



State of Florida
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Office of the Executive Director
11351 Ulmerton Road, #311-K
Largo, FL 33778-1630
Phone: (727) 518-3202 Fax: (727) 518-3403
www.FloridaVets.org

Ron DeSantis
Governor
Ashley Moody
Attorney General
Jimmy Patronis
Chief Financial Officer
Nikki Fried
Commissioner of Agriculture

Daniel W. "Danny" Burgess Jr.
Executive Director

DATE: June 18, 2020

TO: The Honorable Ron DeSantis
The Honorable Ashley Moody
The Honorable Jimmy Patronis
The Honorable Nikki Fried

FROM: Daniel W. "Danny" Burgess Jr.
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D.W. Burgess Jr." in a cursive style.

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report – Third Quarter, Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs submits the Quarterly Report for the Third Quarter of the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year, covering the period January 1 - March 31, 2020.

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 James S. Hartsell at (727) 518-3202 or Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director Roy Clark at (850) 487-1533.

CC:

Senator Aaron Bean, Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
Senator Tom A. Wright, Chair, Military and Veterans Affairs and Space Committee
Speaker Pro Tempore MaryLynn Magar, Chair, Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee
Representative Bobby Payne, Chair, Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee
Chris Spencer, Policy Director, Governor's Office of Policy and Budget

Attachment 1: FDVA Quarterly Report

ATTACHMENT 1
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
THIRD QUARTER REPORT
January 1 – March 31, 2020

This report covers the activities of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for the Third Quarter of the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year.

1) Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Administrative Highlights

a) Current Issues/Concerns

i) Executive Direction:

Governor Ron DeSantis announced *Salute Our Soldiers (SOS)* Housing Loan Program for Florida's veterans and service members. Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) Executive Director Danny Burgess and Florida Housing Finance Corporation Executive Director Trey Price joined the Governor at the press conference in Tallahassee on February 19.

Florida Housing administers the program, which will assist over 1,000 veterans and active-duty military members with down payments, closing cost assistance, low-interest rate first mortgages, and down payment and closing cost assistance forgiveness options. At the conference, Executive Director Burgess made the following remarks. *"On the heels of our Forward March statewide veteran outreach initiative. I am proud to join Governor DeSantis today to encourage veterans to set roots in Florida and call our state home."*



Governor DeSantis developed a Complete Count Committee (CCC) of twenty-four board members to implement a 2020 Census awareness campaign in Florida to support the Federal 2020 Census. The board members include, committee chair Lt. Governor Jeanette Nunez and Executive Director Burgess. Executive Director Burgess was appointed to work hand-in-hand with veteran organizations, and to reach out to the veteran communities across the state to promote and encourage response to the 2020 Census in Florida. Florida's CCC will coordinate with the U.S. Census Bureau to ensure Florida's demographic accurately reflects in the federal count.

Roy Clark was appointed to serve as Director of Legislative and Cabinet Affairs in the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs on January 10.

Deputy Executive Director James S. Hartsell conducted a site visit of the Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port Charlotte on January 15.

FDVA hosted the seventh Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Induction ceremony and reception at the Capitol on March 9. The annual event honored sixteen inductees of the Class of 2019 for their significant contributions to the communities, businesses and public services in the State of Florida following the completion of their military service. Executive Director Burgess honored Class of 2019 inductees for their selfless services to our nation and to the community. Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis and Deputy Executive Director Hartsell made remarks while Communications and External Affairs Director Steve Murray served as master of the ceremony.

Executive Director Burgess accompanied Governor DeSantis during the COVID-19 announcement press conference in Tallahassee on March 11.

Executive Director Burgess restricted access to the State Veterans' Homes in compliance with Executive Office of Governor's guidance, Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) guidance and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended guidelines for COVID-19. In addition, FDVA temporarily suspended admissions in the State Veterans' Homes. FDVA aligned the safety measures with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) nursing homes and community living centers to combat the spread of COVID-19 to protect our veteran residents.

The Executive Director also cautioned personnel to adhere to the Florida Department of Health's safety measures guidelines and restriction memorandum to Florida State Veterans' Nursing Homes and State Veterans' Domiciliary Home to safeguard staff, residents and their families from the COVID-19 outbreak.

Executive Director Burgess provided directions to FDVA team leaders to coordinate the execution of emergency plans on COVID-19. Chief of Staff Al Carter, Division of State Veterans' Homes Program Director Connie Tolley and State Veterans' Homes Administrators coordinated and implemented the agencies pandemic emergency plan to ensure the safety of the veterans' residents. The Division of State Veterans' Homes provided noteworthy status updates of the facility's proceeding COVID-19 to the agency directors.

FDVA Communications and External Affairs Director and Agency Emergency Operations Coordinating Officer Steve Murray provided continuous updates to the agency with the Executive Office of the Governor's mitigation and remediation efforts on COVID-19.

Governor DeSantis, Executive Director Burgess, Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran and Congressman Matt Gaetz applauded President Donald Trump and Congress' prompt legislative actions on the U.S. Senate Bill 3503, in support of veteran's education benefits. The Law 116-128 / U.S. Senate Bill 3503 authorized the VA to provide educational assistance for educational programs that have been converted to distance learning due to an emergency or health-related situation. More than 43,000 Florida veterans and their eligible family members are able to continue their post-secondary education without losing benefits during this pandemic crisis.

The Florida Veterans Foundation collaborated with the American Legion of Florida to create the COVID-19 Project Vet Relief Fund. The fund will help with emergency assistance for Florida's veterans, active-duty military members and their families affected by the pandemic crisis. Due to the pandemic, many businesses and organizations are being forced to close their doors, leaving our veterans are unable to work and provide income to support their families.

❖ **Veterans Education and Awareness**

Governor DeSantis formed a committee to review suicide statistics, develop strategies and priorities to prevent suicide, and address mental and healthcare access to service members, veterans and their families.

Executive Director Burgess met with leaders of the Florida Defense Support Task Force council in Tallahassee on January 15.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell toured the Southeastern Guide Dogs facility in Palmetto on January 15. The service dog organization develops partnerships between dogs and veterans, and service members living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other challenges such as hearing loss, seizures, emotional balance, and to help regain their independence and reintegrate into the community.

Executive Director Burgess met with the Florida Defense Support Task Force State Chief Resiliency Officer Dr. Julia Nesheiwat in Tallahassee on January 16.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Veterans Alternative Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Brian Anderson, Tapp Network's Director of Strategic Planning, Susan Myers and Open Partnership Education Network Director, Benjamin Smet in St. Petersburg on January 21. The meeting was focused on alternative treatments and therapy programs in Florida for veterans suffering with Mental Health conditions.

FDVA Leadership met with VA Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Margarita Devlin, and the Bay Pines VA regional office Director, Julianna Boor in Largo on January 22. During the meeting, Deputy Executive Director Hartsell elaborated on the need for Adult Health Day Care for veterans, and additional skilled staff members needed to accommodate programs that focus on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Wellness programs among service members, veterans and their families.

Executive Director Burgess served as a panel member at the Task Force Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide meeting in Tampa on January 28.

FDVA collaborated with the VA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), holding a Governor's Suicide Prevention Challenge Post-Policy conference in Tallahassee during January 30-31. The joint venture between FDVA and the SAMHSA addressed federal, state and local policies, committee objectives, processes, actions, and initiatives to end suicide.

FDVA Leadership met with BayCare Behavioral Health System Vice President Gail Ryder, and RSA Consulting Group Vice President/Chief Operating Officer Natalie King in Tallahassee on February 5.

Executive Director Burgess met with Dynamic Workforce Solutions Regional Director Dan McGrew in Tallahassee on February 5.

Executive Director Burgess and Legislative staff met with Collier County Commissioner Lisa Hurley, and county staff in Tallahassee on February 6. The meeting was to analyze possible opportunity to build a new State Veterans' Nursing Home in Collier County to address the needs of additional resources for the growing elderly and disabled veteran demographic in Florida.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with America's Warrior Partnership Director Thomas "Tom" Bowman and Marcus Institute for Brain Healthcare Consultant for Legislative and Federal Relations Michael W. Hartford in Brandon on February 7.

The Division of State Veterans' Homes Director Connie Tolley attended the National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH) winter conference in Washington, D.C., during February 10-13.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Florida National Cemetery Joint Veterans Committee meeting in Bushnell on February 12.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Southeastern Guide Dogs Heroes meeting in Tampa on February 13.

FDVA Leadership attended the 2020 National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) Mid-Winter conference in Alexandria, Virginia during February 23 - 26. During his conference attendance in Virginia, Executive Director Burgess joined the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie for the prestigious Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Awards ceremony on February 23.

FDVA Leadership participated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in a joint venture of SAMHSA council meeting in Washington, D.C., during February 25-27. Executive Director Burgess provided introductory remarks at the meeting.

FDVA Leadership joined the Florida Senate at the Florida National Guard Appreciation Day ceremony in Tallahassee on March 3.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with BayCare Behavioral Health System Vice President Ryder in Tampa on March 10.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell represented FDVA at the Florida National Cemetery Joint Veterans committee meeting in Bushnell on March 11. At the meeting, Hartsell made remarks on the available burial benefits and resources to veterans and their eligible family members.

❖ **Community Outreach**

Executive Director Burgess and the FDVA Leadership represented FDVA at the following community outreach visits and events.

Chief of Staff Al Carter met with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Florida's outreach team to discuss partnering opportunities for veterans' outreach in St. Petersburg on January 8.

Executive Director Burgess and Agencies Leadership team met with Florida State University College of Law Dean Erin O'Hara O'Connor in Tallahassee on January 22. The meeting was focused on GI Law Florida's Veterans' legal issues and the need for Veterans' Treatment Court (VTC) judges to precede over veteran-related cases. The Lawyers Assisting Warriors program would provide free legal help to active-duty service members in state.

Executive Director Burgess met with Pasco County Sheriffs Chief Deputy Jeff Harrington in New Port Richey on January 24. Later that afternoon, Executive Director Burgess provided remarks to law enforcement members at Pasco-Hernando State College on veteran benefits.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with the Founder of Shield of Faith Missions, Dr. Damon Friedman in Tampa on February 3.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with James A. Haley VA Medical Center staff in Tampa on February 5.

FDVA Leadership met with Mayor Manny Cid and council members of Miami Lakes in Tallahassee on February 5.

Executive Director Burgess participated in the Florida League of Mayors forum in Tallahassee on February 12.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Inspector General David Marzullo joined Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody at the *Keeping Seniors Safe Summit* in Sun City Center on March 3. U.S. Attorney General William Barr addressed a platform for federal, state, and municipalities to network and streamlined resources to combat crimes against senior

communities. This includes the Elder Justice Initiative program to fight elder abuse, financial exploitation and fraud targeted at seniors.

❖ **Legislative Activities**

During the 2020 Session, the FDVA Leadership provided educational support to legislators and committee members on veterans related issues and addressed the benefit gaps for Florida veterans and their families, and requested possible solutions to those issues.

Executive Director Burgess represented FDVA during Governor DeSantis' *2020 State of the State Address*, the opening ceremony of 2020 Joint Legislative Session in Tallahassee on January 14.

Executive Director Burgess presented remarks at the ceremony on the *Forward March* veterans' outreach initiative and available veteran benefits and services in the state of Florida. The benefits include in-state tuition rates for veterans and their families using the Post-9/11 GI Bill, property tax exemptions, expanded veterans' preference and extensive benefits, licensure, and fee waivers for many activities and occupations. He also addressed the high-quality care services available for veterans at the seven state veterans' homes, and two new state veterans' homes to be open later this year in Port St. Lucie and Orlando.

Executive Director Burgess met with the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget (OPB) and with legislators regarding veteran-related bills. During the meetings, he proposed best practices for veterans' initiative to improve benefit access for Florida's veterans and their family members. He also addressed top financial issues that could impact Florida veterans' resources and programs.

FDVA Leadership desired endeavor is that the agency continues to assist with strengthening the state's support for Florida veterans with education, healthcare, employment and family programs. During the 2020 Session, FDVA Leadership team represented FDVA in support of Legislative Bills or/and at the following legislative meetings in Tallahassee.

- Senator Tom A. Wright presented *Senate Bill (SB) 0294 Crimes Against Veterans* at the Senate Criminal Justice Committee meeting on January 10.
- Representative Robert 'Bobby' Payne presented *House Bill (HB) 0167 Offenses Against Veterans* at the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee meeting on January 15.
- Representative Cary Pigman presented *HB 409 Health Care Licensing Requirements* at the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee meeting on January 15.
- FDVA Leadership met with Senator Tom A. Wright in Tallahassee on January 15. FDVA leaders provided educational support to Senator Wright on veterans' alternative therapies and wellness programs.
- Executive Director Burgess attended the Senate Committee on Appropriations meeting on January 16.
- Representative Ardian Zika presented *HB 0687 Services for Veterans and Their Families* at the House Local, Federal and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee meeting on January 21.
- Executive Director Burgess provided remarks at the State College President's Leadership Academy of Northwest Florida State College in Niceville on February 5. Executive Director Burgess also accompanied Representative Mel Ponder at the Council of President's meeting in Tallahassee.
- Representative Sam Killebrew presented *HB 0877 Ad Valorem Tax Discount for Spouses of Certain Deceased Veterans Who Had Permanent Combat-Related Disabilities*, and *HB 0879 Surviving Spouse Ad Valorem Tax Reduction* at the House Ways and Means Committee meeting on February 11.

- Representative Ardian Zika presented *HB 0687 Services for Veterans and Their Families* at the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee on February 11.
- Executive Director Burgess met with Senator Wright and the University of South Florida staff in Tallahassee on February 12. The meeting focused on starting a veteran’s medical treatment and therapy programs initiative across the state of Florida.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell accompanied Representative Mel Ponder at the Council of Presidents’ meeting in Tallahassee on February 20. Later that day, they attended the Patriots Path launch press conference in support of *HB 0171 Postsecondary Education for Certain Military Personnel*.

Executive Director Burgess met with U.S. Representative Matt Gaetz, U.S. Representative Michael Waltz, U.S. Representative Ross Spano, U.S. Representative Gus Bilirakis, U.S. Representative Greg Steube, and U.S. Representative Brian Mast and Florida’s U.S. Senator Rick Scott in Washington, D.C., on February 26.

ii) Division of Veterans’ Benefits and Assistance:

1. Bureau of Veterans’ Claims Services:

Claims Service’s third quarter production review of rating decisions remained steady. The Bureau of Claims Services processed 15,029 rating decision review of claims for disability benefits completed through the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS). Bureau of Claims represented 373 veterans before the Board of Veterans Appeals to uphold their appellate rights for veterans’ benefits.

Additionally, the Bureau represented 72 local Personal Hearings with the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office and continued to mitigate the majority of these local issues to the advantage of the veteran prior to the hearing date. Due to COVID-19 restrictions placed, we anticipate a reduction in reported services for the foreseeable months. As always, we continue to stand ready to meet the increasing demands of Veterans’ appeals requirements.

Fiscal Year 2019-2020					
Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20	YTD Third Quarter FY 2018-19
Retroactive Compensation	\$35,250,634	\$30,055,499	\$43,657,512	\$108,963,645	\$91,209,296
Largest Single Retro. Benefit ⁽¹⁾	\$441,364	\$424,831	\$566,392	\$566,392	\$352,913
Debt Waiver Resolutions	\$231,335	\$279,349	\$282,600	\$793,284	\$587,049
Notices of Disagreement	2,211	6,320	4,476	13,007	3,017
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases ⁽²⁾	92	29	55	176	277
Act as Representative at Hearings*	571	593	445	1,609	616
Veterans’ Appeals Hearings*	668	721	524	1,913	1,180
Number of Ratings Reviewed	15,048	13,384	15,029	43,461	33,003
<p>(1) The “Largest Single Retro. Benefits” Year to Date for FY 2019-20 and the Actual for FY 2018-19 reflects only the largest benefit amount that was received for the quarter.</p> <p>(2) 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.</p>					

2. Bureau of Veterans' Field Services:

The Bureau of Field Services advocated for 59,586 veterans and their families, while conducting 232 outreach events, providing earned benefit information to 6,050 veterans and their families. Field Services also completed 10,951 disability claims. In addition, Field Services attended 2 Homeless Stand Down events, 25 Transition Assistance Briefings to file disability claims during those presentations, and 40 New Patient Orientations in VA Medical Centers and VA Outpatient Clinics.

Field Services' supervisors assisted the Bureau of Veterans' Claims by reviewing and entering 571 rating decisions. Field Services also assisted more than 1,206 veterans related to voter registration.

Fiscal Year 2019-2020					
Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20	YTD Third Quarter FY 2018-19
Number of Issue Resolutions	6,620	5,662	5,321	17,603	24,288
Total Amount of Issues Resolution	\$22,240,582	\$19,993,484	\$18,200,811	60,434,877	\$70,427,832
Outreach Visits	300	329	232	861	808
Veterans Served at Outreach	9,061	13,482	6,050	28,593	31,758
Bedside Interviews	244	346	123	713	870
Walk-ins / Counseling	38,533	34,523	31,276	104,332	101,475
Disability Claims	12,303	11,524	10,951	34,778	30,105
Voter Registration	1,768	1,906	1,206	4,880	9,569
Homeless Walk In	84	61	61	206	346
Ratings Reviewed Orlando / West Palm	401	419	571	1,391	1,911

Fiscal Year 2019-2020					
Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20	YTD Third Quarter FY 2018-19
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve Units	4	1	0	5	12
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	2	11	2	15	26
Medical Center Welcome Home Events	0	3	0	3	0
Congressional Open House Events	1	4	1	6	3
National Conferences	0	0	0	0	0
New Patient Orientation	62	55	40	157	149
Transition Assistance Briefings	29	19	25	73	93
Other	197	233	162	592	522

(1) 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.

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

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, U.S. Senate Bill 3503 passed into law. The law enables most facilities approved to participate in VA Education Benefit Programs to deliver their programs online. The law also provides the VA the authority to remit benefit payments to veteran students and schools, as if the students were taking the classes in-residence. It also provides the veteran with a sense of normalcy and purpose during these unprecedented times. In addition, VA's authority to change the way education benefit payments administered during a state of emergency promotes safety and well-being for veteran students and their families.

Due to COVID-19, the SAA team rapidly transitioned to 100% telework when the Bay Pines VA Campus closed. During this closer, FDVA Information and Technology (IT) Program supported to SAA to create electronic communications to shift school communications and document submissions from VA Certifying Officials to an all-electronic format.

The Florida SAA works with more than 1,000 VA approved facilities throughout the state of Florida. The SAA annually interacts with thousands of VA Certifying Officials for the VA Education Benefit Programs. Twenty-six participated facilities reported temporary program terminations and extension and/or full-facility temporary or permanent closures to the SAA. The SAA found many of the facilities just needed time to regroup while they created mechanisms to deliver their programs online. Currently, nine of the twenty-six facilities have now established online delivery for their students, and their operations continue. Section 109 of the Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017 also enables VA to continue to make monthly housing payments to Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill®) beneficiaries, for up to four weeks, following a temporary school closure.

Fiscal Year 2019-2020					
Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20	YTD Third Quarter FY 2018-19
SAA Programs Approved	4,550	5,819	3,100	13,469	13,631
Other Approval	1,727	778	848	3,353	1,639
Compliance Visits	20	5	32	57	57
Inspection Visits	10	7	15	32	35
Outreach Activities ⁽¹⁾	149	155	174	478	617
Liaison Activities ⁽²⁾	192	123	198	513	1,001
Technical Assistance ⁽³⁾	1,358	715	719	2,792	2,675

(1) Outreach Activities are any activity designed to inform or encourage those with entitlement to use it. SAA contact with non-approved schools and training facilities, inviting them to apply for approval to participate in GI Bill® programs, also are considered outreach.

(2) 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.

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

iii) Division of State Veterans' Homes:

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs provides the highest standard of care and services while managing the cost of its programs and being efficient stewards of resources entrusted to

us by the people of Florida. Improving the quality of care provided at State Veterans' Homes is our top priority. FDVA is continually striving for the highest quality and continuous improvement to better serve veteran residents in the best way possible that promotes their health and well-being. Our goal is to provide the best healthcare with an enjoyable, pleasant environment and provide a safe, warm, comforting, and secure place while being treated with the dignity and respect residents deserve.

Care is provided to veterans with qualifying war or peacetime service, who are residents of Florida preceding admission, and who require skilled care as certified by a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA/VA) physician. Admission criteria are based on the need to maintain a safe environment for all residents. The skilled nursing and assisted living homes only admit those persons whose needs can be met within the accommodations and services it provides with consideration for all residents.

Assisted Living level care is provided at the Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City. It includes rehabilitative assistance and other therapeutic measures to eligible ambulatory veterans who do not need hospitalization or skilled nursing services. The focus of care in the Domiciliary Home is preparing veterans to function at their highest level of independence. A multidisciplinary approach is followed by the veterans participating in the established care plan.

Skilled nursing home care provides full-service, long-term residential nursing care to eligible veterans in the six State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The homes are supervised 24-hours daily by registered and licensed nurses. Five of the six skilled nursing facilities operated by FDVA have dementia-specific wings.

FDVA operates nursing homes in Daytona Beach, Land O' Lakes, Pembroke Pines, Panama City, Port Charlotte, and St. Augustine.

Comprehensive services and a deep concern for all veterans go hand in hand at our FDVA nursing homes.

A full-time staff of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and certified nursing assistants provides around-the-clock medical and nursing care. Rehabilitative services, such as occupational and physical therapies, speech therapy, and recreational activities are provided under the direct supervision of licensed therapists. A variety of on-and-off site recreational and social activities are provided to encourage active minds, bodies, and spirits, and slow physical and mental decline. A wide range of other medical services are also offered. These include dental, podiatric and dermatological care.

In spacious dining rooms, residents are provided with wholesome meals prepared under the supervision of licensed dietitians. The Division of State Veterans' Homes has a proud tradition of concern and commitment to the veterans. We remain at the forefront in ensuring that the care and services provided to our veterans meet or exceed the highest standards in an environment that enhances the quality of life of each veteran.

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

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

- i. Purchase Orders processed for this quarter is 1,109 for a total amount of \$5,641,466.70.
- ii. Processing 385 recurring annual Purchasing Requisitions.
- iii. Processed 50 e-quotes.
- iv. FDVA On-Premise Pharmacy System single source notice of intended purchase (PUR 7776) issued 3/17/2020, further procurement action pending as of 3/31/2020. Total project budget \$250,000.

- v. FDVA Time Keeping/Payroll Based Journal System contract Amendment No. 1 (adding 2 new homes), with IT Computing Services, Inc., executed on 1/13/2020. Annual contract amount \$76,492.
- vi. FDVA Housekeeping and Laundry Services contract, with Healthcare Services Group, Inc., closed out 3/20/2020. Total contract amount \$16,366,500.
- vii. FDVA Web-Hosted Electronic Health Record/Electronic Medical Record System single source notice of intended purchase (PUR 7776) issued 11/12/2019 and expired 11/21/2019 (with no vendor responses received). Single source notice of intended decision (PUR 7778) issued 11/21/2019 and expired 11/26/2019 (with no vendor protests received). Contract awarded to MatrixCare, Inc. and executed 12/19/2019. Total contract amount \$2,664,642. Amendment No. 1 (revising/reducing price schedule), with MatrixCare, Inc., executed on 1/14/2020. Total contract amount \$2,631,738.
- viii. Alexander “Sandy” Nininger SVNH “Renovations” DMS Architect Agreement, with Rogers, Lovelock, and Fritz, Inc., executed and received 1/16/2020. Total project budget amount \$5,500,000 (65% federally funded; 35% state funded).
- ix. Alexander “Sandy” Nininger SVNH “Kitchen Appliances” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 2/11/2020. Pre-bid/onsite meeting held 2/25/2020. Bid opening held 3/13/2020. Contract award and execution pending as of 3/31/2020. Total project budget \$50,000.
- x. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 10/1/2019. Pre-bid/onsite meeting held 10/17/2019. Bid opening held 11/5/2019. Contract awarded to Santa Fe Professional Solutions, Inc., 11/18/2019. Contract executed 12/17/2019. Total contract amount \$114,767.
- xi. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Fluid Cooler Replacement” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 1/30/2020. Pre-bid/onsite meeting held 2/12/2020. Bid opening held 3/12/2020. Contract awarded to EMCOR Services, Inc. 3/17/2020. Contract execution pending as of 3/31/2020. Total project budget \$200,000.
- xii. Chester Sims SVNH “Rooftop Vents Replacement” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 12/30/2019. Pre-bid/onsite meeting held 1/15/2020. Bid opening held 1/30/2020. Contract awarded to Comfort Systems USA Southeast, Inc., 2/6/2020. Contract executed 2/26/2020. Total contract amount \$75,137.
- xiii. Chester Sims SVNH “Parking Lot Lights” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 1/9/2020. Pre-bid/onsite meeting held 1/15/2020. Bid opening held 2/7/2020. Contract awarded to A&K Energy Conservation, Inc. 2/17/2020. Contract executed 3/2/2020. Total contract amount \$136,708.
- xiv. Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH “Dining Room/Lanai Remodel” contract Amendment No. 2 (extending contract to 3/7/20), with Design Build Remodel, Inc., executed on 1/24/2020. Total contract amount \$325,099.
- xv. Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH “Dining Room/Lanai Remodel” contract Amendment No. 3 (extending contract to 3/31/2020), with Design Build Remodel, Inc., executed on 3/6/2020. Total contract amount \$325,099.
- xvi. Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH “Renovations” DMS Construction Agreement, with Allstate Construction, Inc., executed and received 2/5/2020. Total project budget amount \$5,500,000 (65% federally funded; 35% state funded).
- xvii. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Concrete Curb and Sidewalk Repairs” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 1/21/2020. Pre-bid/onsite meeting held 1/28/2020. Bid opening held 2/21/2020. Contract awarded to Huffman, Inc. d/b/a NuWave Concrete 2/27/2020. Contract executed 3/13/2020. Total contract amount \$29,852.

- xviii. Robert Jenkins SVDH “Replacement of Wall Rails and Guards” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 1/8/2020. Pre-bid/onsite meeting held 1/23/2020. Bid opening held 2/13/2020. Contract awarded to Shine and Company, Inc. 2/17/2020. Contract executed 2/27/2020. Total contract amount \$229,000.
- 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(3)(k) and (3) (l))**
 - i. **0 - General Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 0 pending.
 - ii. **2 - Employment Liability Claims:** (2 new this Quarter) 0 won, 1 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.
 - iii. **1 - Other Liability Claims:** (1- new this Quarter) 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.
- e) Contracts and agreements required to carry out programs approved by the Legislature or Governor and Cabinet (F.A.C. 55-1.003(3)(e))**
 - i. None
- f) Professional Services (F.A.C. 55-1.003(3)(k))**
 - i. None
- g) Notifications to State Attorneys, Sheriffs or other Law Enforcement (F.A.C. 551.003(3)(m))**
 - i. None.
- h) Donations (F.A.C. 55-1.003(n))**
 - i. **Non-Cash Donations Received by State Veterans’ Homes**

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Third Quarter				
Facility	Item	Quantity	Value	Total
Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans’ Domiciliary, Lake City				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Alexander “Sandy” Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines				\$1769
	Optical Reader	1	\$300	\$300
	Wheelchair	1	\$100	\$100
	Pool Table Cover	1	\$119	\$119
	Used TV	2	\$80	\$160
	Used Scooter	1	\$1,000	\$1,000
	Used TV	1	\$90	\$90
Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home, Land O’ Lakes				\$772
	Wheelchair	1	\$25	\$25
	TV Vizio E Series 70”	1	\$747	\$ 747
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City				\$2,262

	Tablets	3	\$150	\$450
	Tablets Ipad	2	\$330	\$660
	32" Philips TV	9	\$128	\$1,152
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Total Non-Cash Donations				\$4,803

ii. Cash Donations Received by State Veterans' Homes

Fiscal Year 2019-2020				
Facilities	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$10,050	\$606	\$3,554	\$14,210
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$0	\$2,084	\$1,175	\$3,258
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$160	\$2,946	\$673	\$3,779
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$0	\$0	\$4,175	\$4,175
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$0	\$400	\$375	\$775
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$1,365	\$3,992	\$1,130	\$6,487
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$155	\$300	\$300	\$755
Ardie R. Copas SVNH, St. Lucie	\$0	\$48,000	\$0	\$48,000
Total Cash Donations	\$11,730	\$58,328	\$11,382	\$81,440
(1) State Veterans' Nursing Home (SVNH)				
(2) State Veterans' Domiciliary Home (SVDH)				

i) Memberships in Professional Organizations Paid (F.A.C. 55-1.003(p))

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Third Quarter	
Facilities	Total
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$1,652
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$4,329
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$4,354
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$4,316

Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$4,341
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$4,341
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$4,316
Total Paid	\$27,649
Third Quarter Memberships Fees paid to The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Inc.	



3) Veterans Florida (VF)

During the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the following budget passed at the 2020 Florida legislative session.

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 State Funding to Veterans Florida	
Operations	\$344,106 Recurring
Workforce	\$750,000 Nonrecurring
Entrepreneur	\$625,000 Nonrecurring
Additional	The unexpended balance of FY 2019-2020 funds for Entrepreneur Program and Workforce Program shall revert and is appropriated for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 to the department for the same purpose.

Internal Operations

Veterans Florida staff daily using the Salesforce software program to conduct intake, qualify, assist, and direct veterans towards the programs we offer, and manage the grants. We are fine-tuning the reporting available within the system and are working on streamlining certain operations within the software for better efficiencies.

Sheila Helton joined Veterans Florida as our new Entrepreneur Program Specialist. Her focus is vendor relations, contract management and supporting program operations.

Staff and board travel ended and staff began working from home on March 12 in response to the COVID-19 epidemic. All of our productivity tools are cloud based and operations are able to continue smoothly.

External Operations

VISIT Florida expanded our presence on their military tourism webpage.

The Board approved suspending through June 30, 2020, the requirement that Florida employers seeking veteran talent or workforce training funds under the VETS Program, may only seek such assistance for full-time and permanent positions to allow for temporary or part-time positions as the state's manufacturers and economy shift to meet the requirements of addressing the pandemic.

The Veterans Florida Expo planned for June 5-6, 2020, will be postponed or cancelled.

Veterans Florida participates each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday on the State Emergency Operations Center Private Sector Partner and Tourism teleconference. The information received from these calls is added to our Recovery page on our website. We also participate in numerous webinars to learn about new federal legislation and resources which we can direct our audience to for support during the epidemic.

Marketing

The marketing team assisted FDVA in promoting the *Forward March* report with a press release and social media promotion.

We are also finalizing display ads to retarget users that have been to VISIT's military hub.

Campaign Statistics:

Third Quarter Marketing Metrics			
Network Partner	January Performance	February Performance	March Performance
Unique Website Visitors	4,101	3,123	7,316
Facebook Organic Post Reach	6,728	7,906	86,845
Newsletter Subscribers	30,988	31,392	31,411
LinkedIn Post Reach	2,900	2,923	2,630
Twitter Post Reach	4,179	5,115	7,533

Career Services Program

Amidst the recent COVID-19 development the Career Services Team (CST) continues to provide services to employers and veterans. The CST rapidly changed focus to assess the current needs to support employers and veterans affected by COVID-19. For this goal, we have taken the following three prong outreach approach:

- Employers: Inquire if they are operating and hiring.
- Community partners: Inquire if there is any targeted industry employer that has a surge in hiring needs.
- Veterans: Refer veterans inquiring about COVID-19 related resources to the appropriate entity.

We understand that the onset and developments are occurring rapidly and many organizations and individuals are in assessing mode. Our goal is to provide support to those that have an immediate need and to prepare them for when they are ready to move forward.

Career Services activity metrics continue to be refined as we learn Salesforce reporting functions. Grant reimbursement payments are below:

Third Quarter	
Month	Grant Reimbursement Amount
January 2020	\$36,975
February 2020	\$144,616
March 2020	\$60,219
Total	\$241,810

* Note: Due to the holidays, several November trained veterans will appear in December metrics

Veteran Leads Fiscal Year 2019-2020			
	Job Fair	Website	Total
September	44	1,828	1,872
October	0	66	66

November	141	81	222
December	32	46	78
January	68	95	163
February	25	67	92
March	47	60	107
YTD Total	357	2,243	2,600

Entrepreneurship Program

The board members appointed Sheila Helton as the new Entrepreneurship Coordinator of Veterans Florida. Coordinator Helton comes to VF from Visit Florida and brings several years of program coordinator experience.

The approved Network Partners are conducting their various cohorts. Network partners have been holding various workshops and networking events to address specific challenges and create a pipeline of participants for the fall and spring cohorts. VF entrepreneurship team attended the following workshops:

- Tampa Green Beret Association Veterans Benefit Social in Tampa.
- Florida Association of Veteran Owned Businesses' networking event in Orlando.
- Florida Venture Capital Conference in Orlando.

Network Partner	Cohort	Applications	Selected	Start Date
Action Zone, Inc.	Business Modeling 2	33	17	January 5
Action Zone, Inc.	Mission Mapping 12	17	9	February 8
Florida Atlantic University	Facilitated Startup 1	19	15	February 27
Florida Atlantic University	Facilitated Startup 2	16	13	February 29
Florida Gulf Coast University	Facilitated Startup 2	13	11	February 5
Julo Strategy	CEO Mindset Tampa	6	5	March 4
Julo Strategy	CEO Mindset Pensacola	TBD	N/A	TBD
Julo Strategy	CEO Exchange	TBD	N/A	March 19
University of North Florida	Startup Cohort 1	18	15	January 15
University of North Florida	Growth Cohort 1	TBD	N/A	March 25
University of West Florida	Facilitated Startup	TBD	N/A	March 7

Network Partner	Cohort	Start Date	End Date	Course of Action
Action Zone				All Classes have ended; One-on-one Mentorship Available; Virtual Pitch Competition
Florida Atlantic University	Startup	February 27	April 17	Virtual/online lectures/presentations; Live WebEx; Digital webinar events; Virtual Pitch Competition

Florida Atlantic University	Startup	February 29	April 17	Virtual/online lectures/presentations; Live WebEx; Digital webinar events; Virtual Pitch Competition
Florida Gulf Coast University	Startup	February 5	May 9	Online classes; In-person available; One-on-one Zoom available, Virtual Pitch Competition
Florida Gulf Coast University	Growth	May 13	June 27	Online classes; In-person available; One-on-one Zoom available, Virtual Pitch Competition
Julo Strategy	Growth	February 25	March 31	Online/Zoom classes; One-on-one Zoom Coaching; One-on-one mentorship available
University of North Florida	Startup	January 15	March 11	Online classes; One-on-one mentorship available
University of West Florida	Growth	March 5	May 13	Online classes; One-on-one mentorship available
University of West Florida	Startup	March 7	May 30	Online/Zoom classes; One-on-one mentorship available

Fiscal Year 2019-2020		
Network Partner	Total Contracted Amount	YTD Payments
Action Zone, Inc.	\$81,773	\$76,335
Florida Atlantic University	\$64,500	\$0
Florida Gulf Coast University	\$76,500	\$45,000
Julo Strategy	\$60,000	\$8,710
University of North Florida	\$46,500	\$13,200
University of West Florida	\$60,000	\$17,775
YTD Total	\$389,273	\$161,020

Veteran Agriculture Program

February was the final month of funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture pilot grant and we are compiling the final report for the program. Although pilot funding ended, we continue to connect interested veterans with opportunities at the individual research centers and agriculture related employment. To date, all veterans who have completed the internship have been placed into agriculture-related positions. We are shifting focus to work with the Department of Defense (DOD) and their transition assistance programs to recruit eligible service members interested in pursuing a career in agriculture who are eligible for either the DOD SkillBridge Program or United States Special Operations Command Wounded Care Program. Our agriculture team participated in the Military Agriculture Tour in Hillsborough County.

Location	Openings	Applications	Active	Completed
Gulf Coast REC (Wimauma)	2	29	0	4
Mid-Florida REC (Apopka)	0	16	0	1
North Florida REC (Quincy)	0	9	0	1
Range Cattle REC (Ona)	1	6	0	2

Citrus REC (Lake Alfred) *New	0	6	0	0
Southwest Florida REC (Immokalee)	0	9	0	0
Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory (Ruskin)	0	12	0	0
Tropical REC (Homestead) *New	0	0	0	0
West Florida REC (Milton)	0	0	0	0

Development

Development was focused on arranging sponsorships and exhibitors for the 2020 Veterans Florida Expo until the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to reevaluate the expo date. Development has since shifted to researching new non-profit specific grants and financial assistance created by the Federal Government and private organizations in response to the pandemic.

Third Quarter Development					
Organization	Amount	Type	Purpose	Date Submitted	Status
Bank of America	\$50,000	Grant	General support of Veterans Employment and Trainings Services Program	02/22/2020	Pending

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board Directors met on March 25 to review the results of the 2020-2021 Legislative Session and approved Veterans Florida 2020-2021 Operating Budget.

The next Board of Directors meeting scheduled for June 5, 2020, the meeting agenda includes:

- Coincide with the 2020 Expo.
- Alternative operations and projects planning for the COVID-19 pandemic.



Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF)

In 2008, the Florida Legislature established the FVF as a Direct Support Organization of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA). The Foundation operates for the direct and indirect benefit of the veterans of Florida, the FDVA, and the state veteran's service organizations (VSO). FVF is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit operating for charitable and educational purposes. The foundation operates by one full time position and two interns.

❖ **FVF Continues COVID-19 Project Relief Fund**

The Foundation has partnered with the American Legion of Florida and created the COVID-19 Project Relief Fund to help veterans affected by the pandemic. A webpage and partnership marketing program was developed to accept donations and for veterans to apply for assistance. FVF is accepting any level of donations, grants, etc. to help those veterans in need with emergency funding. Veterans have to follow guidelines for application.

❖ **District Directors & Fundraising**

FVF Chairman, District Directors and supporting advocates are taking the lead by creating their mission statement and taking ownership through personal contributions, local fundraising, and increased outreach activities.

❖ **Boots on The Ground Partnerships**

FVF is partnering with statewide associations enhancing the opportunity for a *Boots on The Ground* grassroots efforts to reach thousands of veterans previously not achieved through routine activities in recent years.

❖ **Forward March Ambassadors for Veterans Council**

FVF has continued to promote the council which includes veteran advocates from around the state to invest in FVF with sustainable funding and extended outreach. Council designation is honorary and will meet yearly at a special veterans' conference/reception to be announced soon.

❖ **Suicide Prevention, Opioid Addiction, Mental Health Services**

FVF has led the collaboration with the Tampa Bay area's 2-1-1 Crisis Center and the development of two direct module connections, which are now operational on FVF's website and on FDVA's app platform. The module provides counseling to help veterans in crisis mode or in need of additional support.

❖ **Forgotten Warrior Project – Kenan Family Trust, Palm Beach & Surrounding Counties**

The Foundation has received a private trust fund of \$100,000 to work in collaboration with the National Association of Veterans and Families by conducting free seminars and claims assistance for aging wartime veterans and their survivors to help with long term care VA benefits in Palm Beach and surrounding counties. The statewide economic impact is unlimited.

❖ **Grant Opportunities**

FVF has a specialty grant writer on staff to help recruit funding for FVF's initiatives, which also extends to helping other local veterans' organizations with emergency funding opportunities. To date, FVF has received \$19,000 in grants, with over \$200,000 awaiting decisions.

❖ **License Plate Bills**

The bills, sponsored by Representative James Grant and Senator Aaron Bean, have included funding language to create the Gadsden Flag License plate which will help with recurring funding for foundation sustainability. Awaiting the Governor's signature. FVF Marketing plan on standby to sell 3,000 vouchers.

❖ **Chartered Functions and Success**

Florida Veterans Foundation Staff, Board & Collaborating Partner Accomplishments:

- Developed COVID-19 emergency response and assistance services for veterans
- 95,156 veterans/families reached via staff, chairman & board members
- 10,948 veterans transported to medical appointments = *298,321 volunteer miles & 17,036 hours
- 7,100 likes & interactions on increased social media platforms
- \$55,449+ in emergency financial support provided to 50 Veterans and their families
- 501 Aging Wartime veterans/survivors attended 12 seminars around the state
- 66 veterans/survivors approved federal claims for \$3.3 million in Long Term Care Benefits
- 5,637 veterans reached for Aid & Attendance outreach & educational benefits
- 55 veterans were honored & awarded with Veteran Service Medals & Challenge Coins
- \$900 in grant to Homeless Veterans for clothing, meals, etc.
- \$12,000 in funding allocated for FDVA's Florida Veterans Benefits Guides
- \$5,000 in funding for FDVA's media efforts to recruit Personnel for State Veterans' Nursing Homes
- 1,873 volunteer hours from foundation board members to assist veterans

Chairman, Staff and Directors' Participation Events:

Veteran Treatment Courts, County Council meetings, Mission United Advisory Council, Florida Veterans Council, Commanders meetings, Veteran awards events, Homeless Veterans Stand Downs, Homeless Veterans Meals Served, 72 Burial & Memorial Services, Chamber of Commerce events, Senior Coalition meetings. *(6 month period)

Acknowledgment: FVF is grateful for FDVA's partnership through the provisions of office space, administrative, and legal collaboration efforts, which help to support FVF mission objectives.