

HRA's Michael J. Handy Veterans' Job Center Connects Veterans to Employment, Permanent Housing, and Veterans' Benefits

Since 2002, the Michael J. Handy Veterans' Job Center has managed the cases of Cash Assistance (CA) clients who are veterans of the U.S. military or have veterans in their households. Located in downtown Brooklyn, the center works collaboratively with the Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs and the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs (NYSDVA) to offer its target population help returning to work, obtaining permanent housing, and adjusting to civilian life.

"The Veterans' Job Center works like other job centers, connecting clients to jobs through the Back to Work program or WeCARE," said Greg Gomez, Executive Regional Manager of the Special Needs Region, within the Family Independence Administration's Division of Job Support Services. "The Center's mission is also to transfer clients from Cash Assistance to veterans' benefits, which provide additional support. Our staff has been trained in the veterans' benefits process, and the Center also has VA counselors available through the NYSDVA office."

The Center also works collaboratively with the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Project TORCH, a program of the Veterans Administration, to help homeless veterans secure employment, obtain permanent housing, and apply for veterans' benefits. To be eligible for veterans' benefits, a veteran must have had an honorable discharge. In some instances, the Center and NYSDVA work with the Armed Services in an effort to persuade them to upgrade an ineligible veteran's discharge to honorable.

The Center is named after Michael J. Handy, who served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War, followed by a distinguished career at HRA, and culminating in his heading up the Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs during three administrations. His tireless efforts for the betterment of veterans, and his untimely death, which occurred shortly after the center opened, led the City to rename the center in his honor. The Agency has endeavored to honor his legacy by fighting hard for the betterment of veterans in Cash Assistance households. "We're very happy to be able to help New York City veterans find work, and receive the benefits they're entitled to for their service to this country," said Mr. Gomez.