Delaware's Veteran Labor Force, 2025



Delaware's veteran labor force represents a distinct segment of the state's workforce, shaped by military service, demographic characteristics, occupational experience, and the transition to civilian employment. This article exams veterans' labor force participation and unemployment rates, age distribution, and educational attainment. This analysis also helps identify differences between veterans and non-veterans in Delaware's labor market.

According to the US Census Bureau's 2024 5-year estimate:

- Delaware had approximately 59,600 veterans, representing 7.4 percent of the state's population aged 18 and older.
- More than half (54.2 percent) of veterans were age 65 or older, compared with 23.8 percent of non-veterans.
- Veterans were more likely than non-veterans to have a high school diploma, some college education, or an associate degree.

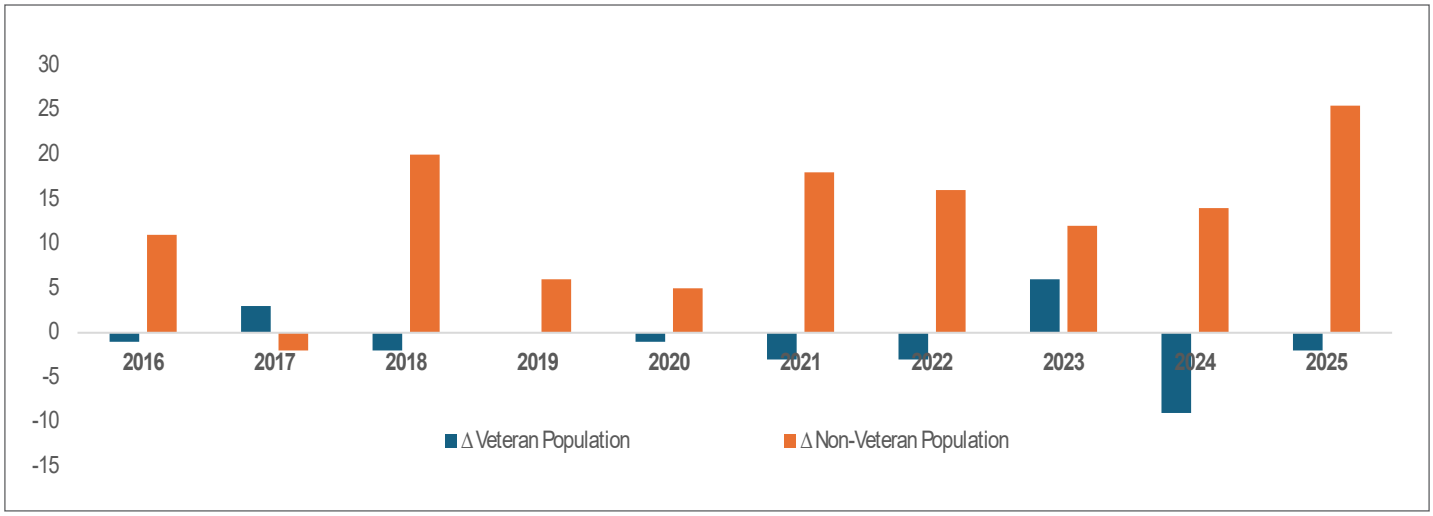
		Veterans		Non-Veterans	
Delaware Veterans vs. Non-Veterans		**No.**	**% of Total**	**No.**	**% of Total**
	Men	52,811	88.7%	331,048	44.4%
	Women	6,746	11.3%	414,943	55.6%
	18 to 34 years	3,462	5.8%	209,471	28.1%
	35 to 54 years	10,542	17.7%	229,123	30.7%
	55 to 64 years	13,288	22.3%	129,561	17.4%
	65 and older	32,265	54.2%	177,836	23.8%
	Civilian Labor Force (2024)	28,000	5.7%	465,000	94.3%
	Employed (2024)	27,000	5.7%	449,000	94.3%
	Unemployed (2024)	1,000	6.3%	15,000	93.8%
	Unemployment Rate (2024)	1.7%		3.3%	
	Less than High School Graduate	2,314	3.9%	57,991	8.8%
	High School Graduate (incl. equivalency)	18,538	31.4%	189,066	28.6%
	Some College or Associate's Degree	19,678	33.3%	175,144	26.5%
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	18,540	31.4%	238,693	36.1%

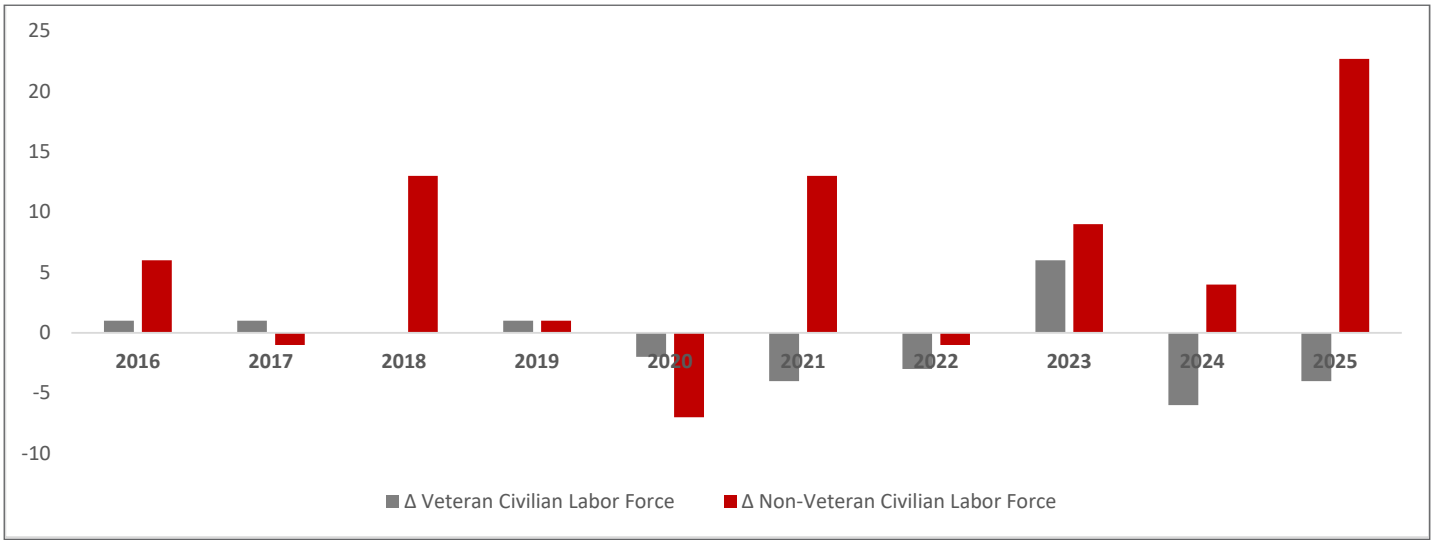
Sources: US Census Bureau, 2024 5-year estimate; Current Population Survey, 2024

Delaware's veteran labor force reflects the combined effects of an aging population and a declining number of veterans statewide. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey, since 2015, Delaware's veteran population has declined by an average of 1,200 residents annually, while the non-veteran population has grown by approximately 12,600 residents per year. Over the same period, the number of veterans in the labor force fell by an average of 1,000 workers annually, while the non-veteran labor force has expanded by roughly 6,000 workers per year. Both factors place downward pressure on the veteran labor force participation rate.

In 2025, veterans had a labor force participation rate of 37.5 percent, compared with 63.0 percent for non-veterans. More than 60 percent of veterans were not participating in the labor force, compared with approximately 37 percent of non-veterans, reflecting the veteran population's 65 and older, retirement eligible age profile.

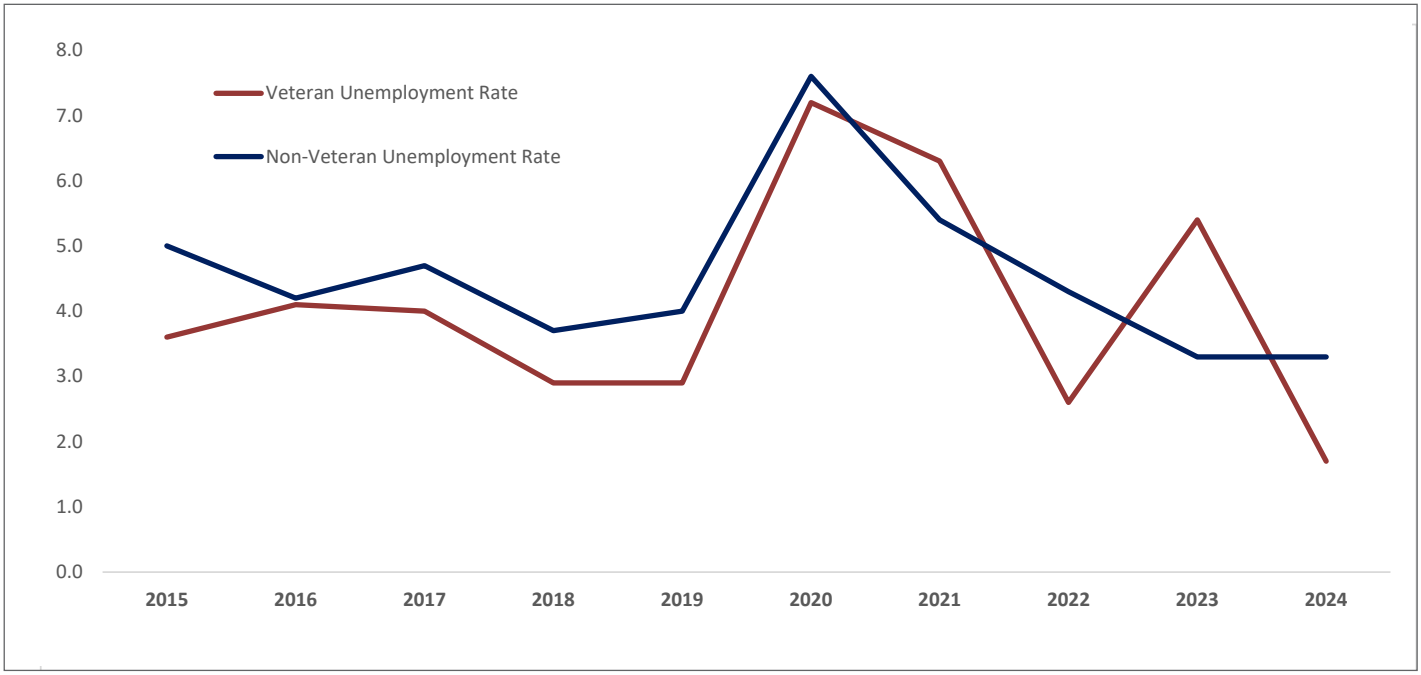
Over-the-Year Change in Population & Civilian Labor Force, Veterans vs. Non-Veterans, 2015-2025 (in 000s)





Source: Current Population Survey, 2015-2025

The Bureau of Labor Statistics did not publish a 2025 unemployment rate for Delaware veterans. In 2024, veterans had an annual average unemployment rate of 1.7 percent, compared with 3.3 percent for non-veterans—a difference of 1.6 percentage points. From 2015 to 2024, the veteran unemployment rate was generally lower than the non-veteran rate, with exceptions in 2021 and 2023, when it was higher by 0.9 and 2.1 percentage points, respectively. Overall, these trends indicate that veterans in Delaware's labor force have generally experienced lower unemployment than non-veterans, although annual fluctuations underscore the importance of evaluating longer-term patterns rather than individual years in isolation.



Source: Current Population Survey, 2015-2024