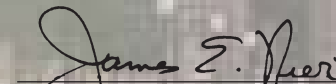




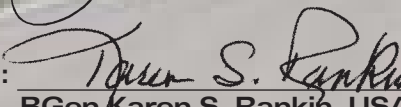
Texas Veterans Commission **STRATEGIC PLAN** **2009 - 2013** **June 27, 2008**

MEMBER	DATE OF TERM	HOMETOWN
BGen Karen S. Rankin, USAF (Ret.), Chair	December 31, 2009	San Antonio, TX
T.P. O'Mahoney, Vice Chairman	December 31, 2011	Dallas, TX
Ezell Ware, (BG) (CA) (Ret.), Secretary	December 31, 2011	Austin, TX
Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Member	December 31, 2013	Corpus Christi, TX
John B. McKinney, Member	December 31, 2013	El Paso, TX

Signed:


James E. Nier, Executive Director

Approved:


BGen Karen S. Rankin, USAF (Ret.), Chair

*The Statewide Strategic Planning
Elements for
Texas State Government*



Securing Our Future

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

STRATEGIC PLAN For the 2009-2013 Period

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I. Statewide Vision, Mission and Philosophy

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

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

THE MISSION OF TEXAS STATE GOVERNMENT

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

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

THE PHILOSOPHY OF TEXAS STATE GOVERNMENT

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

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

Finally, state government should be humble, recognizing that all its power and authority is granted to it by the people of Texas, and those who make decisions wielding the power of the state should exercise their authority cautiously and fairly.

II. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS

Economic Development

Priority Goal:

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

Benchmarks:

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

III. Agency Mission and Philosophy

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

AGENCY MISSION

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

AGENCY PHILOSOPHY

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

IV. External/Internal Assessment

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

EXTERNAL/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

AGENCY SCOPE AND FUNCTION

The Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2009-2013 of the Texas Veterans Commission is the result of a collaborative effort of the TVC staff and Commissioners, stakeholders, veterans' organizations and other interested parties (Appendix A, Planning Process, Page 41). More so than any time in the Commission's seventy-nine year history, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) is the focal point for veterans' assistance in the State. Not only is the Commission the sole State of Texas Agency charged with responsibility for helping Texas veterans experiencing difficulties in dealing with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), but also, the Texas Veterans Commission is the focal point for veterans who are seeking employment. On April 1, 2006, TVC transferred the Veterans Employment Services (VES) from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). This transfer added the responsibility for the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) grants to the TVC's responsibilities for veterans' assistance. To further emphasize the importance of TVC's role in assisting veterans, Governor Perry transferred the Veterans Education program (State Approval Authority) by executive order on October 1, 2006.

The TVC operates under the provisions of Chapter 434, Texas Government Code. The agency was established in 1927 as the State Service Office to assist veterans of the Indian

Wars, Spanish-American War and World War I. The State Service Office was established because of complaints by Texas veterans about the complexity of the veterans' claims process, insensitivity of the Veterans Bureau (predecessor of the Veterans Administration) and Federal bureaucratic red tape. After World War II (1947), the agency was renamed and restructured as the Veterans Affairs Commission. This legislation also established a system of veterans' county service officers, and mandated the Commission to train the veterans' county service officers and assistants and coordinate a statewide Veterans Assistance Program. The 1947 legislation also provided that the State Approving Agency would be part of the TVC. However, subsequent legislation transferred the State Approving Agency to the Texas Education Agency. It is a welcome development that the State Approving Agency has come home to the Commission, the agency where it started its life in 1947. The Commission was renamed the Texas Veterans Commission in 1985. In 1989, the Commission was given greater responsibility for training and certification of the veterans' county service officers, as mandated with the passage of Senate Bill 252 (71st Legislature, Section 434.038, Texas Government Code). Reference Appendix B, Organizational Chart, Page 42.

Prior to the establishment of the TVC the federal government mandated that veterans would receive employment preference and job assistance. On October 3, 1944, *The War Remobilization and Reconversion Act* established the Re-employment and Re-training Administration for veterans in DOL.

Responsibility for employment assistance was given to the states. Following the Vietnam War, the DVOP and LVER programs were created as part of the continuance and expansion of the G.I. Bill. The programs were created to provide dedicated employment and training services to veterans. The DVOP and LVER programs have remained relatively intact since their inception more than 25 years ago. Program services and functions are focused on providing intensive employment related services to veterans most in need. Program administrators envision that the need for these services will continue, and veterans will need support.

Congress established State Approving Agencies several years after passing the GI Bill of Rights in 1944. Congress recognized that States are really the guardians of education and that each state has a right and responsibility to oversee what is offered within its borders. As a result, a triangular relationship was established with the State Approving Agencies approving the programs and policies, VA paying the benefits and the schools/employers providing the training. In 1952, the law was amended to include “enforcement” as a State Approving Agency activity and charged the States and VA to give particular attention to fraudulent and criminal activities in the administration of the GI Bill. In summary, State Approving Agencies are the guardians of the GI Bill and provide consumer protection for the veterans.

The TVC has always provided indispensable services for Texas veterans through statewide dissemination of vital information on veterans’ rights and entitlement programs; in depth, professional claims assistance for all federal and state veterans’ programs and professionally delivered training and certification programs for all veterans’ county service officers and assistants of Texas. The TVC will deliver the same level of commitment to its newest programs, Veterans Employment Services and

Veterans Education. In every way, the delivery of services to our State’s veterans is enhanced because of the synergy created by the addition of the Veterans Employment Services and the Veterans Education Programs to the TVC. The added value to veterans by having the services of the three programs in one agency is significant.

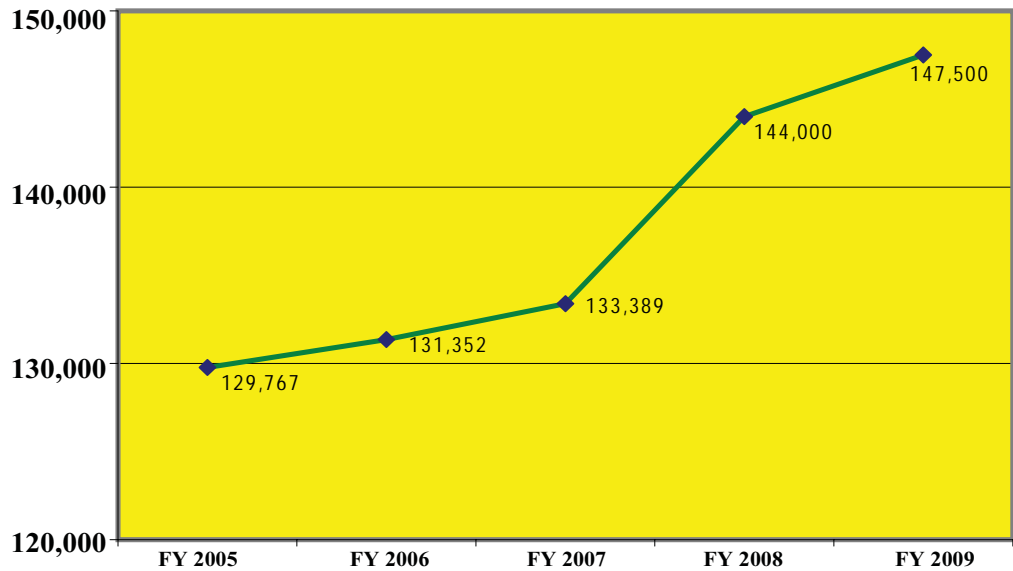
Advisory Committees

In 2008, the TVC began the process of seeking advice from stakeholders in the areas of communication with veterans, improving employment services and ways to enhance the value of the Fund for Texas Veterans. The membership in these groups was solicited by TVC staff and commissioners during the spring of 2008. The initial selection to join the advisory committees was made on May 14, 2008. In the period covered by this plan, TVC is expecting the advisory committees to contribute significantly to developing methodologies to better serve the veteran population in Texas.

Veterans Claims Representation and Counseling Services

This program counsels and assists Texas veterans with gaining their rights and entitlements in all areas of veterans’ benefits. The primary focus is veterans’ assistance. This assistance is directed toward ensuring that all Texas veterans receive every benefit to which they are entitled; and, as a corollary benefit, increase the federal payments to Texas veterans and their survivors, thereby benefiting the economy of the State of Texas. This is accomplished by counseling potential beneficiaries concerning their entitlements, helping them apply for that entitlements, and preparing the evidence which will prove their entitlements. Counseling is conducted in Commission field offices throughout the State,

CHART I
Claims Representation & Counseling
Caseload Growth
FY 2005 - FY 2009



Source: FY 2005-2007 Data Provided by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; FY 2008-2009 TVC Targets

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

A comprehensive program needs to extend service and claims assistance for financial benefits to disabled veterans and survivors who are unable to come to a Texas Veterans Commission office or county service office. Texas Veterans Commission veterans' counselors are stationed at established field offices with assignments concentrated on outreach service to Texas State Veterans' Homes, institutions and other related facilities throughout the State. Services are provided through briefings, individual counseling and review of patient medical records. Incarcerated veterans are assisted with educational benefit applications

and claims for VA benefits. The Commission assists veterans seeking admission to Texas State Veterans' Homes by providing assistance in applying for VA benefits. Institutionalized patients receiving mental health care, nursing home residents and helpless children are assisted in applying for VA pension or compensation benefits. Eligible recipients in under served areas are provided all Texas Veterans Commission services.

This coordinated effort of the Commission and the veterans county service officers, coupled with marketing and outreach services, has made the Commission's Claim Representation and Counseling program the most effective of the seven most populous states.

The Commission's Claims Representation and Counseling program directs special outreach efforts towards those veterans most in need of assistance, i.e. totally disabled veterans who are impoverished. VA has a benefit program to

provide financial assistance to these veterans. However, the benefit, like all VA benefits is not automatic. Application for the benefit must be made and eligibility proven. Through direct outreach at VA hospitals, clinics, State nursing homes and field offices, public information activities and a strong referral system, the Commission proactively seeks eligible disabled veterans. It then assists the veterans with their claims, represents them before VA and sees their claims through to final authorization for payment. The Commission also operates proactively in pursuing similar benefit programs for veterans whose disabilities are ruled as service-connected and for the widows and orphans of veterans. This is the principal reason the State of Texas leads all other large States in monetary recovery of veterans' compensation and pension benefits (Table I).

In 2008 the Commission established an office at Brooke Army Medical Center for the purpose of representing active duty soldiers, principally from Operation Iraqi Freedom

and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) veterans, before the Physical Evaluation Boards. The program has met with such initial success that the agency has been approached to duplicate it for the Air Force at Lackland, AFB, which would require an additional counselor and funding.

Veterans Employment Services

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

Effective April 1, 2006, the Texas Veterans Commission completed the transfer of the DVOP and LVER grant from the TWC. This grant funds the Veterans Employment Services program operated by the Texas Veterans Commission.

TABLE I

**MARKET PENETRATION
PER CAPITA VA EXPENDITURES FOR COMPENSATION AND PENSION
& RECIPIENTS PER 1,000 VETERANS
SEVEN MOST POPULOUS STATES
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2007**

	VETERAN POPULATION	VETERANS RECEIVING COMPENSATION OR PENSION	COMPENSATION & PENSION EXPENDITURES (\$000)	AVERAGE COMPENSATION & PENSION PAYMENT ¹	COMPENSATION & PENSION RECIPIENTS PER 1000 VETERANS
TEXAS	1,707,365	273,852	\$3,215,501	\$1,883	160.39
Florida	1,746,539	248,905	\$2,755,423	\$1,578	142.51
California	2,131,939	258,923	\$2,828,302	\$1,327	121.45
New York	1,065,749	119,373	\$1,255,771	\$1,178	112.01
Pennsylvania	1,057,073	107,516	\$1,166,975	\$1,104	101.71
Ohio	957,889	102,775	\$1,029,533	\$1,075	107.29
Illinois	841,679	74,821	\$736,604	\$875	88.89

¹ per capita: Compensation and pension payments / veteran population)

Source: US Department of Veterans Affairs: *Veterans Benefits Administration Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity*

This program assists veterans in finding employment through job matching and intensive services. It also provides Transition Assistance Program (TAP) briefings to National Guard, Reserve and regular military personnel preparing to leave military service and operates the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program to improve and expand employment opportunities for veterans with disabilities.

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

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

Texas facilitates the TAP workshops at 13 TAP sites in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Defense and DOL-VETS. All TAP facilitators must attend and successfully complete TAP facilitator training before

conducting TAP workshops. TVC will coordinate with DOL-VETS to monitor TAP participant surveys for all new facilitators. Additionally, TVC plans to train existing staff as backup TAP facilitators as training slots become available.

The TAP workshops, which last two to three days, provide information on VA benefits, job search techniques, interviewing skills, translation of military duties into civilian job skills, resume preparation and labor market information. The TAP workshops are conducted an average of 17 times per month statewide.

TAP workshops are conducted at the following 13 military installations:

- Fort Hood, Killeen
- Fort Bliss, El Paso
- Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio
- Lackland AFB, San Antonio
- Corpus Christi NAS, Corpus Christi
- Dyess AFB, Abilene
- Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo
- Ingleside NAS, Ingleside
- Randolph AFB, San Antonio
- Joint Reserve Center, Fort Worth
- Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls
- Brooks City Base, San Antonio
- Laughlin AFB, Del Rio

As a full partner with VA's VR&E Services, TVC assigns staff to designated VA facilities to assist Chapter 31 disabled veterans with intensive employment assistance. There are VR&E locations in Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Killeen, Lubbock, McAllen, San Antonio and Waco.

Disabled veterans enrolled in the Chapter 31 program attend VA-funded vocational and educational training courses to increase their skills. Graduates not only have access to workforce center services but also VA-funded subsidized employment. Within 90 days of a

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

Veterans Education

By federal law, each governor is asked to designate an agency within the state as the State Approving Agency. In an effort to centralize services to veterans, Governor Perry transferred the Veterans Education program to the Texas Veterans Commission effective October 1, 2006. As the State Approving Agency for Texas, the Texas Veterans Commission is under contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to determine those programs of education and training within the state which may be approved for veterans training. TVC approves all programs for Chapter 30 (Active Duty), Chapter 32 (Post Vietnam Veterans' Educational Assistance Program or VEAP), Chapter 35 (Dependents' Educational Assistance Program), 1606 (Selected Reserve), and Chapter 1607 (Reserve Educational Assistance Program or REAP) educational benefits. Through an approval process, TVC ensures that institutions and employers are in compliance with federal guidelines and are qualified to provide the type of training offered. TVC also continues to monitor approved programs by conducting annual on-site visits to all facilities that have veterans receiving benefits. This is how we determine if schools and employers are enforcing and abiding by the approved policies and procedures and if veterans are being certified for benefits correctly.

The federal government funds approximately 93% of this program. Since 1995, the Veterans Education program has received general revenue funds to assist in covering additional indirect expenses. VA reimburses the

Commission for all reasonable and necessary expenses (salary, fringe, travel, and outreach) incurred in approving and regulating veterans education and training programs in Texas. The Commission also receives a nominal administrative expense allowance to cover all other operating expenses.

There are 12.5 FTEs assigned to the Veterans Education program: 7.5 in Austin, two in the Dallas area, two in the Houston area, and one in the San Antonio area. The field staff telecommutes. The Program Specialists in Austin are responsible for processing all approval applications received and conducting visits to facilities in the Austin and surrounding areas. The field staff is responsible for conducting visits in their assigned areas with a heavy emphasis on marketing and outreach to prospective schools and employers.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2007, Texas ranked second behind California in the number of students receiving VA educational benefits with a total of 42,173. In FFY07, the Texas Veterans Commission:

- Reviewed and approved over 16,000 programs of education and training for veterans
- Conducted 770 visits to schools and employers throughout the State
- Mailed out 23,448 information letters and brochures to recently discharged veterans
- Followed up on 197 denial of benefit letters sent to veterans by VA
- Contacted/visited 157 prospective employers/schools
- Mailed GI Bill information to 660 prospective employers/schools
- Received and responded to 1,638 calls and e-mails from veterans, institutions, and employers

The State of Texas leads all other large States in per capita payments of veterans

TABLE II
TEXAS LEADS MAJOR STATES IN PER CAPITA PAYMENTS OF
VETERANS EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
BENEFITS

Seven Most Populous States
Federal Fiscal Year 2007

STATE	VETERAN POPULATION	VETERANS EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION EXPENDITURES	PER CAPITA PAYMENTS*
Texas	1,707,365	\$363,398,000	\$213
Florida	1,746,539	\$374,780,000	\$176
California	2,131,939	\$185,733,000	\$174
New York	1,065,749	\$268,488,000	\$154
Pennsylvania	1,057,073	\$120,595,000	\$143
Ohio	957,889	\$102,429,000	\$107
Illinois	841,679	\$108,038,000	\$102

* Per capita: Veterans education and vocational rehabilitation payments / veteran population

Source: US Department of Veterans Affairs: Veterans Benefits Administration Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity

education and vocational rehabilitation benefits (Table II).

Statewide Priorities and Benchmarks

The activities of the Texas Veterans Commission have a positive impact on the statewide priority goals and benchmarks. This contribution is made in the context that the agency focuses its efforts on the most deserving members of our State's population. Those men and women who have served the cause of preserving our Nation's independence in time of war and those widows and orphans who have lost their loved ones to the service of the United States are the most deserving citizens of this State. Because of the large population of veterans and their families, assistance to them reflects positively on the entire State population.

The Texas Veterans Commission contributes significantly to the following statewide benchmarks:

Economic Development

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

In fact, if, on average, Texas veterans received the same amount of compensation as the average amount paid to those veterans in the six other most populous states listed in Table I, the Federal VA payments received by Texas veterans would be one billion dollars less than the amount that is currently paid to them. This not only has a positive effect on the veterans population of the state but also has a collateral positive impact on the state wide

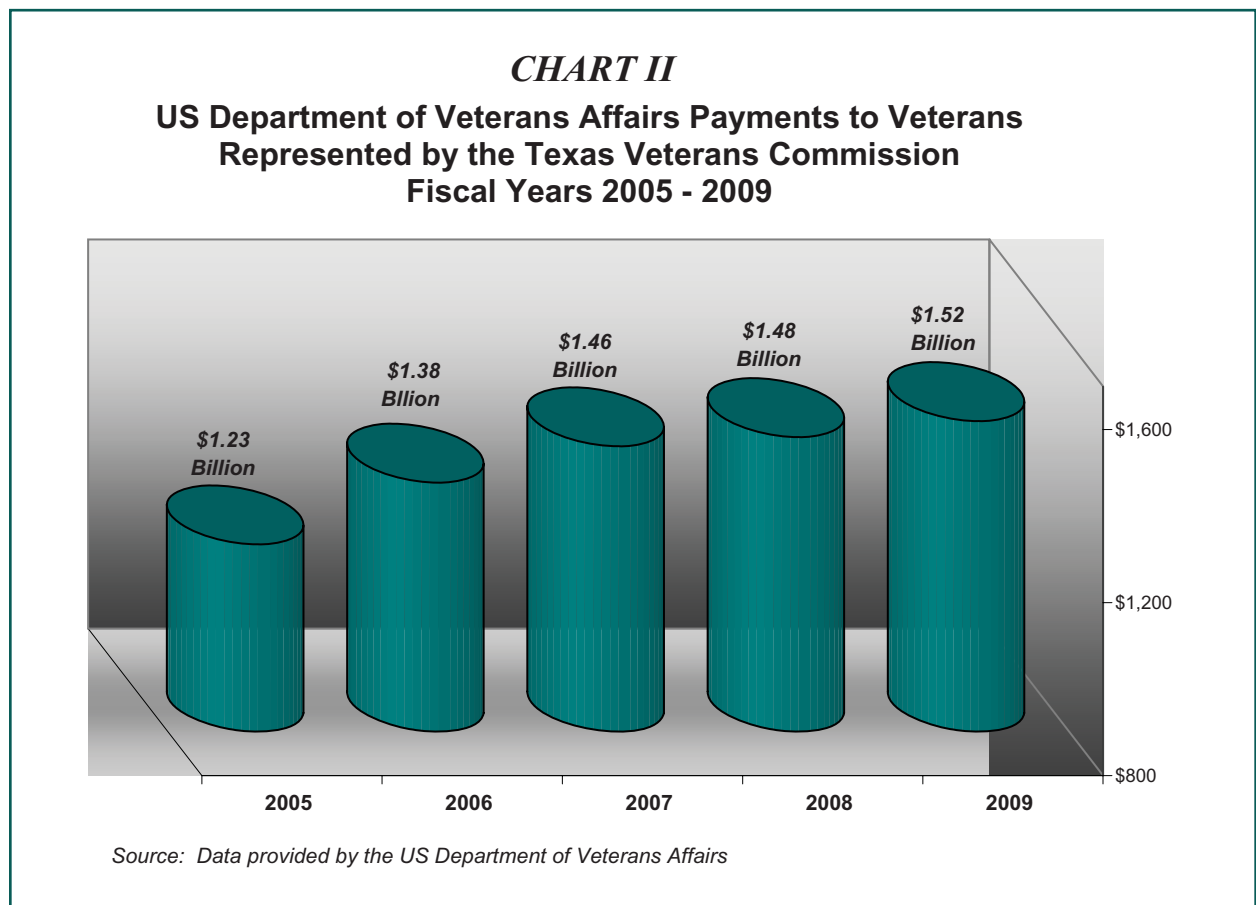
benchmarks and the economic prosperity of the population in general. The most obvious effect is that Texas Veterans Commission programs generate a recovery of hundreds of millions of federal dollars in payments to Texas veterans and their families. In Fiscal Year 2006, payments to the 130,000 veterans and survivors whom the Commission represents before VA will again total more than 1.5 billion, (Chart II). During the period covered by this Strategic Plan, these payments should **exceed eight billion dollars**.

The Commission Claims Representation and Counseling program, which is the only program of the commission which is funded by General Revenue, recovers more than \$350 for Texas veterans for every dollar expended by the State (Appendix C, Five Year Projection of Outcomes, Page 43). The positive effect on the economy is enormous; especially in light of the fact that these payments to veterans are not

subject to federal income taxes. Every dollar paid to Texas veterans directly benefits the economy of the State and is undiluted by federal taxes.

At the same time TVC claims program is helping veterans with navigating the complexities of a VA claim for benefits, the Veterans Employment Services program of the TVC is helping veterans obtain jobs that are both rewarding and meaningful.

The Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 and Title 38 US Code Chapter 41 established new language for the DVOP/LVER grant moving it from a prescriptive, detailed structure to a more flexible, less specific process similar to other existing DOL grants. With this flexibility also comes accountability in the form of federal performance targets.



There are eight grant-specific performance measures. Generally, they focus on Entered Employment Rate (EER) and Employment Retention Rate (ERR) for specific categories of veterans. State goals for each measure are negotiated annually in conjunction with the TWC and DOL-VETS. Goals are based on a federal performance year (PY), July-June. Table III below shows the goals and results for PY06 and year-to-date PY07.

The Commission seeks to continuously improve the effectiveness of its operation; one of the principal methods to improve the operation of the Commission and the services it provides is direct interaction with the veterans' community through such vehicles as formal Advisory Committees, town hall meetings, attendance by TVC staff at veterans organization functions and operating a statewide toll-free line for veterans in coordination with the TVLB. The TVC actively seeks input from veterans and their families at veterans' organization meetings. By law, all

Local Workforce Development Boards must have a veterans' representative. The Executive Director of the TVC was a member of the President's Hire Veterans Committee. Feedback from Texas veterans, TVC field staff at claims and employment offices, as well as Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs), provide the best source of information, ensuring the efficiency of our continuous quality improvement program. On a daily basis, TVC counselors and employment services personnel assist thousands of veterans and their families, many of whom have ideas on how to improve service. Because of this direct client interaction, the Commission field staff is also an invaluable source for methods to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency.

At the same time, the Commission seeks to improve the level of service it provides its veteran clientele, the Commission is actively involved with VA and DOL-VETS in finding better ways to improve service to our State's 1.7 million veterans. As part of the total program

TABLE III

Veterans Employment Services Statistics

Standard	PY06 Goal	PY 06 Actual	PY07 Goal	PY07 YTD Actual
LVER				
Veterans EER	63%	68.0%	65%	68.0%
Veterans ERR	82%	82.9%	80%	84.6%
Recently Separated EER	64%	73.5%	66%	73.5%
Recently Separated ERR	82%	84.4%	80%	84.4%
DVOP				
Veterans EER	63%	67.8%	64%	67.8%
Veterans ERR	82%	84.2%	80%	84.2%
Disabled Vet EER	55%	62.2%	56%	62.2%
Disabled Vet ERR	82%	83.3%	80%	83.3%

of veterans' assistance, the Commission strives to inform veterans of their benefits from other agencies to include educational benefits, job training and programs available from the TVLB.

On a monthly basis, VA supplies the Commission with address labels for all recently discharged Texas veterans. Information letters and brochures listing the State of Texas benefits and services for veterans, dependents and survivors are provided to each veteran. The Commission mails out over 20,000 of these information packets annually.

In an effort to further increase available services and information to veterans and their families, the 77th Texas Legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 1159. This legislation requires the Commission to adopt joint Memorandums of Understanding with the TWC, the TVLB and any agency of the state that administers a program applicable only to veterans or the family members of veterans to coordinate the provision of services. As a result the TVC has entered into Memoranda of Understanding with the many agencies of the State and Federal Government to coordinate assistance to veterans. Of particular significance, because of the transfer of the Veterans Employment Services, and the Veterans Education programs from the TWC to the TVC, the Commission has entered into a new era of expanded cooperative efforts with the DOL-VETS and VA. The commission is also involved in referring veterans who have employment and reemployment related problems that fall under the provisions of Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Of unique interest to the commission are the special problems faced by the returning Afghanistan and Iraq veterans. These can include combat-related injuries to include physical and psychological injuries. A very significant

number of these veterans are suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The TVC is entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Texas National Guard, called "Partners Across Texas," to provide comprehensive employment and disability claims assistance to veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. The TVC Claims Representation and Counseling and Veterans Employment Services programs will provide teams at unit family days shortly after the return of the unit from the war.

A new initiative by the TWC called the Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) promises to be another opportunity for the TVC and the TWC to continue their long standing mutual commitment to the best interests of Texas veterans. The TVLP will provide resource and referral services to assist OIF/OEF veterans in connecting with employment and training services. The TVLP will seek out veterans in need of employment assistance, assist them in attaining skills for employment and solve problems that prevent employment. This assistance will be coordinated among different organizations, government agencies and local communities. The TVC through its programs of employment, claims assistance and education expects to be a full partner in these efforts. In addition, a comprehensive media campaign will be developed to make the target population of veterans aware of the types of assistance available. It is the expectation of the TVC that this new initiative will produce a long term benefit to Texas through recognition of the important contribution that OIF/OEF veterans can make in securing the future of our State as a model for economic prosperity and quality of life.

The Commission will continue to enter into Memoranda of Understanding with additional agencies to increase awareness within other agencies of TVC services available to

veterans and their families and to increase the awareness of services available to veterans from the TVC and other state agencies. The Commission is currently engaging in discussion with VA to establish broad areas of cooperation in an effort to ensure that claims are decided within least amount of processing time. This effort could take the form of a simple cooperative effort or a contract to provide services for reimbursement from VA. The Commission is also entering into agreements with the Veterans County Service Officers Association to establish standards for claims assistance. All of the efforts, coupled with an aggressive marketing effort have had a resultant effect of dramatically increasing the Claims Representation and Counseling program workload. (Chart I)

The TVC is also involved in an effort to remedy the problem of homeless veterans. The Commission is one of the member agencies of the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless. This council is composed of representatives from fifteen state agencies and three members representing service providers for the homeless (one each appointed by the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House of Representatives).

The multifaceted programs of the Texas Veterans Commission make Texas a better place for Texas veterans to live. The Commission helps veterans and their families find good jobs, ensures that no totally disabled wartime veterans have to live in poverty, and assist veterans in navigating through the red tape inherent in obtaining VA Benefits. This serves to enhance the prosperity of not only the veterans' population, but the State of Texas as a whole. Because most of the Texas Veterans Commission staff is co-located with VA facilities, military installations or at local workforce development board's one stop centers, a large number of veterans and their survivors consider the Texas Veterans Commission as the "ombudsman"

for veterans in the State of Texas. The Texas Veterans Commission is in fact, THE STATE AGENCY that serves as the veterans' advocate whether it involves finding them employment, or ensuring their entitlement to veterans' benefits. Since 1927 the Texas Veterans Commission has been the trusted friend of our State's veterans, whether it is helping a veteran establish service connection, assisting an older veteran with pension benefits or helping a newly discharged veteran steer through the complexities of entering civilian life.

In FFY2007, 42,173 veterans and eligible dependents used GI Bill educational benefits in Texas. Nearly 92% of those veterans were enrolled in institutions of higher learning (universities, both public and private, and community colleges) seeking graduate and undergraduate degrees and certificates. The remaining recipients were enrolled in a variety of career and trade schools/academies such as cosmetology, barber, massage therapy, flight, municipal/county police, and fire academies, and on-the-job and apprenticeship training programs. GI Bill funding associated with these educational programs ranges from \$150 to \$1,300 per month per student/trainee, depending upon the type of training and the academic load the student is carrying.

Of equal importance is the fact that federal GI Bill usage rates indicate that only about 71% of eligible veterans actually use their educational benefits entitlements. Currently, this equates to approximately 17,000 eligible veterans who essentially lose those benefits and opportunities the benefits would create. One of the Commission's strategic objectives is to expand the educational opportunities within the State to encourage those veterans to use the benefits they have earned. Every federal dollar paid for veterans educational benefits directly impacts the economy of Texas.

SERVICE POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Age Distribution

The war against terrorism (OIF/OEF) has added to the number of younger wartime veterans in Texas. The veteran population in Texas age 60 years of age and older which in 2007 numbered approximately 803,000 will increase slightly by 2013 to 826,000. The number of aged veterans (80 years of age and older) is expected to increase from 169,000 to 178,000 during the next five years; with a gradual decline over the years through 2021 at which time the number of veterans 80 years and older will once again begin to grow.

By FY 2013, the modal age of veterans will have increased significantly (Chart III). With this increase, we expect that there will be a concurrent increase in demand for care and for providing assistance to older veterans. This will be a major challenge to both VA and the Texas Veterans Commission. The majority of older

civilian males (age 80 and older) are veterans, reflecting the high proportion of men who served in WW II. (Chart IV on Page 18).

The largest number of veterans in Texas as a group is from the Vietnam era with 517,000 veterans having served during that period. The second largest group of veterans is from the Gulf War periods with 411,000 veterans. The smallest numbers of veterans is from WWI. Currently, VA no longer provides statistics on that group of veterans. Those aged 65 to 84 are projected to increase between 2010 and 2015 as the Korean War and Vietnam veterans age.

A relatively high proportion of men of the early baby boom generation, now in their 50's, are veterans, reflecting the relatively large number of men serving during the Vietnam era. At ages 30-49, a relatively smaller proportion of men are veterans as a result of a smaller, all-volunteer military. While the majority of veterans are males the number and proportion of female veterans in Texas continues to show a steady increase. (Chart V)

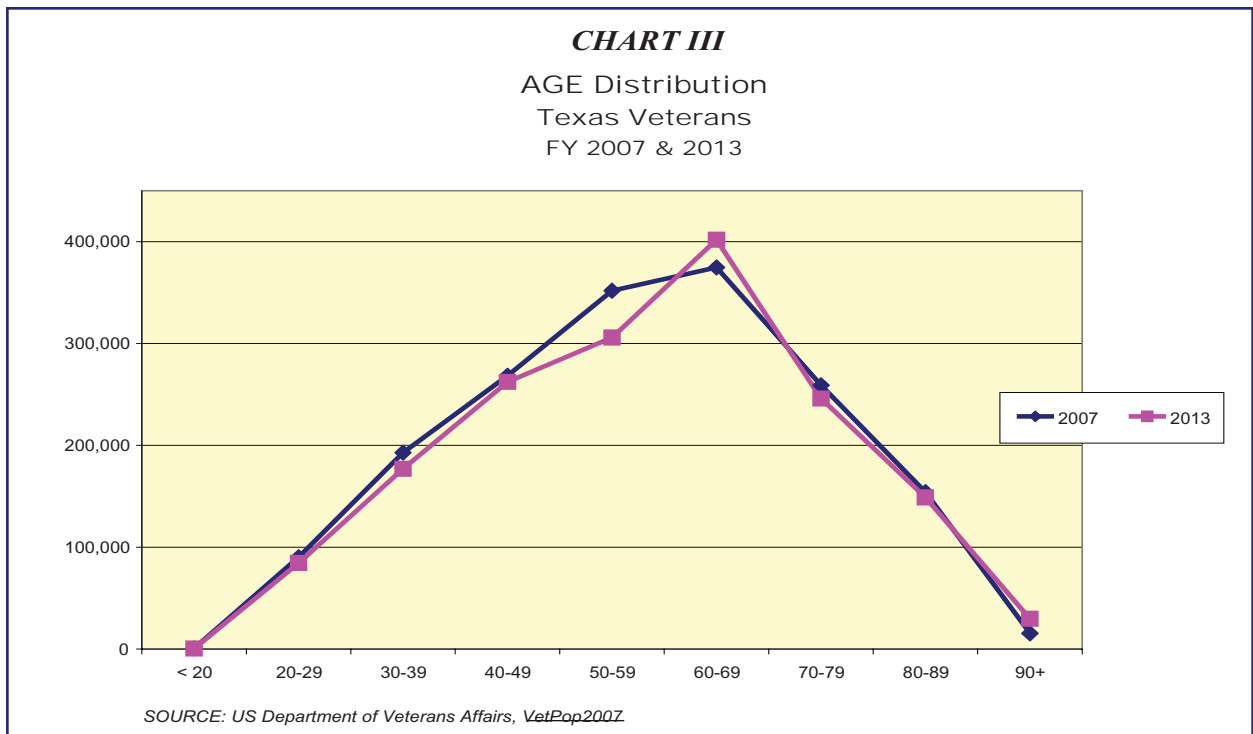
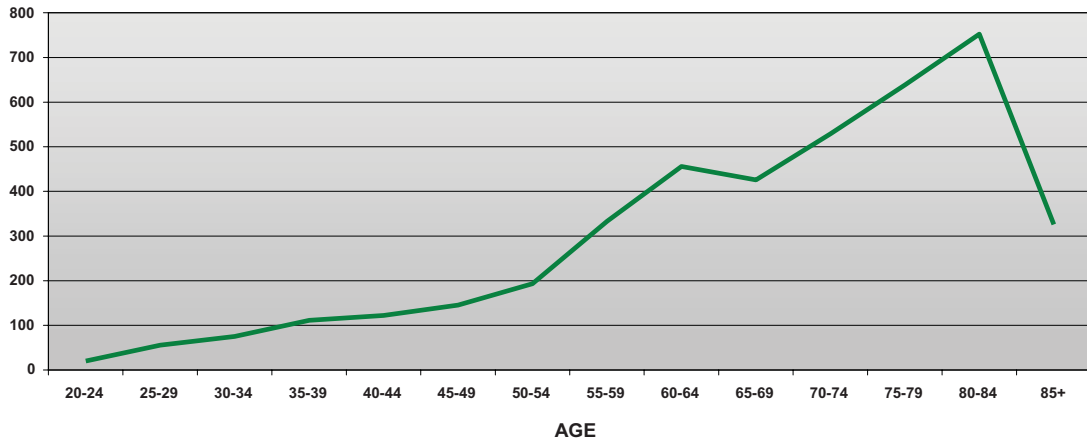


CHART IV

A LARGE PROPORTION OF ELDERLY TEXAS MALES ARE VETERANS Number of Male Veterans per 1000 Texas Males 2006



Source: US Department Of Veterans Affairs VETpop 2007 and Office of the State Demographer: ESTIMATES OF THE POPULATION BY AGE, SEX, AND RACE/ETHNICITY FOR JULY 1, 2006 FOR STATE OF TEXAS.

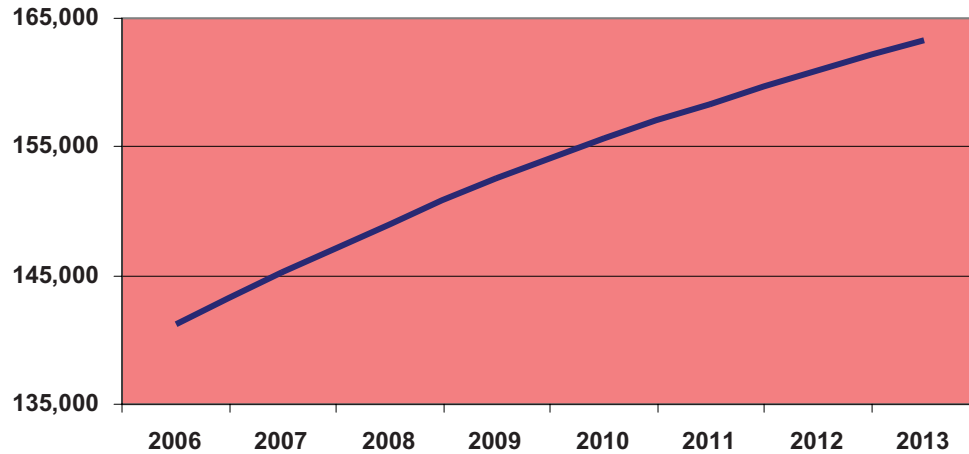
In 2006, Vietnam veterans still comprised the largest number of veterans in Texas (517,000). However there has been a very significant growth in the Gulf War veterans' population. Currently there are 411,000 Gulf War veterans living in Texas. The growth in the proportion of females serving in the military is reflected by the number of female Gulf War veterans (70,000) compared with female Vietnam veterans (19,000). The proportional percentages for the female Vietnam and Gulf War veterans are 3.7% and 17% respectively.

The other principal demographic change is that Texas is no longer a rural state. Sixty percent of all Texas veterans live in the six largest metropolitan areas in the State. According to VA statistics, more than 75 percent of the net migration of veterans to Texas was in the age group from 20 to 64. This indicates that most of these veterans came to Texas for work and are most likely to have moved to metropolitan areas. The population centers continue to grow. With this increase, there is an incidental growth in the concentration of veterans' population. In some

rural areas, there will not be sufficient work to merit a TVC office. Currently, the TVC is experiencing difficulty in meeting the increased demands for service at clinics in high growth areas like Austin. In addition, the expansion of troop levels at Fort Hood and Fort Bliss as a result of Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) in the long term should increase the number of OIF/OEF veterans. To meet the changing demands, the Commission will need to realign service and increase staffing at certain locations.

The TVC Claims Representation and Counseling program anticipates a significant shortfall in the ability to respond to an increased demand created by larger numbers of aged veterans because the principal area of requests for claims assistance by these veterans will be at VA medical facilities. Texas Veterans Commission offices are co-located with these facilities and serve the same population. The Commission can expect a proportionate increase in workload. VA is actively pursuing enrollment of veterans in their expanding program of

CHART V
**Growth of Female Veterans Population
 2006 – 2013**



Source: US Department of Veteran Affairs, VETPop2007

establishing Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC), which is in line with the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) proposals by VA to realign and expand service according to changing veterans' needs.

The fact that an increasing number of veterans are activated National Guard and Reserve personnel has created new requirements to enable TVC to provide employment, education and claims assistance. In keeping with the TVC philosophy of taking service to veterans, the commission is looking at new and innovative programs. At the same time, there is a need to provide additional service at point of discharge and at the local National Guard/Reserve unit level.

At the same time, because of the large increase in services that are anticipated for OIF/OEF veterans and continuing services to Gulf War veterans, the number of veterans needing assistance with finding meaningful employment will continue to place demands on the Veterans Employment Services program of TVC.

During the coming years, Texas will face an increasingly technology-based economy characterized by rapid change and uncertainty. To remain competitive in the global economy, Texas businesses must be able to operate on demand and be more productive. This requires a different relationship between companies and employees. Many firms will reconstitute their workforce at a faster pace, hiring or retraining workers as industry skill demands change.

Recent national economic reports indicate economic slowing and increasing unemployment rates. Fortunately, Texas has a diverse economy with particularly strong trade, transportation and utility sectors. As of February 2008, Texas employers have added 235,000 jobs over the past 12 months, for an annual growth rate of 2.3 percent.

Veterans are well equipped to take advantage of Texas' labor market because of their unique ability to rapidly adapt to change, first-rate training and desire to excel.

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

Future Educational and Training Needs of Veterans

The veterans educational assistance programs are the cornerstones on which the higher educational achievement of veterans is based. With the advent of the all volunteer military, one of the primary reasons young people are entering the military is to take advantage of educational opportunities offered by VA and the military on the completion of service. The increasing costs of higher education in both the public and private sectors have made the veterans educational benefits program even more attractive to young people whose career goals hinge on attainment of a postsecondary degree or certificate. Similarly, the veterans educational benefits program offers opportunities for those veterans seeking occupational training through apprenticeship and other on-the-job training.

Because of the large number of Texas veterans who probably will be released after their tour of service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Texas Veterans Commission will need to expand the spectrum of educational opportunities for veterans through an active outreach program to military personnel and their families, prospective employers, and career/vocational training schools/academies. This effort will increase the number of schools and training establishments available for Texas veterans and also expand the number of programs approved for GI Bill usage to meet the changing needs of veterans.

SERVICE POPULATIONS BY AREA

The Texas Veterans Commission provides employment assistance, claims representation and counseling, and educational counseling and oversight to every area of the State of Texas. There are three categories of State and local government veterans' advocacy offices:

- TVC Regional Offices: These offices are either co-located with VA regional offices, in Texas Workforce Centers or at LWDB offices. Six of the Regional Offices support the Veterans Employment Services program and two support the Claims Representation and Counseling program.
- TVC Field Offices, operated by the Claims Representation and Counseling program, the Veterans Employment Services program and Veterans Education program are located throughout the State. They are on military installations, in Texas Workforce Centers operated by LWDBs, in county facilities, in VA facilities or they work from their homes.
- VCSOs are located in 220 counties in the State.

Appendix H, Service Area by Office, on Page 67, has a complete listing of Texas Veterans Commission Regional Offices, Field offices and Veterans County Service Offices.

The Texas Veterans Commission has more than 300 full time equivalent employees, of whom more than five sixths (5/6) are veterans. In addition to the offices listed above, the Commission has a Headquarters office in Austin. Additionally, there are 220 Veterans County Service Offices dependant on the Commission for training, claims representation and support.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The TVC continues to improve its technology infrastructure. The TVC web site, www.tvc.state.tx.us, was redesigned to focus on the benefits offered to veterans. Counselors and veterans throughout the State take advantage of the timely information available on the web site.

The Texas Veterans Commission is scheduled to move its computers to the consolidated data center by June 2008. The consolidated data center will increase the technologies available to the TVC without increasing staff to support a data center. The data center will allow the TVC to improve disaster recovery services. It will also allow the TVC to segregate computer services which will improve computer security and system performance.

At the same time that the Commission enhances its use of computer technologies, the agency realizes that to be truly effective in serving our veterans it must enhance the ability of our partners to use these new technologies. To this end, the Commission has entered into an interagency agreement with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to refurbish computers. After these computers are completely refurbished and upgraded, they are distributed to Veterans County Service Officers. To date, the TVC has distributed more than seventy-five computers to Veterans County Service Officers and Assistants.

Every one of the Commission's 10 Veterans Employment Services Field offices is equipped with modern computer equipment which is integrated into the TWC WorkinTexas and TWIST systems. This enables the Veterans Employment Representatives to provide a high level of service to their veteran clientele.

The Veterans Education program maintains a comprehensive database of approved schools and employers which contains all correspondence, approval, visits, program, technical assistance, outreach, and Federal Quarterly Report information. The database is linked to the Commission web page which provides veterans easy access to a directory of institutions and employers with approved programs. Veterans can search for specific approved programs by program type and location. In addition, all approval application forms are available on the Veterans Education web page.

As part of the Commission's commitment to taking advantage of opportunities afforded by new technologies, the TVC is exploring uses of web-based training and training modules provided on disc for all of its employees. The Claims Representation and Counseling program is rapidly standardizing training by employing computer based training modules used to train VA personnel.

VA has implemented direct on-line filing of claims. Of great concern to the Texas Veterans Commission is the potential for a lack of representation for veterans who may use on-line means to file claims. **It is incumbent on the TVC to make all veterans aware of their earned entitlements. Veterans will benefit from the claims representation and counseling assistance provided by the Texas Veterans Commission.**

TVC is developing a centralized claims management system that will be used by veterans' representatives to assist veterans with processing claims. The claims management system will be available statewide. It will improve standardization of claims processing and enhance retrieval of performance measures and individual workloads. A four year refresh cycle was recently implemented for Claims

desktop computers as TVC prepares for the implementation of the case management system.

In a continuing effort by the TVC and the TVLB, both agencies have cooperatively instituted the Texas Veterans Hotline, a single statewide toll free number (1-800-252-VETS), which provides access to both agencies. Depending on the nature of the inquiry, the veteran is directed to either the TVC or the TVLB for assistance. This hotline provides enhanced direct access and improved service from a single number to our State's veterans. This feature will enable rapid customer response to inquiries and provide enhanced service delivery throughout the State.

As a part of our Workforce Development System Strategic Planning, TVC is participating with the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) in the development of a system-wide universal information gateway designed to provide a consistent and universal framework for all workforce system customers (SI2.0). The TVC has focused its efforts on ensuring information for veterans is available and accurate on www.texasworkexplorer.com, including a page dedicated to "veterans assistance."

TVC recently outsourced its e-mail service. Outsourcing e-mail eliminated the need for an e-mail server, e-mail management software and e-mail administrators to manage the Commission's e-mail.

SIGNIFICANT EXTERNAL TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The transfer of the Veterans Employment Services and Veterans Education programs to the TVC in 2006 presented the commission with an important opportunity to enhance the agency's response to external trends.

The fact that our Country is at war also creates long-range planning issues. The service members in the Gulf Wars have the highest survival rate in the history of warfare. However, just because a soldier survives does not mean that that soldier was not injured. In fact, the additional protection offered by modern high tech body armor implemented in this war, soldiers are experiencing physical injuries that are not apparent in addition to the conventional injuries such as loss or use of limbs. The most prevalent is traumatic brain injury (TBI). Additionally, because of the inherent nature of fighting an insurgency that doesn't have any particular safe areas or the additional emotional stress has resulted in a very high incidence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Both of these classes of injury, the first is physical and the second which is psychological, do not tend to be manifested immediately. The fact that VA recognizes these injuries is a good sign. However, historically after periods of conflict, new issues arise for veterans that were not anticipated prior to the conflict. For example, in Vietnam, many veterans were exposed to Agent Orange. Thirty-five years after the last troops left Vietnam, VA recognized that Agent Orange can contribute to diabetes. After Desert Storm, the Texas Veterans Commission took a lead role in presenting issues to VA that faced Desert Storm veterans, among which were "Persian Gulf Syndrome," and an incidence of "Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Syndrome." The Commission has to be conscious that veterans returning from Afghanistan, Iraq and other areas of conflict may face health issues, about which we are not even aware as this plan is being prepared. In both cases, VA and the Department of Defense initially denied that there was any causality between the injuries and exposure to the war zone.

The most prevalent injuries for OIF/OEF veterans are the TBI and PTSD. The tragic nature of these injuries is compounded by the fact that

they are not readily apparent. Reintegration of veterans into society and ensuring that veterans receive assistance is the number one concern of the TVC. However, these injuries present a new challenge to all service providers, such as, the effect that they have on family members. The family issue brings an entirely new dimension to Milton's statement that "They also serve who stand and wait." For the period of this plan, TVC with the assistance of its focus groups and the Texas Legislature will make every effort to develop family services to ease the burden of this very important group.

As part of the effort to provide transition assistance to veterans suffering from PTSD, a pilot project is planned for the Summer of 2008 to provide special training to a limited number of VCSOs and TVC staff. This Pilot Project would create rural support groups for at-risk veterans. A large percentage of returning service members suffer from PTSD (estimates range up to 30%). There are also those Texas residents who suffer from PTSD as a result of previous wars. Senate Bill 1058 (80th TX Leg. Reg) refers to the facilitation of reintegration and treatment for both the service member and their families. This pilot program would initially train a total of 25 individuals (from a pool of currently employed TVC counselors and VCSOs) in how to facilitate the VA Peer Support and Educational Support program. Peer support groups are led by nonprofessional people who have experienced the same or similar issues. They would help identify successful strategies for coping to include:

- Facts about issues
- Differences between healthy and unhealthy coping skills
- Developing a social network
- Validating feelings
- Learning self-advocacy

Texas is a large state. Travel to talk to someone with similar experiences is difficult

at best. This program would support that need for the veteran, active duty service member, Guardsman, Reservist **and family members** as well as assist them with claims and information on how and where to receive medical care at no cost. The target locations for the pilot program would be 25 rural areas with populations sufficient to support the program and with limited access to any VA Medical Facilities. This program could be coordinated with the proposed Family Readiness Support Group Coordinator who will enhance awareness of this program. TVC's goal for the pilot program would be to have 400 to 500 participants. VA manuals for this program have already been developed and TVC has access to experienced VA personnel to conduct the training. The training would take place this summer.

Because of the large number of men and women returning from the Afghanistan and Iraq theaters, in 2004, the TVC started a program to contact these returning veterans and advise them of the services offered by the Texas Veterans Commission. As the war has continued, the avenues to contact the veterans have expanded. TVC is now engaged in a cooperative effort with VA to contact returning Reserve and National Guard members at their units during a drill weekend. The TVC is also expanding its program of using information from Certificates of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD214s), that it receives to not only contact the veteran about the claims program but to furnish the contact information to the VES and Veterans Education staff of the Commission for employment assistance and/or education assistance.

Approximately 95% of personnel joining the U.S. military forces sign up for GI Bill educational benefits; yet, historically, only 71% of those eligible use those benefits. The Commission proposes to expand its outreach efforts to veterans returning from OIF/OEF who are not using their educational benefits. There

is an urgent need to hire additional Program Specialists to focus solely on expanding the training benefits available throughout the State in an effort to target the approximately 17,500 Texas veterans who do not use their educational benefits. Specifically, these specialists would:

- Develop/execute an overall outreach strategy for their specified geographic area
- Participate in TVC and other State Agency job fairs, open houses, etc., to provide visibility to veterans education programs within their specified area
- Initiate involvement/liaison with military installations within their specified area, expanding participation in TAPS programs and briefings
- Create avenues for liaison with soldiers/airmen, etc., prior to separation/retirement (this could be giving briefings at Family Support Centers, or other such entities on a military installation.)
- Liaise with veteran students at schools/training establishments to assess quality of education being provided

These additional Program Specialists would also:

- Identify and recruit prospective employers for the OJT and apprenticeship programs
- Provide first-hand assistance in completion of application for approval packets for targeted schools and training establishments
- Perform inspection or annual supervisory visits, as needed
- Provide technical assistance to VA certifying officials

The additional staff would target the recruitment of employers for the on-the-job and apprenticeship training programs. These programs are virtually untapped resources in Texas. Texas veterans who elect not to seek traditional education and training programs will

have these options available to them.

Furthermore, the growing need for employment services to families of service members recovering from severe injuries, survivors of those killed in action and veterans who have not been successful in transitioning from active duty or retaining long-term employment has identified significant opportunities for the VES program.

Serve, Support, Simplify - the final report from the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors concludes:

- *33 percent of active duty, 22 percent of reserve component, and 37 percent of retired/separated service members report that a family member or close friend relocated for extended periods of time to be with them while they were in the hospital.*
- *21 percent of active duty, 15 percent of reserve component, and 24 percent of retired/separated service members say friends or family gave up a job to be with them or act as their caregiver.*

The VES staff serves over 100,000 veterans each year with employment assistance, but staff are prohibited from providing services to spouses or other family members because of federal funding source restrictions. If another more flexible funding were available for new employment programs designed specifically to provide services to assist spouses, service members transitioning from active duty and current veterans who have special circumstances (near homeless) then more job seekers could benefit from the great successes and personalized employment services veterans now receive through VES staff.

The programs of the TVC can be extremely complicated because of the burden of interpreting State and Federal laws; staff is

often asked to make these interpretations with limited professional legal assistance. In the Claims Representation and Counseling program, the staff is often asked to represent a veteran and prepare his case all the way to the courthouse; the Veterans Education program is called upon to make complicated decisions about federal education standards, and state laws governing the Hazelwood Act; and Veterans Employment Services must adhere to all federal laws governing employment. An attorney dedicated to the program areas would be able to develop training to simplify such laws and expand the strategies used in representing veterans.

During the last legislative session, the Sunset Commission reviewed the training provided by the Texas Veterans Commission and explored methods to improve such training. A program attorney could add a legal component to the training and develop legal strategies for representing veterans. Additionally, an attorney could organize the available legal support in various communities across Texas to provide legal assistance to veterans that is beyond the representation of TVC.

NEED FOR MORE AWARENESS OF THE TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

With the addition of Veterans Employment Services and Veterans Education to the Texas Veterans Commission programs, there is a critical need for increased awareness of the Commission. There are too many veterans who are not aware of the services offered by the Texas Veterans Commission. Given the excellent results the Commission obtains for veterans, the question is, “Why is it that all Texas veterans don’t avail themselves of Commission services?”

In the past, the Commission drew its client base from patients at VA hospitals and

clinics and veterans’ organizations. As the population of aged veterans grows, more of them will seek medical treatment from sources other than VA. Additionally, the baby boom generation does not seem to be as interested in joining veterans’ organizations as was the case in earlier generations. To ensure that these veterans are receiving the earned VA benefits, the TVC needs to target this population through marketing.

The agency’s primary customer for claims tends to be veterans from the ages of 45-65 needing assistance with disability claims or employment. The oldest of this group are beyond the eligibility time requirement for federal education programs. These individuals also seem to be at a transitional point in their life, usually experiencing new or heightened medical problems or looking for new career opportunities.

Newly separated veterans are an increasing market segment that needs assistance with claims, employment, and education services. These veterans have the potential of needing and accessing a variety of services through different stages of their lives. They also have the most eligibility for education benefits.

Veterans over the age of 65 tend to need assistance with disability claims and pension programs. Because of their age, they are usually past the point of seeking employment and education opportunities.

All segments of veterans are most populous near major metropolitan areas because of the access to job opportunities and medical facilities. Although the veteran population in Texas is approximately 1.7 million, not all may be eligible for every category of benefits. Veterans may also not be interested in pursuing some benefits for which they may be eligible. Examples would be a veteran eligible for

education benefits who has no intention of attending a higher learning institution or a veteran who would like to attend a university but is no longer eligible for G.I. Bill benefits because of time requirements. A single veteran may also qualify for all benefit programs and need assistance in utilizing many agency services. Therefore it is difficult to analyze a total number of veterans that potentially qualify for each particular type of assistance. The focus of marketing will be to make an effort to contact or expose the agency to 100 percent of veterans so they can make an informed decision on which agency department best serves their needs.

Overall marketing strategies will focus on the major core activities and designated market areas which yield the highest returns from time and resources. Specialized time and resources will be allocated to serving specific market demographics, creating pilot programs, performing training, and conducting outreach to non-core audiences.

The following is a list of target audiences that marketing efforts will reach.

1. Veterans (and families) ages 55 and older – this group makes up 65-70 percent of all veterans in Texas and constitutes a number of veterans interested in a particular agency service or benefit.
2. Veterans (and families) under age 55 – this group makes up the remaining percentage of veterans and is usually looking for assistance with a variety of programs.
3. Active-duty service members, Guard, and Reserve – this group will make up a significant number of future veterans in Texas. They have the potential of using a variety of agency services after separation for many years. In addition, many existing veterans have frequent contact with current military personnel and installations. Targeting this group has the secondary effect of indirectly

reaching other core audiences. In addition, a quantitative survey of Transition Assistance Program coordinators on military installations estimates that 25-35% of separating military members will remain in Texas.

4. Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) – this group consists of mass veterans with a common interest. Conducting marketing activities aimed at them has the benefit of reaching a large number of veterans by using a relatively small amount of coordination. Although the agency may offer similar services for claims and counseling, additional employment and education services are not addressed by VSOs.
5. Civic Organizations – this group includes Chambers of Commerce, Military Affairs Committees, and other entities established within communities. These groups have ties with military installations and/or veterans and usually have an established amount of credibility and recognition.
6. Local, state, and federal agencies and officials – this group frequently addresses veterans topics in communities throughout the state. They also have influence over providing programs to assist veterans.
7. Specialized organizations – this group consists of military reunion groups, religious organizations, non-profit agencies, and others formed for very specialized purposes. These groups are smaller in size, but more closely knit with strong ties. Because of their exclusiveness and schedules, activities with these groups may require extra amounts of coordination compared to a relatively small audience. However, the audience tends to provide a stronger and longer lasting relationship once established.

The agency marketing staff currently consists of a marketing manager and one dedicated marketing administrator. There is also a publications coordinator who works closely with the marketing office and is responsible

for maintaining and updating the agency's public web site, publications, brochures, and directories. As marketing efforts and roles increase, there will be an increased need for marketing and outreach personnel and resources. It is estimated that about 70-75% of newly separating veterans use the internet to look for veterans benefits and services. Veterans county service officers and veteran service organizations also use internet resources to communicate activities, events, and veteran trends in their communities. The Commission should continue to upgrade its web site and interactive computer-based capabilities. This will require a full-time web site designer/programmer to create and maintain this increasingly important medium. In addition, outreach and marketing staff at the regional levels are needed to coordinate events, marketing, and public relations activities.

The following is a list of objectives that will provide more information to veterans about benefits and services. They will also be used to coordinate and organize agency-wide marketing and outreach efforts.

1. Create marketing training program – The ability to successfully carry out any marketing program depends on the ability of the personnel involved. Agency marketing staff will be trained on specific marketing duties, procedures, policies, messages, resources, and lines of communication. In addition, directorate and regional staff will be updated on current marketing strategies, tactics, and messages to ensure that the entire organization is speaking with “one voice” to all audiences.
2. Develop family / brand of marketing material and tools – The agency needs to present audiences with a family of up-to-date brochures, pamphlets, promotional items, and other products that are similar in style, color, and format. This will allow the agency to begin to establish itself as a brand, rather than just another state or federal administration. These items will be systematically phased into the product lineup as supplies of older items are depleted.
3. Develop recurring regional/audience specific outreach activities – The agency's most valuable and numerous assets are its people. Therefore, recurring outreach activities such as town hall meetings, seminars, briefings and community event participation will be scheduled to ensure there are active appearances to external audiences. Headquarters marketing staff will team with regional marketing staff to coordinate the appropriate ratio of major designated market area to outlying market area event participation.
4. Develop comprehensive media relations program – Because of its ability to reach mass audiences, the media should be utilized whenever possible to communicate agency messages to veterans. A plan with a hierarchy of designated media market areas will be established to create an outline of interaction with print, radio, and television media throughout the State. A focus will also be placed on special target mediums such as active-duty, Guard, and Reserve military newspapers, as well as other veteran specific outlets.
5. Create marketing/public relations library – A ready-to-distribute library of video, print, and electronic items should be created, cataloged, and kept current. These items will then be easily disseminated to media outlets, veterans county service officers, or agency staff to use in marketing efforts. These items will also be utilized for publications, brochures, and displays.
6. Establish quantitative/qualitative measurements and tracking tools – Marketing metrics should be established for each program to determine their effectiveness. A set of baseline data will be confirmed and used as a starting reference point. This data will include existing customers, first-time customers, VA

monetary distributions to veterans, call center inquiries, and other statistical data. The goal is to gauge the relative increase in customer activity due to marketing efforts. In addition, qualitative surveys will be created to gauge agency awareness, customer needs, customer satisfaction, and measurements regarding marketing effectiveness.

The Texas Veterans Commission and staff have always prided themselves on excellent performance. The Commission leads the most populous states in both compensation and education monetary recovery of VA benefits. However, the Veterans Employment Services program performance in recent years has not been as stellar. At one time, Veterans Employment Services in Texas ranked, by one parameter, 46th out of the 50 states. Because of increased focus on program management and direct operational control of DVOP's and LVER's, the Veterans Employment Services program consistently ranks in the top ten (often in the top five) states in the nation in veterans entering employment and retained in employment.

Essential to continuously improving employment and educational opportunities, as well as improving the lives of disabled veterans through increased payments of compensation and pension, is making the veterans of Texas aware of TVC services. This necessitates increased availability and exposure of the TVC to the veterans in the State. Avenues available are numerous (e.g. town hall meetings, public service announcements for both television and radio, press releases, etc.). The TVC needs to take advantage of all of them. The most significant new opportunity is the cross referral of veterans between the three operational programs of the TVC.

The long-term trend in medical treatment for veterans by VA is to focus on outpatient as opposed to inpatient care. Traditionally, this

care has been provided at VA medical centers or large independent VA outpatient clinics. The TVC has a presence in all of these facilities and are the primary source for TVC clients for claims assistance. At the same time, the traditional employment office has given way to a "One Stop Center." There is an obvious mutual advantage to all programs from exposure to veterans who are seen for different types of assistance. With a few probing questions, in many cases, the TVC employee will be able to determine that the veteran is also a potential client for the TVC's sister programs.

Without an increased public awareness of the TVC's role, the veterans who make use of clinics or one stop centers may not receive the services provided by the TVC. The only remedy for this is marketing the TVC claims, employment assistance and education programs. To reach these veterans, we must improve public awareness of the Commission and its service for Texas veterans.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Veterans' county service officers and assistants are appointed by the county commissioners' courts. Another critical issue is the training of veterans' county service officers and assistants. Although training requirements have been mandated, the current requirement of 12 hours per year is not adequate to maintain professional standards. Of the 250 veterans county service officers and assistants who require training, thirty-one (31) did not participate in any training during the last calendar year. This is mostly attributed to medical conditions of an aging Veterans County Service Officer staff. Any training of VCSOs will now also include additional training to make them aware of TVC's Veterans Employment Services program and the opportunities available to enhance veterans

services at the county level for veterans seeking employment assistance.

The new program will make use of the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) located in Denver, Colorado as its primary source for training VES staff. NVTI was established in 1986 to further develop and enhance the professional skills of veterans' employment and training service providers throughout the United States. The program is funded by the DOL-VETS, and administered by the University of Colorado at Denver with training conducted in Denver, Colorado and at selected regional sites in the U.S. and abroad. The Institute is the only one of its kind in the United States.

The classes available through NVTI include basic employment functions, such as quality job matching and job development, various levels of case management, promoting partnerships and outreach to employers, TAP instructor training and management/supervisory functions associated with veterans employment services.

The NVTI training is provided free of charge to veteran employment staff, making it one of the most economical training opportunities available. Additionally, the VES program is beginning an initiative of providing internal training similar to the Veterans' County Service Officer model of "Initial Training."

For the Veterans Education program, §21.4155 of the Code of Federal Regulations requires that VA cooperate with State approving agencies in developing and implementing a uniform national curriculum for the training of new employees. The National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA), in cooperation with VA, has developed a National Training Curriculum and has provided copies to all of the States. Also, NASAA offers training for new VA and SAA staff at a National Training

Institute that is held periodically (at least every 18 months). Additionally, biannual training and business meetings hosted by NASAA also provide additional training opportunities for all staff. A major portion of the meetings is devoted to discussions and training regarding the implementation of changes to the federal regulations and contractual requirements. During these meetings, attendees discuss and vote on many policy issues that affect Texas and the rest of the nation. It is important that staff be present to vote and represent the interests of TVC and Texas veterans.

In Fiscal Year 1996, the Commission undertook a program of advanced certification of veterans' county service officers (VCSO) and assistants. The advanced certification, which is voluntary, is called "accreditation" and is governed by federal and state regulation to recognize those VCSOs who complete an advanced program of training and mentoring approved by VA. The Commission's program includes mentoring, one-on-one instruction by senior TVC counselors, classroom training, training at TVC regional and field offices and testing. In 2008, twenty three (23) VCSOs have completed the training and passed the examination; there are five (5) pending certification and an additional eight (8) awaiting testing. All of these will earn the title of "Accredited Representative of the Texas Veterans Commission." This allows the VCSO the opportunity to represent veterans at VA hearings and gives them full access to the VA files of veterans who have named TVC as their representative in a claim.

In addition to training, the Commission needs to coordinate its efforts to provide the best veterans' claims assistance program with the federal and local officials. Particular emphasis needs to be made on the counties' responsibility to appoint qualified individuals to be veterans county service officers.

EMPLOYEE PAY

The principal ingredient in the success of the TVC program is the quality of the Commission employees. Employees of the Commission are extremely dedicated and hard working. They are enthusiastic about the service that they provide. Added levels of responsibility and workload increases without additional salaries for employees may be an issue in the future. One concern the Commission addressed during the last biennium is the disparity between State of Texas salaries and the salaries of Federal VA employees. VA employees have significantly higher salaries, although they have comparable duties, responsibilities and technical expertise. Retention can also become an issue because State TVC personnel are co-located with and interact with these Federal personnel on a daily basis. The reallocation of senior level Veterans Assistance Counselors and recent salary actions by the Texas Legislature have aided retention; specifically targeted salary increases for Veterans Assistance Counselors authorized by the 80th Texas Legislature have had a positive impact. However, to maintain parity with other potential employers, these actions need to continue. Other than those programmed merit increases necessary to maintain the viability of the TVC career ladder, the agency does not have funds to provide adequate pay adjustments through the merit process to maintain competitive salaries. Because demographic models show that there will be a significant reduction in the available United States workforce in the next five years, lack of salary parity would indicate a potential for difficulty in staffing. The salaries of the Veterans Employment Services staff are significantly lower than the pay of the employees in the other two programs. This indicates a need to establish a career ladder and equitable salary policies. This effort would include a uniform and fair manner for administering merit salary increases and promotions. To this end the TVC is working with the State Auditor's Classification office to

establish a single classification schedule for TVC employees in the Veterans Employment Services and Claims Representation and Counseling Programs. The new classification would be called Veterans Services Representatives. The fact that both of the agency programs that principally deal with the public will be in the same classification schedule will also enhance the concept of a single unified TVC.

Fair pay was identified as a prominent area of concern to employees in the most recent Survey of Organizational Excellence (Appendix F, Page 62).

Another issue that is of concern to the Commission is the loss of personnel because of retirement. Within the period covered by this plan, nearly thirty-one (31%) of agency personnel will become eligible for retirement. When these retirements occur, the agency will lose a valuable resource of experienced personnel. A concurrent issue the Commission faces is the cost of paying accrued leave for these employees. Although we do not anticipate these employees retiring at the same time, a large number of retirements become more of a possibility with each passing year. Retirements, along with the shrinking U.S. work force, will in all likelihood present staffing problems within the next five years. The Commission understands that there is a vast untapped workforce available from the ranks of the recently discharged veterans. To this end the new classification plan allows for On the Job (OJT) training with concurrent payment of VA benefits and State salary for new TVC employees. The approval of the TVC for OJT benefit payments by VA for both the Claims and Employment programs will make working for veterans more attractive to recently discharged veterans.

The Commission expends approximately eighty-nine percent (89%) of its budget for personnel. When faced with the additional costs

for reallocations and accrued leave, the only source of funds for these expenses is to reduce operating funds.

SURVEY OF ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The Commission participated in the “Survey of Organizational Excellence” for the first time in the Fall of 1999 and again in the Fall of 2007. The overall response rate for the Agency was 72%. As a general rule, rates higher than 50 indicate soundness within an organization. Commission employees believe that a major strength of the organization is that it responds well to external organizations such as the public, the legislature and other governmental bodies. Employees believe the agency delivers high quality work with a low error rate. Employee beliefs about the work of the organization represent a very positive attitude of the employees toward work done by the organization. Employees also feel that there is a variety of cultural, gender and income groupings in the organization that reflect the relative diversity of their environment. The major internal weakness identified by employees concerns the issue of fair pay. The Commission has addressed the issue of fair pay by requesting and receiving funding from the legislature for the Agency’s claims program career ladder. The Commission has provided survey information to managers within the agency and meetings are being scheduled to review and develop human resource methods and strategies to address issues identified by the survey. Appendix F, Survey of Organizational Excellence, Page 62.

FISCAL ASPECTS

The Texas Veterans Commission is funded from the State’s General Revenue Fund and through grants from the U.S. Department

of Labor (DOL) and VA. The State funds the Claims Representation and Counseling strategy and a cost allocated proportion of Central Administration and Marketing. Since 1995, the Veterans Education program has also received General Revenue Funds for the purpose of meeting automation, training, and other indirect expenses. Obtaining additional supplemental funding from the State due to dwindling federal resources and allocations are critical to the Commission. Federal funds are not keeping up with inflation and the additional work load as a result of the increasing number of Texas veterans—especially disabled veterans—and for the additional staff necessary to provide comprehensive services for OIF/OEF veterans and families. It is also critical that the Commission obtain the necessary funds for a more extensive marketing campaign to ensure that veterans and their families are aware of all of the services available to them.

The Federal DOL funds the Veterans Employment Services strategy. In addition to the direct payments from grants, the federal government contributes significantly to the operation of the Texas Veterans Commission by providing office space and utilities to the Claims Representation and Counseling strategy. Currently, VA provides 12,000 square feet of office space to the Commission at 23 Commission sites. All of these offices are also provided use of the federal telephone system.

The Commission has a responsibility to train and certify training of the VCSOs. The 79th Texas Legislature appropriated funds to the Commission to partially underwrite the increased travel costs for veterans’ county service officers and assistants to attend Texas Veterans Commission sponsored training. However, because of increased costs for per diem and lodging the Commission is still not sufficiently funded to fully offset the cost of

VCSO travel to training. As a result, general operating funds are used for this purpose.

The Commission finances and support structure is very much interrelated with other levels of government. The Commission is partially dependent on VA for office space and some administrative costs of operation. The county level of government depends on the Commission for training, financial and technical assistance. The Veterans Employment Services strategy pays a significant amount of its grant to Local Workforce Development Boards for rent and administrative support. These funds contribute to the successful operation of one stop centers.

IMPACT OF ECONOMIC VARIABLES AND FEDERAL STATUTES/REGULATIONS

Historically, the economy and changes of the statutes and regulations of VA have affected the operations of the Texas Veterans Commission. Our basic purpose of helping the veterans of Texas, their dependents and orphans is the same today and tomorrow. The veterans of Texas have defended our nation and deserve to receive professional assistance. The veterans of Texas, like all veterans, are faced with the erosion of their federal entitlements or stricter regulations to prove these entitlements. They must have an advocate to represent them. Their advocate is the Texas Veterans Commission. Additionally, because the Texas Veterans Commission has the closest contact with veterans and understands the impact of economic variables and changes in State and Federal regulations, it will continue to provide information to the Legislature on their needs.

The economy has a significant impact on Texas Veterans Commission functions. The effect of the economy is the same as it is for

the general population. However, because the government has accepted special responsibilities regarding veterans' needs, there are special implications in a changing economy for the Texas Veterans Commission.

In the Veterans Education program, there are several variables that will severely impact the Commission's ability to serve the large number of Texas veterans who will be released after their tour of service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. For FY2007 and FY2008 federal funding for the program has remained level. Without federal legislation, the funding for FY2009 and subsequent years will be reduced by 32%. This decreased funding will require major staff reductions and a corresponding loss of services to veterans. With legislative proposals to dramatically increase GI Bill educational benefits likely to pass during the current session of Congress, the role of the Texas Veterans Commission will be even more critical. The ability for veterans to transfer their GI Bill benefits to their dependents is also included in proposed legislation. This transferability feature is another variable that TVC will need to consider in order to address the education and training needs of this population. With these changes, we are anticipating that more veterans will take advantage of their benefits. With another proposal to issue tuition payments directly to the schools, TVC's oversight and compliance role will also expand dramatically.

The VES program is particularly influenced by unemployment rates. As unemployment rates increase and more veterans are displaced and begin looking for work, there is a corresponding increase in demand for the VES program. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Employment Situation of Veterans: 2007, veteran unemployment rates were consistent with, or better than, their non-veteran counterparts. One exception to this

data was in young male veterans ages 18-24. The unemployment rate for this group was 11.2 percent. However, BLS estimates 4.3 million veterans have served since August 1990 (Gulf War era - present). This combination of veteran demographics, past unemployment data and recent unemployment trends will result in increased workload for veteran employment representatives.

The three-fold impact of flat (or decreased) federal funding, increased demand from unemployed veterans, and the need for more intensive services to OIF/OEF veterans and their families creates a situation where Texas veterans may not have access to the one-on-one employment assistance they deserve.

Under the provisions of 38 US Code and 38 CFR, the Texas Veterans Commission receives free office space from VA in 24 locations. In addition, TVC receives furniture, equipment, telephones and miscellaneous office items from VA at no cost to the State or the TVC. The items the Texas Veterans Commission is able to obtain from VA usually depend on the budget of each particular federal facility where a Texas Veterans Commission office is located (i.e., Dallas VA Medical Center, Houston VA Medical Center, etc.). If VA's budget cuts or reallocation of funds affect VA facilities where Texas Veterans Commission offices are located, TVC capital outlay expenses would dramatically increase.

The establishment of the Court of Veterans Appeals in 1988, as well as budget constraints, has made the work of the Texas Veterans Commission more complex. Before the court was established, VA employees decided a veteran's final appeal. With the establishment of the Court of Veterans Appeals, VA has become more adversarial in the process of awarding veterans' benefits. The time required by Texas Veterans Commission employees to develop

various disability claims has increased because additional information is required. There is also increased emphasis on procedure, law, process and documentation by VA. Budget driven decisions by VA have especially affected low-income elderly veterans. For example, veterans who are in receipt of pension annually complete an income questionnaire. To save cost and reduce claims processing, VA has eliminated this requirement in many cases. Those veterans with significant medical expenses during the year, which is the norm for aged veterans, could have some of those expenses reimbursed by reporting them on the questionnaire. Many of those aged veterans can miss this opportunity for reimbursement because they will not complete the questionnaire. To help these veterans, the TVC is contacting those on our caseload and offering our assistance in reporting their medical expenses. Direct contact on this issue is only available to the veterans on our caseload. Another development is that VA has changed its policy on who is eligible for VA pension. Under the provisions of a recent change in VA regulations, veterans who are 65 and older are automatically entitled to receive VA pensions (nonservice-connected disability) if they did not exceed certain income limitations. These new requirements have had a significant impact on the TVC workload. More veterans are going to be eligible for pension and the TVC will be needed to file their claims for them. This also creates an additional need for public awareness, which the TVC can address through marketing.

As a result, the advocacy service, which is provided by the Texas Veterans Commission, will be needed more than ever. When a veteran cannot receive care in a VA hospital or does not establish entitlement to VA pension, the burden is shifted to the state, county and city.

Veterans employment programs are governed by federal statute under Title 38,

chapters 41 and 42. The most recent major changes to the law came under the Jobs for Veterans Act which was signed by the President George W. Bush in November 2002. The purpose of the law is: “that there shall be an effective (1) job and job training intensive services program, (2) employment placement service program, and (3) job training placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons and that, to this end policies and regulations shall be promulgated and administered by an Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans’ Employment and Training, established by section 4102A of this title, through a Veterans’ Employment and Training Service within the Department of Labor, so as to provide such veterans and persons the maximum of employment and training opportunities, with priority given to the needs of disabled veterans and veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized through existing programs, coordination and merger of programs and implementation of new programs, including programs carried out by the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service to implement all efforts to ease the transition of service members to civilian careers that are consistent with, or an outgrowth of, the military experience of the service members.”

This law outlines the roles and responsibilities of DVOP and LVER along with creating a President’s National Hire Veterans Committee, specifying an amount of the grant be set aside for incentives to DVOP/LVER staff and establishing a formula for allocating funds to states based on each state’s relative proportion of veterans seeking work.

HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

The Commission has office locations throughout the State. Effort must be made to identify certified Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) that can serve these offices. The Commission continuously makes every effort to utilize HUBs when making its purchases and as a result, only one agency exceeded the TVC in percentage HUB expenditures of the agencies tracked by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA).

As required by Texas Government Code, Chapter 2056 and Chapter 2161.123 the Commission adopted administrative rules (40 TAC Section 453.1) concerning Historically Underutilized Businesses. The Commission will use the following procedures to continue its strong commitment to providing business to Historically Underutilized Businesses.

1. Require agency offices to seek out and purchase from local HUB vendors when possible.
2. Utilize the CPA’s HUB Directory of Approved Vendors to assist agency offices in locating HUBs in the communities where they are located.
3. Identify vendors the Commission is using that are a HUB but are not CPA certified and provides information to those vendors concerning certification.
4. Continuously monitor purchasing from HUBs.

V. Performance Measures and Statewide Benchmarks

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STATEWIDE BENCHMARKS

The Texas Veterans Commission's performance measures are interrelated. Achieving the measures contributes to the relative health of the economy of the State of Texas (Economic Development). The principal performance measures of the Texas Veterans Commission are as follows. (Outcome measures are followed by the output, which contributes to the outcome).

Amount of Department of Veterans Affairs Monetary Awards Paid Because of Commission Advocacy In Claims Representation of Veterans With Service-Connected Disabilities.

Number of Claims for Veterans Benefits Filed and Developed on Behalf of Veterans With Service-Connected Disabilities.

Amount of VA Monetary Awards Paid Because of Commission Case Development and Advocacy in Claims to Raise or Maintain the Income Level of Totally Disabled Wartime Veterans Above The Poverty Line.

Number of Claims for VA Monetary Benefits Filed to Raise or Maintain the Income of Totally Disabled Veterans Above Poverty Level.

Amount of VA Monetary Awards Paid Because of Commission Advocacy In Claims Representation for Widows And Orphans of Veterans.

Number of Claims for Veterans Benefits Filed and Developed on Behalf of Widows and Orphans of Veterans.

Percentage of Veterans Entered Employment.

Number of Appeals of Unfavorable VA Decisions Filed on Behalf of Veterans, Their Widows, or Their Orphans.

Percentage of Veterans Retained in Employment at Six Months.

Veterans Employment Services Customers Served.

VI. Agency Fact Sheet

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

AGENCY FACT SHEET

Texas Veterans Commission

Established 1927

Fact Sheet

Demographics¹

Texas Veterans Population	1,707,365
Texas Veterans Age 60 and Older	803,362
Texas Veterans Age 80 and Older	169,532
Texas Women Veterans	145,226
County with Most Veterans	Harris ... 197,030
County with Fewest Veterans	Loving20

Texas Veterans Commission Data Offices

Number of Texas Veterans Commission Offices	140
Number of Veterans County Service Offices	220

Key Measures of Performance for Veterans Represented By the Texas Veterans Commission Fiscal Year 2007

Outputs

Claims Filed and Developed on Behalf of Service-Connected Disabled Veterans ²	63,452
Active Cases for Veterans Represented by the TVC	133,389
Appeals of Unfavorable VA Decisions Filed on Behalf of Veterans	14,854
Veterans Employment Customers Served	97,437
Average Number of Participants in Veterans Education & Training Programs	24,395

Outcomes

VA Awards to Service-Connected Veterans (millions of dollars)	\$1,138.3
VA Awards to Totally Disabled Veterans (millions of dollars)	119.2
VA Awards to Widows and Orphans of Veterans (millions of dollars)	202.5
Total of Awards to Veterans and Survivors Represented by the TVC (millions of dollars)	\$1,460.0

¹ Source U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, VETPop2007

² In addition to the claims for service-connected veterans in FY 2007, the Commission also filed 7,663 claims on behalf of veterans who were totally disabled and who had an income below the poverty level and 4,421 claims on behalf of the widows and orphans of recently deceased veterans.

VII. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

AGENCY GOALS

Budgetary

Goal: Through effective training, marketing and advocacy we will provide claims representation and employment services and ensure quality education for veterans, their dependents and their survivors. (Budgetary)

HUB

Goal: We will make a good faith effort 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 44).

BUDGETARY GOAL

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

Objective

■ Outcome Measures

Assist disabled veterans, their widows and orphans in obtaining entitlements as follows:

- Amount of Department of Veterans Affairs monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation of veterans with service-connected disabilities.
- Amount of Department of Veterans Affairs 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.
- Amount of Department of Veterans Affairs monetary awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation for widows or orphans of veterans.
- Percentage of Veterans Entered Employment.
- Percentage of Veterans retained in employment at six months.

Strategy

■ Output Measures

Claims Representation & Counseling

Provide outreach services and advocacy in claims by veterans, their widows and their orphans by Texas Veterans Commission personnel and through veterans county service officers.

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

Veterans Employment Services

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

- Veterans Employment Services customers served.

Outreach and Marketing

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

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

Veterans Education

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

- Average number of Participants in Veterans Education and Training Programs

NON BUDGETARY GOALS

Goal *We will make a good faith effort to purchase from certified historically underutilized businesses.*

Objective

■ *Outcome Measures*

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

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

Strategy

■ *Output Measures*

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

- *Dollar value of certified purchases.*

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

Objective

■ *Outcome Measures*

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

- *Percentage of Texas Veterans Commission clients who indicate that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.*

Strategy

■ *Output Measures*

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

- *Number of customer satisfaction surveys performed.*

VIII. Agency Technology Initiative Alignment

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ALIGNMENT

Technology Alignment for the Texas Veterans Commission					
Technology Initiative	Related Agency Objective	Related SSP Strategy (IES)	Status	Anticipated Benefits	Innovation, Best Practice, Benchmarking
1. Transformation and consolidation of agency data center operations into the State Data Center	All objectives	1 - 1	Planned	Replacement of outdated server, better segregation of server processes, enhanced disaster recovery.	
2. Develop a case management system for tracking veterans' compensation claims and their interactions with TVC.	All objectives	5 - 1	Planned	Develop a centralized, statewide database of Texas Veterans with an emphasis on a case management system for tracking veterans' claims, improved standardization for processing benefit request forms and quicker retrieval of performance and workload measures.	TVC has been in discussions with Virginia, New York and Utah regarding case management systems for military veterans.
3. Outsource TVC email services.	All objectives	1 - 4	Current	Eliminate the need for additional staff, hardware and software to administer TVC email.	
4. Implement the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts' Employee Information System (EIS)	All objectives	1 - 4	Current	Reduce the manual processes and paperwork required for employee time and earning statement reporting.	

Appendices

**Texas Veterans Commission
Strategic Plan for the 2009 - 2013 Period**

APPENDIX A: PLANNING PROCESS

Texas Veterans Commission Planning Committee

Commissioners

BGen Karen S. Rankin, Chair

T.P. O'Mahoney, Vice Chairman

Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Member

BGen Ezell Ware, Jr., Secretary

John B. McKinney, Member

Staff

James E. Nier

Executive Director

Charles A. Buerschinger

Deputy Executive Director

Bill Wilson

Director of Veterans Employment Services

Cruz Montemayor

Director of Human Resources

James O. Richman

Director of Claims Representation & Counseling

Terry C. Burns

Director of Administration & Training

Connie Jacksits

Director of Veterans Education

Irma Rodriguez

Director of Finance

Tina M. Coronado

General Counsel

Planning Process

May 2, 2008

First draft prepared by staff submitted to Commissioners.

May 14, 2008

Commission comments/changes Third Quarterly Commission Meeting

Week of May 26, 2008

Staff incorporates Commissioner's changes and provides second draft to Commissioner's and stakeholders.

June 9, 2008

Deadline for Commissioner's and stakeholder comments.

June 27, 2008

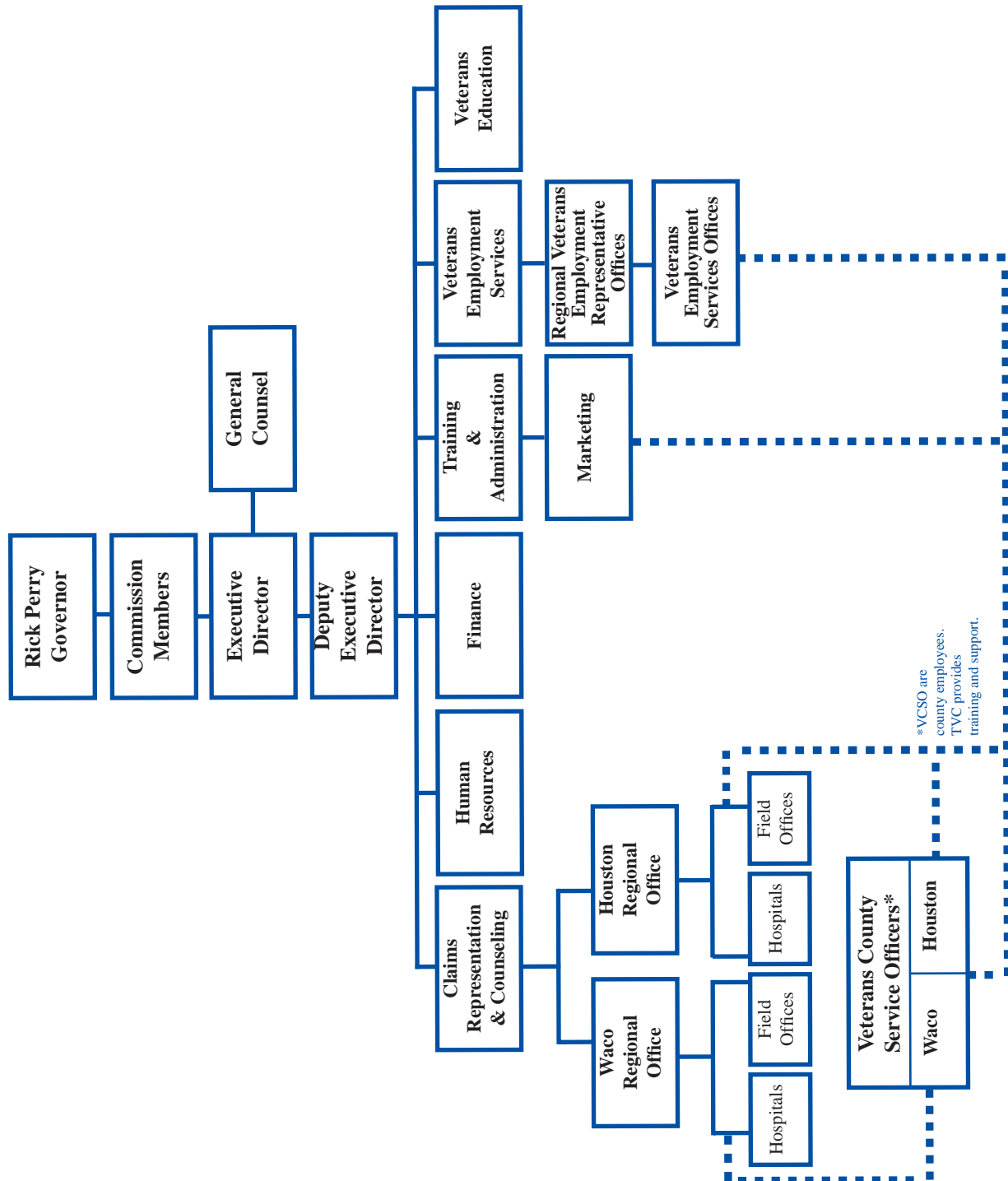
Strategic Plan is submitted to Governor's Office and Legislative Budget Board.

Agencies, Organizations and Individuals

Receiving Copies for Comment

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

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



*VCSO are county employees. TVC provides training and support.

APPENDIX C: FIVE YEAR PROJECTION OF OUTCOMES

Texas Veterans Commission Outcome Projections 2009-2013

OUTCOME	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation to veterans with service-connected disabilities.	\$1,199	\$1,200	\$1,225	\$1,250	\$1,275
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation and development for totally disabled, impoverished veterans.	\$ 113	\$ 113	\$ 113	\$ 113	\$ 113
Amount of VA monetary awards paid (in millions of dollars) because of TVC advocacy in claims representation for widows or orphans of veterans.	\$ 198	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200
The percentage of original or reopened claims submitted by the TVC granted by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%
Percent of Veterans Entered Employment.	68%	68%	68%	68%	68%
Percentage of Veterans Retained in Employment at Six Months.	84%	85%	85%	85%	85%
Percent of total dollar value of purchases to certified HUBs.	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Percent of Texas Veterans Commission clients who indicate that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Percent of veterans county service officers who feel that the Commission provides service that meets their needs and expectations.	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%

APPENDIX D: MEASURES DEFINITIONS

Goal 1: *Through training, marketing and advocacy we will provide effective claims representation, employment, and education services to veterans, their dependents and their survivors.
(Budgetary)*

OUTCOME MEASURES

1. VA Monetary Awards (Million \$) to Veterans with Service Disabilities

Short Definition: Amount of US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation payments 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 the VA.

Purpose/Importance: This measure addresses the amount of payments by the VA to veterans with service-connected disabilities who are represented by the Texas Veterans Commission. The payments provide well-deserved compensation to veterans who have suffered a disability as a result of military service. These payments not only have a positive effect on the lives of these veterans but also have a significant impact on the economy of the State of Texas.

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

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

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

Calculation Type - Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

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

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

Purpose/Importance: This measure addresses the extent to which services provided by the Texas Veterans Commission assist totally and permanently disabled wartime veterans receive payments, which raise these veterans income above the poverty level. These payments have a profound effect on the lives of the veterans concerned and have a positive effect on the State economy and the State budget. In many cases, if these veterans did not receive these payments of financial assistance to them, they would become a responsibility of the State. It represents the amount of VA pension payments for nonservice-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 the VA. To be eligible for pension the VA requires a veteran to be determined to be “permanently and totally disabled” by the VA due to disabilities and have an income below a level set by the VA annually, which is approximately the poverty line income level.

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

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

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

Calculation Type - Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

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

Short Definition: Amount of US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Monetary Awards (in millions of dollars) paid because of Commission advocacy in claims representation for widows or orphans of veterans.

Purpose/Importance: This measure addresses the extent to which services provided by the Texas Veterans Commission assist the widows and orphans of wartime veterans or veterans who died as a result of service-connected disabilities. These payments provide either a fixed amount to survivors of veterans who died from service-connected disabilities or payment to survivors of wartime veteran

who have very limited incomes. These payments have a profound effect on the lives of the survivors concerned and have a positive effect on the State economy and the State budget. In many cases, if these survivors did not receive these payments of financial assistance to them they would become a responsibility of the State. It represents the amount of VA payment Texas resident survivors of veterans who have appointed the Commission or an organization for which Commission personnel are the accredited representatives to represent them in their claim against the VA.

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

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

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

Calculation Type - Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

4. Percent of TVC Claims Granted by VA.

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

Purpose/importance: Represents the success rate for claims filed prior to any further action (appeals, decision review by the VA at the regional office, responses to a notice of disagreement, etc.) by the TVC staff.

Source: Logs maintained by TVC staff of initial VA rating decisions

Method of Calculation: Decisions by the VA are reviewed at the TVC Regional Offices daily. Prior to finalizing the decision, the TVC staff must sign off on each decision on claims filed by veterans appointing the TVC as their representative in their claim. From these reviews, daily logs are created which indicate the number of claims granted and the number denied. A monthly report is then compiled from these daily logs. Annual totals are derived from the monthly reports. The percentage of claims granted is calculated by dividing the number of granted by the total number of claims.

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

Calculation Type – Non Cumulative
New Measure – NO
Desired Performance - Higher than target

5. Percentage of Veterans Entered Employment

Short Definition: The number of unemployed veteran clients who were employed in the first quarter after the exit..

Purpose/Importance: This measure provides an assessment of program impact in increasing employment for those who were not employed. This measure reflects the true number of veterans who benefit from the One-Stop system. By providing a full range of employment services through the One-Stop system, which result in Veterans entering employment, represents a significant impact on the economy of the State of Texas.

Source: Texas Workforce Commission from WorkinTexas and TWIST

Method of Calculation: A percentage is obtained by taking the number of Veterans who are employed during the first quarter after the exit quarter divided by the number of Veterans who exit during the quarter.

Data Limitations: Texas Workforce Commission provides the data and the Commission is dependent on the data integrity of the WorkinTexas.com and TWIST reporting systems. This measure is based on wage records and supplemental data sources.

Calculation Type - Cumulative
New Measure – New
Desired Performance - Higher than target.

6. Percentage of Veterans Retained in Employment at Six Months.

Short Definition: The number of employed veteran clients who were employed in both the second and third quarters after the exit quarter.

Purpose/importance: This measure provides an assessment of program impact in increasing employment for those who were not employed. This measure reflects the true number of veterans who benefit from the One-Stop system. By providing a full range of employment services through the One-Stop system, which results in Veterans entering employment, represents a significant impact on the economy of the State of Texas.

Source: Texas Workforce Commission from WorkinTexas and TWIST

Method of Calculation: Of those who are employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter the number of participants who are employed in both the second and third quarter after the exit quarter divided by the number of Veterans who exit during the quarter.

Data Limitations: Texas Workforce Commission provides the data and the Commission is dependent on the data integrity of the WorkinTexas.com reporting system. Employment, in the, first, second, and third quarters after the exit quarter, does not have to be with the same employer.

Calculation Type - Cumulative
New Measure – New
Desired Performance - Higher than target

OUTCOME MEASURES

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

Short Definition: This measure provides participant information on education and training programs at institutions and training establishments with programs approved for veterans, Reservists, and eligible dependents to receive VA educational benefits.

Purpose/importance: This measure provides an assessment of program impact in increasing the number of trainees receiving VA educational benefits in Texas.

Source: The data for this measure is derived from monthly RCS 20-0260 Education Activities Reports provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and recorded in the Veterans Education Access database files. The activity is considered complete when the RCS report matches the Veterans Education database.

Method of Calculation: Based on records retrieved from the Veterans Education database, the number of veterans, Reservists, and 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. This measure is non-cumulative.

Data Limitations: The Texas Veterans Commission is dependent on the VA for providing the monthly reports. There have been occasions when these monthly reports have not been available. Also, the monthly RCS 20-0260 reports do not include any out-of-system payments: On-the-job, apprenticeship, flight, correspondence. Also, the number of participants appearing on each monthly report is not an unduplicated count. Therefore, the figures from these reports are considerably less than the total enrollment figure reported by the VA at the end of each federal fiscal year.

Calculation Type – Noncumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

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

OUTPUT MEASURES

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

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

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

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

Method of Calculation: Data is collected on claims filed as they are received at the two regional offices. Claim numbers, office source and type of claim are recorded in an agency database. A separate claim is recorded for each issue claimed.

Data Limitations: The data is collected at the regional office level. It requires cross checking with counts from field offices. Because of the volume of claims the identification of the category of claim is dependent on the coding by field office personnel.

Calculation Type - Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

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

Short Definition: Number of claims for U S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits filed to raise or maintain the income of totally disabled veterans above the poverty level.

Purpose/Importance: This represents the number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against 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.

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

Method of Calculation: Data is collected on claims filed as they are received at the two regional offices. Claim numbers, office source and type of claim are recorded in an agency database. A separate claim is recorded for each issue claimed.

Data Limitations: The data is collected at the regional office level. It requires cross checking with counts from field offices. Because of the volume of claims the identification of the category of claim is dependent on the coding by field office personnel.

Calculation Type - Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

3. Claims Filed and Developed on Behalf of Widows and Orphans of Veterans

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

Purpose/Importance: This represents the number of claims filed through the Commission counselors against the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) by Texas widows 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.

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

Method of Calculation: Data is collected on claims filed as they are received at the two regional offices. Claim numbers, office source and type of claim are recorded in an agency database. A separate claim is recorded for each issue claimed.

Data Limitations: The data is collected at the regional office level. It requires cross checking with counts from field offices. Because of the volume of claims the identification of the category of claim is dependent on the coding by field office personnel.

Calculation Type – Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance – Higher than target

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

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

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

Source of Data Collection: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reports provided to the Commission.

Method of Calculation: Number of active cases is recorded from data provided by the VA. The number reported is the number of cases used to calculate outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

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

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance – Higher than target

5. Number of VA Decisions Reviewed

Short Definition: Number of US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Rating Board decisions reviewed.

Purpose/Importance: This represents the number of VA Rating Board decisions reviewed by TVC counselors at the Houston and Waco Regional Offices. Case review is the primary means to determine if veterans or their survivors are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. Before a TVC client's claim can be finally adjudicated by the VA, TVC counselors must sign off on the claim that they agree with the decision.

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

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

Data Limitations: The VA must first adjudicate claims before they can be reviewed. VA backlogs can reduce the numbers of claims reviewed. The VA must post the TVC as the representative of the claimant in the official record of the claim. If this is not done, the file will not receive review by the TVC. The TVC is constantly crosschecking files to ensure that TVC representation is posted in that file.

Calculation Type – Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

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

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

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

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

Method of Calculation: Data is collected on appeals filed as they are received at the two regional offices. Claim numbers, office source and type of appeal are recorded in an agency database. A separate appeal is recorded for each issue appealed.

Data Limitations: The VA must first adjudicate claims before they can be reviewed. An unresolved disagreement with the VA after a review is the source of an appeal. VA backlogs can reduce the numbers of claims reviewed, which can subsequently reduce the number of appeals of decisions.

Calculation Type – Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

EFFICIENCY MEASURES

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

Short Definition: Payments to veterans represented by the Commission by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) per dollar spent by the TVC during a fiscal year.

Purpose/Importance: This represents the amount of payments to veterans represented by the TVC to the VA per dollar spent by the TVC during a fiscal year. It is a measure of the return on investment from TVC appropriations.

Source of Data Collection: TVC records and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Method of Calculation: The total of outcome measures 1, 2, and 3 for Goal 1, for a specified period is divided by total TVC expenditures.

Data Limitations: The VA provides the data for payments to veterans; the Commission is dependent on the VA to provide the data on a timely basis.

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

EXPLANATORY MEASURES

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

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

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

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

Method of Calculation: 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. The result is expressed as a percentage.

Data Limitations: The result is dependent on the VCSO attending training. Despite the fact that the TVC pays the expenses for VCSO to attend this training, on occasion there are VCSO who do not attend training.

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance - Higher than target

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

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

Purpose/Importance: Indicates the success of TVC training programs and the percent of Veterans County Service Officers (VCSO) attending at least one ongoing training conference per year.

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

Method of Calculation: 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). The result is expressed as a percentage.

Data Limitations: The result is dependent on the VCSO attending training. Despite the fact that the TVC pays the partial expenses for VCSO to attend ongoing training there are VCSO who do not attend the State mandated training.

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance – Higher than target

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

1. Veterans Employment Services Customers Served.

Short Definition: Number of eligible veteran employment customers assisted with employment services.

Purpose /Importance: This measure provides an assessment of the number of veterans served and can be compared to the number of veterans residing in a particular area and shows the increase or decrease in total veterans served. This measure provides a measure of the effectiveness of advertising.

Source: Texas Workforce Commission from WorkinTexas and TWIST

Method of Calculation: Unduplicated number of customers receiving a qualifying service from a DVOP/LVER staff member during the performance reporting period. Qualifying Services are based on guidance received from DOL.

Data Limitations: Texas Workforce Commission provides the data and the Commission is dependent on the data integrity of the WorkinTexas.com reporting system. Target was set before list of qualifying services was set and before we had a system designed for Common Measures.

Calculation type: Cumulative.
New Measure: Yes
Desired Performance: Higher than target.

Goal 1, Strategy 3: Provide outreach and direct marketing to inform veterans, their dependents, and their survivors of services provided by the Texas Veterans Commission, local Workforce Centers and the Veterans County Service Officers.

1. The Number of Public Information Briefings Given.

Short Definition: The number of public information briefings given statewide, including Town Hall meetings, conferences, conventions and any other public events attended by the TVC.

Purpose/Importance: Public information briefings represent community outreach for the marketing department. Direct contact with the public allows the TVC to establish relationship

within veteran communities to promote services offered by the TVC. It also allows veterans to meet with TVC representatives in person, often on a one-on-one basis.

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

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

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

Calculation type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target.

2. The Number of Items of Public Information Distributed to Include Brochures and public service announcements. (cumulative measure)

Short Definition: The number of brochures distributed to TVC offices, VCSO offices and others as well as the number of television and radio public service announcements distributed statewide.

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

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

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

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

Calculation type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target

EXPLANATORY MEASURES

1. The number of calls for assistance received. (cumulative measure)

Short Definition: The number of requests for assistance received by call center.

Purpose/Importance: This represents the number of incoming phone calls to the call center on both the shared veterans hotline and the local line. The calls exhibit contact the TVC makes with veterans both at the call center level and when calls are referred out to TVC counselors and Veterans County Service Officers.

Source: Daily phone call log maintained by call center employees.

Method of Calculation: Data are collected on individual phone calls as they are answered by the call center. The incoming phone line and time of the call are recorded along with the location and inquiry of the caller and the action taken by the call center. A monthly report is compiled for the call center, noting the number of both individual and overall calls.

Data Limitations: There is no method for crosschecking data recorded. If all necessary information is not recorded at the time of the call, there is no opportunity to retrieve it.

Calculation type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than target.

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

OUTCOME MEASURE

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

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

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

Source of Data Collection: Texas Building and Procurement Commission HUB Reports and TVC purchasing Records.

Method of Calculation: Total purchases of goods and services by certified HUB from procurement categories for a specified period are calculated. These are divided by the total of all purchases from

procurement categories for the same period. The number is converted into a percentage of the total purchases.

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

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance – Higher than target

OUTPUT MEASURE

1. Dollar Value of Certified Purchases

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

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

Source of Data Collection: Texas Building and Procurement Commission HUB Reports and TVC purchasing records.

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

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

Calculation Type – Cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance – Higher than target

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

OUTCOME MEASURE

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

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

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

Source of Data Collection: TVC survey records.

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

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

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance – Higher than target

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

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

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

Source of Data Collection: TVC survey records.

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

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

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance – Higher than target

OUTPUT MEASURE

1. Number of Customer Satisfaction Surveys Performed.

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

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

Source of Data Collection: TVC survey records.

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

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

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – No
Desired Performance – Higher than target

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

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

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

Source of Data Collection: TVC survey records.

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

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

Calculation Type – Non cumulative
New Measure – Yes
Desired Performance – Higher than target

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

OVERVIEW

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

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

required to accomplish the agency mission and strategic goal. They are supported by a clerical staff. The Commission's administrative staff are located in Austin.

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

CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

The current Commission staff has the skills necessary to address business issues of the agency. A majority of the current workforce (83%) consists of employees who have military service. The Commission has a diverse workforce. The Commission workforce consists of 51% White, 23% Hispanic, 24% Black, 1% Native American and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander employees. Males comprise 68% of the workforce and females 32%.

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

LENGTH OF STATE SERVICE	
Less than 2 years . . .	23%
2-4 years . . .	22%
5-9 years . . .	20%
10-14 years . . .	10%
15 years and over . . .	25%

EMPLOYEE AGE	
Under 30 . . .	2%
30-39 . . .	11%
40-49 . . .	18%
50-59 . . .	42%
60 and over . . .	27%

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

with all of the services needed to obtain their benefits and entitlements.

The average turnover rate of the Commission in the five years from 2003 through 2007 was 15.1%. During this period, the turnover rate was as low as 6.9% in 2004 and reached a high of 22.9% in 2007. The Commission turnover rate has consistently been lower than the statewide turnover rate, which averaged 16.44%. It is anticipated the turnover rate will remain lower than the statewide rate but may be affected by the number of employees eligible to retire in addition to normal attrition. A review of current employee records indicates 31% of employees of the agency will be eligible for retirement within the next five years. Even though 31% of employees are eligible to retire, eligibility dates for retirement of these employees are spread out over the years. It is anticipated employee retirements will not greatly affect the turnover rate in any one year. Taking into consideration normal attrition and the number of employees who can retire, it is projected the turnover rate will be approximately 17% each year in the period covered by this strategic plan.

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

Currently, 37% of the Commission’s upper level management are eligible to retire. It is anticipated the Commission may be faced with the challenge of recruiting new employees with the needed administrative and managerial skills to meet agency needs in these areas.

APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The Commission participated in the Survey of Organizational Excellence for the first time in the fall of 1999 and has continued participation.

For FY 2008, the highest level of the survey assessment is the Workplace Dimensions, which captures the total work environment. Each Workplace Dimension consists of several Survey Constructs designed to broadly profile areas of strength and concern so that intervention may be targeted appropriately. Comparative average statewide benchmarks, comparative average benchmarks for organizations of similar size (FTE Category) and similar mission were used to evaluate Commission scores in Workplace Dimensions. The results of the comparison revealed Commission scores were consistently above statewide benchmarks for organizations of similar size and mission. The survey indicated an increase in overall employee satisfaction with the total work environment compared to the previous survey.

The Commission areas of strengths included Strategic Orientation and “Quality”. Commission scores were well above all benchmarks in these areas. The Strategic Orientation 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” focuses upon the degree to which principals, such as customer service and continuous improvement, are parts of organizational culture. This also addresses the extent to which employees feel that they have the resources to deliver quality services. The survey revealed that employees of the Commission feel they produce a high quality of work with a low error rate, services match customer needs and the Commission is constantly improving services.

The Commission areas of relative weakness included the Fair Pay and Change Orientation. Fair Pay is an evaluation from the viewpoint of employees of the competitiveness of the total compensation package. Commission scores for Fair Pay were approximately equal to all benchmarks. It addresses how well the package “holds up” when employees compare it to similar jobs in their own communities. The survey revealed employees did not feel their salaries are competitive with similar jobs in their communities. This received a lower score than in the 1999 survey. Despite a cost of living increase and equity adjustments made prior to the employees’ completion of the survey in 2007, this remains an area of concern by Commission employees. The score for Fair Pay was higher than the two previous scores in 2004 and 2006,

indicating conditions are improving in this area. This remains the lowest scoring category for the survey. “Change Orientation” secures employees’ perceptions of the organization’s capability and readiness to change based on new information and ideas. It addresses the organization’s aptitude to process information in a timely manner and act upon it effectively. It also examines the organization’s capacity to draw upon, develop and utilize the strengths of all in the organization for improvement. The “Change Orientation” portion of the current survey received a higher score than in the two previous surveys. This trend indicates a marked improvement in this category. Although the change orientation is identified as an area of concern, the current score is higher than the scores of agencies with similar size and mission.

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

FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE

It is expected that the Commission mission, goals, and strategy will not change significantly over the next five years. Veterans assistance counselors, veterans employment representatives and veterans education program specialists who are the core of the Commission’s professional workforce require a very strong and competent knowledge of state and federal veterans benefit programs and VA and DOL policies and procedures which affect the administration of benefits to the Texas veterans population and their families. Skills required

by veterans assistance counselors, veterans employment representatives and veterans education program specialists to competently serve Texas veterans will remain a priority in developing future agency workforce plans. To accomplish Commission goals and meet statutory requirements, competent training must continue to veterans county service officers who are critical to assisting the Commission to meet its established mission, goals and strategy. The TVC clerical staff will need support through training and equipment to keep abreast of ever changing computer technology.

Commission administrative personnel will require ongoing training to keep up with changes in Federal budget procedures, accounting and human resource best practices and policies to efficiently use both fiscal and human resources made available to the Commission by the Legislature. Training of Commission personnel and veterans county service officers will remain a critical function as the Commission plans for 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 assistance counselors to meet the demand. Requests for additional personnel will be for areas of the state where the projected demand for service is growing.

The Commission began a marketing program in FY 2002. The goal of this program is to reach Texas veterans and their families and to make them aware of federal and state benefits and services to which they are entitled. As the marketing program matures and the number of veterans and their families reached by this program increases, additional personnel may be required in the next five years to expand TVC’s outreach efforts.

GAP ANALYSIS

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

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

As discussed in the Current Workforce Profile section, 31% of Commission personnel will be eligible for retirement over the next five years. There is a high probability that 37% of upper management personnel will retire over the next five years which will require replacement with new management personnel.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The Commission has incorporated succession planning and succession management in order to develop job requirements and skills needed to replace key managerial personnel. Key management personnel include financial, human resources and administrative staff. Personnel should be cross trained to the extent necessary to continue operation of the Commission during the intervening time. A study has been completed and a list of recruitment resources to draw upon has been identified in the event that an announcement of retirement by a key manager is received.

Recruitment and replacement of veterans assistance counselors, veterans employment specialist, veterans education program specialist and clerical personnel as they resign and retire has been an ongoing process over the years. We will continue to utilize "Work in Texas" and the agency's web site to fill those positions. This method has worked well in the past and is expected to meet the needs of the Commission over the next five years.

Staff development and training programs should be emphasized to allow for cross training of employees and to provide leadership development. Funding for the Commission career ladder was requested and appropriated during the 80th Legislative session for veterans assistance counselors and should be included in future Legislative Appropriations Requests to continue the support the Commission retention effort.

APPENDIX G: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN

The Texas Veterans Commission has three programs, Claims Representation and Counseling, Veterans Employment Services (VES), and Veterans Education. These programs implement the agency's mission of ensuring that Texas veterans and their families receive all the rights and entitlements provided by law. The Veterans Employment Services (VES) program has a direct connection to the workforce system through job matching and intensive services to veteran job seekers.

PART 1A-B

The Texas Veterans Commission did not identify any specific Programmatic Long-Term Objectives but did find that Systematic Long-Term Objective SI2.0 requiring all system partners to participate in an information gateway is applicable to the TVC. Discussion of this objective is found under Technological Developments on Page 21.

PART 2

Customer Satisfaction

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

Employer Survey

The agency will evaluate satisfaction among employers who hire veterans by conducting a survey. The VES program is currently developing survey questions, evaluating appropriate sample sizes and preparing to implement the survey with a target date of early FY 2009. The survey data will be used for both operational program management and long-term strategic planning.

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

Coordination

Veterans Employment Services are delivered through the Texas Workforce Centers by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER). House Bill 2604, 79th Regular Session, moved the DVOP/LVER program to the Texas Veterans Commission effective April 1, 2006. The TVC ensures that DVOP/LVER staff will remain in the Texas Workforce Centers and use the service delivery models established by local workforce development boards.

VES staff integration in Texas Workforce Centers builds on the systemic approach to workforce development, promoting the inclusion of partner agencies, local governments and community organizations resulting in a one-stop resource for both job seekers and employers. Furthermore, DVOP and LVER staff are using the electronic job matching, reporting and case management tools, WorkinTexas.com and The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST), maintained by the Texas Workforce Commission and used by workforce center staff.

Additionally, performance measurement and reporting of VES staff are integrated with the workforce system. The Department of Labor's Common Measures includes Veteran (DVOP/LVER) measures as a subset of Employment Service measures. These Common Measures allow federal and state regulators and policy makers to compare performance across various programs by standardizing definitions and data sources.

APPENDIX H: SERVICE AREAS BY OFFICE

COUNTIES SERVED

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Regional Office - **Houston, Texas**

Angelina	De Witt	Jasper	Matagorda	Shelby
Aransas	Dimmit	Jefferson	Maverick	Starr
Atascosa	Duval	Jim Hogg	Medina	Sutton
Austin	Edwards	Jim Wells	Menard	Terrell
Bandera	Fort Bend	Karnes	Montgomery	Trinity
Bee	Frio	Kendall	Nacogdoches	Tyler
Bexar	Galveston	Kenedy	Newton	Uvalde
Blanco	Gillespie	Kerr	Nueces	Val Verde
Brazoria	Goliad	Kimble	Orange	Victoria
Brewster	Gonzales	Kinney	Pecos	Walker
Brooks	Grimes	Kleberg	Polk	Waller
Caldwell	Guadalupe	La Salle	Real	Washington
Calhoun	Hardin	Lavaca	Refugio	Webb
Cameron	Harris	Liberty	Sabine	Wharton
Chambers	Hays	Live Oak	San Augustine	Willacy
Colorado	Hidalgo	McCulloch	San Jacinto	Wilson
Comal	Houston	McMullen	San Patricio	Zapata
Crockett	Jackson	Mason	Schleicher	Zavala

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Regional Office - **Waco, Texas**

Anderson	Crane	Hansford	Lubbock	Runnels
Andrews	Crosby	Hardeman	Lynn	Rusk
Archer	Culberson	Harrison	McLennan	San Saba
Armstrong	Dallam	Hartley	Madison	Scurry
Bailey	Dallas	Haskell	Marion	Shackelford
Bastrop	Dawson	Hemphill	Martin	Sherman
Baylor	Deaf Smith	Henderson	Midland	Smith
Bell	Delta	Hill	Milam	Somervell
Borden	Denton	Hockley	Mills	Stephens
Bosque	Dickens	Hood	Mitchell	Sterling
Brazos	Donley	Hopkins	Montague	Stonewall
Briscoe	Eastland	Howard	Moore	Swisher
Brown	Ector	Hudspeth	Morris	Tarrant
Burleson	Ellis	Hunt	Motley	Taylor
Burnet	El Paso	Hutchinson	Navarro	Terry
Callahan	Erath	Irion	Nolan	Throckmorton
Camp	Falls	Jack	Ochiltree	Titus
Carson	Fannin	Jeff Davis	Oldham	Tom Green
Cass	Fayette	Johnson	Palo Pinto	Travis
Castro	Fisher	Jones	Panola	Upshur
Cherokee	Floyd	Kaufman	Parker	Upton
Childress	Foard	Kent	Parmer	Van Zandt
Clay	Franklin	King	Potter	Ward
Cochran	Freestone	Knox	Presidio	Wheeler
Coke	Gaines	Lamar	Rains	Wichita

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Regional Office - **Waco, Texas** (Continued)

Coleman	Glasscock	Lampasas	Reagan	Williamson
Collin	Gray	Lee	Red River	Winkler
Collingsworth	Grayson	Leon	Reeves	Wise
Comanche	Gregg	Limestone	Roberts	Wood
Concho	Hale	Lipscomb	Robertson	Yoakum
Cooke	Hall	Llano	Rockwall	Young
Coryell	Hamilton	Loving	Wilbarger	
Cottle	Lamb	Randall		
Garza				

Counties Served by the Texas Veterans Commission Area Office – **Fort Hood, Texas**

(Service Emphasis is on Military and Military Retirees)

Anderson	Burnet	Fayette	Lee	Mills
Bastrop	Cherokee	Freestone	Leon	Navarro
Bell	Coleman	Hamilton	Limestone	Robertson
Bosque	Comanche	Henderson	Llano	San Saba
Brazos	Coryell	Hill	Madison	Somervell
Brown	Erath	Houston	McLennan	Travis
Burleson	Falls	Lampasas	Milam	Williamson

Counties Served by the Texas Veterans Commission Area Office – **Fort Sam Houston, TX**

(Service Emphasis is on Military and Military Retirees - Army)

Atascosa	Comal	Hays	Lavaca	Starr
Aransas	De Witt	Hidalgo	Live Oak	Uvalde
Bee	Dimmit	Jim Hogg	McMullen	Victoria
Bexar	Duval	Jim Wells	Maverick	Webb
Brooks	Frio	Karnes	Medina	Willacy
Caldwell	Goliad	Kenedy	Nueces	Wilson
Calhoun	Gonzales	Kinney	Refugio	Zapata
Cameron	Guadalupe	Kleberg	San Patricio	Zavala
		La Salle		

Counties Served by the Texas Veterans Commission Area Office – **Lackland AFB, TX**

(Service Emphasis is on Military and Military Retirees – Air Force)

Atascosa	Comal	Hays	Lavaca	Starr
Aransas	De Witt	Hidalgo	Live Oak	Uvalde
Bee	Dimmit	Jim Hogg	McMullen	Victoria
Bexar	Duval	Jim Wells	Maverick	Webb
Brooks	Frio	Karnes	Medina	Willacy
Caldwell	Goliad	Kenedy	Nueces	Wilson
Calhoun	Gonzales	Kinney	Refugio	Zapata
Cameron	Guadalupe	Kleberg	San Patricio	Zavala
		La Salle		

Counties Served by the Texas Veterans Commission Area Office – **Marshall, TX****

Bowie	Gregg	Morris	Red River	Shelby
Camp	Harrison	Nacogdoches	Rusk	Titus
Cass	Marion	Panola	San Augustine	Upshur

Counties Served by the Texas Veterans Commission Area Office – **Midland, TX****

Andrews	Crane	Glasscock	Midland	Upton
Crockett	Ector	Martin	Reagan	Winkler

Counties Served by the Texas Veterans Commission Area Office – **Sheppard AFB, TX**

Archer	Clay	Hardeman	Knox	Wilbarger
Baylor	Foard	Jack	Montague	Wichita

Counties Served by the Texas Veterans Commission Area Office – **Wichita Falls, TX****

Archer	Clay	Hardeman	Knox	Wilbarger
Baylor	Foard	Jack	Montague	Wichita

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **Amarillo, Texas**

Armstrong	Cottle	Gray	Hutchinson	Ochiltree
Bailey	Crosby	Hale	Knox	Oldham
Briscoe	Deaf Smith	Hall	King	Parmer
Carson	Dallam	Hansford	Lamb	Randall
Castro	Dickens	Hardeman	Lipscomb	Roberts
Childress	Donley	Hartley	Lubbock	Potter
Cochran	Foard	Hemphill	Motley	Sherman
Collingsworth	Floyd	Hockley	Moore	Swisher
				Wheeler

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **Big Spring, Texas**

Andrews	Dawson	Irion	Mitchell	Sterling
Borden	Dickens	Jeff Davis	Nolan	Stonewall
Brewster	Ector	Jones	Pecos	Taylor
Callahan	Fisher	Kent	Presidio	Terrell
Cochran	Gaines	King	Reagan	Terry
Coke	Garza	Loving	Reeves	Tom Green
Crane	Glasscock	Knox	Runnels	Upton
Crockett	Haskell	Lubbock	Schleicher	Ward
Crosby	Hockley	Martin	Scurry	Winkler
Culberson	Howard	Lynn	Shackelford	Yoakum
	Hudspeth	Midland	Stephens	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **Bonham, Texas**

Delta	Fannin	Grayson	Lamar
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Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **Dallas, Texas**

Archer	Denton	Hunt	Parker	Throckmorton
Baylor	Eastland	Jack	Red River	Van Zandt
Clay	Ellis	Kaufman	Rains	Wise
Collin	Franklin	Johnson	Rockwall	Wood
Cooke	Hood	Montague	Smith	Young
Dallas	Hopkins	Palo Pinto	Tarrant	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **Houston, Texas**

Angelina	Galveston	Jasper	Newton	Trinity
Austin	Grimes	Jefferson	Orange	Tyler
Brazoria	Hardin	Liberty	Polk	Walker
Chambers	Harris	Matagorda	Sabine	Waller
Colorado	Jackson	Montgomery	San Jacinto	Washington
Fort Bend				Wharton

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **Kerrville, Texas**

Bandera	Edwards	Kerr	Mason	Sutton
Blanco	Gillespie	Kimble	Menard	Val Verde
Concho	Kendall	McCulloch	Real	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **San Antonio, Texas**

Atascosa	Comal	Hays	Lavaca	Starr
Aransas	De Witt	Hidalgo	Live Oak	Uvalde
Bee	Dimmit	Jim Hogg	McMullen	Victoria
Bexar	Duval	Jim Wells	Maverick	Webb
Brooks	Frio	Karnes	Medina	Willacy
Caldwell	Goliad	Kenedy	Nueces	Wilson
Calhoun	Gonzales	Kinney	Refugio	Zapata
Cameron	Guadalupe	Kleberg	San Patricio	Zavala
		La Salle		

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **Temple, Texas**

Anderson	Burnet	Fayette	Lee	Mills
Bastrop	Cherokee	Freestone	Leon	Navarro
Bell	Coleman	Hamilton	Limestone	Robertson
Bosque	Comanche	Henderson	Llano	San Saba
Brazos	Coryell	Hill	Madison	Somervell
Brown	Erath	Houston	McLennan	Travis
Burleson	Falls	Lampasas	Milam	Williamson

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Hospital Office – **Waco, Texas**

ef Medical Center in Waco is unique in that it is a Psychiatric Hospital. Because of this, the Waco facility actually accepts eligible patients from every part of the State.

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Austin, TX**

Bastrop	Burleson	Fayette	Lavaca	Travis
Blanco	Burnett	Gonzales	Lee	Williamson
	Caldwell	Hays	Llano	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Beaumont, TX**

Hardin	Jefferson	Orange
Jasper	Newton	Tyler

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Cedar Park, TX**

Bastrop	Burleson	Fayette	Lavaca	Travis
Blanco	Burnett	Gonzales	Lee	Williamson
	Caldwell	Hays	Llano	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **College Station, TX**

Brazos	Grimes	Madison	Robertson	Waller
Burleson	Leon	Montgomery	Walker	Washington

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Conroe, TX**

Brazos	Grimes	Madison	Robertson	Waller
Burleson	Leon	Montgomery	Walker	Washington

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Corpus Christi, TX**

Aransas	Jim Wells	Kleberg	Nueces	San Patricio
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Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **El Paso, TX**

Culberson	Hudspeth	Jeff Davis	Presidio
El Paso			

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Fort Worth, TX**

Archer	Denton	Johnson	Shackelford	Throckmorton
Baylor	Erath	Montague	Somervell	Wise
Clay	Hood	Palo Pinto	Stephens	Young
Cooke	Jack	Parker	Tarrant	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Galveston, TX**

Galveston County and surrounding counties.

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Harlingen, TX**

Cameron County and surrounding counties.

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office – **Laredo, TX**

Dimmit	Jim Hogg	Maverick	Zapata
Duval	LaSalle	Webb	Zavala

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office –**Lubbock, TX**

Armstrong	Childress	Dickens	Hardeman	Lubbock
Bailey	Cochran Collingsworth	Floyd	Hockley	Motley
Briscoe	Cottle	Foard	King	Parmer
Carson	Crosby	Hale	Knox	Swisher
Castro		Hall	Lamb	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office –**Lufkin, TX**

Angelina	Jasper	Polk	Shelby	Tyler
Cherokee	Nacogdoches	Rusk	Smith	Walker
		San Augustine		

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office –**McAllen, TX**

Brooks	Hidalgo	Kenedy	Willacy
Cameron	Jim Hogg	Starr	Zapata

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office –**San Antonio, TX**

Atascosa	Crockett	Hays	McCulloch	Refugio
Bandera	De Witt	Jackson	McMullen	Schleicher
Bee	Edwards	Karnes	Mason	Sutton
Bexar	Frio	Kendall	Maverick	Terrell
Blanco	Gillespie	Kerr	Medina	Uvalde
Caldwell	Goliad	Kimble	Menard	Val Verde
Calhoun	Gonzales	Kinney	Pecos	Victoria
Comal	Guadalupe	Lavaca	Real	Wilson
		Live Oak		

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission VA Clinic Office –**Victoria, TX**

Bee	De Witt	Gonzales	Lavaca	Victoria
Calhoun	Goliad	Jackson	Refugio	

Counties with **Veterans County Service Officers**

Anderson	Dallas	Henderson	Maverick	Shelby
Andrews	Dawson	Hidalgo	Medina	Smith
Angelina	Deaf Smith	Hill	Menard	Somervell
Aransas	Delta	Hockley	Milam	Starr
Atascosa	Denton	Hood	Mills	Stephens
Austin Co.	De Witt	Hopkins	Mitchell	Sterling
Bailey	Dimmit	Houston Co.	Montague	Stonewall
Bandera	Donley	Hunt'	Montgomery	Sutton
Bastrop	Duval	Hutchinson	Moore	Swisher
Baylor	Eastland	Irion	Morris	Tarrant
Bee	Ector	Jack	Motley	Taylor
Bexar	Ellis	Jackson	Nacogdoches	Terry
Bosque	El Paso	Jasper	Navarro	Throckmorton
Bowie	Erath	Jeff Davis	Newton	Titus
Brazoria	Fannin	Jefferson	Nolan	Tom Green
Brazos	Fayette	Jim Hogg	Nueces	Travis
Brewster	Fisher	Jim Wells	Ochiltree	Trinity
Brooks	Floyd	Johnson	Oldham	Tyler Co.
Brown	Fort Bend	Jones	Orange	Upshur
Burleson	Franklin	Karnes	Palo Pinto	Upton
Burnet	Freestone	Kaufman	Panola	Uvalde
Caldwell	Frio	Kendall	Parker	Val Verde
Calhoun	Gaines	Kent	Parmer	Van Zandt
Callahan	Galveston	Kimble	Pecos	Victoria
Cameron	Gillespie	Kinney	Polk	Walker
Camp	Goliad	Kleberg	Presidio	Waller
Cass	Gonzales	Knox	Rains	Ward
Castro	Gray	Lamar	Real	Washington
Chambers	Grayson	Lamb	Red River	Webb
Cherokee	Gregg	Lampasas	Reeves	Wharton
Childress	Grimes	LaSalle	Refugio	Wheeler
Clay	Guadalupe	Lavaca	Robertson	Wichita
Coke	Hale	Lee	Runnels	Wilbarger
Coleman	Hall	Liberty	Rusk	Willacy
Collin	Hansford	Limestone	Sabine	Williamson
Collingsworth	Hardin	Lipscomb	San Augustine	Wilson
Colorado	Harris	Llano	San Jacinto	Winkler
Comal	**Harrison	McCulloch	San Patricio	Wise
Comanche	Hartley	McLennan	San Saba	Wood
Cooke	Haskell	Madison	Schleicher	Yoakum
Coryell	Hays	Marion	Scurry	Young
Culberson	Hemphill	Martin	Shackelford	Zapata
Dallam		Matagorda		Zavala

** = County/TVC Shared Office

Counties Served by Veterans Employment Services

SERVICE AREAS BY WDA

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff -**WDA Alamo No. 20**

Atascosa	Comal	Guadalupe	Kerr
Bandera	Frio	Karnes	Medina
Bexar	Gillespie	Kendall	Wilson

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Brazos Valley No. 16**

Brazos	Grimes	Madison	Washington
Burleson	Leon	Robertson	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Cameron County No. 24**

Cameron

Counties Served By Texas veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **Capital Area No. 14**

Travis

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Central Texas No. 26**

Bell	Hamilton	Milam	San Saba
Coryell	Lampasas	Mills	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Coastal Bend No. 22**

Aransas	Duval	Kleberg	Nueces
Bee	Jim Wells	Live Oak	Refugio
Brooks	Kenedy	McMullen	San Patricio

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Concho Valley No. 12**

Coke	Irion	McMulloch	Schleicher
Concho	Kimble	Menard	Sterling
Crockett	Mason	Reagan	Sutton
			Tom Green

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Dallas No. 6**

Dallas

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Deep East Texas No. 17**

Angelina	Nacogdoches	Sabine	Shelby
Houston	Newton	San Augustine	Trinity
Jasper	Polk	San Jacinto	Tyler

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA East Texas No. 8**

Anderson	Gregg	Marion	Rusk
Camp	Harrison	Panola	Smith
Cherokee	Henderson	Rains	Upshur
			Van Zandt

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Golden Crescent No. 19**

Calhoun	Goliad	Jackson	Victoria
DeWitt	Gonzales	Lavaca	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Gulf Coast No. 28**

Austin	Colorado	Harris	Montgomery
Brazoria	Fort Bend	Liberty	Walker
Chambers	Galveston	Matagorda	Waller
			Wharton

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Heart of Texas No. 13**

Bosque	Freestone	Limestone
Falls	Hill	McLennan

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Lower Rio Grande No. 23**

Hidalgo	Starr	Willacy
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Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Middle Rio Grande No. 27**

Dimmit	Kinney	Maverick	Uvalde
Edwards	LaSalle	Real	Val Verde
			Zavala

Counties Served BY Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA North Central No. 4**

Collin	Erath	Johnson	Palo Pinto
Denton	Hood	Kaufman	Parker
Ellis	Hunt	Navarro	Rockwall
		Somervell	Wise

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA North East No. 7**

Bowie	Delta	Hopkins	Morris
Cass	Franklin	Lamar	Red River
			Titus

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA North Texas No. 3**

Archer	Cottle	Jack	Wilbarger
Baylor	Foard	Montague	Young
Clay	Hardeman	Wichita	

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA No. Panhandle No. 1**

Armstrong	Dallam	Hartley	Parmer
Briscoe	Deaf Smith	Hemphill	Potter
Carson	Donley	Hutchinson	Randall
Castro	Gray	Lipscomb	Roberts
Childress	Hall	Moore	Sherman
Collingsworth	Hansford	Ochiltree	Swisher
		Oldham	Wheeler

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Permian Basin No. 11**

Andrews	Ector	Loving	Reeves
Borden	Gaines	Martin	Terrell
Crane	Glasscock	Midland	Upton
Dawson	Howard	Pecos	Ward
			Winkler

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Rural Capital No. 15**

Bastrop	Burnett	Fayette	Lee
Blanco	Caldwell	Hays	Llano
			Williamson

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA South East Texas No. 18**

Hardin	Jefferson	Orange
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Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA South Plains No. 2**

Bailey	Floyd	Lamb	Yoakum
Cochran	Hale	Lynn	Garza
Crosby	Hockley	Motley	Lubbock
Dickens		King	Terry

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA South Texas No. 21**

Jim Hogg	Webb	Zapata
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Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Tarrant No. 5**

Tarrant

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Texoma No. 25**

Cooke	Fannin	Grayson
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Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA Upper Rio Grande No. 10**

Brewster	El Paso	Jeff Davis
Culberson	Hudspeth	Presidio

Counties Served By Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Staff – **WDA West Central No. 9**

Brown	Eastland	Knox	Shackelford
Callahan	Fisher	Mitchell	Stephens
Coleman	Haskell	Nolan	Stonewall
Comanche	Jones	Runnels	Taylor
	Kent	Scurry	Throckmorton