

NATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION

TOPIC 1: ECONOMY

A drop in the number of Americans seeking jobless benefits to 2008 levels, reported Thursday, was just the latest evidence of a private-sector employment revival. It followed a three-month decline in the unemployment rate from 8.9% to 8.3%. The *Economic Report of the President* to be released next Friday will project an increase of 2 million jobs in 2012 if stimulus measures are extended, on top of 3.1 million in the past 23 months. According to the White House, the unemployment projection of 8.9% for this year and 8.6% in 2013, contained in the budget to be released Monday, is already "stale and out-of-date."

A USA TODAY survey of 48 economists last month found a median forecast of 8.4% unemployment by the end of this year. The Congressional Budget Office projected 8.9%.

As forecasts tumble, risks remain. Housing prices continue to fall. Europe's debt crisis isn't over. Another 2 million Americans could re-enter the job market, making further drops in unemployment less likely. And as the short-term outlook improves, Republicans in Congress are calling for more dramatic reductions in long-term budget deficits, which boost the nation's \$15 trillion debt.¹

Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted²

HOUSEHOLD	DATA					
	Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted					
	[Numbers in thousands]					
Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	Jan. 2011	Jan. 2012	Jan. 2011	Jan. 2012	Jan. 2011	Jan. 2012
Gulf War-era II veterans						
Unemployed	278	178	240	128	39	50
Unemployment rate	15.2	9.1	15.5	7.7	13.5	17.3

National unemployment rate is 8.3% (January 2012). Gulf War II Veterans unemployment rate is 9.1%.³

Washington Conference 2012 Schedule

¹ <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2012-02-09/unemployment-economic-outlook/53033122/1?csp=34news>

² <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t05.htm>

³ U.S. Department of Labor. *Economic News Release: Employment Situation Summary, January 2012.*
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t05.htm>

LICENSING AND CREDENTIALING

National Credentialing Summit

February 21-23

Tuesday, 21 – Reception & Opening/Keynote (5pm – 7pm)

Wednesday & Thursday, 22-23 – 8am – 5:30pm

- The military invests millions in training service members, sending them all over the world to learn skills and gain a wide arsenal of experiences. Unfortunately, these skills don't often translate into a civilian career - especially in the trade and certification professions. The American Legion will investigate this issue and find ways to improve veterans and transitioning service members' job prospects in the trade professions.

Location: U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H St. NW
Washington, DC 20062

THE AMERICAN LEGION JOB FAIR

Thursday, February 23

11 am – 3 pm **Career & Benefits Fair**

Location: Washington Hilton
1919 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009
Jefferson East and Lincoln Rooms, Concourse Level

Registration: <http://www.legion.org/careers/careerfair/registration>

HOMELESS VETERANS

Friday, February 24

10 am – Noon: **Homeless Veterans' Roundtable**

- The Roundtable discussion will center on VA's Five-Year Plan to eliminate veteran homelessness, along with their new prevention initiatives. In addition, DOL & HUD will discuss their programs/services to homeless veterans as well as community service providers.

Location: Washington Hilton
1919 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009
Lincoln West, Concourse Level

VETERANS EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

Sunday, February 26

1 pm - 5 pm **Veterans Education Symposium**

This Symposium will focus on the unique needs of returning veterans upon arrival or return to college campuses and how colleges/universities can provide the necessary attention and resources for their successful transition. In addition, there will be discussion about the role of Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and how they can assist in this transition as well.

Location: Washington Hilton
1919 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009
Georgetown, Concourse Level

EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE

Monday, February 27
9 am – 4:30 pm **Economic Commission Meeting**

- The Roundtable discussion will center on the Veterans Hiring Initiative within the federal government, transition issues, licensing and certification, training, veterans' preference and private sector opportunities for veterans and their families.

Location: Washington Hilton
1919 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009
Jefferson West, Concourse Level

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

February 28-29 (Tuesday & Wednesday)
9 am - 4 pm **Two-day Small Business Development Workshop**

- Entrepreneurs with military backgrounds will benefit greatly from the two-day small business development workshop. Experienced mentors will counsel attendees on the practical aspects of setting up a veteran-owned business from the vitally important development of a business plan to the landing of government contracts.

Registration: <http://www.legion.org/careers/conference>

TOPIC 2: MEETING

PLANNING MEETING FOR NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS – 100,000 JOBS MISSION HIRING EVENT

On Tuesday, February 7, 2012, The Economic staff participated in a conference call with representatives from JPMorgan Chase to discuss its mission goal of hiring 100,000 transitioning service members and military veterans by 2020. On February 25, 2012, JPMorgan Chase will launch its first Job Fair, Naval District Washington Family Support Programs 100,000 Jobs Mission Hiring Event, for veterans, transitioning military service members, wounded warriors and military spouses. Items discussed during the meeting, but not limited to, are as follows:

- Floor plan for event layout
- Registration area strategy
- Event tracking
- Additional marketing

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR – VETERANS’ EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE (VETS)

On Wednesday, February 8, 2012, The Economic Division met with Junior Ortiz, the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training Service and his Staff at the Department of Labor (DOL). There, Mr. Ortiz and his staff discussed their part in the implementation of the recently passed VOW to Hire Heroes Act. Three new initiatives were discussed in length, the Veteran’s Gold Cars issued at the One Stop Career Centers, My Next Move web application for veterans exiting service and the creation of the online Veterans Job Bank. Additionally, now that the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) has been deemed mandatory for service members separating from service, The Department of Labor has undergone efforts to overhaul TAP, so it’s more interactive with updated and relevant information for the civilian marketplace. The new TAP is already in the testing phase, and as such, DOL is currently seeking feedback from various government entities and VSOs. According to DOL, all changes to the TAP will be finalized by December of 2012 and the new program will be implemented in January 2013.

TOPIC 2: EDUCATION

ECPI UNICERSITY

On Wednesday, February 8, 2012, The Economic and Legislative staff met with representatives from ECPI University. ECPI University is a private, for-profit college that serves students in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina through online and on-campus classes. ECPI University offers 2 year and 4 year degree programs (Associate's and Bachelor's degrees) in Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Health Science, Culinary Arts, Engineering Technology and Computer and Information Science. Terms are revolving five week sessions, resulting in a fast-paced road to your degree. Items discussed during the meeting, but not limited to, are as follows:

- Tuition rates
- Veteran Debt
- Department of Education “gainful employment rule”⁴
- Department of Education 90/10 rule
- Possible measures and ideas to ease the increase of tuition rates

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE

On Thursday, February 8, 2012, The Economic and Legislative staff met with Amy Jones, Education Policy Counsel & Senior Advisor, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education & The Workforce. Items discussed during the meeting, but not limited to, are as follows:

- Tuition rates
- Department of Education “gainful employment rule”⁵

⁴ <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2011/06/13/2011-13905/program-integrity-gainful-employment-debt-measures>

- Department of Education 90/10 rule
- Possible measures and ideas to ease the increase of tuition rates

The idea of a college/university scorecard with comparable information on costs, quality, completion, retention (drop-out), and graduation rates of student-veterans makes good sense for the consumer (veteran) to evaluate this information and make an informed choice when deciding on post-secondary institution. The federal government is already collecting similar information for for-profits and vocational programs at community colleges; therefore, collection of this data should be expanded to all of higher education institutions.

TOPIC 3: CAREER FAIRS

This week, Career Fairs were held in San Antonio, Texas. The Economic Division would like to personally thank the Department of Texas for their support and interest in reaching out to America's wounded warriors, their spouses and other veterans through Legion sponsored Career Fairs. In partnership with Recruit Military and Military.com, The American Legion is providing valuable resources for veterans who are looking to transition into the civilian sector and those who have been unemployed and/or seeking new employment. The American Legion continues to support these Career Fairs that assist our veteran community with finding stable and gainful employment. Additionally, these Career Fairs have been great opportunities to promote The American Legion and our programs, as well as to promote membership.

Quick Facts concerning Legion sponsored Career Fairs:

- Attract about 20 – 40 employers and approximately 250 – 500 job seekers at each Fair;
- Most common participant is local law enforcement agencies of that area; and,
- Make up of Employers - 1/3 Defense Department, 1/3 other Federal/State and local government agencies, & 1/3 Private sector companies.

UPDATE: The American Legion in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (USCC) has undertaken a new initiative to combat the rising unemployment rate amongst our nation's veterans. Hence, efforts continue under the Hiring our Heroes (HOH) Initiative to identify American Legion Posts where Job Fairs can be held. This week, an additional 16 Posts from Pennsylvania, Delaware, Alabama, New York, Arizona, Virginia and West Virginia have committed to hosting Job Fairs under the HOH Initiative, which brings our total for confirmed Job Fairs this year to 53. With all the Departments combined, so far there are 167 Job Fairs being considered, but of course The Economics Division is hoping to increase this number and also lock in more venues for Job Fairs.

TOPIC 4: VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

On Dec. 23, 2011 the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report titled "Actions Needed to Ensure Safe and Appropriate Housing." The report examined homelessness among women veterans, noting that the number of women veterans identified as homeless has more than doubled, from 1,380 in FY 2006 to 3,328 in FY 2010.

The report examines the needs of homeless women veterans, how available services meet those needs, and where there is room for improvement. In light of the continuing increase of women in

⁵ <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2011/06/13/2011-13905/program-integrity-gainful-employment-debt-measures>

the military, GAO found several areas to make recommendations to better serve the growing population of homeless women veterans.

To view the report in its entirety, go to <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-182>

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Week Ending: 2/10/12