

Veterans report underemployment, pay frustration up to four years post-service

August 20 2024



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Some veterans continue to struggle with underemployment and dissatisfaction with their pay up to four years after leaving the military, according to a recent survey study by researchers in the Clearinghouse

for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse).

Published in the [*Journal of Veterans Studies*](#), the study of approximately 3,000 post-9/11 veterans analyzed data from The Veterans Metrics Initiative: Linking Program Components to Post-Military Well-Being (TVMI Study) and the Veterans Engaging in Transition Studies (VETS). TVMI launched in April 2015 and, with the VETS study, followed post-9/11 veterans over the first 6.5 years of their transition from military to [civilian life](#).

"Post-9/11 veterans, those who served during the global War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan and have transitioned to civilian life face substantial risk of [underemployment](#)," said Katie Davenport, assistant research professor at the Clearinghouse and lead author on the study.

"This issue partly arises because many employers struggle to understand how military skills, particularly leadership, translate to civilian jobs. Also, veterans can feel pressure to accept jobs quickly after they leave [military service](#) and may not be as selective as they should be."

Underemployment occurs when people hold jobs that do not match their education, experience or skills. Underemployment can lead to significant challenges, including depression, anxiety, anger, low job commitment and poorer health.

This study found that one-third of post-9/11 veterans reported being underemployed but not dissatisfied with their compensation, while 10% reported being underemployed and dissatisfied. Slightly more than half of veterans reported no issues with underemployment or dissatisfaction with their compensation.

Veterans who reported underemployment and dissatisfaction with their compensation after three years out of the military earned between

\$11,000 and \$24,000 less than their peers who did not report these issues.

This research also explored how underemployment and dissatisfaction with compensation influenced veterans' likelihood of leaving their jobs.

"Compared to veterans who were neither underemployed nor dissatisfied with their compensation, those who were underemployed were nearly 90% more likely to leave their job, while those who were both underemployed and dissatisfied with their compensation were four times more likely to leave," said co-author Daniel Perkins, principal scientist at the Clearinghouse and professor of family and youth resiliency and policy in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

Between the third and fourth years after leaving the military, 12% of veterans changed jobs. Underemployed veterans who left their jobs experienced a salary increase of over \$10,000.

"These findings highlight the proactive steps many veterans take to improve their employment situations," Davenport said. "Rather than sitting still, veterans dissatisfied with their jobs or compensation actively seek [better opportunities](#) to enhance their transition from military to civilian life."

More information: Katie E. Davenport et al, Underemployment, Compensation Dissatisfaction, Job Turnover, and Salary Change: How Are Post-9/11 Veterans Doing Three Years after Leaving the US Military?, *Journal of Veterans Studies* (2024). [DOI: 10.21061/jvs.v10i1.542](#)

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

Citation: Veterans report underemployment, pay frustration up to four years post-service (2024, August 20) retrieved 21 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-08-veterans-underemployment-pay-frustration-years.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.