

MEMORANDUM

TO: Claire Powell, City Manager

FROM: Stacie Anaya, Director of Parks and Recreation

DATE: June 13, 2023

SUBJECT: **Approval of Memorandum of Agreement Between the City of Lewisville and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the Free use of Thrive Once a Month to Offer Readjustment Counseling Services; and Authorization for the City Manager to Execute the Agreement.**

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) assists veterans in local communities through Community Access Points (CAP). The USDVA utilizes CAP to offer readjustment counseling services to eligible veterans, service members and their families in an effort to make a successful transition from military to civilian life.

Eligible veterans and active duty service members include those who fought in the WWII, Korean, Vietnam, Persian wars as well as Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and subsequent operations within the Global War on Terrorism.

Lewisville had previously hosted readjustment counseling services through the USDVA at Senior Activity Center for four years prior to its permanent closure in 2018. In 2018, the services were moved to the temporary recreation center at The Vista (formerly Music City Mall) until services were discontinued due to COVID in March of 2020. The services utilized by local veterans and their families were beneficial and staff recall no issues during prior operations. Other municipalities with similar agreements include Denton, Decatur, Weatherford, Cleburne, Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas.

ANALYSIS

Readjustment counseling is a wide range of psychosocial services offered to eligible veterans, service members, and their families in the effort to make a successful transition from military to civilian life. They include:

- Individual and group counseling for veterans, service members, and their families.
- Family counseling for military related issues.

- Bereavement counseling for families who experience an active-duty death.
- Military sexual trauma counseling and referral.
- Outreach and education including post deployment health reassessment, community events, etc.
- Substance abuse assessment and referral.
- Employment assessment & referral.
- Veterans Benefits Administration benefits explanation and referral.
- Screening & referral for medical issues including traumatic brain injury, depression, etc.

According to the 2020 US Census, Lewisville has an active veteran population of over 5,000 individuals. The City of Lewisville is identified by the USDVA as a local catchment area. A local catchment area is an area of a city from which veteran hospital patients are drawn. The City will provide a room at Thrive once a month, at no cost and the USDVA will offer readjustment counseling services.

The purpose of the Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Lewisville and the USDVA is to define the working relationship and outline their respective responsibilities.

This partnership with USDVA will aid in the action priorities of the Lewisville 2025 Vision plan update.

- Strategic Moves
 - 3. Connected City
 - Objective (e) Focus on inclusiveness when connecting Lewisville residents to City services and opportunities.
 - Action Priorities – Increase collaboration with social service agencies, non-profits, utility providers and others to help the Lewisville community become more adaptable and resilient, and to offer the community coordinated support in times of crisis.

The partnership with USDVA will also help the City achieve the following Goals and Objectives in the Healthy Infrastructure Plan (HIP):

- Goal 4: Reinforce Community Building
 - Objective 4.2 Provide equitable programming opportunities.
 - 4.2.1 Partner with community organizations to provide financial assistance to people of all ages to participate in recreation programs.
 - 4.2.2 Design programs and services to support the diverse cultural needs related to parks and recreation system-wide.
 - 4.2.4 Continue to provide diverse programs and offerings that are low-cost or no charge to residents.

In addition, the partnership will address strategies in the Parks and Recreation Department’s 2022-2027 Business Plan designed to support Goals and Objectives of the HIP. As there will be a focus on providing services to Lewisville Veterans, it will help efforts to ensure “Everyone is Welcome and Safe” by promoting an environment of inclusion and diversity for both park professionals and park fans.

CITY STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council approve the agreement and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement as set forth in the caption above.