

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 664
By: Davis
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance (fund) is to provide grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to enhance or improve programs that address the needs of veterans and their families.

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) awards grants on a competitive basis to local governments and nonprofit organizations after grant applicants are reviewed by TVC agency staff and an advisory committee. TVC reviews include agency staff evaluations of grant applications and advisory committee grant funding recommendations. However, TVC is not required to perform a needs assessment before awarding grants to applicants. A needs assessment would result in more efficient grant allocations, and help TVC better direct its resources towards addressing the highest priority needs of veterans.

S.B. 664 will implement a recommendation in the Legislative Budget Board's *Government Effectiveness and Efficiency Report* by requiring TVC to conduct a needs assessment every two years to identify specific high-priority needs of veterans throughout the state. The assessments should allow TVC to determine appropriate grant categories that address the highest priority needs of the veteran community, and indicate where gaps in services for veterans exist. TVC would also be required to incorporate the findings of the needs assessment into its process for awarding grants from the fund.

As proposed, S.B. 664 amends current law relating to the allocation of certain grants from the fund for veterans' assistance.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 434.017, Government Code, by adding Subsections (c-1) and (c-2), as follows:

(c-1) Requires the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), not later than May 1 of each even-numbered year, to:

- (1) conduct a needs assessment to identify the specific high-priority needs of veterans and the services available to address those needs;
- (2) determine the grant categories that correspond to the high-priority needs identified under Subdivision (1); and
- (3) identify any gaps between the needs identified under Subdivision (1) and the services available to address those needs.

(c-2) Requires TVC to incorporate the results of the needs assessment and other determinations under Subsection (c-1) in its process for awarding grants from the fund for veterans' assistance.

SECTION 2. Requires TVC, not later than May 1, 2014, to conduct a needs assessment and make other determinations required by Section 434.017(c-1), Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2013.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.