

Testimony of James Hendon
Commissioner for the New York City
Department of Veterans' Services (DVS)
New York City Council Committee on Veterans
Topic: Mental Health Roadmap – Stop 2 - Veterans
November 30th, 2023, 10:00 AM

Introduction

Good morning, Public Advocate, Chair Holden, Committee members, Councilmembers and advocates. My name is James Hendon, and I'm proud to serve as the Commissioner for the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). Thank you for holding this hearing on the package of legislation you've introduced to further support and amplify mental health services for Veterans and their families. I am joined today by Dr. Lauren D'Mello, Executive Director of Mental Health and Care Coordination, Ellen Greeley, Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Strategic Partnerships, and Paul Vallone, Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs. We are here today to discuss the following priorities laid out in Stop 2 of the City Council's Mental Health Roadmap:

- Int. 1237: Collection of Demographic Data
- Int. 1239: Community Outreach on Mental Health Resources
- Int. 1241: Reporting on Mental Health Services
- Int. 1244: Distribution of Resource Guides
- State Legislation for Emotional Support Dogs

The New York City Council's Mental Health Roadmap is a critical and well-considered combination of steps in addressing the social determinants of health for our veterans. It is an essential initiative that recognizes the unique mental health challenges faced by veterans and seeks to provide comprehensive support. Here, I will outline the importance of "Stop 2" and discuss three key areas for the Committee and the rest of Council to consider now and in the future during the legislative development process.

These three areas are:

- (1) Bolstering existing legislation to reach its intent more effectively.
- (2) Codifying existing resources to enhance or secure its future success.
- (3) Redirecting the focus of Veterans and their needs from an individual need, such as mental health, to a whole health approach to include housing and economic health. Further reducing the ongoing stigma of all veterans' having severe mental health challenges.

Addressing such needs begins with asking the very simple but effective question, "Have you or your loved one, ever serve in the US Armed Forces?" Executive Order 65 has allowed us to begin data collection as it relates to veterans and their needs, but Intro. 1237 codifies that effort and bolsters this concept into something DVS and many other agencies can build on, as it relates to our data sharing efforts.

Intro. 1237

The importance of data-sharing among government offices and agencies throughout New York cannot be overstated, particularly when it comes to coordinating care for veterans and their

families. Asking the crucial question of whether a client or constituent has ever served in the US Armed Forces can be a game-changer in tailoring support. However, to ensure the seamless sharing of this critical information, an "opt-out" option rather than an "opt-in" option is essential. By implementing an "opt-out" system, we maximize the potential for data collection and coordination, ensuring that veterans and their families receive the comprehensive care and support they deserve. This collaborative approach will not only improve the efficiency of service delivery but also help identify and address the unique needs and challenges faced by our veteran community, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being and quality of life.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the success of data sharing played a pivotal role in our response efforts. Government agencies, healthcare providers, and researchers came together to share crucial information on infection rates, testing, contact tracing, and vaccine distribution. This collaborative data-sharing approach allowed us to make informed decisions, track the virus's spread, and allocate resources effectively. It also facilitated the foundation of our Mission: VetCheck initiative. Resulting in the execution of over 34,000 total calls with an approximate 25% answer rate, resulting in over 100 calls per week. Of those answered calls, DVS is proud to have been able to serve the over 1,200 requests for service since launching. All from the successful implementation of critical data sharing agreements with our City partners at the New York City Department of Homeless Services, the New York City Human Resources Administration, and more.

The success of data sharing during the pandemic showcased the power of collective information sharing in times of crisis, underscoring its importance for future public health challenges. Which is why we are so passionate about seeing this legislative age with the appropriate mechanisms for

agencies and offices in New York City government to serve our clients, with a no wrong door approach.

Intro. 1239 & 1244

However, having no wrong door approach also requires technological synergy amongst every office and agency executing the mutual goal of uplifting our veterans and their families.

Traditionally this synergy has been held together by DVS through current local laws, including:

- **Local Law 113 (Formerly Local Law 42):** Our interagency work to cultivate and maintain relationships with designated veteran liaisons in each city agency and office.
- **Local Law 216:** The creation and public sharing of our Veteran Resource Guide.
- **Local Laws 215 and 44:** The complimentary public reports that outline the outcomes associated with the services and resources shared in our Veteran Resource Guide.

Understanding Intro. 1244's intent is to bolster the awareness and access to critical mental health resources through a pamphlet, we hope the Public Advocate will consider amending the legislation to address the operational component of connecting our clients to those resources using a care coordination software, that is currently known as "VetConnectNYC" (VetConnect).

VetConnect is a multi-service provider referral platform used by an array of public and private institutions that have the mutual goal of connecting veterans and their families with resources to enrich their lives. Veterans complete an assistance request form via an online intake form or by speaking to our care coordinators at one of our locations throughout the 5 boroughs or by phone. The care coordinators then input the client into the platform, a brief interview is conducted which includes two voluntary mental health screeners, the General Anxiety Disorder- 7 (GAD – 7) and Patient Health Questionnaire - (PHQ - 9) which screen for anxiety and depression respectively.

The screeners are reviewed with each client and mental health services are offered. All referrals are sent to our numerous selections of providers which include the VA Vet Centers, VA Medical Centers, other government agencies, private and nonprofit providers and Veterans Crisis Lines.

As Intro 1239 points out, the need for outreach and engagement on mental health resources is critical to advancing this connection to care. VetConnect and the work associated with it, include for outreach and engagement, as the success of the coordinated approach to educating and connecting veterans and their families with mental health resources lie with the relationship DVS maintains with city, state, federal and nonprofit organizations. This same interagency effort can be applied to Intro. 1241 to close gaps relevant to mental health programming and public reporting.

Intro. 1241

The proposed law mandating the commissioner of the NYC Department of Veterans' Services to collect data and information from agencies providing mental health services to veterans through an annual report is a significant step toward improving the support system for our veteran community. This interagency collaboration can seamlessly integrate into the codifying of the VetConnect system, streamlining the process of connecting veterans with the services they need.

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services is enthusiastic about contributing to an existing annual report required by the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health (OCMH), which identifies critical gaps in mental healthcare that are preventing New Yorkers with mental health needs from accessing and staying connected to care. We are interested in working with OCMH so that it includes specific insights regarding veterans.

By including veterans in this report, we recognize the unique mental health needs of this population and the importance of tailoring services to address their experiences and challenges. It will shed light on the barriers veterans face in accessing and staying connected to mental health care, helping us develop more targeted and effective interventions. Furthermore, it underscores the commitment of the city to improve the overall well-being of our veterans by ensuring they have access to the quality mental health services they deserve. This proposed law is a testament to New York City's dedication to providing comprehensive support for our veterans and fostering a more inclusive and responsive mental health care system for all New Yorkers.

Ending The Stigma Surrounding Mental Health and Veterans'

The stigmatization of veterans and their mental health needs is a deeply concerning issue that has profound effects on our community. This stigma often oversimplifies the experiences of veterans, inaccurately categorizing them into broad stereotypes. The truth is veterans' mental health challenges are as diverse as their backgrounds and experiences in the military. Whether they experience mild or severe levels of depression and anxiety, it's crucial to recognize that these symptoms can be amplified by financial and housing insecurity. A healthy relationship with finances and stable housing are fundamental aspects of overall well-being, and addressing these areas is equally important as addressing mental health. To best support our veterans, we must move beyond stereotypes, break the stigma, and focus on providing comprehensive assistance that includes mental health support, financial stability, and secure housing, ensuring that all veterans could thrive in their civilian lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, "Stop 2: Veterans' Mental Health" in the New York City Council's Mental Health Roadmap is an important and necessary combination of steps to address the social determinants of health for veterans. While some goals may seem to overlap with existing local laws, they are, in fact, complementary at their core. DVS supports this initiative and hopes the Council will take into consideration what was shared today.

Mayor Adams and his administration are deeply committed to the success and well-being of the City of New York. They recognize that the path to achieving this success lies in fostering effective communication and synergy between Agency leadership, like myself, and City Council offices across all corners of our great city. In Mayor Adams' vision, a win for New York is a win for all its residents, and by working collaboratively and transparently, we can ensure that our city thrives, prospers, and provides a brighter future for all who call it home, especially our veterans. Together, we can overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and build a stronger, more resilient, and inclusive New York City that benefits every member of our diverse and vibrant community. I urge you all to please reach out to me or our Senior Advisor of Intergovernmental Affairs, Jason Loughran. Please view us as a tool to help navigate our legislative ideas and act as an optimizer to your historic and future success.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 65

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES

**ADDRESSING THE NEEDS AND IMPROVING THE LIVES OF NEW YORK CITY
SERVICEMEMBERS, VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

MARCH 8, 2021

WHEREAS, Members of the U.S. armed forces, past and present, have played crucial roles in protecting the freedoms and liberties of all, and approximately 300,000 servicemembers and veterans call the City of New York (the "City") their home; and

WHEREAS, New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) was established to support and connect City servicemembers, veterans, and their families to high-quality services across a variety of needs, and to strengthen their capacity for and commitment to continued service within the City; and

WHEREAS, DVS is dedicated to improving the lives of all City servicemembers, veterans, and their families, regardless of a veteran's type, length, or era of service, or their discharge status; and

WHEREAS, DVS views veterans as invaluable public servants, whose strength and demonstrated commitment to public service will help the City thrive; and

WHEREAS, City servicemembers, veterans and their spouses or domestic partners, represent a significant percentage of the City's overall population and experience disproportionately low levels of employment, especially veterans with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the City of New York is privileged to have among its workforce 49,367 veterans, as reported in the 2018 ACS 5-year estimate, and hopes to increase such number of veterans in the workforce and integrate servicemembers, veterans, and their spouses or domestic partners into City government employment; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks to increase City agencies' hiring professionals' understanding of military occupational skills and specialties to meaningfully match such skills and specialties with available employment opportunities within City government; and

WHEREAS, in order to understand the challenges and needs of members of the armed forces, veterans, and their families, the City seeks to conduct an assessment survey targeted to the members of the veteran and military community living in the City; and

WHEREAS, to advance targeted care within the veteran and military community, the City must also comprehensively and uniformly identify servicemembers, veterans, and their families served by City agencies by posing a more inclusive veteran indicator question on City forms, to effectively reach, capture, and serve them as they seek benefits, services, or employment from City agencies; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to section 23-1202 of the N.Y.C. Admin. Code, the Chief Privacy Officer of the City of New York has determined that, unless prohibited by federal or state law, the disclosure to DVS by City agencies of the “identifying information” of veterans, as such term is defined under section 23-1201 of the Code, that City agencies collect via the veteran indicator question for the purposes outlined in Section 8 herein and the collection by DVS of such information is authorized as being in the best interests of the City; and

NOW, THEREFORE, by the power vested in me as Mayor of the City of New York, it is hereby ordered:

Increase Military Cultural Competence in Hiring within City Government

Section 1. DVS shall coordinate with DCAS to arrange for Citywide military occupational skills and specialties competence trainings directed to City Agency Personnel Officers, hiring managers, and Agency Veterans Liaisons, to increase recruitment of servicemembers, veterans and their spouses or domestic partners, in City government. Such trainings shall also include benefits and employment protections for veterans and members of the active and reserve components of the U.S. armed forces under Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

§ 2. Because military skills and specialty functions are generally not easily identified or understood by HR professionals, DVS shall provide hiring managers with direction and access to an existing online employment military translation tool. The employment tool translates military skills and functions into relevant specialized skills, education, or experience required for civilian employment. Through the tool, City hiring professionals will have visibility into a candidate’s U.S. Naval or Coast Guard rating, Air Force Specialty Code, or Army and Marine Corps Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) code, and their ranks. The tool translates such MOS and rank into civilian skills, qualifications, and eligibility for relevant licensures and certifications, to assist hiring professionals with matching qualified veterans to available job descriptions.

§ 3. City agencies, in cooperation with DCAS, shall provide the following data to DVS on an annual basis: number of agency personnel trained in military competence; number of competitive, labor, non-competitive, or exempt class positions filled by veterans and veteran spouses or domestic partners; and any other such data DVS may require for the purpose of increasing military cultural competence and veteran hiring in City government.

§ 4. DCAS Human Capital Division or DVS shall conduct periodic reviews to ensure that agency practices comply with this Order and may collect relevant data for their reviews.

Veteran and Military Community Assessment Surveys

§ 5. DVS, either on its own or through a third party, shall develop a veteran and military community assessment survey, which DVS shall distribute throughout the veteran and military community to collect information about their service needs. Survey questions shall include but not be limited to the following: how veterans and military families discover City resources, services, and benefits; their experiences accessing and navigating local, state, federal, and community support available to them; and the identification of service gaps. The first survey shall be distributed by end of fiscal year 2021; the second survey in fiscal year 2023; and every four years thereafter on or before January 31st.

§ 6. DVS shall review the information collected from the survey; assess and analyze the responses; and develop a plan on how to improve the lives and empower members of the veteran and military community. Such plan shall address their needs and fill in gaps for benefits, services, and employment in the City. The results of the survey shall inform the administration's formulation of priorities and strategies directed to the veteran and military community.

Veteran Indicator Question on City Forms

§ 7. City agencies shall adopt, by end of fiscal year 2021, a standard and uniform veteran indicator question on their intake forms, questionnaires, or requests for assistance, unless the City is prohibited, either by law or restriction by an oversight agency, from modifying the form. Such question shall be optional for the responder to answer:

Has anyone in your household ever served, or are they currently serving, in the U.S Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves? Please select any that apply:

Self | Spouse/Partner | Child | Other (write in) _____

§ 8. The information gathered by City agencies from responses to the veteran indicator question will allow the City to better connect with previously unknown veteran populations throughout the City, target newly-identified veterans for services, benefits and resources which they may qualify for at all levels of government, and connect these veterans to public and private free or low-cost resources such as legal, housing, employment and education assistance.

§ 9. When collecting, and disclosing to DVS, information relating to the veteran indicator question, each City agency shall ensure compliance with applicable law, the Citywide Privacy Protection Policies and Protocols of the Chief Privacy Officer, and the citywide information security protocols, policies and standards concerning the handling of "Restricted" information, as set forth by the NYC Cyber Command.

§ 10. Each City agency shall aggregate any known veteran data that was gathered prior to the promulgation of this Order, and thereafter present such data together with the veteran indicator question data in a compiled report submitted to the Mayor's Office of Operations and DVS no later than October 15th of each year, beginning on October 15, 2021.

§ 11. City agencies, including all mayoral offices providing direct services to New Yorkers, shall cooperate with the coordination of efforts as detailed in this Order.

§ 12. Effective date. This order shall take effect immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill de Blasio", is written above a horizontal line.

Bill de Blasio,
MAYOR



Department of Veterans' Services

Follow Us on Social Media

@nycveterans



For Questions, Comments, and Concerns Please CALL or EMAIL:

212-416-5250

connect@veterans.nyc.gov

Veteran Resource Guide

Sometimes life is tough.
The Veterans Crisis Line can help.



Subscribe to Our Newsletter

VetConnectNYC

NYC Veterans are able to connect to services from our partner organizations through the VetConnectNYC platform. Our Care Coordinators receive all requests made through VetConnectNYC and process them within 3-5 business days. Visit nyc.gov/VetConnectNYC to learn more.

Benefits

Veterans, servicemembers, and their families can get help accessing the benefits they deserve. Veterans can receive assistance packaging their benefit claims for submission and review by the Veterans Administration. Our team also helps Veterans understand what other city, state, and federal benefits they may be eligible for based on their service. For benefits assistance, please fill out the form at nyc.gov/VetConnectNYC and select "Benefit Navigation" as your preferred service.

Employment

Veterans and their spouses are eligible for civil service exam fee waivers, among other special programs. To learn more about the employment resources and an initiatives available to you, visit nyc.gov/vetjobs

Housing

Unhoused Veterans and Veterans facing housing insecurity may be eligible for assistance:

- accessing rental subsidies, including HUD-VASH
- finding permanent/supportive housing
- identifying apartments and Vet-friendly brokers/landlords
- eviction prevention and referrals to service providers
- rental arrears and landlord mediation
- utility payment assistance
- guidance navigating affordable housing options

For housing assistance, please fill out the form at nyc.gov/VetConnectNYC and select "Housing & Shelter" as your preferred service.

Legal Services

Veterans looking for discharge upgrade assistance or to connect to free legal assistance and pro bono services that can help resolve legal matters, including eviction, discrimination complaints, debt, child custody, public assistance requests, and end-of-life planning, visit nyc.gov/VetLegal

Mission: VetCheck

Veterans across NYC are eligible to receive check-in calls through Mission: VetCheck, where volunteers provide information on public services and mental health resources. To volunteer with Mission: VetCheck or request a check-in call for yourself or a Veteran you know, visit nyc.gov/MissionVetCheck

Final Honors Program

Eligible indigent Veterans are provided dignified burials at a national cemetery: nyc.gov/VetBurials

November '23 Supplemental

VetBizNYC

Veteran-Owned Businesses (VOBs) can join VetBizNYC, an online interactive map designed to make it easier for New Yorkers to find and support VOBs in their community. Find a VOB in your community or add you business to the map at nyc.gov/VetBizNYC

Veteran Voices Project

Veteran Voices Project is an oral history initiative to preserve NYC Veterans' stories: nyc.gov/VetVoices

Wellness Resources



Matches Veterans with licensed therapists
Email: info@getheadstrong.org

Website: getheadstrong.org



Free Veteran mental health services

Email: militaryfamilyclinic@nyulangon.org

Phone: 855-698-4677



TO: The Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York

FROM: James Hendon, Commissioner of the Department of Veterans' Services

DATE: November 6th, 2023

SUBJECT: Local Law 44 DVS Services and Performance Annual Report for FY 2023

Attached please find the FY23 Department of Veterans' Services Annual Report pursuant to Local Law 44 of 2019. Local Law 44 requires the department to submit to the Speaker of the New York City Council and post to its website an annual report regarding the department's services and performance. This includes a list and description of the services provided by the department, functional titles, number of employees in said titles, and summary of responsibilities. If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact Cassandra Alvarez, Chief of Staff at calvarez@veterans.nyc.gov. Thank you.

See attachment.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 REPORT

- I. **DVS Services** – Created in 2016, the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) connects, mobilizes, and empowers New York City's 210,000 Veterans, their families, and caregivers, to foster purpose-driven lives. DVS fulfills this mission by providing Veterans with access to essential services, such as disability benefit counseling, care coordination, and referrals to social services providers. DVS also offers a host of special initiatives and programs that address housing security, employment, entrepreneurship, health and wellness, education, and culture. Each year, DVS strengthens its core services by improving efficiency and identifying new ways to address service gaps to ensure NYC remains a Veteran-friendly city.

Community Services

- Benefits Claims – Accredited DVS staff members help NYC Veterans and their families package Veterans Affairs (VA) disability and other compensation claims related to time in service.
- VetConnectNYC & Care Coordination – DVS staff work directly with Veterans and their families to coordinate referrals to quality care from a network of community-based service providers. Services include legal assistance, employment, mental health and wellness, education, and housing support.
- Final Honors Program – DVS ensures eligible indigent unclaimed Veterans are provided dignified burials at a national cemetery when no other family member is able to ensure a proper burial.
- VetConnectPro – DVS offers a first-of-its-kind employment tool to assist active Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families with career readiness support. The tool provides jobseekers with an array of functions including a military occupation skills translator, a resume generator, and information about benefits and services customized to the user's needs and background.
- Housing & Support Services – DVS' Housing and Support Services staff work in conjunction with the NYC Department of Homeless Services to provide direct support to homeless and at-risk Veterans. This work includes:
 - Direct Assistance – Housing Coordinator assist Veterans with the housing search process, ensuring those that need it have rental subsidies; identifying housing opportunities and supporting them through apartment viewings and interviews; managing the inspection and paperwork process with landlords, brokers, and relevant government agencies; and coordinating lease signings and moves into their new apartments.
 - Eviction Prevention Assistance – Staff provide aftercare support to all formerly homeless Veterans recently housed by DVS and aid all Veterans requesting help to maintain their housing. This includes landlord mediation, assistance with rent arrears, and other income supports, and referrals to partner organizations.

Partnerships

- Big Apple Transition Assistance Program (TAP) – DVS offers a Transition Assistance Program for recently separated service members and any Veteran interested in calling the Big Apple their home. This information session serves as an introduction to our agency and highlights how we can serve as a resource for Veterans and their families during their transition to civilian life. DVS held virtual and in-person workshops for recently transitioned Veterans who have moved or returned to New York City. Workshops focused on GI Forever benefits, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, housing, and VA health benefits. In-house workshops were co-sponsored by The Mets and held at Citi Field.

- CoveredNYCVet – DVS and the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit (PEU) collaborate to connect Veterans with appropriate healthcare coverage options and determine VA healthcare eligibility via easy text messaging options.
- Veterans on Campus – DVS staff regularly meet with school administrators and student Veterans to collaborate, share vital information, and create partnerships that empower service member scholars.
- Veteran Voices Project – DVS staff work to capture and share the stories of New York City Veterans to bridge generational gaps, preserve our city's rich military history, and foster a citywide appreciation for service.
- Crisis Intercept Mapping – DVS partners with the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish Crisis Intercept Mapping (CIM) networks. CIM networks are communities of practice that offer resources to first responders and clinicians that provide mental health and suicide prevention services to Veterans. Crisis mapping teams have been established in all five boroughs creating a learning community for medical, mental health providers, community-based organizations, and government agencies to stay current on topics impacting Veteran health and wellness.
- Private First-Class Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Fund: With funding provided by New York State, DVS has initiated a competitive grant process to collaborate with a network of Veteran and community-based organizations to enhance social engagement, fortify emotional wellness, and encourage health-seeking behavior among Active-Duty Service Members, Veterans, and their families through various types of culture, educational, health, and recreational activities favored by the Veteran community.
- Nourish New York: Born out of the Covid-19 Pandemic, DVS collaborates with The Campaign Against Hunger and Black Veterans for Social Justice to pack 2,000 meal kits for 1,000 Active-Duty Service Members, Veterans and Families affiliated with 20 Veteran Service Organizations with donated food donated by HelloFresh, a food kit delivery company. Recently, Cazares Logistics, working on behalf of Amazon, has joined the volunteers to deliver the food kits to three sites.
- Veteran Business Leadership Association – The Veteran Business Leadership Association is an empowerment initiative designed to provide one-on-one assistance to Veteran business owners in pursuit of city and state certifications, contracting opportunities, high-level networking, and business development.
- VetBizMap – An interactive map that provides the location of Veteran-owned businesses across NYC. VetBizMap includes key business contact information as well as a list of a Veteran-owned business's city and state certifications.
- Discharge Upgrade Assistance for Legal Services (DUALS) - A three-year, \$1.5 million dollar program to address the need for Discharge Upgrade services in New York City. This program provides additional funding to legal service providers who have demonstrated a unique expertise in discharge upgrades, while managing the sensitivity of client relations for a powerful, yet vulnerable Veteran population.
- Mission VetCheck - The NYC Department of Veterans' Services ("DVS"), among its core functions, is responsible for engaging Veterans and their families. DVS created Mission: VetCheck to link Veterans with resources, and information in a way that also promotes social connection to community. This initiative allows volunteers from the veteran community to make supportive check-in calls to New York City veterans. Volunteers will provide veterans with vital

information on essential public services, including but not limited to, information about the VA PACT Act, housing resources, employment support, food resources, mental health support, and other free or public benefits. The project will run from November 2023 through June 2024.

Functional Units & Titles

| Business Title | # Positions | #Filled/Staffed |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| Agency Leadership | 10 | 10 |
| Assistant Commissioner, Community Services | 1 | 1 |
| Assistant Commissioner, Operations & Administrative Services | 1 | 1 |
| Assistant Commissioner of Policy & Strategic Partnerships | 1 | 1 |
| Assistant Commissioner, Outreach | 1 | 1 |
| Chief Information Officer | 1 | 1 |
| Chief of Staff | 1 | 1 |
| Commissioner | 1 | 1 |
| Deputy Commissioner for Operations | 1 | 1 |
| Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs | 1 | 1 |
| Deputy Commissioner, General Counsel & Agency Chief Contracting Officer | 1 | 1 |
| Agency-wide Operations | 13 | 13 |
| Administrative Services Manager | 1 | 1 |
| Chauffeur Attendant | 1 | 1 |
| Digital Communications Manager | 1 | 1 |
| Director of Finance | 1 | 1 |
| Human Resources Generalist | 1 | 1 |
| Network Engineer | 1 | 1 |
| Operations Support Manager | 1 | 1 |
| Senior Advisor of Operations | 1 | 1 |
| Senior Policy Analyst | 2 | 2 |
| Policy Analyst | 1 | 1 |
| Press Secretary | 1 | 1 |
| Procurement Analyst | 1 | 1 |
| Veteran Benefits | 8 | 8 |
| Burial Coordinator | 1 | 1 |
| Care Coordinator | 5 | 5 |
| Director of Claims | 1 | 1 |
| Executive Director of Mental Health and Care Coordination | 1 | 1 |
| Housing and Support Services | 5 | 5 |
| Director of Housing and Support Services | 1 | 1 |
| Housing Coordinator | 2 | 2 |
| Housing Specialist | 1 | 1 |
| Senior Housing Coordinator | 1 | 1 |
| Outreach Services | 1 | 1 |
| Outreach Coordinator | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 37 | 37 |

Summary of Responsibilities

Commissioner

Agency Head.

Deputy Commissioner for Operations, General Counsel and Agency Chief Contracting Officer

As a direct report to DVS' Commissioner and a member of the agency's executive team, the Deputy Commissioner for Operations and General Counsel has broad latitude for independent judgment, action, and decision making. As Deputy Commissioner, this role oversees the development and implementation of the agency's administrative and operational functions. As General Counsel, this role provides all legal support for DVS including guidance and counsel on the agency's business matters and transactions. As the Agency Chief Contracting Officer ("ACCO"), this role oversees the coordinating, planning, and implementation of contract and procurement activities from pre-solicitation to award and registration, including drafting and/or reviewing requests for: Information (RFIs), Bids (RFBs), Proposals (RFPs) and Quotes (RFQs); completion of Pre-solicitation Reports (PSRs), Request for Awards (RFAs), and Responsibility/Responsiveness Determinations, Contract Performance Evaluations, and other procurement-related documents.

Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs

The Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs is the governmental and policy liaison for Veteran's issues at the city, state, and federal levels, and manages relations between the agency and intergovernmental stakeholders, including but not limited to veterans' advocacy groups, elected officials, non-profits, and community-based organizations. Under the direction of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs oversees an expansive inter-governmental legislative agenda and other special projects.

Chief of Staff

As a direct report to the DVS Commissioner, and as a member of the agency's executive team, the Chief of Staff possesses oversight on all external and internal agency functions to ensure the agency operates efficiently and in accordance with the Mayor and Commissioner's vision. The Chief of Staff acts on behalf of the Commissioner to manage high profile projects and coordinate the outputs of senior-level staff members. In addition to serving as the primary liaison to City Hall, the Chief of Staff also oversees the agency's marketing and communications strategy by providing supervision and guidance to press and communications staff. In addition, the Chief of Staff also serves as the agency's Chief Diversity Officer. As Chief Diversity Officer, the Chief of Staff oversees the agency's MWBE spending, engages with MWBE vendors, and attends required seminars, trainings, and events related to the CDO function.

Deputy Commissioner for Operations

The Deputy Commissioner for Operations is responsible for leading the agency's operational functions. The Deputy Commissioner for Operations is responsible for monitoring and advising on strategic planning of all DVS programming; oversees the development and implementation of the agency's digital strategy, including *VetConnectNYC* and oversees human resources, EEO, budget, procurement and contracting.

Assistant Commissioner for Policy & Strategic Partnerships

As a member of the senior leadership team, the Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Strategic Partnerships structures and leads partnerships, working across city government and with external partners to support the Commissioner's highest priorities. The Assistant Commissioner also cultivates and secures philanthropic and in-kind donations in partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC and other nonprofits to support strategic agency initiatives. The Assistant Commissioner oversees the Senior Policy Analysts and grant administration functions.

Assistant Commissioner for Community Services

The Assistant Commissioner for Community Services is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the agency's direct services programs. This includes Housing & Support Services (HSS), Benefits and Claims Services, burials, and Care Coordination Services. The Assistant Commissioner for Community Services ensures the agency is informing, engaging, assisting, and referring New York City's 210,000 Veterans to benefits and resources that address economic empowerment, housing security, benefits, health, wellness, culture, and more. The Assistant Commissioner also maintains relationships with community-based organizations and service providers to foster the growth of a robust Veteran service delivery network in NYC.

Assistant Commissioner for Outreach

The Assistant Commissioner for Outreach oversees all agency outreach and community event-related projects. The Assistant Commissioner provides strategic guidance and representation, ensuring the community is engaged and connected to agency services through various means, including community boards, Community Education Councils, mutual aid groups, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, constituent services teams for elected officials and city agencies, and Veteran service organizations, including VA medical facilities and Vet Centers.

Assistant Commissioner for Operations and Administrative Services

The Assistant Commissioner of Operations and Administrative Services is responsible for overseeing the agency's administrative and human resources functions. The Assistant Commissioner leads payroll operations, develops, and implements the agency's administrative strategic plan, provides budget guidance, and oversees key administrative projects including the agency's compliance with citywide personnel policy.

Chief Information Officer

The Chief Information Officer (CIO) develops and manages advanced internal and external technology projects for DVS, including designing and implementing innovative solutions to identify, track, and strategically leverage large datasets. The CIO also oversees the agency's reporting, and all IT operations, policies, procedures, and technology hardware management. In addition, the CIO serves as the agency's official records management liaison, overseeing agency facilities and storage operations to ensure compliance with citywide record retention policies.

Senior Advisor of Operations

The Senior Advisor of Operations/EEO Officer collaborates with senior and executive management in setting organizational vision, operational planning, oversight of Other than Personnel Services budget procedures, ensuring coordination between administrative units to resolve operational issues and provide timely and responsive support for the agency's mission and goals. As the EEO officer, the Senior Advisor continues to monitor and evaluate compliance with equal opportunity laws, guidelines, and policies to ensure that equal opportunity laws and best practices are adhered to.

Senior Policy Analyst

The Senior Policy Analyst serves as the strategic leader for intergovernmental affairs and is the government policy liaison for Veteran's issues at city, state, and federal levels. The Senior Policy Analyst manages relations between the agency and external stakeholders, including but not limited to Veterans' advocacy groups, non-profits, government, and private institutions.

Press Secretary

The Press Secretary is responsible for DVS digital content, including official website and social media accounts, coordinates with DVS staff for content updates; identifies, curates, and manages content – written and multimedia – for current DVS social media accounts, and identify new opportunities to engage online. The Press Secretary represents DVS as spokesperson at public engagements including conferences, special events, and high-level inter-agency functions.

Finance Director

The Budget Director is responsible for the supervision of the oversight of DVS' Expense and Revenue Budget; performs responsible analysis operations including, but not limited to, the following: prepare monthly financial reports including PS (Personnel Services) Budget Forecast, OTPS (Other Than Personnel Services) Discretionary Report, and Miscellaneous Revenue Report. The Budget Director is responsible for reviewing financial analyses and requests prepared by staff members. The Director is also responsible for managing and overseeing OTPS funding, Procurement, and Payments functions, developing and directing the implementations of strategic business and/or operational plans, projects, programs, and systems. The Director ensures compliance with local, state, and federal budgetary and procurement requirements.

Network Engineer

The Network Engineer reports directly to the Chief Information Officer and plays a key role on the agency's Information Technology team. The Network Engineer provides technical assistance to agency staff, enter, update, and record technical support tickets into DVS IT Support Tracker system, diagnosing system errors. The Network Engineer also supports the IT inventory management, and effectively communicates agency-wide IT policies and procedures.

Administrative Services Manager

The Administrative Services Manager provides support to the agency's core administrative functions, including payroll and compliance. The Administrative Services Manager is responsible for certifying agency payroll to ensure that all DVS receive their pay in a timely manner and with appropriate deductions.

Human Resources Generalist

The Human Resources Generalist is responsible for executing the agency's day-to-day operations of human resources, that supports a diverse workforce. This individual will be primarily responsible for the processing of personnel transactions for new hires, promotions, terminations, suspensions, reassignments, and other related transactions.

Policy Analyst

Policy Analysts manage a series of special projects and initiatives to support the mission goals and priorities of the agency. Policy Analysts work directly with the Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Strategic Partnerships to propose, plan, execute, and assess the effectiveness of policy related projects and initiatives to advance the agency's mission.

Digital Outreach Manager

The Digital Outreach Manager works with the Press Secretary to create and edit multimedia content highlighting agency initiatives. Coordinates with DVS staff for content updates; identifies, curates, and manages content – written and multimedia – for current DVS social media accounts; and identifies new opportunities to engage online. Creates and manages communication materials for outreach events (e.g., flyers, posters, infographics, video clips).

Chauffeur Attendant

DVS has the responsibility of providing dedicated transportation services to the Commissioner for official city business. The Chauffeur Attendant meets the often-changing scheduling demands of DVS, provides transportation support for personnel, and equipment to and from meetings, conferences, and special events.

Director of Housing and Support Services

The Director of Housing and Support Services reports directly to the Assistant Commissioner for Community Services and supervises the Veteran Peer Coordinator ("VPC") team and the Veteran Housing Specialist. The Director's primary function is to oversee housing operations for the unit, including management of the VPC program, the housing referral system, and resources to match HSS' veteran clients to housing, and an extensive external network of colleagues in the housing and homelessness space.

Housing and Support Services Manager

The Housing and Support Services Manager (“HSS”) directly supports the Director of HSS in the expansion and improvement of housing and social service resources available to NYC Veterans and their families, and aids constituents in navigating existing resources, with the top priority being to work with homeless Veterans, developing and sustaining a system that rapidly rehouses all those that become homeless.

Executive Director of Mental Health and Care Coordination

The Constituent Services Manager ensures all NYC Veterans and their families that seek assistance are referred to vetted providers that offer best-in-class resources that are tailored to an individual’s needs. The Constituent Services Manager is also tasked with supervising the Care Coordinators as well as building and implementing mental health procedures and programming throughout the agency and forecasting the community’s needs and works with community partners to rapidly fill service gaps as they emerge in real time.

Director of Claims

The Benefit Claims Manager oversees all Benefits Claim Coordinators in the accredited unit to assist Veterans, Service Members, and their family members in the preparation, and presentation, of claims and appeals for benefits and services before the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The Manager is responsible for engaging, developing, educating, and mentoring VBC's with the skills and knowledge that will produce outstanding claims handling results and drive exceptional customer experiences.

Care Coordinator

Care Coordinators are responsible for the constituent services; primarily receiving and completing intake of new constituents. Care Coordinators manage a caseload of constituents who are seeking services, assess the needs and provide information on resources and benefits and make referrals to network service providers. Veteran Benefit Coordinators work with Veterans to determine the eligibility for federal, State, and local Veteran Affairs (VA) benefits. Veteran Benefits Coordinators provide support, prepare claim submissions, submit claims, and monitor client progress and follow-up with the veteran for resolution.

Burials Care Coordinator

The Burials Care Coordinator supports the agency’s Funeral Honors Program. The Burials Care Coordinator executes the administrative responsibilities to provide proper burial services for unclaimed veterans.

Veteran Housing Specialist

The Veteran Housing Specialist is responsible for cultivating landlord and broker relationships through direct outreach, events, and community engagement; engaging with landlords and brokers through phone and in-person outreach to recruit and retain private market units, reviewing applications, navigating the various rental subsidy and inspection processes, and coordination with the landlords and shelters to ensure successful housing placements. The VHS also provides initial eligibility review and ongoing support for the VASH Continuum program.

Veteran Housing Coordinator

Veteran Housing Coordinators manage a caseload of clients at a designated homeless shelter(s). Veteran Housing Coordinators work directly in support of the Housing & Support Services (HSS) unit by providing housing intakes on clients and updating their information as new details emerge; working with DVS and interagency housing staff to find apartments that meets their clients’ needs and preferences, coordinating with case managers where applicable, and then working hand in hand with their clients to help them navigate the process of securing an apartment.

II. The total number of engagements* per month provided at the department's main office, a Veteran resource center, or in the field, broken down by borough.

Engagement Metrics

| | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | Total |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Bronx | 34 | 24 | 15 | 14 | 19 | 24 | 31 | 9 | 26 | 50 | 32 | 33 | 311 |
| Brooklyn | 94 | 45 | 24 | 23 | 45 | 44 | 26 | 13 | 37 | 42 | 61 | 59 | 513 |
| Manhattan | 43 | 32 | 20 | 38 | 30 | 50 | 51 | 13 | 44 | 38 | 30 | 50 | 439 |
| Queens | 71 | 69 | 20 | 29 | 27 | 34 | 37 | 25 | 43 | 51 | 50 | 29 | 485 |
| Staten Island | 15 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 79 |
| Outside NYC | 8 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 11 | 0 | 22 | 12 | 20 | 31 | 138 |
| Total | 265 | 184 | 91 | 111 | 139 | 169 | 166 | 61 | 177 | 198 | 196 | 208 | 1965 |

Unique Clients – Per Borough

| | Bronx | Brooklyn | Manhattan | Queens | Staten Island | Outside NYC | Total |
|--|-------|----------|-----------|--------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| Number of Unique Clients Served | 239 | 401 | 340 | 360 | 62 | 129 | 1531 |

*Engagements reflect when clients received in-person service from DVS; whereas the "Cases Managed by Issue Category" (Section 3b) includes all modalities through which cases were managed except for 311, which is separately tracked. Examples of modalities tracked include: VetConnectNYC, social media, telephone, and email.

III. The types of services Veterans have inquired about, including through 311 calls, per month, disaggregated by type of service.

a. Veteran Services – 311 Call Center

| Inquiry Name | Call Resolution | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Total |
|---|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Benefits for Veterans | <i>Information Provided</i> | 44 | 35 | 49 | 46 | 50 | 55 | 65 | 44 | 52 | 43 | 57 | 53 | 593 |
| | <i>Transfer to City Agency</i> | 13 | 11 | 20 | 17 | 14 | 25 | 36 | 17 | 27 | 25 | 32 | 29 | 266 |
| Criss Support for Veterans | <i>Information Provided</i> | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 64 |
| | <i>Transfer to City Agency</i> | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 29 |
| Veteran Health Care | <i>Information Provided</i> | 9 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 6 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 85 |
| | <i>Transfer to City Agency</i> | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 16 |
| Legal Assistance | <i>Information Provided</i> | 4 | 9 | 7 | 13 | 7 | 16 | 18 | 7 | 16 | 9 | 13 | 22 | 141 |
| | <i>Transfer to City Agency</i> | 2 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 15 | 67 |
| Military Discharge or Separation Documents | <i>Information Provided</i> | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 14 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 69 |
| | <i>Transfer to City Agency</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Covered NYC Vet | <i>Information Provided</i> | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | <i>Transfer to City Agency</i> | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Resolution Totals | <i>Information Provided</i> | 64 | 62 | 71 | 77 | 73 | 94 | 102 | 70 | 90 | 66 | 88 | 96 | 953 |
| | <i>Transfer to City Agency</i> | 24 | 15 | 27 | 29 | 19 | 39 | 47 | 24 | 39 | 34 | 36 | 45 | 378 |

b. Client Cases Managed by Issue Category*

| Client Categories | Inquiry | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Bronx | | 44 | 31 | 19 | 15 | 23 | 26 | 35 | 9 | 26 | 53 | 35 | 35 | 351 |
| Benefits Navigation | | 6 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 49 |
| Clothing & Household Goods | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Education | | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Employment | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 6 | 50 |
| Entrepreneurship | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Food Assistance | | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| Housing & Shelter | | 18 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 13 | 15 | 11 | 106 |
| Income Support | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 17 |
| Legal | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 55 |
| Mental/Behavioral Health | | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 32 |
| Money Management | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Physical Health | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Social Enrichment | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Transportation | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Utilities | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Brooklyn | | 107 | 69 | 43 | 32 | 52 | 50 | 29 | 13 | 40 | 45 | 63 | 59 | 602 |
| Benefits Navigation | | 10 | 19 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 112 |
| Clothing & Household Goods | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Education | | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| Employment | | 17 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 14 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 11 | 96 |
| Entrepreneurship | | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Food Assistance | | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 15 |
| Housing & Shelter | | 22 | 23 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 13 | 6 | 5 | 19 | 19 | 23 | 26 | 187 |
| Income Support | | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 27 |
| Individual & Family Support | | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Legal | | 18 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 16 | 4 | 87 |
| Mental/Behavioral Health | | 19 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 38 |
| Money Management | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Physical Health | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sports & Recreation | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Substance Use | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Transportation | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Utilities | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Wellness | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Manhattan | | 51 | 48 | 27 | 44 | 42 | 52 | 54 | 15 | 52 | 39 | 33 | 51 | 508 |
| Benefits Navigation | | 10 | 23 | 10 | 16 | 15 | 11 | 14 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 126 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Clothing & Household Goods | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Education | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Employment | 7 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 10 | 63 |
| Entrepreneurship | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 15 |
| Food Assistance | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Housing & Shelter | 9 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 29 | 16 | 11 | 17 | 133 |
| Income Support | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 31 |
| Individual & Family Support | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Legal | 2 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 18 | 14 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 85 |
| Mental/Behavioral Health | 11 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 33 |
| Physical Health | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Social Enrichment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Transportation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Queens | 77 | 81 | 28 | 37 | 30 | 34 | 44 | 27 | 44 | 55 | 51 | 29 | 537 |
| Benefits Navigation | 9 | 22 | 7 | 19 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 101 |
| Clothing & Household Goods | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Education | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 12 |
| Employment | 11 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 11 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 15 | 7 | 2 | 88 |
| Entrepreneurship | 8 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 |
| Food Assistance | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Housing & Shelter | 17 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 15 | 19 | 13 | 123 |
| Income Support | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 58 |
| Legal | 8 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 13 | 7 | 2 | 78 |
| Mental/Behavioral Health | 9 | 13 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 31 |
| Social Enrichment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sports & Recreation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Transportation | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Staten Island | 15 | 14 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 12 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 89 |
| Benefits Navigation | 6 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 32 |
| Education | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Employment | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Food Assistance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Housing & Shelter | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 11 |
| Income Support | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Individual & Family Support | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Legal | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 18 |
| Mental/Behavioral Health | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Outside NYC | 8 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 15 | 9 | 12 | 0 | 19 | 10 | 20 | 28 | 142 |
| Benefits Navigation | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 12 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Education | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Employment | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 14 |
| Housing & Shelter | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 19 | 65 |
| Income Support | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 17 |
| Individual & Family Support | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Legal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 26 |
| Mental/Behavioral Health | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Money Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sports & Recreation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Overall Total | 302 | 249 | 130 | 141 | 169 | 181 | 186 | 65 | 186 | 207 | 205 | 208 | 2229 |

**Cases Managed by Issue Category (Section 3b) includes all modalities through which cases were managed except for 311, which is separately tracked. Examples of modalities tracked include: VetConnect NYC, social media, telephone, and email.*

IV. The methods by which the department provides information to Veterans and their families, caretakers, and active servicemembers and the methods by which Veterans and their families learned about the department.

Community Events & Public Briefing

Events Attended

| Location | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Total |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Bronx | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 29 |
| Brooklyn | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 32 |
| Manhattan | 0 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 21 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 23 | 7 | 98 |
| Queens | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 49 |
| Staten Island | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| Virtual | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 16 |
| Outside of NYC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Grand Total | 9 | 20 | 13 | 16 | 39 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 12 | 29 | 45 | 28 | 243 |

V. A list of the field services provided by the department in each borough, per month.

HSS - Veterans Housed by Borough

| | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Total |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| Bronx | 6 | 20 | 15 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 88 |
| Manhattan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Queens | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 12 |
| Brooklyn | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Staten Island | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Grand Total | 10 | 20 | 17 | 14 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 13 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 120 |

VI. Digital Outreach - Total number of views, impressions and users reached for agency website, email newsletter, and social media.

Website & Social Media

| Platform | FY 23 Total |
|-------------|---------------------|
| DVS Website | 125,457 page views |
| Twitter | 146,549 impressions |
| Facebook | 61,953 reached |
| Instagram | 21,907 reached |

Newsletter Email Outreach

| Campaign | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Monthly Recipients | 32,950 | 43,765 | 54,329 | 43,173 | 42,940 | 53,353 | 42,504 | 67,269 | 77,417 | 58,207 | 57,444 | 59,722 |
| Monthly Opens (Average) | 25.3% 8,336 | 26.5% 11,597 | 29.2% 15,864 | 27.8% 12,002 | 28.5% 12,237 | 25.4% 13,551 | 24.6% 10,455 | 17.2% 11,570 | 17.7% 13,702 | 19.1% 11,117 | 18.7% 10,742 | 19.8% 11,824 |

VII. Methods

For the purposes of this report all data points reported correspond to Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1st, 2022 – June 30th, 2023). Data was collected from the following sources: Veteran Peer Coordinator (VPC) Move Tracker, Eviction Prevention Report, 311 Veteran Service Metrics, VetConnectNYC Exports, MailChimp, Events Calendar, and HR Personnel Records. Based on the data collection from the agency's various input points, the following key performance indicators were processed and interpreted.

- a) **311 Veteran Service Metrics** – The data is collected through the OTI 311 Contact Center Siebel system and the reports are delivered to the agency monthly via email.
- b) **Digital Outreach** – This report includes data collected from the DVS website and social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) using the analytics and reporting functions on each respective platform. Data collected represents the summation of total page views, unique page views, users reached and impressions, where indicated.
- c) **DVS Events Calendar Activity**– This tracker is based on Community Events and Public Briefings. Data is collected from public events attended by DVS staff including metrics for Veterans who were reached and engaged.
- d) **Eviction Prevention Report** – This report consists of call logs, email communications, and client inquiries, and is collected by the HSS Aftercare Specialist. Eviction prevention data was extracted and analyzed through spreadsheet pivot tables and reviewed by the DVS data management team.
- e) **HR Personnel Records** – Data was provided by the Assistant Commissioner of Operations & Administrative Services. Titles, staffing levels, and functional units were compiled and analyzed through spreadsheet pivot tables and reviewed by the DVS data management team.
- f) **MailChimp** – Data is collected through various intake and interest forms and compiled and processed through MailChimp distribution list platform. Email campaign data was extracted and analyzed through spreadsheet pivot tables and reviewed by the DVS data management team.
- g) **VetConnectNYC** – VetConnectNYC is a program powered by a Veteran-led technology platform which serves as a care coordinated network of service providers. Starting January 2021, VetConnectNYC became the sole application system to enter and track client information and requests.
- h) **VPC Move Tracker** – This tracker is a client workflow tracker of the processes entailed in *intake > eligibility > searching/viewings > matched > successfully housing Veterans*. Move data was extracted and analyzed through spreadsheet pivot tables and reviewed by the DVS data management team.

VIII. Terms & Definitions

Aftercare & Eviction Prevention: This program focuses on assisting previously homeless Veterans who are now housed through the Veteran Peer Coordination Program. Formerly homeless Veterans receive homelessness prevention assistance by DVS. Prevention assistance includes landlord mediation, assistance with paying rent arrears, and connecting Veterans and their families to the social services and other supports needed to remain stably housed.

Assistance Requests: Inquiries or requests for services, care, or resources supported via phone, in-person, postal mail or electronic mail.

Assisted: The number of unique assistance requests received from Veterans and their families supported via phone, in-person, postal mail, electronic mail or VetConnectNYC. Support involves connecting Veterans and their families to a coordinated network of public, private and non-profit organizations.

Client: A person or individual seeking information or services pertaining to Veterans, service members, reservists, and their families or caregivers.

Discharge Upgrade: A discharge upgrade changes the "character of service" shown on a veteran's DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty). Simultaneously, a veteran may request their "narrative reason for separation" and "re-entry code" be changed. This results in the actual military record being changed. Types of Discharges include Honorable, General, Other-than-Honorable, Bad Conduct, Dishonorable, Entry-Level Separation, and Medical Separation.

Engagements: Any interactions for the purposes of providing services to Veterans, caretakers, active Servicemembers and their families, including those interactions in Veteran Resource Centers, DVS Main Office, or in the field.

Field Services: Any service performed in communities throughout the boroughs outside of DVS main headquarters or Veteran Resource Centers. Field services typically involve providing information or literature at community events. We provide information on all services offered by DVS as well as by community partners and organizations.

Housed: The number of Veterans and Veteran families that find housing through the Veteran Peer Coordinator program. The program provides peer-to-peer housing assistance to Veterans and their families, helping them navigate the process of finding, applying for and moving into an affordable apartment that meets their needs.

Impressions: The number of times any content from the DVS page entered a person's screen.

Intake: The process of collecting client information and requested or needed services for the strict and limited purposes of providing or coordinating services, resources, benefits to Servicemembers, Veterans, and/or members their household

Page Views: Page views are the total number of instances when a page is loaded in a browser. Repeated views of a single page are counted.

Reach: The sum of users who have viewed DVS content from the agency's page.

Services: The term "services" means any activity or resource provided by the department to help Veterans, including, but not limited to, providing information, offering referrals, connecting Veterans with internal and external resources and any direct action taken for or on behalf of Veterans.

Unique Views: Unique page views show how many users visited a specific page, whereas the page views

display the total number of times any pages were visited, including multiple views from the same user.

Veterans Resource Center: DVS maintains a presence in each of the five boroughs providing Veterans and their families with up-to-date information regarding benefits, housing, social services offered by public agencies and charitable and private organizations, financial assistance, tax exemptions available to Veterans, discharge upgrade resources and counseling for any type of Veteran benefits. Walk-ins also have access to a hard copy of DVS Veteran Resource Guide.

VETERAN RESOURCE GUIDE

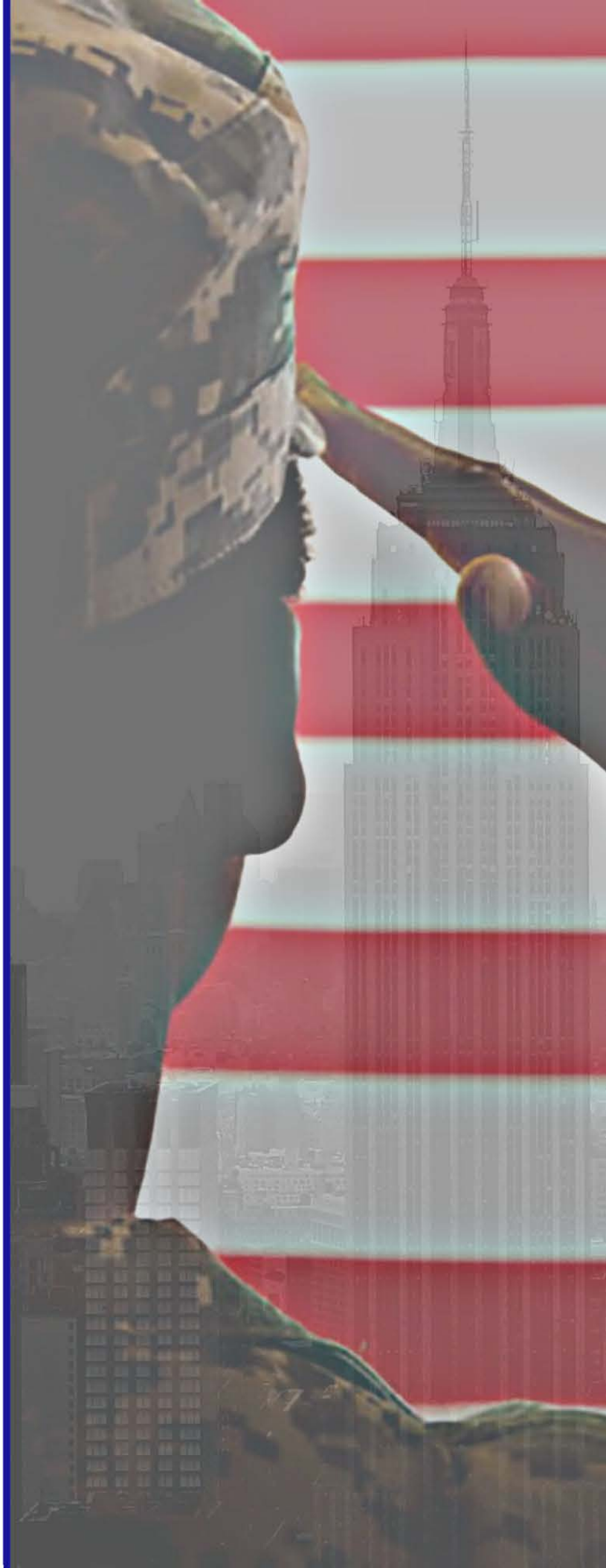
NYC® Department of
Veterans' Services

1 Centre St, Suite 2213
New York, NY 10007

Office Hours:
Mon - Fri: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Phone: 212-416-5250
Website: nyc.gov/vets

Follow DVS on [Facebook](#),
[Instagram](#), [Twitter](#),
[LinkedIn](#) at @nycveterans



Dear NYC Veteran Community,

New York City is home to roughly 210,000 Veterans and Active Duty Service Members who are the backbone of our local community. The New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) is committed to ensuring that all New York City Service Members—in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families—have access to quality care that is compassionate and aligned with our population's needs.



Our mission is to connect, mobilize, and empower New York City's Veteran community in order to foster purpose-driven lives for those who have sacrificed in service to our country. In partnership with hundreds of community-based organizations and numerous city, state, and federal entities, DVS enables those whom we assist to receive VA claims-related benefits, housing support, access to VA healthcare, employment resources, educational offerings, mental health programming, and several other amenities.

We also work to uplift the local Veteran ecosystem through advancing a host of unique programs and targeted advocacy efforts that strive to make New York City a Veteran-friendly place to live, learn, and work.

Our office has compiled this resource guide to provide you with information about the benefits and services that you have rightfully earned. Recognizing that you are a member of our tribe, we encourage you to educate yourself about the many pathways to care and support that is available to you and others through your Veteran identity and/or your identity as a Veteran ally.

DVS is standing by to help you through every step of your journey, regardless of where you find yourself in life. As a nation and city, we owe you this and much more.

As we look toward the future, know that the City of New York will always be here to ensure that you and your families thrive in this amazing place we call home.

Thank you.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JWH'.

James W. Hendon

Commissioner

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army Reserves

DVS MISSION

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) connects, mobilizes, and empowers New York City's Veteran community to foster purpose-driven lives for service members – past and present – in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families.

- Email: connect@veterans.nyc.gov
- Phone: 212-416-5250
- Website: nyc.gov/vets



CONNECT TO SERVICES

ATTENTION NYC VETERANS:

VetConnectNYC.org

**FILL OUT THE
FORM AND
CONNECT TO
SERVICES**

| Get Help | |
|-----------------|---|
| First Name * | <input type="text"/> |
| Last Name * | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of Birth * | <input type="text" value="MM-DD-YYYY"/> |
| Email Address * | <input type="text"/> |

NYC Department of Veterans' Services



DVS connects NYC's Veterans to services from our partner organizations through the **VetConnectNYC** platform. DVS Care Coordinators receive all requests made through VetConnectNYC and process them within 3-5 business days.

- Website: nyc.gov/vetconnectnyc
- Phone: 212-416-5250

VETERAN RESOURCE CENTERS



DVS's Veteran Resource Centers (VRC) are satellite offices staffed by DVS employees who are ready to connect Veterans and their families to benefits assistance and other essential services. VRCs can be found across NYC. Learn more about locations and hours of operation by visiting nyc.gov/vetcenters.

- Website: nyc.gov/vetcenters
- Phone: 212-416-5250

DVS PROGRAMS

VA Claims Unit

Accredited DVS staff members are now processing VA claims for NYC Veterans and their families within the five boroughs. The goal of the **DVS Veterans Affairs (VA) Claims Unit** is to help prepare and package a VA Claim that is substantial, valid, and clearly identifies the pertinent information relevant to the claim.

DVS staff are trained to process the following claims:

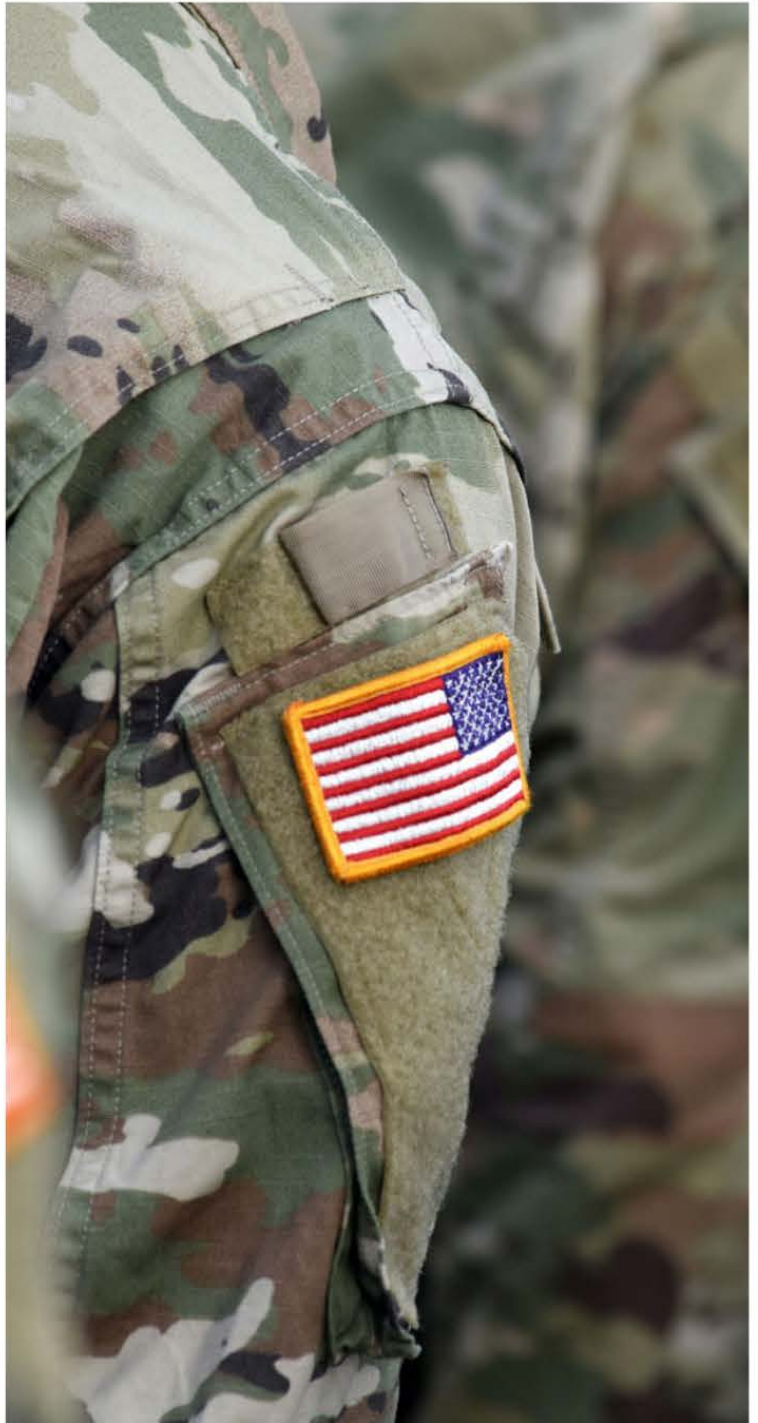
- Disability Compensation
- DIC (Dependency and Indemnity Compensation)
- Non-Service Connected Pension
- Survivors Pension
- Education

Before meeting with a DVS Veteran Benefits Coordinator (VBC), please have the below items readily available:

- DD214
- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Marriage Certificate (if available)
- Decision Letter (if prior claim submitted)
- VA Award Letter (if available)
- VA Medical Evidence that supports claim
- Private doctor medical evidence that supports claim

To make an appointment:

- Website: nyc.gov/vetbenefits
- Phone: 212-416-5250



VetBizNYC

VetBizNYC is an interactive map that identifies Veteran-owned businesses across NYC. More than 300 businesses have been added to our interactive map so far, with pins showing their location throughout the five boroughs. These businesses represent a cross-section of industries, including consulting, food and beverage, manufacturing, etc. To support a local Veteran-owned business, or to be featured on our map, visit:

- Website: nyc.gov/vetbiznyc



Veteran Business Leadership Association

The **Veteran Business Leadership Association (VBLA)** is a collective of private sector, government, and local partners who are aligned to provide customized support services to Veteran business owners. Guidance and one-on-one assistance are now available to Veterans in pursuit of business certifications, contracting opportunities, and business development support through the VBLA.

- Website: nycvbla.org
- Phone: 212-416-5250



VetConnectPro

VetConnectPro is a tool designed to help Veterans find employment opportunities in NYC government, professional mentorship, and resources to advance their careers in public service. VetConnectPro features a military skills translator, a dashboard with NYC government job postings, information on civil service exams, and recommended online job training.

- Website: nyc.gov/vetconnectpro
- Phone: 212-416-5250



Veteran Voices Project

The **Veteran Voices Project (VVP)** is an oral history initiative that preserves the stories of NYC's Veterans. VVP is designed to easily capture the voices of local Veterans 100% remotely. To contribute your story to the VVP archive, contact us:

- Website: nyc.gov/vetvoices
- Phone: 212-416-5250



NYC DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS' SERVICES

FINAL HONORS PROGRAM

nyc.gov/vetburials



Final Honors Program

If you are aware of a deceased Veteran who is at risk of being unclaimed or abandoned please contact the NYC Department of Veterans' Services:

- Phone: 212-416-5250
- Learn more about Indigent Burial Reimbursements: veterans.ny.gov/content/indigent-burial-reimbursements

Mission: VetCheck

Mission: VetCheck connects Veterans to their fellow New Yorkers through supportive check-in calls. Trained volunteers call Veterans to provide information on essential public services, COVID-19 testing and vaccine information, and mental health resources. Veterans can volunteer with the program or request a check-in call for themselves or a Veteran they know.

- Website: nyc.gov/missionvetcheck
- Phone: 212-416-5250



MISSION:
VetCheck *Let Us Move Forward Together*

Service2Service

Service2Service is a professional development experience centered in mentorship between NYC Veterans and AmeriCorps alumni as mentees and City government employees as mentors. The program aims to build relationships between service-minded New Yorkers and empower mentees with the network and knowledge to continue a legacy of service in the City.

- Website: nyc.gov/s2s
- Phone: 212-416-5250



Veterans on Campus

Veterans on Campus is an initiative of the NYC Department of Veterans' Services designed to assist academic institutions in identifying and adopting best practices that create a supportive experience for student Veterans. If you or your school would like to attend our quarterly Veterans on Campus meetings, please contact us at connect@veterans.nyc.gov.

- Website: nyc.gov/vetsoncampus



Legal Services

As of 2017, service members and Veterans are a protected class in New York City. If you feel you have been discriminated against based on your military status, you can file a complaint with the NYC Commission on Human Rights (NYCCHR) by calling 311 or 212-416-0197.

- Website: nyc.gov/humanrights

For legal services, including discharge upgrades due to sexual orientation, PTSD, MST, or other issues that affect service records and access to VA services, call 212-416-5250.

- Website: nyc.gov/vetlegal



Weekly Newsletter

The **DVS Weekly Newsletter** keeps NYC Veterans informed about the latest news impacting their community. The newsletter includes updates on city services, information on DVS programs, Veteran-specific resources, and a rundown of local events. To sign up for our newsletter, email connect@veterans.nyc.gov.



Social Media

Keep up with DVS on social media by following @nycveterans on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).



HOUSING SERVICES

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)



The **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)** program provides rental assistance to eligible Veterans.

To receive services you must currently have a household income that does not exceed 50% of the area median income. To learn more, email SSVF@va.gov or call 877-737-0111. You can also contact the following SSVF providers directly:



HELP USA

- 815 Burke Ave
Bronx, NY 10467
- Email: ssvfny@helpusa.org
- Phone: 646-619-3277 | 855-457-7783
- Website: helpusa.org

Jericho Project

- 39 Broadway, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10006
- Email: ssvf@jerichoproject.org
- Phone: 646-970-7170
- Fax: 212-269-2549
- Website: jerichoproject.org

Services for the Underserved

- 17 Battery Place Suite 1232
New York, NY 10004
- Email: services@sus.org
- Phone: 212-633-6900
- Website: sus.org

Volunteers of America

- 349 East 149th St
Bronx, NY 10451
- Email: voa4vets@voa-gny.org
- Phone: 718-993-356
- Fax: 718-841-6217
- Website: voa.org



DVS Housing and Support Services



DVS has developed a multi-step approach to housing Veterans experiencing homelessness:

Veteran Peer Coordinators

DVS has a team of Veteran Peer Coordinators (VPCs) who provide direct, peer-to-peer assistance to homeless and at-risk Veterans in shelters by:

- helping to find affordable housing
- identifying apartments Veterans are eligible for
- providing transportation to and from apartment viewings
- ensuring Veterans have rental subsidies

Housing Coordination Center

The DVS Housing Coordination Center (HCC) team works to increase the supply of housing available to Veterans facing housing insecurity. The HCC also finds brokers and landlords who are looking to house Veterans.

Aftercare and Eviction Prevention

DVS provides aftercare support to ensure that recently housed Veterans can stay in their new homes. Assistance includes:

- regular check-in calls
- referrals to community partners
- rental arrears and mediation for both the landlord and the tenant

To determine if you are eligible for these services, please contact DVS:

- Website: nyc.gov/vethomeless
- Phone: 212-416-5250



HUD-VASH

HUD-VASH is a program from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to help Veterans facing homelessness find and sustain permanent housing. HUD provides rental assistance vouchers for privately owned housing to Veterans who are eligible for VA health care and are experiencing homelessness. VA case managers connect these Veterans with additional support services.



To be eligible, Veterans must be VA health care eligible (determined by the VA). Veterans must also meet the definition of homelessness defined in the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. HUD-VASH prioritizes the chronically homeless. To apply, call 877-424-3838.

- Website: va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp

DVS administers the **HUD-VASH Continuum Program**, a rental subsidy program with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) designed to help disconnected Veterans access HUD-VASH Section 8. This service is designed to help homeless Veterans find a home.

- Website: www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/hud-vash-section-8.page

Mitchell-Lama Affordable Housing



Mitchell-Lama provides affordable rental and cooperative housing to moderate and middle-income families. Mitchell-Lama apartments are sold or rented through waiting lists maintained by each development. Many Mitchell-Lama waiting lists are closed because there are already sufficient applicants on waitlists to fill vacancies expected for the foreseeable future. Periodically, these developments open their waiting lists and new applications are accepted based on a lottery system. Eligible Veterans or surviving spouses of eligible Veterans residing in New York State are entitled to a preference for Mitchell-Lama developments if selected in a lottery to which they have applied. If an external waiting list is open, an eligible Veteran household can submit an application to be placed on the list. Veterans will be offered a unit in the order of when they submitted their application but must be given an offer before applicants who do not have this preference. At the time an external waiting list is opened and a lottery conducted, Veterans or their surviving spouses who are selected in the lottery also have priority over other applicants selected in the lottery. A qualified Veteran who is selected in the lottery is placed at the top of the external list. The order of Veterans on the list will be according to their lottery selection.

- Website: www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/mitchell-lama-program.page
- Phone: 212-863-6500

VA Home Loans

The US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) helps service members, Veterans, and eligible surviving spouses become homeowners by offering the following loans:

- **Purchase Loans** help Veterans purchase a home at a competitive interest rate often without requiring a down payment or private mortgage insurance:
 - Website: va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/loan-types/purchase-loan
- **Cash-Out Refinance Loans** allow you to take cash out of your home equity to take care of concerns like paying off debt, funding school, or making home improvements
 - Website: va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/loan-types/cash-out-loan
- **Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan (IRRRL)**, also called the Streamline Refinance, helps you obtain a lower interest rate by refinancing your existing VA loan.
 - Website: va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/loan-types/interest-rate-reduction-loan
- **Native American Direct Loan (NADL) Program** helps eligible Native American Veterans finance the purchase, construction, or improvement of homes on Federal Trust Land, or reduce the interest rate on a VA loan.
 - Website: benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/nadl.asp
- **Adapted Housing Grants** help Veterans with a permanent and total service-connected disability purchase or build an adapted home or modify an existing home to account for their disability.
 - Website: benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/adaptedhousing.asp

VA loans can be classified as either VA Direct Loans or VA-Backed Home Loans.

- **VA Direct Loan:** With a VA direct home loan, the VA serves as your mortgage lender. Veterans work directly with the VA to apply for and manage your loan.
- **VA-Backed Home Loan:** With a VA-backed home loan, the VA guarantees a portion of the loan you get from a private lender. If your VA-backed home loan goes into foreclosure, the guarantee allows the lender to recover some or all of their losses. Since there's less risk for the lender, they're more likely to give you the loan under better terms. Lenders follow VA standards when making VA-backed home loans. They may also require you to meet additional standards before giving you a loan. These standards may include having a high enough credit score or getting an updated home appraisal (an expert's estimate of the value of your home).

Learn more at

- Website: va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/loan-types/
- Phone: 1-877-827-3702



FOOD ACCESS



Emergency Food Assistance

For urgent food and hunger needs, call 311 and ask for the **Emergency Food Assistance Program**. Everyone is eligible for emergency food assistance, regardless of immigration status or how much money you have.

- Website: access.nyc.gov/programs/emergency-food-assistance

If you often need help buying food, use **ACCESS NYC** to see if you're eligible for SNAP (food stamps) and other benefits.

- Website: access.nyc.gov

DVS coordinates food deliveries to veterans and their families across NYC. Fill out the form at nyc.gov/vetconnect to request free meal kits from HelloFresh.

- Website: nyc.gov/vetconnect

The **NYC Department of Education's Summer Meals Program** is available throughout New York City to anyone ages 18 years old and under. Designated public schools, community pool centers, parks, and food trucks will be open for service. No registration, documentation, or ID is necessary to receive a free breakfast or lunch meal.

- Website: schools.nyc.gov/school-life/food/summer-meals

Visit the **Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center** to find a list of food resources in each NYC neighborhood.

- Website: nycfoodpolicy.org/coronavirus-nyc-food-reports

Benefits Assistance

You can apply for **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** ("SNAP", also known as "food stamps") benefits online at Access HRA.

- Website: access.nyc.gov

To shop for fresh groceries online using your SNAP benefits visit the online SNAP ordering page.

- Website: nyc.gov/accesshra



The **United States Department of Agriculture** provides information on services and resources available for military and veteran families struggling with food insecurity.

- Website: fns.usda.gov/military-and-veteran-families

The **USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse** provides food assistance and other nutrition and social services information to low-income individuals and communities. Call the USDA National Hunger Hotline, which operates from 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM ET. If you need food assistance, call 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE to speak with a representative who will find food resources such as meal sites, food banks, and other social services available near your location. Text the automated service at 914-342-7744 with a question that may contain a keyword such as "food," "summer," "meals," etc. to receive an automated response to resources located near an address and/or zip code.

- Website: fns.usda.gov/partnerships/national-hunger-clearinghouse

Delivery Services

New Yorkers struggling with food insecurity can place requests for food deliveries from volunteers in your community through **Invisible Hands**.

- Website: invisiblehandsdeliver.org



God's Love We Deliver delivers food to individuals living with chronic illnesses or disabilities.

- Website: glwd.org

Find a Food Bank

The NYC Department of Probation has opened five **Nutrition Kitchens** throughout the city. When you visit a NeON Nutrition Kitchen, you'll get free, nutritious groceries and great service from our friendly staff.

- Website: www1.nyc.gov/site/neon/programs/nutrition-kitchen.page

The following organizations provide food bank locations and maps:

- **Feeding America:** feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank
- Download the **Plentiful** app to make reservations at food pantries: plentifulapp.com

Food Assistance for Senior Veterans

Seniors looking for delivery services can visit **Meals on Wheels**.

- Website: mealsonwheelsamerica.org



CITY & STATE BENEFITS

Property Tax Exemptions

The **Alternative Veterans Exemption** is available on a Veteran's primary residence and includes cooperative apartments where jurisdiction adopts local option to exempt. The exemption is available to eligible Veterans of foreign wars, expeditionary medalists, Veterans with honorable discharges, spouses/widow(er)s of Veterans, and Gold Star parents. Form DD-214 is usually used to indicate discharge under honorable conditions. Benefits under this exemption include:

- a 15% reduction in assessed value to Veterans who served during a time of war
- an additional 10% reduction in assessed value to Veterans serving in combat zones, including recipients of expeditionary medals
- an additional reduction in assessed value to Veterans who incur service-connected disabilities, equal to one-half of their service-connected disability ratings (regardless of whether such Veterans served in combat zones)



The **Eligible Funds Exemption** is for Veterans who bought homes using "eligible funds," including pensions, bonuses, insurance, and mustering out pay.

- Website: www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/landlords-veterans.page
- Phone: 311

Civil Service Exams

NYC Veterans are no longer required to pay application fees for the City of New York's civil service examinations. Fee waivers may be used an unlimited number of times and on all exams.

- Website: nyc.gov/dcas
- Phone: 212-669-1357



Civil Service Exam Program for Veterans with Disabilities

Section 55-a of the New York State Civil Service Law allows a qualified person with a certified mental or physical disability to be hired into competitive civil service positions without having to take an exam. Eligible persons will be evaluated on the basis of their qualifications and interviews.

- Website: www1.nyc.gov/site/dcas/employment/55-a-program.page
- Phone: 212-386-1701



VA HEALTH SERVICES

VA Health Care

Through VA health care, Veterans are covered for regular checkups with their primary care providers and appointments with specialists such as cardiologists, gynecologists, and mental health providers. Veterans can also access health care services like home health and geriatric (elder) care, and get medical equipment, prosthetics, and prescriptions. To read more about VA healthcare services, including eligibility requirements, how to apply, healthcare costs, and a list of available benefits, visit va.gov/health-care. NYC is home to several VA health care facilities:

VA New York Harbor Healthcare System



Margaret Cochran Corbin VA Campus

- 423 East 23rd Street
New York, NY 10010-5011
- Phone: 212-686-7500
- Mental health clinic: 212-686-7500 x4656
- Website: va.gov/new-york-harbor-health-care/locations/manhattan-va-medical-center



Brooklyn VA Medical Center

- 800 Poly Place
Brooklyn, NY 11209-7104
- Phone: 718-836-6600
- Mental health clinic: 718-836-6600 x4165
- Website: va.gov/new-york-harbor-health-care/locations/brooklyn-va-medical-center



St. Albans VA Medical Center

- 179-00 Linden Boulevard
Queens, NY 11424-1468
- Phone: 718-526-1000
- Mental health clinic: 718-836-6600 x4165
- Website: va.gov/new-york-harbor-health-care/locations/st-albans-va-medical-center

To learn more about the facilities in the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System, visit va.gov/new-york-harbor-health-care. Register to get care at a VA New York Harbor Healthcare System facility at va.gov/new-york-harbor-health-care/register-for-care or call the Brooklyn campus at 718-836-6600 ext. 1807, Manhattan campus at 212-686-7500 ext. 4411, 7181, 3691, or St. Albans Community Living Center campus at 718-526-1000 .

VA Bronx Healthcare System



James J. Peters Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

- 130 West Kingsbridge Road
Bronx, NY 10468-3904
- Phone: 718-584-9000
- Mental health clinic: 718-584-9000 x5172
- Website: va.gov/bronx-health-care/locations/james-j-peters-department-of-veterans-affairs-medical-center

To learn more about the facilities in the VA Bronx Healthcare System, including what services are offered and how to schedule an appointment, visit va.gov/bronx-health-care. To register to get care at a VA Bronx Healthcare System facility, visit va.gov/bronx-health-care/register-for-care or call 718-584-9000 ext. 5354.

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

The VA currently has three Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) in NYC. These clinics provide the most common outpatient services, including health and wellness visits.



Harlem VA Clinic

- 55 West 125th Street
Community Resource & Referral Center (CRRC), 11th Floor, Room 1101
New York, NY 10027-4544
- Phone: 646-273-8125
- Mental health clinic: 212-686-7500 x4656
- Website: va.gov/new-york-harbor-health-care/locations/harlem-va-clinic



Staten Island Community VA Clinic

- 1150 South Avenue, 3rd Floor, Suite 301
Staten Island, NY 10314-3404
- Phone: 718-761-2973
- Mental health clinic: 718-836-6600 x4165
- Website: va.gov/new-york-harbor-health-care/locations/staten-island-community-va-clinic



Thomas B. Noonan Community Clinic

- 47-01 Queens Blvd, 3rd floor, Suite 301
Sunnyside, NY 11104
- Phone: 718-741-4800
- Website: va.gov/bronx-health-care/locations/thomas-p-noonan-jr-department-of-veterans-affairs-outpatient-clinic



VA Vet Centers

VA Vet Centers provide a range of social and psychological services, including readjustment counseling to eligible Veterans and active duty service members. Vet Center services are also provided to family members of Veterans and service members for military-related issues when they aid in the readjustment of those who have served.

VA Vet Center services are provided at no cost and do not require someone to be enrolled in VA health care or have received care for conditions caused by military service. Services are also provided regardless of the nature of the Veteran's discharge status. Learn if you are eligible to receive counseling services at a VA Vet Center at [vetcenter.va.gov/eligibility.asp](https://www.va.gov/vetcenter/eligibility.asp).

If you need to talk with someone confidentially, please call the Vet Center Call Center at 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387).

VA Vet Center Locations in NYC

Manhattan Vet Center:

- 32 Broadway, Suite 200
New York, NY 10004-1637
- Hours: Mon-Fri | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
- Phone: 212-951-6866
- Website: [va.gov/manhattan-ny-vet-center](https://www.va.gov/manhattan-ny-vet-center)

Harlem Vet Center:

- 2279 3rd Avenue, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10035-2249
- Hours: Mon-Fri | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
- Phone: 646-273-8139
- Website: [va.gov/find-locations/facility/vc_0133V](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/facility/vc_0133V)

Bronx Vet Center:

- 2471 Morris Avenue, Suite 1A
Bronx, NY 10468-5450
- Hours: Mon – Fri | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
- Phone: 718-367-3500
- Website: [va.gov/bronx-vet-center](https://www.va.gov/bronx-vet-center)

Brooklyn Vet Center:

- 25 Chapel Street, Suite 604
Brooklyn, NY 11201-1954
- Hours: Mon-Wed, Fri | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm,
Thurs | 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
- Phone: 718-630-2830
- Website: [va.gov/brooklyn-vet-center](https://www.va.gov/brooklyn-vet-center)

Queens Vet Center:

- 75-10B 91 Avenue
Woodhaven, NY 11421-2824
- Hours: Mon – Fri | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
- Phone: 718-296-2871
- Website: [va.gov/queens-vet-center](https://www.va.gov/queens-vet-center)

Staten Island Vet Center:

- 60 Bay Street
Staten Island, NY 10301
- Hours: Mon – Fri | 9:00 am – 5:30 pm
- Phone: 718-816-4499
- Website: [va.gov/staten-island-vet-center](https://www.va.gov/staten-island-vet-center)

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



Veteran Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line provides crisis support to Veterans and their supporters. If you or your loved one is in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, please contact the Veterans Crisis Line. Caring, qualified VA responders are standing by to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Connect with a responder by doing one of the following:

- Call: 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
- Text: 838255
- Chat Online: veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat
- Learn more at veteranscrisisline.net

Support Hotlines



NYC Well offers free, confidential mental health support. Speak to a counselor via phone, text, or chat:

- Hours: 24/7
- Phone: 888-NYC-WELL (or text WELL to 65173)
- Website: nyc.gov/nycwell



NY Project Hope provides support for those struggling during the pandemic:

- Hours: Mon – Sun | 8:00 am – 10:00 pm
- Phone: 844-863-9314
- Website: nyprojecthope.org



VA Women Veterans Call Center helps women Veterans navigate the VA and connects them with the Women Veterans Program Manager at their local VA Medical Center:

- Hours: Mon – Fri | 8:00 am – 10:00 pm, Sat | 8:00 am – 6:30 pm
- Phone: 1-855-829-6636 (call or text)
- Website: va.gov/womenvet



VA Caregiver Support Line connects caregivers to a caregiver support team at their local VA Medical Center.

- Hours: Mon – Fri | 8:00 am – 10:00 pm, Sat | 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
- Phone: 855-260-3274
- Website: caregiver.va.gov



Counseling Services



Headstrong matches Veterans with a licensed therapist:

- Email: info@getheadstrong.org
- Website: getheadstrong.org



The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Center at NYU Langone provides free mental health services to Veterans and military families:

- 1 Park Ave
New York, NY ,10016
Hours: Mon – Thurs | 9:00 am – 8:00 pm, Fri | 9:00 am – 6:00 pm
- Phone: 855-698-4677
- Email: militaryfamilyclinic@nyulangone.org
- Website: nyulangone.org/locations/steven-a-cohen-military-family-center



New York-Presbyterian Military Family Wellness Center offers individual therapy, group therapy, couples therapy, telehealth, and virtual therapy to Veterans and military families:

- Website: nyp.org/mfwc
- Phone: 212-821-0783



Trauma and Resiliency Resources (TRR) provides behavioral health services to Veterans and administers the Warrior Camp, a week long residential suicide prevention and trauma resolution program:

- 26 West 9th St, Ste 5-E
New York, NY 10011
- Phone: 855- 877-4968
- Email: support@trrhelpp.org
- Website: trrhelpp.org



Stop Soldier Suicide connects Veterans with wellness coordinators who develop personalized wellness plans:

- Website: stopsoldiersuicide.org
- Phone: 646-491-8985

Peer Support



Vets4Warriors provides Veterans, family members, and caregivers with 24/7 help from a confidential peer support network. Receive immediate, free, and long-term peer support through private chats, emails, phone, and text conversations:

- Phone: 1-855-838-8255
- Website: vets4warriors.com



OBJECTIVE ZERO

Objective Zero app gives Veterans access to mental health resources and a peer support network:

- Website: objectivezero.org



RallyPoint is a social network for and about service members and Veterans. RallyPoint also provides peer counseling.

- Website: rallypoint.com



Together We Served is an online platform for Veterans to reconnect with old service friends and share service stories:

- Website: togetherweserved.com



American Red Cross Military Veteran Caregiver Network connects military caregivers to peers and support groups:

- Phone: 877-272-7337
- Website: redcross.org/get-help/military-families/services-for-veterans/military-veteran-caregiver-network.html



Elizabeth Dole Foundation's Hidden Heroes Community (HHCC) is an online support group that offers a positive place for military caregivers of all eras to connect with one another:

- Phone: 202-249-7170
- Website: hiddenheroes.org



Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) connects Veteran family survivors to a national peer support network and grief resources:
Phone: 800-959-TAPS (8277)

- Website: taps.org



NYC AGENCY DIRECTORY

See below for a list of NYC agencies that provide services that may support Veterans and their families:



NYC Department for the Aging partners with hundreds of community-based organizations to provide services through senior centers, naturally occurring retirement communities, case-management and home-care agencies, home-delivered meal programs, mental health and friendly visiting programs, and much more in each borough.

- Website: nyc.gov/aging
- Phone: 212-Aging-NYC (212-244-6469)



NYC Administration for Children's Services protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services.

- Website: nyc.gov/acs
- Phone: 212-341-0900



NYC Department of Education manages and operates NYC's public schools.

- Website: nyc.gov/education
- Phone: 718-935-2200



NYC Department of Buildings promotes worker and public safety through its review and approval of building plans, permitting and licensing functions, and inspections.

- Website: nyc.gov/buildings
- Phone: 212-566-5000



NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services recruits, hires, and trains City employees.

- Website: nyc.gov/dcas
- Phone: 212-669-1357 (Civil Service and Citywide Personnel Inquiries)



NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection protects and enhances the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities. The agency licenses more than 51,000 businesses in more than 40 industries and enforces key consumer protection, licensing, and workplace laws that apply to countless more.

- Website: nyc.gov/dcwp
- Phone: 311



NYC Department of Cultural Affairs ensures adequate public funding for non-profit cultural organizations throughout NYC. The agency also works to promote and advocate for quality arts programming and articulate the contribution made by the cultural community to the City's economic vitality.

- Website: nyc.gov/culture
- Phone: 212-513-9300



NYC Department of Finance administers the tax, revenue laws, and exemptions of the City.

- Website: nyc.gov/finance
- Phone: 311



NYC Health and Hospitals provides essential inpatient, outpatient, and home-based services to more than one million New Yorkers every year in more than 70 locations across the city's five boroughs.

- Website: nychealthandhospitals.org
- Phone: 311



NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) protects and promotes the health of 8 million New Yorkers. The agency's work includes inspection grades of dining establishments, low-to-no-cost health clinics, and birth certificates.

- Website: nyc.gov/health
- Phone: 311



NYC Department of Homeless Services addresses street homelessness, provides safe temporary shelter, and connects New Yorkers experiencing homelessness to suitable housing.

- Website: nyc.gov/dhs
- Phone: 212-361-8000



NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development preserves affordable housing to make sure homes that are affordable now, stay affordable into the future.

- Website: nyc.gov/hpd
- Phone: 212-863-6300



NYC Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services fights poverty and income inequality by providing New Yorkers in need with essential benefits such as Food Assistance and Emergency Rental Assistance.

- Website: nyc.gov/hra
- Phone: 718-557-1399



NYC Commission on Human Rights is charged with the enforcement of the Human Rights Law, Title 8 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York and educating the public and encouraging positive community relations.

- Website: nyc.gov/humanrights
- Phone: 212-416-0197



NYC Parks

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation is the steward of more than 30,000 acres of land. The agency is the principal provider of recreational and athletic facilities, as well as home to free concerts, world-class sports events, and cultural festivals.

- Website: nyc.gov/parks
- Phone: 311



NYC Department of Small Business Services creates economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building thriving neighborhoods across the five boroughs.

- Website: nyc.gov/sbs
- Phone: 311



NYC Department of Youth and Community Development invests in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish.

- Website: nyc.gov/dycd
- Phone: 1-800-246-4646



NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities is the liaison between NYC government and the disability community. In partnership with all City offices and agencies, MOPD consistently ensures that the rights and concerns of the disability community are included in all City initiatives, and that City programs and policies address the needs of people with disabilities.

- Website: nyc.gov/mopd
- Phone: 311



NYC Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health works toward a New York City where more New Yorkers get the mental health treatment they need and fewer mental health needs become crises.

- Website: nyc.gov/mentalhealth
- Phone: 1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355) | 311



NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs serves immigrant New Yorkers and their children who make up a significant proportion of the City's population.

- Website: nyc.gov/immigrant
- Phone: 212-788-7654



NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence develops policies and programs, provides training and prevention education, conducts research and evaluations, performs community outreach, and operates the New York City Family Justice Centers.

- Website: nyc.gov/endgbv
- Phone: 311



NYC Service builds partnerships to deepen and expand civic engagement through volunteer and service programs, creating sustainable change for our city's greatest needs.

- Website: nyc.gov/service
- Phone: 212-788-7550



NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings is the City's central independent administrative law court.

- Website: nyc.gov/oath
- Phone: 844-628-4692



"Those who served their country, who endured the horrors of war, and who still endure the pain to this very day. We honor their memory, and recommit to the cause of peace." – New York City Mayor Eric Adams





*Thank you for
your service!*

1 Centre St, Suite 2213
New York, NY 10007

Office Hours: Mon - Fri: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Phone: 212-416-5250
Website: nyc.gov/vets

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[LinkedIn](#) at @nycveterans

NYC[®]

**Department of
Veterans' Services**



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON VETERAN AFFAIRS
NOVEMBER 30, 2023**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I would like to thank Chair Holden and the Committee on Veteran Affairs for holding this hearing and allowing me the opportunity to speak in support of my bill, Intro 1244. This bill would amend the city's administrative code to require the Department of Veteran Services (DVS) to develop and distribute informational pamphlets to social services organizations in NYC on the DVS resources and services available to veterans.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2021, New York City was home to 144,558 veterans.¹ The New York City Department of Veterans' Services connects our city's veterans to a variety of resources and services, all tailored to meet the needs of veterans who upon coming home face heightened suicide rates, increased drug and alcohol abuse, and PTSD stemming from traumatic events experienced while in the military, including violent combat and sexual assault. Despite our best efforts to support these individuals however, data suggests that some veterans are unlikely to immediately access the resources and services available to them, if they're even aware of them. In 2022, more than half of veterans experiencing mental illness did not receive treatment in the previous year, and more than 90 percent of those with substance use disorder did not receive treatment.² We need to ensure that veterans know about these services.

Intro 1244 would facilitate outreach to veterans seeking assistance, which according to prior testimony by DVS, has proven to be the most difficult part of the job as self-identifying remains low against veterans. In conjunction with other bills being heard today like Intro 1239, requiring DVS to conduct outreach and public education in coordination with city agencies, this bill would maximize DVS' limited resources and enable local elected officials, community board offices and other social service agencies to assist veterans seeking services by having all the information in one place.

Thank you.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/newyorkcitynewyork/VET605221#VET605221>

² <https://www.samhsa.gov/blog/supporting-behavioral-health-needs-our-nations-veterans>

Testimony of Derek Coy, Senior Program Officer, New York Health Foundation**Presented to New York City Council Committee on Veterans on Legislation for Resources and Services Available to Veterans in New York City****November 30, 2023**

Thank you, Chairperson Holden and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today about the health needs of veterans in New York City. I am pleased to provide testimony on behalf of the New York Health Foundation (NYHealth), a private, independent, statewide foundation dedicated to improving the health of all New Yorkers—including the more than 200,000 veterans who call New York City home.

In more than 15 years of work on behalf of veterans, the Foundation has used many approaches, including grantmaking, policy analysis, convenings, and advocacy to better understand the health needs of military veterans. Through this work, we have identified gaps in services and helped to replicate promising and effective programs; supported a robust network of community-based services; and prepared health care providers to better meet the unique needs of the veteran population.

My testimony today highlights two key opportunities for New York City to advance veterans' health: (1) raising awareness about recent, unprecedented veterans' benefits expansions and (2) prioritizing comprehensive and timely local data collection and dissemination.

1. Maximizing Veterans' Access to New Health Care Benefits

Most veterans return from deployment and transition to civilian life relatively smoothly. Although media depictions too often suggest otherwise, most returning veterans are healthy, ready to work or go to school, and eager to settle into their communities.

But for some, the adjustment isn't so easy. Veterans may struggle with physical injuries and disabilities, and they may also be dealing with the invisible wounds of war: mental health issues including PTSD, suicidal ideation, and substance use. They may also be challenged by food insecurity, lack of employment, or homelessness—all factors that can increase a veteran's risk of dying by suicide. Veterans deserve to have high-quality health care and services to meet their unique physical and mental health needs.

New York City should take advantage of the recent and unprecedented expansions of federal benefits that increase access to health care for veterans. The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act expands eligibility for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care to any veteran with toxic exposure. A complementary policy allows every veteran, regardless of their previous VA eligibility, to get access to VA or private care for acute suicidal crises. A similar policy has expanded VA health care to every World War II veteran across the State. Together, these policies represent the largest benefits expansion in VA history.

Yet many veterans, health care providers, local government officials, and veterans service organizations are unaware of this expansion and how to access the newly available benefits. New York has an opportunity and an obligation to educate veterans and the organizations that serve them about these new benefits and how to use them. To support this effort, the Foundation recently invested in expanding the Mission: VetCheck program with the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) to ensure every veteran within the five boroughs is aware of, and has access to, the benefits they have earned.¹ The City Council also has the opportunity to fund this outreach—increasing public funding by leveraging federal funds—and further ensure that all New York City veterans have access to these needed resources.

2. Developing New and Timely Local Data on Veteran Suicide, Demographics, and Other Trends

Throughout NYHealth's work, a common theme, and frustration, has continually emerged: the lack of high-quality, New York-specific data on military veterans. We know the Council shares our concerns about these limitations.

NYHealth has filled some of these gaps by analyzing federal and State data sources and disseminating findings across the State. A few examples include briefs on trends in veteran suicide,^{2,3} a data profile of the State's veteran population,⁴ and a fact sheet on the mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on New York's veterans.⁵ I encourage the Council to dig into the findings and share with others working to improve the health of veterans in New York.

At the same time, data limitations and lack of availability hinder more analyses and understanding of statewide and local issues in three key areas:

Veteran Suicide

Just two weeks ago, the VA released its national report on veteran suicide for 2021, and the findings are sobering. Nationally, both veteran and civilian suicide rates rose in 2021. However, in New York State, these rates held steady. We even see a potential silver lining in these statewide data: a 13.4% decrease in the use of firearms—the most lethal modality—in veteran suicides.

However, because only State-level data on veteran suicide are available, we can't understand, analyze, or respond to trends at a local level. This information void makes local planning and targeting of services more difficult, including here in New York City. Having access to local data would enable government agencies and community-based organizations to identify the veteran populations most affected by suicide in their communities and target their prevention efforts accordingly. These data would also enable organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of their suicide prevention work.

¹ New York Health Foundation, "New York Cares, Inc.: Maximizing Veterans' Access to New Health Care Benefits", <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/grantee/new-york-cares-inc/>, accessed November 2023.

² New York Health Foundation, "Veteran Suicide in New York State: The Latest Trends," <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/veteran-suicide-in-new-york-state-the-latest-trends/>, accessed November 2023.

³ New York Health Foundation, "Data Snapshot: Veteran Suicide in New York State (2011–2020)," <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/data-snapshot-veteran-suicide-in-new-york-state-2011-2020/>, accessed November 2023.

⁴ New York Health Foundation, "New York's Veteran's: An In-depth Profile," <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/new-yorks-veterans-an-in-depth-profile-2/>, accessed November 2023.

⁵ New York Health Foundation, "Fact Sheet: The Mental Health Impact of COVID-19 on New York State Veterans," <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/fact-sheet-the-mental-health-impact-of-covid-19-on-new-york-state-veterans/>, accessed November 2023.

New York City’s Bureau of Vital Statistics should make available local suicide data, where appropriate, to aid government and nonprofit organizations in their service efforts. More recent and more precise data will be a beneficial resource to program planning and policy development at the City level. For instance, we know firearms are an issue both nationally and statewide, but without granular data from the five boroughs, a tailored approach that addresses the specific modalities of veteran suicide is a near-impossible task.

Veteran Status and Demographics

Our veteran population is becoming increasingly diverse. There is no one-size-fits all solution, especially for suicide prevention. Racial and ethnic minorities now make up 23% of New York State’s veteran population, with that proportion expected to reach nearly 30% by 2030. The share of women veterans is also growing quickly; women are expected to make up 10% of New York’s veteran population by 2025.⁶ Having more granular data about different demographics within the veteran population can shed light on important trends: for example, younger veterans are at highest risk for suicide, whereas Black and Hispanic veterans are at highest risk for alcohol abuse.

New York City has the opportunity to build on State-level efforts to improve demographic data collection about veteran status in health care settings. Doing so is a critical component of preventing suicide and tailoring services based on veterans’ unique needs. New York State stakeholders participating in the Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families, including NYHealth, have established a core priority to increase access to care through screening for veteran status. New York City agencies should consult with State partners to learn from best practices and recommendations. For example, Governor’s Challenge workgroup members have identified promising data collection models from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles and school admissions departments.

Veterans Treatment Courts

Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) are a type of problem-solving court that provides an alternative to incarceration for justice-involved veterans who have mental health and/or substance use disorders. Although available data largely show positive outcomes of VTCs—including reduced recidivism, lower alcohol and drug use, more stable housing, increased opportunities for employment, stabilized relationships with friends and family, and improved mental health among participants—more robust and longitudinal evaluations are needed. Today, even the most basic data, such as the numbers of New York veterans who have participated in VTCs, are hard to come by.

State court agencies are currently working to make more data available, which is promising. To ensure the effective and equitable implementation of VTCs, ongoing and granular data collection and program assessment are imperative. A firmer grasp on how many veterans have used VTCs in New York City, who they are, and the rate of successful graduations will help legal professionals, researchers, advocates, funders, and policymakers better understand not only how well these courts are performing, but also what prevents success and who is still slipping through the cracks.

New York City court systems have the opportunity to lead the way by working together to improve more granular data collection to contribute to the State’s strategic planning efforts regarding VTCs.

⁶ New York Health Foundation, “New York’s Veteran’s: An In-depth Profile,” <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/new-yorks-veterans-an-in-depth-profile-2/>, accessed November 2023.

Looking Ahead: New Veterans' Health Data From New York Health Foundation

In the coming months, NYHealth plans to release a number of data products that will provide valuable new information for veterans, policymakers, service providers, and others interested in improving veterans' health in New York. These include data snapshots of veteran suicide in both New York State and New York City, as well as an overview of VTCs across New York State.

We are particularly excited about an upcoming needs assessment of New York State's veterans, developed by the RAND Corporation with support from NYHealth. RAND is currently fielding the survey, the first statewide veterans' needs assessment since 2011.⁷ The report, which we expect to release in the first quarter of 2024, examines the health, mental health, and social service needs of New York State's evolving veteran community. It will examine trends over the past decade, explore new issues that have emerged over time, and provide recommendations on how to best meet the needs of New York's veteran community, with a focus on underserved and minority populations.

We look forward to sharing these new data analyses with the Committee, and we encourage you to look to the Foundation as a resource as you continue your important work to meet the needs of New York's veterans. You can learn about our veterans work and more by visiting our website, www.nyhealthfoundation.org.

Thank you.

⁷ New York Health Foundation, "The Needs of New York State's Returning Veterans and Their Families," <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/the-needs-of-new-york-states-returning-veterans-and-their-families/>, accessed November 2023.



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

Thursday, November 30, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

My name is Peter Kempner. I am the Legal Director of Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS). Our mission is to leverage private attorneys to provide free legal services to low-income New Yorkers to help fill the justice gap.

The Veterans Initiative of the VOLS Senior Law Project strives to empower older New Yorkers who served in the military to age in place with dignity, access their legal rights, and live without fear of homelessness. Our free legal services assist low-income older veterans in making key decisions about incapacity and end-of-life care by providing Last Wills and Testaments, Powers of Attorney, Health Care Proxies, Livings Wills, and other advance directives. These documents enable our clients to ensure that their dying wishes are fulfilled and that they are able to maintain income and services during their lifetime. We also enable our clients' caregivers to make medical decisions in line with their beliefs. Our guides, fact sheets, workshops, and training are aimed at overcoming confusion about planning for the future. Through this work, we empower older veterans to take charge of their finances, property, and medical care, helping them continue to live in their communities. We provide home and hospital visits for limited mobility clients to ensure that all eligible veterans are able to access our services.

The VOLS Veterans Initiative also provides legal advice on a range of other civil legal issues including landlord tenant matters, access to benefits, consumer matters, and other civil legal needs. The most recent work VOLS has undertaken to support the New York City veteran community is to add a veteran focus to our Microenterprise Project. For over 20 years our Microenterprise Project has helped existing and aspiring small business owners and microentrepreneurs access high-quality free legal services. For many veterans, owning a small business is an effective path to financial stability and independence upon their return from service. VOLS aids with drafting contracts, reviewing government documents, protecting intellectual property, and advising on commercial leases.

My comments this morning focus on Int. 1237-2023 and Int. 1244-2023.

Screening for and collecting data with respect to military service is critically important. Knowing whether someone has a history of military service can be the key to unlocking benefits and services which could be life changing. Asking the question, "Have you or anyone in your family or household ever served in the U.S. military?" is a simple yet effective method of ensuring that

a veteran or family member's military affiliation is accounted for, opening up a vast number of possible benefits and solutions to problems that might not have otherwise been considered. The benefits available to veterans through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA") and other programs are extensive and often life changing. Knowing someone's veteran status can mean access to eviction prevention grants, housing subsidies, cash benefits, health care services, preferences for affordable housing, job opportunities, veteran focused social services, educational grants, and many other programs.

The New York City veteran community is incredibly diverse, and many in the community face a wide variety of challenges. Often those with a history of military service do not think of going to the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) for help and instead turn to other agencies for assistance. When these other agencies fail to screen for military service, we miss an opportunity to provide veteran specific services and care.

While we applaud the first steps taken by Int. 1237, if adopted, it is also important to note that if agencies simply collect data and do not apply that data to solutions, we will continue to miss opportunities to serve our city's veterans. Data collection can certainly shed light on the demographics of our veteran community and what social services they are seeking. But the goal should be to provide access to the best benefits and services possible. Agencies must create systems to direct veterans to targeted services and create a feedback loop with DVS to ensure that no veteran slips through the cracks. Having a single informational pamphlet, such as the one envisioned in Int. 1244, could be a useful tool that agencies and others could use to direct veterans to the right programs and services. We must all be dedicated to guaranteeing that individuals who sacrificed on behalf of our country have access to the benefits, resources, and assistance they need and have earned.

We would like to thank the City Council for holding this hearing and inviting us to testify. We hope that the city will continue to invest in services and programs that make New York City a place where veterans feel supported, welcomed, and at home.

Peter Kempner, Esq.
Legal Director

**TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH BELLO
NY METROVETS**

BEFORE

**THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS**

RE: MENTAL HEALTH ROADMAP LEGISLATION

November 30, 2023

Chairman Holden, members of the veterans committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on the proposed legislation focused on veterans' mental health, part of the Council's Mental Health Roadmap to improve outcomes for all New Yorkers.

Many of us recognize that DVS is one of the smallest agencies in the city with a budget of roughly five (5) million dollars. Like many agencies over the past several years, DVS has seen a decline in its personnel and has had to shift personnel to cover various programs and outreach.

Therefore, while well intentioned, I would like to address some concerns regarding these legislative roadmap items.

In March 2021, Mayor de Blasio signed Executive Order 65, which mandated that all city agencies adopt by the end of FY21 a "standard and uniform veteran indicator question" on their intake forms, questionnaires, or requests for assistance. The purpose was to connect previously unknown veteran populations, as well as new veterans, to services and benefits they may qualify for, including legal, housing, employment, and education assistance. Each agency was supposed to start submitting this data on October 15, 2021.

Intro. 1237 would seemingly codify this Executive Order, which I should note still remains in effect. However, to date, no one to my knowledge has seen any demographic data from 2021 onward from either the previous administration or the current one and the mayor's most recent MMR provided no data on this either other than to give a percentage number of veterans and their families referred to resources and services (no context to numbers).

My concern with Intro. 1237 is that without knowing what the agencies have done as a result of EO65 or what veteran data/demographics they collected, we are asking them to throw out "the baby with the bathwater" and start again in a time of budget cuts and reduced personnel.

Additionally, without a system or policy in place, Intro. 1237 could conceivably have the unintended consequence of "double dipping" on the data/numbers of veterans seeking services. This Intro. also mandates third parties, through contracts, to collect demographic information, which could add additional issues in the collection of data.

Therefore, I cannot support this Intro. at this time and would recommend the committee request the administration (Deputy Mayor for Operations) to provide the EO65 information it has to see what other city agencies have done/are doing to identify veterans. I would also recommend that the Intro. be amended to align with the question(s) contained within EO65. As an example (in the Intro.), what's the relevance of the city needing to know what branch of service an individual was in? Finally, the survey data report compiled by DVS should be amended to be submitted to not only the Speaker, but the Veterans Committee chair and the city's veterans advisory board, who represent the community.

With respect to Intro. 1239, DVS does have a mental health webpage (Connect to Wellness) where they have one-pagers to review mental health resources available to veterans and family members, however I don't know how often it is reviewed or updated.

My concern with this Intro. is that while I do agree the Mayor's Community Affairs & Public Engagement Unit could be doing much more on the outreach front, Commissioner Hendon testified at DVS's Executive Budget hearing last May that because of the PEGs (\$193,000) from last fiscal year, the agency cut \$19,800 from media marketing, specifically an iHeartRadio Christmas marketing campaign that the agency ran last holiday season that few knew about. To everyone's knowledge that was the extent of the agency's citywide public advertising.

So, with a 5% PEG just happening and potentially another two scheduled for early next year, which would most likely come from DVS's "other than personnel services" (OPS) monies, I share ICL's CEO Jody Rudin's concern that with a potential 15% PEG, how are we asking DVS (and the non-profits) to do this work when DVS doesn't have the manpower and the Council did not increase funding to its Veterans initiative.

With regards to Intro. 1241, this legislation in its current form should be held over. NYC regards everyone who served, regardless of discharge, to be a veteran. The city also includes active-duty military personnel stationed in NYC as veterans. Therefore, if Councilman Dinowitz's Intro. 1237 legislation were to pass, there are non-profit organizations providing mental health services that would have to be added into Intro. 1241 as well. Additionally, the annual report on the provision of mental health services should be amended to be separate and distinct from any other report DVS is required to submit.

Regarding Intro.1244, I appreciate all the Public Advocates' work with Theater of War on bringing veterans mental health to the forefront. However, with this legislation, as I stated previously, DVS already has one-page pamphlets and mental health resources on its webpage. The issue here is the distribution to social services agencies, council member district offices, etc. That doesn't need to be legislated. Additionally, the veterans resource guide would need to be reviewed and updated annually. Again, I don't know who in the agency is doing this work.

Finally, while I am supportive of Chair Holden's resolution (Reso. 0387) to provide eligible veterans with support dogs, I also recognize that it currently costs upward between 15K to 30K, depending on specific skills required to train them and not all dogs make the cut. I also recognize that DVS used an example of funding for the Joseph P. Dwyer program for Animal Assisted Modalities, but we'll have to see what the concept paper says, whenever that comes out.

In conclusion, I want to thank Speaker Adams for her leadership and for raising awareness of this issue. I also want to echo the Speaker's statement and thank Council members Lee, Holden, Dinowitz and Narcisse, as well as Public Advocate Williams for their work on these items. I believe there is potential with these bills but let's get it right.

Thank you Councilmembers for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.



Department of Veterans' Services

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For Questions,
Comments, and Concerns
Please CALL or EMAIL:
212-416-5250
connect@veterans.nyc.gov

Veteran Resource Guide

MISSION: The NYC Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) connects, mobilizes, and empowers New York City's Veteran community to foster purpose-driven lives for servicemembers - past and present - in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families.

VetConnectNYC

NYC Veterans are able to connect to services from our partner organizations through the VetConnectNYC platform. Our Care Coordinators receive all requests made through VetConnectNYC and process them within 3-5 business days. Visit nyc.gov/VetConnectNYC to learn more.



Scan the QR Code
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Housing

Unhoused Veterans and Veterans facing housing insecurity may be eligible for assistance:

- accessing rental subsidies, including HUD-VASH
- finding permanent/supportive housing
- identifying apartments and Vet-friendly brokers/landlords
- eviction prevention and referrals to service providers
- rental arrears and landlord mediation
- utility payment assistance
- guidance navigating affordable housing options

For housing assistance, please fill out the form at nyc.gov/VetConnectNYC and select "Housing & Shelter" as your preferred service.

Legal Services

Veterans looking for discharge upgrade assistance or to connect to free legal assistance and pro bono services that can help resolve legal matters, including eviction, discrimination complaints, debt, child custody, public assistance requests, and end-of-life planning, visit nyc.gov/VetLegal

Mission: VetCheck

Veterans across NYC are eligible to receive check-in calls through Mission: VetCheck, where volunteers provide information on public services and mental health resources. To volunteer with Mission: VetCheck or request a check-in call for yourself or a Veteran you know, visit nyc.gov/MissionVetCheck

Final Honors Program

Eligible indigent Veterans are provided dignified burials at a national cemetery: nyc.gov/VetBurials

Benefits

Veterans, servicemembers, and their families can get help accessing the benefits they deserve. Veterans can receive assistance packaging their benefit claims for submission and review by the Veterans Administration. Our team also helps Veterans understand what other city, state, and federal benefits they may be eligible for based on their service. For benefits assistance, please fill out the form at nyc.gov/VetConnectNYC and select "Benefit Navigation" as your preferred service.

Employment

Veterans and their spouses are eligible for civil service exam fee waivers, among other special programs. To learn more about the employment resources and an initiatives available to you, visit nyc.gov/vetjobs

VetBizNYC

Veteran-Owned Businesses (VOBs) can join VetBizNYC, an online interactive map designed to make it easier for New Yorkers to find and support VOBs in their community. Find a VOB in your community or add you business to the map at nyc.gov/VetBizNYC

Veteran Voices Project

Veteran Voices Project is an oral history initiative to preserve NYC Veterans' stories: nyc.gov/VetVoices



Testimony for NYC Council Veterans Committees November 30, 2023

I am Michelle DeMott, and I am the Vice President of External Affairs at Samaritan Daytop Village. I first want to thank you for your continued support during these challenging times. Samaritan Daytop Village (SDV) is a nationally recognized human services organization that provides comprehensive services to more than 33,000 people each year through a network of over eighty facilities primarily located in the five boroughs of New York City. SDV offers a rich array of programs including treatment for mental health issues and substance use disorder, transitional and supportive permanent housing, as well as innovative services for veterans, homeless individuals, women, children, youth, seniors, and families.

There are more than 200,000 veterans living in New York City and there are thousands returning from active duty every year. Veterans are a diverse group of people who reflect the full spectrum of American culture. As a cohort, they personify the ultimate spirit of patriotic service, personal sacrifice, leadership, commitment, and courage. Veterans returning from overseas deployment face a variety of reintegration tasks, including issues related to employment, housing, family reunification, and the psychological transition to civilian life after military service. Throughout the course of their lifetimes, many veterans will face significant personal challenges, including mental health issues, substance use disorder, homelessness, etc.

The aftermath of the Vietnam War and the readjustment problems experienced by many of the combat veterans of that era resulted in important advances in our understanding of the profound psychological impact of trauma and the responsibility that society has to provide a suitable homecoming for our heroes. This hearing itself is evidence that we have learned not to ignore or to stigmatize our veterans; nor to assume that the full responsibility for their care rests with the Veterans Administration.

Over thirty years ago, SDV identified a population of veterans with substance use disorder whose special clinical needs were not being met within existing programs. Many of these individuals were Vietnam combat veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). They often had histories of prior treatment failures, and were not able to maintain sobriety over any

significant period of time. Most treatment options available during that era focused exclusively on either the substance use or the mental health aspects of the veterans' problems.

Clinicians in mental health settings often felt that they could not conduct meaningful therapeutic work with substance users until they had established long term sobriety, and chemical dependency counselors often felt that attempts to address traumatic issues would destabilize clients in early recovery. Clients were left to negotiate the cycles of hyperarousal, numbing, and self-destructive impulses that would emerge in sobriety, and would frequently revert to the use of drugs or alcohol in an effort to find relief from painful memories and emotions. The subsequent progression of addiction would exacerbate the mental health problems and make lasting recovery less likely over time. Substance use was often a misguided attempt to suppress or medicate distressing mental health symptoms. Combat veterans who were participating in mainstream treatment programs were reluctant to disclose issues relating to combat trauma and had difficulty forming therapeutic bonds with practitioners or peers. Furthermore, few clinicians had any significant expertise in identifying or working with combat trauma, and the symptoms of PTSD were often misunderstood by the civilian community, misdiagnosed, and mismanaged.

Working with a core group of staff and clients who shared the profound camaraderie and rapport of combat veterans, SDV created a holistic, integrated treatment model where substance use, mental health issues, PTSD, and other life problems could be addressed simultaneously within a veterans-specific clinical culture. At SDV, we utilize validated instruments to assess mental health issues, employ evidence-based practices to treat co-occurring disorders, and work with our residents daily to create a clinical culture that provides sanctuary, brotherhood, belonging, and an emphasis on promoting veterans pride and mutual self-help. Our programs have on-site psychiatric services, and are staffed by licensed clinical social workers and credentialed alcoholism and substance use counselors.

A recent nonprofit report entitled "*Supporting Veterans and Ending Veteran Homelessness*" named all the challenges that were mentioned above. Additionally, PTSD may take months or years to manifest, and may result in a wide range of psychological, interpersonal, and life issues including vocational disruption, family problems, physical health issues, alcohol and substance use disorders, behaviors that precipitate criminal justice system involvement, and heightened suicide risk.

The report identifies "*thirteen (13) percent of homeless New Yorkers as veterans, while 1.5 million veterans are considered at-risk of homelessness.*" It is imperative to remember that many of these veterans have historically been unable to register and have been excluded from benefits from the Veterans Administration because of their discharge status. It is recommended that legislation is enacted to protect veterans from source of income discrimination, increase low-income veteran housing, as well as ongoing support services.

Honorable members of the Veterans Committee, the proposed legislation in the New York City Council's Mental Health Roadmap not only emphasizes vital veteran resources and service accountability, but also champions innovative initiatives like Council Member Holden's resolution, which seeks to provide eligible veterans with emotional support dogs, recognizing the profound impact such programs can have on their mental well-being. As we stand on the cusp of progress, let us ensure our veterans receive the comprehensive support they deserve, fostering a city that truly honors their sacrifice.

For the reasons stated above, we strongly support: Intro 1237, to collect demographic data on veterans; Intro 1239 to support community outreach and public education on mental health resources to veterans; Intro 1241 requiring the Commission of Veterans' Services to submit an annual report on the provision of mental health services by city agencies to veterans; and Intro 1244 to support the development and distribution of an informational pamphlet on accessing Department of Veterans' services.

We are proud of our record in assisting thousands of veterans in achieving personal recovery and reintegrating into the community as productive members of society. We also actively provide training and consultation to other agencies that are developing veterans' services. Government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels, human service providers, and veterans' organizations can all work together to innovate solutions and design services that are grounded in proactive thinking, practical planning, and prudent spending.

Samaritan Daytop Village is grateful for your continued support. I thank you, on behalf of our agency and our clients. We look forward to continuing to be on the front lines in partnership with you and your communities serving the most vulnerable New Yorkers.



Testimony before the New York City Council
Committee on Veterans
November 30, 2023

Doreen Thomann-Howe
Chief Operating Officer, Project Renewal

Project Renewal's mission is to end the cycle of homelessness by empowering individuals and families to renew their lives with health, homes, and jobs.

www.projectrenewal.org

My name is Doreen Thomann-Howe and I am the Chief Operating Officer for Project Renewal, a New York City homeless services nonprofit agency.

Thank you to Speaker Adrienne Adams, Veterans Chair Robert Holden, Mental Health Chair Linda Lee, Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Council Member Mercedes Narcisse, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, and all of the Council Member bill sponsors for making this important hearing possible and for their work on developing this important legislative package to address the mental health needs of veterans through education, outreach, demographic information gathering, and reporting,

For over 55 years, Project Renewal has been a trusted source, empowering individuals and families grappling with homelessness to embark on transformative journeys to lead renewed lives and end the revolving door of emergency rooms, jails, shelters, and streets. Our unwavering commitment extends to the vibrant tapestry of New Yorkers, including veterans, who form a vital part of our community.

We know that veterans often bear the unseen scars of their service and confront unique challenges that demand our urgent attention. We also know that secure housing and mental health and supportive services are critical to appropriately support veterans who are striving to rebuild their lives post-service.

The City Council's generous support has enabled Project Renewal's homeless prevention services for veterans to meet new and ongoing demands. It is critical that we continue to utilize our deep knowledge and experience to connect veterans with our essential services which include healthcare, mental health support, and specialized housing that are tailored to their specific and urgent needs.

In FY 2023, we saw veterans accessing the full gamut of Project Renewal health services including primary care, psychiatry, dental care, gender-affirming care, women's health services, behavioral health services, and drug user treatment services. Almost 200 veterans received care at Project Renewal's four clinics located within shelters and via three mobile healthcare vans.

Our fleet of mobile medical vans bringing care to the most underserved corners of New York City has become a lifeline for our veteran clients. As a result, veterans exhibit a higher level of engagement, attending more appointments per person compared to their non-veteran counterparts.

Within our housing programs, we provided 45 veterans with emergency shelter in FY2023. An additional 57 veterans found secure housing within Project Renewal's transitional or permanent facilities, benefiting from enhanced services such as occupational therapy, hot meal delivery, and tele-psychiatry.

The bedrock of our support lies in our employment services, a lifeline for veterans striving to regain their footing. Our vocational training, job placement, and job retention assistance prove invaluable for those facing significant barriers to employment, such as substance use disorders, homelessness, histories justice involvement, and mental illness. Just this week, we celebrated a new cohort of graduates in our Culinary Arts Training Program,

In the last fiscal year, 28 veterans enrolled in our culinary and homeless services sector-based training programs, boasting an impressive 74% placement rate into jobs. Notably, 19% of our current workforce clients have family members who are veterans or active service members, a metric we've recently started tracking to better understand the workforce needs of veteran families.

A striking 63% of the veterans we serve actively engage with multiple programs, surpassing the engagement rate of our general client population at 28%. This synergy is a testament to the interconnected needs that veterans bring to our shelters and housing, where healthcare services become integral to their holistic well-being.

Project Renewal takes pride in our work, and we will continue to provide the best care for those who have served and so bravely defended our country. We extend sincere appreciation to the Council for their consideration of increased support in the crucial areas of housing, health, and jobs, allowing us to amplify our efforts and better meet the evolving needs of our veterans.

Thanks to the advocates City government from the City Council to the Administration, including the Department of Veterans Services, we stand ready to continue this dialogue about solutions to advance the mental health roadmap to support the well-being of our veterans.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrew

Address: 33-21 108th

I represent: SELF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Date: _____

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Name: JOE BELLO

Address: _____

I represent: NY METRO VETS

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Date: 12/30/23

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Name: lauren Dimello

Address: _____

I represent: NYC DVS

Address: 1 Center St

Suite 2208

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Name: Paul Vallone (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: DVS

Address: _____

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Date: _____

Name: Dr Lauren D'Mello (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: DVS

Address: _____

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Date: _____

Name: Ellen Gleely (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: DVS

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Date: _____

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Name: James Hendan

Address: _____

I represent: DVS

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: 11/30/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Peter Kempner

Address: 40 worth St. NY, NY 10013

I represent: Volunteers of Legal Service

Address: 40 worth St NY NY 10013

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Date: 11/29/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ellen Greeley

Address: _____

I represent: DUS

Address: 1 Centre St Suite 2289



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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11-30-23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JASON LOUGHRAN

Address: _____

I represent: DUS

Address: 1 CENTRE 22ND FLOOR



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