



Veteran and Military Affairs Update

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Jerry Jacobitz Veteran Program Coordinator

Goal 1 – Cultivate an Environment Conducive to Strong, Sustainable Economic Development

Goal 5 – Promote Transparent and Consistent Communication Amongst all Members of the Community

Goal 6 - Set the Standard for Sound Governance & Fiscal Management

Goal 8- Nurture and Promote a Healthy, Sustainable Community




The City of El Paso Veteran and Military Affairs




City of El Paso and Ft. Bliss Collaboration



 DEFENSE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

 COMMUNITY-MILITARY PARTNERSHIPS

 BUILDING GREAT COMMUNITIES FOR OUR MILITARY

- Energy & Water Programs
- Military Installation Resiliency Review
- Deployment Support from Fort to Port
- Inter-Governmental Support Agreements (IGSAs)
- Defense Advanced Manufacturing Program
- Defense Economic Assistance Adjustment Grant
- Defense Community Infrastructure Program
- Spouse Employment
- PCS Support at local hotels
- Education Programs
- “The 500” SGM Academy Leadership Seminars
- Community information exchange
- National Defense Conferences
- Military Transitions
- Healthcare
- Child Care
- Rental Markets
- Housing & Utility Costs
- Service Member Quality of Life

Our responsibility is to establish clear and equitable community + installation expectations that address military-community partnerships while identifying innovative efforts and resources to ensure our military and their families are provided the high quality of life they deserve





The City of El Paso Veteran and Military Affairs

El Paso is ranked 7th Nationwide in Best Cities for Veterans Homebuyers

Employing our Veterans

- “We Hire Vets” 13.8% employment rate
- HR4VETS
- The Bridge Fellowship Program
 - ❖ Expanded to Communities of Excellence
- Veteran / Military Hiring Fairs
- Veterans Employment Tax Incentives
- **Veteran Business Recognition program**

Synchronizing Resources

- Veteran and Military Affairs website with Event calendar
- Sun City Bliss
- Visit El Paso mobile App
- El Paso Helps
- Department of Veteran Affairs Vet Resources Community Network (VRCN) Digest
- **City Veteran Employee Connection program**
 - ❖ **Veteran Luncheon**
- **Veteran Transportation**

Addressing Homelessness

- Veteran Tenant Based Rental Assistance program 2020-ongoing
- Paso Del Norte Health Information Exchange Network

We have a **duty to serve** our Veterans through **collaboration + community partnerships** to deliver exceptional services to a community that selflessly volunteered to serve us



The City of El Paso Veteran and Military Affairs



Thursday, April 27, 2023 5:00PM-7:00PM
Undergraduate Learning Center UTEP

The City of El Paso Veteran and Military Affairs



**“Welcome Home” Saturday, April 29, 2023 6:00PM
El Paso International Airport**

El Paso's Military Heroes: Past, Present, and Future!



The City of El Paso Veteran and Military Affairs



THE OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF
**AMERICA'S GREAT
DEFENSE COMMUNITIES**

The City of El Paso, in collaboration with Endeavors, is one of five communities across the country selected as a **2023 Great American Defense Community** by the Association of Defense Communities

“We are incredibly excited to honor the city of El Paso as a 2023 Great American Defense Community,” ADC President Karen Holt said. “El Paso is a great example of how communities are working tirelessly to ensure America’s military can be proud of where they call home.”

The City of El Paso Veteran and Military Affairs



Next Steps:

- **The Association of Defense Communities** will send a delegation to El Paso to present the award
- El Paso's Veteran and Military Affairs Community will be highlighted in the **American Defense Communities Magazine**
- The City of El Paso, and Endeavors, will be formally recognized nationally as a Great American Defense Community by the Association of Defense Communities during the **Installation Innovation Conference** in Orlando, FL



NOVEMBER 6 – 8, 2023 | ORLANDO, FL





Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee

Brief to City Council 27 March 2023

VAAC Chair Melissa Harcrow



The Veteran Affairs Advisory Committee



❖ Mayor Appt	Vacant	Term Expires	
❖ District 1	Brian Kanof	Term Expires	10/11/2026
❖ District 2	Ron Jackson (Secretary)	Term Expires	7/20/2023
❖ District 3	Rodney Washington	Term Expires	9/5/2023
❖ District 4	Jonathan Bohannon (Vice-Chair)	Term Expires	6/29/2025
❖ District 5	Vacant	Term Expires	
❖ District 6	Bruce Biegel	Term Expires	7/1/2023
❖ District 7	Justin Rotti	Term Expires	10/19/2023
❖ District 8	Melissa Harcrow(Chair)	Term Expires	10/03/2023



Employment

- **Key Concerns**

Hiring Veterans, Transitioning Service Members and Military Spouses into meaningful employment.

- **Lines of Effort**

Providing Information to and participation with local businesses.

Grow the workforce of El Paso with transitioning Service members, Military Spouses and Veterans.

Participation in Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, and Military Spouse focused Hiring Fairs.

- **Recommendations**

Continue the support and implementation of the Veteran Employment Program into the HR administrative policies and procedures.

Use available City resources and leverage the city's relationships with local business, Fort Bliss and beyond to advocate for hiring veterans and military spouses

Employment

- As we strive to become the best city for Veterans to live and work, we must all build upon the successes of our cities HR Department and the Council's and Administrations support.
- We should be proud of earning the "We Hire Vets" award we have received every year since it's inception. Our goal of 15% of city workforce by 2025 is well within our grasp.
- The next step is to use our knowledge and platform to encourage the employers in El Paso to do likewise.
- El Paso is the best place for Veterans to live and work.



**The 'We Hire Vets' program
recognizes Texas employers
for their commitment to
hiring veterans.**

Homelessness



Key Concerns /Lines of Effort

- Intensive case management seems to be the best defense to Veteran homelessness.
- Maintain situational awareness of the impact of decreased abortion options for at-risk women Veterans and military families.
- According to the 2022 Point in time data provided by El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, 84 Veterans are homeless in El Paso at any given time.
- Currently awaiting the 2023 Point-in-Time survey results and a detailed update by the EPCH.

Homelessness



Recommendations

- Continue to fund the City's homeless Veteran programs which provide intensive case management and supportive services. These have provided many success stories over the past two years.
- Support the City to explore General Assistance Grants to include legislature to address federal grant restrictions. This has to potential to provide more flexibility and remove barriers for entry.
- Encourage the sharing of information between homeless grant providers, the City of El Paso, and the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless. We recommend using the Paso Del Norte Health Information Exchange (PHIX Network) which is a local collaborative network to consolidate data.

Marketing & Communication

Key Concerns:

Reaching out to the 167,888 (18-20%) of our El Paso population that includes Veterans, active-duty, transitioning service members, and their families.

Critical Gaps:

As the City of El Paso strives to become the #1 City in America for Veterans to live, we **must** continue working to provide resourceful information to the large military population. Seek to feature Veteran presence/resources, on web pages, and social media sites and build a comprehensive strategy to connect with past/present Service Members and families

Marketing & Communication

Recommendations

- Use available city resources to expand the strategic communications plan that reaches our target population. Continue working on marketing resources to be used to reach out to Veterans and their spouses and families.
- Increase the Department of Veteran and Military Affairs staff to better support the Chief Military Officer. Since October 1st, one individual was hired in support, extras are requested (County has 5-person team). More staff assistance could help with social media (marketing and outreach) and general assistance grants.
- Utilize the VA Work-Study Program. Open to college students to get paid and gain experience. See if the city can offer part-time employment, through this or a similar programs. (internship/Skillbridge)
- Recommend more city hiring/resource fairs geared towards the military community to include, spouses and formerly incarcerated service members

Marketing & Communication

- More help from TV/radio, sporting events- PSAs, and Job and Resource Fairs (City in 5 TV loop).
- City Wide Text Message options about Veteran events for those interested. (Requesting reconsideration of idea)
- Take advantage of El Paso weather, more city events/block off streets for car/bike shows, concerts (Lt. Dan Band), etc.
- Great opportunity to highlight small Veteran businesses, employer hires, resources availability, and local VSOs. Build partnerships with organizations that are effectively operating within the veteran /military family landscape as well as with those that do not exclusively provide services to this population.

Questions