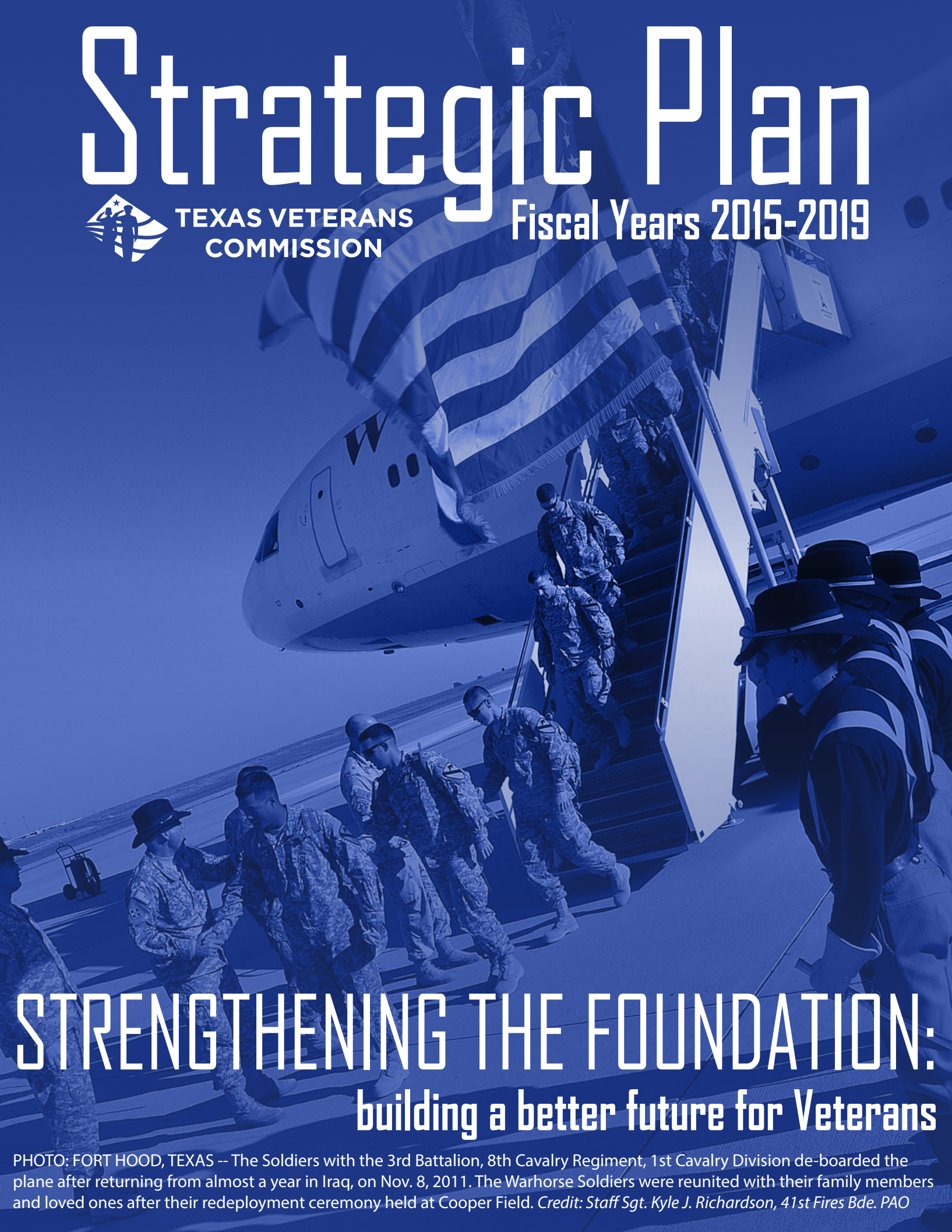


Strategic Plan



TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

Fiscal Years 2015-2019



STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION:
building a better future for Veterans

PHOTO: FORT HOOD, TEXAS -- The Soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division de-boarded the plane after returning from almost a year in Iraq, on Nov. 8, 2011. The Warhorse Soldiers were reunited with their family members and loved ones after their redeployment ceremony held at Cooper Field. *Credit: Staff Sgt. Kyle J. Richardson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO*

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2015-2019

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

June 2014

<u>Member</u>	<u>Date of Term</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Chair	December 31, 2019	Corpus Christi, TX
James H. Scott, Vice Chair	December 31, 2015	San Antonio, TX
Richard A. McLeon, IV, Secretary	December 31, 2017	Henderson, TX
Daniel P. Moran, Member	December 31, 2019	Cypress, TX
J.K. "Jake" Ellzey, Member	December 31, 2017	Midlothian, TX

Signed: 
Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director

Approved: 
Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Chair



**TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION**

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION: building a better future for Veterans

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STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION: building a better future for Veterans

Executive Summary

Throughout its entire history, Texas has placed great value upon the military service of its citizens. As early as the 1830's, both the Republic and State of Texas issued land grants as additional compensation for those who served Texas in the military. The care of those who fought for Texas' causes was a priority for the state's leaders then, and it remains so to this day.

Our military is winding down two of the longest conflicts in our nation's history, after eight years of war in Iraq and over twelve years in Afghanistan. As these wars come to an end, force-shaping efforts are underway to reduce the size of the U.S. Armed Forces and to decrease defense spending. This follows a similar trend to the post-war years over forty years ago when the last American troops left Vietnam. As these conflicts, and the stories of those brave men and women who fought them vanish from newspaper headlines, some in the federal government are tempted to cut back on support for these servicemembers as they transition to civilian careers and become Veterans.

Despite this national trend, the State of Texas, through the Governor and the Texas Legislature, continues to make significant commitments to care for Texas Veterans, their families, and survivors. The regular session of the 83rd Texas Legislature will be remembered as one in which lawmakers made among the most significant and meaningful commitments to Texas Veterans. State leaders passed legislation that invested in a solution to help address the growing backlog of federal disability claims in Texas, promoted Veteran entrepreneurship as good for business in Texas, committed to preserving the state's Hazlewood Exemption program, and enhanced critical mental health services for Veterans.

The Legislature also passed significant legislation affecting a number of critical issues and services for Veterans including professional and occupational licenses and certifications, state contracting preferences for service-disabled Veteran small business owners, discounts on utility bills for certain disabled Veterans and property tax exemptions for surviving spouses of servicemembers killed in action.

The Texas Veterans Commission is proud to be the state agency charged with Veterans advocacy, and continues to provide superior service to Veterans in the areas of claims assistance, employment services, education, and grant funding that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas Veterans, their families and survivors.

Few other states throughout the country have established and consolidated such a wide range of programs that provide resources and assistance to their Veterans. No other state has centralized all of these program areas within their state's Veterans agency. Texas continues to be recognized for aggressively leading the nation on Veteran issues. National leaders have referred to the "Texas-model" when advocating for the integration of Veterans services. This integration allows the agency to remain Veteran focused, with no competing priorities.

Despite an effort nationwide to scale back military-related spending, now is not the time to scale back our commitments to our Veterans. On the contrary, now is the time to strengthen the foundation that Texas' leaders have built and to remind Veterans everywhere that Texas will not forget the sacrifices made by so few on behalf of so many, or in the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, "A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards."

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION: building a better future for Veterans

Part I

Statewide Vision of Texas State Government

Working together, we can accomplish our mission and achieve these priority goals for our fellow Texans:

Ensuring the economic competitiveness of our state by adhering to principles of fiscal discipline, setting clear budget priorities, living within our means and limiting the growth of government;

Investing in critical water, energy and transportation infrastructure needs to meet the demands of our rapidly growing state;

Ensuring excellence and accountability in public schools and institutions of higher education as we invest in the future of this state and ensure Texans are prepared to compete in the global marketplace;

Defending Texans by safeguarding our neighborhoods and protecting our international border;

And increasing transparency and efficiency at all levels of government to guard against waste, fraud and abuse, ensuring that Texas taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money to keep our economy and our families strong.

Sincerely,
RICK PERRY
Governor of Texas

Part II

The Mission of Texas State Government

Texas state government must be limited, efficient, and completely accountable. It should foster opportunity and economic prosperity, focus on critical priorities, and support the creation of strong family environments for our children. The stewards of the public trust must be men and women who administer state government in a fair, just, and responsible manner. To honor the public trust, state officials must seek new and innovative ways to meet state government priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

Aim high . . . we are not here to achieve inconsequential things!

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION: building a better future for Veterans

Part III

The Philosophy of Texas State Government

The task before all state public servants is to govern in a manner worthy of this great state. We are a great enterprise, and as an enterprise, we will promote the following core principles:

- First and foremost, Texas matters most. This is the overarching, guiding principle by which we will make decisions. Our state, and its future, is more important than party, politics, or individual recognition.
- Government should be limited in size and mission, but it must be highly effective in performing the tasks it undertakes.
- Decisions affecting individual Texans, in most instances, are best made by those individuals, their families, and the local government closest to their communities.
- Competition is the greatest incentive for achievement and excellence. It inspires ingenuity and requires individuals to set their sights high. Just as competition inspires excellence, a sense of personal responsibility drives individual citizens to do more for their future and the future of those they love.
- Public administration must be open and honest, pursuing the high road rather than the expedient course. We must be accountable to taxpayers for our actions.
- State government has a responsibility to safeguard taxpayer dollars by eliminating waste and abuse and providing efficient and honest government.
- Finally, state government should be humble, recognizing that all its power and authority is granted to it by the people of Texas, and those who make decisions wielding the power of the state should exercise their authority cautiously and fairly.

Part IV

Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

General Government

Priority Goal: To provide citizens with greater access to government services while reducing service delivery costs and protecting the fiscal resources for current and future taxpayers by supporting effective, efficient, and accountable state government operations.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Number of state employees per 10,000 population
- Number of state services accessible by Internet
- Total savings realized in state spending by making reports/documents/processes available on the Internet and accepting information in electronic format

Economic Development

Priority Goal: To foster economic opportunity, job creation, capital investment, and infrastructure development by promoting a favorable business climate, addressing transportation and housing needs, and developing a productive workforce.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Unemployment rate
- Median household income
- Number of Texans receiving job training services

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION: building a better future for Veterans

Part V

Agency Mission

The mission of Texas Veterans Commission is to advocate for and provide superior service to Veterans in the areas of claims assistance, employment services, education, and grant funding that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas Veterans and their families.

Agency Philosophy

The Texas Veterans Commission will aggressively advocate for Texas Veterans, their families and survivors.

The Texas Veterans Commission will provide quality service through four program areas: Claims Representation and Counseling, Veterans Employment Services, Veterans Education Services, and the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

Texas Veterans Commission staff will maintain the quality of its service through a superior level of dedication, professionalism and training.

The Texas Veterans Commission will tailor its service to the needs of Veterans and their families. The Texas Veterans Commission will connect with all Veterans in the communities across the state to serve their needs.

The Texas Veterans Commission will take the lead in coordinating efforts not only between our four programs, but with all federal, state, and local governmental offices and private organizations that provide services and assistance to Veterans.

The Texas Veterans Commission will ensure that Texas Veterans maintain the highest quality of life and well-being through its advocacy and dedication to Veterans' services.

PART VI: EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Who are Texas Veterans?

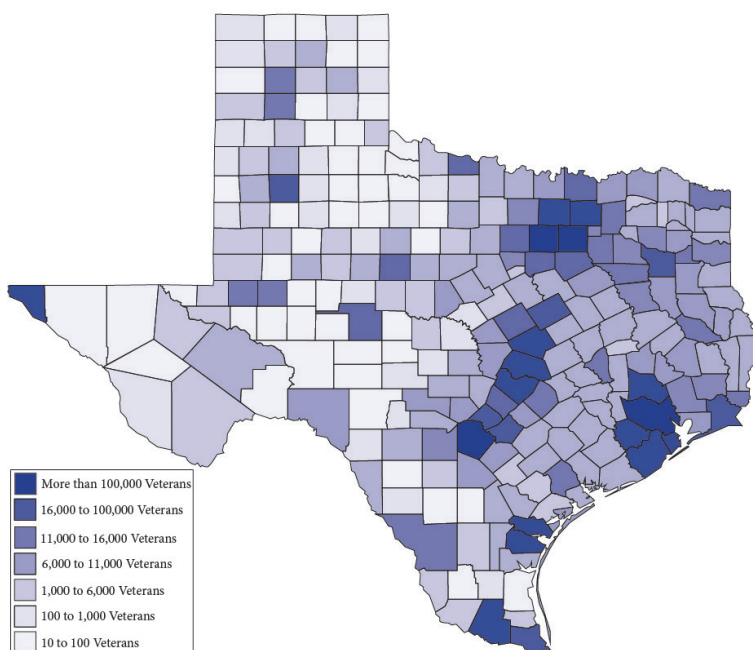
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) defines “Veterans” as those who served in the active duty military, Coast Guard, uniformed Public Health Service, the uniformed National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, reservists called to active duty, and those disabled while on active duty training. The U.S. Department of Labor also adds to that definition that the Veteran must have served 180 days.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the Veteran Population Model 2011 (VetPop2011) which provides the latest official Veteran population projections. VetPop2011 is an actuarial projection model developed by the Office of the Actuary for Veteran population projection from Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 to FY 2040. Using the best available Veteran data by the end of FY 2010, VetPop2011 projects future living Veteran counts by key demographic characteristics.

It should be noted that the actuary data for VetPop2011 was collected prior to the force reductions announced by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), beginning in January 2012. As a result, it is the assessment of the Texas Veterans Commission that while VA’s long term projections are likely sound, the projections do not account for this current surge of servicemembers departing the military, in many cases involuntarily. This affects the demand for services, as highlighted below.

According to VetPop 2011, Texas is currently home to 1.67 million Veterans, second in population only to California. Many Veterans either entered service in Texas or were stationed at one of the 15 active military installations spread throughout the state. Veterans remain in or migrate to Texas for many reasons, including to take advantage of a military-friendly culture and the many services and Veterans benefits the state provides.

While males continue to dominate all branches of service, the number of female Veterans continues to increase steadily. In FY 2013, the population of women Veterans nationwide climbed to 2.2 million. By percentage, women Veterans now represent just over 10 percent of the total U.S. Veteran population of 21.9 million. Texas has seen its population of women Veterans climb sharply as well, up to 191,000 women Veterans in FY 2013, and overtaking California to now boast the largest female Veteran population in the country.



This population of Veterans is spread across a huge geographic area. While approximately 70 percent of Texas Veterans live within one of the largest 25 counties by Veteran population, the remaining 30 percent, which represents approximately 503,000 Veterans, are spread across 229 counties, many of those rural, to very rural, with less than 7 persons per square mile.

All of these population factors present huge challenges to providing responsive Veterans services to a diverse population of Veterans, with unique needs, over such a vast geographic area. The Texas Veterans Commission will continue to be challenged to meet the growing demand for services.

PART VI: EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Why is the demand for Veterans Services in Texas Growing?

There are two key external factors which continue to increase the demand for Veterans services.

Force Reductions cause a surge of Veterans to Texas

As noted previously, VA's near term population projections do not account for surge of servicemembers departing the military in the near term.

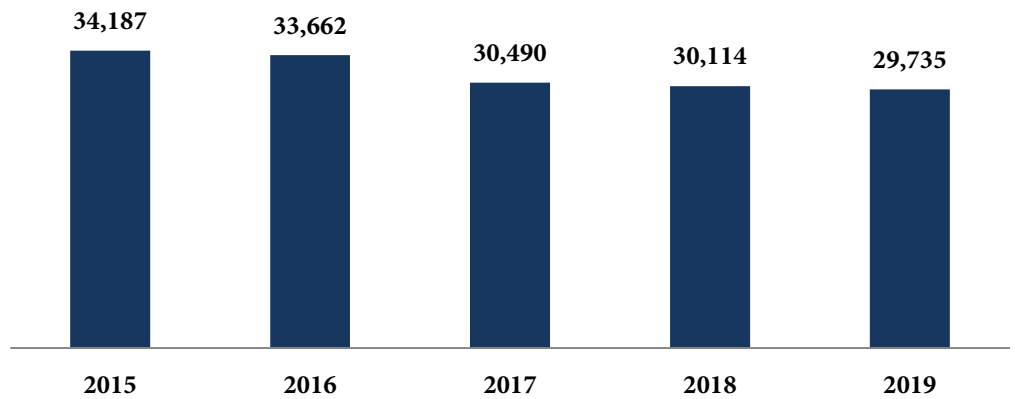
The end of combat operations in Iraq, an already significantly decreased military presence in Afghanistan followed by a possible complete withdrawal by December 2014, and force shaping measures, first announced by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) in January 2012, are all expected to increase the number of servicemembers separating from the military, either voluntarily or as the result of force reductions measures.

In February 2014, DoD announced further proposed cuts when it submitted its budget to Congress. The proposed reductions include a sharp drawdown in the size of the Army, to as low as 440,000 active duty soldiers from the current size of 520,000. The proposed budget also envisions a 5-percent reduction in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. The Marine Corps will draw down from about 190,000 to an endstrength of approximately 182,000.

An analysis of this impact to Texas reveals that approximately 31,600 additional Veterans will either remain or migrate to Texas as the result of separation from the military related to the drawdown. This surge will have a significant impact on the demand for Veterans services.

Due to more robust transition assistance programs by the DoD and other organizations, and a greater level of awareness of benefits available, recently separated Veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are seeking services at a much higher rate than any previous generation of Veterans. To use the VA disability claims process as an example, not only are they filing claims at a greater rate than Veterans of previous conflicts, but they are also claiming more individual disabilities and more complex disabilities, than the Veterans of prior wars. This is largely due to multiple combat deployments in a combat theatre for a longer period than at any time since WWII. This is also attributable to advances in force protection technology, as many wounded servicemembers are surviving incidents that would have been fatal during previous conflicts. Additionally, as is commonly noted, the signature wounds of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are largely unseen wounds, manifesting themselves in the form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury. These conditions require specific and intensive services.

New Veterans Separation in and/or Migration to Texas Projections FY 2015-2019



PART VI: EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Large Aging Population of Veterans

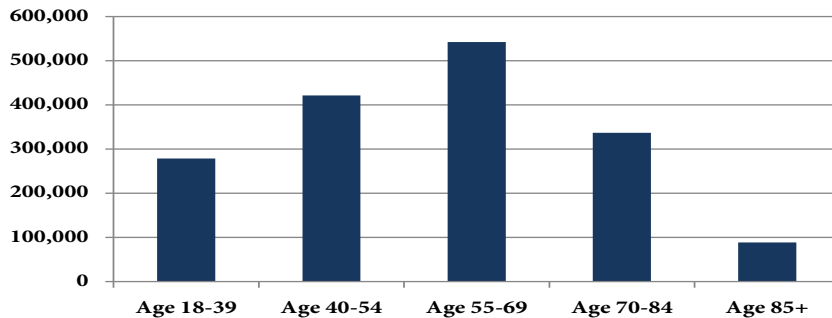
The second external factor that will continue to swell the demand for Veterans services in Texas is an aging population of Veterans, specifically from the WWII, Korea, and Vietnam eras.

The greater number of Texas Veterans from these earlier periods of service inflates the average age of the Veteran population. In 2011, approximately 47 percent of the Veterans in Texas

served during the Vietnam, Korean or WWII eras compared to approximately 16 percent of Texas Veterans served during the Gulf War Era I (August 1990 through August 2001) and 15 percent of Texas Veterans served during the Gulf War Era II (September 2001 and later).

Population of Veterans in Texas, by Age

FY 2013



As these previous generations of Veterans age and their health deteriorates, their need for more intensive healthcare services, in particular will grow. Their service-connected conditions worsen with age resulting in those Veterans filing for increases in disability compensation, as well as new service-connected conditions “as

a direct result” of conditions whose service connection has already been established.

What are the Veterans’ Needs?

Upon leaving the military, a Veteran will need benefits and services such as:

- Filing a claim with the VA
- Using Veteran education benefits
- Finding on-the-job training opportunities
- Finding employment
- Starting or growing a business
- Getting housing assistance
- Accessing healthcare
- Getting counseling for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury
- Finding family and child services
- Finding referrals to other services
- Getting into a Veterans’ Retirement Home
- Accessing burial, health, and life insurance benefits

PART VII: INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Providing Direct Services to Veterans

Claims Representation and Counseling assists Texas Veterans, survivors and dependents in obtaining federal benefits and entitlements from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It also executes the State Strike Force and Fully Developed Claims Teams initiative to help address the backlog of VA claims.

Veterans Employment Services matches Veterans, particularly Veterans with significant barriers to employment, with the best employment opportunities available. This program also outreaches to employers to encourage hiring of Veterans, recruit positions, and match employers with qualified Veterans.

Veterans Education Program directs two programs with complimentary missions: the Federal Program functions as the State Approving Agency and determines those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for Veterans training and for which eligible Veterans and their families may receive GI Bill educational benefits; the State Program oversees the administration of the Hazlewood Act exemption program, manages the statewide Education Coordinator Program, and facilitates the Veterans Education Excellence Award Program.

Providing Grants to Organizations that Assist Veterans

Fund for Veterans' Assistance provides competitive, reimbursement grants to non-profit organizations, Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), and units of local government to provide direct services to Texas Veterans and their families. These grants are awarded in three categories: General Assistance Grants; Housing4TexasHeroes (H4TXH) Grants; and Veterans Mental Health Grants.

Connecting Veterans to Services

Communications and Veterans Outreach communicates and reaches out to the almost 1.7 million Veterans in Texas to ensure that all Texas Veterans receive information on all the services and benefits they earned through their service.

Women Veterans Initiative assists Women Veterans in Texas by helping them obtain their federal and state Veteran services and support, and by coordinating supplemental services and support with local governments and community organizations.

Veteran Entrepreneur Program fosters and promotes Veteran entrepreneurship throughout the State of Texas by connecting aspiring Veteran entrepreneurs with the resources available to help their businesses thrive.

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION AND COUNSELING

The Claims Representation and Counseling (Claims) Program assists Texas Veterans, their families and survivors in obtaining federal benefits and entitlements from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Claims Program ensures all Texas Veterans and their families receive every benefit to which they are entitled.

Three (3) of the most common benefits are:

- **Service-Connected Disability compensation is a monthly benefit paid to Veterans who are disabled because of injuries or illnesses that were incurred in or aggravated during military service. A disability can apply to physical conditions, such as a chronic knee condition, as well as a mental health condition, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).**
- **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a monetary benefit generally payable to a surviving spouse, child, or parent of servicemembers who died or survivors of Veterans who died from their service-connected disabilities.**
- **Pensions - Veterans and Survivors Pension benefits are payable to low-income wartime Veterans or the low income, un-remarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried child(ren) of a deceased Veteran with wartime service. Income threshold is the key factor to eligibility for VA pension benefits.**

The Texas Veterans Commission assists Veterans with these and other benefits

All TVC Claims Counselors are accredited by VA to represent Veterans throughout the process of applying for these benefits. Claims Counselors must possess a high degree of competency in the medical field and be experts in VA administrative law. In order to represent Veterans in the claims process, TVC Claims Counselors:

- Interview Veterans and their families concerning their potential claims and benefits
- Request, review, and evaluate service records and military medical and health records, as well as private medical records
- Consider laws and regulations which apply to the individual's claim
- Prepare the application for benefits
- Prepare and request the medical and other evidence necessary to prove their claim
- Advocate on behalf of the Veteran throughout the processing of the application

In FY 2013, the Texas Veterans Commission managed a total caseload of 201,423 claims and filed over 102,163 monetary claims and represented 19,135 Veterans with appeals.

In addition to providing representation to Veterans and family members seeking the benefits listed above, TVC Claims Counselors also:

- File for discharge upgrades
- Represent appeals claimants before the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA)
- Represent servicemembers who are being processed through the Physical Evaluation Board
- Prepare and submit claims for Vocational Rehabilitation
- Act as a liaison between Veterans and VA medical facilities to insure the Veterans receive all of the healthcare benefits to which they are entitled

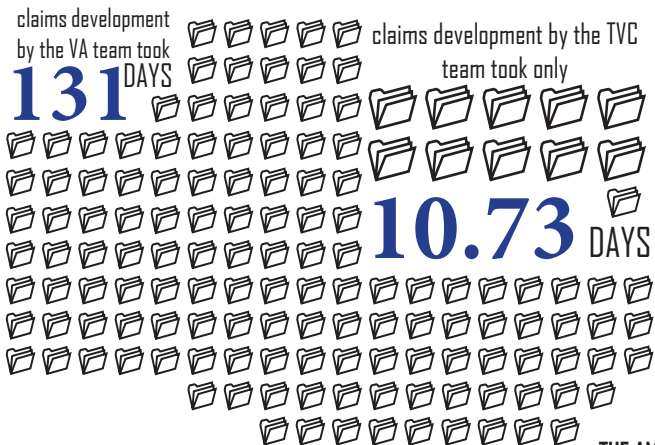
TEXAS' ANSWER TO CRISIS WITHIN VA

In the recent past, the Texas Veterans Commission has been called upon on several occasions to help the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) address crisis that have arisen.

2008

Development Assistance Pilot Project

D.A.P.P. was the first cooperative project between the VA Regional Office in Waco and TVC. A team of TVC Claims Counselors conducted claims development parallel to a team from the VA.



2009

Claims Processing Assistance Teams

C.P.A.T. was a state project funded by the Governor's Office that assembled teams of claims counselors to work on expediting the development process.



CPAT teams reduced pending claims by

17,325

by **2010** there were **16,803** claims pending at the two VA regional offices in Texas

but by **2012** there were **68,612** backlogged claims,

THE AMOUNT OF BACKLOGGED CLAIMS HAD MORE THAN **QUADRUPLED**

2012

State Strike Force and Fully Developed Claims Teams Initiative

In July 2012, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst, working with Governor Perry and Speaker Straus, directed the Texas Veterans Commission to launch the State Strike Force and Fully Developed Claims Teams Initiative to help reduce this federal backlog of Veterans' claims for disability benefits.

Eighteen months into the initiative,

STATE STRIKE FORCE TEAMS reviewed over **35,000** cases, and

FULLY DEVELOPED CLAIMS TEAMS submitted almost **15,700** new claims, which the VA pledged to complete within 90 days.

THESE COMBINED EFFORTS HELPED REDUCE THE BACKLOG

BY MORE THAN **1/2** resulting in approximately **\$78 million** in retroactive payments and **\$27 million** in new monthly awards for **TEXAS VETERANS** and their families.

CRISIS AT VA CONTINUES

CLAIMS BACKLOG

Despite significant progress in addressing this issue, there are still has over 26,000 claims in backlog in Texas.

26,000 CLAIMS REMAINING

BACKLOG OF APPEALS

Since VA shifted its focus to the backlog of claims, the number of appeals to initial VA decisions has been growing, up 35% in Texas since July 2012, to almost 38,000 appeals in May 2014.

38,000 PENDING APPEALS

VA HEALTHCARE SCANDAL

In May 2014, allegations emerged, first at the VA Medical Center in Phoenix, alleging that VA staff had reduced wait times by manipulating reported data, and that Veterans had died while awaiting appointments for medical care. Similar allegations have popped up around the country and the VA's Inspector General now has 26 VA medical facilities under investigation, including facilities in San Antonio, Austin, and Temple.

3 VA MEDICAL FACILITIES UNDER INVESTIGATION
San Antonio, Austin, Temple

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION AND COUNSELING

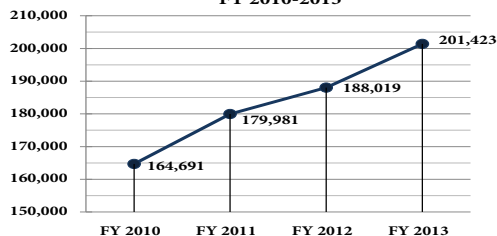
- Assist institutionalized patients who are receiving mental health care, nursing home residents and children apply for VA pension or compensation benefits
- Assist the Texas State Bar program, Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans, which provides no cost legal aid services to Veterans
- Assist incarcerated Veterans with benefit applications
- Provide assistance to Veterans Courts by advising them on Veterans benefits and entitlements

This work has a significant economic impact on both individual Veterans and the State of Texas

The receipt of any one or a combination of these benefits has an obvious and meaningful impact on the lives of Texas Veterans and their families, especially those who are disabled or have very low income. Just to use service-connected disability compensation as an example, the benefit amount is graduated according to the degree of the Veteran's disability on a scale from 10 percent to 100 percent (in increments of 10 percent). This rating may entitle the Veteran to monthly compensation of approximately \$130, on the low end, to over \$3,000 for Veterans determined to be 100 percent disabled.

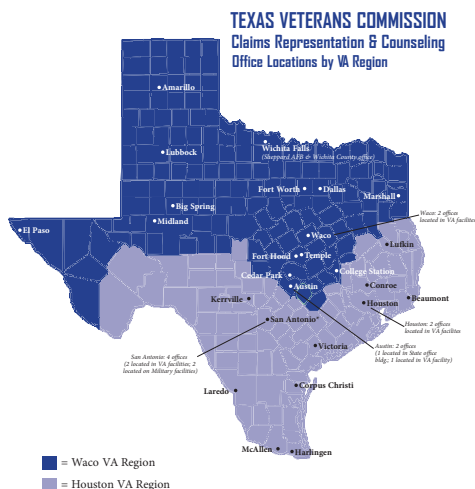
Due to representation by the Texas Veterans Commission, 201,423 Texas Veterans and their families received over \$2.5 billion in compensation and pensions during FY 2013.

**TVC Claims Representation and Counseling
Total Caseload
FY 2010-2013**



With increases in the federal payments to Texas Veterans and their families comes a corollary benefit to state and local governments, as significant portion of those funds are invested in the local economy to purchase goods and services. State and local taxing authorities also see a direct benefit captured through tax receipts.

Veterans benefits paid to Texas Veterans in FY 2013 generated \$316.3 million in State tax receipts and another \$117.1 million to local governments.



The Texas Veterans Commission partners with the network of Veteran County Service Officers to extend the reach of these services across the state

TVC Claims Counselors are located in 41 offices throughout the state at VA Regional Offices, VA Medical Centers, VA Clinics and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, military installations and county offices. The office locations are strategically located in the areas of the highest Veteran traffic and at the same time, provide the widest geographic distribution possible.

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION AND COUNSELING

The efficient and effective delivery of quality Veterans services is impeded by the challenge of a huge Veteran population spread across a vast geographic area like Texas. The “reach” of the TVC Claims Representation and Counseling program is greatly extended through a partnership with the network of Veterans County Service Officers throughout the state.

The office of Veterans County Service Officer (VCSO) was established by Texas law (Texas Government Code Chapter 434, Subchapter B). Current statute requires each county with a population of over 200,000 to employ a Veterans County Service Officer. State law is permissive for those counties with a population under 200,000, they may employ a Veterans County Service Officer, but are not required to do so. (According to the 2010 Census, 23 Texas counties have populations greater than 200,000.)

No state funding is appropriated to Texas counties to support Veterans County Service Officers

The duties of these officers, according to current statute are “...to prepare, submit, and present any claim against the United States or a state for benefits to which the person may be entitled under United States or state law.”

Currently, of the 254 counties in Texas, 212 (83%) have a VCSO working in them (some counties have multiple, while others have none). Of the 212 counties staffed with a VCSO, only 97 are available to Veterans on a full-time basis. Others are either part-time or work on an “on-call” basis.

TVC is statutorily required to provide training for the network of Veterans County Service Officers on at least an annual basis. TVC provides initial training to new VCSOs and offers annual certification and accreditation training through one training conference each fall, and multiple regional training conferences in the spring.

This critical partnership includes:

- An MOU between TVC and the VCSO Association of Texas which outlines “Shared Goals”
- TVC provides VCSOs with training bulletins, status inquiries, and in-depth explanations of VA laws and regulations
- VCSO Advisory Committee to provide direct feedback and counsel on how best to grow the partnership

Women Veterans Claims Representation and Counseling

In order to focus on the specific needs of a growing population of women Veterans, the Women Veterans Claims Coordinator files claims on behalf of women Veterans in Texas and performs outreach to women Veterans to enroll in the VA healthcare system to receive gender specific services, such as:

- Gynecological and reproductive services
- Mammography
- Obstetrics and maternity services
- Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma

The Womens Veterans Claims Coordinator also collaborates with Veteran organizations and other non-profits that are helping Women Veterans. The goal of collaborating with these organizations is not to duplicate services but maximize our ability to connect Women Veterans with benefits and resources. Major organizations include: the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor (DOL), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the American Legion (AL), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Women’s Bureau, F7, and Grace After Fire.

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION AND COUNSELING

- Provides follow-up phone calls to Women Veterans who are already in the TVC database to see if they need any future services,
- Coordinates with VA Women Veterans Managers/Coordinators,
- Nominate five Women Claims Counselors,
- Collaborate with Women Veterans Employment/Outreach Coordinators on workshops they are planning,
- Assist and work with Employment/Claims employees, and
- Develop a Women Veterans Advisory Committee with internal and external employees.

The Texas Veterans Commission is the State's Answer to Crisis Within the VA

State Strike Force and Fully Developed Claims Teams Initiative

On July 16, 2012, the Texas Veterans Commission testified before the State Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and Military Installations, provided data which showed that the backlog of Veterans claims filed with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in Texas more than quadrupled from 2010 to 2012, climbing from approximately 16,800 backlogged claims to over 68,000 backlogged claims in a span of just over two years.

In July 2012, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst, working with Governor Perry and Speaker Straus, directed the Texas Veterans Commission to launch the State Strike Force and Fully Developed Claims Teams initiative to help reduce this federal backlog of Veterans' claims for disability benefits.

The teams became fully staffed and operational on September 1, 2012 and the 83rd Texas Legislature appropriated funds to continue the initiative through 2014 and 2015.

In the first 18 months of operation, the State Strike Force Teams reviewed over 35,000 cases. Additionally, the Fully Developed Claims Teams submitted more than 15,700 new claims, which the VA pledged to complete within 90 days.

These combined efforts helped reduce the backlog of federal disability claims in Texas by half, resulting in approximately \$78 million in retroactive payments and \$27 million in new monthly awards to Texas Veterans and their families.

While the backlog has been reduced significantly, as of May 2014, there are still over 25,000 backlogged claims in Texas. Additionally, while the VA has focused attention and resources on the backlog of claims, the number of appeals on those claims steadily increased, creating additional concern.

The need for a crisis response capability within the Claims Representation and Counseling program at TVC will not soon subside. Whether working to address an influx of claims related to Agent Orange exposure in 2009, beating the VA backlog in 2013, or now working to address a growing number of VA appeals, Texas Veterans will need the State of Texas working alongside VA to advocate for them.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Veterans Employment Services (VES) program matches Veterans, particularly Veterans with significant barriers to employment, with the best employment opportunities available. This program also outreaches to employers to encourage hiring of Veterans, recruit positions, and match employers with qualified Veterans.

The program provides:

- Specialized employment services to Veterans
- Outreach to employers to promote the Veteran hiring opportunities
- Employment services for military spouses
- Specific assistance to public entities to enhance Veterans hiring processes
- Targeted assistance to women Veterans to overcome unique challenges to employment

The goal of VES is to ensure Veterans have as much assistance as they need to locate and obtain long lasting, meaningful employment.

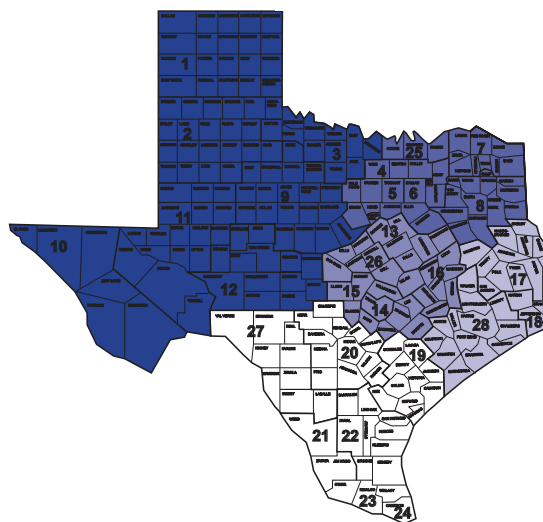
VES staff is trained to provide a full range of employment services such as assistance with job applications, resume preparation, job matching, and job searches. One major responsibility is helping Veterans overcome significant barriers to employment. VES staff is located in more than 75 cities throughout Texas and offers one-on-one assistance to Veterans at American Job Centers, VA facilities, and military installations.

The “Texas Model”: Unique structure fosters success

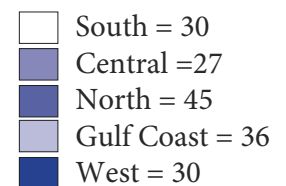
The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS), provides 98 percent of the funding for VES. General Revenue provides the other 2 percent of funding for VES which is used to operate the Family Employment Assistance Counselors (FEAC) program.

Texas is the only state in the nation to have the JVSG program as part of the Veteran advocacy agency. TVC has direct administration over all employment services to Veterans in Texas. This consolidation is a key to our success, allowing us to concentrate all of our efforts and resources on Veterans with a focus not possible when these programs exist as components of larger agencies. National leaders have referred to the “Texas Model” when advocating for the integration of Veterans services.

This “Texas Model” streamlines the entire employment process by making services provided to Veterans more comprehensive, and thus, more effective. The “Texas Model” has had tremendous success through the hard work of VES staff and partnering with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), American Job Centers, and DOL-VETS.



156 Veteran representatives in federally-funded workforce centers in 75 cities:



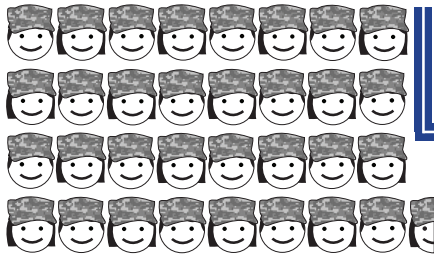
During the last reported fiscal year, over 32,000 Veterans entered employment after receiving assistance from Veteran Employment Services

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT

The Texas Veterans Commission's Veterans Employment Services program matches Veterans, particularly Veterans with significant barriers to employment, with the best employment opportunities available. The program also outreaches to employers to encourage Veterans hiring, recruit positions, and match employers with qualified Veterans.

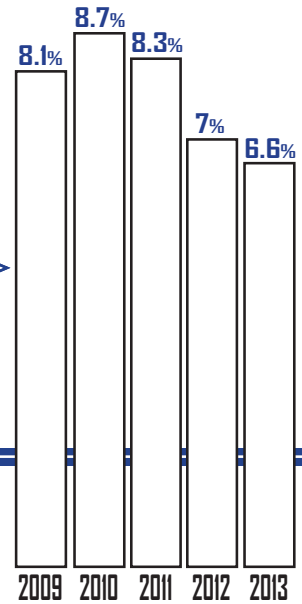
Unemployment Rate

The nation and the state look to unemployment rates to gauge the value of workforce programs. Unemployment rates among the Veteran population in Texas have trended down in recent years, due in large part to the effectiveness of the Texas Veterans Commission's Veterans Employment Services program.



32,445

Veterans entered employment last year after receiving services from Veterans Employment Services staff, the most of any state in the nation.

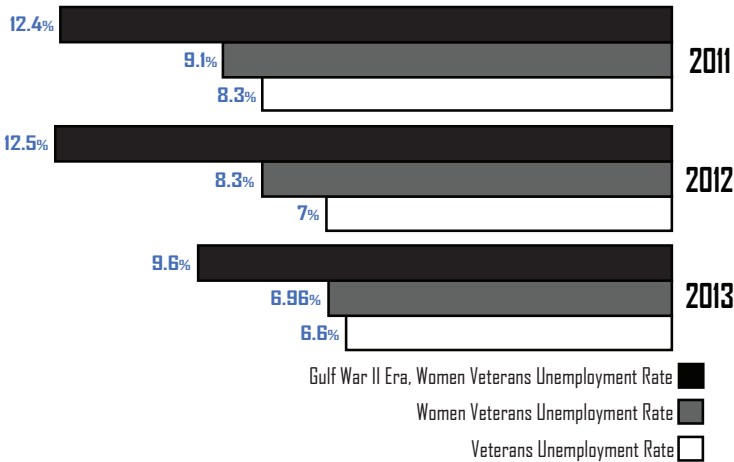


Challenges

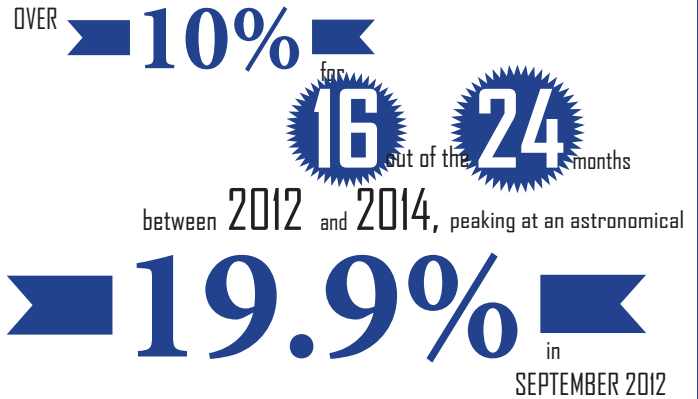
Despite successes in the turning the unemployment tide in the general Veterans population, challenges continue to exist for certain segments within the general Veterans population. Two of those ongoing challenges are highlighted below:

WOMEN VETERANS

Women Veterans are facing challenges to employment at a higher rate than their male counterparts. The problem is even more dire for recently separated Women Veterans.

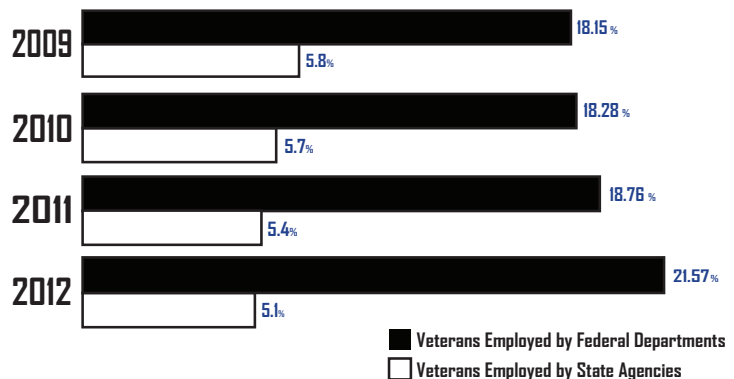


THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR GULF WAR II ERA WOMEN VETERANS WAS



STATE EMPLOYMENT

State agencies in Texas are lagging Federal departments when it comes to hiring Veterans to positions within the state government. The disparity is significant and has been trending downward for almost a decade.



IN THE LAST EIGHT YEARS, WHILE THE NUMBER OF STATE EMPLOYEES HAS INCREASED BY **35,165**

THE NUMBER OF VETERANS EMPLOYED BY STATE AGENCIES HAS DECREASED GOING FROM **5.94%** in 2006, to **4.98%** in 2013

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Helping Veterans overcome significant barriers to employment

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists provide intensive services to disabled Veterans and/or Veterans with significant barriers to employment.

Significant barriers to employment are defined by DOL-VETS as:

- Homelessness
- Disabled
- Low-income
- Lacking a high school diploma or GED
- An offender who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months
- Active duty wounded soldiers
- Transitioning service members
- Recently-separated service member who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks

In order to help Veterans overcome these barriers and get them employment ready, DVOP Specialists perform the following intensive services:

- Identify significant barriers to employment
- Provide targeted employment services
- Connect Veterans to other supportive services (VA healthcare, peer-to-peer counseling, etc.)
- Assist Veterans to develop an employment plan
- Job coach

Connecting with employers

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) establish, facilitate and maintain regular contact with employers. LVERs also provide a range of employment, training and placement services to meet the needs of Veterans.

LVERs connect with employers by:

- Advocating for Veterans employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community-based organizations
- Planning and participating in job fairs
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs, and business organizations to promote employment and training opportunities
- Providing individualized job development
- In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups
- Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts

Recent guidance published by DOL-VETS requires LVERs to work primarily with employers developing job opportunities for Veterans and spend less time actually working with Veterans. This means American Job Center staff will take on a larger, more prominent role in providing direct service to Veterans. Limited partner resources could have a negative impact on one-on-one service delivery to Veterans.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Helping families of Veterans find employment

Historically, the federal grant from DOL-VETS prohibits our Veteran Employment Representatives from providing services to family members. As a result, the Texas Legislature authorized and funded the Family Employment Assistance Counselor (FEAC) program in 2009, making the FEAC program the only state funded program in VES.

FEAC personnel support and assist caretakers and spouses of active duty personnel with an emphasis on Wounded Warriors, providing the same employment services to spouses and family members as other VES staff provide to Veterans.

FEAC personnel are located at the San Antonio Military Medical Center (SAMMC) and in Killeen (Fort Hood).

Working with public entities to increase Veteran workforce

According to the 2013 Veteran Workforce Summary Report from the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, from 2006 to 2013 the number of state employees has increased by over 35,000 employees, while the Veteran employment rate for state agencies has decreased from 5.94% to 4.98%.

The Veteran employment rate by federal departments is triple that of Texas state agencies

In January 2014, the TVC established a Veterans Employment Liaison (VEL) to work with public entities, with a focus on state government, to assist them with hiring Veterans.

Veterans Employment Liaisons provide the following services to agencies:

- **Veterans Preference Program Assistance - Resource and technical assistance regarding Veteran hiring strategies**
- **Career Fair Guidance - Guidance regarding career fairs so that Veterans can learn about the client agency, opportunities available, career progression, and more**
- **Direct Outreach to Veterans - Utilize TVC's social media and professional networking sites to inform Veterans of potential job opportunities, and reach qualified Veteran candidates**
- **Training for Hiring Authorities - Receive a variety of Veteran specific trainings i.e. translating military skills to ensure the client agency can interpret Veteran skill sets and language**
- **Job Posting Development - Learn how to develop an effective "Veteran Friendly" job posting**
- **Follow up - Utilize the VEL as a direct liaison between the client agency and the TVC Veterans Employment Representatives to recruit qualified Veterans**

The Texas Veterans Commission's one (1) Veteran Employment Liaison has already begun working with the 14 state agencies listed below to improve Veteran employment rates by their individual agency. The list of agencies below represents approximately 22% of the state's entire workforce.

- Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Office of the Governor
- Lower Colorado River Authority

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Veterans Land Board
- Texas Secretary of State
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas Attorney General
- Texas Department of Motor Vehicles
- Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
- Texas Facilities Commission
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Helping female Veterans to overcome unique challenges

Women Veterans employment is lagging in comparison to male Veterans. According to an analysis conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, some contributing factors may include:

- Employers may have an outdated understanding of a woman's role in the military.
- Female Veterans may not be aware of, and therefore not obtaining, the services and benefits that are available to them.
- In comparison to male Veterans, female Veterans are twice as likely to be single parents. This "caregiver" status can conflict with employer needs.
- Female Veterans are more likely to have significant service related disabilities than their male counterparts.

The unemployment rate for Gulf War Era II, Women Veterans remained over 10% for 16 out of the 24 months from January 2012 to December 2013, peaking at an astronomical 19.9% in September 2012.

In September 2013, the Texas Veterans Commission established the Women Veterans Employment Program (WVEP).

A single Women Veterans Employment Coordinator (WVEC) is currently developing a program to provide the following services:

- **Outreach and Education**
 - Identifies women Veterans with barriers to employment by attending community outreach events and job fairs, conducting Veteran workshops, and providing educational briefings to the public.
 - As part of educating the community, the WVEC reaches out to employers to promote employment and training opportunities for women Veterans.
- **Veteran Services**
 - Provides intensive services to women Veterans with barriers to employment with an emphasis on creating solutions to make them employment ready.
 - Conducts workshops focused on women Veterans' employment challenges that assists the Veteran in finding employment.
- **Staff Technical Assistance**
 - Provide training and technical assistance to TVC staff and Workforce partners regarding the unique employment challenges women Veterans face.
 - Available to assist staff or community partners with any necessary assistance related to the WVEP.

VETERANS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Veterans Education Program directs two programs with complimentary missions: the Federal Program functions as the State Approving Agency and determines those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for Veterans training and for which eligible Veterans and their families may receive GI Bill educational benefits; the State Program oversees the administration of the Hazlewood Act exemption program, manages the statewide Education Coordinator Program, and facilitates the Veterans Education Excellence Award Program.

Veterans Education operates through a combination of federal and state funding

Approximately 75 percent of Veterans Education funding is dedicated to the State Approving Agency role of approving and regulating GI Bill educational and training programs in the state. Since 1995, federal funds have been augmented by state general revenue funds to ensure adequate oversight and outreach in the Rio Grande Valley and El Paso areas. The remaining 25 percent of Veterans Education funding has been used to initiate the programs enacted by the 83rd Legislative Session, administration of the Hazlewood exemption, creating Education Coordinators and establishing an award program for excellence in educating Veterans. Currently, this funding has been sourced from unobligated funds identified for TVC Claims Strike Force teams.

Federal Program: State Approving Agency

Shortly after enactment of the original GI Bill of Rights in June 1944, Congress recognized the historic and primary responsibility that states have for education and provided for each state to oversee programs of study offered within its borders. As a result, Congress invited the governors of each state to participate in the administration of Veteran educational assistance programs to insure that Veterans would get quality education and training and that taxpayer dollars would be spent without fraud, waste, and abuse. Thus, State Approving Agencies were created in each state.

In FY 2013, the TVC Veterans Education Program, in its role as the State Approving Agency, approved over 3,000 programs of education and training for Veterans in Texas.

For nearly 70 years, State Approving Agencies have worked successfully in partnership with the VA and educational institutions to achieve these purposes and to serve as advocates for Veterans. Veterans Education functions as the State Approving Agency for Texas and receives funding from the VA to determine the institutions and programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for Veterans training and for which eligible Veterans and their families may receive GI Bill educational benefits. Additionally, to prevent fraud, waste and abuse, Veterans Education conducts financial audits of VA payments to schools and Veteran students.

\$1.016 billion in federal educational benefits were paid out to Veterans and eligible family members in Texas during FY 2013

VETERANS EDUCATION

The Texas Veterans Commission's Veterans Education Program directs two programs with complimentary missions: The Federal Program functions as the State Approval Agency and determines those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for Veterans training and for which eligible Veterans and their families may receive GI Bill educational benefits. The State Program oversees the administration of the Hazlewood Act exemption program, manages the statewide Education Coordinator Program, and facilitates the Veterans Education Excellence Award Program.

In fiscal year 2013, the Veterans Education Program, in its role as the State Approval Agency approved

over 3,000 programs

The number of approved institutions continues to grow each year, which leads to

expanded opportunities

of education and training in Texas for Veterans.







for **Veterans and their families**

to utilize and receive federal GI Bill educational benefits.

FEDERAL GI BILL

As more programs are approved, and the opportunities for GI Bill utilization are expanded, more and more Veterans and their families have chosen to utilize their federal GI Bill benefits over the past five years. As the number of individuals utilizing benefits grows, so does the amount of federal expenditures within the state.

Greater Utilization

2008		42,562 recipients
2009		40,402 recipients
2010		67,015 recipients
2011		76,878 recipients
2012		71,331 recipients
2013		75,000 recipients*

*estimated; VA data not yet published

Greater Federal Investment

2008		\$303,923,000
2009		\$390,710,000
2010		\$778,710,000
2011		\$986,466,000
2012		\$979,947,000
2013		\$1,016,906,000

Since 2008, the total federal investment in Texas has amounted to

\$4,456,662,000

STATE HAZLEWOOD ACT

The state's Hazlewood Act Exemption Program may supplement the GI Bill for Texas Veterans and eligible dependents. Hazlewood is a state benefit that provides qualified Veterans, spouses, and dependent children with an education benefit of up to

150

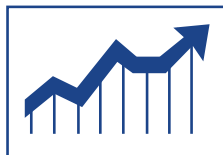
hours of tuition exemption





including most fee charges at public institutions of higher education in Texas.

IMPACT OF BENEFITS

Beyond the individual gain to Veterans and families in receipt of federal and state Veteran educational benefits, there is a positive collective economic impact to the state as the result of this investment.


To the Economy (Fiscal Year 2012)



	Federal Benefits	State Benefits
Gross Product	 \$5.717 billion	 \$1.989 billion
Personal Income	 \$3.488 billion	 \$1.194 billion
Employment	60,470 permanent jobs	19,664 permanent jobs

On State and Local Government



	State Tax Receipts	Local Tax Receipts
Total Expenditure	 \$420.9 million	 \$165.5 million
Gross Product	 \$143.5 million	 \$55.4 million

VETERANS EDUCATION PROGRAM

State Program

In 2013, the Texas 83rd Legislative Session expanded the role of the Veterans Education Program by adding components comprising a State Program:

- **Texas Hazlewood Act Exemption Program**

Transferred administration of the Texas Hazlewood Act exemption program from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to the Texas Veterans Commission.

Hazlewood is a state benefit that provides qualified 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 Hazlewood Act exempts qualified Texas Veterans, and in some cases, their families, from payment of tuition and fees at public institutions of higher education in Texas. Hazlewood rules were transferred from THECB to TVC on July, 12, 2013; effective May 26, 2013. The Negotiated Rulemaking process, to standardize and streamline the rules, was begun in July, 2013. Rules were approved by the Commission in February, 2014, for publication in the Texas Register for public comment. Target date for implementation of the new rules is Fall, 2014, academic term.

- **Veteran Education Coordinator Program**

Established a statewide Veteran Education Coordinator Program to provide assistance to public colleges and universities in creating programs, services and procedures to assist Veterans and their families transition from the military to civilian environment ultimately enhancing the Veterans' opportunity for academic success.

The mission of the Veteran Education Coordinator Program is to assist colleges and universities in their respective areas to institute or enhance programs and procedures which would increase the probability of Veterans and their families successfully completing their academic experience.

The Veteran Education Coordinator Program began in September, 2013, with three coordinators based in areas with the greatest concentration of Veterans using GI Bill educational benefits and the greatest concentration of schools. Based on this criteria, the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the Houston area, and the San Antonio area were selected. Veteran Education Coordinators have been well-received by institutional leadership and are being included in the decision process for Veteran-related issues on campus. This program is already producing benefits for Veteran students. Ultimately, TVC planning would locate Veteran Education Coordinators in the Rio Grande Valley area, in El Paso, and in the East Texas area to assist Veterans and their families throughout the state.

VETERANS EDUCATION PROGRAM

- **Veterans Education Excellence Award Program**

Established a Veterans Education Excellence Award Program to recognize institutions of higher education within the state for excellence in providing education and related services to Veterans and their families.

The Veterans Education Excellence Award program will recognize schools for excellence in providing education and related services to Veterans and their families.

The Veterans Education Excellence Award program is currently under development. Due to funding limitations, only one staff member has been assigned to this effort.

As envisioned, there would be two levels of award, one for universities and one for community colleges. There would be biennial awards, with universities and community colleges alternating years. Three levels of award, Gold, Silver, and Bronze, would be established, based upon the types and scope of services/programs available to Veterans and their families. Schools would self-evaluate via a comprehensive survey form, with the results verified/evaluated through a campus visit by TVC staff. Recommendations for award would be vetted through the Texas Veterans Commission for presentation by the Governor, or senior state official.

FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

The Texas Veterans Commission's (TVC) Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) grant program was established in 2007 by the 80th Legislature and funded in late 2009. The FVA program awards reimbursement grants in three categories: General Assistance, Housing4TexasHeroes (H4TXH), and Veterans Mental Health Grants. These grants offer funding to non-profit organizations, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), and units of local government to provide direct services to Texas Veterans and their families. Since 2009, the program has awarded nearly \$40 million in 207 grants to 118 non-profit and local government entities.

General Assistance Grants

Organizations receiving these grants offer programs that focus on helping Veterans achieve a better quality of life. Through these programs, for example, a Veteran can receive much needed mental health counseling as they re-enter civilian life or overcome post-traumatic stress, a female Veteran can take back control of her life while dealing with military sexual trauma, and a child whose parent is deployed can get help with homework and know that he or she is not alone during this difficult time.

Since 2009, the TVC has awarded approximately \$29.7 million in General Assistance grants to Veteran-serving organizations to help 171,668 Texas Veterans and dependents. The program awarded \$2.5 million in its first grant solicitation for 2014.

This category awards reimbursement grants twice a year to eligible organizations that provide direct services to Texas Veterans and their families. Grants address a broad range of needs, including:

- Limited emergency financial assistance;
- Transportation services;
- Homeless/Housing assistance;
- Family and child services;
- Veterans Courts; and
- Other supportive services.

Housing4TexasHeroes Grants

The Housing4TexasHeroes (H4TXH) category awards grants to eligible organizations that assist Texas Veterans and their families in maintaining or improving housing. Currently, these grants address the home modification assistance needs of Disabled Veterans, Low Income, and Very Low Income Veterans. These two-year grants are funded through Housing Trust Fund money transferred from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA).

Since the program began in 2011, the FVA program has awarded nearly \$6 million in Housing4TexasHeroes grants to help 1,272 Texas Veterans and dependents. In 2014, the program awarded \$3 million in H4TXH grants.

Through grantees, each Veteran may receive up to \$10,000 in improvements that may include but is not limited to:

- Walkways, ramps

GRANTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT ASSIST VETERANS

The Texas Veterans Commission's Fund for Veterans Assistance provides competitive reimbursement grants to non-profit organizations, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), and units of local government to provide direct services to Texas Veterans and their families. These grants are awarded in three categories: *General Assistance Grants*, *Housing4TexasHeroes (H4TXH) Grants*, and *Veterans Mental Health Grants*.

Funding Sources



TEXAS
Department of
State Health Services



General Assistance Grants

Provide grants to organizations that address a broad range of needs, including:
 Limited emergency financial assistance;
 Transportation services;
 Homeless/Housing assistance
 Family and child services;
 Veterans Courts; and
 Other supportive services.

Since **2009** TVC has awarded approximately **\$3 million** in General Assistance Grants every six months.

Housing4TexasHeroes Grants

Provides grants to organizations that address the home modification assistance needs of:
 Disabled Veterans
 Low income Veterans
 Very low income Veterans
 Modifications and improvements may include:
 Walkways, ramps
 Accessible kitchens
 Accessible bathroom modifications

Since **2011** TVC has awarded **\$3 million** in Housing4TexasHeroes Grants per biennium for a two-year grant cycle.

Mental Health Grants

Provides grants to fund projects providing direct counseling and mental health services to Veterans and their families.
 Counseling services may include:
 Peer sessions and groups sessions;
 Veteran family member counseling
 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) services;
 Equine therapy;
 Co-occurring diagnosis counseling; and
 Other types of counseling.

TVC will award approximately **\$1.5 million** in Veterans Mental Health Grants each year, for a one-year grant cycle. The program's first Veterans Mental Health Grants were awarded in May

2014

As of **2014** organizations receiving grants from Fund for Veterans Assistance have provided assistance and services to over **172,000** Veterans and their families.

BUT, at current funding levels, the Fund for Veterans Assistance is only able to award

1/5 of the requested grant funding.

FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

- Accessible kitchens
- Accessible bathroom modifications

Mental Health Grants

In 2013, the TVC partnered with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to create the Veterans Mental Health Grant program to fund projects providing direct counseling and mental health services to Veterans and their families. These grants are awarded once a year. The program's first Veterans Mental Health Grants were awarded in May 2014. The 12 grants, totaling \$1.75 million, will begin July 2014.

Counseling services may include:

- Peer sessions and groups sessions;
- Veteran family member counseling;
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) services;
- Equine therapy;
- Co-occurring diagnosis counseling; and
- Other types of counseling.

Grant Process

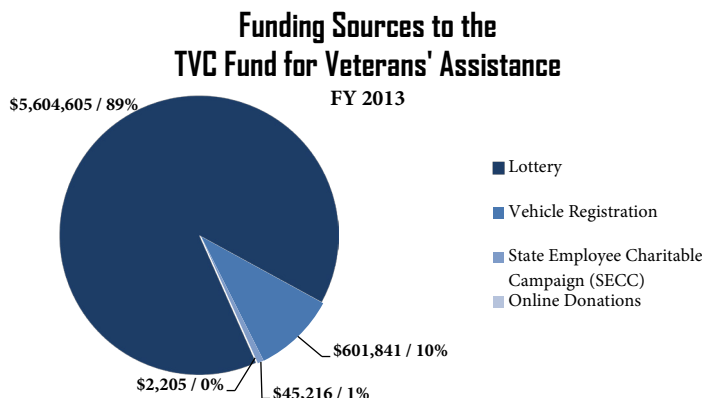
Eligible grant applicants are units of local government, 501(c)(19) posts or organizations of past or present members of the Armed Forces, 501(c)(3) private nonprofit corporations authorized to conduct business in Texas, and Texas chapters of 501(c)(4) Veterans service organizations.

Grants provided by the FVA are competitive awards and every applicant must submit a complete application to the FVA using the current posted Request for Applications (RFA) and application within the published timeframe in order to be considered. Care has been taken to publicize the grant to organizations throughout the state. The RFA is posted in the Texas Register, on e-Grants, and the TVC website.

Additionally, the Commission has requested grantees be geographically distributed throughout the State of Texas, duplication of services within a geographic region be minimized, and applications approved for funding be fully funded. The TVC Commission makes the final funding decisions based upon the FVA Advisory Committee's funding recommendations.

Funding Sources

The FVA General Assistance grants are funded through five funding sources: (1) Portion of sales from the Texas Lottery scratch-off game; (2) State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC); (3) Vehicle Registration Renewal Notice donations; (4) Application for Texas Driver License or Identification Card donations; and (5) Restricted and Unrestricted donations. Donations to the FVA are tax deductible.



Unmet Need

The largest funding source for grants is the proceeds from the sale of the Lottery scratch-off ticket. Through a combination of all funding sources, approximately \$6 million is available for award each fiscal year, approximately \$3 million per grant solicitation. As a result, the grants are highly competitive and the identified need within communities always outweighs the funding available to award. At current funding levels, the FVA is le to award just a fifth of the funding requested.

COMMUNICATIONS AND VETERANS OUTREACH

Communications and Veterans Outreach communicates and reaches out to the 1.7 million Veterans in Texas to ensure that all Texas Veterans, their families and survivors receive information on all the services and benefits they earned through their service.

To that end, the agency, through Communications and Veterans Outreach, utilizes several means to efficiently communicate:

Communications: Publications

The agency produces a bi-weekly electronic newsletter, E-Vets. E-Vets is currently distributed to over 140,000 Veterans each month and contains relevant, contemporary information on Veteran issues and benefits. It is also a place to highlight the most recent news and information from within the agency's program areas and upcoming agency events.

The agency also produces the Journal, a yearly publication focusing on the successes of the agency including data, statistics, and success stories from each program area from the past fiscal year. In addition, the Journal spotlights success stories and provides information on changes to legislation and policy that effect federal and state Veteran programs.

Media Relations

Within Communications and Veterans Outreach, the agency's Public Information Officer coordinates the effort to communicate agency resource information to Veterans with national, statewide and local media outlets. The Public Information Officer serves as a liaison for all media inquiries and requests for information from print, radio, and television media.

Social Media

To supplement traditional communication methods, Communications and Veterans Outreach provides and maintains content for a variety of social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. These communication methods allow TVC to provide information about TVC's programs and activities to the public in a quick, accessible, and interactive way. Veterans, survivors and their families can also use these tools as another way to contact TVC about programs and Veterans benefits.

Veterans Outreach: Events

At the Texas Veterans Commission, the most important asset is the staff, 84 percent of whom are Veterans themselves. Almost all of the 400 employees, most distributed at claims offices and workforce centers throughout the state, consistently participate in Veterans outreach events within the communities they support. Communications and Veterans Outreach assists with the participation of Texas Veterans Commission employees in benefits fairs, warrior transition briefings, Yellow Ribbon events, Legislator-sponsored Veteran Town Halls, and a number of other events.

Veterans Summit

In cooperation with Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) throughout the State of Texas, the Texas Veterans Commission hosts an annual Veterans Summit each January. The Summit provides a unique venue for a wide array of attendees to collaborate on ways to meet the challenges facing Texas Veterans. Invitees include the leadership of Veterans Service Organizations, which represent over 600,000 Texas Veterans; county, state and federal officials involved in Veterans' programs and organizations; non-profit and service organizations that serve Veterans and their families; and individual Veterans interested in participating.

COMMUNICATIONS AND VETERANS OUTREACH

Campus Outreach

In addition, the Texas Veterans Commission supports college and university campuses by providing information through campus visits regarding services and resources available to student Veterans, specifically targeting Veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Partnerships

Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (TCCVS)

The Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (TCCVS) was created as a result of legislation authored by Senator Leticia Van de Putte and sponsored by Representative Sid Miller during the 82nd Legislature. Senate Bill 1796 established the Council to accomplish three tasks:

1. Coordinate the activities of state agencies that assist Veterans, servicemembers, and their families;
2. Coordinate outreach efforts that ensure that Veterans, servicemembers, and their families are made aware of services; and
3. Facilitate collaborative relationships among state, federal, and local agencies and private organizations to identify and address issues affecting Veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

The legislation enabled the members of TCCVS to establish workgroups to focus on specific issues affecting Veterans, servicemembers, and their families. The total number of workgroups has increased to eight since the first report was published in 2012:

1. Health
2. Higher Education
3. Housing
4. Employment
5. Criminal Justice
6. Women Veterans
7. Transportation
8. Communication and Outreach

After the first TCCVS report was published, it was evident that some agencies that play an important role in providing Veterans' services were not included in the council's original composition. SB 1892, authored by Sen. Garcia and sponsored by Rep. Menendez, expands state agency representation on the council.

Agencies added as a result of SB 1892 include:

- Office of Acquired Brain Injury
- Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE)
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Texas Department of Motor Vehicles
- Office of Public Utility Counsel

COMMUNICATIONS AND VETERANS OUTREACH

All participating state agencies involved in TCCVS workgroups and council meetings are listed below:

- Texas Veterans Commission
- Veterans Land Board
- Office of Acquired Brain Injury of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Texas Department of State Health Services
- State Bar of Texas
- Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services
- Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Workforce Investment Council
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- Texas Commission on Jail Standards
- Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education
- Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Texas Department of Motor Vehicles
- Office of Public Utility Counsel

Beginning in September of 2013, the TCCVS met regularly to begin this work. Each of the eight workgroups met at least six times throughout the period from September 2013 to August 2014 and has identified strengths and weaknesses of Veterans services provided by the State of Texas. The recommendations identified in the report include extensive collaboration efforts between state, federal, local agencies and private organizations.

Veterans Courts

Background

Veterans Court Programs provide military Veterans who enter the civil or criminal justice system, most often as the result of substance or drug abuse or mental health issues, caused or linked to injuries connected to their military service (PTSD, TBI, etc.), an alternative to jail or prison time. The courts were modeled after the drug treatment or mental health treatment courts first established two decades ago.

In 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature passed SB 1940, authored by Senator Leticia Van de Putte, which incorporated SB 112 authored by Senator Rodney Ellis, and was codified as Chapter 617 of the Health and Safety Code and governs the establishment and implementation of Veterans Court Programs.

It allows the Commissioners Court of a county to establish a Veterans Court Program for Veterans or current servicemembers of the United States Armed Forces charged with any misdemeanor or felony offense if the Veteran or servicemember “suffers from a brain injury, mental illness, or mental disorder, including post-traumatic stress disorder, that...”:

- “...resulted from the defendant’s military service in a combat zone or other similar hazardous duty area; and
- materially affected the defendant’s criminal conduct at issue in the case.”

COMMUNICATIONS AND VETERANS OUTREACH

If Veterans or servicemembers successfully complete a Veterans Court Program, the court in which the criminal case is pending will dismiss the criminal action against the defendant after determining that the dismissal is in the best interest of justice.

In 2013, the 83rd Texas Legislature passed SB 462, authored by Senator Joan Huffman which consolidated Texas statutes by creating a new Subtitle K within the Government Code where all relevant specialty court provisions are now located. These courts include:

- Family Drug Court Programs
- Drug Court Programs
- Veterans Court Programs
- Mental Health Court Programs

Changes to the specialty court programs include:

- Established some oversight of specialty court programs by requiring them to register with the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor;
- Required courts to follow programmatic best practices in order to be eligible to receive state and federal grant funds; and
- Modified the composition of the Governor's Specialty Courts Advisory Council to nine members and requires the council to recommend programmatic best practices to the criminal justice division.

On December 9, 2009, the first Veterans Court Program in Texas commenced in Houston, with the Honorable Marc Carter presiding.

Currently, there are 20 Veterans Court Programs operating in Texas as reported to the Criminal Justice Division (CJD) of the Office of the Governor.

Texas Veterans Commission's Role in Veterans Courts

The Texas Veterans Commission plays two (2) critical roles in Veterans Courts in Texas. First, the Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) awards reimbursement grants to eligible charitable organizations, local government agencies, and Veterans Service Organizations that provide direct services to Texas Veterans and their families, including Veterans Courts. Eight (8) counties have been awarded grants through the FVA's competitive general assistance grant process. These grants have been limited in size to assist in the initial cost to establish Veterans Court Programs.

Secondly, in addition to providing Veterans Court Programs with opportunities for grants, TVC also serves to provide many resources and supportive services relied upon by Veterans Court Programs. TVC representatives offer assistance to Veterans in Veterans Court Programs which include:

- Assisting Veterans in obtaining monetary VA disability benefits through the TVC's Claims Counseling and Representation Program;
- Acting as a resource to the judge and court manager concerning VA benefits and services to assist the Veteran;
- Facilitating enrollment into the VA health care system;
- Seeking and obtaining employment;
- Acquiring educational benefits through state or federal programs; and
- Providing local points of contact for organizations that assist Veterans.

WOMEN VETERANS INITIATIVE

The mission of the Texas Women Veterans Initiative, established on September 1, 2011, is to ensure that the women Veterans in Texas have equitable access to federal and state Veterans benefits and services. The program advocates for women Veterans and works to increase public awareness about the gender-specific needs of women Veterans and recommend legislative initiatives and the development of policies on the local, state, and national levels to address the issues affecting women Veterans. In order to carry out the mission Women Veterans Coordinators were appointed for the state.

The Women Veterans Coordinators serve as advocates for Women Veterans by:

- Collaborating with government and non-government programs in Texas to identify resources within the Women Veterans' communities;
- Assisting with health care, disability claims, employment issues;
- Identifying the challenges and barriers of Women Veterans;
- Advocating for changes on their behalf; and
- Increasing support for Women Veterans throughout Texas and United States.

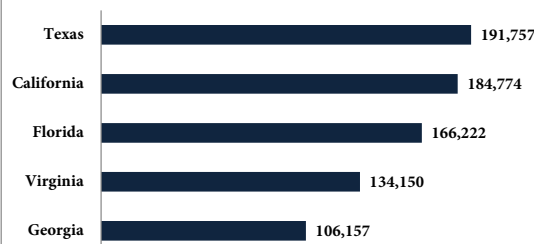
Constituent Research and Analysis

There is not a typical woman Veteran. The military is continually changing the roles of women in the Armed Forces; their multiple deployments and the blurring of combat and non-combat operations suggest that the future outcomes and needs of these women as they become Veterans may be quite different from those of their predecessors.

Currently Texas is outnumbering all the other states on the number of Women Veterans.

More and more women Veterans are residing in Texas today compared to 10 years ago. In 2013 there were 191,757 women Veterans in Texas. In 2010 there were 180,642; this has increased by 11,115 in just three years. The total population of women Veterans is expected to increase at an average rate of about 11,000 women per year for the next 20 years. By 2023, there is expected to be 225,842 women Veterans residing in Texas.

Population of Women Veterans, by State
FY 2013



The Women Veterans Initiative Comprises Coordinators in Three (3) Main Areas:

Three (3) Women Veterans Coordinators with specific areas of focus work in tandem to provide a full array of services specifically geared towards women Veterans.

• Women Veterans Claims Representation and Counseling

As outlined in previous sections, the Women Veterans Claims Coordinator files claims on behalf of women Veterans in Texas and performs outreach to women Veterans to enroll in the VA healthcare system to receive gender specific services such as gynecological and reproductive services, mammography, obstetrics and maternity services, and treatment for Military Sexual Trauma.

• Women Veterans Employment Services

Also outlined in a previous section, the Women Veterans Employment Coordinator

WOMEN VETERANS INITIATIVE

assists Veterans, specifically women Veterans, to overcome barriers to employment. This is accomplished through assuring the Veterans receive intensive one-on-one job coaching services and by educating service providers and employers. The Women Veterans Employment Coordinator focuses on, in cooperation with employers, assisting women Veterans to gain the skills, knowledge, and to achieve long-term and meaningful employment.

- **Women Veterans Outreach**

Texas has the largest Women Veterans population of 191,757 and growing. The population spans multiple generations, each utilizing different methods of accessing information. To effectively deliver information and reach as many Women Veterans as possible, the Women Veterans Outreach Coordinator communicates with the women Veteran community in Texas utilizing: (a) social media, (b) outreach events, such as Women Veterans 5K and Women Veterans Conference, (c) collaborative events through reputable non-profit and government organizations, and (d) traditional media.

VETERANS ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

The Veterans Entrepreneur Program (VEP) is dedicated to providing the men and women who volunteered to serve their country with the tools and resources necessary for entrepreneurial success. The program was created by Senate Bill 1476 in May 2013.

More than 2,500 Veterans have received information and support for entrepreneurship from the Veteran Entrepreneur Program since its inception.

As Veterans with business backgrounds and education, VEP team members understand the process oriented nature of Veterans. Having spent the vast majority of their career in non-business environments, Veterans tend to be unfamiliar with the process of starting a business. VEP has proceduralized the business start-up process and strives to remove much of the “mystery” surrounding the business start-up process.

To that end, the Veterans Entrepreneur Program provides the following services:

- **Pre-business plan workshops**
- **Business concept assessment**
- **Business plan development**
- **Entrepreneurial training and counseling**
- **Financial guidance**
- **Management assistance**
- **Marketing assistance**
- **Government procurement/certification assistance**
- **Information regarding franchise opportunities**
- **Mentorship opportunities**

VEP is in the process of enhancing and broadening the scope of services it delivers. Depending upon the data source utilized, 25% of startups fail after the first year. By the end of the second year the percentage increases to 36% and by the end of the third year, the percentage of failures increases to 44%. After five years, more than half of those businesses have failed.

To mitigate these figures, VEP is creating an enhanced process for training Veteran Entrepreneurs. Headquartered in Austin, VEP will travel to several target specific locations throughout the year to conduct enhanced training sessions. There will be a limited number of sessions conducted annually and each class will have a limited number of available seats.

With very few exceptions, government entities want to see that an organization has a track record of delivering products or supplies to the government on-time, on-budget and in full accordance with advertised specifications. For start-up businesses this is a challenge.

Conversely, businesses that do receive government contracts are typically required to allocate a percentage of the contract to Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) or Service Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses (SDVOBs). For businesses with government contracts, one of their biggest challenges in meeting the SDVOB requirement is identifying those that offer a product or service capable of fulfilling the terms of the contract. VEP is also in the process of becoming a conduit for Prime Contractors and Veteran Owned Businesses (VOBs) by developing and maintaining a list of Prime Contractors and VOBs.

The ongoing efforts of the Veterans Entrepreneur Program provide Veterans with the information, resources and tools necessary for the successful launch and growth of businesses in Texas will yield significant benefits to the state for many years to come. Today's Veterans are poised to be the backbone of a new generation of small businesses that can quickly build a sustainable new jobs base in Texas.

PART VIII: AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

The Agency's Goals are segmented into three categories: Budgetary, Non-Budgetary and Customer Service.

Budgetary

Goal: Through effective training, marketing and advocacy, provide effective claims representation, Veterans education, and employment services to Veterans, their dependents and their survivors. (Budgetary)

Non-Budgetary

Historically Underutilized Business (HUB)

Goal: We will make good faith efforts to purchase from certified historically underutilized businesses. (Non-budgetary)

Customer Service

Goal: The Texas Veterans Commission will manage Commission resources to produce the highest level of service to our State's Veterans and their families. (Non-budgetary)

Evaluation of Commission performance is linked to meeting performance objectives. Outcome measures are associated with "Goals." Output measures are associated with "Strategies." (Appendix D, Measures Definitions).

A. Budgetary Goal – Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

Through effective training and advocacy, provide effective claims representation, employment services, Veterans education approval and assistance to Veterans, their dependents and their survivors.

A.1. Objective: Maintain Veterans' Benefit 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 and education.

Outcome Measures:

1. Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation of Veterans with service-connected disabilities.
2. Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission case development and advocacy in claims to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled war time Veterans above the poverty level.
3. Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation for survivors or orphans of Veterans.
4. Percentage of original or reopened claims submitted by the Texas Veterans Commission granted by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) after initial VA rating.
5. Veterans Employment Services Employment Rate.
6. Veterans Employment Services Retention Rate.

A.1.1. Strategy: Claims Representation & Counseling

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 Measures:

1. Number of claims for Veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of Veterans with service-connected disabilities.

PART VIII: AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

2. Number of claims for VA benefits filed to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled Veterans above the poverty level.
3. Number of claims for Veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of survivors and orphans of Veterans.
4. Number of active Veterans' benefits cases for Veterans, their survivors or their orphans as reported by VA represented by the Texas Veterans Commission.
5. Number of VA rating board decisions reviewed by Texas Veterans Commission counselors at the Houston and Waco Regional Offices.
6. Number of appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of Veterans, their widows or their orphans.
7. Number of Files Reviewed by State Strike Force Team Manually to Guarantee Accuracy
8. Percent of Fully Developed Claims Filed

Efficiency Measures:

1. Payments to Veterans represented by the Texas Veterans Commission per dollar spent.

Explanatory Measures:

1. Percent of newly appointed Veterans County Service Officers and Assistants who attend initial training.
1. Percent of Veterans County Service Officers and Assistants who attend continuing education training conferences.

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 Intensive Services.

A.1.3. Strategy: Veterans Education

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

Output Measure:

1. Average number of Participants in Veterans Education and Training Programs.

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 Measures:

1. Number of Public Information briefings conducted statewide.
2. Number of Public Information items distributed statewide.
3. Number of Veteran Engagements.

PART VIII: AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

A.1.5. – Veteran 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 Measures:

1. Services provided to Veterans and their families from the Veterans Entrepreneur Program.

B. Budgetary Goal – Fund Direct Services to Veterans

Ensure Veterans Receive General Asst., Mental Health & Housing Services. Provide Veterans, their families and survivors direct to services through grants for General Assistance, Veterans mental health, and Housing for Texas Heroes from the funding out of the Fund for Veterans Assistance and other funding provided by the legislature.

B.1. Objective: Provide General Assistance Grants

Provide grants to community nonprofit organizations and units of local government for general assistance, Veterans mental health, and housing services.

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.

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

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

Output Measure:

1. Count the number of Veterans, their dependents, and survivors served by the H4TXH program.
2. Count the number of completed home modifications provided to Veteran beneficiaries through the H4TXH program.

C. Budgetary Goal – Indirect Administration

C.1.1. Strategy: Central Administration

PART VIII: AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

D. Non-Budgetary Goal – Historically Underutilized Businesses

We will make good faith efforts to purchase from certified historically underutilized businesses.

D.1. Objective: Include historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) in the total value of purchases by the percentages of unadjusted HUB goals by expenditure category as established by Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts each fiscal year.

Outcome Measure

1. Percent of total dollar value of purchases to certified HUBs.

D.1.1. Strategy:

Continue to implement the agency's plan for purchasing from certified HUBs.

Output Measure

1. Dollar value of HUB purchases.

E. Non-Budgetary Goal – Customer Service

The Texas Veterans Commission will manage resources to produce the highest level of service to our state's Veterans and their families.

E.1. Objective: To achieve a 75 percent satisfaction level from Veterans receiving Texas Veterans Commission assistance.

Outcome Measure

1. Percentage of Texas Veterans Commission clients who indicate that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.
2. Percentage of Veterans' County Service Officers who feel the Texas Veterans Commission meets their needs.

E.1.1. Strategy:

Conduct continuing training of Texas Veterans Commission employees to maintain a high level of professional competence and customer service.

Output Measure

1. Number of customer satisfaction surveys performed.

PART IX: TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ALIGNMENT FOR THE TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT AND ALIGNMENT

1. Initiative: TVC Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System	
2. Description: TVC plans to convert its internal accounting and payroll/personnel systems to the Comptroller of Public Accounts' (CPA) new CPA Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS).	
3. Associated Project(s):	
Name	Status
CPA CAPPS Project	Production
4. Agency Objective(s): CAPPS will provide TVC with a standardized and centralized system for administering accounting and payroll/personnel. Benefits include collecting employee time information at the employee level thus eliminating TVC's cumbersome paper system.	
5. Statewide Technology Priority(ies): Legacy Modernization and Enterprise Planning and Collaboration	
6. Guiding Principles: Innovation - TVC CAPPS will utilize the business rules established in the State's CAPPS system with few, if any, exceptions.	
7. Anticipated Benefit(s): Foundation for future operation improvements – TVC's current system for managing employee time and payroll is paper intensive. CAPPS will improve turnaround time and decrease the administrative resources required to process employee time.	
8. Capabilities or Barriers: This initiative will require additional funding.	

PART IX: TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ALIGNMENT FOR THE TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT AND ALIGNMENT

1. Initiative: Veterans Case Management System (CMS)	
2. Description: TVC will upgrade its CMS to a cloud based CMS solution that will not only address Veterans claims, but also Veterans education, employment, and other contacts made by Veterans to the TVC.	
3. Associated Project(s): N/A	
Name	Status
4. Agency Objective(s): This improve Veterans' case management and enhance TVC's reputation as a one stop shop for Texas military Veteran benefits.	
5. Statewide Technology Priority(ies): Cloud Services and Legacy Modernization	
6. Guiding Principles: Innovation – Veteran claims, education, and employment benefits will be maintained in a consolidated, secure database.	
7. Anticipated Benefit(s): Operational efficiencies – Counselors will be able to better educate Veterans regarding their benefits.	
8. Capabilities or Barriers: This initiative will require additional funding.	

APPENDIX A: AGENCY PLANNING PROCESS

Texas Veterans Commission Planning Committee

Commissioners

Eliseo Cantu, Jr.
Major, US Army (Retired), Chair

James H. Scott
Colonel, US Air Force (Retired), Vice Chair

Daniel P. Moran
Captain, USMC (Retired), Member

The Rev. Richard A. McLeon, IV
US Army Veteran, Secretary

J.K. "Jake" Ellzey
Commander, US Navy (Retired), Member

Staff

Thomas Palladino
Colonel, US Army (Retired)
Executive Director

Kyle Mitchell
Deputy Executive Director

James O. Richman
Director of Claims Representation & Counseling

Shawn Deabay
Director of Veterans Employment Services

Rufus Coburn
Director of Veterans Education

Kathy Wood
Director of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance

Cruz Montemayor
Chief Administrative Officer

H. Karen Fastenau
General Counsel

Chip Osborne
Chief Financial Officer

Jeff Williford
Manager of Government Relations

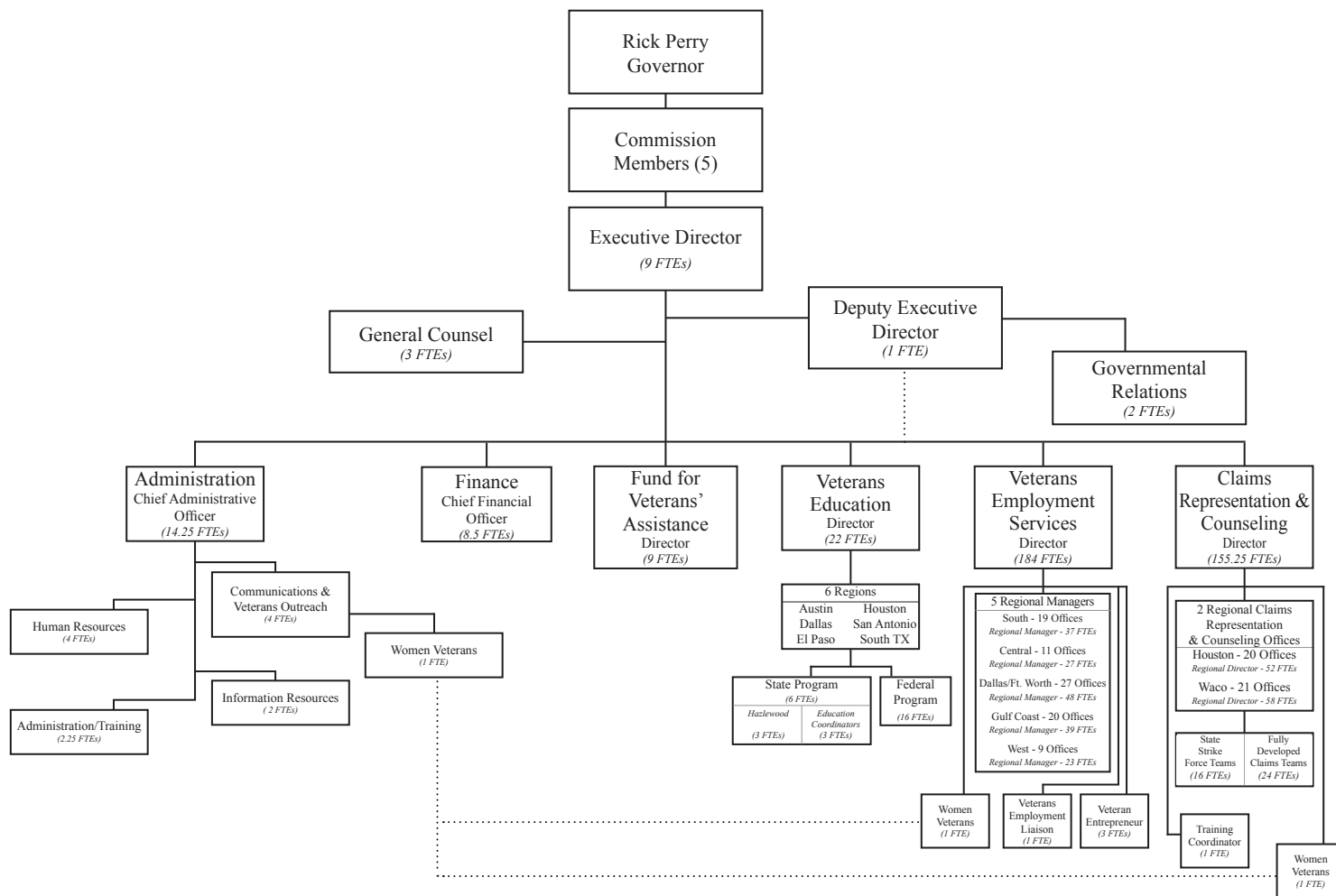
Rachel Shumaker
Manager of Communications and Veterans Outreach

Planning Process

February 4, 2014	Staff initiates Strategic Plan planning process
February 25, 2014	Commission briefed on Strategic Plan process by staff/opportunity for public comment at Second Quarterly Commission Meeting
March 3 – 17, 2014	Programs and applicable divisions hold regional meetings to get input on Strategic Plan process and conduct customer satisfaction surveys
March 31, 2014	Initial Draft of Strategic Plan compiled
April 21, 2014	Second Draft of Strategic Plan complete
May 14, 2014	Commission briefed on Strategic Plan by staff/opportunity for public comment at Third Quarterly Commission Meeting
June 6, 2014	Final Draft of Strategic Plan complete
June 18, 2014	Commission approved Strategic Plan at Special Commission Meeting
June 23, 2014	Strategic Plan submitted to Governor's Office and Legislative Budget Board

APPENDIX B: CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART MAY 2014



APPENDIX C: FIVE YEAR PROJECTIONS OF OUTCOMES

New Five Year Projections 2015 - 2019

OUTCOME	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation to veterans with service-connected disabilities.	1,810	1,850	1,900	1,900	1,900
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation and development for totally disabled, impoverished veterans.	143	140	140	140	140
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation for survivors or orphans of veterans.	247	248	248	248	248
The percentage of original or reopened claims submitted by the TVC granted by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
Percent of Veterans Entered Employment.	64%	64.2%	64.5%	64.5%	64.5%
Percentage of Veterans Retained in Employment at Six Months.	80.2%	80.2%	81%	81%	81%
Percent of total dollar value of purchases to certified HUBs.	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Percent of Texas Veterans Commission clients who indicate that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.	97.2%	97.2%	97.2%	97.2%	97.2%
Percent of veterans county service officers who feel that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.	95.2%	95.2%	95.2%	95.2%	95.2%

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

A. Goal: Assist Veterans with receiving benefits

Through effective training and advocacy, provide effective claims representation, employment services, veterans education approval and assistance to Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors.

A.1. Objective: 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 and education.

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

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

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the amount of 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: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) - 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% accuracy range. This amount is expressed in millions and rounded to the nearest 100,000.

Data Limitations: Data is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (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

Outcome Measure 2. Amount of Monetary Awards (in millions of dollars) to Totally Disabled Wartime Veterans

Short Definition: Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission case development and advocacy in claims to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled wartime Veterans above the poverty line.

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the amount of VA pension payments in VA reports for non-service-connected disabilities to Texas resident Veterans who have appointed the Commission or an organization for which Commission personnel are the accredited representatives to represent them in their claim against VA. To be eligible for pension VA requires a Veteran to be deemed "permanently and totally disabled" by VA due to disabilities and have an income below a level set by VA annually, which is approximately the poverty line income level.

Data Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) - Total reported amounts of awards for Texas residents are provided by VA for one month in each quarter.

Methodology: Amount provided, as reported by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Reports, for one month is multiplied by three to calculate the quarterly performance. Quarterly performance results are added to determine the annual performance. The 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% accuracy range. This amount is expressed in millions and rounded to the nearest 100,000.

Data Limitations: Data is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (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 target

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

Outcome Measure	3. VA Awards (in millions of dollars) to Survivors or Orphans of Veterans
Short Definition:	Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation for survivors or orphans of Veterans.
Purpose/Importance:	Indicates the amount of 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:	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) - Total reported amounts of awards for Texas residents are provided by the VA for one month in each quarter.
Methodology:	Amount provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for one month is multiplied by three to calculate the quarterly performance. Quarterly performance results are added to determine the annual performance. The 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% accuracy range. This amount is expressed in millions and rounded to the nearest 100,000.
Data Limitations:	Data is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Commission is dependent on the VA to provide the data on a timely basis.
Calculation Type:	Cumulative
New Measure:	No
Desired Performance:	Higher than target
Outcome Measure	4. Percent of TVC Claims Granted by VA
Short Definition:	The percentage of original or reopened claims submitted by the TVC granted by the VA after initial VA rating. Does not include claims granted after continued TVC advocacy by submitting the claim to a decision review officer, filing a notice of disagreement and/or an appeal.
Purpose/Importance:	Represents the success rate for claims filed prior to any further action (appeals, decision review by the VA at the regional office, responses to a notice of disagreement, etc.) by the TVC staff.
Data Source:	Logs maintained by TVC staff of initial VA rating decisions.
Methodology:	Decisions by the VA are reviewed at the TVC Regional Offices daily. Prior to finalizing the decision, the TVC staff must sign off on each decision on claims filed by Veterans appointing the TVC as their representative in their claim. From these reviews, daily logs are created which indicate the number of claims granted and the number denied. A monthly report is then compiled from these daily logs. Annual totals are derived from the monthly reports. The percentage of claims granted is calculated by dividing the number of granted by the total number of claims.
Data Limitations:	Data recorded depends on the reports of individual counselors from their reviews of VA decisions. However, on regular basis, managers can crosscheck logs.
Calculation Type:	Noncumulative
New Measure:	No
Desired Performance:	Higher than target
Outcome Measure	5. Veterans Employment Services Employment Rate
Short Definition:	The percentage of Veteran Employment Services (VES) adult clients unemployed at registration who are employed within one calendar quarter of termination of all workforce and business services (exit). The measure is an entered employment rate for customers who received services under DVOP/LVER grant. "Services" does not include registration, determination of entitlement/eligibility, follow-up or support services and other contacts to obtain status or progress information or the need for additional services.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

Data Source: Texas Workforce Commission’s Common Measures Performance Reporting System which pulls wage, client, and process data from various TWC information systems such as the Workforce Information System of Texas, Job Search Matching System, Work in Texas, the Learner Outcome Tracking System, the Unemployment Wage System and the Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Appeals Systems.

Methodology: The denominator is the number of VES adult clients who were unemployed or had received a layoff notice when they began receiving workforce business services and who received their last service in the performance period (exit). Exit occurs when a client does not receive an applicable service for 90 days. The numerator is the number of clients from the denominator who were employed by the end of the calendar quarter following the quarter of exit. A client is considered employed if wage records show earnings or federal or other employment records indicate employment. Performance is calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator. Excluded from the measure may be clients who exited for noncompliance, whose SSNs do not appear valid, who at exit or during the quarter following the quarter of exit are deceased or, for at least 90 days, institutionalized, called to active military duty, receiving treatment, or providing care to a family member.

Data Limitations: Reporting of UI wage and federal employment records lags well behind the period being reported. As a result this measure reports the entered employment rate for those clients who exit services up to one year prior to the reporting period. These reporting periods are consistent with Federal standards. Additionally, not all employers report UI wage records which limits the ability to determine whether a client entered employment. A client can exit more than once in a given year and can count in this measure each time they exit.

Calculation Type: Noncumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Outcome Measure 6. Veterans Employment Services Retention Rate

Short Definition: The percentage of Veteran Employment Services (VES) adult clients employed within one calendar quarter of termination of workforce and business services (exit) AND who are employed (by the same or another employer) in both the second and third quarters following exit. This measure is an employment retention rate for clients who received services under the DVOP/LVER Grant. “Service” does not include registration, determination of entitlement/eligibility, follow-up or support services and other contacts to obtain status or progress information or the need for additional services.

Data Source: Texas Workforce Commission’s Common Measures Performance Reporting System which pulls wage, client, and process data from various TWC information systems such as the Workforce Information System of Texas, Job Search Matching System, Work in Texas, the Learner Outcome Tracking System, the Unemployment Wage System and the Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Appeals Systems.

Methodology: The denominator is the number of VES adult clients who received their last service in the performance period (exit) and were employed in the calendar quarter following the quarter that person last received an applicable service. Exit occurs when a client does not receive an applicable service for 90 days. The numerator is the number of clients from the denominator who were employed in both the second and third calendar quarters following the quarter of exit. A client is considered employed if wage records show earnings or federal or other employment records indicate employment. Performance is calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator. Excluded from the measure may be clients who exited for noncompliance, whose SSNs do not appear valid, who at exit or within three quarters following the quarter of exit are deceased or, for at least 90 days, institutionalized, called to active military duty, receiving treatment, or providing care to a family member.

Data Limitations: Reporting of UI wage and federal employment records lags well behind the period being reported. As a result in this measure reports the retention rate for those clients who exit services up to one year prior to the reporting period. These reporting periods are consistent with Federal standards. Additionally, not all employers report UI wage records which limit the ability to determine whether a client retained employment. A client can exit more than once in a given year and can count in this measure each time they exit.

Calculation Type: Noncumulative

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target
<i>Output Measure</i>	7. Number of Files Reviewed by State Strike Force Team.
<i>Short Definition:</i>	Number of files reviewed Manually by the State Strike Force Teams of the Texas Veterans Commission.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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' Counselors. All changes to the log must be approved by the Division Director before the log is updated.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	None.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	Yes
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target
<i>Output Measure</i>	8. Number of Files Reviewed by the Fully Developed Claims Team.
<i>Short Definition:</i>	Number of Fully Developed Claims filed in the Houston and Waco Regional Offices by the Fully Developed Claims Team submitted to VA offices for expedited rating decision.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	The purpose of this measure is to track the number of fully developed claims filed through the TVC Regional Offices to expedite a rating decision from the VA.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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 Fully Developed Claims Teams' Counselors. All changes to the log must be approved by the Division Director before the log is updated.
<i>Methodology:</i>	The total number of Fully Developed Claims filed is calculated by adding the number of unique VA Claim numbers logged each month. The log is reviewed for accuracy to ensure FDC files are not a duplicate count.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	None.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	Yes
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target
<p>Goal: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.1 - Claims Representation and Counseling 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 Veteran County Service Officers.</p>	
<i>Output Measure</i>	1. Number of Claims Filed and Developed on Behalf of Disabled Veterans
<i>Short Definition:</i>	Number of claims for Veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of Veterans with service-connected disabilities.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	This represents the number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against the VA by Texas Veterans to establish, reopen or reestablish eligibility for disabilities, which are service-connected. Includes claims sent to the Commission by Veterans County Service Officers for representation, review and/or development.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Claims filed for processing at the TVC regional offices are recorded on receipt.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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 Veterans Administration (VA). Regional managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of claims on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	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.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

Output Measure 2. Claims Filed to Raise above Poverty Level the Income of Totally Disabled Veterans

<i>Short Definition:</i>	Number of claims for VA benefits filed to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled Veterans above the poverty level.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	The number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against the VA by Texas Veterans to prove initial eligibility or to maintain and reestablish their eligibility for VA pension in order to raise or maintain their income above the poverty line. Includes claims sent to the Commission by Veterans County Service Officers for representation, review and/or development.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Claims filed for processing at the TVC regional offices are recorded on receipt.
<i>Methodology:</i>	Data on claims numbers, office source and type of claim 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). Regional managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of claims on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	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.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

Output Measure 3. Claims Filed and Developed on Behalf of Survivors and Orphans of Veterans

<i>Short Definition:</i>	Number of claims for Veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of survivors and orphans of Veterans.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	The number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against the VA by Texas survivors and/or orphans of Veterans to prove initial eligibility or to maintain and reestablish eligibility for VA pension or compensation benefits. Includes claims sent to the Commission by Veterans County Service Officers for representation, review and or development.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Claims filed for processing at the TVC regional offices are recorded on receipt.
<i>Methodology:</i>	Data on claims numbers, office source and type of claim 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). Regional managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of claims on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.

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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 target

Output Measure 4. Active Veterans' Benefits Cases for Veterans Represented by TVC

Short Definition: Number of active Veterans' benefits cases as reported by VA for Veterans, their survivors, or their orphans represented by the Texas Veterans Commission.

Purpose/Importance: 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 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: Noncumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Output Measure 5. Number of VA Decisions Reviewed

Short Definition: Number of VA Rating Board decisions reviewed by TVC counselors at the Houston and Waco Regional Offices.

Purpose/Importance: The number of VA Rating Board decisions reviewed by TVC counselors at the Houston and Waco Regional Offices.

Data Source: Data is collected at the two TVC regional offices and recorded in a log.

Methodology: Total number of log entries is added for each month.

Data Limitations: Source of a significant number of these claims is Veterans County Service Officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Output Measure 6. Appeals of Unfavorable VA Decisions Filed on Behalf of Veterans

Short Definition: Number of appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of Veterans, their survivors or their orphans.

Purpose/Importance: 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 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 office where the claim is sent to be submitted to the Veterans Administration (VA). Regional managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of appeals on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.

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<i>Data Limitations:</i>	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 for external auditors to certify this measure is restricted.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

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

<i>Short Definition:</i>	VA payments to Veterans represented by the Commission per dollar spent.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	The amount of payments to Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors represented by TVC per state dollar spent in the Claims Representation and Counseling program during a fiscal year.
<i>Data Source:</i>	TVC records and the VA.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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 Representation and Counseling Strategy.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Data for monetary recovery is provided by the VA.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

Explanatory Measure 1. Percent of Newly Appointed VCSO's who Attend Initial Training

<i>Short Definition:</i>	Percent of newly appointed Veterans County Service Officers and Assistants who attended initial training.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	Indicates the success of TVC training programs and the percent of Veterans County Service Officers (VCSO) attending State mandated initial training.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Registration and completion records of TVC initial training.
<i>Methodology:</i>	The number attending Commission-sponsored training from a pool of those VCSO appointed in the twelve-month period immediately preceding the cut off date for registration for the last Commission-sponsored initial training conference divided by the number of VCSO appointed during that same twelve-month period. Expressed as a percentage.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Number is dependent on the VCSO attending training. The only ramification of not attending is that a letter is sent to the County Commissioners Court informing them that the VCSO does not meet minimum training requirements.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

Explanatory Measure 2. Percent of VCSO's who Attend Continuing Training Conferences

<i>Short Definition:</i>	Percent of Veterans County Service Officers and Assistants who attend continuing education training conferences.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	Indicates the success of TVC training programs and the percent of Veterans County Service Officers (VCSO) attending at least one ongoing training conference per year.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Registration and completion records of TVC continuing education training.
<i>Methodology:</i>	Number of VCSO and Assistants who have completed continuing education requirements to maintain certification during the reporting period divided by the total number of VCSO and assistants who are required to attend continuing education conferences during the reporting period plus those VCSO and Assistants who are not classified as newly appointed (i.e. have been appointed for more than twelve months). Expressed as a percentage.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Number is dependent on the VCSO attending training. The only ramification of not attending is that a letter is sent to the County Commissioners Court informing them that the VCSO does not meet minimum training requirements.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

Goal: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.2 – 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 Intensive Services.

<i>Short Definition:</i>	The proportion of Veterans receiving Intensive Services compiled the total number of individual Veterans receiving services from a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists. “Intensive Services” include 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.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) provides quarterly reports from the Veterans Performance Report regarding veterans receiving employment services during each quarterly reporting period. TWC’s Common Measures Performance Reporting System, which pulls wage, client, and process data from various TWC information systems such as: The Workforce Information System of Texas, Job Search Matching System, Work in Texas, the Learner Outcome Tracking System, the Unemployment Wage System and the Unemployment Insurance Benefit and Appeals Systems.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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 Intensive Services.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	None.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	Yes
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

Goal: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.3 – Veterans Education
 Evaluate appropriateness of education and training programs offered to Veterans and other eligible persons.

Output Measure 1. Average Number of Participants in Veterans Education and Training Programs

<i>Short Definition:</i>	This measure provides participant information on education and training programs at institutions or establishments approved by Veterans Education for Veterans of the armed forces and their eligible dependents receiving GI Bill educational benefits.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	The purpose of the measure is to report utilization of services under Veterans Education and Training.
<i>Data Source:</i>	The data for this measure, collected by the state Veterans Education staff, is derived from monthly RCS 20-0260 Education Activities Reports provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Waco, and recorded in the Veterans Education Access database files. The activity is considered complete when the RCS report matches the Veterans Education database. These records are maintained in the Veterans Education office.
<i>Methodology:</i>	Based on records retrieved from the Veterans Education database, the number of Veterans and eligible dependents is summed for the reporting period then divided by the number of monthly reports received during the reporting period. The figure is used to derive an average monthly total of the number of participants in educational training programs.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

Data Limitations: None.

Calculation Type: Noncumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Goal: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.4 – 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 Public Information Briefings Given

Short Definition: The number of public information briefings conducted statewide, including Town Hall meetings, conferences, conventions and any other public events sponsored by TVC or attended by TVC as a participant for outreach and marketing purposes.

Purpose/Importance: Public information briefings represent community outreach for the marketing program. Direct contact with the public allows TVC to establish relationship within Veteran communities to promote services offered by TVC. It also allows Veterans to meet with TVC representatives in person, often on a one-on-one basis.

Data Source: TVC counselors/representatives who attend public information briefings.

Methodology: Records of all public information briefings are given to the outreach and marketing staff and are kept on file. Records include date, time and location of briefing as well as which TVC counselors/representatives attended.

Data Limitations: The source of data collection is dependable thus resulting in very little risk of data limitation.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Output Measure 2. The Amount of Public Information Distributed

Short Definition: The number of TVC brochures, television and radio public service announcements (PSAs) distributed statewide.

Purpose/Importance: This measure addresses the distribution of TVC literature and public service announcements (PSAs) to Veterans in the state. The TVC currently prints six different brochures used for marketing purposes. The printed material is a vital part of promoting the TVC in that the brochures are often the initial contact made with Veterans. Brochures are distributed from both TVC and VCSO offices, mailed from headquarters when requested by individual Veterans and are distributed via other organizations that request brochures. The TVC distributes radio and television PSAs statewide. The PSAs are also an initial contact for Veterans to gather information about the TVC.

Data Source: All brochures and PSAs are distributed from headquarters and call center employees log the numbers distributed.

Methodology: All brochures leaving headquarters are counted and logged, then compiled for monthly and annual reports. Television and radio PSAs are on a six-month distribution cycle and are counted and logged upon distribution.

Data Limitations: The source of data collection is dependable thus resulting in very little risk of error.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

<i>Output Measure</i>	3. Number of Veteran Engagements
<i>Short Definition:</i>	The number of veteran engagements through TVC-hosted events, webinars, social media, website and electronic newsletters.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	Veteran engagement through online and in person channels represents community outreach for the Communications and Veterans Outreach program. Through these channels, community and promote services offered by TVC. It also allows Veterans to interact with TVC representatives beyond traditional TVC offices, often on a one-on-one basis.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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.
<i>Methodology:</i>	All data is compiled on a quarterly basis and includes data source, date, and total number of veteran engagement.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	The source of data collection is dependable thus resulting in very little risk of error.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	Yes
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

Goal: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.5 – Veteran 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.

<i>Output Measure</i>	1. Services provided to Veterans and their families from the Veterans Entrepreneur Program.
<i>Short Definition:</i>	The number of 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, and (8) Copyright/Patent Support. 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 of family member. Thus, services is an unduplicated number.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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.
<i>Methodology:</i>	The number of unique services provided to Veterans and their families. Each service is unique to the start or expansion of a business along the following continuum: (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, and (8) Copyright/Patent Support. Records include date service rendered and next stage/step.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	None
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	Yes
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

B. Goal: Provide Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) General Assistance and Veterans Mental Health grants to community nonprofit organizations and units of local government that assist Veterans, their families, and surviving spouses with expanded local service delivery.

B.1. Objective: Funds for Veterans'

To provide Veterans, their families and survivors assistance through the FVA General Assistance Grants, Veterans Mental Health and Housing for Texas Heroes grant programs.

Goal: B, Objective: B.1, Strategy: B.1.1 – 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.

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

Purpose/Importance: 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 Veterans 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 Division 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 target

Goal: B, Objective: B.1, Strategy: B.1.1 – Housing for Texas Heroes Grants (H4TXH)

Provide home modification grants to local non-profit 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 served by the H4TXH program.

Short Definition: The number of Veterans, their dependents, or survivors of Veterans served by the H4TXH program.

Purpose/Importance: 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 Division 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: Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than target

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<i>Output Measure</i>	2. Count the number of completed home modifications provided to Veterans, their dependents, or survivors through the H4TXH program.
<i>Short Definition:</i>	The number of completed home modifications provided to Veterans, their dependents, or survivors by the H4TXH program.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	None
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	Yes
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

C. Goal: Indirect Administration

Goal: C, Objective C.1, Strategy: C.1.1 – Central Administration

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Commission's current organization contains a core of well-trained Veterans' assistance counselors, Veterans employment representatives, education program specialists and grant specialists to provide assistance to Veterans and their families throughout Texas to meet the needs required to accomplish the agency mission and strategic goal. They are supported by a clerical staff. The Commission's administrative staff is located in Austin.

It is estimated that 1.7 million Veterans live in Texas. A key issue is the growth of the Veterans' population in Texas 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 need education or employment assistance; older Veterans have the needs for assistance associated with aging. The overall U.S. Veteran population has declined over the past ten years while the Texas Veteran population has remained steady for the same period. This indicates a net migration of Veterans to Texas.

CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

The current Commission staff has the skills necessary to address business issues of the agency. A majority of the current workforce (83 percent) has military service. The Commission has a diverse workforce. The Commission workforce is 51 percent White, 23 percent Hispanic, 25 percent Black and 1 percent Other employees. Males comprise 64 percent of the workforce and females 36 percent.

The basic business issues of the Commission are administration, Claims assistance counseling, Veterans employment services, Veterans education and the Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The knowledge required to provide successful Claims assistance counseling services, Veterans employment services and Veterans education services are knowledge of VA and DOL laws and operating policies and procedures. Employees must have the skills to apply the required knowledge within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Department of Labor (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 basic administrative knowledge and managerial skills required to successfully operate a state agency.

The average turnover rate of the Commission in the five years from 2008 through 2012 was 17.20 percent. During this period, the turnover rate was as high as 20.8 in 2011 and reached a low of 13.7 percent in 2012. The Commission turnover rate was lower than the statewide turnover rate, which averaged 17.3 percent. It is anticipated the turnover rate will rise slightly above the statewide rate due to the number of employees eligible to retire in addition to normal attrition.

The Commission has responded to attrition by successfully recruiting new employees. The Commission will continue to utilize the Veterans Employment program and the Agency's web site 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.

GAP ANALYSIS

A significant percentage of the agency's leaders and managers are either eligible to retire now or will be eligible within the next five years. Succession planning and knowledge transfer offer

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

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 experiencing a shortage of personnel due to losses from retirement, an increased workload and competition from federal agencies. 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 that the funding of over two-thirds of agency personnel is from federal grants which may be reduced from one year to the next. This could result in a shortage of staff to provide services unless General Revenue is available to fill the gap in funding.

The state is facing large budgetary shortfalls and will need to make adjustments (such as budget cuts, significant increases in benefit costs and/or reduced benefits, reorganizations, etc.). The workforce may experience low morale, less productivity and loyalty, and more conflict, skepticism, and fear of job loss. Employees may delay retirement resulting in an even wider variety of generations working together.

As the economy continues to recover, there may be a surge of retirements by those who had delayed leaving the workforces in tougher times. The ability to stay competitive with the private sector and federal governments will continue to be a challenge to the agency.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A. Goals

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

Development:

Encourage employee development by continuing the TVC's training program that requires employees to earn a minimum number of training credit each year.

Offer employee training to help develop the critical skills. Continue to provide both internal and external classroom training, as well as online/DVD training to make training available to field employees and accommodating to 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/or developmental assignments (to help them increase their knowledge/experience even if promotional opportunities are temporarily stagnant).

Conduct regular training needs assessments to identify training of interest to employees and managers.

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

Continue the TVC mentoring program to match experienced/skilled employees with employees seeking to learn from them. These mentoring relationships can also help less experienced/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.

Maintain agency career ladders to help employees identify development paths to prepare for jobs with higher-level skill requirements.

Develop a searchable database to inventory employee training and skill sets so that employees may be identified for development and possible promotional opportunities.

Succession planning – 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.

B. Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment:

Every area 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
- Retention bonuses
- Promoting state benefits
- Integrating staff development with career ladders
- Formal and informal orientation programs
- Positive work culture and conditions
- Work/life balance and family friendly policies including flexible work hours
- Telecommuting opportunities
- Sufficient salaries and merit increases
- 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 knowledge and skill needs.

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

Leadership Development and Replacement:

The following elements of discovery 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 people, 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
- 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.

C. 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 business partnership with each of the programs and divisions to determine training needs, assist with workforce strategic and succession planning. HR will provide divisions with information regarding turnover, retirement eligibility and tenure in addition to assisting in recruiting a diverse workforce.

FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE

As a market-driven system, the Texas workforce system will continue to evolve and improve to meet Veterans needs and deliver outstanding customer service. Accordingly, the agency's critical functions will adjust to meet the new challenges. Overall fluctuations in the economy, both up and down, 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 the Commission's mission, goals, and strategy will not change significantly over the next five years. Claims assistance counselors, Veterans employment representatives, Veterans education program specialists and grant specialists who are the core of the Commission's professional workforce require a very strong and competent knowledge of state and federal Veterans benefit programs and VA and DOL policies and procedures which affect the administration of benefits to the Texas Veterans population and their families. Skills required by Claims assistance counselors, Veterans employment representatives, Veterans education program specialists and grant specialists to competently serve Texas Veterans will remain a priority in developing future agency workforce plans. To accomplish Commission goals and meet statutory requirements, competent training must continue to Veterans County Service Officers who are critical in assisting the Commission to meet its established mission, goals and strategy. The TVC clerical staff will need support through training and equipment to keep abreast of ever-changing computer technology.

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

Expected Workforce Changes

The immediate future is easier to predict, but long term planning is more difficult. Although more unknown variables exist, past 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 carrying TVC into the future may include:

- Changes in leadership as retirements occur
- Increased demand for efficiencies to make best use of available budget/FTEs
- Increase in less-tenured/less-experienced staff
- Improved communication and understanding of 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
- Increased demand for knowledgeable technical assistance staff

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 possible 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.

APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND UTILIZATION

The Commission participated in the Survey of Employee Engagement (formally known as the Survey of Organizational Excellence) for the first time in the fall of 1999 and has continued participation. Eight percent of TVC employees participated in the survey in 2014 which is above average compared to other state agencies. High participation rates indicate a strong commitment by the employees and a healthy overall morale.

For FY 2014, the highest level of the survey assessment is The Strategic Construct, which reflects employees' thinking about how the organization responds to external influences that should play a role in defining the organization's mission, vision, services and products. Implied in this construct is the ability of the organization to seek out and work with relevant external entities. High scores indicate employees view the organization as able to quickly relate its mission and goals to environmental changes and demands. It is viewed as creating programs that advance the organization and having highly capable means of drawing information and meaning from the environment. Maintaining these high scores will require leadership to continually assess the ability of the organization and employees at all levels to test programs against need and to continue to have rapid feedback from the environment.

The survey indicated an above average employee satisfaction with the total work environment compared to the previous survey. The Commission areas of strengths included the constructs of Strategic, Supervision and External Communication. Commission scores were well above all benchmarks in these areas.

The Supervision construct provides insight into the nature of supervisory relationships within the organization, including aspects of leadership, the communication of expectations, and the sense of fairness that employees perceive between supervisors and themselves. High supervision scores indicate that employees view their supervisors as fair, helpful, and critical to the flow of work. Maintaining these high scores will require leadership to carefully assess supervisory training and carefully make the selection of new supervisors.

The Strategic construct indicates the employees' thinking about how the organization responds to external influences, including those which play a role in defining the mission, services and products provided by the organization. This includes an assessment of the organization's ability to seek out and work with external entities. The survey revealed that employees of the Commission feel they work well with the public, the legislature and other governing bodies. Further evaluation revealed Commission employees believe they know who their customers are and that they are known for customer service.

The External Communication construct looks at how information flows into the organization from external sources, and conversely, how information flows from inside the organization to external constituents. It addresses the ability of organizational members to synthesize and apply external information to work performed by the organization. High scores indicate that employees view their organization as communicating effectively with other organizations, its clients, and those concerned with regulation. Maintaining these high scores will require leadership to be alert to change and maintain strong and responsive tools to assess the external environment.

Constructs have been color coded to highlight the organization's areas of strength and areas of concern. The three highest scoring constructs are blue, the three lowest scoring constructs are red, and the remaining eight constructs are yellow. Each construct is displayed below with its corresponding score. Highest scoring constructs are areas of strength for this organization while the lowest scoring constructs are areas of concern. Scores above 350 suggest that employees perceive the issue more positively than negatively, and scores of 375 or higher indicate areas

APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND UTILIZATION

of substantial strength. Conversely, scores below 350 are viewed less positively by employees, and scores below 325 should be a significant source of concern for the organization and should receive immediate attention.

The Commission's areas of relative weakness included the constructs of Pay and Information Systems and Internal Communications. The Pay construct addresses perceptions of the overall compensation package offered by the organization. It describes how well the compensation package 'holds up' when employees compare it to similar jobs in other organizations. Low scores suggest that pay is a central concern or reason for satisfaction or discontent. In some situations pay does not meet comparables in similar organizations. In other cases, individuals may feel that pay levels are not appropriately set to work demands, experience, ability, increased cost causes sharp drops in purchasing power, and as a result, employees will view pay levels as unfair. Remediating any problems requires a determination of which of the above factors are serving to create the concerns. Triangulating low scores in Pay by reviewing comparable positions in other organizations and cost of living information and using the employee feedback sessions can make a more complete determination for the causes of low Pay scores.

The Information Systems construct provides insight into whether computer and communication systems enhance employees' ability to get the job done by providing accessible, accurate, and clear information. The construct addresses the extent to which employees feel that they know where to get needed information, and that they know how to use it once they obtain it. High scores indicate that employees view both the availability and utility of information very positively. They find that information resources are complete and accessible. Maintaining these high scores will require leadership to continuously be vigilant about determining information needs and meeting those needs.

The Internal Communication construct captures the organization's communications flow from the top-down, bottom-up, and across divisions/departments. It addresses the extent to which communication exchanges are open, candid, and move the organization toward its goals. High scores indicate that employees view communication with peers, supervisors, and other parts of the organization as functional and effective. Appropriate communication technology is available and useful. Maintaining these high scores will require continual attention to communication needs and technology.

APPENDIX H: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Background

Veterans Employment Services

The Texas Veterans Commission's Veteran Employment Services (VES) program is the state program charged with advocacy in the area of employment on behalf of Texas' 1.6 million Veterans and their families. The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS), provides 98 percent of the funding for VES. This program has a demonstrated record of performance helping Veterans find long-term, meaningful employment.

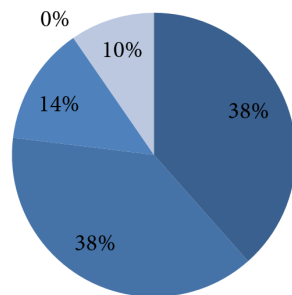
LTO Reference Number P-5 Task: Partner Agencies will gather data from employer customers at appropriate interval to determine the employer needs and satisfaction.

A critical component of the employment placement process is increasing rapport and confidence between Veterans Employment Representatives (VER) and employers. In order to be successful, employers must understand that the VER is invested in successful placements where both the employer and Veteran employee are satisfied. Providing quality hires is a key to developing that confidence with employers or potential employers throughout the state. Data gaps regarding employer's needs and customer satisfaction can hinder the ability to assess whether existing programs and services are adequately meeting customer requirements. Therefore, employer satisfaction/needs surveys are essential for continuous improvement of product, services, and/or support.

VES has an ongoing process to gather feedback regarding employers' needs and level of satisfaction with services. VES will continue to administer customer satisfaction surveys to verify that VERs are well positioned amongst prospective employers, and that employers are completely satisfied. Random Employer Satisfaction surveys are conducted twice a year. Response and satisfaction rates from the initial survey are presented in Figure 1. Additionally, VER will continue to evaluate Local Market Information to determine employment trends.

Overall, I am very satisfied with the services my Veteran Business Representative provided.

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Not Applicable



LTO Reference Number C-2 Task: Veteran Population will achieve additional employment outcomes.

The mission of the VES program is that every Veteran and eligible Veteran's spouse in the State of Texas have access to long term and meaningful work. Every year from now until 2031, 250,000 military personnel will separate from the military due to normal attrition. That equates

APPENDIX H: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLANNING

to 4.75 million Veterans nationally over the next 19 years. Approximately 32,000 discharged military personnel enter Texas as Veterans every year. From 2013 to 2018 more than 160,000, newly discharged Veterans will enter Texas.

Currently there are 44,914 Veterans registered in Work-In-Texas (WIT) seeking jobs throughout the state (Male – 37,123 and Female – 7,194). The Veteran unemployment rate as of April 2014, is 5.6 %, resulting in approximately 92,920 unemployed Veterans in the state of Texas (10,974 women and 81,973 male).

In order to ensure these Veterans get a fighting chance to integrate back into society, and can do so with long term meaningful employment, it is our duty as a state to ensure employers are willing and ready to receive them and understand how Veterans will contribute to the economy and society overall. To facilitate this transition, VES has developed programs and services that will provide a link between employers at every level and our Veterans. It is our aspiration to ensure that Veterans have full access to the resources they need to locate and obtain long lasting, meaningful employment to include self-employment.

LTO Reference Number P-6 Task: Partner Agencies will use the employment data/outcomes of their programs to understand and improve their programs.

Women Veterans Employment Program

Women Veterans employment is lagging in comparison to male Veterans. According to analysis conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, some contributing factors may include:

- Employers may have an outdated understanding of a woman's role in the military.
- Female Veterans may not be aware of, and therefore not obtaining, the services and benefits that are available to them.
- In comparison to male Veterans, female Veterans are twice as likely to be single parents. This "caregiver" status can conflict with employer needs.
- Female Veterans are more likely to have significant service related disabilities than their male counterparts.

In September 2013, the Texas Veterans Commission established the Women Veterans Employment Program (WVEP). A single Women Veterans Employment Coordinator is currently developing a program to provide the following services: Outreach and Education, Veteran Services, Technical Assistance to other VES staff members. This new initiative is already yielding positive results for Women Veterans in Texas. In the first six months of the program, the coordinator worked with 93 Women Veterans, while providing intensive employment services to 73 Women Veterans. Those Women Veterans who have entered employment as the result of services received through this program have earned an average annual salary of approximately \$44,000.

Public Entity Veteran Recruitment

The Comptroller's Office produces an annual report, the Veteran Workforce Summary Report, which identifies number and percentages of Veterans employed by state agencies and institutions of higher learning. The latest report shows a 4.98 percentage rate of Veterans employed by these state agencies and institutions of higher learning. The Legislature has provided state laws (Chapter 657, Section 657.004, Government Code) which mandate that public entities or public works of the state must exercise Veteran's employment preference practices until at least 40 percent of the employees of the public entity are Veterans.

APPENDIX H: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Recognizing that hiring authorities can sometimes find it difficult to navigate the plethora of Veterans hiring resources available to them, the Texas Veterans Commission decided to expand its Veteran Business Outreach program to include a Veteran Employment Liaison who specializes in best practices for state agencies. This expansion of the outreach program will assist state agencies in matching the skill sets of our Veterans, recruitment, and developing Veteran preference programs within their agency.

The Veteran Employment Liaison is available to assist state agencies in their efforts to recruit and retain qualified Veteran employees. This liaison will help develop recruiting plans, create Veteran talent location marketing strategies, and variety of other services to help meet this need. The ultimate goal is for the Veteran Employment Liaison to work with the agency hiring managers to maximize effectiveness of the Veteran recruiting process. By working with a Veteran Employment Liaison, agencies can easily develop a multi-channel recruiting strategy that takes advantage of the diversity of media outlets and events targeted towards our Veterans.

The Texas Veterans Commission's one (1) Veteran Employment Liaison has already begun working with the 14 state agencies listed below to improve the rate of Veteran employment rates by their individual agency. The list of agencies below represents approximately 22% of the state's entire workforce.

- Health and Human Services Commission
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Office of the Governor
- Lower Colorado River Authority
- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Veterans Land Board
- Secretary of State
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas Attorney General
- Texas Department of Motor Vehicles
- Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
- Texas Facilities Commission
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department

