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State of Florida
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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Commissioner of Agriculture

DATE: January 26, 2018

TO: The Honorable Rick Scott
The Honorable Pam Bondi
The Honorable Jimmy Patronis
The Honorable Adam Putnam

FROM: Glenn W. Sutphin Jr.
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report – Second Quarter, Fiscal Year 2017 - 2018

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs submits the Quarterly Report for the Second Quarter of the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year, covering the period October 1 – December 31, 2017.

The Quarterly Report is submitted pursuant to the procedures authorized by Rule 55-1.003 Florida Administrative Code (06/10/2008). The report will be placed on the agenda at a future meeting of the Governor and Cabinet.

If you have any questions regarding any matter covered by this report, please contact Deputy Executive Director Al Carter at (727) 518-3202 or Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director Roy Clark at (850) 487-1533.

CC: Senator Anitere Flores, Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
Senator Audrey Gibson, Chair, Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee
Representative MaryLynn Magar, Chair, Health Innovation Subcommittee
Representative Jason Brodeur, Chair, Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee
Representative Scott Plakon, Chair, Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee
Cynthia Kelly, Director, Governor's Office of Policy and Budget

Attachment 1: FDVA Quarterly Report

ATTACHMENT 1

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS SECOND QUARTER REPORT Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2017

This report covers the activities of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for the Second Quarter of the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.

1) Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Administrative Highlights

a) Current Issues/Concerns

i. Executive Direction:

Gov. Rick Scott awarded 374 Florida veterans with the Governor's Veterans Service Award in West Palm Beach on Oct. 23 for their service to Florida and the nation.

FDVA Executive Director Glenn Sutphin was part of a panel Oct. 26 at the Capitol. He and several other veteran advocates were interviewed for the Nov. 12 edition of *In Focus*. *In Focus with Allison Walker Torres* is a 30-minute public affairs program on Bay News 9 in Tampa and News 13 in Orlando. The show featured a roundtable of newsmakers representing a full range of perspectives, including local officials and expert analysts as they tackled topical issues of importance to Floridians.

FDVA Executive Director Glenn Sutphin spoke at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center 50th Anniversary Ceremony & Celebration in Gainesville on Oct. 27. With Deputy VA Secretary Thomas Bowman, Colonel Sutphin discussed a number of milestones and accomplishments to date in the State of Florida.



Deputy VA Secretary Thomas Bowman with FDVA Executive Director Glenn Sutphin at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville.

Judge T. Patt Maney, a retired Army Reserve Brigadier General, accepted the Governor's Medal of Merit during the Nov. 7 Cabinet Meeting. The Cabinet Meeting also featured 85 veterans receiving the Governor's Veterans Service Award, in addition to the annual presentation of the Veterans Day Resolution and, an announcement of free admission for all Florida State Parks for veterans and their families on Veterans Day.

FDVA celebrated its first, in-house Certified Nursing Assistant training course graduation at the Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home in St. Augustine on Nov. 17. All nine graduated students were hired to work for State Veterans' Homes.

More than 500 Florida veterans received the Governor's Veterans Service Award from Gov. Rick Scott during presentations in Crystal River and Eustis on Nov. 21.

The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Class of 2017 was inducted into the Hall of Fame during ceremonies at the Governor's Mansion, Nov. 27. FDVA Executive Director Glenn Sutphin presented remarks while FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray served as master of ceremonies.

Gov. Rick Scott signed the annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Proclamation, marking the 76th anniversary of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. As part of the observance, the governor directed the flags of the United States and State of Florida to be flown at half-staff throughout the state on Dec. 7. More than 65,000 World War II veterans currently reside in the Sunshine State.

During the Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2017-2018, FDVA continued strengthening the state's support for veterans and their families with a focus on connecting veterans with their earned benefits, services and support.

- ✓ Executive Director Sutphin also presented and/or attended the following events:
 - County Veteran Service Officer Association (CVSOA) Training Conference in Safety Harbor, Oct. 1.
 - Coordinated support with state and local municipalities for hurricane mitigation assistance during Oct. 1-7.
 - Committee meetings in Tallahassee during the week of Oct. 9-14 and Nov. 12-16.
 - The Florida Department of Law Enforcement's 50th Anniversary Celebration in Tallahassee, Oct. 17.
 - 2017 Hispanic Heritage Month Reception in Tallahassee, Oct. 30.
 - White House Veterans Affairs Conference, Nov. 29.
- ✓ Deputy Executive Director Al Carter and key agency staff presented and/or attended the following events:
 - FDVA Deputy Executive Director Al Carter presented remarks at the Mission United Veterans Forum in Tampa, Oct. 6.

- FDVA Deputy Executive Director Al Carter attended the Memorial Unveiling Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Park Museum in Tampa, Oct. 7.
- FDVA Benefits and Assistance Division Director Alene Tarter presented remarks at the Florida Department of State's Creative Forces Summit at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts in Tampa, Oct. 23. The summit featured national and state military and health professionals discussing strategies to increase access to therapeutic arts activities for military personnel and their families.
- FDVA Deputy Executive Director Al Carter attended the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council Meeting, Oct. 26.
- FDVA Deputy Executive Director Al Carter and State Veterans' Homes Program Director Connie Tolley attended a conference with Architect and Construction Managers for the renovation of the Lake Baldwin facility in Orlando, Nov. 8-9, 2017.
- FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray presented remarks at the Florida Health Care Association's annual Veterans Day program, Nov. 11 in Tallahassee.
- FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray provided an agency update at the Florida Defense Alliance meeting in Orlando, Nov. 15. He also provided an agency update to the Florida Veterans Council Meeting in Orlando on Nov. 16.
- FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray welcomed eight members of Florida's Rolling Thunder motorcycle group to the Capitol, Nov. 30. He presented the patriotic group with a U.S. Flag which had been flown over the Capitol.
- FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray was a guest presenter at the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony at the Capitol, Dec. 4.
- FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray received an award of recognition Dec. 7 from Honor Flight Tallahassee for his years of volunteer work for the organization, chartered to honor World War II veterans with no-cost annual flights to the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.
- FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray represented Governor Scott at the nation's largest Battle of the Bulge reunion in West Palm Beach, Dec. 17. In addition to presenting the annual Battle of the Bulge Day proclamation to reunion organizer George Fisher, Colonel Murray presented the Class of 2017 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Medal to 101-year-old retired Army Brig. Gen. Albin Irzyk, who attended the reunion.

ii. Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance:

(1) Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services:

Claims Service's second quarter continued to provide maximum effort in all areas of operation despite critical personnel losses due to death and continued migration of our Veterans' Claims Examiners to county government. The office advocated for 23,902 veterans and their families, while completing 9,837 rating decision reviews of claims for disability benefits through the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS), a VA computer management system for claims processing. VA software upgrades and our new

internal search standard has increased this office's ability to conduct a 25% increase in review of rating decisions during the past month.

Additionally, 234 veterans were represented before the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) to uphold their appellate rights for compensation and pension benefits. More than 170 personal hearings were scheduled with the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office. Our intercession on the veterans' behalf resulted in the mitigation of most issues prior to the hearing date. As we cope with personnel losses, we continue to stand ready to meet the increasing demands of Veterans' appeals requirements.

FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018				
EVENT	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	YEAR TO DATE FY 2017-2018	2 nd Qtr. FY 2016-2017
Retroactive Compensation	\$31,141,768	\$32,363,616	\$63,505,386	\$72,593,976
Largest Single Retro. Benefit	\$227,412	\$214,818	\$227,412	\$256,700
Debt Relief	\$102,179	\$486,934	\$589,113	\$185,897
Notices of Disagreement	715	843	1,558	1,586
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases*	329	381	710	764
Act as Representative at Hearings*	132	170	302	291
Veterans' Appeals Hearings*	332	234	566	473
Ratings Reviewed	9,293	9,837	19,130	11,413
* The appeals representation process includes formal filing of the appeal application, and paralegal representation with the veteran at the Regional Office and in teleconferences with the Board of Veterans' Appeals.				

(2) Bureau of Veterans' Field Services:

The Bureau of Field Services advocated for 62,297 veterans and their families, while conducting 227 outreach events providing earned benefit information to 9,236 veterans and their families. Field Services also completed 9,111 disability claims and provided 120 hours of support towards Governor's Veterans Service Award ceremonies in West Palm Beach, Eustis and Crystal River. Field Services' Supervisors assisted the Bureau of Veterans' Claims by reviewing and entering 1,028 rating decisions capturing \$11,485,783 in federal revenue.



FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018				
EVENT	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	YEAR TO DATE FY 2017-2018	2 nd Qtr. FY 2016-2017
Number of Issue Resolutions	7,953	7,597	15,550	9,527
Total Amount of Issues Resolution	\$18,184,776	\$16,488,658	\$34,673,434	\$35,309,978
Outreach Visits	175	227	402	266
Veterans Served at Outreach	7,426	9,236	16,662	12,323
Bedside Interviews	1,321	688	2,009	7,445
Walk-ins / Counseling	30,797	30,995	61,792	58,706
Claims	9,006	9,111	18,117	16,599
Voter Registration Pref. Forms	2,077	2,963	5,040	4,334
Homeless Walk In	154	123	277	N/A
Ratings Reviewed Orlando / West Palm	878	1,028	1,906	829

FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018				
EVENT	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	YEAR TO DATE FY 2017-2018	2 nd Qtr. FY 2016-2017
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve Units	2	4	6	5
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	10	6	16	16
Medical Center Welcome Home events	1	0	1	0
Congressional Open House events	4	2	6	2
National Conferences	0	0	0	3
New Patient Orientation	14	26	40	42
Transition Assistance Briefings	16	9	25	22
Other	128	179	307	171
* Supervisors and VCEs throughout the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance provide presentation, orientations and briefings on state, federal and local veterans' laws and benefits.				

Summary of veterans' benefits derived vs. cost of the benefits staff: \$119:\$1 (ROI).

(3) The Bureau of State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans' Education and Training:

This quarter's focus was on partner education and relationship-building. In an effort to nurture relationship development and maximize resources for outreach with other state agencies, we cultivated a successful cooperative exchange with employees from the State Apprenticeship Agency and the Department of Economic Opportunity. All three agencies

have field representatives throughout the state and are working to ensure veterans are able to train in their desired field of work and secure positions with Florida employers. One-on-one training with 11 State Apprenticeship Agency personnel, who work directly with new Registered Apprenticeship organizations, will provide for greater awareness for employers to administer GI Bill® training benefits for their veteran employees. The participation at seven veteran hiring events, hosted by CareerForce, provided for SAA/CareerForce engagement and enabled outreach to hundreds of employers regarding opportunities for their on-the-job training programs for veteran employees. Attending the hiring events also provided us an opportunity to speak with scores of veterans their use of education benefits. They provided feedback on the types of employers and training programs they would like to see approved for GI Bill® use.

Working with our partners in higher education, the SAA participated in VA/SAA training for school officials in North Florida. The regional training afforded us the opportunity to educate approximately 80 school officials on the processes and requirements for reporting enrollment of their veteran students to VA. The SAA also worked with an organization, which has multiple campuses within our state, and provided intense training to 25 of their employees.

As stewards of GI Bill Education® programs, the SAA must not only ensure the quality of the approved education and training programs but also ensure the participating employers and school officials receive the desired training and guidance for their roles in facilitating veteran education and training in our state.

FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018				
EVENT	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	YEAR TO DATE FY 2017-2018	2 nd Qtr. FY 2016-2017
SAA Programs Approved	5,469	5,789	11,258	8,089
Other Approval	573	621	1,194	891
Compliance Visits	37	15	52	23
Inspection Visits	9	18	27	24
Outreach Activities*	272	216	488	510
Liaison Activities**	235	224	459	450
Technical Assistance***	1,272	934	2,206	1,711
<p>* Outreach Activities are any activity designed to inform or encourage those with entitlement to use it. Contact with non-approved schools and training facilities, inviting them to apply for approval to participate in GI Bill® programs, also are considered outreach.</p> <p>** Liaison activities are those that foster education about the SAA with other education and training professionals, which promote and encourage the exchange of information and support to raise awareness of the professional nature of the SAA approval function.</p> <p>*** Technical assistance is any interaction designed to assist an individual or a facility with any aspect of the approval function.</p>				

iii. Division of State Veterans' Homes:

FDVA offers education and training for individuals wishing to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). Designed to help you learn the skills necessary to provide important, quality care, FDVA's CNA training program makes it possible to embark on a rewarding, meaningful career that can make a difference to those in need. By combining traditional classroom

instruction with hands-on experience, FDVA's Certified Nurse Assistant training program not only gives potential students the needed knowledge – but allows students to build the skills necessary to do the job well. Down the road, students will be able to use their CNA training as a stepping-stone to becoming a licensed practical nurse or registered nurse.

Under the direction of a licensed nurse, FDVA's Certified Nursing Assistants provide care to meet the physical and emotional needs of residents in our skilled nursing facilities. The training has been condensed to a four-week course that involves classroom work, facility orientation and hands-on instruction and completing certification within 120 days of the training start date. Some of the courses include standards of patient care, legal issues, how to use different types of medical equipment, procedures of daily care, nutrition, anatomy, infection control, body mechanics and nutrition. Applications for on-the-job training are completed in People First.

Becoming a certified nursing assistant is a great career path. Due to the nationwide CNA shortage, there is a continuing demand for Certified Nursing Assistants. Certified nursing assistants are in great demand. The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that CNAs will have a 20% increase of jobs by 2020. It is expected this field will grow on both the federal and state levels. The upside to the FDVA CNA training program is that students do not need to go and find a job afterward. After the students complete all of these requirements they will officially be a FDVA CNA. They will be able to enjoy a long and rewarding career in caring for the neediest among us, our Florida Veterans.

Some of the essential qualities of a good CNA include:

- **Calm:** Work in high stress situations. Calm is required to handle everything CNAs have to deal with on the job.
- **Caring attitude:** CNAs care about people. Each veteran is different and CNAs need to dedicate their time and attention to each of them.
- **Easy going:** FDVA Nursing Homes operate 24-hours per day. CNAs may have to handle an emergency or crisis at any time and they may have to work in the middle of the night and on weekends.
- **Emotionally stable:** CNAs provide direct care to veterans who are very sick and in their last days or who have health conditions resulting from accidents. CNAs must be able to stay on an even keel emotionally.
- **Strong communication skills:** CNAs have to be able to communicate well with our veterans and families, as well as with other health care professionals.
- **Endurance:** CNAs have to be both emotionally and physically strong. They are required to work long hours and need to have a great deal of endurance and stamina.
- **Compassion:** CNAs are in direct, constant contact with our veterans, so they have to have a great deal of compassion and empathy.

Nursing homes and eldercare facilities are two of the largest employers of CNAs, accounting for nearly 60 percent of all jobs in the profession. By conducting training programs in-house, FDVA Veterans' Homes will better position themselves for a steady stream of new CNAs from which to choose. There will always be openings caused by CNAs leaving the field for other employment, or through retirement.

2) Required Items per Florida Administrative Code/F.A.C. 55-1.003(s):

a) Contracts (F.A.C. 55-1.003(e))

- i. FDVA “Veterans Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Therapy Service Dogs” contract, with K-9 for Warriors, Inc., executed 10/17/2017. Total contract amount \$50,000.
- ii. FDVA “Ardie R. Copas SVNH New Home Construction” DMS contract Amendment No. 3 (re-evaluation of phases), with RLF/Architect-Engineering, executed 11/2/2017. Total budget/contract amount \$58,446,960.
- iii. FDVA “Agency-Wide Resident Safety Lift System” contract Amendment No. 4 (extending contract 90 days; clarifying cabinet and training requirements), with Tollos, Inc., executed 12/14/2017. Total contract amount \$5,477,535.
- iv. Robert H. Jenkins SVDH “Primary Care Services” contract renewal Amendment No. 1 (exercising Option Year 1), with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, executed 11/14/2017. Annual contract amount \$29,942.
- v. Robert H. Jenkins SVDH “Air Handlers” contract, with Siemens Industry, Inc., closed out 11/17/2017. Total contract amount \$174,715.
- vi. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Grounds Lighting Replacement” contract, with Paul’s Electrical Contracting, Inc., closed out 12/4/2017. Total contract amount \$49,974.
- vii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Bathrooms Remodeling” contract Change Order No. 1 (extending contract 90 days), with Sealander Contractor Services, Inc., executed 12/8/2017. Total contract amount \$411,112.
- viii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Air Handling Unit Replacement” solicitation (ITB) issued 12/20/2017. Total budget amount \$60,000.
- ix. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Porch Remodel & Retrofit (Bistro)” contract, with McInnis Builders, LLC, executed 12/12/2017. Total contract amount \$66,240.
- x. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Commercial Laundry Equipment Replacement” single source notice issued 12/5/17, intent to award issued 12/18/2017. Total budget amount \$36,041.
- xi. Clyde E. Lassen SVNH “Kitchen Hot Water Heater System” contract, with Brooks Building Solutions, Inc., executed 12/18/2017. Total contract amount \$26,800.

b) Consultants (F.A.C. 55-1.003(h))

- i. None.

c) Leases (F.A.C. 55-1.003(i))

- i. FDVA added 229 square feet to the Grizzle Building lease that began on October 1, 2017. That total up to 17,626 square feet leased space at headquarter in Largo.

d) Lawsuits/Claims in Litigation or Settled this Quarter (F.A.C. 55-1.003(k) and (l))

- i. **0 General Liability Claims:** (0 new this quarter), 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 0 pending.
- ii. **4 Employment Liability Claims:** (3 new this quarter) 1 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 4 pending.
- iii. **1 Other Cases:** (1 new this quarter) 1 pending.

e) Notifications to State Attorneys, Sheriffs or other Law Enforcement (F.A.C. 55-1.003(m))

- i. None.

f) Donations (F.A.C. 55-1.003(n))

i. Non-Cash Donations Received by State Veterans' Homes

SECOND QUARTER FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018		
	ITEMS	VALUE
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	No Donations this Quarter	\$0
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	No Donations this Quarter	\$0
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	(2) walkers @ \$25 ea.	\$50
	(2) wheelchairs @ \$50 ea.	\$100
	(2) shower chairs @ \$25 ea.	\$50
	TV 70" Vizio E70-E3	\$1198
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	(2) Rocking Chairs, not useable	\$0
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	(2) Resident TV's 32" Sanyo @ \$132 ea.	\$264
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	Pedal exerciser	\$35
	(4) Wheelchairs @ \$50 ea.	\$200
	(6) Walkers @ \$25 ea.	\$50
	TV 32" Samsung	\$329
	TV 65" Samsung LEDTV	\$1300
	TV 65" Hisense 4K LED	\$748
	(10) 7" Sylvania Portable DVD @ \$25 ea.	\$250
	(3) 11.5" DVD @ \$75 ea.	\$225
	(5) 10.5 DVD @ \$70 ea.	\$350
	(3) 14" DVD @ \$106 ea.	\$318
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	7" Phillips DVA @ \$25 ea.	\$25
	TV 32" Samsung	\$115
	Wheelchair Electric Quantum 6000Z	\$3800
Total Value		\$9407
* Rounded amount in to nearest tenths.		

ii. **Cash Donations Received by State Veterans' Homes**

FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018			
FACILITIES	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	YEAR TO DATE TOTAL
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$686	\$1,045	\$1,731
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$1,181	\$4,116	\$5,297
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$5,323	\$1,870	\$7,193
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$35	\$13	\$48
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$500	\$3,000	\$3,500
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$125	\$2,670	\$2,795
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$199	\$61	\$260
All State Veterans' Homes	\$8,049	\$12,775	\$20,824
* State Veterans' Nursing Home (SVNH).			
** State Veterans' Domiciliary Home (SVDH).			

g) Memberships in Professional Organizations Paid During Second Quarter (F.A.C. 55-1.003(p))

SECOND QUARTER FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018		
PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
The Institute Of Internal Audit	Membership Fee	\$150
National Fire Protection Association	Annual Membership Fee	\$175
Total for Department		\$325



3) Veterans Florida

During the Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2017-2018, *Veterans Florida* continued its work implementing its statutory programs as well as continuing its efforts to assist veterans in finding and connecting with services and benefits.

This Quarter our marketing campaign has resumed paid advertising with *Miles Media*. Miles has launched a full homepage redesign and has increased the readability and usability of the site on mobile devices. There were also new video and photo shoots conducted featuring Bryan Jacobs, from Vets2Success.

Florida continued to grow its social media footprint and website traffic. At the conclusion of the quarter, Veterans Florida garnered 23,285 (+15,506 over last quarter) website visitors, 77,252 (+2,049) Facebook likes, 13,974 (+1,068) newsletter subscribers, 832 (+287) LinkedIn followers and 313 (+35) Twitter followers.

External Relations

Our new Entrepreneurship Manager, Cheryl Townsend, joined us in October. We are targeting the March board meeting for a workshop on the Entrepreneurship Program Network Partner RFP. This will give us the opportunity to have our current partners and prospective new partners give us feedback on our program before publishing an RFP.

We've hired two Veterans Employment Specialists to help us recruit for more Training Grant funded positions. Chris Meinhardt, our Employer Outreach Specialist, has completed his training and is actively meeting and qualifying companies for the Business Training Grant.

VETERANS FLORIDA BUSINESS TRAINING GRANT STATISTICS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017	
Total Number of Contracted Businesses	32
Total Number of Veterans Hired	246
Total Number of Veterans Who Have Completed Training	206
Total TD Obligated Amount	\$960,894.47
Total TD Training Grant Reimbursements Made	\$873,644.76
Projected Reimbursements (veterans currently in training)	\$87,249.71
Current Salary Total	\$8,073,416.00

a) Fiscal Year 2017-2018 marks the third year of the *Veterans Florida* Entrepreneurship Program.

The program now consists of three distinct tiers, designed to serve veterans at different stages in their entrepreneurial development.

- Self-Paced Online Learning (to be launched in early 2018).
- Stand Alone Workshops: Designed to be 2-3 hours in length, held periodically throughout the fall/winter of 2018.
- Advanced Class: Modified version of curriculum from past programs, reserved for a smaller class size of well-vetted candidates with solid business ideas.

Advanced classes, Homefront Foundation Workshops and Program Success Events will be taking place between January and the end of May.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM RECRUITMENT STATISTICS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017	
Total Workshop RSVPs	308
Self-Paced Online Program Waitlist	619
Advanced Class Applications	245
Total Program Signups	1,172

Bunker Labs, the contractor that is providing the platform and content for our self-paced online entrepreneurship pathway has continued to find snags in the development of the program. We are in regular, ongoing communication with their marketing team and have been assured the program will be ready to launch sometime in January 2018. With more than 600 veterans signed up, we are ready to start and launch the program.

We've signed an agreement with Startup Tree for an online entrepreneurship community management program. The platform will allow us to track the program alumni to see what businesses they are starting and how they are doing financially. The software also has the capability to handle mentor matching and time tracking, contains a complete entrepreneurship resource database and much more. We'll be building out the bones of the back end and opening it up to participants soon. If you want a sneak peek you can visit:

<https://veteransflorida.startuptree.com>



4) Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF)

The FVF serves Florida veterans and their families by providing direct services in partnership with a spectrum of other organizations including: state and local governments, other veteran service organizations, and educational institutions to improve our veterans' physical, financial, mental, emotional and social well-being. The FVF supports the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs mission of advocacy by educating the public and governmental entities to increase awareness of veteran-related issues.

The Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2017-2018 continued with the tackling of the many challenges of fundraising that nonprofits are experiencing, especially with competing veteran entities within the state and nation. The new charge of nonprofits is how to stay in business, while keeping pace with the mission. The new prospective is that you are relying on grant dollars, state, federal and private monies for support. Nonprofits may dissolve if they solely rely on that funding. The "new" for nonprofits, like FVF, is to create a business model that brand, market and outsell their competitors. In other words, "entrepreneurial" is the name of the game.

a) Functions

- i. Continue to provide direct and indirect services to veterans and their families through collaborating with the appropriate federal, state and local government agencies, veteran service organizations and education entities.
- ii. Develop and facilitate best practices for programs to benefit the overall health, welfare, education, employment and housing for Florida veterans. These best practices will be in collaboration with other agency initiatives to ensure the greatest impact on veteran assistance.
- iii. Facilitate construction of the "Veterans' Walk of Honor," and begin final planning for the "Florida Veterans' Memorial Garden."
- iv. Support veteran "Stand Downs" statewide.
- v. Provide financial and administrative support to the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council and Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.
- vi. Analyze and develop fundraising opportunities to support veterans' financial needs while maintaining financial and fiscal solvency within the Foundation.
- vii. Board approved District Directors' fundraising efforts upon provision of fundraising plan (including goal, purpose, event/activity risk assessment, disposition of property and goods).

- viii. Develop a fundraising Standard of Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Foundation and its District Offices. SOP should address requirements, disposition of funds and detailed receipts.
- ix. Support financially the publication of the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide and Governor's Veterans Service Award ceremonies.
- x. Support the veteran benefit information services request mandate pursuant to Chapter 322.08, Florida Statutes as required by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

b) Accomplishments

- Through collaboration with the American Legion, provided Emergency Financial Assistance to 386 Florida veterans, expending funds of \$96,194.
- FVF assisted 943 veterans for \$423,796 during Calendar Year 2017.
- Collaborated with Five Star Veterans Center and matched Mental Health / Wellness Grant, transitioning homeless veterans for reintegration into productive citizens with residence.
- Collaborated with Disabled American Veterans (DAV) to arrange transport for veterans to medical appointments. Effort resulted in 134 volunteers moving 4,077 veterans, 97,814 miles in 6,410 hours driven.
- FVF was able to assist 740,507 veterans through personal contact and media. The reached out number for second quarter is more than twice compare to the estimated annual number required by the contract.
- Provided support to 30 veterans with driver licenses, enabling them to continue productive lives.
- Delivered services to 151 homeless veterans.
- Served veterans through the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for education and benefits.
- Supported the Class of 2017 Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Induction.
- FVF weighted performance score is 5 for the second quarter.
- FVF reached out to 3,100 Assisted Living Facilities of other agencies; educating administrators and caregivers on veterans' benefits for aging veterans. This collaborative effort with the Agency for Healthcare Administration can potentially bring in \$500 million in federal benefits to Florida veterans.
- Collaborated with 211 Crisis Center, Veterans Treatment Court Legal Services, and Global Telehealth Services to serve veterans who are in immediate mental health crisis. The effort provides a veteran who is geographically co-located to answer a veteran's call for help.
- FVF has reached 14,218 potential donors via the website, television, newspaper and social media.

- As a Florida Veterans Council leader, voted unanimously to be #1 legislative priority for appropriation of the Council.
- Produced a Veterans' Benefits video for aging veterans in Florida.

The FVF has moved forward in making the education of veterans on their benefits their number one priority. The FVF has begun a needs-analysis focused on the Vietnam War Era veterans, the last group of wartime veterans to qualify for veterans' pension for the next fifteen years.

c) Subsequent Projects

- Work with 211 and GTS to provide a suicide prevention module/application available to all Florida veterans.
- Support the Northeast Florida Women Veterans' wellness program.
- Create a workforce to educate aging veterans' families/caretakers on veteran benefits.
- Advocate statewide initiative on veteran's court committee; Rehabilitation vs. incarceration.
- Continue developing best practices for support organizations.
- Lead initiative to reduce veteran medical visits by 80%.
- Assist in multi-generational military veteran entrepreneurship.
- Lead a recruitment effort of younger veterans to support the aging forces in Veteran Service Organizations to serve veterans in Florida.
- Support a "registry of resources" with the support of 211 and Trilogy services.

The widespread and aggressive marketing efforts have illuminated our existence and the grant that provides the financial wherewithal to assist veterans facing emergencies. These results are reflective of collaborative efforts on the part of service providers who target veterans living throughout the State of Florida through various mediums (electronic, face-to-face, print, etc.), social media, statewide advertising, Stand Downs, conferences, and other activities.

d) Anticipations

- The AG extended our agreement into a third year. FVF reduced staff to one paid employee to avoid deficit into the FY 2017/2018 operational fund.
- FVF is working with the FDVA Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director to seek legislative appropriation of funds. Without state funding, the enormity of the financial impact on the lives of veterans throughout the State of Florida would be critical. Without a legislative appropriation, the FVF will not be able to continue to provide the incredible work that has been done since its existence. The FDVA will lose the services currently provided by FVF. The Foundation has been the "go to" institution for veteran's needs.
- FVF eagerly seeks the Florida Lottery to license the FVF image on two scratch-off lotto tickets. The opportunity would provide approximately 2% net of revenue in all tickets sold to sustain operations that would continue operations.