

**Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations**  
**Thursday, June 17, 2010**  
**Fort Worth City Council Chamber**

**Summary of TWC Services for Veterans:** The Texas Workforce System, of which the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is a part, is 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 not designated such that some apply to veterans and others apply to non-veterans, rather all services are available to all customers, with veterans being afforded priority in receipt of services.

These 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.

**Priority of Service for Veterans for all Workforce 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. Priority of Service definition and notification is provided to all veterans upon entry into the system and at certain subsequent reentry points.

**Texas Veterans Leadership Program:** 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.

Our TWC Program Director 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 staff from the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) who are co-located in Texas Workforce Centers.

**Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) National Emergency Grant:** The impact of base closures and realignments has resulted in the dislocation of civilian federal employees some of which are military spouses. Since 2005, TWC has received \$10 million for the planning and delivery of workforce services for BRAC affected workers, including dislocated military spouses. BRAC-funded services are provided by the:

- Alamo Workforce Development Board (San Antonio)
- Upper Rio Grande Workforce Development Board (El Paso)
- North East Texas Workforce Development Board (Texarkana)
- Coastal Bend Workforce Development Board (Corpus Christi)
- North Texas Workforce Development Board (Wichita Falls)
- Central Texas Workforce Development Board (Killeen)

**Hard to Serve Veterans Initiative:** 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 complement the employment services offered by the Texas Veterans Commission.

**Military Warriors Support Foundation “CEOs 4 Heroes Job Placement Program” (C4H):** TWC Commissioners approved \$447,789 of WIA Statewide Activity Funds to provide veterans with internships, mentoring, apprenticeships, and training opportunities within 12 partner companies that are leading Texas based companies with direct involvement and support at the CEO level. C4H will provide best practice seminars for employers related to hiring veterans with service related disabilities.

**Comprehensive Veterans Initiative:** On April 13, 2010, TWC Commissioners approved 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.

**WorkInTexas.com:** As part of the U.S. Department of Labor's basic labor exchange services, TWC operates a labor exchange/job matching system, WorkInTexas.com. WorkInTexas.com is available to all customers free of charge.

WorkInTexas.com was implemented in June 2004. Prior to its inception, approximately 7% (29,000 of 411,000) of all Texas employers were engaged with the workforce system. Since its inception and to date, approximately 54% (298,000 of 551,000) of all Texas employers are registered with the system, with about 25% of all Texas employers (139,000) actively receiving services.

Since inception, WorkInTexas.com has received:

- 1.35 million job postings,
  - Of which 11,000 were designated Veteran Only; and
- 2.75 million job openings,
  - Of which 20,000 were designated Veteran Only.

To date, WorkInTexas.com has been directly responsible for:

- 1.58 million job seekers being hired from jobs listed with WorkInTexas.com,
  - Of which 103,000 were veterans; and

Additionally, registered with WorkInTexas.com are:

- 3.91 million total job seekers,
  - Of which 332,000 are veterans; and
- 751,000 job seekers actively receiving services,
  - Of which 74,000 are Veterans.

WorkInTexas.com does provide some special features to/for veterans and employers, including:

- Flags to identify Veterans to employers and staff;
- Ability for employers to designate job postings as Vet Only, added in May 2007;
- A first-day hold was implemented in October 2007 on all newly created job postings, in February 2009, this was enhanced to become two-day hold , to ensure veterans get first review; and
- Numerous job search options for veterans, including the ability to search for Vet Only and Federal Contractor job postings.

Over the past year (June 2009 – May 2010), the Texas Workforce System served 158,327 veterans and other eligible persons. Texas Veterans Commission staff (DVOP/LVER) provided services to 78,623 of them.

**WorkInTexas.com Link with VetCentral:** WorkInTexas.com is linked to JobCentral National Labor Exchange. JobCentral is provided as a public service by DirectEmployers Association—a consortium of Fortune 500 employers. DirectEmployers Association, in partnership with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, established a National Labor Exchange. This includes VetCentral which serves as an additional tool for veterans and employers. Employers list their Federal Contractor Job Listings (FCJL) with VetCentral—this provides veterans with a consolidated listing of FCJL job openings and employers with the necessary FCJL compliance reports.

**TWC Veterans Web Portal into WorkInTexas.com:** TWC is working on a WorkInTexas.com enhancement that will create a web presence specific to Veterans. This portal will serve as a front door to the existing WorkInTexas.com job matching system, and will be tailored to returning veterans.

This new web presence or dedicated web page will provide:

- a translation of military experience into civilian occupations for jobs posted in WorkInTexas.com;
- a quick and easy way to find jobs posted by employers who are specifically looking for and/or required to hire veterans.
- awareness to veterans of their priority of service entitlement;
- an additional opportunity to engage veterans;
- increased visibility for special features and services available to and for veterans; and
- educate on veteran-specific services offered by TWC and partners such as Texas Veterans leadership Program (TVLP) and Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)

**Concerns Regarding Creation of a New Veteran-Specific Employment Database:** There are two primary concerns with this creation of a Veteran-specific job matching system, functional duplication and user-fragmentation.

Functional Duplication - While the state's current employment database (WorkInTexas.com) may not have all the desired veteran-specific bells and whistles, it does without a doubt provide essential job matching functionality as well as features enabling employers interested in hiring veterans to find them, and visa versa.

Additionally, WorkInTexas.com is constantly being enhanced. TWC would welcome the opportunity to engage in conversations with other entities about how WorkInTexas could be improved to meet all needs and desires, as opposed to having resources diverted to create something that already exists.

User Fragmentation – Creating another online employment database would only further muddy the waters. There are literally thousands of online job sites through which talent and talent-seekers must navigate. Adding another will create questions and concerns regarding who should use which system when, and how. Additionally, some users are required to register with or use WorkInTexas.com, veteran job seekers filing for UI and FCJL employers, thereby forcing duplicate system registrations and potentially creating situations where users will pick one system over another.