

**CITY OF ANAHEIM  
VETERANS WORKING GROUP**



**VETERAN SUPPORT & ACTIVITY  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**OCTOBER 23, 2012**

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## **1. Introduction**

The City of Anaheim (City) has continually honored its veterans and active military personnel for their sacrifices to this country and unyielding bravery. In return, the City has frequently explored additional opportunities to provide assistance and well-deserved recognition to Anaheim veterans and active military personnel.

In July 2012, City staff was tasked with comprehensively examining existing City veteran programs and activities, and exploring potential opportunities to provide additional support/resources and recognition. In response, City staff created a Veterans Working Group (Group) that consists of 22 individuals from veteran-based non-profit organizations, active community members, other government jurisdictions and multiple City department staff. The Group proactively held three meetings at City Hall over a three-month period to discuss veteran programs and activities.

The recommendations presented in this document proudly represent the collective ideas of the Group to provide additional assistance and recognition to Anaheim's veterans.

## **2. Existing Veteran Programs and Activities**

The City currently provides a diverse array of veteran programs and activities. The types of activities can naturally be separated into two categories: support/resources and recognition. The City's existing veteran programs and activities are found below.

### **A. Support and Resource Programs and Activities**

#### **i. Workforce Development (Employment)**

The Workforce Investment Board oversees funding, provides strategic planning and develops policies that enhance workforce objectives. The Anaheim Workforce Investment Board's instrument for providing employment services is through its One-stop/ Anaheim Jobs, which enhances the skills, employability and training levels of the current and future workforce. Existing veteran programs and activities offered through Anaheim Jobs are found below.

- a. Provides office space and strong partnership with the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD) including Veterans Programs staff. The Veteran Representative is on-site at least two days a week to facilitate comprehensive services for veterans. The Veteran Representative can provide referral services for programs and activities offered through Veteran Affairs, as well as assistance with employment.
- b. Provides preference to veterans seeking employment services including case management, training opportunities, career planning and advice, and referrals to other services.
- c. Provides additional services to post 9/11 veterans through the Veteran Gold Card Initiative including, but not limited to, case management, skills assessment and interest surveys, career guidance, referral services, job search assistance and a monthly follow-up by an assigned case manager for a six-month period.
- d. Provides and facilities employment and social services annually at the Anaheim and Orange County Job Fair Exposition; centralized seven organizations that provided veteran services at the 2012 Job Fair.
- e. Provides guidance to veterans requesting the County of Orange's Veteran Service Office for additional assistance with benefit claims counseling, and referral assistance.

**ii. Housing Assistance**

The Anaheim Housing Authority (AHA) provides assistance to very-low income households for affordable housing needs. Without assistance many of these households would be living in substandard housing, unable to afford the basic necessities for their households, or homeless. Existing veteran programs and activities offered through the Anaheim Housing Authority are found below.

- a. AHA offers a Homeless Voucher Set-Aside for homeless individuals and families. 91 vouchers are reserved for this purpose. The program combines comprehensive case management services, provided by a partnering organization, with rental assistance. To qualify, individuals must have completed a six month transitional housing program. Veterans who lived and/or worked in Anaheim are eligible for a preference in admission for this program.
- b. Provides referral services through active case management for participants, including veterans, in the HCV Program.

### iii. **Human Resources**

In January 2003, the City Council adopted a resolution to provide supplemental payments of salaries and benefits to City employees called into active military service in connection with actions to combat terrorism and to assist with rescue and recovery operations arising from natural disasters. The City Council has entered into multiple continuing resolutions in response to City employees called into active military duty. These resolutions have supplemented the difference between the City employees' current compensation and respective active military salary and benefits.

## **B. Recognition Programs and Activities**

### i. **Anaheim Marine Adoption Committee / 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit**

In October 2007, the City Council formally adopted the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (13<sup>th</sup> MEU), stationed in Camp Pendleton, to support military personnel and their families. The Anaheim 13<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit Adoption Committee, made up of city residents and business people, was subsequently formed to facilitate the relationship between the people of Anaheim and the Marines.

The Anaheim Marine Adoption Committee supports the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit and their families on an ongoing basis, both when units are at home and deployed. In return, the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit provides

community support by participating in Anaheim community events. The goal is to encourage mutually beneficial interaction between the community and military personnel.

The accomplishments of the Anaheim 13th MEU Adoption Committee include, but are not limited to, the programs and activities found below.

- a. Actively attended various city and community events, including Flag and Independence Day parades, Military Banner ceremonies, Veterans Day and fundraising events.
- b. Provided 300 welcome home bags to single Marines who live in barracks upon return from their deployment.
- c. Annually donate gift cards to help provide for Thanksgiving dinners.
- d. Host annual Christmas party for 350 13th MEU Marines, Sailors and their families with dinner and toy donations from the support of the Anaheim community and corporate sponsors.

**ii. Military Banner Program**

In 2009, the City launched the Military Banner Program, which recognizes active Anaheim military personnel who are serving in the Armed Forces. The Military Banner Program is designed to honor Anaheim residents that are currently deployed in our nations' military. Active military personnel are honored and recognized through a city dedicated webpage on anaheim.net, and with a banner displayed on a streetlight pole in various locations throughout Anaheim to show the City's public expression of gratitude. The City has proudly recognized 72 honorees since the inception of the program.

**iii. Honor Fallen Heroes**

The City honors Anaheim residents who served in the military that gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country. In respect for our fallen heroes, the City pays special tribute at the Military Banner Ceremony and honors them with a military banner in each of the three designated banner locations. In addition, the City honors these fallen heroes by recognizing them on a dedicated City webpage.

### **3. Recommended Veteran Programs and Activities**

The recommended veterans programs and activities were created in a collaborative process by the Group. These recommendations represent programs and activities in addition to the continuation of the City's current actions. Many of the programs and activities derived from a comprehensive study of surrounding jurisdictions and received support by the Group. In addition, the Group created recommendations by identifying additional opportunities. The Group's recommended veteran programs and activities are found below.

#### **A. Assistance Programs and Activities**

##### **i. Comprehensive Resource Directory**

The Group recommends creating a comprehensive resource directory/brochure that includes all veterans programs and activities in the City and partnering organizations. The creation of a comprehensive resource directory will allow the City and partnering organizations to streamline services according to each veteran's specific needs. These resources are deliverable in the form of a robust City webpage, brochure and first-responder's guide.

The dedicated city webpage solely for veterans, to include- veteran services and provide a "one-stop" for assistance and recognition programs. In regard to assistance, the webpage will provide referral services including, but not limited to, City activities, partnering organizations, state and federal agencies. To enhance our recognition of Anaheim veterans, the webpage accepts veteran's photos to add on the website and develop a robust gallery featuring Anaheim veterans.

With the understanding that not all veterans utilize the computer and/or have access to the City website, the Group recommends a comprehensive brochure that identifies city and partnering organizations resources available to veterans. Also, the brochure will be provided to each department that encounters veterans for subsequent distribution. The brochure will include some of the recognition and all assistance activities listed on the City's veterans webpage.

The first-responder's guide will consist of a pamphlet of information for veterans in need of emergency services (e.g., shelter, food and health services). This guide will be provided to city staff that conduct frequent field work in order to proactively reach veterans most in need of services. In addition, the City will provide the guide to partnering organizations for subsequent distribution.

**ii. Designated Veterans Advocate**

The Group recommends having a designated veterans advocate located at City Hall. The advocate would be an existing city staff member that incorporates this into their role and ideally would be the first contact for veterans inquiring veteran-related services at City Hall. Similar to the comprehensive resource directory, a designated advocate will allow the City and partnering organizations to streamline services according to each veteran's specific needs.

**iii. Human Resources Veteran Hiring Preference**

The Human Resources Department is exploring the implementation of hiring preference points for veterans when conducting external recruitments for general city positions and public safety positions. The veteran's preference program could be similar to what is already in place for federal civil service positions. The program would provide qualified veteran job seekers an edge in gaining employment with the City of Anaheim. Further, the City for all positions will proactively target potential veteran job seekers by providing job announcements to those publications geared towards veterans.

**iv. Homeless Set-Aside Vouchers**

As previously mentioned, the City voluntarily administers a Homeless Set-Aside program that provides a preference to homeless veterans who lived and/or worked in Anaheim. These vouchers are available to homeless individuals or families that have the ability to become stably housed with financial assistance and active case management from a partnering organization. Due to program requirements, chronically homeless individuals may find it difficult to the meet

all requirements of the program. The Group recommends utilizing these vouchers for homeless veterans by creating additional partnerships with service providers and looking for ways to help increase the capacity to provide supportive services to veterans in the City of Anaheim.

**v. Enterprise Zone Tax Credit**

The Enterprise Zone is a State of California program that provides special tax incentives to qualified businesses to encourage private sector growth within designated areas. In addition, the Enterprise Zone specifically provides a hiring tax credit to employers that hire veterans within these designated areas. The Anaheim Enterprise Zone received its final designation from the State in February 2012. The Group recommends exploring methods to market these incentives.

**vi. “You Are Not Alone” Program**

The Anaheim Police Department, through the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP), provides the “You Are Not Alone” (YANA) Program, which checks on those living alone who request someone occasionally checking on their welfare. Also, the RSVPs identify other needs for services and referrals for program participants.

The Group recommends marketing the YANA Program to veterans not only to occasionally check in on their welfare, but to ensure they understand the types of services eligible to veterans. In addition, RSVPs can initially contact those who just returned home from active duty to explain the respective resources available in Anaheim and through its partnering organizations.

**B. Recognition Programs and Activities**

**i. Funeral Procession Ceremony**

Many cities throughout this country pay tribute to those in the military that gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country. Specifically, some jurisdictions have honored fallen heroes with a funeral procession ceremony the day the individual is being placed to final rest.

The Group recommends having a coordinated funeral procession ceremony for these fallen heroes. The funeral procession ceremony would occur on a designated location in Anaheim determined at a later date. Ideally, the Veterans Working Group would maintain a database of residents and organizations interested attending the respective ceremony and subsequently contact such participants with information when receiving notification of such services. The funeral procession ceremony would not only pay tribute to fallen heroes, but display our condolences to the family as well.

**ii. Veterans Memorial Rededication**

The City currently has a Veterans Monument located adjacent to the MUZEO in downtown Anaheim. Anaheim's 9-foot high Veterans Monument was dedicated in 1999. The monument, made from bronze-relief and concrete, depicts all branches of the military from wars of the 20th century. The monument is flanked by two fountains, representative of water washing away years of conflict. Near the Veterans monument there is a flag pole that proudly flies the American and Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) flags. Immediately in front of the flag pole there is a dedicated plaque consisting of the names of former Anaheim Mayors. The Group recommends using this flag pole to fly the flag of a deceased veteran for a given time period to honor the Anaheim veteran and their family. In addition, the Group recommends relocating the current plaque and dedicating a veterans plaque in front of the flag pole to commemorate our veterans. As this recommendation is implemented, the Group would establish flag-flying policies and procedures to honor deceased veterans on the existing flag pole. Moreover, the Group would honor the veteran and fly the flag by developing a public opportunity for other Anaheim veterans to join this special tribute when the flag is added to the pole.

**iii. Marketing Opportunities / Publications**

The City has various publications that are accessible to Anaheim residents. The Group recommends utilizing its publications to periodically honor Anaheim veterans and to provide marketing opportunities for veteran service

organizations. The types of publications discussed include, but are not limited to, potentially an article within the *Anaheim magazine* on a bi-annually basis.

**iv. Community Services Activities**

In an effort to contribute more veterans programs and activities, the City's Community Services Department has created the following recommendations for Council consideration. In addition, the Group supports and recommends the following proposed Community Services Department activities described below.

- a. Provides a 10 percent discount on Community Services contract recreation classes, up to a maximum of \$10 per class for veterans, active military personnel and their immediate dependents. To receive this special discount, applicants must complete a Military Discount Application Form and present a copy of their Active Duty Service or Veteran Identification Card.
- b. Provides veterans and active military personnel with a complimentary pass for themselves and up to three guests for the Summer Family Series at Pearson Park Amphitheatre. To receive this special pass, the participant must be an Anaheim resident and present their Active Duty Service Card or Veteran Identification Card at the box office.

**v. Veterans Working Group**

The Group believes its collaborative process has been beneficial in providing the recommendations for additional veteran programs and activities in Anaheim. As a result, the Group recommends periodically collaborating to explore additional ways to enrich the City's veteran programs and activities. The Group may potentially take form as an ad hoc working group that meets on a quarterly basis.

**4. Conclusion**

The Group respectively requests City Council’s consideration of the aforementioned veteran programs and activities. In addition, the Group recommends City staff begin implementing such actions immediately upon consideration. If any veteran programs and activities require the reallocation of city funds, city staff will present the respective items for City Council consideration at a later date.