



# **TACVPO**

## **FY26 Annual Conference**

# **AGENDA**

**9 – 12 March 2026**  
**Houston, Texas**

# AGENDA

Monday, 9 March 2025		Pre-Conference Workshops
9:00 am – 9:15 am	<b>Introduction to TACVPO</b> <i>TACVPO Board</i>	Constellation/Virtual
9:15 am – 10:00 am	<b>SAA 101</b> <i>Texas State Approving Agency</i>	Constellation/Virtual
10:00 am – 11:00 am	<b>Flight Programs*</b> <i>Department of Veterans Affairs</i>	Constellation/Virtual
10:00 am – 11:00 am	<b>Flight Program Approvals</b> <i>Texas State Approving Agency</i>	Constellation/Virtual
12:00 am – 1:30 pm	<b>LUNCH</b> <i>On your own</i>	
1:30 pm – 5:00 pm	<b>Registration</b> Desk Open	Main Lobby
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	<b>VA Beginner SCO Training*</b> <i>Sharon Coverdell, Department of Veterans Affairs</i>	Constellation/Virtual
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	<b>VA Advanced SCO Training*</b> <i>Chelsea Jackson, Department of Veterans Affairs</i>	Constellation/Virtual
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	<b>Let's Rodeo, TACVPO! President's Reception</b> <i>All Conference Attendees welcome</i> <i>(hors d'oeuvres provided + cash bar)</i>	Pool Deck Sponsored by Combined Arms 

Tuesday, 10 March 2026		General Sessions
7:00 am – 8:00 am	<b>BREAKFAST</b> <i>On your own</i>	
10:00 am – 3:00 pm	<b>Registration</b> Desk Open	Main Lobby
8:00 am – 5:00 pm	<b>Resource Fair</b>	Prefunction Area
8:30 am – 8:45 am	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> <i>Tila Jernigan, TACVPO President</i>	Constellation Ballroom
8:45 am – 9:45 am	<b>Keynote Speaker</b> <i>Katie Cook, Lt. Col, USMC &amp; Former Blue Angels pilot</i>	Constellation Ballroom
9:45 am – 10:00 am	<b>AM BREAK</b>	The Landing

## Tuesday, 10 March 2026

## General Session

10:00 am – 11:00 am	<b>Department of Veterans Affairs Update*</b> <i>Kenneth Smith, Executive Director, VBA Education Services</i>	Constellation Ballroom
11:00 am – 11:45 am	<b>National Association of State Approving Agencies</b> <i>Rebecca Ryan, NASAA President</i>	Constellation Ballroom
11:45 am – 12:00 pm	<b>Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) Updates</b> <i>David Salgado, Director, TVC Veterans Education</i>	Constellation Ballroom
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	<b>LUNCH</b> <i>Buffet lunch provided</i>	The Landing
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	<b>Veteran Education Excellence Recognition Award (VEERA) Presentations</b> <i>Texas Veterans Commission</i>	Constellation Ballroom
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	<b>Combined Arms</b> <i>Johnn Smith, Southeast Texas Regional Manager</i>	Constellation Ballroom
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm	<b>PM BREAK</b>	The Landing
2:45 pm – 3:15 pm	<b>Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Updates</b> <i>Gabriel Lopez, Texas Workforce Commission</i>	Constellation Ballroom
3:15 pm – 3:45 pm	<b>College Credit for Heroes</b> <i>Bob Gear, Texas Workforce Commission</i>	Constellation Ballroom
3:45 pm – 4:30 pm	<b>State Voc Rehab (TWC)</b> <i>Arthur Jones, Texas Workforce Commission</i>	Constellation Ballroom
4:30 pm – 5:00 pm	<b>Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&amp;E)</b> <i>TBD</i>	Constellation Ballroom

## Wednesday, 11 March 2026

## Break Out Sessions

7:00 am – 8:00 am	<b>BREAKFAST</b> <i>On your own</i>	
8:00 am – 5:00 pm	<b>Resource Fair</b>	Prefunction Area
9:00 am – 3:00 pm	<b>Q&amp;A with TVC Veterans Education Staff</b> <i>1x1; walk-ins welcome; SAA and Hazlewood</i>	Timber Grove
9:00 am – 9:15 am	<b>BREAK</b>	The Landing

8:00 am – 9:00 am	<b>Dixon Center for Military and Veteran Services</b> <i>Wendy Lang, Senior Advisor for Policy and Research</i>	River Oaks 70
	<b>Lessons Learned Moving Beyond Spreadsheets For VA Benefit Management</b> <i>Gisele Hinojosa, MilVet Navigator</i>	Museum Park 70
	<b>85/15 Requirements*</b> <i>VA Representative</i>	Constellation West
	<b>Hazlewood Act Exemption - Overview</b> <i>Dominique Gill, Texas Veterans Commission</i>	Constellation East
9:15 am – 10:15 am	<b>How to build partnerships with staff and faculty that best support Veteran students</b> <i>Paul Calhoun, University of Houston-Downtown</i>	River Oaks 70
	<b>Texas ELRs Update and Q&amp;A*</b> <i>VA</i>	Museum Park 70
	<b>Compliance Surveys*</b> <i>VA</i>	Constellation West
	<b>Uniform Application – Accredited IHLs</b> <i>State Approving Agency</i>	Constellation East
10:15 am – 11:15 pm	<b>Empowering Faculty: Implementing Green Zone Training to Support Military-Connected Students Across Campuses</b> <i>Siara McMahon, Lone Star College</i>	River Oaks 70
	<b>Innovative Approaches to Military-connected Student Success</b> <i>Jessica Hodges, Marissa Pina, Breanna Greer, Ontoria Robinson, and Jamie Gregory - Dallas College</i>	Museum Park 70
	<b>Work Study Programs*</b> <i>VA</i>	Constellation West
	<b>SAA Approvals – (Flight)</b> <i>State Approving Agency</i>	Constellation East
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	<b>Business Office Best Practices</b> <i>LeAnn Pickett, Texas A&amp;M University</i>	River Oaks 70
	<b>NVEST Project</b> <i>Monteigne Long and Abby Lynch</i>	Museum Park 70
	<b>Yellow Ribbon*</b> <i>VA</i>	Constellation West
	<b>SAA Approvals – (NCD/Government Academy)</b> <i>State Approving Agency</i>	Constellation East

12:15 pm – 1:45 pm	<b>LUNCH</b> <i>Buffet lunch provided</i>	Vista Ballroom
1:45 pm – 2:45 pm	<b>Dixon Center for Military and Veteran Services</b> <i>Wendy Lang, Senior Advisor for Policy and Research</i>	River Oaks 70
	<b>NVEST Working Group Meet-up</b> <i>Working Group Members</i>	Museum Park 70
	<b>Enrollment Manager*</b> VA	Constellation West
	<b>Risk-based Surveys &amp; Supervisory Visits</b> <i>State Approving Agency</i>	Constellation East
2:40 pm – 3:00 pm	<b>PM BREAK</b>	Rio Grande lobby
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>The SVO Blueprint: Building and Sustaining Dynamic SVO's Across Texas</b> <i>Siara McMahon, Lone Star College</i>	River Oaks 70
	<b>Texas ELRs Update and Q&amp;A*</b> VA	Museum Park 70
	<b>Debt Management*</b> VA	Constellation West
	<b>Hazlewood Act Exemption – In-depth</b> <i>Texas Veterans Commission</i>	Constellation East
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	<b>Proposal from IHL</b> <i>TBD</i>	River Oaks 70
	<b>Proposal from IHL</b> <i>TBD</i>	Museum Park 70
	<b>Non-College Degree Training*</b> VA	Constellation West
	<b>Hazlewood Database Update</b> <i>Texas Veterans Commission</i>	Constellation East

<b>8:00 am – 9:00 am</b>	<b>NETWORKING BREAKFAST</b>	Constellation Ballroom
<b>9:00 am – 9:30 am</b>	<b>Mentorship Break-out/Sign-up</b>	Constellation Ballroom
<b>9:30 am – 10:30 am</b>	<b>TACVPO Membership Meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President Report</li> <li>• Treasurer Report</li> <li>• New Direction / Discussion</li> <li>• Election of Officers</li> <li>• By-Laws Review</li> <li>• Other New Business</li> </ul>	Constellation Ballroom
<b>10:30 am – 11:00 am</b>	<b>CONCLUSION and Closing Remarks</b>	Constellation Ballroom
<b>12:00 noon</b>	<b>Hotel Checkout</b> <b>HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME!</b>	
<b>12:00 pm – 1:00 pm</b>	<b>New/Old Board Members Meeting</b>	Constellation Ballroom

\*May be held virtually; credit awarded for VA continuing education requirements.

## Acknowledgements

### **TACVPO Board**

- Tila Jernigan – President
- Dr. Trisha Ruiz
- Jessica Hodges
- Eric Matthews
- Judy Schuler – Ex-officio Member

### **Special Guests:**

- Dr. Robert I. Miller, Lt Gen, USAF, Ret
- Mary Dale, Vice-Chair, Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)
- Kenneth Smith, Acting Director, VBA Education Services
- Rebecca Ryan, President, National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA)
- David Salgado, Director, TVC Veterans Education/Vice President, NASAA
- Lily Snyder, South Region Vice President, NASAA
- Casey Wade, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
- Arthur Jones, TWC Voc Rehab Services
- Tina Van Cleve, TWC Voc Rehab Services
- Shay Norton-Leonard, VA National Training Team
- Nicole Haselberger, VA Debt Management
- Aerial Manning, VA
- Jennifer Linnell, VA
- Heather Cates, VA
- Kevin White, VA
- Brittany Tennant, VA
- Traveon Ward, VA
- Toni Bravo-Price, VHA
- Mary Kindle, VHA
- Kira Harris, VHA
- Chloe Freeman, VR&E
- Patty Morgan, Combined Arms
- Montaigne Long, Texas A&M University System
- LeeAnn Pickett, Texas A&M University
- Ruben Aleman, The University of Texas at San Antonio
- Marijke Gray, The University of Texas at Dallas
- Rifeta Badic-Grady, The University of Texas at Dallas
- Clifton Bland, The University of Texas at Dallas
- Toni Rocha Rico, University of Houston at Clear Lake
- Jessica Hodges, Dallas College
- Priscila Fiala, University of the Incarnate Word
- Shirley Uriostegui, Sam Houston State University
- Megan St. Vigne, Sam Houston State University
- Mitch Seal, Fayetteville State University