



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION



Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2019 - 2023

100th Anniversary of Veterans Day (Armistice Day)

November 11, 1918



STRATEGIC PLAN

Fiscal Years 2019 - 2023


Submitted to the

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

June 2018

<u>Member</u>	<u>Date of Term</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
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TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Helping Veterans Starts Here

Mission

To advocate for and provide superior service to veterans that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas veterans, their families, and survivors.

Philosophy

The Texas Veterans Commission will:

- **Provide quality service through nine program areas: Claims Representation and Counseling, Veterans Employment, Veterans Education, Communications and Veterans Outreach, Veteran Entrepreneur Program, Health Care Advocacy, Veterans Mental Health, Women Veterans Program, and the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.**
- **Provide quality services through a dedicated, professional, and well-trained workforce.**
- **Connect with all veterans across the state, and tailor its service to meet their needs and the needs of their families and survivors.**
- **Take the lead in coordinating efforts between our nine programs and with federal, state, and local governmental offices and private organizations that provide services and assistance to veterans.**
- **Ensure that Texas veterans maintain the highest quality of life and well-being through its advocacy and dedication to veterans' services.**
- **Provide exemplary customer service to veterans, their families, and survivors through our core values of Professionalism, Integrity, Compassion, Commitment, and Teamwork.**

Table of Contents

Agency Goals and Action Plan

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefitspage 2
Goal B: Fund Direct Services to Veteranspage 17
Goal C: Hazlewood Administrationpage 20

Redundancies and Impedimentspage 22

Services for Survivors, Spouses, and Family Memberspage 23
Statutory Consistencypage 23
Reliance on Donationspage 24

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A.1 Objective: Maintain Veterans' Benefits Awardspage 25
A.1.1 Strategy: Claims Representation and Counselingpage 29
A.1.2 Strategy: Veterans Employment Servicespage 36
A.1.3 Strategy: Veterans Educationpage 37
A.1.4 Strategy: Veterans Outreachpage 40
A.1.5 Strategy: Veterans Entrepreneurpage 41
A.1.6 Strategy: Health Care Advocacy Programpage 42
B.1.1 Strategy: General Assistance Grantspage 43
B.1.2 Strategy: Housing for Texas Heroes Grantspage 44
B.1.3 Strategy: Veterans Treatment Court Grantspage 46
C.1.1 Strategy: Hazlewood Administrationpage 46
D.1.1 Strategy: Central Administrationpage 46

Historically Underutilized Business Planpage 47

Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Planpage 49

Report on Customer Servicepage 53

Information Resource Planningpage 55

Contract Manager Trainingpage 57

Agency Goals and Action Plan

Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

GOAL A

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

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

CLAIMS REPRESENTATION & COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Claims Representation and Counseling Department will provide one-on-one personalized assistance to assist Texas veterans as well as their families and survivors in obtaining all federal benefits and entitlements they are entitled to receive from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This will be accomplished through claims counseling, State Strike Force teams, Fully Developed Claims (FDC) teams and robust training programs. Claims counselors are accredited by the VA to represent veterans throughout the process of applying for veteran's benefits. Claims counselors must possess a high degree of competency in the medical field and be experts in interpreting VA administrative law.

The department will continue to work to maximize the compensation and pension benefits received by veterans and survivors with the minimum staff needed. In fiscal year 2017, the program brought \$4.1 billion into the State of Texas through recovered benefits for veterans and their families. This was accomplished with 156 full-time employees and 230 fully-trained Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs).

In 2015, Claims Representation and Counseling reorganized the department into four districts, from the previous two VA regions, to decentralize program services in the state that will ensure efficient services are provided to all Texas veterans. In fiscal year 2017, the department represented 260,488 veterans across 39 full-time offices and four part-time offices.

Claims Representation and Counseling is committed to achieving its performance measures and through continuous education, strives to stay up-to-date with ever changing VA rules and regulations.

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

Representation and Counseling

Claims counselors assist veterans with filing benefit claims including service-connected disability compensation, dependency, indemnity compensation as well as non-service connected pension. Claims counselors will continue to file FDCs to the VA for expedited rating decisions. FDC counselors are located throughout the state, in order to maximize the number of FDC claims filed in Texas. In order to represent veterans in the claims process, claims counselors:

- Interview veterans and their families concerning their potential claims and benefits;
- Consider laws and regulations which apply to the individual's claim;
- Prepare the application for benefits;
- Prepare and request medical and other evidence necessary to prove their claim;
- Advocate on behalf of the veteran throughout the processing of the application;
- Represent appeals claimants before the Board of Veterans Appeals;

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

- Represent service members who are being processed through the Physical Evaluation Board;
- Prepare and submit claims for vocational rehabilitation;
- Assist institutionalized patients who are receiving mental health care, nursing home residents and children in applying for VA pension or compensation benefits;
- Assist incarcerated veterans with benefit applications; and
- Provide assistance to Veterans Courts by advising on veterans' benefits and entitlements.

VetraSpec

The VetraSpec software will rapidly decrease the time it takes to prepare and file a claim, improve how Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) track claims and eliminate unnecessary paperwork. This new claims management software will allow TVC Claims Counselors and VCSOs to access their data from any computer with internet connection. VSOs will no longer need to export and import records across multiple platforms. All claims data will be stored in one, centralized, secure database.

State Strike Force Team Branch

The State Strike Force team continues to help reduce the federal backlog of veterans' claims for disability benefits. The team works in VA regional offices located in Waco and Houston where they will complete a review of appeals and backlogged claims while reviewing files for accuracy. In addition, the team will assist veterans in preparing and requesting evidence necessary for claims and appeals.

Decision-Ready Claims

TVC, in partnership with the VA, participates in the Decision-Ready Claim (DRC) Program. The DRC program allows you to submit VA compensation claims that are decision ready so you can get your claim processed as fast as possible. In fiscal year 2017, TVC filed 93 percent of Texas' DRC submissions and 29 percent of the nation's total DRC submissions.

Training

TVC is statutorily required to provide accreditation and certification training for the network of VCSOs at least once per year. In 2017, the 85th Legislature granted VCSOs greater flexibility where they receive accreditation training. VCSOs will now be able to obtain their training from entities approved by TVC.

TVC will continue to provide initial training to new VCSOs and offer annual certification and accreditation training through regional, in-person and online training. The program constantly evaluates training programs and seeks new innovative ways to offer more effective training. This critical partnership shall include:

- Training bulletins, status inquiries, and in-depth explanations of VA laws and regulations; and
- A VCSO Advisory Committee that will provide direct feedback and counsel on how best to grow the partnership between VCSOs and TVC.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

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

Veterans Employment will work in conjunction with the Texas Workforce Commission to provide priority service to eligible veterans and qualified individuals. Staff is specially trained to assist veterans with preparing job applications and résumés, perform job matches and job searches, and provide other employment services.

The goal of Veterans Employment is to match qualified veteran job-seekers with the best career opportunities available and to fulfill employers' needs for a qualified workforce, thus contributing to the growth of the Texas economy. Increasing awareness and expanding career opportunities through apprenticeship programs aboard military installations will assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce.

Veterans Employment Services is comprised of three Branches:

1. Family Employment Branch

The Family Employment Branch (FEB) will consist of two state-level funded positions and will provide job coaching to spouses, family members, and caregivers of active duty service members, and veterans who are not eligible for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program-funded services. FEB will offer eligible job-seekers services including:

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

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

2. Veterans Career Resource Branch

The Veterans Career Resource Branch (VCRB) consists of 106 Jobs for Veterans State Grant-funded positions. VCRB will be tasked with providing individualized career services and ensure veterans are job-ready. Emphasis and priority will be offered to qualified disabled veterans and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. VCRB will provide:

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

3. Veterans Recruitment Branch

The Veterans Recruitment Branch (VRB) consists of 46 Jobs for Veterans State Grants-Local Veteran Employment Representative-funded positions and is tasked with facilitating employment, training, and placement services for veterans in the state of Texas. VRB staff will promote the benefits of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups. The VRB will provide:

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

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

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

VETERANS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Veterans Education Department administers two programs with complimentary missions: the administration of federal veteran educational benefits (federal program) and the administration of the state tuition exemption program (state program).

Under the federal program, Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) functions as the State Approving Agency for schools and determines those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) GI Bill¹ education benefits.

Under the state program, TVC provides consultation and assistance to public institutions of higher education with the administration of the Hazlewood Act tuition exemption program. TVC also collects and reports utilization data that allows public institutions of higher education to receive reimbursement of certain expenses.

The state program also manages the statewide Education Coordinator Program that assists institutions of higher education in developing awareness and active participation in veteran education programs, ancillary services for veteran students and their family members, and promoting the establishment of student veteran's groups on each campus.

State Approving Agency

The Veterans Education Department functions as the State Approving Agency (SAA) for Texas to maximize educational and training opportunities for eligible veterans and their families by approving institutions and programs which meet federal and state laws and regulations for Montgomery and Post 9/11 GI Bill[®] use.

In this capacity, the Veterans Education staff conducts on-site visits to provide technical assistance and ensures that institutions comply with state and federal criteria for operation as a post-secondary school or training establishment as it applies to the receipt of federal GI Bill[®] educational compensation.

The Veterans Education Department trains school officials, provides advocacy and assistance to veterans, and participates in outreach events. The department will also evaluate institution policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines for administration of GI Bill[®] benefits.

The SAA is funded through a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contract which specifies performance goals based upon the number of post-secondary schools and training establishments which are approved for GI Bill[®] use and which the SAA will use regularly.

The SAA performance is reviewed annually by a joint VA/SAA panel which determines annual contract performance and recommends a rating for each SAA to the Director of VA Education Services.

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

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

Hazlewood Administration

The Veterans Education Department assists with the administration of the Hazlewood Act tuition exemption program which provides eligible Texas veterans, spouses, survivors and dependent children with up to 150 hours of tuition exemption at public institutions of higher education in Texas.

Applicants can obtain an exemption application online at the Texas Veterans Commission website, which provides instructions and resources for submitting the Hazlewood exemption application and supporting documentation to a public institute of higher education as part of the admissions application process.

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

Education Coordinator Program

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

Education Coordinators assist these institutions by sharing information, resources, and best practices as it pertains to policies, plans and procedures to enhance opportunity for success for veterans and their families. Education Coordinators collaborate with institutional, agency and community partners to provide veteran education and ancillary services in a supportive environment.

The department maintains a customer service center and responds to inquiries from veterans, family members, and school officials regarding the use of VA educational benefits and Hazlewood exemption benefits.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

COMMUNICATIONS AND VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Communications and Veterans Outreach Program in alignment with the Texas Veterans Commission's (TVC) overall mission and vision shall provide advocacy, awareness, engagement, outreach, and resource information of services provided by the TVC and Veterans County Service Officers (VCSO). The Outreach Program will aim to ensure Texas veterans, their family members, and survivors are aware of the benefits and services earned through military service.

The Outreach Program will drive engagement to TVC programs. In addition, the Outreach Program will work with agency programs to gather, analyze, track, and monitor veteran awareness and engagement. This essential information will assist in the planning, execution, and assessment of veteran outreach efforts to maximize the reach and return on investment of outreach activities. In addition, the Outreach Program shall utilize several media channels and platforms to accomplish its mission, including a call center, radio and television, print publications, social media platforms, outreach and engagement events, and other activities across the state.

Media Relations

The Outreach Program's Public Affairs team shall communicate and coordinate TVC resource information to the veteran population and the general public via national, state, and local media channels. The team will serve as the liaison for all media inquiries and requests for information. In addition, the Outreach Program will plan, coordinate, produce, and distribute public service announcements. These will be circulated to targeted media channels to amplify the awareness and reach of veteran resource information.

The Outreach Program shall plan, coordinate, and participate in media interviews to extend the awareness and reach of veteran resource information. These interviews will ensure effective and efficient results are produced with a minimum amount of taxpayer funds, while successfully fulfilling core functions and performance measures, and allowing for excellent customer service and transparency.

The Outreach Program shall plan, coordinate, implement, and execute training activities and events including media training, skill set cross-training, and software training. These activities and trainings will allow for continuous improvement, excellent customer service, and transparency.

Publications

The Outreach Program shall deliver the E-Vets electronic newsletter on a monthly basis. E-Vets will be distributed to subscribers across the state and beyond. The external/internal facing newsletter will include relevant veteran topics, veteran benefits and services, and upcoming veteran-centric events. The Outreach Program will also deliver an annual report with emphasis on agency successes throughout the prior fiscal year. The annual report will also include legislative and policy updates that affect federal, state, and local veteran benefits and services. All products will be consistently evaluated for continuous improvement.

The E-Vets electronic newsletter shall be delivered monthly to subscribers and will improve the distribution of relevant information to the veteran population. This cost-effective method will allow for rapid dissemination of information.

The Outreach Program shall produce and distribute printed and electronic guides of state veterans' benefits in even numbered years. Booklets will be updated and posted on the TVC website. Electronic and printed versions will be provided to VCSO's and to state and federal military installations in Texas. The Outreach Program shall also design and distribute brochures and flyers that highlight TVC's programs providing consistent information and messaging that will encourage the Texas veteran population to contact and engage with TVC through the "No Wrong Door" model.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

Social Media

The Outreach Program shall manage TVC resource information and messaging utilizing social media platforms to include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. Social media platforms are an easily accessible and cost-effective method that allows for rapid communication and engagement, while providing excellent customer service and transparency.

The Outreach Program will engage the veteran community through social media platforms. Performance metrics of these platforms will be analyzed to improve online efficiency and help eliminate redundant or superfluous efforts. This cost-effective method will allow for rapid dissemination of information.

Events

The Outreach Program shall actively coordinate and facilitate TVC sponsored events as well as participate in non-TVC sponsored events with veteran-centric strategic partners. Such events will include Veterans Benefit Fairs, state agency collaborative events, institutes of higher learning fairs, legislator-sponsored town hall meetings, veterans' service organization events, and local community events across the State of Texas.

The Outreach Program will document event participation including the number of attendees and cost per attendee. These valuations will ensure effective and efficient results are produced with a minimum amount of taxpayer funds. This documentation will allow for continuous improvement, excellent customer service, and transparency. These events will allow for excellent customer service through the building of interagency relationships, and face-to-face veteran interaction.

Texas Veterans Commission's resource information shall be effectively and efficiently communicated to the Texas veteran population and the general public via national, state, and local channels. Dedicated staff members will serve as media and community liaisons to ensure all inquiries and requests for information are met with clear and responsible answers. The Outreach Program will participate in professional associations to ensure best practices and cutting-edge concepts are implemented and utilize.

Community Outreach Campaign

The Outreach Program will conduct a community outreach campaign to provide information to, and increase awareness of, benefits and services available to veterans including: claims assistance services; health, financial, housing, and employment services; and the veteran's treatment court program. The campaign will capitalize on TVC's ability to better inform and reach veterans by implementing outreach efforts at places where veterans routinely gather, including community centers and places of worship. The Outreach Program will collaborate with, and/or contract with, community-based or nonprofit organizations, as well as to solicit and accept gifts and grants to fund the community outreach campaign.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

VETERANS ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program will assist veterans with starting and growing businesses by providing guidance to veteran entrepreneurs and business owners through conferences, seminars, and training workshops with federal, state, and private agencies.

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program shall provide veterans with business tools, resources and direct support that can be leveraged towards business success. The program will continuously observe the Texas market landscape and create programs that enhance the scope of services it delivers to veterans. A team of Veteran Business Consultants will travel to targeted regions of the state to conduct and facilitate training sessions and informational seminars as needed. The Veteran Entrepreneur Program will enlist regional program coordinators across the state to promote and support veteran entrepreneurs and business education through training and counseling.

Veteran Entrepreneurship Outreach and Advocacy

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program shall serve as liaisons for veteran entrepreneurs and business owners in the areas of monitoring and researching the need for benefits and services and identify issues affecting the interests of entrepreneurship. The program shall advocate for veteran entrepreneurship to increase public awareness about the needs of veteran business owners, and recommend legislative initiatives and policies at the local, state, and national levels in addressing issues that impact veteran entrepreneurs. As appropriate, the Entrepreneur Program shall evaluate the effectiveness of the commission's efforts to assist veteran entrepreneurs and provide recommendations to leadership to incorporate issues concerning entrepreneurs and business owners into the agency's plan for assisting veterans in securing benefits and services.

Bridge Resources

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

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

Business Mentorship

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

Veteran Verification

The Veteran Entrepreneur Program shall verify veteran eligibility for the state's fee exemption program for new veteran-owned entity formations and produce proof of such verification for veteran entrepreneurs and business owners. The program will work with interagency resources to design and implement an automated processing system to track and monitor activities associated with veterans' request for verification and collaborate with the Texas Secretary of State and the Comptroller to promote efficient processes.

Modernize Technology

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

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

HEALTH CARE ADVOCACY PROGRAM

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

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

Advocacy

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

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

HCAP staff will work to resolve VA health care related billing by working with the VA to correct instances of improper veteran billing and assisting community care medical providers with delayed payments. HCAP will educate veterans and their families on the responsibilities, if the VA is billing the veteran for health care services.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

In order to increase awareness of VA health care resources, HCAP will engage in public relations projects to increase community and veteran awareness of health care services, resources, benefits, and entitlements. HCAP will connect with and utilize local resources to maximize impact and improve veteran outcomes.

Prescription Assistance and Testing

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

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

Community Referrals

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

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

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

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

No later than November 1, 2018, WVP will issue a report on the estimated number of women veterans in this state, number of women veterans who contact the commission for assistance, and number of women veterans who receive assistance from the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), the Texas Workforce Commission, the Department of State Health Services, and other state agencies.

Outreach

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

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

Education

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

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

Recognition

The Women Veterans Program creates public awareness by recognizing and honoring the women veterans of this state and women who serve in the military, increases the number of women veterans identifying as a veteran, and improves women veterans' awareness of their eligibility for benefits, services, and opportunities.

Goal A: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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

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

- Difficulty in the ability to be self-aware of the need for mental health services and support;
- Lack of mental health resources available to veterans upon recognition of mental health needs; and
- A lack of community awareness of military-related traumas, which may exacerbate veteran mental health conditions.

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

Military Veteran Peer Network and Peer-to-Peer Support

The VMHD shall provide training and technical assistance to the Military Veteran Peer Network's (MVPN) local mental health authority-based peer service coordinators and their volunteer peers to create a statewide peer-to-peer network of support for military-trauma affected veterans.

Licensed Mental Health Providers

The VMHD shall provide training and technical assistance to licensed mental health providers across Texas to promote military culturally aware mental health service offerings and increase access to clinical mental health services for veterans suffering the effects from military-related traumas.

Community and Faith-Based Organizations

The VMHD shall provide training and technical assistance to community and faith-based organizations across Texas to promote military culturally aware supportive service offerings and increase access to community-based services for veterans suffering the effects from military-related traumas.

Justice-Involved Veteran Services

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

Women and Rural Veteran Mental Health Initiatives

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

Agency Goals and Action Plan

Fund Direct Services to Veterans

GOAL B

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

Goal B: Fund Direct Services to Veterans

FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

General Assistance Grants

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

Eligibility

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

Competitive Awards

All FVA grants are competitive awards. Care has been taken to publicize the grant to organizations throughout the state. The RFA is posted in the Texas Register, on eGrants, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) website, and agency social media.

Selection Process and Priorities

FVA accepts, screens for eligibility, and scores all eligible applications. The FVA Advisory Committee reviews the evaluations and application materials and makes funding recommendations to the TVC based on the priorities established by the Commission. The TVC makes the final funding decisions.

Housing for Texas Heroes (H4TXH) Grants

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

Eligibility

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

Competitive Awards

H4TXH grants are competitive awards. Care has been taken to publicize the grant to organizations throughout the state. The RFA is posted in the Texas Register, on eGrants, the TVC website, and agency social media.

Selection Process and Priorities

FVA staff accepts, screens for eligibility, and scores all eligible applications. The FVA Advisory Committee reviews the evaluations and application materials and makes funding recommendations to the TVC based on priorities established by the Commission. The TVC makes the final funding decisions.

Goal B: Fund Direct Services to Veterans

Veteran Treatment Courts Grants

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

Eligibility

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

Competitive Awards

Veteran Treatment Court grants are competitive awards. Care has been taken to publicize the grant to organizations throughout the state. The RFA is posted in the Texas Register, on eGrants, the TVC website, and agency social media.

Selection Process and Priorities

The FVA staff accepts, screens for eligibility, and scores all eligible applications. The FVA Advisory Committee reviews the evaluations and application materials and makes funding recommendations to the TVC based on the priorities established by the Commission. The TVC makes the final funding decisions.

Veterans County Service Officers Grants

The FVA sets aside 5 percent of anticipated grant funding each year to be available for grants to Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs). The VCSOs apply for this funding through the appropriate grant program application for the services they propose to provide and identify the Project Manager as the VCSO on the application.

Competitive Awards

The VCSO Funding Awards are competitive awards that are available to and only compete against other VCSO projects. Care has been taken to publicize the grant to organizations throughout the state. The RFA is posted in the Texas Register, on eGrants, the TVC website, and agency social media.

Selection Process and Priorities

FVA staff accepts, screens for eligibility, and scores all eligible applications. The FVA Advisory Committee reviews the evaluations and application materials and makes funding recommendations to the Texas Veterans Commission based on the priorities established by the Commission. The Texas Veterans Commission makes the final funding decisions.

Agency Goals and Action Plan

Hazlewood Administration

GOAL C

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

Goal C: Hazlewood Administration

Hazlewood Administration

The Hazlewood Act is a State of Texas benefit that provides qualified Texas veterans, spouses, and dependent children with an education benefit of up to 150 hours of tuition exemption, including most fee charges, at public institutions of higher education in Texas. This does not include living expenses, books, or supply fees. Applicants can obtain an exemption application online from the Texas Veterans Commission website, which provides instructions and resources for submitting the Hazlewood Exemption application and supporting documentation to a public institute of higher education as part of the institution's admissions application process.

The Veterans Education Department maintains the Hazlewood database which records information input from the public institutions of higher education in Texas. This database will contain the number and classification of veterans and other eligible Hazlewood students, as well as the funding exempted by each institution for the various Hazlewood eligibility categories.

Redundancies and Impediments

1. Services for Survivors, Spouses, and Family Members
2. Statutory Consistency
3. Reliance on Donations

Redundancies and Impediments

1. SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS, SPOUSES AND FAMILY MEMBERS

The citations in the Texas Government Code below, statutorily limit the ability of the agency to provide the associated services (outreach and grant funding) to spouses, survivors and families of veterans. Although benefits such as the Hazlewood exemption, property tax relief, and claims and benefit representation are available to qualified family members and survivors of veterans, the below language prohibits Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) from legally providing full complement of agency services to these groups.

§ 434.0161. USE OF FUNDS TO SUPPORT OUTREACH AND TRAINING

The commission may use appropriated funds to purchase, for use at outreach and training functions:

- (1) promotional items that include the agency's name and contact information to be distributed to **veterans**; and

§ 434.017. FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

(c) Money appropriated under this subsection shall be used to:

- (1) make grants to address **veterans'** needs;

Recommendation:

Modify Texas Government Code § 434 to allow for all TVC programs and services to be available to qualified survivors, spouses and family members when appropriate.

2. STATUTORY CONSISTENCY

§ 434.0078 of the Texas Government Code provides interpretive flexibility to the Claims Representation and Counseling Department to fulfill their statutory obligations. However, the Veteran Entrepreneur Program lacks the crucial word "unnecessarily." This omission provides inconsistency with TVC's statute and puts an undue burden on the entrepreneur program.

§ 434.0078. CLAIMS ASSISTANCE SERVICES

(B)(1) ensure the services provided by the commission do not **unnecessarily** duplicate services provided through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

Recommendation:

The following change to § 434.022 would provide consistency in terms of how TVC interprets its statutory authority to delivers services that are similar to those provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs programs.

§ 434.022. VETERAN ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

(f) The program shall consult with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Small Business Administration in developing procedures under this section to ensure the services provided by this program do not **unnecessarily** duplicate services provided through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Small Business Administration.

Redundancies and Impediments

3. RELIANCE ON DONATIONS

Subchapter E of Texas Government Code § 434 outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Texas Women Veterans Program. While funding is appropriated to the Women Veterans Program for one full-time employee, the program must rely on community donations to fund operations, which impinges employees from focusing on the program's core mission.

The following are mandated duties under this section:

§ 434.204. GENERAL PROGRAM DUTIES. The program shall:

- (1) provide assistance to the women veterans of this state as provided by this subchapter;
- (2) perform outreach functions to improve the awareness of women veterans of their eligibility for federal and state veterans' benefits and services;
- (3) assess the needs of women veterans with respect to benefits and services;
- (4) review programs, research projects, and other initiatives designed to address the needs of the women veterans of this state;
- (5) make recommendations to the executive director regarding the improvement of benefits and services to women veterans; and
- (6) incorporate issues concerning women veterans in commission planning regarding veterans' benefits and services.

§ 434.205. ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

- (a) The program shall advocate for women veterans and work to increase public awareness about the gender-specific needs of women veterans.
- (b) The program shall recommend legislative initiatives and the development of policies on the local, state, and national levels to address the issues affecting women veterans.

§ 434.206. COLLABORATION. The program shall collaborate with federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies that provide services to women veterans.

§ 434.207. RESEARCH; DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

- (a) The program shall monitor and research issues relating to women veterans.
- (b) The program shall disseminate information regarding opportunities for women veterans throughout the network of entities with which the program collaborates.

§ 434.208. EDUCATION. Through conferences, seminars, and training workshops with federal, state, county, municipal, and private agencies, the program shall provide guidance and direction to a woman veteran who is applying for grants, benefits, or services.

§ 434.209. HONOR AND RECOGNITION. The program shall promote events and activities that recognize and honor the women veterans of this state and women who serve in the military.

The following authority has been granted to the Women Veterans Program:

§ 434.211. FUNDING; GRANTS. On behalf of the program, the commission may:

- (1) accept and spend funds:
 - (A) appropriated to the commission for the operation of the program; and
 - (B) received from other sources, including donations and grants; and
- (2) provide matching grants to assist in the implementation of the program's goals and objectives.

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A. Goal: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

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

A.1. Objective: Maintain Veterans' Benefits Awards

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

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

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

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

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Outcome Measure: 2. 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 U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (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: Total reported amounts of awards for Texas residents are provided by VA for one month in each quarter.

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Outcome Measure: 4. **Percent of Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) Claims Granted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (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 state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

A. Goal: Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits

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

A.1. Objective; A.1.1 Strategy: Claims 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 Veterans County Service Officers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

Purpose/Importance: This represents the number of claims filed through 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 (VCSOs) for representation, review and/or development.

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

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

Short Definition: Number of claims for veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of survivors and orphans of veterans.

Purpose/Importance: The number of claims filed through Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) 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 (VCSO) for representation, review and or development.

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

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Outcome Measure: 4. Active Veterans' Benefits Cases Represented by the Texas Veterans Commission.

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

Purpose/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 state target

Outcome Measure: 5. Appeals of Unfavorable VA Decisions Filed on Behalf of Veterans.

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

Purpose/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 (VCSOs) for representation, review and/or development.

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

Methodology: Number of active cases is recorded from data provided by VA in a special report. The number of 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 the reports provided.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Outcome Measure: 6. Number of Files Reviewed by State Strike Force Team.

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

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

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

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

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Outcome Measure: 7. Number of Fully-Developed Claims (FDC) filed by the FDC Team.

Short Definition: Number of Fully-Developed Claims (FDC) by the FDC Team to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for expedited rating decision.

Purpose/Importance: The purpose of this measure is to track the number of fully-developed claims filed by the FDC counselors to expedite a rating decision.

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

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

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: Yes

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

Short Definition: VA payments to veterans represented by the Commission per dollar spent.

Purpose/Importance: The amount of payments to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors represented by TVC per state dollar spent in the Claims Representation and Counseling Department during a fiscal year.

Data Source: TVC records and the VA.

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

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

Calculation Type: Noncumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

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

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

Purpose/Importance: The amount of payments to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors represented by TVC State Strike Force Team per state dollar spent in a fiscal year.

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

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

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Explanatory Measure: 1. Percent of Veteran County Service Officers (VCSOs) and Assistants who Attend Initial and Continuing Training Conferences.

Short Definition: Percent of Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs) and assistants who attend initial and continuing education training conferences.

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the success of TVC training programs and the percent of VCSOs attending at least one initial or ongoing training conference per year.

Data Source: Registration and completion records of TVC initial and continuing education training.

Methodology: Number of VCSOs and assistants who have completed initial and continuing education requirements to maintain certification during the reporting period divided by the total number of VCSOs and assistants who are required to attend initial and continuing education conferences during the reporting period. Expressed as a percentage.

Data Limitations: Number is dependent on the VCSOs 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.

Calculation Type: Noncumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

Short Definition: This measure provides participant information on education and training programs at institutions or establishments approved by the Veterans Education Department for veterans of the armed forces and their eligible dependents receiving GI Bill® educational benefits.

Purpose/Importance: The purpose of the measure is to report utilization of services under Veterans Education and Training.

Data Source: 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.

Methodology: 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.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Noncumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Output Measure: 2. Number of institution/program approval actions completed by Veterans Education Department for institutions/training establishments throughout the state for which eligible veterans and their family members may use federal GI Bill® Educational benefits.

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

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

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

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

Data Limitations: Federal U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports are generally available 2 years in a row. Data is available quarterly.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

Output Measure: 3. Number of institution/program visits completed by Veterans Education to ascertain compliance with Federal Guidelines for the administration of the GI Bill®.

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

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

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

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

Data Limitations: Data is available quarterly.

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

Output Measure: 3. The Number of Veteran Engagements.

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

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

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

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

Short Definition: The number of services provided to veterans and their families from the 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 or family member. Thus, the number of services provided are not duplicated.

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

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

Methodology: The number of unique services provided to veterans and their families. 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.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

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

Outcome 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 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 Commission. Quarterly reports are required from all grantees.

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

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

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 Department will add all totals reported by H4TXH Grantees to arrive at the total number of veterans, their dependents, and survivors served by type of grant.

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

Data Limitations: None

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than state target

Budget Structure and Measure Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

C. Goal: Hazlewood

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

D. Goal: Indirect Administration

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

Historically Underutilized Business Plan

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

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

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

HUB Participation

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

HUB Outreach

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

HUB Goal

To make a good-faith effort to award procurement opportunities to businesses certified as historically underutilized.

HUB Objective

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

Statewide HUB goals by procurement category:

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

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

HUB Strategy

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

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

Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

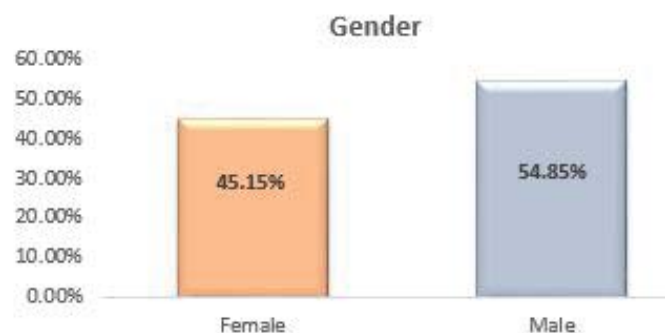
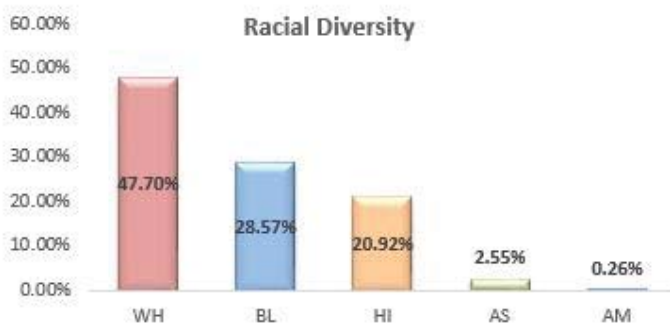
Overview

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

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

Current Workforce Profile

The current commission staff has the skills necessary to address business issues of the agency. A majority of the current workforce (83.42 percent) has prior military service. The commission has a diverse workforce that is 47.7 percent White, 28.57 percent Black, 20.92 percent Hispanic, and 2.81 percent Other. Males comprise 54.85 percent of the workforce and 45.15 percent are females.



Strategy Development

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 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 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.

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; and
- Recognition programs.

Retention:

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

Career Development

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

Leadership Development and Replacement:

The following elements 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; and
- Priorities, desired outcomes, expected results, and timelines for implementation.

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

Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision

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

Human Resources (HR) will develop a stronger partnership with each of the programs and divisions to determine training needs, 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 veteran needs and deliver outstanding customer service. Accordingly, the agency's critical functions will adjust to meet the new challenges. Overall fluctuations in the economy will have an impact on TVC in terms of the agency's workforce and the need for the services our staff oversees and provides to the public at large. Legislation on the federal and state levels also impacts the operations of TVC.

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

Expected Workforce Changes

The immediate future is easier to predict, but long-term planning is more difficult. Although more unknown variables exist, 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/full-time employees;
- 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; and
- 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 veteran and their families. Currently Commission personnel have the necessary skills to perform their jobs due to the training made available to them. With the expectation of continued migration of veterans to Texas over the next five years, the Commission may require additional Veterans Services Representatives to meet the demand. Requests for additional personnel will be for areas of the state where the projected demand for service is growing.

Report on Customer Service

SURVEY RESPONSES

Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) Veterans Clientele

Of those completing the survey, 97 percent expressed overall satisfaction with the service provided by Claims Representation and Counseling staff. When asked if clients were treated courteously by their counselors, 97 percent responded affirmatively. A survey of facilities was not included, because the TVC is provided office space within U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities; the TVC is not responsible for, nor has any control over, the operation of these VA facilities.

When asked if clients received information on how to obtain TVC services, 98 percent responded positively. More than 94 percent of clients were aware of the complaint process. Only one percent of clients responded they were not aware of the complaint process. The portion of the survey concerning complaints dealt specifically with TVC and its services. While TVC is aware of complaints made against the VA, we have no control over the timeliness of how the VA handles veterans' cases.

When clients were questioned regarding receiving information on how to obtain TVC services, 97 percent gave a positive response. Less than two percent responded they had not received printed information from the Texas Veterans Commission.

In regard to Veterans Employment Services (VES), 98 percent expressed overall satisfaction with the services received. When asked if clients were treated courteously by TVC staff, 98 percent responded affirmatively.

These surveys indicate TVC continues to provide a high level of customer service to our veteran clientele. Nevertheless, TVC will increase efforts to address customer complaints in a timely manner. TVC will also increase marketing efforts aimed at distribution of information about TVC services. The survey illustrates that TVC has a strong public awareness program, which ensures that most veterans are receiving printed information about the TVC. Only one percent of TVC Claims Representation and Counseling respondents stated that they had never received printed information about the TVC. In regard to VES, less than one percent responded they had not received printed information. This indicates that a greater percentage of veterans, dependents and survivors are aware of TVC services through the distribution and marketing of printed materials.

Veterans County Service Officers

Of those completing the survey, 75 percent expressed satisfaction with the service received from TVC. In addition, 72 percent felt that TVC staff was courteous. Overall, 97 percent were satisfied with the response time from TVC counselors.

Report on Customer Service

Analysis of Findings

Overall, TVC clientele are very satisfied with TVC services. The majority of responses from TVC veteran clientele were positive. TVC needs to improve its service to VCSOs by responding to requests from VCSOs in a more efficient manner. In addition, TVC needs to consider improving the literature and publications provided to the VCSOs, as indicated in survey responses.

Customer Service Performance Measures:

1. Customer Service Goal: The Texas Veterans Commission will manage agency resources.
2. Customer Service Objective: To achieve a 98 percent satisfaction level from veterans and a 98 percent satisfaction level from Veterans County Service Officers receiving agency assistance.

Outcome Measures:

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

Output Measures:

1. Number of customer satisfaction surveys performed.
2. Number of customer satisfaction surveys of Veterans County Service Officers performed.

Efficiency and explanatory measures were not developed because the survey costs were not significant enough to measure, all surveys were conducted as a part of the normal business operations of the agency. The agency identified three distinct customer groups. Contact with these three groups is also part of the normal business operations of the agency. The surveys for these three groups were specific to each group.

Information Resource Planning

Reliable and Secure Services

Safeguard the confidentiality, integrity and availability of agency data, systems and network. Veterans entrust the Commission with their confidential personal information for the assistance they seek. The Commission is committed to honoring that trust to be an effective advocate for veterans. The Commission aligns itself with the State Strategic Plan for Information Resources Management on Security and with the Texas Cybersecurity Strategic Plan to guide the secure deployment of information resources.

Risk-based Planning and Procurement of Security Services

The agency obtained the Texas Cybersecurity Assessment Report in March 2017. The report informs the agency Security Plan and the basis for implementing information security policies.

Comply with the Texas Cybersecurity Act

The agency recognizes the urgency of responding to threats against individual privacy and personal information. The agency will comply with legislative requirements to further lower the risk of breach and to deter cybercrime.

Procure Managed Security Services

The importance of reliable and secure services must be balanced with fiscal constraints. By procuring security services through the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) Data Center Services, the agency leverages the state's purchasing power to achieve savings. Furthermore, participating with their Shared Services offerings eliminate redundancies with centralized systems and personnel.

Mobile and Digital Services

The pervasive use of mobile devices presents new opportunities for the Commission to interact with veterans. Digital services provide a convenient and cost-effective entry point of assistance. A workforce equipped for mobility allows the Commission to serve veterans in flexible ways beyond the confines of traditional office spaces. The Commission aligns itself with the State Strategic Plan for Information Resources on Mobile and Digital Services to guide deployment of information resources responsive to today's mobile savvy veterans.

Transition to a Mobile Ready Workforce

A mobile workforce has the flexibility to respond in ways not possible with desk-bound equipment. It allows for a more natural interaction between employee and customer. It allows for effective collaboration by allowing employees to have the information resources with them at meetings, conferences or wherever work takes them.

Participate with the Department of Information Resource's Texas.gov

A mechanism for reaching veterans throughout the state is essential to the Commission's mission. The goal of the Texas.gov Shared Service is to facilitate the interaction of Texans and of state agencies that seek to serve them. Already, the Commission's participation with the Texas Veterans Portal Project, a component of Texas.gov, has been recognized for its collaboration with state agencies. The project deployed a web-based digital service that aggregates agency information to ease the navigation of available assistance for veterans. The Commission must continue to develop this collaboration to reach veterans.

Information Resource Planning

Expand Agency Data Network

A mobile workforce is as effective as its data network. Collaboration relies on the timely distribution of information to participants wherever they may be working. The Commission's digital services and workforce must be able to reach rural areas just as well as urban areas to carry out its mission. Therefore, a robust data network is of strategic importance to the Commission.

Promote Online Training for Both Employees and External Partners

Online-based training give comparable results while significantly reducing logistical and fiscal obstacles. The employees and partners of the Commission are spread throughout the state to be closer to the veterans they seek to serve. Traditional classroom-based training is a challenge for the Commission both in terms of preparation time and cost. Though not a complete replacement, online-based training can effectively overcome these challenges. The Commission is committed to increasing the use of online-based training for both employees and external partners.

Contract Manager Training

The Texas Veterans Commission complies with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) system of training, testing, certification and continuing education for state agency contract management personnel in accordance with Texas Government Code §656.052, effective September 1, 2017; and its predecessor statute, Texas Government Code §2262.053 (amended by Senate Bill 255, 85th Texas Legislature, R.S., 2017).

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

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

Certification and Continuing Education

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

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

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



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