



Division of Veterans' Services

Division of Veterans' Services Efforts to Increase Transparency (2021)

The New York State Division of Veterans' Services (DVS) strives to provide New York's veteran families with accessible, open and transparent information about its activities and services at all times. DVS currently has several practices in place to ensure transparency and availability to those it serves. Below are improvements DVS is committed to implementing to maintain the trust New York's veterans and their families.

- **Making additional information available to the public through the DVS website**
 - Current status: The Division of Veterans' Services (DVS) website is currently updated on a weekly basis with new and useful information for New York's veteran families. The website hosts information on DVS's programs and services as well as those available through other State agencies and through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The website is also updated to comply with requirements established through legislation or executive order, including providing translations of vital documents, information for veterans concerning healthcare options, access to the NYS Veterans Mobile App, voter registration, and information on Military Sexual Trauma, Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Public documents such as agency contact information, annual reports, press releases, and open meeting information are also available on the agency website.
 - Possible improvements: Announcements regarding new federal changes will be added within 48 hours of the policy or legislation becoming effective so the most-up-to date information is available for New York's veteran families. DVS will work with ITS to continue modifying and updating the website to include new features and accessibility items provide the highest quality digital experience for veterans and their families.
- **Making additional information available to the public through DVS social media accounts**
 - Current status: DVS consistently updates its main social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) on a daily basis. Information transmitted is often about legislation, outreach activities, programs or services which may be of interest to New York's veteran families. There is a concerted effort made to make sure the same information is available



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across various platforms, and that the agency also includes unique media on each platform depending on what is most effective for that platform. DVS makes an effort to inform the public via social media about any updates or changes made to relevant state or federal laws or regulations. Our social media platforms are advertised in every member of DVS's staff email signature block, mobile app, agency brochures, agency presentations, agency flyers and the agency website. The agency maintains the same handle (@NewYorkVeterans) across all platforms for consistency. Information regarding meetings, town halls, Q&A's, and hosted events by the agency are posted in advance as well as the day of the event on social media for increased awareness and participation.

- Possible improvements: DVS can announce when reports are available on its website via social media to increase awareness among New York's veterans and the public more generally. DVS can continue to amplify the information and work done by its partner agencies on social media that may impact our service population so individuals are aware of the array of services available to them. DVS could include links to public comment periods provided by the Federal Register on social media to alert New York's veterans to opportunities for engagement and feedback.
- **Ensuring timely preparation and publication of legally mandated reporting**
 - Current status: DVS currently meets all of its annual reporting requirements. Several of these reports are included within DVS's "Annual Report" for increased ease of access. These reports are available on DVS's website under "Public Information" and are available in the universally accessible PDF format. These reports are posted within the week of submission to their respective Executive and Legislative recipients.
 - Possible improvements: Currently, some veteran-related reports are handled by other agencies such as the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business initiative, which is handled by the Office of General Services (OGS) rather than DVS. DVS can provide links to these reports on our website for increased awareness and transparency. DVS will work with the Executive Chamber to streamline this process and remove any unnecessary delays to ensure the timely submission of these reports.