



TO: Corey Johnson, Speaker of the City Council

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

DATE: July 1, 2020

SUBJECT: Local Law 215 DVS Veterans Resource Center Report
(January 2020—June 2020)

Attached please find the 2020 Department of Veterans' Services Veterans Resource Center Report pursuant to Local Law (LL) 215 of 2018. Local Law 215 requires the department to submit a report in machine-readable format to the mayor and the speaker of the council regarding the operation of the Veterans resource centers, beginning January 1, 2020, and every six months thereafter. This report includes the number of veterans utilizing such center; a summary of the services offered by such center; a description of the services and information most frequently requested by veterans utilizing such center; the number of full-time and part-time staff persons working at such center; and the number of complaints received by and against such center from veterans regarding the services offered by such center, including feedback received by the 311 customer service center. If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact Vincent Garcia, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at VGarcia1@veterans.nyc.gov or 646-891-9948. Thank You.

See Attachment

FISCAL YEAR 2020 REPORT

Local Law 215 requires the department to submit a report in machine-readable format to the mayor and the speaker of the council regarding the operation of the Veterans Resource Centers, beginning January 1, 2020, and every six months thereafter. This report includes the number of veterans utilizing such centers; a summary of the services offered by such centers; a description of the services and information most frequently requested by veterans utilizing such centers; the number of full-time and part-time staff persons working at such centers; and the number of complaints received by and against such centers from veterans regarding the services offered by such centers, including feedback received by the 311 customer service center.

I. Number of veterans utilizing such center

Intake Month	DVS Main Office	Staten Island Borough Hall	Queens Borough Hall	Grand Total
January 2020	38	0	2	40
February 2020	32	2	0	34
Total	70	2	2	74

March 2020— Due to the city-wide shutdown caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, DVS pivoted all veteran assistance operations to a virtual model. As an alternative, the table below illustrates the assistance requests processed by DVS staff broken down by client borough of residence for the time period of March 1 through June 30.

Intake Month	Queens	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Bronx	Staten Island	Grand Total
March 2020	10	2	4	7	1	24
April 2020	11	23	17	16	1	68
May 2020	50	21	22	22	6	121
June 2020	21	9	11	6	4	51
Grand Total	92	55	54	51	12	264

II. Summary of the services offered by such center

The NYC Department of Veteran’s Services (DVS) Engagement and Community Services (ECS) team is dedicated to helping veterans navigate NYC-wide and Veteran-specific resources. ECS Coordinators provide similar services at all veteran resource sites located in each of the five boroughs as provided at DVS Headquarters. ECS coordinators help veterans and their families gain access to Veteran benefits and support services, promoting a whole health model of support. These services include, but are not limited to, VA Claims assistance, education and employment resources, emergency food assistance, connection to affordable housing and financial support services, military caregiver and survivor support, and connection to mental health resources as appropriate.

III. Description of the services and information most frequently requested by veterans utilizing such center

The following table illustrates the same unique client requests broken down by borough of residence and assistance categories for the for the time period of March 1 through June 30.

Assistance Category	Queens	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Bronx	Staten Island	Grand Total
City Benefits & Services	63	35	41	29	8	176
Other	9	9	8	8	4	38
Housing	10	6	6	4	0	26
Employment	5	5	0	2	1	13
DVS Information	2	1	3	6	0	12
VA Claims	5	1	1	0	0	7
Clinical	1	4	0	1	0	6
Legal	2	1	0	2	0	5
Mental Health	0	0	1	1	1	3
Health/Wellness (Non-VA)	1	0	1	1	0	3
Grand Total	92	55	54	51	12	264

IV. Full-time and part-time staff persons working at such center

Full-time Staff Persons		
VRC	Location	Staff
DVS Main HQ	1 Centre Street, Suite 2208, New York, NY 10007	Amauri Espinal
Bronx Borough President Office	851 Grand Concourse, Room 209, Bronx, NY 10451	Christian Peralta
Brooklyn Workforce1	9 Bond Street, 5th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11238	Martine Nivose
Queens Borough Hall	120-55 Queens Boulevard, Room 222, Jamaica, NY 11424	Tanya Thomas
Staten Island Borough Hall	10 Richmond Terrace, Room G-25, Staten Island, NY 10301	Eileen Barcene

Part-time Staff Persons: 0

V. Complaints received by and against such center from veterans regarding the services offered by such center

311 Call Center Complaints / Comments			
Date	Agency	Nature of Complaints / Comments	311 Topic
January 2020	Department of Veterans' Services	Caller complaining that local precinct is not responding to noise complaints.	Suggestion
June 2020	Department of Veterans' Services	Caller upset that NYCHA has not set up appointment for the infestation of pests in apartment, NYCHA citing limitations due to COVID-19.	Trauma Counseling

Terms & Definitions

Aftercare & Eviction Prevention: The number of veterans and their families that received homelessness prevention assistance by DVS. Prevention assistance includes landlord mediation, assistance with paying rent arrears and connecting veterans and their families to the social services and other supports needed to remain stably housed.

Assistance Requests: Inquiries or requests for services, care, or resources supported via phone, in-person, postal mail or electronic mail. Assistance and support involve connecting City veterans and their families to a coordinated network of public, private and non-profit organizations.

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

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

Engagements: The term “engagements” means any interactions for the purposes of providing services to veterans, caretakers, active servicemembers and their families, including those interactions in resource centers, the department’s office, or in the field.

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

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

Veterans Resource Center: DVS maintains a presence in each of the five boroughs providing veterans and their families with up-to-date information, at no cost; regarding housing, social services offered by public agencies and charitable and private organizations, financial assistance and tax exemptions available to veterans, discharge upgrade resources and benefits counseling services along with a hard copy of the resource guide.

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