

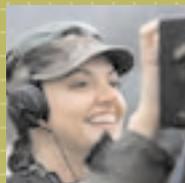
OVERVIEW REPORT

DECEMBER 2010

2010



8th VMFA 2010 Youth Poll & Report



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September 2011

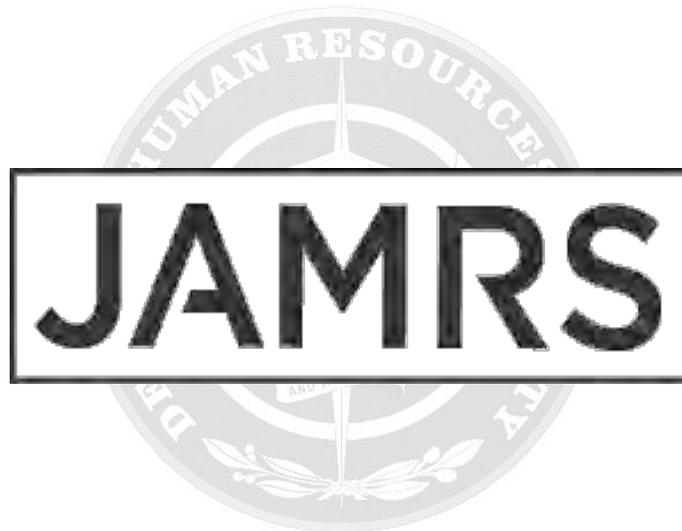
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
YOUTH POLL WAVE 20 – DECEMBER 2010

OVERVIEW REPORT

Prepared by:

Ricardo S. Carvalho, Caitlin M. Krulikowski, Sean M. Marsh, Ph.D.
Fors Marsh Group

Andrea B. Zucker and Katherine Helland, Ph.D.
Defense Human Resources Activity



Department of Defense
Defense Human Resources Activity
Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies
4800 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22350-4000

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Executive Summary

For over three decades, the Department of Defense (DoD) has regularly surveyed youth ages 16 to 21 about their attitudes toward the Military and their interest in military enlistment. DoD Youth Polls, which are conducted twice a year, are a part of that effort and are focused on measuring the likelihood of youth to join the Military and other enlistment-related metrics.

The December 2010 Youth Poll collected information from mail surveys completed by a nationally representative sample of 5,504 youth between the ages of 16 and 21 and an additional 2,286 youth between the ages of 22 and 24. This report details the findings of the December 2010 Youth Poll.

Demographic Profile

The characteristics of the American youth population, the primary recruiting market of the Armed Forces, are always changing. The changes in the demographic profile of America's youth are of special interest to military recruiting officials because they directly impact enlistment.

Educational aspirations of youth have gradually increased over the years, and the vast majority of youth ages 16 to 21 (90%) report that they plan to continue schooling and obtain higher education of one form or another following high school. Consequently, there has been an increase in the number of high school graduates enrolling in colleges and universities. Overall, higher education goals among youth have translated into fewer youth strongly considering military service after high school.

Enlistment is also influenced by the economy and employment options for youth. As of May 2011, unemployment among young people ages 16 to 24 remained high at 16.5%,¹ and results from the December 2010 Youth Poll showed that a majority of youth reported it was impossible or very difficult to find a full-time job in their community. Additional results from the poll showed that just under half of youth believed that the economy would be better in four years.

Additionally, the U.S. veteran population has been decreasing in size. For instance, in 1995, 36.8% of youth ages 16 to 21 had fathers who had served in the U.S. Armed Forces.² As of December 2010, this estimated proportion had dropped to only 16% of youth ages 16 to 21. This decline in the veteran population is noteworthy because former Service men and women have typically had a strong, positive influence on military recruiting.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009). *Labor force statistics from the current population survey*. Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://www.bls.gov/data/home.htm>

² Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center (2000). *Youth attitude tracking study: 1995*. Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center.

Executive Summary

(continued)

Enlistment Propensity

Propensity is defined in the Youth Polls as the proportion of youth who say they will “definitely” or “probably” enter military service in the next few years. This propensity measure has been shown to be a valid indicator of enlistment behavior.^{3 4 5 6} For most youth, propensity for military service is general (i.e., not tied to only one specific Component of the Military), as most youth who are interested in military service cite interest in two or more Services.

Propensity is related to several demographic characteristics. Generally, propensity:

- Is higher for men than women
- Declines with age
- Declines with increasing educational attainment
- Is higher for unemployed than employed youth
- Is highest among Hispanics
- Varies by census division (propensity is relatively high in the South Atlantic, Pacific, Mountain, East South Central, and West South Central divisions and is relatively low in the New England division).

Looking back at data from the Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS), which was conducted from 1975 until 1999, youth propensity for military service dropped following Operation Desert Storm and declined through 1999. Beginning in late 2001, propensity appeared to be on the rise but began to trend downward in 2004. In June 2006, substantial declines in propensity occurred. These strong declines stabilized in June and December 2007. Propensity improved through 2008 and remained stable through December 2010.

It is important to note that these generalizations pertain to propensity for general military service and do not necessarily hold for all racial and ethnic groups or for the different Active Duty Services, Reserve Components, or the National Guard.

³ Orvis, B. R., Sastry, N., & McDonald, L. L. (1996). *Military recruiting outlook: Recent trends in enlistment propensity and conversion of potential enlisted supply* (MR-677-A/OSD). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

⁴ Orvis, B. R., Gahart, M. T., & Ludwig, A. K. (1992). *Validity and usefulness of enlistment intention information* (R-3775-FMP). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

⁵ Ford, M., Griepentrog, B., Helland, K., & Marsh, S. (2009). *The strength and variability of the military propensity-enlistment relationship: Evidence from 1995–2003*. (JAMRS Report No. 2009-005) Arlington, VA: Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies.

⁶ Stone, B. M., Turner, K. L., & Wiggins, V. L. (1993). *Population propensity measurement model: Final analysis report*. Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center.

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The primary goal of the Youth Poll is to provide regular tracking of propensity — the likelihood that youth will join the Military. Chapter 1 covers the approach and methodology used in the December 2010 Youth Poll to track propensity.



Chapter 1

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Tracking youths' interest in military service—or propensity—has been a steady effort by the Department of Defense (DoD) since the mid-1970s; the set of questions asked about youths' future plans has gone relatively unchanged since that time.

Under the current administration's methodology, data is collected twice per year with fielding ending in June and December. A “topline” memorandum provides initial results to the Services and DoD leadership in approximately July and January.

The Youth Polls and their predecessor, the Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS), have provided the Department with information on youth attitudes for over 30 years. Shortly after the termination of the military draft, DoD realized that in order to compete with commercial and educational institutions for youths' attention, it was vital to have ongoing information on youth attitudes. Particularly, DoD sought to survey youth about their future career plans and their views of military service. In 1975, YATS was created to address these needs. Changes were made to the YATS methodology after 1999 so that DoD would receive information more frequently and in a more actionable time frame. These changes resulted in the creation of the Youth Polls.

Historically, the DoD Youth Polls were conducted via random-digit-dial (RDD) telephone interviews. However, increasing pressures on military recruiting have made it necessary to gather more accurate information about the youth market in smaller geographical areas in order to improve the organization and concentration of recruiting efforts. In addition, undercoverage and participation issues have steadily been growing in the RDD landscape and undermine the accuracy, efficiency, and completeness of RDD-based survey data. To address these trends and improve fielding efficiency, JAMRS switched the RDD telephone-based Youth Poll to an Address List Sample (ALS) mail-based survey methodology. The ALS methodology offers several benefits: vastly improved coverage, an extensive list of best practices shown empirically to be effective for increasing response rates, and significant cost savings. In addition, a mail-based methodology facilitates the implementation of token incentives, which can positively affect response rates.¹ The December 2010 Youth Poll marked the inaugural administration of the Youth Poll under the mail-based methodology.

Data collected from Youth Polls have several important applications both within and outside of the Department. Given that Youth Polls are the primary measure of youth propensity for military service, information from Youth Polls is used by each of the Services and by their advertising agencies. Youth Polls are also used by outside organizations to evaluate youth and military recruiting issues. This report is the primary vehicle for disseminating findings from the Youth Polls to non-military audiences.

¹ Dillman, D. (2007). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Overview of the Report

This report provides information on two related aspects of the current recruiting market: demographics of the youth population and propensity for military service. This first chapter describes the methodology and profile of the respondents in the December 2010 Youth Poll. It details the respondents' age, education level, employment status, geographic distribution, and history of family members who have served.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 explores demographic trends that are shaping the recruiting market. It focuses on population trends, high school dropouts, post-secondary education enrollment and cost, employment and earning trends, and the decline of the veteran population.

Chapter 3 provides a description of current youth propensity, correlates of propensity, and historical trends in propensity. This chapter first describes the Youth Poll propensity measures and their validity. It then covers the relationship between propensity and a variety of youth characteristics—gender, age, school status, educational prospects, employment, employment prospects, race/ethnicity, and geographic location.

Methodology

The fielding period for the December 2010 Youth Poll was between September 20, 2010, and January 3, 2011. The questionnaire was administered via paper-and-pencil mail-based surveys. The sample size was 7,790 completed and returned surveys.

The December 2010 Youth Poll pencil-and-paper questionnaire was created using the method set forth in Donald Dillman's *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (2007), which outlines best practices for designing survey questionnaires and participation requests. The December 2010 questionnaire was adapted to a scannable optical mark read (OMR) form. The data were weighted by gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and census region to reflect the general population based on Current Population Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau. For more information regarding the survey design and methodology, please refer to the *December 2010 Youth Poll Technical Report*.

Youth above the age of 21 were surveyed starting with the June 2008 Youth Poll. Because estimates for the 22- to 24-year-old population are available for only six points in time, results in this report are presented only for youth ages 16 to 21. The sample size for youth ages 16 to 21 was 5,504.

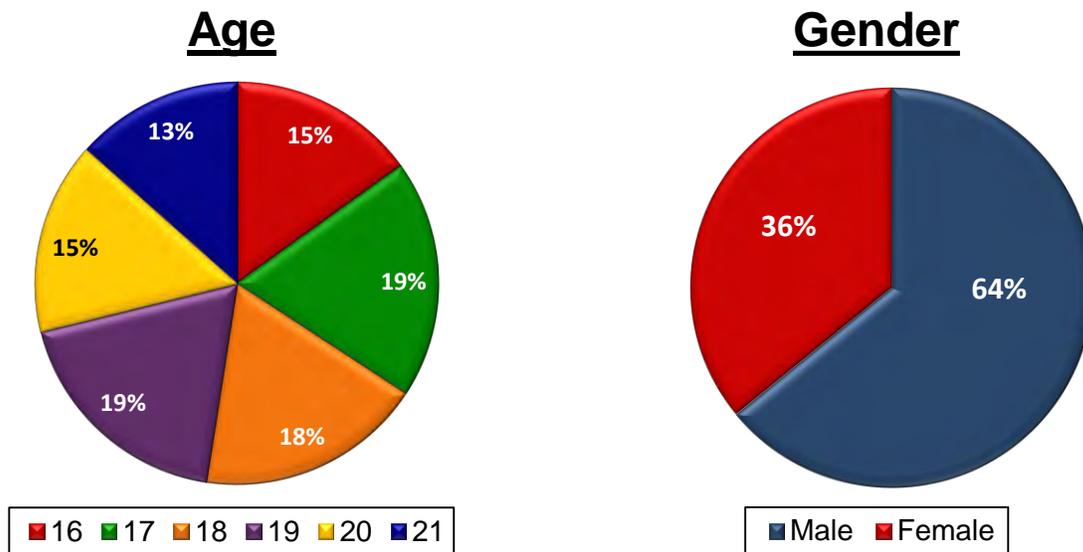
Naming Convention

Unless otherwise noted, this report refers to three racial/ethnic groups: Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. These names correspond to the group names used by the U.S. Census Bureau. The groups correspond to individuals who indicated that they were White and non-Hispanic, Black and non-Hispanic, or of Hispanic origin. December 2010 marks the first Youth Poll with a sample size sufficiently large enough to report estimates for Asian youth. Estimates for Asian youth are provided when available. Please note that Asian youth estimates are included at the overall level, but are not provided at the gender level due to sample size restrictions.

Respondent Profile

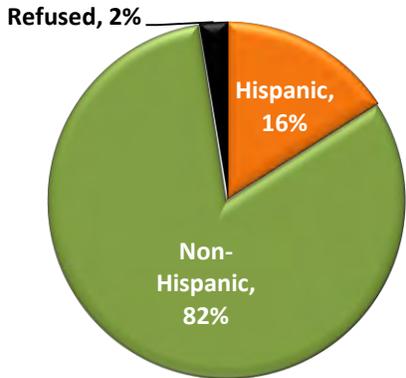
The December 2010 Youth Poll was conducted via mail-based surveys. The following charts display the demographic segments of the 5,504 survey respondents aged 16 to 21.²

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Education level (current and highest level completed)
- Average grades in high school
- Currently employed either full- or part-time
- Number of hours worked per week
- Geographic division
- Military family members

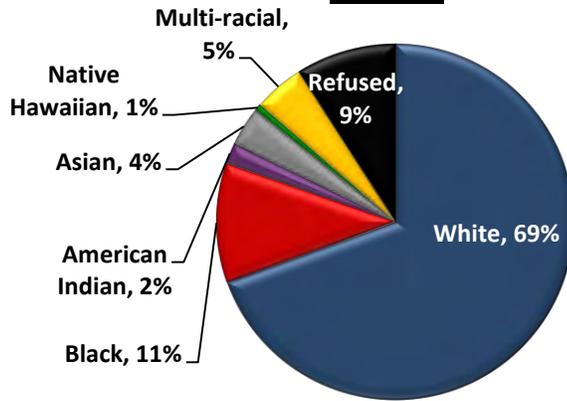


² Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. Frequencies are unweighted.

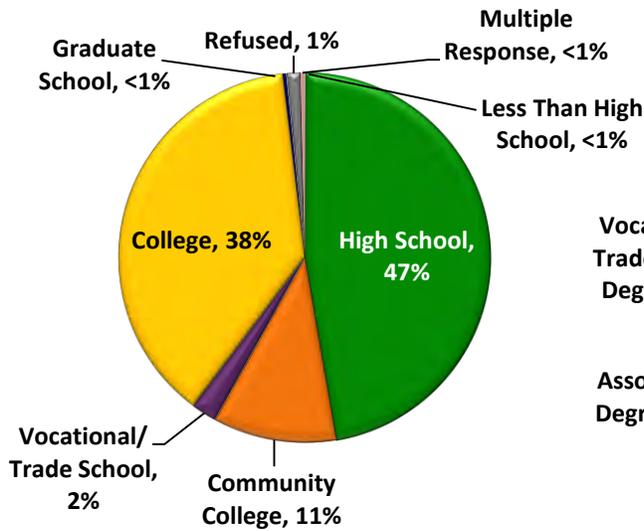
Ethnicity



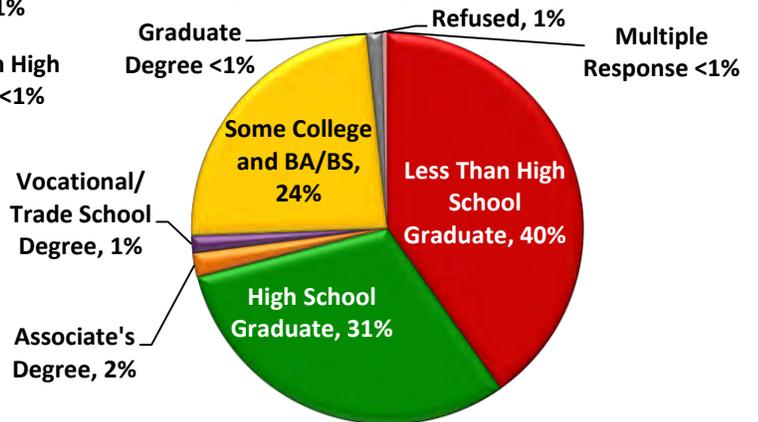
Race



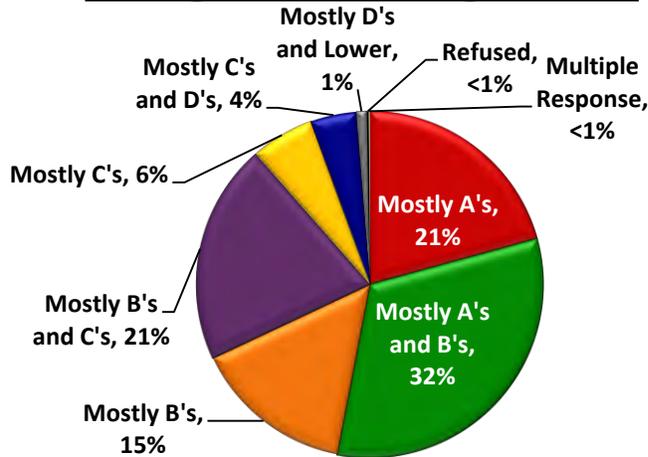
Current Education Level *(those currently enrolled)*



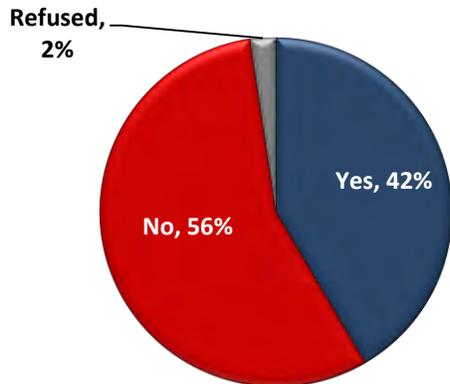
Highest Level of School Completed *(those currently not enrolled)*



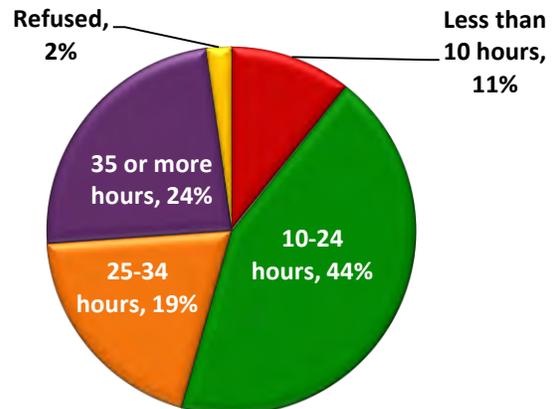
Average Grades in High School



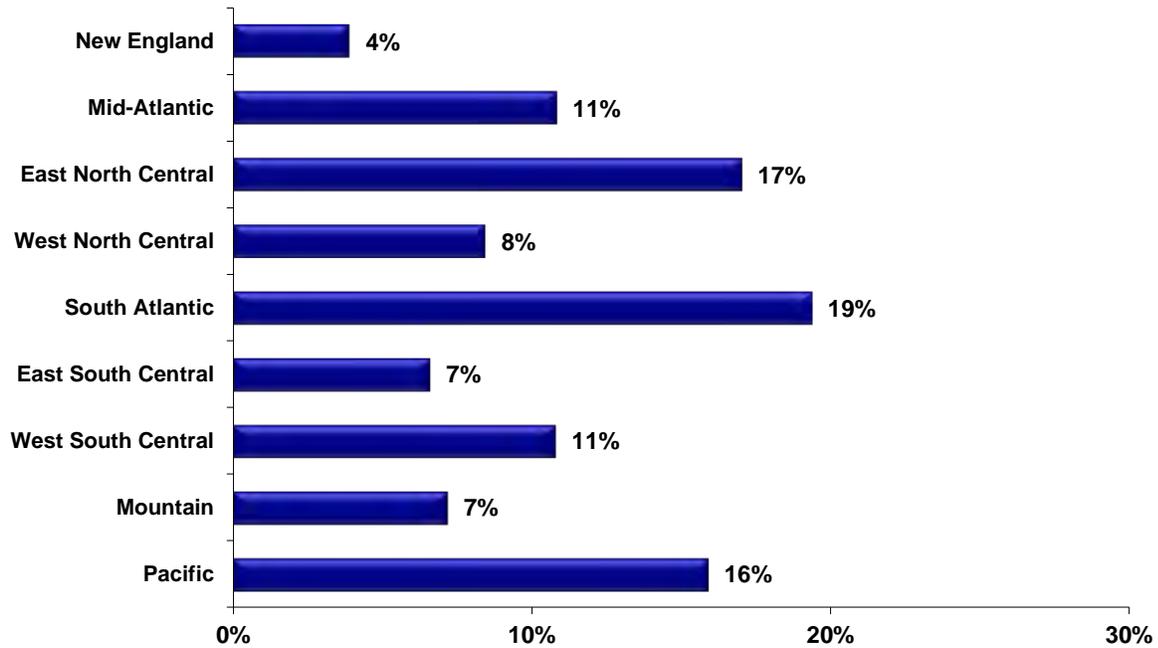
Currently Employed Either Full- or Part-Time



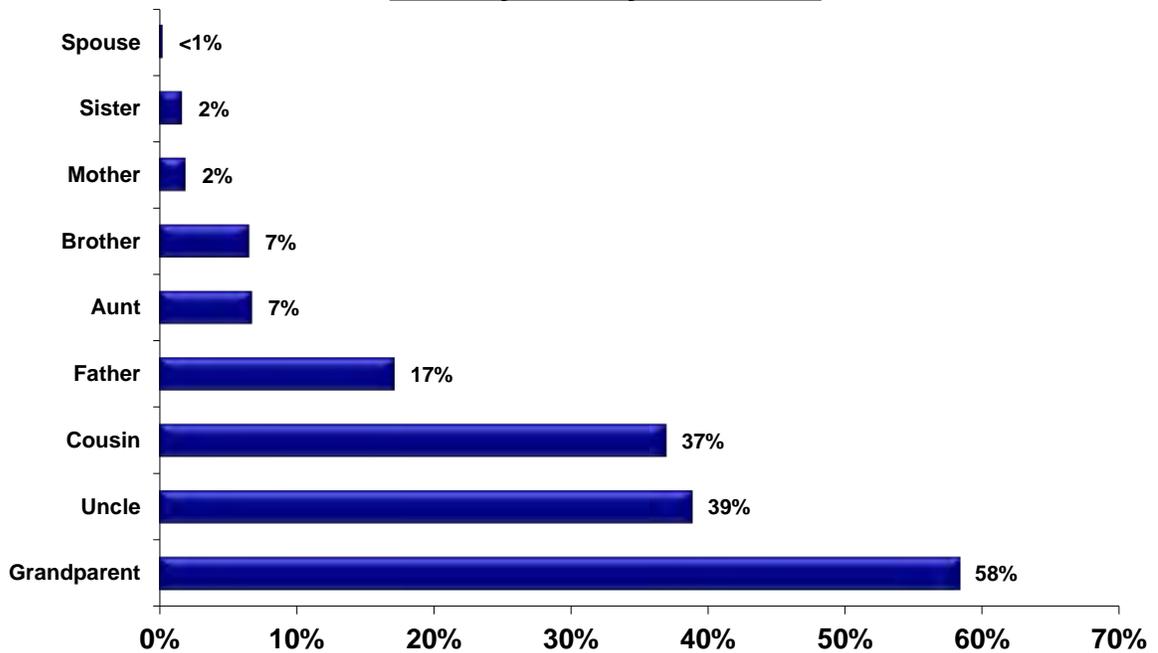
Numbers of Hours Worked per Week (those currently employed)



Geographic Division



Military Family Members



OVERVIEW REPORT

Chapter 2 provides an overview of demographic characteristics and trends in the youth population that are related to the recruiting challenge.



Chapter 2

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Chapter 2: Youth Population Trends Impacting Recruitment

Introduction

In recent years, the Armed Forces have faced challenges in meeting their recruitment goals. Currently, the Active Duty Services¹ are tasked with recruiting over 160,000 new members per year. Adding the enlistment goals of the Reserve and National Guard Components brings this figure to approximately 300,000 individuals annually.ⁱ With more than 4 million youth becoming age-eligible for military service each year,ⁱⁱ it would appear that the Services have sufficient numbers from which to recruit. However, many of the youth in America are not qualified for military service based on mental, physical, or moral standards. Additionally, the future plans of youth who are eligible for Service often do not include military service.

Eligibility remains a large problem for recruiting. The number of youth who are within the core age range for military service (17 to 24 years old) has been growing and is predicted to continue growing,ⁱⁱⁱ however, military entry requirements have traditionally excluded more than half of these youth from military service.

According to the results of the June 2009 Youth Poll,^{iv} 51% of youth ages 16 to 21 would be ineligible for military service due to medical, physical, moral, or legal reasons.² The majority of these youth are ineligible primarily for medical and physical reasons. This is particularly worrisome given that youth who are ineligible tend to be more interested in military service than eligible youth. The pool of potential recruits is reduced even further when considering only high school graduates and youth who score in the upper half on military service aptitude tests.

The increasing importance of post-secondary education is leading the vast majority of youth to focus primarily on continuing their education after high school. President Barack Obama has made education a priority with the goal of America regaining the world's highest proportion of graduating college students by 2020.^v His 2011 State of the Union Address highlighted the need for higher education to maintain a competitive workforce.^{vi} To accomplish this, the Obama Administration has introduced several campaigns including "Educate to Innovate," a program to improve and encourage Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education.^{vii} In addition, the passing of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act in March 2010 further increased the amount of funding for federal Pell Grants and provided \$2 billion for community colleges.^{viii} This increased focus on post-secondary education has led most youth to disregard the possibility of enlisting following graduation.

The employment opportunities available to youth often influence the plans they have after high school. The U.S. economy is still recovering from crises in the banking, housing, and automotive industries and unemployment rates remain high. Earnings for youth ages 16 to 24 have generally increased but so has unemployment.^{ix} Military recruiting may have recently benefited from these economic trends as fewer youth have civilian employment options after high school, leading military jobs to appear secure and well paying. However, up until around

¹ The accession goal for Active Duty Services does not include the Coast Guard.

² Please note that the Youth Poll eligibility metrics are not the DoD official QMA based metric.

2008, unemployment among youth was relatively low, and youth had a wide variety of employment options other than the Military.

Finally, the U.S. veteran population has been steadily declining over the past 10 years.^x Given the positive impact that veterans have on military recruiting,^{xi} the projected decline of the U.S. veteran population indicates a more difficult scenario for recruitment.^{xii}

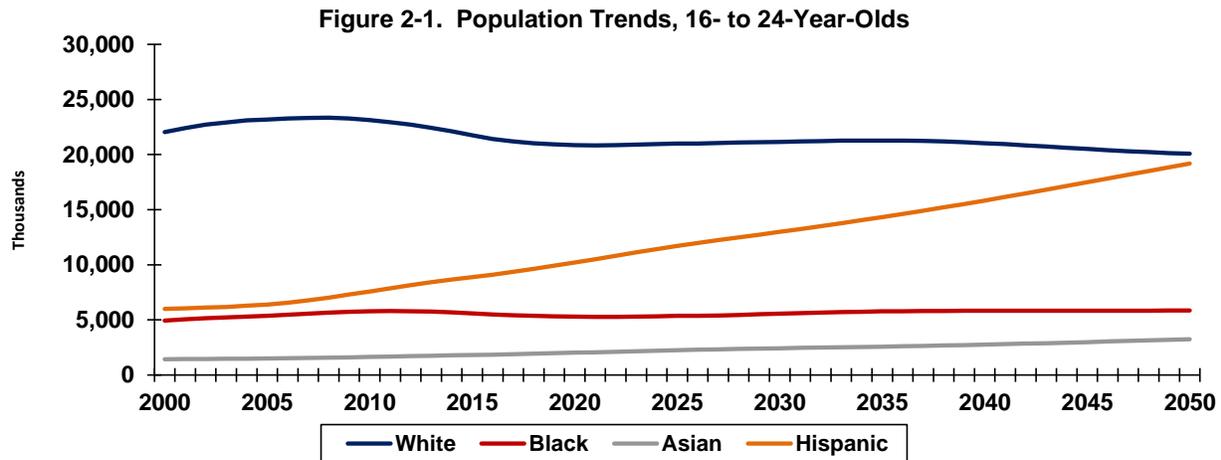
The strain that these trends have placed on recruiting is reflected in military accession statistics. Although all Active Duty Services met their accession goals for fiscal years 2006,^{xiii} 2007,^{xiv} 2008,^{xv} 2009,^{xvi} and 2010,^{xvii} the Army fell just shy of its goal as recently as fiscal year 2005.^{xviii} Furthermore, the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard fell short of their accession goals in fiscal years 2005,^{xviii} 2006,^{xiii} and 2007.^{xiv} For fiscal year 2010,^{xvii} all Active Duty Services as well as Reserve and National Guard Components met recruiting goals, with the Army National Guard intentionally missing its recruiting goal to stay within end strength constraints. As of April 2011 all Active Duty Services and Reserve and National Guard Components (with the exception of Air Force Reserve at 99%) have met or exceeded their fiscal year 2011 year-to-date recruiting goals.^{xix} However, this recruiting success does not discount the challenge in recruiting nor the monetary and human capital resources the Military invests to attain its recruiting goals.

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of a number of population characteristics and trends that may affect recruiting. The topics cover important demographic measures such as trends in the youth population, education, employment, and the declining veteran population.

Population Trends

Youth who are 16 to 24 years old make up the majority of new entrants to the labor force, college, and the Military. Figure 2-1 shows resident population trends for White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic youth.³ These trends begin in 2000 and are projected through 2050.ⁱⁱⁱ Figure 2-1 includes both male and female youth. In general, about half the youth population is male and half is female; the population trends are essentially the same for both genders.



The size of the resident 16- to 24-year-old age cohort has fluctuated since the early 1980s. In July 1983, the size of this age group was 37.4 million^{xx} but by July 1996 declined to less than 32.4 million.^{xxi} Since 1996, this age group has grown, increasing to 35.3 million in July 2000ⁱⁱ and to 39.0 million by July 2010.ⁱⁱ This represents an increase of about 1.0% per year from 2000 to 2010. This age group is expected to reach the 40 million mark in 2020, with the largest increase expected among Hispanic youth.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Hispanic 16- to 24-year-old age cohort is projected to increase by 34.7% overall between 2010 and 2020. This represents an annual compounded increase of 3.0% per year. Of additional interest is the expected increase among Asian youth. The Asian 16- to 24-year-old age cohort is projected to increase 23.8% overall by 2020, which is an annual compounded increase of 2.2% per year.

Education Trends

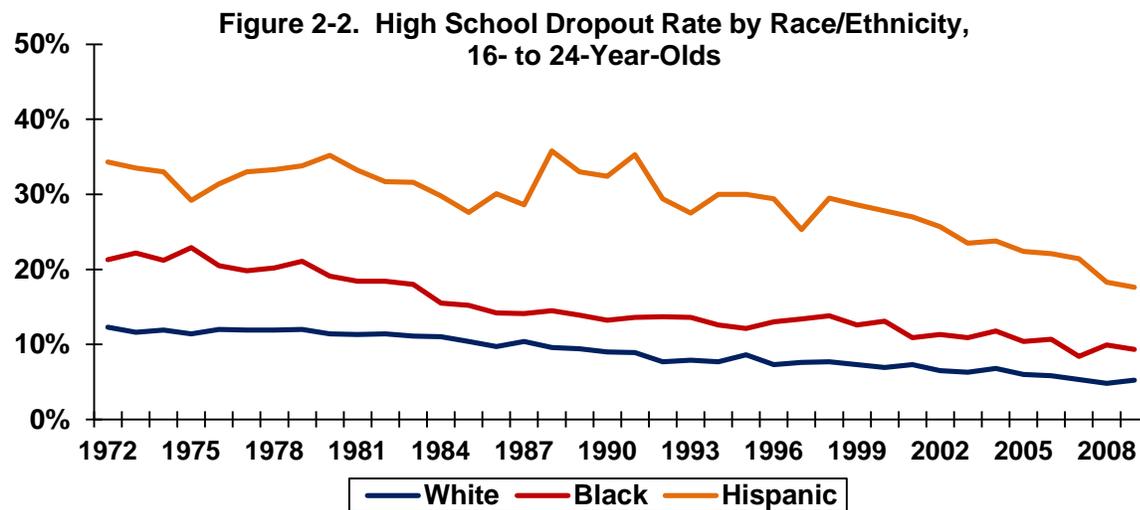
High School Dropout Rate

A high school degree is required for military service, though some exceptions to this rule do exist. Hence, the number of youth who finish high school is important to military recruitment. The proportion of high school dropouts⁴ among 16- to 24-year-olds has decreased considerably over the past 40 years.^{xxii} Most recently, from 1999 to 2009, the overall high school dropout rate declined from 11.2% to 8.1%. The dropout rate decreased significantly among Hispanic youth

³ The population estimates and projections listed in Chapter 2 do not encompass the full matrix of racial and Hispanic-origin categories. The racial/ethnic groups that are presented above include (1) Non-Hispanic White alone, (2) Non-Hispanic Black alone, (3) Non-Hispanic Asian alone, and (4) Hispanic origin (any race).

⁴ High school dropouts are defined as all persons who are neither enrolled in school nor recipients of a high school diploma, regardless of when they left school. GED recipients are counted as having completed high school.

during this period. Hispanic youth, however, continued to be much more likely than Black or White youth to drop out of high school. Figure 2-2 shows the high school dropout rate for youth by race/ethnicity since 1972.

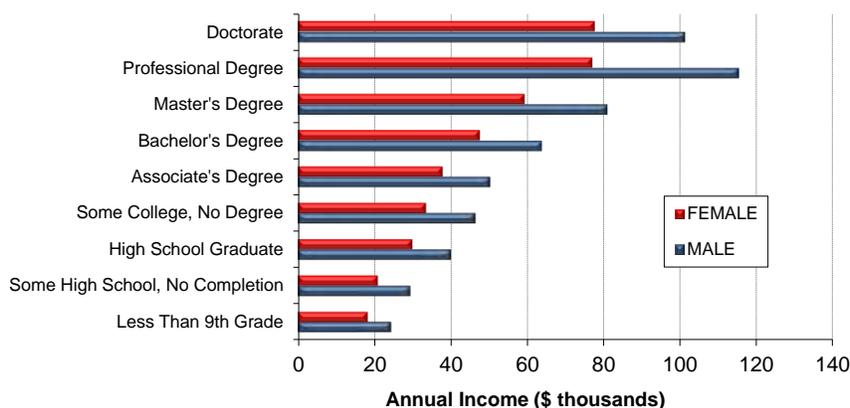


Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2011

Educational Attainment and Earnings

Most youth aspire to continue their education after they graduate high school rather than to pursue full-time employment or service in the Military. The December 2010 Youth Poll results supported this and showed that the vast majority (85.5%) of youth ages 16 to 21 hope to pursue post-secondary education. The motivation for higher education is clear: more years of education typically result in higher salaries. In 2010, male full-time workers aged 25 and older holding a bachelor’s degree earned a median annual income (in current dollars) of \$63,737 compared to a median annual income of \$40,055 earned by males with only a high school diploma.^{xxiii} Figure 2-3 shows the median income for men and women, 25 years old and over, by educational achievement.⁵

Figure 2-3. Median Income of Full-Time Workers by Gender, 25 Years Old and Over



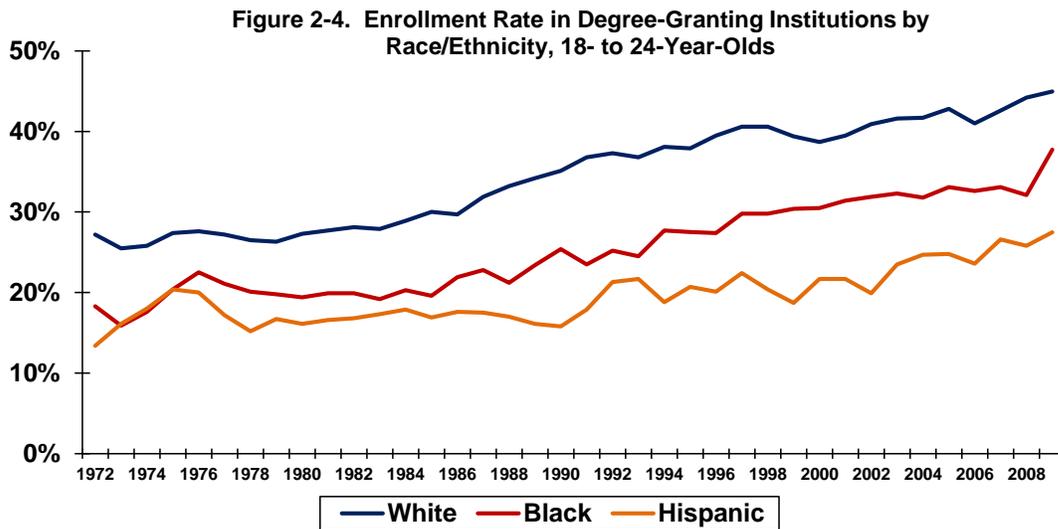
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010

⁵ Beginning with 2009 income data, the Census Bureau expanded the upper income interval used to calculate medians and Gini indexes to \$250,000 or more. Medians falling in the upper open-ended interval are plugged with “\$250,000.” Before 2009, the upper open-ended interval was \$100,000 and a plug of “\$100,000” was used.

Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education

Further evidence of youths' desire to pursue post-secondary education can be found in the increased proportion of youth who are attending college. Between 1999 and 2009, the proportion of youth ages 18 to 24 enrolled in degree-granting institutions increased from 35.6% to 41.3%.^{xxiv} This increase in enrollment was due to more women attending college. The proportion of females enrolling in degree-granting institutions grew from 37.0% in 1999 to 44.2% in 2009. Enrollment of male youth experienced a less dramatic increase over this same period (from 34.1% in 1999 to 38.4% in 2009).

The proportion of minorities who are enrolled in degree-granting institutions has also been increasing.^{xxiv} In 1999, 30.4% of Black and 18.7% of Hispanic youth ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in college. These proportions rose to 37.7% of Black and 27.5% of Hispanic youth in 2009. While the proportion of Hispanic youth enrolled in college showed strong growth over the past decade, it remained considerably less than the proportion of White or Black youth enrolled. Figure 2-4 provides enrollment rates in degree-granting institutions among 18- to 24-year-olds.



Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2011

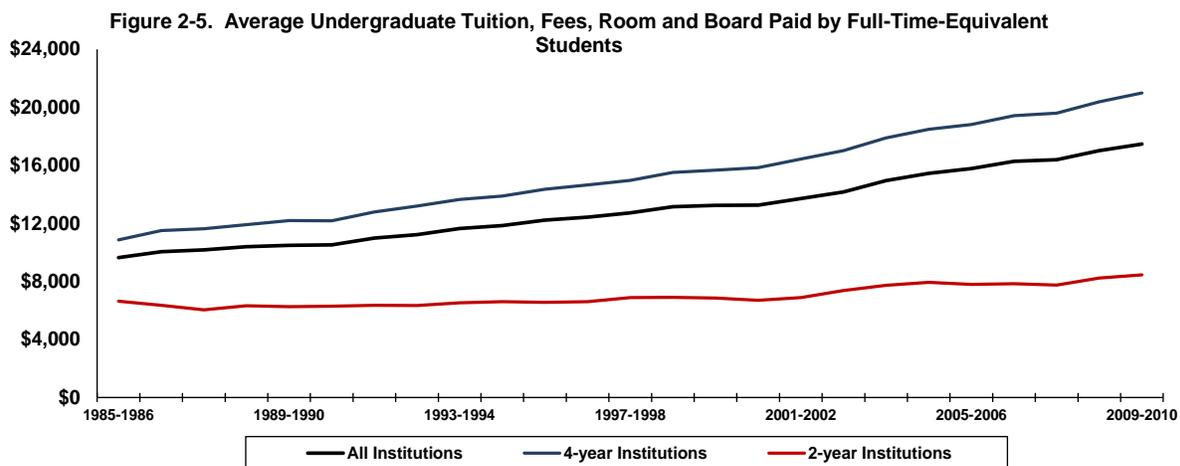
While overall enrollment in post-secondary institutions has increased over the past 10 years, the proportion of recent high school graduates attending college immediately after graduation has remained stable. In October 2010, 68% of high school graduates from the class of 2010 were attending college in the following fall semester, and 90% of those enrolled in college were set to attend full-time.^{xxv} The post-secondary enrollment rate of 68% was slightly lower than the 70% historic high in October 2009 since the measure began in 1959.^{xxvi} The October 2010 proportion of high school graduates attending college is considerably higher than in October 2000, when 63% of recent high school graduates were enrolled in college in the fall following graduation.^{xxvii}

Approximately two-thirds of male (63%) and female (74%) high school graduates from the class of 2010 were enrolled in college after graduation. In addition, recent Asian graduates (84%)

continued to be considerably more likely than White (69%), Black (61%), or Hispanic (60%) graduates to be enrolled in college in the fall following their graduation.^{xxv}

Cost of Post-Secondary Education

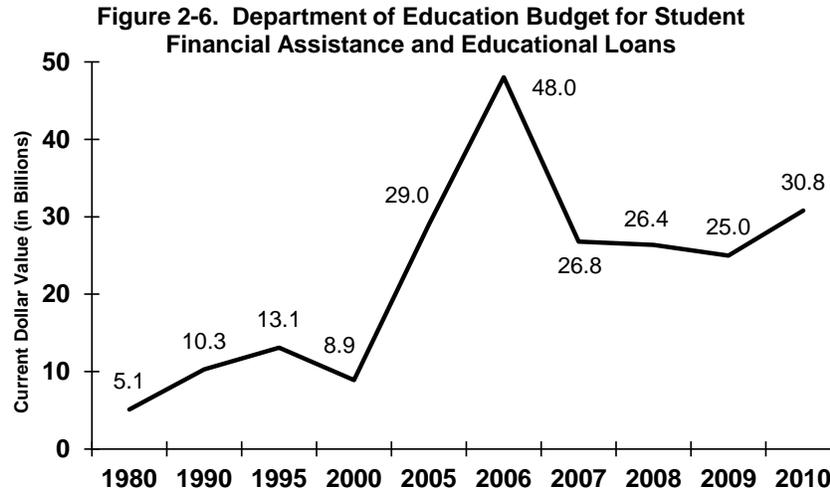
As the desire of youth to obtain a post-secondary degree has increased over the past 20 years, so has the cost of this degree. As Figure 2-5 demonstrates, the average cost (in constant 2008–2009 dollars) of an undergraduate education has steadily increased since 1985.^{xxviii} For the 2009–2010 academic year, the average cost for undergraduate tuition, fees, room and board was \$20,986 for 4-year institutions and \$8,451 for 2-year institutions. Compared to the 1999–2000 academic year, costs for 2-year institutions increased by 23.2% whereas costs for 4-year institutions increased by 34.0%.



Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2011

As these post-secondary education costs have risen, students increasingly rely on a variety of economic resources to cover tuition, fees, and board. For example, in the 2000–2001 academic year, about 4.3 million students took out Stafford loans. By the 2009–2010 academic year, the number of borrowers had doubled to a total of 8.6 million.^{xxix} The debt burden also grew for bachelor’s degree recipients. Students who graduated in 2000–2001 from public 4-year colleges averaged a debt burden of \$10,000; by 2008–2009, this had grown to \$11,000.^{xxx} Similarly, students who graduated in 2000–2001 from a private 4-year college averaged a debt burden of \$13,900; by 2008–2009, this had grown to \$16,900.^{xxxi}

Figure 2-6 shows how the Department of Education increased federal funding in the form of both financial assistance and educational assistance loans from \$13.1 billion in 1995 to \$48.0 billion in 2006. In 2007, total funding decreased to \$26.8 billion. This was caused by a sharp reduction in educational assistance loans, which decreased from \$33.2 billion in 2006 to \$11.4 billion in 2007. Federal funding continued to decrease in 2008 and 2009 before increasing to \$30.8 billion in 2010.^{xxxii}

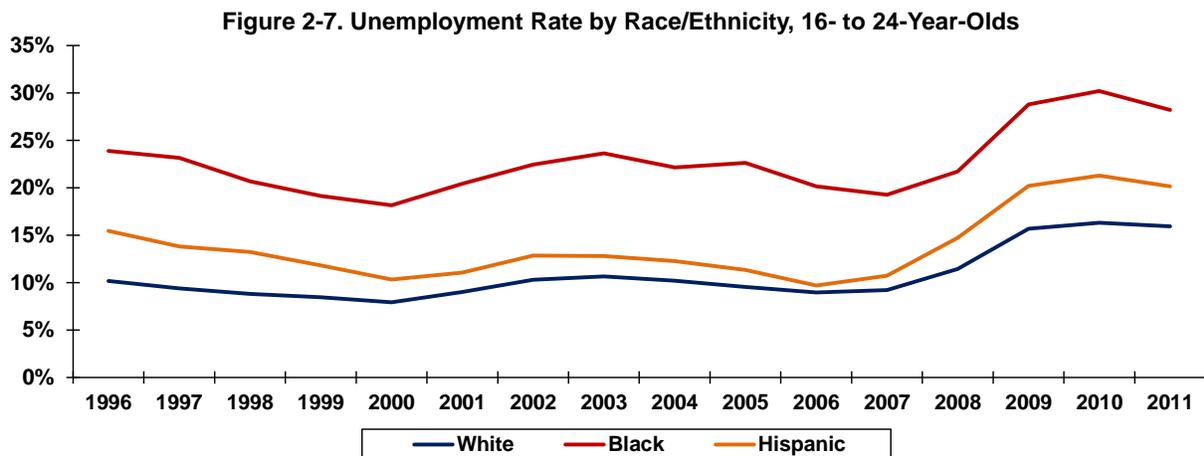


Employment Trends

Generally, youth leaving high school choose from among three options: college, civilian employment, or military service. As mentioned previously, most graduates enroll in college after high school. Many recent high school graduates, however, are also interested in civilian employment. In October 2010, 51.7% of the graduating class of 2010 had entered the civilian workforce,^{xxv} down from 2000, when 59.1% of the graduating class had entered the civilian workforce.^{xxvii}

Unemployment⁶

Figure 2-7 shows the unemployment rate (unadjusted) among all individuals ages 16 to 24.^{ix} Unemployment increased slightly from 2000 to 2003 and declined through 2007. Since then, youth unemployment has been steadily increasing. Black youth ages 16 to 24 are considerably more likely to be unemployed than are White and Hispanic youth. As of May 2011, the unemployment rate for youth ages 16 to 24 was 17.5%.^{ix}

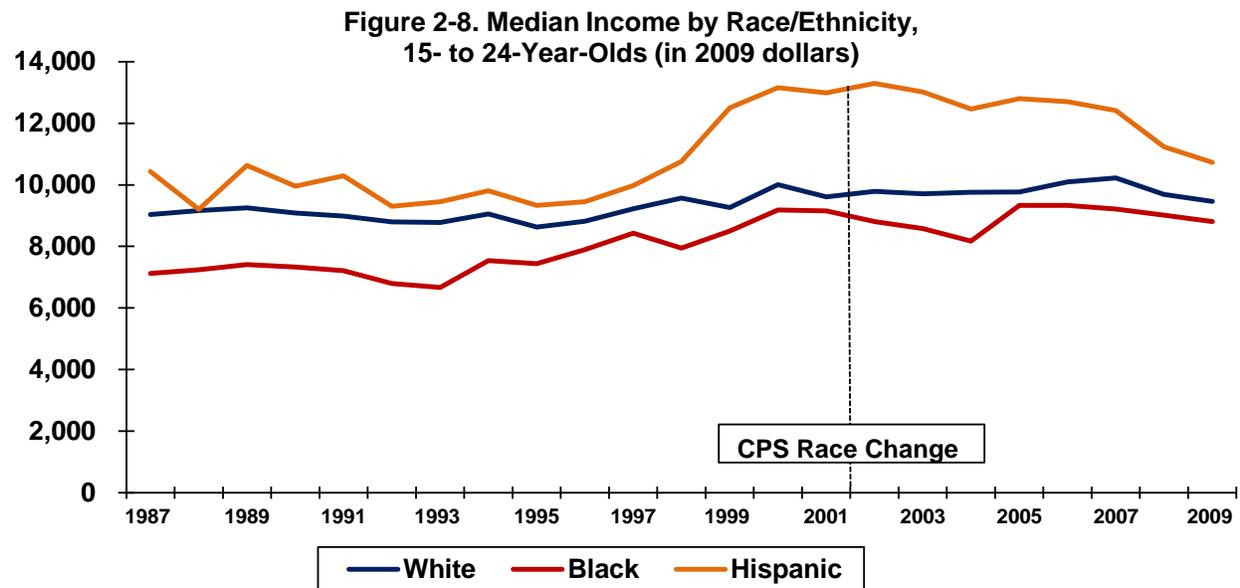


Source: U.S. Department of Labor: Current Population Survey, 2011

⁶ Unemployment for 2011 uses data from January to May 2011.

Earnings

Unemployment for youth has been gradually increasing; and median incomes have remained generally stable relative to inflation. Figure 2-8 shows the median incomes⁷ of youth ages 15 to 24 normalized to 2009 dollars.^{xxxiii} Median incomes among Hispanic youth ages 15 to 24 have been slightly decreasing since 2002, while Black and White youth have had stable median incomes since 2002.

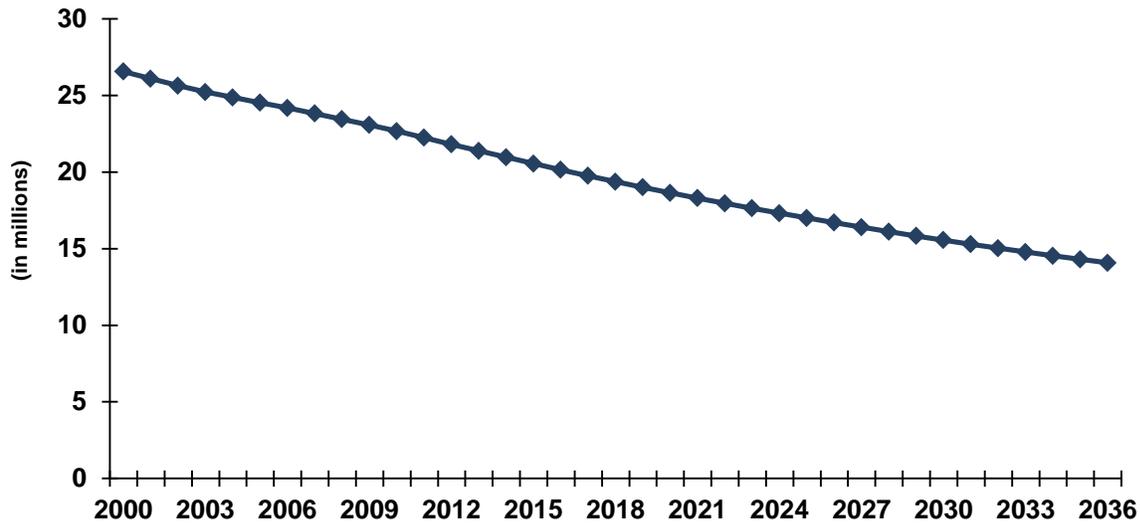


Source: U.S. Department of Labor: Current Population Survey, 2011

Veteran Population Trends

Although not a direct characteristic of the youth population, the veteran population in the United States has a strong influence on military recruiting. Studies by individual Services, including the Navy,^{xi} have found a link between knowing a veteran (particularly one's father) and enlistment behavior. Nevertheless, the size of the veteran population has been steadily declining. In December 2010, the Current Population Survey estimated that the U.S. population included approximately 20.7 million military veterans, reflecting a decrease from an estimated 23.7 million veterans in December 2000.^x As shown in Figure 2-9, the Department of Veteran Affairs predicts that the veteran population is expected to continue to decline to around 14.1 million by 2036.^{xii}

⁷ The earnings for the respondent's main job have been adjusted by the Consumer Price Index to reflect 2009 dollars. For the year 2001 and earlier, the CPS allowed respondents to report only one race group. Beginning with the 2003 CPS, respondents were allowed to choose one or more races. For 2002 and forward, data for White and Black are for White alone and Black alone only.

Figure 2-9. Projected U.S. Veteran Population

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: VetPop 2007

As mentioned previously, having a father who is a veteran plays an important role in youths' interest in military service. As the number of veterans declines, so does the number of youth who have a father who served in the Military. For instance, in 1995, 36.8% of youth ages 16 to 21 had fathers who were veterans.^{xxxiv} Data from DoD Youth Polls indicate that 25.3% of young adults aged 16 to 21 reported having a father with military experience in November 2003, but only 16.2% reported the same in December 2010. The declining number of fathers who have served in the Military and the increasing number of parents who have gone to college have contributed to today's recruiting challenges.

Summary

Overall, the market for youth recruitment has challenges: Not only have youth shied away from enlistment, but many are also ineligible for military service. As more youth continue to seek post-secondary education, the pool of possible applicants shrinks. This, along with new legislation and programs designed to encourage and facilitate college enrollment, could have a substantial impact in the number of youth interested in military service. Veterans, who may positively influence a youth to enlist, are a shrinking population and are expected to decrease by approximately 40% over the next 30 years.^{xiii} On the other hand, post-secondary education costs have risen and may become more prohibitive if the Department of Education does not further increase its student aid. Furthermore, unemployment levels among youth remained high and stable from 2010 into 2011 and median weekly earnings have gradually increased among youth. In short, the overall impact of these trends has significantly changed the landscape of the youth recruiting market.

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OVERVIEW REPORT

Chapter 3 describes the propensity measures, the propensity-related factors, propensity for the specific Services and Reserve Components, and the trends in propensity.



Chapter 3

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Chapter 3: Enlistment Propensity for Military Service

Introduction

The DoD Youth Polls are best known for the information that they provide on youth propensity for service in the Armed Forces. This chapter presents the most current estimates of propensity. For all measures of propensity referenced in this chapter, “propensity” is defined as the proportion of youth indicating that military service is a likely event in their future.

Chapter Overview

This chapter is divided into five sections:

1. **Propensity Measures:** This section explains the measures of propensity for the Active Duty and Reserve Services that are included in the Youth Poll. It also describes research showing that propensity is a strong predictor of later enlistment behavior.
2. **Propensity-Related Factors:** This section explains the relationship between propensity and several demographic factors, such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, educational level, employment prospects, and geographic division.
3. **Propensity for Specific Services:** This section presents the latest information on propensity for the individual Services, demographic differences in Service-specific propensity, and the overlap in propensity across the different Services. Additionally, it demonstrates the correlation between propensity for Active Duty Services and propensity for the Reserves and the National Guard.
4. **Propensity Trends:** This section displays trends for aided and unaided propensity, Service-specific propensity, and propensity among different racial/ethnic groups.
5. **Summary:** This section provides a concise overview of Chapter 3.

Propensity Measures

Both the YATS and Youth Poll surveys were conducted via telephone interviewing. However, recent changes in the survey response landscape led JAMRS to switch to a mail-based methodology beginning with the December 2010 administration. As such, certain questions had to be slightly altered to cohesively function within the paper survey.

The same questions have been used to measure youth propensity since the first YATS survey was conducted in 1975, with slight alterations made during the transition to a the paper survey. With the telephone interview, prior to any mention of military service by the interviewer, respondents are asked an open-ended question about their future plans:

“Now let’s talk about your plans (after you get out of high school/for the next few years). What do you think you might be doing?”

In the paper surveys, respondents were asked the following question and given a blank box in which to write their answers:

“Thinking about your plans for the future, what do you think you might be doing in the next few years?”

The most common responses in both telephone and paper surveys include going to school, working, and entering the Military. In the telephone interviews, respondents were encouraged by the interviewer to indicate all of the things that they might be doing. Respondents in either the telephone or paper surveys who reference military service in general, or one of the Services specifically, are counted as demonstrating an “unaided propensity” for military service. The reference is considered to be “unaided” because the topic of military service is first mentioned by the respondent.

After the open-ended question about future plans, telephone respondents were asked a question to measure their propensity for serving in the Military:

“Now I’d like to ask you how likely it is that you will be serving in the Military in the next few years. Would you say definitely, probably, probably not, or definitely not?”

This same question was asked in the paper survey with slight alterations:

“In the next few years, how likely is that you will be serving in the Military?”

Of additional interest was youths’ propensity to serve in the various Services of the Military, including the Reserves and National Guard. The telephone survey sought to obtain this information by asking respondents:

“How likely is it that you will be serving on active duty in the [Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard]?”

In the telephone survey, this question was repeated for each of the Services listed. The order of the Service-specific questions varied from one respondent to the next to eliminate any question-order effects. However, this sort of rotation was not possible in the paper survey as it would have required creating, printing, and coding various versions of the same survey.

To obtain propensity information for the Reserves and National Guard, telephone respondents were asked:

“How likely is it that you will be serving in the [Reserves, National Guard]? Would you say definitely, probably, probably not, or definitely not?”

From 1990 through June 2010, the telephone survey asked the questions about the Reserves/National Guard immediately after the questions about Active Duty. In order to avoid question-order effects, half the telephone respondents were randomly selected to be asked first about potential service in the Reserves and then about potential service in the National Guard; the other half of respondents were asked about potential service in the National Guard first. However, only those telephone respondents indicating an interest in serving in the Reserves or National Guard were asked about the specific Branch (e.g., Air National Guard versus Army National Guard) they were interested in serving.

The paper survey included all possible branch options for Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard in a grid. Respondents were encouraged to place a response for each Service through additional instructions highlighted in the survey. The grid structure created slight differences between the telephone and paper survey with regard to the National Guard and Reserves content in the following manner:

- **Telephone survey:** Respondents were first asked about their interest in the National Guard and Reserves as a broad group. Only those indicating an interest in the National Guard or Reserves were then asked about their interest in the specific Branch within the National Guard or Reserves.
- **Paper survey:** The grid structure specifically asked respondents about their propensity to serve in each of the Branches within the Reserves and National Guard.¹ There were no questions devoted to general interest in the Reserves or National Guard.

The grid in the paper survey was preceded by the following question:

“In the next few years, how likely is it that you will be serving in any of the following Military Services?”

Respondents were given the same four options in both telephone and paper surveys: Definitely, Probably, Probably Not, and Definitely Not. The question for the Military in general is asked first in both telephone and paper surveys. Those who say that they will “definitely” or “probably” be serving in the Military in general or in a particular Service are counted as demonstrating “aided propensity” for the Military or that Service. “Composite Active Propensity” is defined as the proportion of respondents who indicate propensity for at least one of the four active DoD Services:² Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Air Force.

Research has shown that these propensity measures are valid measures of enlistment behavior. A study conducted by RAND Corporation¹ found that high-quality youth who offered an unaided mention of plans to enlist were seven times more likely to actually enlist than those who said they will “probably not” or “definitely not” serve. Those who, in response to a direct question about the Military, said they will “definitely” or “probably” serve were three times more likely to actually enlist than those who said they will “probably not” or “definitely not” serve. Additional studies by RAND,ⁱⁱ the Defense Manpower Data Center,ⁱⁱⁱ and JAMRS^{iv} found similar results.

¹ Because of this, it was not possible to calculate Composite Reserve Propensity for the December 2010 Youth Poll in a manner consistent with previous Youth Polls. Hence, analyses of Composite Reserve Propensity are excluded from this report. Future Youth Polls will incorporate the broad interest questions to ensure consistent tracking of Composite Reserve Propensity.

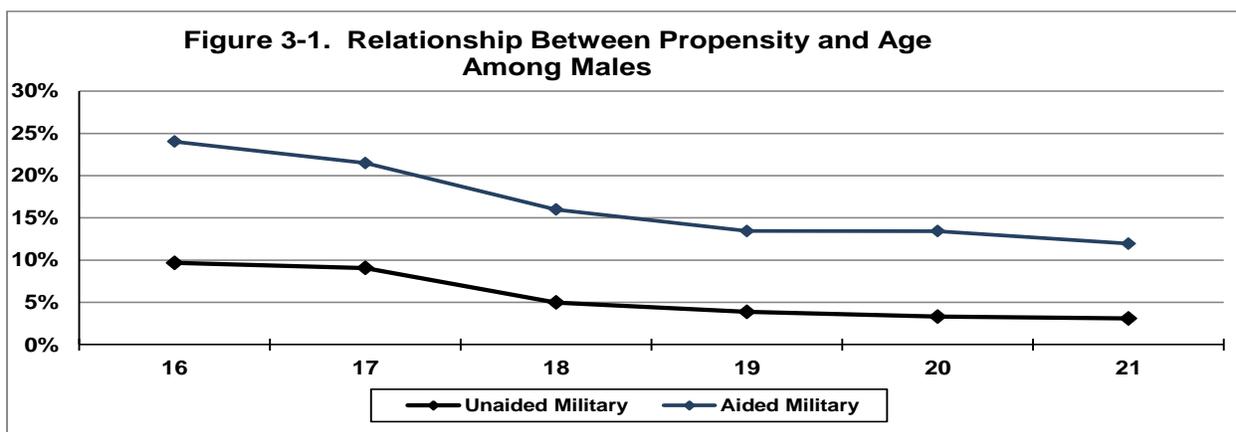
² Except in wartime, the Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Propensity-Related Factors

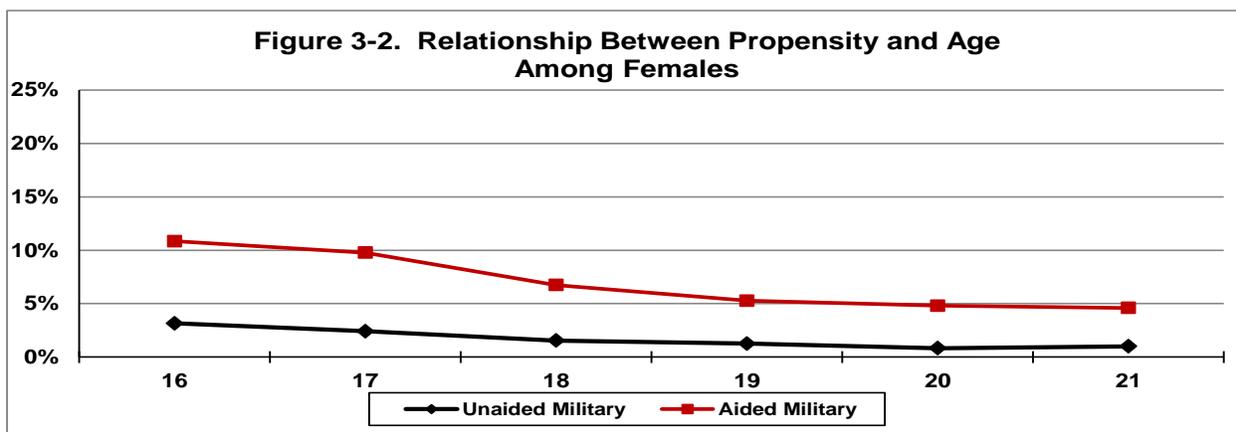
Youth Poll results demonstrate that propensity for military service is related to a number of demographic variables and that these relationships have been fairly stable over many years. The following section describes the relationship between several of these factors and propensity.

Gender and Age

The proportion of youth propensed for military service decreases as age increases from 16 to 21 years of age. Figures 3-1 and 3-2 show this pattern for unaided military propensity and aided military propensity for the May 2004 through December 2010 Youth Polls.



Source: 2004–2010 Youth Polls



Source: 2004–2010 Youth Polls

As shown in Figures 3-1 and 3-2, propensity declines rather dramatically with age: 16- to 17-year-olds are about twice as likely to be propensed as 20- to 21-year-olds. The majority of this decline occurs as youth age from 16 to 18 years old. At all ages unaided military propensity is considerably lower than aided military propensity.

Scholastic Status

Prior studies have shown that propensity also varies by scholastic status and achievement. As shown in Table 3-1, propensity generally decreases with each additional year of education. High school students are more likely than college students to indicate propensity for military service.

Table 3-1. Propensity by Education, Gender

Education Level	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Unaided Military	Aided Military	Unaided Military	Aided Military
Students				
Less than 11 th Grade	12	28	4	13
H.S. Juniors	10	23	3	10
H.S. Seniors	6	17	2	8
Vo-Tech & 2-Yr College	3	11	1	4
4-Year College				
Freshmen	2	10	1	4
Sophomores	1	8	0	4
Juniors	2	6	0	1
Seniors or higher	3	9	1	4
Non-Students				
H.S. Dropouts ³	9	27	3	10
H.S. Grads (no college)	5	16	1	7
Some College or more	3	9	2	5

Source: 2004–2010 Youth Polls

Employment Status

Propensity also varies by employment status. As Table 3-2 shows, unemployed youth, regardless of educational status, are more likely than employed youth to be propensed for military service. Furthermore, propensity is generally highest among youth who are not students and are unemployed.

Table 3-2. Propensity by Employment, Gender

Employment	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Unaided Military	Aided Military	Unaided Military	Aided Military
Students				
Employed	5	14	1	6
Unemployed	7	19	2	8
Non-Students				
Employed	4	16	1	6
Unemployed	5	21	2	10

Source: 2004–2010 Youth Polls

³ H.S. Dropouts include any non-student who did not complete high school.

Employment Prospects

Propensity for military service is also related to employment prospects. To evaluate employment expectations, youth were asked how difficult they think it is to get a job in their community. As Table 3-3 shows, the more difficult that youth believe it is to get a job in their community, the more likely they are to be propensed for military service. This effect was much more pronounced among males than females.

Table 3-3. Propensity by Perceived Difficulty in Getting a Civilian Job, Gender

Perceived difficulty in getting a job	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Unaided Military	Aided Military	Unaided Military	Aided Military
Almost impossible	8	24	2	10
Very difficult	6	18	2	8
Somewhat difficult	6	16	2	7
Not difficult	5	16	1	6

Source: 2004–2010 Youth Polls

Race/Ethnicity

Propensity also varies by race and ethnicity. In past years, aided military propensity for both males and females had been higher among Hispanic and Black youth than among White youth. However, from May 2004 to June 2010, aided military propensity has been roughly the same for White and Black males, though it diverged in December 2010 (see Table 3-4).

As noted earlier, educational achievement is related to both race and ethnicity (see Chapter 2) and propensity (see Table 3-1); however, educational achievement alone does not explain differences in propensity across the different races/ethnicities (see Table 3-4).

Table 3-4. Propensity by Race and Ethnicity,⁴ Gender

Race/Ethnicity⁵	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Unaided Military	Aided Military	Unaided Military	Aided Military
Total Population				
White	6	16	2	5
Black	5	18	2	11
Hispanic	6	23	2	12
Asian	3	14	1	9
H.S. Juniors and Seniors				
White	9	19	2	7
Black	6	20	3	13
Hispanic	8	27	3	15
H.S. Graduates, no college				
White	5	14	2	5
Black	7	19	2	13
Hispanic	5	18	1	12

Source: 2004–2010 Youth Polls

Gender Differences

The preceding tables demonstrate that between May 2004 and December 2010, fewer women than men have been interested in military service. In any particular category (e.g., high school seniors, Hispanics), the propensity of women has been lower than that of men. In general, it has been about half that of men.

⁴ Estimates for racial and ethnic categories were based on all respondents who indicated that they belong to a particular group. Respondents who indicated membership to multiple groups were counted as part of each group mentioned.

⁵ Separate estimates for Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Eskimos who were high school seniors or high school graduates were not included because of sample size restrictions. They represented considerably smaller portions of the population and of the Youth Poll sample than did White, Black, or Hispanic youth.

Geography

Propensity for military service also varies by geographic area. As shown in Table 3-5, propensity for military service is relatively high in the South Atlantic, Pacific, Mountain, East South Central, and West South Central divisions and remains relatively low in the New England division.

Table 3-5. Propensity by Geographic Division,⁶ Gender

Census Division	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Unaided Military	Aided Military	Unaided Military	Aided Military
All Racial/Ethnic Groups				
New England	5	13	2	5
West North Central	6	16	2	5
East North Central	5	14	1	6
Mid-Atlantic	5	14	1	5
East South Central	7	20	1	7
South Atlantic	7	18	2	9
Pacific	6	19	2	8
Mountain	7	19	2	7
West South Central	7	21	2	10
Whites Only				
New England	6	13	2	5
West North Central	5	14	2	4
East North Central	5	13	1	5
Mid-Atlantic	5	12	1	4
East South Central	7	19	1	5
South Atlantic	8	17	2	5
Pacific	6	15	2	5
Mountain	7	17	2	5
West South Central	8	18	2	5

Source: 2004–2010 Youth Polls

⁶ Census Divisions defined as follows: New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT); West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD); East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI); Mid-Atlantic (PA, NJ, NY); East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN); South Atlantic (DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, DC, WV); Pacific (CA, OR, WA, AK, HI); Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY); and West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX).

Propensity for Specific Services

As mentioned earlier, Youth Poll respondents were asked how likely they are to serve on active duty in each of the Armed Services: the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

Historically, propensity has been most closely monitored for 16- to 21-year-olds. This focus continues to be appropriate for evaluating the enlistment potential of the youth market: only about 1 in 3 enlisted Active Duty accessions are over 21 years old. However, the adjustment in enlistment standards for the Army has resulted in sizable increases in the proportion of older Army enlistees (see Table 3-6). In 2010, about 8% of Army enlistees were over 29 years old, while about 1% or less of enlistees for all other Services were over 29 years old.

Table 3-6. Cumulative Percentage of 2010 Enlistees by Age and Service

Age	Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Coast Guard
≤17	2.2	1.0	4.1	1.5	1.3
≤18	21.3	19.7	43.1	24.2	18.8
≤19	38.3	41.3	67.2	48.1	36.4
≤20	50.8	57.0	79.6	64.5	49.1
≤21	60.0	68.0	86.7	75.3	60.3
≤22	67.6	76.6	91.5	83.1	68.6
≤23	73.9	82.7	94.7	88.6	76.8
≤24	79.1	87.9	96.8	92.9	83.5
≤25	83.0	91.0	98.0	95.8	88.7
≤26	86.1	93.4	98.9	97.7	92.5
≤27	88.5	95.1	99.4	99.6	96.2
≤28	90.5	96.6	99.9	99.7	97.6
≤29	92.2	97.6	99.9	99.8	98.5
≤30+	100	100	100	100	100

Source: FY10 Active Duty Accessions, Defense Manpower Data Center

Service-Specific Propensity

Table 3-7 shows the propensity estimates in December 2010 for each Armed Service and the National Guard and Reserve Components. Males were more likely than females to be propensed for all Services and Components.

Table 3-7. Propensity: Active Duty and National Guard/Reserves Components by Gender

Service	Men (%)	Women (%)
Army	10	4
Navy	8	6
Marine Corps	11	4
Air Force	10	6
Coast Guard	7	3
Army National Guard	8	4
Air National Guard	6	3
Army Reserve	7	4
Navy Reserve	6	4
Marine Corps Reserve	7	3
Air Force Reserve	7	4
Coast Guard Reserve	5	3

Source: December 2010 Youth Poll

Propensity for Multiple Services

The majority of propensed youth are propensed for multiple Services. Table 3-8 shows the proportion of youth who indicated they were propensed for a particular Service and for at least one additional Service in 1999 and December 2010. In December 2010, male youth who were interested in the Marine Corps were the most likely to be interested solely in joining that Service. Female youth who were interested in the Air Force were the most likely to be interested solely in joining that Service.

Table 3-8. Percentage of Propensed Youth Indicating Propensity for Multiple Active Duty Services by Gender

Service	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	1999	2010	1999	2010
Army	76	76	74	72
Navy	78	84	71	77
Marine Corps	73	73	89	85
Air Force	72	74	66	65
Coast Guard	80	81	79	81

Sources: 1999 YATS and December 2010 Youth Poll

Since 1999, multiple Service propensity has remained relatively unchanged for both male and female youth for most Services.

As previously mentioned, youth are typically propensed for multiple Services. Of additional interest is the relationship between propensity for the Active Duty Services and the various Branches of the National Guard/Reserves. Tables 3-9 and 3-10 outline these relationships by looking at youth propensed for the National Guard or Reserves and Active Duty Services by gender.

Among those propensed for the National Guard or Reserves, the majority of youth were propensed for two or more National Guard/Reserve components and one or more Active Duty Services. Only about 15% were propensed solely for the National Guard/Reserve and no Active Duty Service. In addition, about one third of youth were propensed for two or more National Guard/Reserve components and Active Duty Services.

Table 3-9. Percentage of Youth Propensed for Multiple Active Duty and National Guard/Reserve Branches (Males)

Number of National Guard/Reserve Branches Propensed For	# of Active Duty Services Propensed For			Total
	0	1	2+	
1	12%	17%	8%	36%
2+	8%	17%	39%	64%
Total	20%	34%	47%	100%

Source: December 2010 Youth Poll

Table 3-10. Percentage of Youth Propensed for Multiple Active Duty and National Guard/Reserve Branches (Females)

Number of National Guard/Reserve Branches Propensed For	# of Active Duty Services Propensed For			Total
	0	1	2+	
1	14%	21%	5%	40%
2+	9%	15%	36%	60%
Total	24%	36%	41%	100%

Source: December 2010 Youth Poll

Propensity Trends

Since Youth Poll tracking began in 2001, youths' aided propensity for military service has fluctuated in response to current events. Male aided propensity for military service rose immediately following the events of September 11th, reached a high point in November 2001, and remained high until 2006. It dropped precipitously in June 2006 and began rebounding after December 2007. Since 2008, male aided propensity has remained relatively stable.

In general, aided propensity among females has not varied greatly, but it increased through May 2004 before experiencing smaller, more gradual declines through December 2007. Female aided propensity showed signs of rebounding in 2008, but has gradually declined since December 2008.

Propensity remained generally unchanged overall and for the various Services in 2010. Trends differ for unaided and aided military propensity, for each race/ethnicity,⁷ and for each Service.

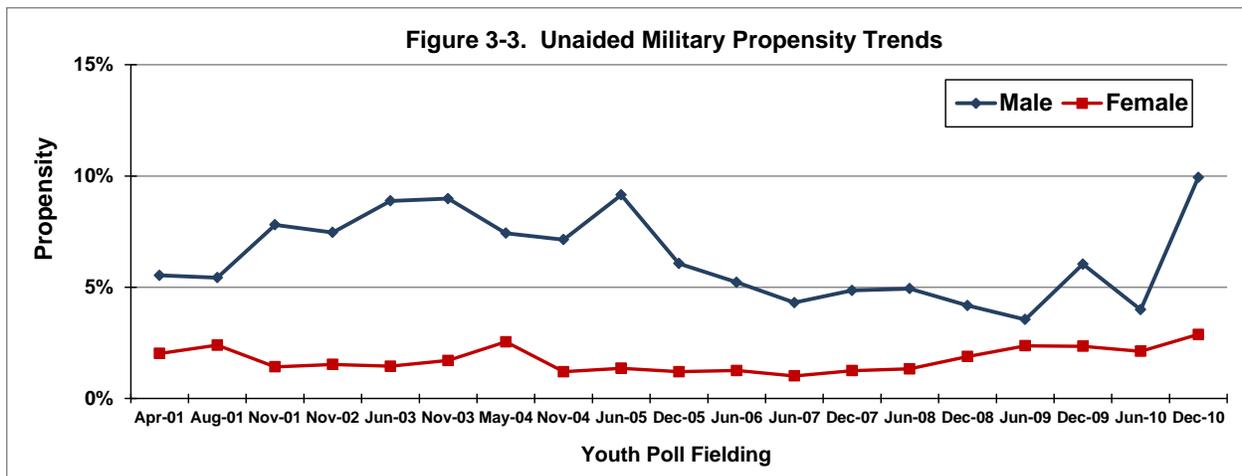
The figures in the following section show observed values of propensity for each fielding of the Youth Poll since 2001. The observed values include a small degree of sampling error. In the following charts, the sampling error is almost always less than 3 percentage points—often it is less than 2 percentage points. Thus, the propensity estimate shown for a particular year is typically within 2 percentage points of what would have been found if every youth in America had been interviewed. For minority populations (particularly Black and Hispanic youth), the sampling error is larger because estimates are based on fewer observations. For minorities, sampling error is almost always less than 10 percentage points and is often less than 5 percentage points.

⁷ In this section, race and ethnicity categories are mutually exclusive (i.e., each respondent was counted only in one group). The main racial/ethnic groups are: White, Non-Hispanic; Black, Non-Hispanic; and Hispanic (any race). This was done to remain consistent with past trend lines reported by YATS and in the Youth Polls.

Unaided Military Propensity

Figure 3-3 shows trends in unaided military propensity—the percentage of youth stating, without prompting from the interviewer, that military service was among their plans for the next few years. Since 2001, an average of 6.4% of males and 1.8% of females have volunteered that they expect to serve in the Military.

Unaided propensity has changed significantly in the past several years for males. From April 2001 through June 2005, it increased about 1 percentage point per year; then, between June 2005 and June 2007, it dropped approximately 2 percentage points per year. From December 2007 through June 2009, unaided propensity among males remained low and stable. Since June 2009 unaided propensity among males has fluctuated frequently. In December 2009, unaided propensity among males increased by 2 percentage points only to decrease by the same amount in June 2010. In December 2010, unaided propensity among males dramatically increased 6 percentage points. Although unaided propensity among females has shown some fluctuation, the long-term trend is relatively stable. Unaided propensity among females has been gradually trending upwards since June 2008.

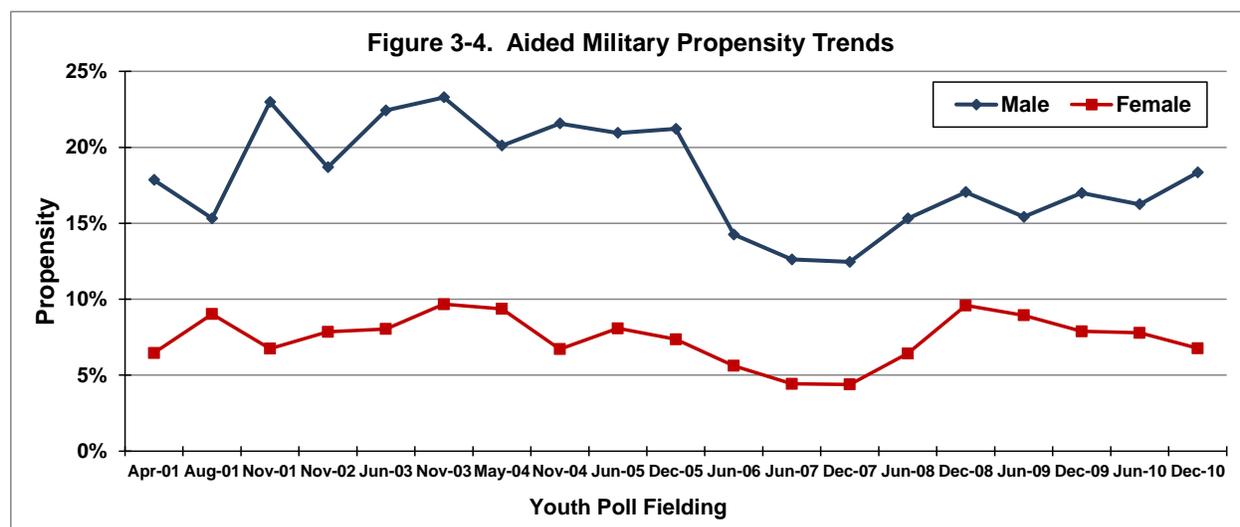


Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

Aided Military Propensity

Figure 3-4 shows trends in aided military propensity—that is, the percentage of youth responding that they will “definitely” or “probably” be serving in the Military in the next few years. Aided military propensity has changed significantly in the past several years. From 2001 through 2003, aided propensity among males increased about 2.1 percentage points per year. It was stable from 2004 to 2005. However, in June 2006, aided propensity among males dropped by 7.0 percentage points and remained low through December 2007. Though it trended upward in 2008, aided propensity among males has since then remained stable.

Aided military propensity among females generally increased from November 2001 through May 2004 and then decreased from November 2004 through December 2007, with aided military propensity among females in December 2007 being half of what it was in May 2004. Aided military propensity among females saw statistically significant and relatively large increases through 2008 but has slowly been trending downward since December 2008. Aided military propensity between males and females has been diverging further since December 2008.

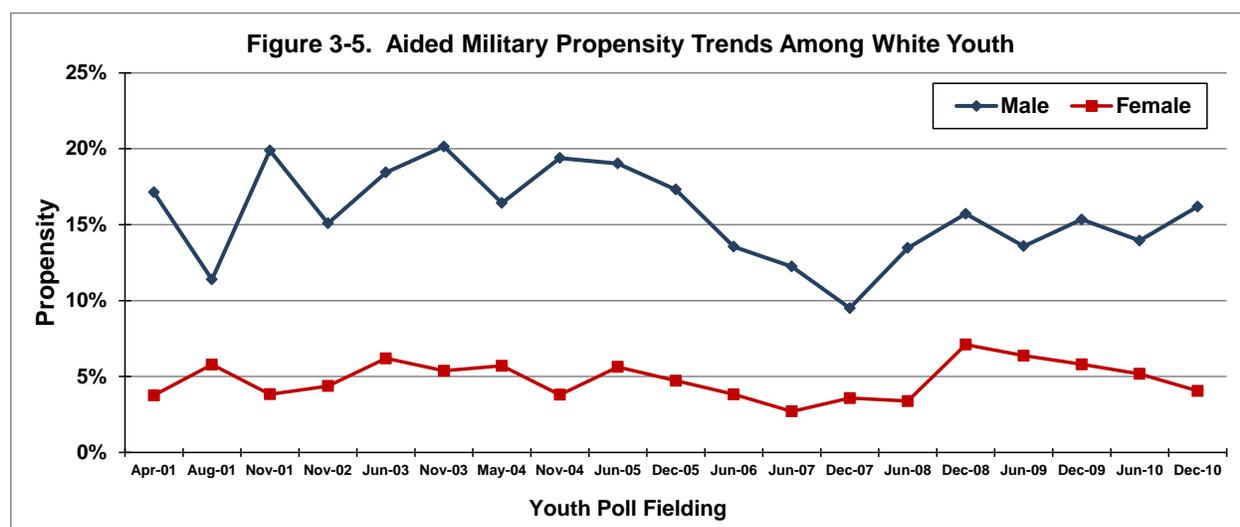


Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

White Youth Propensity

Figure 3-5 shows aided military propensity trends among White youth. Given that approximately 60% of youth are White,^v it is not surprising that trends in aided propensity among White youth closely resemble trends among all youth. Among White males, aided propensity fluctuated from 2001 through 2004, and from June 2005 to December 2007, it declined. Aided propensity among White males saw considerable growth in June and December 2008 and remained relatively stable through December 2010.

Aided military propensity among White females remained relatively stable from April 2001 to June 2005 with approximately 5% of White females reporting that they would “definitely” or “probably” serve. However, aided propensity among White females steadily declined between June 2005 and June 2007, decreasing an average of 1.5 percentage points per year. In December 2007 and June 2008, aided propensity among White females remained relatively low and stable. In December 2008, aided propensity among White females increased significantly, reaching a historically high level, and since then has steadily declined through December 2010.

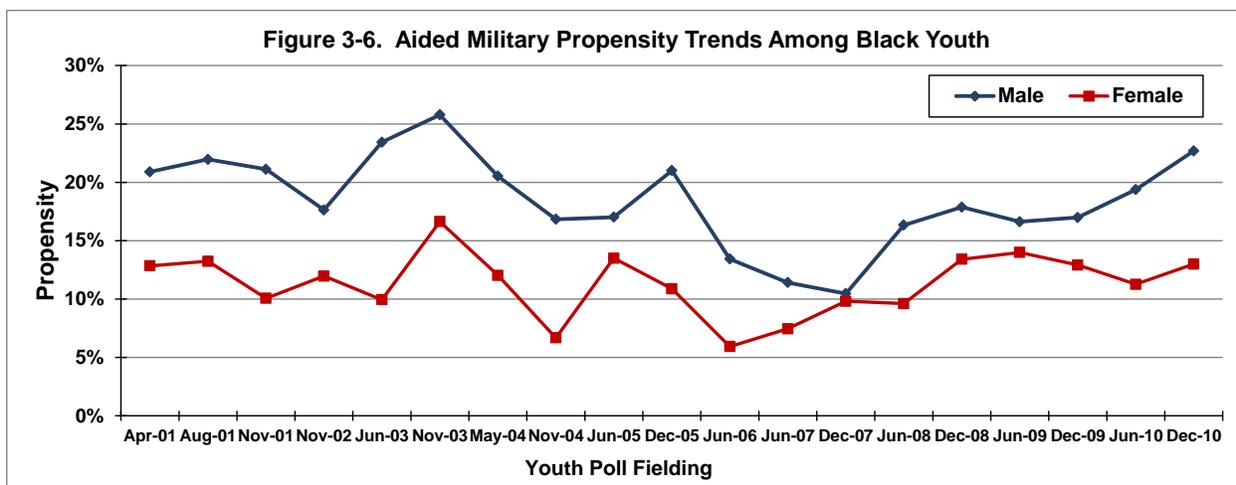


Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

Black Youth Propensity

Figure 3-6 shows aided military propensity trends among Black youth. In the early 2000s, aided propensity among Black males appeared to be on the rise and reached a historic high in November 2003. However, between November 2003 and December 2007, aided propensity among Black males declined at an average rate of 3.7 percentage points a year. Aided propensity among Black males increased by approximately 6 percentage points in June 2008 and remained relatively stable through 2009. Since June 2009, aided propensity among Black males has gradually increased.

Aided military propensity among Black females remained relatively stable between 2001 and 2003. Following a similar trend to Black males, aided propensity among Black females declined at an average annual rate of 4.1 percentage points between November 2003 and June 2006. From June 2007 through December 2008, aided propensity among Black females steadily increased and has remained relatively stable through December 2010.

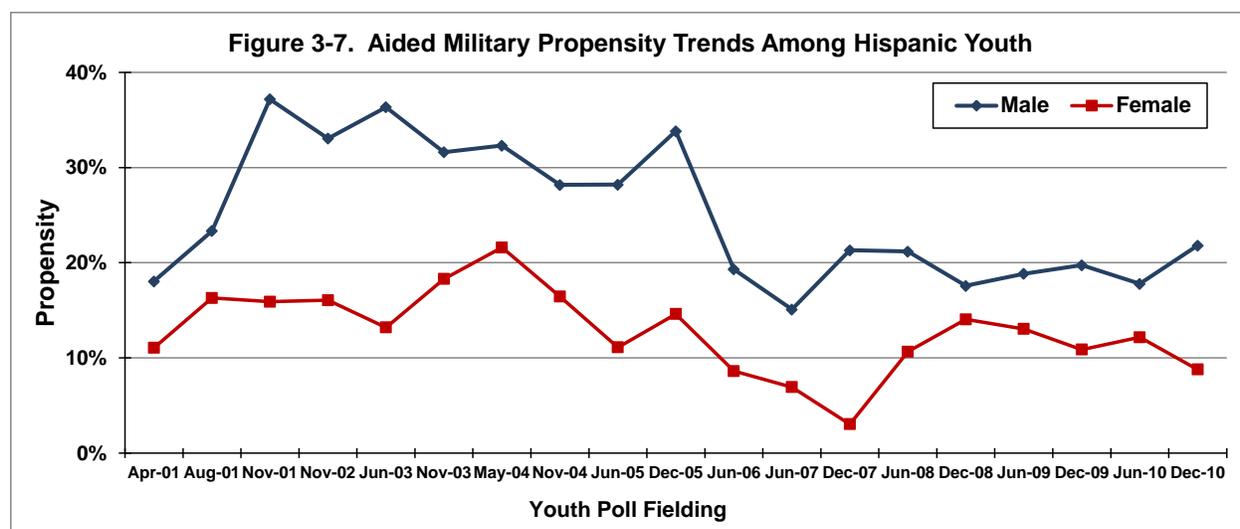


Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

Hispanic Youth Propensity

Figure 3-7 shows aided military propensity trends among Hispanic youth. Among Hispanic males, aided military propensity increased at an average rate of 8.4 percentage points a year from April 2001 through June 2003. Aided propensity among Hispanic males remained high until June 2006, when it declined by 15 percentage points. It has not significantly improved since then and remained relatively stable through June 2010. In December 2010 aided propensity among Hispanic males increased 4 percentage points.

Aided military propensity among Hispanic females increased from April 2001 through May 2004 at an average annual rate of 3.4 percentage points. Then, Hispanic female propensity declined sharply, at an average rate of 5.2 percentage points per year between May 2004 and December 2007. Aided propensity among Hispanic females increased by approximately 8 percentage points in June 2008 and has remained stable since then.



Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

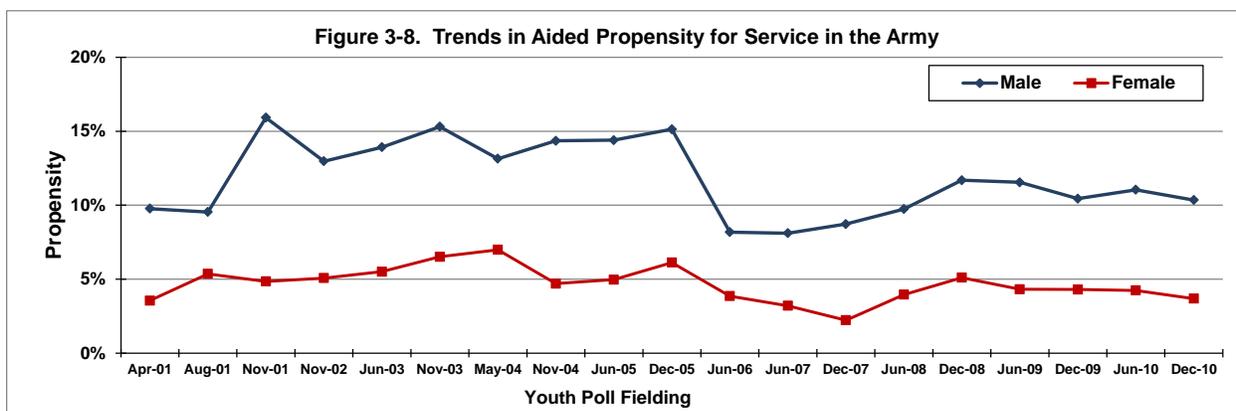
Service-Specific Propensity

Figures 3-8 through 3-12 provide trends in aided propensity for each Service. These trends are generally similar to the trends observed for aided military propensity.

Army Propensity

Figure 3-8 shows trends in aided propensity for the Army. Aided Army propensity among males increased significantly in November 2001 and then stayed relatively stable through 2005. Aided Army propensity among males significantly decreased in June 2006 but gradually increased until December 2008, after which it stabilized.

Aided Army propensity among females increased gradually through May 2004 and then declined through December 2007. It has increased since then and has remained stable through December 2010.

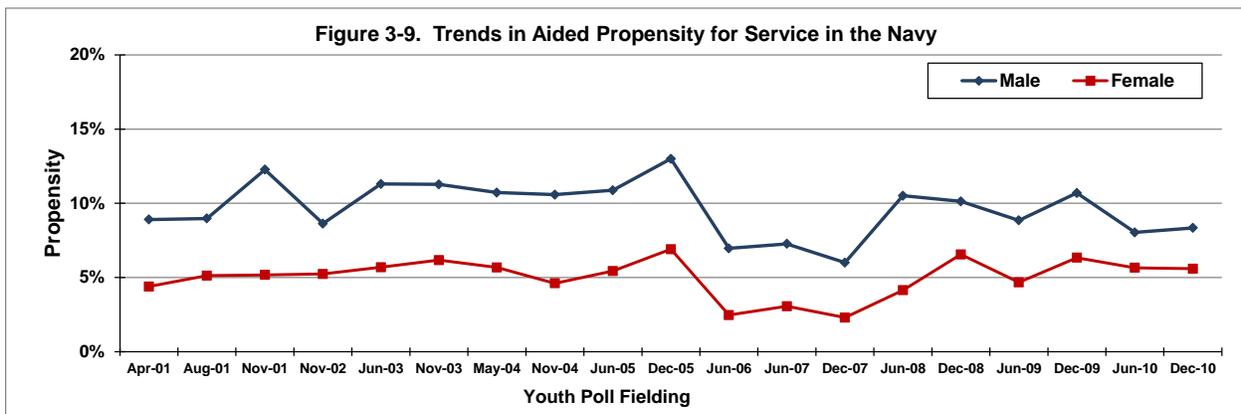


Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

Navy Propensity

Figure 3-9 shows trends in aided propensity for the Navy. Similar to the trends seen with the Army, aided Navy propensity among males increased sharply in November 2001 and then remained relatively stable through 2005. In June 2006, it significantly decreased. Aided Navy propensity among males rebounded significantly in June 2008, almost doubling from December 2007 levels. In June 2010, aided Navy propensity among males declined by 3 percentage points, but was statistically unchanged and has remained stable in December 2010.

Aided Navy propensity among females remained relatively stable from 2001 through 2005. After a significant decrease in June 2006, it remained stable through 2007 and then nearly tripled with significant increases in June 2008 and December 2008. Aided Navy propensity among females remained stable through December 2010.

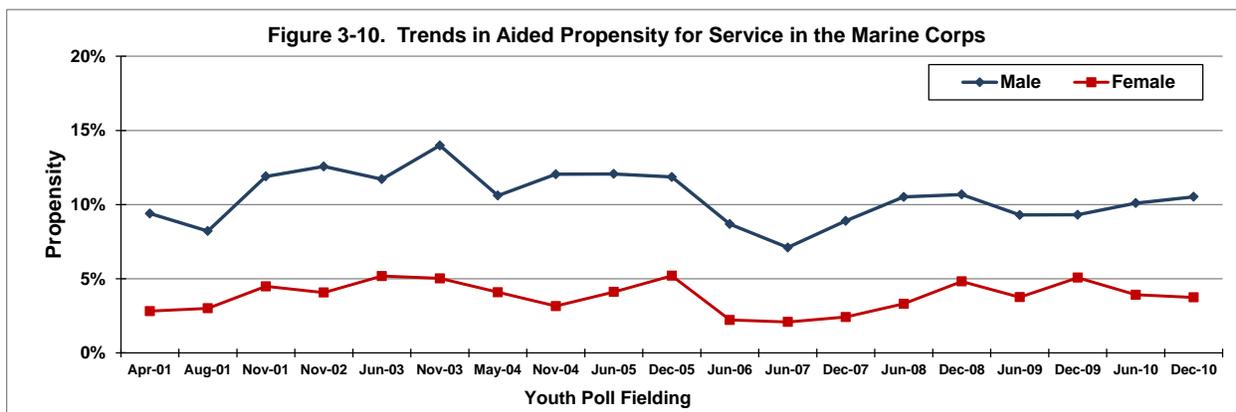


Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

Marine Corps Propensity

Figure 3-10 shows trends in aided propensity for the Marine Corps. Aided Marine Corps propensity among males increased steadily from 2001 through November 2003. Beginning in May 2004, aided propensity began a downward trend that continued through June 2007. Modest increases occurred in December 2007 and June 2008, returning aided Marine Corps propensity among males to more normal levels. It has since remained stable.

Aided propensity for the Marine Corps among females remained relatively stable from 2001 through 2005. It decreased significantly in June 2006 but steadily increased through December 2008 and remained stable through December 2010.

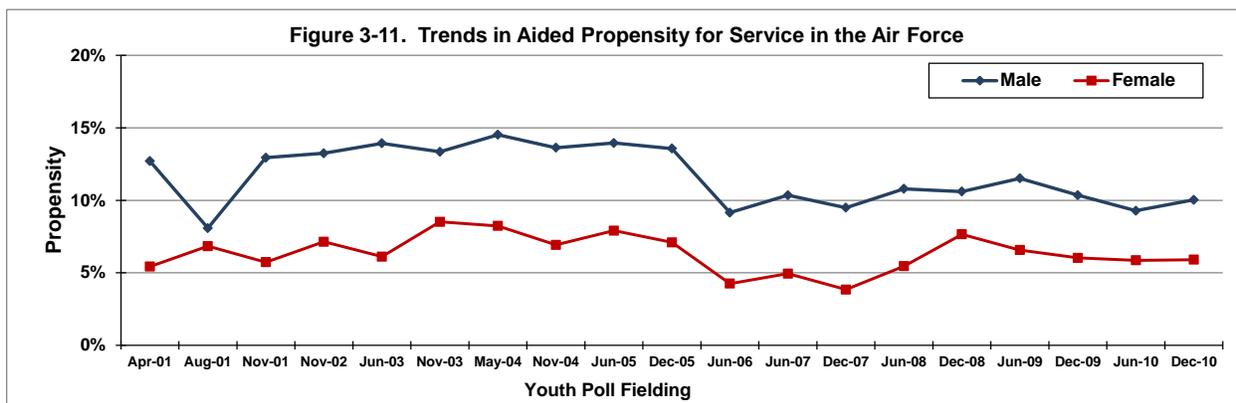


Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

Air Force Propensity

Figure 3-11 shows trends for aided propensity for the Air Force. Aided Air Force propensity among males significantly decreased in August 2001 before rebounding in November 2001 and holding steady through December 2005. Aided Air Force propensity among males declined sharply in June 2006 and has yet to significantly rebound.

Aided propensity for the Air Force among females increased gradually from 2001 through 2003, began trending downward in 2004, and decreased significantly in June 2006. Aided Air Force propensity among females showed modest increases in 2008 and remained stable through December 2010.

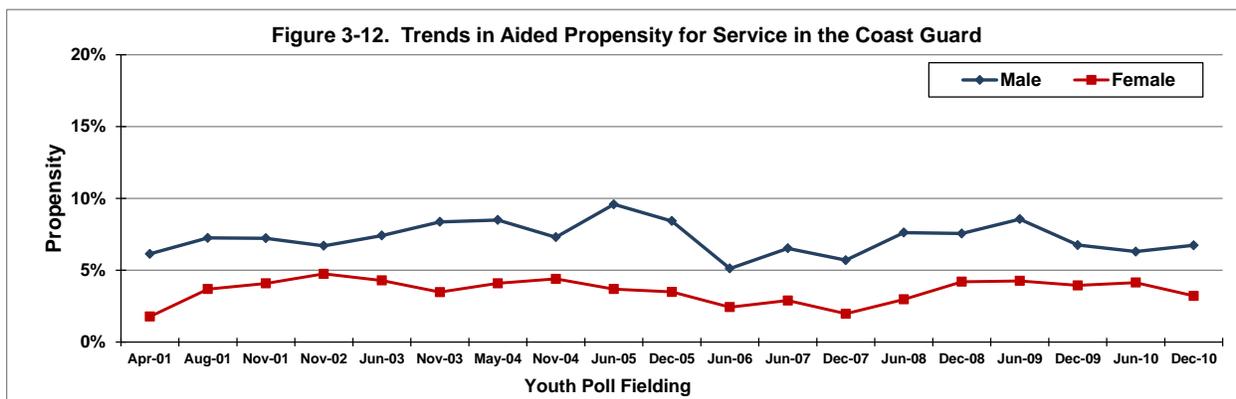


Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

Coast Guard Propensity

Figure 3-12 shows trends in aided propensity for the Coast Guard. Aided Coast Guard propensity among males increased gradually from 2001 through 2005. It significantly declined in June 2006 and increased gradually through June 2009. Aided Coast Guard propensity among males somewhat decreased in December 2009 and has since then remained stable.

Aided propensity for the Coast Guard among females has consistently hovered between 2% and 4%. It increased significantly in August 2001, remained relatively stable through 2004, and began trending downward from June 2005 to December 2007. Aided Coast Guard propensity among female youth began to gradually increase in 2008 and continued to do so in December 2010.



Source: 2001–2010 Youth Polls

Summary

Propensity—defined in the Youth Polls as the percentage of youth stating they will “definitely” or “probably” enter military service in the next few years—is a valid indicator of enlistment behavior. Youth who say they are likely to join are more likely to do so than are those who say they are unlikely to join.

Historically, propensity for military service dropped following Operation Desert Storm and continued declining through 2001.⁸ Beginning in late 2001, propensity among males increased sharply as a reaction to the 9/11 attacks. Propensity remained high until June 2006 when significant declines in propensity occurred. In 2008, propensity showed signs of rebounding; however, estimates from December 2009 have remained relatively stable through December 2010.

Examining data from the May 2004 to December 2010 Youth Polls reveals that propensity was related to several demographic factors:

- Men showed higher levels of propensity than did women.
- Propensity declined with age.
- Propensity declined with increased education.
- Propensity was related to perceived employment prospects:
 - Propensity was higher among unemployed youth than among employed youth.
 - Propensity was higher among youth who believed that it is difficult to get a job in their local community than among youth who believed that this is not difficult.
- Propensity was highest among Hispanics.
 - Propensity among Black male youth was slightly higher than propensity among White male youth. Propensity among Black female youth, however, was substantially higher than propensity among White female youth.
 - Propensity among White and Asian male youth was roughly equal, but was slightly higher among Asian female youth than White female youth.
- Propensity varied by census division with propensity being relatively high in the South Atlantic, Pacific, Mountain, East South Central, and West South Central divisions and relatively low in the New England division.

Propensity for military service was not tied to a specific Service for the majority of youth, as most youth who expressed propensity for military service expressed propensity for multiple Services.

⁸ It is important to note that these historical trends pertain to propensity for general military service (aided) and do not entirely hold for specific racial and ethnic groups or for different Active Duty Services, Reserve Components, or the National Guard.

ⁱ Orvis, B. R., Sastry, N., & McDonald, L. L. (1996). *Military Recruiting Outlook: Recent Trends in Enlistment Propensity and Conversion of Potential Enlisted Supply* (MR-677-A/OSD). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

ⁱⁱ Orvis, B. R., Gahart, M. T., & Ludwig, A. K. (1992). *Validity and Usefulness of Enlistment Intention Information* (R-3775-FMP). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

ⁱⁱⁱ Stone, B. M., Turner, K. L., & Wiggins, V. L. (1993). *Population Propensity Measurement Model: Final Analysis Report*. Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center.

^{iv} Ford, M., Griepentrog, B., Helland, K., & Marsh, S. (2009). *The Strength and Variability of the Military Propensity-Enlistment Relationship: Evidence from 1995–2003* (JAMRS Report No. 2009-005). Arlington, VA: Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies.

^v U.S. Census Bureau (2008). *National Population Projections: Released 2008 (Based on Census 2000)*. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/files/nation/download/NP2008_D1.xls

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