



Division of Veterans' Services

Director McDonough's Veterans Day Message

This Veterans Day, as we seek brief respite to reflect upon the one-hundredth anniversary of the end of World War I – the “...war to end all wars....” as it was known, the day offers me a unique opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of the team here in the Division of Veterans' Services. And while we now know that history also has a tragic way of repeating itself, with several wars and conflicts ensuing and weighing upon this nation's heart, the mission before the Division of Veterans' Services remains constant, to deliver world-class benefits services to those who served, and their family members.

Next year, the New York State Division of Veterans' Services (DVS) will celebrate its own anniversary – our 75th - as it turns out. Formed in the aftermath of World War II, the Division has long enjoyed a humble reputation for digging into our mission and changing lives for the better. I'm honored to report this Veterans Day that our capacity and ability to positively impact the lives of New York's Veteran families yielded more than \$756,000,000 last calendar year in earned benefits delivered to our Veterans,

Servicemembers, and their families from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

New York's Veteran families wisely invest these federal benefits largely here in New York, improving upon their lives as they see fit, by spending and contributing to their local economies. They are also able to offset their expenses and create savings for themselves, which enables them to have greater financial security. For each of these federal dollars secured, New Yorkers' lives are improved.

With 80 federally accredited and well-trained Veterans Benefits Advisors — all of whom are Veterans themselves — stationed across 55 locations throughout the State, DVS goes to work every day on behalf of you. Along the way, we form longstanding relationships with those who served and support them.

Utilizing Veterans to help other Veterans builds trust and empathy between the employees of DVS and the clients whom they serve. This is integral for effective benefits delivery on behalf of our clients. Earning

trust is job one in this trade, for without it, the system does not work. The unique bonds shared between Veterans builds confidence in the systems of care and resources designed to help people.

In 2018 alone, DVS helped New York's Veterans and their family members submit 13,000 claims for benefits and receive a monthly recurring amount of over \$63,000,000 in federal Veterans' benefits which can be seen in our 2018 infographic [here](#). This is in addition to bringing in over \$550,000,000 in educational benefits for New York's Veterans.

Lastly on this Veterans Day, I am pleased to introduce our newest teammate, Kristen Rouse, who will serve as the Division's first-ever, Deputy Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. In this capacity, Kristen will focus the Division's efforts to more comprehensively address the needs of New York's Veteran families into the outyears.