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

DATE: November 20, 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 – First Quarter, Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs submits the Quarterly Report for the First Quarter of the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year, covering the period July 1 - September 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:

Chris Sprowls, Speaker of the House, Florida House of Representatives
Wilton Simpson, President, Florida Senate
Chris Spencer, Policy Director, Governor's Office of Policy and Budget
Eric Miller, Policy Chief, Local Administration and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee
Diana Caldwell, Staff Director, Military and Veterans Affairs and Space

Attachment 1: FDVA Quarterly Report

ATTACHMENT 1
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
FIRST QUARTER REPORT
July 1 – September 30, 2020

This report covers the activities of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for the First Quarter of the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.

1) Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Administrative Highlights

a) Current Issues/Concerns

i) Executive Direction:

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell facilitated coordination for support services and provided updates to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) team leaders on COVID-19. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell promotes awareness in the agency to adhere to the Executive Office of the Governor's Executive Orders, the Florida Department of Health safety measures guidelines and memorandums to safeguard the State Veterans' Homes residents, staff, and their families from further spread of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Chief of Staff Al Carter distributed face masks to Agency personnel following Pinellas and Hillsborough County guidelines to wear face masks in public spaces.

Division of State Veterans' Homes Director Connie Tolley and State Veterans' Nursing Homes Administrators continued their efforts on the health and safety of the Veterans' Homes staff, residents and their families. Director Tolley provided facilities emergency plans and status updates relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and weather threats to the agency.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Task Force on the Safe and Limited Re-Opening of Long-Term Care facilities virtual meeting. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell also provided a status update to the committee members on the COVID-19 outbreak and implemented safety measures and the State Veterans' Homes re-open plan to essential caregivers. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell also visited the Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City to assess the facility's operations, provisions to resume admissions and interface with staff members and management.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Director of Support the Troops Mark Van Trees. In the meeting, he addressed the importance of providing aid, supplies and care packages to Florida's State Veterans' Nursing Homes and donations and sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies during COVID-19.

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, Clyde E. Lassen 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.

Agency Emergency Coordinating Officer Murray also provided progressive updates to the agency with the following severe weather threats in support of Governor Ron DeSantis' preparation to promote awareness and access services available to Floridians.

- Tropical Storm Gonzalo, July 20 - 31.
- Tropical Storm Isaias, July 31 - Aug 8.
- Tropical Storm Marco Aug 17 - 28.
- Tropical Storm Laura Aug 24 - 28.

- Tropical Storm Sally Sept 14 - 25.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in a virtual conference with the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) on July 22 and 29. The conferences addressed issues impacting veterans across the nations and recommended best policies, practices and resources to assure that service members, veterans and their families receive eligible benefits, emergency assistance, and support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended a presentation of Infrared Light Spectrum technology during August 5 - 6. Infrared light radiation flows through the machine in a continuous flow process that creates a visual electromagnetic spectrum that defines the air's impurities. The attentiveness is if Infrared Light radiation technology can be used at facilities to defined COVID-19 impurities.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell provided a list of twenty Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame inductees for the Class of 2020 to the Governor and Cabinet at the September 22 Cabinet meeting. FDVA leadership supported the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council meetings via teleconference during the first quarter.

Chief of Staff Carter participated with the Florida Department of Financial Services in a Florida Planning, Accounting and Ledger Management (PALM) for Legislative Budget Requests (LBR) virtual meeting on August 7. The meeting allowed agencies to discuss the Florida PALM implementation to date and any financial matters related to the LBR submission.

❖ **Veterans Education and Awareness**

FDVA Office of Communications produced and edited the *Forward March* Veterans' Newsletter for July, August and September. Also, 60,000 copies of the 2020 edition of the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide were produced and printed for statewide distribution.

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.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter represented FDVA at the following education and awareness events.

- Chief of Staff Carter participated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Substance and Mental Health Service Agency (VA/SAMHSA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in weekly virtual conferences on July 14 and August 27.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended the Space Florida virtual conference on July 15. Space Florida is Florida's aerospace research and economic development agency providing economic development, opportunities and workforce growth among the veteran communities in the state.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Challenges Specific to Women Veterans virtual conference on July 16. The Governor's Challenges Specific to Women Veterans initiative promotes awareness of the amended Bills that support Women Veterans' entitlements and links female service-members with available local and state resources; include Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services social support centers.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated in a virtual meeting with the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Consultant John Bolton on July 16. The meeting was focused on ChildSafe firearm safety and suicide prevention initiatives that promote community awareness and protective measures to safeguard Florida's youth.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Substance and Mental Health Service Agency (VA/SAMHSA) and the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services in weekly virtual conferences on July 20, August 10 and August 27.

- Chief of Staff Carter attended the Suicide Prevention Special Populations virtual conference on July 20.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended the Florida Suicide Prevention Interagency Action Plan Committee virtual meeting on July 30.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in a Florida Minority Veterans Together program meeting on August 13.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated with the Hillsborough County in a Crisis Intercept Mapping for Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF) virtual conference on August 26.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the University of South Florida in the Alternative Treatment for Veterans Virtual meeting on September 1.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended the Northeast Florida Crisis Intercept Mapping for (SMVF) virtual conference on September 2.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Gold Star Family Monument Committee meeting during September 7 - 8.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Florida National Cemetery Joint Veterans committee virtual meeting on September 9.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Pledge To Prevent: Action to End Veteran Suicide virtual meeting on September 10.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with James Haley VA Medical Center for the Medal of Honor Recipient Portrait Donation virtual ceremony on September 11.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), States Department of Veterans' Affairs (SDVA), and National Association of State Directors of Veterans' Affairs (NASDVA) Partnership event on September 15.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell served as the keynote speaker at the Tampa Chapter of the Florida Association of Veterans Owned Businesses (FAVOB) launch event in Tampa on September 17.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council virtual meeting on September 17.
- Chief of Staff Carter conducted a virtual interview and an ad-campaign with Veterans Counseling Veterans CEO and President Ellsworth Williams Jr. on September 28.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with America's Warrior Partnership Director Thomas "Tom" Bowman on September 28.
- Chief of Staff Carter joined Veterans Counseling Veterans' CEO and President Ellsworth Williams Jr. in the Second Annual Veteran and Family Suicide Prevention virtual forum on September 30.

❖ **Community Outreach**

Chief of Staff Carter joined the Florida Department of Health with the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and Community Health Advisory Person (CHAP) forum in Columbia County on August 20.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with President and CEO of Accelerated Health Benefits Omar Fuentes on August 26. The meeting was focused on the challenges and impacts of a startup business and veteran virtual events that promote business creation and growth to our state's economic development, creating job opportunities and advancements for Floridians, service-members and veterans.

❖ Legislative Activities

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Senator Tom A. Wright and the University of South Florida's Medical Team in Tallahassee on August 24. The meeting was focused on Alternative Therapy programs and the benefits of Alternative Therapies, rehabilitation, massage therapy, and wellness programs available in local communities to veterans and their families.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter participated in a virtual Town Hall meeting with Florida Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Nicole "Nikki" Fried on July 22.

FDVA Leadership provided an update on the COVID-19 related issues to Attorney General Ashley Moody in a virtual conference on August 19. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell provided an operational overview for the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter attended a virtual meeting with the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget (OPB) on August 27. The meeting was focused on the Agencies Legislative Budget Requests, Schedule VIII B-1 and 2 reductions, policy bill issues, and to address top financial issues that could impact Florida Veterans' resources and programs.

Governor DeSantis signed proclamations in Florida to commemorate veterans for their selfless dedication to the nation. FDVA Office of Communications drafted the following proclamations for the Governor.

- On July 27, Governor DeSantis released a Korean War Armistice Day Proclamation.
- On August 7, Governor DeSantis released a Florida Purple Heart Day Proclamation.
- On September 10, Governor DeSantis released a Florida Veteran Suicide Prevention Month Proclamation.
- On September 18, Governor DeSantis released a National POW/MIA Remembrance Day Proclamation.
- On September 27, Governor DeSantis released a Gold Star Family Day in Florida Proclamation.

ii) Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance:

1. Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services:

The Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services first quarter production review of rating decisions continues from the previous quarter. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been acutely affected by the pandemic as their operations are slowed. This reduction has echoed in our operations as we have a symbiotic relationship. The Bureau of Claims Services processed 10,256 rating decision reviews of disability benefits claims through the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Petersburg Regional Office has remained closed. Additionally, the Board of Veterans Appeals suspended hearings indefinitely. Personal Hearings were also affected due to the closure of the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office.

The Bureau has shifted to telework operations and 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. It is anticipated that St. Petersburg VA Regional Office will begin reopening in the second quarter. Accordingly, we have expanded the use of "virtual" hearings with the VA and have conducted 193 hearings. As always, we continue to stand ready to meet the increasing demands of Veterans' appeals requirements.

Event	First Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	First Quarter FY 2019-20
Retroactive Compensation	\$41,616,436	\$41,616,436	\$35,250,634
Largest Single Retro. Benefit (1)	\$496,582	\$496,582	\$441,364
Debt Waiver Resolutions	\$12,107	\$12,107	\$231,335
Notices of Disagreement	2,304	2,304	2,211
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases (2)	232	232	92
Act as Representative at Hearings*	97	97	571
Veterans' Appeals Hearings*	96	96	668
Number of Ratings Reviewed	10,256	10,256	15,048

2. Bureau of Veterans' Field Services:

The Bureau of Field Services advocated for 27,760 veterans and their families and completed 4,546 disability claims. In addition, the Bureau of Field Services led by the Veterans Claim Examiner Supervisor Mark Johnson, assisted with the first Virtual Veterans Experience Action Center (V-VEAC) during July 29 - 31. The program proactively assisted veterans throughout Florida with VA benefits, healthcare and resources in partnership with the Northeast Florida Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB). Field Services' supervisors assisted the Bureau of Veterans' Claims by reviewing and entering 934 rating decisions. Field Services also assisted more than 824 veterans related to voter registration.

Event	First Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	First Quarter FY 2019-20
Number of Issue Resolutions	4,227	4,227	6,620
Total Amount of Issues Resolution	\$14,532,515	\$14,532,515	\$22,240,582
Outreach Visits	42	42	300
Veterans Served at Outreach (FV SVD)	647	647	9,061
Bedside Interviews	8	8	244
Walk-ins / Counseling	3,853	3,853	38,533
Disability Claims	4,546	4,546	12,303
Voter Registration	824	824	1,768
Homeless Walk In	39	39	84
Ratings Reviewed	934	934	401

Event	First Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	First Quarter FY 2019-20
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve Units	0	0	4
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	0	0	2
Medical Center Welcome Home Events	0	0	0
Congressional Open House Events	0	0	1
National Conferences	0	0	0
New Patient Orientation	6	6	62
Transition Assistance Briefings	5	5	29
Other Events	31	31	197

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

The SAA's primary duties are fulfilling U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contract specific requirements for monitoring the quality and the integrity of veteran education programs and the oversight and enforcement of approval-related laws according to the GI Bill® VA Education Benefits program. Therefore, SAA's FY 2020 (Federal Fiscal Year, October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020) performance goals reviewed by the Federal government.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the significant enactment of the following laws created incredible opportunities for veteran beneficiaries.

- 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.
- 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 to 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 GI Bill® education programs' participation if schools are found non-compliant.
- 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. Over 700 schools reported and approved to participate in VA Education Benefits programs, only eight Florida school reported closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 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 performed two virtual inspections with GI Bill® participated facilities with the assistance of School Certifying Officials (SCO) pointing the camera to areas directed by the inspecting SAA employee.

SAA signed the FY 2021 (Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2020-September 30, 2021) contract with VA. VA requirements for the SAA's performance may continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the new fiscal year, including documentation and all electronic work performance. However, the SAA's dedicated team is prepared to provide consistent, accessible and reliable assistance to the veterans' beneficiaries and the participated facilities.

Event	First Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	First Quarter FY 2019-20
SAA Programs Approved	4,682	4,682	4,550
Other Approval	894	894	1,727
Compliance Visits	43	43	20
Inspection Visits	2	2	10
Outreach Activities (1)	190	190	149
Liaison Activities (2)	246	246	192
Technical Assistance (3)	1,022	1,022	1,358

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 continuously striving for the highest quality and continuous improvement to serve veteran residents in the best way possible to promote their health and well-being. Our goal is to provide the best healthcare with an enjoyable, pleasant environment, to 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, residents of Florida preceding admission, and who require skilled care as certified by a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 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 the following nursing homes in the state.

- 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.
- Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home, St. Augustine
- Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home, Pt. Charlotte.
- Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home, Daytona Beach.

The following two new State Veterans' Homes are under construction and anticipated to be open by the end of Fiscal Year 2020-2021 with Agency for Health Care Administrations inspection and approval.

- Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home, Port St. Lucie.
- Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home, Orlando.



Comprehensive services and a deep concern for all veterans go hand in hand at our State Veterans' Nursing Homes. A full-time staff of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and certified nursing assistants provides around-the-clock medical and skilled nursing care. Rehabilitative services, such as occupational and physical therapies, speech therapy, and recreational activities, are provided under licensed therapists' direct supervision. A variety of on and off-site recreational and social activities are provided to encourage active minds, bodies, and spirits, and slow the physical and mental decline of the veterans' residents. A wide range of other medical services is 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 level of care and services provided to our veterans meets or exceeds the highest standards in an environment that enhances each veteran's quality of life.

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: 1,683
- ii. E-Quotes processed: 32
- iii. FDVA "On-Premise Pharmacy System" single source notice of intended purchase (PUR 7776) issued 3/17/2020 and expired 3/26/2020 (with no responses received). Single source notice of intended decision (PUR 7778) issued 3/27/2020 and expired 4/1/2020 (with no protests received). Contract awarded to Smith Technologies, LLC on 4/2/2020. Contract executed 7/7/2020. Total contract amount \$474,918.

- iv. FDVA “On-Premise Pharmacy System” contract Amendment No. 1 (additional system service), with RedSail Technologies, LLC (formerly Smith Technologies, LLC), executed 9/17/2020. Total contract amount \$486,438.
- v. FDVA “USDVA/VISN-8 Pharmacy Services” contract Amendment No. 6, final annual renewal (all existing SVNH’s, except Chester Sims SVNH), executed 8/24/2020. Approximate annual contract amount \$2,750,000.
- vi. FDVA “USDVA/VISN-16 Pharmacy Services” contract Amendment No. 4, final annual renewal (only for Clifford C. Sims SVNH), and executed 9/1/2020. Approximate total contract amount \$575,000.
- vii. FDVA “Veterans Workforce Initiatives” contract, with Florida is for Veterans (DBA Veterans Florida), closed out 8/6/2020. Annual contract amount \$344,000.
- viii. FDVA “Therapeutic K-9 Services for Veterans” contract, with K-9’s for Warriors, Inc., closed out 7/17/2020. Total contract amount \$500,000.
- ix. FDVA “Veterans Housing & Reintegration Services” contract, with Five S.T.A.R. Veterans Center, Inc., closed out 7/27/2020. Total contract amount \$250,000.
- x. FDVA “Veterans Legal Services Hotline” contract, with Bay Area Legal Services, Inc., closed out 7/27/2020. Total contract amount \$500,000.
- xi. FDVA “Veterans Alternative Healthcare Treatments” contract, with University of South Florida, closed out 7/27/2020. Total contract amount \$200,000.
- xii. FDVA New “Veterans Workforce Initiatives” contract, with Florida is for Veterans (DBA Veterans Florida), executed 7/28/2020. Annual contract amount \$344,000.
- xiii. FDVA New “Veterans Housing & Reintegration Services” contract, with Five S.T.A.R. Veterans Center, Inc., executed 7/28/2020. Total contract amount \$250,000.
- xiv. FDVA New “Therapeutic K-9 Services for Veterans” contract, with K-9’s for Warriors, Inc., executed 7/28/2020. Total contract amount \$600,000.
- xv. FDVA New “Veterans Legal Services Hotline” contract, with Bay Area Legal Services, Inc., executed 7/28/2020. Total contract amount \$500,000.
- xvi. FDVA New “Veterans Alternative Healthcare Treatments” contract, with University of South Florida, executed 9/24/2020. Total contract amount \$200,000.
- xvii. Ardie R. Copas SVNH & Lake Baldwin CLC “New TV’s and Accessories” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 5/20/2020. Bid opening held 6/9/2020. Contract awarded to BES Industries, Inc. on 6/30/2020. Contract executed 7/21/2020. Total contract amount \$209,910.
- xviii. Ardie R. Copas SVNH & Lake Baldwin CLC “New TV’s and Accessories” contract Amendment No. 1 (revised requirements), with BES Industries, Inc., executed 8/21/2020. Total contract amount \$212,464.
- xix. Ardie R. Copas SVNH & Lake Baldwin CLC “Flip Foam Mattresses” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 7/31/2020. Bid opening 8/19/2020. Contract awarded to Medline Industries, Inc. 8/24/2020. Contract executed 9/11/2020. Total contract amount \$43,625.
- xx. Lake Baldwin CLC “Remodel/Retrofit” DMS contract (Client Agency Agreement/CAA) Amendment No. 1 (additional funding) executed 7/10/2020. Total contract amount \$9,200,916 (65% federally funded; 35% state funded).

- xxi. Lake Baldwin CLC “Barcode Packaging and Labeling System” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 5/6/2020. Bid opening held 5/27/2020. Contract awarded to CareFusion Solutions, LLC 8/24/2020. Procurement withdrawn and cancelled 9/2/2020.
- xxii. Douglas Jacobson SVNH “Dining Room/Lanai Remodel” contract Amendment No. 5 (extension), with Design Build Remodel, Inc., executed 9/24/2020. Total contract amount \$325,099.
- xxiii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” contract Amendment No. 4 (contract extension), with Santa Fe Professional Solutions, Inc., executed on 6/26/2020. Total contract amount \$114,767.
- xxiv. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” contract Amendment No. 5 (contract extension), with Santa Fe Professional Solutions, Inc., executed on 8/4/2020. Total contract amount \$114,767.
- xxv. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” contract Amendment No. 6 (contract extension), with Santa Fe Professional Solutions, Inc., executed on 9/24/2020. Total contract amount \$114,767.
- xxvi. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Fluid Cooler Replacement” contract Amendment No. 1 (contract extension), with EMCOR Services, Inc., executed on 8/18/2020. Total contract amount \$187,200.
- xxvii. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Rooftop Vents Replacement” contract Amendment No. 2 (additional funding), with Comfort Systems USA Southeast, Inc., executed 7/23/2020. Total contract amount \$79,070.
- xxviii. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Rooftop Vents Replacement” contract Amendment No. 3 (contract extension), with Comfort Systems USA Southeast, Inc., executed 8/5/2020. Total contract amount \$79,070.
- xxix. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Parking Lot Lights” contract Amendment No. 2 (contract extension), with A&K Energy Conservation, Inc., executed 8/25/2020. Total contract amount \$136,708.
- xxx. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Parking Lot Lights” contract Amendment No. 3 (revised pay term), with A&K Energy Conservation, Inc., executed 9/8/2020. Total contract amount \$136,708.
- xxxi. Robert Jenkins SVDH “Replacement of Wall Rails and Guards” contract Amendment No. 1 (contract extension), with Shine and Company, Inc., executed 6/17/2020. Total contract amount \$229,000.
- xxxii. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Concrete Curb and Sidewalk Repairs” contract Amendment No. 3 (contract extension), with Huffman, Inc. d/b/a NuWave Concrete, executed 8/4/2020. 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. **1 - General Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.
- ii. **1 - Employment Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 0 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

First Quarter				
Facility	Item	Quantity	Value	Total
	No Donations this Quarter			
Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary, Lake City				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Ardie R. Copas SVNH, Port St. Lucie				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home, Land O' Lakes				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines				\$0
	Samsung Smart TV 55" UHD	1	\$378	\$378
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City				\$378
	Apple iPad	2	\$329.00	\$658
	INTCO Wheel Chair	12	\$25.00	\$ 300
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte				\$958
	No Donations this Quarter			
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine				\$0
Total Non-Cash Donations				\$1,336

ii. Cash Donations Received by State Veterans' Homes

Facilities	First Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$120	\$120
Ardie R. Copas SVNH, Port St. Lucie	\$0	\$0
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$4	\$4
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$5,630	\$5,630
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$13,378	\$13,378

Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$250	\$250
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$522	\$522
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$0	\$0
Total Cash Donations	\$19,904	\$19,904

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

First Quarter			
Facilities	FHCA	NASVH	YTD FY 2020-21
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$1,652	\$1,000	\$2,652
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$4,316	\$1,000	\$5,316
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$4,329	\$1,000	\$5,329
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$4,354	\$1,000	\$5,354
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$4,316	\$1,000	\$5,316
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$4,341	\$1,000	\$5,341
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$4,341	\$1,000	\$5,341
All State Veterans' Homes	\$27,649	\$7,000	\$34,649
The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Inc.			\$600
The Institute for Public Procurement (NIGP)			\$370
Institute of Internal Auditors-Tallahassee			\$175
Total Paid			\$35,794
(1) State Veterans' Nursing Home (SVNH)			
(2) State Veterans' Domiciliary Home (SVDH)			
(3) Florida Health Care Association (FHCA)			
(4) National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH)			



3) Veterans Florida (VF)

During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2020-2021, we received our annual advance payment in 25 percent of the total Operations appropriation. The remaining approved funds will be released as the fiscal year progresses.

❖ Internal Operations

Veterans Florida staff continues working from home in response to COVID-19. We anticipate reopening the office to the team in October.

❖ External Operations

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.

First Quarter			
Events	Location	Date	Team Members
Work Group for Post-Secondary Credit for Military	Virtual	July 27	Marino, Sinnemaki
Military Consumer Month Tele-town Hall with Commissioner Fried	Virtual	July 22	Marino
Veterans News Hour Podcast	Virtual	July 20	Marino, Barrow
Work Group for Post-Secondary Credit for Military	Virtual	July 14	Marino, Sinnemaki
Onward 2 Opportunity Employer Spotlight	Virtual	Aug 21	Mendez
Onward 2 Opportunity Mock Interview Prep for Veterans	Virtual	Aug 20	Livingston
Onward 2 Opportunity Career Cohort	Virtual	Aug 19	Meinhardt
Wounded Warrior Project Networking Meeting	Virtual	Aug 17	Marino, Sinnemaki
Work Group for Post-Secondary Credit for Military	Virtual	Aug 12	Marino, Sinnemaki
Enterprise Florida's Moving Florida Forward: Reclaiming Economic Prosperity	Virtual	Sep 30	Marino
Work Group for Post-Secondary Credit for Military Courses and Occupations	Virtual	Sep 23	Marino, Sinnemaki
Tampa Chapter of FAVOB Official Launch	Virtual	Sep 17	Marino, Sinnemaki, Entress
CareerSource Okaloosa - Military and Veteran Career Fair and Expo	Virtual	Sep 17	Livingston, Marteeny
Onward 2 Opportunity Career Cohort	Virtual	Sep 16	Meinhardt
Work Group for Post-Secondary Credit for Military Courses and Occupations	Virtual	Sep 9	Marino
FAVOB Space Coast Monthly Meeting	Virtual	Sep 8	Mendez
2020 PWD/PWTD Information Sessions with the Federal Aviation Administration	Virtual	Sep 8	Livingston

No in-person this quarter, but you may view the full [FY 2020-21 Events and Outreach](#) list.

❖ **Marketing**

The marketing team edited the Virtual Expo live stream into segments and promoted them via social media. The team also produced this report detailing the June 2020 marketing campaign's success, including the LinkedIn campaign that assisted in growing our LinkedIn audience by over 35 percent. We sent the marketing report and the Expo report to VISIT Florida as we prepare to continue our relationship over the coming year. As noted in the chart below, the increased LinkedIn audience is consuming and engaging with our content.

We issued press releases regarding the Entrepreneurship Program's new partner contracts. The release promoting Action Zone's renewal appeared in Floridapolitics.com. Follow-up phone calls to reporters have built relationships for coverage of future releases. Florida Atlantic University issued a release through its communications department, which the Boca Raton Tribune covered, which included a quote from Joe Marino.

We were accepted into Google's Ad Grant program, which offers qualified nonprofits free search advertising up to \$10,000 per month. We started campaigns promoting Career Services and Entrepreneurship and will add more programs as needed. With the Virtual Expo's panels as a foundation, we are writing weekly blogs around that content. The first two editions of "Power Plays" covered "The New Job Search" and "Franchising." Blog content is distributed on social media and to custom email segments and is generating substantial readership numbers. The marketing team continues to issue press releases regarding entrepreneurship network partner agreements, which have been covered by the press. We began interviewing candidates to replace Sarah Harmon, who left her role as Content & Media Specialist. We executed the \$115,000 agreement with VISIT Florida to fund event sponsorships, travel, the Expo, and other marketing opportunities that emerge.

The marketing department updated the Board of Directors in the September meeting, and VISIT Florida also provided their update on last year's efforts and their upcoming plans. We are working with VISIT Florida on several "advertorials" surrounding Veterans Day.

We continue to generate blog content with plans to feature Battle of the Pitches winners and other entrepreneurs who are adapting their businesses to succeed during COVID-19.

First Quarter Marketing Metrics			
Network Partner	Performance		
	July	August	September
Unique Website Visitors	*4,135	3,249	3,310
Facebook Organic Post Reach	6,797	4,732	**3,299
Newsletter Subscribers	32,188	32,197	32,197
LinkedIn Post Reach	7,937	7,955	**4,668
Twitter Post Reach	6,438	3,985	**2,965
*Decreased web traffic caused by ending of June paid advertising			
**Social media numbers are down due to Sarah, our content writer, leaving the organization during the month.			

❖ **Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS)**

The VETS team continues contacting and assisting veterans who are looking for employment and training services. Veterans Florida continue to provide services to veterans and employers amidst the recent COVID-19 development. Our intern, Marnie Williams, left Veterans Florida to accept an internship that is more aligned to her field of study.

❖ **Career Services Program**

The career services team conducts employer training grant evaluations and preparation for contract renewals for the fiscal year 2020-2021. The team continues the work to expand both workforce grant employers and career matching opportunities to the benefit of our veterans. Our Workforce Development Manager, Fernando Mendez, presented at the Onward 2 Opportunity Virtual Employer Spotlight and attended the FAVOB Space Coast monthly meeting. At the same time, our Veterans Outreach Specialist, Kolby Livingston, conducted mock virtual interviews for Onward 2 Opportunity and attended the CareerSource Okaloosa - Military and Veteran Career Fair and Expo virtually along with our Veterans Outreach Specialist, Andrea Marteeny.

First Quarter	
Month	Grant Reimbursement Amount
July	\$13,716
August*	\$0
September	\$241,190
Total	\$254,906

* Reworked software for payment processing during August 2020.

First Quarter Veteran Leads Metrics			
	Job Fair	Website	Total
July	0	222	222
August	0	140	140
September	21	123	144
Total	21	485	506

❖ **Veteran Agriculture Program**

Veterans Florida was awarded a federal three-year Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Program grant by the US Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, to conduct the Veterans Florida Agriculture Program. The Veterans Florida Agriculture Program is an immersive, hands-on six month paid fellowship, and selected veterans study at a University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Research and Education Center, learning about local agriculture. The VETS Team has been aggressively working with the stakeholders to reinstate the program and resume accepting veterans' applications to participate in the program.

❖ **U.S. Department of Defense SkillBridge**

Veterans Florida began expanding the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) SkillBridge fellowship offerings with employers throughout the state of Florida to better serve our transitioning active duty service members. We have authorized DoD SkillBridge Organizations for our agriculture fellowship in partnership with the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Research and Education Centers, and intend to expand into other industries throughout the year.



4) 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.

❖ Florida Veterans Support Lines

The FVF continues its partnership with the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay to support Suicide Prevention, Opioid Addiction and Mental Health issues by fielding and referring emergency phone calls from veterans in need.

❖ Expanded Outreach

The Foundation was invited to speak at five statewide associations via zoom meetings as well as give four workshops on "Navigating VA Benefits & Services for Aging Veterans & Survivors." Hundreds of participants were in attendance.

❖ Board Members Provide/Recruit Donations

FVF board members recruited donations for an \$18,000 renovation to help a veteran's widow with needed repairs, a late model vehicle was donated to help with veterans' transportation to and from Doctors Appointments, and an Army Nurse and Vietnam veteran needed electric scooters to increase their mobility. Delivered 120 gallons of water for hurricane relief, a refrigerator was also purchased for Veteran's Village Food Pantry. These are a few examples of the Foundations strength to help our veterans.

❖ Volunteer Florida Grant

FVF has signed an agreement with Volunteer Florida to recruit 400 volunteers in three regions to help with veterans with referrals, counseling services, job training transitioning and financial management.

❖ State Troopers Recognition Program

The Foundation has partnered with the Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles to recognize those Troopers who are veterans, and who go beyond the call of duty to help our citizens.

❖ Financials Webpage

FVF has completed its design of the full transparency webpage and lists its audits, financial reports and annual cabinet reports.

❖ Aging Wartime Veterans

Two claims partners provided free seminars and consultations and received approvals for 179 Aid & Attendance Claims with combined benefits over three years, equaling \$8.9 million in benefits.

❖ **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.

❖ **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. The foundations scheduled two fundraisers event in November will help to support this program as well.

❖ **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.

❖ **License Plate Bill**

FVF Marketing plan is on track to sell 3,000 vouchers through specific statewide marketing programs. This will provide the Foundation with continued sustainability.

❖ **Chartered Functions and Success**

Florida Veterans Foundation Staff, the Board & Collaborating Partners served 75,028 veterans and veteran families, the accomplishments include:

- \$7,500 in emergency financial support provided to veterans and their families
- 210 Aging Wartime veterans/survivors seminars attended around the state
- 179 veterans/survivors approved federal claims for \$8.9 million in benefits
- 112 veterans were honored & awarded with Veteran Service Medals & Challenge Coins
- 245 meals served to homeless veterans (Includes serving breakfast to Veteran's Village Food Pantry)
- \$12,000 in funding allocated for FDVA's Florida Veterans' Benefits Guides
- \$25,000+ recruited from vendors and families to donate their repair services
- 1,782 volunteer hours from foundation board members to assist veterans

*Note: * These are only the reported numbers*

❖ **Chairman, Staff and Directors' Participation Events:**

Celebrations of Life Field Work, Veterans Cemetery Lawn & Landscaping, Religious services, Commanders meetings, Veteran awards events, Field Work of Food, Water & Supplies for homeless veterans, Repairing Homes for veterans, Flags on Veterans Graves and Reconstruction of Veteran monuments, Memorial Day ceremonies, American Legion meetings.

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