Bedford-Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corps can't give emergency medical technician exam on site

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For the second time in six months, nearly every student from the Bedford-Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corps (BSVAC) passed the state emergency medical technician certification test - but the corps is still not allowed to hold the courses in its brand new $115,000 double trailer on Greene Ave.

"It's just ridiculous," said Corps Commander James (Rocky) Robinson, 69, whose "unprecedented" 25 of 27 students passed last week's exam.

"Even though it is our instructors and our students, I cannot understand why the state . . . won't let us go the whole nine yards."

The corps has been stuck in bureaucratic limbo since the state Department of Health decided in July that the 585-square foot trailer wasn't big enough to sponsor EMT training courses.

Then, in September, state officials asked corps officials to answer 12 more questions before granting approval. Robinson is still waiting for the state to decide.

"Our instructors are the best in the world," he said, explaining his students must now

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Corps Commander James (Rocky) Robinson says an "unprecedented" number of students passed last week's certification exam.

Not again.

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travel to a state-approved EMT course in a Cobble Hill doctor's office three times a week - for classes taught by corps-instructors. "What is the problem?"

State Department of Health Spokeswoman Claire Pospisil said only that the state was working on BSVAC's case. "[Their application] is in the final stages of the review process," she said.

But Robinson hopes the state will give them the okay soon, in part because groups allowed to sponsor courses can charge $1,200 per student for the 140 hours of course time, a fee the state covers for needy students.

"The only way we get money is out there bagging pennies on the street," he said, noting that funds from sponsoring the course could help the struggling volunteer crew. "Why can't we put it all together?"

Until the state decides, students will continue to take courses in Cobble Hill and return to the trailer in Bedford-Stuyvesant every day for additional hands-on experience, clinical work and extra training - all of which the corps is approved to provide.

"It's a big hassle having to travel back and forth from one location to the next," said Adrienne Harte, 21, of Canarsie, who scored an 85% on the state test last week. "But if it wasn't for the corps, I wouldn't have passed."