



TO: Bill de Blasio, Mayor

FROM: James Hendon, Commissioner of the Department of Veterans' Services

DATE: January 1, 2021

SUBJECT: Local Law 215 DVS Veteran Resource Center Report (Jul 2020—Dec 2020)

Attached please find the 2021 Department of Veterans' Services Veteran Resource Center Report pursuant to Local Law (LL) 215 of 2018. Local Law 215 requires the department to submit a report in machine-readable format to the mayor and the speaker of the council regarding the operation of the Veteran Resource Centers, beginning January 1, 2020, and every six months thereafter. This report includes the number of veterans utilizing such center; a summary of the services offered by such center; a description of the services and information most frequently requested by veterans utilizing such center; the number of full-time and part-time staff persons working at such center; and the number of complaints received by and against such center from veterans regarding the services offered by such center, including feedback received by the 311 customer service center. If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact Vincent Garcia, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at VGarcia1@veterans.nyc.gov or 646-891-9948.

Thank You.

See Attachment

FISCAL YEAR 2021 REPORT

Local Law 215 requires the department to submit a report in machine-readable format to the Mayor and the Speaker of the Council regarding the operation of the Veteran Resource Centers (VRCs), beginning January 1, 2020, and every six months thereafter. This report includes the number of Veterans utilizing such centers; a summary of the services offered by such centers; a description of the services and information most frequently requested by Veterans utilizing such centers; the number of full-time and part-time staff persons working at such centers; and the number of complaints received by and against such centers from Veterans regarding the services offered by such centers, including feedback received by the 311 customer service center.

I. Number of Veterans utilizing such center

The following table illustrates client requests, broken down by client borough of residence for the time period of July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.*

Intake Month	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island	Undisclosed [†]	Total
July 2020	33	48	31	56	9	11	188
August 2020	20	26	17	22	3	17	105
September 2020	23	20	20	18	8	19	108
October 2020	21	31	17	18	3	10	100
November 2020	19	28	17	16	9	8	97
December 2020	18	21	14	21	1	5	80
Grand Total	134	174	116	151	33	70	678

* Due to the city-wide shutdown caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, DVS pivoted all Veteran assistance operations to a virtual model. As an alternative, the table above illustrates the assistance requests processed by DVS staff broken down by client borough of residence for the time period of July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

[†] Undisclosed represents clients who did not provide full assistance request details at the time of reporting.

II. Summary of the services offered by such center

Due to the pandemic, DVS staff no longer occupy each of the VRCs, but continue to engage the Veteran community online and by telephone. VRC staff members provide Veterans with up-to-date information regarding areas including, but not limited to: housing, City services, mental health, employment matters, legal issues, and other needs. When needed, DVS staff members facilitate the appropriate connections between NYC Veteran community members and nonprofit, City, State, and Federal partners. Further, DVS staff members assist Veteran community members with the processing of VA claims.

As of July 2020, the Claims Unit – trained and accredited by the New York State Division of Veterans’ Services – began to process VA claims. DVS has developed a standalone capability to process VA claims for: 1) Service-Connected Disability, 2) Non-Service-Connected Pension, and 3) GI Bill Certificates of Eligibility regarding education.

III. Description of the services and information most frequently requested by Veterans utilizing such center

The following table illustrates client assistance requests broken down by borough of residence and assistance categories for the time period of July 1 through December 31.

Assistance Category	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island	Undisclosed [†]	Total
VA Benefits/Claims Navigation	29	49	29	46	11	70	234
City Benefits & Services	29	26	22	43	9	0	129
Housing & Shelter	33	41	28	18	2	0	122
Employment	13	18	21	17	1	0	70
Other	11	14	8	11	1	0	45
Clinical	9	13	9	2	5	0	38
Legal	10	6	9	12	1	0	38
Income Support	9	10	5	10	1	0	35
Mental/Behavioral Health	1	6	5	6	1	0	19
DVS Information	4	3	3	3	0	0	13
Entrepreneurship	2	2	2	3	1	0	10
Money Management	1	4	1	1	0	0	7
Education	1	2	1	0	1	0	5
Food Assistance	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Clothing & Household Goods	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Individual & Family Support	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Substance Use	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Transportation	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Social Enrichment	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Wellness	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	154	197	148	175	34	70	778

[†] Undisclosed represents generic requests for assistance where the client has not provided additional information to DVS nor responded to follow-up from our team. This table measures assistance requests, not clients..

IV. Full-time and part-time staff persons working on constituent services and VA claims

Full-time Staff Persons		
VRC	Location	Number of Staff
DVS Main Office	Virtual / Remote	1
Bronx Borough President’s Office	Virtual / Remote	1
Brooklyn Workforce1	Virtual / Remote	1
Queens Borough Hall	Virtual / Remote	1
Staten Island Borough Hall	Virtual / Remote	1

Part-time Staff Persons: 0

V. Complaints received by and against such center from Veterans regarding the services offered by such center

There were no complaints made against the agency or the VRCs during this reporting period