



Presentation to the Senate Veteran Affairs and Border Security Committee: Veterans Health in Texas

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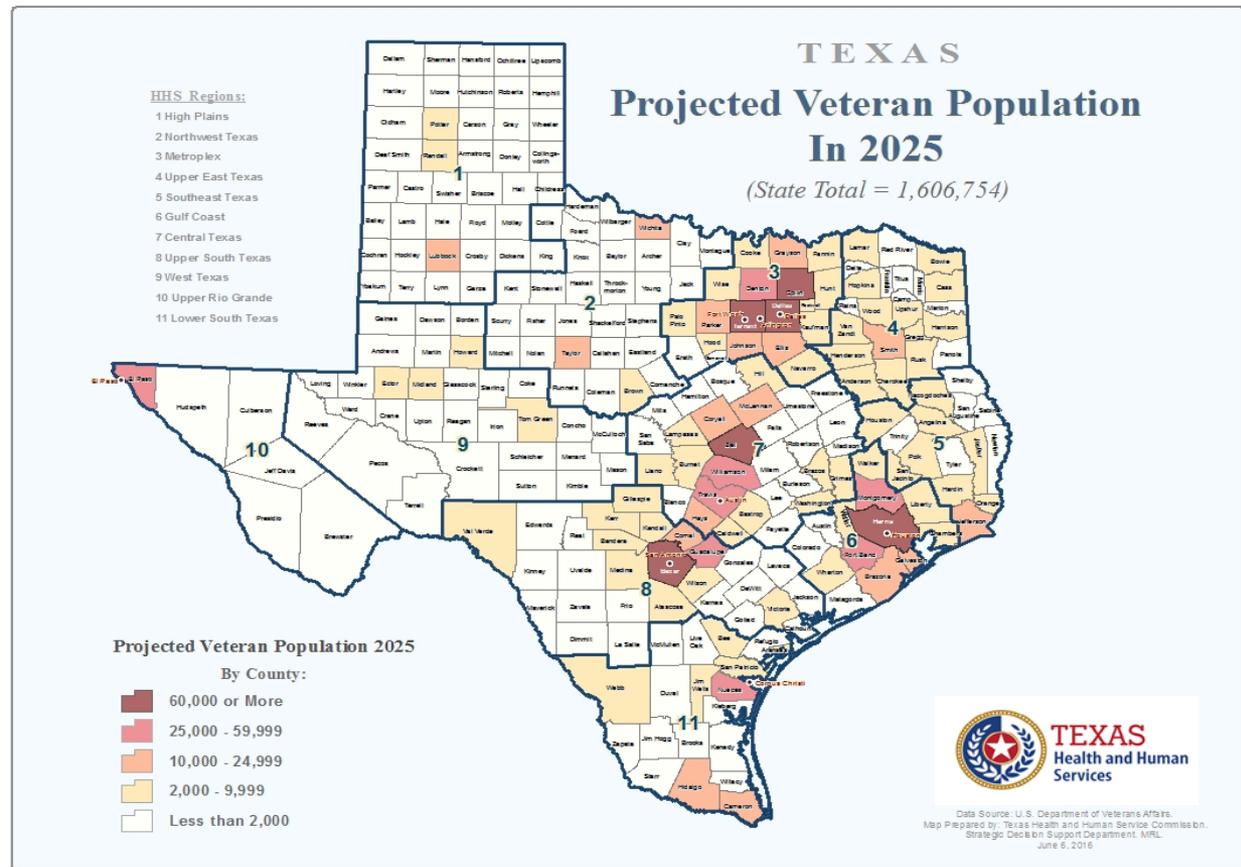
May 22, 2018



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Texas Veteran Population

Texas is projected to have the most veterans of any state by 2020





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HHSC Veteran Initiatives: Coordination Efforts

Federal

- State lead for the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SAMHSA-SMVF) National Policy Council on veteran issues, suicide prevention, homelessness, and employment.

State

- HHSC representative on the legislatively established Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran Services (TCCVS).
- Lead for the Texas Interagency Behavioral Health and Aging Committee in addressing needs, attributes, and programs for aging Texas veterans.
- HHSC leads the Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council, which includes the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and Texas Military Department as member agencies.



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HHSC Veteran Initiatives: Behavioral Health Services

Veteran Suicide Prevention Action Plan

- SB 578 (85R), 2017, directed HHSC to create a comprehensive action plan with short- and long-term goals to increase access to, and availability of, professional veteran health services to prevent suicide among the population.

Veterans Recovery Pilot Program

- HB 271 (85R), 2017, directed HHSC to establish a pilot program to provide veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury with hyperbaric oxygen treatment, subject to available funding.
- Also requires establishment of a Veteran's Recovery Fund.

Increased access to Licensed Mental Health Professionals

- SB 27 (85R), 2017, amended statute to increase access to licensed mental health professionals for veterans in rural areas.



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HHSC Veteran Initiatives: Behavioral Health Services

Texas Veterans + Family Alliance Grant Program

- SB 55 (84R), 2015, directed HHSC to seek to improve the quality of life of veterans and family members through expanded availability, increased access, and enhanced delivery of mental health treatment and services.
- Awarded \$17 million to 38 community collaboratives through three funding cycles since 2016.
- Through the first quarter of fiscal year 2018, grantees have reported serving over 8,400 veterans and family members.

Mental Health Program for Veterans

- The Mental Health Program for Veterans was established by SB 1325 (81R), 2009, to provide peer-to-peer counseling for veterans.
- Services are implemented by TVC, local mental health authorities, and Texas A&M University Health Science Center.
- In fiscal year 2017, over 133,000 peer services were delivered to service members, veterans, and their families and over 6,000 peers were trained.



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HHSC Veterans Initiatives: Texas Veterans App

The Texas Veterans App is a free phone application that has approximately 23,000 downloads providing access to:

- Crisis intervention services through the Veterans Crisis Line
- Services for women veterans
- Local veterans and veteran service organizations
- Texas Veterans Portal





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HHSC Veterans Initiatives: Texas Veterans App

Veterans Crisis Line

- The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs provides the Veterans Crisis Line
- The line is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year by qualified, trained intervention counselors who deal specifically with veteran suicides





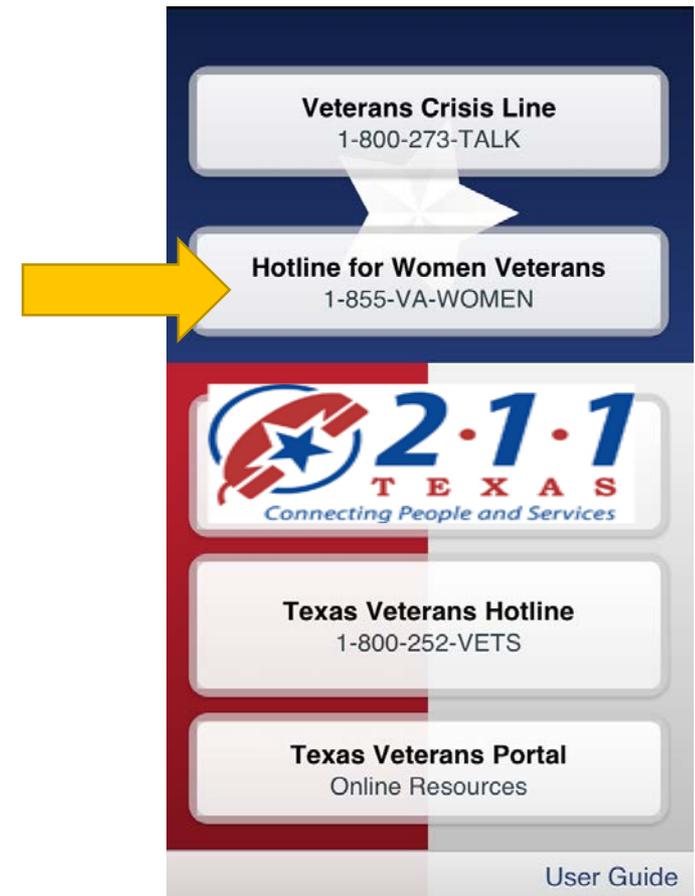
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HHSC Veterans Initiatives: Texas Veterans App

Hotline for Women Veterans

Connects women veterans to programs and resources specific to women veterans and their needs, such as:

- Military sexual trauma treatment
- Homelessness resources for women veterans with children
- Employment resources





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HHSC Veterans Initiatives: Texas Veterans App

Connect to Texas Veteran Benefits

- HHSC Office of Veteran Services finalizing the link between Texas Veterans App and 2-1-1 veteran specialists
- Connection will allow veterans and their families a direct link to a trained veteran specialist who can counsel and refer them to services 24/7
- Mission United, the 2-1-1 software platform, will provide report to HHSC to monitor how the service is working

The screenshot displays a vertical menu of services. At the top is the 'Veterans Crisis Line' with the number 1-800-273-TALK. Below it is the 'Hotline for Women Veterans' with the number 1-855-VA-WOMEN. The central section features the '2-1-1 TEXAS' logo with the tagline 'Connecting People and Services'. Below the logo are two more options: 'Texas Veterans Hotline' with the number 1-800-252-VETS, and 'Texas Veterans Portal' with the text 'Online Resources'. At the bottom right corner of the interface, the text 'User Guide' is visible.



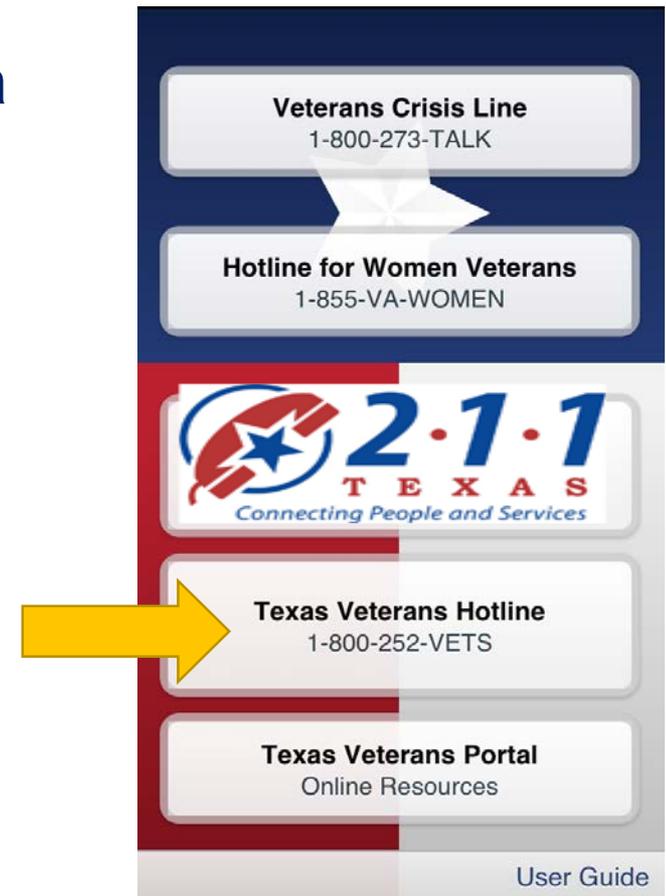
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HHSC Veterans Initiatives: Texas Veterans App

Texas Veterans Hotline

Connects to the Texas Veterans Land Board, a state agency that manages:

- Loans for home or land purchase or home improvement
- State veteran nursing homes
- State veteran cemeteries
- Additional access to veterans resources





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HHSC Veterans Initiatives: Texas Veterans App

Texas Veterans Portal

Links the phone or device to the Texas Veterans Portal, an online resource for veteran benefits provided in Texas

- Emergency services, food, shelter, cash assistance
- Links for law enforcement
- Links for service providers





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Future of Veteran Services in Texas

Continuing to serve veterans and their families and supporting communities seeking to address unmet mental health needs

- Coordinate with TVC and other veteran-serving state agencies, local communities, and the VA to enhance the system providing services to veterans
- Develop meaningful outcome measures to evaluate successes and challenges in programs and initiatives
- Seek feedback from veterans, families, and community partners
- Continue to understand barriers veterans and families have in accessing services and collaboratively identify solutions
- Provide support to communities through capacity and competency building, training, technical assistance, and increased awareness of resources