

# **Texas Funeral Service Commission 2017-2021 Workforce Plan**

## **TFSC Overview**

The Texas Funeral Service Commission is charged with regulating the practice of funeral directing and embalming in the State of Texas. Its core business functions are licensing and compliance.

- The Commission processes initial applications and renewal applications for licensure in accordance with the Cemetery and Crematory Services, Funeral Directing, and Embalming Act and the Rules of the Commission. The Commission arranges for the administration of the Texas Mortuary Law Exam to individual licensees prior to licensure.
- The Commission investigates complaints and resolves them either by dismissal or disciplinary action. Disciplinary action can range from reprimand to revocation. The Commission inspects all funeral establishments at least every 12 months to ensure compliance with mortuary laws.

The TFSC regulates an industry that deals with people during one of the most difficult and stressful periods in their lives – the death of a loved one. As such, TFSC employees must have the same critical skills industry members should have.

One of the most critical skills for agency staff is the ability to manage difficult situations. Regulating the death care industry also requires the ability to organize, plan and prioritize, problem-solve, communicate and be professional. Without employees possessing these skills the TFSC's basic business functions would be impeded.

## **TFSC Mission / Strategies / Goals**

“The mission of the Texas Funeral Service Commission is to protect the public from deceptive practices in the funeral and death care industry through a process of impartial enforcement, inspection, licensing and education in order to guarantee that every citizen's final disposition is conducted professionally and ethically.”

### Goal: Competent Licensees

Objective: To ensure that licensees meet the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct.

### Strategies:

- Operate licensing program to ensure initial and renewal applications are processed efficiently
- Decrease administrative processes through online renewals
- Ensure licensure qualifications and standards for professional practice are properly evaluated, accurately applied and vigorously enforced

Goal: Enforce Standards

Objective: To ensure the protection of the general public from licensed individuals and establishments.

Strategies:

- Inspect 100 percent of all licensed funeral establishments every 12 months
- Investigate complaints upon receipt
- Provide due process

The Commission anticipates no changes to its mission, strategies and goals for the next five years. However, statutory changes at either the federal or state level could impact workforce needs.

Possible action at the state level could include:

- Amendments to Tex. Occ. Code, Chapter 651 which could expand agency duties and responsibilities.
- Amendments to Tex. Health & Safety Code to provide a maximum time frame for when the final disposition of a dead human body must occur.
- Amendments to Tex. Occ. Code to regulate Crematory Operators and/or Transport services.

Additionally, workforce needs could be impacted by the following non-statutory issues:

- Staff turnover due to low salaries
- Need for more funeral professionals because of the increasing population of Texas
- Updated work procedures to ensure timely and efficient customer service
- FBI fingerprint criminal record checks on license renewals

**TFSC Current Workforce Profile**

The TFSC has 12 classified employees. The turnover rate for FY14 was 16.7 percent and for FY15 was 8.3 percent. The agency projects the turnover rate to be 8 percent (1 employee) per year over the next five years.

Almost 60% of the agency's workforce has less than five years of agency service. Two employees have less than one year of service. Five employees have more than two but less than five years of service. Three employees have more than five but less than seven years of service. One employee has 14.5 years of service and the final employee has 16 years of service. The two long term employees currently are eligible to retire.

The agency workforce is 42% female and 58% male. The greatest concentration of males (five) is found in the Compliance Division. The EEO workforce statistics show the agency is comprised of one African American female, one African American male, one Hispanic female, two Hispanic males, three Caucasian American females and four Caucasian American males.

**TFSC Future Workforce Profile**

Changes to the Commission’s workforce functions are attributable to the following factors:

- New reporting mandates by the Legislature
- Growth in the death care industry workforce fueled by state population increases
- Updated work procedures to ensure timely and efficient customer service
- Increased use of and advances in technology
- Cross-training of employees in critical areas
- “Sunset” review during the interim of 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session
- Continued low staff salaries

In order to handle future workforce needs, the Commission will focus on ensuring its staff can multi-task. Emphasis will be placed on cross-training employees across job responsibilities so that if a critical employee leaves the agency, the essential work will not be impeded. Additionally, it is critical that the agency have the budget to offer regular salary increases so that employees feel valued and appreciated for their efforts on behalf of the state.

**Gap Analysis**

A comparison of the Commission’s workforce supply to the workforce demand reveals minor gaps that can be addressed by additional staff training in new skills and higher staff salaries.

Providing quality service to consumers, as well as licensees, depends on the critical function of being able to respond in a timely and professional manner to public inquiries, complaints, licensing issues and requests for information. All staff positions need additional writing skills in order to better and more professionally communicate with licensees and consumers.

The Commission’s ability to sustain continuity and maintain positive outcomes depends on retaining its trained staff. With every staff turnover, the agency must spend time training a new employee which takes away from the efficiency of the office. Relatively low staff salaries continue to make turnover a major concern for the Commission.

In order to address possible deficits between the current workforce and future demands, the TFSC has developed goals to address the current gaps in its workforce.

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Current employees lack critical skills</b>
<b>Goal</b>	Develop a competent, well-trained workforce
<b>Rationale</b>	The training and development of current employees is critical to the success of the agency. TFSC must continue to analyze existing staff to determine which employees demonstrate the potential to develop new competencies. Through management and leadership development, outside training opportunities are available for all levels of staff.
<b>Action Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify new skills required</li> <li>• Expand Internal/External Training opportunities</li> <li>• Rely on other small agencies for expertise</li> <li>• Review procedures to ensure knowledge is retained within the agency</li> </ul>

<b>Gap</b>	<b>TFSC cannot retain employees</b>
<b>Goal</b>	Become an employer of choice
<b>Rationale</b>	Human resource investments are crucial to the continued efficiency and effectiveness of the agency operations. TFSC must recognize there is a competitive market for good workers and take appropriate action to ensure each staff member is compensated fairly in comparison to other Article VIII agencies of similar size. The agency will focus on rewarding exceptional performance and creating a culture that supports innovation and creativity.
<b>Action Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a pay incentive for performance planning</li> <li>• Utilize pay incentives to retain staff</li> <li>• Create programs for employees who are seeking new challenges to work on special projects/assignments</li> </ul>

<b>Gap</b>	<b>TFSC has high turnover rate without adequate succession plan</b>
<b>Goal</b>	Ensure there is a plan to transfer knowledge of key employees
<b>Rationale</b>	Prepare TFSC for risks associated with the planned or unplanned loss of knowledge that is critical to the success of the agency.
<b>Action Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop policy manual for each key position</li> <li>• Cross-train staff</li> <li>• Create programs for employees who are seeking new challenges to work on special projects/assignments</li> </ul>