

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

jointly with

COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS

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November 19, 2019  
Start: 10:11 a.m.  
Recess: 12:19 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee  
Room, 14th Floor

B E F O R E: Chaim M. Deutsch  
Chairperson  
Committee on Veterans

Ben Kallos  
Chairperson  
Committee on Contracts

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Chaim M. Deutsch  
Alicka Ampry-Samuel  
Mathieu Eugene  
Alan N. Maisel  
Paul Vallone

Ben Kallos  
Inez Barron  
Bill Perkins

Helen K. Rosenthal  
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## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Adam Connolly  
Assistant Commissioner  
Engagement and Community Services  
New York City Department of Veterans  
Services

Valentine Lopez  
Assistant Commissioner  
Discretionary Programs  
New York City Department of Youth and  
Community Development

Cassandra Alvarez  
Associate Commissioner of Public-Private  
Partnerships  
New York City Department of Veterans  
Services

James Wilson

James Fitzgerald

@



3 STEVEN SIDOWSKI: This is a mic check,  
4 this is a mic check. Today's date is 11/19/2019, on  
5 the Committee on Veterans jointly with the Committee  
6 on Contracts, recorded by Steven Sidowski.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Good morning. I'm  
8 Council Member Chaim Deutsch, chair of the Committee  
9 on Veterans. I'm joined today with Council Member  
10 Ben Kallos, chair of the Committee of Contracts.  
11 Thank you all for joining us today during this month  
12 of November, just after Veterans Day. I would like  
13 to especially thank the members of the armed forces  
14 who protect our way of living and all of the freedoms  
15 that we are afforded. I would also like to extend a  
16 warm welcome to the new commissioner of DVS,  
17 Lieutenant Colonel James Hendon, although he is not  
18 joined with us here today. I look forward to working  
19 with the new commissioner going forward to better the  
20 city for our veterans and their family members.  
21 Today's hearing is one that we have had important to  
22 our advocates, which is important to our advocates  
23 and veteran service organizations. The committee  
24 today will be hearing testimony on topic of DVS's  
25 contracting ability and process. We will look at  
what contracting ability exists within DVS's

3 structure and how contracts are currently procured  
4 for and through DVS. As procurement is a large part  
5 of our city agencies providing effective programs and  
6 services, this is an important issue to be  
7 transparent about our veterans and their advocates.  
8 In 2016, the early days of DVS, DVS and the  
9 Department of Citywide Administrative Services, or  
10 DCAS, agreed upon a Memorandum of Understanding,  
11 which in other words MOU, that allowed DCAS to  
12 provide DVS with certain support and guidance  
13 functions. This included the use of DCAS's citywide  
14 procurement line of service. As part of DCAS  
15 citywide procurement line of service, DVS assigned a  
16 liaison to DCAS. Our understanding is that the  
17 initiation of the procurement process required that  
18 DVS submit a completed requisition form and approved  
19 fiscal certification to the DCAS citywide procurement  
20 line of service. Under the MOU DCAS performed a  
21 variety of tasks for DVS, including reviewing the  
22 scope of service and pricing documents prepared by  
23 DVS, preparing, reviewing, and approving required  
24 procurement documents, representing DVS at public  
25 hearings, and creating purchase order documents in  
DCAS purchase order system, amongst other things.

1 COMMITTEE ON VETERAN SERVICES  
2 COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS

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3 Since DVS has now been active for almost three years,  
4 the agency began to procure its own contracts  
5 instead. From its establishment, DVS has held 10  
6 active contracts, totalling 2.1 million dollars.  
7 This has included the provision of professional  
8 computer services and Vet Connect NYC, which we  
9 discussed at one of our last hearings. Currently  
10 there are only two active contracts with DVS. These  
11 contracts total of 1.7 million and are Syracuse  
12 University for Vet Connect NYC and Payer Alliance for  
13 Veterans Employment LLC, for the veterans'  
14 employment. Both contracts are run through DVS,  
15 which indicates that DVS now has the ability to  
16 procure contracts. This being the case, this  
17 committee would like to better understand how DVS  
18 does so and what process for procurement is, what  
19 other agencies are involved, as well as what barriers  
20 exist. Although it seems to have the ability to  
21 procure, DVS still lacks a chief contracting officer,  
22 which advocates have called for year after year.  
23 Having a chief contracting officer could expedite  
24 process of procurements and ensure that funds are  
25 distributed to CBOs and providers more quickly and  
efficiently. To date, advocates and stakeholders

3 have highlighted DVS's lack of funding and staff as  
4 the major reason for DVS not having a capacity for  
5 contracting effectively. Thus, the goal of this  
6 hearing is to examine the prospect of changing DVS's  
7 contracting capability so they can secure contracts  
8 more effectively, as well as to look at the prospect  
9 of creating a chief contracting officer to distribute  
10 funds to providers. I look forward to discussing  
11 this matter in depth today, joining with the  
12 Committee on Contracts and my cochair, Council Member  
13 Ben Kallos. I would like to acknowledge, well, no  
14 colleagues are here yet, so I'd like to, first of all  
15 I'd like thank the committee staff, Nuza Saudri,  
16 Kevin Kapowski, Andrew Wilber, and John Russell, as  
17 well as my Citywide Veterans director that you all  
18 know, Joel Bellow, for their help in helping with  
19 this hearing. I'll now ask my cochair, Council  
20 Member Ben Kallos, to give his opening remarks.

21 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I want to start with  
22 a huge thank you to the chair of the Committee on  
23 Veteran Services, Chaim Deutsch. I have the  
24 opportunity to work with him on this committee now as  
25 Contracts chair, and also as the chair of the  
committee, the Jewish Caucus, and wherever he leads

3 he does amazing work, groundbreaking work, and we're  
4 so glad to have him in these leadership roles. I  
5 want to thank those of you who are in the audience  
6 today, and I want to thank Chaim for his partnership in  
7 social media outreach on Veterans Day. His team  
8 created an amazing video. We created a graphic  
9 asking our veterans to come out and let us know, you  
10 served our country, how can our city serve you, and  
11 that's what I'm hoping that we can get into today.  
12 If you are watching the live stream or you're  
13 watching at home and it is within 72 hours of  
14 November 19, 2019, we'd love to hear from you, and  
15 you can submit your testimony to us in whatever  
16 length and whatever format you like. You can also  
17 tweet me at @benkallos. You can tweet Chaim at  
18 @chaimdeutsch. And in terms of the testimony, you  
19 can submit to [correspondence@council.nyc.gov](mailto:correspondence@council.nyc.gov). I'm  
20 joined here by Daniel Gorman. He is an MSW candidate  
21 from Fordham University. He's currently placed in  
22 our district office as part of his MSW field  
23 placement. He is also a veteran who served four  
24 years in the navy and 16 years in the Army National  
25 Guard, for a total of 20 years. I want to thank him  
for his service and continue to work with him on

3 making sure these services are available. With, with  
4 the creation of the Department of Veterans Services  
5 in 2016, something that I was proud to vote on, we  
6 now have an agency that can provide services to our  
7 veterans and there's two ways to do it. It's either  
8 for you to staff up and hire a huge team of people to  
9 provide direct services from your agency, which  
10 frankly and honestly is my preference. I always  
11 believe government employees can do most things  
12 better. But in other instances it can be very  
13 helpful to have partners in the community. I'm a  
14 particular fan of nonprofits over for-profits. I'm  
15 not sure why we need to give anyone any profit on a  
16 government contract. That being said, it can be  
17 challenging to bring in contracts. Currently you  
18 have about 2 million dollars in contracts while we  
19 have about a million veterans in our city, plus their  
20 family members, who need your support, which comes  
21 out to a little less than about two dollars per  
22 veteran, which means we do need more support for our  
23 veterans than just two dollars per veteran. And one  
24 of the questions we have today is the current  
25 framework you have of using procurement through a  
different agency working, or could you benefit from

3 having your own chief contracting officer, what a lot  
4 of folks call in the slang an ACCO, agency chief  
5 contracting officer, what that would look like, and  
6 how long we can get you to a place where you need to  
7 be. And then similarly, as we're talking about this,  
8 what kinds of services do you believe the veterans  
9 need, what are you currently offering, and let's just  
10 say you had 94 billion dollars, let's just say you  
11 have that, what would you spend it on to help our  
12 veterans, and as we enter this holiday season,  
13 Thanksgiving isn't too far away. We have a homeless  
14 crisis in our city and a portion of that crisis, a  
15 face of that crisis is our veterans. I don't ever  
16 want to see another veteran on our street. We have a  
17 duty to care for them in the same way that they cared  
18 for our country. So I want to thank you. Thank you,  
19 Chaim, and I will pass it back to him or our counsel  
20 to swear in the first panel.

21 COUNSEL: Would you please raise your  
22 right hands? Do you swear or affirm to tell the  
23 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in  
24 your testimony today and to respond honestly to  
25 council member questions? Thank you. You may begin.

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: Good morning, Chairman  
4 Deutsch, Chairman Kallos, members of the committees,  
5 and advocates. My name is Adam Connolly and I'm  
6 proud to serve as the assistant commissioner of  
7 engagement and community services for the New York  
8 City Department of Veteran Services. I am joined  
9 today by Cassandra Alvarez, associate commissioner of  
10 public-private partnerships at DVS. Commissioner  
11 Hendon, who was unable to attend this hearing, sends  
12 his regards. On behalf of the commissioner and New  
13 York City veterans we would like to extend our  
14 appreciation to the committees for their continued  
15 advocacy and support. As always, DVS staff members  
16 are proud to meet council members at our veteran  
17 resource centers to maintain our ongoing  
18 collaborations to better the New York City veterans'  
19 community. Like those we serve, DVS adheres to a  
20 military training framework. We must first begin by  
21 crawling before we can walk or run. Under the  
22 guidance and expertise of Commissioner Sutton we  
23 executed that crawl framework. In three short years  
24 an agency that once operated in the Mayor's Office  
25 evolved into a stand-alone agency with approximately  
44 employees. These employees, motivated by the

3 mission to serve veterans, worked tirelessly to get  
4 DVS to the level and capacity that it is today. In  
5 this time, through the help of our sister agencies  
6 and staff members banding together, DVS was able to  
7 successfully procure both Vet Connect NYC and Pay for  
8 Success, each leading to notable progress aiding New  
9 York City veterans. As we now begin our walk phase,  
10 it would be helpful to break down our employment  
11 concentrations. Of our 44 current employees,  
12 approximately 44% are dedicated to the three  
13 programmatic lines of action. 19% are agency-wide  
14 specialists. 6% are executive and 14% are  
15 administrative and operational support of the agency  
16 in areas such as budget, HR, and legal services. DVS  
17 managed the contractual process for Vet Connect NYC  
18 and Pay for Success initiatives. In light of our  
19 limited administrative capabilities we owe our  
20 success for approval of these contracts to DCAS and  
21 MOCS as they provided invaluable advice and guidance  
22 to DVS through the procurement process. While DVS is  
23 currently exploring procurement methods for future  
24 initiatives, we are mindful of our current staffing.  
25 As we enter this new phase, to better serve the New  
York City veteran community we continue to work with

3 our OMB partners to address any operational and  
4 staffing lines which might be necessary. Presently,  
5 each of DVS's current procurements have a staff  
6 member who takes on the role of the project lead in  
7 conjunction with their regular responsibilities.  
8 Because of the nature of the tasks, several DVS staff  
9 members, including the deputy commissioner, chief of  
10 staff, associate commissioner for public-private  
11 partnerships, general counsel, assistant commissioner  
12 for operations and administration, budget manager,  
13 and others assist that individual in reviewing the  
14 contractual language, deadlines, correspondence, and  
15 other notable steps. As DVS increases its number of  
16 procurements we are working with OMB to address any  
17 operational and staffing lines which might be  
18 necessary to maintaining our internal contracts. DVS  
19 is committed to working with and assisting the number  
20 of veteran service organizations and their ongoing  
21 advocacy in New York City. While we have not been  
22 made aware of any issues currently affecting  
23 interactions between contracting agencies and VSOs,  
24 we take the suggestions and information presented by  
25 our partners, such as the New York City Veterans  
Advisory Board and New York City Veterans Alliance

3 deeply. As such, DVS is reviewing the most efficient  
4 ways to respond to any needs or issues the VSOs may  
5 have. As DVS continues its upward trajectory into  
6 the next chapter we will continue to expand on the  
7 work we have done thus far as we seek new endeavors.  
8 We thank you for the ability to testify in the matter  
9 and look forward to addressing some of the topics  
10 discussed in the coming months. We are happy to  
11 address any questions you or the committee may have.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Ah, thank you.  
13 thank you so much. So, in your testimony you said  
14 while we have not, ah, while we have not been made  
15 aware of any issues currently affecting interactions  
16 between contracting agencies and VSOs, so you did  
17 mention currently. Were you ever made aware or do  
18 you have any knowledge that CBOs have been asking  
19 year after year to have their contracting done  
20 through DVS?

21 ADAM CONNOLLY: And, and, please let me  
22 clarify, sir, um, fully acknowledging our, the  
23 advocacy that's been happening regarding the ACCO  
24 shop, um, complaints from specific VSOs are what I  
25 was referring to in the testimony.

CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you are aware?

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: Aware of the advocacy for  
4 an ACCO shop, yes sir.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, and what has,  
6 how has DVS responded to them?

7 ADAM CONNOLLY: That is an active part of  
8 our conversation right now with OMB, addressing if  
9 the agency, which direction the agency should move in  
10 regarding contract procurement. Currently our deputy  
11 commissioner is our acting ACCO, since he has  
12 extensive knowledge in these processes and in city  
13 government.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: When was like the  
15 first time you were made aware, to the best of your  
16 knowledge, that the VSOs have issues and have  
17 advocating for their contracting to be done in DVS?

18 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, sure, I think the,  
19 the [VABU] in their, in their testimony during their  
20 report, since I believe that they came before the  
21 Veterans Alliance in mentioning that, I would assume  
22 that was the first time that they brought it to our  
23 attention that there was a need there.

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: When was that,  
25 approximately?

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: I'm not sure exactly,  
4 sir.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: A year ago, two  
6 years ago, three years ago?

7 ADAM CONNOLLY: I think it's been  
8 ongoing, the advocacy has been ongoing since our  
9 inception, so about two years.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Two years ago.

11 ADAM CONNOLLY: Um-hmm.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And now you're  
13 saying that you're working on it. So what happened  
14 for two years?

15 ADAM CONNOLLY: We were just focusing on  
16 our original charter mandate and focusing on getting  
17 out into the community, serving our constituents,  
18 etc.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So the Veterans  
20 Initiative currently is 2.8 million dollars and  
21 you're aware that's [inaudible] there is a Veterans  
22 Initiative in the New York City Council?

23 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yes, sir.

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. So getting the  
25 veterans the vital services they need and, you know,  
we cannot have a CBO, um, we cannot have a VSO say,

3 listen, I'm waiting for the funding to come in and I  
4 can't help you. And we all know that part of Vet  
5 Connect would refer to some of those VSOs, right? And  
6 we rely on them to do a lot, a lot of the legwork,  
7 whether it's legal services, whether it's mental  
8 health resources. So how do you think that affects  
9 the services that veterans should receive over the  
10 last two years with the knowledge that there are  
11 issues that have been brought to DVS about the  
12 funding process?

13 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right, and I, I remember  
14 that testimony very well by our partners at the last  
15 hearing, sir, and thank you for bringing that to my  
16 attention. And we, we all know at DVS how important  
17 these services are, in this specific example legal  
18 services, if I'm not mistaken, and we realize we can  
19 always do more to support them, and our ongoing  
20 conversations with OMB are constantly talking about  
21 what that looks like, what other ways can we advocate  
22 for more money, and in this specific instance, um,  
23 what was recently announced was funding for legal  
24 services, which we are working on how we're going to  
25 procure that and divvy those funds out.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So do you believe  
4 you could have done more over the last two years?

5 ADAM CONNOLLY: I think we could have, we  
6 could always do more, especially considering our  
7 constituency.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So why hasn't DVS  
9 done more?

10 ADAM CONNOLLY: In, in the regards to  
11 which, sir, exactly?

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: In regards to  
13 responding and making sure that the VSOs during the  
14 procurement process and getting the funding that  
15 everything is streamlined.

16 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, I, I think...

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Opposed to, opposed  
18 to talking about it and to continue talking about it.

19 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, absolutely. And I  
20 think this...

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [inaudible] will  
22 continue again to talk about it. So I want to know  
23 the end, the bottom line is like what, what are you  
24 doing about it? We can't go back in time now, but  
25 what is DVS going to do from today moving on, moving  
forward...

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: In regarding to the  
5 VSO complaints?

6 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, we, so we, it, so  
7 that very hearing and the first piloted year of Vet  
8 Connect was a perfect opportunity to unearth and  
9 identify that issue is a great example, the discharge  
10 status upgrades in legal services for veterans. Now  
11 that we have that it is now shifted into a priority  
12 for our office as, as they are acquired. So I'm, I'm  
13 happy that our colleagues at that organization  
14 testified and brought that to our attention so now we  
15 can prioritize and incorporate it especially into the  
16 new commissioner's vision for the agency moving  
17 forward.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So how are you  
19 going to prioritize it and move forward with it and  
20 make sure it gets done?

21 ADAM CONNOLLY: Adding more providers and  
22 advocating for more funding for those providers, sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So do you realize  
24 there are 30 VSOs that receive funding, right? And  
25 these community-based organizations have issues with

2 the streamlining the process, which currently through  
3 DYCD. Correct?

4 ADAM CONNOLLY: Some of it, yes, sir.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And so do you know  
6 how many go through DYCD and how many go through  
7 other administrating agencies?

8 ADAM CONNOLLY: I'll defer to my  
9 colleague here for that.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [inaudible] he have  
11 to be sworn in.

12 VALENTIN LOPEZ: It's Valentin Lopez,  
13 assistant commissioner for discretionary.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Let's just have you  
15 sworn in.

16 COUNSEL: Please raise your right hand.  
17 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and  
18 nothing but the truth in your testimony before this  
19 committee and to respond honestly to council member  
20 questions?

21 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yes. Thank you, Chair.  
22 Valentin Lopez, assistant commissioner for  
23 discretionary programs over at DYCD. Currently we  
24 have nine providers with about 25 discretionary  
25

3 awards through the Veterans Initiative program that  
4 you mentioned earlier.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I'm sorry, say that  
6 again, how many?

7 VALENTIN LOPEZ: We have nine providers,  
8 which equals about 25 awards issued through the City  
9 Council either through the initiative or through  
10 their local awards. And that represents roughly  
11 about \$700,000 going through DYCD.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, can you, can  
13 you give me those nine providers?

14 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Ah, yes. Um, we have,  
15 listed we have 161st Street Merchants Association,  
16 the Allied Veterans Memorial, Bailey House, Black  
17 Veterans for Social Justice, Giving Alternative  
18 Learners, Uplifting Opportunities, the Jericho  
19 Project, Rowe, NY, United Military Veterans of Kings  
20 County, and Vietnam Veterans, American Chapter number  
21 32 of Queens.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So these you just  
23 mentioned goes through DYCD?

24 VALENTIN LOPEZ: That is correct, Chair.

25 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. And so how do  
you believe we could move forward to make sure that

3 the funding is streamlined, that the VSOs don't have  
4 any issues?

5 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So currently in our  
6 portfolio through the 25 awards, 25 of the contracts  
7 are already in process. They had, either one of the  
8 VSOs attended one of our workshops or they had a one-  
9 on-one session with their program manager assigned in  
10 order to assist them in the contract processing. In  
11 addition to the organizations that haven't gone  
12 through the process as yet, we're still waiting for  
13 them. Some of them were just cleared on the last  
14 clear list through the Mayor's Office of Contracts  
15 and we just contact them in order to begin the  
16 process.

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Are you aware of  
18 when the budget was adopted?

19 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Do you know when?

21 VALENTIN LOPEZ: June.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: June, and today is,  
23 today is already almost the end of November. So do  
24 you believe it's acceptable for these agencies who  
25 are still waiting for the funding?

3 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So, there's a couple,  
4 there's, so the ones that I listed, there's a few  
5 that are already in process and are registered.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: That's not what I  
7 asked. I asked do you think it's acceptable?

8 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So I don't, I don't  
9 think so.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK.

11 VALENTIN LOPEZ: But there's, there's  
12 also a catch to that as well, ah, because some of the  
13 organizations have not submitted contracts or have  
14 not been cleared through the Mayor's Office of  
15 Contract Processing, the prequalification process as  
16 well.

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So that's also an  
18 issue.

19 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So what is DVS  
21 doing about it, working with those VSOs in order to  
22 get it done, if you're aware of that?

23 ADAM CONNOLLY: So, to be clear, we  
24 haven't had any VSOs and come to us and express that  
25 they needed assistance with these process. But if  
they did and they were concerned about their delivery

3 of services as it relates to the contract being in  
4 effect, we would happily help them negotiate that  
5 process. But I think they are also, there's a  
6 complicated process with not only the City Council  
7 vetting, but the Mayor's Office of Contract Services  
8 ensuring that they're within compliance, so on and so  
9 forth.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So DVS is aware of  
11 a situation that's a VSO has an issue with, you would  
12 wait for DVS to get calls? You wouldn't like step in  
13 and...

14 ADAM CONNOLLY: We're being proactive  
15 with it.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: ...reach out to  
17 them?

18 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, when we're out  
19 talking to the VSOs and engage with them on, and City  
20 Council discretionary funding, the policies and  
21 procedures, if they are in that moment hypothetically  
22 in the middle of a contract and maybe they've been  
23 waiting a couple months and feel that they should  
24 have had it already or confused as to why it's  
25 delayed we would happily go about any complaints...

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So how many VSOs  
3 were reached out by DVS in regarding to the  
4 contracting issues?

5 ADAM CONNOLLY: That would be tailored  
6 into our outreach and I would have to get that number  
7 for you, sir.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Do you have, do you  
9 believe that's more than one?

10 VALENTIN LOPEZ: From DYCD's point of  
11 view all the providers have been reached, have been  
12 contacted and they made...

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I'm not talking  
14 about DYCD. I'm talking about from DVS.

15 VALENTIN LOPEZ: OK.

16 ADAM CONNOLLY: Definitely more than one.

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Definitely more  
18 than one?

19 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Can you, how many  
21 people would reach out to those VSOs, like how many  
22 people in the office?

23 ADAM CONNOLLY: Usually the outreach  
24 coordinators primarily, about seven.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: About seven. Is  
4 there any way to get that number before the end of  
5 the hearing? Like if one of your staff members could  
6 reach out to them and just to get me that, those  
7 numbers and which VSOs they reached out to?

8 ADAM CONNOLLY: We'd have to dig into our  
9 CRM just to identify it.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But wouldn't they,  
11 wouldn't they know? Shouldn't they know?

12 ADAM CONNOLLY: That specific data we  
13 would just have to pull from our CRM database.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, but wouldn't  
15 the seven outreach coordinators know, like if you  
16 reached out to them? Like wouldn't they know, OK, I  
17 did reach out to these VSOs.

18 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, I'll, I'll give  
19 direction for them to recall going to their records,  
20 but I, I can't promise it will be done by the end of  
21 the day, sir.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, but it's only  
23 seven people, right?

24 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

25 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So do you have  
access to those seven people?

2 ADAM CONNOLLY: Oh, I always do, yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So can you ask your  
4 staff if you don't mind to reach out to them and just  
5 to get those numbers before the end of the hearing?

6 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, that's not a  
7 problem. I'll do that. And then if I get...

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [inaudible]

9 ADAM CONNOLLY: If I get it by the end..

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I just want to know  
11 how many of them were reached out to regarding the  
12 contracts.

13 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And also which  
15 ones.

16 ADAM CONNOLLY: OK, not a problem.

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. Now, why is,  
18 why is DYCD administrating the contracts? Why isn't  
19 it going through DVS?

20 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I think it's just the  
21 historical nature of us processing the discretionary  
22 awards for the City Council, um, with the  
23 anticipation and the hopes that those contracts will  
24 be moving over to Veteran Affairs.

25

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What do you mean,  
4 it's going to be moving over to Veteran Affairs?

5 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So we would think that  
6 once they got their, ah, their [inaudible] up in  
7 order and they're fully staffed the hospital  
8 discretionary awards will be processed over to their  
9 offices.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So why isn't DVS  
11 processing the contracts?

12 ADAM CONNOLLY: It would just be an  
13 issue.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: You're currently,  
15 you currently are processing two contracts for 1.7  
16 million dollars, right?

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So why aren't you  
19 processing the VSOs' contracts?

20 ADAM CONNOLLY: We wouldn't have the  
21 bandwidth to take on that many contracts, sir, at  
22 this time.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So who does the,  
24 who in your office processes the 1.7 million with  
25 Syracuse University and for Vet Connect, as well as  
Paid Alliance for Veterans Employment?

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: So it is a collective  
4 effort led by our deputy commissioner and then he'll  
5 assign project leads. My colleague, Cassandra, is  
6 the project lead for the Pay For Success Initiative,  
7 for example. And then my, one of my direct reports  
8 is the project lead for the Vet Connect NYC contract.

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What is the title  
10 in the office? So you have one person, so Cassandra  
11 does the Payer Alliance and, and the Syracuse  
12 University for Vet Connect, who does that?

13 ADAM CONNOLLY: My deputy assistant  
14 commissioner handles that project, sir.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What's his name?

16 ADAM CONNOLLY: Kwamed Francis.

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And it's always the  
18 same people each year?

19 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. So they only  
21 have, so they do other work besides for, doing these  
22 contracts, right? So...

23 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Hi, Chair, um, thanks  
24 for having us here. Um, so yes, yes, um, so I do  
25 manage the Payers Alliance for Veterans Employment  
contract, which is also known as the Pay for Success

3 Initiative. I do that in consultation with our  
4 partners at the Mayor's Office of Contract Services  
5 and in partnership with our administrative team at  
6 DVS.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you already,  
8 you're already administering contracts for  
9 [inaudible]. You have a contract, a large contract,  
10 so it is, how much more difficult it is to have the  
11 VSOs come to DVS directly opposed to going through  
12 DYCD or other agencies to administer the contracts?

13 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: So we're having  
14 ongoing conversations about what that would look like  
15 for our agency. Um, at this moment our agency is  
16 focusing on the contracts that we have at hand, which  
17 are the two you mentioned here.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So what are your  
19 ongoing conversations? And who are they with?

20 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yeah, absolutely.

21 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right, we're, we're  
22 mainly having, so interoffice conversations in  
23 conjunction with OMB about what staff lines are most  
24 appropriate moving into the new year.

25 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, again, you were  
made aware of these issues two years ago and you said

3 that you're having, you're continuously having  
4 ongoing conversations. When are those conversations  
5 going to like going to end?

6 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right, so we were made  
7 aware of the advocacy to have an ACCO shop in the  
8 office is, is what you're referring to, right, sir?

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yes.

10 ADAM CONNOLLY: Um, so those  
11 conversations right now I think we're at a place in  
12 our agency, especially considering that we have a new  
13 commissioner with a new vision, we're gonna have  
14 clarity on what he wants to do and I just want to  
15 give him that opportunity to absorb what we're  
16 talking about, as you can imagine he's pretty busy,  
17 but we're in the midst of that right now.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And what's your  
19 feeling? Like what would your recommendation be to  
20 the Commissioner?

21 ADAM CONNOLLY: So we have a few, ah,  
22 administrative and operational positions in the  
23 agency, um, that we have discussed would increase our  
24 efficiency and those are what I would prioritize.  
25 Those positions may or may not have individuals that  
know about and are experts in this contracting

3 process. They might not. I'm not sure. It's, it's  
4 a dynamic conversation at, at this point. But I  
5 just, you know, I don't want to be presumptuous and I  
6 want to give him the chance to really dig into that  
7 and see what he wants to do moving forward with the  
8 agency.

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: How long, ah, how  
10 long have you been with DVS?

11 ADAM CONNOLLY: About nine months now,  
12 sir.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Nine months.

14 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you're  
16 definitely there longer than the commissioner.

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So if the  
19 commissioner is going to ask you for your opinion,  
20 what would you recommend the commissioner to, to  
21 administer, that DVS should administer those VSOs  
22 contracts?

23 ADAM CONNOLLY: My recommendation to the  
24 commissioner would be to bolster our administrative  
25 services to ensure that we have longevity dealing  
with interoffice.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And how would you  
4 do that?

5 ADAM CONNOLLY: My recommendation? Well,  
6 it would be continued conversations with OMB about  
7 new needs and additional staff lines.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, I'm going to go  
9 to my cochair.

10 ADAM CONNOLLY: Thank you for your  
11 questions, sir, appreciate it.

12 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I'd like to  
13 acknowledge that we've been joined by a contracts  
14 committee member, Kalman Yeger. Welcome. Thank you  
15 for joining us. I guess I just want to start. So in  
16 your testimony you mentioned two contracts. So it  
17 appears those are the only two contracts you're  
18 currently administering through your agency, Vet  
19 Connect NYC and Pay for Success.

20 ADAM CONNOLLY: Correct.

21 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Can you elaborate on  
22 Pay for Success?

23 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Hi, Chair. I'd be  
24 happy to. Thank you for the question. So the Pay  
25 for Success project is an employment program  
specifically for veterans with service-connected PTSD

3 that is administered through the Manhattan and  
4 Brooklyn V.A. medical centers. The program is an  
5 innovative financing model in that it leverages  
6 private funds, ah, up front to start the project and  
7 then the city and V.A. in partnership together pay  
8 out, ah, those private funders based on positive  
9 outcomes that the program generates. Therefore, the  
10 project shifts the risk from the public sector onto  
11 the private sector and the city and the V.A. are only  
12 on the hook to pay for successful job placements for  
13 those veterans. In terms of the actual intervention  
14 and what the program is, ah, veterans, as I  
15 mentioned, with service-connected PTSD under the age  
16 of 62 get paired with an employment specialist. That  
17 person provides highly individualized to that program  
18 participant. They also work in conjunction with the  
19 individual's mental health care provider to map out a  
20 road map for that individual to eventually seek and  
21 get placed in a job that is suitable for their  
22 disability, but also compatible with their interests  
23 and skill sets.

24 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: How does one access  
25 Pay for Success?

3 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Through the Manhattan  
4 and Brooklyn V.A. medical centers. That is where our  
5 employment specialists, and I say our, but they're  
6 really V.A. employees, are staffed. One is in  
7 Manhattan. One is in Brooklyn. They each have  
8 individual phone numbers that they can be reached  
9 out. There's also information...

10 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: What are the  
11 addresses and phone numbers?

12 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Ah, the phone number  
13 for the Brooklyn specialist, her name is Ann Cordato,  
14 and her number is 718-836-6600, extension 6037. And  
15 then George Robertson is the gentleman who works in  
16 Manhattan. He's also a veteran himself. And he can  
17 be reached at 347-666-5337. We also have this  
18 information on the DVS website and we push it out  
19 over our social media.

20 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I am on the DVS  
21 website. If I were to be looking at it at home or  
22 trying to find it, where would I find it on the DVS  
23 website? You currently have a drop down for I Am  
24 Looking For, there's nothing that says jobs.

25 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: It should be under  
the Career Counsel page. If it's not up yet it's an

3 update that we are currently in the process of  
4 making. But our team did discuss this.

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I, I think one of  
6 the top things folks come to me for is jobs. So I,  
7 it is not on your front page. So will you add it to  
8 your drop-down?

9 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: We can absolutely do  
10 that, Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I guess the, the,  
12 you gave two people in two boroughs, is there a plan  
13 to expand to all five boroughs?

14 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Um, so the individual  
15 who actually staffs the Manhattan site does travel to  
16 Queens, um, to recruit veterans for the program, and  
17 I understand it he also does travel to the Bronx as  
18 well. The operations of the program itself are in  
19 the hands of the V.A. So DVS is in a position to  
20 make suggestions, recommendations. We're also in a  
21 position to connect those employment specialists with  
22 potential employers that ultimately can close on job  
23 placements for those veterans. But as far as the  
24 program is operationalized it follows the V.A.'s  
25 framework.

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Dollar for dollar,  
4 how much is coming from the V.A. and how much is  
5 coming from the city.

6 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: So the city's  
7 contract value is \$750,000 of outcomes payments. The  
8 procurement value for that contract is \$650,000  
9 because we've partnered with a private-sector partner  
10 to defray some of the city's obligations.

11 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And what is, what do  
12 we get from the V.A. for every dollar we invest?

13 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: It's a one-to-one  
14 match. So they match \$750,000 in outcomes payments.

15 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And if we don't  
16 follow exactly what they want then we won't get the  
17 dollar-for-dollar match?

18 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: No, but those pay,  
19 that dollar-for-dollar match has already been  
20 obligated by contract.

21 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: So I guess the  
22 question is let's say we wanted to serve a borough  
23 like Staten Island, ah, despite two of my colleagues  
24 who would like to secede they're still a borough as  
25 far as I know and I love them dearly. I think it's a  
great borough.

3 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: I do, too.

4 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: How do we provide  
5 services to veterans in Staten Island?

6 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: So the Staten Island  
7 veterans have been traveling to the Brooklyn V.A. to  
8 access the program. The outreach that the, they're  
9 called IPS specialists, individualized placement  
10 support specialists. Those are the employment  
11 specialists that I referred to before. They have  
12 been traveling to the Staten Island Vet Center and  
13 elsewhere.

14 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: But there's two. On  
15 Staten Island we have 21,502 veterans, according to  
16 our committee report. So I guess, ah, what are their  
17 caseloads currently and how much do the jobs pay that  
18 they can place people with?

19 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Ah, we don't have  
20 that information prepared today, but we can get back  
21 to you with that.

22 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Is that information  
23 that you're tracking for your outcomes to make sure  
24 that we're getting good investment in return?

25 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: That's correct. They  
are tracked as, as part of the outcomes. It's also

3 important to note that two sites were selected for  
4 this project because it is a pilot. So this is the  
5 first time the V.A. has ever done a project like  
6 this, um, this is the city's second-ever Pay for  
7 Success project. It's the V.A.'s first. So this is  
8 very much a pilot that could be positioned to scale  
9 pending positive outcomes that are generated. So  
10 that's why those two sites were particularly  
11 selected, and the IPS specialists have gone above and  
12 beyond to make sure that they recruit outside of  
13 those two specific hospitals, but the program is  
14 operationalized specifically to have staff at those  
15 two sites for the pilot phase.

16 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Tell me a little bit  
17 about Vet Connect. So if somebody need resources,  
18 what's the value of the contract with Vet Connect?

19 ADAM CONNOLLY: \$514,000 per year, sir.

20 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And, I'm on the Vet  
21 Connect website. There seems to be a veritable  
22 laundry list of services and service providers. Who  
23 reimburses them for providing services to veterans?

24 ADAM CONNOLLY: All those services are  
25 free of charge for the veterans, sir. So those are  
not for, ah, those are not-for-profits.

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Right, but not-for-  
4 profits, the money has to come from somewhere, so it  
5 either comes from generous donors, and God bless  
6 those people, but otherwise it usually comes from  
7 government. I'm the contracts chair of a lot of the,  
8 and it was in my opening, a lot of the services that  
9 the government would otherwise offer or should  
10 otherwise offer go through nonprofits. So who's  
11 paying the nonprofits for the services they are  
12 providing directly to veterans?

13 ADAM CONNOLLY: They have raised their  
14 own funding for that. So DVS isn't involved.

15 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Do you, do you think  
16 it's fair to, ah, lay the services that we're going  
17 to provide to veterans on the backs of nonprofits and  
18 tell them that they need to provide the funding for  
19 the veterans and that we're off the hook, or what do  
20 you think we should do in terms of supporting those  
21 nonprofits?

22 ADAM CONNOLLY: Those nonprofits offered  
23 and volunteered to be part of that program due to  
24 their capacity, because they want to serve our  
25 constituency base. So at any point if they have an  
issue with capacity or an issue with funding they're

2 not on the hook by any means. It's a relatively  
3 dynamic relationship.

4 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I guess where I'm  
5 going is, so for instance on the Vet Connect one of  
6 the projects is the Wounded Warrior project.

7 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

8 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: If they have high  
9 need, is there an opportunity for the city to provide  
10 direct funding to the Wounded Warrior project or if  
11 they are unable to meet the need then just they're,  
12 they're out of luck and they won't get any support  
13 from here. We'll leave one of them behind.

14 ADAM CONNOLLY: I would have to look into  
15 that, sir, but that's a good point.

16 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: OK. Should we,  
17 should the Department of Veterans Services be  
18 providing support to the nonprofits that are  
19 providing services to our veterans, financially? I  
20 tried to be very straightforward about the question.  
21 If I wasn't straightforward you can ask me how I can  
22 clarify it.

23 ADAM CONNOLLY: Just areas of expertise.  
24 I just want to let her touch on that.

3 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: [laughs] We  
4 appreciate that, Chair. So we are making one of our  
5 first forays into working with providers and that  
6 relates to the announcement that the mayor made on  
7 Veterans Day around creating a fund for legal  
8 services, so that is our, our first foray into that  
9 space.

10 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: OK, let me, I'm just  
11 going to try to be very, very clear. So they are  
12 nonprofits. They are providing direct services to  
13 our veterans. And you've testified that they are not  
14 getting any money from the city. And so I'm asking  
15 if you would agree that you as the Department of  
16 Veterans Services can provide direct funding to the  
17 nonprofits in order to serve our veterans better.

18 ADAM CONNOLLY: I think that's going to  
19 be the subject of some internal discussion with our  
20 commissioner and some of the senior staff. I  
21 wouldn't want to answer that right away without a  
22 little more feedback and context from them, sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: If the commissioner  
24 can't show up, so, so, I know I try to send people  
25 with authority. I'm an attorney. When I've gone to  
court I can't show up in court without authority to

3 settle, without authority to, to move forward. I  
4 understand in the military generally you, you might  
5 have somebody at the top who says this is the battle  
6 plan, but when you send somebody out into battle  
7 you're going to send them with the ability to be in  
8 command, and what have you. So I guess I'm, I  
9 understand your deference to the new commissioner,  
10 but they sent you here and they knew what we were  
11 going to ask you about, so, um, I would just love,  
12 even in your own personal capacity or what you would  
13 do if you were commissioner, but just whether or not  
14 we could, whether or not having a chief procurement  
15 officer would help you with this. So I guess I'll  
16 just ask one more time. Like, would having a chief  
17 procurement officer help you work with the specific  
18 nonprofits to provide specific services to our  
19 veterans and should the city be working with our  
20 nonprofits and funding them to provide more services  
21 to our veterans?

22 ADAM CONNOLLY: I think that's really  
23 going to be dependent on future conversations with  
24 OMB, sir. It's not just about the commissioner. I  
25 think it's a bigger administration and I want to make  
sure everyone is right in on that.

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I'm just going to be  
4 honest. This was the softball question. I'm the  
5 contracts chair. We have 16 billion dollars in  
6 contracts, many of which with nonprofits. I think  
7 people in this audience, people watching at home  
8 expect government to use their tax dollars to provide  
9 services to those who need them most, particularly  
10 our veterans, and at least for my part our homeless  
11 veterans. So I'll pass it on to whoever has  
12 questions. Back to Chaim.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you. So  
14 firstly, you mentioned your Pay for Success program,  
15 you have an outreach in Brooklyn and in Manhattan,  
16 right?

17 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: That's correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What boroughs is  
19 your largest veterans population?

20 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: I believe the largest  
21 population is in Queens, sir.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: In Queens. So how  
23 come there's no one in Queens?

24 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: The way the sites  
25 were selected was really dictated...

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I don't know if  
4 your mic is on.

5 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Can you hear me? Um,  
6 the sites were selected by the V.A. and it was also  
7 based on the infrastructure that those respective  
8 hospitals had to house the program. That's how the  
9 decision was made. By the V.A.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Do you know what  
11 the outreach is in all five boroughs? How many people  
12 you service through Pay for Success program?

13 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Ah, we do have those  
14 numbers. I don't have them prepared for today, but  
15 we can get back to you with those, with those  
16 figures.

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. You also  
18 mentioned that there were 25 awards to nine  
19 providers, totaling \$700,000? Is that correct?

20 VALENTIN LOPEZ: That's correct.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So who administers  
22 the other VSOs?

23 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I believe HRA has some.

24 ADAM CONNOLLY: In accordance with  
25 Schedule C, it's HRA, SBS, HRA, DI, DHMH, DCLA, CUNY,  
and DHMH again.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. All right. So  
4 how are we going to move on from here in regards to  
5 deciding and regards to a chief contracting officer  
6 if DVS is able to implement that in order to work  
7 with the VSOs. So what is the next step?

8 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, the next step is  
9 we're going to continue our current framework with  
10 the deputy commissioner as the acting ACCO until a  
11 decision is made based off of our conversations with  
12 OMB.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, so what's the  
14 next step? Are you going to reach out to OMB?

15 ADAM CONNOLLY: We're currently in  
16 deliberations with them about these positions. So  
17 that's ongoing right now.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So it's ongoing  
19 right now. So what is their response to that?

20 ADAM CONNOLLY: Um, we're waiting on  
21 that.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So I think you had  
23 like several meetings and it's ongoing and you didn't  
24 hear anything from OMB?

25 ADAM CONNOLLY: Not yet. No, well...

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So they didn't  
4 respond to you?

5 ADAM CONNOLLY: It's, it's an ongoing  
6 conversation that we're having...

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [inaudible] email,  
8 I'll send it to OMB.

9 ADAM CONNOLLY: ...where we submit our new  
10 needs requests. We...

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Just, one second.

12 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I don't want to get  
14 this hearing, I don't want to go crazy in this  
15 hearing, but I'm going to ask again. What is the  
16 next step? You're going to reach out to OMB? I know  
17 you had ongoing conversations.

18 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, forget about  
20 those past conversations. I just want to know what  
21 is going to happen tomorrow, like are you going to  
22 have a conversation with OMB? Are they going to  
23 respond to you? Are they not going to respond to?  
24 Are they going to tell you, give you the same answers  
25 that you're giving us here today. Like, tell me  
what, what, what do you expect from OMB? Like if you

3 reach out to OMB and tell them that we need a chief  
4 contracting officer or we need someone to administer  
5 the contracts for the VSOs, like, and your  
6 recommendation is that you think it's important?

7 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, the next step is  
8 going to be we're going to discuss the outcomes of  
9 this hearing in our advocacy groups and the  
10 discussions we're having about the chief contracting  
11 officer and subsequent positions. We're then going  
12 to take the outcomes of that conversation, discuss  
13 with OMB, and eventually they will come back with  
14 approval or denial of our requires.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK.

16 ADAM CONNOLLY: But they have been, I  
17 just want to be clear.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, I just want  
19 to say we have a hearing today. Let's assume we  
20 didn't have a hearing today on the contracts. We had  
21 a hearing today on some unanswered questions from  
22 before, like how many veteran suicides are there in  
23 New York City. Maybe we can have a hearing on  
24 something else. But let's assume we didn't have a  
25 hearing today. So for two years, and you've been  
there for nine months, that DVS is aware that there

3 is an issue with the VSOs. Let's assume there's no  
4 hearing today. How is DVS going to respond to the  
5 VSOs on their issue that we have with DYCD or other  
6 contracting agencies that it's not moving quick  
7 enough and it's not streamlined and they're asking  
8 for DVS to administer all their contracts. So how  
9 can we resolve this and if, if we have an answer from  
10 OMB and they tell us no, then we know what to do  
11 again. You know, we know how to move forward. But  
12 if you're reaching out to OMB and they're reaching to  
13 you and they're not responding and it's going to be  
14 ongoing issues for the next two years, then we don't  
15 know what the next steps are. So what is the next  
16 step on DVS's part?

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Regarding the contracts,  
18 we're going to continue our community outreach.  
19 Should we receive any complaints that, from a VSO  
20 directly, we're going to treat that with the same  
21 urgency that we treat any complaint that a veteran or  
22 one of our constituents has. We're going to work  
23 with the teams and the very smart, capable people we  
24 have in place such as our deputy commissioner, our  
25 chief of staff, people like Cassandra, and address  
their needs. And if they have any issues, then let's

3 say for argument's sake now that it's the speed at  
4 which the contract is going, that they're not getting  
5 it on time or they have any concerns, their concerns  
6 will be heard and we will attempt to remedy. If  
7 there is an issue that we can correct or refer them  
8 to an agency such as MOCS, who has a plethora of  
9 resources that would be able to help them out.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. So I just want  
11 to tell you for the record, I want to work together  
12 with DVS making, to make sure that we work together  
13 and, you know, get things done and move forward. I'm  
14 not an enemy. So I want to work together. But when  
15 I don't get the proper answers and things are just  
16 not moving along, right, then it becomes an issue. I  
17 want to work together with you. I want to work  
18 together with DVS. So does any, anyone here, is  
19 there any VSO who has an issue with DYCD who  
20 currently has a contract? Raise your hand. OK, can  
21 you come up here, if you don't mind. Yeah, you can  
22 come up here, yeah. So I just want to get one  
23 person. Do we have a mic? No? OK. So you could  
24 talk to [inaudible] yeah, if you don't mind.

25 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Could we get  
4 another chair for [inaudible]?

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Is this on? Right. Since  
6 DVS was created, was created, I've contacted  
7 Commissioner Sutton probably at least five times  
8 about becoming a fully contracting agency. Ah, we've  
9 always been told that we're a new agency, we're not  
10 ready for that yet, we're not ready to take the next  
11 step, we don't have anybody who can do it. The list  
12 is as long as my arm. In my office, I'm Chapter 32-V  
13 of Veterans of America. In my office I have four 4-  
14 drawer filing cabinets that are filled with paperwork  
15 generated by DYCD in trying to administer our grants.  
16 When we do get a grant we have to pay a conduit 10%  
17 of that grant, so if we get a \$30,000 grant we're  
18 paying \$3000. So now we've only got a \$27,000 grant.  
19 Ah, I'd like to see DYCD and, I'd like to see DVS,  
20 the initials you gave me are all screwed up. I'd  
21 like to see DVS take over administering the contracts  
22 rather than DYCD. We don't speak the same language  
23 as DYCD. They're totally different from us. One,  
24 one guy from DYCD once mentioned to me that he  
25 thought PTSD was something to do with data. It's  
shameful. Perhaps I exaggerated, but four filing

3 cabinets full of paperwork. Every time you apply for  
4 a grant there's a new class, there's more paperwork  
5 that needs to be done. Ah, Chapter 32 right now is  
6 in jeopardy of having to close its doors, because I  
7 can't get anybody to step up into a leadership  
8 position, excuse me, a leadership position because of  
9 the onerous amount of paperwork involved. With three  
10 guys in a room with 240 members and I can't get one  
11 guy who wants to be president, another guy who wants  
12 to be treasurer, because it's a full-time job.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, OK, if you  
14 don't mind, if you could sit up there, stay up there.  
15 I have a question for Valentin. So, yeah, no, no,  
16 no, you could sit, yeah. Um, you have a mic?

17 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I'm sorry, it's  
19 just a little disorganized.

20 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Sorry.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So I have a  
22 question. What does DYCD have to do with veterans?

23 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So the, the way these  
24 Schedule C is designated under discretionary funding,  
25 like you and your colleagues allocate, are the way  
you designate the award, so, um, we take it based on

3 the designations made on Schedule C and also through  
4 the transparency resolutions. Ah, so those contracts  
5 come to us through designation, through council  
6 finance staff.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. So that's  
8 because we really don't have a choice, right?

9 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I would believe so.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, but  
11 Department of Youth and Community Development really  
12 has nothing to do with the veterans, right?

13 VALENTIN LOPEZ: That is correct.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: That's correct.

15 VALENTIN LOPEZ: We only handle their  
16 discretionary [inaudible].

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, do you have,  
18 do you have a department in DYCD, do you have like  
19 veterans that work in DYCD?

20 VALENTIN LOPEZ: We have, we have  
21 veterans that work at DYCD, yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Are those veterans  
23 assigned to the veterans' contracts?

24 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Ah, in the, I would have  
25 to look at that.

CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But offhand?

3 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I would say no because I  
4 think in that unit currently there's maybe two  
5 veterans.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But they're not  
7 dealing with, only two veterans?

8 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yeah, I think in that  
9 unit. Well, DYCD is a large, well, a small agency  
10 compared to others, but there's other units besides  
11 the discretionary. The discretionary portion of  
12 that, ah, unit, it's about 24 people and of those 24  
13 I believe we have two veterans that are part of that  
14 unit.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So how many people  
16 in DYCD work under veterans' grants?

17 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Well...

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Is it one, two,  
19 three?

20 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Well, you have the  
21 discretionary unit that handles all the  
22 discretionary, ah, portfolio. You also have other  
23 shops that approve budgets. You have our budget  
24 department that handles the award process. We have  
25 our ACCO shop who handles the registration process  
[inaudible] office.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So people in your  
4 office are trained, like when you get, when you get  
5 funding for youth services, so they are trained to  
6 deal with issues and they have the knowledge of  
7 working on contracts and understanding, you know, the  
8 youth services that the city funds every year, right?  
9 They have training?

10 VALENTIN LOPEZ: That is correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Does the office  
12 have training on veteran issues?

13 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Through our HR  
14 department, yes, they do have training for veteran  
15 issues.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you're saying  
17 that those people in DYCD that administer the funding  
18 for the veteran groups, they receive training?

19 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yeah, I would have to  
20 take a look at this because that...

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Is it yes or no? Or  
22 you don't know?

23 VALENTIN LOPEZ: It's a yes. We have...

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Let's say you don't  
25 know.

2 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Well, I really don't  
3 know. I'd have to take a look, yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you don't know.

5 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So what's your  
7 position at DYCD?

8 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Assistant commissioner  
9 for discretionary programs.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Assistant  
11 commissioner. So as assistant commissioner you, you  
12 should know, right? I mean, if you have training and  
13 those members that are trained under veteran  
14 services, you right away would have acknowledged this  
15 and say, and answer me oh, yes, of course, this  
16 [inaudible], right?

17 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yeah, but in this  
18 particular...

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But you're not  
20 sure. You're not sure.

21 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yeah, I would have to  
22 take a look at this.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, I hear what  
24 you're saying. Do you see it's a problem that if a,  
25 if a VSO is working through DYCD with one of your

3 caseworkers that he or she may not have knowledge of  
4 veteran issues?

5 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: It's a problem.

7 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. Do you believe  
9 that DYCD is the right, um, the right agency to  
10 administer veterans' funding?

11 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Again, I would say that  
12 through the designation, ah, we're responsible for  
13 handling the discretionary funding.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Because you have no  
15 choice, right?

16 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: You really have no  
18 choice. So according to, at a March 2019 hearing  
19 Former Commissioner Sutton mentioned that there will  
20 be someone in DVS who will be responsible for going,  
21 for being the going-between for the agencies and  
22 contracts and working with community-based  
23 organizations. Does DVS, does DVS have this  
24 individual that the former commissioner mentioned?

25 ADAM CONNOLLY: We've identified the  
individual and we're working through a training plan

3 with that individual to best assist the organizations  
4 that are applying for discretionary funding in  
5 calendar year 20.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So this was back,  
7 this was at a March 2019 hearing.

8 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So what happened  
10 between March and today? It was discussions?

11 ADAM CONNOLLY: The individual was hired  
12 in April that we intend to be the ombudsman for the  
13 agency.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And what does the  
15 training involve? Like how long is the training, is  
16 it a day?

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, it's, it's a  
18 secondary hat for that individual, but their training  
19 is really putting them in touch with point of  
20 contacts at interagency departments like DYCD and  
21 establishing those relationships. Ah, the training  
22 involves situations that, first of all, sir, I'm  
23 sorry to hear about the troubles that you're having  
24 with the contracting process, but I want to reaffirm  
25 our commitment to helping VSOs and that this exact  
situation is a situation where even now, despite the

2 individual not having agency-directed training, um,  
3 they have the expertise, ah, and the knowledge to  
4 take a situation like this and act as the liaison  
5 between this gentleman's organization and the  
6 administration and city government.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But my question is  
8 how, like I have opioid training...

9 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I think next week,  
11 so I know it's a six-hour training. So people come  
12 in six hours, they train. How long is this training?  
13 Is it a six-hour course? Is it...

14 ADAM CONNOLLY: The training is really  
15 just identifying the standard operating procedures.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, so you  
17 identified someone in April after the March hearing.

18 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So what happened  
20 from April?

21 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, we haven't had any  
22 formal issues where we would have had to include this  
23 individual to help negotiate or deliberate.

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, but you said  
25 DVS had knowledge that there were issues.

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: We had knowledge that our  
4 advocates want us to create an ACCO shop but we  
5 haven't, I...

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: You also mentioned  
7 that the seven, um, outreach...

8 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: ...coordinators are  
10 aware that there are issues.

11 ADAM CONNOLLY: They are not aware.  
12 They've been conducting outreach to encourage VSOs to  
13 apply for discretionary funding and if they needed  
14 assistance with that they would have provided them  
15 with the language.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But you did mention  
17 before that the outreach coordinators were reaching  
18 out to see if they have any issues [inaudible]...

19 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right, and we haven't had  
20 any negative feedback from that so far.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: To your knowledge.

22 ADAM CONNOLLY: To my knowledge, yes,  
23 sir.

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So if there was  
25 negative feedback who would they report to?

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: We would have funneled  
4 that feedback to the ombudsman and collectively the  
5 team. We would have worked to...

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So that person's,  
7 that person is in the office now, so does he have any  
8 knowledge?

9 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, we now have very  
10 new knowledge of the situation.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Who is that person?

12 ADAM CONNOLLY: It's our, currently it's  
13 our IGA director.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Is he, is he here?

15 ADAM CONNOLLY: He is.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Where is he? Oh,  
17 so, can we swear you in? Yeah, sure, OK. First of  
18 all, yeah, let's swear you in.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: Would you please raise your  
20 right hand? Do you swear or affirm to tell the  
21 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in  
22 response to council member questions?

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Thanks.

25 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, and  
congratulations on your new appointment.

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Exactly.

4 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you have seven  
5 outreach coordinators who reach out to the VSOs, is  
6 that correct.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. Are you aware  
9 of any issues that these community-based  
10 organizations had regarding their funding cycle?

11 UNIDENTIFIED: Ah, I have not been made  
12 aware of that, sir. But I can assure you that in  
13 understanding the plight of this gentleman I'm sure  
14 many of the other organizations that are, ah, having  
15 issues, I will be reaching out to them as well as to  
16 the council to figure out the appropriate steps and  
17 point them in the right direction to assist them in  
18 their needs and understanding the contractual process  
19 within the city itself, sir.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Is it possible that  
21 your seven outreach coordinators have received issues  
22 from VSOs regarding the funding cycle?

23 UNIDENTIFIED: I believe it's, it's,  
24 anything could be possible, sir, but I can assure you  
25 that the coordinators are under the [inaudible]

2 direction here at DVS. If they received any such  
3 information...

4 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But you would know.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible] pass that  
6 through the channels.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But they would have  
8 to tell you.

9 UNIDENTIFIED: They would have to bring up  
10 the channel, sir, and they are aware of the, the...

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What are those  
12 channels? What are those channels?

13 UNIDENTIFIED: That's my line of action  
14 specifically.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So the, they report  
16 first to the assistant commissioner?

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: No, so if they identify  
18 an issue in the field that requires what we call a  
19 critical care issue that they can't mitigate on site  
20 that requires some additional expertise they report  
21 that to their senior outreach coordinator and then  
22 he'll work with my deputy commissioner, ah, assistant  
23 commissioner who oversees that team. But..

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: When does it, when  
25 does it get to?

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: At that point. So once  
4 my deputy assistant commissioner is, that need is  
5 identified, and it is a need that he determines is  
6 best suited, in this example, for the ombudsman to  
7 take on, and that example just being a VSO having  
8 issues with contracts, then we would initiate our  
9 care for that organization and individual.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. So you have,  
11 let me just get this straight. If the answer is I  
12 don't know, if the answer is no, just say it and I'll  
13 just move on. I just want to, I don't want to go  
14 around in circle. So you have seven, I'm just trying  
15 to understand it. You have seven outreach  
16 coordinators.

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yes, sir.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And you mentioned  
19 before that they reach out to VSOs.

20 ADAM CONNOLLY: They do, yup.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And they would ask  
22 those community-based organizations do you have any  
23 issues with your funding, right?

24 ADAM CONNOLLY: Correct.  
25

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Whether it's the  
4 DYCD, or it's HRA, whichever, whichever, whoever the  
5 administrating agency is, correct?

6 ADAM CONNOLLY: Correct.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Now that  
8 individual, that VSO would say either no issues,  
9 right, everything is good.

10 ADAM CONNOLLY: Um-hmm.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Or they would  
12 answer you, or they would tell them, no, we have a  
13 problem.

14 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Right? Did anyone  
16 bring up any problems or any issues with their  
17 funding process and how it's delayed and how it's,  
18 how now it's November and the budget was adopted in  
19 June?

20 ADAM CONNOLLY: Through the coordinators,  
21 no. Not through that [inaudible].

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [inaudible] But  
23 it's possible that they do have knowledge, just it  
24 wasn't reported, is that correct?

25 ADAM CONNOLLY: No, they would have  
reported it up.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: They would have  
4 reported it.

5 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you're still  
7 trying to get an answer of which VSOs they reached  
8 out to?

9 ADAM CONNOLLY: Right. I sent that email  
10 out. Hopefully I can have it for you, sir.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So if we have one  
12 of those, ah, VSOs who I contact today and they tell  
13 me, oh, yeah, they, no one reached out to me, will I  
14 call every community-based organization that receives  
15 the veterans' initiatives, is it possible that they  
16 were telling that no one reached out to us? Is that  
17 possible, regarding their funding cycle and for it to  
18 be streamlined?

19 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, I think we're going  
20 to use this as an opportunity to now reach out to  
21 veteran service organizations and have a blanket  
22 statement of are you having issues with funding, and  
23 then we're going to collect them and build what that  
24 outreach is going to, and partnership is going to  
25 look like.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, so you're going  
4 to start now?

5 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, now that we're  
6 given this information that someone is having an  
7 issue and very specifically this gentleman's  
8 organization. Absolutely.

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK.

10 ADAM CONNOLLY: And I'll have his  
11 information before I leave today and we'll...

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: You see one of the  
13 people you would reach out to that DVS, one of the  
14 outreach coordinators would have reached out to?

15 ADAM CONNOLLY: I'd have to check to see  
16 if they're in our system as an organization that  
17 we've reached out to.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: How would you know?  
19 How difficult it is to check?

20 ADAM CONNOLLY: We have a database that  
21 someone would have to go in and check, but I'd have  
22 to access that through the office.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Can you, can you,  
24 OK.

25 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: And Chair, we also  
encourage veteran service organizations to join us at

3 tomorrow's VAB meeting, which will be taking place at  
4 the municipal building on the mezzanine level  
5 tomorrow, the 19th, 6:00 p.m. That's also an outlet  
6 where we can gather feedback.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. So I think  
8 what we accomplished today so far is that DYCD is,  
9 the assistant commissioner is saying that, you know,  
10 these veteran groups should not be going through DYCD  
11 because they really have no training. And they have  
12 no knowledge on veteran issues and, you know,  
13 administering these, the funding through DYCD has no,  
14 has no place. It has no place going through DYCD. I  
15 think that's what we heard today from, from the  
16 commissioner, right?

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, I think we heard a  
18 specific example of how we can help bridge the gap of  
19 services at organizations like that, as we move  
20 forward to establishing what direction DVS is going  
21 to go into as it relates to service and contract,  
22 sir. But this is a unique opportunity for us to  
23 collaborate with them now to ensure that...

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: No, I understand.  
25 But, but for two years advocates have been coming to  
DVS and DVS is aware of these issues for two years.

3 And we're still going through DYCD. So at this point  
4 we really have no trust of anyone collaborating with  
5 DVS. So that's why we want to see if they could go  
6 directly to DVS and for DVS to have, um, to have that  
7 chief operating officer, um, the chief contracting  
8 officer, so this way they could work directly with  
9 your agency so there's no middle person involved.  
10 Does that make sense?

11 ADAM CONNOLLY: It makes seen to have for  
12 now the ombudsman to act as that liaison. But I do  
13 want to say that this, we are aware of two years of  
14 advocates pushing for a contracting arm of the  
15 agency. We haven't been aware, to my knowledge, of  
16 issues such as this and I'm sorry that you brought  
17 this up, sir, and you know, it seems that nothing was  
18 done, but I promise you today I will take your  
19 information and will personally address this issue.  
20 Had we been aware of any situation marginally close  
21 to what this gentleman, or any organization, had been  
22 going through for the past two years, specifically as  
23 it relates to contracts, we would have addressed it  
24 at that time whether we have the capacity or not just  
25 because of the greater good of our constituency.

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Now, he did say he  
3 reached out to DVS, right?

4 UNIDENTIFIED: Excuse me, sir?

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: You did reach out  
6 to DVS?

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, sir, I did.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, so, OK.

9 UNIDENTIFIED: I've had, I've met  
10 Commissioner Sutton many times, always mentioned  
11 this, ah, the individuals from DVS always mentioned  
12 this. I would really like them to be a full  
13 contracting agency.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So what's going to  
15 change if he has brought this to the commissioner's  
16 attention, to DVS's attention, over the last how many  
17 years?

18 UNIDENTIFIED: Since DVS was, was created.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Since, for the last  
20 three years. So if nothing was done, so how are  
21 things going to change now? So is that going to be  
22 through your job? I'm sorry, what's your, I didn't  
23 get his name.

24 VINCENT: It's Vincent [inaudible].

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Vincent. So is  
3 that going to be your job now to make sure that he  
4 gets taken care of and VSOs like him, that his issues  
5 will be taken care of?

6 VINCENT: Yes, sir, and what I can do is  
7 I, I can definitely provide him my contact  
8 information and get yours as well and we can work  
9 from there. But I can assure yourself, Chairman, and  
10 the other VSOs that are here that...

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK.

12 VINCENT: ...are here that as part of this  
13 new role that I've taken on and to assist in the  
14 actions of DVS, to meet with yourself and the  
15 committee to detail what's going on, but work with  
16 those VSOs to address those issues and then point the  
17 right partners through whatever sister agency it may  
18 be or whatever information I have to determine the  
19 best course of actions to move forward.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. Is your  
21 information listed on Vet Connect? And your role,  
22 your new role?

23 VINCENT: It is not, but I think we can,  
24 we can definitely add that in [inaudible].

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, so how would  
4 someone know to contact you, like anyone, anyone here  
5 from a VSO? Anyone here. OK. Do you know, do you  
6 ever meet Vincent?

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Um, I'm relatively new  
8 [inaudible]

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. You didn't  
10 have the opportunity. OK, so how would, how would,  
11 how would the community-based organizations know that  
12 they need to reach out to you?

13 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, we could do to  
14 things. One is any, anyone asking about contracts  
15 going forward will be defaulted to Vincent, and would  
16 have been defaulted to Vincent when, from when he was  
17 hired.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So who would they  
19 call? Like?

20 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, any, any arm of the  
21 agency, if someone wanted to talk to me on the street  
22 or one of my coordinators...

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But my question is  
24 how would they get to Vincent, like if, if?

25 ADAM CONNOLLY: Well, we would perform  
intake with that individual organization. They would

3 be in our internal system, so we'd have them tracked  
4 with detailed follow-up there. But they would be  
5 referred to Vincent at that point.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So how would they  
7 originally get, like if a VSO had an issue, so they  
8 pick up a phone, they call DVS, is that what you're  
9 saying? How would...

10 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yes, sir, if they're  
11 interacting with us in the field.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK.

13 ADAM CONNOLLY: By, by any means  
14 available.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So they would have  
16 to go through your, your outreach coordinator.

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: They wouldn't have to, it  
18 could be any organization we bump into at an event  
19 or, um, conducting any of our deliberate outreach.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. So we're not  
21 talking about like, we're talking about 30, right, 30  
22 CBOs. We're not talking about 300. We're talking  
23 about, how many contracts do you have in DYCD?

24 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Probably it's  
25 [inaudible].

1 COMMITTEE ON VETERAN SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS

75

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: No, no, total, for  
3 the whole city.

4 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Oh, total, ah, total is  
5 948 [inaudible] currently.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you have 948.

7 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Correct.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: How many people do  
9 you have working in such a small agency?

10 VALENTIN LOPEZ: It's about 24 dedicated  
11 to this [inaudible].

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, so you have 940  
13 CBOs, 940, and you have 20?

14 VALENTIN LOPEZ: It's about 24 dedicated  
15 staff.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: 24 dedicated staff  
17 who work with these not-for-profits to...

18 VALENTIN LOPEZ: That's right.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And DVS, how many  
20 employees do you have now?

21 ADAM CONNOLLY: Ah, 44 total, I think we  
22 have about 40.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you have 44, and  
24 you have 30 CBOs. Right? So you're actually a lot  
25

3 larger than DYCD. And DYCD is doing your contracting  
4 for you.

5 ADAM CONNOLLY: We just, we don't have  
6 the infrastructure to support taking on additional  
7 contracts at this time.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, Vincent, how  
9 would you work with DYCD if they have only 24  
10 dedicated employees with 940 community-based  
11 organizations that they, they work on their funding?  
12 So if DYCD is backed up with 910 of the CBOs and 30  
13 veteran organizations are crying to you and screaming  
14 at you, how would you push the veterans' CBOs? How  
15 would you push them to make sure that they're able to  
16 get the funding when DYCD has another 910 contracts  
17 that they may be behind on?

18 VINCENT: Well, I think first and  
19 foremost, ah, Chairman, just once again thank you for  
20 the question, sir. And I think it's really just  
21 communication and collaboration. It's working with  
22 the VSOs to understand what exactly are the main  
23 issue through which they're going through, being able  
24 to communicate that to my sister agency here, and  
25 then also understanding the issues that may go on  
your end. I think in a lot of ways the issue comes

3 down to communication, that there may be a document  
4 missing or something that fell through the cracks and  
5 it's being able to address both parties and move them  
6 together because we're fighting for the common goal  
7 of assisting veterans, assisting New Yorkers.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Do you have another  
9 910 CBOs who have the same issue, documents missing  
10 or more documents to be filled out? So how would you  
11 push the veteran organizations ahead and make sure  
12 they get the funding right away if DYCD has already  
13 their own issues with non-for-profits? Like it's not  
14 just a communication thing.

15 VINCENT: No, I understand that, sir.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: All right.

17 VINCENT: But I think it really starts in  
18 that communication because it has to, in that 900 or  
19 so contracts that my colleague speaks that he works  
20 on that, that the agency works on, it's also being  
21 able to address these issues. And sometimes these  
22 issues can be a quick fix and other times also, um,  
23 assisting the VSOs, as this gentleman said before, he  
24 knows it's difficult trying to get the number of  
25 people who take leadership roles, we would be able to  
assist him in recognizing what those things are, how

3 we can help as an organization, and may be able to  
4 push that forward and realistically I think sometimes  
5 when you put things on the radar and depending who's  
6 able to work, that working relationship, ah, we can  
7 find that solution. But it's being able to work on,  
8 on both ends of the spectrum to assist those, these  
9 on one end for the VSO, assess the other needs for my  
10 sister agency, because at the end of the day we serve  
11 the people of New York and whether it's 900 contracts  
12 or 1000 contracts we'll get it done.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, I'm glad you're  
14 saying that. Could we hear from you, Commissioner?

15 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I'm sorry?

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So can we hear that  
17 from you? So if Vincent calls you up...

18 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yup, yup.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And he tells you I  
20 have issues with 30, 30 VSOs, right? Like, and they  
21 have paperwork they still have to do. They have  
22 questions. So how would you react to that?

23 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So the first thing I  
24 would do is I would look over the portfolio and who's  
25 assigned to those particular contracts that they are  
requesting information on, see what the statuses are,

3 see how we can resolve the issues that we're facing.

4 A lot of times it's just documents that may have been  
5 signed wrong or have not been submitted. I think  
6 those are easy fixes. I think a lot, some of the  
7 major issues about clearance and getting designation  
8 awards to the providers, it's out of our hands. It  
9 comes prior to getting to us, ah, but the stuff that  
10 we have that has been cleared and been ready to go, I  
11 think it's very easy to work with them.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: It's simple.

13 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yup.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So if, if you, if  
15 someone, if a CBO has an issue with DYCD, is there is  
16 like a number to call?

17 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yes, there is.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Who do they call?

19 VALENTIN LOPEZ: There's a telephone  
20 hotline that's on everyone desk as part of the  
21 discretionary portfolio.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: How many complaints  
23 do you get, like from the end of the fiscal year to  
24 the beginning of the fiscal year to now?  
25 Approximately?

3 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Um, I don't think it's  
4 really complaints. I think it's a lot of updates,  
5 what the status are.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, updates, like  
7 questions, like a lot of questions.

8 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I would say maybe two to  
9 three a day.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Are you up to date  
11 with all the contracts?

12 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Um, when you say up to  
13 date?

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: The 940 contracts  
15 that you're working on.

16 VALENTIN LOPEZ: They're all in various  
17 stages. Some of, some of the contracts have been  
18 received and in process. Some have been registered  
19 already.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What is like, if  
21 you have to rate it from like one to 10?

22 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I would say at this  
23 point in time we have more than about a quarter of  
24 contracts registered already.

25 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you only, you  
only have a quarter, is that good?

2 VALENTIN LOPEZ: And, well, yeah, because  
3 what happens is remember...

4 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Is that good? Is  
5 that...

6 VALENTIN LOPEZ: ...remember the  
7 clearance process, not all the awards are designated  
8 in July, a lot of them are staggered, as you know.  
9 We're at the fourth transparency resolution...

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yes.

11 VALENTIN LOPEZ: And a lot of those  
12 organizations are designated in November. Ah, we  
13 just received a clear list this past October 31,  
14 which had about 200 new awards on there for fiscal  
15 year 20. So a lot of it has to do up front with the  
16 designation and the clearance process, and when the  
17 awards get to us the process for contracting and  
18 moving things forward is kind of routine and able to  
19 deal with any issues that come up.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So 200 just came on  
21 you because of new transparency resolutions.

22 VALENTIN LOPEZ: That's correct.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you would have,  
24 let's say, 740 that was done when the budget was

3 adopted. So from the 740, you would say like a  
4 quarter of that?

5 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So, not, again, not all  
6 of the groups were designated at adoption of the  
7 Schedule C.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Are you happy the  
9 way that, that, at this point where you're holding  
10 with all the contracts? Are you satisfied or you  
11 think a lot more could be, you could be, a lot of  
12 work...

13 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Ah, I'm never satisfied.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I know, I know.

15 VALENTIN LOPEZ: If you hear from my  
16 staff I'm never satisfied with...

17 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Are you in need of  
18 more staff?

19 VALENTIN LOPEZ: We are always in need of  
20 more staff.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, always in need.  
22 So the 24 staff members is not enough.

23 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yes, I would, I would  
24 agree with that.

25 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So if you don't  
have enough staff and you're backed up, right,

3 because that's what it sounds like because you need  
4 more staff.

5 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So I, I don't think  
6 we're backed up, Council Member. What I think is...

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: But you need more  
8 staff, if you weren't backed up you wouldn't, you  
9 probably wouldn't need more staff.

10 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Yeah, well, if we were,  
11 yeah, I think we would need more staff. But, um...

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: If you're not  
13 backed up, why would you need more staff?

14 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So currently what  
15 happens is, again, like I mentioned earlier, the  
16 designation happens through the entire year. So  
17 currently for October 31 we received 200 new awards,  
18 would probably take us over the 1000 threshold of  
19 contracts, right? Ah, December, November will come  
20 out and we'll have some new designations on there,  
21 which will increase that portfolio as well. Um, so  
22 as the designations become available to DYCD, the  
23 amount of contracts goes up. Ah, currently right now  
24 we're at a manageable position because of the  
25 designations that have been staggered. Ah, but as

3 you say, all the awards to happen at designation back  
4 in July...

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: How many, how many,  
6 how many awards from back in July, how many awards di  
7 you get?

8 VALENTIN LOPEZ: So back in July I think  
9 we generated about 400 contracts.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So 400 was right  
11 away.

12 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Right, I think right  
13 away, yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So if you, if you  
15 would have to send out a letter to 400 asking them  
16 their experience with DYCD you would say all 400 will  
17 be satisfied with the process?

18 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Ah, I wouldn't say all  
19 400 would be satisfied with the process.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What would you say?

21 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I would probably say,  
22 ah, a little more than half, maybe 80% would be happy  
23 with the process.

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: 80%, that's a  
25 little more than half. So why, why wouldn't the rest  
be happy?

3 VALENTIN LOPEZ: I think it's, again,  
4 because of designation, sometimes they're  
5 designated...

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: No, no, I'm saying  
7 if, I'm talking about the 400, the ones that were  
8 designated right away.

9 VALENTIN LOPEZ: Well, well some of those  
10 have other issues that are, ah, not up front. So  
11 they may have issues passing responsibility  
12 determination. Ah, they may have issues with  
13 documentation and being responsive the staff. So  
14 that varies across the board.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Ahuh. I'd like to  
16 recognize Council Member Barron. She has joined us.  
17 OK, so I'm going to give it back to my cochair.

18 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: With regards to Pay  
19 for Success, ah, who is currently administering that  
20 contract? Who is the city actually contracting with?

21 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: So the city is  
22 contracting with, um, it's called the Payers Alliance  
23 for Veterans' Employment, which is a subsidiary,  
24 legal entity that was created to hold the city's  
25 outcomes payments, um, in conjunction with the V.A.

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: So that's Payers  
4 Alliance for Veterans' Employment, LLC.

5 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: That's correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And the contract, as  
7 you mentioned before, is \$675,000, which is matched  
8 one-to-one by the federal government through the  
9 V.A.?

10 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: So the full contract  
11 is \$750,000. The procurement value of that contract,  
12 which is the amount of money that the city is on the  
13 hook for, is \$650,000. \$75,000 is being provided by  
14 a private sector funder to help defray the city's  
15 costs.

16 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: According to our  
17 committee report and according to the New York City  
18 comptroller's website on Checkbook NYC the value of  
19 the contract is \$675,000. Ah, that being said, one  
20 of the things we noticed when we were preparing for  
21 this hearing, and I doubled checked on Checkbook just  
22 now is that to date the contract has had zero dollars  
23 spent. This is a contract that started in December  
24 of last year. So we're now almost a year later. Is  
25 that because no one has found a job through this  
program or is it just that we've asked them to work

3 without getting paid for a year, I guess. Why are  
4 there zero dollars spent to date?

5 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Those, so the  
6 payments are predicated on outcomes reports that are  
7 generated by a third party evaluation. So the  
8 evaluation hasn't happened yet. When that evaluation  
9 does happen the city will receive a report, which  
10 will trigger our outcomes payment. And that's when  
11 the money will be spent. It will happen in this  
12 fiscal year.

13 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: So it's almost a  
14 year. How often do these evaluation reports happen?

15 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Um, I have to get  
16 back to you on the cycle of the evaluations. But  
17 one, one did occur in the fall and we're waiting for  
18 the report to come out.

19 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: OK. We've been  
20 joined by Council Member Eugene. As you, as you  
21 evaluate, so the next, so one was done in the fall.  
22 When was it done in the fall?

23 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Ah, in September.

24 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: OK, so it's November  
25 now. Why did it, why is it taking it more than two  
months to get a?

3 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: It's ah, it's a third  
4 party, ah, evaluator named West Stat, and they are  
5 the ones who generate the, the report to us.

6 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: OK.

7 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: So they've done the  
8 review of the program and then they will, they will  
9 generate that report, which will trigger an outcomes  
10 payment.

11 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Do you have any  
12 information on what they found? Have we helped a  
13 single veteran?

14 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Yes, yes. There are  
15 veterans enrolled in the program.

16 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: How many?

17 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Um, I have to get  
18 back to you with the specific numbers of that. I  
19 want to make sure that you have accurate information.  
20 But we have heard positive stories from the program  
21 thus far. We've received testimonials as well.

22 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: OK.

23 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Which I'm happy to  
24 share, sir.

25 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you. In the  
Mayor's Management Report, ah, according to the

3 Mayor's Management Report your budget in fiscal year  
4 19 is, was 5.4 million dollars. Ah, does that sound  
5 accurate?

6 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: It's correct.

7 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And of that, how  
8 much did you spend in fiscal year 19? Did you spend  
9 all of it or did you have head count that went  
10 unhired or what have you?

11 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Um, we're not  
12 prepared to answer that specific question, sir, but  
13 we can get back to you with that information.

14 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Are you, are you  
15 short-handed at all at your agency? Are there any  
16 positions that are unfilled?

17 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: We do have some  
18 vacancies just from general turnover.

19 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Ah, I guess, the  
20 reason I'm asking is it, we looked at the budget and  
21 it looks like you actually got a cut in your budget  
22 in fiscal year 20, so you now went from 5.4 million  
23 down to 5.3 million, so I'm just curious what impact  
24 that has and what budget you would need to see in  
25 order to have a, ah, chief contracting officer and  
what budget increases you will need in order to

3 actually do contracting with the veteran service  
4 organizations.

5 ADAM CONNOLLY: It's noted, sir, and I'll  
6 just have to take that back to my agency.

7 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: You mentioned in  
8 your testimony that you have a client relationship  
9 management tool? Can you tell me a little about what  
10 that is? What software or platform are you using and  
11 how that interacts with Vet Connect? How that  
12 interacts with the Pay for Success and how you came  
13 to the number for the MMR of that you were working  
14 with 2896 veterans and family members?

15 ADAM CONNOLLY: Sir, our composite, our  
16 consumer relationship management tool is a Microsoft  
17 Dynamics program that we built. That program, every  
18 organization, every constituent or client, and every  
19 event that we attend we, ah, record it in the CRM.  
20 Everyone at the agency has their own access to the  
21 program with their own specific dashboards per line  
22 of action. For example, if we interact with, ah, a  
23 client and we refer them to Vet Connect on that  
24 coordinated care platform, they, that note and that  
25 referral, date, time, who they talked to, etc., will  
be record in the CRM. But at that point they will

3 enter a different database. They will then be re-  
4 engaged when after they've been connected to services  
5 or if they had an issue getting connected to  
6 services.

7 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: And sir, I can speak  
8 to how, um, the Pay for Success project works. So  
9 all of that client information is housed by the V.A.  
10 and we do not receive that client information unless  
11 that person gets connected to DVS for whatever  
12 reason, for resources or for, ah, support. Ah, but  
13 those, those individuals are not put into our  
14 database for privacy reasons.

15 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: How, so I guess, how  
16 will we know that Pay for Success is working and when  
17 will you have, how, how soon can you give me a number  
18 of the folks that at least were served, even if their  
19 outcome hasn't been certified yet?

20 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: We could do that  
21 before the week is over. We could get those numbers  
22 to you, um, and we are happy to share more  
23 information about the success of the project as well,  
24 once we get that formalized, ah, evaluation report.  
25 I also want to note one other, ah, thing that you  
brought up, sir, previously about the contract value.

3 It is \$675,000 that the city is on the hook for. Um,  
4 and then that is matched dollar-for-dollar by the  
5 V.A. An additional \$75,000 is coming from a private  
6 funder. So the full contract value amount is  
7 \$750,000.

8 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you. So I  
9 guess one of the things is you are tracking the  
10 number, in the Mayor's Management Report you are  
11 tracking the number of people, of veterans and  
12 families that you're engaging, but it seems like  
13 there might be disconnects, so if somebody goes  
14 directly to Vet Connect that doesn't get in your  
15 system and if somebody goes directly to the, ah, Pay  
16 for Success that doesn't go into your system.

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Let me just jump in there  
18 with...

19 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: So there may be  
20 under-reporting.

21 ADAM CONNOLLY: Oh, with the Vet Connect,  
22 ah, no, because they, we have a contract with IVMF, a  
23 data-sharing contract. So they, they push regular  
24 reporting to us at an as-needed basis throughout the  
25 quarter. And their reporting format looks much like  
ours. We use the same language when it comes to

3 engaged in assisted veterans and then, um, as it  
4 relates to Pay for Success, you know, the evaluation  
5 of that program will provide us with numbers as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: And I guess just on  
7 the Vet Connect when I went to the website it  
8 generally has, ah, the fact that they offer  
9 assistance with disability but it doesn't actually  
10 say who or what or what-have-you, it just says go  
11 into our general intake and fill out the form. Is  
12 there a way to make sure that the Vet Connect site  
13 actually gives specifics? I guess one of the things  
14 is do you find in working with veterans that  
15 sometimes they have a lot of pride and sometimes they  
16 don't want to take assistance? I have that program  
17 in my district with residents who qualify for SNAP  
18 who won't apply for it. Have you ever had that  
19 occasion?

20 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, my coordinators,  
21 um, really in a lot, the majority of my team has been  
22 enrolled for quite some time and that is often an  
23 issue that we face with veterans from all war eras is  
24 that that pride and not necessarily being so vocal  
25 and willing to accept to services from the city.

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Is there, is there  
4 an opportunity on the Vet Connect site to actually  
5 spell out the different program? A lot of the  
6 services that I see under your services tab, where  
7 every single other tab directs you to, there's a lot  
8 of, ah, education resources but there's no details  
9 on, is it free credits, is it discounted credits?  
10 Ah, it is an undergrad, is it a graduate? Like  
11 there's no details, there's, ah, there's Bronx  
12 Veterinary Center with a picture of a cat and a dog,  
13 so I'm imagining that it has to do with animals, not  
14 veterans, ah, but they may have some sort of, ah, and  
15 they may have some sort of relationship where they're  
16 willing to provide a discount for veterans who have  
17 animals, maybe they provide service animals. I,  
18 there's no details.

19 ADAM CONNOLLY: So regarding that, I'd be  
20 more than happy to have a conversation with our  
21 providers about maybe being more transparent with  
22 program descriptions, but an added benefit of Vet  
23 Connect is, you know, they are called within a couple  
24 days and then based off of the issues that they, um,  
25 maybe came in with and then additional service  
requests that might have been discovered in that

3 subsequent conversation, that there is a specific  
4 coordinator tailored to walk them through that  
5 process, and explain what services they would have  
6 available. So that's not to overload them with  
7 information, ah, but tailor the needs of the program  
8 to the client. But for their own informational  
9 purposes I agree and think that being more  
10 transparent with program services per organization is  
11 a good idea.

12 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I appreciate the,  
13 the agreement. So, yeah, I think it's just one of  
14 those things where you don't want to overwhelm  
15 people, but if folks saw, oh, if I go to Hunter I  
16 could XYZ and I go there folks might say, you know  
17 what, I, I don't feel bad about taking this specific  
18 resource. This seems right, ah, and I guess the only  
19 other piece is, ah, you mentioned that I might be a  
20 couple of days in terms of quality of service and  
21 even sales, ah, I've seen that generally if somebody  
22 touches base with you, in a perfect world you get  
23 back to them immediately. Ah, do you have any  
24 quality of service related to Vet Connect where  
25 there's a specific timeframe you want them to respond  
in?

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: There is. The original  
4 contract, um, I believe, one of the program tools was  
5 around 10 days, but we've lowered that to, ah, it's  
6 48 hours on average. We reach back out to the client  
7 and then for a client to be successfully connected to  
8 services and for their case to be resolved, um, it's  
9 less than a week.

10 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: OK. I would just  
11 urge that if you're doing anything more than same day  
12 or immediate then just let people pick a time, ah, on  
13 the form so that they, that you can manage the  
14 expectations. I'd like to pass it over to Council  
15 Member Barron, who has a question.

16 ADAM CONNOLLY: Thank you, sir.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you to the  
18 chairs and thank you to the panel for coming and  
19 sharing your information. Just one general question.  
20 What is the relationship that you have with City  
21 University, with CUNY, both in terms of contractually  
22 as well as the services that are provided  
23 specifically to veterans.

24 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Thank you for the  
25 question, ma'am. Um, so DVS has an initiative called  
Veterans on Campus, ah, which is a program that

3 enables us to work directly with the, ah, student  
4 veteran administrators. Those are the folks at those  
5 respective institutions who are essentially the boots  
6 on the ground that have the strongest relationships  
7 with the student vet population. Um, so that  
8 initiative helps us and establish a relationship with  
9 those folks, helps us use them as a channel to  
10 communicate information about city benefits. So we  
11 do have good relationships with the CUNY schools.  
12 We're always happy to improve them and build stronger  
13 relationships with them. Certainly sometimes those  
14 administrators turn over and so that's fertile ground  
15 for use to create a new relationship. Contractually,  
16 we don't have any contracts with the CUNY office or  
17 any of the individual schools. I do know that they  
18 receive discretionary funds through, ah, Schedule C  
19 for the CUNY Prove program. But we do have a great  
20 relationship with the CUNY institutions, specifically  
21 the ones that have the highest student veteran  
22 populations, such as John Jay, ah, BMCC, Laguardia,  
23 Queens College, and we, we are always looking to,  
24 again, strengthen those relationships with the other  
25 schools.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So those students  
3 who are veterans, how do you know that they're  
4 veterans? Do they self-identify or is your section on  
5 the application where they check, how do you know?  
6 Is it self-identification?

7 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: We're able to  
8 identify them through their use of the GI bill.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: OK. Thank you.

10 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you. So I  
12 have a few more questions. What role does OMB have  
13 with DVS?

14 ADAM CONNOLLY: As it relates to the new  
15 needs discussions or the?

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah.

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Ah, so they are available  
18 to discuss, um, we will submit to them what  
19 positions, salaries we think are appropriate each  
20 year for new needs. They will then take into  
21 account, I imagine, the larger picture of the budget  
22 and see what's realistic and we will go back and  
23 forth with what's doable and what is not.

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What role does OMB  
25 have with the veterans' contracts?

3 ADAM CONNOLLY: I'd have to follow up on  
4 that, sir.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: You kept on  
6 mentioning before you had to speak to OMB. So what,  
7 what role does OMB have?

8 ADAM CONNOLLY: Oh, as it relates to the  
9 staff lines. If our agency is going to move forward  
10 with an ACCO or a procurement shop or not.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: What role does the  
12 commissioner have of DVS?

13 ADAM CONNOLLY: I think it's important to  
14 include...

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: As far as decision-  
16 making.

17 ADAM CONNOLLY: Yeah, I think, well, he,  
18 the chief decision-making authority by all accounts  
19 for the agency. We respect and want to give him  
20 every opportunity to not only digest his new role,  
21 but to take into account what his vision of the  
22 agency is, whether it's going to be continuing our  
23 original charter, becoming more service oriented  
24 agency as Council Member Kallos mentioned, it's all  
25 up for debate. But we just want to give him the  
right amount of time to make informed decisions,

2 especially with something related to something as  
3 important contracts and adding new personnel to the  
4 office.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So since you're  
6 using existing personnel, right, so could the  
7 commissioner of DVS make a decision to have a chief  
8 contracting officer without even having a discussion  
9 with OMB?

10 ADAM CONNOLLY: No, I believe that will  
11 have to, perhaps could assign an individual as an  
12 acting ACCO, but we already have an individual  
13 serving in that role right now. But for a specific  
14 staff line as the chief contracting officer, keeping  
15 in mind that they will also need a staff to be as  
16 effective as we need them to be, the commissioner  
17 would be subject to discussions with OMB just like  
18 the rest of the agency is, sir.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So if DVS should  
20 take up all the contracts, 30 contracts, from the  
21 veteran organizations, that would have to go through  
22 OMB as well? Or would the commissioner have at his  
23 discretion to OK that?

24 VINCENT: In the event that all 30 VSOs  
25 would come over to DVS the commissioner has the

2 authority to designate someone as an acting ACCO  
3 within the agency that would add effectively a  
4 secondary add to their current job as it stands right  
5 now. Which is why we're also stressing the idea that  
6 there's a team that's placed behind that. But if we  
7 were to assume the present contracts that would just  
8 effectively add an additional half of the individuals  
9 that are currently working in the office, dealing  
10 with their current capacity. They would just add on  
11 an additional capacity of dealing with procurement  
12 functions, which may or may not be able to assist the  
13 VSOs because it's adding on an additional duty on top  
14 of additional duty for DVS staff [inaudible].

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you're saying  
16 that DVS doesn't have enough staff to take up the 30  
17 VSOs?

18 VINCENT: I don't think it's necessarily  
19 that, sir. I think it's DVS is always actively  
20 working with, um, our partners and our duties to  
21 ensure that we do what is best for the city and for  
22 New Yorkers and for the VSOs, but in doing so there  
23 are certain things in regards to timelines and being  
24 able to assure that we can do, um, the current roles  
25 that we have now in addition to the current roles

2 that we may take on overall. Ah, but we find  
3 different ways to be, I guess, proactive and flexible  
4 in doing different things, but there's always, um,  
5 room for improvement and room for growth. It's just  
6 really figuring out where the next steps are and how  
7 can we work with our sister agencies, the council,  
8 the mayor's office, to ensure that whatever next  
9 steps we do take are taken appropriately to assist  
10 the veterans because we would not like to expand and  
11 then still provide, or provide inadequate service by  
12 expanding. We want to be sure we do everything right  
13 and to do so we have to, um, check all the boxes and  
14 recognize that we do what is necessary and understand  
15 what those line items and positions are.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you.

17 VINCENT: On top of also carrying the,  
18 the requisite space and office space to then house  
19 these individuals.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, Vincent.

21 VINCENT: Yes, sir.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So you are going to  
23 be reaching out to the 30 VSOs or are you waiting for  
24 them to still call you if they have any issues?

3 VINCENT: I will personally reach out to  
4 them, Mr. Chair.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK.

6 VINCENT: As well as providing you with  
7 my personal contact information in the event that  
8 they come to yourself or to any members of your  
9 committee, and really just working it [inaudible]  
10 sir. It's just, it's really being flexible and  
11 getting out there.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. You have all  
13 of the information? Is that correct? Otherwise, my  
14 office could provide you with the connects.

15 VINCENT: I believe we have all the  
16 information, but I'm always helpful to receive what  
17 you have, sir. It's best to have a contingency to  
18 double check and move forward.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Great, OK. And  
20 Commissioner, thank you so much. Assistant  
21 Commissioner, thank you for being here today.

22 ADAM CONNOLLY: Thank you for your  
23 questions, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And Cassandra.

25 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Thank you, sir.

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you. And  
3 thank you, Commissioner. Thank you. All right, I  
4 think no more questions. You have a question? All  
5 right, thank you so much.

6 CASSANDRA ALVAREZ: Thank you, sir.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Oh, you could stay  
8 there [laughs]. You want to sit there, you can sit  
9 there.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: I got physical therapy  
11 tomorrow.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Oh, OK. [laughter]  
13 I think you already testified, right? Michael,  
14 you're done? You already testified? Yeah?

15 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. So James  
17 Fitzgerald, Allen Singer, Komatsu, Mr. Komatsu, you  
18 can come up. That's fine. And James Wilson.  
19 [pause] So first I just want to thank you, well,  
20 thank you all for taking the time to be here today  
21 and testifying. We'll go clockwise. [pause]

22 JAMES WILSON: Shall I wait?

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, you could  
24 begin.

25

3                   JAMES WILSON: Thank you, Chairman  
4 Deutsch, and the rest of the members of the Veteran  
5 Committee for the opportunity to testify today. My  
6 name is James Wilson. I'm the interim executive  
7 director of GALLOP NYC, also known as Giving  
8 Alternative Learners Uplifting Opportunities. I'm  
9 glad to be able to be here today to share our  
10 thoughts on the contracting process for our veterans'  
11 programs and to share some of our insights on the  
12 challenges and opportunities that can be found within  
13 the contract implement process. GALLOP NYC has  
14 always felt very strongly about the benefits of  
15 therapeutic horsemanship for veterans in New York  
16 City. Thanks to the support from the City Council  
17 and relationships within the veterans' community in  
18 New York City we have made great strides towards  
19 expanding and enhancing our veterans' program over  
20 the past several years. We are excited by the  
21 prospect of serving more veterans in NYC and excited  
22 by the prospect of developing and executing different  
23 programs that fit the needs of different veterans and  
24 the needs of their families. However, in order to  
25 successfully work with veterans we must collaborate  
with an agency that specializes in the needs of

3 veterans. GALLOP NYC has been working with the DYCD  
4 on our contract implementation. As you are aware,  
5 DYCD is an agency that does not exist explicitly for  
6 veterans. Their mission is to engage the  
7 constituents of a community and focusing on youth is  
8 their priority. Our contract management and  
9 implementation with DYCD has involved primarily  
10 conversations that are technical. These  
11 conversations surround current limitations on  
12 contracts, such as vendor or consultant approval or  
13 how expense reports are filled out. We would like to  
14 engage with an agency of oversight on a very  
15 substantive level, with the relationship based on  
16 collaboration and guidance and not simply structure  
17 and process. We feel strongly that such a  
18 relationship will allow GALLOP NYC to continue to  
19 offer programming that fits the needs of veterans in  
20 New York City today and as those needs change in the  
21 future. Thank you for your time.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, James,  
23 and I want to tell you GALLOP NYC, amazing, amazing  
24 organization. You guys don't horse around, that's  
25 for sure. [laughter] So I hope, I hope you're going  
to take Vincent's number and you can get it from Joe

3 Bellow and please give us the feedback of your  
4 experience working now with Vincent regarding to your  
5 contract, yeah, yeah. So please let us know. My  
6 good friend here.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm not a great public  
8 speaker. I've had conversations with Ben Kallos  
9 previously about my attempts to get legal assistance.  
10 I have a federal lawsuit against the city that I've  
11 apprised you about. Let me just use this video I  
12 guess to be my testimony. [plays video] Let me  
13 rewind it. [continues to play video] So the bottom  
14 line is this. Like I said, I have a federal lawsuit.  
15 The judges issued a decision on September 30 in my  
16 favor. It's [inaudible] discovery. I got an email  
17 last night from the law department, saying we're not  
18 going to comply with your discovery demands. The  
19 mayor is having a public hearing at 12:30 today in  
20 regards to legislation pertaining to labor rights.  
21 Actually HRA is doing business with a company still  
22 stealing my pay from seven years ago. I talked to  
23 the mayor. You saw the video from July 18.  
24 Taxpayers are paying for those contracts. At the  
25 same time I'm still being victimized by [inaudible].  
So today's hearing is about veterans' contracts.

2 Also with regards to legal assistance for veterans,  
3 HRA had a public hearing in regards to legal  
4 assistance for veterans. They said that if you want  
5 to see the proposed contract with your M2Is prior to  
6 the hearing you can come to our office at 150  
7 Greenwich. They won't let me into the building to  
8 see those contracts or any contract whatsoever with  
9 my own two eyes and they're using a [inaudible]  
10 pretext to try to justify that. So I guess if you're  
11 a lawmaker, if, you know, we all have, you know,  
12 First Amendment rights that I guess we honor, we  
13 defended when we were in the military, what can you  
14 do about that?

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Contract?

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Thanks.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: What is the exact name of  
18 the provider?

19 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

20 UNIDENTIFIED: The one that, with the  
21 contracts with the city.

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Um, there's [inaudible] and  
23 HRA actually changed my lease agreement [inaudible]  
24 records [inaudible].

25

3 UNIDENTIFIED: You were concerned about  
4 somebody who had a contract with the city that owes  
5 you back pay?

6 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, MTT Data [inaudible].

7 UNIDENTIFIED: What is the first letter?

8 UNIDENTIFIED: N as in Nancy, Data. Data.

9 [inaudible]

10 UNIDENTIFIED: OK.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

12 UNIDENTIFIED: And what are you hoping to  
13 gain from the, what insight would you believe you  
14 would gain?

15 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

16 UNIDENTIFIED: That is if your question is  
17 so weak. I found NTT Data Incorporated and we can  
18 pull the contract and I'm happy to hand it over to  
19 you. I just, I'm not.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

21 UNIDENTIFIED: Oh, you do?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Sorry, the thing I was  
24 hearing was that you said you tried to go inspect the  
25 contracts and you weren't able to access them.

UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Ah, what is the specific,  
4 who is the contractor for the HRA body cams?

5 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

6 UNIDENTIFIED: OK. And, we, we're, so I'm  
7 interested particularly in issues of public access to  
8 contracts that's guaranteed by the City Charter, so  
9 they are violating your rights under the City  
10 Charter. So I'm taking that seriously, and in terms  
11 of the specific contracts you're interested in having  
12 access to I'm interested in pulling those for you.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

14 UNIDENTIFIED: I understand and I think  
15 the thing I've heard from DOI when I've reported  
16 folks is just that incompetence isn't always  
17 criminal.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: But they also gave me the  
19 payroll records and home address information for  
20 HRA's own employees that I made complaints against.  
21 So in terms of data security, where is that?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Got it. OK. So we'll try  
23 to figure out which things we can get for you.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

25 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you. OK.

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Hi, good afternoon,  
4 Council. My issue doesn't have to do with the  
5 contracts or any of that, and I just would like to  
6 say that as a veteran my thing today is, ah, the Fair  
7 Fares program. As a veteran and as a New Yorker I  
8 have not been invited to partake in the program and  
9 it's been 10 months since the program has rolled out  
10 and I understand that like 90,000 people haven't been  
11 invited and are currently using the program, and I'm  
12 just extremely frustrated that I've not been invited  
13 to partake in the program and I have to get to  
14 appointments and to the V.A. and to doctors'  
15 appointments and look for, as I'm also unemployed and  
16 look for work and it's difficult without, without car  
17 fare.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK, we could  
19 definitely, firstly, we'll take your information and  
20 we'll find out. The Fair Fares are for all low-  
21 income New Yorkers.

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And if you're not  
24 employed then you should be receiving it. So I have  
25 my citywide coordinator, Joe Bellow, was here, but

3 we'll put you in touch with him and we'll make sure  
4 that you get on the Fair Fares list.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you, thank you very  
6 much, sir. Thank you, council.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, so I'll have  
8 someone come down, my staff, Tova, my deputy chief of  
9 staff or Joe Bellow. Yeah. And I want to thank you.  
10 Thank you for being here today and listening to the  
11 hearing. In the future you could always contact my  
12 office, just walk up to 250 Broadway, 18th Floor, and  
13 just walk into my office, OK? You're always invited  
14 and you're always welcome to come, as all veterans.  
15 Thanks.

16 JAMES FITZGERALD: Thank you, Chair  
17 Deutsch, Chair Kallos, and committee members for this  
18 opportunity to testify today. My name is James  
19 Fitzgerald. I served nine years in the United States  
20 Army as an infantryman with deployments to Iraq and  
21 Afghanistan. I received the Purple Heart and was  
22 medically retired due to injuries sustained during  
23 combat in Afghanistan while serving with the 101st  
24 Airborne. I am newly appointed as deputy director of  
25 NYC Veterans Alliance, a member-driven, grass-policy  
advocacy and community building organization that

3 advances veterans and families as civic leaders. We  
4 work with community organizations across the NYC  
5 metro area to promote events for veterans and  
6 families posted online at ourveterans.nyc. Our year  
7 round online resource hub visited by more than 4000  
8 users each month. We also remain the only  
9 organization dedicated to local level advocacy for  
10 veterans and families here in NYC. I greatly  
11 appreciate the opportunity to present testimony  
12 before you today. There are two key issues we wish  
13 to bring to the attention of both committees  
14 regarding contracting capabilities within city  
15 government to improve the lives of veterans and their  
16 families. First, ensuring that the NYC Department of  
17 Veteran Services has the capability of managing  
18 contracts within the agency. We strongly support  
19 contracting capability housed within the NYC  
20 Department of Veterans Services. As we have stated  
21 in previous testimonies before the Veterans Committee  
22 and discussions with Chairman Deutsch over the last  
23 two years, we strongly urge the council to support  
24 and fund a dedicated agency chief contracting  
25 officer, ACCO, with specialized expertise in the  
city's contracting and procurement policies housed

3 within DVS. We believe DVS would be enhanced by an  
4 ACCO with the right expertise, relationships, and  
5 sense of urgency when it comes to serving our  
6 veterans' community. An example of why this  
7 capability is so needed in house is the long delay  
8 that took place during the first three years prior to  
9 DVS bringing Vet Connect NYC under agency management.  
10 In house contracting and procurement expertise would  
11 likely have mitigated many of the issues and delays  
12 that occurred, which we hope to never to see again.  
13 We urge the council to ensure DVS has no delays on  
14 establishing and managing contracts going forward, as  
15 this is a necessary function for any independent  
16 agency within city government. An ACCO would also  
17 bring the capability of providing meaningful  
18 oversight for discretionary funding from the council  
19 to organizations serving veterans based on their  
20 expertise and knowledge of the veterans' community.  
21 As you are aware, discretionary funding awarded to  
22 number organizations across the city for the purpose  
23 of serving veterans and families are currently  
24 overseen by agencies with little to no cultural  
25 competency in veteran services, such as the  
Department of Youth and Community Development and

3 Small Business Services. At a minimum, community  
4 organizations receiving discretionary funds from the  
5 council to serve veterans and families should be a  
6 part of DVS's Vet Connect NYC network for those  
7 services they provide and be a robust part of the  
8 city's growing support network for our veterans'  
9 community. Second, prioritizing veteran-owned  
10 businesses in city contracting. Going back to 2015,  
11 we have many times called upon the council to  
12 establish priorities for veteran-owned businesses  
13 along the city's goals for contracting with minority  
14 and women owned businesses and enterprises. In  
15 recent years city, state, and federal government have  
16 invested greatly in veteran entrepreneurial programs  
17 from NYU Veterans Future Lab to Bunker Labs and many  
18 other great programs. Yet the opportunities and  
19 assistance for veteran-owned businesses with  
20 lucrative city contracts simply have not been open  
21 and available. Precedent for contracting preferences  
22 with veteran-owned businesses exist in federal and  
23 New York State government and many cities including  
24 Chicago and Los Angeles. Support their veteran  
25 entrepreneurs by prioritizing them in government  
contracting. We again urge both the contracting and

3 veteran's committee to go beyond thank you for your  
4 service to our city's veteran entrepreneurs, veteran-  
5 owned businesses could be included into the existing  
6 program for minority and women owned businesses.

7 Potentially our city's agencies could work towards  
8 the larger goal of prioritizing women, minority,  
9 veteran, business entrepreneur, women, minority,  
10 veteran, business entrepreneur priorities and city  
11 contracting. Thank you for the opportunity to speak  
12 with you today. Pending your questions, this  
13 concludes my testimony.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: James, thank you,  
15 thank you so much and first of all thank you for your  
16 service.

17 JAMES FITZGERALD: Thank you, Chairman.

18 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And congratulations  
19 on your role at the Veterans Alliance. I'm looking  
20 forward to working with you and to working on these  
21 issues that you mentioned here to make M/WBE and  
22 veteran-owned businesses, to making that a priority  
23 and so looking forward to working together with you  
24 and I'm sure you know Joe Bellow who is really an  
25 amazing, amazing individual and who is a veteran  
himself. So, you know.

2 JAMES FITZGERALD: Oh, yeah. We go way  
3 back.

4 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Any questions? No.  
5 All right. So I want to thank you all once, oh, we  
6 have, she snuck in, Rhonda. Welcome back. Yeah. Go  
7 ahead. And I heard you have a great representative  
8 in City Council.

9 RHONDA: Yes, so Ben is my representative  
10 and I'm proud to be in his district. I just wanted  
11 to talk briefly about my services at Veterans  
12 Financial Coach. And the new development is that I  
13 was offered a grant from the Bob Woodruff foundation,  
14 so I'm now working part time at the CUNY campuses, 12  
15 CUNY schools that I'll be doing financial coaching  
16 for student veterans. I'd like to expand the program  
17 for now PROVE is only at 12 schools. But I'll give  
18 you an example of a day that I have coming up on  
19 Thursday. Starting at 9:00 a.m. I'm going to be  
20 speaking one on one with a veteran every half hour.  
21 So for that day I'll be speaking at least 10 student  
22 veterans, helping them with their finances,  
23 budgeting, credit card, any kind of personal finance  
24 issues. In addition, I'll be doing a seminar during  
25 lunch time with about 25 veterans showing up, student

3 veterans showing up. So in one day I'm going to be  
4 helping about 35 veterans. I'd like to compound that  
5 on a multitude of CUNY campuses and all over the  
6 city, for that matter. I'm also in the process of  
7 working on a contract with a nonprofit, again doing  
8 financial coaching. But I need to do more. I can do  
9 more. I've been a financial coach for three years  
10 and I want to continue to do it in the city. So when  
11 there's discretionary funding I'm requesting that I  
12 can add a lot more to, you know, what's available to  
13 me. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, and  
15 thanks for everything you do. I'm going to, we're  
16 going to continue supporting CUNY and the PROVE  
17 program.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: I just want to ask a quick  
19 question on that. So I asked the Department of  
20 Veterans Services about who pays for all the services  
21 provided through Vet Connect and they said well,  
22 we've spent \$514,000 and the nonprofits are on their  
23 own. Is that the right attitude, or should the city  
24 be trying to support the nonprofits directly so that  
25 you can go from surveying 20 or 30 in a day to being  
able to serve 6000 in a yeah or more?

3 RHONDA: Just for background, I was on  
4 Vet Connect when I was with the nonprofit, when I was  
5 under a federal contract through the Consumer  
6 Financial Protection Bureau. It was administered by  
7 the nonprofit. So I was on Vet Connect. When the  
8 contract ended I could no longer be on Vet Connect.  
9 So therefore the services that I was providing for  
10 hundreds of veterans went away. Um, so in terms of  
11 funding the nonprofits directly that would probably  
12 be a better route, in other words, to get, to get  
13 people like me to provide more services.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, and also  
16 we should be working closely 'cause I'm hoping  
17 shortly that we're going to be able to get, um, to  
18 have the Fair Fares, half-fare Metro cards to all  
19 12,000 student veterans, so this is something you can  
20 add on when you speak to the veterans regarding  
21 [inaudible].

22 RHONDA: I'll mention that, right, I'll  
23 mention that this week, yeah, yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: OK. Once again, I  
25 want to thank you all for staying through the hearing  
and testifying today. I want to thank all the

2 advocates who are here today and stuck around. Thank  
3 you, too. This hearing is now adjourned. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 30, 2019