

# STRATEGIC PLAN

FISCAL YEARS 2013-2017



## TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION



*85 Years of Service*

# STRATEGIC PLAN

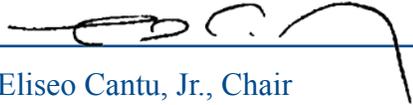
## FISCAL YEARS 2013-2017

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

June 2012

<b>Member</b>	<b>Date of Term</b>	<b>Hometown</b>
Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Chair	December 31, 2013	Corpus Christi, TX
James H. Scott, Vice Chair	December 31, 2015	San Antonio, TX
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Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Chair



**TEXAS VETERANS  
COMMISSION**



# 85 Years of Service

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Texas, through the Governor and the Texas Legislature, leads this nation in its commitment to serving the needs of its Veterans, their families, and survivors. 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. For 85 years, the agency has served as the state advocate of Texas Veterans as they seek the benefits rightfully earned in the performance of their duties in our nation's armed forces.

In 1947, Texas legislators established a system of Veterans' county service officers to provide Veterans with additional resources and services for local, state, and federal benefits. The Legislature mandated the Texas Veterans Commission to train the Veterans' county service officers and assistants and coordinate statewide veterans' assistance.

More recently, the 79th Texas Legislature took the bold step of better serving the needs of Texas Veterans by transferring Veterans Employment Services (VES) to the Texas Veterans Commission. On the heels of this move, Governor Rick Perry issued an executive order transferring the Veterans Education program

(State Approval Authority for the G.I. Bill) to the Texas Veterans Commission in October 2006. The 81st Legislature, recognizing Veterans and their families have unique needs not faced by their civilian counterparts, answered the call again by creating a lottery scratch-off game benefiting the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA).

Few other states throughout the country have established such a wide range of programs that provide resources and assistance to their Veterans. No other state has centralized all of these program areas within their state's veterans agency. Having these programs fully integrated within the Texas Veterans Commission allows each program to provide an enhanced level of service that significantly improves the quality of life for Texas Veterans and their families.

Today, Texas is widely recognized for aggressively leading the nation on Veteran issues. National leaders have referred to the "Texas-model" when advocating for the integration of Veterans services. Texas' 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 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 must seek new and innovative ways to meet state government priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

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



# PART III

## The Philosophy of Texas State Government

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

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

# PART V

## Agency Mission

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

## Agency Philosophy

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

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

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

# PART IV

## Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

General Government  
Priority Goal:

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

Applicable Benchmarks:

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

Economic Development  
Priority Goal:

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

Applicable Benchmarks:

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

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

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

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



# PART VI

# EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

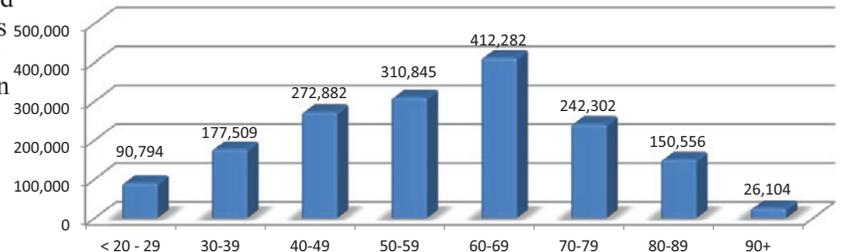
## Who are Veterans?

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

Texas has the second-highest number of Veterans of any state in the United States — 1.7 million — and Veterans come to Texas to take advantage of the services and benefits provided. Many Veterans either entered service in Texas or were stationed at one of the 15 active military bases spread throughout Texas.

While males continue to dominate all branches of the military, the number of female Veterans continues to increase steadily. There are now over 1.8 million women Veterans nationwide, and women Veterans represent 7.7 percent of the total

**Veteran Population in Texas by Age Group**



U.S. Veteran population of 23.4 million. Texas has approximately 161,000 women Veterans, the second-largest female Veteran population of any state.

**Texas has the second-highest number of Veterans of any state in the United States — 1.7 million**

## Why is the Veteran Population in Texas Growing?

Troop surges during the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq affect the number of Veterans in Texas. In 2007, President George W. Bush ordered an additional 20,000 troops to Iraq, and in 2009, President Barack Obama ordered an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan.

To meet these personnel demands, while simultaneously maintaining a state of global readiness, required an increase in the number of troops serving and activation of the National Guard and Reserves.

Through normal attrition, 250,000 military personnel will leave the military and become Veterans every year through 2031. Also the Army, with current troop strength of 562,000, will shrink to somewhere in the range of 480,000 – 500,000. The Marines, currently staffed at 203,000, will reduce its force by as much as 30,000, and there will be a total reduction of 90,000 to 125,000 personnel over all branches of the military.

In 2014, the United States is scheduled to withdraw nearly 100,000 military personnel from Afghanistan resulting in a potential spike in the number personnel leaving the military between 2014 and 2016. The number of Veterans entering the state will be incomparable to any Veteran population increase experienced since the end of the Vietnam War.

## What are the Veterans' needs?

Texas is committed to serving the needs of its Veterans. Because of the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, a large number of Veterans require specific assistance and services, such as filing for disability compensation from the VA or finding counseling for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Also as Veterans age in Texas, there is an increase in the need for care and assistance for older Veterans, which includes filing to increase a VA disability rating or applying to enter a Veterans' Home. Women Veterans, who need health care services that differ from their male counterparts, also tend to access services at a higher rate than male Veterans.

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

- Filing a claim with the VA
- Using GI Bill benefits
- Finding an On-the-Job training opportunity
- Finding employment
- Getting housing assistance
- Getting counseling for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury
- Finding family and child services
- Finding referral to other services
- Getting into a Veterans' Home
- Accessing burial, health, and life insurance benefits

The Texas Veterans Commission helps Veterans through program areas that provide direct services and through services that connect Veterans to the Texas Veterans Commission.



# PART VII

# INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

## Agency Vision

The Texas Veterans Commission provides direct services to Texas Veterans through four program areas and connects Texas Veterans to all Veterans' services. This integrated approach provides Veterans with a gateway to Veterans benefits in Texas to meet the Veterans' needs.

## Four Program Areas Providing Direct Services to Veterans

**Claims Representation and Counseling** assists Texas Veterans, survivors and dependents in obtaining non-educational federal benefits and entitlements from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Claims Counselors handled 179,981 benefit cases on behalf of Veterans survivors and dependents, while at the same time filing 125,179 new monetary claims and 16,101 appeals in Fiscal Year 2011.

**Veterans Employment Services** matches Veterans, particularly recently separated and disabled Veterans, who are seeking jobs with the best employment opportunities available. In addition, employers are matched with qualified Veterans. In Fiscal Year 2011, 38,714 Veterans found work after receiving Texas Veterans Commission services, and \$1.4 billion in wages were earned by Veterans who received TVC employment assistance.

**Veterans Education Services** functions as the State Approval Agency and determines those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for Veterans training and for which eligible Veterans and their families may receive GI Bill educational benefits. In Fiscal Year 2011, Veterans Education Services reviewed and approved/disapproved 18,341 programs of education and training for Veterans.

**Fund for Veterans' Assistance** awards reimbursement grants in two categories: FVA General Assistance and Housing4TexasHeroes. The Fund for Veterans' Assistance has awarded 83 grants totaling more than \$21.5 million as of April 2012.

## Three Areas Connecting Veterans to Services

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

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

**Texas Veteran Entrepreneur & Business Development Initiative** fosters and promotes Veteran Entrepreneurship throughout the state of Texas by connecting the resources available and Veteran entrepreneurs.



# CLAIMS COUNSELING AND REPRESENTATION

The Claims Representation and Counseling (Claims) Program assists Texas Veterans, survivors and dependents in obtaining non-educational federal benefits and entitlements from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Claims Program ensures all Texas Veterans and their families receive every benefit to which they are entitled; and, as a corollary benefit, increases the federal payment to Texas Veterans and their survivors, thereby benefiting the economy of the state of Texas. Claims staff is located in 37 offices throughout the state at VA Regional Offices, VA Medical Centers, VA Clinics, military installations and county offices. The office locations are strategically located in the areas of the highest Veteran traffic and provide the widest geographic distribution possible.

Claims counselors assist Veterans and provide services, which include, but are not limited to:

- Filing original claims for service-connected compensation
- Filing for an increase in already service-connected conditions
- Filing claims for non-service-connected pension
- Filing claims for survivor benefits such as service-connected or non-service-connected death benefits and burial benefits
- Filing for discharge upgrades
- Representing service members who are being processed through the Physical Evaluation Board
- Assisting incarcerated Veterans with benefit applications
- Preparing and submitting claims for Vocational Rehabilitation
- Providing crisis intervention due to financial hardship or terminal illness
- Helping Veterans who are seeking admission to Texas State Veterans' Homes
- Assisting institutionalized patients who are receiving mental



health care, nursing home residents and children apply for VA pension or compensation benefits

- Ensuring eligible recipients in underserved areas are provided all Texas Veterans Commission services
- Assisting the Texas State Bar program, Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans, which provides no cost legal aid services to Veterans
- Acting as a liaison between the Veteran and VA medical facilities to insure he/she receives all of the benefits to which they are entitled
- Providing assistance to the Veterans Courts

**Due to representation by the Texas Veterans Commission, 179,981 Veterans and their families received \$2.2 billion tax-free dollars during FY 2011.**

## Claims Counselors are specialists in VA Administrative Law.

Counselors interview Veterans and their families concerning their potential claims and benefits, helping them apply for those benefits, and prepare the evidence, which will prove their claims. The counselors are experts at constructing claims as part of a very complex federal process. They must use the appropriate forms, some being as long as twelve pages, for the claim being proposed; review and evaluate both service treatment records and private medical records; gather various documents to prove dependency, evidence of incurrence and current level of disability; and consider to the laws and regulations which apply to the individual claims. Claims Counselors represent Veterans in both informal and formal hearings through the entire claims process to include the Board of Veterans Appeals. Claims Counselors are flexible in adjusting procedures because of frequent updates in VA processes, including:

- Changing VA laws and regulations
- Pilot Programs – currently an appeals pilot
- Contracting development of claims
- Centralization of various functions (phone unit, specialty claims, etc.)

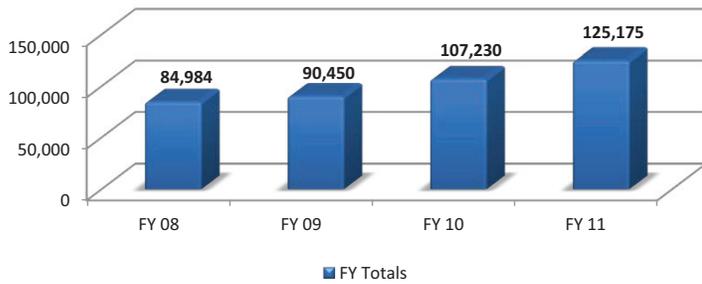
## Claims Counselors know that those who may need their services the most may not be able to come to in to an office.

The Claims Representation and Counseling Program strives to be truly comprehensive by extending our services and claims assistance to Veterans and survivors who are unable to come to a Texas Veterans Commission office or county service office. Hospitalized Veterans are contacted by Claims Counselors located at VA and military hospitals. Counselors routinely and upon special request, reach out to Texas State Veterans' Homes, institutions and other related facilities throughout the state. Claims Counselors also travel to those who are shut-in, or for whatever reason, unable to travel to one of our offices. Claims Counselors are also acquainted with the other organizations in their respective areas that provide services to Veterans and their families and routinely refer Veterans to these entities.



**In FY 2010 the number of service-connected claims filed increased by 19 percent, and in FY 2011 that number continued to increase by another 18 percent.**

**Texas Totals of Monetary Claims by Fiscal Year**



**During the last fiscal year, Claims Counselors filed 125,179 new monetary claims and 16,101 appeals.**

With the number of Veterans increasing due to the combat operations ending in Iraq and withdrawal scheduled for Afghanistan, the amount of work of the Claims Program will only continue to increase. Veterans will need assistance in higher numbers than ever before especially with the influx the younger Veterans from the current wars and older Veterans continuing to need services. Because the increase in need will strain the workload of the counselors who are already at capacity, the quality of services provided may decrease as the counselors struggle to keep up with growing demand. Veterans and their families may not receive full access to claims assistance, much less the quality of representation they are entitled to and that TVC is recognized for.

**Though the state has the second highest Veteran population, Texas has the largest number of Veterans receiving compensation and pension funds from the VA.**

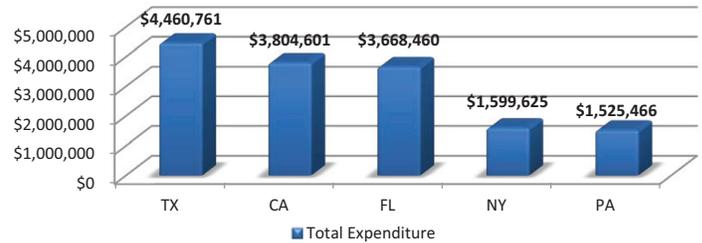
Texas is the leader in total number of Veterans receiving compensation and pension, compensation and pension expenditures, and per capita compensation and pension payments. As a corollary benefit, these federal dollars have a significant benefit to Texas' economy.

A study commissioned by the VA and conducted by the Institute for Defense in 2007 analyzed Veterans receiving compensation or pension and found that Veterans using the services of an agency like the Texas Veterans Commission receive on average \$6,200 more annually than those who do not. The positive economic impact to the state is undeniable and improves both the quality of life of the individuals receiving the benefits (both monetary and medical) and also the state as well.

The work of the Claims Counselors for Veterans, survivors and dependents brings money into the state of Texas.

- \$2.2 billion in tax-free benefits will be paid to Texas Veterans and their families this year due to TVC representation, according to the VA.
- For every \$1 spent in General Revenue on Claims, \$452 comes back to the state in federal benefits. Claims Counselors handle over 1,388 claims cases per year each and

**Total Compensation and Pension Expenditures as FY 10**



generate over \$27.4 million in federal claims and pension benefits per counselor, on average.

- Approximately \$75 million in sales tax revenue is generated annually from Claims Counselors aiding Veterans with their VA benefits. Each counselor helps generate an estimated \$950,000 in state sales tax revenue; a \$16 to \$1 return on state taxpayer investment.
- TVC saves \$366,300 per year in rent for the state because the VA provides the Claims Counselors with office space and utilities, according to the Texas Facilities Commission.

**The partnership between TVC and the VCSOs provides the best network to reach as many Veterans across the state of Texas as possible.**

In counties with populations of 200,000 or more, the commissioners court of that county is required to maintain a Veterans County Service Office (VCSO). In counties with populations of less than 200,000, the commissioners court can maintain and operate a VCSO if the commissioners court determines that the office is a public necessity to enable county residents who are veterans to obtain benefits to which they are entitled.

When a county creates a VCSO, or there is a personnel change in an existing office, TVC sends a Claims Counselor to that office to provide the new VCSO a thorough orientation and training needs assessment. The VCSO is also required to complete a course of initial training provided by the Texas Veterans Commission. To

maintain certification, the VCSO completes continuing training to as required by TVC and VA. The VCSO must maintain certification to remain in office. Training occurs twice a year, and VCSOs can become "accredited" through TVC by completing a mentorship program along with annual training.

TVC and the VCSO Association of Texas have a MOU in place, which outlines our "Shared Goals," and there is also a newly created VCSO Advisory Committee.

TVC further supports the VCSO's by providing:

- TVC Training Bulletins (immediate notification of law or regulation changes)
- In depth explanations of VA laws, regulations, and procedures
- Status inquiries
- Veteran claim specific information



# VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) Veterans Employment Services (VES) program provides employment services to all Veterans, particularly recently separated and disabled Veterans, and eligible persons in Texas. The goal of these services is to match Veteran job seekers with the best opportunities available. In addition, employers are matched with qualified Veterans.

Veterans Employment Representatives (VERs) are specifically trained to provide a full range of employment services such as assistance with job applications, resume preparation, job matching, job searches, and other employment services. VERs are located

in more than 75 cities throughout Texas and offer one-on-one assistance to Veterans at local workforce solutions offices.

A federal grant from the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS), provides 99 percent of funding for VES. This is a non-competitive grant allocated to TVC in direct proportion to the number of Veterans seeking employment within Texas compared to other states. General Revenue provides the other 1 percent of funding for VES to support two FTEs for the Family Employment Assistance Counselor (FEAC) program.

**Texas accounts for 18 percent of the nation's Veterans entering employment while receiving 7 percent of the total funding from DOL-VETS for VES.**

## **Texas leads the nation in assisting Veterans in obtaining employment.**

The VES program in Texas is different than any other state. Texas is the only state in the nation to have VES as part of the Veteran advocacy agency. This "Texas Model" streamlines the entire employment process by making services provided to Veterans more effective. Because TVC has direct control over all employment services to Veterans in Texas, the Texas Model has had tremendous success through the hard work of VERs and partnering with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Local Workforce Boards, and DOL-VETS.

## **VES gets recently separated Veterans in the civilian workforce.**

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

LVERs' primary focus is to provide individualized job development for Veterans. They also provide job search information for recently separated Veterans. In order to maximize services to those Veterans, LVERs conduct a variety of activities including, but not limited to:

- Advocating for Veterans employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community-based organizations.
- Providing job coaching services to Veterans.
- Planning and participating in job fairs.
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs, and business organizations to promote employment and training opportunities for Veterans.
- Providing individualized job development for hard to place Veterans.

## **VES helps families of Veterans find employment.**

- Family Employment Assistance Counselors (FEAC) FEAC is the only state funded program in VES. FEACs support and assist caretakers and family members of Wounded Warriors and Veterans as well as spouses of active duty military personnel. FEAC personnel provide the same employment services to spouses and family members that VERs provide to Veterans. FEAC personnel are located in San Antonio (BAMC) and Killeen (Fort Hood).

## **VES helps disabled Veterans overcome barriers to employment.**

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists provide a full range of employment and training services to Veterans, with the primary focus of providing intensive services to disabled Veterans and/or Veterans with significant barriers to employment, especially homeless Veterans. In order to maximize services to those Veterans, DVOP specialists perform a variety of activities including, but not limited to:

- Case manage Veterans with significant barriers to employment.
- Job coaching services.
- Locate Veterans with barriers to employment.

## **There are two specialized DVOP programs.**

- The Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines (REALifelines): REALifelines is a comprehensive program that provides individualized job training, counseling and re-employment services to seriously injured or wounded Veterans at Fort Bliss, Fort Hood and Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio.
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E): VERs receive referrals from the VA VR&E counselors to deliver vocational rehabilitation, counseling services and employment guidance to Veterans.

## **VES ensures Veterans are given every opportunity available.**

Another key factor in the success of VES is the implementation of Priority of Service in the Workforce Development System. Through Priority of Service, Veterans and eligible spouses are entitled to precedence over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job training program. This means that a Veteran or an eligible spouse either receives access to a service earlier in time than a non-covered person or, if the resource is limited, the veteran or eligible spouse receives access to the service instead of or before the non-covered person.



**During the most recent 12-month period, 38,714 Veterans found work after receiving services from VERs. That same year \$1.4 billion in wages were earned by Veterans who received TVC employment assistance.**

**Hiring Veterans is not just good will, it is good for business.**

There are two parts to the employment equation: Veterans and Veteran-friendly employers. Established in July 2011, Veteran Business Representatives (VBRs) enhance the services offered by LVER staff by acting on behalf of the employer to recruit qualified Veterans for new career opportunities. Also, VBRs work with local development boards, the TWC, DOL-VETS and all partners to ensure businesses are educated on the benefits of hiring Veterans. Four VBRs currently serve all of Texas and are strategically located in Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, San Antonio and Austin.

Since August 2011:

- VBRs have directly placed 50 Veterans into employment with an average starting salary of \$44,000 per year.
- Companies taking advantage of the Texas Veterans Commission’s Business Outreach program include USAA, AT&T, Lowes, and Spitzer Industries.

**Since 2006, Texas has received 16 national Veteran employment awards from both Veteran service organizations as well as workforce organizations.**

**Training continues to be the cornerstone to VES’ success.**

VES ensures “Initial Training” is provided to employees within six months of their hire date. This training creates a solid base of knowledge and educates new VER staff on proper procedures, use of Texas’ automated job matching system, administrative requirements, case management documentation and other issues necessary for VERs to perform their jobs effectively.

Additional VES staff training includes:

- Regional training – Training completed quarterly, and focuses on region specific policies, procedures and refresher training.
- Annual training – Training conducted during the TVC Annual Training Conference with a focus on strategic planning, Veterans programs and staff recognition.
- Specialized training – Training conducted on an as needed basis for one or more regions.
- Other training – Training at the National Veterans’ Training Institute (NVTI), located in Denver, Colorado.

**VES has helped more Veterans find employment than any other state. One-in-three Veteran jobs found by Veteran employment agencies in the top 10-funded states were in Texas.**

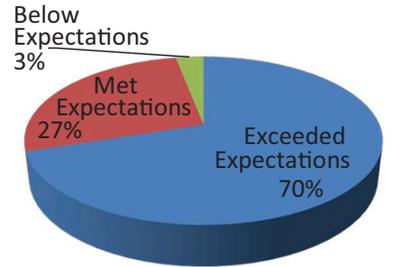
**Veterans need to know about all the employment services available.**

Texas is facing an influx of Veterans due to the drawdown of troops overseas, most of who will be looking for employment. It is imperative that those Veterans are aware of the full range of employment service programs. Therefore, VES must conduct outreach to as many Veterans as possible to provide information about employment opportunities and services.

VERs outreach activities include:

- Yellow Ribbon events
- Job fairs
- Veteran service organizations
- Chambers of Commerce

**VES Customer Survey Responses**



Though the number of Veterans served continues to increase, TVC is dedicated to maintaining a high level of customer service. According to the customer satisfaction survey, shown above, VES staff services meet or exceed most clients’ expectations. It is important that the same level of customer satisfaction continues in the future.

VES staff conducts external training for Workforce partners in the specialized needs of Veteran clients and applicable laws. 161 partner trainings were completed in the 28 Workforce Center Board Areas during the last program year. Additionally, VES conducts training and presentations to Veteran and employer organizations in an effort to promote TVC services.



# VETERANS EDUCATION

## Veterans Education is the face and voice of the GI Bill in Texas.

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

For over 65 years states, through entities known as State Approving Agencies, states have worked successfully in partnership with VA and educational institutions to achieve these purposes and serve as advocates for Veterans. Veterans Education functions as the State Approval Agency for Texas and receives funding from the VA to determine those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for Veterans training and for which eligible Veterans and their families may receive GI Bill educational benefits.

The Veterans Education staff:

- Approves programs for Montgomery GI Bill and Post-9/11 GI Bill educational benefits;
- Ensures that institutions and employers comply with federal guidelines and are qualified to provide the type of education/training offered; and
- Conducts on-site visits to monitor and enforce approved policies and procedures for all Veterans enrolled.

Yet, the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-377), effective August 1, 2011, dramatically changed the focus of Veterans Education from providing proactive technical assistance and training to schools to that of auditing VA payment of benefits to schools and Veterans.

The law:

- Eliminates the approval process for all public and not-for-profit, flight, registered apprenticeships, high schools, and licensing and certification organizations since these programs are now automatically deemed approved with no review from the state;
- Eliminates opportunities for staff to interact with school administrators in any kind of official capacity on issues related to the offering of academic programs and policies for student enrollment;
- Severely restricts the work and contributions of states to the success of the GI Bill; and
- Limits Veterans' advocacy and customer service, outreach, and technical activities due to the amount of time required by the new financial auditing responsibilities.

Federal VA education benefits have grown dramatically since 2006, due largely to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which has made postsecondary education an affordable option for Veterans who have served after September 11, 2001. In 2010, federal education programs infused \$778 million in GI Bill benefits in Texas.

## In 2010, federal education programs infused \$778 million in GI Bill benefits in Texas.

### Veterans Education is funded through a combination of federal and state funds.

The federal government provides approximately 77 percent of the Veterans Education budget for approving and regulating Veterans' education and training programs in the state. Since 1995, federal funds for Veterans Education have been augmented by state general revenue funds to better assist in covering expenses.

### Veterans Education operates with only 16 full-time staff—nine in Austin and seven located throughout the state.

The field staff is responsible for conducting visits, marketing and outreach to prospective schools and employers in their respective areas. The headquarters staff in Austin processes all approval applications and conducts visits to facilities in the Austin and adjacent areas.

For Federal Fiscal Year 2011, Veterans Education:

- Conducted 1,020 visits;
- Responded to 11,481 phone calls and email messages;
- Received and responded to 3,685 mail items;
- Reviewed and approved or disapproved 18,341 programs of education and training for Veterans;
- Mailed 19,584 information letters and brochures to recently discharged Veterans;
- Participated in 456 outreach activities; and
- Followed up on 230 denial of benefit letters sent to Veterans by the VA.

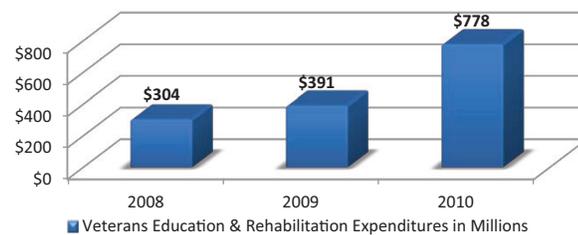
### The Texas Veterans Commission plays a critical role in the administration of the Hazlewood Act Exemption program.

In addition to federal VA educational benefits, the Veterans Education staff works closely with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board regarding the Hazlewood Act exemption program.

The Hazlewood Act exempts qualified Texas Veterans from payment of tuition and required

fees at public colleges and universities in Texas. With the establishment of the Hazlewood Legacy Act which was effective the fall 2009 semester, an eligible Veteran may waive his or her right to any unused hours and transfer the exemption to a child. With the changes in the Hazlewood Act Exemption program and the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, the number of phone calls and e-mails staff responded to increased from 5,000 in 2009 to 11,481 in 2011. Staff provides technical assistance to school officials, Veterans, and family members regarding the Hazlewood Act Exemption.

### Education Benefits Paid to Texas Veterans & Dependents



# FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE

Through the Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) program, TVC awards reimbursement grants in two categories: FVA General Assistance and Housing4TexasHeroes. Both categories offer funding to non-profit and local government organizations to provide direct services to Texas Veterans and their families.

## FVA grants funds for general assistance

Organizations receiving FVA General Assistance grants provide direct services to Texas Veterans and their families. The General Assistance grants address a broad range of needs that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Limited financial assistance;
- Counseling for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury;
- Housing assistance;
- Employment, training, education, and job placement assistance;
- Legal services;
- Transportation services;
- Family and child services; and
- Information and referral to other services.

In June 2012, the Commission established priorities to ensure widespread distribution of grants across the state and that a variety of services are provided in geographic areas. Priority is given to programs that provide:

- Quality grant applications;
- One of three service categories: financial assistance, counseling, or homeless/housing services;
- Widespread distribution of grants across the state; and
- Variety in geographic areas to ensure there is no over-saturation or duplication of services in areas of the state.

## Housing4TexasHeroes grants funds for housing

The Housing4TexasHeroes program was established in 2012, and through it, TVC awards grants to organizations that provide Veterans with permanent and temporary housing. During the 82nd Legislative Session, Gov. Rick Perry called on the Legislature to transfer the Veterans Housing Program from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) in order to increase

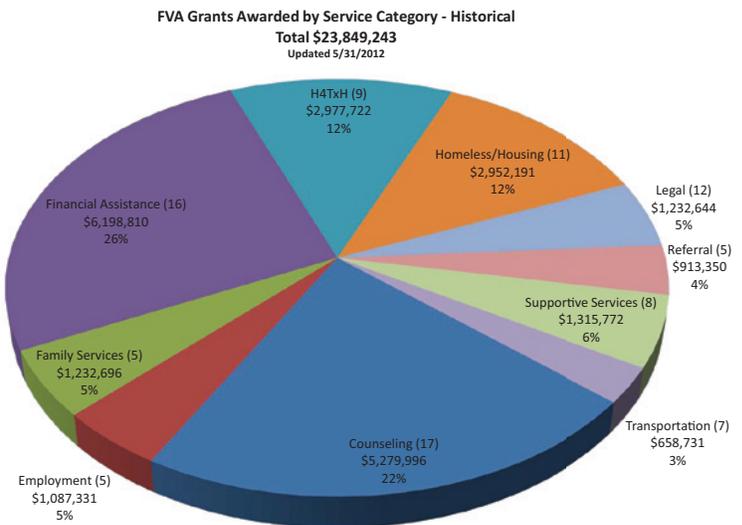
the number of veterans served. Through the leadership of Sen. Van de Putte, Sen. Davis, and Sen. Williams, the Legislature determined that the FVA would administer the program as of September 1, 2011. The General Appropriations Act provided \$1 million over the biennium, and TDHCA transferred \$2 million in existing funds already designated for Veterans' housing assistance. With a total of \$3 million for the program, the Veterans Housing Program was designated Housing4TexasHeroes Program by Gov. Rick Perry.

Organizations receiving grants for temporary housing may provide:

- Transitional housing to homeless Veterans;
- Short-term rental assistance to low income Veterans; or
- Assistance to families of Veterans who are undergoing long-term treatment at a medical facility in Texas.

Organizations receiving grants for permanent housing may provide disabled Veterans with a physical disability or severe injury:

- New home construction;
- Home renovation; or
- Home modification.



**More than 90 percent of the annual funding for FVA grants comes from the generosity and support of the people of Texas.**

## The FVA program is funded through five sources:

### 1. Veterans Cash Lottery Scratch-Off

This revenue source currently generates the majority of the funding. The Lottery Commission is very supportive of the FVA program, providing sales reports, coordinating press events, and updating the image of the Veterans Cash ticket.

### 2. DMV Vehicle Registrations

This revenue source was authorized during the 81st Legislative session and enhanced in the 82nd Legislative session. Its first two months of operation suggest that with proper awareness of this donation opportunity may generate as much as \$1 million each year.

### 3. State Employee Charitable Campaign

Promotion of the benefits and services provided to Texas Veterans with FVA funds could increase giving.

### 4. Online and Direct Individual Donations

In May 2011, the FVA program began accepting online donations through Texas.gov. Creating awareness has proved challenging and so far has generated little funding.

### 5. Texas Housing Trust Fund

The 82nd Legislature appropriated General Revenue from the Texas Housing Trust Fund to be used for Housing4TexasHeroes grants that was merged with funding dedicated for Veterans housing from TDHCA.



# As of April 2012, TVC has awarded 83 grants totaling more than \$21.5 million. This represents a nearly 500% increase in the number of grants over 18 months.

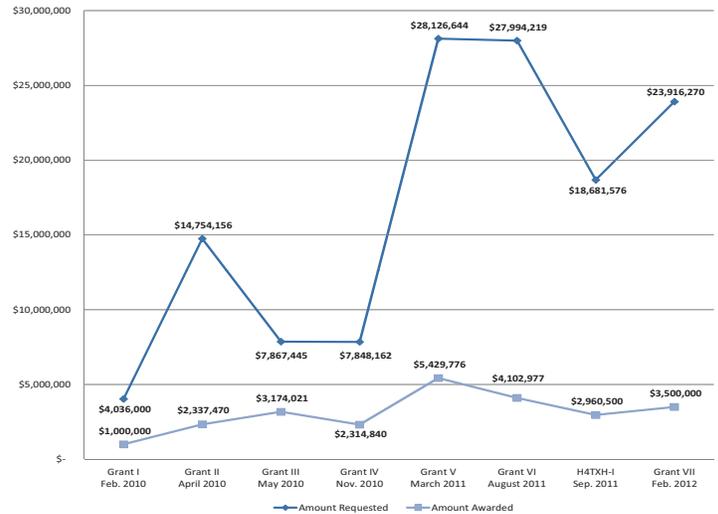
Since awarding the first grant in 2009, demand for FVA funds from local governments, Veterans Service Organizations and non-profit organizations has increased dramatically.

At the same time, revenue available to make grant awards has increased only slightly. The chart at right shows the demand for grants based on the amount requested from applicant organizations compared to the amount that TVC was able to award.

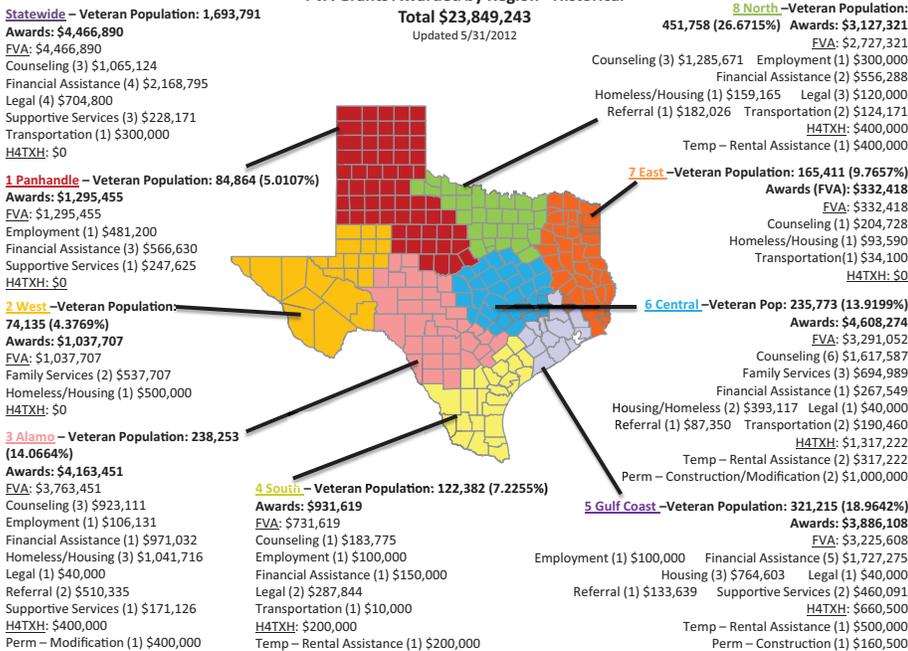
At the end of FY2010, there were 17 active grants totaling \$3.6 million. As of April 2012, the TVC awarded 83 grants totaling more than \$21.5 million. This represents a nearly 500% increase in the number of grants over 18 months.

The FVA accepts applications for grant funding twice each year. In the most recent application solicitation period (January 2012), 92 organizations submitted requests for over \$23.9 million. The agency was able to award \$2.3 million based on available revenue. In the prior application solicitation period, FVA announced the one-time Housing4TexasHeroes funds at the same time as the FVA General Assistance grants and received applications totaling \$46.7 million

Fund for Veterans' Assistance Grant Cycle Amounts



FVA Grants Awarded by Region - Historical  
Total \$23,849,243  
Updated 5/31/2012



from 146 organizations. TVC awarded 24 grants for \$7.1 million, \$3 million for housing.

Meeting the need for services delivered through local governments and non-profit organizations is essential to the agency's purpose and mission. Therefore, TVC will aggressively explore available methods for building awareness and increasing revenue and donations to the FVA program. These methods may include expanding use of the Texas Housing Trust Fund for Housing4TexasHeroes grants; increasing marketing and advertising of the Veterans Cash lottery ticket; building awareness of vehicle registration form and on-line donations opportunities; seeking out direct donations from individuals, corporations and foundations; applying for competitive federal pass-through grants that are consistent with the FVA purposes; and exploring further legislative funding mechanisms.

## During FY2011 FVA-funded organizations assisted 65,700 Veterans, dependents and surviving spouses.

In February 2012, the FVA program conducted its first customer service survey of organizations that were awarded FVA grants.

The survey was offered electronically to all current and former FVA organizations and the responses were anonymous. A total of 25 organizations completed the survey representing 35 percent of the total surveys sent.

Some highlights from the results were:

- 88 percent of the organizations indicated they were Satisfied

or Very Satisfied with their FVA grant experience.

- 96 percent indicated that FVA staff was knowledgeable, helpful and courteous.

When asked which area of the grant process needs the most improvement, 40 percent said Reimbursement Payments and 28 percent marked Reports. These issues were identified in 2011 by management and in January 2012 the FVA staff was reorganized to place more emphasis on these two grant areas.



# VETERANS OUTREACH

## **Communications and Veterans Outreach**

The Texas Veterans Commission recognizes the importance of communicating effectively with the 1.7 million Veterans that reside in Texas and, more broadly, with the general public. TVC also has a responsibility to coordinate and exchange ideas and resources with a multitude of federal, state, and local departments and agencies as well as non-profit and service organizations that contribute to the care of our Veterans. To that end, the agency, through Communications and Veterans Outreach, utilizes several means to efficiently communicate:

### **Veterans Outreach**

At the Texas Veterans Commission, the most important asset is the staff, 84 percent of whom are Veterans themselves. Almost all of the 300 employees, most distributed at claims offices and workforce centers throughout the state, consistently participate in Veterans outreach events within the communities they support. Communications and Veterans Outreach assists with the participation of Texas Veterans Commission employees in benefits fairs, warrior transition briefings, Yellow Ribbon events, Legislator-sponsored Veteran Town Halls, and a number of other events.

### **Veterans Summit**

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

### **Campus Outreach**

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

### **Publications**

The agency produces the *Journal*, a quarterly magazine devoted to Veteran issues. It provides a place to highlight the most recent news and information from within the agency's program areas. In addition, the *Journal* spotlights success stories and provides information on changes to legislation and policy that effect federal and state Veteran programs.

Another area of outreach includes the agency's bi-weekly electronic newsletter, E-Vets. E-Vets is currently distributed to almost 100,000 Veterans each month and contains relevant, contemporary information on Veteran issues and benefits.

## **Media Relations**

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

## **Social Media**

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

## **Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (TCCVS)**

Established by legislation passed during the 82nd Legislature, TCCVS was created to coordinate the activities of state agencies that assist Veterans, coordinate outreach efforts, and facilitate relationships among state, federal, and local agencies to identify and address issues affecting Veterans. The Texas Veterans Commission chairs the council, which is comprised of 15 state agencies. The TCCVS has been charged with producing a report of recommendations to the legislature in October 2012 which will focus on six areas: Health and Behavioral Health, Employment, Higher Education, Criminal Justice, Housing, and Women Veterans.



## Women Veterans Initiative

Texas has the second largest population of women Veterans in the United States, and women today comprise approximately 15 percent of our military force. As the number of women joining the military increases annually, the VA estimates that the number of women Veterans will increase from 7.7 percent today to 10 percent of the total Veteran population by 2020.

As Veteran demographics change, Veteran services and support must change to accommodate the needs of the Veterans. Women Veterans require gender specific healthcare, and many prefer female service providers. More women are finding themselves in combat operations while providing direct service and/or support to military troops and operations. As a result, women Veterans also require services which in the past were typically only provided to male combat Veterans.

Women Veterans are returning home to resume their roles in their families and communities. Traditionally, most women are the primary caregivers for their families and secondary financial providers. Women also may come home to assume and/or resume the responsibilities as the head of household in addition to their other roles. In today's economic environment, women Veterans must face the challenges and stressors of supporting themselves and their families. Women Veterans may have trouble finding equitable support services and programs for their families and themselves, and great difficulty transitioning back to civilian life.

Women Veterans may require additional support and services

to reduce or remove barriers to employment, and help them to transition back into civilian society. Women Veterans may also require access to additional services such as adequate and safe family housing, training, employment, childcare, and transportation that cater to the needs of women Veterans. These services benefit the woman Veteran, and promote her transition back to her family, community, and life.

In keeping with Texas' proud and progressive history of serving the evolving needs of Texas Veterans through the Texas Veterans Commission's services, the Legislature provided funding in the state budget for a Women Veterans Coordinator to address the needs of women Veterans in Texas.

### Mission of the Women Veterans Initiative

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

### Goals of the Women Veterans Initiative

1. Coordinate support with government and non-government programs and agencies in Texas.
2. Advocate services for women Veterans.
3. Raise awareness of Veteran benefits and services to women Veterans.
4. Increase support for women Veterans throughout Texas and the United States.

## Texas Veteran Entrepreneur & Business Development Initiative

The purpose of the Veteran Entrepreneur Initiative is to foster and promote Veteran Entrepreneurship throughout the state of Texas by bridging the gap between the resources available and Veteran entrepreneurs. Identifying funding sources, mentors, business opportunities and business education programs and providing that data in a one-stop-shop will help to demystify the business start-up process for would-be Veteran entrepreneurs and provide much needed support for fledgling Veteran-owned businesses.

Starting any business venture is a challenge, but because Veterans have spent most of their career in non-business environments, the learning curve for successful business ownership can be slightly steeper. The good news for Veterans is a wealth of information exists to help them start, grow and thrive as entrepreneurs, but currently there is no single resource exists for pulling all of the available resources together for 1) making them available to Veterans and 2) making Veterans aware of those resources.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 Survey of Business Owners (SBO), Veterans own approximately 9 percent of all private companies in the United States. That equates to more than 2.4 million businesses, with 5.9 million employees and receipts of \$1.2 trillion. In Texas, Veterans represent 7.2 percent of the overall population yet they own 9.2 percent of all private companies and employ nearly 500,000 with receipts totaling more than \$99 billion.

In November 2010, Karen Mills, Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator, said the SBA approved loans to help only 4,800 Veterans start businesses in Fiscal Year 2010. That's less than 2/100th of 1 percent of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans. More than 200,000 military personnel return to civilian life every year and the vast majority is either unaware of the programs available or lacks knowledge of how to leverage the available resources.

As an information resource for Veterans, the Texas Veterans

Commission's Veteran Entrepreneur Initiative will gather and distribute Veteran entrepreneur data in the state of Texas. The Veteran Entrepreneur Initiative will provide the following services:

- Pre-business plan workshops
- Business concept assessment
- Business plan development
- Entrepreneurial training and counseling
- Financial guidance
- Management assistance
- Marketing assistance
- Government procurement/certification assistance
- Information regarding franchise opportunities
- Mentorship opportunities
- Participation in a network of Veterans' business owners

The focus of the initial "start-up" phase of the initiative is the collection of data on the various disparate programs and services currently available. At this time, no comprehensive, single source of data exists. The start-up plan will include identifying franchise opportunities, financing mechanisms and targeted business education programs. Though labeled as a "phase," this identification process will be ongoing throughout the lifespan of the program. Investigating the efficacy of creating a statewide Veteran Business Outreach Center through a collaborative effort with the SBA will also occur during this phase.

The next phase of the initiative will be the creation of a network of business analysts and mentors that will include business executives, current business owners and retired executives or former business owners. The program will seek to identify Veterans in these roles but the focus will be on business experience and leveraging that experience to the benefit of current Veteran business owners and entrepreneurs.



# 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 23).*

### **A. Budgetary Goal – Assist Veterans with Receiving Benefits**

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

#### **A.1. Objective: Maintain Veterans' Benefit Awards**

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

##### Outcome Measures:

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

### **A.1.1. Strategy: Claims Representation & Counseling**

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

##### Output Measures:

1. Number of claims for Veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of Veterans with service-connected disabilities.
2. Number of claims for VA benefits filed to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled Veterans above the poverty level.
3. Number of claims for Veterans' benefits filed and developed on behalf of survivors and orphans of Veterans.
4. Number of active Veterans' benefits cases for Veterans, their survivors or their orphans as reported by VA represented by the Texas Veterans Commission.
5. Number of VA rating board decisions reviewed by Texas Veterans Commission counselors at the Houston and Waco Regional Offices.
6. Number of appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of Veterans, their widows or their orphans.

##### Efficiency Measures:

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

##### Explanatory Measures:

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



**A.1.2. Strategy: Veterans Employment Services**

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

Output Measure:

- 1. The number of Veterans receiving services from a TVC Veterans Employment Representative (VER).

**A.1.3. Strategy: Veterans Education**

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

Output Measure:

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

**A.1.4. Strategy: Veterans Assistance Grants**

Provide assistance to Veterans, their families and survivors using the proceeds of the Fund for Veterans’ Assistance or other resources.

Output Measure:

- 1. Number of Veterans, their dependents, and survivors of Veterans served through grant programs funded through the TVC Fund for Veterans’ Assistance.

**A.1.5. Strategy: Veterans Outreach**

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

Output Measures:

- 1. Number of Public Information briefings conducted statewide.
- 2. Number of Public Information items distributed statewide.

**B. Budgetary Goal – Indirect Administration**

**B.1.1. Strategy: Central Administration**

**C. Non-Budgetary Goal – Historically Underutilized Businesses**

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

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

Outcome Measure

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

**C.1.1. Strategy:**

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

Output Measure

- 1. Dollar value of HUB purchases.

**D. Non-Budgetary Goal – Customer Service**

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

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

Outcome Measure

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

**D.1.1. Strategy:**

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

Output Measure

- 1. Number of customer satisfaction surveys performed.



# PART IX:

## TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ALIGNMENT FOR THE TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

<b>1. Initiative:</b> TVC Paperless Claims	
<b>2. Description:</b> TVC counselors print Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) forms for a Veteran's signature. The signed forms are batched and mailed to a TVC regional office. Many other states submit electronic forms with electronic signatures to the VA. Implementing this technology will eliminate the time and expense associated with mailing Claim forms.	
<b>3. Associated Project(s):</b> N/A	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>4. Agency Objective(s):</b> This initiative will reduce the turnaround time and paperwork required to file a claim with the VA.	
<b>5. Statewide Technology Priority(ies):</b> Priority 2 – Data Management	
<b>6. Guiding Principles:</b> Innovation - Claims filed by TVC will be available to counselors and veterans in an electronic format.	
<b>7. Anticipated Benefit(s):</b> Operational efficiencies – The time required to submit a claim to a regional office will be reduced to one day.	
<b>8. Capabilities or Barriers:</b> This initiative will require additional funding.	

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



<b>1. Initiative:</b> Online Training and Testing	
<b>2. Description:</b> TVC plans to provide its employees and Veterans County Service Officers with an internet based solution for training.	
<b>3. Associated Project(s):</b> N/A	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>4. Agency Objective(s):</b> Online training will provide counselors throughout the state with initial and supplemental training on a timelier basis. Training is provided to counselors at biannual conferences. Online preparatory training will allow TVC to cover more detailed subject matter during training conferences.	
<b>5. Statewide Technology Priority(ies):</b> Priority 1 - Cloud	
<b>6. Guiding Principles:</b> Connect – Training will be expanded to counselors throughout the State. Deliver – Counselors will receive guidance on new initiatives prior to more in-depth training at conferences.	
<b>7. Anticipated Benefit(s):</b> More detailed subject matter will be covered at biannual training conferences. Veterans will receive advice from counselors who have been trained in the latest developments for veteran benefits.	
<b>8. Capabilities or Barriers:</b> For this initiative to be successful throughout the State, county offices will need internet access with sufficient bandwidth.	



# PART X: APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: AGENCY PLANNING PROCESS

Texas Veterans Commission Planning Committee

### Commissioners

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

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

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

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

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

### Staff

Thomas Palladino  
Colonel, US Army (Retired)  
Executive Director

Kyle Mitchell  
Deputy Executive Director

James O. Richman  
Director of Claims Representation & Counseling

Shawn Deabay  
Director of Veterans Employment Services

Rufus Coburn  
Director of Veterans Education

Sarah Tillman  
Interim Director of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance

Cruz Montemayor  
Chief Administrative Officer

H. Karen Fastenau  
General Counsel

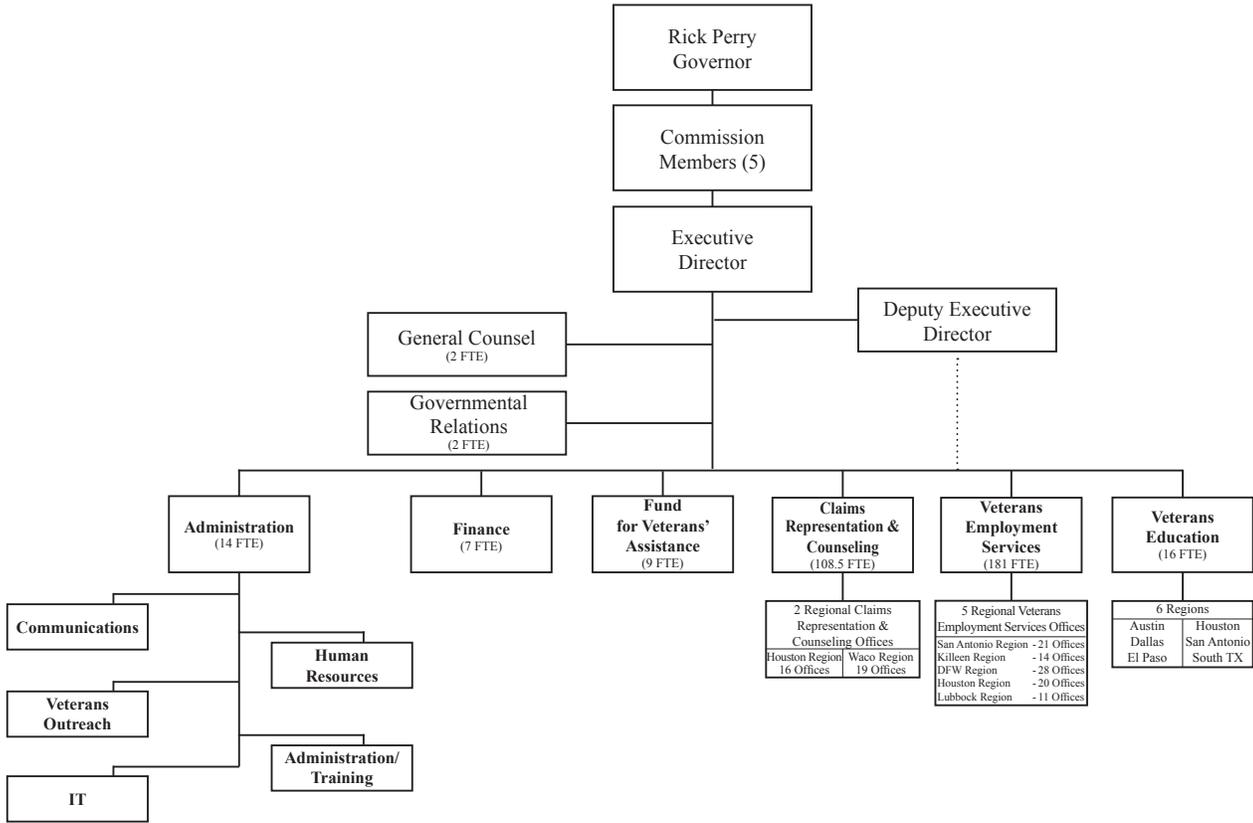
Irma Rodriguez  
Budget Analyst

### Planning Process

April 19, 2012	First draft prepared by staff submitted to Commissioners and available for public
April 30, 2012	Opportunity for public comment and Commissioner direction at Special Commission meeting
May 1 – May 20, 2012	Staff incorporates Commissioners' changes and provides second draft to Commissioners and stakeholders.
May 30, 2012	Opportunity for public comment and Commissioner direction at Third Quarterly Commission Meeting.
June 22, 2012	Strategic Plan is submitted to Governor's Office and Legislative Budget Board

## TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

May 2012



**APPENDIX C: FIVE YEAR PROJECTIONS FOR OUTCOMES**

Texas Veterans Commission  
 Outcome Projections  
 2013-2017

<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation to veterans with service-connected disabilities.</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>1,810</b>	<b>1,810</b>	<b>1,850</b>	<b>1,900</b>
<b>Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation and development for totally disabled, impoverished veterans.</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation for survivors or orphans of veterans.</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>The percentage of original or reopened claims submitted by the TVC granted by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Percent of Veterans Entered Employment.</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>64.5%</b>
<b>Percentage of Veterans Retained in Employment at Six Months.</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Percent of total dollar value of purchases to certified HUBs.</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Percent of Texas Veterans Commission clients who indicate that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.</b>	<b>97.2%</b>	<b>97.2%</b>	<b>97.2%</b>	<b>97.2%</b>	<b>97.2%</b>
<b>Percent of veterans county service officers who feel that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>95.2%</b>

**APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS**

**A. Goal: Assist Veterans with receiving benefits  
Through effective training and advocacy, provide effective claims representation, employment services, veterans education approval and assistance, and services through grants to Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors.**

**A.1. Objective: Maintain Veterans’ Benefits Awards**

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

<i>Outcome Measure</i>	<b>1. Amount of Monetary Awards (in millions of dollars) to Veterans with Service Disabilities</b>
<i>Short Definition:</i>	Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation of Veterans with service-connected disabilities.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	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.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than state target
<i>Outcome Measure</i>	<b>2. Amount of Monetary Awards (in millions of dollars) to Totally Disabled Wartime Veterans</b>
<i>Short Definition:</i>	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.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	Indicates the amount of VA pension payments in VA reports for non-service-connected disabilities to Texas resident Veterans who have appointed the Commission or an organization for which Commission personnel are the accredited representatives to represent them in their claim against VA. To be eligible for pension VA requires a Veteran to be deemed “permanently and totally disabled” by VA due to disabilities and have an income below a level set by VA annually, which is approximately the poverty line income level.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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.
<i>Methodology:</i>	Amount provided, as reported by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Reports, for one month is multiplied by three to calculate the quarterly performance. Quarterly performance results are added to determine the annual performance. The VA states that award amounts are consistent from one month to the next and the estimate for the quarter and the year are within a 5% accuracy range. This amount is expressed in millions and rounded to the nearest 100,000.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	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.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target
<i>Outcome Measure</i>	<b>3. VA Awards (in millions of dollars) to Survivors or Orphans of Veterans</b>
<i>Short Definition:</i>	Amount of monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation for survivors or orphans of Veterans.

<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	Indicates the amount of VA payments for pension and compensation in VA Reports to Texas resident survivors of Veterans who have appointed the Commission or an organization for which Commission personnel are the accredited representative to represent them in their claim against VA.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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.
<i>Methodology:</i>	Amount provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for one month is multiplied by three to calculate the quarterly performance. Quarterly performance results are added to determine the annual performance. The VA states that award amounts are consistent from one month to the next and the estimate for the quarter and the year are within a 5% accuracy range. This amount is expressed in millions and rounded to the nearest 100,000.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Data is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Commission is dependent on the VA to provide the data on a timely basis.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

**Outcome Measure 4. Percent of TVC Claims Granted by VA**

<i>Short Definition:</i>	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.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	Represents the success rate for claims filed prior to any further action (appeals, decision review by the VA at the regional office, responses to a notice of disagreement, etc.) by the TVC staff.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Logs maintained by TVC staff of initial VA rating decisions.
<i>Methodology:</i>	Decisions by the VA are reviewed at the TVC Regional Offices daily. Prior to finalizing the decision, the TVC staff must sign off on each decision on claims filed by Veterans appointing the TVC as their representative in their claim. From these reviews, daily logs are created which indicate the number of claims granted and the number denied. A monthly report is then compiled from these daily logs. Annual totals are derived from the monthly reports. The percentage of claims granted is calculated by dividing the number of granted by the total number of claims.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Data recorded depends on the reports of individual counselors from their reviews of VA decisions. However, on regular basis, managers can crosscheck logs.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

**Outcome Measure 5. Veterans Employment Services Employment Rate**

<i>Short Definition:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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.

<i>Methodology:</i>	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.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Reporting of UI wage and federal employment records lags well behind the period being reported. As a result this measure reports the entered employment rate for those clients who exit services up to one year prior to the reporting period. These reporting periods are consistent with Federal standards. Additionally, not all employers report UI wage records which limits the ability to determine whether a client entered employment. A client can exit more than once in a given year and can count in this measure each time they exit.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

**Outcome Measure 6. Veterans Employment Services Retention Rate**

<i>Short Definition:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	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.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Reporting of UI wage and federal employment records lags well behind the period being reported. As a result in this measure reports the retention rate for those clients who exit services up to one year prior to the reporting period. These reporting periods are consistent with Federal standards. Additionally, not all employers report UI wage records which limit the ability to determine whether a client retained employment. A client can exit more than once in a given year and can count in this measure each time they exit.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

Goal: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.1 - Claims Representation and Counseling

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

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

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

*Purpose/Importance:* This represents the number of claims filed through 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 on claims numbers, office source and type of claims, including a separate claim for each issue claimed, are collected in the case management system as claims are completed and signed by the Veteran at a TVC office or outreach function. This data is verified by staff in their respective regional office where the claim is sent to be submitted to the Veterans Administration (VA). Regional managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of claims on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.

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

*Calculation Type:* Cumulative

*New Measure:* No

*Desired Performance:* Higher than target

**Output Measure 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:* The number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against the VA by Texas Veterans to prove initial eligibility or to maintain and reestablish their eligibility for VA pension in order to raise or maintain their income above the poverty line. Includes claims sent to the Commission by Veterans County Service Officers for representation, review and/or development.

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

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

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

*Calculation Type:* Cumulative

*New Measure:* No

*Desired Performance:* Higher than target

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

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

*Purpose/Importance:* The number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against the VA by Texas survivors and/or orphans of Veterans to prove initial eligibility or to maintain and reestablish eligibility for VA pension or compensation benefits. Includes claims sent to the Commission by Veterans County Service Officers for representation, review and or development.

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

<i>Methodology:</i>	Data on claims numbers, office source and type of claim is collected in the case management system as claims are completed and signed by the Veteran at a TVC office or outreach function. This data is verified by staff in their respective regional office where the claim is sent to be submitted to the Veterans Administration (VA). Regional managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of claims on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Source of a significant number of these claims is Veterans County Service Officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge. Because of federal privacy laws, the ability to audit this data is limited.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

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

<i>Short Definition:</i>	Number of active Veterans' benefits cases as reported by VA for Veterans, their survivors, or their orphans represented by the Texas Veterans Commission.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	VA reports provided to the Commission.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	TVC depends on VA for information from reports provided.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

**Output Measure 5. Number of VA Decisions Reviewed**

<i>Short Definition:</i>	Number of VA Rating Board decisions reviewed by TVC counselors at the Houston and Waco Regional Offices.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	The number of VA Rating Board decisions reviewed by TVC counselors at the Houston and Waco Regional Offices.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Data is collected at the two TVC regional offices and recorded in a log.
<i>Methodology:</i>	Total number of log entries is added for each month.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Source of a significant number of these claims is Veterans County Service Officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

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

<i>Short Definition:</i>	Number of appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of Veterans, their survivors or their orphans.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	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.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Appeals filed for processing or that are prepared at the TVC regional offices are recorded on receipt.

<i>Methodology:</i>	Data on appeal numbers, office sources and type of appeal, including a separate appeal for each issue appealed, are collected in the case management system as appeals are completed and signed by the Veteran at a TVC office or outreach function. This data is verified by staff in their respective regional office where the claim is sent to be submitted to the Veterans Administration (VA). Regional managers or regional office supervisors review a sample of appeals on a monthly basis to ensure quality, technical correctness, and data accuracy.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Source of a significant number of these claims is Veterans County Service Officers and is dependent on their training and knowledge. Because of federal privacy laws, the ability for external auditors to certify this measure is restricted.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

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

<i>Short Definition:</i>	VA payments to Veterans represented by the Commission per dollar spent.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	The amount of payments to Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors represented by TVC per state dollar spent in the Claims Representation and Counseling program during a fiscal year.
<i>Data Source:</i>	TVC records and the VA.
<i>Methodology:</i>	The total of outcome measures 1, 2, and 3 for Goal 1, for a fiscal year is divided by total TVC state dollar expenditures for the Claims Representation and Counseling Strategy.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	Data for monetary recovery is provided by the VA.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Noncumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

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

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

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

<i>Short Definition:</i>	Percent of Veterans County Service Officers and Assistants who attend continuing education training conferences.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	Indicates the success of TVC training programs and the percent of Veterans County Service Officers (VCSO) attending at least one ongoing training conference per year.
<i>Data Source:</i>	Registration and completion records of TVC continuing education training.

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

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

*Calculation Type:* Noncumulative

*New Measure:* No

*Desired Performance:* Higher than target

Goal: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.2 – Veterans Employment Services

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

**Output Measure 1. 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. TWC’s Common Measures Performance Reporting System which pulls wage, client, and process data from various TWC information systems such as the Workforce Information System of Texas, Job Search Matching System, Work in Texas, the Learner Outcome Tracking System, the Unemployment Wage System and the Unemployment Insurance 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. Service 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: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.3 – Veterans Education

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

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

*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: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.4 – Veterans Assistance Grants

Provide assistance to Veterans, their families and survivors using the proceeds of the Fund for Veterans’ Assistance and other resources.

**Output Measure 1. Number of Veterans, Their Dependents, and Survivors of Veterans Served.**

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

*Purpose/Importance:* This measure provides an indication of how effective FVA grant programs are at providing services to Veterans, their dependents, and survivors.

*Data Source:* 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.

*Methodology:* Organizations receiving grant funds calculate by counting each Veteran, their dependents, and their survivors of Veterans that receive a FVA grant-funded service. TVC will add the number of Veterans, their dependents, and survivors of Veterans served from all program reports of submitting organizations to arrive at a total number of Veterans, their dependents, and survivors of Veterans served.

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

*Calculation Type:* Cumulative

*New Measure:* No

*Desired Performance:* Higher than target

Goal: A, Objective: A.1, Strategy: A.1.5 – Veterans Outreach

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

**Output Measure 1. The Number of Public Information Briefings Given**

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

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

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

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

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

*Calculation Type:* Cumulative

*New Measure:* No

*Desired Performance:* Higher than target

*Output Measure* 2. The Amount of Public Information Distributed

<i>Short Definition:</i>	The number of TVC brochures, television and radio public service announcements (PSA's) distributed statewide.
<i>Purpose/Importance:</i>	This measure addresses the distribution of TVC literature and public service announcements (PSAs) to Veterans in the state. The TVC currently prints six different brochures used for marketing purposes. The printed material is a vital part of promoting the TVC in that the brochures are often the initial contact made with Veterans. Brochures are distributed from both TVC and VCISO offices, mailed from headquarters when requested by individual Veterans and are distributed via other organizations that request brochures. The TVC distributes radio and television PSAs statewide. The PSAs are also an initial contact for Veterans to gather information about the TVC.
<i>Data Source:</i>	All brochures and PSAs are distributed from headquarters and call center employees log the numbers distributed.
<i>Methodology:</i>	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.
<i>Data Limitations:</i>	The source of data collection is dependable thus resulting in very little risk of error.
<i>Calculation Type:</i>	Cumulative
<i>New Measure:</i>	No
<i>Desired Performance:</i>	Higher than target

**B. Goal: Indirect Administration**

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

## APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

### OVERVIEW

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

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

### CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

The current Commission staff has the skills necessary to address business issues of the agency. A majority of the current workforce (84 percent) has military service. The Commission has a diverse workforce. The Commission workforce is 52 percent White, 23 percent Hispanic, 23 percent Black and 1 percent Other employees. Males comprise 69 percent of the workforce and females 31 percent.

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

The average turnover rate of the Commission in the five years from 2006 through 2010 was 17.94 percent. During this period, the turnover rate was as low as 16.1 percent in 2006 and reached a high of 21.7 percent in 2007. The Commission turnover rate was higher than the statewide turnover rate, which averaged 16.85 percent. 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.

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

Currently, 30 percent of the Commission's upper level management is eligible to retire. Although 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, key management has had recent turnover with anticipated longevity.

### 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.

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

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

## Strategy Development

### A. Goals

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

#### Development:

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

Offer employee training to help develop the critical skills. Continue to provide both internal and external classroom training, as well as online/DVD training to make training available to field employees and accommodating to employees' schedules. Continue to inform employees about training opportunities, including those offered by the TVC's Employees Assistance Program and by other agencies that TVC employees may attend at no or little cost.

Continue to provide thorough leadership training to all levels of agency managers, as well as potential managers.

Encourage managers to create programs that allow employees who are seeking new challenges to work on special projects, rotations and/or developmental assignments (to help them increase their knowledge/experience even if promotional opportunities are temporarily stagnant).

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

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

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

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

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

## B. Recruitment and Retention

### Recruitment:

Offer competitive salaries to the extent possible. Consider offering recruitment bonuses for hard-to-fill positions.

Broadly market TVC positions (which may include attending career fairs, placing advertisements in relevant newspapers, journals or other publications, posting jobs at targeted Internet sites, and coordinating with colleges/universities and other resources in the community) in an effort to achieve a qualified applicant pool.

Continue holding regular recruitment meetings in which employees are invited to brainstorm about how to recruit for posted positions.

Coordinate with employees familiar with targeted positions to seek assistance with recruiting.

Continue the TVC's summer intern/law clerk/volunteer program to provide individuals interested in public service with hands-on experience with TVC 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.

Offer training on employee retention strategies.

### Retention:

Make managers aware of the wide array of tools they may use to retain valuable employees, including utilizing a variety of employee recognition and reward options, offering flexible and challenging work/projects for staff to help increase their knowledge/experience, and emphasizing our strengths to employees. Our strengths include strong Survey of Employee Engagement scores, defined benefit/retirement plans, paid leave, stable employer, multifaceted programs in which to use/develop skills/abilities, and appealing/safe cities.

Remind managers of the different motivational interests of the various generations in the workforce so they can better motivate all of their employees. (For example, cross-functional, project-focused teams are thought to appeal to the motivational needs of the younger members of our workforce).

Emphasize the disproportionate turnover for employees who are under 4 years of experience and the resulting need to develop and work with newer/younger employees to make sure they are engaged and can see a path for them to grow and progress at the TVC.

## C. Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision

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

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

## FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE

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

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 future service to Veterans and their families. Currently Commission personnel have the necessary skills to perform their jobs due to the training made available to them. With the possible migration of Veterans to Texas over the next five years, the Commission may require additional Veterans services representatives to meet the demand. Requests for additional personnel will be for areas of the state where the projected demand for service is growing.

## APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND UTILIZATION

The Commission participated in the Survey of Employee Engagement (formally known as the Survey of Organizational Excellence) for the first time in the fall of 1999 and has continued participation. Ninety-seven percent of TVC employees participated in the survey in 2012 which is above average and an increase from the previous surveys. High participation indicates a strong commitment by the employees and a healthy overall morale. Agency participation rate has increased every year since 2004.

For FY 2012, the highest level of the survey assessment is The Strategic construct, which reflects employees' thinking about how the organization responds to external influences that should play a role in defining the organization's mission, vision, services and products. Implied in this construct is the ability of the organization to seek out and work with relevant external entities. High scores indicate employees view the organization as able to quickly relate its mission and goals to environmental changes and demands. It is viewed as creating programs that advance the organization and having highly capable means of drawing information and meaning from the environment. Maintaining these high scores will require leadership to continually assess the ability of the organization and employees at all levels to test programs against need and to continue to have rapid feedback from the environment.

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

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

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

The Quality construct focuses upon the degree to which quality principles, such as customer service and continuous improvement, are a part of the organizational culture. This construct also addresses the extent to which employees feel that they have the resources to deliver quality services. High scores indicate that employees feel the organization delivers superior products and services to its customers. In general, quality is a result of understanding the needs of customers or clients coupled with a continuous examination of products and processes for improvement. Essential to maintaining high levels of quality are the clear articulation of goals, the careful attention to changes in the environment that might affect resources or heightened competition and the vigorous participation by all members.

Constructs have been color coded to highlight the organization's areas of strength and areas of concern. The three highest scoring constructs are blue, the three lowest scoring constructs are red, and the remaining eight constructs are yellow. Each construct is displayed below with its corresponding score. Highest scoring constructs are areas of strength for this organization while the lowest scoring constructs are areas of concern. Scores above 350 suggest that employees perceive the issue more positively than negatively, and scores of 375 or higher indicate areas of substantial strength. Conversely, scores below 350 are viewed less positively by employees, and scores below 325 should be a significant source of concern for the organization and should receive immediate attention.

The Commission's areas of relative weakness included the constructs of Pay, Benefits and Information Systems. 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 any problems requires a determination of which of the above factors are serving to create the concerns. Triangulating low scores in Pay by reviewing comparable positions in other organizations and cost of living information and using the employee feedback sessions can make a more complete determination for the causes of low Pay scores.

The Benefits construct provides a good indication of the role the benefit package plays in attracting and retaining employees in the organization. It reflects employees' perceptions of how well their benefits package compares to those of other organizations. High scores indicate that employees view the benefits package positively. The benefits package (health care, vacation, retirement, etc.) is seen as appealing and providing appropriate flexibility. Important benefit items are available at a fair cost. To maintain these scores, it is important to regularly check benefits provided by competing organizations, as well as examine environment factors that may make existing benefits less desirable.

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.

## APPENDIX H: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLANNING

### Background

#### Veterans Employment Services

The Veterans Employment Services (VES) program assists Veterans in finding employment through job matching, resume assistance, and intensive services. The VES staff is primarily located in Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Workforce Centers and at various active duty military installations and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) facilities across the state. In addition to services at centers, VES also operates the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program to improve and expand employment opportunities for Veterans with disabilities, provide employment counseling to severely injured service members, spouses and caregivers through the REALifelines (RLL) program, and assist family members of active duty service members at military installations with Family Employment Assistance Counselors (FEAC). Ninety-nine percent of funding for VES is provided through a federal grant from the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS), with additional state General Revenue to support three FTEs for the FEAC program. The Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 (JVA) created a statutory formula for the allocation of DOL-VETS funds to the states. This formula is based on each state's relative proportion of Veterans seeking work. When the Fiscal Year 2012 funding projections are compared to the Program Year 2009 performance data, some important statistics emerge. Texas received 7 percent of the nation's Jobs for Veterans State Grant funding but accounted for 18 percent of the Veterans entering into employment after receiving assistance from VES staff. Figure 1 provides a comparison of the costs per hire in the top 10 funded states.

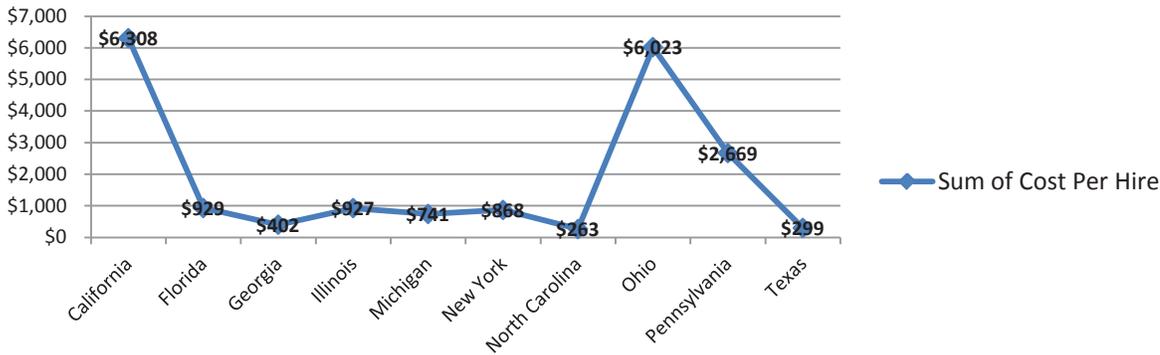


Figure 1. Top 10 State Cost Per Hire Comparison

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

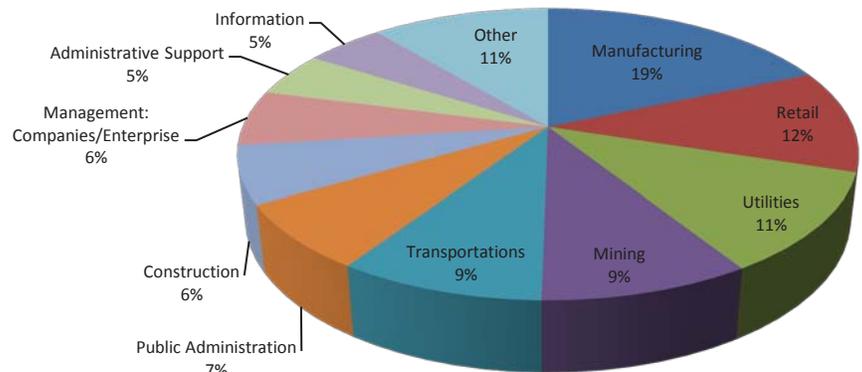
#### Initiative I: Enhance employer services and relations

TVC expanded the Business Outreach Program by hiring three additional representatives in July 2011 and designating them as Veterans Business Representatives (VBR). The VBRs are strategically located in Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, San Antonio and Austin and are charged with building relationships with large companies and influential Texas employers in an effort to promote the hiring of highly qualified Veterans. This initiative's strategic approach has three phases. The first phase was to make initial contacts with TWC business service units (BSU) and managers. Outreach to employers and employer organizations such as Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) and local Chambers of Commerce were essential in marketing TVC employment services. Through media coverage and active marketing, TVC has received a large number of phone calls and email correspondence from across Texas and the nation from employers eager to hire skilled Veterans.

Since August 2011, the VBRs have conducted 492 outreach activities to employers; 440 of those were initial contacts to employers. This outreach initiative has resulted in 588 Veteran job opportunities with hired Veterans earning an average salary of \$44,000. Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the industries these job opportunities comprise. As the military continues to draw down troops over the next few years, the VBR program will bridge the gap between job-seeking Veterans and employers that are eager for Veteran employees.

Because of the high value of efficiently finding the right fit for job vacancies to a business, phase two includes increasing the hiring rate for Veteran job referrals. Helping employers fill job vacancies provides the greatest potential to positively affect employer relations and improve the well being of

Figure 2. VBR Managed Job Opportunities



all Veterans. In coordination with TWC, our staff will work to increase fill rates for Individualized Job Developments and WorkInTexas.com job postings. From start to placement, staff will communicate that our goal is obtaining meaningful employment for our Veterans. The message to Veterans, qualified spouses, community and partners is “we are here to help you find, get, and keep a job.” Two tools used to meet this objective will be applicant tracking and increased employer follow up.

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

Phase three of this process is continued feedback in order to meet the employers’ needs. VES will continue to administer customer satisfaction surveys to verify that VERs are well positioned amongst prospective employers, and that employers are completely satisfied. Additionally, VER will continue to evaluate Local Market Information to determine employment trends. TVC also conducted an employer satisfaction survey six months after the implementation of the VBR program to provide a baseline for process improvement. Response and satisfaction rates from the initial survey are presented in Figure 3.

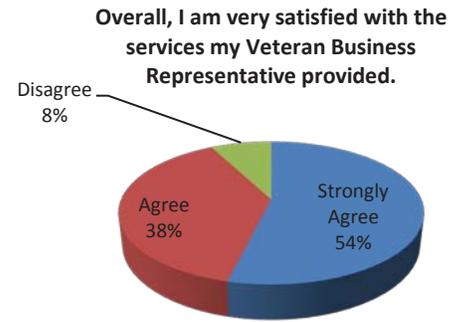
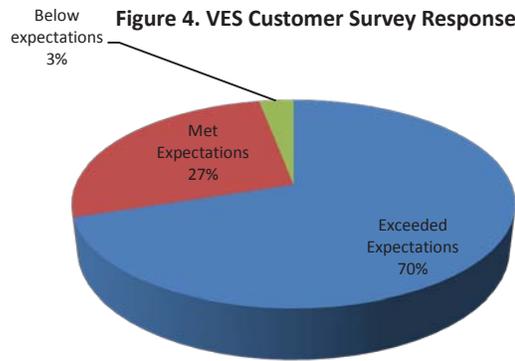


Figure 3. Employer Survey Results

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

**Initiative I: Increase the number of Veterans served by VES staff**

**Figure 4. VES Customer Survey Responses**



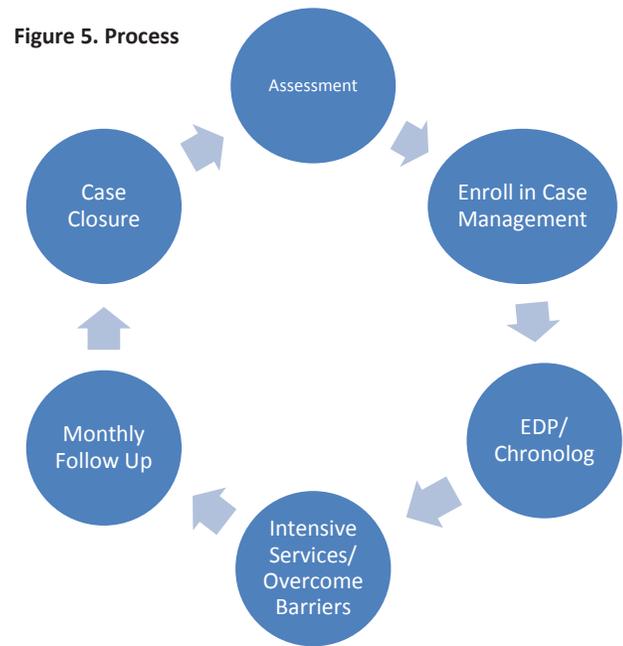
The goal of VES is to ensure that more Veterans are aware of the full range of employment service programs and are using them for maximum benefit. This initiative will encompass two strategies: more outreach to targeted groups and improving staff procedures and training for better efficiency. The outreach strategy will focus on reaching unemployed Veterans who are unaware of the services provided by VES staff. Word of mouth is one of the best marketing tools in the world. TVC takes full advantage of that through the VES outreach program. Knowing that Texas is facing an influx of Veterans, most of whom will be looking for employment, it is imperative that systems and processes are in place to handle the increase in Veteran clients. VES already has an extensive training program that provides staff with the tools necessary to soften the challenging economic climate. VES has adopted a training program that includes the National Veterans’ Training Institute (NVTI), located in Denver, Colorado, as its primary source for training VES staff. Also, VES continues to refine staff training by ensuring Initial Training is provided to employees

within six months of their hire date. This training creates a solid base of knowledge and educates new VES staff on proper procedures, use of the Texas’ automated job matching system, administrative requirements, performance measures, case management documentation and other issues necessary for VES staff to perform their jobs effectively. Other trainings offered are regional level training, managers level training and issue specific training based on need. While training continues to be the cornerstone to VES’s success, it is important that the VES training program continues to evolve to meet the changing Veteran demographics of the state.

When attempting to increase the number of Veterans served, one concern raised is the difficulty maintaining a high level of customer service. According to the customer satisfaction survey, shown in figure 4, VES staff services meet or exceed most clients’ expectations. It is important that the same level of customer satisfaction continues in the future.

### Initiative II: Increase the quality of Case Management documentation

Issues affecting job readiness extend beyond simple job searching skills and the labor market to influencing Veterans before they complete their first job application. The primary purpose of intensive services is to provide Veterans with specific resources to overcome barriers to employment. The case management process is the facilitation and coordination of these services at the community level. Figure 5 provides an explanation of how this process works. Veterans who have one or more barriers to employment, without the resources to take care of those barriers, are considered for case management. In an effort to improve uniformity in case management documentation, VES developed a quality assurance checklist that serves as both a guide and a monitoring tool. VES also implemented the Veterans Case Management System. This stand-alone system provides a consistent case management format and encompasses all case management elements required by DOL-VETS. This system allows VES to improve the quality of Case Management files by allowing files to be remotely monitored by supervisors. Recently revised personal performance standards set forth not only a quality assurance requirement but a requirement for a positive outcome.



### Initiative III: Follow-up Procedures

In an effort to increase Veteran employment outcomes, VES has implemented follow-up procedures using The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) reports provided by the TWC. The procedure requires a 30-day and 60-day follow-up with Veterans who received a qualifying service within the last 90 days. Since implementation, TVC has seen an increase in performance outcomes. TVC will continue to improve on follow-up procedures and ultimately increase employment outcomes.

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

### Initiative I: Promote partnerships and agency awareness

Partnership and collaboration are two of the most valuable tools VES has. There are several organizations that are strategically placed to be strong allies and advocates for Veterans employment related issues. Greater collaboration between VES and these agencies will lead to more employment-based outcomes for Veterans. VES's most recognizable partners are the members of the Texas Workforce Development System. VES's primary method of service delivery is through local workforce solution centers and may include Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training opportunities, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and support services such as child care and transportation. VES staff also coordinates with local Business Services to outreach to employers and participate in events such as job fairs and community events. In 2011, the Texas Workforce Investment Council asked the twenty-eight workforce boards to describe their most successful strategy for increasing employment outcomes for Veterans. Partnering with TVC employment staff was the second most frequently mentioned strategy, behind only providing priority of service. This speaks to the great partnerships already in place.

A direct example of how multiple agency collaboration can improve the lives of Veterans is the Veteran Homelessness Prevention Demonstration (VHPD) Project. The VHPD program is a joint partnership with VA, Texas Veterans Commission and the Salvation Army Austin. This program works to prevent homelessness by intervening before homelessness occurs. The primary groups this program is marketed to are Veterans returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, female Veterans and Veterans with children. Figure 6 provides a demographic breakdown of the eighty-eight cases opened since program implementation. Once selected for this project Veterans may receive employment assistance from VES staff and short term/time-limited housing support if needed. Employment counseling is required for job-ready Veterans and is conducted at Texas Workforce Centers. Supportive services for housing may consist of rental assistance where there is a current lease with the Veteran listed on the lease. Veterans receive case management to address medical and mental health needs. This example illustrates how VES is able to direct resources and focus staff on increasing economic opportunities for Veterans increasing the communication and collaboration with like minded organizations.

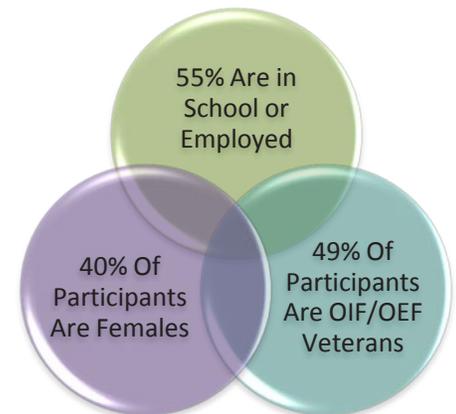
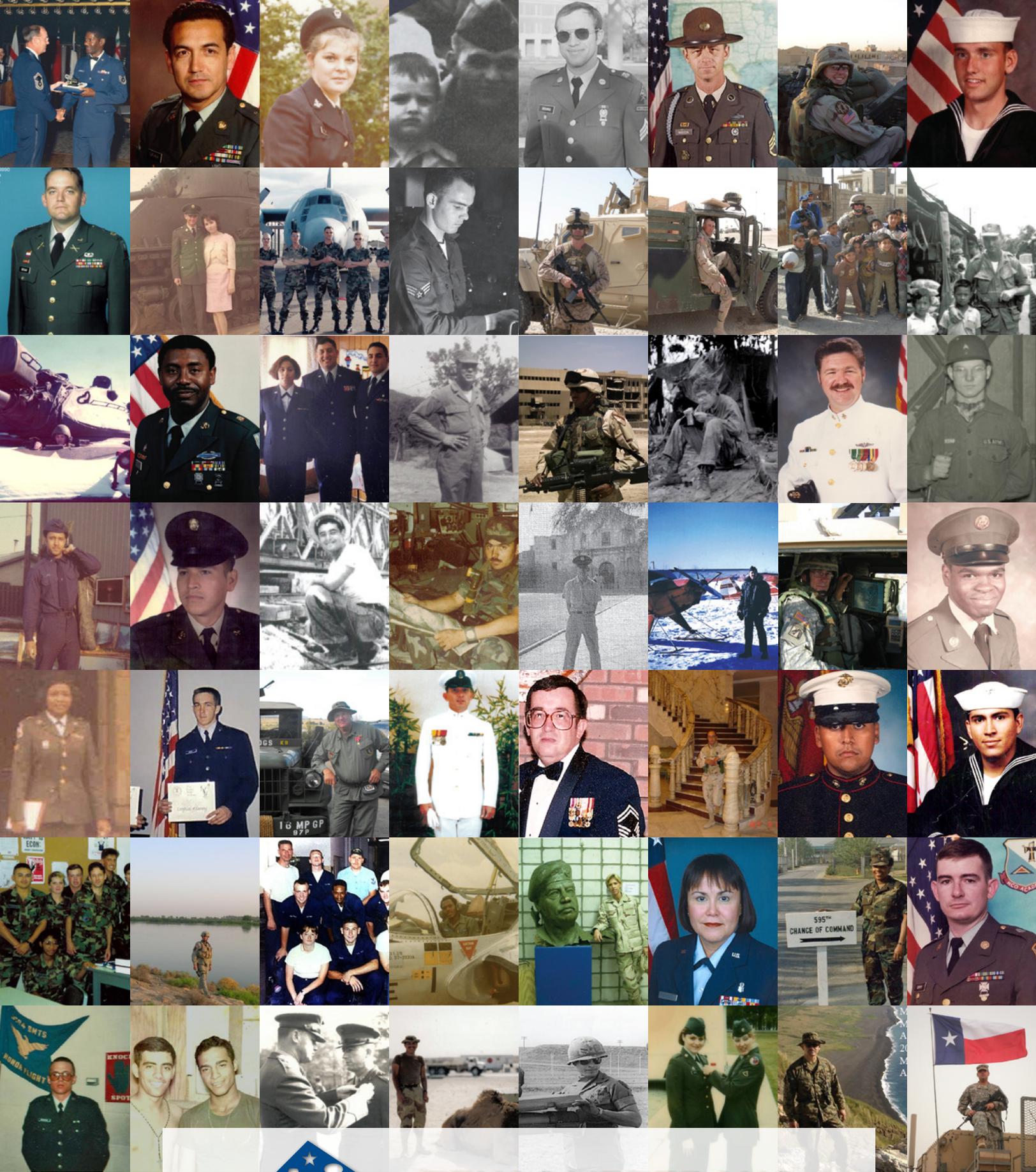


Figure 6. Central Texas VHPD Demographics



# TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION