



## Department of Veterans' Services

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**VIVIANA DECOHEN**  
Commissioner

**February 20, 2024**

### **Transparency Updates from 2021**

#### **Enhancing Public Access: DVS Website Upgrades**

Due to significant and structural enhancements to the DVS website, the agency has achieved greater responsiveness to the immediate needs of New York's Veterans and their families. These improvements have enabled rapid updates, exemplified by the Nonprofit Capital Grant Program, where new information is consistently provided in less than 24 hours. This turnaround time is shorter than the 48-hour period previously proposed by DVS. Additionally, the revamped website allows for enhanced language adjustments to ensure increased accessibility across all platforms. These changes align with DVS's transparency plans, reinforcing the commitment to keeping the public well-informed.

#### **Enhancing Transparency: DVS Shares Vital Information Through Social Media Platforms**

DVS remains dedicated to fostering transparency by consistently sharing crucial reports, both from our own work and the work of other State entities, across various social media platforms. This commitment extends to disseminating relevant information from partner agencies to benefit New York's Veterans. From NYC City Council Funding updates to RFP requests, DVS ensures that not only Veterans but also those involved in serving them receive comprehensive and timely information through social media. This approach has significantly contributed to raising awareness about various grant programs and federal commentary opportunities.

#### **Enhancing Transparency Through Comprehensive Reports**

As part of DVS's ongoing transparency efforts, DVS provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive reports not only from our agency, including DEI reporting and annual reports, but also relevant reports from partner agencies where DVS plays a significant role. Explore insights on Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses, Geriatric Reporting, and crucial mental health information at <https://veterans.ny.gov/partner->

[agency-reports](#). This consolidated resource ensures New Yorkers have a transparent view of the collaborative work undertaken by all agencies on their behalf.

## **Initiatives to be Implemented in 2024**

### **Community Engagement Report**

As part of DVS's ongoing transparency efforts, DVS anticipates publishing an annual Community Engagement Report, which will be broken down by quarters and will encompass executive staff's community engagement metrics. We expect these to include the number of community events hosted or supported, categories of the targeted community engagement, population demographics of the targeted community engagement, the geographical region of the targeted community engagement, and the date/quarter of each engagement. The report, broken down by quarters, will aim to offer the public an important insight into the agency's initiatives and dedicated efforts to address the unique needs of diverse populations within the Veterans community. These efforts extend to BIPOC veterans, LGBTQ+ veterans, incarcerated veterans, veterans at risk of homelessness, and Women and gender non-conforming veterans, among others.

### **Law Accessibility Project**

DVS is committed to ensuring accessibility of the law for all, as knowledge of the law leads to the empowerment of New Yorkers. Annually, DVS anticipates publishing a compendium of every New York State statute directly impacting Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families on the department's website. DVS expects to publish upcoming dates for in-person and online trainings free of charge to better inform Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families — and those who serve them, from educational leaders to medical professionals to business executives — about federal, state, and local laws that can lead them to life-changing benefits, services, and resources, cutting through the red tape and legalese to ensure that everyone present comprehends their legal rights.