

Texas Workforce Commission Veteran Services

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) operates a service delivery model comprised of 28 Local Workforce Development Boards and a network of 240 workforce centers that work cooperatively with numerous public and private partners to provide employment, training, and job placement services to all customers, including veterans. Services are available to all customers, however, *veterans are afforded priority in receipt of services.*

Services include but are not limited to:

- Job search assistance;
- Pre-employment and work readiness;
- Education;
- Training;
- Assessment and Planning;
- Case Management;
- Information and referral to support services; and
- Life skills

Job placement services are largely provided via the labor exchange/job matching system, WorkInTexas.com. WorkInTexas.com is available to all customers free of charge.

WorkInTexas provides special features to/for veterans including:

- Flags to identify veterans to employers and staff;
- A two-day hold on all newly created job postings, to ensure veterans get first review;
- Ability for employers to designate job postings as Veteran Applicants Only;
- Numerous job search options for veterans, including viewing only Veteran Applicant Only and Federal Contractor job postings; and
- Priority of Service definition and notification to all veterans upon entry into the system and at certain subsequent reentry points.

TWC Veteran Specific Initiatives

The Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) - A resource and referral network to connect returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with resources and tools they need to lead productive lives and enjoy the full benefits of the society they have willingly served.

- Veterans Resource and Referral Specialists (VRRSs) work to find ancillary services in local communities, some of which will be community service organizations, veterans' service organizations, and faith-based programs. The VRRSs also link to federal, state, and local governmental agencies and programs as well as community leaders and employers.
- TWC's Program Director, Jason Duran, and the VRRS are all veterans of Iraq and/or Afghanistan. This network of returning veterans play an integral role in addressing the needs of other returning veterans, including referrals to address employment, training, medical, educational, and other needs of veterans. One VRRS is assigned to each of the 28 local workforce development areas. Located in a Texas Workforce Center, each VRRS works closely with Texas workforce center staff and some Texas Veterans Commission staff that are co-located in Texas Workforce Centers.
- Through the TVLP, TWC sends letters to veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan explaining the services that are available to help these men and women transition back to civilian life. Veterans that work with the TVLP are provided information based on individual needs, and provided referrals to local resources to address employment, and other challenges.
- Information on TVLP is also available on TWC's website
<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/tvlp/tvlp.html>

Hard to Serve Veterans – TWC has dedicated \$1.4 million to provide outreach and assistance to hard-to-serve veterans in Texas. Specifically, the initiative targets veterans that are:

- Homeless;
- History of substance abuse;

- Ex-offenders;
- Experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder;
- Physical, mental or learning disabilities; and
- Recently discharged from military duty.

Services are intended to compliment the employment services offered by the Texas Veterans Commission.

Comprehensive Veterans Initiative – TWC Commissioners approved on April 13, 2010, dedicating up to \$3 million to address the needs of veterans and their families. Funds will:

- assist in placing returning veterans in adjunct professor positions at community colleges. This initiative will provide training in the allied health field, using veterans in adjunct professor positions.
- support a demonstration project to ascertain college credits that can be accredited to veterans who have experience in the health care field based on their military training.
- meet the employment needs of military families with services provided to military family members that need job search assistance (i.e., labor market information, assessment, résumé development, and interviewing) and training.
- support of after-school youth robotics programs, and recommends prioritizing applications that will serve military children in order to support youth in military families.

TWC Veteran Service Delivery

All customers, veterans and non-veterans, are notified of available services at their point of entry into the workforce system. This includes information on the full array of employment, training, and job placement services available, as well as any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and services.

The Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 established a federal priority for veterans in the receipt of any services funded, in whole or in part, by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). In addition, state law (Texas Labor Code §302.152) establishes priority of service for veterans for any services funded in whole or in part by state funds. Based on these laws, veterans receive priority in the receipt of all workforce services.

Veterans are notified of the right to priority of service upon entry into the system – this can occur when a veteran virtually accesses the workforce system through WorkInTexas.com, or when a veteran calls or visits a Texas Workforce Center. When a veteran accesses WorkInTexas.com, a special message is displayed on the screen to inform them priority of service provided to veterans.

TWC Veteran Funding

TWC's budget is mainly comprised of federal funds, representing 85% of the agency's budget. Veteran services are supported through the agency's integrated service delivery model which allows TWC to serve veterans using existing funding streams such as Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Employment Service (i.e. federal funds). As such, costs associated with providing such services are integrated within the larger budget strategies, depending on the type of service or resource needed as identified by the veteran whether it be training/education, workintexas.com assistance, and more.

TWC Veteran Referrals, Website and Outreach Efforts

TWC engaged in an outreach effort to notify the public about the Texas Veterans Leadership Program. This included the development of the website, and of Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Governor Perry, Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, and TWC's Chair Tom Pauken did the PSAs, which aired throughout Texas. No costs were associated with this outreach effort.

TVLP also entered into an MOU with the Health and Human Services Commission's Texas Information and Referral Network, or 2-1-1, to promote cross referrals of veterans in order to ensure that veterans are aware of the wide arrange of services available through other entities.

TWC's website provides links to a hosts of services much broader than just the programs offered by TWC. One of the links is to the Texas Veteran's Portal (TexasOnline.com) which brings together veteran's benefit and assistance resource information that extends to the

veteran's family as well. Other links include U.S. Depart. of Veteran Affairs and to Today's Military website produced by the United States Department of Defense and developed as a resource for parents, educators and young adults curious about military service.

Finally, each Local Workforce Development Board's website highlights information about the availability of workforce services to all customers including veterans.

TWC Veteran Collaboration

TWC collaborates on many levels to ensure veterans have access to a wide array of services and resources. As mentioned above, TWC partners with 2-1-1, the Texas Veterans Commission, and the Texas National Guard in outreach efforts to Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

TWC also provides cross linkages via the web with Texas Veterans Online, Texas Veterans Commission, and the Texas Veterans Land Board.