

Mayor and Council Communication

DATE: 12/09/25

M&C FILE NUMBER: M&C 25-1133

LOG NAME: 80STANDARDSOFCARE2026

SUBJECT

(ALL) Conduct Public Hearing and Adopt Ordinance Establishing Standards of Care for Youth Programs in the City of Fort Worth for 2026

(PUBLIC HEARING - a. Staff Available for Questions: Monique Hill; b. Public Comment; c. Council Action: Close Public Hearing and Act on M&C)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council conduct a public hearing and adopt the attached ordinance establishing the Standards of Care for Youth Programs in the City of Fort Worth for 2026.

DISCUSSION:

This Mayor and Council Communication (M&C) is requesting that the City Council adopt the attached ordinance establishing Standards of Care (Standards) for Youth Programs in the City of Fort Worth for 2026. The Standards set requirements for supervision of programs for youth ages 5 through 13.

In 1995, the Texas Legislature amended Section 42.041 of the Human Resources Code to exempt elementary aged (5 through 13 years) municipal youth recreation programs from the state's licensing requirement under certain conditions. This law requires that a city annually adopt Standards by ordinance after a public hearing. Adopted Standards must be provided to the parents of each program participant and must include, at a minimum: staffing ratios; minimum staff qualifications; minimum facility, health and safety standards; and, mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing the adopted local standards. State law also requires that parents be informed that the program is not licensed by the State of Texas and that the program may not be advertised as a child-care facility.

The Standards are intended to be minimum standards by which the City of Fort Worth Park & Recreation, Neighborhood Services, and other potentially affected departments will operate the City of Fort Worth's youth programs. In accordance with the current Standards, the director is required to make an annual report on the overall status of the youth programs and their operation relative to compliance with the adopted Standards.

The items listed below provide information regarding the prior year's activities:

1. Youth programs were offered at 21 community centers and four mobile sites providing services to 2,463 youth.
2. Average ratio of participants to staff during these programs was 15:1.
3. Youth received integrated literacy instruction to improve or maintain reading levels throughout summer.
4. All Staff working directly with youth at each facility were certified in First Aid and CPR/AED.
5. All Staff received training on the Standards of Care.
6. Safety inspections were completed at each facility on a weekly basis during youth programming.

The Standards are in place year-round. In accordance with the legislation, the Standards and Ordinance must be submitted for adoption to the City Council on an annual basis. The 2026 Standards have modifications highlighted in the attached policy. Changes include:

Proposed Changes:

Definitions

E. Operations Manual (page 1)

Current: Notebook policies, procedures, required forms, organizational and programming information relevant to City of Fort Worth Youth Programs.

Proposed: Documented policies, procedures, required forms, organizational and programming information relevant to City of Fort Worth Youth Programs.

Revision reason: Original statement indicates manual will be provided by hardcopy in a notebook. Information is provided to staff in various forms, email, electronic formats or written documentation.

H. Program Coordinator or Coordinator (page 1)

Current: City of Fort Worth staff who has been assigned administrative responsibility for a City of Fort Worth Youth Program.

Proposed: City of Fort Worth staff (Community Center Coordinator, Program Coordinator, Community Center Supervisor, Site Supervisor, Sr. Recreation Programmer and Recreation Programmer) who has been assigned administrative responsibility for a City of Fort Worth Youth Program.

Revision reason: Definition of Program Coordinator or Coordinator did not clearly reflect job titles as defined by City of Fort Worth Human Resources Department. The document was updated to include positions of staff that can perform duties of Program Coordinator or Coordinator. The person filling this role can vary by location and is contingent upon staffing levels.

I. Program Leader (page 1)

Current: City of Fort Worth contract instructor or volunteer who has been assigned responsibility to implement the City's Youth Programs.

Proposed: City of Fort Worth staff (Community Center Aide, Recreation Assistant, Camp Leader, Sr. Camp Leader, and Recreation Instructor) contract instructor or volunteer who has been assigned responsibility to implement the City's Youth Programs.

Revision reason: Definition of Program Leader did not clearly reflect job titles as defined by City of Fort Worth Human Resources Department. The document was updated to include positions of staff that can perform duties of Program Coordinator or Coordinator. The person filling this role can vary by location and is contingent up staffing levels.

STAFFING

Section Titles (page 3)

Current: I. Program Coordinator (Coordinator) Qualifications

Proposed: Program Coordinator Qualifications (referred to as "Coordinator" for remainder of document)

Revision reason: Language was added for continuity to the titles throughout the remainder of the document.

Current: III. Proposed: Program Leader Qualifications

Proposed: Program Leader Qualifications (referred to as "Leader" for remainder of document)

Revision reason: Language was added for continuity to the titles throughout the remainder of the document.

IV. Leader Responsibilities (page 4)

Current: C. Leaders must ensure that Participants are released only to a Parent or an Authorized Person designated by the Parent. If a Parent wishes that their child sign himself in or out, the Parent must sign a release giving said authorization (child must be at least 10 years of age). Any child signing themselves out cannot stay at the facility or on the premises.

Proposed: Leaders must ensure that Participants are released only to a Parent or an Authorized Person designated by the Parent. If a Parent wishes that their child sign himself in or out, the Parent must sign a release giving said authorization (child must be at least 12 years of age). Any child signing themselves out cannot stay at the facility or on the premises.

Revision reason: To improve safety of children leaving the facility alone, it is recommended to increase the age a child is allowed to sign themselves out from 10 to 12.

ACTIVITIES

III. Participant Pick Up & Drop Off (page 8)

Current: G. Sign in/sign out will be completed electronically and records will retained for the life of the software application.

Proposed Change: Sign in/sign out will be completed electronically and records will be retained for the life of the software application.

Revision reason: Grammatical error, added the word "be" to complete the sentence.

Current: Parents may electronically sign a form allowing their child to walk home at the end of the program (child must be at least 10 years of age).

Proposed Change: Parents may electronically sign a form allowing their child to walk home at the end of the program (child must be at least 12 years of age).

Revision reason: To improve safety of children leaving the facility alone, it is recommended to increase the age a child is allowed to sign themselves out from 10 to 12.

At its November 19, 2025 meeting, the Park & Recreation Advisory Board reviewed and endorsed staff's recommendations to the City Council to adopt these standards.

The Standards affect programs in ALL COUNCIL DISTRICTS.

A Form 1295 is not required because: This M&C does not request approval of a contract with a business entity.

FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:

The Director of Finance certifies that approval of this recommendation will have no material effect on City funds.

Submitted for City Manager's Office by: Dana Burghdoff 8018

Originating Business Unit Head: Dave Lewis 5717

Additional Information Contact: Monique L. Hill 5775