



# TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

*"Helping Veterans Starts Here"*

## WOMEN VETERANS REPORT

STATUS OF TEXAS WOMEN VETERANS 2022

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NOVEMBER 1, 2022  
Women Veterans Program

# TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

## Women Veterans Report

*Submitted to*

*Governor Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, and Texas Legislature*

*Prepared by*

*Dr. Krystle Matthews, Women Veterans Program Director*

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Dear State Leaders,

It is an honor to present to you the Women Veterans Report on behalf of the Texas Veterans Commission's (TVC) Women Veterans Program (WVP).

With over 200,000 women veterans, Texas has the largest population of any state. It is important that we stay connected with them and understand their unique needs. It is vital that we work to ensure they claim the benefits and services they have earned.

In this report, we review the program's ongoing successful efforts to assist women veterans and suggest new strategies to meet their growing and diverse needs.

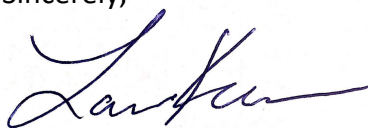
Since our last Women Veterans Report, TVC created a monthly networking meeting to outreach and engage women veterans across the state. Attendees learn about a benefit or service available to them that addresses the challenges and unmet needs women veterans have recently reported. Networking meetings are held virtually which allows women veterans across the state to participate. Attendees are encouraged to join TVC's Texas Women Veterans Professional Network, a social media network, that includes over 2,000 members. The WVP also collaborates with community organizations throughout the state to host additional women veteran specific events and meetings.

To gain further data on challenges and unmet needs, TVC's Women Veterans Survey was conducted in Summer 2022. The most important challenges identified by women veterans included: health care, claiming disability compensation, entrepreneurship, and financial assistance. Others were in the categories of education, housing, and employment.

Women Veteran Program Coordinators meet and connect with women veterans and assist them with claiming earned entitlements from state and federal agencies. They also create local networking and support opportunities within the women-veteran community for much needed peer-based support.

We appreciate your attention to the issues, successes, and recommendations outlined in this report. I thank you for your continued support of women veterans and for giving the Texas Veterans Commission's Women Veterans Program the opportunity of this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laura Koerner', written in a cursive style.

Laura Koerner  
Chairwoman  
Texas Veterans Commission

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# *Executive Summary*

The Women Veterans Program was established as an initiative during the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative session (2011). It was formally established in the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative session (2015) by HB 867, which appropriated a woman veteran coordinator and outlined the goals and responsibilities of the program. During the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative session (2017), Senate Bill (SB) 805 further expanded the scope of responsibilities of the Women Veterans Program. SB 805 also established June 12<sup>th</sup> as Women Veterans Day to recognize the role of women in the military forces and to commemorate their sacrifices.

The mission of the Women Veterans Program is to ensure the women veterans of Texas have equitable access to federal and state veterans' benefits and services. The program was established to perform the following general program duties:

1. Provide assistance to the women veterans of this state;
2. Perform outreach functions to improve the awareness of women veterans of their eligibility for federal and state veterans' benefits and services;
3. Assess the needs of women veterans with respect to benefits and services;
4. Review programs, research projects, and other initiatives designed to address the needs of the women veterans of this state;
5. Make recommendations to the executive director regarding the improvement of benefits and services to women veterans;
6. Incorporate issues concerning women veterans in commission planning regarding veterans' benefits and services; and
7. In collaboration with appropriate state agencies, provide information to women veterans about services and resources provided by state and federal agencies and organizations to women veterans.

This report provides information on the estimated number of women veterans that reside in Texas, the number of women veterans that requested and received assistance from Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and Texas Workforce Commission, the challenges and unique problems women veterans stated they face, and recommendations for policy proposals, initiatives, and funding levels required to address problems identified. The information reflected in this report was collected through multiple sources including but not limited to Department of Veterans Affairs current veteran population statistics, TVC and other state agencies assistance requests, and a TVC women veterans survey.



## TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

*"Helping Veterans Starts Here"*

### OUR MISSION

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

### OUR CORE VALUES

**Professionalism** - Perform duties to the highest standard and provide superior customer service in every program.

**Integrity** - Provide fair, honest, and objective advocacy in an ethical manner while displaying the highest standard of conduct, on and off duty.

**Compassion** - Demonstrate care, concern, and understanding in every encounter with veterans, their family members, and survivors.

**Commitment** - Uphold and be dedicated to carrying out the mission of the agency.

**Teamwork** - Work together in a positive and productive manner to accomplish the mission of the agency.

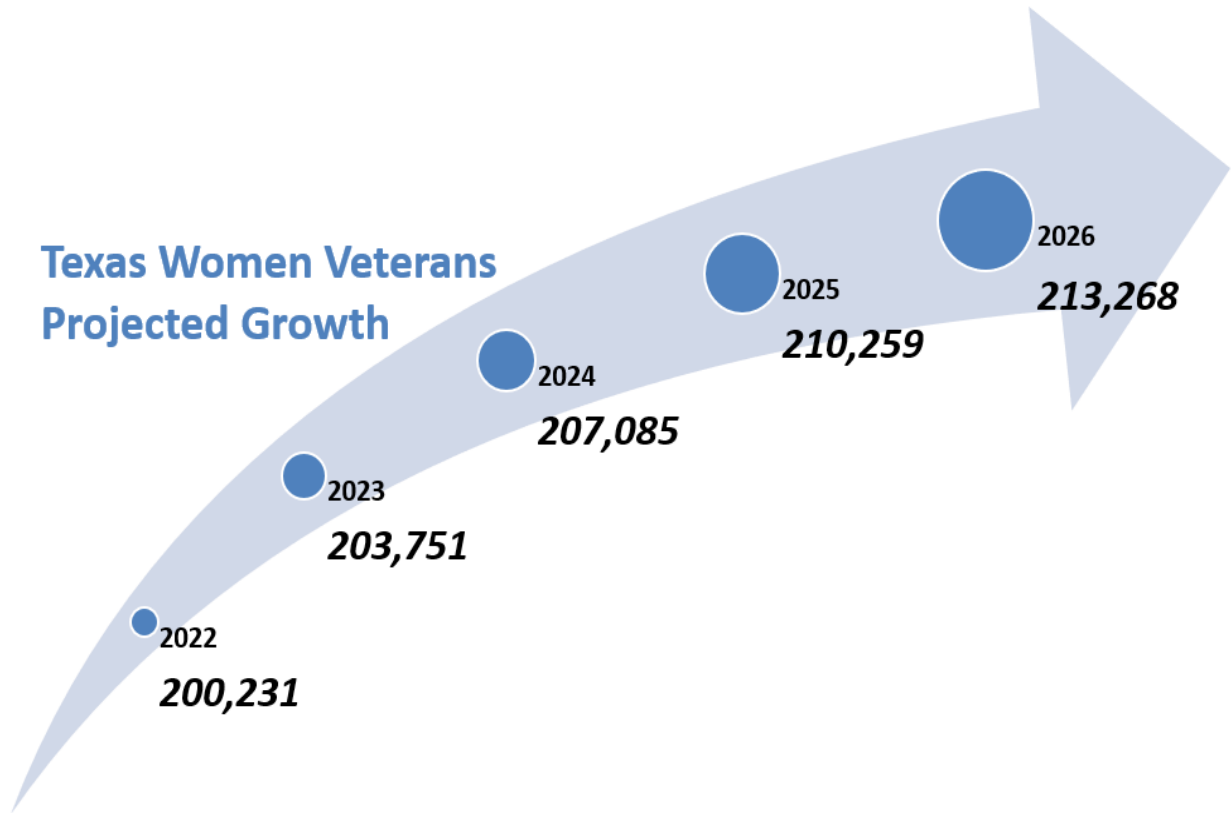
### SERVICES PROVIDED

<b>Veteran Employment Services Department (VES)</b>	VES assists veterans with finding long-term and meaningful employment through job matching services and one-on-one job coaching.
<b>Claims Department</b>	Claims provides one-on-one personalized assistance to Texas veterans, as well as their families and survivors, in obtaining federal benefits and entitlements which they are eligible to receive from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
<b>Veterans Education Department (VetsEd)</b>	VetsEd approves all programs for Chapter 30, 33, 35, 1606, and 1607 federal educational benefits, ensuring that institutions and employers are in compliance with federal guidelines and are qualified to provide the type of training offered. Additionally, VetsEd administers the Hazlewood Act tuition exemption state benefit.
<b>Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD)</b>	VMHD ensures access to competent mental health services for service members, veterans, and their families by providing training, certification, and technical assistance across Texas.
<b>Health Care Advocacy Department (HCAD)</b>	HCAD assists veterans and their beneficiaries with gaining access to veteran health care facilities, and they provide assistance by resolving patient issues and concerns within Veterans Health Administration (VHA) systems.
<b>Veteran Entrepreneur Program (VEP)</b>	VEP provides veteran entrepreneurs and veteran small businesses the tools they need to start or grow their businesses through consulting services, referrals, and outreach and educational services.
<b>Fund for Veterans Assistance (FVA)</b>	FVA provides annual grants to nonprofit organizations, veteran service organizations, posts, or organizations of past or present members of the armed forces, and units of local government to provide a variety of assistance or mental health services to eligible veterans, their dependents, and surviving spouses.
<b>Women Veterans Program (WVP)</b>	WVP bridges the gap between Texas women veterans and the services and benefits they have earned through their military service while also increasing awareness of the needs of women veterans, assisting in improving and creating services, and identifying existing resources for women veterans.

## *Number of Texas Women Veterans*

According to data reflected in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), VA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics population tables, Texas has the largest population of

women veterans in the United States and its territories. Currently, Texas has an estimated population of 200,231 women veterans.<sup>1</sup> Texas consists of 254 counties with a minimum of 8 women veterans per county and the largest population residing in Bexar County. The women veteran population of Texas is expected to increase by 6.5% in the next 5 years.



## *Requests and Assistance*

The information and data below were collected from Texas Veterans Commission, Texas Workforce Commission, and other state agencies. The data reflected in this report is from FY21

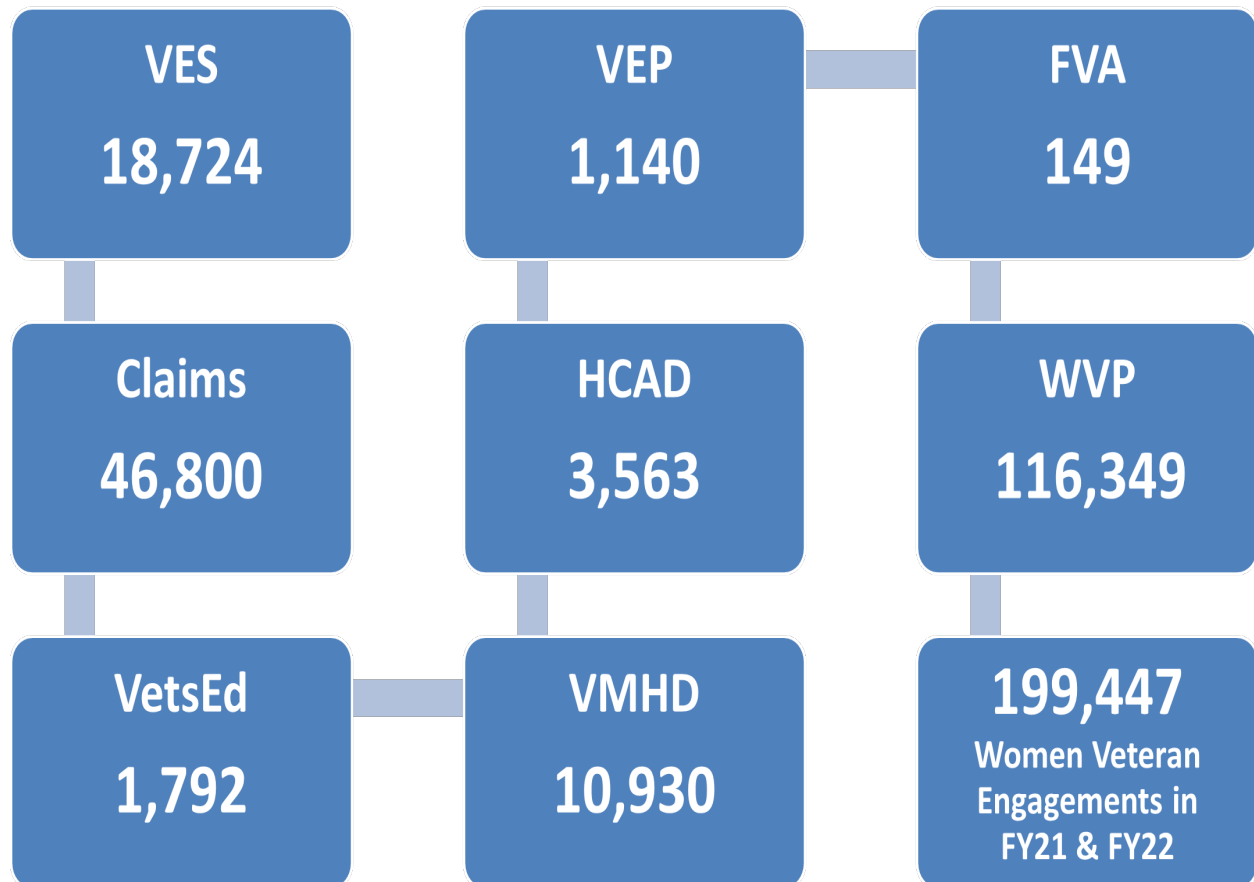
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2018). Retrieved from [https://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran\\_population.asp](https://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran_population.asp)



(September 1, 2020 - August 31, 2021) and FY22 (September 1, 2021 - August 31, 2022). The information includes the number of women veteran engagements per organization for FY2021 and FY2022.

## Texas Veterans Commission

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) serves Texas veterans via 8 programs: Veteran Employment Services Department (VES), Claims Department, Veterans Education Department (VetsEd), Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD), Health Care Advocacy Department (HCAD), Veteran Entrepreneur Program (VEP), Fund for Veterans Assistance (FVA), and Women Veterans Program (WVP). Each program gathers data based on specific program requirements.



\*TVC's combined number of women veteran engagements for FY2021 and FY2022

## Texas Workforce Commission

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the state agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to employers and job seekers of Texas. TWC is part of Texas Workforce Solutions network, a statewide network comprised of 28 Workforce

Development Boards, their contracted service providers and community partners, and four TWC unemployment benefits Tele-Centers. The network gives customers local access to job-search resources, career training, and temporary financial assistance.<sup>2</sup> TVC Veterans Career Advisors (VCA) are co-located at workforce solutions offices and assist veterans with significant barriers to employment.

For FY2021 and FY2022, TWC provided **48,200** services to women veterans through multiple TWC programs. For this report, TWC programs include Wagner Peyser (WP), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), Noncustodial Parent Choices (NCP), Choices Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Adult Education & Literacy (AEL), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Childcare, and other unduplicated services.

## Department of State Health Services

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) promotes and protects the health of people, and the communities where they live, learn, work, worship, and play. The organization understands that no single entity working alone can improve the health of all Texans.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Texas Health and Human Services, which includes DSHS and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) provide hundreds of programs and services to more than seven million Texans a month. For FY2021 and FY2022, HHSC provided **5,008** services to women veterans. HHSC provides access and eligibility determinations for multiple programs and services. For this report, HHSC programs include Medicaid/CHIP, SNAP, and TANF benefits, Family Violence Program Services, and services provided across the State Hospital system.

## Other State Agencies

All state agencies of the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (TCCVS) were asked to provide data, if available, on the number of women veterans served by their respective agencies. SB 1796 passed by the 82nd Texas Legislature established the TCCVS. The Council was established to: (1) coordinate the activities of state agencies that assist veterans, service members, and their families; (2) coordinate outreach efforts that ensure that veterans, service members, and their families are made aware of services; and (3) facilitate collaborative relationships among state, federal, and local agencies and private organizations to identify and address issues affecting veterans, servicemembers, and their families.<sup>4</sup> The Council consists of twenty-two state agencies including TVC. The agencies that responded to the request to participate reported they do not collect women veteran status from clients.

# *Current Status of Texas Women Veterans*

The data on the ***Current Status of Texas Women Veterans*** was collected via an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback directly from Texas women veterans on

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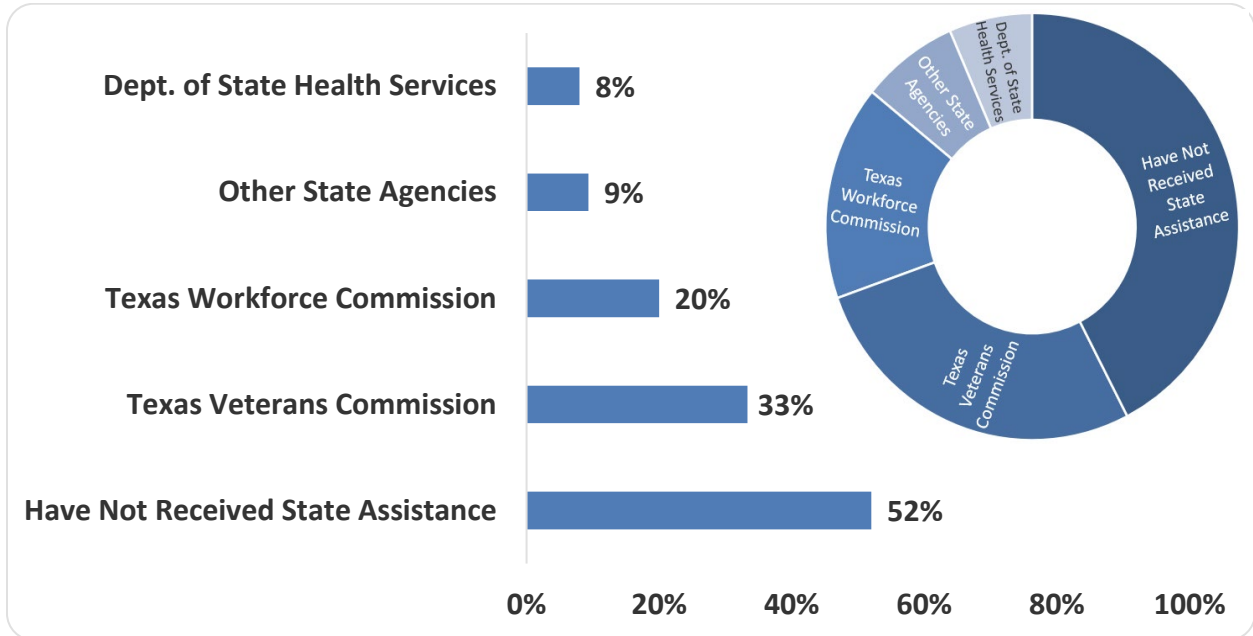
<sup>2</sup> Texas Workforce Commission. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.twc.texas.gov/about-texas-workforce>

<sup>3</sup> Texas Department of State Health Services. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/about-DSHS.shtm>

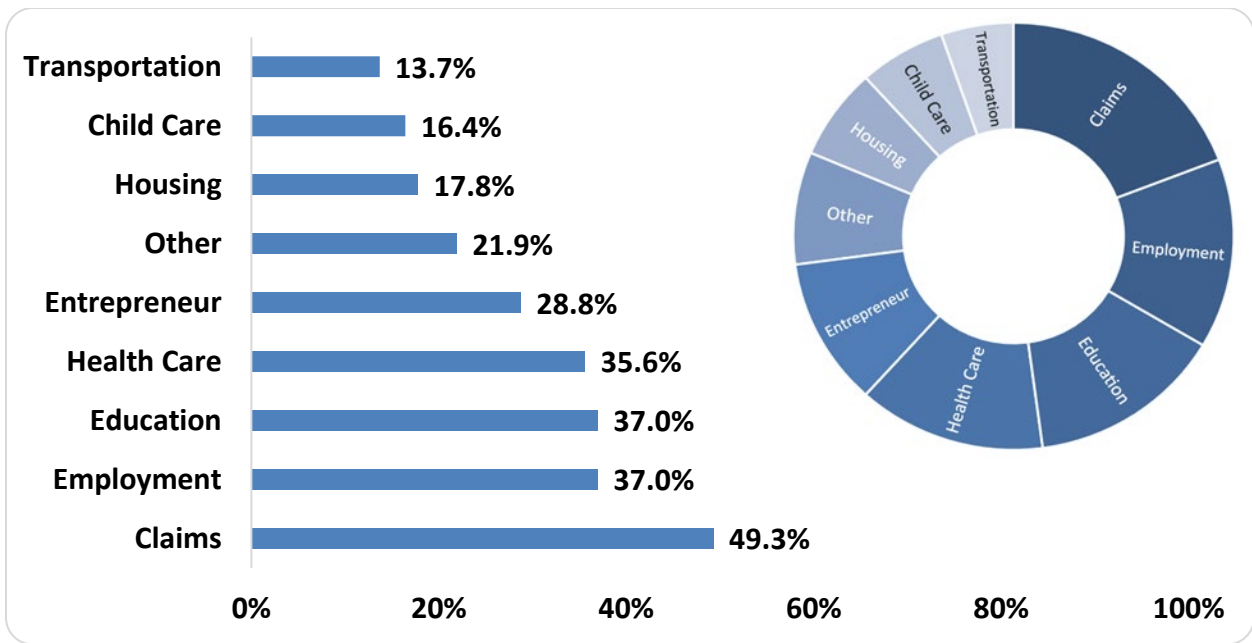
<sup>4</sup> Government Code, Chapter 434. (2022). Retrieved from <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/docs/GV/htm/GV.434.htm>

unique problems and challenges they currently face. The Women Veterans Program created a flyer with a link and QR Code to the survey to share with women veterans via TVC social media platforms, TVC EVETs Newsletter, email distribution lists, veteran outreach events, etc. The survey was open from June 30, 2022 to August 31, 2022, for responses. The charts and graphics below do not include all survey questions such as demographics.

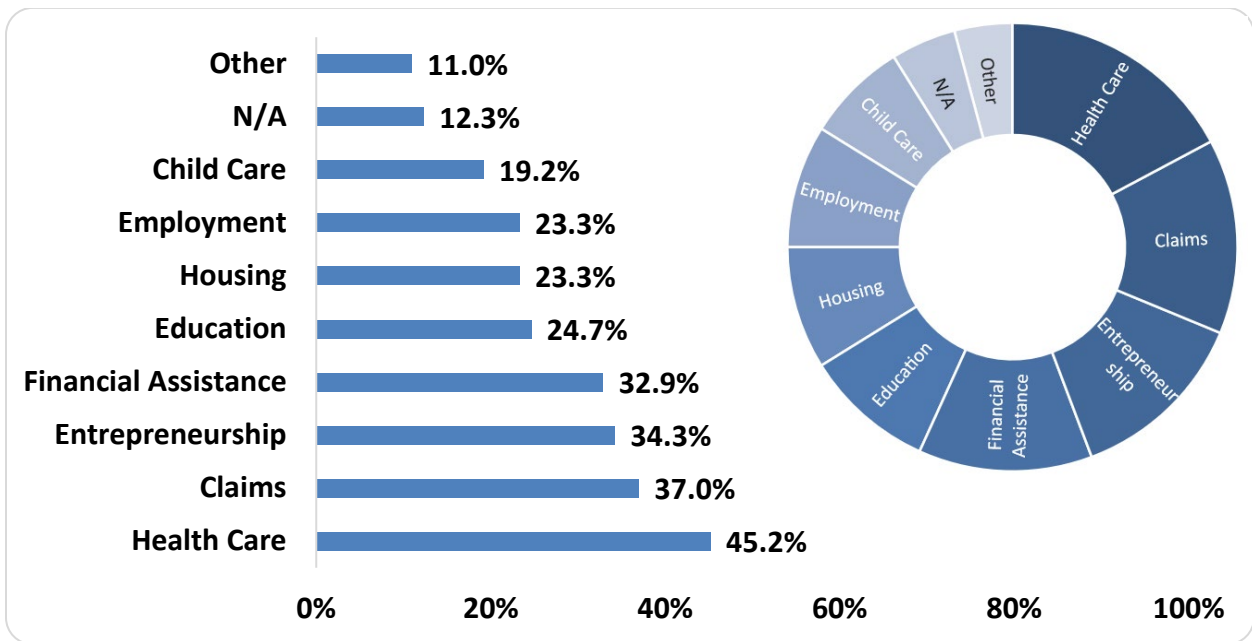
**In the past 2 years, which state agency/agencies have you received assistance from? (Please select all that apply.)**



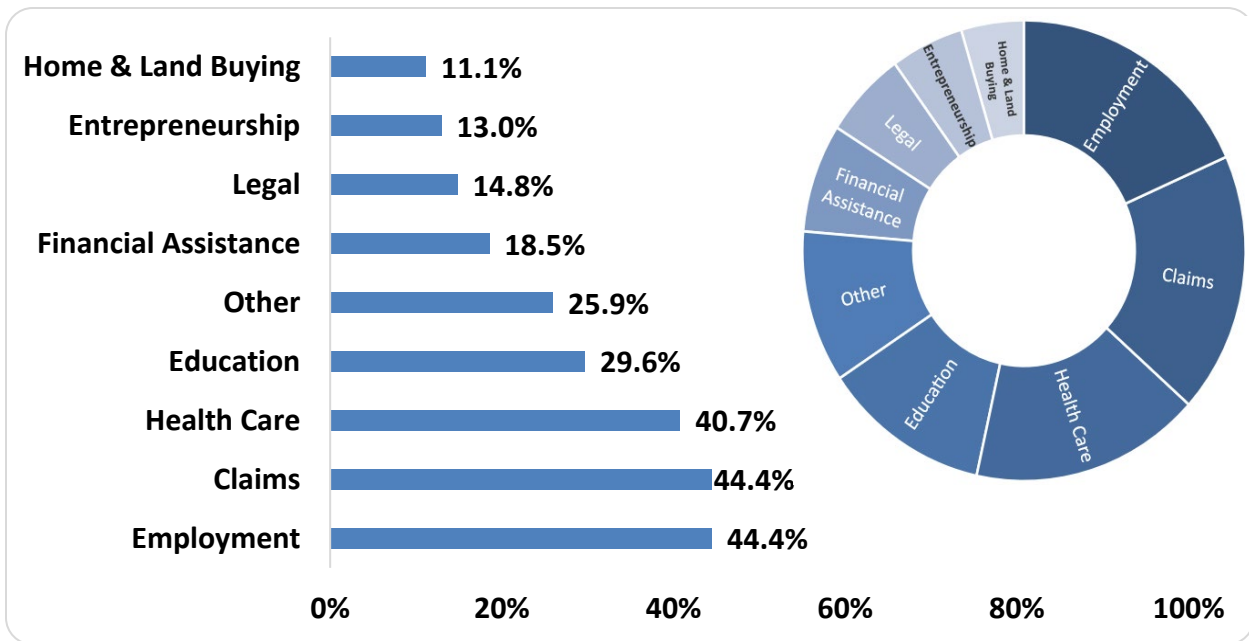
**Please select a service you have needed in the past or currently need. (Select all that apply.)**



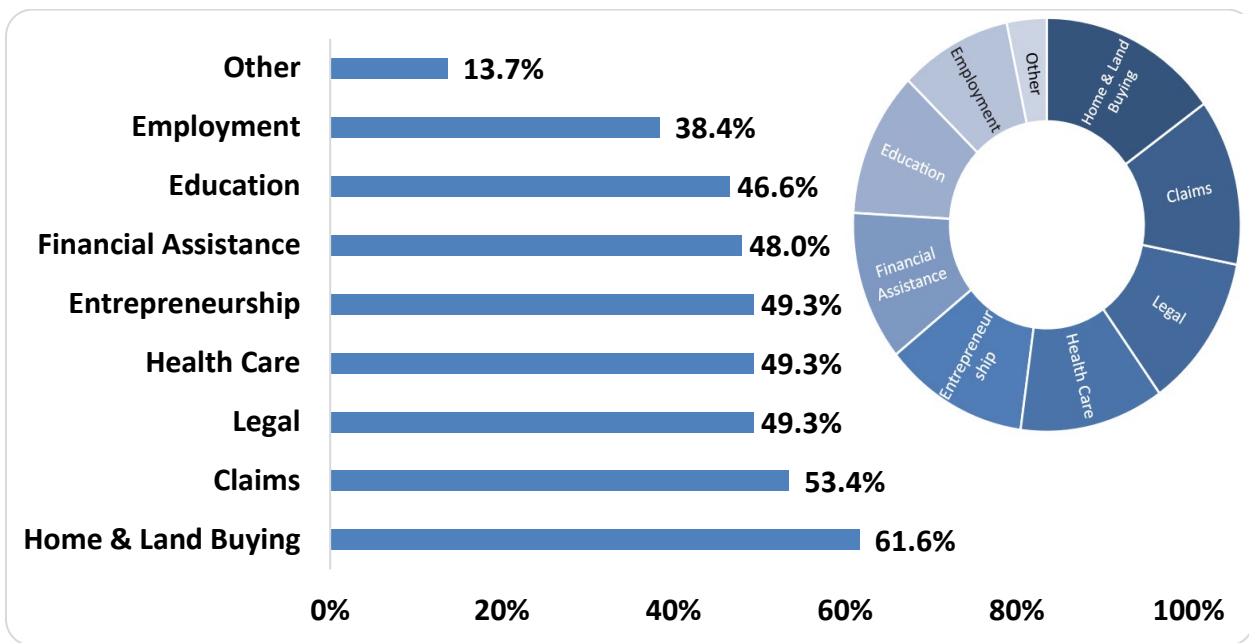
**What do you feel your unique challenges and/or unmet needs are as a woman veteran?**



**What veterans services and resources are available in your local community?**



**What veterans services and resources would you like to see in your local community?**



## Conclusion

The women veteran population is consistently growing and the needs for women veterans are constantly changing. The survey responses show the largest unique challenges and/or unmet needs are health care and VA claims assistance. Entrepreneurship and financial assistance are additional unique challenges and/or unmet needs for 30% or more of participants. The data

highlights that majority of the services women veterans needed and requested are also considered unique challenges and/or unmet needs by women veterans. It appears that while services and resources are available in some communities, they may not be available or accessible in the communities where women veterans are requesting them. Additionally, the data presented in this report shows, in the past 2 years, 52% of the participants have not receive assistance from a state agency.

## *Recommendations*

Based on the data provided in this report, the state of Texas must be diligent about serving the current population by increasing the accessibility of existing resources and services. Due to the expected increase in population, thoroughly assessing current needs will provide insight on future needs and locations with gaps in service. Based on other state agencies feedback for this report and survey participants feedback, TVC recommends:

1. Legislative support for TVC's legislative appropriation request to fund one additional staff to further the goal of connecting women veterans to federal, state, and local services within the four districts of the state. The WVP districts are broken down by counties and the veteran population. With 254 counties to cover, the work of the four staff still has limitations.
2. State agencies that provide services to veterans should be required to track veteran status and veteran gender for analysis and strategic planning purposes.
3. Consider funding opportunities for state agencies and possible grants for nonprofits to: (1) provide low-cost or free health care for women veterans that are not eligible to receive health care at the VA and (2) assist women veteran entrepreneurs with starting or expanding a business.
4. Consider funding opportunities for general financial assistance specifically for women veterans that's accessible in all counties. General financial assistance may include but not limited to mortgage, rental, utilities, childcare, and transportation assistance.