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Rick Scott
Governor


Pam Bondi
Attorney General

Jimmy Patronis
Chief Financial Officer

Adam Putnam
Commissioner of Agriculture

DATE: August 15, 2017

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 – Fourth Quarter, Fiscal Year 2016 - 2017

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs submits the Quarterly Report for the Fourth Quarter of the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year, covering the period April 1 – Jun 30, 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

"Honoring Those Who Served U.S."

ATTACHMENT 1

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS FOURTH QUARTER REPORT April 1 – June 30, 2017

This report covers the activities of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for the Fourth Quarter of the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year.

1) Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Administrative Highlights

a) Current Issues/Concerns

i. Executive Direction:

The Florida Senate unanimously confirmed retired Army Lt. Col. Glenn W. Sutphin Jr. as Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. The vote took place on May 5, 2017, during the 2017 Florida Legislative Session. Colonel Sutphin was appointed Executive Director by Gov. Rick Scott and the Cabinet during the Aug. 2, 2016 Cabinet Meeting.

Executive Director Sutphin accompanied Governor Scott to the signing ceremony of the Veterans Choice Program Extension and Improvement Act at the White House, held on April 19, 2017. The Bill further expands veterans' doctor and medical service location choices. Colonel Sutphin also attended agency mission essential meetings and participated in office calls with legislators and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs leadership to discuss veteran issues relevant to Florida veterans.



Veterans Bill Signing Ceremony, White House

During the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the 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 presented and/or attended the following events:

- Celebrated Easter Egg Hunt with children of Active Duty Recruiters and ROTC Cadre at the Governor's Mansion, Tallahassee – April 8, 2017.
- Liaised with legislative committees for veteran-related bills and initiated proposals during the 2017 Florida Legislative Session, Tallahassee – April 1, 2017 – May 5, 2017.
- Recognized two students for their exemplary exhibits and dedication on veterans' issues and presented them with an FDVA coin, Community Christian School, Tallahassee – May 11, 2017.
- Attended the St. Lucie Board of County Commissioners meeting to discuss construction progress of the planned Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home, Port St. Lucie – May 16, 2017.
- Provided remarks in honor of retired Sgt. Maj. Ray A. Quinn and Andrew Lumish for their services to our Nation and veterans' advocacy and accepted the 2017 Memorial Day Resolution, on behalf of Florida's veterans. The event took place during the May 23 Cabinet Meeting, Tallahassee.
- Provided remarks at the grand opening of the Marion County Veterans Resource Center, Ocala – May 24, 2017.
- Supported Gov. Rick Scott in the presentation of the Governor's Veterans Service Awards at the National Guard Armory, Brooksville – May 31, 2017.
- Attended committee meetings and discussed veteran-related bills with legislators through the last week of the 2017 Special Legislative Session, Tallahassee – June 5-10, 2017.
- Provided remarks during the Governor's Medal of Merit Award ceremony at the June 14 Cabinet Meeting, Tallahassee.
- Provided remarks in support of the 74th Annual Florida American Legion Boys State Program, Tallahassee - June 20, 2017.
- Attended the annual Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of Florida Convention, Orlando – June 24, 2017.
- Attended the farewell reception in honor of Dr. Kim McDougal at the Governor's Mansion, Tallahassee – June 26, 2017.
- Attended the 99th annual convention of The American Legion Department of Florida, Orlando – June 29 - July 2, 2017.

Deputy Executive Director Al Carter and key agency staff presented and/or attended the following events:

- Supported Gov. Rick Scott in the presentation of the Governor's Veterans Service Awards ceremony, Bonita Springs – April 10, 2017.
- Attended the Port St. Lucie City Hall monthly meeting, Port St. Lucie – April 14, 2017.
- Met with the Honorable Lizbeth Benacquisto, Florida State Senator, at the Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home to tour the facility, Port Charlotte – June 5, 2017.
- Provided remarks at the 2017 Annual Conference, Florida Association of Veteran Education Specialists (FAVES), St. Petersburg Beach – June 7, 2017.
- Provided remarks at the 4th Annual Florida Women Veterans' Conference, Orlando – June 9, 2017.
- Attended the Suicide Prevention Academy Preparation Workshop, Tallahassee – June 14-15, 2017.
- Attended the Korean War 67th Anniversary Remembrance Ceremony, Tampa – June 24, 2017.
- Supported Gov. Rick Scott at the groundbreaking ceremony of Florida's veteran recipient Master Sgt. George Vera and his family. The Vera family will receive a mortgage-free home, Land O' Lakes – June 29, 2017.
- FDVA Communications Director Steve Murray and other staff members met with Lt. Gov. Carlos Lopez-Cantera at the Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home to tour the facility, Panama City – April 18, 2017.

ii. Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance:

(1) Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services:

The Bureau advocated for 20,961 veterans and their families, while 7,594 rating decision reviews of claims for disability benefits were completed through the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS). The VBMS is the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) computer management system for claims processing.

During the Fourth Quarter, 345 veterans were represented before the VA Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) to uphold their appellate rights for veteran's benefits. Additionally, 81 personal hearings were scheduled with Decisional Review Officers at the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office. A great majority of appeals were mitigated prior to the hearing date, which was accomplished by FDVA staff offering highly skilled representation in advocating for the veterans. The actions also saved veterans from the often grueling travel and sometimes cost of lodging in order to attend their hearings. Impending Congressional changes to the VA appeals process, and VA development of processes to complete appeals quickly, efficiently and meet quality expectations, will present challenges to our staff in the upcoming quarter.

FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017						
EVENT	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER	TOTAL FY 2016-17	TOTAL FY 2015-2016
Retroactive Compensation	\$25,357,679	\$47,236,297	\$182,747,385	\$62,301,275	\$317,642,636	\$127,084,442
Largest Single Retro. Benefit	\$166,302	\$256,700	\$286,771	\$185,607	\$286,771	\$379,640
Debt Relief	\$80,555	\$105,342	\$68,977	\$58,950	\$313,824	\$311,763
Notices of Disagreement	786	800	1,017	1,001	3,604	3,104
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases*	353	411	435	395	1,594	923
Act as Representative at Hearings*	194	97	79	81	451	889
Veterans' Appeals Hearings*	203	270	265	345	1,083	900
Ratings Reviewed	3,700	7,713	13,310	9,947	34,670	25,419
* 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:

Field Services' staff members David Austin, Ernie Kuykendall and Harry Rudy provided instruction at the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Certification Course held on June 5-8, 2017. The Bureau organized and facilitated the semiannual American Legion Post Service Office training on June 29-30, 2017, with more than 150 in attendance. The course covered various VA benefits, including: Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Life Insurance, Education, State Veterans' Homes, State Veterans' Benefits, Burial, Waivers, Discharge Review/Military Records and the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program.

Together with the training courses and its normal workload, the staff was able to present, attend or otherwise support 186 outreach events providing earned benefit information to 10,322 veterans and their families and complete 9,692 disability claims. Field Services provided 80 production hours to support three Governor's Veterans Service Award ceremonies this quarter. Field Services' also assisted the Bureau of Claims Services by reviewing and entering 991 disability rating decisions.

FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017						
EVENT	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER	TOTAL FY 2016-17	TOTAL FY 2015-2016
Number of Issue Resolution	4,788	4,739	7,717	8,254	25,498	15,397
Total Amount of Issues Resolution	\$22,113,449	\$13,196,529	\$15,567,599	\$18,194,845	\$69,072,422	\$64,036,957
Outreach Visits	129	137	150	186	602	787

Veterans Served at Outreach	5,688	6,635	6,237	10,322	28,882	33,659
Bedside Interviews	2,633	4,812	0	2,492	9,937	12,141
Walk-ins/ Counseling	30,952	27,754	33,595	32,732	125,033	110,113
Claims	8,897	7,702	9,708	9,692	35,999	31,297
Voter Registration Pref. Forms	2,529	1,805	3,513	2,980	10,827	11,322
Homeless Walk In	N/A	N/A	122	488	610	494
Ratings Reviewed Orlando/W Palm	87	742	979	991	2,799	2,286

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

Approximately 50,000 students received VA Education Benefits at more than 1,000 Florida schools and organizations approved to administer GI Bill® education programs. About 600 school officials attended training sessions performed by Florida's Bureau of State Approving Agency (SAA) at the annual Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrator's conference, annual Florida Association of Veterans Education Specialist's Non-College Degree School conference and at the 41st Annual Florida VA School Certifying Official Conference.

VA Education presentations were also delivered to those seeking County Veterans Service Officer certification and at FDVA's Fourth Annual State Women Veterans' Conference.

Attesting to the high quality of training offered by the Florida SAA, more than 50 School Certifying Officials from across the nation traveled to Florida for attendance at the SAA-led sessions at these conferences. The Florida SAA, known for their national leadership with flight school approvals and compliance training, boasts representation by Florida SAA Program Consultant Katherine Snyder. Snyder, who serves as Chair of the National Association of State Approving Agencies' Flight Committee, was honored with a Prudential Davis Productivity Award for her assistance with a Florida flight school and was also named as FDVA's Employee of the Year.

In addition, following a recent and successful site visit by the VA Central Office's Contract Team, VA representatives said, "The Florida SAA is a well-organized agency with excellent procedures and policies in place to ensure high quality service to the Florida veteran community. The team members are well-trained and proficient in their duties."

FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017						
EVENT	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER	TOTAL FY 2016-17	TOTAL FY 2015-2016
SAA Programs Approved	3,156	4,933	4,237	3,452	15,778	8,993
Other Approval	394	497	389	546	1,826	2,094
Compliance Visits	23	20	23	35	103	117
Inspection Visits	13	11	14	8	46	37

Outreach Activities*	245	265	246	262	1,018	1,004
Liaison Activities**	204	246	249	298	997	611
Technical Assistance***	938	773	915	1,054	3,680	3,793

* 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 considered outreach.

** 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.

*** Technical assistance is any interaction designed to assist an individual or a facility with any aspect of the approval function.

FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017						
EVENT	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER	TOTAL FY 2016-17	TOTAL FY 2015-2016
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve units	3	2	5	6	16	20
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	8	8	7	9	32	28
Medical Center Welcome Home events	0	0	2	0	1	1
Congressional Open House events	1	1	2	2	6	14
National Conferences	3	0	0	0	3	5
New Patient Orientation	21	21	20	11	73	188
Transition Assistance Briefings	13	9	16	16	55	35
Other	78	93	98	141	410	489

* 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: \$144:\$1 (ROI).

iii. Division of State Veterans' Homes:

During this quarter, five Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs State Veterans' Homes were recognized with the *2017 Bronze - Commitment to Quality Award* by the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living. The National Quality Award Program provides a pathway for providers of long-term and post-acute care services to demonstrate their commitment towards performance excellent for the quality of care to seniors and persons with disabilities. The five veterans' homes are:

- Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home, Daytona Beach
- Alexander "Sandy" Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home, Pembroke Pines
- Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home, Port Charlotte

- Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary Home, Lake City
- Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home, Panama City
- Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home, Land O' Lakes - past Bronze recipient

The award is the first of three distinctions possible through the AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program. All five veterans' homes may now move forward in developing approaches and achieving performance levels that meet the criteria required for the *Silver - Achievement in Quality Award*.

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

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

- FDVA "VetraSpec System" contract Amendment No. 4, with DataSpec, Inc., executed 4/24/2017 (revised Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles veterans' database requirement). Total contract amount \$124,730.
- FDVA new "Subsistence" short-term contract (5/1/2017 -10/31/2018), with US Foods, commenced on 5/1/2017. Total contract amount \$4,000,000.
- FDVA prior "Subsistence" contract (2012-2017), with US Foods, closed out on 5/2/2017. Total contract amount \$13,200,000.
- FDVA "Resident Safety Lift and Transfer System" contract Amendment No. 3, with Tollos, Inc., executed 6/6/2017 (revised work requirements and project completion date). Total contract amount \$5,561,520.
- FDVA "Adaptive Bowling Pilot Program" contract Amendment No. 1, with Bowlers to Veterans Link, Inc., executed 6/22/2017 (revised project completion date). Total contract amount \$75,000.
- Robert H. Jenkins SVDH "CCTV Security System" contract, with Secure2Ware, Inc., closed out on 4/12/2017. Total contract amount \$63,641.
- Robert H. Jenkins SVDH "Boiler Replacement" contract, with Siemens Industry, Inc., closed out on 6/12/2017. Total contract amount \$224,900.
- Robert H. Jenkins SVDH "Air Handlers" solicitation (Invitation to Bid) issued 4/17/2017. Contract execution pending as of 6/30/2017. Total contract amount \$174,715.
- Emory L. Bennett SVNH "Roof Repairs" contract Change Order No. 1, with Precision Roofing Solutions, Inc., executed 5/24/2017 (revised project completion date). Total contract amount \$490,877.
- Emory L. Bennett SVNH "Landscaping" solicitation (Invitation to Bid) issued 5/17/2017. Contract execution pending as of 6/30/2017. Total contract amount \$104,169.
- Baldomero Lopez SVNH "New Pavilion" contract, with DMS as project agent, closed out on 4/13/2017. Total contract amount \$120,000.

- xii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Bathroom Remodeling” solicitation (Invitation to Bid) issued 4/27/2017. Contract execution pending as of 6/30/2017. Total contract amount \$411,112.
- xiii. Alexander “Sandy” Nininger SVNH “Nurse Call System” contract, with Knight Electric, Co., executed 5/8/2017. Contract close out pending as of 6/30/2017. Total contract amount \$260,862.
- xiv. Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH “Chillers Replacement” contract, with Johnson Controls, Inc., closed out on 5/2/2017. Total contract amount \$314,536.
- xv. Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH “Dish Room Flooring and Walls” contract Change Order No. 1, with V&H Construction, Inc., executed 5/30/2017 (revised project completion date). Total contract amount \$84,645.
- xvi. Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH “Dish Room Flooring and Walls” contract, with V&H Construction, Inc., closed out on 6/12/2017. Total contract amount \$84,645.
- xvii. Clyde E. Lassen SVNH “Chiller Coils Replacement” contract Change Order No. 1, with Brooks Building Solutions, Inc., executed 5/1/2017 (revised project completion date). Total contract amount \$106,740.
- xviii. Clyde E. Lassen SVNH “Chiller Coils Replacement” contract with Brooks Building Solutions, Inc. closed out on 6/21/2017. Total contract amount \$106,740.

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

- i. None.

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

- i. FDVA made no additions, alterations or modifications to leased space this quarter.

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

- i. **2 General Liability Claims:** (0 new this quarter), 2 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 0 pending.
- ii. **6 Employment Liability Claims:** (1 new this quarter) 1 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 5 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. Cash Donations Received by State Veterans’ Homes

FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017					
FACILITIES	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER	TOTAL
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$700	\$950	\$0	\$520	\$2,170

Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$1,391	\$2,715	\$3,600	\$3,144	\$10,850
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$8,357	\$1,571	\$2,446	\$120	\$12,494
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$240	\$430	\$0	\$25,720	\$26,390
Clifford Chester Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$100	\$0	\$880	\$0	\$980
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$137	\$1,240	\$450	\$1,871	\$3,698
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$210	\$1,175	\$0	\$350	\$1,735
All State Veterans' Homes	\$11,135	\$8,081	\$7,376	\$31,725	\$58,317
* State Veterans' Nursing Homes (SVNH).					
** State Veterans' Domiciliary Home (SVDH).					

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

FOURTH QUARTER FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017		
	ITEMS	VALUE
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	Phone LG TracFone	\$20
	Bayou Classic Fish Cooker	\$64
	Printer Canon PixMA MG3620 wireless/ink	\$80
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	TV 50" Sharp ROKU	\$380
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	(4) walkers @ \$25 ea.	\$100
	wheelchair	\$50
	(2) sets crutches	\$25
	ATT wireless phone	\$25
	recliner lift chair	\$200
	portable commode/shower chair	\$50
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	Portable CD player	\$50
Clifford Chester Sims SVNH, Panama City	(5) Resident TV's 32" Sanyo @ \$132 ea.	\$660
	(2) Resident DVD players @ \$25 ea.	\$50
	TV 32" ROKU	\$169
	TV 40" Sanyo	\$268
	TV 43" Samsung	\$447
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	Sony PlayStation 4 w/Pro console	\$574
	Asus X55C Laptop	\$499
	(60) 22" LG 1080 TV's @ \$129 ea.	\$7,740
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	Sound Bar System 45" 5.1 SmartCast Vizio	\$499
	Blue Ray player Samsung Ultra	\$299
Total Value		\$12,252
* Rounded amount in to nearest tenths.		

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

No Memberships dues were paid in the fourth quarter of FY 2016-2017



3) Veterans Florida

During the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2016-2017, Veterans Florida continued its work of implementing its statutory programs as well as continuing its efforts to assist veterans in finding and connecting with services and benefits.

- a) Veterans Florida renewed its contract with Miles Media for Fiscal Year 2017-2018. During the fourth quarter Miles Media has produced videos highlighting Florida's diverse regions (North, Central and South). These videos are now linked to dedicated pages for each region, which will in turn highlight employers, resources and educational institutions in each region.
<http://www.veteransflorida.org/why-florida/live/>

Veterans Florida also published a new education page on the Veterans Florida website, which provides visitors with the ability to gain information about colleges and universities throughout the state. The page is filterable by region, school type and amenities (i.e. on-campus housing, Veterans Resource Centers, etc.) Technical schools will be added in a later date.
<http://www.veteransflorida.org/veterans/education/>

Veterans Florida also continues to grow its social media footprint and website traffic. At the conclusion of the fourth quarter, Veterans Florida has garnered 329,083 (+35,121 over compared to last quarter) website visitors, 75,164 (+79) Facebook likes, 12,813 (+2,923) newsletter subscribers, 403 (+63) LinkedIn followers and 267 (+20) Twitter followers.

- b) Veterans Florida has decided to terminate its contract with Monster.com at the end of FY 2016-2017. A new Career Portal will be launched in July 2017, which will focus on the vacant jobs from our Veterans Florida Business Training Grant Employers. The new system will give Veterans Florida more ability to actively recruit for its registered employers as well as giving it better tracking capabilities to determine when veterans are hired by companies.

No new employer certifications were issued in June. The focus for the program this month has been preparing for the loss of our current grant manager and filling the open grant manager position, preparing for the new software transition, and recertifying existing program employers for the 2017-2018 fiscal cycle. Those recertified numbers will be available for the FY 2017-2018 First Quarter report. Additionally, we will receive this quarter's hiring/training reports from employers still under the original contract method, and provide those numbers in the next quarter report.

However, employers have continued hiring and training veterans.

Our businesses have reported 168 (+62 over compared to last quarter) veteran hires, with 114 (+30) of those hires having already completed their training. To date, Veterans Florida has reimbursed businesses \$471,787.34 (+\$126,097.65) for the training of veterans, generating \$6,918,054.20 (+\$2,566,631.80) in salaries.

- c) The second year of the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program began on Jan. 20. Veterans Florida received 458 applications for the 2017 program, and was able to enroll 300 veterans who attended classes at one of the seven Network Partner Colleges and Universities (University of West Florida, University of North Florida, Hillsborough Community College, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, University of Central Florida and Florida Atlantic University). Of the 300 that were enrolled, 267 attended the first day of classes. The program concluded on May 6 with 147 veterans graduating from the program. The program's graduation rate for FY 2016-2017 was 55%, which has improved 30% over the first year program.

The Board of Directors approved several important changes to the FY 2017-2018 Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program at the June 26 meeting.

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

- Self-Paced Online Learning (to be launched in fall 2017)
- Stand Alone Workshops: Designed to be 2-3 hours in length, held periodically throughout the fall/winter of 2017.
- Advanced Class: Modified version of curriculum from past program, reserved for a smaller class size of well-vetted candidates with solid business ideas.

New contracts have been drafted and sent to the Network Partner institutions for signatures on June 30, 2017.

Executive staff and Board Members continued their engagement with external stakeholders including Momentum Solar, Sacred Heart Health System, Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, Okaloosa County Economic Development Office, Florida Highway Patrol, Senior Life Insurance, Eglin Federal Credit Union, Jacksonville Auto Dealers Association, Lessar Corporation, the City of Tallahassee, Tallahassee Chapter of the Network of Entrepreneurs and Business Advocates (NEBA), Florida Chamber Foundation and Navy Federal Credit Union.



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 Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2016-2017 continues with the many challenges of fundraising that nonprofits are experiencing, especially with competing veteran entities within the state and nation. The new world 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. It's only been through a grant from Attorney General Pam Bondi that has allowed the Foundation to continue operating. During the fourth quarter beginning April 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2017, the FVF provided emergency financial assistance to 165 Florida veterans, expending funds of \$79,462.

The FVF leadership has been working hard to garner whatever avenues are available for resources to sustain the operation. We have been innovative in seeking talented individuals through recruitment of interns from local colleges as well as student veterans to help us serve veterans. The push to find these resources save the foundation dollars as they are either gaining credit toward college rather than money and that student veterans in a work study status are being paid by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. A further hustle in the attempt to preserve precious dollars has been the hiring of senior workers who are paid by AARP. The Senior Worker Program employs older personnel in attempt to reintegrate them into the workforce while gaining tools of workplace.

The FVF recently became aware of high dollar initiatives that are directed toward post-9/11 veterans. One is the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), who direct all their support to post-9/11 veterans and severely wounded. The FVF is listed as a resource for emergency financial assistance on the WWP website for all veterans not included in their demographic of veteran. Additionally, the Wayne Weaver Foundation has given \$1 million to the American Red Cross for Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns Counties for the emergency financial assistance of veterans. However, to be eligible you have to be post-9/11. This is important because there is a contingent of about 80% of "other" veterans who are not supported by their efforts. The FVF spoke with the WWP CEO, and asked about the opportunity for a grant from WWP. He said that it had been a bad year so there were no funds available for FVF to receive a grant from them.

The FVF continues to increase awareness on social media and has created a Twitter account to top off the aggressive reach throughout the state. For this quarter, the FVF has received 11,306

Facebook page views. We have begun a new campaign; the *One Less Latte* challenge, which solicits donors through an appeal to think about helping veterans in lieu of a latte. The business cards handed out direct the recipient to the FVF website and asks for a recurring donation of five dollars or more to sustain the Emergency Financial Assistance Program. For this quarter, FVF has reached 15,199 potential donors via webmail.

Leadership has taken the fight for funds to statewide organizations, e.g. the Florida Independent Funeral Directors. At their recent conference, the FVF requested their board reach out to the more than 800 Independent Funeral Home Directors to offer families of deceased veterans an avenue to donate to the FVF in lieu of flowers as a way to honor their veteran. We found that there was an increase in donations through this initiative.

The second effort for funds was by way of creating a dialogue with the Florida Association of Counties and a letter request from the Foundation to leadership of every county in the state. The request was for a \$10,000 donation from each county to FVF so that their veterans could receive emergency financial assistance. No counties have donated to date. Ironically, one county declined one day prior to opening a new veteran resource center, which is funded to operate by the county. A day after opening this resource center, the Foundation received a call from a veteran of that county seeking emergency financial assistance. For 2016, the county received more than \$33,000 for their veterans from the FVF, but has set aside that money to operate the facility. The FVF assisted the veteran.

Currently, Leon County has a high functioning Veteran Emergency Assistance program and has provided funding through the Foundation to expedite claims processing. Leon County provided over \$70,000 in calendar year 2016 for the relief of veterans. In addition to the funds allocated by the county, the Foundation has supplemented the needs. This particular county has the most well-known program thus enticing more veterans for assistance. The state would be well-served to do a needs-analysis on veterans and to see what opportunities for support exist beyond the foundation.

As highlighted on the Third Quarter report, FVF has produced four marketing videos. These videos were produced free of charge through Ron Seggi. He wrote and directed four videos utilizing his videographer in Orlando. The focus was to re-introduce the mission of the Foundation to every Floridian while highlighting the work that is being done to provide comfort and relief to veterans in need. Maj. John Haynes, Chairman Mike Mason and Martine Caraballo were the subjects of the videos. These videos were sited on the FVF Webpage, Facebook and uploaded to the FDVA YouTube site.

The FVF has teamed with Florida HR to become the recipient of proceeds from their upcoming August 2017 conference. The Florida HR group will host more than 1,500 HR professionals from all over the state. In addition, there will be veteran representation from every county and representation from the Pulse Club first responders. It will be incumbent upon the Foundation to promote the event and evoke the greatest donation possible.

At the end of the third quarter, FVF requested the current AG Grant to extend into a third year. Currently there are enough operational funds to finish the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year with \$10K in reserve. The FVF has taken the lead with the Florida Veterans Council to develop a "Top Five" priority for the FDVA to support the next legislative session. These should be available on July 13 at the next Florida Veterans Council meeting.

- A priority would be a Legislative Budget Request on behalf of the FDVA.
- To gain sponsorship for a scratch off lotto ticket as a means of raising funds for Florida veterans.

- The Foundation is to seek a special appropriation for construction of the Florida Veterans Memorial so that it may be completed.
- The Capitol renovation project is working in the House side to ensure loading of the ground above the House parking garage.

Each month the FVF continues to experience an increase in the number of veterans requesting and receiving services. The widespread and aggressive marketing efforts have illuminated our existence and the HELP 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.

a) Veterans Served

The goal of the grant is to reach approximately 329,000 veterans during the first year of the grant, or 82,263 per quarter. For the fourth quarter ending June 30, 2017, the grant touched the lives of 150,648 veterans through distribution of the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide and other FVF outreach efforts. FVF's marketing efforts will continue to target our efforts of providing services in all of the areas and to assist veterans throughout the state, districts and counties.

Based on the expenditures for the fourth quarter, the greatest need is assistance in the Housing category: a total of \$79,462.18 has been spent during the quarter to prevent eviction and homelessness. The actual expenditures document where the greatest needs currently exist and will be used as needed to reallocate funds between the areas of service originally proposed in the agreement. Continuously throughout the fourth quarter, the Foundation received requests for financial assistance caused by unforeseen circumstances (e.g., joblessness, family crisis, disabilities, holiday expenditures, climatic conditions, unexpected or chronic health problems, and etcetera) that created financial hardships for veterans and their families. Our core mission is to provide emergency assistance to prevent veterans from being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless. The reality being that veterans need the financial assistance because the above-mentioned variables are constant in their lives throughout the state.

b) Other Initiatives

North Florida Stand Down 2017 was held at the North Florida Fairgrounds on April 21 – 22, 2017 and served 320 homeless and/or at-risk veterans; the majority were at-risk veterans. The event was successful due to the collaborative efforts of all parties involved. There were 52 vendors/service providers (more than 200 persons who provided those services) and 130 volunteers that assisted in this endeavor. The monetary donations exceeded \$42,000 and the in-kind donations exceeded \$40,000. We are appreciative of all those businesses that generously gave us help to defray the cost of hosting the Stand Down for our veterans. Overall, we were able to heighten the awareness of FVF and provide many needed services to our honored veterans. The funds are not available for FVF to remunerate someone to manage a Stand Down. The Foundation provides \$2,500 to each county hosting a veterans' Stand Down.

c) Florida Veteran Foundation Funding and Fundraising

The Foundation's reputation as the beacon of hope to veterans in need of emergency financial assistance has been established. The ever increasing and irreversible need for available funds to provide financial assistance to Florida veterans is growing without signs of slowing down. Sponsorships and fundraising opportunities have being explored and developed for the

continuance of funds for the FVF to remain viable to provide emergency financial assistance to Florida veterans.

The FVF is working diligently with the FDVA Legislative Affairs Director to seek funding by the state to be in place prior to the end of the AG HELP Grant. Without state funding, the enormity of the financial impact on the lives of veterans throughout the State of Florida would be critical. Veterans faced with a financial crisis have come to depend on the Foundation as a last resort for financial assistance and to provide relief in their moment of despair. This is the top priority for the Foundation. FVF is increasingly becoming more engaged with legislators and opportunities for future and recurring funding. This is the number one priority and will remain so as long as there is a need to provide relief for those who have served us so well.