



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Contact Information

Lisa Waddell
1700 N. Congress, Suite 800
Austin, Texas 78711-2277
512-936-1910 / Fax 512-475-2395
lisa.waddell@tvc.state.tx.us

Press Release

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Texas Veterans Commission assists VA to reduce disability claims backlog

AUSTIN – Gov. Rick Perry recently announced a new plan to help veterans in Texas expedite their benefits claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The governor's office will be partnering with the Texas Veterans Commission to fund two new Claims Processing Assistance Teams in an effort to reduce the more than 39,000 veterans' claims pending at the VA regional offices in Waco and Houston.

Claims backlogs have delayed decisions on veterans' disability compensation and medical care, causing physical and economic hardship for veterans and their families. For every month these claims are pending, TVC estimates a delay of nearly \$37 million in payments to Texas veterans.

The CPAT initiative will draw upon TVC's expertise in helping veterans get more benefits with less confusion and their successful track record in working on special initiatives with the VA.

In 2008, TVC and the VA participated in a pilot project that significantly reduced delays in claims processing. While it took the VA around 132 days to develop a claim or gather information to prepare the claim for the rating process, TVC counselors were able to assist and reduce the development time to less than 11 days.

"The pilot project was a successful experience that showed how TVC was able to team up with VA to assist more veterans and reduce the time they had to wait to receive certain benefits," says Jim Richman, TVC Director of Claims Representation and Counseling. "At TVC, we routinely help veterans who have been waiting three, four and even five years to get benefits from the VA. This new funding means that Texas veterans will not have to wait that long to get what they need."

For more information about TVC, visit www.tvc.state.tx.us.

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