



Division of Veterans' Affairs

ANDREW M. CUOMO

Governor

ERIC J. HESSE

Director



2016 Annual Report New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs

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ABOUT THE DIVISION

The New York State Executive Department created the Division of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) in 1945, tasking the Division with assisting returning World War II Servicemembers re-adjust from military to civilian life. This objective soon expanded to encompass New York State's Veterans, Servicemembers, and their families from all eras. For 70 years, the Division has connected generations of Veterans, members of the armed forces, and their families and dependents to various economic, medical, and social benefits and services earned as the result of military service.

MISSION

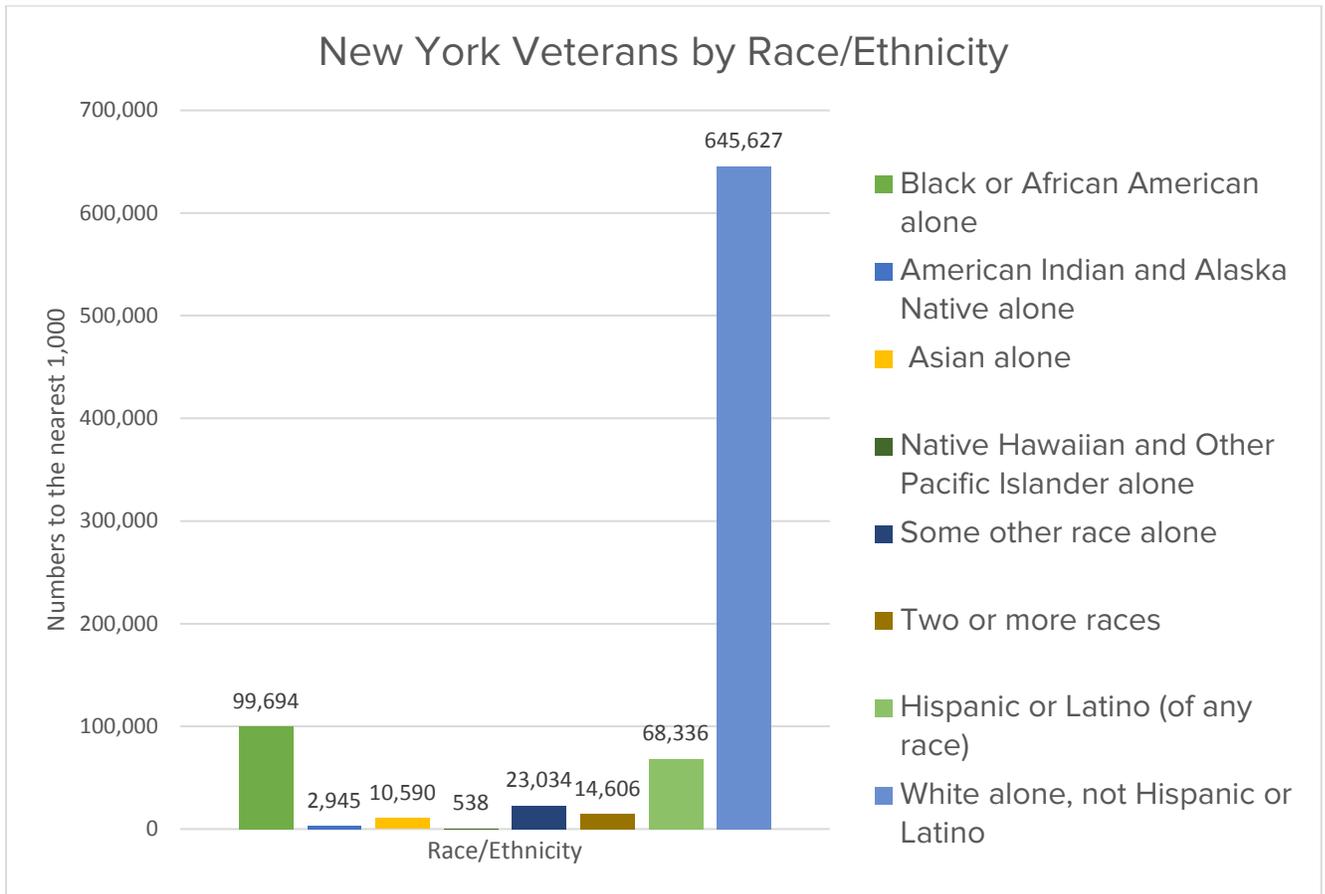
The Division assists New York's Veterans and their families the rest of the way. At all times, we provide quality support, advice, and advocacy for New York State's Veterans, Servicemembers, and their family members, helping them obtain State and Federal benefits earned by their service to New York State and to the United States of America.



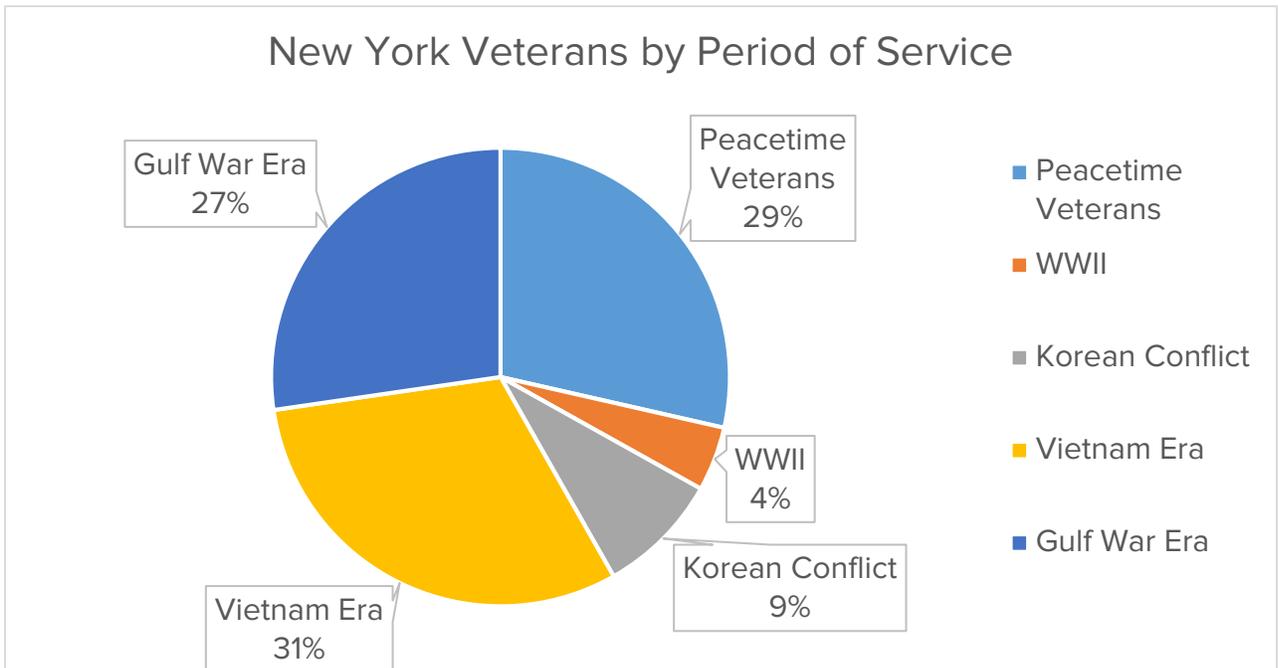
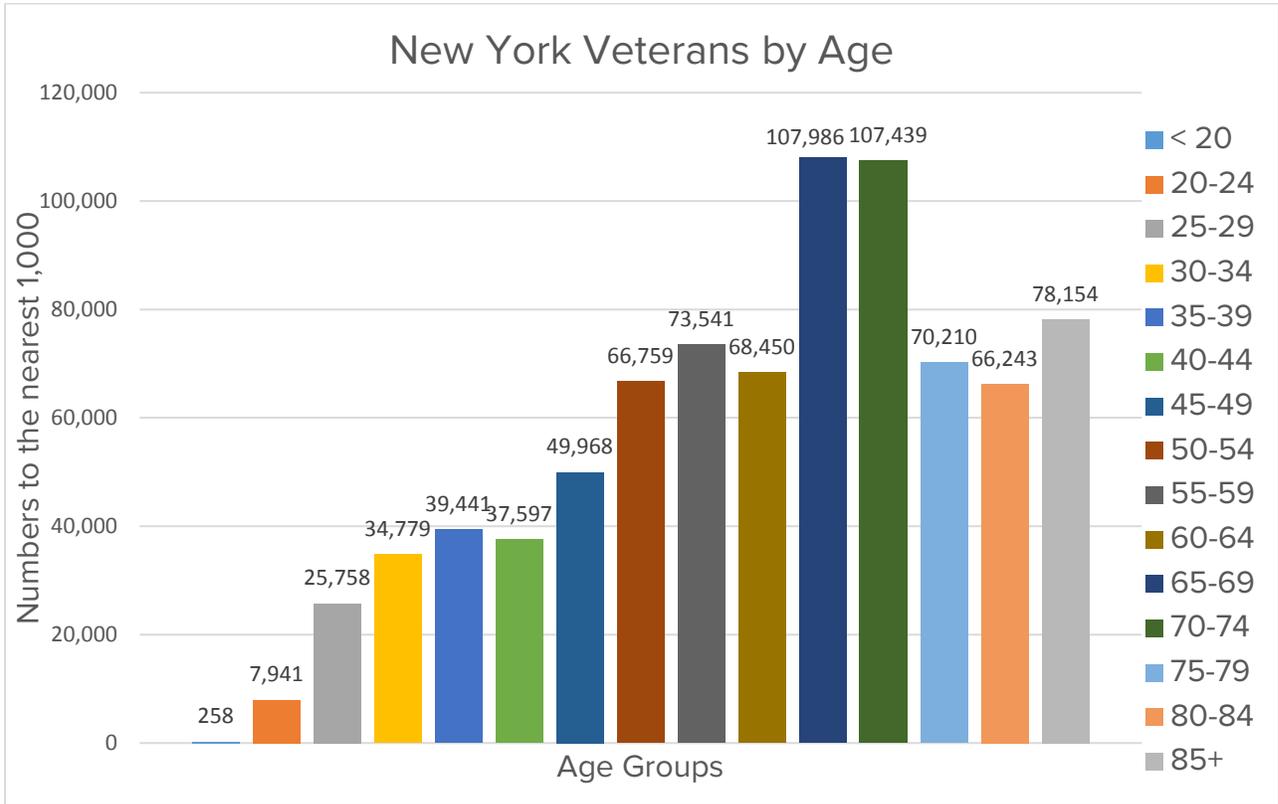
NEW YORK VETERANS SNAPSHOT¹

NEW YORK STATE'S VETERAN POPULATION IN 2016: 834,526

New York State Veteran Demographics



¹ All data reported as of September 30, 2016





By the Numbers: Serving Veterans and Their Families in 2016

Division of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Offices: **68**
VA-Accredited DVA Employees: **63**
Claims for Federal Veterans' Benefits Filed By DVA: **28,246**
Money Awarded in Claims Filed by DVA Advisors: **\$104,972,893**
State Blind Annuity Recipients (Veterans): **2,184**
State Blind Annuity Recipients (Surviving Spouses): **1,810**
Total Blind Annuity Payments: **\$5,457,724**
Total Gold Star Parent Annuity Payments: **\$82,750**
New York Residents Using G.I. Bill Education Benefits: **25,000**
G.I. Bill Approved Educational Programs in New York: **1,200**
Money that G.I. Bill-Approved Programs Brought Into New York: **\$500,000,000**
Residents of State Veterans Nursing Homes: **663**
Percentage of Beds Filled in State Veterans Nursing Homes: **94%**²
Number of Claims Filed by DVA at State Veterans Nursing Homes: **447**
Businesses Certified as Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses: **284**
Veterans Currently Listed in the State's Veterans Temporary Hiring Portal: **1,461**³
Veterans Currently Listed in the State's "55-c Program" Hiring Portal: **271**⁴
Veterans with Disabilities Issued State Parks Lifetime Liberty Passes in 2016: **2,445**
Total Number of Veterans Issued Lifetime Liberty Passes: **7,000**
New York State School Districts Offering Veterans School Tax Exemption: **41%**
Recipients of New York State's Veterans Real Property Tax Exemptions: **554,052**⁵

² Data current as of April 2016

³ Data current as of September 2016

⁴ Data current as of September 2016

⁵ Data collected for 2015



Division of Veterans' Affairs Highlights in 2016

I. Direct Agency Services to Veterans and their Family Members

Veterans Benefits Advisors Assisting Veterans and their Families

The largest single program in the Division of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) is the Veterans Benefits Advising Program. The agency's Veterans Benefits Advisors, all of whom are Veterans accredited by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), secure and maintain a substantial portion of the federal VA benefits paid annually to Veterans and their dependents in New York State. Veterans Benefits Advisors currently staff 68 field offices located throughout every region of New York.

In 2016, Veterans Benefits Advisors generated nearly \$105,000,000 in new and recurring VA benefits payments for Veterans and their dependents. Data indicates that DVA continues to file more Fully Developed Claims than other Veterans Service Organizations in New York State, significantly reducing the VA's processing time and the waiting period before the claimant starts receiving benefits.

Additionally, DVA's Veterans Benefits Advisors help Veterans access the VA's network of health care, State Veterans' Homes, and nursing homes, as well as many local public assistance programs and private venues offering initiatives to assist Veterans and their families. This provides a significant financial savings for many Veterans and their families across the State. For example, 663 Veterans or spouses of Veterans currently live in New York State's Veterans' Homes. All of these individuals would pay significantly more if they were receiving skilled nursing care in private facilities.



Veterans Education Program

The Veterans' Education Program staff, stationed at office locations in Albany and New York City, investigates and approves post-secondary educational and vocational institutions as providing a legitimate and quality education. This federally mandated approval process enables Veterans and their dependents to use VA educational benefits at scholastic institutions and facilities throughout New York.

There are approximately 1,200 approved educational programs in New York State, with around 25,000 Veterans presently utilizing these educational opportunities. These programs currently bring approximately \$500,000,000 into New York State.

Gold Star Parent Annuity Program

New York's Gold Star Parents — mothers and fathers of Servicemembers killed in action, as defined by federal law — are eligible to receive a \$500 annuity payment from the State. DVA evaluates eligibility for all Gold Star Parent Annuity applicants. While no amount of money can ever replace the loss of a child in combat, New York provides this annuity in honor of the deceased Servicemember and his or her family, and in recognition of their tremendous sacrifice. All Gold Star Parents residing and domiciled in New York State are eligible for this annuity, regardless of their household income.

In 2016, New York State paid a total of \$82,750 to Gold Star Parent Annuitants. As of December 2016, a total of 331 New York Gold Star Parents receive this annuity from the State in bi-annual installments.



Blind Annuity Program

New York State provides an annuity for legally blind wartime Veterans, and un-remarried surviving spouses of legally blind wartime Veterans, who reside and are domiciled within New York State. Blindness need not be a service-connected disability in order to qualify. DVA evaluates eligibility for all Blind Annuity applicants.

New York State paid a total of \$5,457,724 to Blind Annuity Program recipients in 2016. As of December 2016, a total of 4,357 New Yorkers receive this annuity.

Each year, the Blind Annuity dollar amount is eligible to change due to cost of living increases. In 2017, the amount will increase to \$114.00 per month (grand total of \$1,368 for the entire year) for each recipient.

Supplemental Burial Allowance

New York State's Supplemental Burial Allowance helps defray funeral and interment costs for Servicemembers dying inside a combat zone or from wounds sustained in combat. This program reimburses family members for up to \$6,000 in documented funeral and interment expenses not covered by federal benefits.



II. New Statewide Initiatives and Programs for Veterans and their Families

Organizing and Facilitating “11-11 Community Conversations” Statewide

In 2016, DVA facilitated several “community conversations” about Veterans and their families in locations throughout New York State during the weeks leading up to Veterans Day. These programs, which were open to the public, brought DVA’s leaders to every corner of the state during this time span, with conversations occurring in Queensbury, Utica, Buffalo, Long Island, Binghamton, New York City, Cortlandt Manor, and more.

DVA executive staff who participated in these programs included Director Eric Hesse, Special Programs Coordinator Jordanna Mallach, Executive Deputy Director Joel Evans, and Deputy Director for Program Development Benjamin Pomerance. Topics of conversation varied substantially from location to location, allowing DVA to improve upon its existing knowledge base regarding key Veterans’ issues facing specific regions and specific localities throughout the state.

At each community conversation, DVA executive staff members explained the mission of the agency and its benefits for Veterans and their families statewide, facilitated engaging dialogues among community conversation participants, and provided ample opportunity for members of the public to present ideas about programs, services, and resources for New York’s Veterans and their families.

DVA collaborated with executive staff from other New York State agencies such as: Office for the Aging, Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance, Office of Children and Family Services, Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, Department of Health, City University of New York, State University of New York, Division of Military & Naval Affairs, and the Department of Motor Vehicles to have a holistic approach to Veterans concerns and questions.



Expanding on the New York State Veterans App

The “New York State Veterans App” provides an important medium for delivering up-to-the-minute information and access to services for Veterans and their family members throughout New York State. It is a vital tool in the agency’s toolbox for the digital campaign to reach out to Veterans.

Only a handful of state governments currently offer a Veterans-specific app, and New York’s app offers certain attributes that are unique in the nation. In recognition of this, the app received the award for Best Mobile/Wireless Project in 2016 by the Center for Digital Government.

The app utilizes geolocation so that any individual standing anywhere in New York State can immediately discover all of DVA’s offices and other New York State resources for Veterans located within close proximity to that individual’s exact location. Every listing includes contact information for that particular local office, allowing Veterans and their families to receive faster and more efficient access to localized Veterans’ services.

Additionally, the “push notifications” system allows subscribers to learn about changes and updates regarding benefits, programs, and services for Veterans available on the federal and state levels. For example, this was important when a federal decision was made for those who served in Camp Lejeune and who needed to be alerted about their potential for financial and medical compensation. This system permits Veterans and their family members to instantly discover new developments regarding the resources applicable to them and their loved ones.

Given that the rules and regulations regarding Veterans’ benefits, programs, and services change frequently, this feature will provide a much-needed and often-requested aid for Veterans and their families. Each notification includes the option for the reader to easily share this notification with others via email, text, Facebook, and Twitter.



Successful Completion of the Appeals Strike Force Initiative

In 2014, DVA entered into an agreement with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to place trained New York State employees at the VA Regional Offices in New York City and Buffalo. This “Strike Force” of State employees was assigned solely to work with backlogged Veterans’ benefits claims in these offices, focusing exclusively on claims pending for 125 days or more, for a period of one year.

In 2015, both VA Regional Offices declared the mission of the Strike Force to be a success. In both offices, the Strike Force contributed significantly to a substantial reduction of backlogged claims. Strike Force employees worked on thousands of backlogged claims, collaborating with the VA’s staff members to provide a long-awaited resolution for many Veterans and their family members in New York State. To proactively address this less-publicized backlog of appeals, DVA and the VA agreed to extend Strike Force’s mission.

In 2016, this “Strike Force Phase Two” partnership, Strike Force employees reviewed and helped prepare for decision more than 3,000 appeals that were backlogged in the New York City Regional Office. In July 2016, with the appeals backlog at the Regional Office reduced to a level where the Strike Force employees had no further pending appeals to review, DVA and the VA mutually decided to end the program and declared the initiative a success.



Budding Partnerships between DVA and Legal Services Organizations

Historically, Veterans Service Officers and attorneys nationwide have maintained a strained relationship. Members of both groups routinely allege that individuals from “the other side” step on their toes and take away “their cases.” Unfortunately, these unfounded fears by both sides result in Veterans, Servicemembers, and their family members failing to receive the full range of benefits and services available to them.

In 2016, DVA focused on remedying this situation in New York, building bridges between DVA’s Veterans Benefits Advisors and legal services organizations that provide *pro bono* assistance to Veterans, Servicemembers, and their families in various practice areas. DVA facilitated cross-training programs with Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, Disability Rights New York, Legal Services NYC, the Columbian Lawyers’ Association of Nassau County, the New York Legal Assistance Group, Prisoners’ Legal Services of New York, and the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, establishing positive ties between DVA and these service organizations.

These newfound relationships have paid dividends, with DVA referring clients to these organizations for various forms of legal help and the legal services groups referring clients to DVA for Veterans’ benefits assistance. These new partnerships proved particularly beneficial on occasions when DVA worked with one or more of these groups to successfully provide several forms of emergency assistance to Veterans who were facing impending homelessness, a life-altering problem that these collaborative efforts were able to prevent. DVA will continue strengthening these ties and establishing new relationships with legal services groups in 2017 and beyond.



Increasing Access to Veterans Treatment Courts

Veterans Treatment Courts provide an alternative to incarceration for certain qualifying Veterans in the criminal justice system, offering the opportunity to complete a closely monitored treatment program in lieu of a heavier sentence. Several counties in New York State offer this possible rehabilitation-centered option for qualifying Veterans. In fact, the nation's first Veterans Treatment Court began in Erie County.

In Governor Cuomo's 2017 State of the State message, it was announced that Veterans Treatment Courts across New York State will now receive \$1 million in funding for the Veteran-to-Veteran mentor programs that are crucial to the continued success of these courts.

In addition, new legislation was introduced seeking to allow eligible cases to be transferred to a Veterans Treatment Court and permitting counties without a Veterans Treatment Court to transfer cases to a Veterans Treatment Court in an adjoining county, eliminating a longstanding inequality for Veterans in New York's criminal justice system.

Prior to this sweeping change, Veterans in fewer than half of the counties in New York State had access to a Veterans Treatment Court. This new initiative will provide the broadest possible geographic reach of every Veterans Treatment Court, resolving this longstanding inequality and ensuring that justice-involved Veterans throughout the state are treated equally. With high success rates across the state, including at least one court with a 0% rate of recidivism, these courts represent a groundbreaking rehabilitation-centered approach to criminal justice.

The Division of Veterans' Affairs will carry on with its work to connect with these Veterans to ensure that they are receiving all of their benefits they are entitled to as a result of their service and collaborate with other agencies to help maintain and increase the impact that these Veteran Treatment Courts have on the lives of New York's Veterans.



Seeking Justice Equality for Veterans through Law School Partnerships

Governor Cuomo's Law School Consortium Initiative created the opportunity for a partnership between Division of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and New York State law schools to develop programs providing pro bono legal assistance to Veterans and their families. This collaboration enables DVA to extend its reach and allow legal service to lend their help and expertise to Veterans across multiple fields of litigation.

In 2016, DVA facilitated a new partnership between the Veterans Defense Program of the New York State Defenders Association and the Criminal Defense Clinic at the CUNY School of Law, helping Veterans charged with criminal offenses in New York City. DVA developed a new collaborative effort between the New York City Bar Association's Veterans Assistance Project and students at the New York University School of Law. This effort focuses on assisting Veterans with complex claims and appeals for federal Veterans' benefits.

Other initiatives include assistance by Pace Law School's Health Law Clinic for Veterans at the State Veterans Home in Montrose, discharge upgrade appeals from Cornell Law School's LGBT Advocacy Clinic for Veterans with less-than-honorable discharges based solely on their sexual orientation, and consumer protection cases handled by Fordham Law School's Consumer Litigation Clinic. DVA also works closely with law schools that have clinics and pro bono projects focused on Veterans' Law, such as Albany Law School, Hofstra Law School, Syracuse Law School and Touro Law School.

In his 2017 State of the State address, Governor Cuomo promised to invest \$250,000 to establish the "Justice for Heroes" award program that will provide funding to New York law schools to continue and expand upon their work of addressing all of the legal needs of Veterans and Servicemembers in New York. This proposal will provide invaluable legal experience for law students and provide Veterans with free and quality legal assistance.



Adding Contract Opportunities for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses

In 2016, it was announced that Governor Cuomo will more than double the number of contracting for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses this year. The Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act enacted by Governor Cuomo in 2014 created the ability to certify, promote and encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of Service-Disabled Veterans in New York. Since its creation in 2014, more than 290 Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses were certified in New York and provided more than \$32 million in contracting opportunities.

This benefitted all of New York as each of these businesses provided the majority of their services within New York State. These opportunities to support and build upon the enterprising ambitions of Veterans also build New York's exposure at the annual New York State Purchasing Forum. They demonstrate New York's commitment to economic development and Veterans contributions to the betterment of communities around the state through investment.



Introducing Benefits Advisors for Veterans in Nursing and Assisted-Living Facilities

In November 2016, the Division of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) spearheaded the creation of a new pilot program to help connect Veterans in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities with benefits, programs, and services earned as a result of their Military service. For the first time in its 70-year history, DVA will hire Veterans Benefits Advisors to exclusively assist Veterans in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities, including the four State Veterans Homes operated by the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and the State Veterans Home operated by the State University of New York (SUNY).

The Veterans Benefits Advisors, all of whom obtain accreditation to represent Veterans and their family members before the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, advocate free of charge for these Veterans in claims and appeals for disability compensation, non-service-connected pension, and other services that can bring life-changing aid to a Veteran and their family. This position will provide a much-needed centralized point of contact for nursing home administrators when they encounter a Veteran or a Veteran's family member who needs assistance with applying for federal and state Veteran's benefits.



III. DVA Partnerships with Other Government Entities

Discharge Upgrades Initiative

In 2016, DVA embarked on an awareness campaign to help as many Veterans as possible obtain a discharge upgrade and bring back the honor of being a Veteran back to them. As a result of a Department of Defense memo released in 2014 and clarified in 2016, Veterans who were previously less-than-honorably discharged from the Armed Forces as a result of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) can now apply for their discharge to be upgraded.

This is of particular importance to Vietnam-Era Veterans who may have been less-than-honorably discharged due to actions from symptoms of PTSD or TBI before either condition was recognized as a medical diagnosis.

With over 40 accredited Veterans Benefits Advisors, all of whom received trainings on discharge upgrades, DVA is ready and able to help Veterans who feel they may have a substantial case for a discharge upgrade. Veterans' Benefits Advisors have already filed and won several discharge upgrade claims.

The Division of Veterans' Affairs is working closely with the Department of Corrections, other state agencies, and nursing facilities to increase the awareness of this policy so that many worthy Veterans can have their status reestablished with an honorable discharge. This restoration could mean having the ability to access and claim vital services like VA benefits and healthcare.

This initiative to increase awareness amongst less-than-honorably discharged Veterans, particularly those of the Vietnam-Era, will ensure that their dignity and status are restored with an honorable discharge.



Fresh Connect Checks

The “Fresh Connect” program began in 2014 as a collaboration between the Division of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The program gives booklets of “Fresh Connect” checks to Veterans, Servicemembers, and members of their families worth \$2 apiece (\$20 total booklet value), redeemable for fresh food products at New York’s farmer’s markets. DVA has increased the number of checks distributed each year by 5,000 since 2014.

In 2016, DVA completed its most successful distribution year to date. 2016’s total was about 35,000 Fresh Connect Checks. In addition to their cash value, these items were valuable tools for “breaking the ice” at outreach events. Frequently, conversations starting with distributing the Fresh Connect Checks evolved to discussions about other Veterans’ benefits, programs, and services. These dialogues often led to the Veteran, Servicemember, or family member accepting DVA’s offer of follow-up meetings with a Veterans Benefits Advisor to facilitate connections to other available benefits and resources.

Feedback regarding this program from recipients and participants remains overwhelmingly positive, as a conversation between a Veterans Benefits Advisor and a Veteran regarding Fresh Connect Checks frequently opens the door to a deeper discussion. DVA and the Department of Agriculture and Markets plan to resume this statewide partnership during the 2017 farmers’ market season.



New York State Legislation Directly Affecting Veterans

The following new laws directly impact New York State's Veterans and their families:

Veterans Equality Act

Prior law allowed certain Veterans enrolled in public retirement systems to buy back up to three years of credits toward their retirement, in recognition and appreciation of their active duty military service. However, the previous statute limited this program to Veterans who served during particular time frames or in certain geographic areas. This excluded a large number of Veterans from buying back their military time, even though these Veterans had served the Nation honorably.

In 2016, Governor Cuomo signed into law the Veterans Equality Act, removing all time-based and geographic-based restrictions from this buyback program. Going forward, all Veterans are now eligible to buy back up to three years of service credits toward their retirement regardless of when or where they served, properly honoring the service and sacrifice that all Veterans render.

Identifying & Helping Veterans

To help Veterans receiving medical care in New York State facilities obtain the full range of benefits for which they are eligible, Governor Cuomo signed legislation requiring any general hospital in New York State to ask during the intake process whether the patient ever served in the United States Armed Forces. If the patient responds affirmatively, then the new law further requires that the hospital provide the patient with the "Information For Veterans Concerning Health Care Options" fact sheet maintained by the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs. If a Veteran, upon learning this information, wishes to be



transferred from a general hospital to a United States Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility, the Public Health Law requires the general hospital to facilitate such a transfer as long as the patient can be transferred safely to the VA facility.

Additionally, Governor Cuomo signed legislation requiring local Social Services districts and not-for-profit agencies receiving State funding to inquire whether a person applying for Social Services, or any member of his or her family, ever served in the Armed Forces. If an applicant answers “yes,” then the office assisting that person is required under this law to provide contact information for the New York State Division of Veterans’ Affairs and a summary of the services that the Division offers, and facilitate contact between the applicant and the Division if the applicant wishes assistance.

Reimbursements For Interment Of Indigent Veterans

To ensure that all Veterans receive a proper burial or cremation with all appropriate honors, Governor Cuomo signed legislation offering a reimbursement of up to \$2,000 from New York State for Congressionally chartered Veterans Service Organizations who pay for the interment of an indigent Veteran. Veterans Service Organizations often pay for these burials and cremations out of their own funds. This reimbursement will help offset their costs of performing this service that allows all Veterans to be laid to rest in an appropriate manner. The New York State Division of Veterans’ Affairs and the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance will work together to facilitate this program.



Extending Hire-A-Vet Tax Credit

To encourage private sector enterprises utilizing the unique skill sets that Veterans bring to the workplace, Governor Cuomo extended New York State's Hire-A-Vet Tax Credit — a \$74 million credit incentivizing private businesses hiring post-9/11 Veterans — through 2019. The incentive was previously slated to expire on January 1, 2017. Private businesses hiring a post-9/11 Veteran to a full-time position of at least 35 hours per week for a minimum of one year are eligible for various levels of this credit.

Local Options For Veterans Property Tax Exemptions

A steep rise in real property values during the past several years is one reason why some Veterans have decided to relocate from New York State to other states. Recognizing this, Governor Cuomo signed legislation creating a local municipal option to increase the maximum real property tax exemption cap allowed under the pre-existing Alternative Veterans Exemption and Cold War Veterans Exemption. The savings provided by localities that chose to offer this heightened exemption will continue to help Veterans maintain home ownership in New York State.

Governor Cuomo also signed legislation expanding the options for localities that decide to offer exemptions from the school tax portion of a Veteran's property taxes. Previously, a locality could offer the school tax exemption only to Veterans who received the Alternative Veterans Exemption. Under this new law, localities may offer this exemption to recipients of the Cold War Veterans Exemption as well.

Lastly, Governor Cuomo signed into law a bill allowing localities to extend a Veterans Real Property Tax Exemption to members of the National Guard who were briefly called to active duty service during a postal strike in March 1970. Previously, individuals whose only active duty service occurred during this postal strike did not receive a real property tax



exemption. Under this new law, local governments now have the authority to provide this exemption to individuals who served on active duty during the postal strike.

Increased Transferability Of Veterans Property Tax Exemptions

Previously, a New York State real property tax exemption on a Veteran's primary residence was not transferrable if a Veteran moved outside his or her locality. Effective January 2, 2016, Veterans can now move anywhere within the same county without any adverse impact upon their real property tax exemption, ensuring that Veterans do not lose this exemption that they earned through their military service through a technicality.



Supplemental Burial Allowance Report

This report is submitted in accordance with the requirements contained in Section 355(i) of New York State's Executive Law.

During calendar year 2016, DVA approved no applications for the \$6,000 Supplemental Burial Allowance payout.



Gold Star Parent Annuity Program Report

This report is submitted in accordance with the requirements contained in Section 367(4) of New York State's Executive Law.

Entering its eighth year of existence, New York State's Gold Star Parent Annuity continues to recognize the ultimate sacrifice paid by New Yorkers during military service. While no amount of money can ever replace the loss of a child in combat, New York provides this annuity in honor of the deceased Servicemember and his or her family, and in recognition of their tremendous sacrifice.

In 2016, New York State paid a total of \$82,750 to Gold Star Parent Annuitants. Moving into 2016, the Gold Star Parent Annuity has a standing roster of 331 annuitants.



Report on Women Veterans and Special Program

2016 continued the trend from the previous year of increased outreach activities. Total outreach events for 2015 exceeded 300 events and outreach events in 2016 exceeded 400.

Outreach events that specifically targeted Veterans over the age of 62 were 15 for 2016 and events that served the homeless population totaled 11. Both of these numbers represent an increase from the previous year. With the increased activities of the Division of SCVOB, agency requests for DVA staff to attend events related to Veteran-Owned Businesses has decreased. However, we did attend one event for Veterans business owners in 2106.

The number of events specifically focused on reaching the Women Veterans population was only 2 compared to 8 in 2015. One of these events was attended by a VBA2 and the other by the Women Veterans Program Coordinator (WVPC).

In May, the WVPC attended the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans Annual meeting in Washington DC. She attended presentations about efforts by the VA to better meet the needs of Women Veterans, current research being done in VA facilitates with regards to women health and general information about the changes in VA.

When speaking about Women Veterans in New York, it is important to recognize the needs of Women Veterans are unique based on gender but also on the age demographic. When looking at the age of New York State Veterans broken down by 10 year increments, the largest age bracket for male Veterans is those in their 60s followed by those in their 70 and then those in their 50s. For female Veterans, the largest population is those in their 50s followed by those in their 30s followed by those in their 40s. As the female Veterans population is significantly younger than the male population, issues of concern will vary greatly in terms of medical care, employment and benefits for dependents.

The WVPC continued her ongoing interaction with the Women program managers at each of the VA Medical centers throughout the state. By staying connected with the VA Women's program managers the WVPC is able to provide the most up to date information about VA programs for Women Veterans each year at DVA staff refresher training, as well as to the Veterans and providers she interacts with throughout her day. Calls through the call center regarding Women Veterans were only 3, but direct contact was made with the WVPC through the Central Office in many more cases.



Thank you for reading the
2016 Annual Report of the
New York State Division of
Veterans' Affairs. We
welcome your questions,
comments and feedback
about the materials
contained herein.