skills and gaps between their experience and the needs of civilian employers.
- Updated and made the **DOL Employment Workshop** mandatory for all TSMs. Although the Employment Workshop requirement applied to most separating Service members, some exceptions remained.[11]

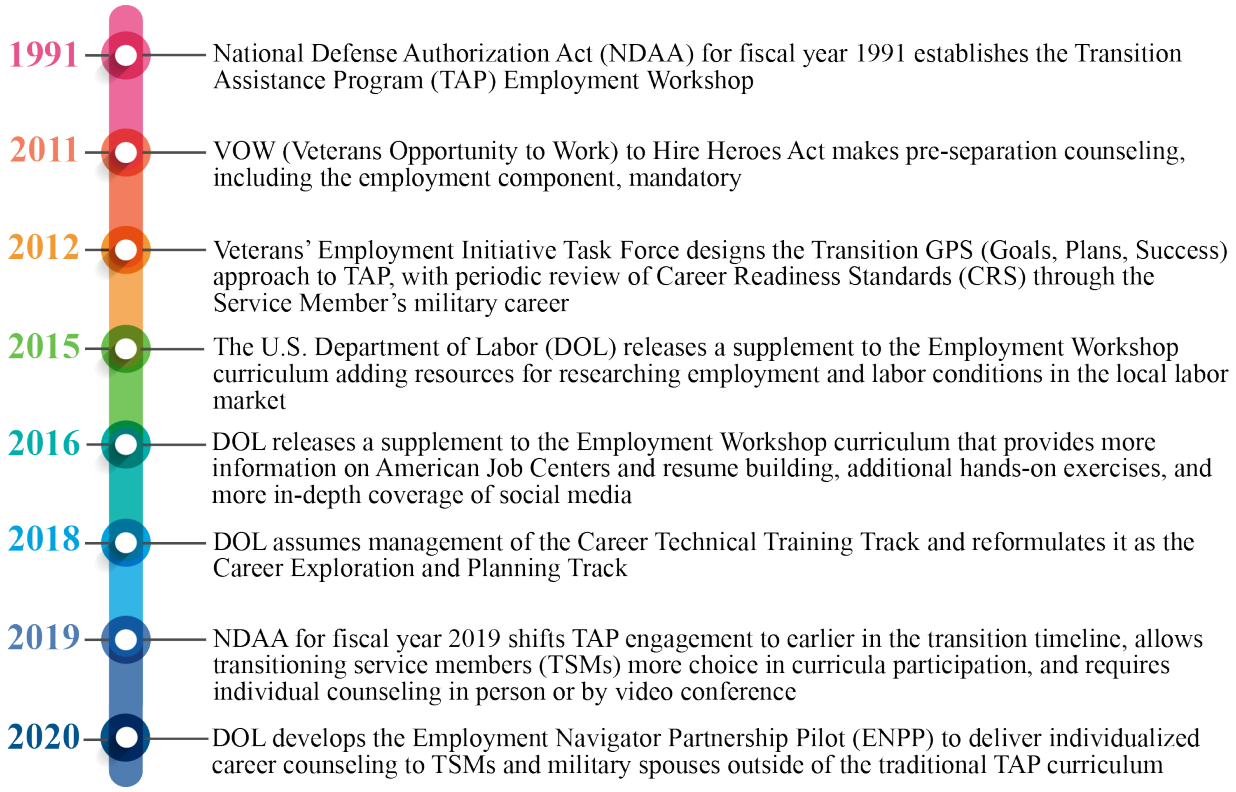
[10] VOW (Veterans Opportunity to Work) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, Pub. L. No. 112-56 (2011) https://www.congress.gov/112/plaws/publ56/PLAW-112publ56.pdf

[11] TSMs may be exempted for the following reasons: (1) confirmed employment, (2) confirmed education/training enrollment, (3) participation in the retiring Service member transition program, (4) retirement with 20 years' armed forces service, (5) pending unit deployment, or (6) prior participation in TAP.

- Added and made mandatory two additional briefings on federal benefits (**Veterans' Benefits I and Veterans' Benefits II**).[12]
- Offered separating Service members the choice of an additional 2-day separation counseling course focused on three possible **career-specific tracks**: Technical and Skills Training, Entrepreneurship, or Education.
- Added a **Capstone Event** in which commanders, or a commanders' designee, verify that TSMs have met Career Readiness Standards (CRS).
- Added a referral process, known as a **warm handover**, as part of the Capstone Event to connect TSMs who do not meet CRS to appropriate local and federal services who support Veterans.

Transition GPS was introduced in January 2013 and fully implemented across military installations from October 1, 2014, through June 30, 2019. TAP was again modified through the NDAA for fiscal year 2019 that included a requirement for individual counseling. As a result, the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) launched the Apprenticeship Pilot in 2020 and the Employment Navigator Pilot Program (ENPP) in 2021. Exhibit 1-2 depicts the history of TAP.

Exhibit 1-2. History of TAP

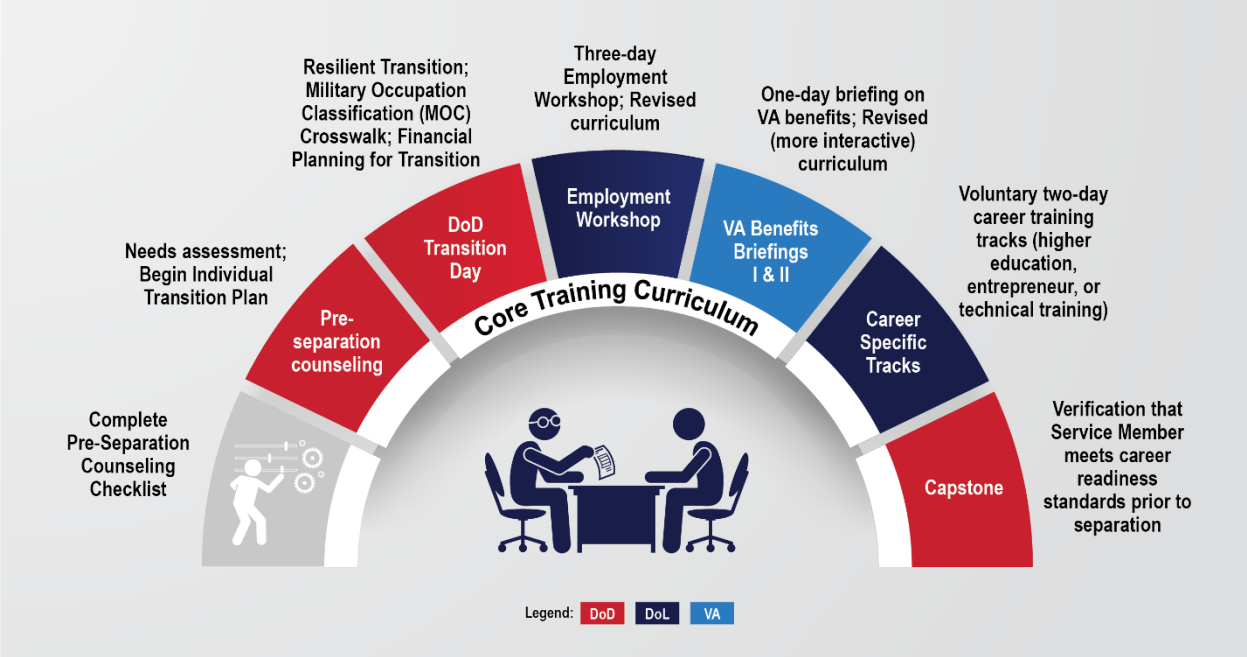


[12] This includes the information for those who have a service-related disability. This information was previously covered in the Disabled Transition Assistance Program.

Transition GPS

Transition GPS provided a 5- to 7-day standardized curriculum to inform TSMs about the transition process, introduce benefits for which they are eligible, and guide them in concrete next steps. Exhibit 1-3 provides an overview of Transition GPS.

Exhibit 1-3. Overview of Transition GPS (2014–2019)



Note: DoD = U.S. Department of Defense; VA = U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Sources: GAO, 2014; *Kamarck, 2018*

After completion of the pre-separation counseling checklist, TSMs begin pre-separation counseling. In this counseling session, a TAP counselor would meet with a TSM to conduct a needs assessment and develop an ITP. The ITP must consider personal circumstances, plans, and risk.

This was followed by the completion of the Core Training Curriculum:

- A 1-day workshop provided by DOD. This workshop included a 30-minute **Transition Overview** and a 1-hour **Resilient Transition** component that provided an introduction to various resources to help TSMs with transition. This included resources on stress management and issues that TSMs may encounter in post-military life. The workshop also included a class on **Personal Financial Planning for Transition** – a financial literacy/planning component where TSMs developed a 12-month budget (4 to 6 hours). Finally, TSMs completed the **MOC Crosswalk** – a tool designed to help TSMs match skills learned in the military to potential civilian careers (2 hours).
- A 3-day **DOL Employment Workshop** focused on job-seeking and included evidence-based practices such as identifying career interests, job search techniques and strategies, resume development and interview skills, and other career-related topics.

- A 1-day briefing by the VA where TSMs learned how to apply for VA benefits and connect with the VA for future assistance. This included two briefings **VA Benefits I** (4 hours) and **VA Benefits II** (2 hours).

Transition GPS offered a set of three voluntary training tracks designed to provide additional training tailored for TSMs' interests: (1) **Accessing Higher Education** for TSMs pursuing higher education, (2) **Boots to Business** for TSMs wanting to start their own businesses, or (3) **Career Technical Training** for TSMs seeking job skills and industry-recognized credentials. These were 2-day courses, and TSMs could participate in more than one course.

The final step was the **Capstone Event** – a standardized final procedure to verify that TSMs completed the required components of Transition GPS and were "career ready." During the Capstone Event, the military installation commander (or designee) verified that the TSMs met the CRS and had a viable ITP. TSMs who did not achieve their CRS were referred to local and federal services who support Veterans for assistance (the process known as a **warm handover**).

Research on the Impact of TAP

Previous studies have examined TAP's impact on outcomes for TSMs. While only a few studies measured TAP's impact on employment or earning outcomes, a greater number studied TSMs' experiences in TAP and perceptions of its benefits to their transition to civilian life. Previous studies of TAP consisted primarily of interviews, focus groups, and surveys with Veterans. Although some sample sizes were very small (e.g., one study interviewed eight Veterans), the studies incorporate almost 4,000 Veteran experiences and voices. Prior studies that evaluated TAP's impact on TSM employment and earnings produced both positive and null findings.

Evidence of Impact on Labor Market Outcomes

In 1995, Barton and colleagues used a comparison group design to compare the outcomes of TSMs who attended TAP to those who did not. The authors used data from telephone surveys, TAP enrollment, and state employment agencies. The study found that TAP reduced unemployment time from 7 weeks to 3 weeks after separation. However, it found no significant differences in the type of employment (as measured by type of job, wage, or hours worked) between TSMs who completed TAP and those who did not.

Using survey data, LISBOA, Inc. (2002) evaluated the impacts of TAP in easing the transition process into civilian employment at 14 months post-separation. The study included two cohorts: one with RSVs who participated in TAP and another with RSVs who did not. The study found that over 84 percent of RSVs who attended TAP found it to benefit their transition and that they had used information gained during TAP since leaving the military. The authors cautioned interpreting the findings due to the small sample size of the non-participant group (n = 136). Also, because this study was conducted when TAP was not yet a mandatory program, these findings may be influenced by differing characteristics between TSMs who decided to participate and those who did not.

Silva (2011) examined the relationship between TAP participation and employment outcomes. The sample included Veterans who separated from the military between 1991 and 2007. The

study did not find a relationship between TAP attendance and finding civilian employment. However, this study only tracked employment at the time the survey was administered. The study did not examine how long it took TSMs to find employment or whether TAP had any impact on decreasing this time spent in transition.

Faurer and colleagues (2014) examined the effectiveness of TAP in reducing unemployment after the return of troops from Iraq in 2011. Of the Army Veteran survey respondents, 84 percent reported that they found a job as a result of using TAP services. Almost all Veterans who participated in TAP used resume or cover letter coaching and 75 percent worked one on one with a job counselor, while only 24 percent took a certificate exam corresponding to a skill gained in the military. Overall, 88 percent of Army Veterans said they would recommend TAP to a peer.

Malone (2015) evaluated the impact of Transition GPS on transition challenges using a cohort analysis. The study used three metrics to determine transition successes or challenges: (1) applying for unemployment compensation for ex-Service members, (2) using the Montgomery GI Bill benefits (used for education and training), and (3) affiliation with a reservist unit after separation. TSMs who participated in Transition GPS were better prepared to integrate into civilian employment than those who attended TAP's earlier version (Malone, 2015).

Li (2020) examined the impact of TAP on employment, earnings, and education outcomes using data from the Veterans Supplement of the Current Population Survey. The author restricted the data to men who were separated from the military between 1990 and 1993. The study found that TAP participants were significantly more likely to be employed 10 years after separation from the military and have higher earnings than non-participants. The author posits that TAP participants were also more likely to pursue higher education due to the GI Bill.

Most recently, Economic Systems and Westat (2022) implemented the *Post-Separation Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Assessment (PSTAP)* to assess Veterans' satisfaction with the TAP program. The study used a cross-sectional survey to measure outcomes for three cohorts of RSVs: those who separated for 6 months, those who separated for 12 months, and those who separated for 36 months. Of the survey respondents, 85 percent reported that the VA Benefits course was the most useful and 75 percent found the DOL Employment Workshop to be the most useful. The study found that at least 70 percent of employed Veterans who participated in TAP found their job within 6 months of separating. TAP participants were also more likely to pursue higher education (15 to 19 percent of respondents based on cohort). However, approximately 55 percent of RSVs reported having difficulty translating their military experience into civilian terms (Economic Systems and Westat, 2020).

The PSTAP also includes a longitudinal survey using the cohorts from the cross-sectional survey plus additional 6-month cohorts from subsequent administrations of the cross-sectional survey. Of the survey respondents, 83 to 90 percent (based on cohort) work in a permanent position but only 31 percent to 38 percent believe their current job matches their military skills (Economic Systems and Westat, 2022). Veterans also reported challenges with translating their military experience into civilian job requirements and managing salary expectations.

Veteran Perceptions of TAP

Findings from the literature offer a variety of Service member experiences with and perceptions of TAP. Several studies found that Veterans had overall positive experiences with TAP and believed it to be beneficial when searching for civilian employment (Edwards, 2015; Heflin et al., 2016; Trutko et al., 2013). Some report on the positive merits of the TAP workshops, including the provision of resume advice, interview practice, and financial management resources (Hogan, 2016). TSMs also valued the multiple touchpoints with career planners and counselors throughout the transition process (Edwards, 2015; Rose, 2016). For example:

- In a study of TSM satisfaction with TAP, the authors analyzed the customer satisfaction survey administered to 2,036 TAP participants between July 2012 and February 2013. Overall, 91 percent of survey respondents provided favorable ratings to the TAP Employment Workshop (Trutko et al., 2013).
- A study used in-depth interviews to explore perceptions of the redesigned TAP. The participants included 20 military officers who were 6 months away from separation or who separated within 1 year. Overall, 95 percent of participants had positive views of TAP. The participants reported that the program's information and the emphasis on preparation for transition were critical to their career transition (Edwards, 2015).
- In a study exploring the employment and job preparation outcomes of TAP, the author interviewed 20 retired Army and Air Force Veterans. Although 60 percent only attended one workshop, the participants identified resume and job search assistance, interview skills, and VA benefits and claim filing as the most helpful topics in TAP (Hogan, 2016).
- A study used data from the Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, from 2003 to 2011, to document the strengths and weaknesses of the original TAP. The participants reported that advice on job training and Veterans' benefits were the most useful (Heflin et al., 2016).
- A study used a survey to explore the personal and professional demographic characteristics on the perceptions of the effectiveness of TAP. The study was conducted with 67 TSMs at military installations in Louisiana, with 87 percent of study participants having a 4-year degree or master's degree. The author found that TSMs perceived TAP favorably; however, the item "Participation in TAP has helped my career readiness" had the lowest agreement (Rose, 2016).

Though reported Veteran perceptions of TAP were generally positive, the studies also included negative perceptions. In previous research, Veterans reported that TAP did not prepare them enough for civilian employment (Apperson, 2017; Hart, 2018; Keeling et al., 2017). For example, Apperson's study (2017) focused on the perceptions of 12 Veterans who reported on a survey that TAP did not adequately prepare them for civilian employment. In Keeling's study (2017) that used focus groups with 33 Veterans, seven Veterans reported that TAP participation was a "box checking exercise" and three Veterans stated that their leaders did not encourage TAP participation.

Multiple studies reported that TAP did not contain enough career counseling and mentorship and that there was not enough practical and individualized instruction (Apperson, 2017; Keeling et al., 2017; Malone, 2015; Trutko et al., 2013). Additionally, Veterans reported that the MOC Crosswalk portion did not translate well to civilian jobs and they felt overwhelmed by the amount of information conveyed in 5 days (Apperson, 2017; Edwards, 2015). In Malone's study, TSMs did not view the DOL Employment Workshop's emphasis on local labor market information and formulating a year-long budget as practical because most TSMs would be relocating and many aspects of their transition were still undecided.

Other studies report that TAP overgeneralizes the transition experience. For example, the Veterans in Hogan's study (2016) viewed TAP as geared toward younger Service members and believed it left out retirees with a longer gap on their civilian resume. Rose's (2016) study noted that younger Service members tended to have a more positive perception of TAP, as did those with higher pre-separation income levels. In contrast, another study found no differences between a TSM's age and their perception that TAP effectively prepared them for reintegration (Apperson, 2017). In a study using surveys from 3,297 TSMs, Heflin and colleagues (2016) found that different military branches varied slightly in terms of perceived usefulness of various program components. Rose (2016) found no significant differences between length of service, rank, pay grade, gender, or education level.

Studies have recommended that the DOL Employment Workshop individualize curriculum to account for differences across ranks, education levels, and specialization (Defense Business Board, 2013; Shue et al., 2021; Whitworth, et al., 2020). A more personalized approach for TAP is becoming more necessary as the population of Veterans becomes more diverse across age, race, and gender (Bradbard & Maury, 2021).

Overview of Study

The study presented in this report addresses the need for a rigorous impact study of Transition GPS. The logic model in Exhibit 1-4 provided a framework that guided the study. The logic model displays the activities and inputs predicted to result in the expected outcomes for Transition GPS, which primarily focus on employment. Short-term outcomes are those the DOL expects to see prior to separation, with medium-term outcomes 6 to 12 months after separation, and long-term outcomes beyond 12 months after separation. The evaluation focused on the medium- and long-term outcomes, which have not previously been explored.

Exhibit 1-4. Logic Model for Transition GPS

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
• Joint agency funding • Transitioning service members (TSMs) • Military Life Cycle delivery model • Contracted and trained Transition Assistance Program (TAP) instructors • Curriculum for core modules and optional tracks • Virtual curriculum and Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) platform for online delivery • Career Readiness Standards (CRS)	• Pre-separation counseling – Introducing the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) • Core curriculum modules – Resilient Transition – Military Occupation Classification (MOC) Crosswalk – Financial Planning for Transition – Department of Labor (DOL) Employment Workshop – Veterans' Benefits I and Veterans' Benefits II briefings • Optional career-specific tracks (education, career technical training, entrepreneurship) • ITP review • Capstone event	• Completion of mandatory and optional TAP components – Classroom – Online synchronous – Online asynchronous • CRS verification • Viable ITP	• Favorably appraising TAP delivery in participant surveys • Demonstrating learning • Achieving CRS • Registering with American Job Centers (AJCs)	• Time between separation and first hire • Employment within 6 and 12 months post-separation • Wages earned at 6 and 12 months post-separation • Employment and wages among Veterans in key populations and demographic subgroups • Time and money received in unemployment insurance benefits (UI) • Employment in high-growth industries/ occupations	• Career stability and progression • Employment retention at 12+ months post-separation • Wages earned at 24+ months post-separation

Research Questions

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to understand the impact of the Transition GPS program on labor market outcomes for Army Veterans. The main research questions were:

1. What is the impact of the Transition GPS program on employment-related outcomes for Army TSMs who participated in Transition GPS compared to Army TSMs who did not participate in Transition GPS?
2. Among participants and non–participants of Transition GPS, are there specific subgroups, such as women, racial/ethnic minorities, or persons with disabilities, for whom employment-related outcomes differed following separation?

Organization of This Report

First, we detail the methodology used for this study, including our evaluation design, the data sources, and our analysis methods (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, to provide context, we describe the underlying economic conditions and trends in the U.S. during the transition period for Transition GPS participants. In Chapter 4, we present the results obtained and key findings related to the research questions. In Chapter 5, we present the results of the associational analyses between outcomes and components of Transition GPS. We conclude with a discussion of the study findings and next steps (Chapter 6). The Technical Supplement contains detailed information about the study sample, data analyses, and findings.

2. Methods and Data Sources

In this chapter, we describe the evaluation design, including the approach we used to estimate program impacts. Next, we describe the study sample, including why Army TSMs were selected and how we determined the TSMs who comprised the treatment and comparison groups. We then describe the data sources used and outcomes of interest. The chapter describes our analytic approach for the impact, subgroup, and associational analyses and concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the methods and data sources.

Evaluation Design

While a randomized controlled trial is considered the most rigorous design for studying program impact, it was not feasible to randomly assign TSMs to participate (or not) in Transition GPS. This study used the strongest design possible – a quasi-experimental matched-comparison group design. Matching is a process used to identify comparison groups for existing groups of treatment units. We used an approach called propensity score matching (PSM) to reduce preexisting differences between groups due to factors such as self-selection. PSM uses a set of participant characteristics to develop a propensity score that represents an individual's likelihood of being in the treatment or comparison group. That propensity score is used to create (matched) groups that are statistically equivalent on the measured, observable participant characteristics (e.g., gender, military rank) included in the PSM model. However, unlike a randomized controlled trial, this process is not able to ensure that the groups are comparable on unobservable characteristics (e.g., motivation).

We identified demographic and military career characteristics for matching based on the research literature.[13] To identify characteristics, we used the following specifications, aiming to choose variables that met these criteria:

- The variable likely affects the outcome (e.g., final pay grade affecting future employment).
- The variable is likely associated with participation in the program (e.g., post-military goal).
- The variable is likely not a consequence of the intervention (e.g., pay grade would not be impacted by Transition GPS participation).

We matched Transition GPS participants with non-participants on the following characteristics: age at separation, gender, race/ethnicity, marital/dependent status, education, military installation location by Census division or international, military pay grade at time of separation, length of service, months deployed since 2002, year of separation, military occupational specialty (MOS), Armed Forces Qualification Test percentile score, character of service at separation, post-military goal, disability status, and employability status at separation. See Appendix A in the Technical Supplement for additional information on the PSM process.

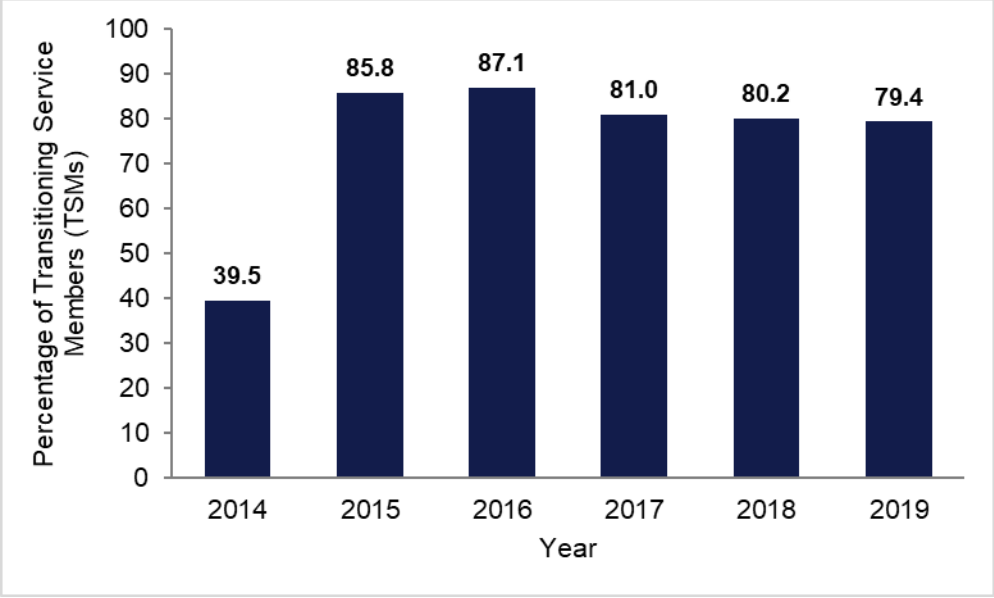
[13] Demographic characteristics have been associated with employment outcomes in a number of studies (Hoynes et al., 2012; Pfeffer et al., 2013), as have military career characteristics (Kleykamp, 2009, 2012, 2013; MacLean, 2017).

Study Sample

Although all military branches provide TAP services and TAP is mandatory for all of the military, the study participants include only TSMs in the U.S. Army. We were unable to gain access to the DOD Defense Manpower Data Center personnel records. However, the Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA), a research center within the U.S. Military Academy's Department of Social Sciences, could provide detailed demographic and transition data for Army personnel only. Also, this data represented the population of TSMs in the Army rather than a sample of TSMs. Due to the availability of the data and discussions with DOL, the study included only Army separations.

For this study we defined program participation based on TSMs' completion of the DOL Employment Workshop. Although other components of TAP provide valuable transition tools, the DOL Employment Workshop is the component of Transition GPS that provides job search, application, and readiness training, making it the logical choice as a focal point for estimating the impact of Transition GPS on post-separation employment outcomes. Transition GPS was implemented in a phased-in rollout (beginning in January 2012 at 11 sites), with different components introduced between 2012 and 2013. By 2014, the core curriculum was implemented at 100 percent of military installations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, TAP changed again in 2019. Therefore, the study time frame is October 1, 2014, to June 30, 2019. Exhibit 2-1 presents the percentage of Army TSMs who completed the DOL Employment Workshop each year.

Exhibit 2-1. TSM Completion of DOL Employment Workshop by Year, 2014–2019



Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019
Note: 2014 includes October 1 through December 31, 2014, and 2019 includes January 1 through June 30, 2019.
Sample size by year: 2014 = 3,292; 2015 = 53,283; 2016 = 74,513; 2017 = 67,229; 2018 = 65,201; 2019 = 25,440
DOL = U.S. Department of Labor

The study included two groups that can be compared to assess the extent to which Transition GPS affected labor market outcomes.

- ***Transition GPS Participants.*** The treatment group consisted of all Army TSMs who completed the DOL Employment Workshop between October 1, 2014, and June 30, 2019.
- ***Transition GPS Non-participants.*** The comparison group consisted of all Army TSMs who did not complete the DOL Employment Workshop prior to separation from the military and were separated between October 1, 2014, and June 30, 2019.

The Transition GPS group included 238,819 TSMs and the Transition GPS non-participant group included 50,139 TSMs, for a total of 288,958 TSMs prior to analysis. Exhibit 2-2 provides details on selected demographic and military characteristics of TSMs in both research groups before matching. The sample was predominantly male (86 percent) with the majority of TSMs being ages 34 or younger (77 percent) and having only a high school diploma or the equivalent (76 percent) at Service entry. The racial/ethnic composition of TSMs was primarily White (59 percent), with smaller percentages of Black (21 percent), Hispanic (13 percent), and individuals of other races (7 percent). Less than 20 percent of the sample had a reported disability. The military pay grade included enlisted (E), officers (O), and warrant officers (W), with half being early enlisted (E–1 to E–4, 55 percent) and over half with less than 6 years of military experience (56 percent).

Appendix A in the Technical Supplement describes the PSM process in detail. It also shows the sample characteristics for the matched sample and details about baseline equivalence for each characteristic. Appendix B provides additional details about the study sample, with Exhibit B-1 presenting details on the parameters used to create these two research groups.

Exhibit 2-2. Selected Demographic and Military Characteristics of Army TSMs at Baseline, 2014–2019

	All TSMs	TGPS	Non-TGPS	Difference between TGPS and Non-TGPS
Demographic Characteristics				
Gender				
Men	86%	86%	87%	-1
Women	14%	14%	13%	1
Age at Separation				
17 to 24 Years Old	35%	36%	30%	6
25 to 34 Years Old	42%	41%	48%	-7
35 to 44 Years Old	14%	14%	13%	1
45 Years Old or Older	9%	9%	8%	1
Race/Ethnicity				
White	58%	59%	55%	4
Black	22%	21%	25%	-4
Hispanic	13%	13%	13%	0

	All TSMs	TGPS	Non-TGPS	Difference between TGPS and Non-TGPS
Other	7%	7%	7%	0
Marital and Dependent Status (Dependents < 18 Years of Age)				
No Dependents, Not Married	35%	36%	26%	10
No Dependents, Married	22%	22%	20%	2
No Dependents, Unknown Marriage Status	0%	0%	0%	0
Has Dependents, Not Married	6%	6%	1%	5
Has Dependents, Married	37%	35%	46%	-11
Has Dependents, Unknown Marriage Status	0%	0%	0%	0
Disability Status				
With Reported Disabilities	18%	20%	9%	11
No Reported Disabilities	82%	80%	91%	-11
Education Level at Entry				
High School Student	0%	0%	0%	0
Completed High School/High School Graduate/Equivalent	76%	76%	75%	1
Alternative Program	3%	3%	3%	0
High School Dropout	0%	0%	0%	0
Associate Degree/Technical Degree/Occupational Certificate	2%	2%	2%	0
Some College Coursework	6%	7%	6%	1
Bachelor's Degree	9%	9%	9%	0
Graduate Degree	1%	1%	2%	-1
Military Career Characteristics				
Years of Service				
Less Than 6 Years	53%	56%	36%	20
6 to 19 Years	36%	32%	55%	-23
20 Years or More	11%	12%	9%	3
Time Deployed				
Not Deployed (0 months)	45%	45%	40%	5
1 to 5 Months	5%	5%	6%	-1
6 to 11 Months	17%	17%	18%	-1
12 to 23 Months	18%	17%	20%	-3
2 Years or More	16%	16%	15%	1
Character of Service				
Honorable Separation	96%	98%	82%	16
Dishonorable Separation	1%	1%	3%	-2
Uncharacterized Separation	3%	1%	14%	-13
Pay Grade at Separation				
E–1 to E–4	50%	55%	30%	25
E–5 to E–6	30%	26%	49%	-23
E–7 to E–9	9%	9%	9%	0

	All TSMs	TGPS	Non-TGPS	Difference between TGPS and Non-TGPS
O–1 to O–3	5%	5%	4%	1
O–4 to O–10	4%	3%	6%	-3
W–1 to W–5	2%	2%	2%	0
Post-Military Goal				
I already have post-military employment	5%	4%	10%	-6
I plan to get a job and start work as soon as possible	47%	48%	41%	7
I plan to go to school and use my VA education benefits	32%	34%	26%	8
I plan to start a business	4%	4%	5%	-1
I plan to retire and not work	1%	0%	1%	-1
Other post-military goal	11%	10%	16%	-6
Number of Participants	**288,958**	**238,819**	**50,139**	

Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019

Notes: Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding. "Other" in the Race/Ethnicity category includes Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other races. Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer).

TSM = transitioning service member; TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans and Success

Data Sources

The study used two data sources to answer the research questions presented in Chapter 1. The first data source was provided by **OEMA**.[14] OEMA compiled the data on TSMs primarily from Army administrative data records and the Army Career and Alumni Program, which administers and tracks TAP services for the U.S. Army. This data provided information on TSM demographic characteristics, military career characteristics, and their participation in Transition GPS.

The second data source was the **National Directory of New Hires (NDNH)** maintained by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children & Families (ACF). The NDNH is a national dataset that contains wage and employment information linked to Social Security numbers. This data included information from unemployment insurance claims, W-4s, and quarterly wage data reported by employers. The NDNH maintains records from the previous 24 months. For this study, we received data from 2014 through the end of 2021.

Army TSM records maintained by OEMA and ACF were matched based on Social Security number. We received merged data in de-identified form from OEMA. The combined data file contained information on Army personnel separations from October 1, 2014, to June 30, 2019. The data contained information for 288,958 TSMs. This number represents the entire set of U.S. Army active duty personnel separating over this period.

[14] Information about OEMA is available from https://oema.army.mil/.

Exhibit 2-3 presents additional information on the data provided by each data source. Appendix Exhibit C-1 in the Technical Supplement lists the variables in each dataset that were used for creating the comparison groups, conducting analyses, and exploring subgroups.

Exhibit 2-3. Information Provided by Data Sources

U.S. Army OEMA			NDNH
Demographic Characteristics	**Military Career Characteristics**	**Transition Goals, Plans and Success (TGPS) Participation Characteristics**	**Outcomes**
• Age at separation • Gender • Race and ethnicity • Marital status • Number of dependents < 18 years of age • Level of education prior to joining military • Disability status at separation	• Pay grade at separation • Military occupational specialty (MOS) • Armed Forces Qualification Test percentile score • Military installation assignment at separation • Deployments • Years of service • Type of discharge	• U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment Workshop • Individual Transition Plan (ITP) • Financial Planning Workshop • Veterans Benefits Briefings (I & II) • Post-Service Budget Workshop • Military Occupational Classification (MOC) Crosswalk • Transition Overview • DOL elective courses • Time between TGPS completion and separation	• Time to employment (6 and 12 months) • Wages (6, 12, 24, and 36 months) • Time spent without employment • Employment retention

Outcome Measures

The study focused on two outcome domains: employment and wages. Within each domain, there are several outcome measures. Each outcome measure is operationalized below.

Employment Outcomes

Time between separation and employment. This is a measure of how quickly TSMs obtained a job after separation. It is based on whether a TSM had a recorded wage in the 1st quarter after separation. If no wages were present in the 1st quarter after separation, that person was considered unemployed; if a wage was present, the person was considered employed. Because quarters were the most granular form of the passage of time available, the metric for this outcome was a count of the number of quarters passing until hired. Another metric included the percentage of TSMs who were employed in the 1st quarter after separation.

Employment. This is a measure of whether or not a TSM was employed at any job after separation. It is based on whether a TSM had a recorded wage within the quarter during the specific time period after separation. If no wage was present, that person would have been considered unemployed; if a wage was present, the person was considered employed. The study included employment at two time periods:

- *Employment at 6 months post-separation*
- *Employment at 12 months post-separation*

Employment retention. This is a measure of whether or not a TSM stayed at the same place of employment after separation. It is based on whether a TSM who was employed at 6 months was still at the same job at 12 months, meaning the TSM had a recorded wage within the quarter during which the 6- and 12-month time periods occurred with the same employer.

A second measure of employment retention was based on whether a TSM who was employed at 6 months was employed at any job at 12 months.

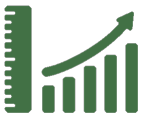
Time spent without employment. This is a measure of how long a TSM was not employed after separation. It was defined by totaling the number of quarters without reported wages post-separation. The study includes:

- *Number of quarters spent not employed at 12 months*
- *Number of quarters spent not employed at 36 months*

Wages Outcomes

Wages. This is a measure of average quarterly income post-separation. It is based on whether a TSM had a recorded wage within the quarter during the specific time period after separation. If no wage was present, that person was excluded. The study includes:

- *Wages at 6 months post-separation (wages in the 2nd quarter)*
- *Wages at 12 months post-separation (wages in the 4th quarter)*
- *Wages at 24 months post-separation (wages in the 8th quarter)*
- *Wages at 36 months post-separation (wages in the 12th quarter)*



Wage Change From 1st Quarter to 5th Quarter. This is a measure of the change in TSM wages from the 1st quarter to 5th quarter post-separation for those with positive wages in both quarters. Wages from the 5th quarter post-separation were compared to wages from the 1st quarter.

Wage Change From Military to 4th Quarter. This is a measure of the change in TSM wages from military wage at separation to wage at 4th quarter post-separation, for those employed in the 4th quarter. Wages from the 4th quarter post-separation were compared to the wages from the military.

Average amount of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits received. This is a measure of the average amount of UI benefits received post-separation. The study includes:

- *Average UI benefits received at 6 months post-separation*
- *Average UI benefits received at 12 months post-separation*
- *Average UI benefits received at 36 months post-separation*

Analysis

This section describes the data preparation process and the analytic approach used to assess program impacts. Appendix D in the Technical Supplement provides additional details and model specifications for each research question.

Data Preparation

The wage data present in our analytic sample had extreme values and was positively skewed (i.e., the right tail extends farther out), as is typical with wage data. Most individuals are clustered on the lower to moderate end of the wage distribution, while very few individuals have extreme wages (e.g., millions of dollars in a single quarter). Extreme wage values (called *outliers*) skew the data such that the mean wage value is dragged to the right of the median wage value within the distribution. As a result, the high-wage earners provide a false representation of typical income when expressed as a mean. We trimmed the upper 0.5 percent of wage values based on an algorithmic search to identify a point along the distribution where the mean wage value stabilizes.

We adjusted wages for inflation to those in 2021, using the Consumer Price Index.[15] This year was used because it was the most recent one in the analysis. We also transformed the wage outcomes and UI benefits outcomes to approximate a more normal distribution. Appendix C of the Technical Supplement provides more detail about the data preparation and transformation process.

Impact Analyses

As described in Exhibit 2-4, we compared the outcomes of Army TSMs who participated in Transition GPS (treatment) to those who did not (comparison). The impact and effect size estimates for all outcomes are based on regression results. For continuous outcomes, we used linear regression, and for binary outcomes we used logistic regression. The regression models were estimated separately for each outcome. In the analyses, we controlled for gender, marital and dependent status, race/ethnicity, DOD occupation codes, disability status at separation, employability status at separation, education level at time of entry to service, year of separation, character of service/discharge status, Armed Forces Qualification Test score, pay grade at separation, post-military goal, Census division (geographic area where military installation was located), age at separation (standardized), years of service (standardized), months in deployment since 2002 (standardized), and pre-Transition GPS wage (standardized).

Exhibit 2-4. Impact Analyses

Outcome	Analysis
Time between separation and employment	Primary: • Compare between groups the average time from separation to first hire
Employment	Primary: • Compare between groups the percentage employed by 6 months and 12 months post-separation
Wages	Primary: • Compare between groups the wage amounts at 6 months and 12 months post-separation • Compare between groups the size of wage increase from 1st quarter post-separation to 5th quarter post-separation • Compare between groups the wage amounts at 24 months and 36 months post-separation Secondary: • Compare between groups the size of wage increase from military wage at separation to wage at 4th quarter post-separation
Time spent without employment	Primary: • Compare between groups the number of quarters spent without employment at 12 months post-separation • Compare between groups the number of quarters spent without employment at 36 months post-separation • For those not employed at 6 months and 12 months post-separation, look at the proportion who received UI and how much they received on average

[15] https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl

Outcome	Analysis
Employment retention	Primary: • For those who got a job by 6 months post-separation, compare between groups the percentage who are employed at the *same* job at 12 months post-separation • For those who got a job by 6 months post-separation, compare between groups the percentage who are still employed *at any job* at 12 months post-separation

Subgroup Analyses

To understand if there were differences by participant demographic and military career characteristics, we analyzed the outcomes by subgroup (Exhibit 2-5). Outcomes for the subgroup analyses were the same as those used in the impact analyses. We used linear regression and logistic regression as described above and controlled for the same variables as those specified in the main effect models above, minus the variables representing the subgroups of interest (i.e., when exploring differences among gender groups we controlled for race/ethnicity, disability status, etc.).

Exhibit 2-5. Subgroup Analyses

Characteristic	Subgroups
Gender	Men; Women
Race and ethnicity	Black; Hispanic; Other races; White
Disability status	With reported disabilities; No reported disabilities
Age at separation	Under 20; 20–24; 25–34; 35–44; 45–54; 55–64; 65 or older
Years of service	0–5 years; 6–20 years; More than 20 years
Pay grade at separation	E–1 to E–4; E–5 to E–6; E–7 to E–9; O–1 to O–3; O–4 to O–10; W–1 to W–5
Post-military goal	Have employment; Plan to get a job; Plan to go to school; Plan to start a business; Retiring; Other
Character of service	Honorable discharge; Dishonorable discharge; Uncharacterized; Missing
Combat arms/infantry	Combat; Non-combat
Military separation date	2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019

Notes: "Other" in the Race/Ethnicity category includes Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other races. Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer). Combat arms/infantry refers to military occupations that include direct tactical land combat.

We used the Benjamini-Hochberg (1995) method to adjust for multiple comparisons, since we conducted multiple analyses on the same outcomes, across multiple levels of the same subgroup variable (e.g., categories of race).

Associational Analyses

In addition to the analyses described above, we also conducted associational analyses to explore the relationships between labor market outcomes and the timing of completion of

Transition GPS. We also explored the association between outcomes and the components of Transition GPS completed by participants:

- DOL Employment Workshop
- Transition Overview
- MOC Crosswalk
- Post-Service Budget
- Personal Finance
- VA Benefits Briefing (I & II)
- ITP (Completed)
- Education Track
- Entrepreneur Track
- Technical Track

Limitations

This evaluation used a quasi-experimental research design to estimate the effects of Transition GPS on labor market outcomes. Although TSMs in the treatment and comparison groups are similar on observable characteristics (see Exhibit A-2 in the Technical Supplement), we cannot rule out the possibility that differences remain.

The study sample was limited to personnel in the U.S. Army, a subset of TSMs from the armed services. The TSMs in the study may not represent the larger military population. For example, the MOS for Air Force personnel has more technical skills. Therefore, the results from the evaluation might not be generalizable to all branches of the military and TSMs.

Another limitation is that the NDNH dataset does not include self-employment or employment for government employees at the local, state, or federal levels (Czajka et al., 2018). The UI data also was limited in that not everyone applies for UI, and even those who do apply may be found ineligible for UI. Therefore, while the UI data could provide information on those who receive UI, it could not provide a reliable indicator of employment status.

While the NDNH dataset has detailed information on wage amount, the quarter it was received, and state location, there are other limitations. Rather than a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), the dataset had pseudo-FEINs (a synthetic, unique identifier assigned to each FEIN to facilitate linking longitudinal records). This allowed for analysis of job retention between quarters but prevents analysis of which job sector TSMs entered or the job quality beyond wages received. Additionally, the employment and wage analysis is at the quarter level, but does not capture part-time or full-time work status. For employment analysis, it does not capture how much of the quarter the TSM was employed since it does not include the exact date an employee starts a job. A TSM could work for a week within a quarter and be counted as employed for the analysis. This makes it impossible to determine if low quarterly wages result from employment obtained at the end of the quarter or from a low hourly wage.

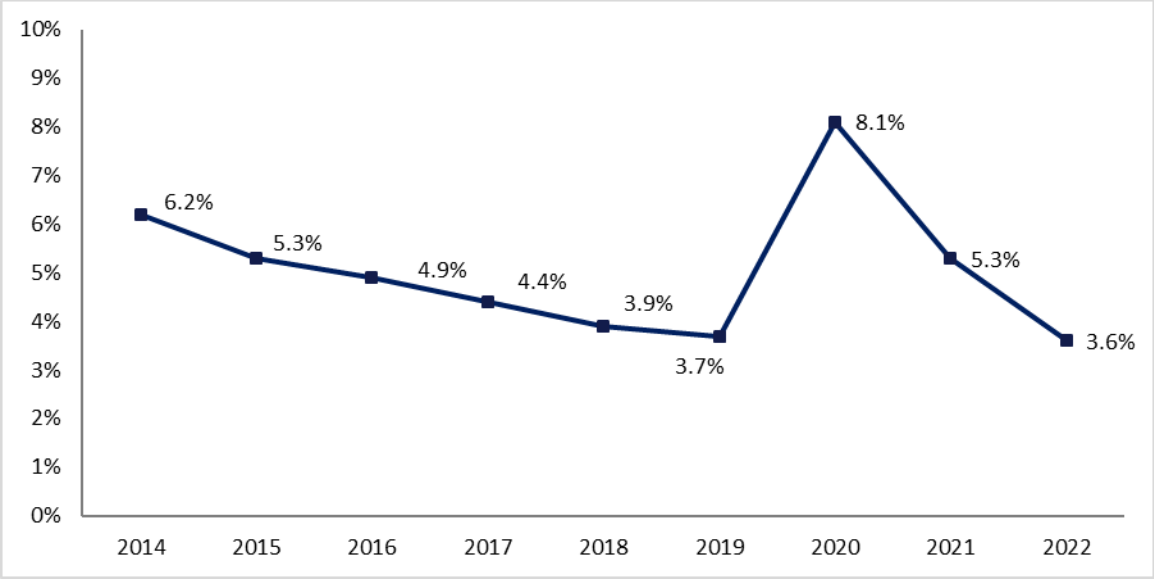
3. Context

To understand the impacts of Transition GPS, it is important to document the context in which the program operated. This includes the national labor market conditions. This chapter describes the national context that is useful for understanding the impact study findings. It also provides information about Veteran employment by industry sector. Appendix E in the Technical Supplement provides tables of percentages and additional details about employment by industry sector by Veteran status, gender, and race.

Unemployment

As shown in Exhibit 3-1, unemployment dropped nationally from 2014 to 2019 as the labor market continued to recover from the 2007–2009 Great Recession (Bennett & Kochhar, 2019). However, unemployment increased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, unemployment dropped for the second year in a row and was lower than the 2019 pre-pandemic rate.

Exhibit 3-1. National Unemployment Rate, 2014–2022



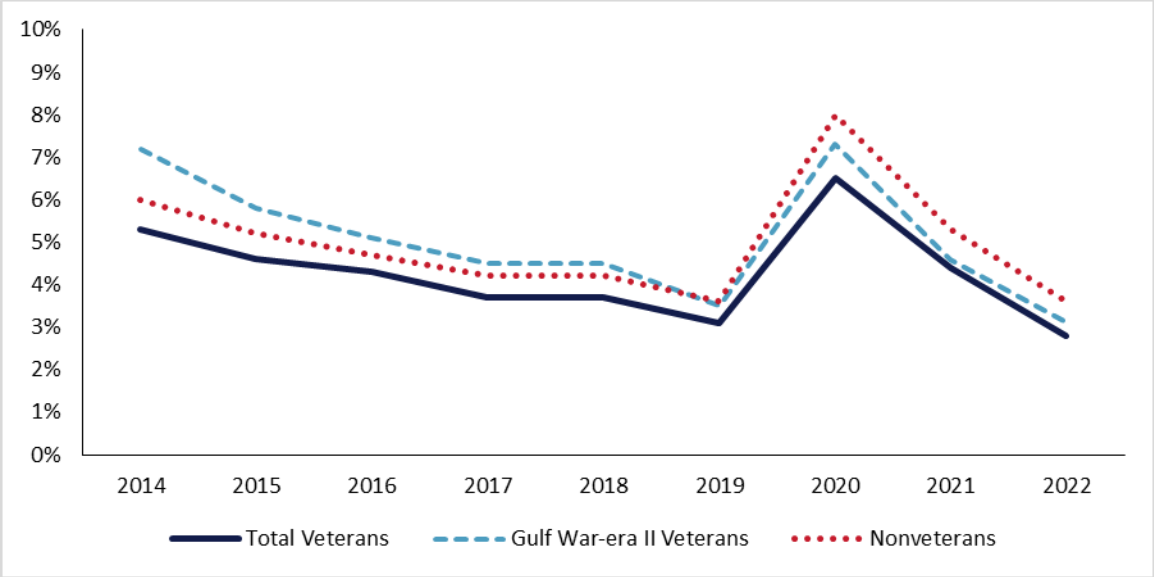
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014–2022

The Veteran unemployment rate mirrored the national labor market, improving for Veterans and nonveterans alike until the pandemic in 2020, followed by decreases in 2021 and 2022 (Exhibit 3-2). From 2014 to 2019, unemployment for all Veterans, Gulf War-era II Veterans, and nonveterans fell by nearly half.[16] When compared to nonveterans, the unemployment rate for all

[16] Definitions based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: *Veterans* are those who served on active duty anywhere in the world during these periods of service: Gulf War-era II (September 2001–present), Gulf War-era I (August 1990–August 2001), Vietnam era (August 1964–April 1975), Korean War (July 1950–January 1955), World War II (December 1941–December 1946), and other service periods (all other time periods). *Gulf War-era II Veterans* are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. *Nonveterans* never served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Veterans was about 1 percentage point lower. Gulf War-era II Veterans experienced higher rates of joblessness when compared with all Veterans and nonveterans in the civilian labor force until 2019. By 2022, the unemployment gap between Gulf War-era II Veterans and all Veterans narrowed, with a higher annual unemployment rate found among nonveterans.

Exhibit 3-2. Annual Average Unemployment Rate by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



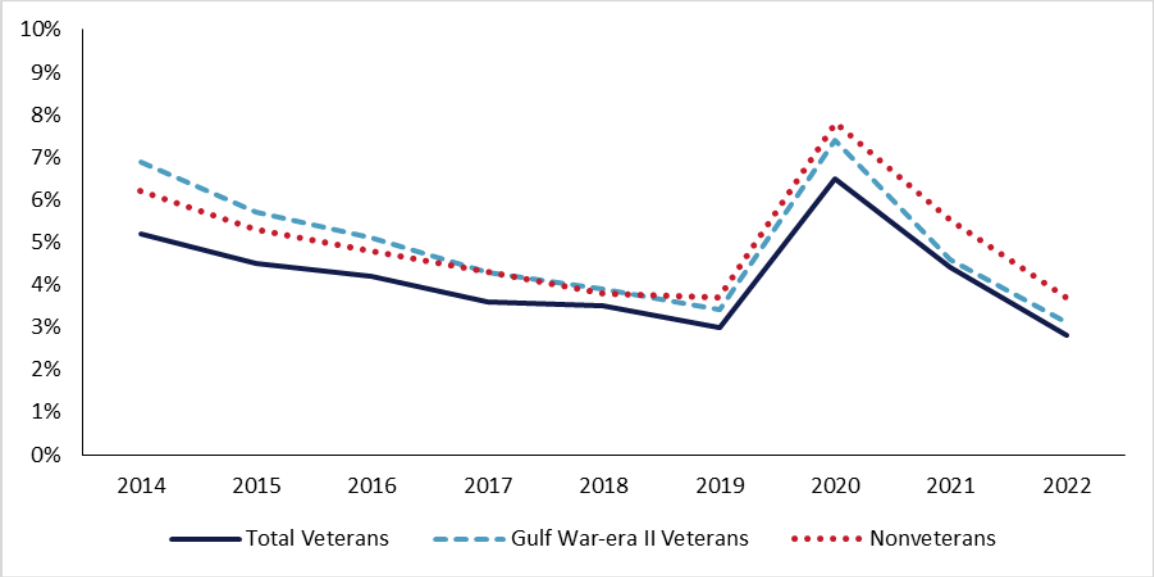
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average unemployment rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Unemployment by Gender

The overall unemployment rate declined for all men and women between 2014 and 2019, increased in 2020, and decreased in 2021 and 2022 (Exhibits 3-3 and 3-4). By 2019, the unemployment rate for men was lower for both Veteran groups than for nonveterans. For women, the unemployment rate increased for both Veteran groups in 2019, with Gulf War-era II Veterans having the highest unemployment rate. However, the unemployment rate was highest among nonveteran women from 2020 through 2022. Among Veterans, women had higher unemployment rates than men for most of the time period. Smaller differences were found between nonveteran men and women until the pandemic where the gap increased.

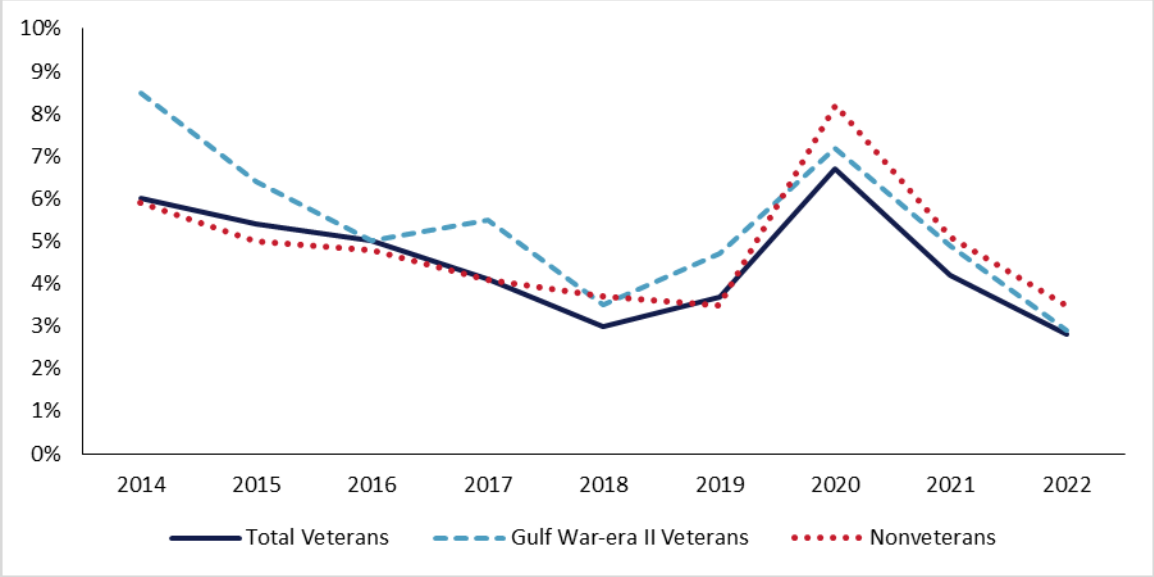
Exhibit 3-3. Annual Average Unemployment Rate for Men by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average unemployment rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Exhibit 3-4. Annual Average Unemployment Rate for Women by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



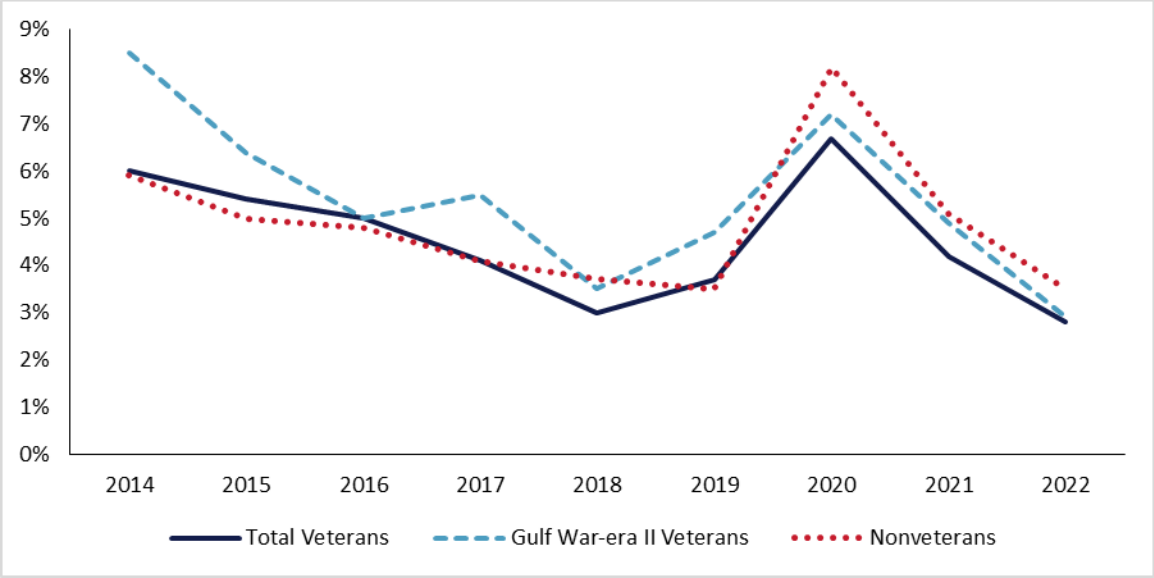
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average unemployment rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Unemployment by Race and Ethnicity

The unemployment rate also declined between 2014 and 2019 for Veterans and nonveterans of all racial/ethnic groups, followed by an increase in 2020 and decrease in 2021 (Exhibits 3-5 through 3-8). The unemployment rate steadily declined for nonveterans of all racial/ethnic groups between 2015 and 2019, with the largest decrease among Black or African American nonveterans (5.4 percentage points). The unemployment rate sharply increased in 2020 for all groups, but the largest increase was for Asian nonveterans. The unemployment rate had greater fluctuation between 2014 and 2019 for Black or African American and Asian Gulf War-era II Veterans. While the overall unemployment rate decreased since 2014, unemployment increased later in the period for Black or African American and Asian Gulf War-era II Veterans. In 2014, Black or African American Veterans had a lower unemployment rate than nonveterans, though by 2019 the unemployment rate for Gulf War-era II Veterans was slightly higher than nonveterans. The opposite trend was found for Hispanic or Latino and White Gulf War-era II Veterans, with higher unemployment than nonveterans in 2014 and lower unemployment in 2019. All groups experienced a sharp increase in 2020 during the pandemic, with rates falling again in 2021 and 2022. Overall, the gap between all Veterans and Gulf War-era II Veterans was closing for all racial/ethnic groups except Asian Veterans.

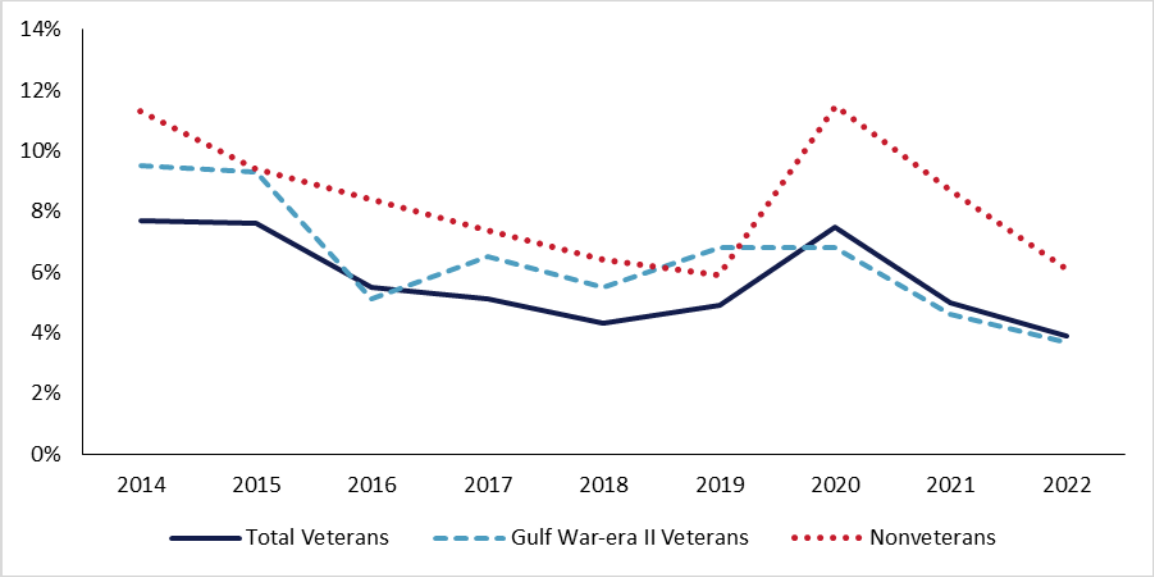
Exhibit 3-5. Annual Average Unemployment Rate for Asian Civilians by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average unemployment rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

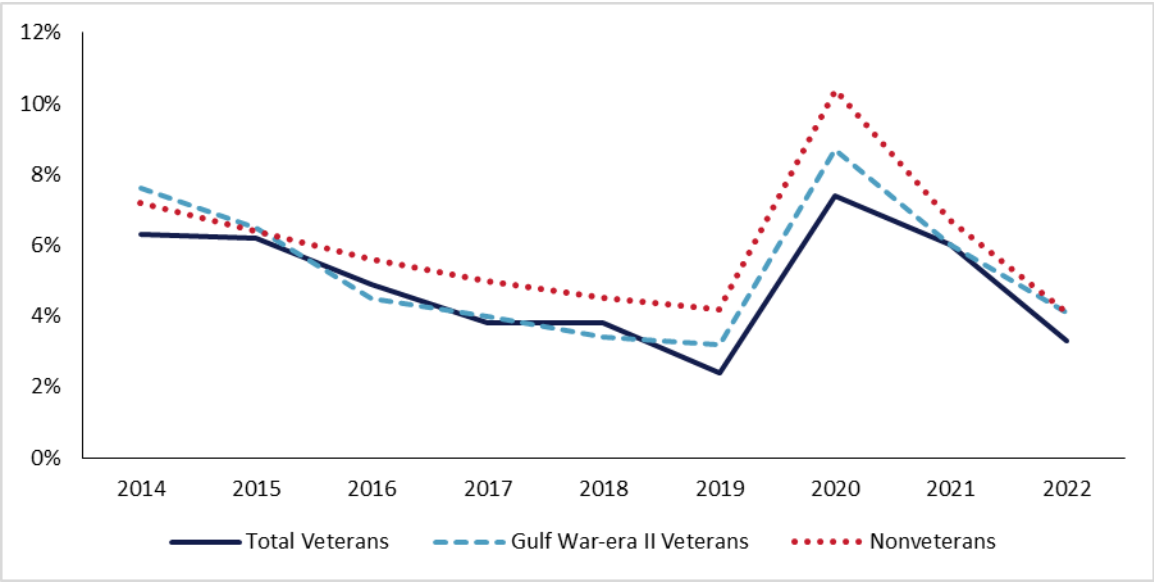
Exhibit 3-6. Annual Average Unemployment Rate for Black or African American Civilians by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average unemployment rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

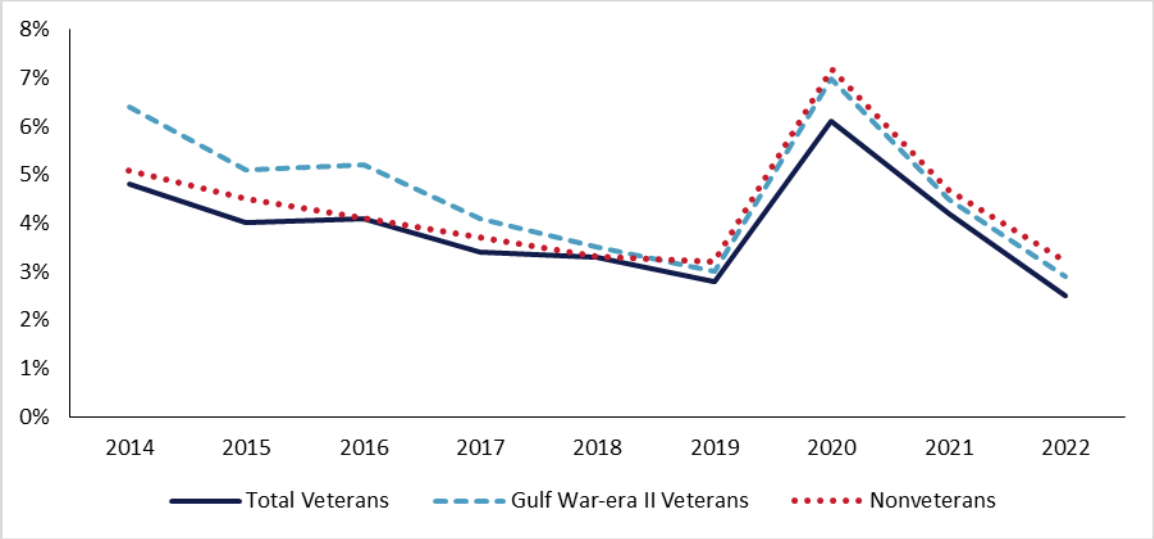
Exhibit 3-7. Annual Average Unemployment Rate for Hispanic or Latino Civilians by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average unemployment rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Hispanic or Latino includes any race.

Exhibit 3-8. Annual Average Unemployment Rate for White Civilians by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



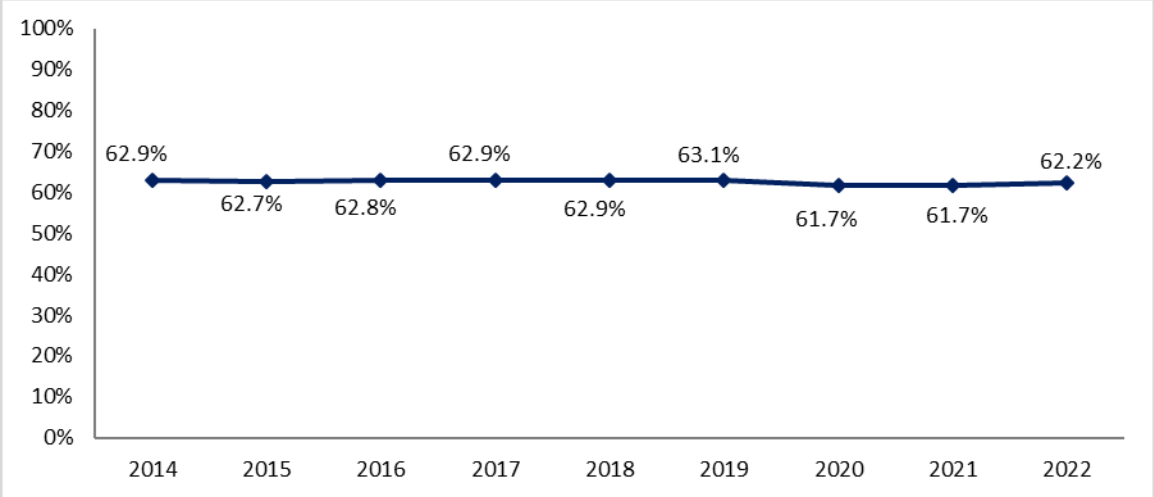
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average unemployment rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Labor Force Participation Rate

Labor force participation[17] was relatively stable from 2014 to 2019, with about 1 percent variation (Exhibit 3-9). The labor force participation rate decreased in 2020, was unchanged in 2021, and increased in 2022.

Exhibit 3-9. National Labor Force Participation Rate, 2014–2022

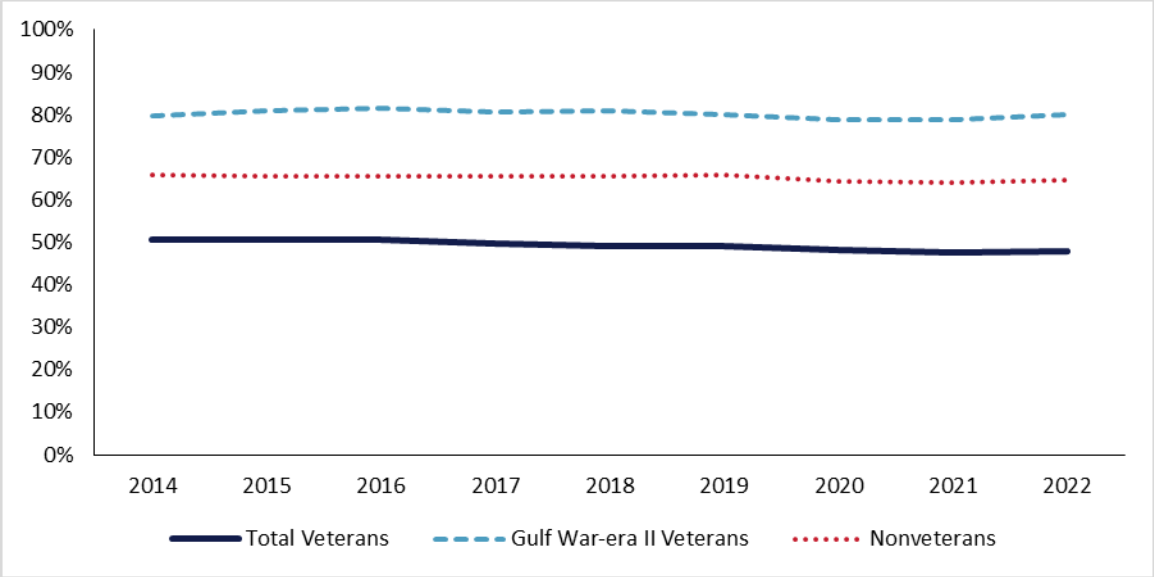


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014–2022

[17] The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population that is working or actively looking for work.

The Veteran labor force participation rate mirrored the national labor market (Exhibit 3-10). Gulf War-era II Veterans had a much higher labor force participation rate, whereas the total Veteran population had lower labor force participation compared to Gulf War-era II Veterans and nonveterans.

Exhibit 3-10. Annual Average Labor Force Participation Rate by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



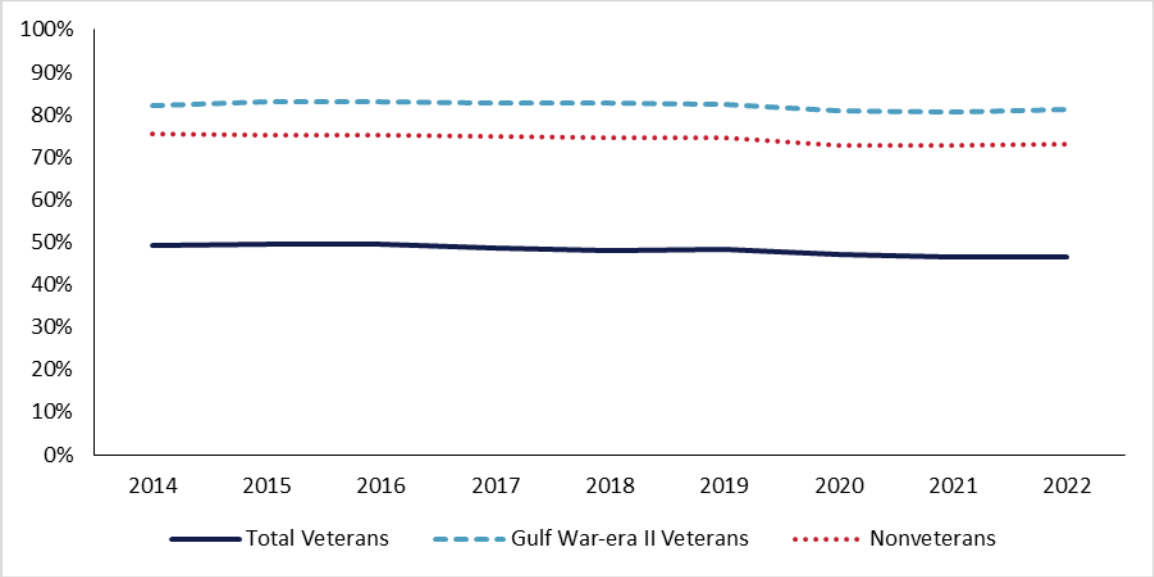
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average labor force participation rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Labor Force Participation by Gender

Labor force participation by gender had more variation but remained steady over time (Exhibits 3-11 and 3-12). Gulf War-era II Veterans were most engaged in the labor market, with more than 80 percent of Gulf War-era II Veteran men and about 70 percent of Gulf War-era II Veteran women participating in the labor force. For men, nonveterans had a higher labor force participation rate than all Veterans. However, women had higher labor force participation among all Veterans and similar participation rate to nonveteran women. Among all Veterans, women had higher labor force participation than men.

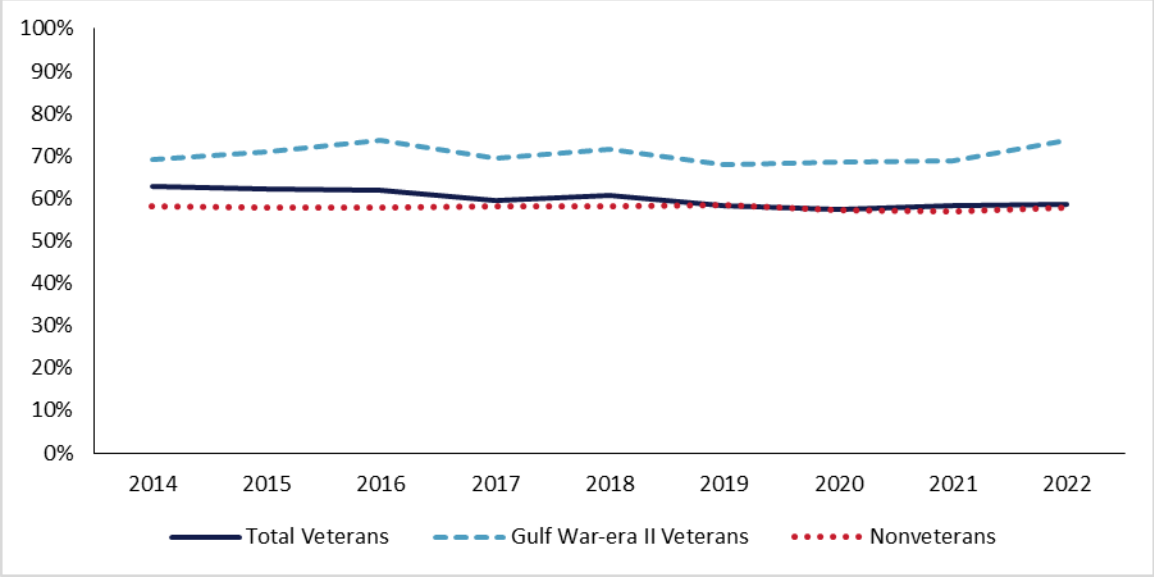
Exhibit 3-11. Annual Average Labor Force Participation Rate for Men by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average labor force participation rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Exhibit 3-12. Annual Average Labor Force Participation Rate for Women by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



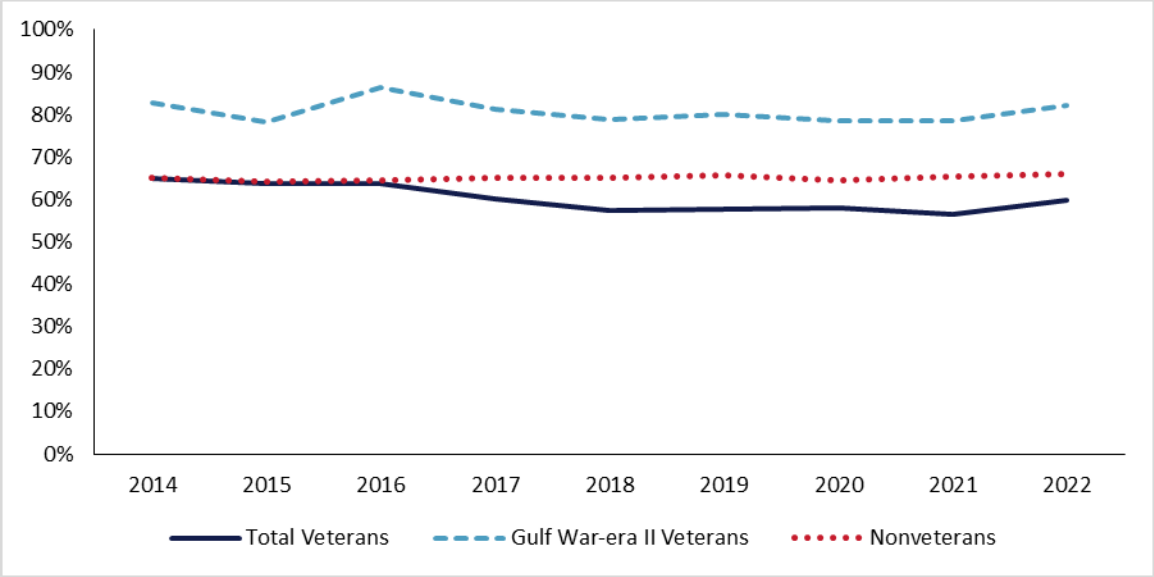
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average labor force participation rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Labor Force Participation by Race and Ethnicity

The labor force participation rate by racial/ethnic group was relatively stable over time, with a few exceptions (Exhibits 3-13 through 3-16). Asian Gulf War-era II Veterans ranged between 79 percent and 86 percent, with no clear trend, while the Asian and Black or African American total Veteran population saw decreased labor force participation, with an increase in 2022. Among all groups, Gulf War-era II Veterans had the highest participation rate, followed by nonveterans and then the total Veteran population. Among Gulf War-era II Veterans, White and Hispanic or Latino Veterans had the highest participation rate at 80 percent, followed by Asian Veterans at 80 percent and Black or African American Veterans closer to 75 percent.

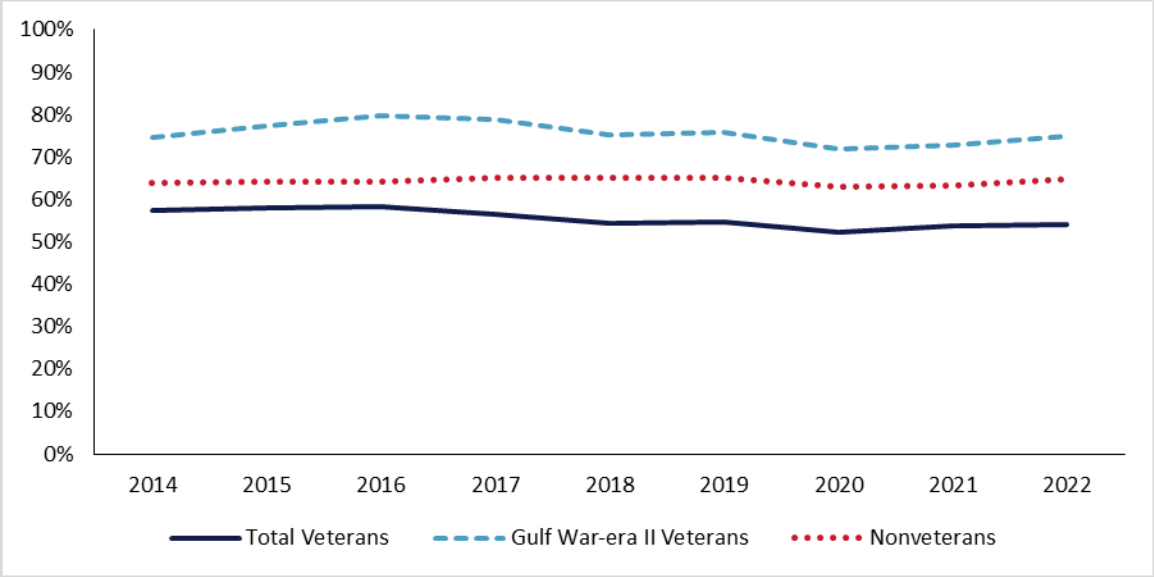
Exhibit 3-13. Annual Average Labor Force Participation Rate for Asian Civilians by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average labor force participation rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

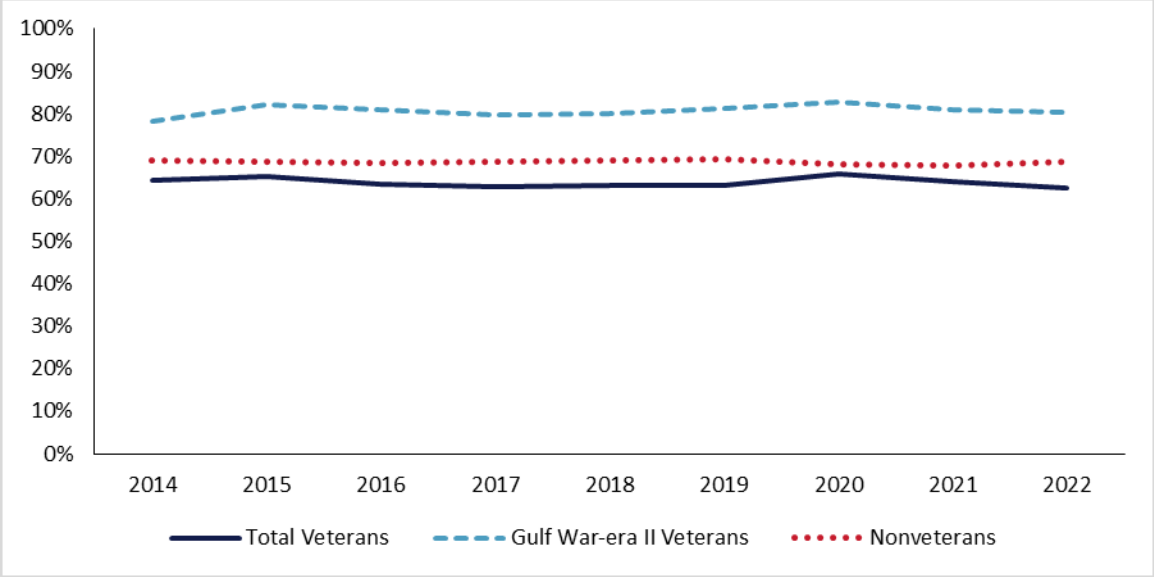
Exhibit 3-14. Annual Average Labor Force Participation Rate for Black or African American Civilians by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average labor force participation rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

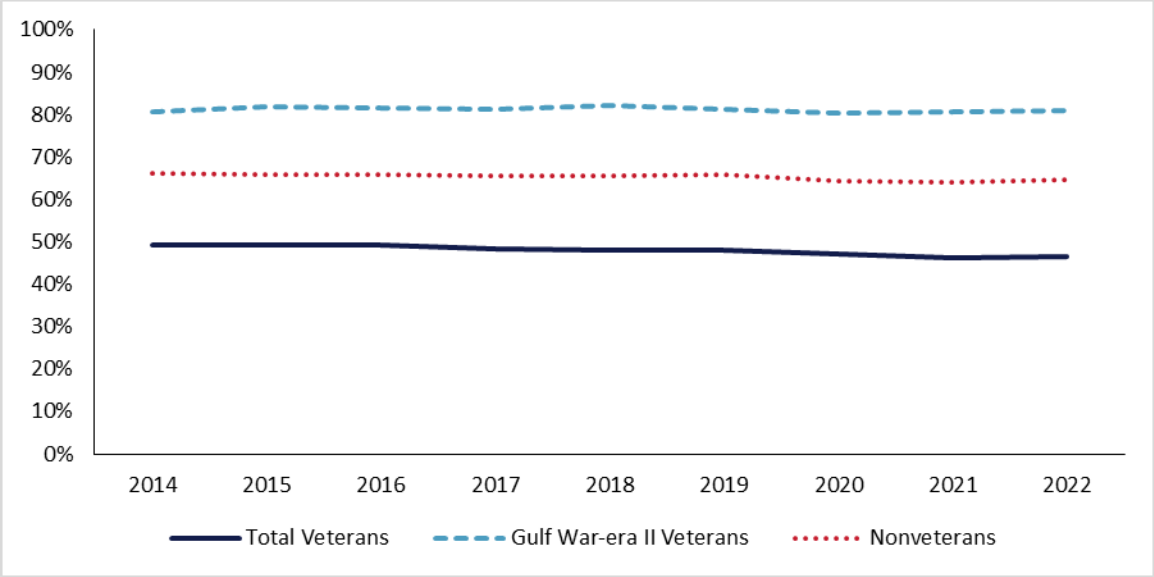
Exhibit 3-15. Annual Average Labor Force Participation Rate for Hispanic or Latino Civilians by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average labor force participation rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Hispanic or Latino includes any race.

Exhibit 3-16. Annual Average Labor Force Participation Rate for White Civilians by Veteran Status, 2014–2022



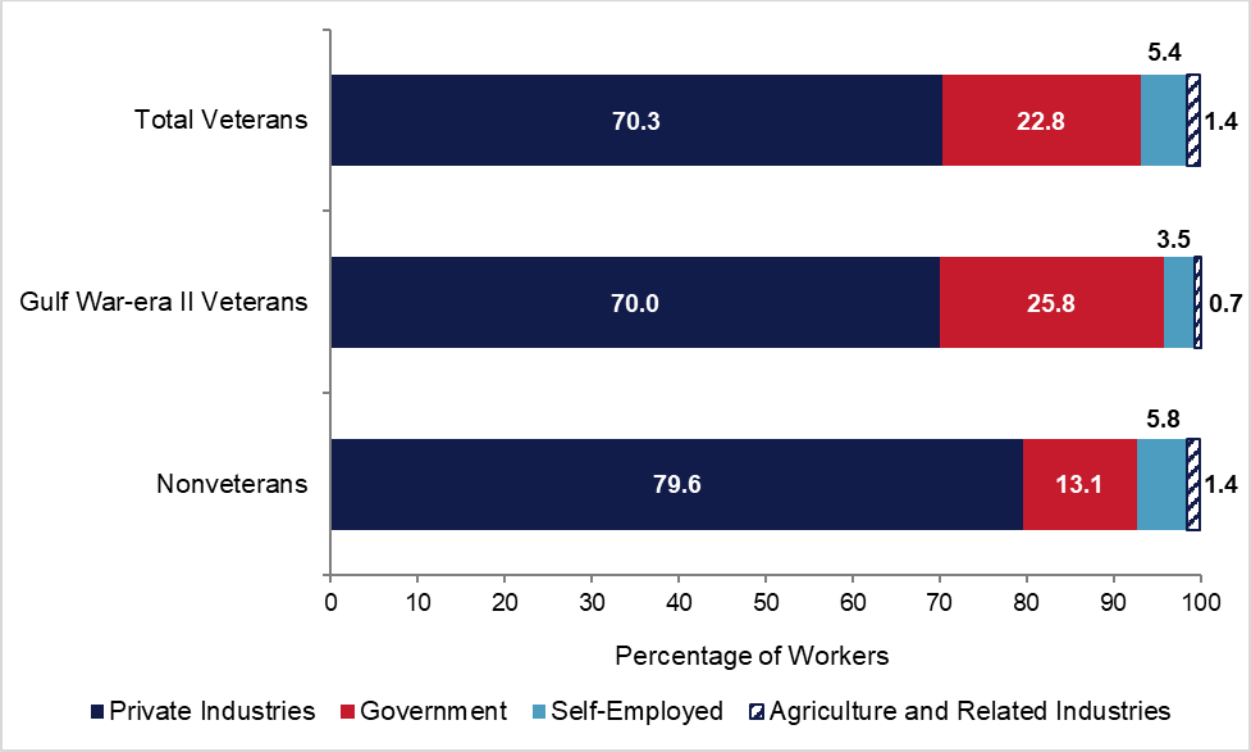
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2014–2022

Notes: Annual average labor force participation rate of the civilian noninstitutional population, 18 years of age and older, by Veteran status and period of service. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Employment by Industry Sector

Larger percentages of Veterans than nonveterans, especially Gulf War-era II Veterans, were employed in the government (Exhibit 3-17). More nonveterans than Veterans worked in the private sector. Gulf War-era II Veterans were less likely to be self-employed than nonveterans and Veterans overall. This changed little between 2014 and 2022.

Exhibit 3-17. Composition of Employment by Industry and Veteran Status, 2022

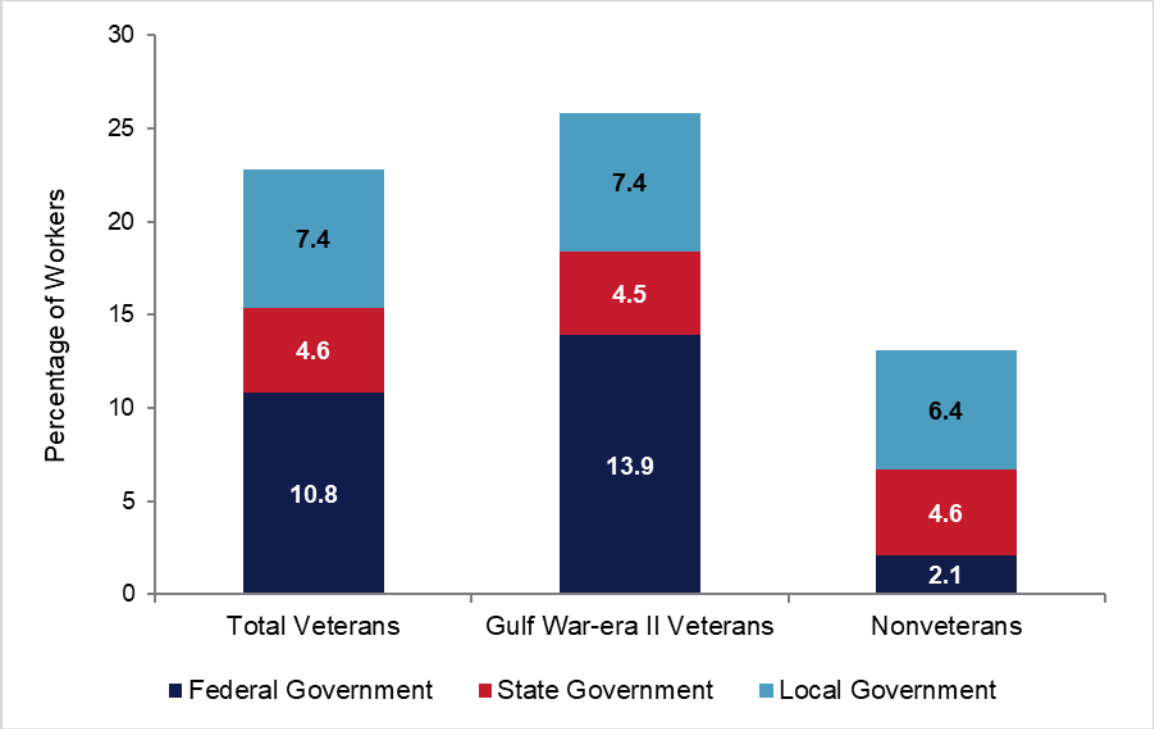


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Agriculture and Related Industries refers to food-generative industries, including food/beverage manufacturing, food services and eating/drinking places, textiles, and forestry and fishing.

Over a quarter of Gulf War-era II Veterans were employed at some level of government (Exhibit 3-18). A larger percentage of Veterans was employed by the federal government rather than state or local governments. There was an 8.7 percentage-point gap between nonveterans and the proportion of all Veterans employed by the federal government, and an 11.8 percentage-point gap between nonveterans and Gulf War-era II Veterans. Veterans and nonveterans have similar levels of employment in state government, but nonveterans have lower rates of employment than Veterans in local government.

Exhibit 3-18. Composition of Government Employment by Veteran Status, 2022



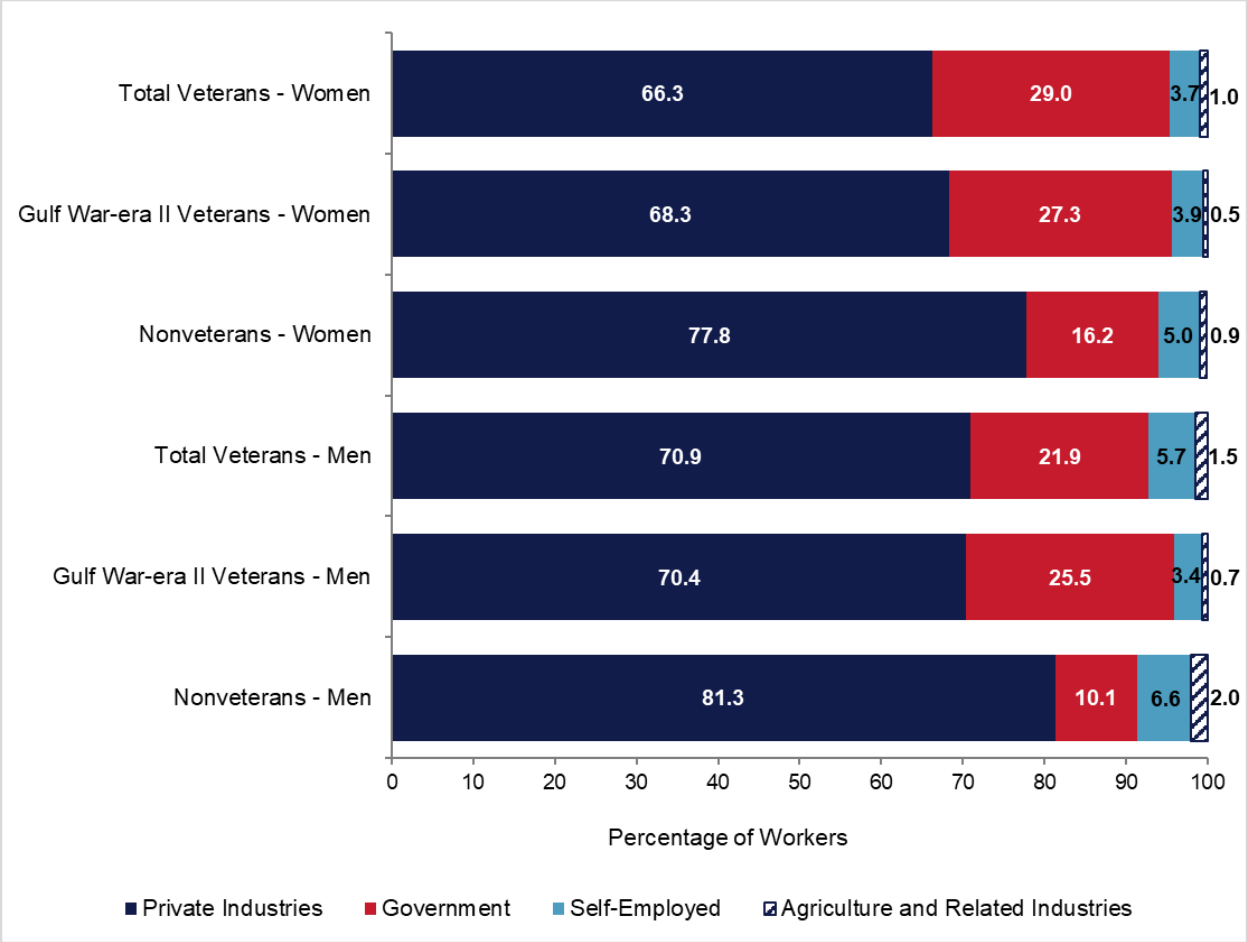
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to the total percentages in Exhibit 3-17 because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Industry Composition by Gender

Women, Veterans, and nonveterans had higher percentages working in the government than men (Exhibit 3-19). With both Veterans and nonveterans, a larger proportion of men was employed in private industries. The gender gap was greater among all Veterans, though the difference between Gulf War-era II Veterans was similar to nonveterans.

Exhibit 3-19. Composition of Employment by Industry, Veteran Status, and Gender, 2022

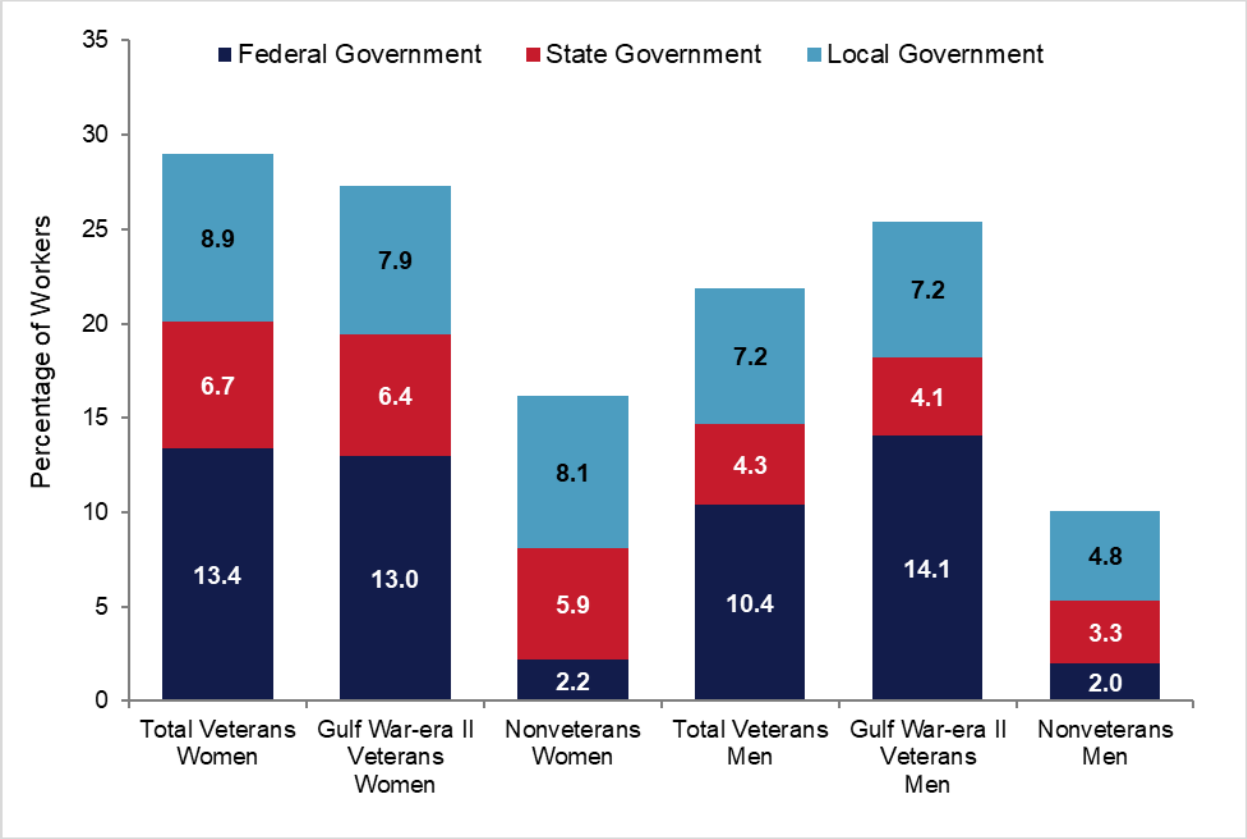


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Agriculture and Related Industries refers to food-generative industries, including food/beverage manufacturing, food services and eating/drinking places, textiles, and forestry and fishing.

The gender gap between Veterans appears related to employment in federal government (Exhibit 3-20), though women also held more jobs in state and local governments. The gender gap among nonveterans is associated with employment in state and local governments.

Exhibit 3-20. Composition of Government Employment by Veteran Status and Gender, 2022



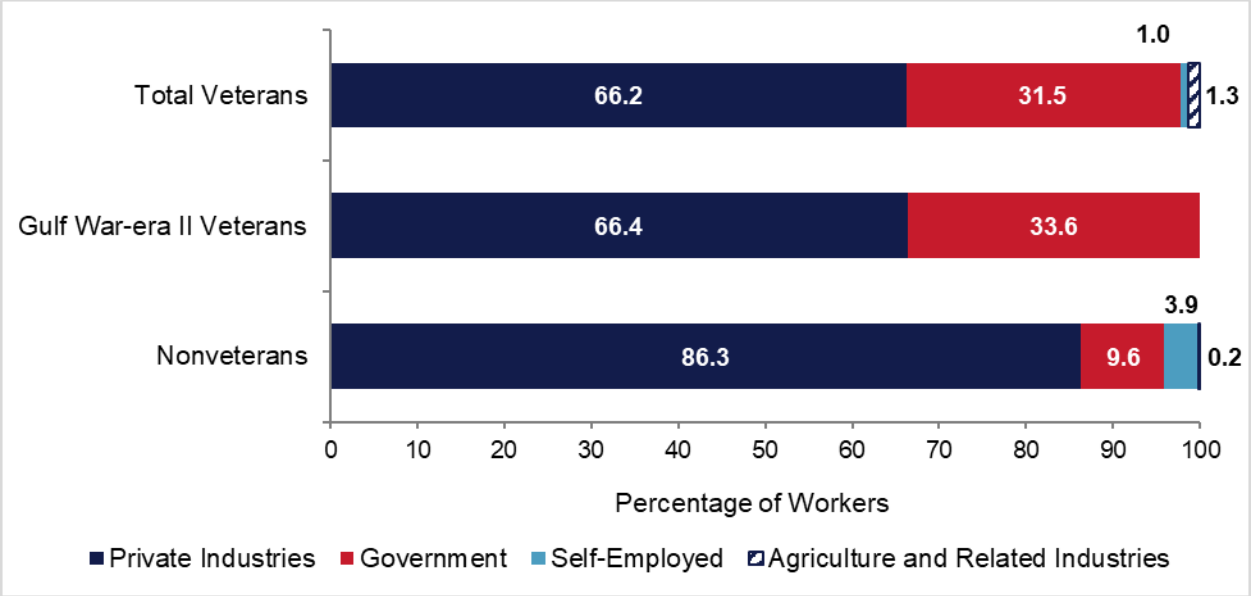
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to the total percentages in Exhibit 3-19 because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

Industry Composition by Race and Ethnicity

Larger percentages of Veterans, especially Gulf War-era II Veterans, were employed in the government across all groups (Exhibits 3-21 to 3-24). Relative to Veterans, more nonveterans worked in the private sector than in the government. Gulf War-era II Veterans were less frequently self-employed than nonveterans and Veterans overall.

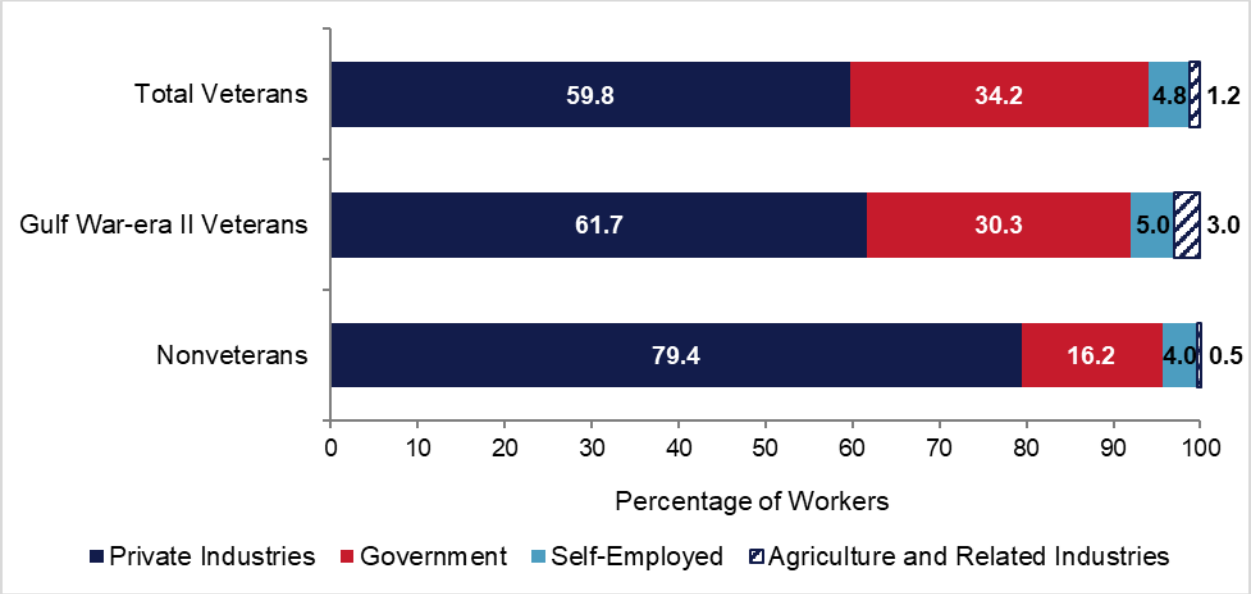
Exhibit 3-21. Composition of Employment for Asian Civilians by Industry and Veteran Status, 2022



Source: Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Agriculture and Related Industries refers to food-generative industries, including food/beverage manufacturing, food services and eating/drinking places, textiles, and forestry and fishing.

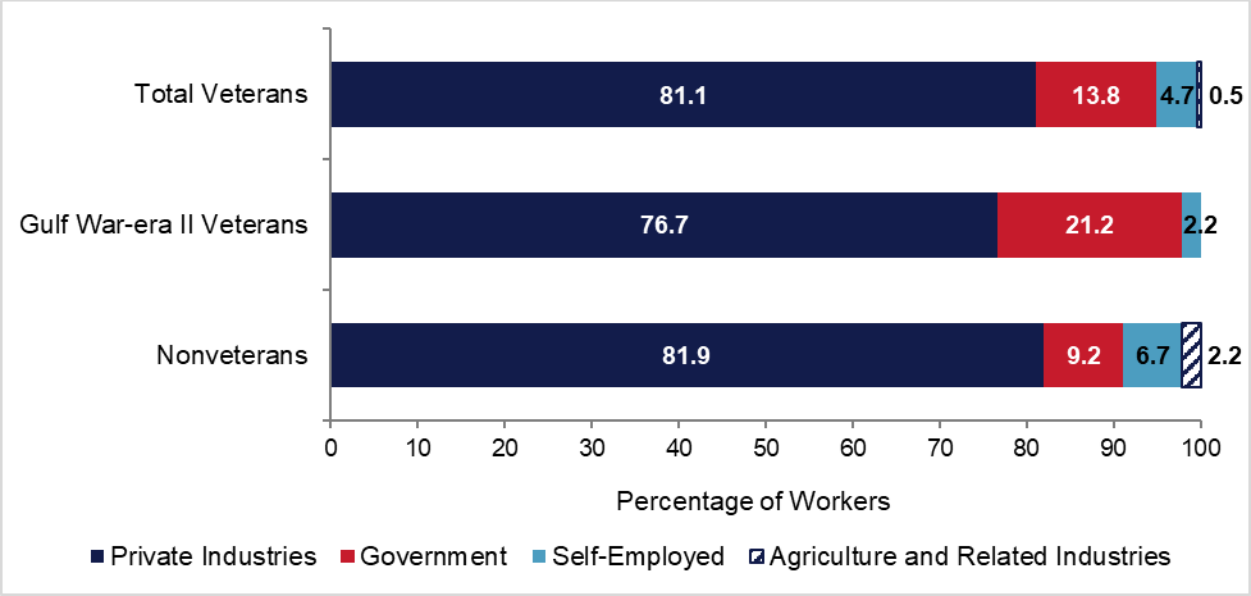
Exhibit 3-22. Composition of Employment for Black or African American Civilians by Industry and Veteran Status, 2022



Source: Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Agriculture and Related Industries refers to food-generative industries, including food/beverage manufacturing, food services and eating/drinking places, textiles, and forestry and fishing.

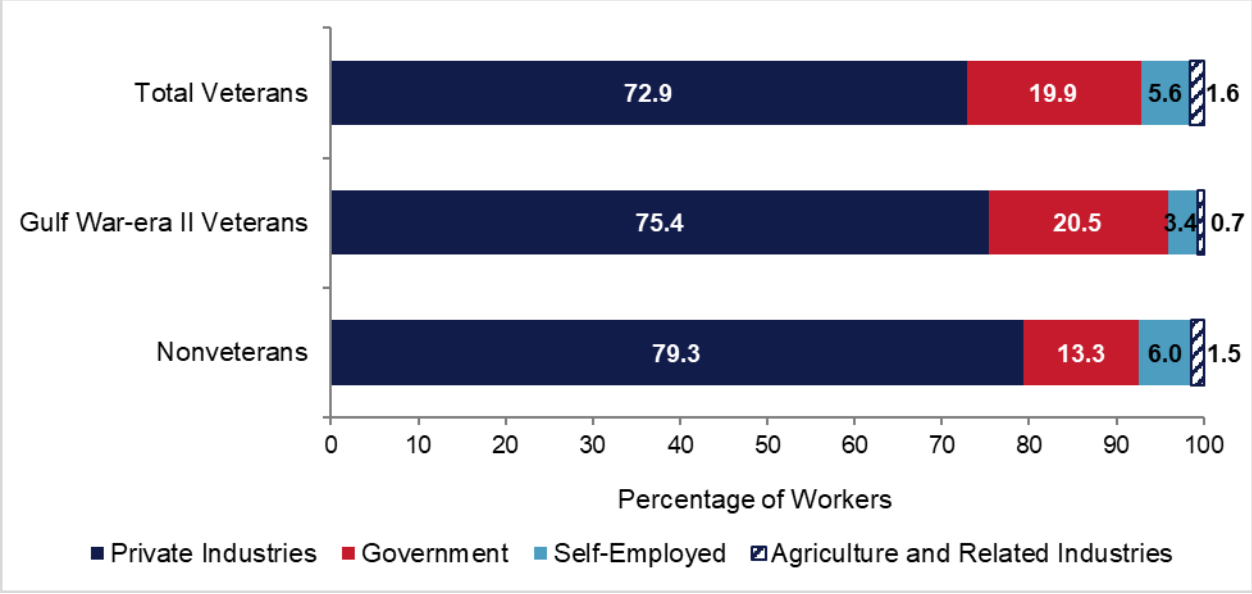
Exhibit 3-23. Composition of Employment for Hispanic or Latino Civilians by Industry and Veteran Status, 2022



Source: Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Hispanic or Latino includes any race. Agriculture and Related Industries refers to food-generative industries, including food/beverage manufacturing, food services and eating/drinking places, textiles, and forestry and fishing.

Exhibit 3-24. Composition of Employment for White Civilians by Industry and Veteran Status, 2022

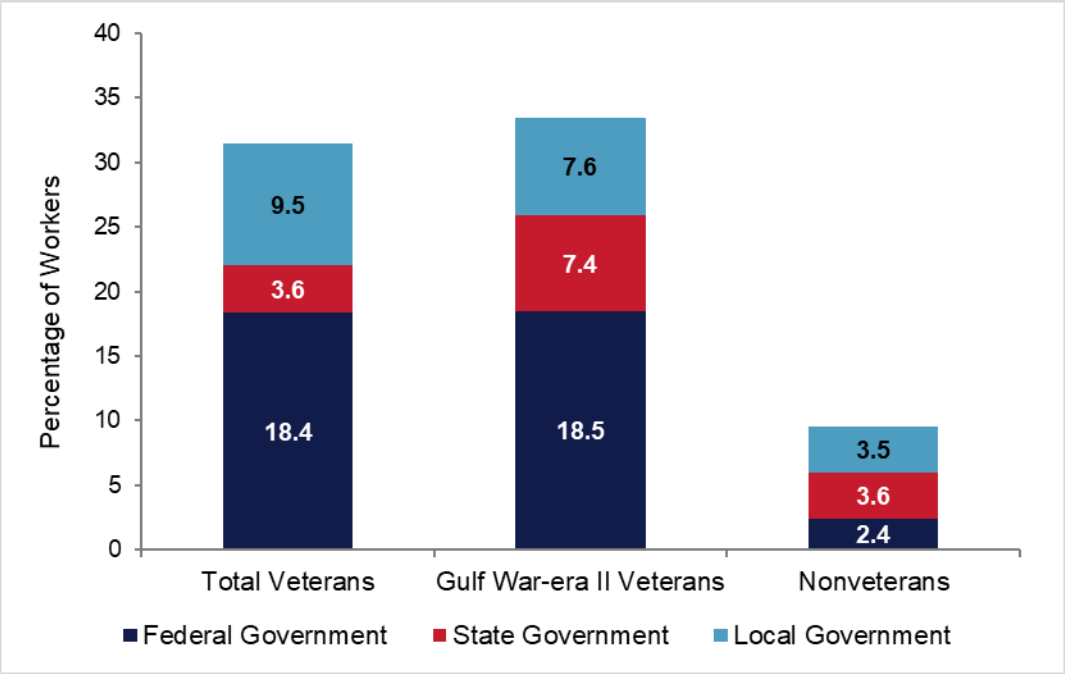


Source: Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Agriculture and Related Industries refers to food-generative industries, including food/beverage manufacturing, food services and eating/drinking places, textiles, and forestry and fishing.

Among all racial/ethnic groups, Veterans and especially Gulf War-era II Veterans were more often working in the government compared to nonveterans (Exhibits 3-25 through 3-29). As discussed previously, the largest percentage is employed in the federal government. Larger percentages of Asian Gulf War-era II Veterans are employed by the government, followed by Black or African American Veterans. The pattern is similar among all Veterans, except Hispanic or Latino Veterans who exhibit the lowest frequency of employment by the federal government.

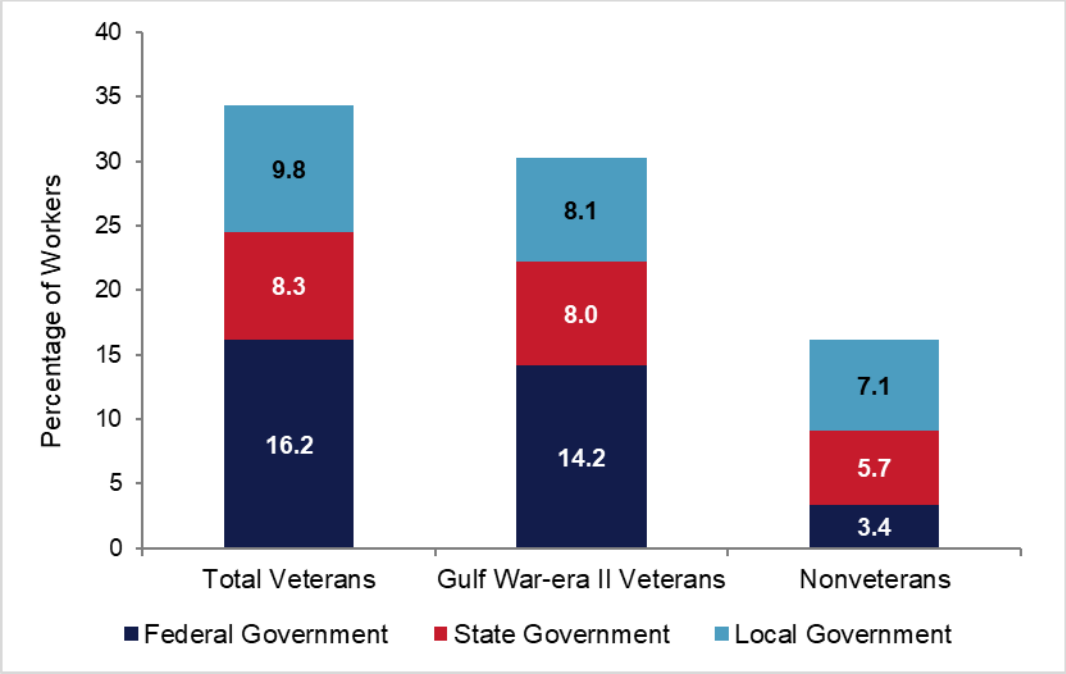
Exhibit 3-25. Composition of Government Employment for Asian Civilians by Veteran Status, 2022



Source: Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to the total percentages in Exhibit 3-21 because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

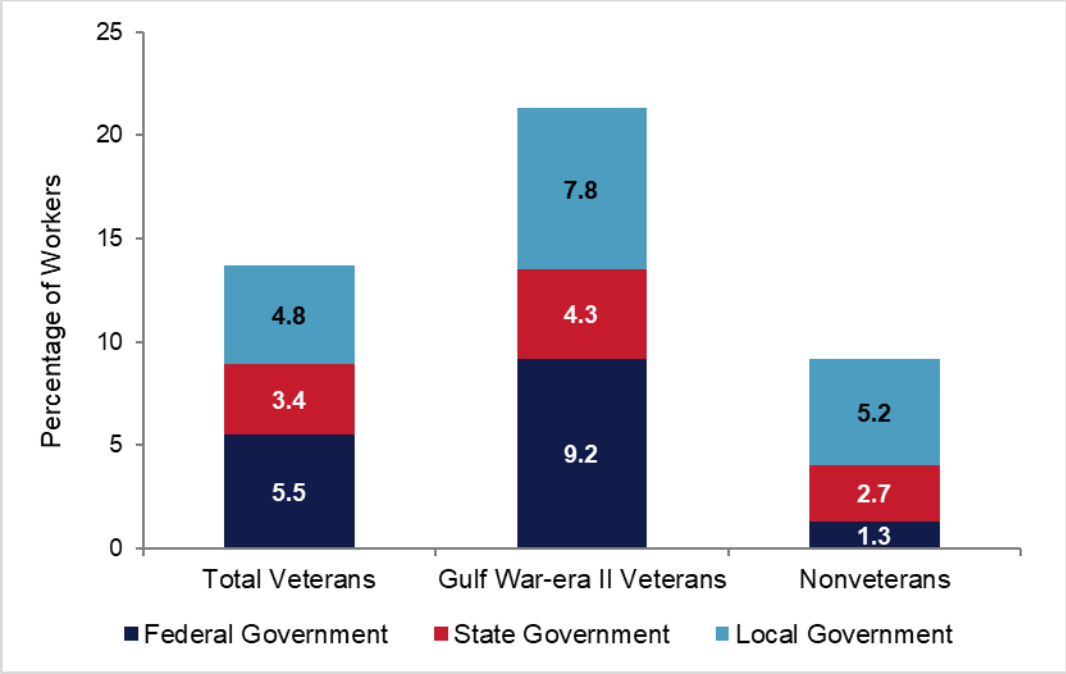
Exhibit 3-26. Composition of Government Employment for Black or African American Civilians by Veteran Status, 2022



Source: Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to the total percentages in Exhibit 3-22 because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

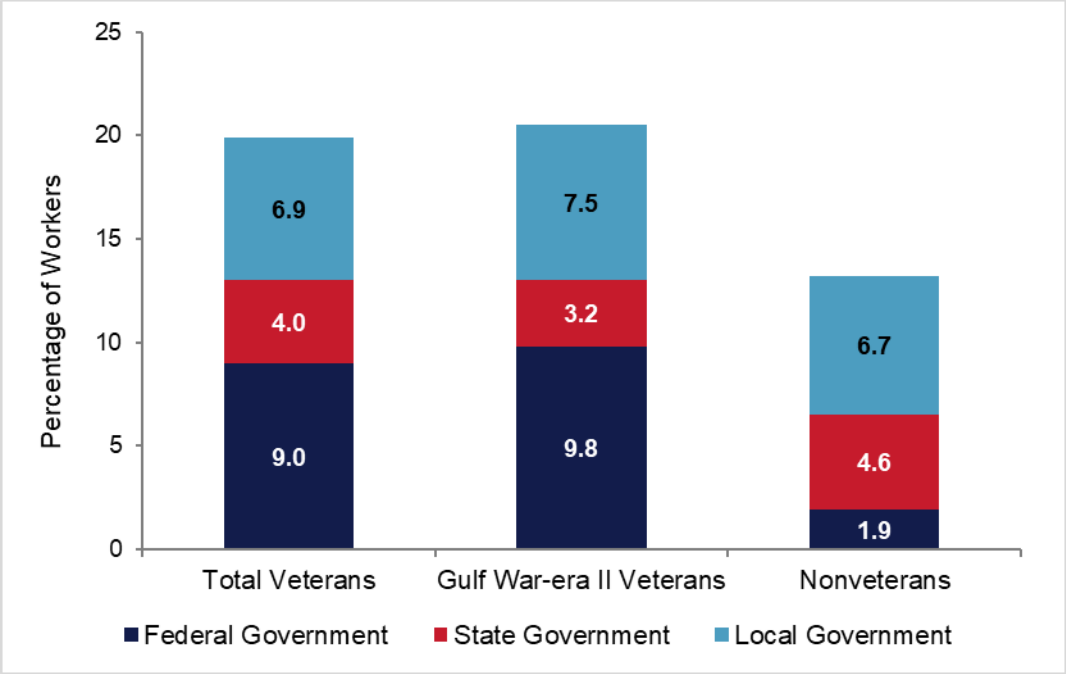
Exhibit 3-27. Composition of Government Employment for Hispanic or Latino Civilians by Veteran Status, 2022



Source: Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to the total percentages in Exhibit 3-23 because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated. Hispanic or Latino includes any race.

Exhibit 3-28. Composition of Government Employment for White Civilians by Veteran Status, 2022



Source: Current Population Survey Veterans Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau, 2022

Notes: Totals may not sum to the total percentages in Exhibit 3-24 because of rounding. Gulf War-era II Veterans are those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between September 2001 and the present and have separated.

4. Impact of Transition GPS on Employment and Wages

The primary goal of Transition GPS was to prepare TSMs for life after military service, including preparation for the civilian workforce. To assess the impact of Transition GPS on this goal, we compared the post-separation labor market outcomes of Transition GPS participants (treatment group) to non-participants (comparison group). This chapter presents the findings of the main impact analyses and how the findings varied for different subgroups. Appendix F of the Technical Supplement provides the outcomes for the overall sample.

KEY FINDINGS

- Transition GPS participants, on average, take less time to gain employment than non-participants.
- Larger percentages of Transition GPS participants were employed at 6 months and 12 months post-separation for some subgroups.
- On average, Transition GPS participants have higher job retention.
- Transition GPS participants had lower unemployment for some subgroups.
- Transition GPS participants, on average, earned less than non-participants.

Throughout this chapter and in our Technical Supplement, we present the effect sizes in addition to levels of statistical significance. Since we were working with data from the population of Army TSMs, we found many statistically significant findings for small group differences because of the large sample size. However, it is important to note that a 1 percentage-point difference in a binary outcome would be the equivalent of 2,890 TSMs in the overall sample. What this means is that even though the estimated differences may be small, the magnitude of the difference may be valuable.

How Does Participation in Transition GPS Affect Employment Outcomes?

As described in Chapter 1, multiple components of Transition GPS aim to help TSMs find a job. This includes the DOL Employment Workshop that focuses on job-seeking skills (e.g., resume writing, interview skills) and the MOC Crosswalk where TSMs translate their military skills and experience into civilian jobs. This section presents the impacts of Transition GPS on employment by comparing the outcomes of participants to non-participants. Exhibit 4-1 presents the average employment outcomes for the treatment and comparison groups, the impact estimate, and the effect size.

Transition GPS participants found work faster.

Over the first 6 quarters post-separation, Transition GPS participants, on average, take significantly less time to gain employment than non-participants. In fact, 80.9 percent of Transition GPS participants found work in the 1st quarter post-separation compared to 80.0 percent of non-participants. This means that an additional 2,890

TSMs who participated in Transition GPS found a job in the 1st quarter after separation relative to non-participants. However, this finding was not statistically significant.

Exhibit 4-1. Impacts of Transition GPS (TGPS) on Employment, 2014–2021

Outcomes	TGPS mean	Non-TGPS mean	Impact estimate	Effect size
Number of quarters to employment post-separation	0.78	0.82	-.045**	-.014
Employed by 6 months post-separation (%)	84.0	84.4	-.031***	-.019
Employed by 12 months post-separation (%)	79.2	78.7	.035***	.021
Employment retention – at same job (%)	51.8	51.5	.086***	.052
Employment retention – at any job (%)	59.3	59.2	.072***	.044
Number of quarters not employed at 12 months post-separation	1.12	1.11	.01	.003
Number of quarters not employed at 36 months post-separation	3.11	3.22	-.114***	-.039

Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

Notes: Mean estimates for number of quarters to employment post-separation, number of quarters unemployed at 12 and 36 months presented are regression-adjusted impacts. Other variable means are adjusted for PSM weights. The impact and effect size estimates for all variables are based on regression results. Estimates were weighted to equalize the odds of selection into the groups.

TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p <. 01; ***p < .001*

Participation in Transition GPS was not associated with higher employment rates at 6 months post-separation but was associated with higher rates at 12 months post-separation.

At 6 months post-separation, significantly higher rates of non-participants were employed compared to Transition GPS participants (84.4 percent vs. 84.0 percent, respectively). However, at 12 months post-separation, Transition GPS participants had a slightly higher employment rate than non-participants (79.2 percent vs. 78.7 percent); this difference was statistically significant. This means that compared to non-participants, an additional 1,445 TSMs who participated in Transition GPS were employed at 12 months post-separation.

Transition GPS participants had higher rates of employment retention.

A significantly higher proportion of Transition GPS participants who were employed at 6 months post-separation were employed at the same job at 12 months relative to TSMs in the non-participant group (51.8 percent vs. 51.5 percent and 59.0 percent and 56.0 percent, respectively as unadjusted and adjusted values). For TSMs who were employed at 6 months post-separation, a significantly higher proportion of Transition GPS participants than non-participants were employed at any job at 12 months (59.3 percent vs. 59.2 percent and 67.4 percent and 65.3 percent, respectively, as unadjusted and adjusted values). The relative impact is that an additional 867 TSMs were employed at the same job at 12 months and an additional 289 TSMs were employed at any job at 12 months.

Transition GPS participants had lower rates without employment at 36 months post-separation.

While no significant differences were found between the groups at 12 months post-separation, non-participants were not employed for significantly more quarters than Transition GPS participants at 36 months post-separation, on average.

How Does Participation in Transition GPS Affect Wage Outcomes?

This section presents the impacts of Transition GPS on wages by comparing the outcomes of participants to non-participants. Exhibit 4-2 presents the average wage outcomes for the treatment and comparison groups, the impact estimate, and the effect size.

Exhibit 4-2. Impacts of Transition GPS (TGPS) on Wages, 2014–2021

Outcomes	TGPS mean	Non-TGPS mean	Impact estimate	Effect size
Wages 6 months post-separation ($)†	10,717.98	12,691.78	-1973.80***	-.224
Wages 12 months post-separation ($)†	10,518.59	12,023.69	-1505.10***	-.178
Wages 24 months post-separation ($)†	11,396.15	12,757.88	-1361.73***	-.161
Wages 36 months post-separation ($)†	11,011.44	12,249.46	-1238.02***	-.151
Wage change from 1st quarter to 5th quarter post-separation ($)	9192.74	9676.06	-483.32***	-.036
Wage change from military to 4th quarter post-separation ($)	9463.07	10,702.38	-1239.30***	-.096
Average UI benefits collected at 6 months post-separation ($)†	3,833.63	3,491.16	-.224***	-.046
Average UI benefits collected at 12 months post-separation ($)†	3,089.26	3,430.73	.402***	.073
Average UI benefits collected at 36 months post-separation ($)†	3,105.85	3,247.69	.042	.007

Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

Notes: Mean estimates for wage change presented are regression-adjusted impacts. Other variable means are adjusted for PSM weights. The impact and effect size estimates for all variables are based on regression results. Estimates were weighted to equalize the odds of selection into the groups. Mean estimates for wage change are the mean wage for the most recent quarter (i.e., 5th quarter or 4th quarter) with the earlier quarter included as a covariate in estimation models. The upper 0.5 percent of the wages distributions were trimmed due to extreme values.

TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

†Variable was transformed in regression analysis by taking its cube root.

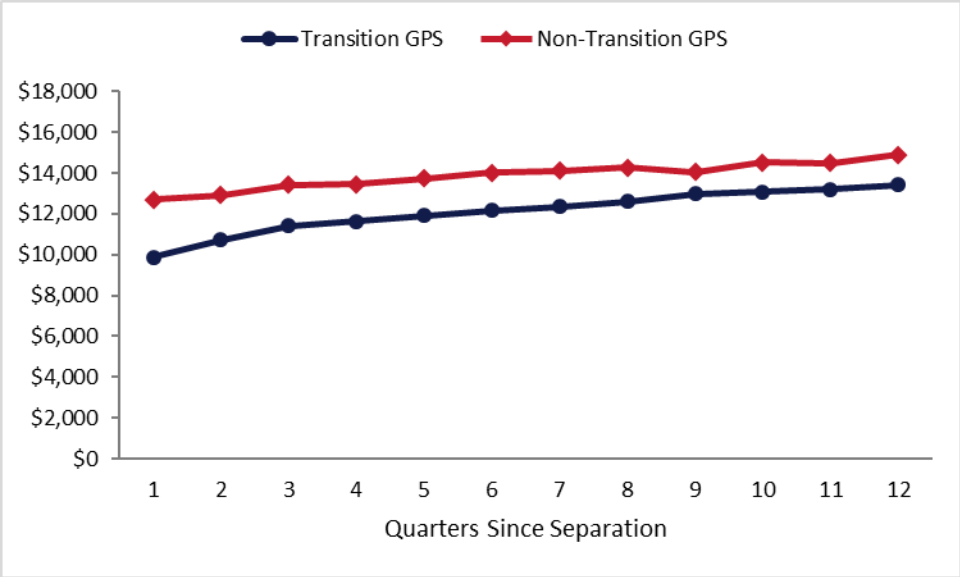
*Significance levels: *p < .05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001*

Participation in Transition GPS was not associated with higher wages post-separation.

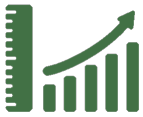
Employed Transition GPS participants' wages were lower than employed non-participants' wages at each follow-up period (Exhibit 4-3). On average, Transition

GPS participants earned $1,974 less than non-participants at 6 months post-separation (during the 2nd quarter). The difference between the groups decreased over time, with Transition GPS participants earning $1,505 less than non-participants at 12 months post-separation (during the 4th quarter); $1,362 less at 24 months post-separation (during the 8th quarter); and $1,238 less at 36 months post-separation (during the 12th quarter).

Exhibit 4-3. Wages for Transition GPS Participants and Non-Participants by Quarter Since Separation, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
Note: Differences between the groups were statistically significant in each quarter (p < .01).
Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success



Transition GPS participants had a smaller wage change between the 1st and 5th quarters.

Transition GPS participants experienced lower wage growth between the 1st and 5th quarters than did the non-participants. On average, Transition GPS participants' adjusted wages were $9,192.74, compared to $9,676.06 for non-participants' wages.

As a secondary analysis, we examined the change between participants' military wages and 4th-quarter post-separation wages. Here again, Transition GPS participants' mean adjusted wages were less ($9,463.07) compared to non-participants' adjusted wages ($10,702.38).

Transition GPS participants collected less in UI benefits.

At 6 months post-separation, the average amount of UI benefits collected by Transition GPS participants was $3,834 while the average amount for non-participants was $3,491. This was a significant difference. At 12 months post-separation, Transition GPS participants collected significantly less in average UI benefits than non-participants. The average amount collected by Transition GPS participants

was $3,089 while the average amount for non-participants was $3,431. No significant differences were found between the groups at 36 months post-separation.

Employment and Wages for Subgroups

As detailed in Chapter 2, we explored differences in outcomes for 10 subgroups. We present subgroup analyses of social identifiers that have been linked to employment outcomes in the literature: gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, and military rank (pay grade). Appendix H in the Technical Supplement contains additional details on findings for all subgroups.

Time to Employment

Exhibit 4-4 presents the time to employment over the first six quarters post-separation. For both men and women, the study found that Transition GPS participants got a job faster than non-participants. However, this difference was statistically significant for men only (a small effect). We next examined the differences by race and gender. As illustrated in Exhibits 4-5 and 4-6, Black men and Black women who participated in Transition GPS found jobs faster than other TSMs who did not participate in Transition GPS. They also found work faster than TSMs in other racial and ethnic groups who participated in the program. In terms of a relative impact, for Black men, an additional 1,798 TSMs found a job in the 1st quarter. For Black women, an additional 266 TSMs found a job in the 1st quarter.

Exhibit 4-4. Average Number of Quarters to Post-Separation Employment by Subgroup, 2014–2021

	TGPS Mean	Non-TGPS Mean
Gender		
Men***	.66	.69
Women	1.38	1.43
Race/Ethnicity		
Black TSMs***	.77	.94
Hispanic TSMs (any race)	1.06	1.11
TSMs of Other Races***	1.24	1.07
White TSMs	.85	.86
Disability Status		
TSMs with Reported Disabilities*	1.00	1.05
TSMs with No Reported Disabilities***	.91	.95
Military Pay Grade		
E–1 to E–4***	1.29	1.60
E–5 to E–6***	1.25	.83
E–7 to E–9***	.68	.84
O–1 to O–3	1.27	1.33
O–4 to O–10	.62	.61
W–1 to W–5***	.77	1.09

Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

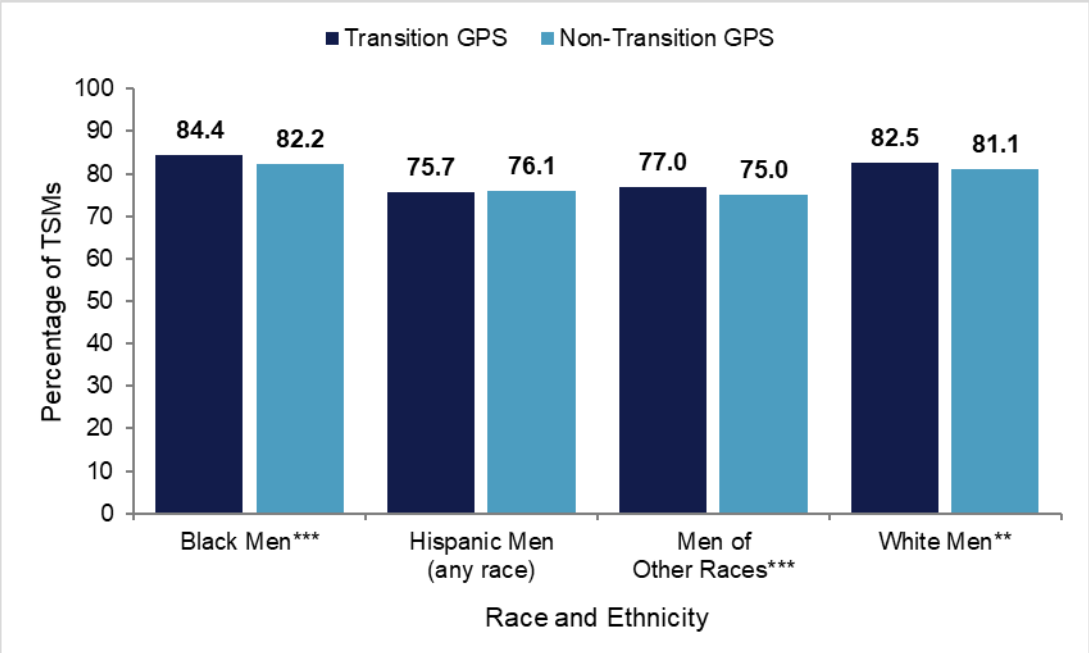
Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.

TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

When differences were explored by disability status, both TSMs with a reported disability and TSMs without a reported disability who participated in Transition GPS found work faster than TSMs who did not participate in the program. This difference was significant for both groups.

Transition GPS participants in pay grades E–1 to E–4, E–7 to E–9, and W–1 to W–5 found a job faster than TSMs in the comparison group – a significant finding. However, non-participants in the E–5 to E–6 pay grades found work significantly faster than program participants.

Exhibit 4-5. Percentage of Men Employed in the 1st Quarter Post-Separation by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



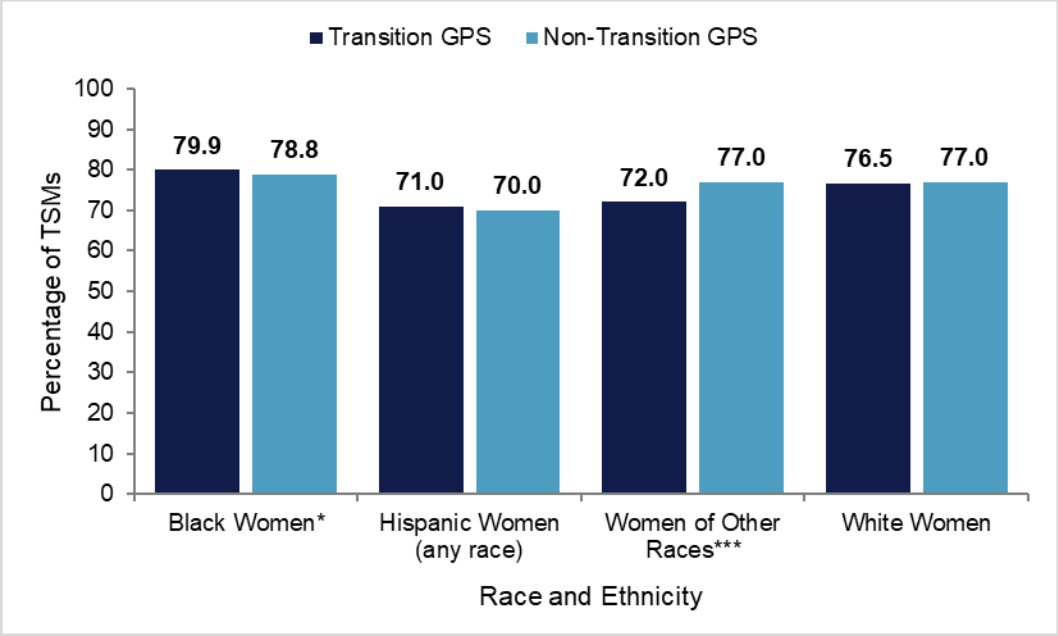
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.
Sample sizes of Transition GPS participants: Black Men = 38,640; Hispanic Men = 26,498; Men of Other Races = 13,568; White Men = 125,690. Sample sizes of non-Transition GPS participants: Black Men = 43,197; Hispanic Men = 23,789; Men of Other Races = 12,773; White Men = 124,896.

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-6. Percentage of Women Employed in the 1st Quarter Post-Separation by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

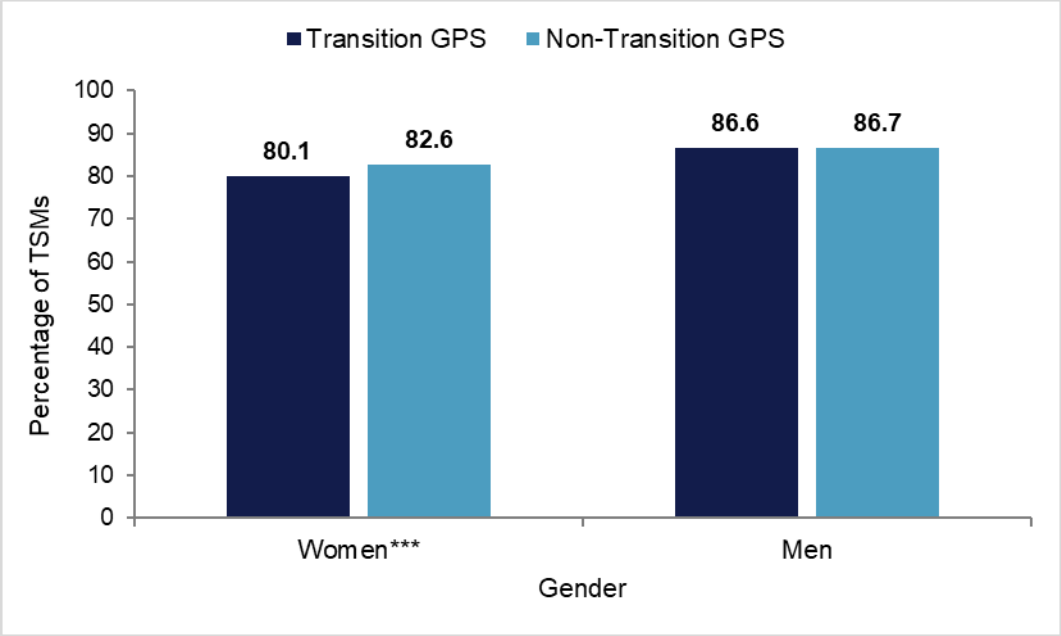
Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.
Sample sizes of Transition GPS participants: Black Women = 12,527; Hispanic Women = 4,821; Women of Other Races = 2,934; White Women = 14,141. Sample sizes of non-Transition GPS participants: Black Women = 11,689; Hispanic Women = 5,489; Women of Other Races = 2,844; White Women = 14,142.

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Employment

TSMs who did not participate in Transition GPS had higher employment rates at 6 months post-separation than Transition GPS participants (Exhibits 4-7 to 4-10). The differences that favored the comparison group were significant for women, Hispanic TSMs, TSMs of other races, White TSMs, TSMs with a reported disability, and TSMs in military pay grades E–5 to E–9. However, the study found that Transition GPS participants who were in pay grades E–1 to E–4 and O–1 to O–3 and TSMs with no reported disabilities had significantly higher employment rates than non-participants.

Exhibit 4-7. Average Employment at 6 Months Post-Separation by Gender, 2014–2021

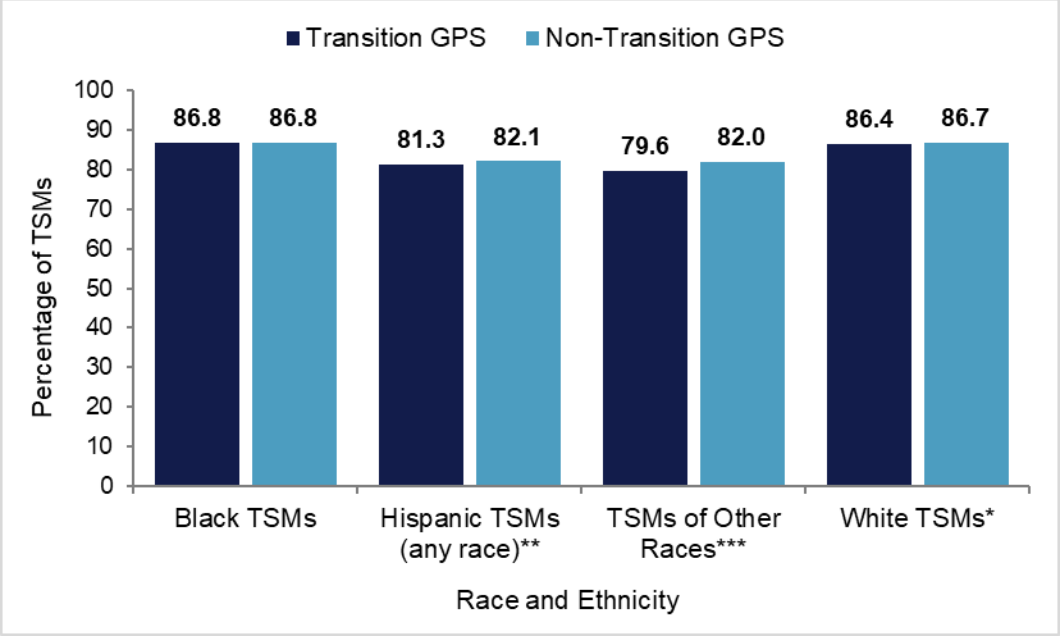


Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-8. Average Employment at 6 Months Post-Separation by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



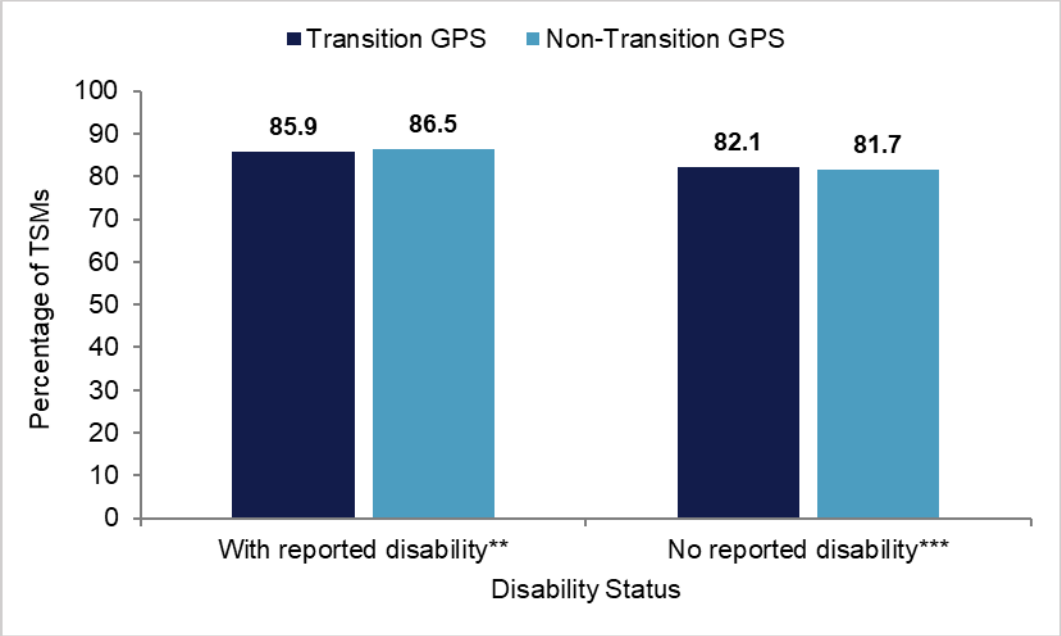
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001*

Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.

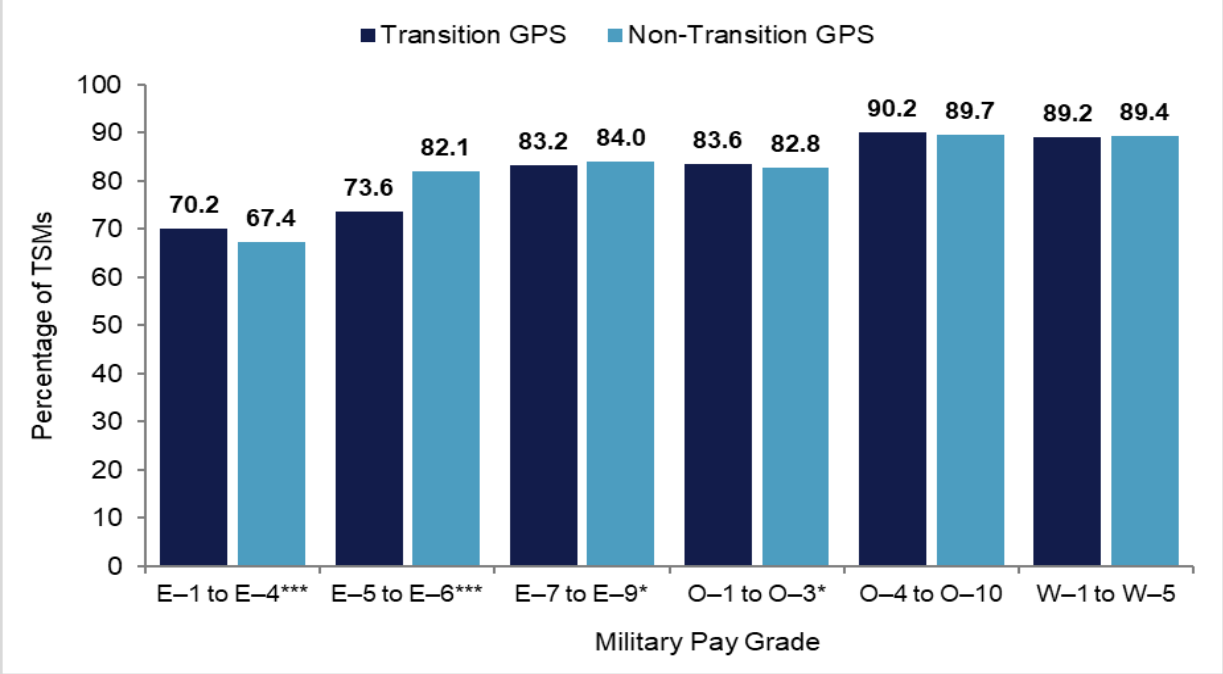
TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-9. Average Employment at 6 Months Post-Separation by Disability Status, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; ** p <.01; *** p <.001*
TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-10. Average Employment at 6 Months Post-Separation by Military Pay Grade, 2014–2021

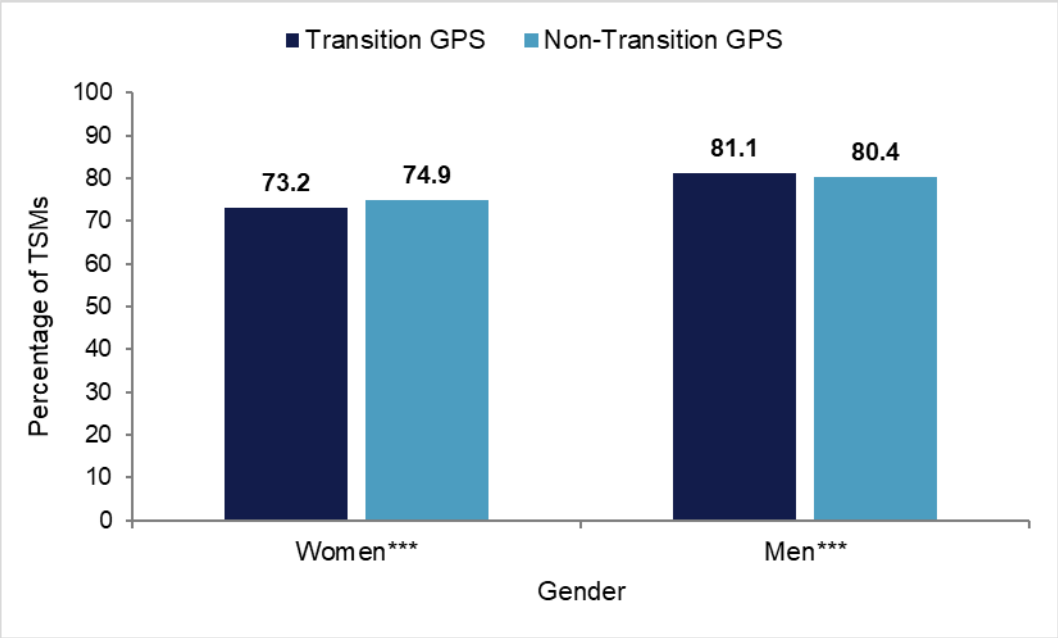


Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*
Note: Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer)
TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

At 12 months post-separation, the differences between Transition GPS participants and non-participants were significant for all subgroups (Exhibits 4-11 to 4-14). Transition GPS had higher employment rates than non-participants for all men; Black TSMs; White TSMs; TSMs without a reported disability; and TSMs in military pay grades E–1 to E–4, E–7 to E–9, O–4 to O–10, and W–1 to W–5. All other findings favored the comparison group.

In terms of a relative impact, for Black TSMs, an additional 1,143 TSMs were employed at 12 months. For early career staff (pay grades E–1 to E–4), an additional 4,363 TSMs were employed at 6 months and an additional 2,909 TSMs were employed at 12 months. For officers (O–1 to O–3), an additional 150 TSMs were employed at 6 months and an additional 552 officers (O–4 to O–10) were employed at 12 months.

Exhibit 4-11. Average Employment at 12 Months Post-Separation by Gender, 2014–2021

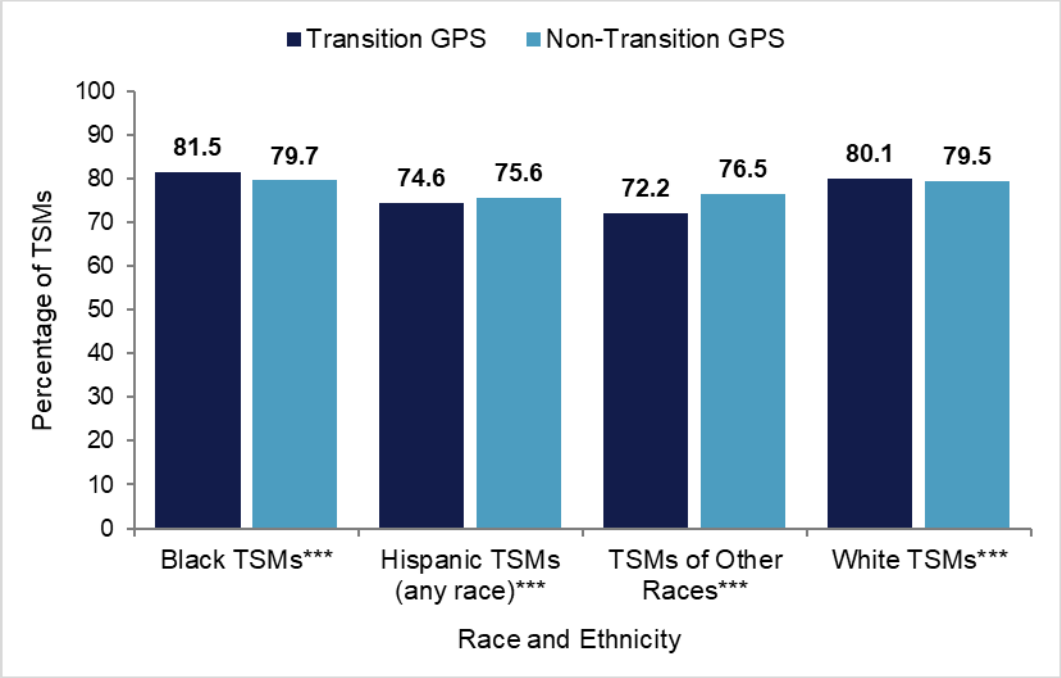


Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-12. Average Employment at 12 Months Post-Separation by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



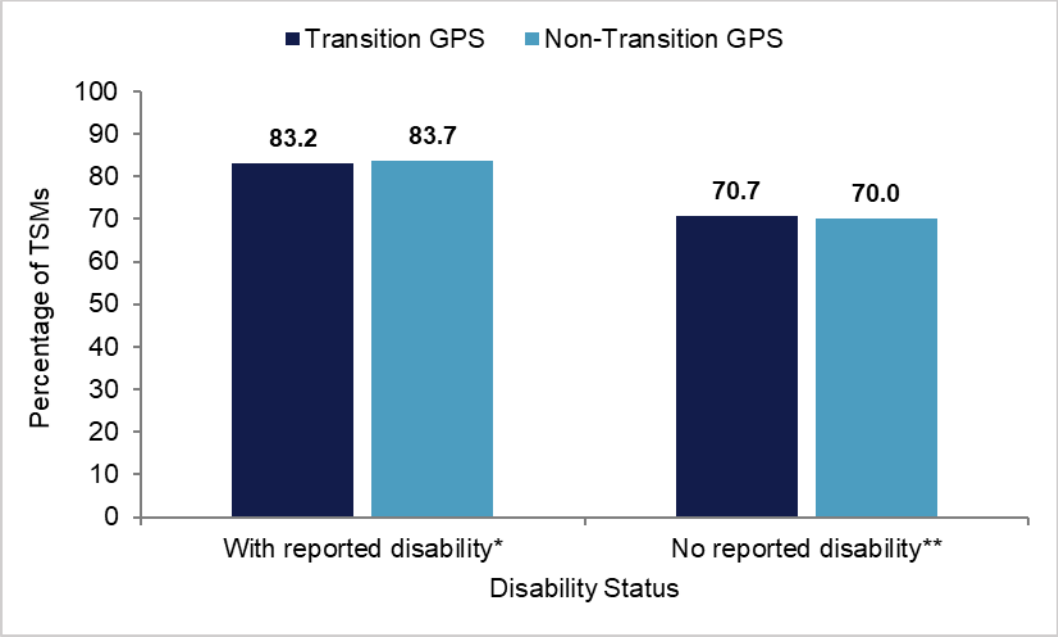
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; *** p <.001*

Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-13. Average Employment at 12 Months Post-Separation by Disability Status, 2014–2021

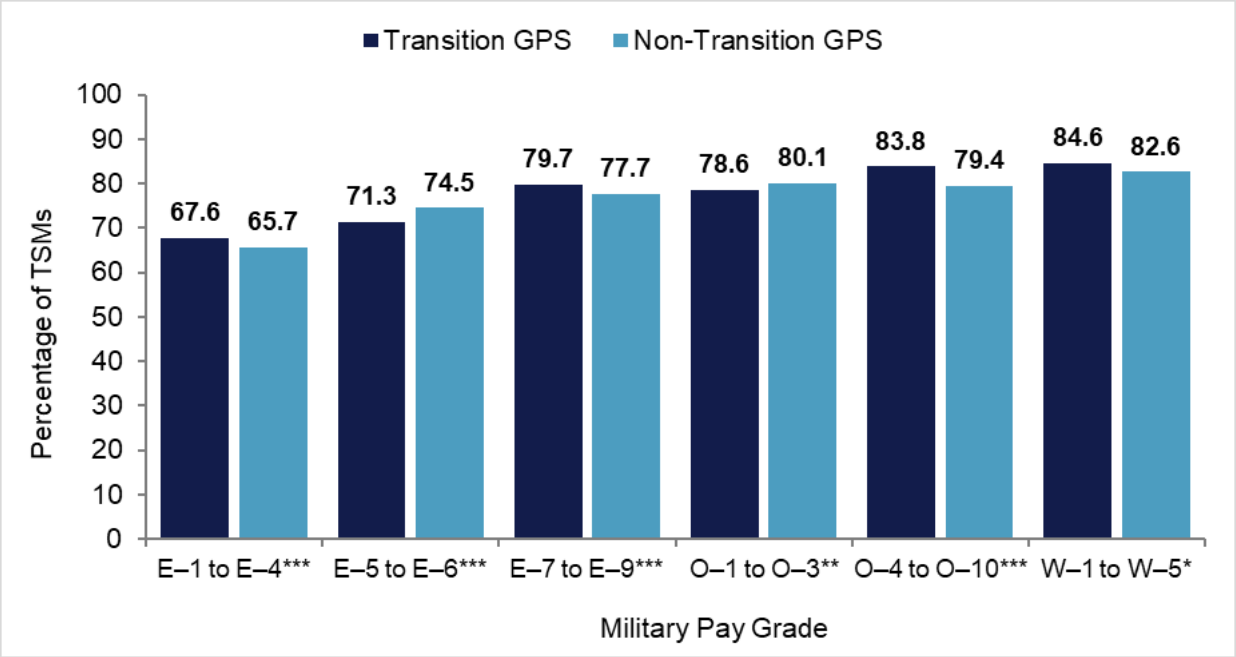


Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

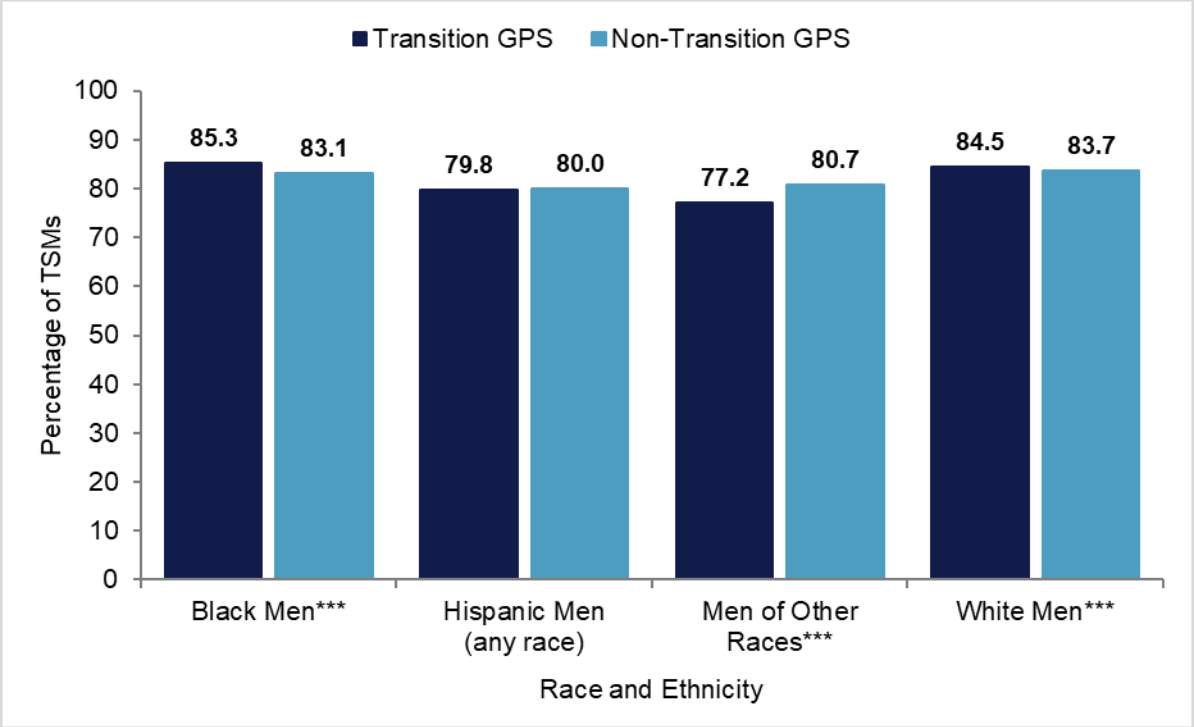
Exhibit 4-14. Average Employment at 12 Months Post-Separation by Military Pay Grade, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; *** p < .001*
Note: Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer)
TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

We further explored the group differences by race and gender (Exhibits 4-15 and 4-16). Significant differences in 12-month employment were found for all men except Hispanic men. For men, Transition GPS participants had significantly higher employment rates than non-participants for Black TSMs and White TSMs. In fact, Black men who participated in Transition GPS had the highest employment rate (85.3 percent) of all TSMs. The non-participant group had significantly higher employment for TSMs of other races. Among women, the comparison group had significantly higher employment relative to the Transition GPS participants for Hispanic TSMs, TSMs of other races, and White TSMs. No significant differences were found for Black women.

Exhibit 4-15. Average Employment for Men at 12 Months Post-Separation by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



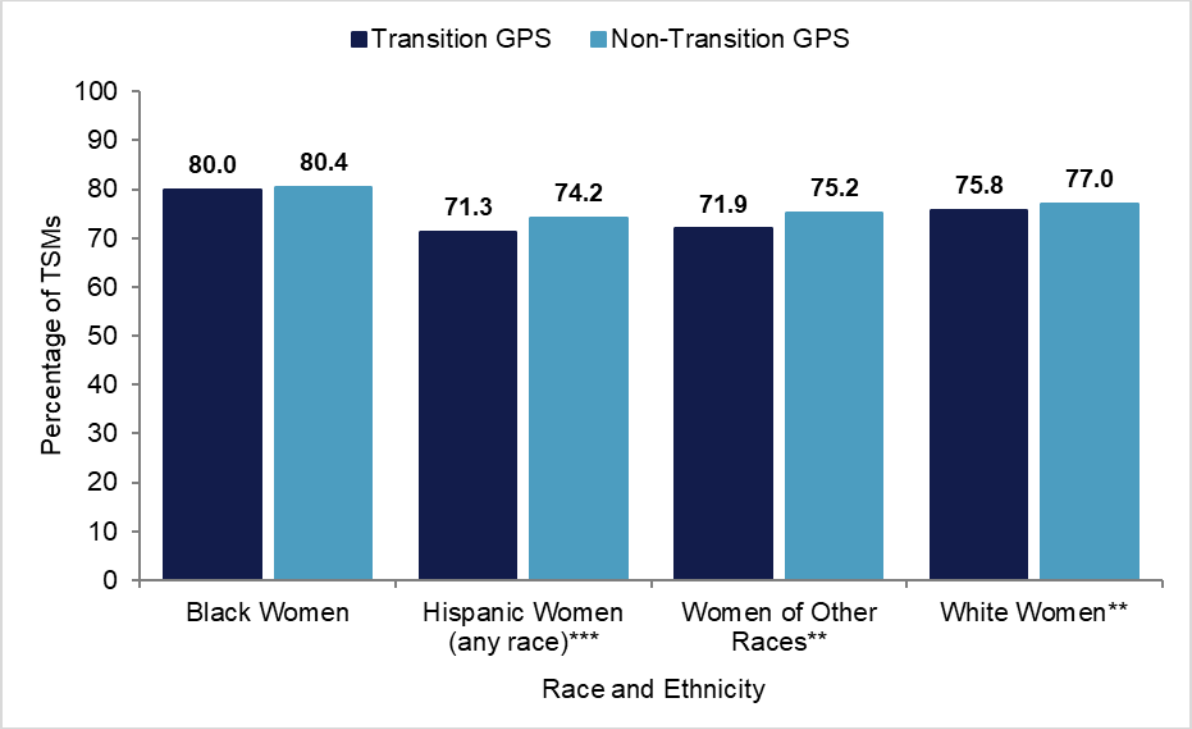
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-16. Average Employment for Women at 12 Months Post-Separation by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*
Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.
TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

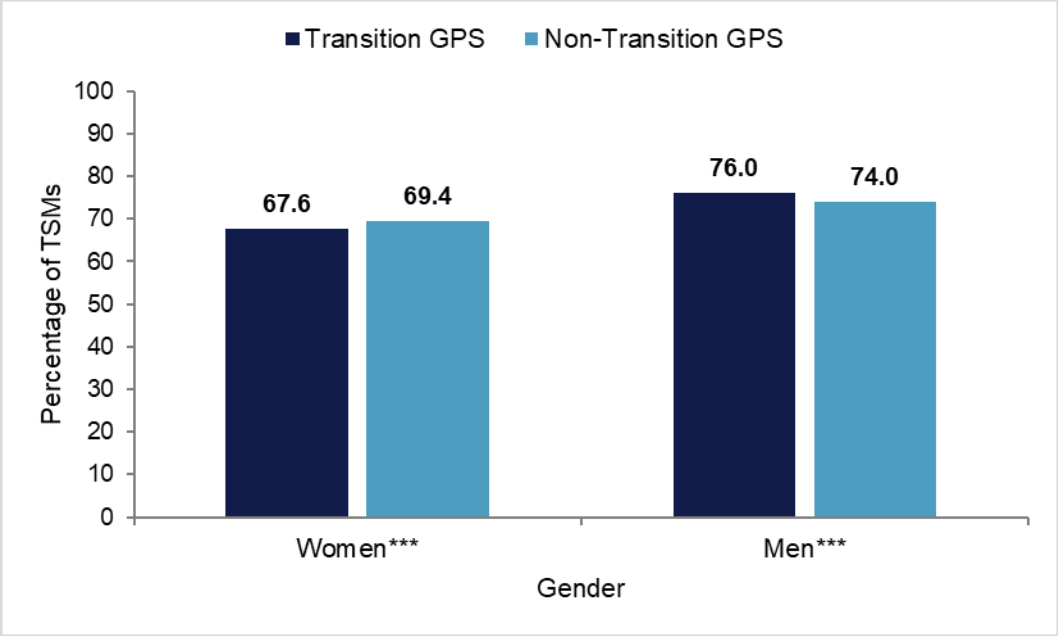
Employment Retention

A significantly higher proportion of Transition GPS participants who were employed at 6 months post-separation were employed at the same job at 12 months compared to TSMs in the non-participant group (Exhibits 4-17 through 4-20). This included all men, as well as Black TSMs, Hispanic TSMs, White TSMs, and TSMs with no reported disabilities. As with 12-month employment, larger proportions of Black TSMs who participated in Transition GPS remained at the same job (76.9 percent) compared to all other racial and ethnic groups. The non-participant group had significantly higher retention for all women and TSMs of other races.

Transition GPS participants for all pay grades, except E–5 to E–6, remained at the same job at higher rates than non-participants. These differences were significant for all but TSMs in the E–7 to E–9 pay grades.

In terms of relative impact, the additional number of TSMs who retained employment included: 4,957 men; 1,715 Black TSMs; 304 Hispanic TSMs; 2,177 White TSMs; 4,976 TSMs without reported disabilities; 5,817 TSMs in E–1 to E–4; 256 TSMs in O–1 to O–3; 221 TSMs in O–4 to O–10; and 102 TSMs in W–1 to W–5.

Exhibit 4-17. Average Employment Retention at 12 Months Post-Separation by Gender, 2014–2021

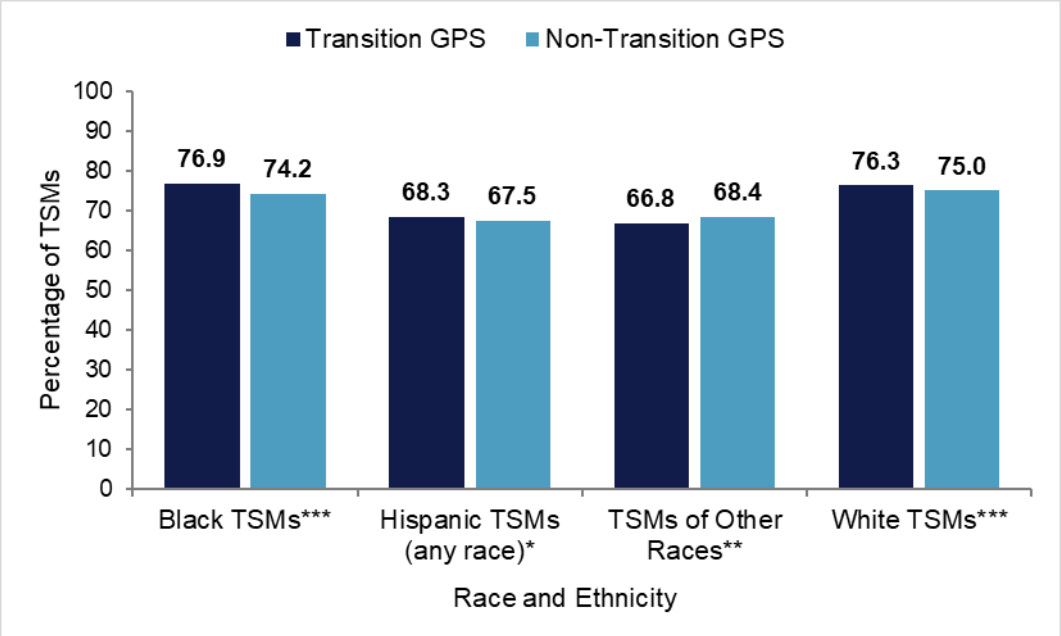


Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-18. Average Employment Retention at 12 Months Post-Separation by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



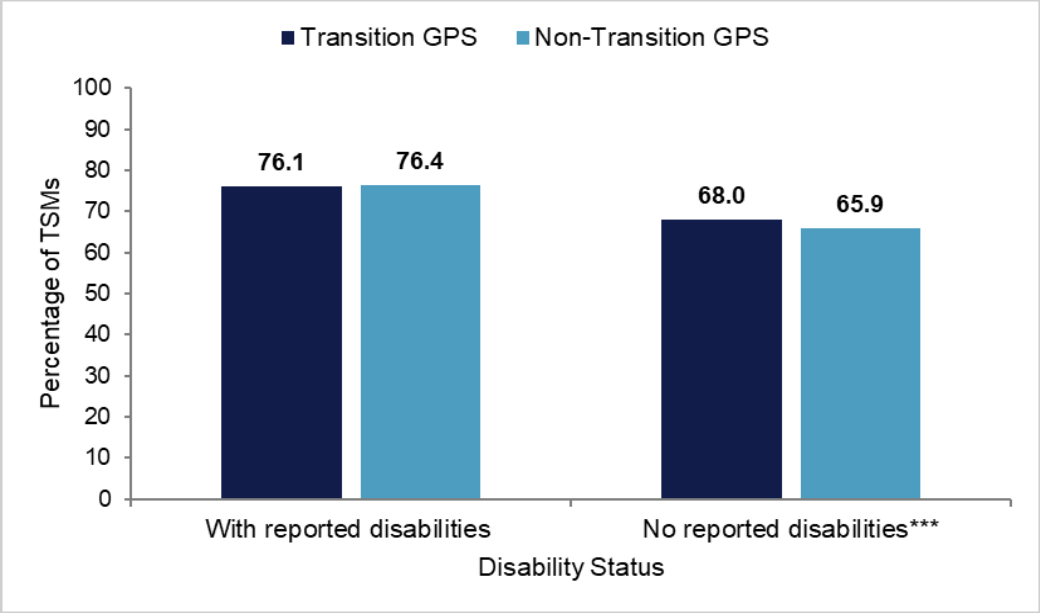
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.

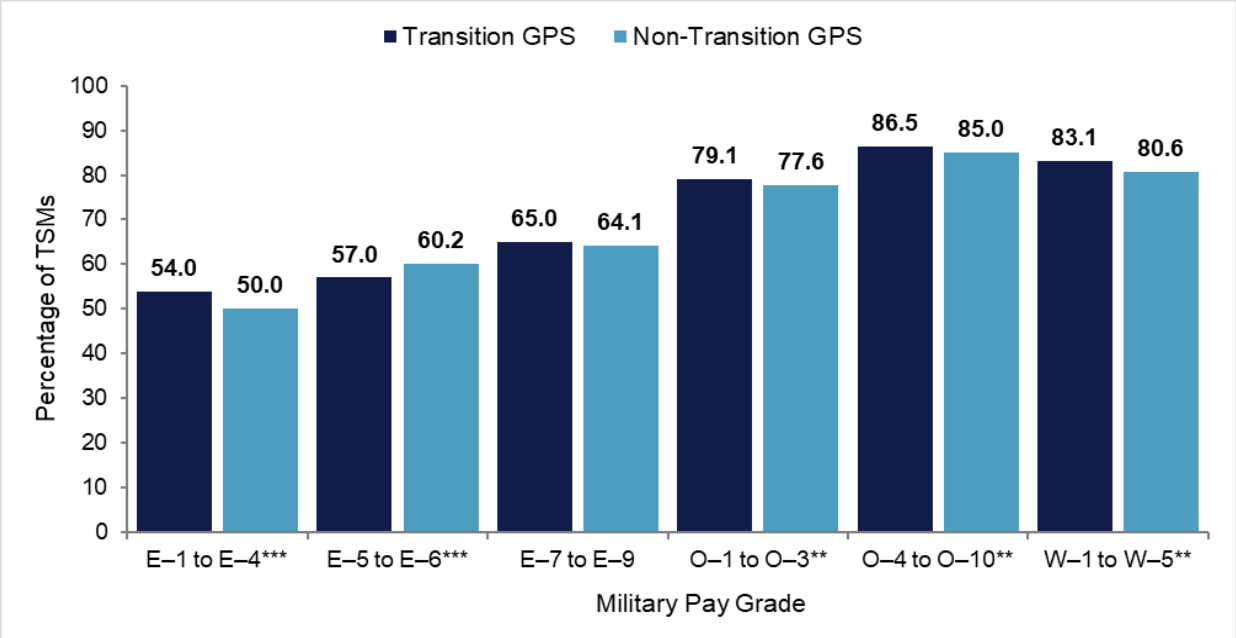
TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-19. Average Employment Retention at 12 Months Post-Separation by Disability Status, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*
TSMs = transitioning service members; *Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success*

Exhibit 4-20. Average Employment Retention at 12 Months Post-Separation by Military Pay Grade, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*
Note: Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer)
TSMs = transitioning service members; *Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success*

Time Spent Without Employment

For this analysis, we explored the number of quarters that TSMs were not employed for different subgroups (Exhibit 4-21). On average, men who participated in Transition GPS were not employed for fewer quarters than non-participants at 12 months and 36 months post-separation; these differences were significant. However, for women, non-participants were not employed for fewer quarters than Transition GPS participants at both time points; these differences were also significant.

Exhibit 4-21. Average Number of Quarters Without Employment at 12 and 36 Months Post-Separation by Subgroups, 2014–2021

Subgroups	12 Months			36 Months		
	TGPS	Non-TGPS	Sig.	TGPS	Non-TGPS	Sig.
Gender						
Men	0.85	0.86	***	3.01	3.19	***
Women	1.10	1.04	***	3.67	3.42	***
Race/Ethnicity						
Black TSMs	0.84	0.87	***	2.86	3.04	***
Hispanic TSMs (any race)	1.06	1.04		3.81	3.80	
TSMs of Other Races	1.11	1.03	***	3.87	3.66	**
White TSMs	0.86	0.87		2.97	3.12	***
Disability Status						
TSMs with Reported Disabilities	0.90	0.89		2.23	2.32	
TSMs with No Reported Disabilities	1.01	1.02		3.49	3.32	***
Military Pay Grade						
E–1 to E–4	1.50	1.63	***	3.42	3.64	***
E–5 to E–6	1.43	1.13	***	3.06	2.94	***
E–7 to E–9	1.06	1.06		2.50	2.67	***
O–1 to O–3	0.80	0.85	***	2.32	2.42	**
O–4 to O–10	0.53	0.59	***	2.23	2.40	
W–1 to W–5	0.70	0.87	***	2.20	2.46	**

Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

Notes: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races. Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer)

TSMs = transitioning service members; Sig. = statistical significance; TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

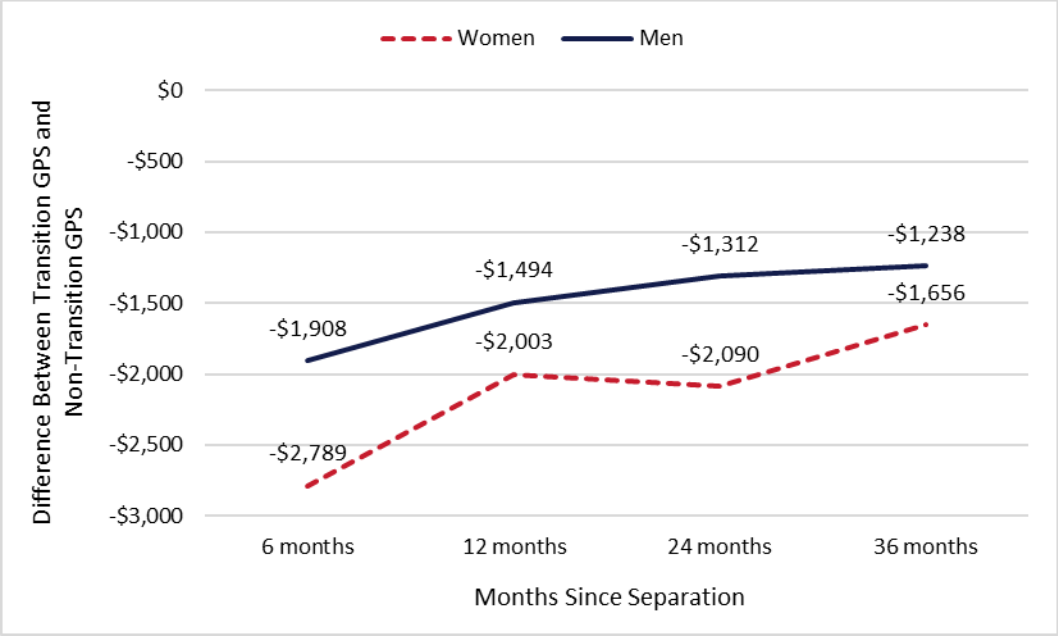
When exploring findings by race, Black TSMs who participated in the program spent significantly less time without employment at 12 and 36 months than TSMs in the comparison group. For TSMs of other races, program participants were not employed for fewer quarters at 12 months but non-participants were not employed for fewer quarters at 36 months. White TSMs in the program group spent significantly less time not employed at 36 months than TSMs in the comparison group.

Transition GPS participants for all pay grades, except E–5 to E–6, were without employment for fewer quarters than non-participants. These differences were significant for all but O–4 to O–10 at 36 months.

Wages

When explored by subgroup, the findings mirrored the main analyses. For men, women, and TSMs with and without reported disabilities, Transition GPS participants' wages were significantly lower than non-participants' wages at each follow-up period (Exhibits 4-22 and 4-23). The differences between the treatment and comparison groups decreased over time.

Exhibit 4-22. Post-Separation Wage Differences Between Transition GPS Participants and Non-Participants by Gender, 2014–2021

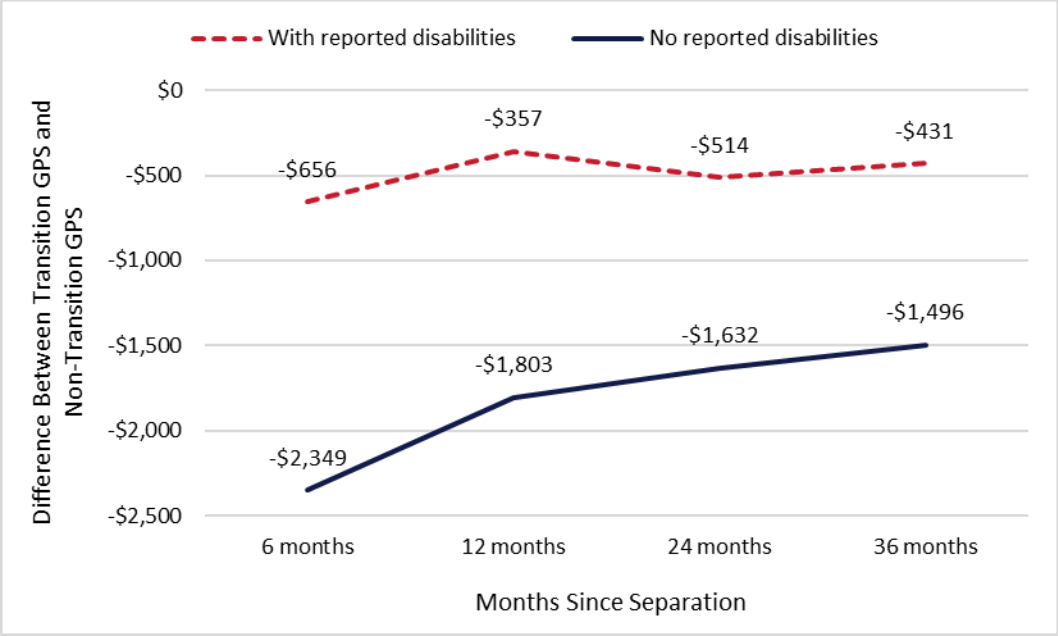


Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

Note: Differences between the treatment and comparison groups were statistically significant at each time point ($p < .001$).

Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-23. Post-Separation Wage Differences Between Transition GPS Participants and Non-Participants by Disability Status, 2014–2021



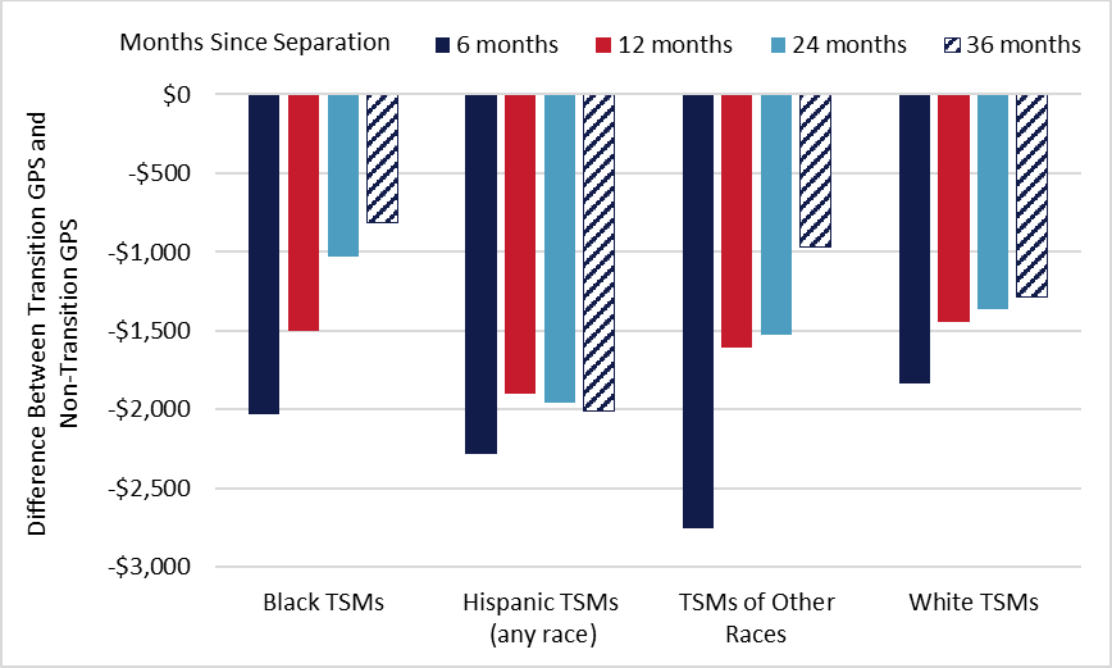
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

Note: Differences between the treatment and comparison groups were statistically significant at each time point ($p < .001$).

Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

When examining findings by race and ethnicity, non-participants had significantly higher wages than Transition GPS participants (Exhibit 4-24). At 6 months post-separation, the differences ranged from $1,836 to $2,750. At 36 months, the wage difference was smallest for Black TSMs ($817) and TSMs of other races ($965).

Exhibit 4-24. Post-Separation Wage Differences Between Transition GPS Participants and Non-Participants by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



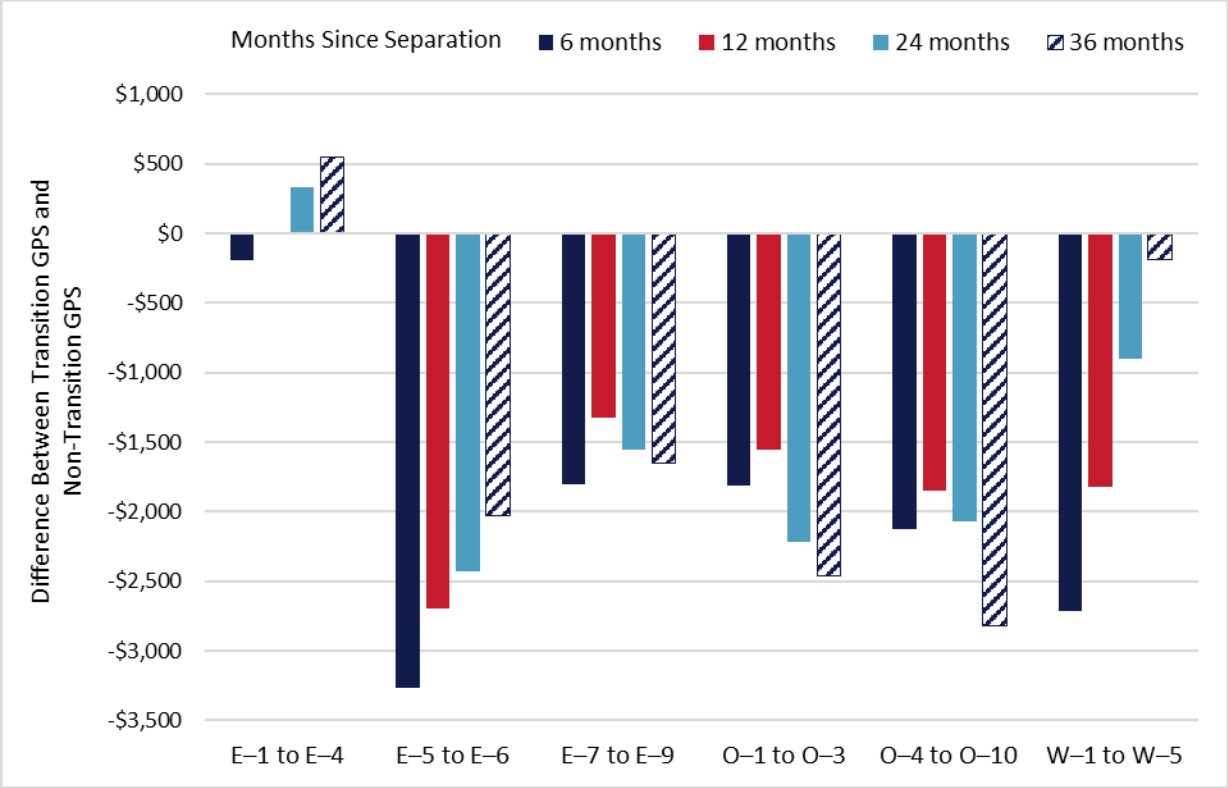
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

Notes: Differences between the treatment and comparison groups were statistically significant at each time point ($p < .001$). Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Comparable to the other subgroup and main findings, Transition GPS participants' wages were significantly lower than non-participants' wages at each follow-up period for all pay grades, except E–1 to E–4 (Exhibit 4-25). On average, Transition GPS participants in the E–1 to E–4 pay grades earned $334.16 more than non-participants at 24 months post-separation and $546.39 more at 36 months post-separation.

Exhibit 4-25. Post-Separation Wage Differences Between Transition GPS Participants and Non-Participants by Military Pay Grade, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

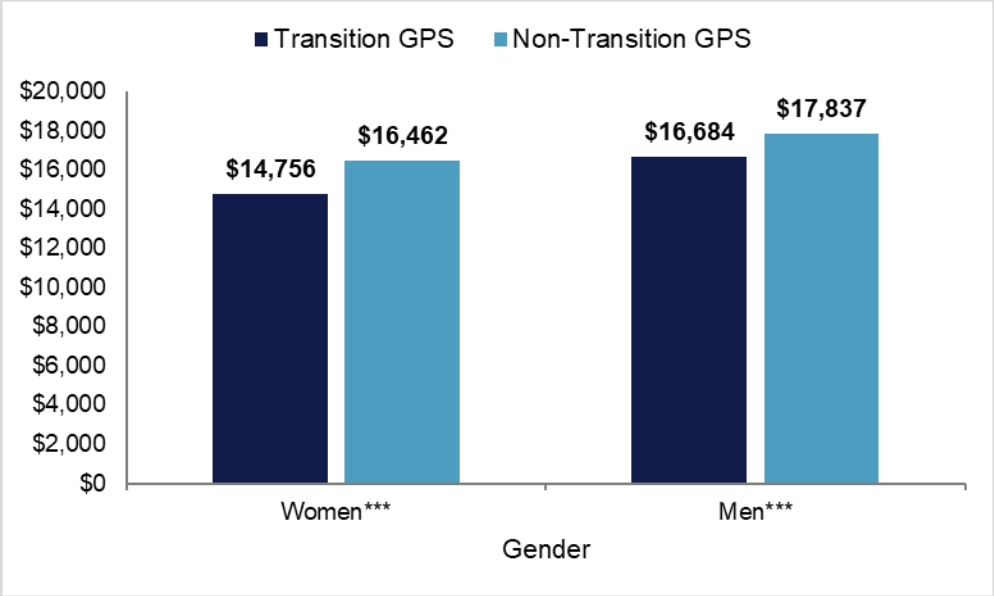
Notes: Differences between the treatment and comparison groups were statistically significant at each time point ($p < .001$) except E–1 to E–4 at 12 months and W–1 to W–5 at 36 months, which were not statistically significant. Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer).

Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Wage Change From 1st Quarter to 5th Quarter

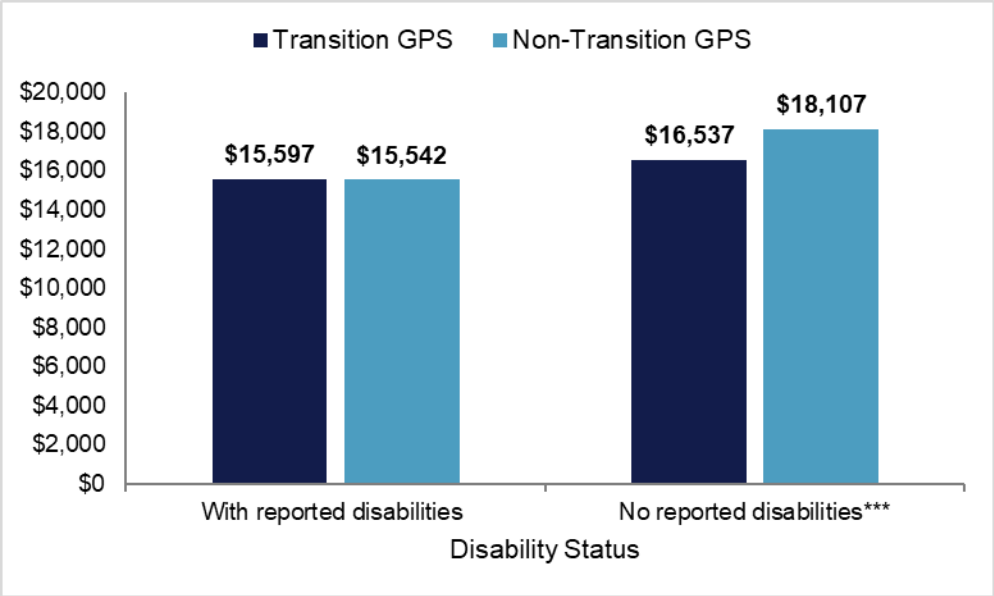
Transition GPS participants experienced smaller wage growth between the 1st and 5th quarters post-separation for nearly all subgroups (Exhibits 4-26 through 4-29). The differences between Transition GPS participants' and non-participants' adjusted wages were significant for all subgroups except those with disabilities and TSMs in the E–1 to E–4 pay grades.

Exhibit 4-26. Wage Change From 1st Quarter to 5th Quarter Post-Separation by Gender, 2014–2021



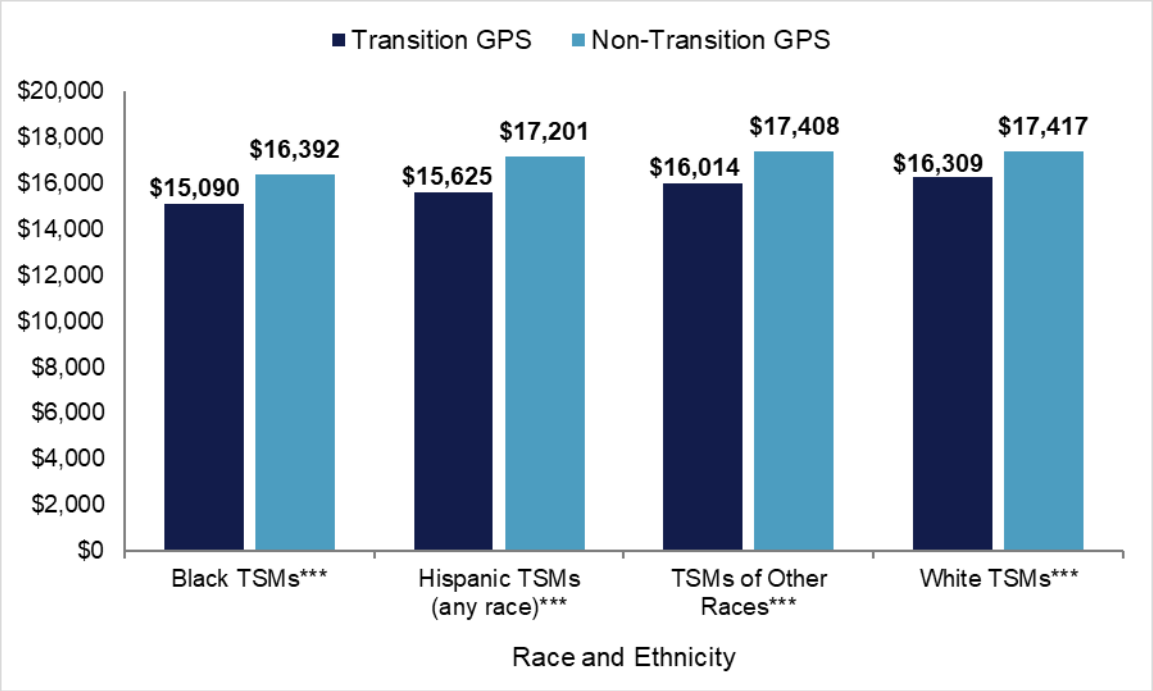
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*
Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-27. Wage Change From 1st Quarter to 5th Quarter Post-Separation by Disability Status, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*
Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-28. Wage Change From 1st Quarter to 5th Quarter Post-Separation by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2021



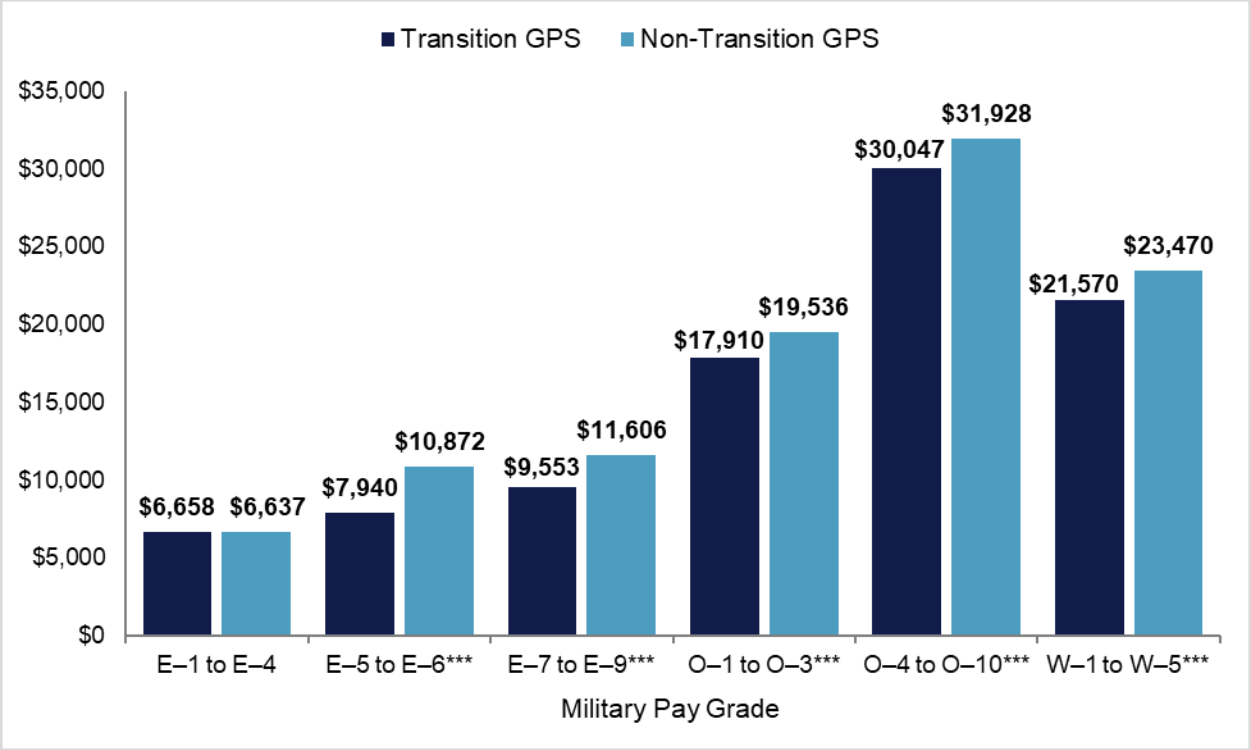
Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021

*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races.

TSMs = transitioning service members; Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Exhibit 4-29. Wage Change From 1st Quarter to 5th Quarter Post-Separation by Military Pay Grade, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
*Significance levels: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p <. 001*
Note: Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer).
Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

5. Associational Analyses

This chapter explores the relationship between the timing of Transition GPS (i.e., when in the last year of service did the TSM complete the DOL Employment Workshop) and labor market outcomes. It also examines how Transition GPS components are related to the outcomes. For this analysis, we explore whether the outcomes are related to how much of Transition GPS was completed by TSMs. For example, are the outcomes more favorable when a TSM completes the core curriculum plus a supplemental course? For the associational analyses, we also explored differences by four subgroups: (1) gender, (2) race and ethnicity, (3) combat arms, and (4) military pay grade.[18]

KEY FINDINGS

- TSMs who completed Transition GPS more than 6 months before separating had higher employment and wage outcomes.
- Completion of the VA Benefits Briefing was positively related to employment while the DOD Financial Planning Course was positively related to employment retention.
- Completion of the VA Benefits Briefing and DOD Financial Planning Course were positively associated with wages.
- Completion of the Higher Education supplemental course was associated with lower employment and wages.

Length of Time Between Transition GPS Completion and Separation

A larger number of TSMs completed Transition GPS more than 6 months before separation (Exhibit 5-1). Exploring findings by gender, racial/ethnic, and combat arm subgroups (Exhibits 5-2 through 5-4) showed that the time-to-separation percentages mirror the overall sample with larger percentages of TSMs completing the program earlier in their separation (more than 6 months before separation). When explored by pay grade (Exhibit 5-5), officers and TSMs in the E–5 to E–6 pay grades also follow this pattern. However, almost one-third of TSMs at the E–1 to E–4 pay grades completed Transition GPS closer to separation (within 3 months of separation). Over two-thirds of TSMs at the E–7 to E–9 pay grades completed the program earlier in the year before separation.

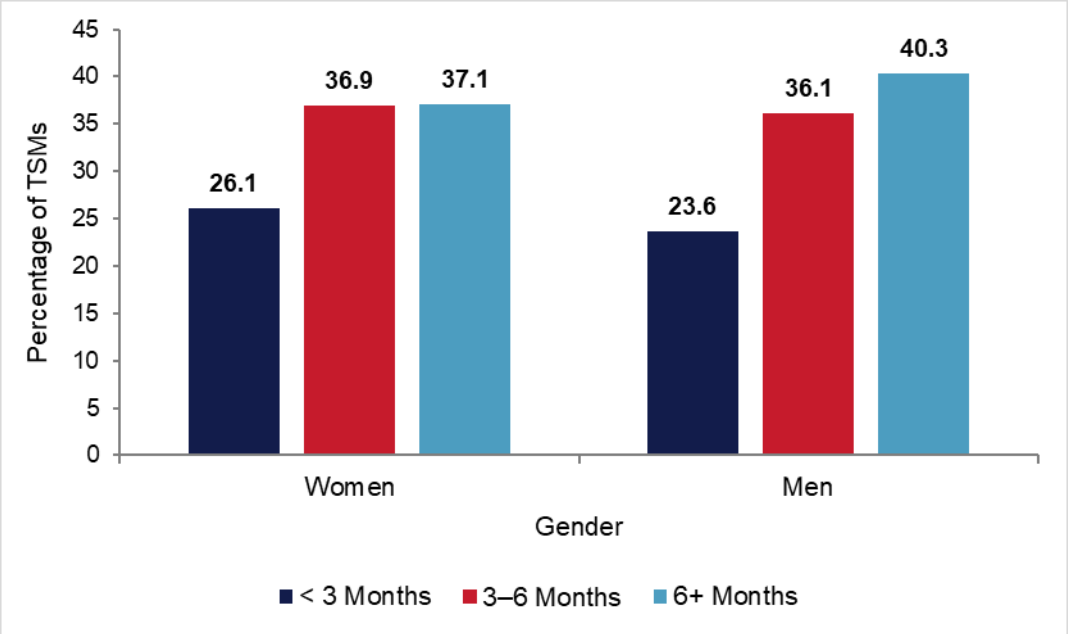
Exhibit 5-1. Completion of Transition GPS by Time to Separation, 2014–2019

Time to Separation	TGPS Completion	
	Count	Percent
< 3 Months	57,274	24
3–6 Months	86,448	36
6+ Months	95,097	40
Total Number of TSMs	238,819	100

Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019
Note: Time to separation categories are based on the milestones outlined in Fisher (2022)
Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success; TSMs = transitioning service members

[18] These specific subgroups were requested by DOL VETS in a meeting held in November 2020.

Exhibit 5-2. Completion of Transition GPS by Time to Separation and Gender, 2014–2019

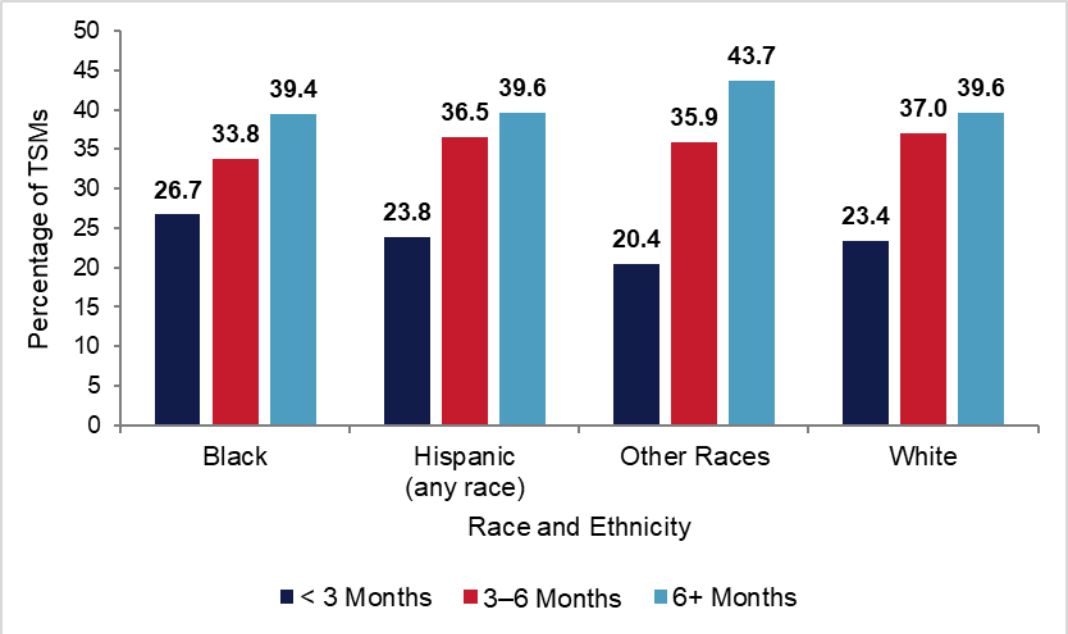


Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019

Note: Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success; TSMs = transitioning service members

Exhibit 5-3. Completion of Transition GPS by Time to Separation and Race and Ethnicity, 2014–2019

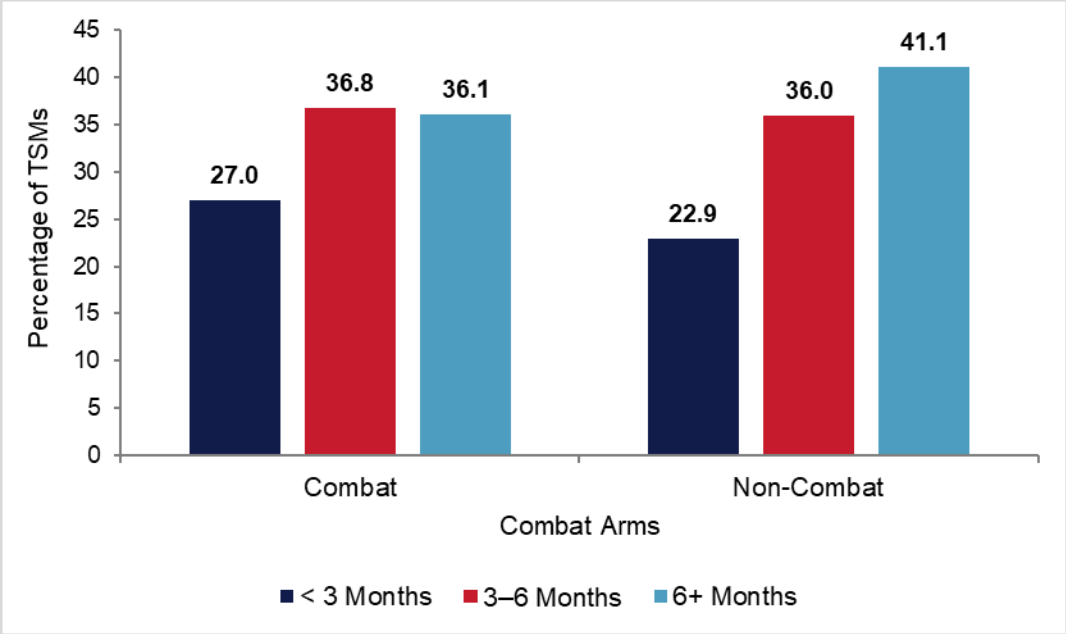


Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019

Note: Other races include Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, and other races. Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success; TSMs = transitioning service members

Exhibit 5-4. Completion of Transition GPS by Time to Separation, Gender, Race/ Ethnicity, and Combat Arms, 2014–2019

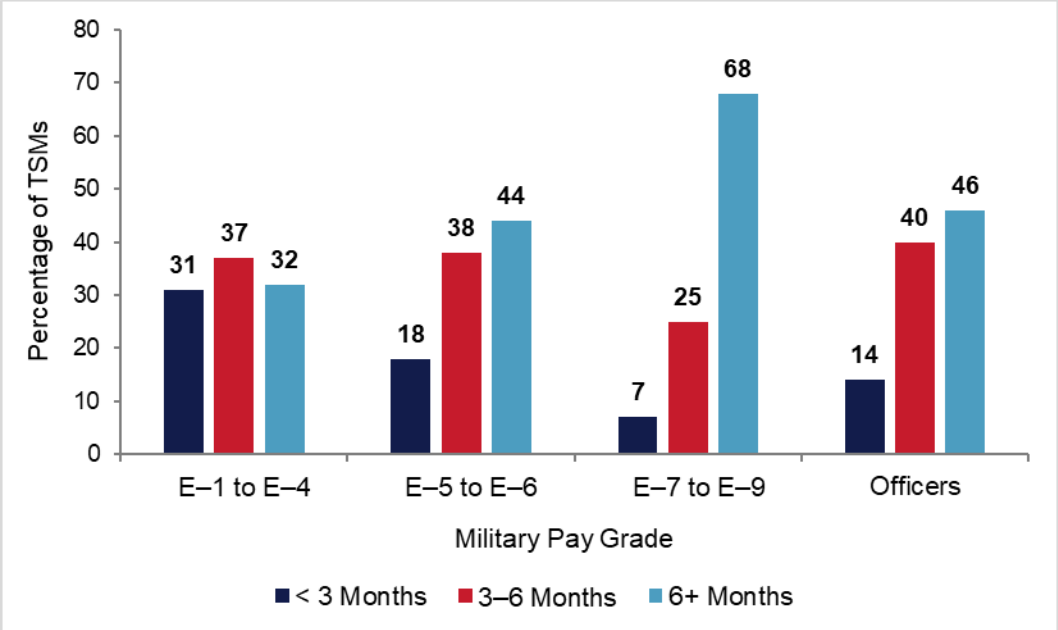


Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019

Note: Combat arms refers to military occupations that include direct tactical land combat. Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success; TSMs = transitioning service members

Exhibit 5-5. Completion of Transition GPS by Time to Separation and Pay Grade, 2014–2019



Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019

Note: Officers category includes the O–1 to O–3, O–4 to O–10, and W–1 to W–5 pay grades. Pay grades (E = Enlisted, O = Officer, W = Warrant Officer).

Transition GPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success; TSMs = transitioning service members

Are Outcomes Related to When a TSM Completed Transition GPS?

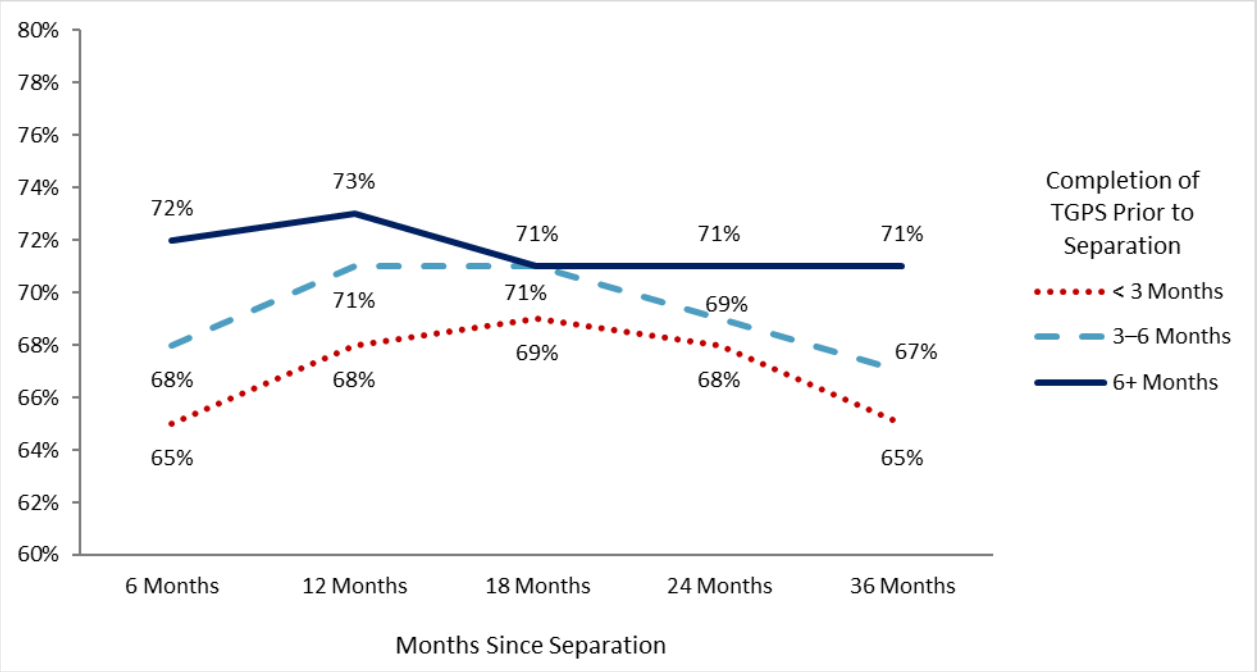
We explored the relationship between Transition GPS completion and employment and wages at 6, 12,18, 24, and 36 months after separation. TSMs who completed the program more than 6 months before separation had higher monthly wages at all time points than TSMs who completed the program within 6 months of separation (Exhibit 5-6). TSMs who completed the program within 6 months of separation had the lowest wages at all time points.

Exhibit 5-6. Median Monthly Wages by Time From Transition GPS (TGPS) Completion to Separation, 2014–2021

Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Similarly, TSMs who completed Transition GPS more than 6 months before separation had higher employment rates than TSMs who completed the program within 6 months of separation (Exhibit 5-7).

Exhibit 5-7. Average Employment Rates by Time From Transition GPS (TGPS) Completion to Separation, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans, and Success

Completion of Transition GPS Program Components

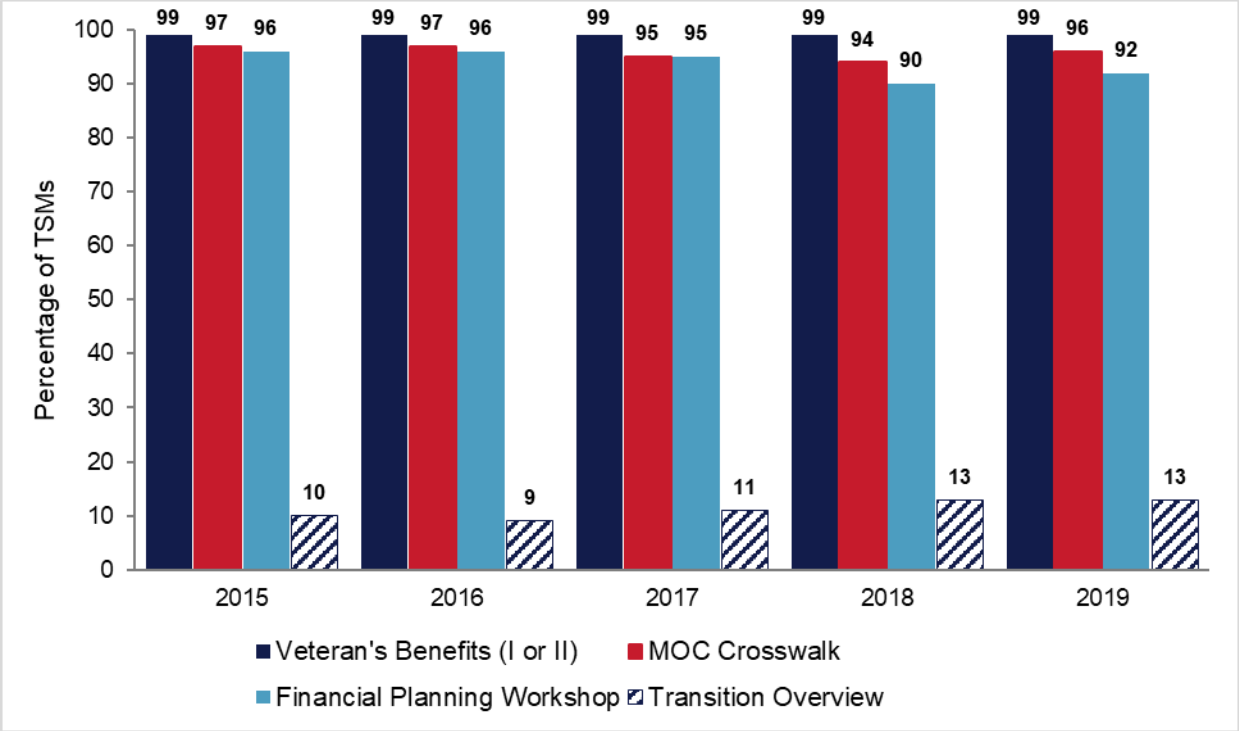
As described in Chapter 1, Transition GPS had several components in addition to the DOL Employment Workshop. Different components of Transition GPS serve different purposes in assisting Service members' transition to civilian life. The components may attract different Service members and may be more or less related to outcomes of interest. Our analysis examined completion of the DOD Core Workshops (Transition Overview, MOC Crosswalk, and the Financial Planning Workshop/Post-Service Budget Workshop) and either of the VA Veterans Benefits Briefings (I or II).[19]

Exhibit 5-8 presents the rate of completion of core DOD and VA components among all TSMs from 2015 to 2019.[20] The completion rate of the VA Briefings was stable over time while completion of the MOC Crosswalk and Financial Planning workshops fluctuated but averaged over 90 percent completion. Completion of the Transition Overview is low (9 percent to 13 percent) compared to other components.

[19] All TSMs in our sample completed the DOL Employment Workshop and an ITP.

[20] Only 3,292 TSMs separated from the U.S. Army between October 1, 2014, and December 31, 2014. The percentages of Transition GPS participation for 2014 were low due to the selection criteria for the study and are excluded from the figure.

Exhibit 5-8. Completion of Core DOD and VA Components by Separation Year, 2014–2019



Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019

DOD = U.S. Department of Defense; VA = U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; MOC = Military Occupational Classification; TSMs = transitioning service members

TSMs could participate in optional "tracks" consisting of guidance on achieving post-separation goals in three career tracks: Higher Education, Career Technical Training, or Entrepreneurship. Exhibit 5-9 presents the rates of completion in the supplemental tracks. The majority of TSMs did not complete any supplemental tracks. Less than one-third of TSMs completed one supplemental track, with a small percentage completing more than one track. Completion of supplemental tracks declined over time.

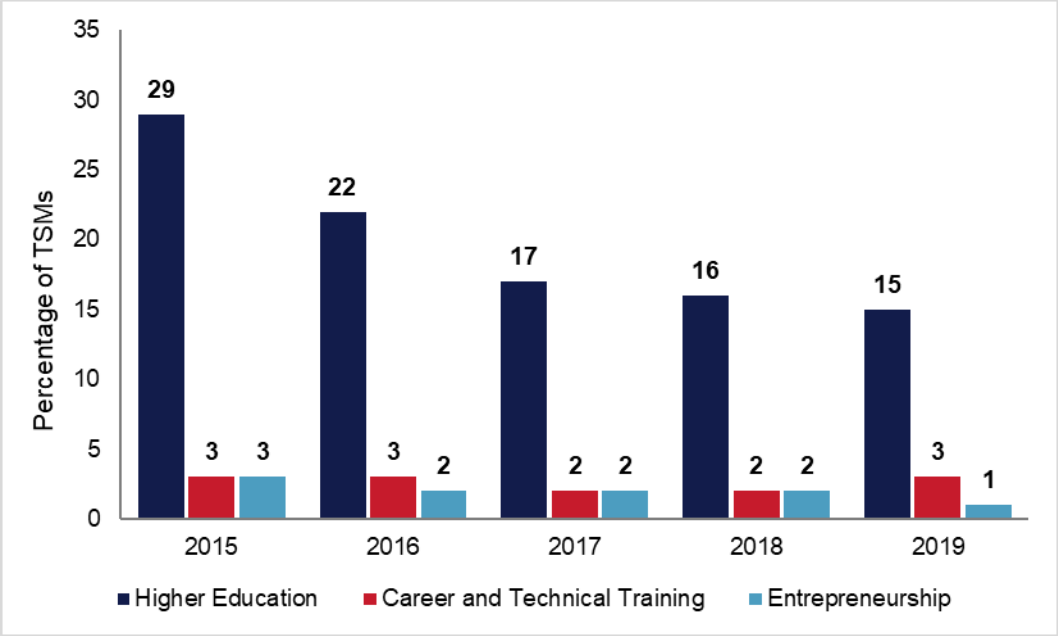
Exhibit 5-9. Supplemental Workshops Completed by Year, 2014–2019 (reported in percentages)

Year	No Tracks	One Track	Two Tracks	Three Tracks
2015	66.7	32.0	1.2	0.1
2016	73.8	25.4	0.8	< 0.1
2017	79.9	19.7	0.4	< 0.1
2018	81.3	18.2	0.4	0.1
2019	81.9	17.5	0.5	0.1

Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019

When examining findings by type of track, the Higher Education track was most popular, followed by the Career Technical Training track (Exhibit 5-10). Completion of the Higher Education track declined over time.

Exhibit 5-10. Completion of Supplemental Tracks by Separation Year, 2014–2019



Source: U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, 2014–2019
TSMs = transitioning service members

Are Outcomes Related to Transition GPS Components?

We examined the relationship between completion of the components of Transition GPS and outcomes. First, we examined the individual core DOD and VA components. We restricted the sample to TSMs who completed the DOL Employment Workshop (treatment group). We then conducted regression analyses to assess the relationship between completion of each individual component of Transition GPS and labor market outcomes. For our next analysis, we restricted the sample to TSMs who completed **all** core components (n = 26,059). The TSMs in the analysis completed the Transition Overview, MOC Crosswalk, Financial Planning Workshop, and VA Benefits Briefing in addition to the DOL Employment Workshop and ITP. This can be viewed as a "full dosage" of Transition GPS. We then divided that group by the supplemental track that the TSM completed. We examined the relationship between outcomes and completing one of the three supplemental tracks using regression.

Relationship Between Outcomes and Completion of Transition GPS Core Components

The associations between completion of Transition GPS core components and employment outcomes post-separation changed over time (see Appendix Exhibit I-14). For DOL Employment Workshop participants, completing the VA Veteran Benefits Briefing was significantly related to a decrease in employment at 6 months post-separation but increased employment at 18, 24, and 36 months. Completing the DOD Financial Planning Workshop was associated with an increase in employment at 6 and 12 months but a decrease at 18, 24, and 36 months. Completion of the MOC Crosswalk was significantly related to a decrease in employment at 24 and 36 months, while completion of Transition Overview was significantly related to a decrease in employment at 6, 12, and 18 months.

Completing the DOD Financial Planning Workshop was positively associated with job retention from 6 to 12 months post-separation, while completing the Transition Overview was negatively associated with job retention (see Appendix Exhibit I-15). No significant relationship was found between retention outcomes and completion of the MOC Crosswalk or a Veteran Benefits Briefing.

Completion of the financial and benefits-related components was significantly associated with quarterly wages over time (see Appendix I-16). Wages were higher for TSMs who completed a DOD Financial Planning Workshop at each post-separation time point but lower for those who completed the Transition Overview or the MOC Crosswalk. For TSMs who completed the Veteran Benefits Briefing, wages were higher at 12, 18, 24, and 36 months.

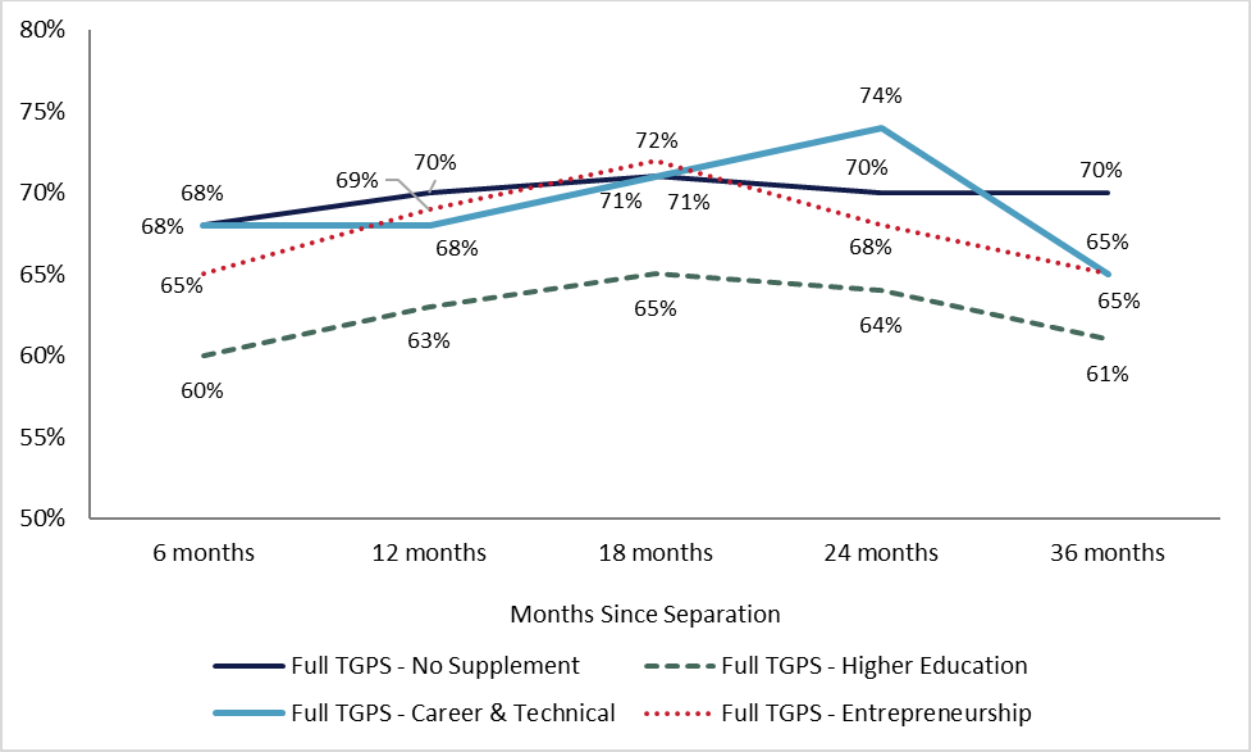
Relationship Between Outcomes and Completion of Supplemental Tracks

Completion of the Higher Education track was significantly associated with lower employment rates at each post-separation time point (see Appendix Exhibit I-17). Completion of the Career and Technical Training track was positively associated with employment at 24 months post-separation and not significant at all other times. There were no significant relationships between employment and completion of the Entrepreneurship track.

Exhibit 5-11 displays the change in employment rate over time for TSMs who completed each supplemental track in addition to all Transition GPS components. TSMs who did not attend a supplemental track tended to have higher employment rates, while those who completed the Higher Education track had the lowest employment rates. The employment rates for the Entrepreneurship and Career and Technical Training tracks fluctuated over time, with the former increasing through 18 months and then declining, while the latter decreased from 6 to 12 months, increased to 24 months, and then declined again through 36 months.

Completion of the Higher Education track was also significantly associated with lower employment retention (see Appendix Exhibit I-18). Higher Education track participants had lower rates of job retention from 6 to 12 months post-separation compared to TSMs who did not attend a supplemental track (28 percentage-point difference). No significant relationships were found between employment retention and completion of the Career and Technical Training track or the Entrepreneurship track.

Exhibit 5-11. Average Employment Rates by Supplemental Track Completion. 2014–2021

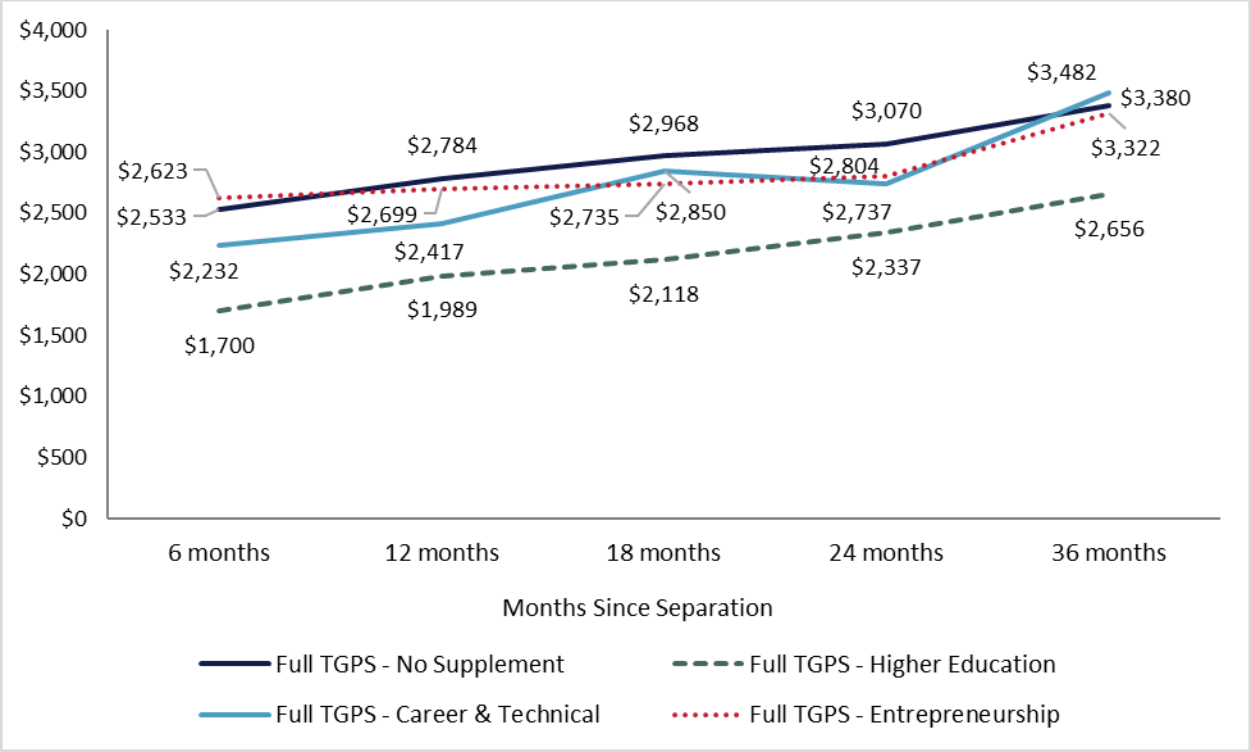


Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans and Success

Completion of the Higher Education track was significantly associated with lower median wages at each post-separation time point (see Appendix Exhibit I-19). Similarly, quarterly wages were lower for TSMs who completed the Career and Technical Training track. There were no significant relationships between wages and completion of the Entrepreneurship track.

Exhibit 5-12 displays the change in wages over time for TSMs who completed each supplemental track in addition to all Transition GPS components. Median wages for all TSMs grew over time. TSMs who did not complete a supplemental track had higher median wages than TSMs who completed a supplemental track. TSMs who completed the Higher Education track had the lowest wages. TSMs who completed all Transition GPS core components and the Career and Technical Training track had the greatest wage gains. TSMs who completed the Entrepreneurship track tended to have wages at the top of the range.

Exhibit 5-12. Median Monthly Wages by Supplemental Track Completion, 2014–2021



Source: National Directory of New Hires, 2014–2021
TGPS = Transition Goals, Plans and Success

6. Discussion

The TAP has been preparing separating and retiring Service members for the transition to civilian life for over 30 years. Initially, its purpose was to help ease involuntarily separated military Service members' transition into civilian life, but today, TAP is a mandatory, comprehensive resource for TSMs to ensure that they are ready for the civilian workforce (DOD, 2016; Kamarck, 2018). This report examines the impact of TAP on labor market outcomes using a rigorous evaluation design. It uses administrative data for the population of the U.S. Army and assesses program impacts for up to 36 months post-separation. This chapter discusses the main conclusions from the report, identifies limitations of the study, and presents the next steps for the Transition GPS evaluation.

TSMs who completed Transition GPS had better employment outcomes than TSMs who did not complete the program.

Our evaluation found that Transition GPS participants obtained work faster than non-participants. They also had higher rates of employment at 12 months post-separation. This favorable finding is not surprising due to the content of Transition GPS. In the DOL Employment Workshop, TSMs are taught interview skills, how to build effective resumes, and how to use emerging technology to network and search for employment. The purpose of the MOC Crosswalk is to convert military skills into the civilian labor market language. These program components influence job attainment (Perkins et al., 2022; Ziencik, 2020).

The research literature indicates that certain TSM subgroups – including women, racial and ethnic minorities, Veterans under the age of 24, and those with service-related disabilities – experience disproportionate challenges when transitioning to civilian life and employment (Bartee, 2018; Fletcher et al., 2022; Harvey, 2021; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015). In our study, the employment outcomes were favorable for Transition GPS participants in several subgroups. We found that Black men and women who participated in the program found jobs faster than non-participants. Black men also had the highest employment rate at 12 months post-separation. We found favorable employment outcomes for TSMs in the early career military pay grades. TSMs in the E–1 to E–4 pay grades had higher employment rates at both 6 months and 12 months post-separation. However, we did not find higher employment rates among women and TSMs with reported disabilities.

Transition GPS participants had higher rates of employment retention.

The study found that a higher proportion of Transition GPS participants who were employed at 6 months post-separation were employed at the same job at 12 months compared to the non-participant group. This is an important finding. Historically, employers have focused on hiring Veterans, but equal attention has not been paid to retaining Veteran hires (Batka & Hall, 2016; Hall et al., 2014). One study found that 44 percent of employed Veterans left their first civilian job within 1 year (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016). Out of that percentage, 61 percent were found to have left in pursuit of better opportunities (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016). In a recent survey, only 31 percent to 38 percent of RSVs believe their current job matches their military skills (Economic Systems and Westat, 2022).

Transition GPS was not associated with increased wages.

While Transition GPS participants had higher rates of employment and employment retention, they earned less than non-participants. This may reflect the need for TSMs to find basic financial stability and build upon civilian connections before finding more suitable and sustaining opportunities elsewhere. The difference in adjusted wages between participants and non-participants suggests this may be the case. This finding may also reflect one common theme that has been found in the research – the need for Veterans to learn to translate military experience to civilian language (Martensen, 2021; Perkins et al., 2022). Previous studies have found the MOC Crosswalk to be an important part of the transition process (Ziencik, 2020). However, some studies found that the MOC Crosswalk portion did not translate well to civilian jobs (Apperson, 2017; Edwards, 2015). In the recent PSTAP, RSVs reported having difficulty translating their military experience into civilian terms (Economic Systems and Westat, 2022).

Another reported issue is that while Veterans regularly use professional and technical skills in the military, this experience often does not translate into the civilian certifications and credentials necessary when seeking employment back home (Gillums Jr, 2016). Mann (2012) found that Veterans must often enter the civilian economy through a low-paying or perceived low-status job to demonstrate value to employers. Unfortunately, these issues may serve to mischaracterize and misclassify TSMs as unskilled workers capable of only entry-level positions. Both Veterans and employers have articulated a disconnect when it comes to translating military experience to the needs of the civilian workforce (Edelman, 2018).

TSMs who completed Transition GPS more than 6 months before separation had higher employment rates and wages than TSMs who completed the program within 6 months of separation.

The study found that a TSM completing Transition GPS was related to favorable outcomes. This finding supports the research, indicating that early preparation for separation may facilitate an easier transition to the civilian workforce. A report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2016) found that those who are more proactive in their job search – starting at least 6 months before their date of separation – are twice as likely to have a job before being discharged. Early starters were also found to be twice as likely to report never being unemployed. The report also noted a positive relationship between a separated TSM's salary and the earlier he or she began preparing for transition (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016).

The timing of preparation for transition is often noted as important to a successful civilian transition. Bartee (2018) identified late transition preparation as one of the largest barriers to a successful transition and suggested that more time be dedicated to early transition planning. Kleykamp et al. (2021) explored the transition experiences of military Veterans and the factors that affect their lives post-transition. The findings indicated the importance of early transition planning regardless of the type of military exit (e.g., anticipated exits and unanticipated exits).

The Higher Education supplemental track was most popular among TSMs.

The supplemental track may serve as an indicator of TSMs' post-separation intentions. Although less than 20 percent of TSMs complete a supplemental track, at least 15 percent of those who

completed a track completed the Higher Education track. The Higher Education track was intended for TSMs who want to pursue higher education. We speculate that TSMs who completed the Higher Education supplemental track are planning to enter school and work fewer hours than those who do not. TSMs who take the Higher Education track may be working part-time or lower-wage jobs while they attend school. Higher education is one pathway to employment for a large portion of the TSM population (Edelman, 2018), as postsecondary education can create opportunities to gain the civilian qualifications required for higher-status jobs. Supplemental tracks appear to be a primary factor in wage and employment outcomes, though this could be more related to post-separation goals rather than impact of the tracks.

Although Transition GPS was mandatory, less than 10 percent of TSMs completed all components.

In our study, 82.6 percent of TSMs completed Transition GPS (defined as completing the DOL Employment Workshop). Although Transition GPS was mandatory, TSMs could be exempted for the following reasons: confirmed employment, confirmed education/training enrollment, participation in the retiring Service member transition program, retirement with 20 years' armed forces service, pending unit deployment, or prior participation in TAP. Further, in practice, the military can rarely enforce mandatory participation in the face of different operations tempos and installation missions. We found that out of the total number of TSMs in our study (N = 288,958), less than 10 percent (N = 26,059) completed all core components.

Multiple studies noted that performing a balancing act between attending TAP and fulfilling military duties is challenging for TSMs (Baker, 2016; Fletcher et al., 2022; Martensen, 2021). This is made especially difficult if military commanders do not give TSMs permission to attend in-person TAP classes (Edwards, 2015; GAO, 2017; Hart, 2018). The Defense Business Board (2013) recommended that one way to address this may be to encourage Service members to engage in career planning 1 year prior to their separation – including beginning to attend TAP – which would allow a larger window of time for class participation. The current iteration of TAP has a transition window of 1 year prior to separation for TSMs who are separating from the military.

The study used a quasi-experimental design, so factors other than TAP may be contributing to the observed findings.

The study was a quasi-experimental design that matched program participants and non-participants on demographic and military characteristics. We attempted to create equivalent groups on baseline characteristics and controlled for differences in our analytic models. However, caution is advised when interpreting the findings as causal as there may be other variables that were not controlled for in the models that are influencing the results.

The COVID-19 pandemic may be influencing the study's findings.

The time period for our study was 2014 to 2019. However, we tracked employment and wage outcomes for 36 months post-separation. For TSMs who left the military between 2017 and 2019, their outcomes include the time period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The national unemployment rate jumped from 3.7 percent in 2019 to 8.1 percent in 2020, with the total Veteran unemployment rate increasing from 3.1 percent to 6.5 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor

Statistics, 2023). The national labor force participation rate for Veterans also decreased from 49.2 percent to 48.3 percent. In our study, employment increased slightly for most groups from 6 to 18 months post-separation and declined 24 and 36 months post-separation. The decline may reflect the lower employment rates in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The limitations of the NDNH may also be influencing the study's findings.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, a limitation of the present study was the lack of an FEIN in the NDNH dataset. While we were able to track whether or not an RSV stayed with an employer, we did not know the industry where the RSV was employed. As described in Chapter 3, a greater percentage of nonveterans worked for the private sector than Veterans, whereas a greater percentage of Veterans were employed by the government. Since NDNH data does not include these jobs, our measured employment outcomes may be lower than expected for all TSMs.

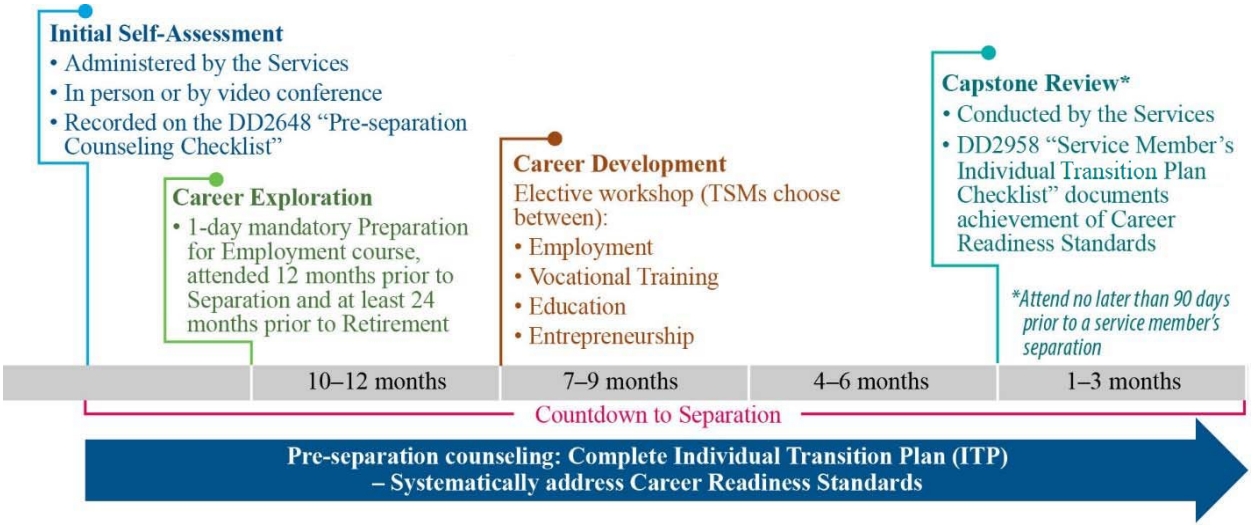
Unfortunately, we were unable to account for the local labor market in our analyses. A limitation of the NDNH data is that it did not provide detailed information about where the employers were located. The OEMA data included a variable for which state the TSM was planning to go after separation, but we did not know locations where wages were earned over time. This is important because the local labor market context can influence TSM outcomes. The national labor market may mask variation in the different areas across the country.

The trend of employment rates declining 24 and 36 months post-separation may also be due to missing employment data since some firms submit data several quarters later than the employment period. This would bias the results downward.

The study's findings may still be relevant under the current version of TAP.

Our study focused on the Transition GPS time period of 2014–2019. Since that time, TAP was revised according to the NDAA of 2019. VETS introduced its own strategic modifications to TAP, including one-on-one counseling and a curriculum for military spouses. Although the timeline and length of the program changed, the core curriculum content remains (Exhibit 6-1). It may be possible that our findings for the core components of TAP would still be relevant under the current version of TAP.

Exhibit 6-1. The 2019 NDAA Redesign of TAP



Next Steps

Based on the subgroup and associational analyses of this impact study, we are conducting exploratory analyses that expand on the findings. The exploratory analyses will provide additional information about the Transition GPS components (core and optional) and how completion of the different components can predict future labor market outcomes. For TSMs with different post-military goals, we will explore the demographic and military career characteristics that are predictive of employment-related outcomes over time. The analyses also will provide information about the ideal time for TSMs to attend TAP, as well as how program participation influences outcomes for different groups of TSMs (an important component of DOL's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility initiative). Moreover, the analyses will explore the impact of TAP on education outcomes using National Student Clearinghouse data. We will also identify Army bases that may benefit from including individualized services in addition to TAP.

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