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MAYOR DE BLASIO INTRODUCES IDNYC VETERAN DESIGNATION AND BENEFITS

City opens first three new pop-up enrollment centers in the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today announced the introduction of a veteran designation to the IDNYC card along with a series of exclusive benefits for veteran cardholders. The City also announced the opening of three pop-up enrollment centers at veterans service locations in the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens to ease access and expand awareness of the card and its benefits to those who have served our country in the armed forces. In addition, the City will open temporary enrollment centers in Brooklyn and Staten Island.

At the launch of the IDNYC program in January 2015, Mayor de Blasio committed to including a veteran designation on the card within the calendar year. With the introduction of the IDNYC veteran designation, the New Yorkers who have served in the U.S. military will be better able to access the services and discounts that they deserve. The de Blasio administration continues to enhance IDNYC's dynamic functionality by integrating access to services, offering new benefit opportunities and supporting special populations such as veterans.

"We're committed to providing the best services and support to our city's veterans, and that includes IDNYC," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "By taking advantage of this card, New York's veterans can gain access to a host of benefits that are available to all city residents, as well as a number of services designed specifically for our veteran cardholders. I'm proud to expand this historic program to those who have done so much to make our county – and our city – a land of equality, acceptance and opportunity for all."

"IDNYC is about giving a voice and identity to everyone in New York City," said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "With this added feature, veterans will be able to more easily access the many benefits and services that New York City offers them. I thank the administration for their continued partnership in making our municipal ID program one that works for all New Yorkers."

"With the IDNYC veteran designation, New York City veterans will be connected to veteran-specific services and discounts with amazing partnerships like the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, Veterans Advantage, and more," said **Nisha Agarwal, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**. "This designation not only furthers the program's integration into City services for New Yorkers, but expresses the City's gratitude and respect for the service of our veteran community to our country. With appointments available as early as this week, now is the time for all New Yorkers to get their IDNYC."

"DNYC is the one card for all New Yorkers, now with a veteran designation to recognize those who have served our country. Under Mayor de Blasio's leadership, NYC is the first city in the nation to recognize veterans on its municipal ID card," said **Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs Loree Sutton**. "The IDNYC veterans card will help veterans access great benefits – and this is just the beginning. It's my hope that veterans will come out to make NYC history by joining the ranks of New Yorkers applying for their card today."

The three new pop-up enrollment centers are located at veteran services centers: Mission Continues in Manhattan, Services for the UnderServed in Queens, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs James J.

Peters VA Medical Center in the Bronx. The IDNYC program will also be launching temporary enrollment centers targeting veterans in Brooklyn and Staten Island. Veterans can also apply for a veteran designated ID card at any of the 28 IDNYC enrollment sites citywide.

Veterans newly applying for an IDNYC card will be asked to demonstrate proof of veteran status, in addition to completing the standard enrollment process for IDNYC applicants. Existing IDNYC cardholders who are eligible for the veteran designation can return to an enrollment center and have the IDNYC card updated to include the veteran designation at no cost. All veterans are eligible as long as they live in New York City and have served in active military service of the United States and been released from such service other than by dishonorable discharge. Eligibility for the Veteran Designation is consistent with the definition of veteran status in the City Charter.

In addition to the robust benefits package that comes with being an IDNYC cardholder, veterans receive additional exclusive benefits with the veteran designation, including:

- **Free membership at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum:** IDNYC card-holding veterans who sign up at museum before July 4, 2016, will receive a free Individual Membership for one full year.

- **Enhanced access to veteran-specific services at the NYC Department of Small Businesses Services:** SBS veterans services include resume preparation, job training and job placement services through the Workforce 1 initiative, which is tailored to meet veteran needs, as well as the Veteran's Entrepreneurship Program. For information visit: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/wf1/html/about/veterans.shtml>.

- **Discounted membership in Veterans Advantage:** When signing up for an IDNYC card with the veteran designation, applicants can register online to receive a free one-year digital plan membership and other benefits. Membership gives access to exclusive military discounts from national retailers and leading travel providers, such as Amtrak, United, Jetblue, Greyhound, CVS, and more.

- **Discounts through the Queens Chamber of Commerce's Queens Vets:** The Queens Chamber of Commerce's Queens VETS Program will accept the IDNYC veteran designation as proof of veteran status. To learn more, visit: www.queenschamber.org/chamber_partners/queens_vet's_program.aspx

As of early June, half a million appointments had been made for the IDNYC and approximately 250,000 cards were issued. More information about the IDNYC veteran designation web page for the most up-to-date information: www.nyc1.nyc.gov/site/idnyc/benefits/benefits.page.

“Our nation’s veterans have made vital sacrifices to protect our freedom, and they deserve special recognition. The new veteran designation on municipal IDs will make sure New York City’s veterans have faster and more direct access to supportive services and benefits. Today our City takes an important step to show our humble gratitude,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**.

“I’m pleased that the Mayor has introduced an IDNYC card for veterans in New York City, providing a variety of important benefits and services,” said **Comptroller Scott M. Stringer**. “Our veterans have provided extraordinary service to this nation – and now it’s our turn to make sure that they can enjoy an array of City attractions and access Veteran Benefits by using their New York ID card. I was proud to become an IDNYC cardholder when the program began, and it’s an honor for New York to now become the first American City designating a municipal card for veterans. I urge all veterans to sign up for the new IDNYC card, with appointments beginning this week.”

“Creating the IDNYC veterans’ card is a simple, practical step to help our veterans and the right thing to do,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “I applaud the Mayor’s Office for securing the benefits that will accompany this card, and for making New York City’s the first municipal ID program in the nation to honor veterans’ status.”

“Incorporating this new veterans designation into the IDNYC program offers the men and women who have served in our nation’s military expanded benefits and greater access to vital services,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “I commend the administration for continuing to demonstrate its commitment to improving the quality of life for our city’s veteran population.”

“We have a duty as Americans to support the men and women who as members of the armed forces have sacrificed to protect our nation and the values we share as a community. These brave individuals represent our highest ideals as a civil society. I commend Mayor de Blasio for his efforts to expand services for veterans, most recently by introducing a Veteran Designation on municipal identification cards. This designation will allow more veterans to access the services that are available to them and honor their contributions to our nation. I encourage all New York City residents, particularly veterans, to apply for a municipal identification card today,” said **Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke**.

“Adding a Veteran Designation to the IDNYC card reaffirms New York City’s commitment to ensuring our veterans have access to the benefits and support they deserve,” said **Congressman Steve Israel**. “I applaud Mayor de Blasio for expanding this program, and look forward to working with our partners at the city, state and federal level to ensure our veterans have unfettered access to the services they need.”

“I applaud Mayor de Blasio for his leadership in making sure New York City veterans receive the recognition and support they deserve,” said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**. “Our city is again leading the way as the first in the country to recognize veterans on its municipal ID cards, adding incredible exclusive benefits and helping veterans better connect with the services and discounts they have earned through sacrifice and service to our country.”

“The IDNYC card will now provide benefits and discounts for veterans,” said **Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney**. “I applaud the de Blasio administration for creating this new designation. Any time we can recognize or support our veterans we should.”

“Kudos to the Mayor for creating a veteran designation to the IDNYC card. Veterans who served our nation deserve the best, and this special category will allow them to take advantage of special benefits and services offered by the City of New York,” said **Congresswoman Grace Meng**. “Thanks to Mayor de Blasio for recognizing the brave men and women who sacrificed so much for our county.”

“Thousands of New Yorkers are already benefitting from the advantages of having an IDNYC card. Now, veterans will be able to access even more benefits and discounts with a special designation on their card. This program is one more way to thank veterans who live in New York City for their service to our nation,” said **Congressman José E. Serrano**.

“Veterans and their families make profound sacrifices so the rest of us can be safe and free. Expanding IDNYC by including a veteran designation will help ensure these heroes can tap into the benefits and assistance they are due,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez**.

State Senator James Sanders, Jr. said, “Having served in the Marine Corps, and as a senator representing a district where many veterans live, I believe expanding the IDNYC program to include a special designation for veterans is a smart, innovative and beneficial move. Increasing access to benefits and services, providing special discounts, and anything else we can do to make life a little easier for our veterans should be embraced. I am glad to hear that one of the city's three new pop-up enrollment centers will be in Queens, making the opportunity to get an ID even more convenient for veterans in my home borough.”

“We are proud to see our Veteran’s Discount Program expand citywide with the Mayor’s IDNYC. This initiative launched last November to give veterans discounts and deals at participating businesses in their own communities. I commend our small business participants, the Queens Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor’s Office for recognizing the bravery and sacrifices of men and women who have served our country honorably.

It's the least we can do for our veterans and a great step forward for our city," said **Assembly Member Michael Simanowitz**.

"Veterans have given so much to this country and it is important that NYC recognize their contributions by giving them a special designation on the IDNYC card," said **Council Member Daniel Dromm**. "The benefits veterans will receive when signing up for IDNYC cards are great. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Agarwal for working with the Council to recognize our veterans."

"IDNYC just keeps getting better! It is clear that this important program continues to be one that is living, and nimble, and responsive to the needs and requests of our communities. This latest development – to include a veteran designation, and accompanying benefits package – points to our City's respect for those who have valiantly served our country, and to the reach of the program. We continue to be committed to enfranchising communities, and our veterans represent an important constituency. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and his administration for their continued work," said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca, co-lead sponsor of municipal ID bill**.

"Veterans are proud of their service to our country, and all New Yorkers genuinely appreciate the sacrifices that veterans have made on their behalf," said **Council Member Eric Ulrich, Chair of the City Council Veterans Committee**. "I commend the Mayor for fulfilling his commitment to include a veteran designation on IDNYC and urge all veterans to take advantage of the benefits and services this card has to offer."

"The men and women who have made sacrifices for our nation have called for a practical way to identify themselves as veterans to receive access to their deserved benefits. With the Mayor's announcement of a veteran designation on the IDNYC card and exclusive benefits that go along with it, we have taken a big step towards providing for our veterans," said **Council Member Paul Vallone**. "I am proud to have fought for this issue and applaud Mayor de Blasio's announcement which honors the commitment we have made to our brave men and women in uniform."

"The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum is thrilled to partner with Mayor de Blasio's administration in launching the veteran designation on the IDNYC card," said **Susan Marenoff-Zausner, President of the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum**. "Like IDNYC, the Intrepid Museum is a quintessential part of New York City. We take great pride in honoring our veterans each and every day, and we are now also immeasurably proud to welcome all IDNYC cardholders with the veteran designation as valued members of the Museum."

"We are proud to be chosen by the City of New York as a benefit provider for the IDNYC with veteran designation program," said **Scott Higgins, veteran and CEO of Veterans Advantage**. "Veterans Advantage Digital will provide free access for one year to a wide range of online benefits from national retailers and travel companies, from Apple and Foot Locker to United Airlines and JetBlue, and many more, exclusively for this most deserving group: the Veterans of the City of New York."

"Veterans continue to play a large part in our economy and I am pleased to support Mayor Bill de Blasio's initiative to help those who have honorably served our country," said **Thomas J. Grech, Executive Director of the Queens Chamber of Commerce**. "The Queens Chamber of Commerce's Veteran's ID Program has been very popular amongst the veterans and business owners in Queens, and with the new municipal ID program's veteran designation, we believe its popularity will grow."

"The Mission Continues believes that veterans' service to our country is not done when we leave the military and return to New York City. We are excited to be a part of the IDNYC initiative, and to open our civic-action headquarters to veterans throughout the city. While veterans sign up for their ID, they can learn about ways to lead again in our city through The Mission Continues Fellowships and Service Platoons," said **Aaron Scheinberg, New York City Executive Director of Mission Continues**.

"We're very pleased to partner with the City of New York and Mayor Bill de Blasio for this first IDNYC initiative at a VA Medical Center," said **Doctor Erik Langhoff, Bronx Veterans Affairs Director at the U.S.**

Department of Veterans Affairs James J. Peters VA Medical Center. “The IDNYC pop-up enrollment center and the Veteran’s Designation will provide immediate access to a useful resource for our veterans and our NYC-based employees. It’s a win-win for all concerned.”

“We at Services for the UnderServed are very proud to continue to serve the community as a pop-up enrollment center for New Yorkers and especially for my fellow veterans,” said **Dr. Brett Morash, retired Lt.Cdr. in the U.S. Navy and Vice President of the Veterans Division at SUS.** “In the modern world you cannot underestimate the importance of having a government-issued identification and I applaud the City in taking such a bold and proactive approach. By hosting IDNYC at SUS we give our veterans the opportunity to highlight their designation as a veteran while they also receive SUS’ broad range of services.”

When we surveyed the NYC veterans community last spring, respondents expressed overwhelming support for including veteran status on IDNYC,” said **Kristen L. Rouse, Interim Director of the NYC Veterans Alliance.** “We applaud this action by MOVA and all those at City Hall and the City Council who worked on this important initiative. We also express our strong support for keeping eligibility criteria consistent with the City Charter, which will include all veterans who served on active duty and received a discharge other than dishonorable. This way we can best recognize NYC veterans who have served and sacrificed for our country.”

“The IDNYC Veteran Designator is a great step for the Mayor’s Office, and a helpful tool for the city’s veterans. This will only help bring better access to services, resources, and care for our veterans and military families,” said **Taylor Justice, co-Founder of UniteUS.com.**

“We’re excited to see that the City is taking an innovative approach to ensuring access to city services for veterans and we hope that initiatives such as the IDNYC continue to attract veterans to settle in NYC upon completion of their service, be it four or 40 years,” said **Todd Haskins, member of the New York City Veterans Advisory Board.**

“The addition of a veteran designator on the IDNYC is a story of inclusion. It sends a message to NYC veterans that we are actively thinking of you and are here to support you in this great city,” said **Samuel Innocent, Member of the New York City Veterans Advisory Board.**

“Including all our veterans – as described in our City Charter – will bring better returns to the veteran community and to our city,” said **Vince McGowan, Past Chairman of the New York City Veterans Advisory Board.**

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