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

DATE: August 27, 2020

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

FROM: James S. "Hammer" Hartsell
Deputy Executive Director

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

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs submits the Quarterly Report for the Fourth Quarter of the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year, covering the period April 1 - June 30, 2020.

The Quarterly Report is submitted pursuant to the procedures authorized by Rule 55-1.003 Florida Administrative Code (06/10/2008).

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
FOURTH QUARTER REPORT
April 1 – June 30, 2020

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

1) Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Administrative Highlights

a) Current Issues/Concerns

i) Executive Direction:

On March 11, 2020, the Governor, in conjunction with the Florida Division of Emergency Management and FDVA senior leadership, made the difficult decision to restrict all visitor access to our homes through Executive Order 20-52, with the exception of those whose veteran is receiving end-of-life care. With enhanced cleaning protocols in place, our goal continues to be the elimination of as much risk to our residents and staff as humanly possible while continuing our efforts to provide skilled and loving care to our residents. This "no visitor" policy was undertaken to safeguard our predominantly older resident population, many of whom have multiple complex health conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to complications from infection.

Executive Director Danny Burgess recognized State Veterans' Homes staff during National Nurses Week for their selfless sacrifice despite the risks of serving our veterans with loving care under some extraordinary conditions. He took pride in the State Veterans' Homes employees for their leadership and dedication towards balancing a commitment to sustained communication with our community while maintaining excellent care delivery to their veteran residents.

Deputy Executive Director James Hartsell and Chief of Staff Al Carter provided support services to FDVA team leaders to coordinate emergency plans on COVID-19. Following Pinellas and Hillsborough County mandates to wear face masks in public spaces, the guideline was provided to agency personnel and orders enforcing facial coverings during official business hours to reduce to spread of COVID-19.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell facilitated coordination for support services related to COVID-19 and provided updates to Senior Leadership.

FDVA Communications and External Affairs Director and Agency Emergency 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. Director Murray delivered remarks to media outlets on the COVID-19 cases at Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Clifford C. Sims SVNH and Baldomero Lopez SVNH. He enlightened media on the State Veterans' Homes sanitization safety measures mandated to personnel and residents to minimize this highly contagious disease.

Chief of Staff Carter, Division of State Veterans' Homes Program Director Connie Tolley, and State Veterans' Homes Administrators coordinated the agency's pandemic emergency plan to ensure the safety of the veterans' home residents.

The VA has collaborated with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and U.S. Treasury Department to distribute Economic Impact Payments to veterans and survivors who receive Compensation and Pension (C&P) benefit payments of non-taxable VA benefits. FDVA

received over \$3.8 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act federal grant money to assist with the impacts of COVID-19 on Nursing Care facilities. Funding is designated to offset revenue losses incurred, staffing shortfalls, equipment and supply shortfalls and related matters.

The VA Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) regional offices were temporarily closed to the general public. FDVA Bay Pines regional office expanded existing technologies to remain accessible to veterans, service members and their families during the office closure. Effective March 30, FDVA provides virtual and individualized counseling on VA benefits briefings and services military installations for transitioning service members and their families through the interagency Transition Assistance Program (TAP) until further notice.

Information Technology Director Christine Loso coordinated with Information and Technology (IT) team members to facilitate the connectivity of telephone and fax services at the Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH in Pembroke Pines during May 15-16.

Executive Director Burgess attended the Complete Count Committee (CCC) teleconference on June 2. Governor DeSantis developed the CCC of twenty-four board members to implement a 2020 Census awareness campaign in Florida to support the Federal 2020 Census. Executive Director Burgess was appointed to work with Lt. Governor Jeanette Nuñez to provide Florida veterans demographic updates for the 2020 Census to the committee.

Executive Director Burgess resigned from FDVA on June 18, to pursue his career in the Florida Senate. Executive Director Burgess served as State Representatives for District 38, Chair of the House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee, Mayor for City of Zephyrhills, served on the Zephyrhills City Council and Judge Advocate in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Information Technology Director Loso, OHL Arellano Construction Company/OHL Superintendent Chuck Langone and Johnson Control Inc. integrated the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system and software services at the State Veterans' Nursing Home in Lake Baldwin, Orlando during June 22-26.

Governor DeSantis signed the following proclamations in Florida to commemorate veterans for their selfless dedication to the nation.

- Governor proclaims May 15 as Armed Forces Day.
- Governor proclaims May 20 as Memorial Day.
- Governor proclaims June 26 as the 70th anniversary of Korean War Remembrance Day.

❖ **Veterans Education and Awareness**

FDVA Leadership participated in a virtual Town Hall meeting with Florida State Representative Margaret Good on May 7. In the meeting, Executive Director Burgess addressed public concerns regarding veteran's benefits, healthcare services and available treatments during the global pandemic. Executive Director Burgess also provided an update on COVID-19 as it relates to the Florida State Veterans' Nursing Homes, and discussed new changes to the GI Bill and the VA's new initiative on veterans' suicides.

Executive Director Burgess and the FDVA Leadership represented FDVA at the following education and awareness visits and events.

- Chief of Staff Carter attended the U.S. Space Command Pursuit teleconference on April 22.

- Chief of Staff Carter attended the Florida Suicide Prevention Interagency Action Plan Committee on April 23.
- FDVA Leadership participated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in a joint venture of the VA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) virtual conference during May 14-15. Executive Director Burgess provided introductory remarks at the meeting.
- Executive Director Burgess participated in a live virtual forum with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Florida's Deputy Communications Manager Colleen Krepstekies on May 28.
- FDVA received 42 nominations for the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Class of 2020.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the first Women's Veterans Forum on June 23. VA Deputy Secretary Pamela Powers hosted the teleconference.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended the VA/SAMHSA council teleconference on June 24. The conference was focused on developing a statewide crisis map that identifies high-risk regions of suicide cases. The Crisis Intercept Map will be a tool to support ongoing efforts to aggressively promote suicide prevention among Florida's citizens, service members, and veterans and their families.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Pasco County Sheriff Veterans Liaison Office on June 25.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the *Fourth Assault Amphibian Battalion* "Change of Command" ceremony in Tampa on June 26.

❖ **Community Outreach**

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the wreath-laying ceremony in Bushnell on May 23, VA virtually shared the ceremony with public via social media. VA hosted the Memorial Day ceremony at the Florida National Cemetery to commemorate all active-duty and former U.S. military service members.

❖ **Legislative Activities**

Executive Director Burgess attended a teleconference with the Cabinet on May 28. During the conference, Executive Director Burgess provided an update on the challenges that FDVA faced to date combating COVID-19. The agency challenges include a reduction in businesses with competitive opportunities and job advancements, and recruiting and retaining medical personnel for our State Veterans' Nursing Homes.

Executive Director Burgess also addressed the Cabinet on other veteran-related challenges and available programs to support veterans and their families. That includes the issuance of new cemetery burial lots, burial benefits, services and available resources, Florida veteran suicide rate and preventative programs, and public awareness and support services.

ii) **Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance:**

1. **Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services:**

The Bureau of Claims Services processed 11,968 rating decision review of claims for disability benefits completed through the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Petersburg Regional Office has remained closed. Personal hearings were affected due to the closure. Additionally, the Board of Veterans Appeals suspended hearings indefinitely.

The Bureau has shifted to telework operations and are adjusting accordingly. The Veterans' Benefits and Assistance Statewide phone and email box continued to get heavy traffic throughout this period. We anticipate a continued reduction in reported services for the

foreseeable future meeting with the public. 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	Fourth Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20	YTD FY 2018-19
Retroactive Compensation	\$35,250,634	\$30,055,499	\$43,657,512	\$48,031,303	\$156,994,948	\$133,741,292
Largest Single Retro. Benefit (1)	\$441,364	\$424,831	\$566,392	\$315,775	\$566,392	\$359,055
Debt Waiver Resolutions	\$231,335	\$279,349	\$282,600	\$120,355	\$913,639	\$1,485,980
Notices of Disagreement	2,211	6,320	4,476	1,848	14,855	3,972
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases (2)	92	29	55	0	176	356
Act as Representative at Hearings*	571	593	445	11	1,620	878
Veterans' Appeals Hearings*	668	721	524	24	1,937	1,702
Number of Ratings Reviewed	15,048	13,384	15,029	11,968	55,429	47,886

(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.

(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.

2. Bureau of Veterans' Field Services:

The Bureau of Field Services advocated for 25,404 veterans and their families. Field Services also completed 2,472 disability claims. In addition, Field Services led Benefits and Assistance with processing 10,961 unemployment applications for the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Field Services' supervisors assisted the Bureau of Veterans' Claims by reviewing and entering 1,290 rating decisions. Field Services also assisted more than 344 veterans related to voter registration.

Fiscal Year 2019-2020						
Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20	YTD FY 2018-19
Number of Issue Resolutions	6,620	5,662	5,321	3,274	20,877	32,726
Total Amount of Issues Resolution	\$22,240,582	\$19,993,484	\$18,200,811	8,728,654	\$69,163,531	\$96,000,011
Outreach Visits	300	329	232	0	861	1,159
Veterans Served at Outreach	9,061	13,482	6,050	0	28,593	46,778
Bedside Interviews	244	346	123	9	722	1,091
Walk-ins / Counseling	38,533	34,523	31,276	767	105,099	138,810
Disability Claims	12,303	11,524	10,951	2,472	37,250	42,580
Voter Registration	1,768	1,906	1,206	334	5,214	12,227

Homeless Walk In	84	61	61	26	232	458
Ratings Reviewed	401	419	571	1,290	2,681	2,243

Fiscal Year 2019-2020

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20	YTD FY 2018-19
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve Units	4	1	0	0	5	16
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	2	11	2	0	15	34
Medical Center Welcome Home Events	0	3	0	0	3	0
Congressional Open House Events	1	4	1	0	6	9
National Conferences	0	0	0	0	0	2
New Patient Orientation	62	55	40	0	157	206
Transition Assistance Briefings	29	19	25	0	73	124
Other	197	233	162	0	592	761

(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:

The SAA's primary duties are fulfilling VA contract specific requirements for the monitoring of quality and the integrity of veteran education programs and the oversight and enforcement of approval-related laws of veteran education benefits. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the significant enactment with the following laws created incredible opportunities for veteran beneficiaries.

- 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.
- The Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018 created 38 U.S.C §3679(e). The law prevents all schools from assessing financial or access penalties on Chapter 31 (VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program) and Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill®) beneficiaries for up to 90 days, while the institution awaits payment from VA.
- Senate Bill 3503 / U.S. Law No: 116-128. 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.
- HR 6322 / U.S. Law No: 116-140. The bill authorizes the VA continue paying educational assistance and subsistence allowances for a specified amount of time for education programs suspended due to an emergency.
- SAAs are generally responsible for the approval of education and training programs in their respective states. They are the pathway into the VA for a program's recognition and identification. The GI Bill requires the SAA to take the suspension and/or disapproval actions for participation in GI Bill® education programs if schools are found non-compliant.
- The SAA team had a seamless transition to 100 percent telework when the Bay Pines VA Campus and State Veterans' Homes prohibited access to their buildings.
- FDVA Information and Technology (IT) Program supported SAA to create electronic communications to shift school communications and document submissions from VA

Certifying Officials to an all-electronic format. The FDVA Communications team also expanded the SAA’s webpages and posted pertinent information for veterans and school officials to facilitate communications with partnering schools and agencies.

- Two training events for School Certifying Officials (SCO) were canceled due to the pandemic. However, a Florida Association of Veteran Education Specialists sponsored teleconference organized training opportunities for the SCO.
- During state travel restrictions, SAA maintained electronic communications with the VA contractual obligations. Upon approval from VA, the SAA began performing all compliance survey audits of facilities remotely. The SAA also began performing facility inspection visits virtually with the SCO pointing the camera to areas directed by the inspecting SAA employee.

In line with FDVA’s *Forward March* goals, the SAA also worked diligently to bridge relationships with other agencies to maximize veteran services by sharing knowledge and the troubleshooting of problems.

The SAA virtually contacted over 140 organizations, inviting them to participate in GI Bill education benefit programs. In addition, the SAA maintained contact with the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, the National Association of Veteran Program Administrators, the Florida Association of Veteran Education Specialists and Accrediting Agencies. Education outreach was also provided during the County Veteran Service Officer’s (CVSO) Annual Conference and quarterly during the CVSO Certification Courses.

Fiscal Year 2019-2020						
Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20	YTD FY 2018-19
SAA Programs Approved	4,550	5,819	3,100	1,519	14,988	15,903
Other Approval	1,727	778	848	482	3,835	2,247
Compliance Visits	20	5	32	16	73	122
Inspection Visits	10	7	15	6	38	43
Outreach Activities (1)	149	155	174	223	701	793
Liaison Activities (2)	192	123	198	189	702	1,246
Technical Assistance (3)	1,358	715	719	773	3,565	3,431

(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:

The Florida State Veterans’ Homes received the 2020 Silver - Achievement in Quality Award by the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL). The award is the second of three distinctions possible through the AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program, which spotlights providers across the nation that have demonstrated their dedication to improving the quality of care for residents and patients in long-term and post-acute care.

The following State Veterans’ Homes earned the 2020 AHCA/NCAL Silver - Achievement in Quality Award:

- Alexander Nininger State Veterans’ Nursing Home, Pembroke Pines.

- Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home, Land O' Lakes.
- Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home, Panama City.
- Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home, Daytona Beach.
- Robert H. Jenkins, Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home, Lake City.

AHCA/NCAL's National Quality Award Program was established in 1996 based on the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's core values and criteria to challenge the member providers. The providers can achieve performance excellence through three progressive levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. At the Silver level, members develop and demonstrate effective approaches that improve organizational performance and healthcare outcomes.

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is well on its way to progress in their quality journey by continuing to achieve better quality results.

The Silver Award-winning State Veterans' Homes can now advance in further developing comprehensive approaches that meet the criteria required for the Gold - Excellence 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))

- i. Processed 939 Purchasing Requisitions for the amount of \$8,922,639.
- ii. Processed 474 recurring annual Purchasing Requisitions for services.
- iii. Processed 56 e-quotes.
- iv. FDVA On-Premise Pharmacy System single source notice of intended purchase (PUR 7776) issued on 3/17/2020 and expired on 3/26/2020 (with no responses received). Single source notice of intended decision (PUR 7778) issued on 3/27/2020 and expired on 4/1/2020 (with no protests received). Contract awarded to Smith Technologies, LLC on 4/2/2020. Contract execution pending as of 6/24/2020 (due to acquisition, DOS/DOC SunBiz, and IRS COVID-19 delays). Total contract amount \$474,918.
- v. FDVA original "Web-Hosted EHR/EMR System" single source contract, with MatrixCare, Inc., closed out on 3/30/2020. Total contract amount \$1,221,355.
- vi. FDVA Direct Support Organization annual contract performance certification (for FY 2018-19), with Florida Veterans Foundation, issued on 4/13/2020. No cost contract.
- vii. FDVA "USDVA/VISN-8 Pharmacy Services" contract Amendment No. 5, adding new Copas and Lake Baldwin SVNH's (new service locations), executed on 5/26/2020. Approximate annual contract amount \$2,500,000.
- viii. FDVA "CMS Cost Reporting" contract Amendment No. 3 (final annual renewal), with Moore Stephens Lovelace PA, executed on 5/15/2020. Annual contract amount \$67,224.
- ix. Ardie R. Copas SVNH & Lake Baldwin "CLC New TV's and Accessories" solicitation (Invitation to Bid - ITB) issued on 5/20/2020. Bid opening held on 6/9/2020. Contract award and execution pending as of 6/24/2020. Total project budget/contract amount \$204,000.
- x. Lake Baldwin CLC "Barcode Packaging and Labeling System" solicitation (Invitation to Bid - ITB) issued on 5/6/2020. Bid opening held 5/27/2020. Contract award and execution pending as of 6/24/2020. Total project budget/contract amount \$125,000.
- xi. Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH "Renovations" DMS Construction Agreement, with OHL Arellano, executed and received on 6/24/2020. Total project budget amount \$5,500,000 (65% federally funded; 35% state funded).

- xii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” with Santa Fe Professional Solutions, Inc., contract Amendment No. 1 (contract extension), executed on 3/25/2020, Amendment No. 2 (payment process revision), executed on 3/30/2020, contract Amendment No. 3 (contract extension), executed on 4/14/2020. Total contract amount \$114,767.
- xiii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Fluid Cooler Replacement” solicitation (Invitation to Bid - ITB) issued on 1/30/2020. Pre-bid/onsite meeting held on 2/12/2020. Bid opening held 3/12/2020. Contract awarded to EMCOR Services, Inc. on 3/17/2020. Contract executed on 4/1/2020. Total contract amount \$187,200.
- xiv. Chester Sims SVNH “Rooftop Vents Replacement” contract Amendment No. 1 (contract extension), with Comfort Systems USA Southeast, Inc., executed 6/9/2020. Total contract amount \$75,137.
- xv. Chester Sims SVNH “Parking Lot Lights” contract Amendment No. 1 (contract extension), with A&K Energy Conservation, Inc., executed on 6/9/2020. Total contract amount \$136,708.
- xvi. Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH “Dining Room/Lanai Remodel” contract Amendment No. 4 (contract extension), with Design Build Remodel, Inc., executed on 3/30/2020. Total contract amount \$325,099.
- xvii. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Concrete Curb and Sidewalk Repairs” contract Amendment No. 2 (contract extension), with Huffman, Inc. d/b/a NuWave Concrete, executed in on 6/2/2020. Total contract amount \$38,152.

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, 1 pending.
- ii. **2 - Employment Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 1 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.
- iii. **1 - Other Liability Claims:** (1 new this Quarter) 1 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 0 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
Fourth Quarter

Facility	Item	Quantity	Value	Total

	No Donations this Quarter			
Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary, Lake City				\$0
	Apple iPad 32GB	2	\$279	\$558
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines				\$558
	Lounge Chair	1	\$25	\$25
Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home, Land O' Lakes				\$25
	No Donations this Quarter			
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
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				\$583

ii. Cash Donations Received by State Veterans' Homes

Fiscal Year 2019-2020					
Facilities	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	YTD FY 2019-20
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$10,050	\$606	\$3,554	\$0	\$14,210
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$0	\$2,084	\$1,175	\$0	\$3,259
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$160	\$2,946	\$673	\$0	\$3,779
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$0	\$0	\$4,175	\$491	\$4,666
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$0	\$400	\$375	\$325	\$1,100
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$1,365	\$3,992	\$1,130	\$500	\$6,987
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$155	\$300	\$300	\$50	\$805
Ardie R. Copas SVNH, Port St. Lucie	\$0	\$48,000	\$0	\$0	\$48,000
Total Cash Donations	\$11,730	\$58,328	\$11,382	\$1,366	\$82,806
(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 Fourth Quarter		
Facilities	Organization	Total
Bureau of State Approving Agency, Veterans' Benefits and Assistance	Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators	\$30



3) Veterans Florida (VF)

During the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the expected budget of approximately \$1.7 million in new funds was passed during the 2020 Florida legislative session and approved by the Governor.

❖ Internal Operations

Veterans Florida staff continues working from home in response to COVID-19. All of the productivity tools are electronic cloud-based, which helped to operate operations smoothly. VF staff was actively using the new software for services we provide veterans, employers, and partners. VF implemented a new phone system that was working smoothly and enhanced the quality of services while working remotely away from the office.

❖ External Operations

VETS program made a change to the Florida veteran workforce training fund's requirements addressing the pandemic economy. The full-time position requirements shift to part-time and permanent positions to temporary positions.

VF 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 the Recovery page on the website. We also participated in numerous webinars to learn about new federal legislation and resources.

The Veterans Florida Expo transitioned into a virtual livestream event. VF hosted the first virtual event on June 18. VF Executive Director Joe Marino presented as the keynote speaker at the event. FDVA, Employers, Resources partners, Sponsors, and Panelists provided video presentations at the event.

Employer partners and Entrepreneur partners are currently being re-signed for the upcoming fiscal year.

VF participated in the following webinars to continue spreading awareness of services.

Events	Date	Team Members
Florida Association of Veteran Owned Business Virtual Town Hall	June 4	Meinhardt, Mendez, Entress
Onward to Opportunity, Onward to Your Career Course	June 12	Meinhardt
Recruit Military Virtual Career Fair, East Coast	June 16	Livingston, Marteeny

To View the full Events and Outreach list, Visit <https://www.veteransflorida.org/>

❖ Marketing

The marketing team continues to provide veterans and businesses with information and resources about COVID-19 response and reopening.

The first Veterans Florida Virtual Expo was presented and sponsored by Bank of America on June 18. The virtual format allowed us to reach a broader audience across the country, including target states such as California and Texas. Over 600 live stream viewers, a peak viewership of 279, and over 2,000 replays resulted. Over 1,500 (71 percent) of the viewers were in the target 25-54 age range. The Battle of the Pitches awarded two finalists with cash prizes. Premiere Virtual took first

place and awarded \$3,000, and Shipshape Urban Farms won second place and was awarded \$2,000. Overall, the team received positive feedback from sponsors, presenters, and viewers.

Watch the Veterans Florida Virtual Expo event at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0fiYydi75s&feature=youtu.be>.

Following the Expo, VISIT Florida funded campaigns for LinkedIn and Facebook. The campaign generated over 600 LinkedIn new followers, and 150,000 views on Facebook. We also ran a flight of radio and digital streaming ads through iHeart media targeting bases and cities with high veteran populations.

Fourth Quarter Marketing Metrics			
Network Partner	Performance		
	April	May	June
Unique Website Visitors	7,691	39,714	185,312
Facebook Organic Post Reach	4,572	4,189	6,667
Newsletter Subscribers	31,583	31,729	32,187
LinkedIn Post Reach	1,762	3,876	4,169
Twitter Post Reach	8,526	8,100	6,549

❖ Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS)

The VETS team worked hard contacting and assisting veterans who signed up to attend the Veterans Florida Virtual Expo. Amidst the recent COVID-19 development, the Career Services Team (CST) continued 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. The team coordinated the following three-prong outreach approach to provide support to those that have an immediate need and to prepare them for when they are ready to move forward.

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

❖ Career Services Program

The career services team attended the Eastern Region RecruitMilitary Virtual Career Fair on June 16. The team continues to expand both workforce grant employers and career matching opportunities to the benefit of veterans. The team has been conducting employer training grant evaluations and preparation for contract renewals for FY 2020-2021.

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

Fourth Quarter	
Month	Grant Reimbursement Amount
April 2020	\$250,405
May 2020	\$133,137
June 2020	\$177,305
Total	\$383,542

Fourth Quarter Veteran Leads Metrics			
	Job Fair	Website	Total
April	0	55	55
May	0	249	249
June	35	1050	1085
Total	35	1,354	1,389

❖ Entrepreneurship Program

Entrepreneurship team virtually attended the Pitch Competition at Florida Atlantic University and Florida Gulf Coast University. Due to COVID-19 measures, the partners have modified their instruction to virtual environments. All partners were able to conduct their respective facilitated cohorts via webinar or Zoom meetings during FY 2019-2020. Some of the partners provided one-on-one coaching and mentoring with veteran entrepreneurs who are facing unique challenges. The entrepreneurship team is virtually attended and evaluated some online courses.

Addressing the pandemic challenge, the entrepreneurship team prepared for virtual exchange practice for the Veterans Florida Virtual Expo by conducting entrepreneurship panel discussions, selecting the virtual pitch competition participants, conducting network partner evaluations and preparing for contract renewals for FY 2020-2021.

Fourth Quarter Entrepreneurship Program Metrics				
Network Partner	Cohort	Applications	Selected	Start Date
Julo Strategy	CEO Mindset Tampa	13	13	April 15

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	\$78,960
Florida Atlantic University	\$64,500	\$63,000
Florida Gulf Coast University	\$76,500	\$75,000
Julo Strategy	\$60,000	\$30,598
University of North Florida	\$46,500	\$39,930

University of West Florida	\$60,000	\$53,700
YTD Total	\$389,273	\$341,188

❖ **Veteran Agriculture Program**

Although pilot funding ended, we continued 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. VF submitted the original proposal with the U.S. Department of Agriculture - National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA - NIFA) for the full Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans (AgVets) grant program for FY 2021 (Federal Fiscal Years October 1 thru September 30).

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

Fourth Quarter Development					
Organization	Amount	Type	Purpose	Date Submitted	Status
Boeing	\$50,000	Grant	Career Services General Operations	05/20/2019	Received 09/27/2019
	Adjusted: \$35,000		Career Services General Operations		Adjusted: 05/20/2020
Robert Irvine Foundation	\$15,000	Grant	Military & veteran cultural awareness activities for employers	12/03/2019	Not Awarded 04/04/2020
Bank of America Foundation	\$50,000	Grant	General support of Veterans Employment and Trainings Services Program	02/22/2020	Not Awarded 04/30/2020
Boeing	\$75,000	Grant	Career Services	05/07/2020	Pending
Learning Alliance Corporation	\$3,000	Sponsorship	2020 Veterans Florida Expo	06/05/2020	Received 06/15/2020
Regions Bank	\$5,000	Grant	General Support and COVID-19 Recovery	06/23/2020	Received 07/01/2020
USDA-NIFA	\$745,245	Grant	Veterans Florida Agriculture Program	06/25/2020	04/04/2020

❖ **Board of Directors Meeting**

The Board Directors met on June 5 to review the approved Veterans Florida FY 2020-2021 Operating Budget. The Board reappointed Chair Warren R. "Rocky" McPherson as a Chair and Martin R. Steele as a Vice-Chair.



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.

❖ Foundation Earns Gold Seal from GuideStar USA

FVF received the GuideStar USA Gold Seal of Transparency for the coveted commitment to transparency including the organization's goals, strategies, capabilities, indicators and progress.

❖ Aging Wartime Veterans

FVF partners approved 179 claims for VA Pension with Aid & Attendance for about \$8,950,000 during April - June 2020. The partners provided free seminars and consultations to aging wartime veterans on their Aid & Attendance claims. Estimated Florida economic impact over three years is over \$26 million for about 556 benefit claims, includes the Forgotten Warrior Project funded by the Kenan Family Trust.

❖ Forgotten Warrior Project – Palm Beach & Surrounding Counties

The Foundation has received the Kenan Family Trust of \$100,000 to collaborate with the National Association of Veterans and Families. The funds support 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.

❖ Veterans Ride Free Program

The Foundation partnered with UBER Drive Program to provide free rides to 224 veterans for \$6,667 in dollars to their medical appointments during May - June 2020.

❖ Veterans Census Program

The Foundation received a grant from the National League of Cities to perform outreach and education for veterans and their families to participate in the 2020 Census. In support, FVF created a webpage at www.VeteransCensus.com.

❖ 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.

❖ 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 Ambassadors includes veteran advocates from around the state and encourages them to invest in FVF with sustainable funding and extended outreach. Council designation is honorary to the beneficiary and includes the name on Ambassador Wall and the opportunity to meet yearly at a special veterans' conference/reception and more.

❖ **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 FDVA's app platform. We are sharing with statewide associations, continuing the outreach to help veterans.

❖ **Grant Opportunities**

FVF has a specialty grant writer that continues to apply for grants to help recruit funding for FVF's initiatives. To date, FDVA has applied for a grant of \$147,000.

❖ **License Plate Bill**

The bill included funding language to create the Gadsden Flag License plate, which will help with recurring funding for foundation sustainability and continue its mission of helping veterans in need. FVF Marketing plan on standby to sell 3,000 vouchers.

❖ **Chartered Functions and Success**

Florida Veterans Foundation Staff, the Board & Collaborating Partners served 143,219 veterans and veteran families, the accomplishments include:

- \$82,612 in emergency financial support provided to 117 veterans and their families
- 224 veterans transported to medical appointments = 4,213 volunteer miles, 32 hours and \$6,677
- 22,036 likes & interactions on increased social media platforms
- 620 Aging Wartime veterans/survivors seminars attended around the state
- 556 veterans/survivors approved federal claims for \$26 million in benefits (see COVID-19 above)
- 112 veterans were honored & awarded with Veteran Service Medals & Challenge Coins
- \$190 in grant to homeless veterans for clothing, meals, etc.
- \$12,000 in funding allocated for FDVA's Florida Veterans' Benefits Guides
- 81,000 veterans outreached for education via digital marketing
- 3,930 volunteer hours from foundation board members to assist veterans

*Note: * These are only the reported numbers*

❖ **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, Homeless Veterans Camps visited, Chamber of Commerce events, Senior Coalition meetings.