

Texas Board Of Veterinary Medical Examiners



Workforce Plan

June 2014

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OVERVIEW OF AGENCY SCOPE AND FUNCTIONS

The Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners was created in 1911 by the 32nd Legislature and charged with regulating the practice of veterinary medicine, surgery and dentistry. As the years have passed, different legislative bodies have refined the Board's responsibilities and authority. The Board's current enabling legislation is located in Chapter 801, Texas Occupations Code.

Agency Mission

The mission of the Board is to establish and enforce policies to ensure the best possible quality of veterinary and equine dental provider services for the people of Texas.

Agency Programs

Today, the Board's primary program responsibilities include Licensing and Examination, Legal/Enforcement, and Peer Assistance.

Licensing and Examination

The Licensing and Examination division is charged with ensuring that only those persons who have demonstrated the ability to meet or exceed the minimum qualifications required to be a licensed veterinarian in the state of Texas enter the practice and provide veterinary services to Texas citizens. The Board is also responsible for renewing the more than 7,756 licenses currently held by practitioners, and for collecting fees associated with the licensing and examination functions.

Through its licensing and examination efforts, the Board collected in excess of \$2.6 million for FY2011. This amount includes fees collected for Peer Assistance, application and exam fees, and licensing and license renewal fees. Also included in the total revenue collected is a \$200 professional tax for most licenses issued or renewed.

Enforcement

The enforcement program is designed to protect consumers of veterinary and equine dental provider services and ensure veterinarians, equine dental providers, and licensed veterinary technicians comply with the Veterinary Licensing Act through the investigation of complaints and compliance inspections as well as the investigation of the unlicensed practice of veterinary medicine.

The legislature has granted the Board authority to utilize many tools for the enforcement efforts. Those tools include the ability to refuse to examine an applicant; suspension, probation or revocation of a license; issue reprimands, require the make up of missed continuing education and/or requiring additional continuing education; impose administrative penalties; and hold informal conferences concerning alleged violations of the Act.

Peer Assistance

The Peer Assistance program assists veterinarians and veterinary students who are impaired by chemical dependency or mental illness.

The program, authorized by Chapter 467 of the Health and Safety Code, is administered under contract through the Professional Recovery Network and is approved by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Our Compact with Texans

The Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners is the State's agency that regulates the practice of veterinary medicine by licensing and regulating veterinarians. It also takes action against non-licensed persons who violate the Veterinary Licensing Act by practicing without a license. The Board and its staff are committed to excellence in their service to the public and the veterinary profession. The Board's first priority is to protect the public. It must maintain high standards for veterinarians who seek licensure in Texas and those who are already in practice. The Board also has a commitment to its licensees to keep them informed about the law, its rules, and related information.

All individuals who contact the Board can expect:

- Easy access to agency services;
- Consumer friendly processes;
- Agency staff that are courteous, knowledgeable, and responsive to their needs;
- Answers to questions and requests for information provided in a timely manner; and
- Services provided in an efficient manner that meets the customer's needs and yet remains fiscally responsible.

I. AGENCY STRATEGIC DIRECTION

A. Agency Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal: To establish and implement reasonable standards for veterinary practice, investigate complaints, and enforce Chapter 801, Texas Occupations Code, to ensure that safe and effective veterinary services are delivered to the citizens of Texas.

Objective: To operate a licensure system that will assure that 100 percent of all veterinarians meet minimum licensure standards.

Strategy: Operate an effective and comprehensive veterinary licensure program to include initial licensure by examination and ongoing renewal of licenses.

Objective: To investigate all complaints received and take disciplinary action against veterinarians who have violated the law and/or Board rules; conduct a compliance program to secure voluntary compliance with the law and Board rules; and provide a peer assistance program to licensed professionals who are impaired because of chemical dependency.

Strategy: To investigate all complaints received within strategy guidelines and take disciplinary action against veterinarians who have violated the law and/or Board rules and conduct a compliance program to secure voluntary compliance with the law and Board rules.

Strategy: To conduct inspections on-site and by mail, in order to enhance compliance of licensees.

Strategy: Identify, refer, and assist veterinarians whose practice is impaired because of chemical dependency or mental health issues.

B. Anticipated Changes to Strategies

The Board anticipates many changes over the coming years due to changes within veterinary medicine, technology, reduced funding levels, an increase in licensees and an increase in complaints received. These changes will present challenges that the Board will endeavor to meet.

The Board has historically seen an increase in licensees each fiscal year. Additionally, the number of complaints received by the Board, while fluid, has consistently risen over the years. In addition, the number of licensees and non-licensees seeking contested hearings before the State Office of Administrative Hearings has steadily increased over the years. These trends toward increased workloads will require adjustments in the agency's business processes and additional staff in order to meet the needs of our customers and strategic requirements.

As our world becomes more technology driven, the Board will continue to make adjustments to accommodate such changes, including an increasing number of licensees renewing online and the need to provide more consumer information on the agency's website.

C. Budget/Financial Forecasts

Severe budget constraints have impacted the agency negatively in the area of workforce, specifically in the investigator positions. The lack of equitable pay has led to a high turnover rate in the enforcement division. This lack of equitable pay coupled with the Board's investigators not being peace officers has impeded the Board's ability to attract qualified staff when vacancies occur. Qualified individuals

in the law enforcement area are concerned about losing their own peace officer status by working for an agency without such status as well as the possible loss of additional weekend pay potentially available with other entities as a peace officer.

In an effort to improve the agency's ability to attract and retain qualified staff, the Board will seek additional funding as an exceptional item during the next Legislative session. These funds will be utilized to attract and retain qualified staff as needed.

D. Anticipated Legislative Changes

During the upcoming Legislative session, the Board anticipates a significant change that will impact its ability to meet strategic requirements and serve its customers. Specifically the Board anticipates legislation to authorize the Board to license and regulate Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs). Should this legislation be enacted, the Board anticipates the need for one additional investigator as well as two additional licensing administrative positions.

Primarily, the Board will seek authorization and funding for new positions to meet the growing workload.

E. Scope of Workforce Plan

This Workforce Plan will address areas most critical to meeting agency strategic requirements and customer needs, and ensuring the agency's compliance with the State Classification Plan.

II. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. Current Workforce

The Board's current workforce consists of 16 full time positions. Classifications include:

- Executive Director
- Executive Assistant II
- General Counsel II
- Manager III
- Investigator V (2)
- Investigator IV (1)
- Investigator III (1)
- Program Supervisor VI
- Administrative Assistant I (1)
- Administrative Assistant II (1)
- Accountant V
- Accounting Technician I
- Licensing and Permit Specialist III
- Licensing and Permit Specialist I (2)
- Legal Secretary II
- Attorney II

B. Critical Workforce Skills

There are numerous skills necessary for successful completion of the agency's core functions. These skills include:

- Executive Level Management
- Customer Service
- Investigative
- Analysis/Research
- Mediation/Arbitration
- Communication (Oral and Written)
- Legal Experience
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking

- State Budgeting/Governmental Fund Accounting
- Advanced Computer Skills
- Business Office Management
- Computer Skills (skill requirements range from entry-level to highly-skilled information technology specialists)

C. Workforce Demographics

As of June 1, 2014, the Board had a total headcount of 18 employees. The agency is authorized to have a total of 18 full-time equivalents (FTEs). The following tables profile the agency's workforce as of June 1, 2014.

Gender		
	Number of Employees	Percent of Employees
Male	4	22%
Female	14	78%

Age		
	Number of Employees	Percent of Employees
20 – 29 years	2	11%
30 – 39 years	2	11%
40 – 49 years	3	17%
50 – 59 years	9	50%
60 – 69 years	2	11%

State Tenure		
	Number of Employees	Percent of Employees
0 – 5 years	6	33%
6 – 10 years	4	22%
11 – 15 years	5	28%
16 – 20 years	0	0%
21 – 25 years	1	6%
26 – 30 years	0	0%
31 – 35 years	2	11%

Agency Tenure		
	Number of Employees	Percent of Employees
0 – 5 years	11	61%
6 – 10 years	4	22%
11 – 15 years	2	11%
16 – 20 years	0	0%
21 – 25 years	0	0%
26 – 30	1	6%

D. Workforce As Compared With Statewide Civilian Workforce

The following table compares the Board's percentage of African American, Hispanic and Female employees to the statewide civilian workforce as reported by the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division.

Job Category	African American		Hispanic American		Female	
	Board%	State %	Board %	State %	Board %	State %
Officials/Administrators	0%	8.9%	0%	19.51%	100%	39.34%
Professionals	0%	11.33%	17%	17.40%	33%	59.14%
Administrative Support	14%	13.57%	29%	30.53%	100%	65.62%

The Board is under-represented in all of the African American and Hispanic categories as well as in the Professional category for females. Because the Board has a small number of staff, only 18 FTEs, and maintains a small budget, \$1,053,651 for FY2014 and \$1,055,579 for FY2015, the Board faces many challenges in attracting a diverse group of applicants from which to choose the most qualified applicants when vacancies arise. A small staff means that promotional opportunities are very limited. A small budget limits the Board in its competitiveness with larger governmental entities and its ability to recruit experienced personnel and retain newly trained employees. In addition, funds are limited for staff development.

The Board continues to utilize as many tools as possible to seek a diverse applicant pool, including advertising with Work In Texas, a web based job Board with the Texas Workforce Commission, providing copies of announcements for all positions to be filled externally to minority and women's organizations, and, when funding is available, placing advertisements in local newspapers. The Board has developed a Recruitment Plan, which is utilized and updated as necessary to address the deficiencies.

E. Employee Turnover

Turnover experienced by the Board can be attributed to salary dissatisfaction, increased workload as a result of legislative initiatives, and an increasing licensee base, and lack of advancement opportunities. In past years, the Board has been able to utilize merit increases, one-time merits and other retention tools to encourage employees to remain with the Board. While the Legislature has provided sufficient tools for the attraction and retention of highly qualified employees, the lack of funding has not allowed the agency to utilize them.

Following is a chart that shows the Board's turnover rate as compared to the overall State turnover for fiscal years 2009 – 2013.

Fiscal Year	TBVME	State
2013	11%	17.6%
2012	33%	17.3%
2011	26.7%	16.8%
2010	19.0%	14.6%
2009	16.7%	14.4%

F. Employee Attrition – Retirement

The Board currently has 2 employees that are eligible for retirement, representing 11% of the Board's workforce. In addition, the Board currently employs 2 return-to-work retirees, 11% of its workforce. This means that the Board is at risk of losing 22% of its workforce over the next 5 years. The loss of institutional knowledge and expertise within the agency, coupled with normal attrition, poses a critical workforce dilemma for the Board as well as the state.

To combat the loss of institutional knowledge and expertise as these employees leave the agency, the Board continues to document job procedures and agency history. The Board will also continue to cross train its employees to allow for a smoother transition as employees leave.

G. Agency Workforce Needs – Expected Workforce Changes

- Attrition through retirement;
- Increased need for additional staff due to changes in workload;
- Increased use of technology to revise and streamline work processes; and
- Greater demand for web-related services;

H. Anticipated Program and Workload Changes and Shortfalls

Enforcement

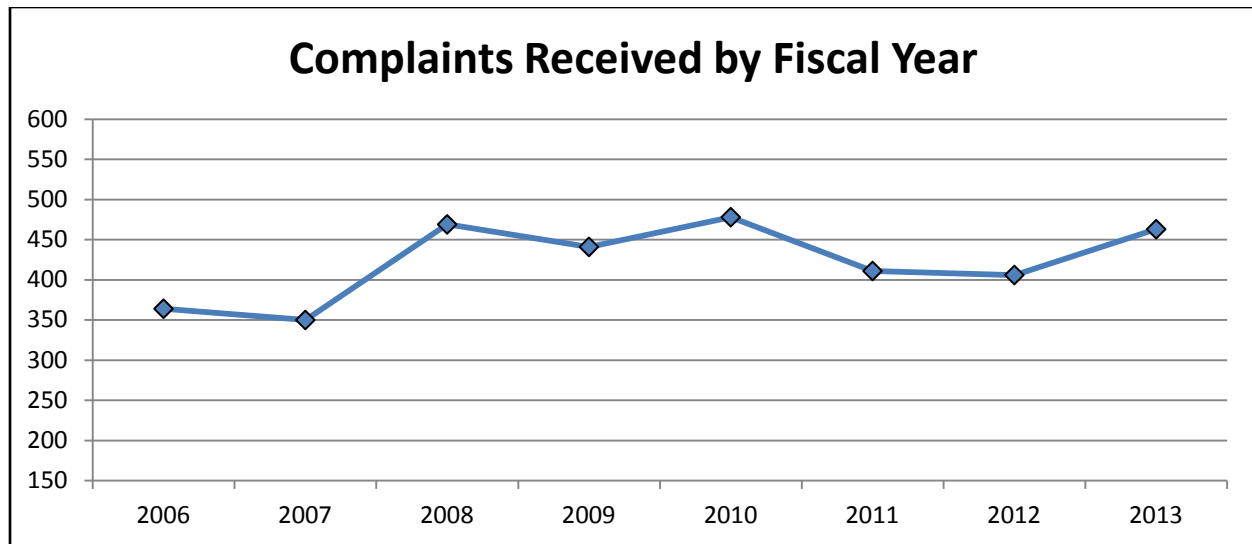
Veterinary medicine is an ever-changing field. With constant advances in medical technology and changes in treatment protocols, the demands placed on veterinarians are increasing dramatically. In addition, many individuals see themselves as guardians of animals instead of owners, placing more emphasis on the emotional attachment to animals. Some individuals even see their animals as companions. This opens the door to more litigation and more complaints. As a result of these changes, the number of complaints received by the Board has increased. For FY 2014, the Board anticipates receiving approximately 500 complaints.

The number of licensed veterinarians has increased from 7,114 in 2008 to 8,136 in 2013. Our current funding allows for 600 on-site inspections per year. Our percentage of veterinarians that are inspected per year has dropped from 8.4% to 7.4%. We would prefer that this percentage increase rather than decrease. We have seen a significant increase recently with drug diversion and serious mental health issues. Some of these problems have been discovered during on-site inspections and some have been long term problems. It certainly is better for the public and the licensee to discover drug diversion, substance abuse, and serious mental health problems as early as possible.

Each individual investigator has a responsibility to investigate a complaint by contacting both the complainant and the responding licensee, gathering information relating to the complaint including patient records and other documentation from both parties to support their argument and obtaining second opinions from veterinarians not connected to the case. In order to allow the Board to make a fair decision, investigators are required to delve into medical matters and understand medical processes and terminology to allow them to write comprehensive, informative reports of investigation that are then sent, along with supporting documentation, for medical review. They also attend informal conferences to provide information to the enforcement committee and answer questions. In addition to the investigation of complaints, Board investigators complete special investigations as needed and enforcement staff spend significant hours per day on the phone answering questions relating to the laws and rules that govern veterinary medicine.

Unlike most medical professions, veterinarians purchase and maintain dangerous drug and controlled substance inventories within their practices. On-site inspections allow investigators to ensure that these controlled substances are maintained and utilized in a manner consistent with applicable laws and rules. These on-site inspections also allow investigators to review patient and continuing education records and licensees to receive one-on-one contact with the Board. This contact gives the licensee the opportunity to ask questions. On-site inspections also allow the Board an opportunity to keep up-to-date on the workings of a veterinary practice.

In Fiscal Year 2001, the Board received a total of two hundred fifty-three (253) complaints. In Fiscal Year 2005 the Board received two hundred ninety (290) complaints with four hundred seventy-eight (478) being received in Fiscal Year 2010. In Fiscal Year 2012 the Board received four hundred six (406) complaints and received four hundred sixty-three (463) in Fiscal Year 2013. The Board anticipates receiving approximately 500 complaints by the end of Fiscal Year 2014.

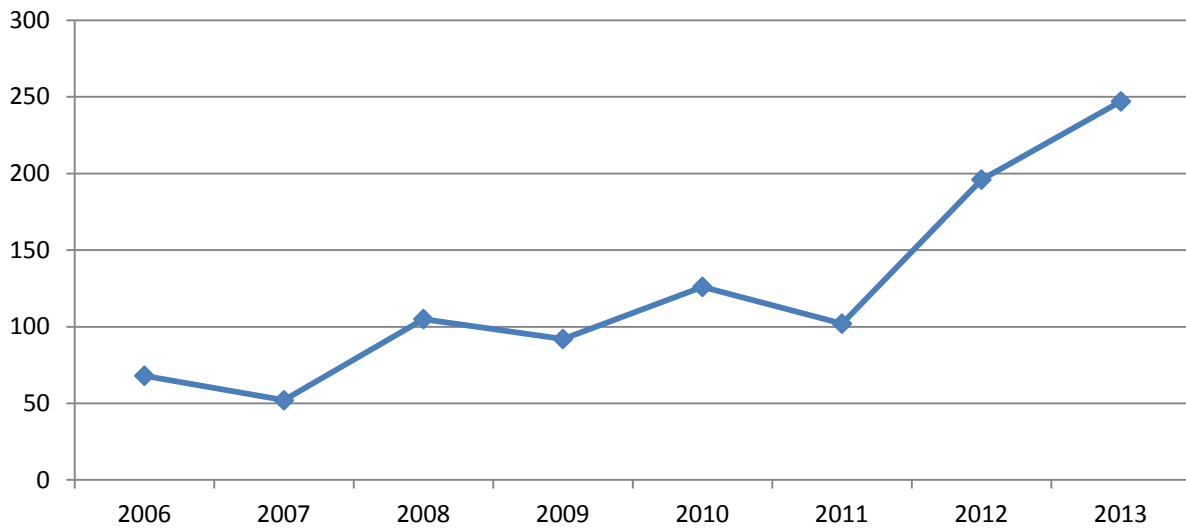


Legal

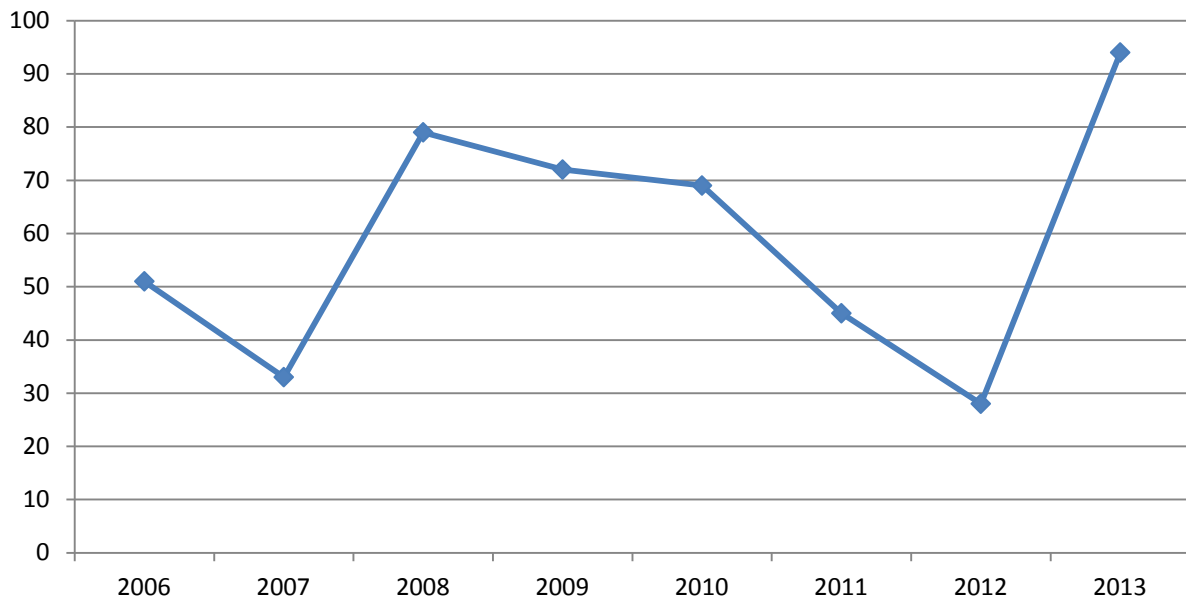
Until September of 2007, the Board's only attorney was part-time. At this time there are two attorneys within the General Counsel's office: the General Counsel and a staff attorney. While the backlog of cases has decreased, a backlog remains. Further, the General Counsel's office has seen an increase in cases and an increase in the complex nature of those cases. The number of licensees is also on the rise which will logically lead to an increase in cases as well. This change in circumstances demands additional resources and experience. The Board's budget only permits a lower salary for its staff attorney; therefore, it often is only able to hire an attorney with less experience. This requires time and resources for training. Once the attorney has obtained such training and institutional knowledge, they often leave employment with the Board for higher salaries in other agencies, often within the Health Professions Council. The Board then begins the process again. This is a waste of the Board's time and resources. The amount and nature of cases the Board is currently experiencing and expects to experience in the future necessitates additional funding to obtain and maintain quality legal representation.



Staff Conferences Held by Fiscal Year

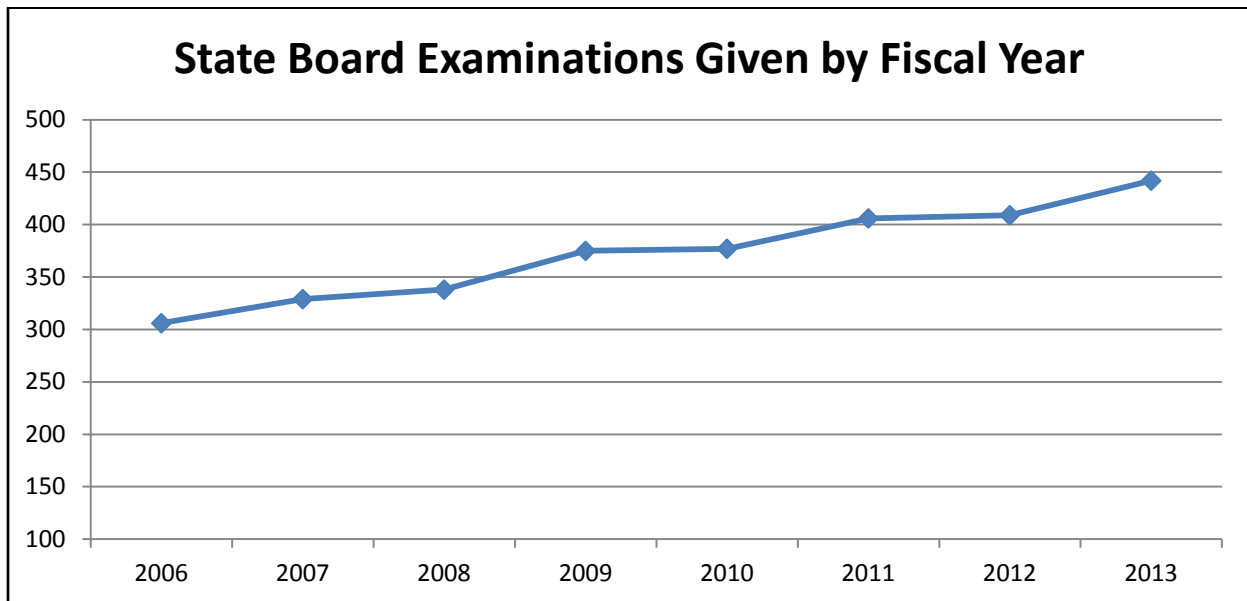
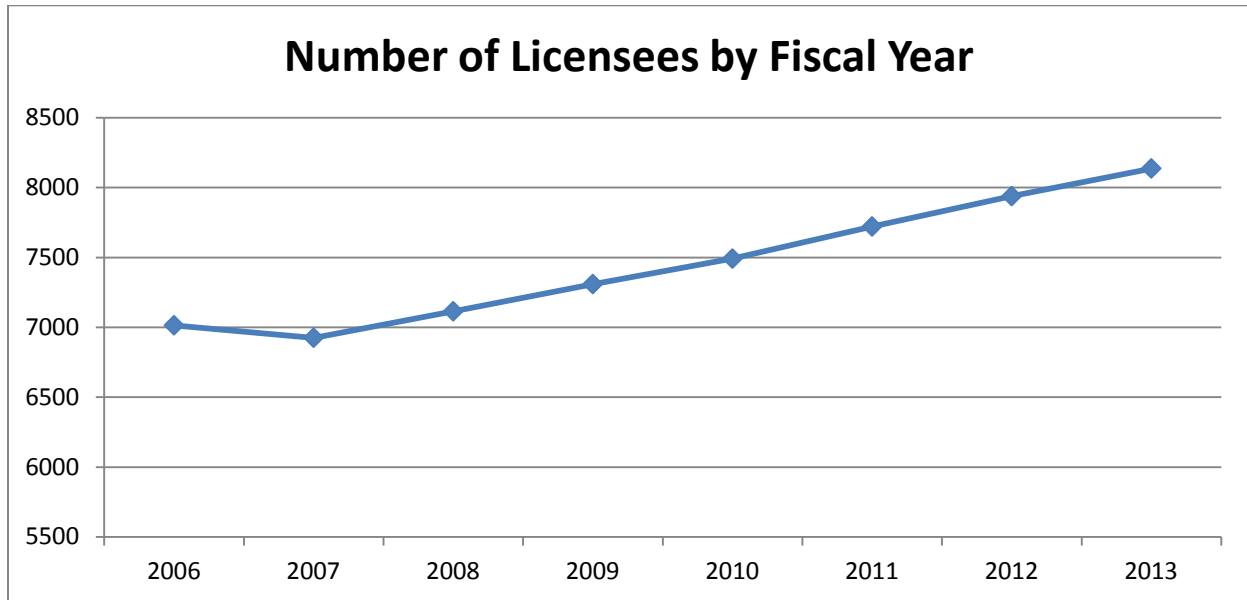


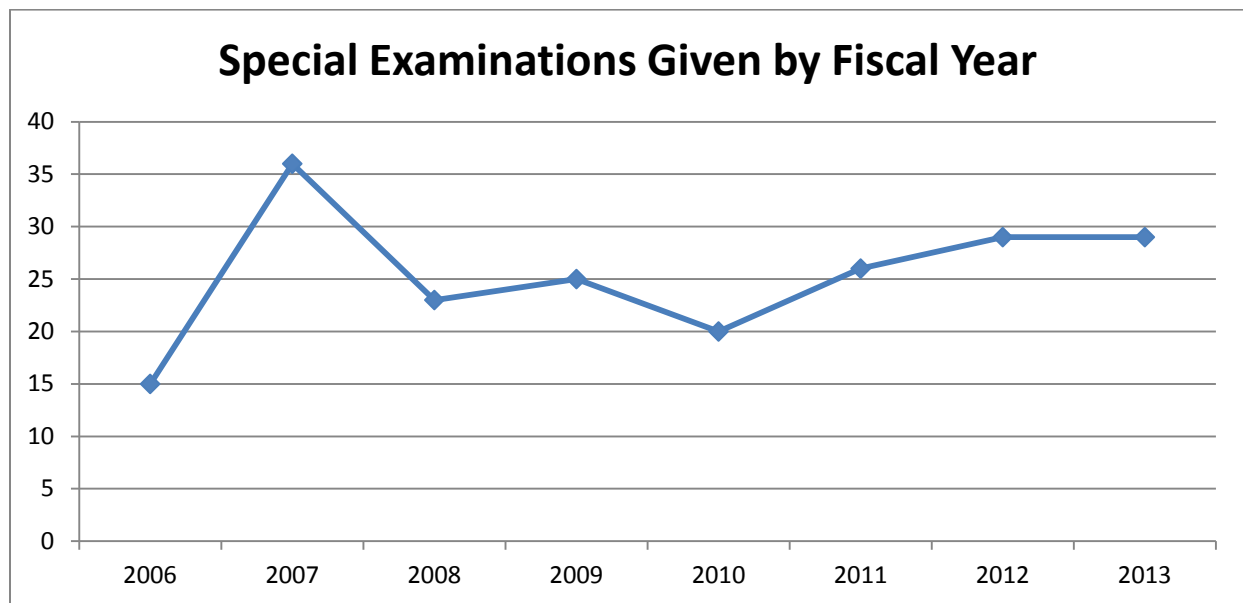
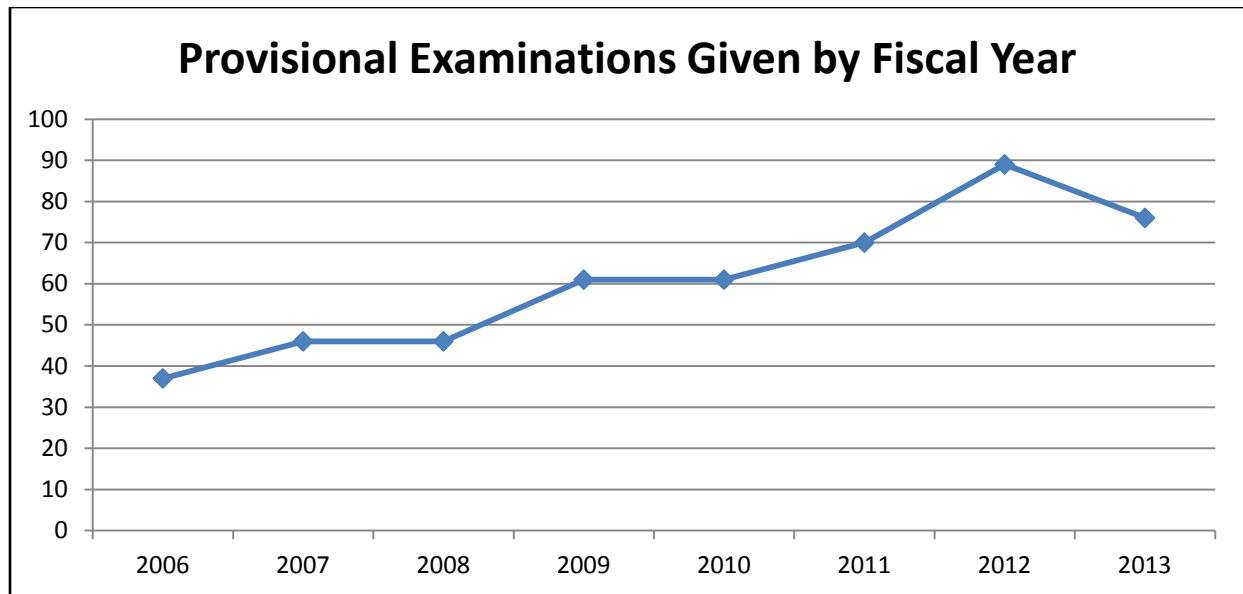
Informal Conferences Held by Fiscal Year



Licensing and Examination

The agency currently has four FTEs operating its licensing and examination program. The licensing and examination division is responsible for administering the State Board Examination, the Provisional and Special License examinations, issuing licenses to qualified individuals who apply for a State of Texas veterinary, veterinary technician or equine dental provider license, and annual renewal of each license. From FY2006 to May 2014, the agency's licensee base increased by 19.93%.





I. Future Workforce Skills Needed

With the evolution of veterinary medicine, an increasingly mobile licensee base, changes in business processes, and the continued need for strong leadership, the agency anticipates a greater need in the following skills:

- Leadership;
- Critical thinking;
- Problem solving;
- Communication;
- Change management;
- Expanded technological; and
- Advanced time management.

The continued development of these skills within agency staff will enable the agency to successfully complete its mission in the coming years.

J. Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Skills

Based on the agency's workforce analysis, the follow issues must be addressed:

- The agency's Licensing and Examination division consists of 4 FTEs. The Licensing and Examination Director has been with the agency for 26 years and is eligible to retire, and two other FTEs in this division are return-to-work retirees. The loss of any of these employees could seriously impact the agency's license process.
- The high number of employees with just a few years of experience in their positions requires more time and resources spent training.

III. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

While the Board faces many challenges in its workforce over the next five years, most can be addressed by the following objectives:

Objective: Obtain additional staff necessary to successfully meet agency strategic responsibilities.

Action Steps

- Identify staffing deficiencies;
- Seek FTEs and funding from the Legislature; and
- Hire appropriate staff.

Objective: Adjustments to current employment placement within the State's compensation schedule.

Action Steps:

- Identify staff inappropriately placed within the State's compensation schedule; and
- Seek funding to allow for appropriate placement.

Objective: Continue to Develop and Document Job Procedures

By continuing to develop and document job procedures, the Board can build a library of resource material for its future workforce. This action will effectively reduce the "brain drain" that will happen as experienced workers leave the agency.

Action Steps

- Identify undocumented procedures;
- Provide guidance to staff on process documentation techniques;
- Ensure sufficient available time to allow staff to complete the documentation process; and
- Include the protection of completed job procedure documentation in the agency's Business Continuity Plan.

Objective: Continue Seeking Diversity Within the Applicant Pool and the Agency's Workforce.
By continuing to seek a diverse applicant pool that includes all qualified individuals, the agency can build a resource of individuals with a wide range of ideas and experience. These attributes can better help the agency to deal with changes in workload and challenges as responsibilities are added.

Action Steps

- Continue to identify and refine ways to attract a more diverse pool of applicants;
- Continue to hire the most qualified applicants; and
- Continue to identify ways to retain those qualified individuals.

Objective: Develop a competent, well-trained workforce.
It is imperative that the agency continues to cross train all agency employees to ensure that agency processes are not disrupted as employees leave. The agency should provide training to its employees whenever possible, utilizing both free and low cost training. This measure will ensure that, where possible, current employees will have opportunities for advancement, thereby increasing the agency's retention ability and that new technologies will be added to the agency's repertoire.

Action Steps

- Identify agency critical skills and competencies with input from divisions;
- Assess the level of risk facing the agency regarding the potential loss of knowledge and focus
- Training efforts in those areas; and
- Expand and enhance staff development to include effective leadership and mentoring
- Assessing and addressing division specific training needs.