

City announces veteran-hiring outreach

By [Marty Toohey](#) | Wednesday, March 4, 2009, 01:59 PM

City of Austin officials said today that, as part of an outreach effort to veterans, 20 percent of people interviewed for a city jobs will have served in the military.

“We’ve been working very hard, as a city and as an employer, to take care of our veterans,” City Council Member Lee Leffingwell, a retired Navy pilot, said at a press conference.

The city has already been awarded a five-star distinction from the Department of Defense for its efforts to take care of its veterans. Those efforts include hiring retired Marine Allen Bergeron as the city’s veterans ombudsman.

At today’s press conference, three city employees — Texas Army National Guard Cpt. Angel Perez, Texas Air National Guard Master Sgt. Tracy Gunderson, and Texas Army National Guard Spc. Beau Tinsley — praised the the city’s efforts to work with deployed reservists and hire veterans.

The city now has a hiring freeze in place for most of its departments. The freeze does not apply to Austin Energy, the Austin Water Utility, the airport or other “enterprise funds” that operate essentially as independent businesses funded by the fees they collect.

The city also may not be able to always have 20 percent of its interviewees be veterans, because too few might apply for some positions, Acting Director of Human Resources Tommy Tucker said.

“But we will make every effort,” Tucker said. “We want to be an employer of choice for veterans.”