

# ***TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION***

## ***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, education program specialists and grant specialist 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.

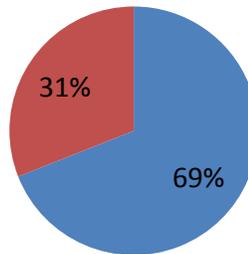
It is estimated that 1.7 million veterans live in Texas. A key issue is the growth of the veterans' population in Texas in two age groups that tend to have the greatest need for assistance. These fall at the opposite end of the age spectrum. Younger veterans usually need to avail themselves of education 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 (84%) consists of employees who have military service. The Commission has a diverse workforce. The Commission workforce consists of 52% White, 23% Hispanic, 23% Black, 1% and 1% other employees. Males comprise 69% of the workforce and females 31%.

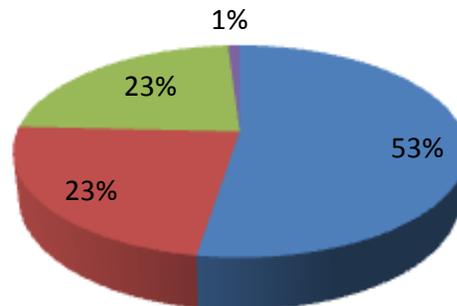
## Agency Gender

■ Male ■ Female

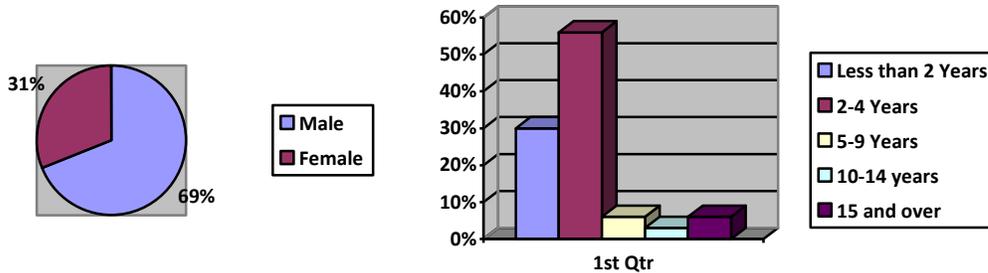


## Ethnic Group

■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ Other



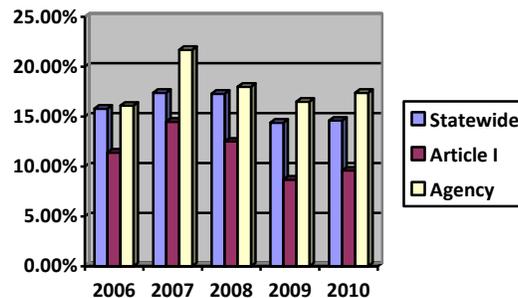
The age and tenure of Commission employees are shown in the following charts:



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basic business issues of the Commission are administration, veterans assistance counseling, veterans employment services, veterans education and the Fund for Veterans Assistance. 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 2006 through 2010 was 17.94%. During this period, the turnover rate was as low as 16.1% in 2006 and reached a high of 21.7% in 2007. The Commission turnover rate was higher than the statewide turnover rate, which averaged 16.85%. It is anticipated the turnover rate will remain slightly above the statewide rate due to the number of employees eligible to retire in addition to normal attrition.



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

Currently, 30% of the Commission's upper level management is eligible to retire. Although the Commission may be faced with the challenge of recruiting new employees with the needed administrative and managerial skills to meet agency needs in these areas, key management has had recent turnover with anticipated longevity.

## **GAP ANALYSIS**

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

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

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

## **Strategy Development**

### **A. Goals**

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

#### *Development:*

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

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

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

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

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

Continue the TVC mentoring program to match experienced/skilled employees with employees seeking to learn from them. These mentoring relationships can also help less experienced/skilled employees identify their career goals and plan their career development. Because agency turnover is disproportionately high for TVC Employees with less than 4 years of service, mentoring needs to continue to be offered and emphasized.

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

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

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

## **B. Recruitment and Retention**

### *Recruitment:*

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

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

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

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

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

Recruitment efforts will focus on areas that are difficult to attract and/or retain such as the recruitment recently released OEF/OIF veterans as well as women and minorities.

Offer training on employee retention strategies. As part of that training:

### *Retention:*

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

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

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

### **C. Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision**

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

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

## **FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE**

It is expected that the Commission mission, goals, and strategy will not change significantly over the next five years. Veterans assistance counselors, veterans employment representatives, veterans education program specialists and grant specialist 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 veteran's assistance counselors, veterans employment representatives, veterans education program specialists and grant specialist 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 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.