

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

August 25, 2022

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**SUBJECT: ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS FOR A VETERANS AFFAIRS LIAISON**

The purpose of this budget response is to provide benchmark data related to the Veterans Affairs Liaison position and provide options for including this role as a resource and point of contact for veterans within the City of Fort Worth.

Veteran services are found in Tarrant, Denton, and Dallas Counties. In addition, cities extending veteran services in a variety of forms include Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. Additional research is being conducted to review the program goals of each entity.

While veteran services are provided by Tarrant and Denton counties, included below are several areas of focus for a Veterans Affairs Liaison position that could serve as a resource and point of contact for City of Fort Worth residents and employees who are veterans, as well as those currently serving in the National Guard or Reserve:

- Provide information on available programs and resources at the City, State, and Federal levels serving veterans and their families.
- Work collaboratively with the Diversity & Inclusion Department and the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities on ADA issues affecting disabled veterans.
- Track data related to veteran-owned businesses within the City.
- Provide guidance on eligibility and entitlement requirements for federal, state, and local Veterans services, programs, or benefits.
- Provide talent acquisition support for veterans and active duty reserve or National Guard personnel
- Provide training to City departments on federal legislation, such as the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act (USERRA), related to military/veteran hiring, leave, and benefits.

In reviewing the Veterans Affairs Liaison role, the Human Resources Department reached out to its network of benchmark cities and counties in the area and throughout Texas. Among Tarrant, Dallas, and Denton Counties, only Denton County has responded that they specifically have a Veterans Services Officer position. It is known that the Cities of Austin and San Antonio have a military and veterans affairs office. On the following page is benchmark data received to-date in response to a survey for information:

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Benchmark Cities with 150,000+ Civilian Population 18 Years and Over

Organization	Civilian Population 18 Years and Over*	Veteran Population*	Veteran % of Civilian Pop 18 Years and Over*	Title	Minimum Salary for Veteran Affairs Position
City of Arlington	294,609	17,557	6.0%	No Related Position	
City of Austin**	773,328	34,879	4.5%	Veteran Services Administrator	\$65,770
City of Dallas**	1,006,774	42,501	4.2%	Human Rights Officer	\$89,443
City of El Paso	592,289	46,088	7.8%	Military Program Administrator	\$74,790
City of Fort Worth	648,392	43,144	6.7%	No Related Position	
City of Garland	174,439	8,759	5.0%	No Related Position	
City of Houston	1,739,957	69,023	4.0%	No Response***	
City of Irving	175,288	6,702	3.8%	No Related Position	
City of Plano	224,299	11,181	5.0%	No Related Position	
City of San Antonio**	1,141,479	97,318	8.5%	Military Affairs Director	\$111,626
Collin County	744,301	41,336	5.6%	Veterans Service Officer	\$54,690
Dallas County	1,935,816	92,201	4.8%	No Response***	
Denton County**	648,896	41,591	6.4%	Veteran Service Officer	\$73,380
Tarrant County	1,528,557	107,816	7.1%	Veteran Services Director	\$80,749
Average Minimum Pay					\$78,635

*Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey (data.census.gov)

**Data Source: Internal Research

***Veterans services information available on the agency's website but no agency response regarding staffing.

Based on minimum salary costs for related positions among the benchmark cities, below is a projection of the annual cost to add a Veterans Affairs Liaison to the City:

Personnel Costs	\$ 99,780 (Based on average minimum salary plus FICA/retirement)
Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 10,777</u> (Includes training, one-time IT and furniture purchases, etc.)
Total Estimated Expenses	\$110,557

If such a position were added, staff recommends it be assigned to the Diversity & Inclusion Department; it is common for Veterans Affairs functions to be in similar departments in other municipalities. For example, in Dallas, the Veterans Affairs Commission is under the Human Rights office. In addition, many of the difficulties facing veterans, including employment and housing, are in areas where the Diversity & Inclusion Department is already focusing on related initiatives.

If the City Council would like to proceed with exploring this opportunity further, the Human Resources Department will work with the Diversity & Inclusion, City Attorney, and other departments to develop a proposed scope of services and further define the resource needs for the buildout of this program.

If you have questions concerning this information, please contact Dianna Giordano, Human Resources Director, at 817-392-7783.

David Cooke
City Manager