Sec. 434.001. COMMISSION. The Texas Veterans Commission is an agency of the state.
Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.002. APPLICATION OF SUNSET, OPEN MEETINGS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE LAWS. (a) The Texas Veterans Commission is subject to Chapter 325 (Texas Sunset Act). Unless continued in existence as provided by that chapter, the commission is abolished September 1, 2019.

(b) The commission is subject to Chapter 551, and Chapter 2001.
Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., 1st C.S., ch. 17, Sec. 3.07, eff. Nov. 12, 1991; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 5.95(50), (83), eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 970, Sec. 2.02, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1169, Sec. 2.02, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1481, Sec. 2.03, eff. Sept. 1, 2001; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1112, Sec. 2.01, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.
Amended by:
Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.
Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1232 (S.B. 652), Sec. 4.03, eff. June 17, 2011.

Sec. 434.003. MEMBERS. (a) The commission is composed of five members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The governor shall make each appointment without regard to the race, color, disability, sex, religion, age, or national origin of the appointee.
(b) A member must be a citizen and resident of the state. At least three members must have been honorably discharged or honorably released from active military service of the United States. At least one member must be a person classified as a disabled veteran by the United States Veterans Administration or the branch of the United States armed forces in which the person served. This person's disability must be service-connected and compensable.

(c) A person having a less than honorable discharge from military service is not eligible to be a member. No two members may reside in the same senatorial district.

(d) Members are appointed for staggered six-year terms.

(e) A person may not be a member of the commission if the person or the person's spouse:

1. is employed by or participates in the management of a business entity or other organization, other than a veterans service organization, receiving money from the commission; or

2. owns or controls, directly or indirectly, more than a 10 percent interest in a business entity or other organization receiving money from the commission.


Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.004. CONFLICT OF INTEREST. (a) In this section, "Texas trade association" means a cooperative and voluntarily joined statewide association of business or professional competitors in this state designed to assist its members and its industry or profession in dealing with mutual business or professional problems and in promoting their common interest.

(b) A person may not be a commission employee employed in a "bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity," as that phrase is used for purposes of establishing an exemption to
the overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. Section 201 et seq.), if:

(1) the person is an officer, employee, or paid consultant of a Texas or national veterans service organization or a Texas trade association in the field of labor, workforce development, or career schools and colleges; or

(2) the person's spouse is an officer, manager, or paid consultant of a Texas or national veterans service organization or a Texas trade association in the field of labor, workforce development, or career schools and colleges.

(c) A person may not serve as a member of the commission if:

(1) the person is an officer, employee, or paid consultant of a Texas trade association in the field of labor, workforce development, or career schools and colleges; or

(2) the person's spouse is an officer, manager, or paid consultant of a Texas trade association in the field of labor, workforce development, or career schools and colleges.

(d) A person required to register as a lobbyist under Chapter 305 because of activities on behalf of a veterans association may not serve as a member of or as general counsel to the commission.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.005. REMOVAL. (a) It is a ground for removal from the commission if a member:

(1) does not have at the time of taking office, or does not maintain during the service on the commission, the qualifications required by Section 434.003 for appointment to the commission;

(2) violates a prohibition under Section 434.004;

(3) fails to attend at least half of the regularly scheduled commission meetings held in a calendar year, excluding meetings held while the person was not a member of the commission without an excuse approved by a majority vote of the commission; or
(4) cannot, because of illness or disability, discharge the member's duties for a substantial part of the member's term.

(b) The validity of an action of the commission is not affected by the fact that it is taken when a ground for removal of a commission member exists.

(c) If the executive director has knowledge that a potential ground for removal exists, the executive director shall notify the presiding officer of the commission of the potential ground. The presiding officer shall then notify the governor and the attorney general that a potential ground for removal exists. If the potential ground for removal involves the presiding officer, the executive director shall notify the next highest ranking officer of the commission, who shall then notify the governor and the attorney general that a potential ground for removal exists.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.006. OFFICERS; COMMISSION ACTIONS. (a) The governor shall designate a member of the commission as the presiding officer of the commission to serve in that capacity at the pleasure of the governor.

(b) The commission annually shall elect from among its members an assistant presiding officer and a secretary. An officer shall serve until the officer's successor is appointed and qualified.

(c) The commission shall meet at least once in each three-month period. No action may be taken by less than a majority of the commission.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.0061. TRAINING. (a) A person who is appointed to
and qualifies for office as a member of the commission may not vote, deliberate, or be counted as a member in attendance at a meeting of the commission until the person completes a training program that complies with this section.

(b) The training program must provide the person with information regarding:

(1) the legislation that created the commission;
(2) the programs, functions, rules, and budget of the commission;
(3) the results of the most recent formal audit of the commission;
(4) the requirements of laws relating to open meetings, public information, administrative procedure, and conflicts of interest; and
(5) any applicable ethics policies adopted by the commission or the Texas Ethics Commission.

(c) A person appointed to the commission is entitled to reimbursement, as provided by the General Appropriations Act, for the travel expenses incurred in attending the training program regardless of whether the attendance at the program occurs before or after the person qualifies for office.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.007. DUTIES. The commission shall:

(1) compile federal, state, and local laws enacted to benefit members of the armed forces, veterans, and their families and dependents;
(2) collect information relating to services and facilities available to veterans;
(3) cooperate with veterans service agencies in the state;
(4) inform members and veterans of the armed forces, their families and dependents, and military and civilian authorities about the existence or availability of:
   (A) educational training and retraining facilities;
(B) health, medical, rehabilitation, and housing services and facilities;
(C) employment and reemployment services;
(D) provisions of federal, state, and local law affording rights, privileges, and benefits to members and veterans of the armed forces and their families and dependents; and
(E) other similar, related, or appropriate matters;
(5) assist veterans and their families and dependents in presenting, proving, and establishing claims, privileges, rights, and benefits they may have under federal, state, or local law;
(6) cooperate with all government and private agencies securing services or benefits to veterans and their families and dependents;
(7) investigate, and if possible correct, abuses or exploitation of veterans or their families or dependents, and recommend necessary legislation for full correction;
(8) coordinate the services and activities of state departments and divisions having services and resources affecting veterans or their families or dependents;
(9) provide training and certification of veterans county service officers and assistant veterans county service officers in accordance with Section 434.038;
(10) through surveys or other reasonable and accurate methods of estimation, collect and maintain for each county in the state the number of servicemembers and veterans residing in the county and annually update and publish the information on the commission's website; and
(11) with the assistance and cooperation of the comptroller, inform and assist veterans and their families and dependents with respect to discovering and initiating claims for unclaimed property held by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 434.0071. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. The commission shall adopt a joint memorandum of understanding with the following governmental entities to coordinate the provision of services to state military veterans:

(1) the Texas Workforce Commission;
(2) the Veterans' Land Board; and
(3) any other agency of the state that administers a program applicable only to veterans or the family members of veterans.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 175, Sec. 1, eff. May 18, 2001.

Sec. 434.0072. "TAPS" TUITION VOUCHER PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education" and "private or independent institution of higher education" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

(b) The commission shall establish a program to issue vouchers to be exchanged for an exemption from the payment of tuition and required fees at an institution of higher education as provided by Section 54.344, Education Code, to students in grades 6 through 12 or at postsecondary educational institutions who sound "Taps" on a bugle, trumpet, or cornet during military honors funerals held in this state for deceased veterans. A voucher must be issued in the amount of $25 for each time a student sounds "Taps" as described by this subsection.

(c) The commission by rule shall design a form for the vouchers and distribute the form, with an explanation of the form's use, to each funeral director in this state for issuance to a person who is eligible to receive a voucher under this section. The commission may not charge a fee for distribution of the form.

(d) The commission shall encourage a private or independent institution of higher education to grant a tuition and fee exemption in exchange for a voucher.
(e) A voucher issued under this section may be used by the student at any time and is not transferable.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 660 (H.B. 1187), Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2007.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 359 (S.B. 32), Sec. 13, eff. January 1, 2012.

Sec. 434.0076. RECORD OF COMPLAINTS. (a) The commission shall maintain a system to promptly and efficiently act on complaints filed with the commission. The commission shall maintain information about parties to the complaint, the subject matter of the complaint, a summary of the results of the review or investigation of the complaint, and its disposition.

(b) The commission shall make information available describing its procedures for complaint investigation and resolution.

(c) The commission shall periodically notify the complaint parties of the status of the complaint until final disposition.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.0077. NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING AND ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES. (a) The commission shall develop and implement a policy to encourage the use of:

(1) negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008 for the adoption of commission rules; and

(2) appropriate alternative dispute resolution procedures under Chapter 2009 to assist in the resolution of internal and external disputes under the commission's jurisdiction.

(b) The commission's procedures relating to alternative dispute resolution shall conform, to the extent possible, to any model guidelines issued by the State Office of Administrative Hearings for the use of alternative dispute resolution by state agencies.

(c) The commission shall designate a trained person to:
coordinate the implementation of the policy adopted under Subsection (a);

serve as a resource for any training needed to implement the procedures for negotiated rulemaking or alternative dispute resolution; and

collect data concerning the effectiveness of those procedures, as implemented by the commission.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.0078. CLAIMS ASSISTANCE SERVICES. (a) The commission shall adopt procedures for administering claims assistance services under Section 434.007(5). The procedures shall include:

(1) criteria for determining when a veteran's initial claim is substantially complete and basic eligibility requirements are met as provided by federal law;

(2) a process for expediting a claim based on hardship, including whether the veteran:
   (A) is in immediate need;
   (B) is terminally ill;
   (C) has a verifiable financial hardship; or
   (D) has a disability that presents an undue burden;

(3) a procedure for counseling veterans on the potential merits or drawbacks of pursuing a claim;

(4) a process to ensure adequate documentation and development of a claim or appeal, including early client involvement, collection of needed evidence and records, and analysis of actions necessary to pursue and support a claim or appeal;

(5) criteria for evaluating whether a decision of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs contains sufficient cause for filing an appeal;

(6) a requirement that a claims counselor report to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs if the counselor has direct knowledge that a claim contains false or deceptive
information; and

(7) a procedure for prioritizing a claim, when appropriate, or providing an alternative source for obtaining claims assistance services when it is not appropriate to prioritize.

(b) The commission shall consult with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in developing the procedures under Subsection (a) to:

(1) ensure the services provided by the commission do not unnecessarily duplicate services provided through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) ensure that the procedures will provide for resolving disputes at the lowest level of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs benefit decision process;

(3) ensure that commission employees are not improperly involved in adjudicating claims; and

(4) establish broad areas of cooperation between the commission and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to streamline and align the commission’s service delivery with United States Department of Veterans Affairs processes, including:

(A) identifying processes to update changes to veterans' cases and power of attorney designation;

(B) cooperating to expedite hardship cases and appeals; and

(C) identifying opportunities for the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to provide the commission with necessary data to assist with tracking the progress and outcomes of claims.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.0079. DUTIES REGARDING CERTAIN TUITION AND FEE EXEMPTIONS FOR VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS. (a) The commission, through its veteran education program, shall assist veterans and their family members in claiming and qualifying for exemptions from the payment of tuition and fees at institutions of higher education under Section 54.341, Education Code.
The commission shall establish the application and necessary evidence requirements for a person to claim an exemption under Section 54.341, Education Code, at an institution of higher education.

The commission shall adopt rules governing the coordination of federal and state benefits of a person eligible to receive an exemption under Section 54.341(k), Education Code, including rules governing:

1. the total number of credit hours assigned under that section that a person may apply to an individual degree or certificate program, consistent with the standards of the appropriate recognized regional accrediting agency; and
2. the application of the assigned exemption to credit hours for which the institution of higher education does not receive state funding.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 3, eff. June 14, 2013.

Sec. 434.00791. ELECTRONIC SYSTEM TO MONITOR TUITION EXEMPTIONS FOR VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

(b) The commission shall ensure a system to electronically monitor the use of tuition and fee exemptions at institutions of higher education under Section 54.341, Education Code, is developed. The system must allow the commission to electronically receive, for each semester, the following information from institutions of higher education:

1. the name of the institution;
2. the name, identification number, and date of birth of each individual attending the institution and receiving benefits for the semester under Section 54.341, Education Code;
3. for each individual receiving benefits, the number of credit hours for which the individual received an exemption for the semester;
4. for each individual receiving benefits at the institution during the semester, the total cumulative number of
credit hours for which the individual has received an exemption at the institution; and

(5) any other information required by the commission.

(c) Not later than January 1, 2014, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, under an agreement with the commission, shall provide access to the system developed by the coordinating board that meets the requirements of this section. This subsection expires September 1, 2015.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 7 (S.B. 101), Sec. 2, eff. May 3, 2005.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 359 (S.B. 32), Sec. 6, eff. January 1, 2012.

Transferred, redesignated and amended from Education Code, Section 61.0516 by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 4, eff. June 14, 2013.

Sec. 434.008. FEES PROHIBITED. The commission may not charge a fee or permit the payment of a fee by an applicant to a third person for services rendered by the commission.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.009. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. (a) The commission shall employ an executive director qualified by experience and training to administer the policies of the commission.

(b) The executive director shall:

(1) place into operation the policies and instructions of the commission;

(2) serve as the executive officer of the commission, without the power to vote;

(3) be in charge of commission offices;

(4) direct the paid personnel of the commission; and

(5) be responsible to the commission for all reports, data, and similar information required by the commission.

(c) The executive director may:

(1) administer oaths;

(2) certify official acts under the commission’s seal;
(3) take depositions inside or outside the state, as provided by law; and

(4) compel the production of pertinent books, accounts, records, and documents.

(d) The executive director shall devote the executive director's entire time to the duties of the office and may not actively engage or be employed in another business, vocation, or profession.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.0091. SEPARATION OF POLICYMAKING AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES. The commission shall develop and implement policies that clearly separate the policymaking responsibilities of the commission and the management responsibilities of the executive director and the staff of the commission.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.010. RULES. (a) The commission may adopt rules that it considers necessary for its administration.

(b) The commission shall adopt procedures for receiving input and recommendations from interested persons regarding the development of rules and policies.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.0101. ADVISORY COMMITTEES. (a) In developing procedures under Section 434.010, the commission may establish and appoint members to an advisory committee to advise and make recommendations to the commission on programs, rules, and policies affecting the delivery of services to veterans.

(b) If the commission establishes an advisory committee under Subsection (a), the commission shall adopt rules regarding:

(1) the purpose, role, and goals of the committee;

(2) the size and quorum requirements of the committee;
the qualifications of the members and the criteria for selecting members;

(4) the procedures for appointing members;

(5) the terms of service of members;

(6) the training requirements of members;

(7) the implementation of a needs assessment process to regularly evaluate the continuing need for the committee; and

(8) a requirement that the committee comply with Chapter 551.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.011. OFFICE; EXPENSES; EMPLOYEES. (a) The state shall provide the commission suitable offices and office equipment in Austin. The commission may incur the expenses necessary to perform its work.

(b) The commission shall employ sufficient office personnel, stenographers, typists, and clerical help to maintain the efficient operation of the office.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.012. COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES. (a) A member of the commission is entitled to a per diem as set by legislative appropriation for each day that the member engages in commission business.

(b) A member is entitled to receive compensation for meals, lodging, or other travel expenses as provided by the General Appropriations Act.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.013. FINANCES. (a) The financial transactions of the commission are subject to audit by the state auditor in accordance with Chapter 321, Government Code.

(b) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1083, Sec. 25(38), eff. June 17, 2011.

Sec. 434.014. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES. (a) The executive director or the executive director's designee shall develop a career ladder program. The program must require that openings in all positions except entry level positions be posted within the commission concurrently with any public posting.

(b) The executive director or the executive director's designee shall develop a system of annual performance evaluation based on measurable job tasks. Merit pay for commission employees must be based on this system.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1385 (S.B. 1655), Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 434.015. INFORMATION OF PUBLIC INTEREST. The commission shall prepare information of public interest describing the functions of the commission and the procedures for filing and for resolution by the commission of public complaints. The commission shall make the information available to the general public and appropriate state agencies.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.0151. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. The commission shall develop and implement policies that provide the public with a reasonable opportunity to appear before the commission and to speak on any issue under the jurisdiction of the commission.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 11, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.016. GIFTS AND GRANTS. The commission may accept gifts of money and property and may accept grants.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 395 (S.B. 1480), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2005.
Sec. 434.0161. USE OF FUNDS TO SUPPORT OUTREACH AND TRAINING. The commission may use appropriated funds to purchase, for use at outreach and training functions:

(1) promotional items that include the agency's name and contact information to be distributed to veterans; and

(2) food and beverages.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1385 (S.B. 1655), Sec. 2, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 434.017. FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE.

(a) The fund for veterans' assistance is a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund. The fund is composed of:

(1) money transferred to the fund at the direction of the legislature;

(2) gifts and grants contributed to the fund;

(3) the earnings of the fund;

(4) money transferred to the fund from proceeds of the lottery game operated under Section 466.027 or transferred to the fund under Section 466.408(b);

(5) money deposited to the credit of the fund under Section 502.1746, Transportation Code; and

(6) money deposited to the credit of the fund under Section 521.008, Transportation Code.

(b) Except as provided by Subsections (c) and (e), money in the fund may not be appropriated for any purpose.

(c) Money in the fund may only be appropriated to the Texas Veterans Commission. Money appropriated under this subsection shall be used to:

(1) make grants to address veterans' needs;

(2) administer the fund; and

(3) analyze and investigate data received from the federal Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) that is administered by the Administration for Children and Families of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.
(d) The Texas Veterans Commission may adopt rules governing the award of grants by the commission under this section.

(e) To carry out any purpose of this chapter, the commission may solicit, accept, or refuse a gift, grant, devise, bequest of money, security, service, or property, including money raised or a service provided by a volunteer or volunteer group, to promote the work of the commission for any purpose related to the fund for veterans' assistance. The commission may participate in the establishment and operation of an affiliated nonprofit organization that is established for the purpose of raising money for or providing services or other benefits to the commission. A gift, grant, devise, or bequest to the fund may be appropriated in the same manner as other money in the fund, subject to the purposes provided by Subsection (c) and any limitation or requirement placed on the gift, grant, devise, or bequest by the donor or granting entity.

(f) Sections 403.095 and 404.071 do not apply to the fund.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 395 (S.B. 1480), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.
Redesignated from Government Code, Section 403.108 and amended by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1418 (H.B. 3107), Sec. 16(a), eff. June 15, 2007.
Amended by:
Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 840 (S.B. 1940), Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 2009.
Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1385 (S.B. 1655), Sec. 3, eff. June 19, 2009.
Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 91 (S.B. 1303), Sec. 11.011, eff. September 1, 2011.
Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 669 (S.B. 1635), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.
Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 673 (S.B. 1739), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.
Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 673 (S.B. 1739), Sec. 2, eff. June 17, 2011.
Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 4 (S.B. 1), Sec. 26.01, eff. September 28, 2011.
Sec. 434.0171. STATE EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE. For purposes of Subchapter I, Chapter 659:

(1) the Texas Veterans Commission, for the sole purpose of managing the fund for veterans' assistance, is considered an eligible charitable organization entitled to participate in the state employee charitable campaign; and

(2) a state employee is entitled to authorize a deduction for contributions to the Texas Veterans Commission for the purposes of managing the fund for veterans' assistance as a charitable contribution under Section 659.132, and the Texas Veterans Commission may use the contributions for the purposes listed in Section 434.017(c), as redesignated and amended by Chapter 1418 (H.B. 3107), Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 840 (S.B. 1940), Sec. 2, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 434.018. PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARD. (a) The commission may make a performance incentive award to an individual or an entity for providing services to veterans as authorized by Section 3(a) of the federal Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C. Section 4112).

(b) The performance incentive award may be monetary or nonmonetary.

(c) A performance incentive award made under this section to a state employee is not a promotion or a merit salary increase under Chapter 659.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 364 (S.B. 310), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Renumbered from Government Code, Section 434.017 by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 87 (S.B. 1969), Sec. 27.001(29), eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 434.019. VETERANS HOSPITAL. (a) The Texas Veterans
Commission and the Department of State Health Services shall work with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and any other appropriate federal agency to propose that the federal government establish a veterans hospital in the Rio Grande Valley region of the state.

(b) The state may contribute money, property, and other resources to the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a veterans hospital described by this section.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 439 (H.B. 2217), Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 434.020. NOTICE TO STATE CEMETERY COMMITTEE OF SERVICEMEMBER'S DEATH. The Texas Veterans Commission shall notify the State Cemetery Committee as soon as practicable after the commission receives notice of the death of a member of the United States armed forces from the state who is killed while serving in a combat zone.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1394 (S.B. 2135), Sec. 2, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 434.021. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE COMMISSION. Information received by the commission that is confidential under Chapter 552 remains confidential regardless of the format in which the commission maintains the information.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1385 (S.B. 1655), Sec. 2, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 434.022. VETERAN ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "veteran" means a person who has served in:

(1) the army, navy, air force, coast guard, or marine corps of the United States; or

(2) the Texas National Guard as defined by Section 431.001.

(b) The Texas Veterans Commission by rule shall establish and implement the veteran entrepreneur program to foster and promote veteran entrepreneurship and business ownership.

(c) The program shall provide assistance to veteran
entrepreneurs and business owners by:

(1) performing outreach functions to improve veteran entrepreneurs' and business owners' awareness of federal and state benefits and services available to those veterans;

(2) assessing the need for benefits and services among veteran entrepreneurs and business owners;

(3) reviewing and researching programs, projects, and initiatives designed to address the needs of veteran entrepreneurs and business owners;

(4) periodically evaluating the effectiveness of the commission's efforts to assist veteran entrepreneurs and business owners and making appropriate recommendations to the executive director of the commission to improve services and assistance provided to those veterans;

(5) incorporating issues concerning veteran entrepreneurs and business owners into the commission's plans for assisting veterans in securing benefits and services;

(6) advocating for veteran entrepreneurs and working to increase public awareness about the needs of veteran entrepreneurs and business owners;

(7) recommending legislative initiatives and policies at the local, state, and national levels to address the issues affecting veteran entrepreneurship and business ownership;

(8) collaborating with federal, state, and private agencies that provide services to veteran entrepreneurs and business owners to allow the veterans to make use of those services;

(9) monitoring and researching issues affecting the interests of veteran entrepreneurs and business owners;

(10) providing information about opportunities for veteran entrepreneurs and business owners in the commission's collaborative network of businesses and organizations;

(11) providing guidance to veteran entrepreneurs and business owners through conferences, seminars, and training workshops with federal, state, and private agencies; and

(12) promoting events and activities that recognize or honor veteran entrepreneurs and business owners.

(d) The executive director of the commission shall appoint a
program coordinator to administer the program.

(e) The commission shall provide facilities as appropriate in support of the program to the extent funding is available for that purpose.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 483 (S.B. 1476), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2013.

SUBCHAPTER B. VETERANS COUNTY SERVICE OFFICES

Sec. 434.031. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Office" means a Veterans County Service Office created under this subchapter.

(2) "Officer" means a veterans county service officer or assistant veterans county service officer.

(3) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.


Sec. 434.032. CREATION. (a) In a county with a population of 200,000 or more, the commissioners court shall maintain a veterans county service office. The office must be:

(1) separate and distinct from other county offices; and

(2) staffed by at least one full-time employee.

(b) In a county with a population of less than 200,000, the commissioners court, by a majority vote of its full membership, may maintain and operate a veterans county service office if the commissioners court determines that the office is a public necessity to enable county residents who are veterans to promptly, properly, and rightfully obtain benefits to which they are entitled.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.033. OFFICERS. (a) A commissioners court that maintains and operates an office shall appoint a veterans county service officer and the number of assistant veterans county service officers that it considers necessary.
To be appointed as an officer a person must:

1. be qualified by education and training for the duties of the office;
2. be experienced in the law, regulations, and rulings of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs controlling cases that come before the commission; and
3. have the service experience specified by Subsection (c) or be:
   A. a widowed Gold Star Mother or unremarried widow of a serviceman or veteran whose death resulted from service; or
   B. the spouse of a disabled veteran who has a total disability rating based either on having a service-connected disability with a disability rating of 100 percent or on individual unemployability.

To meet the service experience requirement of Subsection (b)(3) a person must have:

1. served on active duty in a branch of the armed forces of the United States;
2. served for at least four months or have a service-connected disability; and
3. been honorably discharged.

An officer serves at the pleasure of the commissioners court.

Sec. 434.034. JOINT EMPLOYMENT. The commissioners courts of any number of contiguous counties, by a majority vote of the full membership of each commissioners court, may agree to jointly establish an office and employ a veterans county service officer. The agreement must stipulate the amount of compensation and travel and other expenses to be paid by each county.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.
Sec. 434.035. DUTIES. An officer shall aid any county resident who served in the armed forces or nurses corps of the United States, and any orphan or dependent of the person, to prepare, submit, and present any claim against the United States or a state for benefits to which the person may be entitled under United States or state law. The officer shall defeat all unjust claims that come to the officer's attention. 
Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.036. PROHIBITIONS. (a) An officer may not charge a fee or permit the payment of a fee by an applicant to a third person for services the officer renders under this subchapter. 
(b) An officer may not seek to influence the execution of a power of attorney to one national service organization over that of another.
Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 434.037. ACCESS TO RECORDS. A state eleemosynary or penal institution shall give an officer access to its records to enable the officer to determine the status of a person confined in the institution relating to a benefit to which the person may be entitled. Access to records of a penal institution is governed by rules of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. 
Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 147, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.
Amended by: 
Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 87 (S.B. 1969), Sec. 25.070, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 434.038. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION. (a) An officer shall, within the time after the date of the officer's appointment that the commission prescribes, complete a course of initial training provided by the Texas Veterans Commission. The commission shall issue the officer a certificate of training after completion of the initial training course. To maintain certification, the officer shall complete continuing training to the extent required by the commission. An officer must maintain
certification to remain in office.

(a-1) The commission shall develop and implement methods for providing training to officers. The methods may include Internet-based seminars, participation through videoconference, cooperation with training provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and other methods as appropriate.

(b) The commission shall provide, at commission expense, the initial and continuing training required by this section at least once each year.

(c) The commissioners court of an officer's county shall reimburse an officer's travel and lodging expenses incurred in attending commission training unless state funds are appropriated for that purpose. If state funds are appropriated, the commission shall make the reimbursement in the manner prescribed for the reimbursement of these expenses to state employees.

(d) The commission shall develop standard course materials, training curriculum, and examinations to be used for county service officer certification and United States Department of Veterans Affairs accreditation.

(e) The commission shall:

(1) maintain course materials and examinations in a central location and provide county service offices and commission field staff with access to the course materials on the commission's Internet website;

(2) regularly update course materials, training curriculum, and examinations after consulting with:

(A) the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure the course materials, training curriculum, and examinations are accurate and meet applicable United States Department of Veterans Affairs requirements; and

(B) accredited county service officers to ensure the materials, training curriculum, and examinations include issues developing at the county level;

(3) develop a training handbook containing instruction and case studies addressing:

(A) general assistance techniques, including how to provide general information regarding state and federal benefits
and referrals for other services and to other agencies, and general information regarding state and federal benefits;

(B) basic counseling approaches for assisting veterans, their family members, and other eligible dependents filing benefit claims;

(C) basic information on United States Department of Veterans Affairs processes and procedures, including how to accurately complete claims and appeals forms and how to support claims;

(D) methods of collecting required documentation and developing claims and appeals;

(E) methods of documenting progress and updating a veteran's, a veteran's family member's, or another eligible dependent's case information;

(F) methods of assisting veterans, their family members, or other eligible dependents in pursuing appeals, including offering case knowledge in appeals hearings; and

(G) methods of representing veterans, their family members, or other eligible dependents during appeals hearings; and

(4) coordinate with the Department of State Health Services to incorporate a suicide prevention component as part of the accreditation training and examination.

(f) The commission may establish rules to carry out the purposes of this section, including rules regarding carryover of credit for extra course attendance from one year into subsequent years and the anniversary date by which the continuing certification requirement must be met.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 364, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 12, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 29 (S.B. 846), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.
procedures to coordinate with county service officers and county commissioners courts to:

1. identify the shared objectives of the commission, county service officers, and counties with a county service office in serving veterans;

2. develop a plan for encouraging service officers to become accredited by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

3. develop a procedure for consulting with counties to evaluate the state's overall approach to service delivery by county service officers and commission claims staff as part of the state's veterans assistance network;

4. define the commission's responsibilities in overseeing claims and appeals prepared by county service officers for instances when the commission has been designated as a veteran's agent under a power of attorney;

5. develop a process for collecting information regarding claims filed by county service officers for instances when the commission has been designated as a veteran's agent under a power of attorney, for providing technical assistance to county service officers, and for providing evaluative information, on request, to county judges or other local officials who supervise county service officers;

6. incorporate county service officers into United States Department of Veterans Affairs appeals hearings either to represent veterans or to appear as witnesses, as needed;

7. explore opportunities for funding county service officer travel to participate in United States Department of Veterans Affairs appeals hearings; and

8. develop procedures to regularly update county service officers on changes in United States Department of Veterans Affairs policies and procedures, and other information.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 13, eff. September 1, 2007.
Sec. 434.101. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:
(1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.
(2) "State electronic Internet portal" has the meaning assigned by Section 2054.003.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 69, Sec. 1, eff. May 16, 2003.
Amended by:
 Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 973 (H.B. 1504), Sec. 5, eff. June 17, 2011.

Sec. 434.102. VETERANS WEBSITE. (a) The Department of Information Resources shall establish and maintain on the state electronic Internet portal a veterans website. The website must allow veterans to access information on state and federal veterans benefits programs.

(b) A state agency that participates in the veterans website is encouraged to allow a veteran to electronically file for state veterans benefits, including the electronic signing of the filing by the veteran and an electronic acknowledgment of the filing.

(c) The veterans website may allow a veteran to electronically file for selected federal veterans benefits, as specified by the commission.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 69, Sec. 1, eff. May 16, 2003.
Amended by:
 Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 973 (H.B. 1504), Sec. 6, eff. June 17, 2011.

Sec. 434.103. COMMISSION FORMS. Commission forms shall contain:

(1) the veterans website address maintained under Section 434.102; and
(2) the commission's toll-free telephone number.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 69, Sec. 1, eff. May 16, 2003.

Sec. 434.104. BENEFITS BOOKLETS. (a) Not later than February 1 of each even-numbered year, the commission shall create an electronic version of a state veterans benefits booklet and provide a printed copy and an electronic version of the booklet to:
(1) each veterans county service officer; and
(2) the personnel office of each state or federal military installation in this state.

(b) A veterans county service officer is encouraged to distribute a copy of the booklet to any person who claims or will claim Texas as a residence after discharge from the United States armed forces.

(c) Each veterans county service officer shall make a copy of the booklet available at the veterans county service office.

(d) The commission may update the booklet as necessary.

(e) The commission shall provide an electronic version of the booklet on the commission's website.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 69, Sec. 1, eff. May 16, 2003.

Sec. 434.105. ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO NEWSLETTER OR SERVICES. The commission, with the assistance of the executive director of the Department of Information Resources, may develop and implement a program that uses appropriate computer hardware and software and required training programs to facilitate electronic:

(1) delivery of a veterans newsletter; and
(2) initiation of veterans benefits claims by veterans county service officers.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 69, Sec. 1, eff. May 16, 2003.

Sec. 434.106. DONATIONS; COMPUTERS FOR VETERANS COUNTY SERVICE OFFICERS. (a) The commission may accept donated computers from any person, including a governmental entity, and cooperate with that person to establish a program to provide computers at no cost to interested veterans county service officers.

(b) A veterans county service officer who obtains a computer under this program shall:

(1) make the computer available to veterans at the veterans county service office; or
(2) lend the computer to veterans in a manner determined by the officer and approved by the county commissioners court.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 69, Sec. 1, eff. May 16, 2003.
Sec. 434.107. USE OF TECHNOLOGY. The commission shall implement a policy requiring the commission to use appropriate technological solutions to improve the commission's ability to perform its functions. The policy must ensure that the public is able to interact with the commission on the Internet.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1269 (H.B. 3426), Sec. 14, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 434.108. DIRECTORY OF SERVICES. (a) The commission shall collaborate with and assist the Department of State Health Services and the Health and Human Services Commission in compiling and maintaining the directory of services established under Section 161.552, Health and Safety Code.

(b) The commission shall provide the directory of services established under Section 161.552, Health and Safety Code, on the commission's website or through links appearing on the commission's website.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1381 (S.B. 1058), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2007.

Renumbered from Government Code, Section 434.107 by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 87 (S.B. 1969), Sec. 27.001(30), eff. September 1, 2009.

SUBCHAPTER D. TEXAS COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR VETERANS SERVICES

Sec. 434.151. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Council" means the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services.

(2) "Servicemember" has the meaning assigned by Section 161.551, Health and Safety Code.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1112 (S.B. 1796), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 434.152. TEXAS COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR VETERANS SERVICES. The Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services is established to:
(1) coordinate the activities of state agencies that assist veterans, servicemembers, and their families;

(2) coordinate outreach efforts that ensure that veterans, servicemembers, and their families are made aware of services; and

(3) facilitate collaborative relationships among state, federal, and local agencies and private organizations to identify and address issues affecting veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1112 (S.B. 1796), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 434.153. COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL. The council is composed of the director or executive head of the following entities, or that person's designated representative:

(1) the Texas Veterans Commission;
(2) the Veterans' Land Board;
(3) the Texas Military Department;
(4) the Health and Human Services Commission;
(5) the State Bar of Texas;
(6) the office of acquired brain injury of the Health and Human Services Commission;
(7) the Department of State Health Services;
(8) the Department of Aging and Disability Services;
(9) the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services;
(10) the Department of Family and Protective Services;
(11) the Texas Workforce Commission;
(12) the Texas Workforce Investment Council;
(13) the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;
(14) the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation;
(15) the Department of Public Safety;
(16) the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;
(17) the Commission on Jail Standards;
(18) the Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education;
(19) the Texas Department of Housing and Community

30
Affairs;
(20) the Texas Department of Transportation;
(21) the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles; and
(22) the Office of Public Utility Counsel.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1112 (S.B. 1796), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:
Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502 (S.B. 1892), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.
Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1217 (S.B. 1536), Sec. 2.08, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 434.154. COORDINATING WORKGROUPS. (a) The council may, by majority vote, establish the following coordinating workgroups to focus on specific issues affecting veterans, servicemembers, and their families:
(1) health or mental health;
(2) employment;
(3) higher education;
(4) criminal justice;
(5) housing;
(6) transportation;
(7) women veterans; and
(8) any other coordinating workgroup considered necessary.

(b) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502, Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.
(c) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502, Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.
(d) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502, Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.
(e) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502, Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.
(f) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502, Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

(g) Each member of the council may invite organizations or agencies that provide services to veterans, servicemembers, and
their families, but that are not otherwise members of the council, to each designate a representative to participate in a coordinating workgroup through procedures established by the council.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1112 (S.B. 1796), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502 (S.B. 1892), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502 (S.B. 1892), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 502 (S.B. 1892), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 434.155. PRESIDING OFFICER. The executive director of the Texas Veterans Commission shall serve as the presiding officer.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1112 (S.B. 1796), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 434.156. MEETINGS. The council shall meet at least annually and at the call of the presiding officer.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1112 (S.B. 1796), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 434.157. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. (a) The council is administratively attached to the Texas Veterans Commission. The Texas Veterans Commission may provide administrative support and resources to the council as necessary to enable the council to perform its duties.

(b) A state agency represented on the council shall support the agency's involvement with the council and provide staff support as needed to the council.

(c) The designated representative of any organization or agency that accepts an invitation to serve on a coordinating workgroup of the council under Section 434.154(g) is not entitled to compensation, but is entitled to reimbursement of the representative's travel expenses as provided by Chapter 660 and the General Appropriations Act.
Sec. 434.158. REPORT BY COUNCIL. Not later than October 1 of each even-numbered year, the council shall submit a report to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and chairs of the appropriate committees of the legislature detailing the work of the council and any recommendations.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1112 (S.B. 1796), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

SUBCHAPTER F. VETERAN EDUCATION EXCELLENCE RECOGNITION AWARD NETWORK

Sec. 434.251. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

1. "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.

2. "Institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2014.

Sec. 434.252. VETERAN EDUCATION EXCELLENCE RECOGNITION AWARD NETWORK. (a) The commission by rule shall establish an award program under which institutions of higher education may receive recognition from the commission for excellence in providing education and related services to veterans.

(b) For purposes of receiving an award under Subsection (a), the commission shall evaluate an institution of higher education regarding, as applicable, the existence and quality at the institution of:

1. a centralized place for students who are veterans to meet or find assistance and information;

2. an institution employee who serves as a central point of contact for students who are veterans;

3. a United States Department of Veterans Affairs work-study program;
admissions and enrollment policies for veterans;
new student orientation and courses for veterans;
a student organization for veterans;
academic support services for students who are veterans;
mental health and disability services;
a housing policy that applies to veterans;
faculty and staff training on issues affecting students who are veterans;
career services for students who are veterans;
and
any other criteria considered necessary or appropriate by the commission.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2014.

Sec. 434.253. RULEMAKING AUTHORITY. The commission may adopt rules as necessary to administer this subchapter. In developing rules under this section, the commission shall consult with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and institutions of higher education.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2014.

SUBCHAPTER G. VETERANS EDUCATION COUNSELORS PROGRAM

Sec. 434.301. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:
(1) "Commission" means the Texas Veterans Commission.
(2) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 5, eff. June 14, 2013.

Sec. 434.302. VETERANS EDUCATION COUNSELORS. The commission shall employ veterans education counselors. The veterans education counselors shall:
(1) work with institutions of higher education and any
existing veterans programs at those institutions to:

(A) create a hospitable and supportive environment for veterans;

(B) enhance awareness of and encourage participation in veterans educational programs and commission programs providing other services to veterans, including employment and claims assistance services;

(C) develop programs providing ancillary assistance to veterans based on the unique needs of veterans and their family members;

(D) ensure that veterans successfully complete their education; and

(E) promote the establishment of a student veterans group on each campus of those institutions;

(2) work with local, state, and national veterans groups, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, to promote educational opportunities and benefits to the veteran population;

(3) work with local workforce development boards to:

(A) ensure that the veterans education counselors are aware of available nontraditional educational opportunities, including on-the-job training programs and apprenticeships; and

(B) advise employers of potential opportunities to create on-the-job training programs for veterans;

(4) work with education services officers at military installations to encourage active duty members of the armed forces of the United States and veterans to use federal and state educational benefits;

(5) create and manage publicity campaigns in concert with the commission and institutions of higher education to promote the use of education benefits under the federal Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (38 U.S.C. Section 3301 et seq.), the tuition exemption program for veterans and their family members under Section 54.341, Education Code, and any other education benefit for veterans or their family members under federal or state law;
(6) support programs to assist students who are combat veterans in readjusting and reintegrating into a noncombat environment;

(7) maintain statistical information regarding demographics of veterans assisted, application success, program completion rates, dropout rates, and reasons for success or failure, as appropriate; and

(8) perform other activities, as assigned by the commission, to enhance the educational opportunities of veterans and their family members.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 5, eff. June 14, 2013.

Sec. 434.303. SUPPORT FROM INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. Each institution of higher education shall cooperate with the commission to provide information, as permitted by law, related to student veterans at the institution, provide access to veteran resource centers or other student meeting areas, and otherwise support the work of veterans education counselors.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 5, eff. June 14, 2013.

Sec. 434.304. RULEMAKING AUTHORITY. The commission may adopt rules to implement this subchapter. In developing rules under this section, the commission shall consult with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and institutions of higher education.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1193 (S.B. 1158), Sec. 5, eff. June 14, 2013.