



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: December 16, 2025

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**NYC Department of Veterans' Services Highlights Adams Administration
Accomplishments Serving Veterans, Service Members, And Military Families**

Safer, More Affordable, More Connected—For Those Who Served

NEW YORK — The New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) today released a highlight of key accomplishments delivered during the Adams administration to expand access to affordable housing, strengthen veteran identification across City systems, grow VA-accredited claims support, advance economic opportunity, and invest in peer support, military families, and veteran cultural storytelling across the five boroughs.

"We took office with a simple promise: to 'Get Stuff Done,' and, four years later, our administration can say we delivered that every day for working-class New Yorkers," said **Mayor Adams**. "We drove shootings to record lows and pushed jobs and small businesses to record highs. We rewrote the playbook on homelessness and mental health to finally get New Yorkers living on our streets the help they need, and, after decades of half-measures, passed historic housing legislation to turn New York into a 'City of Yes.' We overhauled the way our students learn to read and do math, cut the cost of childcare, and forgave medical debt. We eliminated taxes for low-income families, launched free universal after-school programming, for our veterans, we expanded access to affordable housing and stability, delivered faster and better services, and increased opportunities for jobs and entrepreneurship to ensure that New York City continues to serve those who served our country. We got scaffolding off our buildings, trash bags off our streets, and opened up new public spaces for New Yorkers to enjoy. The haters may have doubted us, but the results are clear. On issue after issue, we brought common-sense leadership to create a safer, more affordable city, and our work has changed our city for the better; it will stand the test of time because we made New York City the best place to live and raise a family."

"Our mission is to connect, mobilize, and empower—and during this administration we built veteran support that's real and built to last. We improved access to affordable housing, strengthened veteran identification across City systems through better data and better intake, and expanded VA-accredited claims capacity so more New Yorkers can secure the benefits they earned," said **Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner James Hendon**. "We also grew pathways to jobs and entrepreneurship, invested in peer support and military families in public schools, and advanced lasting recognition for the post-9/11 generation. We're proud of what we delivered—and focused on what comes next."

Expanding access to affordable housing and stability

DVS worked to make City housing pathways more navigable for veterans and to reduce friction points that can keep eligible applicants from moving forward.



- **Housing Connect disability verification:** The City enabled DVS and/or VA representatives to verify certain service-connected hearing, vision, and mobility disabilities for veterans applying through Housing Connect—helping make affordable housing more accessible.
- **Mitchell-Lama Veterans Preference transparency (S2372/A1084):** The administration secured greater transparency through per-development reporting for the Veterans Preference waitlists, helping veterans make more informed choices and better understand timelines.

Finding veterans earlier and connecting them to services faster

Recognizing that many veterans do not self-identify, DVS advanced an identification approach grounded in data-sharing, intake reform, and proactive outreach.

- **DoD transitioning service member data:** Since 2022, DVS has received DD-214 separation data as it is processed; in 2023, access expanded to contact information for active-duty members who submit DD-2648 forms indicating intent to separate.
- **VA SQUARES shelter matches:** The City checks adults in shelter against the VA's SQUARES database to identify veterans and connect them to services.
- **Local Law 37 of 2024:** Requires client-facing agencies to include a veteran identifier on intake forms.
- **Mission: VetCheck:** Relaunched in 2023, this volunteer buddy-check program now calls 10,000+ veteran and military households annually.
- **National recognition:** In 2022, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs honored New York City with the Abraham Lincoln "Pillar of Excellence" Award for veteran identification efforts.

Economic empowerment through jobs and entrepreneurship

DVS strengthened pathways to stable careers and business ownership by connecting veterans and military spouses to training, networks, and opportunity.

- **Veteran Business Leadership Association (VBLA):** Supports a citywide ecosystem for veteran-owned businesses through technical assistance, certification help, mentorship, networking, and a map of NYC veteran-owned businesses.
- **Vet Jobs:** Connects veteran job seekers with salaried, long-term roles alongside public and private partners.
- **Boss Up Veteran Small Business Competition (launched 2023):** Annually supports 10 veteran- or veteran-spouse-owned businesses with \$20,000 each, plus multi-week small business training.

Building capacity and strengthening claims access

The administration grew DVS's ability to meet need by increasing staffing and expanding access to VA-accredited claims support.



- **Agency growth:** DVS headcount increased approximately 25%—from 39 (start of FY25) to 49 (start of FY26)—expanding work in housing, VA claims, and care coordination.
- **VA claims expansion:** Accredited NYC-affiliated claims personnel grew from 4 to 14 through DVS hires, VetConnectNYC providers, and full-time Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of New York service officers funded through the Paul Angelo Vallone Veteran Resource Center Initiative (established 2024; \$540,000 annually).

Advancing tax relief for veterans

The administration supported legislation to expand property tax relief to more veterans and households.

- **Cold War Veterans Property Tax Exemption (Intro. 0740):** Would create a peacetime-era veterans property tax exemption mirroring the wartime exemption, with an estimated \$10.3 million in annual relief and roughly 11,000 eligible veterans receiving an estimated \$938 annually.

Strengthening peer support and community connection

DVS expanded neighborhood-level peer support by investing in community-driven connection, wellness, and belonging.

- **PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans' Support Program:** NYC's approach uses funds to seed hyper-local community-building—equine therapy, yoga, pickleball, and more—supporting 32 funded projects under the administration's approach.

Supporting military families and education pathways

DVS strengthened supports for military-connected children and expanded opportunities for veterans and families pursuing higher education.

- **Military Family Advocate Program:** Launched in 2023 with 55 schools and now expanded to 168 schools and growing, training a designated staff/faculty point person for veteran and military families in NYC public schools.
- **Veterans Tuition Award Program (VTAP):** In 2024, the City secured state expansion to include non-combat veterans (S8596/A9205A). In 2025, transferability legislation (S4358A/A3240A) passed both houses and is awaiting signature.

Honoring post-9/11 veterans and preserving legacy

The administration advanced long-term civic recognition for the post-9/11 generation and those New York City has lost.

- **“Homecoming of Heroes” ticker-tape parade:** Scheduled for July 6, 2026, along the Canyon of Heroes to recognize the post-9/11 veteran community; planning is underway.
- **City of New York Post-9/11 Fallen Service Member Memorial:** Approved during the Adams administration; slated for installation circa 2028 to honor 106 NYC service members lost in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other contingency operations.



Elevating veteran storytelling through arts and culture

DVS supported veteran storytellers and cultural institutions to bring veteran experience into the civic mainstream.

- **CineVet at Lincoln Center:** A film showcase celebrating the creativity and resilience of veteran filmmakers, featuring screenings across multiple categories and a veteran filmmaker panel discussion, with Col. Jack Jacobs (Ret.) as guest speaker.
- **Journeys Onward 2025:** DVS sponsored and helped curate an exhibition at the Salmagundi Club of New York featuring approximately 100 works across many mediums from more than 35 veteran artists, with accompanying reflections intended to foster dialogue across military and civilian communities.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services' mission is to connect, mobilize, and empower New York City's Veteran community to foster purpose-driven lives for U.S. military service members—past and present—and their caregivers, survivors, and families. We assist NYC Veteran community members on issues including employment, housing, food security, well-being, benefits, culture, and targeted advocacy. For more information about DVS programs and services, please visit www.nyc.gov/vets, call (212) 416- 5250, or email connect@veterans.nyc.gov.