

DVS: Governor Hochul Delivered Historic Wins in the 2025-26 State Budget for New York's Veterans & Military Families

State Budget Expands Support for Gold Star Families, Enhances Veteran Suicide Prevention Initiatives, and Increases Assistance for Military Families



New York State Department of Veterans' Services

ALBANY, NY, UNITED STATES, May 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The New York State Department of [Veterans'](#)

Services ([DVS](#)) today highlighted several transformative victories for Veterans, Military Families, and Service Members in the 2025-26 enacted State Budget. Under the leadership of Governor Kathy Hochul – a steadfast ally and true friend to New York's Veterans – the State Budget provides critical support, expanding access to essential services, resources, and financial relief for those who have served and sacrificed for our nation.

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*NYSDVS Commissioner
Viviana DeCohen*

Key State Budget wins for New York's Veteran community include:

Expanded Support for [Gold Star Families](#): The enacted State Budget broadens eligibility for the Gold Star Annuity, previously limited to parents of Service Members who died in combat. This vital support will now be available to immediate family members of any Service Member who dies while on active duty, ensuring a broader safety net for

grieving families. This change has been requested by New York's Gold Star Families and DVS for nine years and Governor Hochul made it happen;

Enhanced Veteran Suicide Prevention Initiatives: A historic \$1 million investment will significantly bolster Veteran suicide prevention efforts across New York State. This funding will support enhanced risk assessment training, outreach tools, gun safety programs, and improved access to mental health services, directly addressing the urgent need for Veteran mental health support; and

Increased Support for Military Families: The State Budget provides an additional \$350,000 for the Military Family Relief Fund, expanding financial support for various relief initiatives to improve the lives of Military Families across the state.

These landmark victories for Veterans, Military Families, and Service Members were first introduced in Governor Kathy Hochul's 2025 State of the State Address and further detailed in her 2025-26 Executive Budget proposal. Governor Hochul's vision for a stronger, more supportive New York for those who have served our nation has been realized in this enacted State Budget, reflecting her unwavering commitment to delivering meaningful support, expanding vital services, and honoring the sacrifices of New York's military community.

Tackling the affordability crisis

The 2025-26 State Budget also addresses the affordability crisis, putting nearly \$5,000 back into the pockets of everyday New Yorkers through a middle-class tax cut – bringing rates to their lowest in 70 years, tripling the Child Tax Credit to \$1,000 per child, providing Inflation Refund Checks, and ensuring free school meals for every student. It also makes community college free for adult New Yorkers pursuing careers in high-demand fields, supporting the reskilling and upskilling of Veterans.

DVS Commissioner Viviana DeCohen praised Governor Hochul's unwavering commitment to Veterans and their families, stating: "Governor Kathy Hochul has once again demonstrated her steadfast dedication to New York's Veterans, Military Families, and Service Members. This budget delivers meaningful support and essential resources, ensuring that those who have sacrificed for our nation receive the care and respect they deserve. We are incredibly grateful for the Governor's leadership and friendship."

DVS Executive Deputy Commissioner Joel Evans emphasized the positive impact of the State Budget's pro-Veterans measures, saying: "These historic investments in suicide prevention, Gold Star Family support, and Military Family relief will save lives, honor sacrifice, and strengthen our military community across New York. Governor Hochul's leadership has made a real difference, and our Department of Veterans' Services is proud to help deliver these critical benefits."

Wendy McClinton, President and CEO, Black Veterans for Social Justice, Inc., said, "This budget is a promise kept – a promise that New York will always stand with those who served. Our Veterans deserve a state that listens, supports, and invests in their well-being. Governor Hochul and DVS have delivered exactly that, and Black Veterans for Social Justice looks forward to our continued collaborations."

Cindy Roberts, 2022-2023 Department of New York American Gold Star Mothers President, said "Every penny spent towards mental health education and suicide prevention is a critical step in healing and recovery for our Veterans, families, and the entire military community. We must go 'Ever Forward'."

Tiana Sloan, President, American Legion Auxiliary, Leroy Gregory Unit 979, stated, "This is a powerful affirmation of New York State's commitment to those who have served and sacrificed. By prioritizing mental health, enhancing outreach, promoting gun safety, and easing financial burdens, Governor Hochul and DVS are taking bold, necessary steps to ensure our Veterans and their families are never left behind. These efforts not only save lives but also strengthen the well-being and resilience of the entire military community."

John J. Creskey, Commander, American Legion Adolph Pfister Post 1038, said, "For Gold Star Families and all who have sacrificed, this budget brings hope and recognition. We are grateful for a state that remembers our heroes and supports their families. As Veterans we welcome the historic funding for the prevention of Veteran suicide which addresses a critical need."

Christopher Kreiger, President and CEO, WNY Heroes, Inc., said, "When our Veterans and their families are supported, our entire community is stronger. This budget is a major victory for every Veteran and Military Family in New York."

About the NYS Department of Veterans' Services

The New York State Department of Veterans' Services, proudly serves New York's Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families, connecting them with benefits, services, support, recognition, and respect they have earned. All who served should contact the Department at 888-838-7697 or its website to meet in-person or virtually with an accredited Veterans Benefits Advisor to receive the benefits they have earned. Follow DVS on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn.

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