

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2011-2015



TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION



Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2011-2015

Submitted to the

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

June 2010

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



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Executive Summary

The State of Texas, through its legislative and executive representatives, has a proud history of serving the needs of Texas veterans. The Texas Veterans Commission was established by the 40th Legislature in 1927 (House Bill 551) and operates under the provisions of Chapter 434, Texas Government Code. From its inception the agency has operated as the state appointed advocate of Texas veterans as they attempt to secure the benefits rightfully earned in the performance of their duties in our nation's armed forces.

In 1947, in order to care for the large increase in Texas' veteran population resulting from World War II and other wars in which Texas residents participated, Texas legislators once again rose to the occasion (50th Legislature, Regular Session) by establishing a system of veterans' county service officers, and mandating the Commission to train the veterans' county service officers and assistants and coordinate a statewide Veterans Assistance Program.

More recently, Texas' elected officials have carried the proud tradition of serving the needs of Texas veterans to even greater heights. Recent events unfolded in 2006 when the 79th Texas Legislature took the unprecedented lead in serving the needs of Texas veterans by transferring Veterans Employment Services (VES) to the Texas Veterans Commission. Shortly thereafter, in October 2006, Governor Rick Perry followed suit by issuing an executive order transferring the Veterans Education program (State Approval Authority) to the Texas Veterans Commission. The 81st Legislature, recognizing veterans and their families experience unique hardships not faced by their civilian counterparts, answered the call again by passing House Bill 1299, which created a lottery scratch-off game benefiting the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA).

As elements of a horizontally integrated service delivery network, each program is designed to interact with the other to significantly improve the quality of life for Texas veterans and their families. This relationship remains dynamic and ongoing throughout the course of the veteran's life and, in many cases, beyond through death and pension benefits.

Today, Texas is widely recognized throughout the country as *the* progressive thought leader on veteran issues. The state's leaders have sent a clear message to the veterans of the state and to the nation as a whole that the sacrifices made by veterans and their families are not forgotten and are in fact deeply appreciated.





Part I

Statewide Vision of Texas State Government

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

Assuring open access to an educational system that not only guarantees the basic core knowledge necessary for citizenship, but also emphasizes excellence and accountability in all academic and intellectual undertakings;

Creating and retaining job opportunities and building a stronger economy that will lead to more prosperity for our people, and a stable source of funding for core priorities;

Protecting and preserving the health, safety and well-being of our citizens by ensuring healthcare is accessible and affordable, and our neighborhoods and communities are safe from those who intend us harm; and

Providing disciplined principled government that invests public funds wisely and efficiently.

***RICK PERRY Governor,
State of Texas***

Part II

The Mission of Texas State Government

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

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



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Part III

The Philosophy of Texas State Government

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

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

Part IV

Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

Economic Development

Priority Goal:

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

Benchmarks:

- Per capita gross state product
- Unemployment Rate
- Median household income
- Number of Texans receiving Job Training Services





Part V

Agency Mission and Philosophy

AGENCY MISSION

The Texas Veterans Commission is committed to provide superior service through agency programs of claims assistance, employment services, education and grants that will significantly improve the quality of life of Texas veterans and their families.

AGENCY PHILOSOPHY

The Texas Veterans Commission is the advocate for Texas veterans, their families and their survivors. The Commission takes great pride in providing quality service. The fundamental ingredient to quality is a dedicated, professional, well trained and well paid work force, provided at the State, Local Workforce Development Areas, and the county levels. This work force and the service it provides must be readily available to the population it serves. The services must be tailored to the needs of veterans and their families. To this end, the Texas Veterans Commission must take the lead in coordinating efforts of service providers, sharing of resources, providing innovative and effective training, providing grants to organizations that address a broad range of veterans' needs and developing a partnership with other levels of government to achieve the highest quality of service in assisting the veterans, their families, and their survivors.

Part VI

External Assessment/ Internal Assessment

Never in the Texas Veterans Commission's eighty-three year history has the agency possessed the range of services required to meet the myriad array of needs of Texas veterans. Conversely, at no time in the agency's illustrious history has the need for the services provided by the agency been greater. The external factors driving these needs include:

- Changes in Veteran Demographics (16)
- The War on Terror (18)
- The Economy (20)
- Changes in Federal Law(s) and Policies (21)



Sixty percent of all Texas veterans live within the six largest metropolitan areas of the state. According to VA statistics, more than 75 percent of the net migration of veterans to Texas was in the age group from 20 to 64.

A. Changes in Veteran Demographics

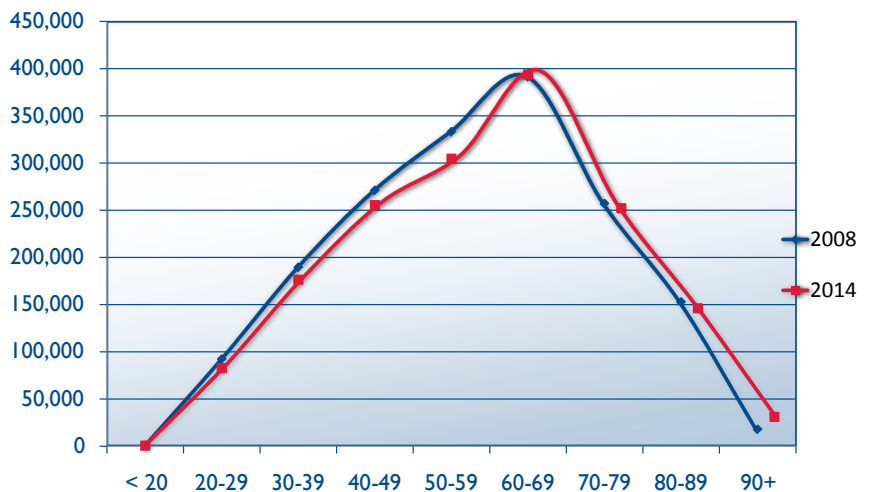
The war against terror, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF), has added to the number of younger wartime veterans in Texas. The veteran population in Texas age 60 years of age and older which in 2008 numbered approximately 818,926 will increase slightly to 823,100 by 2014. The number of aged veterans (80 years of age and older) currently stands at 172,150 and is expected to “peak” in 2014 at 178,000. The number of veterans over the age of 80 will gradually decline over the years through 2021 at which time their numbers will once again begin to grow (Chart I, page 16).

By FY 2014, the modal age of veterans is estimated to be nearly 70 years old (see Chart I). As the veteran population ages, we

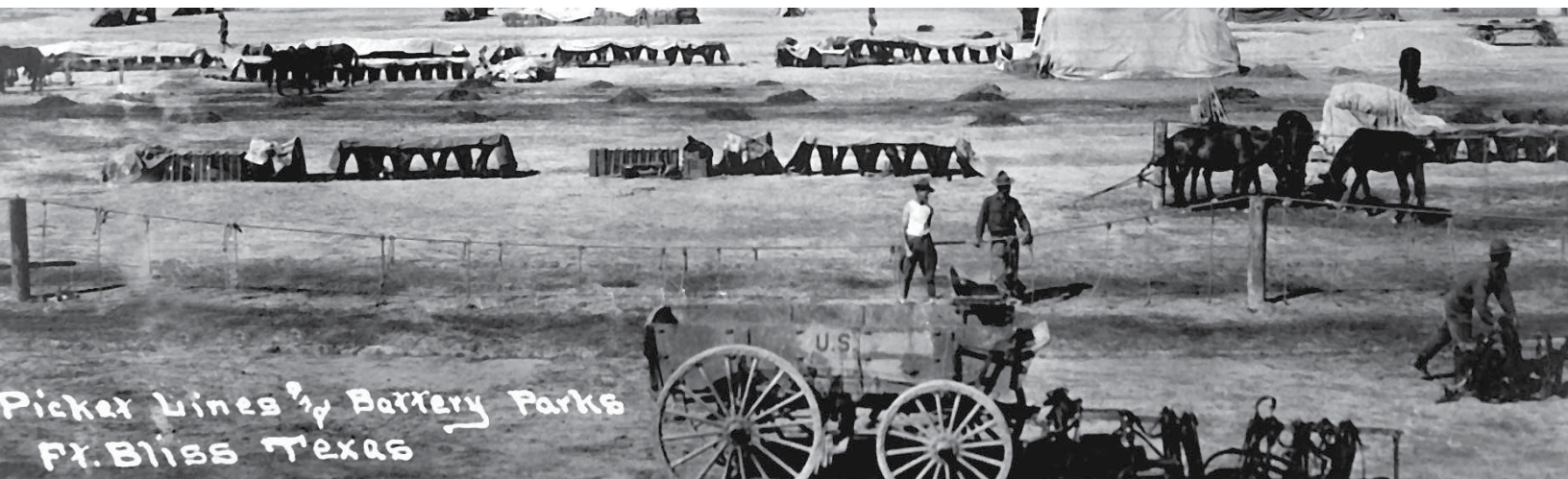
expect a concurrent increase in demand for care and services from this demographic. This will be a major challenge to both the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and the Texas Veterans Commission. The majority of older civilian males (age 80 and older) are veterans, reflecting the high proportion of men who served in World War II (Chart II, page 17).

In 2009, Vietnam-era veterans still comprised the largest number of veterans in Texas (517,000). However, there has been a very significant growth in the Gulf War veterans’ population. Between 2005 and 2009, the number of Gulf War veterans residing in Texas increased by an incredible 32% and currently there are 467,000 Gulf War veterans residing in Texas.

Chart I
Age Distribution of Texas Veterans
FY 2008 & 2014



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



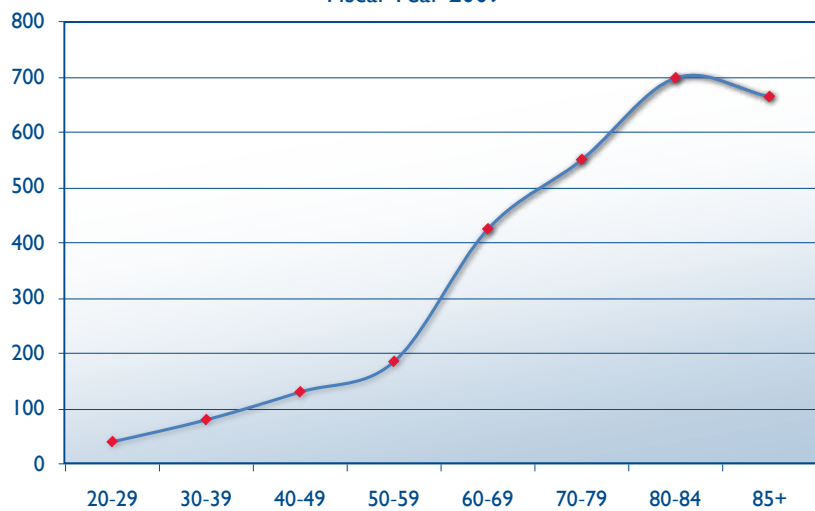
Picker Lines by Battery Parks
Ft. Bliss Texas



While the majority of veterans are males, the number and proportion of female veterans in Texas continues to show a steady increase (Chart III, page 17). The growth in the proportion of females serving in the military is reflected by the number of female Gulf War veterans (79,000) compared with female Vietnam veterans (19,000). The proportional percentages for the female Vietnam and Gulf War veterans are 3.7% and 17% respectively.

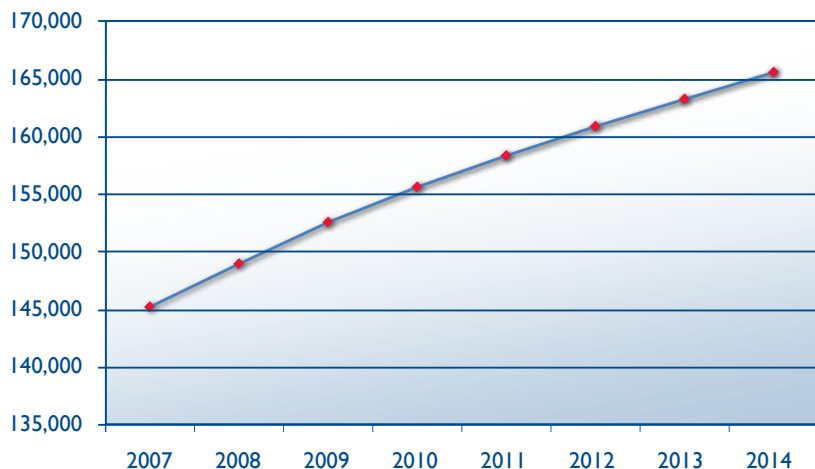
Another principal demographic change is that Texas is no longer a rural state. Sixty percent of all Texas veterans live within the six largest metropolitan areas of the state. According to VA statistics, more than 75 percent of the net migration of veterans to Texas was in the age group from 20 to 64. This suggests the vast majority of relocating veterans came to Texas seeking gainful employment and are therefore most likely to reside in metropolitan areas. The population centers continue to grow and with this increase is a corresponding growth in the concentration of veterans' population.

Chart II
A Large Number of Elderly Males are Veterans
Number of Male Veterans per 1,000 U.S. Males
Fiscal Year 2009



Source: Data derived from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, VETpop2007 and U.S. Census Bureau, National Population Projections.

Chart III
Growth of Female Veteran Population 2007- 2014



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



B. The Global War on Terror

On October 7, 2001, the United States officially launched the Global War on Terror (GWOT) with Operation Enduring Freedom in response to the September 11, 2001, attacks. The initial military objectives of Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan (OEF-A) included the destruction of terrorist training camps and infrastructure within Afghanistan, the capture of al-Qaeda leaders, and the cessation of terrorist activities in Afghanistan. The Global War on Terror expanded on March 20, 2003, with the launching of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) by a multi-national force led by the United States.

In the eight years since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, American troops have deployed almost 3.3 million tours of duty lasting more than 30 days to Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Department of Defense (DoD) data. The numbers, as of April 2009, show that more than two million men and women have shouldered those deployments, with 793,000 of them deploying more than once (Table I, page 18).

The heavy dependence on the National Guard and Reserves, pace of deployments, duration of deployments, the number of redeployments, the short dwell time between deployments, the type of warfare, the types of injuries sustained, and the effects on the servicemembers,

their families, and their communities make Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom fundamentally different from the first Gulf War and previous wars. Moreover, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom together make up the longest sustained U.S. military operation since the Vietnam War. Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF / OEF) are the first extended conflicts to depend on an all-volunteer military.

In the years since the war in Vietnam, there have been significant improvements made in military equipment and medicine. The survival rate for U.S. servicemembers wounded in Iraq has reached 90 percent, higher than in any previous war, and 10 points higher than in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, thanks to body armor and better care. For every servicemember killed in Iraq, 15 others have survived illness or injury there. However, unlike previous wars, few soldiers are wounded as the result of small arms fire or shrapnel. Consequently, more servicemembers survive to return home with severe combat-related injuries that require additional care. For example, a large number of military personnel have survived blasts that resulted in such injuries as hearing loss and traumatic brain injury (TBI). An estimated 10–20% of OEF and OIF servicemembers have sustained mild TBI that has been associated with

Table I

Deployment Statistics as of April, 2009						
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps	Coast Guard	TOTAL
Active Component	742,733	320,140	269,220	209,175	3,539	1,544,807
National Guard	742,733	N/A	65,295	N/A	N/A	304,631
Reserves	125,595	33,891	38,056	37,602	228	235,372
	1,107,664	354,031	372,571	246,777	3,767	2,084,810

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

various long-term health outcomes.

In addition to differences from previous wars in the demographic composition of the current all-volunteer force, deployment to OEF and OIF has some unique characteristics. Because the number of troops in the active component of the military is smaller than in past conflicts, DoD has had to send military personnel on repeat tours in theater to meet the demands of an extended conflict. Overall, about 40% of current military servicemembers have been deployed more than once and, as of October 2009, 263,150 servicemembers have served more than two tours. Multiple tours coupled with the additional emotional stress inherent in fighting an insurgency has resulted in a very high incidence of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Credit should be given to VA for acknowledging the vast array of injuries including TBI and PTSD. However, it must be noted that, historically, after periods of conflict, health-related issues arise for veterans not anticipated prior to the conflict. One widely documented example is the negative health impact to veterans returning from Vietnam as a result of exposure to the defoliant labeled “Agent Orange.” It was not until thirty-five years after the last troops left Vietnam, that VA recognized Agent Orange as a significant contributor to diabetes. Additionally, the Texas Veterans Commission was forced to assume a lead role in presenting health-related issues to VA faced by the veterans of Desert Storm. Among these health-related issues were “Persian Gulf Syndrome,” and an incidence of “Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Syndrome.”

The state of Texas has always been the leader when addressing the needs of the state’s veteran population and understands that veterans returning from Afghanistan, Iraq and other areas of conflict may face health issues that may not manifest or be identified for years to come. As active duty personnel begin to separate from the military and reservists and National Guardsmen rotate off deployment, the need for health, employment, education and financial assistance will be greater than at any time in recent history.



C. The Economy

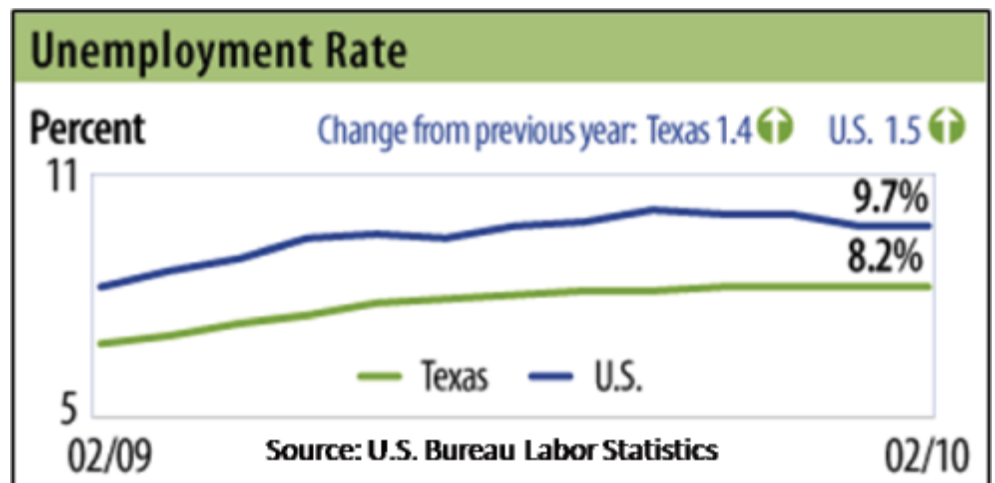
As the 12th-largest economy in the world, Texas continues to fare better financially than the majority of other states. However, Texas was not immune to effects of the worldwide recession during 2009. While the Texas economy continued to grow through most of 2008, with employment peaking in August that year, Texas joined the nation in losing jobs. The “silver lining” can be found in the fact that gross state product (GSP) declined more slowly for Texas than the U.S. economy (-1.7 percent versus -2.5 percent.)

The contracting of the Texas economy is expected to reverse in 2010 and the GSP is expected to grow by 2.6 percent for the year compared with a national growth rate of 2.0 percent. However, job growth is a lagging indicator and as such military personnel exiting the military or

National Guard and reservists coming off deployment are expected to find a bleak job market. Accordingly, unemployment remains high in Texas with a rate of 8.3 percent in April. That rate is unchanged from January, while the U.S. rate for the same period was 9.7 percent (Chart IV, page 20).

The challenge of finding work for veterans is further exacerbated by net migration to the state. The U.S. Bureau of the Census reported that Texas added more people (478,000) than any other state from July 1, 2008, to July 1, 2009, and nearly one half of the population increase during that period (232,000) was from net migration.

Chart IV



D. State and Federal Legislative and Regulatory Actions

Recent Veterans Affairs Regulatory Activity

According to VA, more than 800,000 Vietnam veterans that are alive today are estimated to be eligible for treatment for Agent Orange-related illnesses. According to VA's web site, the department presumes all military members who served in Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange. Also, some children of female Vietnam veterans may qualify for compensation, based on birth defects associated with the chemicals.

Based on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine, VA has directed broader health coverage for Vietnam War veterans exposed to Agent Orange. Research found that three illnesses – B cell leukemias, Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease -- are attributable to Agent Orange exposure and available for compensation on a presumptive basis. Those conditions join a list of related diseases for which Vietnam War veterans already receive compensation, such as prostate cancer, respiratory cancers, soft-tissue sarcomas, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and multiple myeloma. Additionally, the Secretary of VA recently announced nine conditions to be afforded compensation

on a presumptive basis for veterans having served in the Gulf War and Afghanistan theaters of operation.

Pending Federal Legislation

H.R. 2254 (111th) would clarify the laws related to VA benefits provided to Vietnam War veterans suffering from the ravages of Agent Orange exposure. In addition to being used as a defoliant "in country," Agent Orange was also stored on U.S. vessels and used for vegetation clearing purposes around U.S. bases, landing zones and lines of communication.

Currently, VA requires Vietnam veterans to prove a "foot on land" occurrence in order to qualify for the presumptions of service-connection for herbicide-exposure related illnesses afforded under current law. This issue has been the subject of much litigation and on May 8, 2008, the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals upheld VA's narrow interpretation and the Supreme Court later denied certiorari essentially affirming this ruling. However, Congress clearly did not intend to exclude these veterans from compensation based on arbitrary geographic line drawing by VA.

H.R. 2254 is intended to clarify the law so that Blue Water veterans

and every servicemember awarded the Vietnam Service medal, or who otherwise deployed to land, sea or air, in the Republic of Vietnam is fully covered by the comprehensive Agent Orange laws Congress passed in 1991. If enacted, this bill will remove the "foot on land" requirement and extend service-connected conditions linked to toxic exposures during the Vietnam War identified in current law.





Part VII

Internal Assessment

The Texas Veterans Commission delivers exceptional value to our state's veterans through four (4) program areas.



A. Agency Scope and Function

As stated previously in this document, at no time in the Texas Veterans Commission's 83 year history has the agency been better positioned to meet the needs of Texas veterans. The Texas Veterans Commission delivers exceptional value to our state's veterans through four (4) program areas.

Placing all of the programs under a single entity with a shared vision was the first step toward an integrated veteran benefits delivery system. This is the true definition of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. This integrated approach is benefiting the Texas' veteran population by structuring a single agency, the Texas Veterans Commission, as the gateway to all veterans benefits in Texas thus creating a holistic view of the individual veteran and his or her needs. The four program areas currently administered by the Texas Veterans Commission in this integrated fashion include:

- Claims Representation
- Employment Services
- Education Services
- Fund for Veterans' Assistance

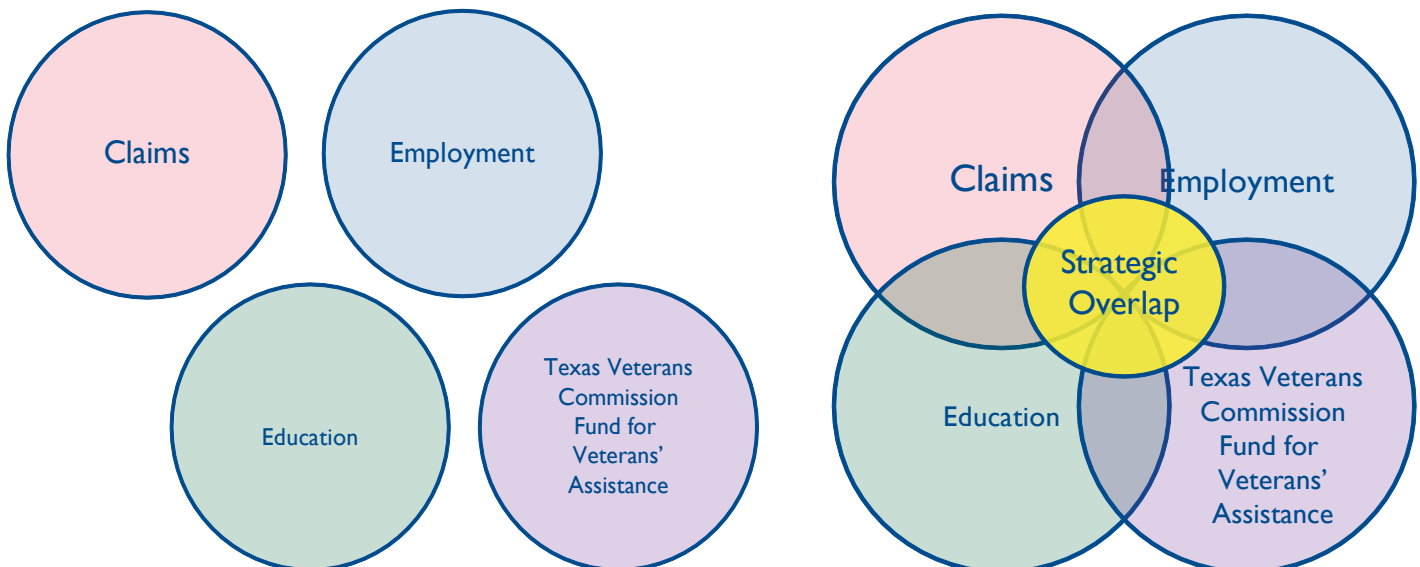
The first steps to securing the successful integration of such disparate programs and tying them to a unified vision is the mapping of existing processes, developing an awareness of the differences between the integrating groups and establishing effective lines of communication. The Texas Veterans Commission leadership

developed a phased strategy to integrate Claims, Employment and Education. The Fund for Veterans' Assistance is an extremely recent addition to the agency and a strategy for integration is currently in development.

The initial phase of the integration process, Phase I, is nearing completion. The technological cornerstone of this phase is a centralized case management system. This system is designed to allow the compiling and accessing of demographic and case data by each program area while simultaneously adhering to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Internally, this approach is referred to as the "Strategic Overlap" (Illustration I, page 24).

Elements of Phase II of the Program Integration process include leveraging the case management technology to develop an automatic referral system/procedure between the programs, a synthesizing of the marketing efforts between Education and Employment (to the extent allowed) and the utilization of the case management system combined with an in-bound call center to begin the holistic relationship at the initial point of contact. With the appropriate elements in place, combined with effective training, the delineation between the program areas will be seamless.

Illustration I: Strategic Overlap



B. Program Areas

1. Veterans Affairs Claims Representation

The number of Texas veterans needing VA claims assistance from the Texas Veterans Commission continues to increase (Chart V, page 25). Since its inception in 1927, the Texas Veterans Commission has provided indispensable services to Texas veterans through the statewide dissemination of vital information on veterans' rights and entitlement programs; in depth, professional claims assistance for all federal and state veterans' programs and professionally delivered training and

certification programs for all veterans' county service officers and assistants of Texas.

This program counsels and assists Texas veterans, their dependents and survivors relative to gaining their rights and entitlements in all areas of veterans' benefits. This program is focused to ensure all Texas veterans and their families receive every benefit to which they are entitled; and, as a corollary benefit, increase the federal payments to Texas

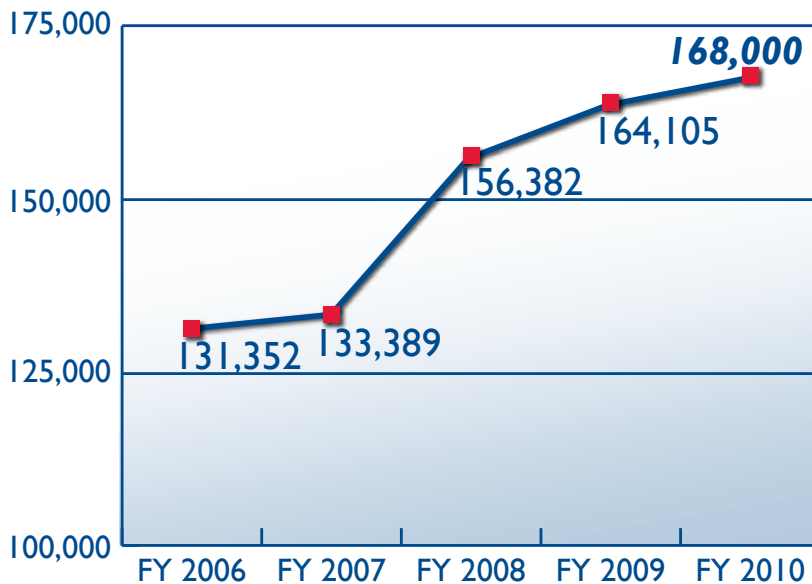
veterans and their survivors, thereby benefiting the economy of the State of Texas. This is accomplished by counseling potential beneficiaries concerning their entitlements, helping them apply for those entitlements, and preparing the evidence which will prove their entitlements. Counseling is conducted in Texas Veterans Commission field offices throughout the state that are manned by trained veterans' assistance counselors. Additionally, claims support and representation is provided through the county service officers (Chart V, page 25).

Hospitalized veterans are contacted by Texas Veterans Commission personnel located at VA and military hospitals. In addition to the Texas Veterans Commission offices, most counties maintain veterans' county service offices, which are dependent on Texas Veterans Commission offices for technical assistance, training and representation at VA regional offices.

To be truly comprehensive, the Claims and Representation Counseling program must be able to extend service and claims assistance for financial benefits to veterans and survivors who are unable to come to a Texas Veterans Commission office or county service office. Texas Veterans Commission veterans' counselors are stationed at established field offices with assignments concentrated on outreach service to hospitals, Texas State Veterans' Homes, institutions and other related facilities throughout the state. Services

CHART V

Texas Veterans Commission Caseload Growth
FY 2006 – FY 2010*



*2010 Estimated

Source: Data Provided by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



It is important to note that while this increase has the potential to strain resources already stretched thin; ironically, it also presents a unique opportunity to positively impact the per capita personal income within the state.

are provided through briefings, individual counseling and review of patient medical records. Veteran populations served through these outreach efforts include, but are not limited to:

- Veterans filing original claims for service-connected compensation.
- Veterans filing claims for non-service-connected pension.
- Survivors making claims for either service-connected or non-service-connected death benefits and burial benefits.
- Veterans seeking discharge upgrades.
- Servicemembers being processed through the Physical Evaluation Board.
- Disabled veterans seeking to increase their disability rating.
- Incarcerated veterans are assisted with educational benefit applications or claims for VA benefits.
- Veterans seeking admission to Texas State Veterans' Homes.
- Institutionalized patients receiving mental health care, nursing home residents and helpless children are assisted in applying for VA pension or compensation benefits.

- Eligible recipients in underserved areas are provided all Texas Veterans Commission services.
- The Texas Veterans Commission recently entered a partnership with the Texas State Bar Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans program to provide no cost legal aid services to veterans.

The Texas Veterans Commission has recently provided a Public Service Announcement script to numerous legislators seeking to reach the veteran population listed above. The coordinated efforts of the Texas Veterans Commission and the veterans county service officers, coupled with marketing and outreach services, has made the Texas Veterans Commission's Claim Representation and Counseling program one of the most effective in the nation.

Two recent events profile the determination and drive toward excellence of the Texas Veterans Commission claims personnel and highlight the opportunity for the state to excel. The first event came about as the result of independent research by two national media organizations that clearly demonstrated the VA Regional Office in Houston to be statistically one of the worst Regional Offices in the nation.

The research pointed to an inordinately large backlog of veterans' claims resulting in the veterans who sought relief for their service-connected injuries having to wait an excessively long period of time for decisions on their claims.

Governor Rick Perry called upon the Texas Veterans Commission to take action by requesting a proposal on how best to address the situation. The proposal called for the Governor's funding and deployment of twelve additional Texas Veterans Commission counselors who would expedite the development for decision or award action on claims and return them to VA for immediate processing.

The Governor accepted the Commission's proposal and funded what has become known as the Claims Processing Assistance Teams (CPAT). At the time of this writing, the CPAT has been operational for 71 work days and have reviewed and returned for processing to VA 3,454 cases ready for either rating or award action.

The second event was referenced briefly in the External Assessment section of this document. The VA broadening of health coverage and service-connected compensation regulations pertaining to Agent Orange exposure provides the following projected claims estimates nationwide:

- Year One: 180,000 new claims
- Year Two: 40,000 new claims
- Year Three 15,000 new claims

The estimated impact to Texas is 12,000 to 15,000 claims in year one. These additional claims have the potential of negatively impacting VA claims processing time and increasing their backlog. A very large percentage of these veterans are expected to seek out the Texas Veterans Commission for assistance with filing and appealing these new claims. This situation will be further exacerbated by nine new disabilities which VA has

Table II
Seven Most Populous States
Federal Fiscal Year 2009

State	Veteran Population	Veterans Receiving Compensation Or Pension	Compensation & Pension Expenditures (\$000)	Per Capita Compensation & Pension Payment	Compensation & Pension Recipients Per 1,000 Veterans
Texas	1,701,675	330,292	\$4,188,343	\$2,461	194.10
Florida	1,683,899	292,787	\$3,476,355	\$2,064	173.87
California	2,025,934	305,570	\$3,472,898	\$1,714	150.83
New York	988,217	142,265	\$1,563,618	\$1,582	143.96
Ohio	913,296	122,820	\$1,343,327	\$1,471	134.48
Pennsylvania	995,315	129,389	\$1,483,207	\$1,490	130.00
Illinois	802,834	87,678	\$980,149	\$1,221	109.21

¹ per capita: Compensation and pension payments / veteran population
Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Veterans Benefits Administration Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity

announced as presumptive to related Gulf War or Afghanistan service. It is important to note that while this increase has the potential to strain resources already stretched thin, ironically it also presents a unique opportunity to positively impact the per capita personal income within the state.

Leveraging the data provided by VA in Table II (page 26), the average annual compensation and pension expenditure per current veteran recipient is twelve thousand six hundred and eighty one dollars (\$12,681). A study commissioned by VA and conducted by the Institute for Defense Analysis of veterans receiving compensation or pension indicates that veterans using the services of an agency like the Texas Veterans Commission receive annually, on average, six thousand and two hundred dollars more (\$6,200) than those who do not. This delta represents a positive economic impact to the state that is unmistakable.

Consider the CPAT effort in Houston for example. If the efforts in Houston yield a conservative, across-the-board average annual payment of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) to the three thousand four hundred fifty-four (3,454) claimants already processed, the result is a \$10,362,000 infusion into the state economy.

The broadening of the health coverage regulation pertaining to Agent Orange presents an even greater opportunity for positive cash flow to the state provided the Texas Veterans Commission possesses the staff to meet the increased workload. Using the same conservative annual payment of three thousand dollars (\$3,000), the impact is \$36 million after year one, \$10.5 million in year two, and \$4.5 million in year three. These are ongoing payments so the aggregate impact by the end of year three is an annual cash infusion to the state of \$133.5 million.



2. Veterans Employment Services

According to the final report from the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, "employment is the dominant concern of most service members reentering civilian life."

According to the final report from the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, "employment is the dominant concern of most servicemembers reentering civilian life."

The Veteran Employment Services (VES) program assists veterans in finding employment through job matching, resume assistance, and intensive services. The VES staff is primarily located in 80 Texas Workforce Centers and at various active duty military installations and VA facilities across the state. In addition to services at centers, VES also conducts Transition Assistance Program (TAP) briefings to active duty personnel and their families, National Guard members, and reservists preparing to leave military service, operates the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program to improve and expand employment opportunities for veterans with disabilities, provides employment counseling to severely injured servicemembers, spouses and caregivers through the REALifelines program, and assists spouses of active duty servicemembers at military installations with Family Employment Assistance Counselors (FEAC).

Funding for VES is primarily provided through a federal grant from the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS), with additional state General Revenue for three FTEs in the FEAC program. The Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 (JVA) created a statutory formula for allocation of DOL-VETS funds to the states. This formula is based on each state's relative proportion of veterans seeking work.

Beyond VES, it is important to recognize the integrated nature and importance of consolidated services available to veterans from the Texas Veterans Commission. In 2005, Governor Rick Perry and the state Legislature agreed that consolidating Employment, Education, and VA Claims Counseling within the state's veteran advocacy agency was the best model for veterans to access the services and benefits they have earned. Three years after the consolidation, the Governor and Legislature recognized the record-setting success of Texas Veterans Commission's work and expanded our ability to assist veterans with the addition of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance in 2009. The VES program is fully integrated with the agency's other programs of Claims Counseling, Education, the Fund for Veterans' Assistance and Marketing efforts. A constant flow of internal referrals and communication ensures that veterans in Texas have one stop to receive the broadest range of services and benefits information available in the country.

The recent addition of a Business Outreach Coordinator has enabled Texas Veterans Commission to improve on the traditional model of veteran's employment services and truly act on behalf of the employer to recruit qualified veterans for specific jobs. The Business Outreach Coordinator works with employers to create new, veteran-only, career opportunities. In less than six months of activity, the Texas Veterans Commission business outreach efforts have yielded 78 jobs, dedicated exclusively for veterans, from 23 employers. Additionally, the VES staff conduct employer outreach/contact on a regular basis, and it is part of the Local



The Veterans Employment Services program is fully integrated with the agency's other programs of Claims Counseling, Education, the Fund for Veterans' Assistance and Marketing efforts.

Veteran Employment Representative's (LVER) duties and responsibilities.

In addition to intra-agency integration, the VES staff is integrated with and in the Texas Workforce Centers. Veterans may seek other employment and training services provided by the Texas workforce system, which may include Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training opportunities, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and support services such as child care and transportation. To ensure that VES staff is aware of all of the services available to veterans, Texas Veterans Commission supports the practice in which Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) provide training on other services available through the workforce system. This training will support the co-enrollment in those programs and services that will best meet the employment and training needs of veterans seeking employment.

To ensure veterans are receiving the best services possible in the workforce centers, in December 2008 DOL issued final rules and regulations at 20 Code of Federal Regulations 1010 implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses. As a result, the Texas Workforce

Commission implemented policies and procedures to identify and provide preference to veterans and eligible spouses who access employment, training, and placement services, on-site or remotely.

Texas Veterans Commission staff facilitates TAP workshops at 12 TAP sites in conjunction with the DoD and DOL-VETS. All TAP facilitators must attend and successfully complete TAP facilitator training before conducting TAP workshops. The TAP workshops, which last two to three days, provide information on translation of military duties into civilian job skills, job search techniques, interviewing skills, resume preparation, VA benefits and labor market information. The TAP workshops are conducted an average of 17 times per month statewide.

As a full partner with VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services, Texas Veterans Commission assigns staff to designated VA facilities to assist Chapter 31 disabled veterans with intensive employment assistance. Disabled veterans enrolled in the Chapter 31 program attend VA-funded vocational and educational training courses to increase their skills. Graduates not only have access to workforce center services but also VA-

In less than six months of activity, our business outreach efforts have yielded 78 jobs dedicated exclusively for veterans from 23 employers.



funded subsidized employment. Within 90 days of a veteran completing vocational rehabilitation, the VA case manager refers the veteran to VR&E staff. These veterans have access to a full range of employment and training services available at the workforce center. Staff follows up with the VA case manager to report on the veteran's progress toward gaining employment.

Texas Veterans Commission assigns staff to designated VA facilities to assist Chapter 31 disabled veterans with intensive employment assistance.





3. Veterans Education Services

The state of Texas leads all other states in payments of veterans’ education and vocational rehabilitation benefits (Table III, page 31). In Federal Fiscal Year 2008, Texas ranked first nationally in education benefits (including vocational rehabilitation) paid to veterans.

In an effort to centralize and improve services to veterans, Governor Perry transferred the Veterans Education program to the Texas Veterans Commission effective October 1, 2006. The Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Education functions as the State Approving Agency for Texas, under contract with VA to determine those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for veterans training; and, for which the eligible veterans may receive federal GI Bill educational benefits. Texas Veterans Commission approves all programs for Montgomery GI Bill and Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 30, 32, 33, 35, 1606, and 1607) educational benefits. Through an approval process, Texas Veterans Commission ensures that institutions and employers comply with federal guidelines and are qualified to provide the type of education/training offered. Texas Veterans Commission monitors approved programs by conducting annual on-site visits to all facilities that have veterans receiving benefits. This enables Texas Veterans Commission to determine if schools and employers are enforcing and abiding by the approved policies and procedures and if veterans are being certified for benefits correctly.

The federal government funds

approximately 93% of the Veterans Education program. Since 1995, the Veterans Education program has received general revenue funds to assist in covering additional indirect expenses. VA reimburses the Commission for all reasonable and necessary expenses (salary, fringe, travel, and outreach) incurred in approving and regulating veterans education and training programs in Texas. The Texas Veterans Commission also receives a nominal administrative expense allowance to cover all other operating expenses.

There are 16 FTEs assigned to the Veterans Education program: nine in Austin, two in the Dallas area, two in the Houston area, one in the San Antonio area, one in the El Paso area, and one in Corpus Christi serving the Rio Grande Valley area. The field staff telecommutes and is responsible for

Texas ranked first nationally in education benefits (including vocational rehabilitation) paid to veterans.

conducting visits in their assigned areas with a heavy emphasis on marketing and outreach to prospective schools and employers. The headquarters staff in Austin is responsible for processing all approval applications received and conducting visits to facilities in Austin and the surrounding areas.

During federal fiscal period 2009, the Texas Veterans Commission:

- Reviewed and approved over 25,500 programs of education and training for veterans
- Conducted 949 visits to schools and employers throughout the State

Table III

Texas Leads All States In Readjustment Benefits Paid To Veterans (Veterans Education And Vocational Rehabilitation)

Top Ten States with the Highest Dollar Amounts Received Federal Fiscal Year 2008		
STATE	VETERAN POPULATION	VETERANS EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION EXPENDITURES
Texas	1,705,000	\$397,000,000
California	2,078,000	\$292,000,000
Florida	1,715,000	\$218,000,000
Georgia	770,000	\$150,000,000
New York	1,026,000	\$147,000,000
Virginia	814,000	\$131,000,000
North Carolina	772,000	\$118,000,000
Illinois	822,000	\$95,000,000
Pennsylvania	1,026,000	\$90,000,000
Washington	640,000	\$90,000,000

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Office of Public Affairs and Media Relations; State Summaries



Texas Veterans Commission ensures that institutions and employers comply with federal guidelines and are qualified to provide the type of education/training offered.

- Mailed out 18,324 information letters and brochures to recently discharged veterans
- Followed up on 452 denial of benefit letters sent to veterans by VA
- Received and responded to over 5,000 calls and e-mails from veterans, institutions, and employers

To continue its high standard of service to veterans, Veterans Education is aggressively pursuing four initiatives to ensure the quality of education opportunities available to veterans in the state remains at a high level, and to expand the spectrum of educational opportunities available to veterans within the state.

Initiative I: Increase the number and type of On-The-Job-Training (OJT) programs available to veterans throughout the state. In coordination with VES, Veterans Education will assist employers (who have hired veterans) to construct OJT programs that enable a veteran to use GI Bill educational benefits during the 6 to 24 months of employment while that veteran is achieving journeyman level experience. Once approved, those OJT programs will be available for other veterans.

Initiative II: Identify and approve non-traditional OJT programs, such as the Alternative Teacher Certification internship, to enable veterans to use otherwise unused educational benefits.

Initiative III: Create a more “veteran-friendly” environment at public institutions of higher learning throughout the state. In partnership with participating schools, Texas Veterans Commission would establish a Veterans Resource Center (VRC) at school campuses with large veteran student enrollments, with at least one VRC in each of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s ten educational regions. These VRCs would provide centralized focal points of assistance and information to veterans and their families during their educational experience. VRCs would reinforce Texas Veterans Commission’s commitment to meeting the needs

of veterans across urban, rural and border areas by delivering innovative, cost-effective programs to:

- Attract veterans and family members to attend public colleges and universities in the state
- Enable schools to establish veteran-friendly environments
- Encourage veterans and their families to take advantage of the Montgomery/Post-9/11 GI Bills and the Hazlewood Act opportunities
- Provide assistance and other services to veterans and their families throughout their collective educational experience, facilitating the transition of our valiant warriors from military service to the civilian workplace

This initiative would require legislation and additional funding support from the state Legislature.

Initiative IV: Support federal legislative efforts to expand the Post-9/11 GI Bill to include non-college degree programs, flight training, OJT, and apprenticeship training.

The state of Texas leads all other states in payments of veterans’ education and vocational rehabilitation benefits.

4. Fund for Veterans' Assistance

The Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) provides grants that address the needs of both veterans and their families, as well as grants to improve veterans' assistance programs, including veterans' representation and counseling.

Following extensive dialog with stakeholders and utilizing the expertise of the FVA Advisory Committee, Commissioners of the Texas Veterans Commission identified nine areas of need that serve as the focus areas of FVA grants:

- Emergency financial needs of veterans and their families;
- Transportation services;
- Family and/or individual counseling for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI);
- Employment training, education, and job placement assistance that supplements and does not supplant existing funding and services;
- Housing assistance for homeless veterans;
- Family and child services;
- Legal services, excluding criminal defense;
- Development of professional services networks; and
- Enhancement or improvement of veterans' assistance programs, including veterans' representation and counseling.

Additionally, grant funding may be provided for other compelling needs and/or emerging issues at the Texas Veterans Commission's discretion.

The 81st Legislature provided a stable revenue stream for the Fund for Veterans'

The 81st Legislature provided a stable revenue stream for the Fund for Veterans' Assistance grant program by creating the "Veterans Cash" scratch-off lottery game.

Assistance grant program by creating the "Veterans Cash" scratch-off lottery game. Currently, more than 90% of funding comes from this revenue stream. Other revenue sources include contributions from the State Employee Charitable Campaign, and generous donations from individuals and businesses. The Lottery Commission projects that approximately \$5 million will be available each fiscal year to fund the FVA grants program.

The Lottery Commission projects that approximately \$5 million will be available each fiscal year to fund the FVA grants program.



5. Marketing and Outreach Efforts

The integrated approach of service delivery provided to veterans by the state of Texas is unique in approach and its overwhelming success. However, though the programs themselves are delivering value once the veteran enters the integrated system, the sad fact is too few veterans within the state are taking advantage of these services. The primary reason for this anomalous incongruity is the Texas Veterans Commission's lack of a brand.

It is of special note that the activities of the Texas Veterans Commission have a direct and positive economic impact to the state of Texas. Because of the large population of veterans and their families, assistance to them reflects positively on the entire state population as measured in the following statewide benchmarks:

- Per capita gross state product,
- Unemployment rate,
- Median household income and
- Number of Texans receiving job training services.

In fact, if, on average, Texas veterans received the same amount of compensation as the average amount paid to veterans in the six other most populous states listed in Table II (page 26), VA payments received by Texas veterans would be two billion dollars less than the amount currently paid. The efforts of the Texas Veterans Commission thereby not only have a positive effect on the state's veteran population, it also provides a collateral benefit to the state wide benchmarks and the economic prosperity of the population in general.

The most obvious effect is that the Texas Veterans Commission programs generate

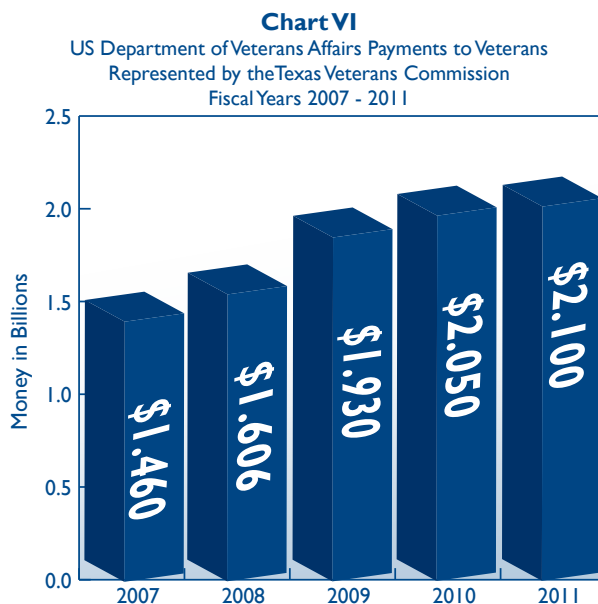
It is of special note that the activities of the Texas Veterans Commission have a direct and positive economic impact to the state of Texas.

a recovery of hundreds of millions of federal dollars in payments to Texas veterans and their families. In Fiscal Year 2010, payments to the 167,000+ veterans and survivors whom the Texas Veterans Commission represents before VA will total more than two billion dollars (Chart VI, page 34).

From 2011 to 2015, the period covered by this Strategic Plan, the aggregate payment amount to veterans in the state of Texas will exceed \$8.5 billion dollars. By increasing the number of veterans seen by Texas Veterans Commission personnel a mere 5% through marketing and outreach efforts, the annual impact could be an additional \$51 million fed directly into the state of Texas economy and nearly an additional two hundred and seventy-five million dollars over the period covered by this plan.

Prior to the agency

becoming the integrated service delivery system it is today, providing not only claims services but incorporating employment and education services as well, the Texas Veterans Commission drew its client base from patients at VA hospitals, VA clinics and veterans' organizations. With the change in veteran demographics comes a change in veteran attitudes and receptiveness to marketing messaging. It



Source: Data provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

If Texas veterans received the same amount of compensation as the average amount paid to veterans in the six other most populous states, the Federal VA payments received by Texas veterans would be two billion dollars less than the amount currently paid.

By increasing the number of veterans seen by Texas Veterans Commission personnel a mere 5% through marketing and outreach efforts, the annual impact could be an additional fifty-one million dollars fed directly into the state of Texas economy and nearly an additional two hundred and seventy-five million dollars over the period covered by this plan.

is therefore incumbent upon the agency to craft an aggressive strategy for elevating awareness of the agency throughout the entire veteran population across the state.

For a media plan to be effective, the marketing mix requires a minimum of nine “impressions.” An impression is defined as your message actually being received by the intended audience. The ideal marketing mix for the Texas Veterans Commission would incorporate radio, print, online advertising, e-mail campaigns, the development of digital public service announcements, billboards (static and mobile) and events. Other mediums include direct mail campaigns, television and telemarketing.

The following is a list of marketing tactics utilized to achieve the organizational goals of increasing veterans’ awareness of their benefits and assisting more veterans and their families.

- **Improved website and web based tools** – As the trends with recently separated veterans have shown, many veterans use the internet as their initial or primary method to get information regarding benefits

and services. Texas Veterans Commission staff members also use the internet to assist veterans when they visit a Texas Veterans Commission office. For marketing activities, the internet is the vital point of communication and outreach for a majority of the veterans in the target segments. The Texas Veterans Commission recently restructured our web presence such that in addition to a completely revamped website, the strategy includes the use of Twitter and the leveraging of Facebook and YouTube. While these tools will help to expand our reach to veterans, the Texas Veterans Commission still needs to expend a significant amount of energy driving unique visitor traffic to these sites. Links / ad presence on sites that “complement” the Texas Veterans Commission have fees generally associated with “click throughs.” Complementary sites could include, but not be limited to, veterans service organizations,

like the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Iraq, Afghanistan Veterans Association (IAVA), The American Legion, as well as the VA, DOL and other state agencies.

- **Marketing material and tools** – The agency provides brochures, pamphlets, promotional items, and other products to offices in the field as well as outreach events. In addition to pamphlets/brochures outlining and highlighting the value of each program area there are several pamphlets/brochures provided by the Texas Veterans Commission detailing other benefits as well, including those offered by the state. The agency disseminates more than 10,000 of these pamphlets each month. Additionally, the agency produces a monthly journal which is a periodical style magazine devoted to veteran related issues. The agency produces and distributes 3,250 copies of The Journal. The combined costs of printing and mailing for pamphlets and The Journal averages six thousand one





hundred and fifty dollars (\$6,150) per month.

Another area of market outreach revolves around the agency monthly electronic newsletter e-Vets. E-Vets is currently distributed to more than 10,000 veterans each month and contains relevant, contemporary information on veteran issues and benefits.

- **Recurring regional / audience specific outreach activities** – The agency’s most valuable and numerous assets are its people. Therefore, recurring outreach activities such as town hall meetings, seminars, briefings, and community event participation are scheduled to ensure active appearances to external audiences.

Claims and Employment personnel are stationed in offices throughout the state to better serve veterans. These individuals are engaged in ongoing outreach events on a local, smaller scale and are supported by headquarters marketing with the crafting of press releases, presentation tools and ongoing outreach/marketing training.

Headquarters marketing staff team with regional managers to coordinate the appropriate ratio of major events requiring support from headquarters marketing staff in the form of media placement or

The agency’s most valuable and numerous assets are its people.

personnel and smaller, rural events requiring fewer resources but no less important. Headquarters marketing staff also participates in outreach events hosted by other agencies like the Veterans Land Board that hosts large events with multiple vendors that deliver a large number of veterans to a single location.

All the aforementioned activities tend to be very cost effective as the meeting places are typically secured by Texas Veterans Commission partners and the “call to attend” costs (advertising, direct mail, etc.) in many instances are borne by these partners as well. However, the travel costs (fuel, car rental, hotel, per diem, etc.) do come out of the Texas Veterans Commission marketing budget and average approximately four thousand (\$4,000) dollars per month. Additional costs include banners, signage, displays and occasionally print media. These costs, once amortized over the course of a year, average one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per month.

An additional component of the marketing efforts is the ongoing liaison with the state legislature

and active duty posts. Legislators leverage the Texas Veterans Commission marketing staff to reach veteran constituents in town hall style meetings. The Texas Veterans Commission Government Liaison provides a direct point of contact for legislators seeking expert advice on behalf of constituents voicing veteran-related problems or concerns. The liaison is active with groups supporting military personnel and their families at military installations throughout the state. Travel costs associated with legislator-hosted town hall meetings, TAP briefings and active duty associations average \$1,000 per month.

- **Media relations and advertising** – Print, radio and television media is utilized whenever possible to communicate agency messages to veterans but the current marketing budget constrains the effective use of these media. The media plan includes earned and paid media. Additional focus is given to special target media such as active, Guard, and Reserve military newspapers, as well as specific internet media with high veteran traffic rates. While radio is proven to be an ideal medium for effectively penetrating the broadest market audiences the current budget does not allow for its aggressive application. An effective radio campaign would consist of two elements; 1) a saturation period and 2) a maintenance period. The saturation period would hit the

Legislators leverage the Texas Veterans Commission marketing staff to reach veteran constituents in town hall style meetings.

Of the 1.7 million veterans residing in Texas, 48% of them reside within five “Tier 1” metropolitan areas; Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Austin, San Antonio, El Paso and the Corpus Christi area.

airwaves twelve times per week during “drive times.” A maintenance period would consist of far fewer ads with an even listening dispersion. Each media outlet also possesses a limited number of stations serving the Texas Veterans Commission target demographic.

Of the 1.7 million veterans residing in Texas, 48% of them reside within five “Tier 1” metropolitan areas; Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Austin, San Antonio, El Paso and the Corpus Christi area. An effective campaign in the five primary media outlets comprised of a two-month saturation campaign and an eight-month maintenance campaign is as follows:

Market	# Stations	Annual Campaign Cost
Houston	4	\$264,192
Dallas/Ft. Worth	6	\$396,288
Austin	4	\$154,112
San Antonio	4	\$143,104
El Paso	3	\$90,816
Corpus Christi Area	3	\$83,213
Total Annual Campaign		\$1,131,725

“Tier 2” market outlets are those comprised of counties with veteran populations fewer than thirty thousand and greater than fifteen thousand. Tier 2 markets would aggregate counties in geographic relation to Tier 2 outlets. For example, the Tier 2 outlets in South Texas would be Hidalgo County (26,405 veterans) and Cameron County (18,342). The process of identifying county veteran populations and aggregating their neighbors would be carried out throughout the state.

Another excellent vehicle for “imprinting” the Texas Veterans Commission brand on the veteran population is moving (buses) or static billboards. Billboards are extremely effective when incorporated into

the marketing mix in conjunction with radio advertising. The cost of these ads includes a onetime set-up and an ongoing fee associated with the number of billboards placed and the placement timeframe. Bus advertising in San Antonio as an example has the following costs:

Size	Service Level	# Units	Rate Per Panel	Total 4 Week Rate
30”H	Full	260	\$125	\$32,500
X 88”W	3/4	195	\$150	\$29,250
	Half	130	\$175	\$22,750
	Quarter	65	\$200	\$13,000

The initial set-up fee is estimated at five thousand dollars for a Half Service level (130 buses). Running a two month campaign in association with a saturation radio campaign costs approximately fifty thousand five hundred dollars (\$50,500). Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth and Austin have higher Per Panel Rates while El Paso rates are comparable to San Antonio. The estimated cost associated with hitting each of the Tier 1 metro areas during the radio saturation campaign is three hundred fifty thousand five hundred dollars (\$350,500).

Currently, because of financial constraints, the application of these media is applied in an extremely conservative fashion with very strategic placements. With sufficient funding provided to the Texas Veterans Commission through the legislative appropriations process an effective marketing campaign will be initiated with the goal of raising awareness of the Texas Veterans

Commission that will in turn drive the metrics associated with the budgetary goals of the Agency.

- **Create marketing / public relations library** – A ready-to-distribute library of video, print, and electronic items is being created, catalogued, and will be kept current. These items will then be easily disseminated to media outlets, veteran’s county service officers, or agency staff to use in marketing efforts. These items will also be utilized for publications, brochures, and displays. They include video and audio public service announcements, print media and press releases.

The goal of raising awareness of the Texas Veterans Commission will in turn drive the metrics associated with the budgetary goals of the Agency.



6. *Training Opportunities*

Key to the success of the Texas Veterans Commission mission is the veteran county service officer (VCSO). VCSOs and assistants are appointed by the county commissioners' courts. Ensuring the VCSOs and their assistants are trained and capable agents for the veteran population they serve is the legislatively mandated responsibility of the Texas Veterans Commission.

The advanced certification, which is voluntary, is called "accreditation" and is governed by federal and state regulation to recognize those VCSOs who complete an advanced program of training and mentoring approved by VA. The Texas Veterans Commission's program includes mentoring, one-on-one instruction by senior Texas Veterans Commission counselors, classroom training and training at Texas Veterans Commission regional and field offices and testing.

In 2008 there were 23 accredited VCSOs. Through our ongoing outreach and information dissemination processes detailing the benefits of becoming accredited there will be a total of 56 accredited VCSOs at the end of this training cycle that culminates in September at the Texas Veterans Commission Annual Statewide Conference. Once trained, the VCSO is able to represent veterans at VA hearings and have access to VA files of veterans who have named the Texas Veterans Commission as their representative in a claim. In the upcoming year, the Texas Veterans Commission intends to test the efficacy of remote training using the internet and remote training applications like WebEx.

The Texas Veterans Commission is further enhancing its training regime through the creation of a training library available on the Texas Veterans Commission website as well as a comprehensive 500+ page Service Officer Manual which includes case

examples and detailed forms instruction. Texas Veterans Commission also provides training through the e-Vets Newsletter, Texas Veterans Commission Journal, and the Texas Veterans Commission Training Bulletin.

The current requirement of 12 hours of VCSO training per year is not adequate to maintain professional standards. The training of VCSOs conducted today includes not only claims but also incorporates the fundamentals of Texas Veterans Commission's VES program, Veterans Education, the Fund for Veterans' Assistance and the other opportunities available to enhance veterans' services at the county level for veterans seeking employment assistance.

VES continues to derive significant benefit from leveraging the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) located in Denver, Colo., as its primary source for training VES staff. Established in 1986 to further develop and enhance the professional skills of veterans' employment and training service providers, NVTI remains the preeminent employment training program and is the only one of its kind in the U.S.

The National Veterans Training Institute is funded by the DOL-VETS, and administered by the University of Colorado at Denver with training conducted in Denver, Colo., and at selected regional sites in the U.S. and abroad. The classes available through NVTI include basic employment functions, such as quality job matching and job development, various levels of case management, promoting partnerships and outreach to employers, TAP instructor training and management/supervisory functions associated with veterans' employment services.

NVTI provides training free of charge to VES staff which makes it one of the most economical training opportunities

available. VES has refined the internal training that bears similarity to the VCSOs model of "Initial Training" for new VES staff. The program of initial training better prepares new VES employees to address the needs of veterans in an employment environment that is the most challenging in more than thirty years.

For the Veterans Education program, §21.4155 of the Code of Federal Regulations requires that VA cooperate with State Approving Agencies to develop and implement a uniform national curriculum for the training of new employees. The National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA), in cooperation with VA, has developed a National Training Curriculum and has provided copies to all of the states. Also, NASAA offers training for new VA and State Approving Agency (SAA) staff at a National Training Institute that is held periodically (at least every 18 months). Additionally, biannual training and business meetings hosted by NASAA also provide additional training opportunities for all staff. A major portion of these meetings is devoted to discussions and training regarding the implementation of changes to the federal regulations and contractual requirements. During these meetings, attendees discuss and vote on many policy issues that affect Texas and the rest of the nation. It is important that staff be present to vote and represent the interests of Texas Veterans Commission and Texas veterans.



Part VIII

Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures

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

Budgetary

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

Non-Budgetary

Historically Underutilized Business (HUB)

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

Customer Service

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

Evaluation of Commission performance is linked to meeting performance objectives. Outcome measures are associated with "Goals." Output measures are associated with "Strategies." (Appendix D, Measures Definitions, Page 53).



A. Budgetary Goal

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

1. Objective

• Outcome Measures

Claims Representation, Veterans Education, and Employment Services

Budgetary Goal 1: *Assist disabled veterans, their survivors and orphans in obtaining entitlements as follows:*

- Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation of veterans with service-connected disabilities.
- Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Texas Veterans Commission case development and advocacy in claims to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled war time veterans above the poverty level.
- Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Texas Veterans Commission advocacy in claims representation for survivors or orphans of veterans.
- Percentage of Texas Veterans Commission claims granted by VA.
- Veterans Employment Services Employment Rate.
- Veterans Employment Services Retention Rate.

2. Strategy

• Output Measures

Claims Representation & Counseling

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.

- Claims for veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of veterans with service-connected disabilities.
- Claims for VA benefits filed to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled veterans above the poverty level.
- Claims for veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of survivors and orphans of veterans.
- Active veterans' benefits cases for veterans, their survivors or their orphans represented by the Texas Veterans Commission.
- VA decisions reviewed.
- Appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of veterans, their widows or their orphans.

Veterans Employment Services

Assist veterans with finding employment through job matching and intensive services; provide Transition Assistance to National Guard, Reserve and regular military personnel and improve and expand employment opportunities for

veterans with disabilities.

- Veterans Employment Services customers served.

Outreach and Marketing

Provide outreach and direct marketing to inform veterans, their dependents, and their survivors of services provided by the Texas Veterans Commission, local Workforce Centers and the Veterans County Service Officers.

- Number of Public Information briefings.
- Number of Public Information items distributed.

Veterans Education

Promote and safeguard quality education and training programs for veterans; ensure greater educational and training opportunities to meet the changing needs of veterans; and to assist in preventing fraud, waste, and abuse in the administration of the GI Bill.

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

Fund for Veterans' Assistance

Provide assistance to veterans, their families and survivors using the proceeds of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

- Number of veterans, their dependents, and survivors of veterans served.





B. Non-Budgetary Goals

Non-Budgetary Goal 1: We will make good faith efforts to purchase from certified historically underutilized businesses.

1. Objective

• Outcome Measures

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

- Percent of total dollar value of purchases to certified HUB.

2. Strategy

• Output Measures

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

- Dollar value of certified purchases.

Non-Budgetary Goal 2: The Texas Veterans Commission will manage resources to produce the highest level of service to our state's veterans and their families.

1. Objective

• Outcome Measures

To achieve a 75 percent satisfaction level from veterans receiving Texas Veterans Commission assistance.

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

2. Strategy

• Output Measures

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

- Number of customer satisfaction surveys performed.



Part IX

Technology

Initiative

Alignment for the

Texas Veterans

Commission

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE	RELATED AGENCY OBJECTIVE/(S)	RELATED SSP STRATEGY/ (IES)	CURRENT OR PLANNED	ANTICIPATED BENEFIT(S)	INNOVATION, BEST PRACTICE, BENCHMARKING
1. Transformation and consolidation of agency data center operations into the State Data Center.	All Objectives.	1.1	Current	Enhanced disaster recovery mechanism.	
2. Increase the public's awareness of military veterans' benefits through a robust electronic delivery service.	All Objectives.	3.1 3.2 4.4	Planned	Provide military veterans an 'opt in' email service to receive the latest information on disability, employment, and educational benefits.	Innovation: Many government entities use GovDelivery services to make citizens aware of their services. Providing GovDelivery service to veterans will make them aware TVC services as well as other services available to them.
3. Improve Information Resource support to the Texas Veterans Commission employees.	All objectives.	4.3	Planned	This will provide TVC with better technology support, improved involvement in statewide initiatives, and reduce the potential impact of losing key technology support personnel.	Best Practice: An organization must have a process in place to reduce to impact of losing key personnel.



Part X **Appendices**

**HERE RESTS
AN HONORED
SOLDIER
KNOWN ONLY
TO GOD**

APPENDIX A: AGENCY PLANNING PROCESS

Texas Veterans Commission Planning Committee

Commissioners
Karen S. Rankin
Brigadier General, USAF (Retired), Chair

T.P. O'Mahoney
Vice Chairman

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

John B. McKinney
Lt. Col., US Army (Retired), Member

Staff
James E. Nier
Executive Director

Charles A. Buerschinger
Deputy Executive Director

Bill Wilson
Director of Veterans Employment Services

Cruz Montemayor
Director of Human Resources

James O. Richman
Director of Claims Representation & Counseling

Duncan McGhee
Director of Marketing & Training

Connie Jacksits
Director of Veterans Education

Irma Rodriguez
Chief Financial Officer

David Nobles
Grant Coordinator

Tina M. Carnes
General Counsel

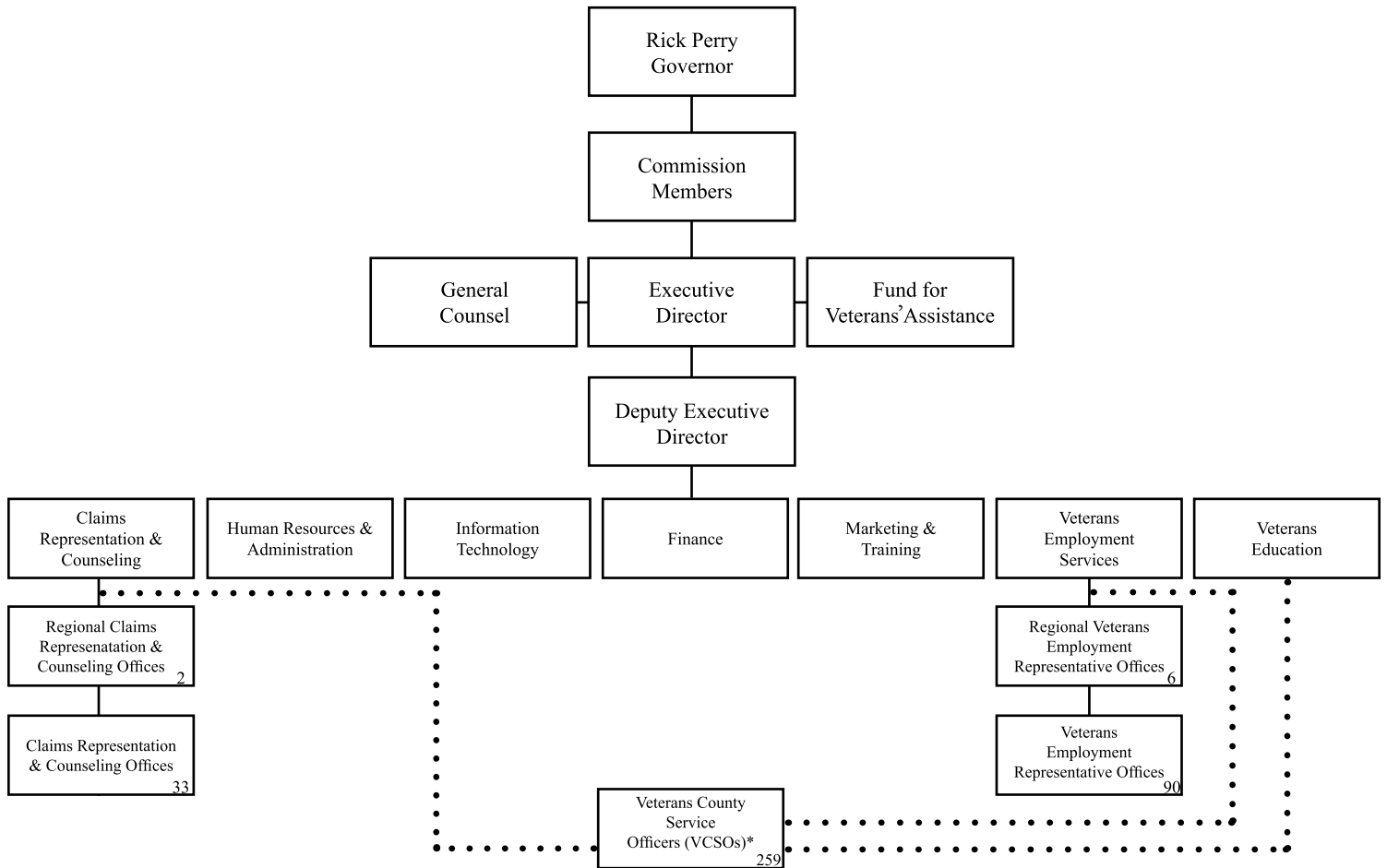
Planning Process

May 3, 2010	First draft prepared by staff submitted to Commissioners
May 17, 2010	Commission comments/changes Third Quarterly Commission Meeting
May 24 - 28, 2010	Staff incorporates Commissioner's changes and provides second draft to Commissioner's and stakeholders.
June 7, 2010	Deadline for Commissioner's and stakeholder comments.
June 18, 2010	Strategic Plan is submitted to Governor's Office and Legislative Budget Board

Agencies, Organizations and Individuals
Receiving Copies for Comment

- American Legion, Department of Texas
- AMVETS, Department of Texas
- Disabled American Veterans, Department of Texas
- Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., Department of Texas
- Veterans County Service Officers Association of Texas
- Texas Veterans Commission Employees
- Former TVC Commissioners
- Texas Veterans Land Board
- Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations
- Veterans Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor
- Texas Workforce Investment Council
- Interested Veterans

APPENDIX B: CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
 TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION – JUNE 2010



*VCSOs are county employees. They receive training and support from all TVC program areas. In turn, they provide referrals to TVC programs.

APPENDIX C: FIVE YEAR PROJECTIONS FOR OUTCOMES

Texas Veterans Commission
 Outcome Projections
 2011-2015

OUTCOME	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation to veterans with service-connected disabilities.	1,656	1,666	1,670	1,675	1,680
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation and development for totally disabled, impoverished veterans.	144	144	143	142	142
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation for survivors or orphans of veterans.	232	232	232	230	230
The percentage of original or reopened claims submitted by the TVC granted by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
Percent of Veterans Entered Employment.	55%	55%	60%	65%	67%
Percentage of Veterans Retained in Employment at Six Months.	83%	75%	75%	80%	82%
Percent of total dollar value of purchases to certified HUBs.	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Percent of Texas Veterans Commission clients who indicate that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.	97.2%	97.2%	97.2%	97.2%	97.2%
Percent of veterans county service officers who feel that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.	95.2%	95.2%	95.2%	95.2%	95.2%

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

Goal 1: Through effective training, marketing and advocacy provide effective claims representation, veterans education, and employment services to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors.

OUTCOME MEASURES

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

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

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

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

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

Data Limitations: Data is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Commission is dependent on VA to provide the data on a timely basis.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than state target

2. Amount of Monetary Awards (Million \$) to Totally Disabled Wartime Veterans

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

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

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

Methodology: Amount provided, as reported by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Reports, for one month is multiplied by three to calculate the quarterly performance. Quarterly performance results are added to determine the annual performance. VA states that award amounts are consistent from one month to the next and the estimate for the quarter and the year are within a 5% accuracy range. This amount is expressed in millions and rounded to the nearest 100,000.

Data Limitations: Data is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Commission is dependent on VA to provide the data on a timely basis.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

3. VA Awards (Million \$) to Survivors or Orphans of Veterans

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

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the amount of VA payments for pension and compensation in VA Reports to Texas resident survivors of veterans who have appointed the Commissioner organization for which Commission personnel are the accredited representative to represent them in their claim against VA.

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

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

Data Limitations: Data is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Commission is dependent on VA to provide the data on a timely basis.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

4. Percent of TVC Claims Granted by VA

Short Definition: The percentage of original or reopened claims submitted by the TVC granted by the VA after initial VA rating. Does not include claims granted after continued TVC advocacy by submitting the claim to a decision review officer, filing a notice of disagreement and/or an appeal.

Purpose/importance: Represents the success rate for claims filed prior to any further action (appeals, decision review by 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 VA are reviewed at the TVC Regional Offices daily. Prior to finalizing the decision, the TVC staff must sign off on each decision on claims filed by veterans appointing the TVC as their representative in their claim. From these reviews, daily logs are created which indicate the number of claims granted and the number denied. A monthly report is then compiled from these daily logs. Annual totals are derived from the monthly reports. The percentage of claims granted is calculated by dividing the number of granted by the total number of claims.

Data Limitations: Data recorded depends on the reports of individual counselors from their reviews of VA decisions. However, on regular basis, managers can crosscheck logs.

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

5. Veterans Employment Services Employment Rate

Short Definition: The percentage of Veteran Employment Services (VES) adult clients unemployed at registration who are employed within one calendar quarter of termination of all workforce and business services (exit). The measure is an entered employment rate for customers who received services under DVOP/LVER grant. “Services” does not include registration, determination of entitlement/eligibility, follow-up or support services and other contacts to obtain status or progress information or the need for additional services.

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

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

Data Limitations: Reporting of UI wage and federal employment records lags well behind the period being reported. As a result in FY 08 this measure reports the entered employment rate for those clients who exit services between Oct06 and Sep 07; FY 09 reports entering employment for those clients who exit services between Oct 07 and Sep 08. These reporting periods are consistent with Federal standards. . Additionally, not all employers report UI wage records which limits the ability to determine whether a client entered employment. A client can exit more than once in a given year and can count in this measure each time they exit.

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

6. Veterans Employment Services Retention Rate

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

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

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

Data Limitations: Reporting of UI wage and federal employment records lags well behind the period being reported. As a result in FY 08 this

measure reports the retention rate for those clients who exit services between Apr 06 and Mar 07; FY 09 reports retention for those clients who exit services between Apr 07 and Mar 08. These reporting periods are consistent with Federal standards. . Additionally, not all employers report UI wage records which limits the ability to determine whether a client retained employment. A client can exit more than once in a given year and can count in this measure each time they exit. .

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

Goal 1, Strategy 1: Provide outreach services and advocacy in claims by veterans, their survivors and their orphans by Texas Veterans Commission personnel and through veterans' county service officers.

OUTPUT MEASURES

1. Number of Claims 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 the Commission counselors against the VA by Texas veterans to establish, reopen or reestablish eligibility for disabilities, which are service-connected. Includes claims sent to the Commission by veterans county service officers for representation, review and/or development.

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

Methodology: Data is collected on claims filed as they are received at the two regional offices. Claim numbers, office source and type of claim are recorded in an agency database. A separate claim is recorded for each issue claimed. Claims are batched by TVC on a daily basis by category and submitted to VA. VA provides a certification, via receipt, of the total number of claims received by category. The official receipt from VA is used to verify the number of claims filed on behalf of disabled veterans.

Data Limitations: Source of a significant number of these claims is veterans county service officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge. Because of federal privacy laws, the ability to audit this data is limited.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

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

Short Definition: Number of claims for VA benefits filed to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled veterans above the poverty level.

Purpose/Importance: This represents the number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against VA by Texas veterans to prove initial eligibility or to maintain and reestablish their eligibility for VA pension in order to raise or maintain their income above the poverty line. Includes claims sent to the Commission by veterans county service officers for representation, review and/or development.

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

Methodology: Data is collected on claims filed as they are received at the two regional offices. Claim numbers, office source and type of claim are recorded in an agency database. A separate claim is recorded for each issue claimed. Claims are batched by TVC on a daily basis by category and submitted to VA. VA provides a certification, via receipt, of the total number of claims received by category. The official receipt from VA is used to verify the number of claims filed to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled veterans above the poverty level.

Data Limitations: Source of a significant number of these claims is veterans county service officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge. Because of federal privacy laws, the ability to audit this data is limited.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

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: This represents the number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against VA by Texas survivors and/or orphans of veterans to prove initial eligibility or to maintain and reestablish eligibility for VA pension or compensation benefits. Includes claims sent to the Commission by veterans county service officers for representation, review and or development.

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

Methodology: Data is collected on claims filed as they are received at the two regional offices. Claim numbers, office source and type of claim are recorded in an agency database. A separate claim is recorded for each issue claimed. Claims are batched by TVC on a daily basis by category and submitted to VA. VA provides a certification, via receipt, of the total number of claims received by category. The official receipt from VA is used to verify the number of claims filed and developed on behalf of survivors and orphans of veterans.

Data Limitations: Source of a significant number of these claims is veterans county service officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge. Because of federal privacy laws, the ability to audit this data is limited.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

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

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

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

Data Source: VA reports provided to the Commission.

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

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

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

5. Number of VA Decisions Reviewed

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

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

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

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

Data Limitations: Source of a significant number of these claims is veterans county service officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

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

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

Purpose/Importance: This represents the number of notices of disagreements, appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals and statements of accredited representatives in appealed cases filed on behalf of Texas veterans through TVC counselors. Includes appeals sent to the Commission by veterans county service officers for representation, review and/or development.

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

Methodology: Data is collected on appeals filed as they are received at the two regional offices. Claim numbers, office source and type of appeal are recorded in an agency database. A separate appeal is recorded for each issue appealed. Claims are batched by TVC on a daily basis by category and submitted to VA. VA provides a certification, via receipt, of the total number of claims received by category. The official receipt from VA is used to verify the number of claims filed on behalf of veterans, their survivors, or orphans.

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 for external auditors to certify this measure is restricted.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

EFFICIENCY MEASURES

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: This represents the amount of payments to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors represented by TVC per state dollar spent in the Claims Representation and Counseling program during a fiscal year.

Data Source: TVC records and 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 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

EXPLANATORY MEASURES

1. Percent of Newly Appointed VCISO's who Attend Initial Training

Short Definition: Percent of newly appointed veterans county service officers and assistants who attended initial training.

Purpose/Importance: This measure indicates the success of TVC training programs and the percent of veterans county service officers (VCISO) attending State mandated initial training.

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

Methodology: The number attending Commission-sponsored training from a pool of those VCISO appointed in the twelve-month period immediately preceding the cut off date for registration for the last Commission-sponsored initial training conference divided by the number of VCISO appointed during that same twelve-month period. The result is expressed as a percentage.

Data Limitations: The result is dependent on the VCISO attending training. The only ramification of not attending is that a letter is sent to the County Commissioners Court informing them that the VCISO does not meet minimum training requirements.

Calculation Type – Non cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

2. Percent of VCISO's who Attend Continuing Training Conferences

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

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the success of TVC training programs and the percent of veterans county service officers (VCISO) attending at least one ongoing training conference per year.

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

Methodology: Number of VCISO and assistants who have completed continuing education requirements to maintain certification during the reporting period divided by the total number of VCISO and assistants who are required to attend continuing education conferences during the reporting period plus those VCISO and assistants who are not classified as newly appointed (i.e. have been appointed for more than twelve months). The result is expressed as a percentage.

Data Limitations: The result is dependent on the VCISO attending training. The only ramification of not attending is that a letter is sent to the County Commissioners Court informing them that the VCISO does not meet minimum training requirements.

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

Goal 1, Strategy 2: Assist veterans with finding employment through job matching and intensive services; provide Transition Assistance to National Guard, Reserve and regular military personnel; and improve and expand employment opportunities for veterans with disabilities.

OUTPUT MEASURES

7. Veterans Employment Services Customers Served

Short Definition: The number of veterans receiving services from TVC Veterans Employment Representative (VER). This measure is a system-wide unduplicated count of veteran customers who received services from a VER. "Services" does not include registration, determination of entitlement/eligibility, follow-up or support services and other contacts to obtain status or progress information or the need for additional services.

Purpose/importance: The purpose of the measure is to report the number of veterans who receive services from a VER.

Data Source: The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) provides quarterly reports from the Veteran Performance Report regarding veterans receiving employment services during each quarterly reporting period. Texas Workforce Commission's Common Measures Performance Reporting System which pulls wage, client, and process data from various TWC information systems such as the Workforce Information System of Texas, Job Search Matching System, Work in Texas, the Learner Outcome Tracking System, the Unemployment Wage System and the Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Appeals Systems.

Methodology: The 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 VER during the performance period. Services does not include follow-up services or other contacts to obtain status or progress information or the need for additional services.

Data Limitations: None.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

Goal 1, Strategy 3: Evaluate appropriateness of education and training programs offered to veterans and other eligible persons.

OUTPUT MEASURES

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 Veterans Education 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

Goal 1, Strategy 4: Provide outreach and direct marketing to inform veterans, their dependents, and their survivors of advocacy services provided by the Texas Veterans Commission, local Workforce Centers and the veterans county service officers.

OUTPUT MEASURES

1. The Number of Public Information Briefings Given

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

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

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

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

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

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

2. The Amount of Public Information Distributed

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

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

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

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

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

Calculation Type – Cumulative.

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

Goal 1, Strategy 5: Provide assistance to veterans, their families and survivors using the proceeds of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

OUTPUT MEASURE

1. Number of Veterans, Their Dependents, and Survivors of Veterans Served.

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

Purpose/Importance: This measure provides an indication of how effective FVA grant programs are at providing services to veterans, their

dependents, survivors of veterans.

Source/Collection of Data: Organizations receiving FVA grant funds shall report program performance, including the number of veterans, their dependents and survivors of veterans served, at least quarterly to TVC. Each organization must maintain a client file that clearly indicates the name of the veteran/family member receiving services, the date those services began, and backup documentation that indicates the type of service received. Each organization will aggregate this data and will report it to TVC using a grant program performance report form. TVC will enter this information into an automated system that tracks grant program performance. TVC will monitor program reporting based on a risk-based model.

Methodology: Organizations receiving grant funds calculate this performance measure by counting each veteran, their dependents, and survivors of veterans that receive a FVA grant-funded service. The aggregate number of veterans, their dependents, and survivors of veterans served is reported to TVC using the periodic grant program performance report form. TVC will add the number of veterans, their dependents, and survivors of veterans served found on each grant program performance report to arrive at a total number of veterans, their dependents, and survivors of veterans served.

Data Limitations: The number of veterans, their dependents, and survivors of veterans served relies on the accurate reporting and documentation of services provided to veterans, their dependents, and survivors of veterans by organizations receiving grant funds. TVC staff monitors organizations receiving grant funds to ensure that grantees meet fiscal and program performance expectations. However, monitoring all grant programs to ensure 100% accurate data is not possible with limited staff resources. TVC will monitor grant programs according to a risk-based assessment, based on criteria such as the amount of the grant, duration of the project, and sophistication of the project. Because of the agency's risk-based monitoring plan, the results of this performance measure will provide reliable information.

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – Yes

Desired Performance – Higher than target

Goal 2: We will make a good faith effort to purchase from certified historically underutilized businesses (Non – budgetary/HUB).

OUTCOME MEASURE

1. Percent of Total Dollar Value of Purchases to Certified HUB

Short Definition: This measure represents the percent of total dollar value of purchases to certified HUBS.

Purpose/Importance: This measure indicates the success of the TVC HUB purchasing program by measuring HUB purchases against total purchases.

Data Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts HUB Reports and TVC purchasing records.

Methodology: Total purchases of goods and services by certified HUB from procurement categories for a specified period are calculated. These are divided by the total of all purchases from procurement categories for the same period. The number is converted into a percentage of the total purchases.

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

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

OUTPUT MEASURE

1. Dollar Value of Certified Purchases

Short Definition: This measure represents the total dollar value of certified HUB purchases.

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the success of the effort by the total amount of purchases from certified HUBS in a given period.

Data Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts HUB Reports and TVC purchasing records.

Methodology: Dollar amount of purchases of goods and services from certified HUB for a specified period is totaled.

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

Calculation Type – Cumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

Goal 3: The Texas Veterans Commission will manage Commission resources to produce the highest level of service to our State's veterans and their families. (Non –budgetary/ customer service)

OUTCOME MEASURE

1. Percentage of TVC Clients Who Feel TVC Service Met Their Needs

Short Definition: Percentage of Texas Veterans Commission clients who indicate that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the success of Commission efforts to provide a high level of customer service.

Data Source: TVC survey records.

Methodology: From customer service surveys, those respondents who indicate that they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the statement “OVERALL, I WAS SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICES I RECEIVED FROM THE TVC.” are calculated. This number is divided by the total number of responses to that question. The result is expressed as a percentage.

Data Limitations: The number of surveys returned by TVC clientele limits the collection of this data.

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

2. Percentage of Veterans’ County Service Officers Who Feel TVC Service Meets Their Needs

Short Definition: Percentage of veterans county service officers (VCSO) who indicate that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the success of Commission efforts to provide a high level of customer service to veterans county service officers.

Data Source: TVC survey records.

Methodology: From customer service survey of VCSO, those respondents who indicate that they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the statement “OVERALL, I WAS SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICES I RECEIVED FROM THE TVC.” are calculated. This number is divided by the total number of responses to that question. The result is expressed as a percentage.

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

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

OUTPUT MEASURE

1. Number of Customer Satisfaction Surveys Performed

Short Definition: Number of Customer satisfaction surveys returned to TVC offices by TVC clients.

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the number of customer service surveys received.

Data Source: TVC survey records.

Methodology: The number of customer satisfaction surveys that are returned to the TVC are counted and totaled.

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

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

2. Number of Customer Satisfaction Surveys of Veterans County Service Officers Performed

Short Definition: Number of customer satisfaction surveys returned to TVC offices by VCSO.

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the number of customer service surveys received from VCSO.

Data Source: TVC survey records.

Methodology: The number of customer satisfaction surveys that are returned to the TVC are counted and totaled.

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

Calculation Type – Noncumulative

New Measure – No

Desired Performance – Higher than target

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Texas Veterans Commission is committed to providing superior service through agency programs of claims assistance, employment services and education that will significantly improve the quality of life of Texas veterans and their families. The primary focus of all agency programs is the following core activities: providing claims counseling, development and presentation; providing employment and reemployment services; training and certifying TVC counselors and veterans' county service officers and promoting and safeguarding the right to a quality education for recipients of Montgomery GI Bill education and training benefits through program approval and oversight. The Commission's strategic goals are accomplished through training, marketing and advocacy. The TVC will provide effective representation and assistance on issues and claims; employment and education to veterans, their dependents and their survivors in obtaining veterans benefits to which they are entitled. The current Commission's mission, objectives and strategy should serve the needs of the veteran population over the next five years.

The Commission's current organization contains a core of well-trained veterans' assistance counselors, veterans employment representatives and education program specialists to provide assistance to veterans and their families throughout the State 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 are located in Austin.

It is estimated that 1.7 million veterans live in Texas. A key issue is the growth of the veterans' population in Texas in two age groups that tend to have the greatest need for assistance. These fall at the opposite end of the age spectrum. Younger veterans usually need to avail themselves of education or employment assistance; older veterans have the needs for assistance associated with aging. The overall U.S. veteran population has declined over the past ten years while the Texas veteran population has remained steady for the same period. This indicates a net migration of veterans to Texas.

CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

The current Commission staff has the skills necessary to address business issues of the agency. A majority of the current workforce (83%) consists of employees who have military service. The Commission has a diverse workforce. The Commission workforce consists of 50% White, 24% Hispanic, 24% Black, 1% Native American and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander employees. Males comprise 70% of the workforce and females 30%.

The age and tenure of Commission employees are shown in the following charts:

LENGTH OF STATE SERVICE		EMPLOYEE AGE	
Less than 2 years . . .	26%	Under 30 . . .	4%
2-4 years . . .	22%	30-39 . . .	11%
5-9 years . . .	20%	40-49 . . .	20%
10-14 years . . .	10%	50-59 . . .	36%
15 years and over . . .	22%	60 and over . . .	29%

The basic business issues of the Commission are administration, veterans assistance counseling, veterans employment services and veterans education. The critical knowledge and skills required in administration are financial, human resources, accounting, marketing, purchasing and basic administrative knowledge and managerial skills required to successfully operate a state agency. The knowledge required to provide successful veterans counseling services, veterans employment services and veterans education services are knowledge of VA and DOL laws and operating policies and procedures. Employees must have the skills to apply the required knowledge within the VA and DOL systems to successfully provide veterans and their families with all of the services needed to obtain their benefits and entitlements.

The average turnover rate of the Commission in the five years from 2005 through 2008 was 18.40%. During this period, the turnover rate was as low as 16.1% in 2006 and reached a high of 21.7% in 2007. The Commission turnover rate was higher than the statewide turnover rate, which averaged 16.85%. It is anticipated the turnover rate will remain slightly above the statewide rate due to the number of employees eligible to retire in addition to normal attrition. A review of current employee records indicates 43% of employees of the agency will be eligible for retirement within the next five years. Even though 43% of employees are eligible to retire, eligibility dates for retirement of these employees are spread out over the years. It is anticipated employee retirements will not greatly affect the turnover rate in any one year. Taking into consideration normal attrition and the number of employees who can retire, it is projected the turnover rate will be approximately 18% each year in the period covered by this strategic plan.

The Commission has responded to attrition by successfully recruiting new employees. The Commission will continue to utilize Work in Texas and the agency's web site to fill positions as they become vacant as this has proven very successful in the past. It is anticipated the Commission can continue to successfully recruit quality employees in a timely manner in response to attrition to meet agency business needs.

Currently, 38% of the Commission's upper level management are eligible to retire. It is anticipated the Commission may be faced with the challenge of recruiting new employees with the needed administrative and managerial skills to meet agency needs in these areas.

GAP ANALYSIS

Currently the Commission is experiencing a shortage of personnel due to losses from retirement, an increased workload and competition from federal agencies. Personnel shortages and the required time to train replacements as well as additional skills for existing personnel that will be required to deal with technical advances when funds become available may have a negative impact on the ability to meet future functional requirements. Of additional concern is that the funding of over two-thirds of agency personnel is from federal grants which may be reduced from one year to the next. This could result in a shortage of staff to provide services unless General Revenue is available to fill the gap in funding.

As with other state agencies, if the economy improves, the agency may face difficulties in finding qualified staff to fill professional positions. The ability to stay competitive with the private sector and federal governments will continue to be a challenge to the agency.

As discussed in the Current Workforce Profile section, 43% of Commission personnel will be eligible for retirement over the next five years. There is a high probability that 38% of upper management personnel will retire over the next five years which will require replacement with new management personnel.

Strategy Development

A. Goals

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

Career development programs – Programs such as mentoring, the expansion of the internship program and an increase in professional training and development for staff will be initiated throughout the agency;

Leadership development – Efforts will be made to identify, retain and develop existing employees with management and leadership capabilities. This will require the funding to identify and increase leadership training;

Organizational training and development – Funding for in-house training such as managerial training and skills development will be needed to address individual employee training needs for the day-to-day operations of the agency; and

Succession planning – Supervisors will be made aware what skill sets are critical to meeting their objectives and can plan for employee attrition. Succession planning will also address staffing or skill imbalances due to turnover and retirements.

B. Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment plan – Recruitment efforts will focus on areas that are difficult to attract and/or retain such as the recruitment of recently released OEF/OIF veterans as well as women and minorities.

Retention programs – Managers will be trained regarding employee retention programs such as flex-time, staggered work hours, personal development training opportunities and service awards.

C. Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision

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

Human Resources (HR) will develop a stronger business partnership with each of the 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

It is expected that the Commission mission, goals, and strategy will not change significantly over the next five years. Veterans assistance counselors, veterans employment representatives and veterans education program specialists who are the core of the Commission's professional workforce require a very strong and competent knowledge of state and federal veterans benefit programs and VA and DOL policies and procedures which affect the administration of benefits to the Texas veterans population and their families. Skills required by veterans assistance counselors, veterans employment representatives and veterans education program specialists to competently serve Texas veterans will remain a priority in developing future agency workforce plans. To accomplish Commission goals and meet statutory requirements, competent training must continue to veterans county service officers who are critical to assisting the Commission to meet its established mission, goals and strategy. The TVC clerical staff will need support through training and equipment to keep abreast of ever-changing computer technology.

Commission administrative personnel will require ongoing training to keep up with changes in Federal budget procedures, 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 the future. Currently Commission personnel have the necessary skills to perform their jobs due to the training made available to them. With the possible migration of veterans to Texas over the next five years the Commission may require additional veterans services representatives to meet the demand. Requests for additional personnel will be for areas of the state where the projected demand for service is growing.

APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND UTILIZATION

The Commission participated in the Survey of Employee Engagement (formally known as the Survey of Organizational Excellence) for the first time in the fall of 1999 and has continued participation. Eighty percent of TVC employees participated in the survey in 2010 which is above average and an increase from the previous survey. High participation indicates a strong commitment by the employees and a healthy overall morale.

For FY 2010, the highest level of the survey assessment is the Workplace Dimensions, which captures the total work environment. Each Workplace Dimension consists of several Survey Constructs designed to broadly profile areas of strength and concern so that intervention may be targeted appropriately. Comparative average statewide benchmarks, comparative average benchmarks for organizations of similar size (FTE Category) and similar mission were used to evaluate Commission scores in Workplace Dimensions. The results of the comparison revealed Commission scores were consistently above statewide benchmarks for organizations of similar size and mission. The survey indicated an increase in overall employee satisfaction with the total work environment compared to the previous survey.

The Commission areas of strengths included the constructs of Supervision, Strategic and External Communication. Commission scores were well above all benchmarks in these areas.

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

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

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

The Commission areas of relative weakness included the constructs of Pay, Information Systems and Internal Communication.

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

The Information Systems construct provides insight into whether computer and communication systems enhance employees' ability to get the job done by providing accessible, accurate, and clear information. The construct addresses the extent to which employees feel that they know where to get needed information, and that they know how to use it once they obtain it.

High scores indicate that employees view both the availability and utility of information very positively. They find that information resources are complete and accessible. Maintaining these high scores will require leadership to continuously be vigilant about determining information needs and meeting those needs.

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

The survey results have been furnished to members of management to analyze and discuss methods and strategies to improve in needed areas. Survey results will be taken into consideration when Commission policies and procedures are revised and developed.

APPENDIX G: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2009-2013 of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) is the result of a collaborative effort of the TVC staff and Commissioners, stakeholders, veterans' organizations and other interested parties. More so than any time in the Commission's eighty year history, the TVC is the focal point for veterans' assistance in the State. Not only is the Commission the sole State of Texas Agency charged with responsibility for helping Texas veterans experiencing difficulties in dealing with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), but also, the Texas Veterans Commission is the focal point for veterans who are seeking employment and educational assistance. Having successfully operated the Veterans Employment Services (VES) and Veterans Education programs for four years, the TVC is now established itself as the most comprehensive veterans' benefits agency in the country.

PART 1

LTO Reference No: C2

Key Actions/Strategies for FY 2011-2015:

Coordinate with Family Support Centers and Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP) on military installations to provide increased seminars and schedule outgoing military personnel to attend sessions. Increasing the number of Transition Assistance Program (TAP) seminars by a percentage relevant to the exiting number of military personnel will ensure each exiting service member is taught fundamental job readiness skills.

Coordinate with the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense (DOD) to identify exiting personnel that could benefit from REALifelines. Increasing participation in the REALifelines program is critical in facilitating our nation's injured veteran return to civilian life.

Outreach major corporations to inform them of the benefits of hiring veterans. Informing corporations of the many values veteran's posses is likely to boost employment and training opportunities for veterans.

Make a special benefits website, launch a public service announcement campaign through radio, TVC, and perform direct mail outs. Raising public awareness of the Texas Veterans Commission will have a circuitous effect on Veterans Employment Services. Veterans will know TVC will assist you in a myriad of areas and specializes in employment.

LTO Reference No: P5

Key Actions/Strategies for FY 2011-2015:

Accomplish annual survey of employers throughout the state to determine their needs and satisfaction. By scrutinizing the results of the survey, VES will make essential adjustments in the delivery of service to employers.

LTO Reference No: P6

Key Actions/Strategies for FY 2011-2015:

Utilize Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting (WISPR) reports to execute trend analysis of over 90 employment offices throughout the state. Trend analysis will identify any service delivery models where performance could be improved and further in-depth analysis will take place to improve overall operational performance and service to veterans.

PART 2

Customer Satisfaction

The agency conducts a customer satisfaction survey each year. The survey instrument is distributed statewide and includes workforce participants who are veterans accessing services. The TVC used Fiscal Year 2006 to establish a baseline to create measurable goals for future years.

Employer Survey

The VES program implemented an Employer Satisfaction Survey in FY2009. Over 150 employer responses throughout Texas were returned and analyzed. The survey data will continue to be used for both operational program management and long-term strategic planning.

Outreach and marketing of TVC services are necessary to reach veterans who need jobs and who need assistance from VA. To meet the challenge of these veterans' needs, all programs of the TVC will have to increase and realign staff according to the changes in population demographic and geographic changes.

Coordination

Beyond Veterans Employment Services, it's important to recognize the integrated nature and importance of consolidated services available to veterans from the Texas Veterans Commission. In 2005, Governor Rick Perry and the State Legislature agreed that consolidating Employment, Education, and VA Claims Counseling within the State's veteran advocacy agency was the best model for veterans to access the services and benefits they have earned. Three years after the consolidation, the Governor and Legislature recognized the record-setting success of TVC's work and expanded our ability to assist veterans with the addition of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance in 2009. The Veterans Employment Services program is fully integrated with the agency's other programs of Claims Counseling, Education, the Fund for Veterans' Assistance and Marketing efforts. A constant flow of internal referrals and communication ensures that veterans in Texas have one-stop to receive the broadest range of services and benefits information available in the county.

The recent addition of a Business Outreach Coordinator has enabled TVC to improve on the traditional model of veterans employment services and truly act on behalf of the employer to recruit qualified veterans for specific jobs. In less than six months of activity, our business outreach efforts have yielded 78 jobs dedicated for exclusively for veterans from 23 employers.

In addition to intra-agency integration, the Veterans Employment Services staff is integrated and in the Texas Workforce System. Veterans may seek other employment and training services provided by the Texas workforce system, which may include WIA training opportunities, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and support services such as child care and transportation. To ensure that Veterans Employment Services staff is aware of all of the services available to veterans, TVC supports the practice in which Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) provide training on other services available through the workforce system. This training will support the co-enrollment in those programs and services that will best meet the employment and training needs of veterans seeking employment.

