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

DATE: June 17, 2021

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

FROM: James S. "Hammer" Hartsell
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report – Third Quarter, Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs submits the Quarterly Report for the Third Quarter of the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year, covering the period January 1 - March 31, 2021.

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 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
THIRD QUARTER REPORT
January 1 – March 31, 2021

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

1) Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Administrative Highlights

a) Current Issues/Concerns

i) Executive Direction:

Then-Deputy Executive Director James S. Hartsell participated in the Florida Chamber of Commerce and *Veterans Florida* virtual press conference on February 10. The conference helped launch the U.S. Department of Defense SkillBridge Program in the state of Florida. The initiative creates a statewide awareness and employment program built on the DoD SkillBridge Program, which allows servicemembers to gain workforce training at civilian employers while on active duty as they are transitioning out of the military and designates *Veterans Florida* (Florida is for Veterans, Inc.) as the state's principal SkillBridge assistance organization to employers and transitioning servicemembers.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell was elected Southeast District Vice President of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) at the 2021 NASDVA Mid-Winter Conference.

Governor Ron DeSantis conducted press conferences in support of the COVID-19 vaccination distribution plan to long-term nursing facilities, residents, front-line healthcare personnel and citizen in the community. At the request of Governor DeSantis, FDVA helped develop a program to vaccinate homebound World War II and Korean War Veterans. To date, more than 800 homebound veterans have received both rounds of vaccines. In addition, Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in a homebound vaccination program teleconference on February 10.

FDVA installed an ultraviolet light sanitization system at the Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell, Communications Director Steve Murray and Public Information Administrator Jeffrey Obos attended the Far-UVC 222 light system installation and troubleshooting demonstration, which was presented by the vendor at the facility.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell briefed senior leadership on Department's COVID-19 protocol and vaccine distributions, agency budget, pending constituent issues, and operational challenges at weekly Board of Directors meetings.

Division of State Veterans' Homes Director Connie Tolley and State Veterans' Homes Administrators continue with their efforts to promote the safety and welfare of residents and staff. Admissions are slowly returning to all veterans' homes.

Communications and External Affairs Director and Emergency Coordinating Officer Murray provided continuous updates to the agency regarding the Governor's mitigation and remediation efforts on COVID-19.

Chief of Staff Al Carter led discussions January 7 with Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) Engineer Kurt Michaels, along with RLF Architect and OHL Arellano Construction Company, regarding the construction and approval process for the Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie. Chief of Staff Carter also provided site visit coordination support to DMS and St. Lucie County Officials for a site survey for the application

process to consider opening the home for operations.

❖ **Veterans Education and Awareness**

FDVA Office of Communications produced the *Forward March* Veterans' Newsletter for January, February and March.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and FDVA Leadership represented FDVA at the following education and awareness events.

- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter attended the National Association of State Veterans' Homes (NASVH) Tele-Town Hall meeting on January 6.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the Gold Star Family Monument Committee in a virtual meeting on January 6.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Bay Area Legal Services' teleconference on January 7.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter participated with the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN) 8 in a virtual stakeholders meeting on January 11.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in a Federal and State Leadership virtual awards ceremony on January 12. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell also attended a teleconference with VA Under Secretary for Benefits Paul R. Lawrence.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter participated in teleconferences with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on January 12 and January 27.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in Florida National Cemetery Joint Veterans Committee virtual meetings on January 13, March 10 and March 24.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Florida Veterans Foundation Chair Bob Asztalos on January 13.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VA Benefits) in a VA senior leadership teleconference on January 14.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in the FY 2021 First Quarter Webcast on January 14. That day, he also participated with the Florida Veterans Foundation in a Quarterly Board of Directors meeting.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended Florida Suicide Prevention Interagency Action Committee meetings on January 14, February 25, March 11 and March 25.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Tribute Ceremony in Brooksville on January 15. That day, he also met with the Florida National Cemetery Interim Executive Director Ginger Wilson in Bushnell.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Quantum Leap Farm Equine Assisted Therapeutic Center for Veterans' meeting in Odessa on January 16. Quantum Leap Farm is a horse breeding center that provides comprehensive therapeutic riding and occupational therapy to service members and veterans living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorders and Traumatic Brain Injuries. On January 23, he had a follow-up visit to the retreat center.

- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the Florida Veterans Council Committee in a virtual meeting on January 21.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter participated in virtual sessions with the Governor's Challenge Workgroups on January 8, January 21, January 25, February 22 and March 8.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated with the First Responder Suicide Deterrence Task Force in a teleconference on January 26.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended a teleconference with Reserve Forces Policy Board Member Burke W. Whitman on January 29.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs in virtual meetings on March 9 and March 30.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Executive Director of Veterans Florida Joe Marino participated in a teleconference with the President and Chief Executive Officer of Purpose Built Families Foundation Seth Eisenberg on March 10. That day, he also participated with Mission United (United Way of Broward County) and JM Family Enterprises in a virtual Volunteer Appreciation ceremony.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention in a Florida Suicide Prevention Day virtual ceremony on March 25.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with the Flag and General Officers' Network's Advisory Group on March 30.

❖ **Community Outreach**

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and FDVA Leadership represented FDVA at the following Community Outreach activities.

- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with the President and CEO of Accelerated Health Benefits Omar Fuentes on January 6.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended a virtual meeting with the Healthcare Consultant of Marcus Institute Michael Hartford on January 11.
- Chief of Staff Carter met with the State Office Director of Direct Data Capture Clinical Service Martha Mason on January 11.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated with the Falls Prevention Program Steering Committee in a virtual meeting on January 13.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter participated with the Florida Healthcare Association's Leadership Committee in a virtual meeting on January 15.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Major General Luis R. Visot on January 29.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated with the Falls Prevention Program Steering Committee in a virtual meeting on February 10.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell joined a virtual teleconference with 2nd Marine Division Chief of Staff John H. Rochford at the U.S. Marine Corps Camp on February 11.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Pasco County Sheriff's Annual Veterans Shooting event on February 12.

- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended a virtual meeting with WellHive, a Healthcare Network Integration service provider on February 24. The Orlando VA Medical Center in Lake Nona has partnered with WellHive to enhance their Electronic Health Record System interface with Community Health Providers. That day, he also participated in a teleconference with Lieutenant General Lawrence D. Nicholson.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the West Orlando Firearm Training event in Groveland on February 26.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended a teleconference with the Lieutenant Governor's Chief of Staff Maureen Wagner on March 29.

❖ **Legislative Activities**

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with the Governor's Staff and Governor's Office of Policy and Budget (OPB) regarding the Department's proposed budget and veteran-related bills at the 2021 Legislative Session. During the meetings, he proposed best practices for veterans' initiative to improve benefit access for Florida's 1.5 million veterans and their family members.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell joined the Florida Veterans Foundation at the Military Veteran Legislative Welcome Breakfast at the Capitol on January 27.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and FDVA Senior Management virtually attended Governor DeSantis' 2021 State of the State Address and the opening ceremony of the 2021 Joint Legislative Session on March 2.

FDVA Leadership's 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. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell addressed to the legislators and committee members about the COVID-19 pandemic impacts and implemented protocols at State Veterans' Homes and Division of State Veterans' Benefits and Assistance functions.

During the 2021 Session, Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and FDVA Senior Management met with legislators and/or represented FDVA at committee meetings in support of the following Legislative Bills in Tallahassee.

- Senator Tom A. Wright proposed Senate Bill (SB) 0586 - Veterans Employment and Training.
- Senator Danny Burgess proposed SB 0764 - Veterans Treatment Courts.
- Representative Ardian Zika proposed House Bill (HB) 0231- Services for Veterans and Their Families, and HB 2215 - Veterans Intervention Program.
- Representative Plakon Alexander proposed HB 0687 - Prescriptive Authority Certification for Psychologists.
- Representative Allison Tant proposed HB 2515 - Florida State University Public Interest Law Center COVID-19 Veterans Legal Clinic.
- Representative Patt Maney proposed HB 3947 - Northwest Florida State College-Veterans Success Center, and HB 0633 - Purple Star Campuses. On March 30, Deputy Executive Director Hartsell also attended Representative Maney's Reception ceremony in Tallahassee.
- Senator Jeff Brandes proposed SB 0508 - Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship Programs, and SB 1804 - Repeal of the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force.

- Representative Clay Yarborough proposed HB 1507 - Workforce Related Programs and Services.
- Senator Gayle Harrell proposed SB 0260 - Services for Veterans and Their Families.
- Senator Jennifer Bradley proposed SB 0408 - Transportation Facility Designations/Veterans Honor Highway.

On March 24, Governor DeSantis signed the *Vietnam War Veterans Day in Florida* proclamation to commemorate the state’s nearly 500,000 Vietnam-era Veterans for their selfless dedication to the nation. FDVA Office of Communications drafted the proclamation for the Governor.

ii) Division of Veterans’ Benefits and Assistance:

Bureau of Veterans’ Claims Services:

The Bureau of Veterans’ Claims Services third quarter production review of rating decisions continues from the previous quarter. Nationally, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to be affected by the pandemic restrictions on its operations. This reduction has echoed in our operations as we have a symbiotic relationship. The Bureau of Claims Services processed 10,977 rating decision reviews of disability benefits claims through the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the St. Petersburg Regional Office has opened for in-person visits by appointment only. The Board of Veterans Appeals has partially opened for hearings but not for our local operations other than “virtual” hearings with its Washington, D.C. facility. Claims Services also experienced an increase in virtual hearings for local and BVA appeals. However, the Bureau has continued partial telework operations and adjusting accordingly. The Veterans’ Benefits and Assistance Statewide phone and email box received 10,187 inquires throughout this period. The Bureau anticipates an increase in reported services for the future for in-person meetings as COVID-19 restrictions are reduced for Federal facilities. Accordingly, the Bureau has expanded the use of virtual hearings with the VA and has conducted 355 hearings. As always, we continue to stand ready to meet the increasing demands of Veterans’ appeals requirements.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	Third Quarter YTD FY 2019-20
Retroactive Compensation	\$41,616,436	\$47,772,997	\$49,576,183	\$138,965,616	\$108,963,645
Largest Single Retro. Benefit (1)	\$496,582	\$705,032	\$598,400	\$705,032	\$566,392
Debt Waiver Resolutions	\$12,107	\$0	\$176,262	\$188,369	\$793,284
Notices of Disagreement	2,304	2,403	2,684	7,391	13,007
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases (2)	232	136	101	469	176
Act as Representative at Hearings*	97	64	208	369	1,609
Veterans’ Appeals Hearings*	96	153	147	396	1,913
Number of Ratings Reviewed	10,256	10,055	10,977	31,288	43,461

(1) The “Largest Single Retro. Benefits” Year to Date for FY 2019-20 and the Actual for FY 2020-21 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.

Bureau of Veterans' Field Services:

The Bureau of Veterans' Field Services continues to provide in-person and virtual services to Veterans and their families during the third quarter. However, the Tampa and West Palm Beach Veterans Health Administration (VHA) catchment areas remain closed to FDVA's Veterans' Claims Examiners for in-person services due to Federal COVID-19 pandemic protocols of our host partners. Field Services advocated for 30,050 Veterans and their families completing 7,142 new disability claims. The Bureau of Field Services gained offices at two VHA medical facilities at Sebring in Highlands County and Kissimmee in Osceola County due to the vigorous efforts of our supervisors for each of these catchment areas. The additional offices have expanded our ability to serve Veterans and families in the surrounding area. Field Services' supervisors assisted the Bureau of Veterans' Claims by processing and reviewing 927 rating decisions.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	YTD Third Quarter FY 2019-20
Number of Issue Resolutions	4,227	3,288	4,114	11,629	17,603
Total Amount of Issues Resolution	\$14,532,515	\$11,262,693	\$14,727,585	\$40,522,793	\$60,434,877
Outreach Visits	42	47	55	144	861
Veterans Served at Outreach (FV SVD)	647	1,132	937	2,716	28,593
Bedside Interviews	8	17	23	48	713
Walk-ins / Counseling	3,853	7,860	10,818	22,531	104,332
Disability Claims	4,546	5,486	7,142	17,174	34,778
Voter Registration	824	720	826	2,370	4,880
Homeless Walk In	39	43	62	144	206
Ratings Reviewed	934	880	927	2,741	1,391

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	YTD Third Quarter FY 2019-20
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve Units	0	2	0	2	2
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	0	2	0	2	2
Medical Center Welcome Home Events	0	0	0	0	0
Congressional Open House Events	0	0	0	0	0
National Conferences	0	0	0	0	0
New Patient Orientation	6	6	2	14	14
Transition Assistance Briefings	5	9	16	30	30
Other Events	31	28	37	96	96

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.

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 requirements for monitoring the quality and integrity of veteran education programs and the oversight and enforcement of approval-related laws.

With the passage of PL 116-315, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, on January 5, 2021, approximately 27 sections of the law have affected VA Education Benefits. The impact of this law means stringent requirements for the approval of facility participation in VA Education Benefit programs.

SAA's continuous effort protecting veteran students and the employees of our 700 plus Florida schools approved to participate in GI Bill® education programs are the laws drawn in response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

- 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.

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. During state travel restrictions, SAA maintained electronic communications to perform VA contractual obligations. Upon approval from VA, the SAA performed Compliance Survey and Risk Based Survey (RBS) audits of facilities remotely. U.S. Code Title 38 § 3673 now requires SAAs to RBS at facilities and determine the cause of the change in the risk factor. In addition to providing consistent and reliable assistance to veteran beneficiaries and participating facilities, the SAA conducted 100 percent of the RBS assigned for the year and 52 percent of the Compliance Surveys assigned.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	YTD Third Quarter FY 2019-20
SAA Programs Approved	4,682	3,662	2,446	10,790	13,469
Other Approval	894	724	755	2,373	3,353
Compliance Visits	43	21	30	94	57
Inspection Visits	2	8	5	15	32
Outreach Activities (1)	190	73	144	407	478
Liaison Activities (2)	246	150	116	512	513
Technical Assistance (3)	1,022	814	767	2,603	2,792

- (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:

❖ State Veterans' Homes COVID-19 Updates

The COVID-19 crisis led FDVA's veterans' home administrators to reconsider the way patients were cared for and the design of nursing homes. It became essential to rethink how they deliver medical care in nursing homes. In the wake of the pandemic, FDVA began using telemedicine services in all seven of our State Veterans' Homes. Throughout the outbreak and even today, we continue to use telehealth as we find it to be a very efficient way to provide excellent safe care to our Veterans.

COVID-19 required us to redesign our space allocation developing smaller settings for our residents. Our newest veterans' home in Port St. Lucie has put us far into the future, a derivation of the national Green House Project, as each household serves only 20 veterans and includes private bedrooms and bathrooms and common areas for residents and staff. In this model, nursing assistants build relationships with patients while performing care only in that household preventing the potential spread of any virus.

We are also making physical changes to all nine of our FDVA facilities, such as adding Ultraviolet C (UVC) light to disinfect Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems and installing Plexiglas in reception areas to separate workers from visitors. Studies have confirmed that UVC light is an effective addition to manual cleaning efforts and can kill harmful pathogens quickly and efficiently.

❖ State Veterans' Homes Current Projects

The Veterans' Homes program administration is diligently working on construction projects for two new State Veterans' Nursing Homes.

- **Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie:**

The Home is scheduled to open for resident admissions in the second half of 2021. The home's construction is making good progress; furniture installation, IT system migration, and staff recruitment/hiring are in progress with the core staff hired. The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) completed their inspections for the licensure approval and the certificate of occupancy was received on March 15. The City of Port St. Lucie also issued a certificate of occupancy for the facility. One last critical step is to receive VA per diem certification.

- **Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando:**

The home is scheduled to open for resident admissions in the second half of 2021. Indoor construction projects continue, which include HVAC certifications, delink the campus plumbing rerouting for drainage pipes line and freshwater from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, etc. The furniture purchases and installation at the facility are in progress. We continue to work toward a certificate of occupancy from AHCA.

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

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

- Purchase Orders processed: 811 for the total of \$6,247,725.
- E-Quotes processed: 107.
- Formal Solicitations: 13.
- FDVA "Media Outreach and Branding Services" contract Amendment No. 2 (extension), with Quest Corp. of America, Inc., executed 3/18/2021. Total contract amount \$20,412.
- Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH "Automatic Transfer Switch" solicitation (Invitation to

- Bid – ITB) issued 11/20/2020. Pre-bid meeting 12/9/2020. Bid opening 1/6/2021. Contract awarded to Santa Fe Professional Solutions, Inc. 1/19/2021. Contract executed 2/2/2021. Total contract amount \$181,000.
- vi. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” contract Amendment No. 8 (extension) with Santa Fe Professional Solutions, Inc., executed 12/17/2020. Total contract amount \$114,767.
 - vii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Fluid Cooler Replacement” contract Amendment No. 5 (extension), executed 1/5/2021, Amendment No. 6 (extension) executed 3/4/2021, closed out 3/19/2021 with EMCOR Services, Inc. Total contract amount \$187,200.
 - viii. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Parking Lot Lights” contract Amendment No. 6 (extension and scope change) executed on 1/15/21, contract Amendment No. 7 (extension) executed on 3/12/2021, with A&K Energy Conservation, Inc. Total contract amount \$152,293.
 - ix. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 1/6/2021. Pre-bid meeting 1/20/2021. Bid opening 2/3/2021. Contract awarded to Zabatt Engine Services, Inc. 2/18/2021. Contract executed 2/25/2021. Total contract amount \$162,000.
 - x. Clyde E. Lassen SVNH “Patio Roof Replacement” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 1/28/2021. Pre-bid meeting 2/9/2021. Bid opening 3/3/2021. Contract awarded to Pontifex Construction Group, Inc. on 3/17/2021. Contract execution pending 3/31/2021. Total estimated contract amount \$44,400.
 - xi. Douglas T. Jacobson SNVH “Renovations” DMS Construction Contract Amendment No. 1, for Allstate Construction (additional funding), executed and received on 3/4/2021. Total contract amount \$5,500,000 (65% federally funded; 35% state funded).
 - xii. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 2/26/2021. Pre-bid meeting 3/10/2021. Bid opening 3/26/2021. Contract award and execution pending 3/31/2021. Total estimated contract amount \$160,000.
 - xiii. Jacobson SVNH “Dining Room/Lanai Remodel” contract Amendment No. 6 (extension), with Design Build Remodel, Inc., executed 1/5/2021. Total contract amount \$325,099.
 - xiv. Lake Baldwin CLC “Remodel/Retrofit” DMS Client Agency Contract Amendment No. 2 (funding), for OHL Arellano (additional construction services), executed and received on 2/18/2021. Total contract amount \$9,801,004 (65% federally funded; 35% state funded).
 - xv. Robert H. Jenkins SVDH “Replacement of Wall Rails and Guards” contract Amendment No. 3 (extension), with Shine and Company, Inc., executed 2/25/2021. 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. **1 - General Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.
- ii. **3 - Employment Liability Claims:** (1 new this Quarter), 2 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.
- iii. **2 - Other Liability Claims:** (2 new this Quarter), 0 won, 1 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**

Third 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
	Dell Laptop	5	\$300	\$1,500
Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home, Land O' Lakes				\$1,500
	Blu-Ray Players	4	\$98	\$392
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines				\$392
	No Donations this Quarter			
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City				\$0
	Wheelchair	1	\$25	\$25
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte				\$25
	No Donations this Quarter			
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine				\$0
Total Non-Cash Donations				\$1,917
(1) State Veterans' Nursing Home (SVNH)				
(2) State Veterans' Domiciliary Home (SVDH)				

ii. Cash Donations Received by State Veterans' Homes

Facilities	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$120	\$850	\$850	\$1,820
Ardie R. Copas SVNH, Port St. Lucie	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$4	\$150	\$1,840	\$1,994
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$5,630	\$1,848	\$265	\$7,743

Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$13,378	\$0	\$1,626	\$15,004
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$250	\$25	\$450	\$725
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$522	\$3,680	\$1,576	\$5,778
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Cash Donations	\$19,904	\$6,553	\$6,608	\$33,064

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

Third Quarter	
Florida Health Care Association	\$4,316



3) Veterans Florida (VF)

During the third quarter of fiscal year 2020-21, Veterans Florida promoted a statewide initiative, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) SkillBridge program, to increase awareness of the benefits to employers and transitioning servicemembers who wish to remain or move to Florida. Senator Tom A. Wright introduced Senate Bill (SB) 586 – Veterans Employment Training, and Representative Tyler I. Sirois introduced House Bill (HB) 435 – Veterans Employment and Training, which will support a statewide awareness and employment program. Veterans Florida is designated as the state’s principal SkillBridge assistance organization.

❖ Internal Operations

The VF staff continues to work from home; the office has partially opened for limited access as needed. The office will open for regular business on April 5, 2021. Staff will work Mondays - Thursdays in the office and remotely on Fridays.

❖ External Operations

Employer partners for SkillBridge are currently being signed for fiscal year 2021-22.

We were notified by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) that our next 3-year review was beginning. Staff is preparing to meet with the OPPAGA team to provide updates on the VETS Program.

VF participated in several outreach events to continue spreading awareness of services.

You may view the third quarter events list at [FY 2020-21 Events and Outreach](#).

❖ Marketing

The 2020 Virtual Expo pitch competition winner Steve Edwards will host the 2021 Expo via Premier Virtual system.

VF executed a successful announcement of the Florida SkillBridge Coalition via press conference and an article in the *Tampa Bay Times* was published in February. VF continues to galvanize outreach for coalition partners’ membership and education. Currently, VF partnered with 14 organizations including the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Enterprise Florida, and CareerSource Florida.

Network Partner	Performance		
	January	February	March
Unique Website Visitors	3,925	3,079	3,543
Facebook Organic Post Reach	8,496	9,422	6,548
Newsletter Subscribers	33,413	33,409	32,773
LinkedIn Post Reach	7,270	6,790	7,015
Twitter Post Reach	4,005	4,760	7,336

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

The VETS team continues contacting and assisting veterans who are looking for employment and training services. VF continues to provide services to veterans and employers amidst COVID-19.

❖ **Career Services Program**

The career services team conducted employer training grant evaluations and preparation for contract renewals for fiscal year 2020-21. The team continues the work to expand both workforce grant employers and career matching opportunities to the benefit of our Veterans.

Third Quarter Veteran Leads Metrics				
Month	Grant Reimbursement Amount	Job Fair	Website	Total
January	\$189,921	66	118	184
February	\$16,497	100	96	196
March	\$13,729	196	136	332
Total	\$220,147	362	350	712

❖ **Veteran Agriculture Program**

VF was awarded a federal three-year Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Program grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) 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 the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Research and Education Center.

During this quarter, VETS Program Director Jeremy Sinnemaki and Entrepreneurship Development Manager Amy Entress performed a site visit at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center.

Third Quarter Research and Education Status				
Partners	Location	Pending	Active	Completed
Gulf Coast REC	Wimauma	1	3	0
Mid-Florida REC	Apopka	2	0	0
North Florida REC	Quincy	1	0	0
Tropical REC *New	Homestead	0	2	0
West Florida REC	Milton	0	1	0

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

Veterans Florida continues to expand 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. VF partnered with the Florida Highway Patrol to bring project management, cybersecurity and IT SkillBridge opportunities to former service members throughout Florida.

Partner	Location	Pending	Active	Completed
University of Florida	Gulf Coast REC (Wimauma)	0	1	0
University of Florida	West Florida REC (Milton)	2	0	0

❖ **Entrepreneurship Program**

The entrepreneurship team partnered with Domi Station in Tallahassee, Groundswell in Melbourne, Rising Tide Innovation Center in St. Petersburg, Tampa Bay Wave in Tampa and Florida Association of Veteran-Owned Businesses (FAVOB) in Orlando. These partners provide mentorship and resources to eligible Veterans. Adding these additional cohorts will reduce waitlists for Veterans seeking entrepreneurship training in Orlando and Tampa.

Partner	Contracted Amount	Payments to Date
Action Zone, Inc.	\$110,029	\$54,138
DOMI Station	\$1,150	\$1,150
Florida Association of Veteran-Owned Businesses	\$2,000	\$500
Florida Atlantic University	\$61,500	\$30,000
Florida Gulf Coast University	\$76,500	\$45,000
Groundswell	\$2,388	\$2,388
Julo Strategy	\$64,000	\$37,600
Rising Tide Innovation Center	\$1,950	\$1,950
Tampa Bay Wave	\$1,500	\$0
University of North Florida	\$48,900	\$38,700
University of West Florida	\$74,500	\$17,100
Veterans Entrepreneurship Initiative	\$80,010	\$25,336
Total	\$524,447 (99%)	\$253,862
Budgeted	\$528,407*	

*Revised budget approved at February 18, 2021 Board Meeting

❖ **Development**

We are contacting potential sponsors for the 2021 Veterans Florida Virtual Expo and secured Bank of America as the presenting sponsor.

❖ **Board of Directors Meeting**

The Board of Directors met on February 18. The Board approved necessary budget adjustments, reviewed the legislative agenda for the upcoming Session, and received partner organization updates. The next Board meeting is tentatively set for the middle of June 2021.



NO FLORIDA VETERAN LEFT BEHIND

4) Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF)

The Foundation operates for the direct and indirect benefit for the Veterans of Florida, the FDVA and state Veteran Service Organizations (VSO). FVF is a 501(C) (3) nonprofit operating for charitable and educational purposes. The Foundation operates solely on grants, donations and fundraisers. The Foundation operates with a full-time and a part-time employee and one intern.

❖ **Board of Directors, FVF Staff & Volunteer Outreach**

All FVF board of directors are volunteers who donate time and resources to support the Foundation’s mission and its programs to help Veterans in need.

Team Members	Hours	Events	Veterans Served
Board of Directors & Volunteers	3,421	130	36,686
75 New Recruit Volunteers	760		
FVF Headquarters Staff Received Calls	168	17	416

Outreach Metrics	Reach	Followers
Facebook Organic Reach	52,000	7,333
Newsletter Subscribers	3,225	34.1% Opens
Veteran Data Services	25,875	
Website Page Views	14,017	Unique – 11,319

❖ **Incoming Grants, Fundraising and Donations**

FVF created a new donation webpage for donors to select Veterans in need options. Year to Date, FVF raised the following funds for FY 2020-21.

Grants, Fundraising & Donations	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21
Corporate / Business Grants	\$3,000	\$100,500	\$5,700	\$109,200
Corporate / Individual Contributions	\$9,283	\$18,270	\$14,049	\$41,602
Agency Grants		\$25,000	\$2,500	\$27,500
Fundraising Events	\$10,680	\$24,165	\$1,075	\$35,920
Affiliated Organization Contributions		\$1,400	\$166	\$1,566
TOTAL	\$22,963	\$169,335	\$23,490	\$215,788

❖ **FVF Income Projections**

10 Incoming Grants Pending Approval	\$140,000
HB 2559 Veterans In Crisis Bill	\$245,000
WWII Documentary Project	\$36,500
Walgreens & Target Projects	\$2,500

❖ **Gadsden Flag License Plate**

The funds will help with recurring funding for foundation sustainability and continue its mission of helping Veterans in need. The plate will go into production soon. FVF Marketing plan on standby to sell 3,000 vouchers.

❖ **Volunteer Florida Grant (VFG)**

Ongoing Grant to recruit and track 400+ volunteers, their hours and participation, etc. As of October 1, 2020, we have cataloged over 256 new volunteers on record who assist with the grant requirements and have logged in over 5,000 hours of volunteer work.

❖ **A State at War, Florida During WWII Documentary**

A new project in collaboration with *82 West Productions* to produce a film on Florida during WWII explores the contributions Floridians made and their sacrifices that helped to win the war. FVF retains 10% of all monies for the project along with future DVDs and other sales.

❖ **Forward March Ambassadors for Veterans Council**

FVF recruited six new Ambassadors that support the FVF with sustainable funding and extended outreach.

❖ **FVF Outreach Programs**

Veterans Assistance = \$177,630	
July 1, 2020 thru March 31, 2021	
Veterans Homeless Shelter Programs	90,000 Veterans Benefits Guides
VA Pension Claims Assistance	COVID-19 Project Vet Relief Fund
Emergency Referral Services	Veterans Recognition Awards
Toys for Tots / JROTC Programs	Holiday Cards for Heroes
<i>*Figures based on three-year life expectancy after claims approval.</i>	

❖ **Aging Wartime Veterans**

VA Pension - Aid & Attendance Financial Workshops Claim partners provided five free seminars with 580 attendees across the state and received approvals for 267 Aids & Attendance Claims.

Forgotten Warrior Project Approved	*267 Claims
Year to Date	
Average Benefit Per Veteran Over 3 Years	\$51,200
Average Total Veteran Benefits Over 3 Years	\$13,670,400
Economic Impact	X 2.39%
Total Amount with Economic Impact	\$31,672,256
<i>*Figures based on three-year life expectancy after claims approval.</i>	

❖ **Florida Veterans Support Crisis Hotline**

FVF continues its partnership with the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay to support Suicide Prevention, Opioid Addiction and Mental Health issues. The center attains approximately 12,000+ calls per quarter.

❖ **Veterans in Career Transitions Workshops**

The Foundation developed special Zoom presentation workshops to help Veterans who experience job loss and help them with life after the military careers.

❖ **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 with various needs.

❖ **Get There Initiative for Veterans**

The FVF has collaborated with Florida’s Workforce Education Initiative (FDOE) connecting Veterans to resources at Florida’s twenty-eight state colleges.

❖ **DHSMV Veterans Recognition Program**

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



❖ **Board Members and Staff Participated in the following Events:**

Veterans Treatment Courts	Veterans Council Meetings	Veterans Day Ceremonies
Mission United Advisory Council	Florida Veterans Council	Veterans Recognition Events
Vet. Nursing Home Deliveries	Homeless Vets Meal Deliveries	Homeless Vets Stand Downs
Burial & Memorial Services	Veterans Seniors Events	FVF Board Meetings
Veterans Workforce Meetings	Veterans Golf Tourneys	Care Packages to Veterans
Walmart Veterans Presentations	Veterans Workshops	Holiday Meals for Veterans
Veterans Flag Presentations	Christmas Meals for Veterans	Women Veterans Workshops
Wreaths Across America	Veterans Task Force Seminars	Trooper Award Program
Veterans Recognition Events	WWII Veterans Day Events	WWII Project Presentations

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