

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker of the Council

Hon. Eric Ulrich
Chair, Committee on Veterans



Report of the Finance Division on the
Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Budget for the
Department of Veterans Services

March 6, 2017

Finance Division

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Department of Veterans Services Overview

Established by Local Law 113 of 2015, the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is dedicated to improving the lives of New York City veterans and their families. Marshalling the collective resources of the City of New York, the Department strives to: expand education and career opportunities for veterans through a rapidly growing network of public, private, and non-profit partners; ensure that they have access to the benefits, resources and services they need throughout the City; cultivate an integrative health model to ensure the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of veterans and their families; and connect homeless veterans with permanent housing and support services. The Department has the following program areas: central administration, community outreach, homeless prevention, and mental health. This is the first fiscal year the agency is in operation.

The DVS has established a City-wide presence with its main office located at 1 Centre Street and four satellite offices in the Bronx, Queens, and two locations in Staten Island. Plans for expansion include additional satellite offices in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

This report provides a review of the Department of Veterans Services Preliminary Budget for Fiscal 2018. The first section presents highlights of Department's Preliminary Budget and provides analysis of significant program areas. The report then discusses agency performance and reviews Council discretionary funding allocated to Veterans Services.

Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Budget Highlights

The Department of Veterans Services (DVS or the Department) Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Budget totals \$3.6 million, including \$2.9 million to support 34 full-time positions. Approximately \$3.3 million or 92 percent of DVS' Fiscal 2018 budget is City tax-levy (CTL) funding. State funding for the DVS totals \$326,000 and represents eight percent of its Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Budget.

Existing resources for veterans services from various agencies, as well as, new resources were combined to create the new agency. The Fiscal 2017 Executive Plan transferred \$560,000 and ten positions from the Department of Social Services, \$200,000 and three positions from the Department of Homeless Services (DHS)/Human Resources Administration (HRA), and \$622,000 and five positions from the Mayor's Office of Veteran's Affairs (MOVA) to the DVS, totaling \$1.4 million and 18 positions. Additional resources and other restorations of \$2.4 million, along with 16 positions were allocated to the newly created Department in order to conduct its expanded mission.

Financial Plan Summary

DVS Expense Budget						
	2015	2016	2017	Preliminary Plan		*Difference
<i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Actual	Actual	Adopted	2017	2018	2017 - 2018
Personal Services	NA	NA	\$2,876	\$2,985	\$2,938	\$62
Other Than Personal Services	NA	NA	967	967	697	(270)
TOTAL	NA	NA	\$3,843	\$3,952	\$3,635	(\$208)
Budget by Program Area						
Central Administration	NA	NA	\$1,970	\$1,970	\$1,761	(\$208)
Community Outreach	NA	NA	657	657	657	\$0
Mental Health	NA	NA	600	600	600	\$0
Homelessness Prevention	NA	NA	616	725	616	\$0
TOTAL	NA	NA	\$3,843	\$3,952	\$3,635	(\$208)
Funding						
<i>City Funds</i>	NA	NA	\$3,517	\$3,517	\$3,307	(\$210)
<i>Other Categorical</i>	NA	NA	0	109	0	\$0
<i>State</i>	NA	NA	326	326	327	\$2
TOTAL	NA	NA	\$3,843	\$3,952	\$3,635	(\$208)
Headcount						
Fulltime Positions	NA	NA	34	35	34	0

**The difference of Fiscal 2017 Adopted Budget compared to Fiscal 2018 Preliminary Budget.*

In Fiscal 2018, funding for DVS decreases by \$208,000 or 5.4 percent, compared to its Fiscal 2017 Adopted Budget. The funding decrease is primarily related to fees paid for a consultant retained to help with the initial department organization, and budgeting for one-time startup costs, such as the purchase of computers, office equipment, supplies, furniture and other non-recurring expenses. Additionally, the November Plan included the recognition of a \$109,000 private grant to support one after care coordinator position through the middle of 2018. The Administration has indicated that DVS' Fiscal 2018 budget will likely be restored to its current funding level in the Executive Plan.

Vet ConnectNYC. The majority of the DVS' Other Than Personal Services (OTPS) budget is allocated for the development and operation of VetConnectNYC, a City-owned digital portal that connects approximately 225,000 veterans and their families with a full range of care, services, and resources from a network of public, private, and non-profit partners.

Headcount. Of the total 34 full-time positions budgeted for Fiscal 2018, nine positions are assigned to central administration, nine to community outreach, eight to mental health services, and eight to homeless prevention. An additional homeless prevention position included in the current year budget but not reflected in the current plan for Fiscal 2018, will likely be restored in the Executive Budget. As of December 2016, seven DVS positions were vacant according to the Office of Management and Budget headcount reporting.

Agency Performance

Because this is the first year of operation, the DVS has yet to be included in the Mayor's Preliminary Management Report. The Council will work with the Department to identify performance metrics for the 2017 Mayor's Management Report.

The DVS has provided the following veterans services performance highlights:

- In December 2015, the federal government certified that New York City had ended chronic veteran homelessness.
- Veteran homelessness was reduced by 90 percent since 2011, nearly doubling the national average.
- The vast majority of homeless veterans in New York City, between 90-95 percent, are now sheltered.
- The City has developed a rapid re-housing system, drastically reducing time veterans remain in shelter before moving into a permanent home, with a median length of shelter stay of 79 days.
- The City has engaged with veterans across the City at over 150 outreach events since the Agency became operational in April 2016.
- One-on-one assistance has been provided to 1,453 veterans and family members since April 2016.
- The Workforce 1 Career Centers have served 4,261 veterans and spouses and helped 949 veterans and spouses get jobs between January and September of 2016.

Council Veteran Services Initiatives

The Council's Fiscal 2017 Veteran Services Initiative totals \$1.34 million providing employment, housing, legal, and mental health services across the five boroughs. Created in Fiscal 2016, funding for the Council's Veterans Services Initiative has increased from \$400,000 in its first year to \$1.34 million in Fiscal 2017. Services under the initiative are currently administered by several agencies. It is the aim of the Committee on Veterans Affairs to have DVS administer this initiative moving forward.

Managing Agency	Veterans Services Initiative	Fiscal 2015 Amount	Fiscal 2016 Amount	Fiscal 2017 Amount
SBS	Job Placement for Veterans	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
DSS/HRA	Legal Services for Veterans	\$100,000	\$350,000	\$350,000
DOHMH	Mental Health Services for Veterans	\$100,000	\$190,000	\$150,000
DYCD	Veterans Community Development	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$390,000
DHS	Homeless Prevention Services for Veterans	\$0	\$150,000	\$300,000
Totals		\$400,000	\$940,000	\$1,340,000

Fiscal 2017 Designated Community-Based Organizations

For Fiscal 2017, 11 community-based organizations were designated by the Council to provide services to the City's veterans.

Veterans Services Initiative

Program Area	Agency	Legal Name of Organization	Fiscal 2017 Amount
Homeless Prevention Services	DHS	Project Renewal, Inc.	\$300,000
Job Placement	SBS	Helmets to Hardhats, NYC	150,000
Legal Services	DSS/HRA	Legal Services NYC	150,000
Legal Services	DSS/HRA	New York Legal Assistance Group, Inc.	200,000
Mental Health Services	DOHMH	New York University - Military Family Clinic	150,000
Community Development	DYCD	Jericho Project	275,000
Community Development	DYCD	Black Veterans for Social Justice, Inc.	25,000
Community Development	DYCD	Bailey House, Inc.	20,000
Community Development	DYCD	Harlem United Community AIDS Center, Inc.	20,000
Community Development	DYCD	United War Veterans Council	25,000
Community Development	DYCD	United Military Veterans of Kings County, Inc.	25,000
Total			\$1,340,000

Veterans Advisory Board

The New York City Veterans Advisory Board (VAB) advises the Administration on all matters concerning veterans. The VAB meets quarterly, comprised of 11 volunteer veterans from the five boroughs, and submits annual reports to the Mayor and the Speaker. Its primary task is to advise the Commissioner of Veterans Services on all matters concerning Veterans. There is no dedicated funding allocated to the VAB in DVS' Budget.