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## **More Than \$750,000 Awarded to Tennessee Colleges to Support Student Veterans**

**NASHVILLE, TN – July 10** – The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) announced today that 13 colleges and universities in Tennessee will receive additional funding and program support to serve veterans and service members and help them earn postsecondary degrees as part of Governor Bill Haslam’s Drive to 55.

THEC will award \$760,781 in total Veteran Reconnect funds to support programs and services for student veterans at campuses across the state. The 2017 grant program is specifically focused on improving the assessment of prior learning for student veterans returning to college, helping them more easily convert previous military experience into college credit, and improving the transition between military service and postsecondary education. THEC will provide technical assistance and professional development to Veteran Reconnect campuses around prior learning assessment (PLA) for veterans.

“In Tennessee, there are an estimated 83,000 veterans with some college credit but no degree, and we are committed to making it easier for them to transition into higher education and graduate,” Haslam said. “Veterans bring valuable experience and learning from their time in the service, and through Veteran Reconnect, we are helping them turn that experience into credit, earn postsecondary degrees, and move into quality jobs after serving.”

Institutions receiving the grants are required to develop and implement new evaluation processes for translating military training into academic credit, while also ensuring that prospective and incoming student veterans have easy, clear access to the information. This grant aligns with legislation passed earlier this year by the Tennessee General Assembly which directs THEC to develop an online web platform to assist veterans in translating their military experience to academic credit. The institutions that participate in Veteran Reconnect grant program will be partners in that effort by mapping the opportunities already available to students at their institutions.

“Receiving proper credit for military training was a frustration we heard from veterans, and Veteran Reconnect is one of the ways we are easing that frustration,” said THEC Executive Director Mike Krause. “Veterans and service members are often forced to decide on a program of study before they know how their military training will be applied to academic coursework. As a state, we’re

working to make this process as transparent as possible so veterans know how their military service will translate before enrolling.”

Veteran Reconnect will provide funding from August 1, 2017 until January 31, 2019. The current round of funding marks the third time THEC has awarded Veteran Reconnect grants to institutions. The 2015 grant provided support to 11 campuses to focus on developing enrollment, retention, and graduation of veteran students. The 2016 grant provided funding to six campuses, focused on expanding existing student veteran programs and bringing successful programs to scale.

Veteran Reconnect is part of Haslam’s Drive to 55 initiative to increase the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or credential to 55 percent by 2025. The grants were included in Haslam’s FY 2017-18 budget.

**2017-18 Veteran Reconnect Grants:**

Austin Peay State University | \$79,954

Christian Brothers University | \$27,673

Cleveland State Community College | \$79,902

East Tennessee State University | \$80,000

Jackson State Community College | \$44,500

Lipscomb University | \$80,000

Middle Tennessee State University | \$72,118

Pellissippi State Community College | \$70,190

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Shelbyville | \$7,500

Tennessee Technological University | \$71,355

Tennessee Wesleyan University | \$67,838

University of Memphis | \$60,734

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga | \$19,017

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***About the Tennessee Higher Education Commission***

*The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, and evaluates postsecondary education policies and programs in Tennessee while coordinating the state’s systems of higher education, and is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential.*