Final Report for
Los Angeles County Supervisor
Mark Ridley-Thomas

By Elena Ong, MS & Paul Ong, PhD
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INTRODUCTION

This report is assembled in six parts:

Part 1 is an analysis of the Demographic Characteristics of Veterans in Los Angeles County for the time period 2005-2012. The analysis is based on tabulations from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Part 2 is an analysis of the Economic Performance of Veterans in Los Angeles County for the time period, 2005-2012. This analysis is based on tabulations from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Part 3 is an analysis of economic performance of working age Gulf War Veterans vs. working age non-Gulf War Veterans, for the time period, 2010-2012. This analysis is based on data from the American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample (PUMS).

Part 4 is an estimate, and a map, of Working Age Veterans in Los Angeles County, by Supervisorial District, for the time period, 2008-2012. This spatial analysis is based on Zipcode Census Tract Data from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Part 5 is an estimate of Young Veterans in Los Angeles County, by Supervisorial District, for the time period, 2008-2012. The analysis is based on Zipcode Census Tract Data from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Part 6 is how to use the information to inform public policy decisions that could impact Veteran economic self-sufficiency in Los Angeles County.
PART 1: THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS

Between 2005-2012, the number of adults in Los Angeles County grew 8%, from 7 million to 7.5 million, while the number of Veterans, overall, declined 23%, from 417,690 to 321,058.

There was one exception. Gulf War Veterans. Gulf War I & Gulf War II Veterans, who served 1990 or later, are the fastest growing Veteran population in Los Angeles County. Gulf War Veterans grew 44% from 54,717 to 78,980 between 2005-2012.

In contrast, the number of Vietnam War Veterans, Korean War and World War II Veterans have been declining. The decline in Korean and WW II Veterans, is likely due to the aging of the population, for if the Veteran began her/his service at 18 years old, s/he would be 75-80 years old in 2012 if s/he served in the Korean War, and 84-89 years old in 2012 if s/he served in WW II.

In summary, the proportion of all Veterans who are Gulf War I & II Veterans, increased from 13% to 25% between 2005 to 2012, while the proportion of Korean and WW II Veterans, decreased from 32% to 22% between 2005 to 2012, and the proportion of Vietnam Veterans remained roughly the same (31% to 32%).
Demographically, the majority of Los Angeles County veterans are Non-Hispanic White, followed by Latino, Black and Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander.

In terms of absolute numbers, non-Hispanic White Veterans experienced the steepest rate of decline, dropping 29%, from 245,184 to 173,371, between 2005-2012, followed by a 20% decrease among Blacks (from 60,983 to 48,801), followed by a 14% decrease among Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islanders (from 28,821 to 24,721), and an 11% decrease among Latinos* of all races (from 74,767 to 66,459).

As the number of Veterans has declined over time, there’s been a more rapid decrease in the number of Non-Hispanic White Veterans. As a result, the percentage of Veterans of Color (of Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, Latino and Black descent) has been increasing.
Overall, Veterans are better educated than Los Angeles County’s Non-Veteran population. Compared to Non-Veterans, Veterans have broken through < High School, High School, Associate Degree and Bachelor’s Degree ceiling.

However, today’s Veterans are not as educated as their predecessors, and this could affect the next generation of Veterans’ ability to be as self-sufficient, and as successful, in today’s, and tomorrow’s, labor market.
What does this portend? On the upside, fewer Veterans have less than a High School Diploma, however, on the downside, there’s been a rise in Associate Degrees, and a decline in Bachelor’s Degrees or higher. Having such low levels of educational attainment can be a barrier to entry to positions in a 21st Century global marketplace that requires a Bachelor’s degree or higher.

In order to improve the future of Veterans’ employability, and sustained employment, it may become more and important to increase Veteran’s access to Bachelor’s Degrees, as well as access to job-training programs.
In terms of disability of all types, not just service-related disabilities, Veterans in Los Angeles County continue to be at a disadvantage, as the disabilities gap between non-Veterans and Veterans, is widening, over time.

For example, the percent of Veterans with disabilities of all types increased from 25% to 27%, while the percent of non-Veterans with disabilities of all types decreased from 13% to 11%, between 2005-2012.

The disabilities gap has the potential of putting Veterans at a disadvantage in the workplace / job marketplace.
PART 2: ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF LA COUNTY VETERANS

PERSONS LIVING IN POVERTY
Veterans vs. Non-Veterans
Los Angeles County, 2005-2012

Source: 2005-2012 ACS

On the surface, Veterans, compared to non-Veterans, appear to have overcome poverty and the sticky floor. In absolute terms, the Veteran poverty rate in 2012 at 8.7% was half of the non-Veteran poverty rate of 16.9%, but that only tells part of the story, because in 2005, the Veteran poverty rate was 4.8%, one-third that of non-Veteran poverty rate of 14.1%.

In other words, the poverty rate for Veterans nearly doubled (i.e., it rose 81%), compared to the poverty rate for non-Veterans, which rose by 20%.
In terms of median income, Veterans, at $37,400/year in 2012, are outperforming their non-Veteran counterparts who made $23,500/year in 2012. However, what’s more subtle, is that while non-Veterans are making a post-2008 recovery, the recovery for Veterans has been inconsistent, and in 2012, downward sloping.
For example, in 2005, female Veterans made, on average, $31,500/year, and while their economic returns were high ($36,100/year) prior to the 2008 recession, female Veterans in Los Angeles County have since been on an economic roller coaster, making some short-lived gains and losses.

While female non-Veteran median income was rising 8%, from $19,200/year in 2005, to $20,700/year by 2012, female Veteran median income fell -5%, to below-2005 levels.

While male non-Veteran median income shows no net gain, male Veterans’ median income of $39,000/year in 2005, rose to a high of $40,400/year in 2008, but fell to below-2005 levels in 2012, at $38,000/year.
In terms of labor force participation rate, the recession did an economic shake-out.

In 2005, Veteran labor force participation was 78%, before it fell to 75% in 2008, with just a slight recovery to 76% by 2012. In contrast non-Veteran labor force participation was 74% in 2005, rose to 77% by 2009, and is now, 75% by 2012.

While non-Veteran labor force participation rate is lower than Veteran labor force participation rate in 2012, non-Veterans are better off in 2012 than they were in 2005. In contrast, Veterans are worse-off in 2012, than in 2005. Labor force participation may be affected by any number of factors, including shifts in Veterans’ educational attainment and Veteran’s higher rate of disability.
In terms of unemployment rate, Veterans were worse off in 2012.

Veterans have an Unemployment Rate that more than doubled from 5.5% in 2005, to 12.8% by 2012.

In contrast, non-Veterans experienced a 7.2% Unemployment Rate in 2005, to an 11.4% Unemployment Rate in 2012.

While Veteran Unemployment Rate saw some improvement in 2011, in 2012, the Veteran Unemployment rate at 12.8%, is higher than the 11.4% Non-Veteran Unemployment Rate and the 11.4% Unemployment Rate for the County overall.
PART 3: GULF WAR VETERANS ARE WORSE-OFF THAN NON-GULF WAR VETERANS

Los Angeles has a legacy. Los Angeles has long been the #1 destination for Veterans returning from the war. It is therefore no surprise that the number of Gulf War Veterans locating in Los Angeles County is increasing. The challenge is, however, that Gulf War Veterans, have not been as successfully integrated into the economic mainstream as their non-Gulf War Veteran counterparts. It has to do, in part, with the fact that so many young, post-1990 Veterans, returned to a weak economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>Gulf War Veterans (post-1990 &amp; 2001-present)</th>
<th>Non-Gulf War Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 18-64</td>
<td>Los Angeles County, 2010-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Income</td>
<td>$38,200</td>
<td>$44,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the 2010-12 PUMS, Gulf War Veterans (post-1990 & 2001-present), 18-64 years of age, have a lower median income of $38,200 than non-Gulf War Veterans at $44,143.

Gulf War Veterans (post-1990 & 2001-present), 18-64 years of age who participate in the labor force, have a higher Unemployment Rate of 13.3% vs. 10.5% for non-Gulf War Veterans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIAN INCOME</th>
<th>Gulf War Veterans vs. Non-Gulf War Veterans</th>
<th>Los Angeles County, 2010-2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
<td>$37,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$38,000</td>
<td>$39,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$41,000</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$43,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$44,000</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>$44,143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2010-2012 PUMS

$38,200
$39,000
$40,000
$41,000
$42,000
$43,000
$44,000
$45,000

Gulf War Vets
Non-Gulf War Vets
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Gulf War Veterans vs. Non-Gulf War Veterans
Los Angeles County, 2010-2012

Source: 2010-2012 PUMS
PART 4: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING AGE VETERANS

The following maps the geographic distribution of Working Age Veterans in Los Angeles County.

We estimate, using Zip Code Tabulations of the 2008-2012 ACS, that there are 180,000 working age Veterans living in Los Angeles County. The greatest number of Working Age Veterans in Los Angeles County lives in Supervisorial District #5, followed by Supervisorial District #4, Supervisorial District #2, Supervisorial District #3 and Supervisorial District #1.

Source: 2008-2012 ACS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisorial District</th>
<th>Estimated Number of Veterans</th>
<th>% of LA County</th>
<th>Communities with &gt;750 Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>25K</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Pico Rivera, La Puente, Highland Park, West Covina, Montebello, Baldwin Park, Claremont, Pomona, Montecito Heights, South Gate and Northeast LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>30K</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Hawthorne, Carson, South LA, View Park, Westmont, Inglewood, Palms, Mar Vista, Baldwin Hills/Leimert Park, Mid-City, Compton, LA-West Adams, Carson &amp; Gardena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>26K</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Pacoima, Reseda, Woodland Hills &amp; Van Nuys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>45K</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Norwalk, Long Beach, Bellflower, Whittier, Downey, Redondo Beach, Hacienda Heights, San Pedro, La Mirada, Whittier, Lakewood, Torrance, Cerritos, Diamond Bar &amp; Lomita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>54K</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Lancaster, Palmdale, Rosamond, Canyon County, La Verne, Granada Hills, Sylmar, San Dimas, Chatsworth, Valencia, Altadena, Palmdale, Castaic, Santa Clarita, Monrovia, Azusa, Walnut Creek Park, Sierra Madre &amp; Tujunga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County</td>
<td>180K</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2008-2012 ACS
PART 5: YOUNG VETERANS BY BOARD OF SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

Young workers are a source for Los Angeles County’s current and future labor supply. Young workers have the potential to determine region’s economic future.

In 2012, we estimate that 32,000 Young Veterans, aged 18-34, made Los Angeles County their home.

Using Zip Code tabulations of the 2008-2012 ACS, we estimate that the highest proportion of Young Veterans in Los Angeles County lives in Supervisorial District #5, followed by Supervisorial District #4, Supervisorial District #1, Supervisorial District #3 and Supervisorial District #2.

This geographic distribution is distinctly different from the aggregate picture for all working age Veterans.

Source: 2008-2012 ACS
Young Veterans
Ages 18-34
Estimates by Supervisorial District
Los Angeles County 2008-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisorial District</th>
<th>Estimated Number of Veterans</th>
<th>% of LA County</th>
<th>DRAFT Communities with &gt;250 Young Vets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>6K</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Pico Rivera, Baldwin Park, Huntington Park, Highland Park &amp; Happy Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>5K</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Palms, Hawthorne &amp; Compton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>5K</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Pacoima &amp; Reseda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>7K</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>North Long Beach, Bellflower, Long Beach, Downey &amp; Whittier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>9K</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Lancaster, Palmdale, Rosamond, La Verne &amp; Canyon Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County</td>
<td>32K</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 6: IMPLICATIONS FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Overall, we find that in absolute economic terms, Veterans in Los Angeles County perform better than non-Veterans in Los Angeles County.

However, we find that relative to non-Veterans’ economic performance, which is trending upward, Veteran’s economic performance is inconsistent, and in 2012, trending downward.

It’s not clear why non-Veterans are making a stronger comeback in the local economy, than Veterans.

It is important to note that Gulf War Veterans do not do as well as their non-Gulf War counterparts.

The problem could get worse, as more Gulf War Veterans make Los Angeles County their home. Many Gulf War Veterans have not been able to translate their educational attainment, and military skills, with the entry requirements, e.g., employment history, educational attainment, and skills that are in demand in the local economy.

Right now, Los Angeles County has 320,000 out of 21.2 million Veterans nationwide. “With the military drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is expected that many of the 35,000 new Veterans returning to California each year will make Los Angeles County their home ... If unemployment and poverty rates remain high, thousands more of Los Angeles County’s veterans could become unemployed, putting them at high risk of poverty and unemployment.”

To address the risk to Veteran self-sufficiency, Los Angeles County may want to develop/enhance programs aimed at integrating younger, Gulf War Veterans, into the economic mainstream.

For example, Los Angeles County may want to develop a Local Hire Program for Veterans that focuses on improving the economic livelihood of Veterans who live in areas with high unemployment rates. This investment at the front-end, would not only reduce the risk of homelessness and poverty now, and for the future, it would provide an employment history and economic self-sufficiency, for Young Veterans who have more than 20 to 30 years to give to the economy.

Towards that goal, it would be worthwhile to overlay poverty maps, and high unemployment rate maps, over the map of Veterans, and Young Veterans, and cultivate win-win opportunities that create a pathway to employment and self-sufficiency for Veterans, young and old, who have given their lives in service to America.
APPENDIX A: DATA SOURCES

The analysis uses micro-level data from the:

- 2005-2012 American Community Survey (ACS) for the Demographic Characteristics and Economic Performance of Veterans (ages 18 and above) in Los Angeles County;

- the 2008-2012 American Community Survey for the Estimates of Working Age Veterans (ages 18-64) and Young Veterans (ages 18-34) by US Census Tract Zip Code; and

- the 2010-2012 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) for the Estimates of Median Income and Unemployment Rates for Gulf War vs. Non-Gulf War Veterans.

American Community Survey (ACS)\(^{iii}\)

The American Community Survey (ACS) is the largest household survey in the United States. The ACS provides single-year labor force estimates for geographic areas with a population of 65,000 or more and 3-year estimates for geographic areas with a population of 20,000 or more. For areas with a population less than 20,000, 5-year estimates will be available. The first 5-year estimates, based on ACS data collected from 2005 through 2009, were released in 2010. All ACS estimates are updated annually. The sample size of approximately 3 million addresses per year make it useful for subnational analyses. The ACS labor force questions are based on the Census 2000 questions. The Census Bureau introduced an improved sequence of labor force questions in the 2008 ACS questionnaire. Accordingly, we advise using caution when making labor force data comparisons from 2008 or later with data from prior years. Additional information can be found at [http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/laborfor/laborforce.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/laborfor/laborforce.html).

Because of its large sample size, the ACS will have advantages over the Current Population Survey (CPS) in producing estimates in the following circumstances:

- to characterize small geographic areas for which CPS (or Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program) estimates are not available, and for comparisons among such areas and between such areas and larger ones;
- to provide information on socioeconomic characteristics of the labor force that are not collected in the CPS, or for geographic areas below the level for which the CPS can provide this information;
- to produce tabulations of finely detailed categories, or extensive cross-tabulations of multiple characteristics of the labor force for any geographic area, including the nation, for which the CPS sample size is insufficient to produce reliable estimates;
- to study rare characteristics of common population groups, or characteristics of uncommon population groups;

Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)\(^{iii}\)

The Census Bureau produces a large number of data profiles, tables, and maps showing a massive amount of pretabulated data from the ACS. However, these [ACS] products cannot meet the needs of every data user. The Census Bureau produces the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files so that data users can create custom tables that are not available through pretabulated ACS products.
The PUMS files are a set of untabulated records about individual people or housing units...The PUMS files should be used by people who are looking for data tables that are not presented by the Census Bureau in the pretabulated products available through American FactFinder. These files can be used to extract custom data for particular population groups (e.g., veterans), or when it is not possible to get particular data categories from the standard tables...The PUMS files can also be used when the standard tables do not provide the categories that a data user is interested in seeing. (e.g., Gulf War Veterans vs. Non-Gulf War Veterans).

APPENDIX B: DATA SOURCES FOR EACH LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

For Parts 1 and 2 of our report – Demographic Characteristics of Veterans in Los Angeles County and Economic Performance of Veterans in Los Angeles County - we downloaded 2005-2012 ACS tabulations for all non-elderly adults – Veterans and Non-Veterans - and analyzed the responses to the following questions (see Sample Questionnaire, 2012 iv):

3. Sex: What is Person X’s sex?
4. Age: What is Person X’s age and date of birth?
5. Ethnicity: Is Person X of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?
6. Race: What is Person X’s Race?
11. Educational Attainment: What is the highest degree or level of school this person has completed?
17, 18, 19: Disability:
17a. Is this person deaf or does s/he have serious difficulty hearing?
17b. Is this person blind or does s/he have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
18a. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions?
18b. Does this person have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
18c. Does this person have difficulty dressing or bathing?
19. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping?

26. Veteran Status:
   Has this person ever served on active duty in the US Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard?
27. Veteran Status: When did this person serve on active duty in the US Armed Forces?
   a. September 2001 or later, and
   b. August 1990 to August 2001 (including the Persian Gulf War)
   c. May 1975 to July 1990
   d. Vietnam Era (August 1964 to April 1975)
   e. February 1955 to July 1964
   f. Korean War (July 1950 to January 1955)
   g. January 1947 to June 1950
   h. World War II (December 1941 to December 1946)
   i. November 1941 or earlier

29, 36, 37, 38: Employment and Unemployment Status:

29a. Last week, did this person work for pay at a job or business?
29b. Last week, did this person do ANY work for pay, even for as little as one hour?
36. During the LAST 4 WEEKS, has this person been looking ACTIVELY for a job?
37. LAST WEEK, could this person have started a job if offered one, or returned to work if recalled?
38. When did this person last work, even for a few days?
48. Income: What was this person’s total income during the past 12 months?
For Part 3 of our report – Working Age Gulf War Veterans vs. Non-Gulf War Veterans - we created a subfile of Veterans from the PUMS for 2010-2012, and analyzed the responses to the following questions:

4. **Age:** What is Person X’s age and date of birth?
   a. Persons 18-64.

26. **Veteran Status:**
   Has this person ever served on active duty in the US Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard?
   b. Yes

27. **Veteran Status:** When did this person serve on active duty in the US Armed Forces?

   Gulf War I and Gulf War II Veterans were defined as Veterans serving:
   c. September 2001 or later, and
   d. August 1990 to August 2001 (including the Persian Gulf War)

   And Non-Gulf War Veterans were defined as:
   c. May 1975 to July 1990
d. Vietnam Era (August 1964 to April 1975)
e. February 1955 to July 1964
f. Korean War (July 1950 to January 1955)
g. January 1947 to June 1950
h. World War II (December 1941 to December 1946)
i. November 1941 or earlier

29, 36, 37, 38: Employment & Unemployment Status for persons, aged 18-64, participating in the labor force:

29a. Last week, did this person work for pay at a job or business?
29b. Last week, did this person do ANY work for pay, even for as little as one hour?
36. During the LAST 4 WEEKS, has this person been looking ACTIVELY for a job?
37. LAST WEEK, could this person have started a job if offered one, or returned to work if recalled?
38. When did this person last work, even for a few days?
48. Income: What was this person’s total income during the past 12 months?

For Part 4 of our Report – Map of Working Age Veterans – we created a 2008-2012 ACS dataset that consisted of the responses to the following questions, by ZCTA (Zipcode by Census Tract Areas) as these are more consistent over time, than annually adjusted/reconfigured USPS ZC (US Postal Service Zip Codes).

4. **Age:** What is Person X’s age and date of birth?
   a. Persons 18-64

26. **Veteran Status:**
   Has this person ever served on active duty in the US Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard?
   b. Yes

27. **Veteran Status:** When did this person serve on active duty in the US Armed Forces?
   a. Any / All Service Periods

[Please note that Part 5 is not part of the original contract, and is under development, and subject to change or deletion.]
For Part 5 of our Report – Estimates of Young Veterans – we created a 2008-2012 ACS dataset that consisted of the responses to the following questions, by ZCTA (Zipcode by Census Tract Areas) as these zip codes are more constant/consistent over time, than the annually adjusted/reconfigured USPS ZC (United States Postal Service Zip Codes).

4: Age: What is Person X’s age and date of birth?
   a. Persons 18-34

26. Veteran Status:
   Has this person ever served on active duty in the US Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard?
   b. Yes

27. Veteran Status: When did this person serve on active duty in the US Armed Forces?
   a. Any / All and All Service Periods.

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iii US Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microsample Survey Handbook, 2009