

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES

James Hendon (Lt. Col.), Commissioner



WHAT WE DO

The Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) connects, mobilizes, and empowers New York City's Veteran community in order to foster purpose-driven lives for U.S. Military Service Members—past and present—in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families. DVS works with City, state and federal agencies, as well as regional private and not-for-profit partners, to improve the lives of all New York City Veterans and those close to them. The Department ensures that homeless Veterans have permanent housing and access to the support services needed to find and maintain their homes; expands education and career opportunities for Veterans; and provides the human and technological infrastructure for Veterans and their families to gain citywide access to benefits, resources and care through the nation's leading coordinated service network.

FOCUS ON EQUITY

DVS strives to connect with New York City Veterans regardless of discharge status and branch of service in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the Reserves and/or National Guard. DVS serves as a critical hub for Veterans' advancement by informing our Veteran community of resources that exist, serving as a bridge to those resources when needed, and occupying roles that the local government can uniquely fill when gaps in Veterans' services appear in the private, not-for-profit, federal and state realms. DVS recognizes and honors Veterans of all protected classes in the City of New York, as the diversity of our City informs and reflects the diversity of our Veteran community. Further, the Department serves family members, caregivers and survivors, recognizing their essential role in Veteran health and well-being.

OUR SERVICES AND GOALS

SERVICE 1 Provide supportive services to Veterans and their families.

Goal 1a Mitigate and prevent homelessness for Veterans.

SERVICE 2 Assist Veterans and their families with accessing eligible resources.

Goal 2a Ensure Veterans have information about and are connected with appropriate resources.

HOW WE PERFORMED

- In Fiscal 2021 DVS secured housing for 38 homeless Veteran households through the Veteran Peer Coordinator (VPC) program, our peer-to-peer service model focused on Veterans helping homeless Veterans to navigate the challenging process of finding housing in New York City. Despite working remotely, our VPCs continued to engage Veterans, community partners and other agencies to work towards ending Veteran homelessness. In the first quarter of Fiscal 2021, housing viewings and interviews were a combination of virtual and in-person appointments for our Veterans to limit close, in-person interactions. Examples of virtual appointments include sharing videos of available units to prospective Veteran tenants and coordinating telephone and / or video-call interviews between management companies and Veteran applicants.
- The number of Veterans who received aftercare prevention assistance from DVS decreased by 24 percent during the first four months of Fiscal 2021 when compared to the same period in Fiscal 2020. The decrease in homelessness prevention assistance can be attributed to the public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The New York State and Centers for Disease Control-imposed eviction moratoria have temporarily moderated the frequency and volume with which New York City Veterans face immediate housing insecurity. As such, three out of four of our internal metrics convey a decrease compared to the last fiscal year. Housing re-certifications are the outlier. The decrease in Veterans housed also means that fewer Veterans are receiving aftercare services as well.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has changed every facet of life, including the way that government engages with the public. DVS transitioned from operating specified Veteran resource centers throughout the City to increasing its online or virtual presence. Historically, the agency's Veteran engagement metrics were closely related to outreach activities at community events across the five boroughs. During July, August, September and October of 2020, DVS continued to perform its outreach through remote means by making almost 7,200 wellness check calls through its Mission: VetCheck initiative. As placed calls were answered, Mission: VetCheck ultimately enabled DVS to actively engage with 1,041 Veterans and their families. During the first four months of Fiscal 2021, DVS engaged a total of 1,106 Veterans, Servicemembers and family members, a decrease of about 58 percent compared to the same period last year.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has made it more critical than ever before to ensure that New York City's Veteran community takes care of one another. Mission: VetCheck is an ongoing initiative that endeavors to this day to bridge the social isolation gaps that have been generated by the pandemic. Veteran and non-Veteran volunteer callers provide our constituents with vital information about essential public services, COVID-19 resources and testing locations and online mental health support assistance. DVS Constituent Services receives service requests across various issue categories, including, but not limited to: housing insecurity, VA claims assistance and benefits navigation, food insecurity, and employment assistance. During the first four months of Fiscal 2021, DVS assisted 443 Veterans, a decrease of around 69 percent from the same period during Fiscal 2020. Compared to the same period in Fiscal 2020, the aforementioned categories comprised a larger share of all assistance requests. Essentially, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the volume of assistance requests received but increased the percentage of those requests related to housing insecurity, VA claims assistance, employment assistance, or food insecurity.

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Goal 1a Mitigate and prevent homelessness for Veterans.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
★ Homeless Veterans and their families who received housing through DVS Veteran Peer Coordinator program	169	158	184	*	*	91	38
★ Veterans and their families receiving homelessness prevention assistance from DVS	466	438	455	*	*	176	133
★ Critical Indicator	"NA" Not Available	↕↔ Directional Target	* None				

SERVICE 2 Assist Veterans and their families with accessing eligible resources.

Goal 2a Ensure Veterans have information about and are connected with appropriate resources.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
Veterans and their families engaged by DVS	12,099	12,896	7,084	*	*	2,638	1,106
★ Veterans and their families given assistance to access resources	3,230	3,087	2,715	*	*	1,450	443
★ Critical Indicator	"NA" Not Available	↕↔ Directional Target	* None				

AGENCY RESOURCES

Resource Indicators	Actual			Sept. 2020 MMR Plan	Updated Plan	Plan	4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21 ¹	FY22 ¹	FY20	FY21
Expenditures (\$000,000) ²	\$3.6	\$4.1	\$5.0	\$6.5	\$6.1	\$6.2	\$2.3	\$1.7
Personnel	35	38	41	44	39	44	43	40
Overtime paid (\$000)	\$23.0	\$29.0	\$25.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$6.0	\$2.0
¹ January 2021 Financial Plan. ² Expenditures include all funds "NA" - Not Available								

SPENDING AND BUDGET INFORMATION

Where possible, the relationship between an agency's goals and its expenditures and planned resources, by budgetary unit of appropriation (UA), is shown in the 'Applicable MMR Goals' column. Each relationship is not necessarily exhaustive or exclusive. Any one goal may be connected to multiple UAs, and any UA may be connected to multiple goals.

Unit of Appropriation	Expenditures FY20 ¹ (\$000,000)	January 2021 Financial Plan FY21 ² (\$000,000)	Applicable MMR Goals ³
001 - Personal Services	\$3.9	\$3.9	All
002 - Other Than Personal Services	\$1.1	\$2.2	All
Agency Total	\$5.0	\$6.1	

¹Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2020. Includes all funds. ²Includes all funds. ³Refer to agency goals listed at front of chapter. "NA" Not Available * None

NOTEWORTHY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

None.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on the agency, please visit: www.nyc.gov/veterans.