

Military Recruitment 2009: Who joined the Army this year?

Approximately one quarter of all military spending goes towards the recruitment and retention of, and wages and benefits for military personnel. In an effort to better understand these expenditures, each year, National Priorities Project (NPP) reports on military recruitment with a focus on active-duty Army recruits.

This report includes analyses of fiscal year 2009 Army recruit characteristics and is accompanied by recruitment data by state, county and ZIP code in the [NPP Federal Priorities Database](#). Data and statistics for FY09 are compared to earlier work done by NPP where relevant. In addition to data obtained from the Army, NPP used ZIP code-level demographic data purchased from Nielson Claritas, a marketing and demographic data company. Population estimates from the US Census Bureau were also used.

To complete this study, NPP filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with the US Army Accessions Command. NPP requested data for every non-prior service, active-duty and reserve Army accession including information on race, ethnicity, gender, age, citizenship, educational attainment, score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) as well as ZIP code. For FY09, NPP received data for 63,661 active-duty recruits.

At the beginning of Fiscal Year 2009, the Army announced that it would require 78,000 new active-duty recruits to meet their needs¹. In March 2009, the recruitment goal was reduced to 71,000 and then in April, it was reduced again to 65,000. This final FY09 recruitment goal was substantially lower than in recent years when the goal was 80,000 recruits. The Army reported exceeding this lowered goal with 70,045 recruits for FY09.

Why did NPP receive data for fewer active-duty recruits for FY09 than reported by the Army? There are at least three factors contributing to the difference between the number reported by the Army and the number of active-duty non-prior service accessions reported by NPP. First, the Army reports the number of “contracts” rather than the number of “accessions.” Contracts are recorded at the time of sign-up whereas accessions are those who actually enlist and report for training. Each year there are individuals who do not end up enlisting despite signing contracts. Second, NPP requests data for “non-prior service” recruits, defined by the Army as individuals that do not have 180 days or more of military service; recruits with prior-service are included in the Army's number. Third, some contracts are signed by individuals in the Delayed-Entry Program (DEP). These individuals sign contracts in one year (counted in the

Army's figure) but accede in another year (at which time they would be captured in NPP's figure).

Recruit Demographics

Of the 63,661 active-duty non-prior service accessions, 62,708 recruits were from addresses in one of the 50 states or District of Columbia. 831 recruits were from US Territories including Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands and others. The remaining 122 recruits were from foreign addresses including military postal addresses. Table 1 shows counties that are rank ordered by the number of FY09 recruits.

Table 1
Number of Recruits by County – Top 100 Counties

Rank	State	County	No. of FY09 Recruits
-		US recruits only	62,708
1	California	Los Angeles County	1,191
2	Arizona	Maricopa County	1,038
3	Texas	Harris County	845
4	Texas	Bexar County	631
5	Illinois	Cook County	606
6	California	San Bernardino County	587
7	California	San Diego County	558
8	Texas	Dallas County	468
9	California	Riverside County	466
10	Texas	Tarrant County	459
11	Florida	Miami-Dade County	442
12	Nevada	Clark County	411
13	California	Sacramento County	400
14	California	Orange County	389
15	Florida	Broward County	331
16	North Carolina	Cumberland County	330
17	Florida	Hillsborough County	328
18	Florida	Orange County	308
19	Washington	Pierce County	284
20	New York	Kings County	282

21	Texas	El Paso County	270
22	Michigan	Wayne County	263
23	Colorado	El Paso County	261
24	Florida	Duval County	259
25	Arizona	Pima County	251
26	New York	Queens County	244
27	Texas	Denton County	230
28	Texas	Bell County	221
29	Ohio	Franklin County	218
29	Washington	King County	218
31	Florida	Palm Beach County	214
32	Hawaii	Honolulu County	211
33	Florida	Pinellas County	207
34	Tennessee	Shelby County	206
35	New York	Suffolk County	204
36	California	Santa Clara County	196
37	California	Fresno County	185
37	Georgia	Fulton County	185
39	California	Kern County	184
39	New York	Bronx County	184
41	Utah	Salt Lake County	175
42	Pennsylvania	Allegheny County	174
43	Texas	Collin County	171
44	Florida	Brevard County	170
45	New York	Monroe County	163
46	Georgia	Gwinnett County	162
47	Michigan	Oakland County	161
48	Nevada	Washoe County	159
49	Massachusetts	Middlesex County	158
49	South Carolina	Richland County	158
51	Indiana	Marion County	153
51	Washington	Snohomish County	153
53	Florida	Volusia County	152
53	Virginia	Virginia Beach city ^a	152
55	North Carolina	Wake County	151
56	California	San Joaquin County	149

56	Texas	Travis County	149
58	Ohio	Cuyahoga County	148
59	California	Stanislaus County	147
60	New Mexico	Bernalillo County	146
61	California	Contra Costa County	145
61	Michigan	Macomb County	145
63	Florida	Lee County	144
63	Georgia	Muscogee County	144
63	North Carolina	Mecklenburg County	144
63	Ohio	Montgomery County	144
67	New York	Erie County	143
67	Virginia	Fairfax County	143
69	Georgia	DeKalb County	142
69	Wisconsin	Milwaukee County	142
71	Georgia	Cobb County	141
72	California	Ventura County	139
72	Florida	Pasco County	139
74	Maryland	Prince George's County	138
75	Florida	Escambia County	136
76	Texas	Montgomery County	130
77	Oklahoma	Oklahoma County	128
78	Alabama	Jefferson County	125
78	Ohio	Hamilton County	125
80	Florida	Polk County	124
80	Minnesota	Hennepin County	124
80	Oklahoma	Tulsa County	124
80	Texas	Cameron County	124
80	Washington	Clark County	124
85	California	Alameda County	122
85	Kansas	Sedgwick County	122
87	Alabama	Mobile County	120
87	Texas	Hidalgo County	120
89	Massachusetts	Worcester County	119
89	Oregon	Washington County	119
89	Washington	Thurston County	119
92	Michigan	Kent County	117

93	Tennessee	Montgomery County	116
94	California	Placer County	115
94	Washington	Spokane County	115
96	Maryland	Baltimore County	112
96	New York	Nassau County	112
96	South Carolina	Greenville County	112
99	California	Solano County	111
99	Missouri	Jackson County	111
99	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia County	111
99	Virginia	Norfolk city ^a	111

^a Virginia is divided into counties and independent cities. The latter are county equivalents for Census purposes and also for this analysis.

Most FY09 recruits were male (84.4%; female: 15.6%) and 10.9% identified their ethnicity as Hispanic. Note that Hispanic ethnicity is not considered a race by either the Army Recruiting Command or the US Census Bureau. A recruit can belong to a race group as well as an ethnicity group. In FY09, 78.1% of recruits identified their race as white, 17.2% as black, 3.8% as Asian or Pacific Islander and 0.9% as Native. The average age of FY09 recruits was 21.9 years. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of recruits for the fiscal years 2005-2009.

Table 2

Recruit Demographics

Year	Race					Ethnicity		Sex	
	Black	White	Asian/PI	Native	Other	Hispanic	Age (yrs)	Male	Female
FY05	15.0%	80.4%	3.4%	1.2%	0.0%	11.8%			
FY06	14.4%	80.4%	3.5%	1.1%	0.5%	11.1%			
FY07	14.9%	80.8%	3.2%	1.0%	0.1%	10.7%		83.6%	16.4%
FY08	16.6%	79.2%	3.3%	1.0%	0.0%	10.9%	21.7	83.8%	16.2%
FY09	17.2%	78.1%	3.8%	0.9%	0.0%	10.9%	21.9	84.4%	15.6%

Note. In FY08, age as of the start of FY08 was computed using the date of birth. In FY09, the age was provided but not the date of birth.

Waivers

Waivers are necessary for recruits who do not meet Army requirements. Any evidence of criminal history may require “moral” or conduct waivers while health issues may require medical waivers for enlistment. The obesity epidemic represents one problem faced by recruiters. “Too Fat to Fight,” a report released by the organization *Mission: Readiness*, comprised of retired senior military leaders, showed that 27% of all 17-24 year old Americans are too heavy by Army recruitment standards². Their report also noted that another 10% of this age group do not meet Army standards because of criminal records. Indeed, the number of waivers for recruits with a criminal history increased from 4,918 in 2003 to 8,129 in 2006 according to a report by the *New York Times*³.

NPP filed a FOIA requesting waivers for non-prior service recruits for the fiscal years 2005-2009 (inclusive). We received information for 2008 and 2009 only. The data we received distinguished among four types of waivers: medical (e.g., previous corrective surgery), drug and alcohol (e.g., positive test for alcohol, marijuana, or cocaine during military entrance processing), conduct (e.g., assault, multiple traffic infractions) and administrative waivers (e.g., married with three or more children). Table 3 shows the number and type of waivers for fiscal years 2008-2009.

Table 3

Military Waivers

Year	Total Waivers	Medical	Drug & Alcohol	Conduct	Administrative	Proportion of recruits receiving ≥ 1 waivers
FY08	17,886	5,434	1,154	8,089	3,209	23.0%
FY09	13,465	5,020	324	5,478	2,643	19.3%

Educational Attainment

A high school diploma is a key indicator of future success in and commitment to the military. Indeed, the Department of Defense (DoD) states that “more than 40 years of research” show that approximately 80% of those with regular high school diplomas will finish the first term of enlistment⁴. Up to half of those with a GED, other alternative equivalency credential or no credential will drop out. Having a regular high school diploma is the single best predictor of successful completion of a first term of enlistment.

Because this indicator is so important, the DoD has set a goal that 90% of new recruits have a regular high school diploma or better. The DoD classifies military recruits into “Tiers” according to their educational attainment. Tier 1 recruits are those with at least a regular high school diploma. The proportion of Tier 1 recruits with a high school diploma in FY09 was 84.9% making this the fifth consecutive year that the Army has missed this DoD benchmark for educational attainment.

States with the lowest proportion of Tier 1 recruits in FY09 were Alaska with 71.4%, Montana with 76.5% and Rhode Island with 78.2%. States with the highest proportion of Tier 1 recruits were Vermont with 94.3%, District of Columbia with 93.2% and Nebraska with 92.9%. Refer to Table 4 for the proportion of Tier 1 recruits by state for the last three fiscal years.

Table 4

Proportion of Tier 1 Recruits (Regular High School Diploma or better)

FY09 Tier 1			Tier 1 Proportions		
Rank	State	No. of FY09 Recruits	FY09	FY08	FY07
-	All recruits	63,661	84.9%	73.4%	70.7%
-	US recruits only	62,708	84.8%	73.8%	70.4%
39	Alabama	1,451	81.7%	68.6%	62.3%
51	Alaska	178	71.4%	65.1%	65.3%
31	Arizona	1,803	83.9%	69.4%	68.8%
44	Arkansas	652	79.3%	63.7%	59.9%
16	California	6,330	86.5%	75.6%	73.3%
35	Colorado	1,074	82.4%	69.6%	69.3%
4	Connecticut	402	91.0%	82.5%	78.6%
5	Delaware	131	90.8%	81.5%	76.3%
	District of				
2	Columbia	52	93.2%	67.5%	79.5%
34	Florida	4,617	82.7%	69.0%	66.1%
36	Georgia	2,810	82.1%	69.1%	64.6%
14	Hawaii	267	87.6%	79.6%	78.3%
42	Idaho	441	80.3%	67.5%	64.8%
20	Illinois	2,007	85.8%	77.1%	72.6%
46	Indiana	1,336	78.7%	67.9%	64.8%
12	Iowa	529	87.9%	79.4%	77.8%
30	Kansas	652	84.1%	73.6%	72.8%
28	Kentucky	809	84.3%	73.2%	71.8%

37	Louisiana	799	82.0%	68.7%	64.6%
23	Maine	354	85.0%	72.4%	71.9%
22	Maryland	920	85.4%	77.6%	69.4%
9	Massachusetts	844	88.2%	77.2%	76.8%
24	Michigan	1,976	85.0%	73.0%	69.3%
8	Minnesota	730	89.7%	81.7%	79.8%
41	Mississippi	607	80.7%	64.2%	59.2%
27	Missouri	1,300	84.7%	75.0%	73.7%
50	Montana	281	76.5%	65.4%	58.2%
3	Nebraska	367	92.9%	82.1%	80.6%
40	Nevada	706	80.7%	59.7%	54.1%
18	New Hampshire	278	86.3%	70.6%	75.4%
13	New Jersey	1,044	87.8%	80.4%	78.3%
38	New Mexico	455	81.8%	72.3%	72.6%
21	New York	2,646	85.5%	73.6%	67.7%
10	North Carolina	2,483	88.1%	79.0%	76.6%
6	North Dakota	87	90.8%	71.4%	66.7%
11	Ohio	2,375	87.9%	78.2%	74.9%
43	Oklahoma	876	79.5%	70.8%	65.8%
47	Oregon	932	78.7%	65.6%	62.3%
19	Pennsylvania	1,947	86.1%	76.5%	75.2%
49	Rhode Island	147	78.2%	62.3%	63.8%
26	South Carolina	1,223	84.9%	73.2%	70.4%
17	South Dakota	148	86.5%	81.5%	75.4%
29	Tennessee	1,443	84.1%	70.6%	65.1%
15	Texas	6,621	87.3%	77.7%	75.0%
32	Utah	550	83.5%	69.2%	62.6%
1	Vermont	88	94.3%	81.9%	80.8%
25	Virginia	1,998	84.9%	71.8%	66.9%
45	Washington	1,478	79.0%	67.8%	65.1%
48	West Virginia	332	78.3%	69.0%	66.5%
7	Wisconsin	994	90.0%	81.2%	77.7%
33	Wyoming	138	83.3%	59.3%	66.9%

Educational Attainment and Enlistment Bonuses

Because the Army has continued to miss its education benchmarks, enlistment bonuses for

recruits that have high school diplomas or better have been retained for FY09 whereas other enlistment bonus programs have been reduced or cut for the fiscal year. The Pentagon is also offering non-cash incentives, such as college loan repayment programs, designed to reduce enlistment costs while still incentivizing educational achievement among new recruits.

In FY09, incentives for shipping to boot camp within 30 days of enlistment were reduced, and bonuses for recruits who enlisted for two years of active duty were eliminated⁵. The average bonus amount for non-prior service recruits dropped from \$18,300 in FY08 to \$13,300 in FY09 and are expected to decline further in FY10 with deeper cuts to bonus amounts and programs⁶.

Armed Forces Qualification Test

The performance of each recruit on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) is reported as a percentile between 1-99 and indicates the percentage of reference group exam takers that scored at or below a given score. The reference group was a sample of 18-23 year olds who took the exam as part of a norming study.

The Army uses the AFQT percentile scores as an indication of recruit trainability. Recruits with scores in Test Score Categories (TSC) I (AFQT percentiles 93-99) and II (65-92) are considered to be above average in trainability; those with scores in TSCs IIIA (50-64) and IIIB (31-49) are considered of average trainability; those with scores in Category IV (10-30) are considered of below average trainability; and, those with scores in Category V (0-9) are considered of markedly below average trainability and are typically not enlisted.

Until 2006, the DoD's goal was a minimum of 67% of recruits testing at least in the 50th percentile of the AFQT, with scores falling into TSCs I – IIIA (50-99) and indicating average to above average trainability. That goal has since been lowered to 60% of recruits in these categories. The Army met their current standard with 66.4% of recruits in FY09 scoring in categories I – IIIA and in FY08 with 62.0% of recruits meeting these scoring standards.

The DoD has also attempted to cap TSC IV (10-30) recruits, those considered of below average trainability, to less than 2% of all new recruits. Recently the cap was raised to 4%. Historically, meeting this raised cap has not been a problem, but in FY05-FY07, the proportion of TSC IV recruits was greater than 4%. In FY08, the proportion of TSC IV recruits was 3.5%. In FY09, we found that only 1.5% of recruits were considered of below average trainability, meeting both the

current and former standards. Table 5 shows the proportion of recruits in test score categories for fiscal years 2008-2009.

Table 5

Proportion of Recruits in AFQT Test Score Categories (TSC)

State	FY09		FY08	
	TSC IIIA	TSC IV	TSC IIIA	TSC IV
All recruits	66.4%	1.5%	62.0%	3.5%
US recruits only	67.0%	1.3%	62.6%	3.2%
Alabama	62.9%	1.3%	60.3%	2.4%
Alaska	78.1%	0.0%	66.5%	2.8%
Arizona	69.6%	1.2%	66.1%	2.6%
Arkansas	61.5%	1.5%	62.3%	3.5%
California	63.9%	2.0%	61.1%	4.5%
Colorado	74.4%	1.0%	68.5%	2.7%
Connecticut	66.9%	0.5%	60.3%	4.1%
Delaware	64.9%	3.1%	70.5%	1.4%
District of Columbia	57.7%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Florida	68.2%	0.8%	63.6%	2.3%
Georgia	62.7%	1.3%	58.4%	2.3%
Hawaii	55.1%	5.2%	46.9%	9.6%
Idaho	75.3%	0.2%	72.6%	0.7%
Illinois	66.4%	1.4%	61.5%	3.7%
Indiana	74.1%	1.0%	70.5%	1.5%
Iowa	75.4%	0.9%	63.9%	3.9%
Kansas	74.2%	0.5%	65.3%	3.3%
Kentucky	64.4%	0.6%	61.8%	2.7%
Louisiana	56.3%	1.9%	53.1%	4.6%
Maine	69.8%	0.8%	64.8%	2.4%
Maryland	63.4%	1.0%	61.1%	3.0%
Massachusetts	66.6%	2.7%	62.5%	5.2%
Michigan	69.8%	0.9%	62.1%	4.1%
Minnesota	72.1%	1.5%	71.8%	2.7%
Mississippi	55.4%	1.2%	53.8%	4.8%
Missouri	66.7%	1.4%	62.7%	4.3%

Montana	77.9%	0.7%	65.7%	1.7%
Nebraska	69.2%	2.2%	69.2%	2.1%
Nevada	69.7%	1.1%	63.6%	2.6%
New Hampshire	73.0%	0.7%	67.5%	3.6%
New Jersey	64.8%	1.5%	56.6%	5.3%
New Mexico	65.3%	1.5%	59.1%	2.7%
New York	67.2%	1.5%	60.8%	3.8%
North Carolina	63.6%	1.2%	61.7%	2.9%
North Dakota	72.4%	1.1%	80.4%	1.8%
Ohio	69.3%	1.6%	64.5%	2.5%
Oklahoma	63.9%	1.3%	60.3%	4.0%
Oregon	74.8%	1.4%	69.9%	2.3%
Pennsylvania	71.3%	1.1%	65.5%	3.0%
Rhode Island	65.3%	2.7%	64.9%	2.0%
South Carolina	61.9%	0.7%	56.2%	3.9%
South Dakota	68.9%	2.0%	64.8%	5.6%
Tennessee	68.2%	0.6%	63.2%	2.3%
Texas	64.6%	1.4%	61.8%	3.3%
Utah	72.2%	1.8%	66.2%	1.8%
Vermont	76.1%	1.1%	71.6%	0.9%
Virginia	67.8%	1.6%	61.2%	2.9%
Washington	74.3%	0.8%	69.7%	1.4%
West Virginia	65.7%	0.3%	57.1%	3.1%
Wisconsin	71.5%	0.9%	68.7%	2.7%
Wyoming	71.7%	0.0%	70.4%	2.2%

Note. TSC IIIA represents AFQT test scores ranging from 50-99, and the Army's goal is for at least 60% of its recruits to score in this range. TSC IV represents AFQT scores from 10-30, and the Army's goal is for 4% or less of its recruits to score in this range. The Army typically does not enlist those scoring below the 10th percentile on the AFQT.

“High Quality” Recruits

The Department of Defense defines a “high quality” recruit based on a combination of educational attainment and AFQT score. A “high quality” recruit is one who scores at or above the 50th percentile on the AFQT (Categories I – IIIA) and who is Tier 1 (has a regular high school diploma or better). The DoD strives to have all recruits be “high quality” as these recruits will be

more likely to complete contracted enlistment terms and perform better during training and on the job.

The proportion of recruits considered “high quality” dropped from 56.2% in FY05 to 44.9% in FY07. In FY08, the proportion of “high quality” recruits increased to 45.9% and in FY09, 54.1% of recruits were considered “high quality.”

States with the lowest proportion of “high quality” recruits in FY09 were Mississippi with 40.4%, Louisiana with 42.7% and Arkansas with 44.3%. States with the highest proportion of “high quality” recruits were Vermont with 70.5%, North Dakota with 64.4% and Iowa with 63.7%. Refer to Table 6 for the proportion of “high quality” recruits by state for the last three fiscal years.

Table 6

Proportion of High Quality Recruits (AFQT ≥ 50 and Tier 1)

FY09 High Quality Rank	State	No. of FY09 Recruits	High Quality Proportions		
			FY09	FY08	FY07
-	All recruits	63,661			
-	US recruits only	62,708	54.1%	45.9%	44.9%
46	Alabama	1,451	47.6%	40.5%	36.7%
36	Alaska	178	52.8%	44.2%	46.0%
27	Arizona	1,803	55.6%	45.8%	45.8%
49	Arkansas	652	44.3%	38.6%	35.5%
38	California	6,330	52.3%	44.9%	44.7%
12	Colorado	1,074	59.0%	48.2%	51.8%
10	Connecticut	402	59.2%	50.0%	51.4%
13	Delaware	131	58.8%	59.6%	39.2%
40	District of Columbia	52	51.9%	30.0%	46.2%
34	Florida	4,617	53.3%	43.8%	41.5%
44	Georgia	2,810	48.5%	39.4%	38.9%
48	Hawaii	267	44.9%	38.1%	43.4%
15	Idaho	441	58.5%	50.0%	47.6%
28	Illinois	2,007	54.7%	47.0%	47.8%
23	Indiana	1,336	55.8%	48.7%	46.2%
3	Iowa	529	63.7%	51.9%	51.3%
8	Kansas	652	60.1%	48.8%	49.4%
39	Kentucky	809	52.0%	45.5%	45.0%

50	Louisiana	799	42.7%	36.6%	33.3%
18	Maine	354	57.1%	46.1%	50.3%
37	Maryland	920	52.4%	48.2%	40.9%
19	Massachusetts	844	56.6%	48.8%	51.1%
20	Michigan	1,976	56.5%	45.5%	45.8%
4	Minnesota	730	62.9%	58.7%	55.8%
51	Mississippi	607	40.4%	34.1%	31.6%
33	Missouri	1,300	53.3%	46.4%	45.5%
16	Montana	281	58.0%	46.5%	41.2%
5	Nebraska	367	62.7%	57.5%	51.6%
35	Nevada	706	53.0%	38.9%	33.6%
7	New Hampshire	278	61.9%	46.4%	55.2%
29	New Jersey	1,044	54.5%	45.7%	45.2%
41	New Mexico	455	50.8%	41.9%	41.5%
22	New York	2,646	56.0%	45.7%	42.7%
32	North Carolina	2,483	53.4%	48.8%	47.8%
2	North Dakota	87	64.4%	60.7%	53.6%
11	Ohio	2,375	59.1%	51.3%	51.2%
45	Oklahoma	876	48.4%	43.2%	40.8%
24	Oregon	932	55.7%	46.4%	43.6%
9	Pennsylvania	1,947	59.4%	50.0%	50.2%
47	Rhode Island	147	46.3%	39.7%	43.8%
42	South Carolina	1,223	48.9%	38.0%	40.2%
21	South Dakota	148	56.1%	53.7%	54.4%
30	Tennessee	1,443	54.4%	45.2%	43.9%
31	Texas	6,621	53.7%	48.1%	46.3%
17	Utah	550	58.0%	47.0%	41.1%
1	Vermont	88	70.5%	61.2%	53.4%
26	Virginia	1,998	55.7%	44.6%	42.3%
25	Washington	1,478	55.7%	47.6%	45.9%
43	West Virginia	332	48.8%	41.7%	44.1%
6	Wisconsin	994	62.4%	56.0%	52.1%
14	Wyoming	138	58.7%	40.7%	48.2%

Overall Recruitment Rates

While the number of recruits coming from any one location is useful information, that number

alone fails to provide a complete picture of recruitment. Consider that in FY09, nearly the same number of recruits came from Nevada (706) and Minnesota (730). We might conclude that Nevada and Minnesota contribute equally to Army recruitment efforts. However, if we compute a recruitment rate, or the number of recruits per 1000 youth ages 15-24 (the population subgroup from which a majority of recruits come), we find that Nevada's recruitment rate (2.21) is more than twice that of Minnesota (1.00). This means that while Nevada and Minnesota had a similar number of recruits, there were twice as many recruits from Nevada as from Minnesota given the youth population of each state.

NPP calculated recruitment rates, the number of recruits per 1000 youth ages 15-24, for the US as a whole as well as by region, state, and county (*NB*: counties must have at least 5 recruits for a recruitment rate to be computed). In FY09, the overall US recruitment rate was 1.47 active-duty recruits per 1000 youth, down from FY08 when it was 1.60. The South continues to have the highest recruitment rate while the Northeast has the lowest. Refer to Table 7 for regional recruitment rates.

Table 7

Regional Recruitment Rates

Region	FY09	FY08	FY07	FY06
Northeast	1.01	1.09	1.08	1.13
Midwest	1.33	1.45	1.52	1.64
South	1.81	2.06	1.99	1.99
West	1.44	1.43	1.33	1.44

Notes. Recruitment rates are total recruits per 1000 15-24 youth for a given area. Regions are defined by the U.S. Census.

Table 8 ranks states by their recruitment rate in FY09 and includes FY07 and FY08 rates as well. Table 9 ranks counties by FY09 recruitment rates. To learn the recruitment rate of counties not appearing in Table 9, refer to the [NPP Federal Priorities Database](#).

Table 8

State Level Recruitment Rates

FY09 Recruitment		Recruits per 1000 youth		
Rate Rank	State	FY09	FY08	FY07
	US recruits only	1.47	1.6	1.59
1	Alabama	2.24	2.53	2.51

19	Alaska	1.67	2.01	2.10
6	Arizona	2.06	2.31	1.90
16	Arkansas	1.70	1.96	2.30
39	California	1.15	1.11	1.07
20	Colorado	1.62	1.58	1.56
49	Connecticut	0.85	0.82	0.77
41	Delaware	1.09	1.21	0.82
51	District of Columbia	0.55	0.43	0.43
8	Florida	2.00	2.22	2.09
4	Georgia	2.10	2.35	2.05
25	Hawaii	1.54	1.50	1.72
7	Idaho	2.05	2.07	1.79
42	Illinois	1.08	1.20	1.32
26	Indiana	1.52	1.72	1.55
35	Iowa	1.22	1.36	1.37
23	Kansas	1.59	1.68	1.95
29	Kentucky	1.46	1.66	1.77
37	Louisiana	1.20	1.40	1.49
3	Maine	2.13	2.20	2.34
38	Maryland	1.17	1.21	1.17
48	Massachusetts	0.91	0.96	0.86
31	Michigan	1.39	1.52	1.60
44	Minnesota	1.00	1.00	0.90
32	Mississippi	1.39	1.57	1.33
21	Missouri	1.60	1.92	2.02
5	Montana	2.07	2.10	2.37
30	Nebraska	1.40	1.46	1.55
2	Nevada	2.21	2.43	2.13
22	New Hampshire	1.59	1.43	1.39
47	New Jersey	0.92	0.88	0.83
24	New Mexico	1.58	1.81	1.59
45	New York	0.94	1.06	1.1

9	North Carolina	1.98	2.15	2.13
50	North Dakota	0.80	0.51	0.64
27	Ohio	1.51	1.60	1.61
17	Oklahoma	1.68	1.92	2.32
11	Oregon	1.90	1.77	1.75
40	Pennsylvania	1.13	1.26	1.28
46	Rhode Island	0.94	0.95	1.00
10	South Carolina	1.96	2.24	2.12
33	South Dakota	1.26	1.38	1.17
15	Tennessee	1.79	1.86	1.70
12	Texas	1.88	2.31	2.25
36	Utah	1.21	1.09	0.73
43	Vermont	1.01	1.32	0.82
13	Virginia	1.85	1.95	1.83
18	Washington	1.67	1.56	1.44
28	West Virginia	1.46	1.95	1.97
34	Wisconsin	1.26	1.31	1.66
14	Wyoming	1.81	1.79	1.81

Note. Recruitment rates are total recruits per 1000 15-24 youth for a given area.

Table 9

County Level Recruitment Rate – Top 100 Counties

FY09 Recruitment		FY09 Recruits per		No. of FY09
Rate Rank	State	County	1000 Youth	Recruits
-	US Recruits Only		1.47	62,708
1	Texas	Somervell County	9.61	11
2	Alabama	Coffee County	9.23	55
3	Georgia	Liberty County	8.45	81
4	Georgia	Lanier County	8.19	9
5	Vermont	Essex County	7.74	6
6	Michigan	Ontonagon County	7.47	5
7	Kentucky	Meade County	7.39	25
8	Nebraska	Howard County	6.91	6

9	Georgia	Clinch County	6.88	6
10	Illinois	Alexander County	6.70	7
11	Florida	Dixie County	6.66	11
12	Iowa	Monroe County	6.64	6
13	Kansas	Geary County	6.63	29
14	North Carolina	Pasquotank County	6.49	46
15	Texas	Sabine County	6.48	7
16	North Carolina	Cumberland County	6.23	330
17	Virginia	Petersburg city ^a	6.15	27
18	Nevada	Churchill County	6.06	19
19	Texas	McCulloch County	6.05	6
20	Illinois	Pike County	5.97	12
21	Virginia	Colonial Heights city ^a	5.90	13
21	Kentucky	Trigg County	5.90	9
23	Missouri	St. Clair County	5.76	6
24	Alabama	Coosa County	5.75	7
25	Georgia	Turner County	5.71	7
26	Georgia	Taylor County	5.60	7
27	Texas	Bell County	5.59	221
28	Pennsylvania	Sullivan County	5.53	5
29	New Hampshire	Coos County	5.44	19
30	Missouri	Madison County	5.41	8
30	Texas	Rains County	5.41	7
32	Nevada	Humboldt County	5.38	14
32	Washington	Ferry County	5.38	6
34	Mississippi	Tishomingo County	5.34	11
35	Kansas	Cherokee County	5.33	15
36	Tennessee	Stewart County	5.29	8
37	Georgia	Muscogee County	5.24	144
37	North Carolina	Perquimans County	5.24	8
39	Arkansas	Lafayette County	5.17	5
40	Texas	Lampasas County	5.14	14
41	Tennessee	Montgomery County	5.13	116
42	Texas	Bosque County	5.12	11
43	Texas	Moore County	5.07	15
44	Maine	Sagadahoc County	5.00	21
45	Iowa	Hancock County	4.99	7

46	Texas	Morris County	4.88	8
47	Georgia	Berrien County	4.85	11
48	Wisconsin	Vilas County	4.83	11
49	Arizona	Greenlee County	4.79	6
50	Texas	Brown County	4.75	27
51	Florida	Putnam County	4.74	43
52	Iowa	Lucas County	4.73	5
53	Alabama	Dale County	4.67	29
54	Virginia	Amelia County	4.63	7
55	Arkansas	Boone County	4.62	19
55	Texas	Franklin County	4.62	6
57	North Carolina	Hoke County	4.56	27
58	Alabama	Covington County	4.54	20
59	Oregon	Klamath County	4.53	41
60	Virginia	Falls Church city	4.51	6
61	Illinois	Crawford County	4.47	12
62	Michigan	Alcona County	4.46	5
63	Texas	Marion County	4.45	5
64	Kentucky	Hardin County	4.43	64
65	Michigan	Roscommon County	4.40	12
66	Missouri	Howell County	4.37	21
66	Georgia	McDuffie County	4.37	13
66	West Virginia	Grant County	4.37	5
69	Georgia	Putnam County	4.34	10
70	North Carolina	Gates County	4.32	7
71	Oregon	Coos County	4.31	32
72	North Carolina	Warren County	4.30	11
73	Alabama	Houston County	4.29	52
73	Tennessee	Monroe County	4.29	23
75	Missouri	Caldwell County	4.28	5
76	Oklahoma	Comanche County	4.27	85
77	Arkansas	Sharp County	4.26	8
78	Arizona	Cochise County	4.24	80
78	Georgia	Thomas County	4.24	26
78	Michigan	Charlevoix County	4.24	13
81	Washington	Cowlitz County	4.23	56
81	Oklahoma	McIntosh County	4.23	10

83	North Carolina	Moore County	4.21	41
83	Georgia	Gilmer County	4.21	13
85	Montana	Roosevelt County	4.19	7
86	Maine	Piscataquis County	4.18	8
87	Missouri	Pulaski County	4.14	47
87	Alabama	Autauga County	4.14	28
87	Ohio	Adams County	4.14	14
90	Missouri	Cedar County	4.12	7
91	Virginia	Nottoway County	4.10	8
92	Missouri	New Madrid County	4.09	9
93	Nevada	Douglas County	4.07	22
93	North Carolina	Currituck County	4.07	12
93	Michigan	Antrim County	4.07	11
96	Minnesota	Mille Lacs County	4.06	13
97	Georgia	Bryan County	4.05	18
98	Alabama	Russell County	4.04	26
98	Michigan	Iosco County	4.04	12
98	Kentucky	Simpson County	4.04	8
98	Florida	Calhoun County	4.04	7
102	Kentucky	Harrison County	4.03	9

Note. Recruitment rates are total recruits per 1000 15-24 youth for a given area. Counties must have at least 5 recruits for this analysis.

^a Virginia is divided into counties and independent cities. The latter are county equivalents for Census purposes and also for this analysis.

Metro/Non-Metro Recruitment Rates

Do the characteristics of recruits coming from more urban or metro areas differ from those of recruits coming from more rural or non-metro areas? To investigate this, we first defined all counties in the United States as either “metro” or “non-metro” according to the USDA Economic Research Service's code for “metro” counties.

Recruitment rates in both metro and non-metro counties, as seen in Table 10, decreased in FY09 relative to FY08 reflecting the lower number of total recruits in FY09. Non-metro recruitment rates for black and white youth declined; rates for Hispanic youth saw a negligible increase. Metro recruitment rates for white and black youth as well as for Hispanic youth dropped in FY09.

Table 10

Recruitment Rates for Metro and Non-Metro Counties

Year	Overall Rates		Race				Ethnicity	
	Metro	Non-Metro	Black		White		Hispanic	
			Metro	Non-Metro	Metro	Non-Metro	Metro	Non-Metro
FY06	1.55	1.99	1.52	1.88	1.63	2.05	0.99	1.15
FY07	1.48	2.07	1.49	1.98	1.56	2.14	0.89	1.19
FY08	1.53	2.02	1.70	2.10	1.58	2.07	0.92	1.02
FY09	1.41	1.91	1.61	2.04	1.43	1.91	0.83	1.03

As in years past (FY06-FY08), a greater proportion of FY09 recruits who identify as white came from non-metro counties (metro: 76.7%; non-metro: 84.7%) whereas a greater proportion of recruits identifying as black (metro: 18.6%; non-metro: 12.3%) or of Hispanic ethnicity (metro: 11.5%; non-metro: 4.5%) came from metro counties.

Recruit Zip Code Income

What is the socioeconomic background of Army recruits? To address this question, we examined the distribution of recruits across a range of median household incomes (MHI). The graph in Figure 1 below shows the proportion of active-duty Army recruits in 2007, 2008 and 2009 according to the median household income of their ZIP code. (Data are not available for the individual recruit's household income.)

Each income bracket, or decile, on the horizontal x-axis represents 10% of the youth population, ages 18-24. For example, the first decile indicates that 10% of **all** youth ages 18-24 live in zip codes with a median household income between \$0 and \$31,623. The bars show the percentage of **recruits** who come from those same income brackets. If the distribution of recruits was the same as the underlying distribution of youth across median household incomes, each bar would represent 10% of recruits.



Figure 1. Proportion of FY09 active-duty Army recruits per income decile.

In fact, the distribution of recruits differs from the youth population as a whole with fewer recruits coming from the lowest two and highest two deciles of median household income. Youth living in the wealthiest 20% of the income distribution are under-represented among new active-duty Army recruits, but that under-representation decreased in FY09. Youth from the lowest 20% of the income distribution are also under-represented among new army recruits, more so in 2009 than prior years. For FY09, there has been slight upwards shift of recruit representation along the income distribution, and youth from middle decile incomes are over-represented among 2009 Army recruits.

To put the income distribution in perspective, note that the median household income for the US as a whole was \$49,777 in 2009. For a family of four, the 150% poverty guideline in 2009 was \$33,075. This guideline is used to determine eligibility for benefits for some government assistance programs (e.g., Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) Program).

Military Recruitment and Unemployment

One assumption embedded in this year's recruitment efforts concerns the role of the economy. Many stories have been written about recruitment being relatively easier and the quality of recruits being better as a function of increased unemployment. Indeed, in the DoD's press conference discussing their FY09 efforts, they too suggested that unemployment plays a role in their ability to identify recruits⁷.

To explore the role of unemployment in this year's Army recruitment efforts, NPP used the Bureau of Labor Statistics state-level unemployment measures looking at both the traditional measure of unemployment (U-3) and a broader measure of unemployment (U-6) which additionally includes people who want work but have given up searching and people who are working part-time but want full-time work.

We found no significant relationship between the traditional measure of unemployment (U-3) and recruitment rates. Using the broader definition of unemployment (U-6), we found a significant relationship ($r=.31$, $p<.05$) between this and the total recruitment rate. This means that recruitment rates were higher where broadly-defined unemployment was greater.

Was this the case for all Army recruits? Further analysis showed that recruitment rates correlated with higher traditional unemployment rates (U-3) for those recruits identifying as white ($r=.30$, $p<.05$) but not for those who identified as black ($r=.06$, $p>.05$) or as Hispanic ($r=-.08$, $p>.05$). This means that recruitment rates for recruits identifying as white are higher in states with higher unemployment rates. This same pattern was seen when using the broader measure of unemployment (U-6) as well.

We also looked at the relationship of unemployment with the quality of the recruits. There was a negative correlation between unemployment and the proportion of Tier 1 recruits (those with a high school diploma or better and an AFQT score ≥ 50 ; $r=-.33$, $p<.05$). The correlation of Tier 1 recruits with broadly-defined unemployment also trended in the same direction ($r=-.27$, $p=.06$). This suggests that states with higher unemployment rates supply lower proportions of recruits who are considered high quality.

In short, while there appears to be some relationship between unemployment and recruitment, it is neither direct nor simple as one might assume. Broader measures of unemployment (U-6) rather than the traditional measure of unemployment (U-3) appear to be related to recruitment rates, at least for recruits who identify as white. And while there has been some suggestion that the recession has improved the quality of recruits entering military service and we found

that quality measures were improved this year for Army recruits, the quality of the recruit appears to be inversely related to measures of unemployment with lower proportions of high quality recruits coming from states with higher unemployment.

Summary

Fiscal Year 2009 finds the fewest active-Army recruits since NPP began its analysis in 2004. While there were fewer recruits, those recruits better met military quality benchmarks. There were more recruits with high school diplomas or better, and AFQT scores were higher overall. In turn, there were more recruits considered “high quality.”

Recruitment rates were lower than past years which follows from the lower number of total recruits. This was true for all regions of the United States, with more recruits coming from non-metro (rural) counties than metro (urban) counties. The South continues to provide the most Army recruits.

Most recruits come from middle-income zip codes. The lowest and highest incomes remain under-represented by Army recruits. Also, NPP did not find that the recession and its high rates of unemployment led to more Army recruits of higher quality. Our analysis is specific to Army recruitment and may not generalize to all branches of the military. It also remains to be seen whether these unemployment findings are replicated in FY10.

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