



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NYC DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES REFLECTS ON A YEAR OF IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES**

*Honoring Service, Supporting Veterans, and Strengthening Communities Across the Five Boroughs*

**New York, NY**—The New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) is proud to highlight the important initiatives undertaken by our agency in 2024. From addressing critical issues such as food insecurity and mental health to fostering educational opportunities and economic empowerment, DVS has worked tirelessly to ensure that those who have served our nation receive the support, recognition, and resources they deserve. These achievements were made possible through strategic partnerships with fellow agencies, community organizations, and devoted advocates, demonstrating the power of collaboration in strengthening the bonds within the New York City Veteran community.

“From day one, our administration has focused on creating a safer, more affordable New York City. In 2024, we continued to deliver on that vision and ‘Get Stuff Done’ for working-class New Yorkers,” said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. “Thanks to our extraordinary public servants, America’s safest big city got even safer this year, with overall crime down and thousands of illegal guns, mopeds, and ghost cars taken off city streets. We passed historic legislation to turn New York into a ‘City of Yes,’ shattered affordable housing records once again, and put billions of dollars back into New Yorkers’ pockets. We broke records for the most jobs and small businesses in city history and moved millions of trash bags off our sidewalks and into containers. But we know that there is even more we can do to continue to uplift working-class families. As we look to the future, our administration remains committed to keeping New Yorkers safe and making our city more affordable for the millions of New Yorkers who call our city home.”

“At DVS, our mission is to connect, mobilize, and empower New York City's veteran community. The success of these programs reflects not only our unwavering commitment to serving those who have served us, but also the power of partnerships,” said **Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner James W. Hendon**. “By working hand-in-hand with fellow agencies, community organizations, and private sector allies, we are creating a network of support that amplifies our impact and strengthens the bonds within our city. Together, we are achieving more for our veterans and their families than any of us could accomplish alone.”

### **Advancing the Post-9/11 Fallen Service Member Memorial**

In collaboration with the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), and through the guidance and direction of the memorial advisory committee, [DVS announced a shortlist of artists](#) selected to design the Post-9/11 Fallen Service Member Memorial: Joan Benefiel, Douwe Blumberg, Cloud Architecture, and Joseph O’Connell. This monument will be located in Whitestone, Queens, and honor the 7,064 U.S. Service Members who sacrificed their lives in Overseas Contingency Operations, including nearly 100 from New York City. The memorial aims to serve as a lasting tribute and a place of reflection for all New Yorkers.

### **Combatting Food Insecurity Through the Veterans Feeding Veterans Initiative**



Through a sustaining public-private partnership with HelloFresh, The Campaign Against Hunger, Amazon affiliates Cazares Logistics, Twinwoods Transportation, and various Veteran Service Organizations, DVS has distributed meal kits to veterans and military families throughout the year. [This ongoing effort culminated during Thanksgiving with the delivery of over 3,000 meal kits and 1,300 turkeys.](#) By the end of 2024, the program is expected to have distributed over 50,000 meal kits, providing a vital lifeline and addressing food insecurity across New York City and beyond.

### **Expanding the Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Program**

To combat veteran isolation and promote emotional wellness, DVS accepted proposals for the [Private First-Class Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program](#) and will announce selected organizations for funding in early 2025. Recognizing that one in four NYC-based service members and veterans experience loneliness, this program will seek to offer peer mentorship and support groups, empowering the veteran community through connection and shared experiences.

### **Hosting the Greater NYC Military and Veteran Family Transition Summit**

DVS, in partnership with Craig Newmark New York Tri-State Blue Star Families Chapter and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, hosted the inaugural [Greater New York City Veteran and Military Family Summit](#) at Yankee Stadium. This event, part of a series including a summit at Citi Field with the New York Mets, provided transitioning service members, veterans, and their families with resources on employment, housing, wellness, and finance, fostering community engagement in iconic venues.

### **Bringing Services Directly to Veterans with Resource Pop-Ups**

In collaboration with NYC Health + Hospitals and City Council members across several districts, [DVS organized veteran resource pop-ups designed to meet veterans where they are.](#) Veteran specialists were on hand to discuss benefits and services, ensuring that both employees and constituents had direct access to the support they deserve.

### **Empowering Veteran Entrepreneurs Through NYC Boss Up and VBLA**

DVS, in collaboration with Small Business Services (SBS) and the Ron and Kerry Moelis Family Foundation, [announced the second cohort of the NYC Boss Up Veteran Entrepreneurship Program.](#) This year, the program expanded to include Gold Star families and military spouses, awarding grants and providing mentorship to visionary small business owners. Additionally, [the Veteran Business Leadership Association \(VBLA\) was relaunched,](#) offering veterans a suite of services, including one-on-one counseling and assistance with NYC government contracting opportunities. To date, the Boss Up Veterans Program has awarded \$380,000 in grants to support a variety of business ventures.

### **Expansion of the Veterans Tuition Award (VTAP)**

In collaboration with New York State, Legislation S.8596-A / A.9205-A was passed, in part, due to the advisement and advocacy of our agency. [This historic legislation entitles military veterans who served for at least four years and reside in New York State to be eligible for the Veterans Tuition Award, regardless of combat service.](#) This expansion significantly broadens access to higher education opportunities, empowering more veterans than ever before to pursue sustainable and rewarding career paths in their chosen post-military professions. This milestone reflects our commitment to advocating for policies that uplift and support New York's veteran community.

### **Enhancing Support for Military Families in NYC Public Schools**

[The Military Family Advocate Program,](#) a collaborative initiative between DVS and NYC Public Schools, continued to enhance engagement with veterans and military families. Launched as a pilot on Staten



Island, the program aims to expand citywide, providing military cultural competency training and resources to support military children and parents within the education system. The program culminated in an end-of-school-year Military and Veteran Family Fair on Staten Island.

#### **Connecting with Veterans Through Mission: VetCheck**

[In partnership with New York Cares, DVS's Mission: VetCheck restarted over the summer](#) and successfully made over 10,000 supportive check-in calls to veterans across the city. This outreach effort connects veterans to resources such as free meals, housing assistance, employment information, and mental health services, while expressing the community's gratitude for their service.

#### **Empowering Women Veterans with the Pink and White Empowerment Luncheon**

As part of Women Forward NYC, [DVS hosted a Women Veterans Pink and White Empowerment Luncheon in partnership with Women Veterans Interactive and Fiserv](#). This event addressed the unique challenges faced by women veterans, offering wellness activities, benefits presentations, and entrepreneurship resources, fostering personal and professional growth.

#### **Promoting Artistic Expression Among Veterans**

[DVS partnered with the Salmagundi Club to produce the National Veterans Art Show, "Journeys Onward,"](#) showcasing art by military veterans and their family members. Additionally, DVS participated in the Virtual Military Veterans Artist Network Symposium, exploring opportunities for veterans in the arts and highlighting their contributions to the creative community.

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#### **About the New York City 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](http://www.nyc.gov/vets), call (212) 416-5250, or email [connect@veterans.nyc.gov](mailto:connect@veterans.nyc.gov).