

# TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Brandon S. Wood



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## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEMORANDUM

TO: All Sheriffs and Jail Administrators  
FROM: Brandon Wood, Executive Director  
REGARDING: Veteran Referral Cards  
DATE: April 2, 2018

Texas statutes<sup>1</sup> require county sheriffs to investigate and verify the veteran status of each prisoner using the Veterans Re-entry Search Service (VRSS) or a similar service and to assist prisoners who are veterans in applying for federal benefits or compensation for which the prisoners may be eligible under a program administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. In the past, the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) has helped jails with this duty by giving them pre-printed post cards (facsimile enclosed) to give to inmates upon their release. TVC will no longer supply these cards to jails. However, sheriffs remain responsible for assisting veterans.

Of 40,000 inmate veterans that passed through jails from Sept – Nov 2017, TVC received only 398 VRSS cards. Though many of the inmates who receive a VRSS card choose not to submit it, this extremely low number may indicate that some jails are not providing them as required.

We have attached a copy of the cards for jails to print themselves or you may choose to print postcards locally. You may also contact your law enforcement specialist with the Texas Association of Counties. They may be able to assist as well. Jails may give the card to the veteran to send in, or the jail staff can have the releasing veteran inmates fill out the card, collect it, and later send multiple cards in mass to the Texas Veterans Commission.

You are not limited to the attached referral card for compliance. If jails have their own method of compliance, contact the Commission for approval. Jails shall document what type of assistance they provide to a justice-involved veteran, i.e. issuance of referral document, or qualified claims counselor, or similar method.

You may also obtain assistance using the VRSS system at this website: <https://vrss.va.gov/login.php>. There, you will find a user guide, webinar, and support contact information.

If you have any questions regarding the Texas Veterans Commission and their services, please contact Erin McGann at:

Erin McGann  
Justice Involved Veterans Coordinator  
Veterans Mental Health Program  
Texas Veterans Commission  
512-815-7906  
[erin.mcgann@tvc.texas.gov](mailto:erin.mcgann@tvc.texas.gov)

<sup>1</sup> Government Code 511.009 (21) (a)(21)(A) and (B).



PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

# TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Benefits and Services  
for Veterans, Dependents  
and Survivors

Texas Veterans Commission

ATTN: VMHP

P.O. Box 12277

Austin, Texas 78711

Check all fields that apply.

Please fill out the contact information you wish to disclose.

- ☐ Education/Hazlewood
- ☐ Mental Health/Peer Support
- ☐ Healthcare/Claims
- ☐ Employment Services
- ☐ Women Veteran Program
- ☐ Veteran Entrepreneur Program

Name:

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Phone:

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Address (upon release):

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County and/or town (upon release):

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Email:

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