# PART A, CHAPTER 3.3.e: VETERANS

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| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope**  | **Effective Date** |
| Part A, Chapter 3.3.e | N/A | All TWC-VR staff | 9/3/2024 |

## PURPOSE

In accordance with the authority (Federal and State) listed above, this policy is issued by the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Division (TWC-VR). Adherence to these rules and regulations issued under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), supports Texans with disabilities in gaining, maintaining, and advancing in competitive integrated employment (CIE).

Specifically, the purpose of this policy and these procedures is to ensure adherence to special requirements regarding the provision of TWC-VR services when working with veterans with disabilities.

## DEFINITIONS

Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD 214): U.S. Department of Defense certificate, issued upon a military service member's retirement, separation, or discharge from active duty.

Service-Connected Disability: Disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in active military, naval, or air service.

Service-Disabled Veteran: Veteran with a disability that is service-connected.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Provides health care services to eligible military veterans at medical centers and outpatient clinics; offers several non-health care benefits including disability compensation, vocational rehabilitation, education assistance, home loans, and life insurance.

Veteran: An individual who served in the active military, naval, or air service and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. This includes a member of the National Guard or reserve components who is activated for Federal military service and serves the full period of activation.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E): Program administered by the VA that provides services to eligible service members and veterans with service-connected disabilities to help them prepare for, secure, and maintain employment or achieve independence in daily living.

## POLICY

### General Overview

Regardless of their eligibility for services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), veteran customers with disabilities may benefit from TWC-VR services. The type of discharge from military, naval, or air service does not affect eligibility for TWC-VR services. Providing services to veterans with disabilities is a priority for TWC-VR, and more veterans can benefit if they are aware of the services and how to access them.

If a veteran receives services from the VA's VR&E, the VR Counselor refers to the memorandum of agreement (MOA) between TWC-VR and the VA. The MOA provides guidance about referral and service delivery processes between TWC-VR and the VA.

The basic period of eligibility in which VR&E benefits may be used is 12 years from the later of—

* Veteran's date of separation from active military service; or
* Date the VA first notified a veteran that they have a compensable service-connected disability.

For questions about the MOA or assistance in developing a relationship with the VA, contact the TWC-VR State Office Program Specialist for Veterans and Behavioral Health.

### Services and Benefits for Veterans

The VA has a range of benefits available to veterans of the military, naval, and air services, and to certain members of their families. Among the benefits available to service-disabled veterans and their families are several types of financial assistance, including monthly cash payments, health care, housing benefits, and educational benefits.

In addition, additional resources for veterans are as follows:

* Centers for Independent Living;
* Community Services for the Blind;
* TWC's Texas Veterans Leadership Program;
* Texas Veterans Commission; and
* The Hazelwood Act.

## PROCEDURES

### Unique Needs of Veterans

Veterans have unique VR needs. Disabilities incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in active military, naval, or air service can hinder readjustment to civilian life. As the veteran population grows, the number of veterans who are blind, visually impaired, or hard of hearing is expected to increase.

Benefits through the VA are not universally available to veterans with disabilities due to geographic barriers or extensive waiting lists. Additionally, veterans with a non-service connected disability might not be eligible for the VA's VR&E services.

It is the applicant's choice to disclose their veteran status. It is recommended that TWC-VR staff members, when interviewing applicants, ask whether the applicant has ever served in the active military, naval, or air service and whether they were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

Depending on the length of program needed, veterans may be provided up to 48 months of full-time services or the part-time equivalent. Rehabilitation plans that provide services to improve independence in daily living only are limited to 30 months. These limitations may be extended in certain circumstances.

### American GI Forum Item and the DD214 Procedures

Generally referred to as a "DD 214," this certificate is a U.S. Department of Defense document, issued upon a military service member's retirement, separation, or discharge from active duty. A veteran may get a replacement DD Form 214 through—

* The Texas Veterans Commission at (512) 463-5538;
* Their online account with the VA; or
* The National Archives, National Personnel Records Center, by submitting a Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records, by fax or mail to—
	+ Fax number: (314) 801-9195
	+ Mailing address:

**National Personnel Records Center Military Personnel Records**
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63138

## APPROVALS & CONSULTATIONS

There are no approvals or consultations for this policy and these procedures.

**REVIEW**

The Policy Planning and Statewide Initiatives Team, or designee, is responsible for reviewing this policy and these procedures and will update the Document History log if necessary.

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