



Special Topic Report

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The Army UCX Claimants' Initiative: A Formative Case Study

This special topic report describes findings and recommendations from a case study in which Army veterans' employment, earnings, and workforce participation data were linked to their military data to support analysis of the veterans' post-separation employment and unemployment experiences. This data linking and analysis was completed as part of an evaluation of the Army Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX) Claimants' Initiative, a collaborative effort between the U.S. Army (Army) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE ARMY UCX CLAIMANTS' INITIATIVE

The Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX) program provides income support during the transition period when former active duty, reserve, or National Guard members search for work. It is supported by transfers of funds from the budget of the appropriate military branch to the Unemployment Trust Fund, which reimburses the state that distributed funds to the ex-service member who had federal military wages. The Army UCX Claimants' Initiative, which ran from July 2012 to June 2015, was a collaboration between the U.S. Army (Army) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to provide states with grants and

technical assistance to improve the training and reemployment outcomes of separating soldiers, while also reducing UCX expenditures.

In the years leading up to the Army UCX Claimants' Initiative, the unemployment rate of veterans was higher than that of similarly situated nonveterans; specifically, younger male veterans (ages 18-24) were more likely to be unemployed than their non-veteran counterparts (Loughran 2014). In 2011, just before the initiative began, average weekly UCX claims were 39,000 nationally (U.S. Department of Labor 2015). A Prudential survey (2012) found that only about half of separating service members attended a transition assistance program before this was mandated in 2011, and few used the reemployment resources offered through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program.

The goals of the Army UCX Claimants Initiative were to:

1. create strong collaborative partnerships among the unemployment insurance (UI) system, the public workforce system, and the three components of the Army (active, Reserve, and National Guard) to support the rapid reemployment of UCX claimants;
2. improve data sharing to better understand UCX claimants and their outreach and service needs; and
3. increase outreach, exposure to jobs, and reemployment strategies for UCX claimants that combine existing resources with innovative service delivery approaches.

Each of the four states that received pilot grants from DOL—Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas—formed a team of partners from state agencies and proposed pilot projects and data-sharing improvements to be implemented between July 2012 and June 2015 with \$750,000 in federal grant funding.

II. STUDY DESIGN

To broadly inform efforts to expand reemployment strategies for veterans, Mathematica Policy Research evaluated the implementation and outcomes of the initiative to identify lessons learned and promising practices among the grantees' exploratory strategies. The final evaluation design included (1) an implementation analysis (described in Boraas 2016), (2) an outcomes analysis for the Georgia grantee, and (3) an analysis of the feasibility of data linking based on an innovative data-sharing project between Georgia and the Army. DOL selected this combination of analyses to provide a multifaceted assessment of lessons learned and promising practices, goals achieved, and the extent of participation and endorsement by relevant partners, as well as to describe other topics of interest, such as how veterans receive services and how the veterans' priority of service requirement is applied in local American Job Centers.

For this formative case study of the Georgia grantee's outcomes and the feasibility of linking state and military data, Mathematica described the data sources and data linking process, and used quantitative methods to address research questions related to:

1. the target population of the initiative,
2. time lags to service for Army UCX claimants,
3. benefit duration and exhaustion,
4. identification of veterans by Georgia's profiling model, and
5. employment and earnings outcomes.

These questions were informed by Georgia's interest in learning more about profiling, as well as about time lags between separation and receipt of UCX benefits and workforce services. Based on findings of the quantitative analysis, Mathematica developed recommendations for future research and documented challenges and promising practices related to linking state and military data.

A. Data sources

This study uses a unique combination of data from several administrative systems to track separating soldiers' interactions with the Georgia workforce system as they enter civilian life. These data sources include:

- The U.S. Military Academy Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA) provided demographic information, including gender, race, birth year, and education. It also provided military information, including Army separation date, Army branch, military occupational specialty (MOS) by functional groups (such as engineers, field artillery, military police), years of service, months deployed, Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) scores, addresses at entry and separation, and date and reason for separation. OEMA provided data for enlisted service members but not for commissioned officers.
- The Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) provided four files: UI claims, weeks compensated, wage records, and Wagner-Peyser service data.
- The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) provided a file of Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD).

OEMA and GDOL developed a sample frame of people who received or filed for UCX benefits in Georgia, or who had an Army forwarding, home of record, or last assignment address in Georgia or one of its neighboring states between

January 1, 2002, and March 31, 2015. This time frame was based on OEMA's interest in analyzing veterans' employment, earnings, and unemployment claims experiences and their use of workforce services over an extended period of time, as well as the need to extract data files from state administrative systems before the initiative's end date of June 30, 2015. OEMA received the datasets from GDOL and GDEcD, linked the datasets per their data sharing agreements, and de-identified the data before providing them to the study team for analysis. Because of the scope of the study's research questions, the analysis data files only included Army veterans who either received UCX benefits or were registered for workforce services in Georgia. Mathematica then worked with all three agencies to resolve questions related to data structure, accuracy, and interpretation. Given the multiple data sources and agencies involved, the process of negotiating data sharing agreements, developing data specifications, extracting data, and data cleaning was quite lengthy. The length of time from initial discussions to the data transfer was 18 months; data management and cleaning added another 9 months to the overall timeline before analysis could begin.

B. Key definitions

To answer the evaluation's research questions, Mathematica first defined key variables:

Army veterans with an attachment to Georgia. An Army veteran was defined as having an attachment to Georgia if at least one of the following three Army addresses of this person was in Georgia: forwarding address, home of record address, or the address of the last assignment.

Age at separation. Age at separation was defined as the difference between the Army veteran's year of separation and his or her birth year.

Received UCX benefits. Our sample of UCX recipients included those who received payment on an eligible UCX claim after separating from the Army. Given the available data, this sample did not include joint UCX-UI claims. In addition, we excluded interstate claims, because the data did not permit observation of employment and earnings outside of Georgia.

UCX benefit duration. UCX benefit duration was defined as total benefits collected divided by

the weekly benefit amount. This corresponded to the number of full-time equivalent weeks of unemployment for which benefits were claimed; it might differ from the calendar time between the start and end of benefits for recipients who had partial or intermittent employment. This method was also used in Mathematica's recent study of the unemployment compensation provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Hock et al. 2016). In recent years, Georgia has reduced its maximum benefit duration from 26 to 20 weeks, and, most recently, has used a regional formula instead of a state-based one.

UCX benefit exhaustion status. Exhaustion of UCX benefits (for those who received UCX benefits) was defined as having less than one week of available benefits remaining in the associated claim. Katz and Meyer (1990) suggested that some recipients might not bother filing a continued claim to collect a final, partial week of benefits. Card et al. (2007) alluded to this phenomenon resulting in inflated estimates in the "spike" in exits from UI at the point of exhaustion. This approach was also used in Mathematica's recent study of UI exhaustion (Needels et al. 2016).

Date of registration for workforce services. UCX recipients are required to enroll in workforce services. Georgia provided both Wagner-Peyser service data and WIASRD data. If a person had both Wagner-Peyser and WIASRD participation dates, or more than one participation date for the same program, we used the earliest participation date that was on or after the Army separation date.

Employment and earnings outcomes. We developed employment outcome measures for UCX recipients we could observe in the available state data for at least one year after UCX benefit receipt. This corresponded to recipients whose UCX claims were initiated between January 2013 and March 2014. We defined employment and earnings using Georgia's UI wage records covering the four quarters following the quarter of the initial UCX claim. When developing measures of average earnings, we used data only from quarters in which the person was employed. We defined three outcome measures: (1) ever worked, (2) quarters worked, and (3) average quarterly earnings for quarters in which the individual was employed.

After defining key variables, we calculated counts for totals, distributions for characteristics, and means for continuous variables.

C. Data linkage process and limitations

As mentioned earlier, Mathematica worked with three different agencies to identify and resolve issues identified in their respective data files. An overarching limitation stemmed from how the data were received for analysis. Because of military security requirements, all Georgia data files were sent to OEMA. OEMA then produced separate analysis files for Mathematica, using the following steps:

1. GDOL's weeks compensated file was converted into quarters compensated to be consistent with the structure of the wage records file.
2. A file containing Army variables was merged to each of the five Georgia files by SSN. When a variable such as date of birth appeared in both the Georgia and military data files, both variables were retained. Records from the Georgia files that did not match to the Army file were dropped.
3. To maintain confidentiality, personally identifiable information was removed from each file; this included name (first, middle, last), cell and home telephone numbers, and addresses. SSNs were used to create a random unique identifier, and employer identification numbers were removed.
4. All date values were truncated to the first of the month to further protect confidentiality.
5. The five de-identified Georgia files, with Army variables appended, were then used for analysis as part of this study.

This process facilitated analysis while maintaining veteran confidentiality. However, it necessarily limited some planned analyses. For example, the truncation of all date values reduced the precision of time lag analyses. Furthermore, OEMA provided data with the Army veteran's year of birth rather than birth date or age.

Data availability also limited some planned analyses. Only initial claims were included in the Georgia files; therefore, we could not analyze veterans' receipt and exhaustion of extended benefits, or associated employment and earnings outcomes. The time frame for which data were available relative to the time frame of the initiative created a right censoring issue; this limited the

extent to which we could analyze veterans' post-separation experiences. We did not receive data for the majority of veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia because they neither received UCX in Georgia nor registered for workforce services in Georgia; in addition, we did not have data to analyze employment and earnings outcomes of veterans who received UCX or workforce services in Georgia, but who may have found employment outside of Georgia.

III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As mentioned, the study identified five sets of research questions related to the initiative. Here, we describe the specific research questions and findings for each question.

A. Target population of the initiative

We answered several research questions about the target population of the initiative:

1. How many individuals separated from the Army with an attachment to Georgia during the initiative period?
2. How many individuals who separated from the Army with an attachment to Georgia during the initiative period received UCX benefits in Georgia?
3. How many individuals who separated from the Army with an attachment to Georgia during the initiative period, but did not receive UCX benefits, registered for workforce services?
4. What are the demographic and military characteristics of these veterans?

In addressing these questions, we looked at two related time periods, described below. The military separation, attachment and characteristics data were linked with state UCX and workforce service data to answer these questions.

Full initiative period. This covers the longest period of Georgia's grant for which data are available—July 1, 2012, through March 31, 2015—to broadly describe the target population of the initiative.¹

Analysis period. To describe the experiences of Army veterans who received UCX benefits in Georgia during the initiative period, the analysis period covers the subset of individuals with Army separation dates and benefit year begin dates,

Target Population of the Initiative

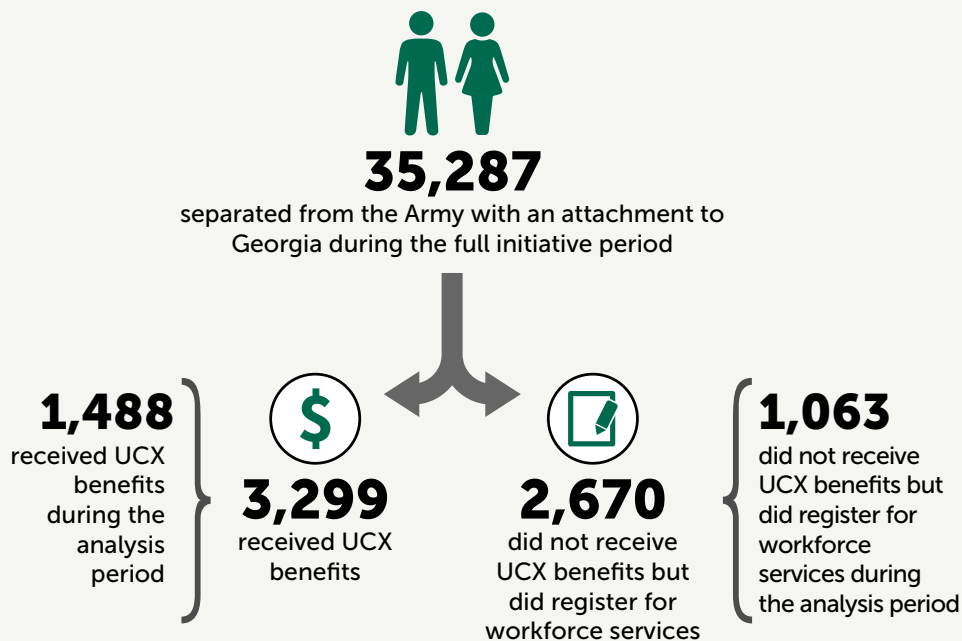


Figure 1

which measure the initiation of benefits, between January 1, 2013, and March 31, 2014, where the benefit year begin date is on or after the separation date. This analysis period begins in January 2013 because grantee implementation plans were not approved until late 2012; any activity during the first six months of the grant does not reflect final grant plans. The end date of this time period provides a full year's worth of data for analysis of veterans' experiences and employment outcomes after the latest possible benefit year begin date. Figure 1 identifies, of the 35,287 veterans who separated from the Army with an attachment to Georgia during the full initiative period, the number who received UCX benefits or registered for workforce services in Georgia during both the full initiative and analysis periods.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the characteristics of three sample groups identified above: (1) 5,969 Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia during the full initiative period and received UCX benefits or registered for workforce services in Georgia; (2) 2,551 Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia during the analysis period and received UCX benefits (1,488) or did not receive UCX benefits but registered for workforce services in Georgia during the

same period (1,063);² and (3) 1,488 individuals who received UCX benefits in Georgia during the analysis period. Across all three sample groups, most veterans were young, were male, and were educated through high school or had received a GED. Most had reached at least the Specialist/Corporal level by their separation date, and more than half had been deployed for 12 or fewer months.

B. Time lags to service

Mathematica then explored several research questions of specific interest to GDOL:

1. What is the average time lag between military separation and the benefit year begin date for Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia and received UCX benefits in Georgia during the analysis period?
 - Of the 1,488 Army veterans who separated and received UCX during the analysis period, about 57 percent received UCX benefits in the same month that they separated from the Army. Approximately 12 percent began receiving UCX benefits at least two months after separating from the Army, and about 1 percent began receiving UCX benefits more than seven months after separation.

Table 1. Army veterans' demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics (Percentage, by category)	Full initiative period N = 5,969	Analysis period N = 2,551	Analysis period (received UCX benefits) N = 1,488
Age			
18 to 24	30.9	28.5	25.5
25 to 34	48.7	50.6	58.1
35 or older	20.4	20.9	16.3
Gender			
Female	23.7	23.4	26.2
Male	76.3	76.6	73.8
Education at separation			
High school diploma, GED, or below	82.5	83.0	83.8
Some college or higher	17.5	17.0	16.2

Note: Maximum sample sizes for each column are provided. Sample sizes for some characteristics are smaller due to missing data. Some categories have been consolidated so that reported cells represent 15 or more veterans; in some cases columns then sum to greater or less than 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 2. Army veterans' military characteristics

Military characteristics (Percentage, by category)	Full initiative period N = 5,969	Analysis period N = 2,551	Analysis period (received UCX benefits) N = 1,488
Army rank (pay grade)			
Private/Private First Class (E01-E03)	24.0	23.6	16.7
Specialist/Corporal (E04)	44.2	45.5	54.2
Sergeant/Staff Sergeant/Sergeant First Class/Master Sergeant/First Sergeant/Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major/Sergeant Major of the Army (E05 or higher)	31.7	30.9	29.1
AFQT percentile			
65 to 100 (Categories 1 and 2)	25.8	25.5	27.1
50 to 64 (Category 3A)	26.5	26.1	25.3
0 to 49 (Categories 3B, 4, and 5)	47.7	48.5	47.7
Months deployed			
0	31.3	29.8	26.5
1 to 12	26.5	26.4	29.5
13 to 24	25.2	25.8	27.7
25 or more	17.0	18.0	16.3

Note: Maximum sample sizes for each column are provided. Sample sizes for some characteristics are smaller due to missing data. Some categories have been consolidated so that reported cells represent 15 or more veterans; in some cases columns then sum to greater or less than 100 percent due to rounding.

2. What is the average time lag between military separation and registration for workforce services for Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia and received UCX benefits in Georgia during the analysis period? (These clients are required to register for services.)

- Veterans who received UCX benefits were required to register for workforce services³ and did so within two months of separation, on average; about 10 percent of these veterans registered for workforce services after a time lag of four months.

3. What is the average time lag between military separation and registration for workforce services for Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia but did not receive UCX benefits during the analysis period? (These clients are not required to register for services.)

- The average time lag between military separation and registration for workforce services was within three months for the 1,063 Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia during the analysis time period, but did not receive UCX benefits. These individuals are not required to register for workforce services. About 10 percent waited at least five months to register for workforce services.

The military separation and attachment data were linked with state UCX and workforce data to answer these questions. Because all date variables were converted to the first of the month of the actual date, we measured the time lag in months.

C. Benefit duration and exhaustion

We also explored research questions related to duration and exhaustion of UCX benefits for the veterans who received UCX during the analysis period. State data were linked with military separation, attachment, and characteristics data to answer these questions.

1. For Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia and received UCX benefits, what is the average duration of UCX benefits?

- The average duration of UCX benefits (initial claims) for these 1,488 Army veterans is 14.6 weeks, and the median

is 18 weeks. One quarter of these UCX recipients had a benefit duration of 11 weeks or less while nearly 30 percent received UCX benefits for 19 weeks.

2. For Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia and received UCX benefits, what percentage exhausted their benefits?

- Sixty-four percent (953) of the 1,488 UCX recipients during the analysis period exhausted benefits, but there was also substantial variability in the duration of benefit collection.

3. What are the demographic and military characteristics of these veterans?

- Tables 3 and 4 present the characteristics of the 1,488 Army veterans who received UCX benefits and the 953 who exhausted their benefits. Demographic and military characteristics are similar, in general, between those who received UCX and those who exhausted UCX.

D. Identification of veterans by Georgia's profiling model

GDOL's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) model is designed to identify people at risk of exhausting their initial claims so they can be targeted for reemployment services. Georgia's model is described in Sullivan et al. (2007); during this study, GDOL described plans to update its model and expressed interest in research questions related to the model:

1. What percentage of Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia, who exhausted UCX benefits in Georgia, were identified by GDOL's profiling model?

- Of the 953 Army veterans who exhausted their benefits, 780 had both claimant and cut scores greater than zero. Of these, 25.4 percent, or 198, were correctly identified by GDOL's profiling model as at risk of exhausting their benefits. Of the 1,212 Army veterans who received UCX benefits and had claimant and cut scores greater than zero, 9.7 percent (118) were predicted to exhaust their benefits but did not.

2. What are the demographic and military characteristics of these veterans?

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of veterans receiving and exhausting UCX

Demographic characteristics (Percentage, by category)	Received UCX N = 1,488	Exhausted UCX N = 953
Age		
18 to 24	25.5	25.9
25 to 34	58.1	60.3
35 or older	16.3	13.8
Gender		
Female	26.2	31.3
Male	73.8	68.7
Education at separation		
High school diploma, GED, or below	83.8	85.8
Some college or higher	16.2	14.2

Note: Maximum sample sizes for each column are provided. Sample sizes for some characteristics are smaller due to missing data. Some categories have been consolidated so that reported cells represent 15 or more veterans; in some cases columns then sum to greater or less than 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 4. Military characteristics of veterans receiving and exhausting UCX

Military characteristics (Percentage, by category)	Received UCX N = 1,488	Exhausted UCX N = 953
Army rank (pay grade)		
Private/Private First Class (E01-E03)	16.7	18.3
Specialist/Corporal (E04)	54.2	56.2
Sergeant/Staff Sergeant/Sergeant First Class/Master Sergeant/First Sergeant/ Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major/Sergeant Major of the Army (E05 or higher)	29.1	25.5
AFQT percentile		
65 to 100 (Categories 1 and 2)	27.1	24.3
50 to 64 (Category 3A)	25.3	23.6
0 to 49 (Categories 3B, 4, and 5)	47.7	52.2
Months deployed		
0	26.5	26.7
1 to 12	29.5	30.2
13 to 24	27.7	28.6
25 or more	16.3	14.6

Note: Maximum sample sizes for each column are provided. Sample sizes for some characteristics are smaller due to missing data. Some categories have been consolidated so that reported cells represent 15 or more veterans; in some cases columns then sum to greater or less than 100 percent due to rounding.

Figure 2 presents the demographic and military characteristics of the 198 people correctly identified by GDOL's profiling model; these veterans tended to be male, ages 25 to 34, with a high school diploma/ GED or below.

State data were linked with military separation, attachment, and characteristics data to answer these questions. To identify people correctly detected by GDOL's profiling model during the analysis period, we relied on two variables: (1) WPRS claimant score, and (2) WPRS cut score. The WPRS claimant score identifies an individual's potential for exhausting their benefits; the cut score is the threshold score used by the state to identify those who will be referred to reemployment services due to their high probability of exhausting benefits. Both scores varied between 0 and 1. If someone has a claimant score greater than or equal to the cut score, this person is predicted to exhaust their benefits.⁴

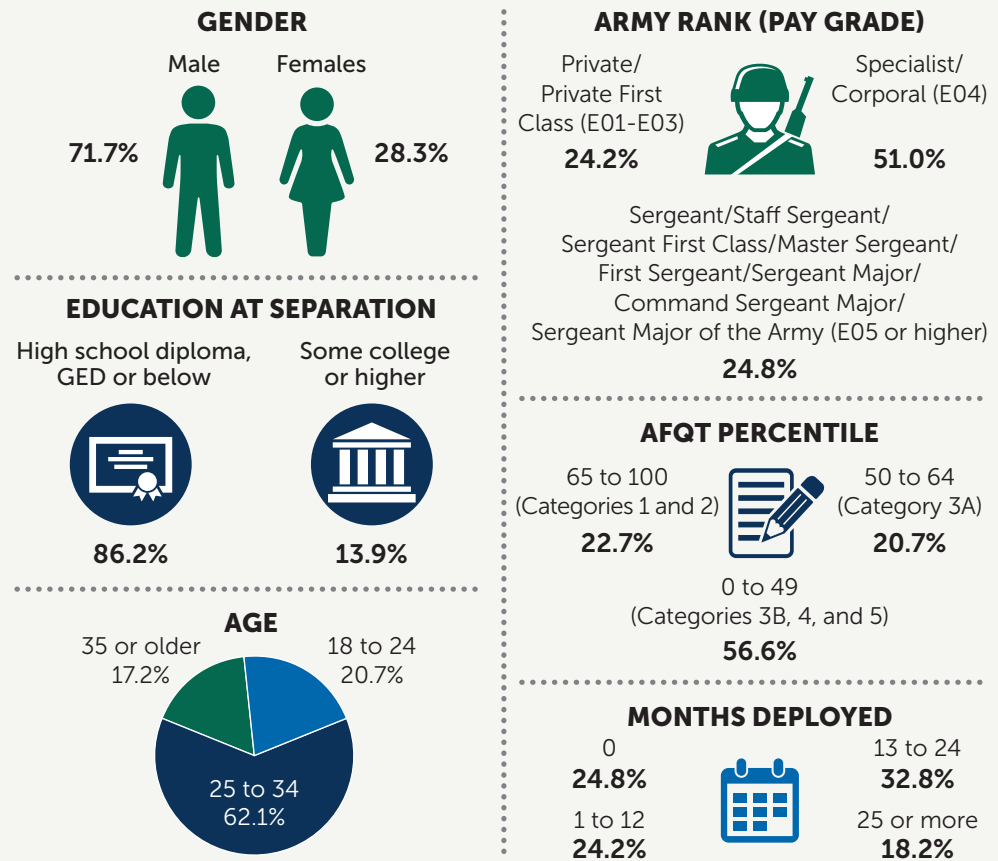
E. Employment and earnings outcomes

We also addressed research questions related to the veterans' employment and earnings outcomes. State data were linked with military separation, attachment, and characteristics data to answer these questions.

1. What were the employment and earnings outcomes for Army veterans who separated with an attachment to Georgia and who received UCX benefits in Georgia?
 - Of the 1,488 Army veterans who separated from the Army and received UCX benefits during the analysis period, 46.7 percent (695) found employment with Georgia employers within four quarters after the quarter of their initiation of UCX benefits. These 695 Army veterans had an average of 2.6 quarters of employment with

Demographic and military characteristics of correctly identified veterans

N = 198



Note: Some categories have been consolidated so that reported cells represent 15 or more veterans; in some cases figures then sum to greater or less than 100 percent due to rounding.

Figure 2

Georgia employers after the quarter of their initiation of benefits. This group had average quarterly earnings of \$3,763.74 for quarters in which they were employed with Georgia employers.

2. What are the employment and earnings outcomes of these veterans based on demographic and military characteristics?

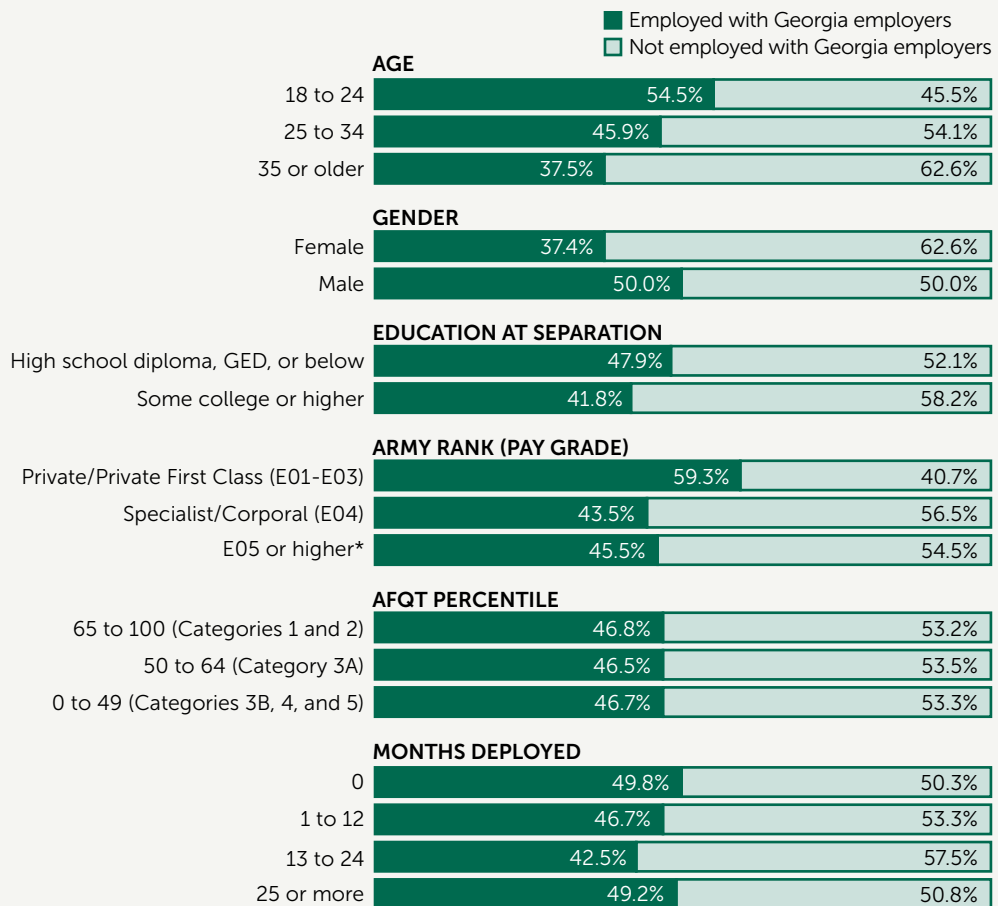
Figure 3 specifies employment status by demographic and military characteristics of the 695 people employed with Georgia employers in at least one of the four quarters following their initiation of UCX benefits, as well as the 793 people not employed with Georgia employers during the four quarters following their initiation of UCX benefits. Younger veterans and those with a rank of Private/Private First

Class tended to be employed, rather than not employed, in at least one of the four quarters following their initiation of UCX benefits.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

To identify recommendations for future research, Mathematica considered the results of the analyses completed for this evaluation as well as questions that leverage the potential of linked employment, workforce services, and military data to help identify ways to better support veterans' needs. Mathematica also documented challenges and promising practices that can be applied to future data sharing based on the experiences gained through this case study. Here, we present details of these recommendations, challenges, and promising practices.

Employment status of veterans by demographic and military characteristics



*Sergeant/Staff Sergeant/Sergeant First Class/Master Sergeant/First Sergeant/ Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major/Sergeant Major of the Army (E05 or higher)

Note: Some categories have been consolidated so that reported amounts represent 15 or more veterans; in some cases figures then sum to greater or less than 100 percent due to rounding.

Figure 3

A. Recommendations for future research

Our recommendations for future research primarily relate to: (1) veterans' demographic and military characteristics; (2) profiling models; (3) the impact of the initiative over time, and (4) expanding the sample available for analysis.

- The research questions related to demographic and military characteristics focused on sample group descriptions. Building on the findings above, it would be useful to analyze the demographic and military characteristics of additional groups of veterans including those who: (1) did not exhaust their benefits, (2) did not exhaust their benefits but were predicted to do so, and (3) were not accurately identified by Georgia's profiling model. Statistical testing could then be conducted to determine whether there are any differences in characteristics between groups of interest, for example between those who: (1) did and did not exhaust their UCX benefits, (2) were and were not accurately identified by Georgia's profiling model, and (3) were and were not employed with Georgia employers in the four quarters following the initiation of their UCX benefits.
- Because only 25.4 percent of the analysis sample who exhausted UCX benefits (initial claims) in Georgia was identified by GDOL's profiling model, further evaluation of this model may be useful. For example, it may be useful to compare this identification rate with that of UI recipients. Future research can also explore whether military characteristics help explain the discrepancy between predicted and actual exhaustion of benefits.
- As noted, the analysis period was limited to 15 months ending in March 2014 to provide sufficient time to analyze outcomes after a veteran initiated benefits. To see whether veterans' outcomes improved during the initiative, the outcomes of veterans who separated and initiated their UCX benefits in the last 15 months of the initiative (between April 2014 and June 2015) could be evaluated.
- Many analyses were limited by small cell sizes. With a larger sample, findings could be provided for more detailed breakouts of demographic and military characteristics. Findings by MOS code could also be presented. In addition, quarterly earnings could be presented by demographic and military characteristics.

- Given the scope of the study, we received data only on veterans who received UCX or registered for workforce services after their separation from the Army. If data were available on veterans who did not receive UCX or register for workforce services, it may be useful to compare the time lag from military separation to employment and the earnings outcomes of this group with the outcomes of those who received UCX, and those who received workforce services.
- Following the above recommendation, employment retention could be analyzed for veterans who received UCX, those who received workforce services, and veterans who received neither. Analyses could focus on identifying the military characteristics of veterans most likely to be retained in employment after their military separation.
- Finally, access to UI and employment data from other states would allow more comprehensive analysis of veterans' employment and earnings outcomes.

B. Promising practices and challenges for future state and military data sharing

Despite grant funds covering the costs of data extraction and sharing, the intensive effort involved with limited state and military staff resources presented challenges. Data extraction must be scheduled around regular reporting cycles, such as quarterly Wagner-Peyser or UI reporting. In addition, the parties involved have different priorities, which can make the process more complicated.

Despite these challenges, promising practices emerged from the case study that may be replicated in future data sharing partnerships. First, having a consistent facilitator helped keep all parties moving forward despite other organizational priorities and scheduling conflicts. For example, the facilitator could serve as a liaison to all parties, schedule meetings of the group, and distribute meeting notes and updated specifications after each discussion. Second, although staff from Georgia contributed specific data expertise, one point of contact from each agency was designated to lead communications and organize schedules. When staff availability shifted, new points of contact were quickly identified by all parties.

Third, every party potentially benefited from the data sharing, and well-defined goals helped

keep each agency involved in working through the many challenges. Each agency was critical to the success of this data sharing and data linking effort; as key stakeholders they also identified research questions of interest. Georgia expressed interest in learning more about its profiling model, as well as about time lags between separation and receipt of UCX benefits and workforce services. These topics were incorporated into the evaluation's research questions; findings are described in Section III of this report.

OEMA plans to use the merged data to conduct additional analyses. OEMA's primary areas of interest for these analyses include:

- Building a predictive model of veterans' employment and unemployment experiences after separation. Specifically:
 - What are the predictors of short-term unemployment that may indicate the veteran is successfully navigating the civilian labor market and identifying good, long-term employment matches?
 - What are the predictors of long-term unemployment that may indicate the veteran is not successfully navigating the civilian labor market, is not effectively translating military skills to civilian occupations, and is instead making bad employment matches?
 - What are the appropriate cut-points to use in this model?
- How do changes to employment programs affect veterans' employment and unemployment? (For example, what is the impact of a program eligibility change on veteran employment outcomes?)

OEMA also is interested in building an analytic framework to illustrate what it can learn about veterans' long-term employment and unemployment after separation, as it works to replicate this data-sharing approach in other states.

In sum, this collaborative effort between the various agencies represented a unique opportunity to answer research questions that could be addressed only by merging state and military data, such as the extent to which veterans who were deployed for different lengths of time obtained employment in the civilian labor market in Georgia after separation.

ENDNOTES

¹The count of people separated from the Army with an attachment to Georgia during the initiative period was calculated using aggregate counts of Army separations by month provided by OEMA.

²Another 422 people separated during the analysis period but did not receive UCX or register for workforce services. Of these individuals, 93 received UCX, and 376 registered for workforce services between April 1, 2014, and March 31, 2015; these are not mutually exclusive subsets.

³Although these individuals are required to register for workforce services, 240 were found to have not registered. Of these individuals, 32 registered for workforce services after the analysis time period, between April 1, 2014, and March 31, 2015.

⁴Of the 953 Army veterans who separated from the Army during the restricted period and exhausted their benefits, 173 had either a WPRS claimant score or WPRS cut score of 0. These individuals were excluded from the analysis.

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