





## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council Members

**THROUGH:** Genesis Gavino, Chief of Staff 

**FROM:** Tamela Saldaña, Ph.D., Interim Director, Office of Equity and Inclusion 

**DATE:** January 29, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **Resolution No. 20240814-021 Veterans Needs Assessment**

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update related to [Resolution No. 20240814-021](#) Texas Veterans Needs Assessments. The Office of Equity and Inclusion, Civil Rights Division has reviewed the Texas Veterans Needs Assessment released in August of 2024 and concurs with the findings identified for the Central Texas Region 6, which includes data for Austin, Texas. Barriers identified by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) reported that veterans did not understand benefits qualifications, had limited knowledge of where to get assistance, language barriers, or lack of digital access.

In 2022, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) hired a Veterans Affairs Administrator to ensure veterans residing in the city of Austin have access to all services and support. TVC's 2020 Texas Veterans Needs Assessment, cited in [Resolution No. 20211209-057](#), identified healthcare support, financial assistance, and housing assistance as the top three unmet needs in the Central Texas Region. Based on the results of the 2020 Report, staff developed internal workplans to better serve veterans in Austin.

The internal workplan is regularly updated as goals, strategies, and specific work tasks are completed. Staff provides regular updates to the Veterans Commission and the City's internal Veterans Working Group. Additionally, major accomplishments regarding programs and services related to the veteran's community are also reported in the Civil Rights Division's annual report that is published on the City's website.

Significant strategies and work tasks completed to address barriers and needs of veterans from both the 2020 and 2024 Texas Veterans Needs Assessment include the following:

- The creation of the City of Austin Veterans Resource Directory.
- Establishment of ongoing outreach efforts to include monthly workshops to address barriers.
- One-on-one appointments for Veterans to provide benefits assistance and resource information.
- Hosted the City's first Veterans Resource Fair in November 2024.
- Implemented the City's Internal Veterans Resource Group represented by City of Austin Departments that provide valuable services to meet the needs of Veterans in the areas of healthcare, housing, employment, and other services to assist with needs and remove barriers.

- Signed several valuable Memoranda of Cooperation and Memoranda of Agreements with local, county, state, and federal resource agencies to streamline services for veterans in Austin.

Additionally, OCR developed a survey tool that is utilized to better understand the needs of veterans specific to those who live and are serviced in Austin. The data is also tracked for veterans who come in or call into the office for assistance. OCR continues to coordinate with local partners, federal agencies, the county, and state agencies to ensure that Veterans have access to all services necessary to remove barriers and improve the quality of life for Veterans who reside in Austin.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact, Veterans Affairs Administrator, Jesus Simental, Office of Equity and Inclusion, Civil Rights Division, at [Jesus.Simental@austintexas.gov](mailto:Jesus.Simental@austintexas.gov)

CC: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
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