



**TEXAS VETERANS  
COMMISSION**

# Strategic Plan

**Fiscal Years 2021 - 2025**

*Together Planning, Together Growing... for the Future*





# STRATEGIC PLAN

Fiscal Years 2021 - 2025

Submitted to the

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


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**Member**

Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Chair  
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**Date of Term**

December 31, 2019  
December 31, 2019  
December 31, 2021  
December 31, 2023  
December 31, 2023

Signed:   
Thomas Palladino, Executive Director

Signed:   
Eliseo Cantu, Jr., Chair

# Agency Workforce Plan and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

## **Overview**

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) contains a core of well-trained veteran assistance counselors, veteran employment representatives, veteran education program specialists, and grant specialists to aid veterans, their families, and survivors throughout Texas to meet the needs required to accomplish the agency mission and strategic goal. They are supported by a clerical staff. TVC administrative staff is located in Austin, Texas.

With approximately 1.68 million veterans living in Texas, the population of veterans in the state has remained steady for the past decade, while the overall United States veteran population has declined during the same period. This indicates a net migration of veterans to Texas. Several key issues impact the growth of the veteran population in Texas, specifically 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 needing education or employment assistance, and older veterans usually need services associated with aging.

## **Current Workforce Profile**

The current commission staff has the skills necessary to address business issues of the agency. A majority of the current workforce (84 percent) has prior military service. TVC has a diverse workforce that is 45 percent White, 29 percent Black, 23 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Other. Males comprise 56 percent of the workforce and 44 percent are females.

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

The average turnover rate of TVC in the five years from 2016 to 2019 was 19.42 percent. During this period, the turnover rate was as high as 25.34 in 2016 and reached a low of 13.8 percent in 2019. TVC turnover rate was slightly higher than the statewide turnover rate, which averaged 18 percent. It is anticipated the turnover rate will remain slightly above the statewide rate due to the number of employees eligible to retire (12 percent) in addition to normal attrition.

TVC has responded to attrition by successfully recruiting quality employees. TVC will continue to utilize the Veterans Employment Program, Work in Texas and the agency's website 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.

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

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TVC will maintain agency career ladders to help employees identify development paths to prepare for jobs with higher-level skill requirements, as well as develop a searchable database to inventory employee training and skill sets so that employees may be identified for development and possible promotional opportunities. Supervisors will be made aware of what skill sets are critical to meeting their objectives and can plan for employee attrition. Succession planning will also address staffing or skill imbalances due to turnover and retirements.

## **Gap Analysis**

A significant percentage (27 percent) of the agency's employees are either eligible to retire now or will be eligible within the next five years. Succession planning and knowledge transfer offer the opportunity for the next generation of TVC employees to launch new ideas that appreciate historical progress while moving services to new levels. TVC programs have high impact staff that cannot be easily replaced because of the employee's expertise and talents. In some cases, there are no natural feeders within the agency from which to draw. In other cases, the person occupying the position has a unique set of skills that cannot be readily found in the marketplace. TVC has a large contingent of tenured staff with institutional knowledge that cannot be quickly gained through the completion of training courses.

Currently the commission is staffed at 97 percent, though a shortage of personnel due to losses from retirement, an increased workload and competition from federal agencies is likely. 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 the allocation of funds for the staff and support sections of the agency. The mandate to increase programs and services led to a significant increase in staff. However, the allocation to grow support staff was limited. The ability to stay competitive with the private sector and federal governments will continue to be a challenge to the agency.

## **Strategy Development**

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

### **Development**

- Encourage employee development by continuing TVC's training program that requires employees to earn a minimum number of training credit each year.
- Offer employee training to help develop critical skills. Continue to provide both internal and external classroom training, as well as online and DVD training to make training available to field employees and accommodating employees' schedules. Continue to inform employees about training opportunities, including those offered by the TVC's Employees Assistance Program and by other agencies that TVC employees may attend at no or little cost.
- Continue to provide thorough leadership training to all levels of agency managers, as well as potential managers.
- Encourage managers to create programs that allow employees who are seeking new challenges to work on special projects, rotations and developmental assignments (to help them increase their knowledge and experience even if promotional opportunities are temporarily stagnant).
- Conduct regular training needs assessments to identify training of interest to employees and managers.

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## **Recruitment**

Every division has the need to attract and retain high performing people with valuable skills. Therefore, a variety of recruitment and retention strategies are available throughout the agency including:

- Hiring and selection methods for best fit;
- Compensation;
- Awarding bonuses;
- Promoting state benefits;
- Integrating staff development with career ladders;
- Establishing formal and informal orientation programs;
- Creating positive work culture and conditions;
- Maintaining work/life balance and family friendly policies including flexible work hours;
- Telecommuting opportunities;
- Ensuring sufficient salaries and merit increases; and
- Creating recognition programs.

## **Retention**

TVC's executive team is committed to preparing for the future by continuously retaining and developing highly qualified personnel who will be prepared to transition into leadership and mission-critical positions in the future.

## **Career Development**

All supervisors are responsible for planning for the development needs in their areas of responsibility. Through analysis of a position's job duties, management will work with individual employees to create individual development plans based on the required knowledge and skills. The development plans must address current and future needs.

## **Leadership Development and Replacement**

The following elements are essential to the leadership development and replacement process:

- Key replacement needs and critical positions to include in the succession plan;
- Key competencies of job performance in all critical positions;
- Key high potential employees, and the individual development plans necessary to prepare them to be replacements in critical positions;
- Methods for preparing and developing employees for advancement;
- Processes for knowledge transfer;
- Possible obstacles that make knowledge transfer difficult and possible solutions; and
- Priorities, desired outcomes, expected results, and timelines for implementation.

Leadership succession integrates competency-based learning tracks with career development. The long-range goal is to prepare staff to perform competencies within specific at-risk functions and to prepare them to be competitive for future career opportunities.



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## Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision

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

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

## Future Workforce Profile

As a market-driven system, the Texas workforce system will continue to evolve and improve to meet veteran needs and deliver outstanding customer service. Accordingly, the agency's critical functions will adjust to meet the new challenges. Overall fluctuations in the economy will have an impact on TVC in terms of the agency's workforce and the need for the services our staff oversees and provides to the public at large. Legislation on the federal and state levels also impacts the operations of TVC.

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

## Expected Workforce Changes

The immediate future is easier to predict, but long-term planning is more difficult. Although more unknown variables exist, experience and short-term future trends are helpful when planning for the next few years. Flexibility is the key, but anticipated critical functions and workforce changes that will carry TVC into the future may include:

- Changes in leadership as retirements occur;
- Increased demand for efficiencies to make best use of available budget and full-time employees;
- Increase in less-tenured and less-experienced staff;
- Improved communication and understanding employers' needs;
- Marketing services to the business community and workers;
- Providing enhanced statistical analysis of data collected;
- Increasing advanced research and evaluation;
- Increasing focus on program integrity and fraud prevention;
- Increased use of technology throughout the agency;
- Increased demand for more sophisticated and integrated information and analyses; and
- Increased demand for knowledgeable technical assistance staff.

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Commission administrative personnel will require ongoing training to keep up with changes in federal budget procedures (OMB Circulars), 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 expectation of continued migration of veterans to Texas over the next five years, the commission may require additional Veterans Services Representatives to meet the demand. Requests for additional personnel will be for areas of the state where the projected demand for service is growing.

## **Employment Service Satisfaction**

It is imperative to understand the employers' needs and expectations when attempting to match qualified veterans to the employers' needs and when promoting the benefits of hiring eligible veterans. TVC Veterans Employment Services uses a strategic approach by evaluating employment trends within the labor market by using the various tools provided by the Texas Workforce Commission.

The Veterans Employer Liaison (VEL) staff are fully integrated with the Workforce Business Units across the state. The VELs also work very closely with Veteran Career Advisors to identify the skill sets of veterans seeking employment in an effort to match those skill sets with employers' needs. To anticipate the changing employer needs and ensure those needs are met, TVC employs several methods to accurately assess the current level of satisfaction and to be able to better project the future needs of the employer. Those methods include but are not limited to:

- Employer panel discussions
- On-site outreach visits
- Active participation in employer organizations such as the local chamber of commerce and other professional business organizations

To accurately evaluate and measure employer satisfaction, TVC conducts an employer/customer feedback survey that is administered throughout the year. The results are reviewed and evaluated for trends and for future improvement.

## **Data-Driven Program Improvement**

TVC Veterans Employment Services continues to evaluate program data supplied by the Texas Workforce Commission. The Workforce Management Information System (MIS) provides federal and state reporting data through the Workforce Investment Performance Report (WISPR). TVC Veterans Employment Services is mandated to report on intensive services provided by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff, Veteran Entered Employment, Retention on and average earnings to the Department of Labor, and the Legislative Budget Board. In addition to the reporting requirements, TVC Veterans Employment Services analyzes the data supplied by MIS to identify trends, shortfalls, staffing needs and benchmarks for the future.

## **Continuous Improvement and Innovation**

TVC Veterans Employment Services continues to evaluate services to veterans and employers through partnerships and data collection. In addition, TVC continues to share information on and best practices with stakeholders, state and federal agencies, as well as veteran employment service providers nationwide.

# Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

SYSTEM OBJECTIVE:	KEY ACTIONS / STRATEGIES / OUTCOMES:
<p><i>Increase Business and Industry Involvement</i></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Expand Social Media to target employers</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> Utilize all avenues of social media to include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, &amp; YouTube to inform small, medium, and large businesses of TVC services.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Employers will have a better understanding of how TVC can assist them in understanding the needs and issues surrounding veteran employment. Market TVC services to employers. Employers will learn how TVC can assist them with veteran hiring to fulfill their business needs.</p>
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Fund memberships in Professional Organizations</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> TVC employment services will fund employer liaison memberships to local chambers of commerce allowing for business services staff to have access to multiple employers at one time. Also allows for presentation of veteran information to the membership.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> More businesses will learn how TVC can assist them with their hiring needs. Relationships between businesses and TVC staff will be developed and more veteran job opportunities will be created.</p>
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Utilize employer satisfaction surveys</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> Survey a percentage of employers who receive services from TVC's employer liaisons to determine satisfaction and identify service positives and negatives.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Survey results will be used to reinforce procedures, improve training of staff, identify new opportunities, and keep employer services focused on the needs of business.</p>



# Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

SYSTEM OBJECTIVE:	KEY ACTIONS / STRATEGIES / OUTCOMES:
<p><i>Increase Business and Industry Involvement</i></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Partner with employers on hiring events</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> Help employers plan, advertise, and produce veteran hiring events. Increase involvement yearly.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Veterans get hired and employers fill their vacancies. Win-Win for both. Working as a team with employers on hiring events helps develop long-term hiring relationships benefiting veterans.</p>
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Participate in corporate events, discussions, presentations, etc.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> TVC Employer Liaisons will be encouraged to learn more about the employers they support by participating in employer activities and events where veteran's employment can be marketed. Giving presentations at employer training events can expand the hiring relationship from one contact to multiple contacts at one business.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> When business relationships are established employers are more likely to utilize TVC services and become a veteran friendly employer which results in more job opportunities for veterans.</p>

# Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

SYSTEM OBJECTIVE:	KEY ACTIONS / STRATEGIES / OUTCOMES:
<p><i>Expand Licensure and Industry Certifications</i></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Publish database of Texas Licensing agencies and distribute to military</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> Provide veterans and transitioning military service members with contact information on licensing requirements and application process using a single source to eliminate the need to “hunt” for information.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Veterans will be able to quickly identify the agency responsible for their specific license, identify the requirements for the license, and obtain the appropriate application for licensing.</p>
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Advocate through Texas Coordinating Council Veterans Services for improved legislation to recognize military skills in licensing</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> Use the influence of the Coordinating Council’s Veterans Services Committee to inform, educate, and encourage legislators to pass legislation to make veteran licensing in Texas a simple smooth process. Work toward full acceptance of veterans and spouses’ licenses issued by other states as well as certifications for military skills that can be applied to licensing requirements.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Eliminates the need for veterans to have to duplicate time and effort to obtain a Texas license when they have already earned one in another state. Saves the veteran the expense of the application and allows for quicker access to the workforce. The veteran/spouse benefits as well as employers.</p>

# Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

SYSTEM OBJECTIVE:	KEY ACTIONS / STRATEGIES / OUTCOMES:
<p><i>Expand Licensure and Industry Certifications</i></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Develop a Texas resource based upon National Occupational Licensing database corresponding with military occupations</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> A crosswalk for military to civilian occupations will be designed and added to the Texas Veterans Portal and other veteran resource sites to assist veterans in targeting career search and resumes to appropriate businesses.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Veterans will be able to identify civilian careers that consist of the same skill sets and experience they have gained through military service. This expedites job hunting and allows for targeted resumes to be sent to the employer seeking the veterans' skills and experience.</p>
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Post Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) classifications that correspond to licensed occupations</p> <p><b>STRATEGY:</b> TVC will expand on, and coordinate with, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) and individual agencies to compile an expanded comparison list of MOS classifications and their comparable civilian occupation(s). Multiple veteran oriented resources will be used to share this information to veterans and transitioning service members.</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES:</b> Veterans will be able to easily identify those civilian careers and licensing requirements that directly correspond to their military career and skills. Licenses can be applied for quickly to make the veteran applicant "job ready" for employers. Veterans can obtain the appropriate license and be an immediate resource for employers.</p>



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