

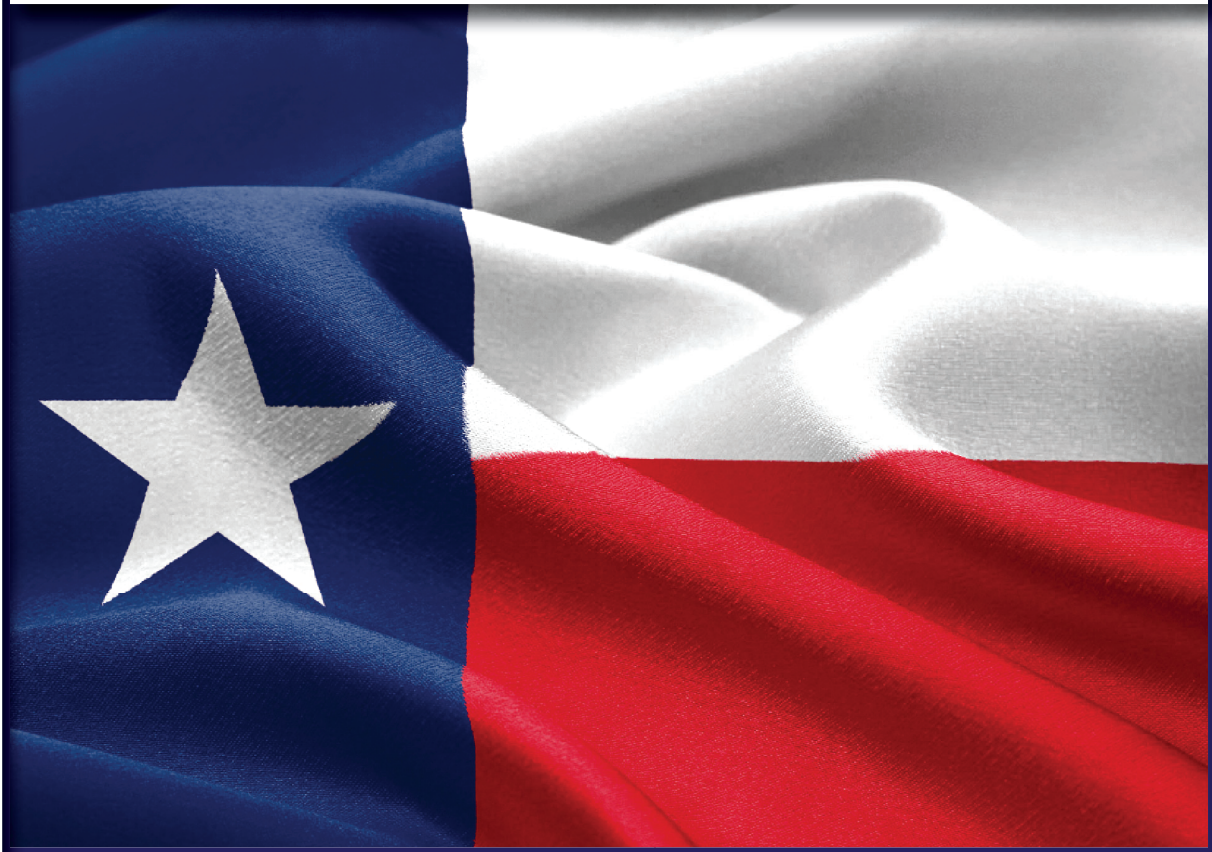


**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2021 - 2025

Together Planning, Together Growing... for the Future





TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

STRATEGIC PLAN

Fiscal Years 2021 - 2025

Submitted to the

**Governor's Office of Budget,
Planning Policy, and the
Legislative Budget Board**


June 2020


Member

Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Chair
Daniel P. Moran, Vice Chair
Kevin Barber, Secretary
Laura Koerner, Member
Kimberlee Shaneyfelt, Member

Date of Term

December 31, 2019
December 31, 2019
December 31, 2021
December 31, 2023
December 31, 2023

Signed: 
Thomas Palladino, Executive Director

Signed: 
Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Chair



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

"Helping Veterans Starts Here"

Mission

The mission of the Texas Veterans Commission is to advocate for and provide superior service to veterans that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas veterans, their families, and survivors.

Philosophy

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) will:

- **Provide quality service through nine program areas: Claims, Veterans Employment Services, Veterans Education, Communications and Veterans Outreach, Veteran Entrepreneur, Health Care Advocacy, Veterans Mental Health, Women Veterans, and the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.**
- **Provide quality services through a dedicated, professional, and well-trained workforce.**
- **Connect with all veterans across the state, and tailor its service to meet veterans' needs and the needs of their families and survivors.**
- **Coordinate efforts between TVC's nine programs, and among federal, state, and local government agencies and other veteran-service organizations.**
- **Ensure that Texas veterans achieve and maintain the highest quality of life and well-being through its advocacy and dedication to veterans' services.**
- **Provide exemplary customer service to veterans, their families, and survivors through TVC's core values of Professionalism, Integrity, Compassion, Commitment, and Teamwork.**

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Agency Goals and Action Plan

Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits



GOAL A

The Texas Veterans Commission will assist veterans with receiving benefits and services through effective advocacy and training within its nine program areas.

**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

CLAIMS DEPARTMENT

TVC Claims Department provides one-on-one personalized assistance to Texas veterans as well as their families and survivors in obtaining all federal benefits and entitlements they are eligible to receive from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This is accomplished through claims benefit representation, State Strike Force teams, Fully Developed Claims (FDC) teams and robust training programs.

Claims Benefit Advisors (CBAs) are accredited by the VA to represent veterans throughout the process of applying for veterans' benefits. Claims Benefit Advisors must possess a high degree of competency in the medical field and be experts in interpreting VA administrative law. The Department continues to work to maximize the compensation and pension benefits received by veterans and survivors with the minimum staff needed. In fiscal year 2019, the program brought \$4.9 billion into the state of Texas through recovered benefits for veterans and their families. This was accomplished by representing 283,417 veterans with 149.6 full-time employees and 264 Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs) and their assistants. In 2015, the Claims Department reorganized into four districts, from the previous two VA regions, to decentralize program services in the state and ensure equal coverage and efficiency in the provision of services to Texas veterans. In fiscal year 2020, the Department increased its rural presence by adding nineteen Claims Benefit Advisors, which opened ten new full-time offices throughout the state, bringing the total full-time offices to 48 and four part-time offices. The Claims Department is committed to achieving its performance measures, and through continuous education, remaining up-to-date with VA rules and regulations.

With the utilization of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) website and increased use of agency social media platforms and traditional media, the Claims Department will strengthen its presence to ensure veterans, their families, and survivors obtain benefits they have earned and deserve.

Claims Assistance

Claims Benefit Advisors assist veterans by filing benefit claims with the VA, including service-connected disability compensation, dependency, indemnity compensation, and non-service-connected pension claims. Claims Benefit Advisors will continue to file fully developed claims (FDCs) with the VA for expedited rating decisions. To maximize the number of FDC claims filed in Texas, FDC advisors are located in offices throughout the state.

In representing veterans in the claims' process, Claims Benefit Advisors:

- Interview veterans and their families concerning their potential claims and benefits;
- Review, consider, and advocate for laws and regulations that apply to the facts of the individual's claim;
- Request and compile medical information and other evidence necessary to demonstrate the applicant's entitlement to the benefits claimed;
- Prepare, submit, and track the application filed with the VA for benefits;
- Advocate on behalf of the veteran throughout the application process;
- Represent appeals' claimants before the Board of Veterans Appeals;
- Represent service members who are being processed through the Physical Evaluation Board;
- Prepare and submit claims for vocational rehabilitation;
- Assist institutionalized patients who are receiving mental health care;
- Assist nursing home residents and veterans' dependents in applying for VA pension or compensation benefits;
- Assist incarcerated veterans with their benefit applications; and
- Provide advice to Texas' Veterans Treatment Courts on VA benefits and entitlements.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

Case Management System

TVC acquired and implemented the VetraSpec electronic case management system in 2017. The decision to transition from a paper-based system to VetraSpec has proved invaluable, as it has allowed all claims for benefits to be submitted directly to the VA electronically, virtually eliminating the need for paper applications and the need to retain and maintain paper copies of confidential evidence submitted by Texas veterans in support of their claims. Further, VetraSpec permits CBAs and VCSOs to track the status of any claim where TVC has Power of Attorney (POA) and to establish veterans' POAs instantly, significantly decreasing the effort and time to submit and process VA claims. The decreased clerical requirements have permitted CBAs and their support staff to assist more veterans than before, when TVC was tied to a paper-based system. Additionally, the new system allows remote access to VA claims' status and provides access to veterans' POA from any computer with internet access. This not only increases efficiency, but it also allows Claims personnel to be more mobile and accessible to Texas veterans. The transition was especially integral in enabling TVC to continue efficient and seamless services to veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic and state-wide shutdown.

State Strike Force Teams

The State Strike Force team works to reduce the federal backlog of veterans' claims for disability benefits. The team also performs rating reviews to ensure that the veteran receives a rating commensurate with the evidence submitted with the claim. The team works in VA regional offices located in Waco and Houston where they also complete a review of appeals while reviewing files for accuracy. In addition, the team will assist veterans and CBAs/VCSOs in preparing and requesting evidence necessary for claims and appeals.

Fully-Developed Claims (FDC) Teams

The TVC Fully Developed Claims (FDC) Team continues to file fully developed claims (FDC) to the Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA) for expedited rating decisions. They are located in the four TVC Claims districts and the Waco and Houston VA Regional Offices, the team completes a review of claims to ensure they meet VBA standards to be filed as FDC.

Veteran County Service Officer (VCSO) Training

TVC is statutorily required to provide annual VA accreditation and certification training to the network of VCSOs. VCSOs may utilize TVC's training to meet their statutory training requirements at no cost; however, VCSOs have the option to use VA-approved third party training to meet statutory training requirements.

In a cost-effective manner, TVC will continue to offer initial training to new VCSOs, and annual certification and accreditation training through regional, in-person and online training. The Claims Department constantly evaluates training programs and seeks new innovative ways to offer more effective training.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Veterans Employment Services (VES) assists veterans with finding long-term and meaningful employment through job matching services and one-on-one job coaching. Veterans Employment offers assistance to veterans at American Job Centers, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) facilities, and military installations in more than 75 cities throughout Texas. Services are funded through the Department of Labor Veteran Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS), Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), and state-level general revenue appropriations.

Veterans Employment works in conjunction with the Texas Workforce Commission to provide priority service to eligible veterans and qualified individuals. Staff is specially trained to assist veterans with preparing job applications and résumés, performing job matches and job searches, and providing a variety of other employment services.

VES's primary goals are to match qualified veteran job-seekers with the best career opportunities available and to fulfill employers' needs for a qualified workforce, which contributes significantly to economic growth in Texas. Increasing awareness and expanding career opportunities through apprenticeship programs aboard military installations will assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce.

Veterans Employment Services executes three major functions:

1. Veterans Career Resources

The VES Division provides Veterans Career Resources through 111 Veteran Career Advisors (VCAs) under DOL-VETS JVSG funding. Veteran Career Advisors are tasked with providing individualized career services and ensure veterans are job-ready. Emphasis and priority is offered to qualified disabled veterans and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor.

Services provided include:

- Job coaching;
- Supportive service referrals;
- Transition assistance;
- Résumé and application assistance;
- Job search technique training;
- Job posting referrals;
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit pre-certification;
- Job Clubs;
- Post-employment follow-up;
- VA Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Orientations; and
- Warrior Transition Unit briefings.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

2. Veterans Recruitment

The VES Division provides Veterans Recruitment through 53 Veteran Employment Liaisons (VELs) under DOL-VETS JVSG funding. Veterans Employer Liaisons (VEL) facilitate employment, training, and placement services for veterans in the state of Texas. VELs promote the benefits of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups.

Services provided include:

- Veterans preference program assistance;
- Career fairs;
- Hiring events;
- Hiring authorities' training;
- Job posting development;
- TVC Employment Services liaison assistance; and
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit pre-certification.

3. Family Employment

VES provides Family Employment services through two state-level funded positions who provide job coaching to spouses, family members, and caregivers of active duty service members, and veterans who are not eligible for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program-funded services.

Staff offers eligible job-seekers services including:

- Job search techniques training;
- Résumé and application assistance;
- Job posting referrals;
- Supportive service referrals; and
- Post-employment follow-up.

VELs continue to build partnerships with employers, nonprofit organizations, and organizations that provide services to veterans and their families. This collaborative approach will capitalize on core functions and services to veterans and reduces costs to taxpayers, while maximizing performance measures through the reduction of redundancies and non-core functions.

The organizational structure of VES creates a distinct chain of command with excellent span of control over the three functions. The VES Director and Operations Manager, located at TVC headquarters in Austin, provide guidance and direction to five district managers, who are geographically assigned to manage frontline staff in a designated portion of the state. Each manager is supported by a district supervisor who performs the direct daily supervisory and quality control duties. Supplementing the supervisors are coaches who have daily mentoring, training, and coaching responsibilities.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

VETERANS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Veterans Education Department (VetsEd) is responsible for the oversight and administration of two programs focused on veteran education benefits and programs:

1. Federal Benefits: As a partner with the Department of Veteran Affairs, VetsEd functions as the State Approving Agency (SAA) and provides opportunities for VA beneficiaries to obtain training and education under the GI Bill®.
2. State Benefits and Veteran Services: As a department within the Texas Veterans Commission, VetsEd aids public institutions of higher education and veterans or family members with:
 - the administration of the Hazlewood Tuition Exemption;
 - the administration of the Education Coordinator Program; and
 - the administration of the Veterans Education Excellence Award Program.

Federal Benefits

The VetsEd department serves as the SAA for the state of Texas and works to maximize the education and training opportunities for eligible veterans and family members. The SAA reviews and approves university, college, on-the-job training, apprenticeship, vocational and technical training programs for delivery under the GI Bill®. These approvals are aligned with the requirements and allowances provided in Title 38 of the United State Code and applicable state laws for offering such programs.

The SAA program receives federal funding through an annual agreement with Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), Education Services. Each year the SAA's performance is reviewed by a Joint Peer Review Group, comprised of VA representatives and SAA representatives selected across the nation, which provides a rating of each state's performance.

The SAA's roles and responsibilities include:

- Reviewing programs of education and training for alignment with the requirements of Title 38, United States Code; appropriate accrediting and licensing bodies; the financial stability of the educational institution or training facility; and the quality of the training program.
- Approving programs of education or training within the state, allowing eligible persons to utilize GI Bill® benefits.
- Evaluating institution policies and procedures to determine compliance with federal and state rules and statutes associated with the GI Bill® and veteran education benefits.
- Conducting on-site visits to determine quality and compliance; providing technical assistance to certifying officials and responsible parties; and ensuring compliance with federal and state criteria for operation and as a post-secondary school or training facility.
- Training school officials on policies and procedures associated with the certification of VA education benefits; advocating for and aiding veterans and families; and participating in outreach events that create awareness of and interest in providing programs under the GI Bill®.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

State Benefits and Veteran Services

Hazlewood Tuition Exemption

The VetsEd department oversees and assists with the administration of the Hazlewood tuition exemption, which provides eligible Texas veterans, spouses, and children with up to 150 hours of tuition exemption at public institutions of higher education (IHEs) within the state.

Applicants can obtain an exemption application either from the IHE or by visiting the Texas Veterans Commission website, which provides instructions and resources for submitting the Hazlewood exemption application and supporting documentation to a public institution of higher education as part of the institution's admissions application process.

The Veterans Education Department provides technical assistance to public institutions of higher education with the review and evaluation of military service records (DD-214s), the use of VA educational and Hazlewood benefits, and the reporting of Hazlewood exemption awards and utilization by those institutions.

Education Coordinator Program

Education Coordinators engage institutions of higher education throughout Texas to create and enhance awareness of veteran educational programs and benefits; encourage the use of those benefits; and create programs to provide a variety of veteran-focused services and assistance to veterans (e.g., employment and claims assistance services).

The coordinators assist IHEs by sharing information, resources, and best practices as it pertains to policies, plans, and procedures that create opportunities for success of veterans and their family members in their academic careers.

Coordinators further assist in developing and maintaining veteran-focused support programs with IHEs and community partners. They create awareness of veteran education benefits, needs, resources, and successes as partners in publicity campaigns, community outreach and resource events, and engage education officers at military installations. Education Coordinators collaborate with institutional agency, and community partners to provide education and ancillary services in a supportive environment.

Veterans Education Excellence Award Program

The TVC administers an award program to recognize public IHEs that provide exemplary services to veteran students and which contribute to the students' overall academic success.

Eligible IHEs are evaluated on existence and quality of twelve criteria associated with providing education and delivering services to veterans and their family members. The criteria include evaluation of services available to veteran students to include admission and enrollment policies; availability of gathering and study spaces; an identified point of contact within the IHE; new student orientation; academic support services; mental health and disability services; housing policies; faculty and staff training as it relates to veteran student concerns; career services; student organizations; and U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs work study programs.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

Institutes of higher education may submit a self-nomination application for recognition between November and April of each fiscal year. Nomination applications will be reviewed by an awards committee comprised of TVC staff members. One of three levels of recognition may be awarded: Gold Level for Distinguished Services; Silver Award for Superior Services; or Bronze Level for Excellent Services.

¹ GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <http://benefits.va/gibill>.

COMMUNICATIONS AND VETERANS OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

Communications and Veterans Outreach Department

The Communications and Veterans Outreach Department provides awareness, engagement, outreach, and resource information of services provided by the TVC and Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs). The Outreach Department aims to ensure Texas veterans and their family members, and survivors are aware of the benefits and services earned through military service.

The Communications and Veterans Outreach Department maximizes the reach and return on investment by utilizing the following efforts; 1) Community Outreach Campaign; 2) Media Relations; 3) Social Media Platforms; 4) Electronic and Printed Publications; 5) Outreach Events; and 6) a joint call center operated in partnership with the Veterans Land Board. These efforts are cost-effective methods that allow for rapid communication and engagement.

1. Community Outreach Campaign:

- Collaborate with, and/or contract with, community-based or nonprofit organizations, as well as to solicit and accept gifts and grants to fund the community outreach campaign.

2. Media Relations:

- Plan, create, and distribute press releases to the veteran population and the general public via national, state, and local media channels.
- Coordinate and conduct media interviews via national, state, and local media channels.
- Plan, create, and distribute regional radio programming that includes relevant veteran topics, veteran benefits and services, and upcoming veteran-centric events.

3. Social Media:

- Utilize social media platforms to disseminate relevant veteran information, veteran benefits and services, and upcoming veteran-centric events via Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

4. Print and Electronic Publications:

- Create and distribute a monthly electronic newsletter that includes relevant veteran topics, veteran benefits and services, and upcoming veteran-centric events.
- Create and distribute an annual report with emphasis on agency successes including legislative and policy updates that affect federal, state, and local veteran benefits and services.
- Create and distribute print and electronic guides of state veterans' benefits and burial booklets in even numbered years to VCSO's and to state and federal military installations in Texas.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

5. Outreach Events:

- Coordinate and participate in outreach events including Veterans Benefit Fairs, state agency collaborative events, institutes of higher learning fairs, legislator-sponsored town hall meetings, veterans' service organization events, and local community events across the State of Texas.

6. Call Center:

- Support the Veterans Land Board Joint Call Center through funding and training to connect veterans with information regarding the Texas Veterans Commission's programs and services.

VETERANS ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program assists veterans with starting and growing their businesses by providing guidance to veteran entrepreneurs and business owners through conferences, seminars, and training workshops with federal, state, and local communities.

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program staff provides veterans with business tools, resources and direct support that can be leveraged toward business success. The program continuously observes the Texas market landscape and creates programs that enhance the scope of services it delivers to veterans. A team of Veteran Business Consultants travel to targeted regions of the state to conduct and facilitate training sessions and informational seminars as needed. The Veteran Entrepreneur Program enlists regional program coordinators across the state to promote and support veteran entrepreneurs and business education through training and mentorship.

Veteran Entrepreneurship Outreach and Advocacy

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program staff serve as a liaison for veteran entrepreneurs and business owners in the areas of monitoring and researching the need for benefits and services. Program staff advocate for veteran entrepreneurship to increase public awareness about the needs of veteran business owners, and recommend legislative initiatives and policies at the local, state, and national levels in addressing issues that impact veteran entrepreneurs. As appropriate, the

Entrepreneur Program evaluates the effectiveness of the commission's efforts to assist veteran entrepreneurs and provides recommendations to leadership to incorporate issues concerning entrepreneurs and business owners into the agency's plan for assisting veterans in securing benefits and services.

Bridge Resources

To foster and promote the growth of the veteran entrepreneurs, the Veteran Entrepreneur Program focuses on connecting veterans with localized resources, opportunities, information, and the tools necessary for the successful launch or sustainability of their businesses. The program collaborates with federal, state, and private agencies that provide services to veteran entrepreneurs and business owners to allow veterans to make use of those services. The Veteran Entrepreneur Program provides guidance to veteran entrepreneurs and business owners through conferences, seminars, and training workshops with federal, state, and private agencies and promotes events and activities that recognize or honor veteran entrepreneurs and business owners. The program works with local, state, federal and private agencies to identify diversity-driven opportunities that promote minority-owned business ownership, reduce disparity gaps, and improve economic development.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

Business Mentorship

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program's veteran business consultants provide one-on-one business mentorship to assist and educate veterans in the field of entrepreneurship. Business consultants may coach veterans on access to capital, marketing, government contracting, copyright and patent support, and mergers and acquisitions that are shaped by industry expectations. The veteran business consultants work in partnership with state, federal and private resources on individual cases to co-mentor and develop business skills and education for the veteran entrepreneur and business owner.

Modern Technology

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program seeks opportunities to improve and update the current Salesforce customer relationship management system to reshape data collection and reporting metrics that support qualitative reports. Upgrades to the current system will consist of automating workflows as appropriate to reduce redundancy and simplify user interface, with the eventual goal of establishing a virtual community for external users such as veteran entrepreneurs, business owners and partner resources.

HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY PROGRAM

The Health Care Advocacy Program (HCAP) provides Texas veterans seeking health care at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) clinics and hospitals with alternatives through which patients can seek solutions to problems, concerns, and unmet needs. In cooperation with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care providers and support staff, HCAP personnel work with the VA health care staff to resolve patient concerns and prevent issues by identifying existing and potential problems and suggesting solutions or alternative options. HCAP staff also assist with congressional inquiries and public relations to increase community and veteran awareness of VHA health care resources and services.

The Health Care Advocacy Program is completing its third year of productivity with fourteen (14) authorized full-time positions. The program has established sound performance measures and implemented a continuous improvement strategy. HCAP executes training on a continuous basis to maintain compliance with VA updates, rule changes, and regulations across the health care spectrum. HCAP continues to evaluate the procedures in place, and search for innovative ways to offer more effective and efficient training.

Advocacy

The HCAP staff addresses health care concerns by working with VHA health care providers and support staff throughout the medical centers to resolve patient concerns and prevent issues. Advocates assist patients in understanding their rights and responsibilities. Staff are strategically positioned in VA facilities across the state of Texas to address issues involving VHA resources. The VHA has provided office space, equipment, and IT support within its facilities free of charge. Upon presentation of an appropriately completed VA Form 10-5345 (Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information), the VHA grants access to medical records, information, and any pertinent data required to resolve the veteran's (or family member's) complaint. All VHA personnel are directed to cooperate with the efforts of HCAP personnel to the best of their abilities. HCAP assists veterans in obtaining health care services within the local community as well. This may include non-VA health care providers as designated in programs such as the Veterans Choice Program.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

When patients must secure or change appointments, HCAP helps guide the patient through the extensive operations of the medical center and the specific treatment teams, recognizing any discrepancies or inconsistencies which exist in securing or changing said appointments. When veterans have complaints and grievances, HCAP advocates for patients and those who speak on behalf of veterans.

HCAP works to resolve veteran's VA health care related billing issues by working with the VA to correct instances of improper billing, and by assisting community care medical providers with delayed payments. HCAP educates veterans and their families on their responsibilities, if the VA is billing the veteran for health care services.

HCAP engages in public relations projects to increase community and veteran awareness of health care services, resources, benefits, and entitlements. HCAP staff connect with and use local resources to maximize impact and improve veteran health care outcomes.

Prescription Assistance and Testing

Pharmacy and medication assistance are provided to veterans, their families, and representatives by recognizing and removing institutional barriers to health care. HCAP assists patients in obtaining the correct pharmaceutical formulary recommended to address specific health care needs. HCAP ensures the veteran receives appropriate medical tests and lab work from local health care teams within medical systems as part of the development of a long-term care plan to optimize health.

When the VA does not provide a particular medical service, the veteran can be seen by a community provider. These services are fee-based. HCAP helps coordinate these services and payments for veterans receiving non-VA care for emergent and non-emergent medical situations. HCAP educates the veteran on the patient responsibilities to ensure that any billing for non-VA emergency care of non-service-connected conditions are submitted to the appropriate VA billing center.

Community Referrals

HCAP also provides the veteran with community referrals for non-health care related issues, connecting the patient with veteran advocates, service providers, and stakeholders. Advocates will ensure that the veteran has a voice in identifying community goals and resolving issues at the local level, potentially improving service delivery for veterans and their families. HCAP enables veterans to easily identify and reach resources available to them within their local communities. The Health Care Advocacy Program assists veterans and their families in gaining access to health care facilities and resolving patient concerns and issues.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

The Women Veterans Program (WVP) bridges the gap between Texas women veterans and the services and benefits they have earned. The program ensures that the women veterans of Texas have equitable access to federal and state veterans' benefits and services. WVP works to increase support for women veterans throughout Texas by collaborating with federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies that provide services to women veterans.

WVP focuses on increasing awareness of the needs of women veterans and identifies existing resources for women veterans. WVP aims to empower women veterans to expect equitable treatment in the care and services, which they are entitled to and elevate public awareness of the vital roles women veterans have played in our national defense.

No later than November 1st on even numbered years, WVP issues a report on the estimated number of women veterans in the state of Texas, the number of women veterans who contact the commission for assistance, and the number of women veterans who receive assistance from the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), the Texas Workforce Commission, the Department of State Health Services, and other state agencies. Additionally, the report includes any recently identified problems women veterans face, and recommended policy proposals, initiatives, and funding levels to address those problems.

Outreach

The Women Veterans Program informs women veterans about the services and benefits available to them through the Texas Veterans Commission and provides guidance and direction to women veterans applying for grants, benefits, or services including, but not limited to:

- Education (i.e. Hazlewood Act, Montgomery GI Bill®, and Post 9/11 GI Bill®)
- Claims
- Employment
- Health Care Advocacy
- Mental Health, Military Veteran Peer Network, Peer-to-Peer Support; and
- Veteran Entrepreneur Program

Education

The Women Veterans Program, in coordination with federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies, plans and conducts conferences, seminars, training workshops, and state-wide community events to:

- Improve the awareness of women veteran's eligibility for federal and state benefits and services;
- Assess the needs of women veterans with respect to benefits and services; and
- Connect women veterans to those agencies that meet the needs of women veterans.

Recognition

The Women Veterans Program creates public awareness by recognizing and honoring the women veterans of this state and women who serve in the military through various events and outreach to include annual women veteran's community outreach campaigns, and Women Veterans Day events. The events and outreach increase the number of women veterans who identify as a veteran, and improves women veterans' awareness of their eligibility for benefits, services, and opportunities.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD) assists transitioning service members, Texas veterans, their family members, and survivors in accessing mental health care and support. Mental health care and support includes the Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN), licensed mental health professionals, community and faith-based organizations, women and rural veteran mental health-focused organizations/services, and justice-involved veteran services.

The VMHD addresses the issues facing military trauma-affected veterans. Military trauma-affected veterans often have difficulty accessing mental health resources due to factors which may include, but are not limited to:

- Limited awareness and/or limited understanding of the need for mental health services and support;
- Lack of available mental health resources accessible to veterans upon recognition of mental health needs;
- A lack of community awareness of military-related traumas, which may exacerbate veteran mental health conditions.

The VMHD provides military trauma-informed training and technical assistance to peer-to-peer support programs, licensed mental health professionals, community and faith-based organizations, the Texas criminal justice system, and women and rural veteran-serving organizations/services to create greater collaboration, access to, and awareness of mental health resources for veterans.

Military Veteran Peer Network and Peer-to-Peer Support

The VMHD provides training, certification, and technical assistance to the Military Veteran Peer Network's (MVPN) peer service coordinators and their volunteer peers to create a statewide peer-to-peer network of support for military-trauma affected veterans.

Licensed Mental Health Professionals

The VMHD provides training and technical assistance to licensed mental health professionals across Texas to promote military culturally aware mental health services and increase access to clinical mental health services for veterans and their families suffering the effects from military-related traumas.

Community and Faith-Based Organizations

The VMHD provides training and technical assistance to community and faith-based organizations across Texas to promote military culturally aware supportive services and increase access to collaborative, coordinated, and local community-based services for veterans suffering the effects from military-related traumas.

Justice-Involved Veteran Services

The VMHD coordinates military trauma-informed services, through training and technical assistance to agencies and organizations within the Texas criminal justice system, to encourage trauma-informed responses to justice-involved veterans suffering from military-related traumas.

Women and Rural Veteran Mental Health Initiatives

The VMHD provides training and technical assistance to organizations across Texas to promote military culturally aware supportive services and increase access to community-based services for women and rural veterans suffering the effects from military-related traumas.

Agency Goals and Action Plan

Fund Direct Services to Veterans

GOAL B

The Texas Veterans Commission will provide grant funding to community nonprofit organizations and units of government to **fund direct services to veterans** in the areas of General Assistance, Mental Health, Housing, and Veteran Treatment Courts.

**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**

Goal B: Fund Direct Services to Veterans

FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

Fund for Veterans' Assistance Grants

The Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) provides grants to nonprofit organizations, veteran service organizations, posts or organizations of past or present members of the armed forces and units of local government that provide a variety of assistance or mental health services to veterans, their families and surviving spouses with funds from the FVA and other funding provided by the legislature.

The General Assistance Program service categories include:

- **Employment:** This includes job skills and training programs, job search services and other employment-related services.
- **Family Services:** Services may include youth programs, family programs, reintegration, and deployment readiness programs. Services may not include Mental Health components.
- **Financial Assistance:** Financial aid that is *short-term and temporary* in nature, such as, a one-time utility payment, one-time rental payment, transportation, or child-care. Medical expenses and child support payments are not qualifying examples of financial aid. Gift cards, pre-paid gas cards, other pre-paid service cards, cash or cash equivalents are not allowable. Services may not include Mental Health components. One-time financial assistance payments shall not cover more than six months.
- **Pro Bono Legal Services:** This includes legal aid, legal clinics and other legal services provided at no cost to veterans, active duty members of the United States Armed Forces, and members of the state military forces. This service category does not include criminal defense or Veterans Courts as defined in the Texas Government Code, Chapter 124.
- **Supportive Services:** This category is for support services such as elder care, food delivery programs, financial counseling, and case management. Pre-paid service cards, such as gas, groceries, and department store-related cards are not allowable. Services may not include Mental Health components.
- **Transportation:** May include transportation assistance and transportation programs. Pre-paid gas or pre-paid service cards, cash or cash equivalents are not allowable.

The Veterans Mental Health Program service categories include:

- **Clinical Counseling Services:** Services that involve interaction with or supervision by licensed mental health professionals. Services may include, but are not limited to clinical counseling, group sessions, veteran family member counseling, Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) services, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) services, co-occurring diagnosis counseling, or other types of counseling.
- **Non-Clinical Support Services:** Mental health services provided by a non-licensed mental health professional. Services may include, but are not limited to therapeutic equine, canine or other animal therapy, music, play or dance therapy, personal improvement workshops.
- **Peer-Delivered Services:** Services based upon the premise that an individual with a "lived experience," in this case military service, is uniquely able to contribute to the rehabilitation and recovery of those needing services. Services could include but are not limited to operation of Peer Networking centers, support groups, information and referral services, information dissemination, outreach, advocacy, technical assistance, training, and direct services.

Goal B: Fund Direct Services to Veterans

Eligibility

Eligible grant applicants are units of local government, 501(c)(19) posts or organizations of past or present members of the Armed Forces, 501(c)(3) private nonprofit corporations authorized to conduct business in Texas, and Texas chapters of 501(c)(4) veterans service organizations. The FVA publishes a Requests for Applications (RFA) once per year.

Competitive Awards

All FVA grants are competitive awards and are publicized to eligible organizations throughout the state via different means. The Request for Applications (RFA) is posted in the Texas Register, on Texas eGrants, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) website, and agency social media.

Selection Process and Priorities

The FVA staff accepts, screens for eligibility, and scores all eligible applications. The FVA Advisory Committee reviews the evaluations and application materials and makes funding recommendations to the TVC Commissioners based on established service category priorities. The TVC Commissioners determine the service category priorities from year to year based on the statewide needs assessment performed based on Texas Government Code 434, Section 017, paragraph c.1. The TVC Commissioners approve the final funding decisions during the third quarter Commission meeting (usually in May).

Housing for Texas Heroes (H4TXH) Grants

The FVA provides grants to nonprofit organizations, veteran service organizations, and units of local government that assist veterans, their families and surviving spouses to obtain, maintain, or improve housing with funds from the FVA and other funding provided by the legislature.

The Housing for Texas Heroes Program service categories include:

- **Housing Assistance to Families of Veterans at Texas Medical Facilities:** Temporary housing solutions to families of veterans who are undergoing long-term treatment at a medical facility in Texas.
- **Home Modification Assistance:** Modification, repair, and weatherization projects can include walkways, doors, windows, floor repairs and materials, sliding doors, handrails and grab bars, or bathroom modifications. The limit in H4TXH funding for home modification projects per veteran household is \$15,000. Grantees may use other revenue streams in addition to H4TXH funding to fund other projects on a home modification.
- **Homeless Veterans Support Programs:** Shelter programs, transitional living, temporary housing, rapid re-housing programs.
- **Veteran Homelessness Prevention Programs:** At-risk homeless prevention, long-term rental assistance, case management, wrap-around services.

Eligibility

Eligible grant applicants are units of local government, 501(c)(19) posts or organizations of past or present members of the Armed Forces, 501(c)(3) private nonprofit corporations authorized to conduct business in Texas, and Texas chapters of 501(c)(4) veterans service organizations. The FVA publishes a Requests for Applications (RFA) once per year.

Goal B: Fund Direct Services to Veterans

Competitive Awards

All H4TXH grants are competitive awards and are publicized to eligible organizations throughout the state via different means. The Request for Applications (RFA) is posted in the Texas Register, on Texas eGrants, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) website, and agency social media.

Selection Process and Priorities

The FVA staff accepts, screens for eligibility, and scores all eligible applications. The FVA Advisory Committee reviews the evaluations and application materials and makes funding recommendations to the TVC Commissioners based on established service category priorities. The TVC Commissioners determine the service category priorities from year to year based on the statewide needs assessment performed based on Texas Government Code 434, Section 017, paragraph c.1. The TVC Commissioners approve the final funding decisions during the third quarter Commission meeting (usually in May).

Veteran Treatment Court Grants

The Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) provides grants to units of local government that provide veterans, with services through Veteran Treatment Court programs with funds from the FVA and other funding provided by the legislature.

Eligibility

Eligible grant applicants are units of local government. The FVA publishes a Request for Applications (RFA) once per year.

Competitive Awards

Veteran Treatment Court grants are competitive awards and are publicized to eligible organizations throughout the state via different means. The Request for Applications (RFA) is posted in the Texas Register, on Texas eGrants, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) website, and agency social media.

Selection Process and Priorities

The FVA staff accepts, screens for eligibility, and scores all eligible applications. The FVA Advisory Committee reviews the evaluations and application materials and makes funding recommendations to the TVC Commissioners based on established service category priorities. The TVC Commissioners determine the service category priorities from year to year based on the statewide needs assessment performed based on Texas Government Code 434, Section 017, paragraph c.1. The TVC Commissioners approve the final funding decisions during the third quarter Commission meeting (usually in May).

Goal B: Fund Direct Services to Veterans

Veterans County Service Officers Grants

The FVA sets aside five percent of anticipated grant funding each year to be available for grants to Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs). The VCSOs apply for this funding through the appropriate grant program application for the services they propose to provide and identify the Project Manager as the VCSO on the application. The VCSOs are eligible to apply for General Assistance, Veteran Mental Health, or Housing for Texas Heroes grant programs. They are not eligible to apply for Veteran Treatment Court programs.

Competitive Awards

The VCSO Funding Awards are competitive awards that are available only to VCSO projects and are publicized to all VCSOs throughout the state via different means. The Request for Applications (RFA) is posted in the Texas Register, on Texas eGrants, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) website, and agency social media.

Selection Process and Priorities

The FVA staff accepts, screens for eligibility, and scores all eligible applications. The FVA Advisory Committee reviews the evaluations and application materials and makes funding recommendations to the TVC Commissioners based on established service category priorities. The TVC Commissioners determine the service category priorities from year to year based on the statewide needs assessment performed based on Texas Government Code 434, Section 017, paragraph c.1. The TVC Commissioners approve the final funding decisions during the third quarter Commission meeting (usually in May).

Agency Goals and Action Plan

Hazlewood Administration

GOAL C

The Texas Veterans Commission will provide effective administration of the **Hazlewood Act Exemption Program** and ensure timely reimbursements to public institutions of higher education.

**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**

Goal C: Hazlewood Administration

HAZLEWOOD ADMINISTRATION

The Hazlewood Act is a state of Texas benefit that provides qualified Texas veterans, spouses, and dependent children with an education benefit of up to 150 hours of tuition exemption, including most fee charges, at public institutions of higher education in Texas. The exemption does not include living expenses, books, or supply fees.

The Veterans Education Department (VetsEd) provides technical assistance to the IHEs and the general public as it relates to the application process, awarding of the exemption, and review and evaluation of military service records (Form DD-214). The department also provides information and assistance regarding the use of VA education benefits and Hazlewood benefits as a combined package of benefits when available.

The Department is responsible for collecting and reporting data associated with the exemptions awarded by IHEs and the utilization rates and ratios across veteran, child, and spouse populations. The fiscal year-end report is used by the Legislative Budget Board to proportionally reimburse IHEs for the costs of exempting – or not charging – tuition under the Hazlewood benefit.

The VetsEd department maintains a customer service center and responds to inquiries from veterans, family members, and school officials regarding the use of veteran federal and state education benefits.

Historically Underutilized Business Plan

The Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) program requires that each state agency make a good-faith effort to award procurement opportunities to businesses certified as HUBs. The HUB program is governed by Texas Government Code, Chapter 2161, and the administrative rules established by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) in Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 20, Subchapter D. The goal of this good-faith effort is to actively involve HUBs in Texas procurement processes and ensure they receive a fair share of state business.

To be certified as a HUB, a business must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A for-profit entity that has not exceeded the size standard prescribed by 34 TAC §20.294, and has its principal place of business in Texas; and
- At least 51 percent owned by an Asian Pacific American, Black American, Hispanic American, Native American, American woman and/or Service Disabled Veteran, who reside in Texas and actively participate in the control, operations and management of the entity's affairs.

HUB Participation

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) makes a good-faith effort to make purchases and award contracts to HUBs whenever possible. TVC has developed strategies to increase the agency's HUB participation and to ensure the agency follows all the laws and rules established for the statewide HUB program.

HUB Outreach

TVC considers the method in which competitive awards and non-competitive purchases are distributed among the various HUB groups. TVC's purchasers pay attention to ensure that competitive awards and non-competitive purchases are distributed among all HUB groups and are not concentrated within just one or two HUB groups. TVC routinely communicates HUB program and certification procedures directly to non-certified HUBs via telephone and email. TVC has also utilized its Veterans Entrepreneur Program to distribute information regarding the HUB program and certification procedures to noncertified HUBs.

HUB Goal

TVC makes a good-faith effort to award procurement opportunities to businesses certified as historically underutilized.

HUB Objective

TVC makes a good-faith effort to increase its utilization of HUBs to meet or exceed the statewide HUB goals established by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA). TVC has implemented policies to ensure that competitive contracts and non-competitive purchases are awarded to HUB vendors who provide the best value and are most cost-efficient to the agency. TVC's purchases consist of professional services and commodities.

Statewide HUB goals by procurement category:

- 23.7% = professional services contracts
- 26.0% = other services contracts
- 21.1% = commodities contract

TVC is committed to reach its goal of purchasing from HUBs as much as possible. Due to the small number of professional services and other services contracts awarded by TVC, the agency is motivated to make up the difference in HUB awards through its procurement of goods and commodities. However, TVC is continually striving to increase procurements with HUB vendors in all categories and will continue to explore new opportunities whenever possible.

Historically Underutilized Business Plan

HUB Strategy

To meet the agency's goals and objectives, TVC has established strategies that include:

- Complying with HUB planning and reporting requirements.
- Utilizing the CPA's Centralized Master Bidders List (CMBL) and HUB search to ensure that a good-faith effort is made to increase the award of goods and services contracts and non-competitive purchases to HUBs.
- Adhering to the HUB purchasing procedures and requirements established by the CPA's Statewide Procurement Division (SPD).
- Informing staff of procurement procedures that encourage HUBs to compete for state contracts.
- Utilizing HUB resellers from the Department of Information Resources' (DIR) cooperative contracts as often as possible.
- Promoting HUBs in the competitive bid process for goods and services.
- Promoting HUBs in the non-competitive purchase of goods and services.
- Increasing TVC's HUB Coordinator attendance and/or participation at HUB-related trainings and events.
- Increase awareness of procurement opportunities and HUB certification procedures through the TVC website.

Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Overview

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) contains a core of well-trained veteran assistance counselors, veteran employment representatives, veteran education program specialists, and grant specialists to aid veterans, their families, and survivors throughout Texas to meet the needs required to accomplish the agency mission and strategic goal. They are supported by a clerical staff. TVC administrative staff is located in Austin, Texas.

With approximately 1.68 million veterans living in Texas, the population of veterans in the state has remained steady for the past decade, while the overall United States veteran population has declined during the same period. This indicates a net migration of veterans to Texas. Several key issues impact the growth of the veteran population in Texas, specifically in two age groups that tend to have the greatest need for assistance. These fall at the opposite end of the age spectrum, younger veterans usually needing education or employment assistance, and older veterans usually need services associated with aging.

Current Workforce Profile

The current commission staff has the skills necessary to address business issues of the agency. A majority of the current workforce (84 percent) has prior military service. TVC has a diverse workforce that is 45 percent White, 29 percent Black, 23 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Other. Males comprise 56 percent of the workforce and 44 percent are females.

The basic business issues of TVC are administration, Claims, Veterans Employment Services, Veterans Education and the Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The knowledge required to provide successful claims assistance, veterans employment services and veterans education services are knowledge of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor (DOL) laws and operating policies and procedures. Employees must have the skills to apply the required knowledge within the VA and the DOL system to successfully provide veterans and their families with all of the services needed to obtain their benefits and entitlements. The critical knowledge and skills required in administration are financial, human resources, accounting, communications, purchasing and the basic administrative knowledge and managerial skills required to successfully operate a state agency.

The average turnover rate of TVC in the five years from 2016 to 2019 was 19.42 percent. During this period, the turnover rate was as high as 25.34 in 2016 and reached a low of 13.8 percent in 2019. TVC turnover rate was slightly higher than the statewide turnover rate, which averaged 18 percent. It is anticipated the turnover rate will remain slightly above the statewide rate due to the number of employees eligible to retire (12 percent) in addition to normal attrition.

TVC has responded to attrition by successfully recruiting quality employees. TVC will continue to utilize the Veterans Employment Program, Work in Texas and the agency's website to fill positions as they become vacant, as this has proven very successful in the past. It is anticipated the commission can continue to successfully recruit quality employees in a timely manner in response to attrition to meet agency business needs.

The agency will continue the TVC mentoring program to match experienced and skilled employees with employees seeking to learn from them. These mentoring relationships can also help less experienced and skilled employees identify their career goals and plan their career development. Because agency turnover is disproportionately high for TVC employees, with less than four years of service, mentoring needs to continue to be offered and emphasized.

Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

TVC will maintain agency career ladders to help employees identify development paths to prepare for jobs with higher-level skill requirements, as well as develop a searchable database to inventory employee training and skill sets so that employees may be identified for development and possible promotional opportunities. Supervisors will be made aware of what skill sets are critical to meeting their objectives and can plan for employee attrition. Succession planning will also address staffing or skill imbalances due to turnover and retirements.

Gap Analysis

A significant percentage (27 percent) of the agency's employees are either eligible to retire now or will be eligible within the next five years. Succession planning and knowledge transfer offer the opportunity for the next generation of TVC employees to launch new ideas that appreciate historical progress while moving services to new levels. TVC programs have high impact staff that cannot be easily replaced because of the employee's expertise and talents. In some cases, there are no natural feeders within the agency from which to draw. In other cases, the person occupying the position has a unique set of skills that cannot be readily found in the marketplace. TVC has a large contingent of tenured staff with institutional knowledge that cannot be quickly gained through the completion of training courses.

Currently the commission is staffed at 97 percent, though a shortage of personnel due to losses from retirement, an increased workload and competition from federal agencies is likely. Personnel shortages and the required time to train replacements as well as additional skills for existing personnel that will be required to deal with technical advances when funds become available may have a negative impact on the ability to meet future functional requirements. Of additional concern is the allocation of funds for the staff and support sections of the agency. The mandate to increase programs and services led to a significant increase in staff. However, the allocation to grow support staff was limited. The ability to stay competitive with the private sector and federal governments will continue to be a challenge to the agency.

Strategy Development

Goals to address TVC's projected workforce gap will include the following:

Development

- Encourage employee development by continuing TVC's training program that requires employees to earn a minimum number of training credit each year.
- Offer employee training to help develop critical skills. Continue to provide both internal and external classroom training, as well as online and DVD training to make training available to field employees and accommodating employees' schedules. Continue to inform employees about training opportunities, including those offered by the TVC's Employees Assistance Program and by other agencies that TVC employees may attend at no or little cost.
- Continue to provide thorough leadership training to all levels of agency managers, as well as potential managers.
- Encourage managers to create programs that allow employees who are seeking new challenges to work on special projects, rotations and developmental assignments (to help them increase their knowledge and experience even if promotional opportunities are temporarily stagnant).
- Conduct regular training needs assessments to identify training of interest to employees and managers.

Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Recruitment

Every division has the need to attract and retain high performing people with valuable skills. Therefore, a variety of recruitment and retention strategies are available throughout the agency including:

- Hiring and selection methods for best fit;
- Compensation;
- Awarding bonuses;
- Promoting state benefits;
- Integrating staff development with career ladders;
- Establishing formal and informal orientation programs;
- Creating positive work culture and conditions;
- Maintaining work/life balance and family friendly policies including flexible work hours;
- Telecommuting opportunities;
- Ensuring sufficient salaries and merit increases; and
- Creating recognition programs.

Retention

TVC's executive team is committed to preparing for the future by continuously retaining and developing highly qualified personnel who will be prepared to transition into leadership and mission-critical positions in the future.

Career Development

All supervisors are responsible for planning for the development needs in their areas of responsibility. Through analysis of a position's job duties, management will work with individual employees to create individual development plans based on the required knowledge and skills. The development plans must address current and future needs.

Leadership Development and Replacement

The following elements are essential to the leadership development and replacement process:

- Key replacement needs and critical positions to include in the succession plan;
- Key competencies of job performance in all critical positions;
- Key high potential employees, and the individual development plans necessary to prepare them to be replacements in critical positions;
- Methods for preparing and developing employees for advancement;
- Processes for knowledge transfer;
- Possible obstacles that make knowledge transfer difficult and possible solutions; and
- Priorities, desired outcomes, expected results, and timelines for implementation.

Leadership succession integrates competency-based learning tracks with career development. The long-range goal is to prepare staff to perform competencies within specific at-risk functions and to prepare them to be competitive for future career opportunities.

Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision

The Workforce Plan will be implemented in connection with TVC's Strategic Plan. Strategic Plan changes due to leadership or legislative changes may result in adjustment to the Workforce Plan.

Human Resources (HR) will develop a stronger partnership with each of the programs and divisions to determine training needs, and assist with workforce strategic and succession planning. HR will provide divisions with information regarding turnover, retirement eligibility, and tenure, in addition to assist in developing and recruiting a diverse workforce.

Future Workforce Profile

As a market-driven system, the Texas workforce system will continue to evolve and improve to meet veteran needs and deliver outstanding customer service. Accordingly, the agency's critical functions will adjust to meet the new challenges. Overall fluctuations in the economy will have an impact on TVC in terms of the agency's workforce and the need for the services our staff oversees and provides to the public at large. Legislation on the federal and state levels also impacts the operations of TVC.

It is expected that TVC's mission, goals, and strategy will not change significantly over the next five years. Claims assistance counselors, veteran employment representatives, veteran education program specialists, and grant specialists, who are the core of the Commission's professional workforce, require strong knowledge of state and federal veteran benefit programs and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor (DOL) policies and procedures which affect the administration of benefits to the Texas veteran population and their families. Developing the skills required by claims assistance counselors, veteran employment representatives, veteran education program specialists, and grant specialists to competently serve Texas veterans will remain a priority in future agency workforce plans. To accomplish commission goals and meet statutory requirements, competent training must continue with Veterans County Service Officers who are critical in assisting the Commission to meet its established mission, goals, and strategy. The TVC staff will need support through training and equipment to keep abreast of ever-changing computer technology.

Expected Workforce Changes

The immediate future is easier to predict, but long-term planning is more difficult. Although more unknown variables exist, experience and short-term future trends are helpful when planning for the next few years. Flexibility is the key, but anticipated critical functions and workforce changes that will carry TVC into the future may include:

- Changes in leadership as retirements occur;
- Increased demand for efficiencies to make best use of available budget and full-time employees;
- Increase in less-tenured and less-experienced staff;
- Improved communication and understanding employers' needs;
- Marketing services to the business community and workers;
- Providing enhanced statistical analysis of data collected;
- Increasing advanced research and evaluation;
- Increasing focus on program integrity and fraud prevention;
- Increased use of technology throughout the agency;
- Increased demand for more sophisticated and integrated information and analyses; and
- Increased demand for knowledgeable technical assistance staff.

Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Commission administrative personnel will require ongoing training to keep up with changes in federal budget procedures (OMB Circulars), accounting and human resource best practices and policies to efficiently use both fiscal and human resources made available to the Commission by the Legislature. Training of commission personnel and Veterans County Service Officers will remain a critical function as the Commission plans for future service to veterans and their families. Currently, commission personnel have the necessary skills to perform their jobs due to the training made available to them. With the expectation of continued migration of veterans to Texas over the next five years, the commission may require additional Veterans Services Representatives to meet the demand. Requests for additional personnel will be for areas of the state where the projected demand for service is growing.

Employment Service Satisfaction

It is imperative to understand the employers' needs and expectations when attempting to match qualified veterans to the employers' needs and when promoting the benefits of hiring eligible veterans. TVC Veterans Employment Services uses a strategic approach by evaluating employment trends within the labor market by using the various tools provided by the Texas Workforce Commission.

The Veterans Employer Liaison (VEL) staff are fully integrated with the Workforce Business Units across the state. The VELs also work very closely with Veteran Career Advisors to identify the skill sets of veterans seeking employment in an effort to match those skill sets with employers' needs. To anticipate the changing employer needs and ensure those needs are met, TVC employs several methods to accurately assess the current level of satisfaction and to be able to better project the future needs of the employer. Those methods include but are not limited to:

- Employer panel discussions
- On-site outreach visits
- Active participation in employer organizations such as the local chamber of commerce and other professional business organizations

To accurately evaluate and measure employer satisfaction, TVC conducts an employer/customer feedback survey that is administered throughout the year. The results are reviewed and evaluated for trends and for future improvement.

Data-Driven Program Improvement

TVC Veterans Employment Services continues to evaluate program data supplied by the Texas Workforce Commission. The Workforce Management Information System (MIS) provides federal and state reporting data through the Workforce Investment Performance Report (WISPR). TVC Veterans Employment Services is mandated to report on intensive services provided by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff, Veteran Entered Employment, Retention on and average earnings to the Department of Labor, and the Legislative Budget Board. In addition to the reporting requirements, TVC Veterans Employment Services analyzes the data supplied by MIS to identify trends, shortfalls, staffing needs and benchmarks for the future.

Continuous Improvement and Innovation

TVC Veterans Employment Services continues to evaluate services to veterans and employers through partnerships and data collection. In addition, TVC continues to share information on and best practices with stakeholders, state and federal agencies, as well as veteran employment service providers nationwide.

Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

SYSTEM OBJECTIVE:	KEY ACTIONS / STRATEGIES / OUTCOMES:
<p><i>Increase Business and Industry Involvement</i></p>	<p>ACTION: Expand Social Media to target employers</p> <p>STRATEGY: Utilize all avenues of social media to include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, & YouTube to inform small, medium, and large businesses of TVC services.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Employers will have a better understanding of how TVC can assist them in understanding the needs and issues surrounding veteran employment. Market TVC services to employers. Employers will learn how TVC can assist them with veteran hiring to fulfill their business needs.</p>
	<p>ACTION: Fund memberships in Professional Organizations</p> <p>STRATEGY: TVC employment services will fund employer liaison memberships to local chambers of commerce allowing for business services staff to have access to multiple employers at one time. Also allows for presentation of veteran information to the membership.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: More businesses will learn how TVC can assist them with their hiring needs. Relationships between businesses and TVC staff will be developed and more veteran job opportunities will be created.</p>
	<p>ACTION: Utilize employer satisfaction surveys</p> <p>STRATEGY: Survey a percentage of employers who receive services from TVC's employer liaisons to determine satisfaction and identify service positives and negatives.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Survey results will be used to reinforce procedures, improve training of staff, identify new opportunities, and keep employer services focused on the needs of business.</p>

Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

SYSTEM OBJECTIVE:	KEY ACTIONS / STRATEGIES / OUTCOMES:
<p><i>Increase Business and Industry Involvement</i></p>	<p>ACTION: Partner with employers on hiring events</p> <p>STRATEGY: Help employers plan, advertise, and produce veteran hiring events. Increase involvement yearly.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Veterans get hired and employers fill their vacancies. Win-Win for both. Working as a team with employers on hiring events helps develop long-term hiring relationships benefiting veterans.</p>
	<p>ACTION: Participate in corporate events, discussions, presentations, etc.</p> <p>STRATEGY: TVC Employer Liaisons will be encouraged to learn more about the employers they support by participating in employer activities and events where veteran's employment can be marketed. Giving presentations at employer training events can expand the hiring relationship from one contact to multiple contacts at one business.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: When business relationships are established employers are more likely to utilize TVC services and become a veteran friendly employer which results in more job opportunities for veterans.</p>

Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

SYSTEM OBJECTIVE:	KEY ACTIONS / STRATEGIES / OUTCOMES:
<p><i>Expand Licensure and Industry Certifications</i></p>	<p>ACTION: Publish database of Texas Licensing agencies and distribute to military</p> <p>STRATEGY: Provide veterans and transitioning military service members with contact information on licensing requirements and application process using a single source to eliminate the need to “hunt” for information.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Veterans will be able to quickly identify the agency responsible for their specific license, identify the requirements for the license, and obtain the appropriate application for licensing.</p>
	<p>ACTION: Advocate through Texas Coordinating Council Veterans Services for improved legislation to recognize military skills in licensing</p> <p>STRATEGY: Use the influence of the Coordinating Council’s Veterans Services Committee to inform, educate, and encourage legislators to pass legislation to make veteran licensing in Texas a simple smooth process. Work toward full acceptance of veterans and spouses’ licenses issued by other states as well as certifications for military skills that can be applied to licensing requirements.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Eliminates the need for veterans to have to duplicate time and effort to obtain a Texas license when they have already earned one in another state. Saves the veteran the expense of the application and allows for quicker access to the workforce. The veteran/spouse benefits as well as employers.</p>

Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

SYSTEM OBJECTIVE:	KEY ACTIONS / STRATEGIES / OUTCOMES:
<p><i>Expand Licensure and Industry Certifications</i></p>	<p>ACTION: Develop a Texas resource based upon National Occupational Licensing database corresponding with military occupations</p> <p>STRATEGY: A crosswalk for military to civilian occupations will be designed and added to the Texas Veterans Portal and other veteran resource sites to assist veterans in targeting career search and resumes to appropriate businesses.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Veterans will be able to identify civilian careers that consist of the same skill sets and experience they have gained through military service. This expedites job hunting and allows for targeted resumes to be sent to the employer seeking the veterans' skills and experience.</p>
	<p>ACTION: Post Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) classifications that correspond to licensed occupations</p> <p>STRATEGY: TVC will expand on, and coordinate with, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) and individual agencies to compile an expanded comparison list of MOS classifications and their comparable civilian occupation(s). Multiple veteran oriented resources will be used to share this information to veterans and transitioning service members.</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Veterans will be able to easily identify those civilian careers and licensing requirements that directly correspond to their military career and skills. Licenses can be applied for quickly to make the veteran applicant "job ready" for employers. Veterans can obtain the appropriate license and be an immediate resource for employers.</p>

Report on Customer Service

The Texas Veterans Commission is required to evaluate Customer Service and provide a report to the Office of the Governor (OOG) and the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) per Texas Government Code Chapter 2114. Obtaining direct input from Texas veterans and their families is highly important in determining whether the agency is meeting veterans' needs.

Overview

Strategies A.1.2. Veterans Employment Services, A.1.4. Veterans Outreach, and A.1.6. Health Care Advocacy Program conducted individual program surveys to obtain and analyze data gathered to improve program services. Therefore, the agency can make data-driven decisions to improve the customer experience based on this data. The survey data collected began September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019.

Survey Implementation

Strategy A.1.2. Veterans Employment Services (VES) distributed an employer and client satisfaction survey, which was based on services entered in WorkInTexas. A total of 2,617 veterans and employers were given the survey and 710 responses were received. This resulted in a 55% response rate.

Strategy A.1.4. Veterans Outreach (Outreach) provided the general public a 22-question survey about the current TVC website. This survey was available via an opt in popup on the website, email blast to the eVets (an electronic monthly newsletter) mailing list, and TVC's social media outlets. A total of 25,389 surveys were emailed to the eVets subscriber list and 150 veterans responded. This resulted in a response rate of less than 1%.

Lastly, Strategy A.1.6. Health Care Advocacy Program (HCAP) offered their customer service survey in person to veterans served by the program. It was also linked in staff e-mail signature blocks and a link to the survey was printed on staff business cards. A total of 8,210 surveys were distributed and HCAP collected 234 responses. This resulted in a 3% response rate.

Analysis of Findings

Overall, TVC clientele are very satisfied with the services provided by Veterans Employment Services (VES), Veterans Outreach, and the Health Care Advocacy Program (HCAP) strategies. Of those completing the survey, 82 percent expressed overall satisfaction with the service provided by VES, Veterans Outreach, and HCAP. This finding is based on a weighted average.

Both veterans with barriers to employment and employers responded favorably to the survey, at 85 percent satisfied with VES and 65 percent of veteran responses were positive regarding the agency website and information. Lastly, HCAP received a 97 percent customer satisfaction rate. Data is based only on customers completing the survey and may not represent the total number of customers served.

Suggestions for Future Research Improvement

The Sunset Advisory Commission's 2018-2019 recommendations required that the agency provide a survey to Texas veterans about their experience with agency programs and overall needs. Standard questions about customer service, with a corresponding scale, to measure customer satisfaction. These questions should be in addition to survey questions in use now, which address customer satisfaction specific to the agency's programs and services. Collecting this information would ensure TVC has regular, direct feedback from the population the agency serves. A standardized survey for implementation will begin the Summer of 2020.

The agency plans to create a customer service survey process to ensure all strategies regularly obtain direct input from Texas veterans and their families, which is highly important in determining whether the agency is meeting their needs. Ensuring the survey is easily accessible on business cards, website, social media, and the eVets newsletter will increase survey responses collected to make data-driven decisions to improve the customer experience.

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A. Goal: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

The Texas Veterans Commission will assist veterans with receiving benefits and services through effective advocacy and training within its nine program areas.

A.1. Objective; Strategy: Maintain Veterans' Benefits Awards

To ensure veterans, their survivors, and orphans receive benefits and services through effective claims representation and training of Veterans County Service Officers, meaningful assistance with employment, education, outreach, entrepreneurial, and health care.

Outcome Measure: 1. Amount of Monetary Awards (in millions of dollars) to Veterans with Service Disabilities.

Definition: Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation of veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Purpose: Indicates the amount of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation payments in VA reports for service-connected disabilities to Texas resident veterans who have appointed the Commission or an organization for which Commission personnel are the accredited representative to represent them in their claim against VA.

Data Source: Total reported amounts of awards for Texas residents are provided by VA for one month in each quarter.

Methodology: Amount provided by VA for one month is multiplied by three to calculate the quarterly performance. Quarterly performance results are added to determine the annual performance. VA states that award amounts are consistent from one month to the next and the estimate for the quarter and the year are within a 5 percent accuracy range. This amount is expressed in millions and rounded to the nearest 100,000.

Data Limitations: Data is provided by the VA and the Commission is dependent on VA to provide the data on a timely basis.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Outcome Measure: 2. VA Awards (in millions of dollars) to Survivors or Orphans of Veterans.

Definition: Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation for survivors or orphans of veterans.

Purpose: Indicates the amount of U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) payments for pension and compensation in VA Reports to Texas resident survivors of veterans who have appointed the Commission or an organization for which Commission personnel are the accredited representative to represent them in their claim against VA.

Data Source: Total reported amounts of awards for Texas residents are provided by VA for one month in each quarter.

Methodology: Amount provided by VA for one month is multiplied by three to calculate the quarterly performance. Quarterly performance results are added to determine the annual performance. VA states that award amounts are consistent from one month to the next and the estimate for the quarter and the year are within a 5 percent accuracy range. This amount is expressed in millions and rounded to the nearest 100,000.

Data Limitations: Data is provided by the VA, and the Commission is dependent on VA to provide the data on a timely basis.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A. Goal: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

The Texas Veterans Commission will assist veterans with receiving benefits and services through effective advocacy and training within its nine program areas.

A.1. Objective; A.1.1 Strategy: Claims Assistance to Veterans and their Families

File and appeal claims on behalf of veterans, their dependents, and their survivors. Provide outreach services and advocacy in claims by veterans, their survivors, and their orphans by Texas Veterans Commission personnel and through Veterans County Service Officers.

Output Measure: 1. Number of Claims Filed and Developed on Behalf of Disabled Veterans.

Definition: Number of claims for veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Purpose: This represents the number of claims filed through Commission counselors against the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) by Texas veterans to establish, reopen or reestablish eligibility for disabilities, which are service-connected. This includes claims sent to the Commission by Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs) for representation, review and/or development.

Data Source: Claims filed for processing at the TVC district offices are recorded on receipt.

Methodology: Data on claims numbers, office source and type of claims, including a separate claim for each issue claimed, are collected in the case management system as claims are completed and signed by the veteran at a TVC office or outreach function. This data is verified by staff in their respective regional office where the claim is sent to be submitted to the VA. District managers or district office supervisors review a sample of claims monthly to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.

Data Limitations: Source of a significant number of these claims is Veterans County Service Officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge. Because of federal privacy laws, the ability to audit this data is limited.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Output Measure: 2. Number of Non-Service Connected Claims Filed to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Definition: Number of Non-Service Connected Claims Filed to the VA.

Purpose: This represents the number of claims filed through the TVC Claims Benefit Advisors against the VA by Texas veterans to prove initial eligibility or to maintain and reestablish their eligibility for VA pension. Includes claims sent to the TVC Claims Benefit Advisors by Veterans County Service Officers for representation, review and/or development.

Data Source: Claims filed for processing at the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) district offices are recorded on receipt.

Methodology: Data on claim numbers, office source and type of claims is collected in the case management system as claims are completed and signed by the veteran at a TVC office or outreach function. This data is verified by staff in their respective regional office where the claim is sent to be submitted to the Veterans Administration (VA). District managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of claims on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.

Data Limitations: Source of a significant number of these claims is Veterans County Service Officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge. Because of federal privacy laws, the ability to audit this data is limited.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Output Measure: 3. Active Veterans' Benefits Cases Represented by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC).

Definition: Number of active veterans' benefits cases as reported by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans, their survivors, or their orphans represented by the TVC.

Purpose: The number of cases at the Houston and Waco and other VA Regional Offices represented by the Commission or an organization for which Commission personnel act as an accredited representative.

Data Source: VA reports provided to the Texas Veterans Commission.

Methodology: Number of active cases is recorded from data provided by VA in a special report. The number reported is the number of cases listed in the report that match used to calculate outcomes 1, 2, and 3 for Goal 1.

Data Limitations: TVC depends on VA for information from reports provided.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Output Measure: 4. Appeals of Unfavorable VA Decisions Filed on Behalf of Veterans.

Definition: Number of appeals of unfavorable U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) decisions filed on behalf of veterans, their survivors or their orphans.

Purpose: The number of notices of disagreements, appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals and statements of accredited representatives in appealed cases filed on behalf of Texas veterans through TVC counselors. Includes appeals sent to the Commission by Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs) for representation, review and/or development.

Data Source: Appeals filed for processing or that are prepared at the TVC regional offices are recorded on receipt.

Methodology: Data on appeal numbers, office sources and type of appeal, including a separate appeal for each issue appealed, are collected in the case management system as appeals are completed and signed by the veteran at a TVC office or outreach function. This data is verified by staff in their respective regional offices where the appeal is sent to be submitted to the Veterans Administration (VA). District managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of appeals on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.

Data Limitations: Source of a significant number of these appeals is Veterans County Service Officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge. Because of federal privacy laws, the ability for external auditors to certify this measure is restricted.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Output Measure: 5. Number of Files Reviewed by State Strike Force Team.

Definition: Number of files reviewed manually by the State Strike Force Teams of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC).

Purpose: The purpose of this measure is to track the number of cases filed that the State Strike Force Teams has reviewed to reduce the number of backlogged Veteran's claims for disability benefits at the VA.

Data Source: Data, including the name of the veteran on the claim, VA's claim number, date of claim and action(s) taken, is collected at the Houston and Waco TVC regional offices and recorded in an internal working log. The VA Claim number is unique to each claim and Data Entry into the log is made by the Strike Force Teams' Claims Benefit Advisors. All changes to the log must be approved by the Division Director before the log is updated.

Methodology: The total number of VA cases filed is calculated by adding the number of unique VA Claim numbers logged each month. The log is reviewed manually to check for accuracy and so that each VA case file is only counted once.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Output Measure: 6. Number of Fully-Developed Claims (FDC) filed by the FDC Team.

Definition: Number of Fully Developed Claims filed by the Fully Developed Claims Team submitted to the VA for expedited rating decision.

Purpose: The purpose of this measure is to track the number of fully developed claims filed by the FDC Claims Benefit Advisors to expedite a rating decision.

Data Source: The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) VetraSpec database tracks FDC claims filed.

Methodology: The number of FDC claims filed by FDC Claims Benefit Advisors will be tracked and calculated by using the TVC database. Ensure FDC claims are not duplicated in the counting of claims in Output Measure No.1.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Efficiency Measure: 1. VA Payments to Veterans Represented by TVC Per Dollar Spent.

Definition: VA payments to veterans represented by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) per dollar spent.

Purpose: The purpose of this measure is to track the amount of payments to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors represented by TVC per state dollar spent in the Claims Assistance program during a fiscal year TVC records and the VA.

Data Source: The total number of VA cases filed is calculated by adding the number of unique VA Claim numbers logged each month. The log is reviewed manually to check for accuracy and so that each VA case file is only counted once.

Methodology: The total of outcome measures 1, 2, and 3 for Goal 1, for a fiscal year is divided by total TVC state dollar expenditures for the Claims Assistance strategy.

Data Limitations: Data for monetary recovery is provided by the VA.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Efficiency Measure: 2. VA Payments to Veterans through State Strike Force Per State Dollar Spent.

Definition: VA payments to Veterans, their dependents, and survivors through favorable claim decisions due to efforts of the State Strike Force Team.

Purpose: The purpose of this measure is to track the amount of payments to Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors represented by TVC State Strike Force Team per state dollar spent in a fiscal year.

Data Source: Data for monetary recovery is provided by the VA.

Methodology: The total monetary benefit received by Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors represented by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) State Strike Force Team is divided by the total state dollar expenditures for the State Strike Force Team.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A.1. Objective; A.1.2 Strategy: Veterans Employment Services

Assist Veterans with finding employment through job matching and intensive services, improve and expand employment opportunities for veterans with disabilities.

Output Measure: 1. Percent of Veterans that Receive Individualized Career Services.

Definition: The proportion of veterans receiving Individualized Career Services compared to the total number of individual veterans receiving participatory services from Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs). “Participatory Services” generally do not include staff-assisted registration, determination of eligibility, follow-up/information/support services or contacts to obtain status or progress information or determine the need for additional services. “Individualized Career Services” include more intensive Participatory Services such as comprehensive assessments, in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and employment goals, group and individual career coaching, short-term pre-vocational services, and development of an individual employment plan.

Purpose: The purpose of the measure is to report the percentage of veterans who received intensive services. The importance is to determine that a veteran has received one or more of the intensive services to assist the veteran in entering the workforce again.

Data Source: Snapshots of data extracted from various Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) information systems and merged to identify participants, their periods of participation, and their post-exit outcomes. The information systems include: The Workforce Information System of Texas, Work in Texas, the Learner Outcome Tracking System, the Texas Educating Adults Management System, ReHabWorks, the Unemployment Wage System and the Unemployment Insurance Benefit and Appeals Systems. Because data in these systems constantly change and it is not possible to recreate previously reported results from the live systems, TWC archives the data snapshots used in reporting for audit purposes.

Methodology: The denominator is the unduplicated number of individual veterans receiving services, which includes but is not limited to resume preparation, job search referrals, and employment training referrals from a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist during the performance period. The numerator is the number of veterans from the denominator who received Individualized Career Services from TVC Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A.1. Objective; A.1.3 Strategy: Veterans Education

Evaluate appropriateness of education and training programs offered to veterans and other eligible persons.

Output Measure: 1. Approval Actions Completed by Veterans Education.

Definition: This measure provides the number of institution/program approval actions completed by Veterans Education for institutions/training establishments throughout the state for which eligible veterans and their families may use federal GI Bill® educational benefits.

Purpose: The number of institution/program approval actions completed is a direct reflection of the scope of educational opportunity available in the state for veterans and their families eligible for federal GI Bill® benefits to engage in post-secondary education. Post-secondary education provides the medium by which military veterans may effectively and efficiently transition/reintegrate from military service to civilian society.

Data Source: TVC personnel record institution/ program approval actions in the Veterans Education database.

Methodology: The number of institution/program approval actions are calculated by TVC personnel after they respond to an institution's request for GI Bill® approval. Reports are generated by TVC personnel and reported to the VA and the affected institutions/training establishments.

Data Limitations: Federal U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports are generally available 2 years in arrears. TVC Veterans Education data is available quarterly.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Output Measure: 2. Number of Institution Visits Completed by Veterans Education for GI Bill® Compliance.

Definition: This measure provides the number of Compliance Survey visits to institutions conducted by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) Veterans Education Department, to ascertain compliance with federal guidelines for administration of the GI Bill®.

Purpose: This measure is an evaluation of institutional compliance with parameters requisite for qualification to receive GI Bill® educational funds for enrolled students.

Data Source: TVC personnel records the number of institution visits in the Veterans Education database.

Methodology: The total number of TVC institution visits is calculated by adding all TVC compliance survey visits of institutions. TVC retains the number of visits conducted by type in the Veterans Education database.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A.1. Objective; A.1.4 Strategy: Veterans Outreach

Provide outreach to inform Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors of advocacy services provided by the Texas Veterans Commission and the Veterans County Service Officers and of other benefits available to them.

Output Measure: 1. The Number of Veteran Engagements.

Definition: The number of veteran engagements through TVC-hosted events, webinars, social media, website and electronic newsletters.

Purpose: Veteran engagement through online and in-person channels represents community outreach for the Communications and Veterans Outreach program. Through these channels, TVC promotes services offered by TVC. It also allows veterans to interact with TVC representatives beyond traditional TVC offices, often on a one-on-one basis.

Data Source: Automated sources include: Constant Contact for event registration; iContact for newsletter opens; Facebook Insights for Facebook fans; Twitter Analytics for Twitter followers; LinkedIn Analytics for LinkedIn followers; Google Analytics for website unique visitors.

Methodology: All data is compiled on a quarterly basis and includes data source, date, and total number of veteran engagements.

Data Limitations: The source of data collection is dependent on 3rd party analytical software.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A.1. Objective; A.1.5 Strategy: Veterans Entrepreneur Program

Assist veterans with starting businesses and growing businesses through the development of their business plan, securing of capital and development of business fundamentals.

Output Measure: 1. Services provided to Veterans and their families from the Veterans Entrepreneur Program (VEP).

Definition: The number of unique services provided to veterans and their families from the TVC Veterans Entrepreneur Program (VEP). This measure is a system-wide count of unique services provided to veterans and their families from VEP. The unique services include: (1) Resource Information, (2) Seminar, (3) Business Plan Support, (4) Business Start-up/Formation, (5) Capital Acquisition, (6) Marketing/Business Expansion Support, (7) Government Contracting, (8) Copyright/Patent Support, and (9) Veteran-owned Business Certification. While a veteran or family member may be provided more than one service, each service is unique in terms of the VEP resources required to support it and the benefit that it has to the veteran or family member. Thus, services provided are an unduplicated number.

Purpose: Services provided by the Veteran Entrepreneur Program are designed to lead to the creation of new, or the expansion of existing, veteran-owned businesses throughout the state. These businesses will represent a new or expanding tax base for the local and state economy in addition to the creation of new jobs for a diverse and sustainable economy.

Data Source: VEP consultants record the services provided to the veterans, their families and report those services to a centralized online database, which is monitored by the program manager. Reports are generated from the online database.

Methodology: The number of unique services provided to Veterans and their families by the TVC. Each service is unique to the start or expansion of a business. Records include date service rendered and next stage/step.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A.1. Objective; A.1.6 Strategy: Health Care Advocacy Program

Assist veterans and their families in gaining access to health care facilities and resolving patient concerns and issues.

Output Measure: 1. Veteran Encounters and Services Provided from the Health Care Advocacy Program (HCAP).

Definition: The purpose of this measure is to track the total number of veteran encounters and services provided by the HCAP in seeking solutions to health care concerns and unmet needs for veterans.

Purpose: HCAP allows the Texas Veterans Commission to provide channels through which patients can seek solutions to problems, concerns, and unmet needs by working with health care providers and support staff to prevent and resolve patient concerns and issues. HCAP staff interpret Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical center policies and procedures while presenting veteran concerns to appropriate personnel. Advocates assist veterans in understanding his or her rights and responsibilities, and assist veterans, their families, and VHA facility personnel in overcoming barriers to veteran health care. Advocates identify existing and potential problems, suggest solutions or alternatives, and assist with Congressional Inquiries and public relations to increase community veteran awareness of VHA health care resources and services.

Data Source: HCAP personnel will record the number of veteran encounters and services provided to the veteran on a centralized online database which is monitored by the Program Manager. Reports are generated from the online database.

Methodology: The total number of encounters and services provided to the veteran is calculated by adding the number of veteran encounters and services provided to the veteran which are inputted into the central online database.

Data Limitations: The report is manually reviewed for accuracy to eliminate duplication of records.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

B. Goal: Fund for Veterans' Assistance - General Assistance

Provide grant funding to community nonprofit organizations and units of local government to ensure veterans receive services in the areas of General Assistance, Mental Health, Housing, and Veteran Treatment Courts.

B.1. Objective; B.1.1 Strategy: General Assistance Grants

Provide assistance to veterans, their families and survivors by making grants to local nonprofit organizations and units of local government providing direct services.

Output Measure: 1. Number of Veterans, their Dependents, and Survivors of Veterans Served by FVA Grants.

Definition: Number of veterans, their dependents, or survivors of veterans served through grant programs funded through the Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA).

Purpose: This measure provides the number of veterans, dependents, and survivors that are provided services through General Assistance and/or Veterans Mental Health grants in the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

Data Source: Organizations that receive grants from the Fund for Veterans' Assistance are required to report the number of veterans, their dependents and survivors of veterans served each quarter to the Commission. Quarterly reports are required from all grantees.

Methodology: Organizations that receive grants from the Fund for Veterans' Assistance are required to report the number of veterans, their dependents and survivors of veterans receiving services. The TVC staff in the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Department will add all organizational totals to arrive at a cumulative amount.

Data Limitations: The number relies on the accurate reporting and documentation of services provided to veterans, their dependents, and survivors of veterans by organizations receiving grant funds. TVC will monitor grant programs according to a risk-based assessment.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

B.1. Objective; B.1.2 Strategy: Housing for Texas Heroes Grants (H4TXH)

Provide home modification grants to local nonprofit organizations and units of local government to assist veterans, their family and surviving spouse using funds provided by the Legislature.

Output Measure: 1. Number of Veterans, their Dependents, and Survivors of Veterans Served by the Housing for Texas Heroes (H4TXH) program.

Definition: Number of veterans, their dependents, or survivors of veterans served through grant programs funded through the Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA).

Purpose: The purpose of this measure is to track the number of veterans, their dependents, or survivors served by H4TXH grantees during the reporting period. This measure provides information for managing grantee performance.

Data Source: Organizations receiving H4TXH grant funds are required to report the number of veterans, their dependents and survivors of veterans served quarterly to TVC.

Methodology: TVC staff in the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Department will add all totals reported by H4TXH Grantees to arrive at the total number of veterans, their dependents, and survivors served by type of grant.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Output Measure: 2. Count the number of completed home modifications provided to veterans, their dependents, or survivors through the Housing for Texas Heroes (H4TXH) program.

Definition: The number of completed home modifications provided to veterans, their dependents, or survivors by the H4TXH program.

Purpose: The purpose of this measure is to track the number of completed home modifications for veterans, their dependents, and/or survivors completed by grantees of the H4TXH program during the reporting period. This measure provides useful information for TVC management to monitor grantees performance.

Data Source: Grantees receiving H4TXH program funds are required to report each quarter the number of home modifications projects completed for veterans, their dependents, and/or survivors and the type of work comprising each completed home modification project.

Methodology: Grantees receiving H4TXH program funds report the number of home modifications projects completed for veterans, their dependents, and/or survivors provided through H4TXH funds. TVC staff will add the number of completed modifications from all H4TXH program reports to arrive at the total number of completed home modifications projects. All modifications are completed and signed-off by both parties for final payment, according to grant terms.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

B.1. Objective; B.1.3 Strategy: Veterans Treatment Court Grants

Provide assistance to veterans and their families obtaining services through Veteran Treatment Court programs.

Output Measure: 1. Number of Veterans served by Veterans Treatment Court Grant Program.

Definition: Number of veterans served through Veterans Treatment Court grant programs funded through the Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA).

Purpose: This measure provides the number of veterans that are provided services through Veterans Treatment Court grants in the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

Data Source: Organizations that receive grants from the Fund for Veterans' Assistance are required to report the number of veterans served each quarter to the Commission. Quarterly reports are required from all grantees.

Methodology: Organizations that receive grants from the Fund for Veterans' Assistance are required to report the number of veterans receiving services. The TVC staff in the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Department will add all organizational totals to arrive at a cumulative amount.

Data Limitations: The number relies on the accurate reporting and documentation of services provided to veterans by organizations receiving grant funds. TVC will monitor grant programs according to a risk-based assessment.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

C. Goal: Hazlewood

C.1. Objective; C.1.1 Strategy: Hazlewood Administration

D. Goal: Indirect Administration

D.1. Objective; D.1.1 Strategy: Central Administration

Performance Measure Information

The following table lists a summary of customer service goals/objectives, measures, and estimated FY2020 performance measures by each strategy.

STRATEGY	CUSTOMER SERVICE GOAL	CUSTOMER SERVICE OBJECTIVE	OUTPUT OR OUTCOME MEASURE	ESTIMATED FY2020 PERFORMANCE
A.1.1 Strategy: Claims	Under Development	Under Development	Under Development	N/A
A.1.2 Strategy: Veterans Employment	80%	Overall satisfaction with service and staff	% of employers and clients satisfied as compared to number surveyed	85%
A.1.3 Strategy: Veterans Education	90%	Customer satisfied with overall service provided.	Customer satisfied with overall service provided.	85%
A.1.4 Strategy: Veterans Outreach	50%	Informs whether TVC staff are meeting needs of customers served.	% of customer survey responses that express satisfaction with services provided by TVC.	70%
A.1.5 Strategy: Veteran Entrepreneur	75%	Customer satisfied with overall service provided.	Customer satisfied with overall service provided.	76%
A.1.6 Strategy: Health Care Advocacy Program	90%	Counsel and assist veterans with obtaining and understanding their benefits, rights, and supportive services.	% of customer survey responses that express satisfaction with services provided.	92.5%
B.1.1 Strategy: General Assistance Grants	N/A	Beneficiary ability to self-support	% of beneficiaries who report ability to self-support at 120 days after receipt of grant benefit. Calculated by dividing the number of beneficiaries who report self-supporting ability by the total number of beneficiaries receiving financial assistance.	60%
B.1.2 Strategy: Housing for Texas Heroes Grants	N/A	Grantee ability to prevent homelessness	# of beneficiaries who report prevention of homelessness as a result of grant benefit	
B.1.3 Strategy: Veterans Treatment Courts	N/A	Justice-involved veterans graduation rate	% of veterans who begin and complete VTC program requirements in the same grant cycle. Calculated by dividing the veterans who complete program requirements by the veterans who graduate their assigned program.	60%
C.1.1 Strategy: Hazlewood Administration	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Information Resource Planning

Goal:

Support Business Strategy and Goals by Optimizing, Securing and Modernizing Legacy Equipment.

Objective:

Align Information Technology (IT) plans and resources to meet agency and programs' needs.

In order to provide excellent customer service, IT will build strong relationships with all our business components. IT will work together with all division and department directors to ensure their missions are one of the top priorities. IT will modify governance processes to align with our business partners. IT will evaluate mobile and digital methods and provide efficient IT solutions to be a positive force multiplier and help our agency accomplish our top priority - helping veterans.

Objective:

Improve cost saving by reducing redundant business applications.

A comprehensive examination of all applications and tools is required in order to consolidate IT resources at the agency level. The proliferation of funding streams warrants a deliberate and strategic roadmap in order to align all departments' tools and applications according to the agency's vision. Separate applications currently meet single business needs but require streamlining to achieve cost savings and improve efficiencies. We are committed to transparency, increasing efficiencies, reducing costs, streamlining processes and aligning technical capabilities that meet our customers' needs.

Objective:

Protect resources and agency information by implementing security best practices and complying with state and federal security requirements.

IT will strategically conduct IT assessments to determine systems' capability and lifecycle dates, which is essential to identifying potential replacements and modernizing agency equipment. IT will maintain strict compliance with Department of Information Resources (DIR) Cybersecurity framework and follow the recommendation of the Federal National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) regulation and best business practices. The agency will stay aligned to the DIR State Strategic Plan and evaluate and deploy cost effective security enhancement tools. Additionally, IT will protect agency data from unauthorized access and data corruption throughout its lifespan.

Objective:

Modernizing TVC Workforce

A mobile workforce is the new norm. All employees require the flexibility to work from any location. A mobile workforce empowers the agency to be more responsive and resilient during adversity, disaster recovery, and continuity of operations. IT will evaluate mobile and digital methods and equip all employees with the proper technologies to increase portability, ease of use and productivity. IT employees will require the ability to instantly communicate with our customers and quickly address their needs. Along with our Virtual Personal Network capabilities, we will evaluate the Zero Trust model to protect modern and emerging digital environments.

Contract Manager Training

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) must comply with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) system of training, testing, certification and continuing education for state agency contract management personnel in accordance with the Texas Government Code.

Specifically, a state agency employee must be certified as a Certified Texas Contract Manager (CTCM) to engage in contract management functions on behalf of a state agency if the employee has the job title of “contract manager”, “contract administration manager” or “contract technician”; performs contract management activities as fifty percent (50%) or more of his/her job activities; or manages any contract in excess of \$5,000,000.

Individuals may obtain certification as a CTCM through the CPA after completion of the training course and successful certification exam.

Certification and Continuing Education

Certifications issued prior to January 2018 are effective for five (5) years; and may be renewed under the previous requirement of eighty (80) hours of continuing education over the 5-year period, provided the training meets the previous policy and timeline for renewals. Once a certification is renewed, all current rules and procedures apply.

Certifications issued after January 1, 2018 are effective for three (3) years and require twenty-four (24) hours of CPA Statewide Procurement Division (SPD)-sponsored in-person or online continuing education to renew. One (1) of the twenty-four (24) hours must be ethics, to maintain certification and one (1) hour may be a non-SPD-sponsored elective of choice.

All certified procurement professionals are also required to take the Renewal Refresher course offered by SPD once every three years in order to maintain certification. The Renewal Refresher course does not count towards continuing education hours.



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