



# PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

## NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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# North Carolina Needs a Coordinated Strategy to Guide the Changing Landscape of Veterans Programs

## Summary

The Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee's 2013–15 Work Plan directed the Program Evaluation Division to inventory and describe state programs and services available to veterans and their families. This report is the only known published summary of state programs and efforts for veterans and their families in North Carolina.

**In State Fiscal Year 2013–14, North Carolina state agencies and public higher education institutions operated 23 programs for veterans, 11 of which spent \$53.9 million solely on veterans and their families.** The 23 programs in the inventory reside in 10 state entities: the departments of Administration, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Public Instruction, Public Safety, and State Treasurer; the NC Community College System; the NC Housing Finance Agency; the University of North Carolina; and the Wildlife Resources Commission.

**Although outcome data provide the strongest evidence of program success, few programs in the inventory track this information.** Most programs track the number of veterans served. However, only nine programs track outcomes for veterans and their families.

**In addition to the programs identified for the inventory, North Carolina offers 22 educational initiatives, benefits, discounts, and reduced recreational fees to veterans and their families.** Some of these efforts are administered by the same agencies that house programs in the inventory, but the tracking of participation and outcomes is not consistent.

**Although the Governor recently created a Working Group on veterans via executive order, North Carolina lacks a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to support veterans in the State.** Lack of legislative oversight of the Working Group means its efforts may not be aligned to budget priorities established by the General Assembly.

### **Based on these findings the General Assembly should**

- establish the Task Force on Veterans, Service Members and their Families in statute; direct this group to develop and implement a statewide strategic plan to track and improve services for veterans and their families; and direct state entities to track and report information to the Task Force; and
- create a legislative oversight committee to monitor and oversee the implementation of this plan.