1LT CODY CHEEK

LEGAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO LOCAL VETERANS

13 May 2010
Quick Bio

• Educational Background
  – 2007 Graduate of UT
  – Current Student at UT Law (One Final Exam Left)
  – President of Texas Law Veterans Association

• Military Background/Experience
  – Commissioned as 2LT into U.S. Army in 2007; Currently a 1LT and selected for the U.S. Army JAG Corps
  – Distinguished Military Graduate from the UT Army ROTC Program
  – Nationally ranked 21st out of 3900 ROTC cadets
  – Attended Airborne School, Mountain Warfare, Robin Sage
Major Disclaimer

• This is just a summary of some of the key organizations and initiatives and by no means represents a comprehensive list.
1) Texas Veterans Commission
2) Travis County Veterans Office
3) Texas Veterans Leadership Program
4) Volunteer Legal Services
5) National Organization of Veterans Advocates
6) Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans
The Texas Veterans Commission serves veterans, their dependents and survivors, in all matters pertaining to veterans' disability benefits and rights. It is the designated agency of the State of Texas to represent the State and its veterans before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The agency represents veterans in filing VA disability claims and during VA appeals processes, and assists dependents with survivor benefits.”

PHILOSOPHY

- Serves veterans, their dependents, and survivors
- Coordinates service providers, shares resources, provides training, and develops partnerships with other levels of government
CLAIMS AND BENEFITS
- Designated agency to represent the State and TX:
  - VA disability claims
  - VA appeals processes
  - Assisting dependents
- Availability of claims counselors
- Locations in VA Regional Offices, VA medical facilities, VA clinics, and military installations
  - VA Outpatient Clinic on Montopolis
MISSION OF TCVSO

The mission of the Travis County Veterans Service Office is to ensure that Travis County Veterans and their families receive all the rights and entitlements provided for Veterans by Federal and State laws. The Travis County Veterans Service Office is the advocate for veterans, their families and their survivors and must achieve the highest quality in assisting veterans.
Travis County Veterans Office

SERVICE-CONNECTED
"Means, with respect to disability or death, that such disability was incurred or aggravated, or that the death resulted from a disability incurred or aggravated, in line of duty in the active Military, Naval, or Air Service."

NON-SERVICE CONNECTED PENSION
Pension is available for wartime veterans who are permanently and totally disabled from a disability not related to service. Veterans age 65 or older do not need to prove permanent and total disability. Pension is also available for surviving spouses and/or children based on income.

A CLAIM PACKET MUST INCLUDE
- VA Form 21-526
- DD Form 214
- VA Form 21-22
- Military and/or private medical records
- Marriage Certificate*
- Children's Birth Certificate*
- Divorce Decrees*
- Dependent's SSA Number/SSA Award Letter**
  *Applicable if married and/or with dependents

MISSION OF TCVSO
The mission of the Travis County Veterans Service Office is to ensure that Travis County Veterans and their families receive all the rights and entitlements provided for Veterans by Federal and State laws.

The Travis County Veterans Service Office is the advocate for veterans, their families, and their survivors and must achieve the highest quality in assisting veterans.

VSO 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.

Helpful Numbers
- VA Regional Office: 800-827-1000
- VA Home Loan Guaranty: 888-232-2571
- VA Direct Deposit: 877-838-2778
- VA Education Benefits: 888-442-4551
- TRICARE: 800-525-1550
- DEAS: 800-321-1000
- VA Austin OP Clinic: 512-389-1040
- VA Mental Health Clinic: 512-483-2020
- VA Cedar Park OP Clinic: 512-260-1388
- GFOV Insurance: 800-609-8477
- DEERS: 800-538-9363
- Camp Mabry I.D. Section: 512-782-5841
- Military One Source 24 hrs: 800-343-0647
- VA Hospital, Temple, TX: 512-782-5997
- VA Info, Referral, Appointments: 800-433-4111
- Texas Veterans Commission: 1-800-252-8989
- S12-453-6564: VRG (813-77)
- T.C. Emergency Assist: 512-854-4120
- T.C. Property Tax: 512-854-9473

Some programs listed may be referred to other governmental agencies.

Our goal is to process and provide access to benefits for all eligible veterans and their dependents.

Pray for our Men and Woman in uniform and God Bless our Veterans

Our office does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or providing services.

Travis County Veterans Service Office
100 N. IH 35
Austin, Texas 78701
512-854-9340
Fax: 512-854-4453
Hours: 8-12 & 1-5 M-F
Closed 12-1pm (1-13-93)

PROUDLY SERVING MILITARY VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS IN TRAVIS COUNTY "ONE VETERAN AT A TIME"
Benefits Programs
- Eligibility
- Benefits Overview
- Compensation or Pension
- Aid and Attendance (A&A)

Disabled Benefits
- Auto or other benefits:
- Blind Aid and Services
- Clothing Allowances
- Specially Adapted Homes
- Unemployability Compensation (IU)

Educational Benefits 1-888-442-4551
TX – 877-898-3833  Local 512-463-3168
- Montgomery G. I. Bill
- GI Bill for selected reserves
- Non-Contributory G. I. Bill
- Special program for unemployable vets
- Special training program for vets receiving pension
- Veterans Educational Assistance Program
- Veterans Job Training
- Dependents of permanent 100% Vets

Insurance 1-800-699-8477
- Service-Disabled Insurance
- Modified life
- Dividends
- Servicemans Group Life Insurance
- Veterans Group Life Insurance
- Veterans Mortgage Life Ins.
- Pensions & Improved Pension Rates

Death Benefits
- Service Connected Veterans burial allowance
- Burial in National Cemeteries
- Burial Flags
- Memorial Markers/Headstones
- Memorial Plots
- Presidential Memorial Certificates

Survivors Benefits
- Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Reinstated Entitlement Survivors Program
- Death Compensation referring to before January 1, 1957
- Non-Service Connected Death Pension/Burial
- DIC Education Benefits

Health Care Temple 1-800-423-2111
- Agent Orange & Nuclear exposure treatment
- Alcohol, Drug, & PTSD Treatment
- Domiciliary care
- Hospitalization/Outpatient Care Center
- Prosthetic appliances
- Vet Centers

Other Federal Benefits
- VA Home Loan
- Small Business Administration

Texas Veterans Commission
www.tvc.state.tx.us
800-252-vets (8387), Local 463-5538

State Benefits Assistance
Employment Assistance
Education State Benefits
- Disabled Veterans Outreach Program
- Preference points for employment in the Federal Government
- Job placement assistance thru TWC
- Job Training Partnership Act
- Re-employment

ALSO Provided by:
Texas Workforce Solutions
www.ctwc.org

Texas Veterans Land Board
www.glo.state.tx.us/vlb
1-800-252-VETS (8387)
- Loans for Land
- Home Improvements
- State Veterans’ Homes

---

Do you know how to get your VA benefits? These guys do.
“Governor Perry and I want Texas to serve as the model for the nation in welcoming our veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan home as they return to civilian life. The best means of thanking them for the sacrifices they have made for our state and nation is to put in place a road map for the successful re-integration into civilian life.”

MISSION

- TX Workforce Commission resource and referral network
- Connects returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with resources and tools
Texas Veterans Leadership Program

http://www.twc.state.tx.us/tvlp/tvlp_community.html#legal

• Legal Assistance

To help Service members, their families, and other eligible clients, Department of Defense (DoD) provides the Legal Assistance Program. Legal Assistance Attorneys within the Program can assist eligible clients with some personal legal matters and provide legal advice on a variety of topics to ensure that Service members, their families, retirees, and DoD civilians are prepared and protected under their legal rights.
What services are provided through the Legal Assistance Program? The Legal Assistance Offices aboard military installations can provide eligible clients with a wide range of services, but these services are subject to availability of resources and the expertise of the Legal Assistance Attorneys. Specific services offered by the Program may vary from installation to installation.

Typically, Legal Assistance Attorneys offer advice and/or services on the following topics:

- Wills, testamentary trusts, advanced medical directives (living wills), and estate planning
- Domestic relations to include divorce, legal separation, marriage annulments, child custody, and paternity cases
- Adoption and legal name changes
- Notarization of documents
- Financial nonsupport and indebtedness issues to include communication, correspondence, and negotiations with collection agencies, lawyers, or other parties
- Immigration and naturalization issues
- Basic tax advice and assistance on federal, state, and local taxes
- Review of landlord-tenant contracts and leases
- Civil suits to include preparation of legal correspondence, documents, and, in limited cases, preparation of pleadings
- Service members' rights and responsibilities under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act
- General advice on misdemeanor criminal matters or traffic offenses
- Additionally, the installation Legal Assistance Offices may provide advice and/or services related to power of attorney, real estate, bankruptcy, contracts, and consumer affairs.
VLS offers the following services:

- **Legal Advice Clinics:** We hold free general legal advice and intake clinics on Monday and Wednesday evenings at local middle schools. We also offer specialty advice clinics for specific legal topics such as special education and HIV/AIDS. Attorneys, interpreters, and others volunteer their time at these clinics to give brief advice to people with civil legal problems. Many attendees are then referred to VLS for further legal assistance, depending on the merits of their case and income eligibility.

- **Individual Representation:** Volunteer attorneys represent individuals and their families in ways ranging from simple advocacy to courtroom litigation.

- **Law Firm Partnerships:** Thanks to longstanding partnerships, local law firms take a group of family law cases on a monthly rotation. Each firm handles cases involving divorce and child custody issues. Occasionally, firms will take a group of cases outside of family law. The number of cases each firm handles is based on the firm's size.

- **Assisted Pro Se Project:** The assisted pro se clinics are available to clients with uncontested cases, such as a divorce in which the parties agree on child custody and/or where there is no property to be divided. In these clinics, attorney and paralegal volunteers assist clients in the completion of all necessary legal forms, providing the support they need to finish their own cases.

- **Evening Uncontested Docket:** We hold an evening uncontested docket on the first Thursday of each month for VLS clients whose cases need to be finalized in front of a judge and whose work schedules may not allow them to attend court during the day. Travis County District Judges, clerks, court reporters, and attorney volunteers donate their time to make the uncontested docket possible.
Volunteer Legal Services

How to Get Help Through VLS

If you need help with a civil legal problem, you can

• **Come to an evening legal clinic to get free legal advice from an attorney and apply for legal services through Texas RioGrande Legal Aid.** Click on [Free Legal Advice](#) for details.
  
  • **KEY: Must qualify for Poverty Guidelines to be eligible**

• Get answers to frequently asked legal questions on the [Texas Law Help](#) website. You can also access legal forms on this site.

• Find links to other legal and social service providers that have helpful information for your situation. Click on [Helpful Links](#) to find organizations that may be helpful.

• **Please Note: VLS does not provide services for criminal matters.** This website is intended for use by individuals living in Travis County, Texas or who have a case that could be litigated in Travis County, Texas. Forms and information may differ for individuals residing in different counties in Texas. This website is not intended for use by individuals who do not live in Texas because the laws may be different in another state.
Attorneys specializing in advocating for clients seeking benefits from the VA

17 different Texas lawyers listed in their Membership directory, but none are located in the Austin area

Waco, Houston, Dallas, etc.
Contact Information

• 1LT Cody Cheek
  – Email: cody.cheek@gmail.com
  – Phone: 817-715-5105
Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans

- **Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans (TLTV)** is a new State Bar of Texas Committee established by State Bar President-Elect Terry Tottenham to develop and assist pro bono legal clinics throughout the state for military veterans and their families who otherwise cannot afford or do not have access to legal services they need and deserve.

- **On Friday, May 21, 2010** the San Antonio Bar Association’s Community Justice Program will hold its first Veterans Legal Clinic at the Audie L. Murphy Hospital (7400 Merton Minter). The ask-a-lawyer clinic will be held from 2-5 p.m.