

# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021

James S. "Hammer" Hartsell, Major General, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired  
Executive Director



# FDVA

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

[www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org)

The premier point of entry for Florida veterans to access earned services, benefits and support



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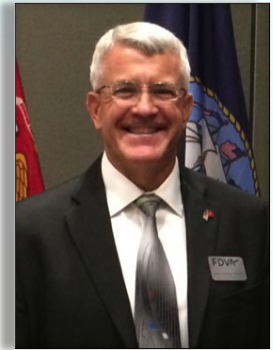
# Executive Director's Message

December 29, 2021

To: The Governor of the State of Florida, Members of the Cabinet, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

On behalf of my agency, I am honored to submit the 2021 annual report for the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.

We are working together to ensure a positive future for Florida veterans and their families, we'll ensure Florida continues to be the most sought-after state by veterans in the nation. The report highlights the outstanding accomplishments of our superb team of dedicated professionals and the unmatched support we receive from our state and federal partners. Helping to connect the Sunshine State's 1.5 million veterans, their families and survivors with earned services, benefits and support are the more than 1,500 men and women of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. They play a major role in the direct infusion of more than \$23.2 billion annually for veterans into Florida's economy through federal compensation, education and pension benefits, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' medical services and military retired pay.



Historically, a vibrant economy with low unemployment, coupled with the lack of a state income tax and mild winters, has brought many veterans and their families to Florida and will continue to do so in the future. However, with the advance of COVID-19 into our nation and state, we've seen many changes during the last couple of fiscal years in the administration of services, benefits and support. During the reported fiscal year, our veterans' claims examiners have reopened for in-person services. In our state veterans' homes, where 24/7 critical health care to our elderly veterans remains our top priority, the residents' admissions and family members' visits were reopened. The department provided COVID-19 safety tools, training and vaccinations to the employees and residents. In addition, FDVA assisted the governor in developing a program to vaccinate homebound World War II and Korean War veterans.

Mental health awareness has been a central part of the state's ongoing response to COVID-19. The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs ensures advocating Florida veterans, their families and survivors have access to free mental health resources and necessary support. Florida is a major participant in the "Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families," a national call to action asking state, military and civilian interagency teams to collaborate, plan and implement suicide prevention best practices and policies for service members, veterans and their families statewide. In addition, the Florida Veterans Support Line, 1-844-MyFLVet (693-5838), continues to provide confidential emotional support and connection to community resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The line, supported by FDVA and its suicide prevention partners, is available to all veterans in Florida.

From our comprehensive efforts on mental health advocacy and veteran suicide prevention to the happy reunion of our veterans' home residents with their families, we continue to ensure the Sunshine State remains the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

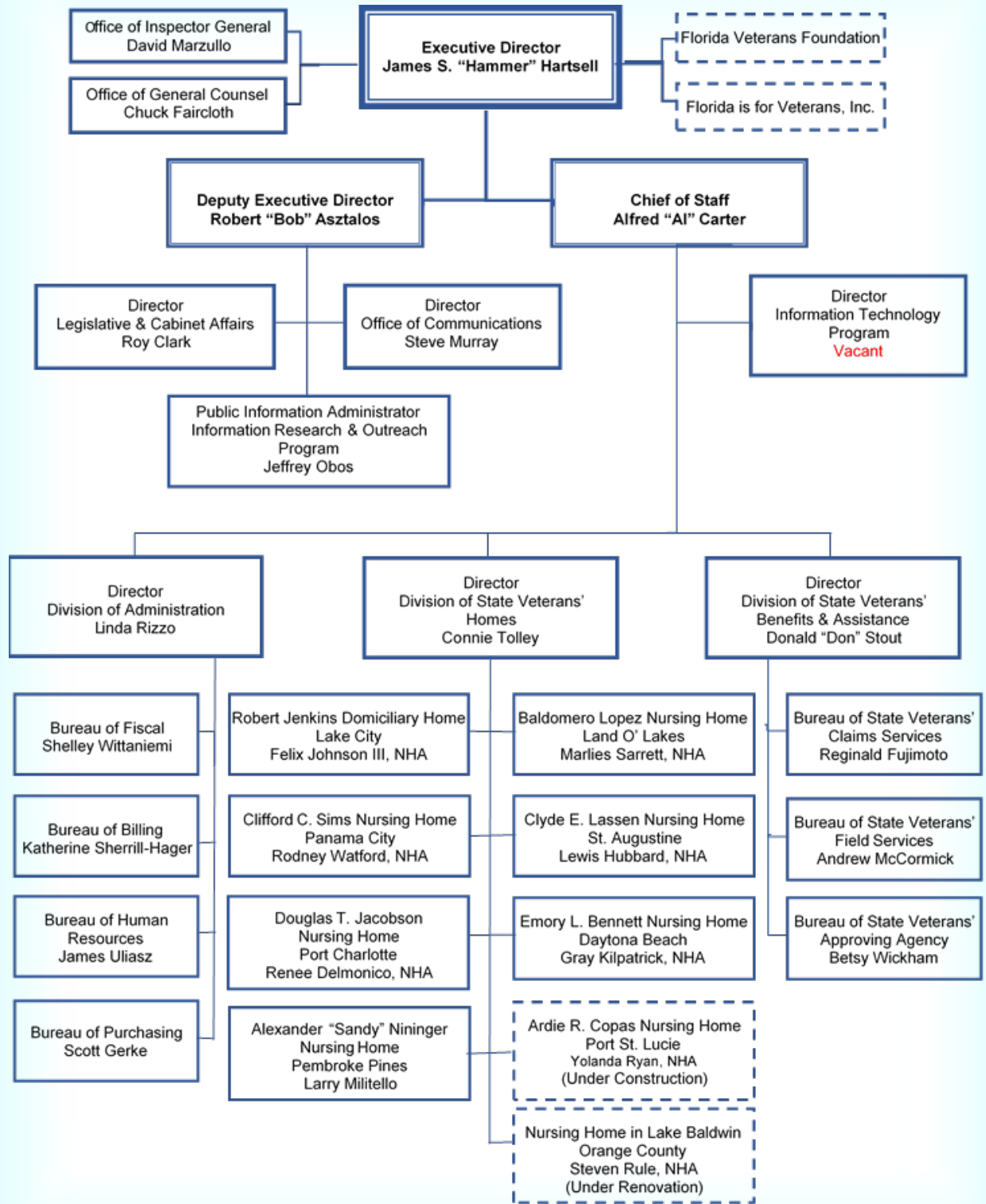
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James S. Hartsell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

James S. "Hammer" Hartsell  
Major General, U.S. Marine Corps, (Ret)  
Executive Director

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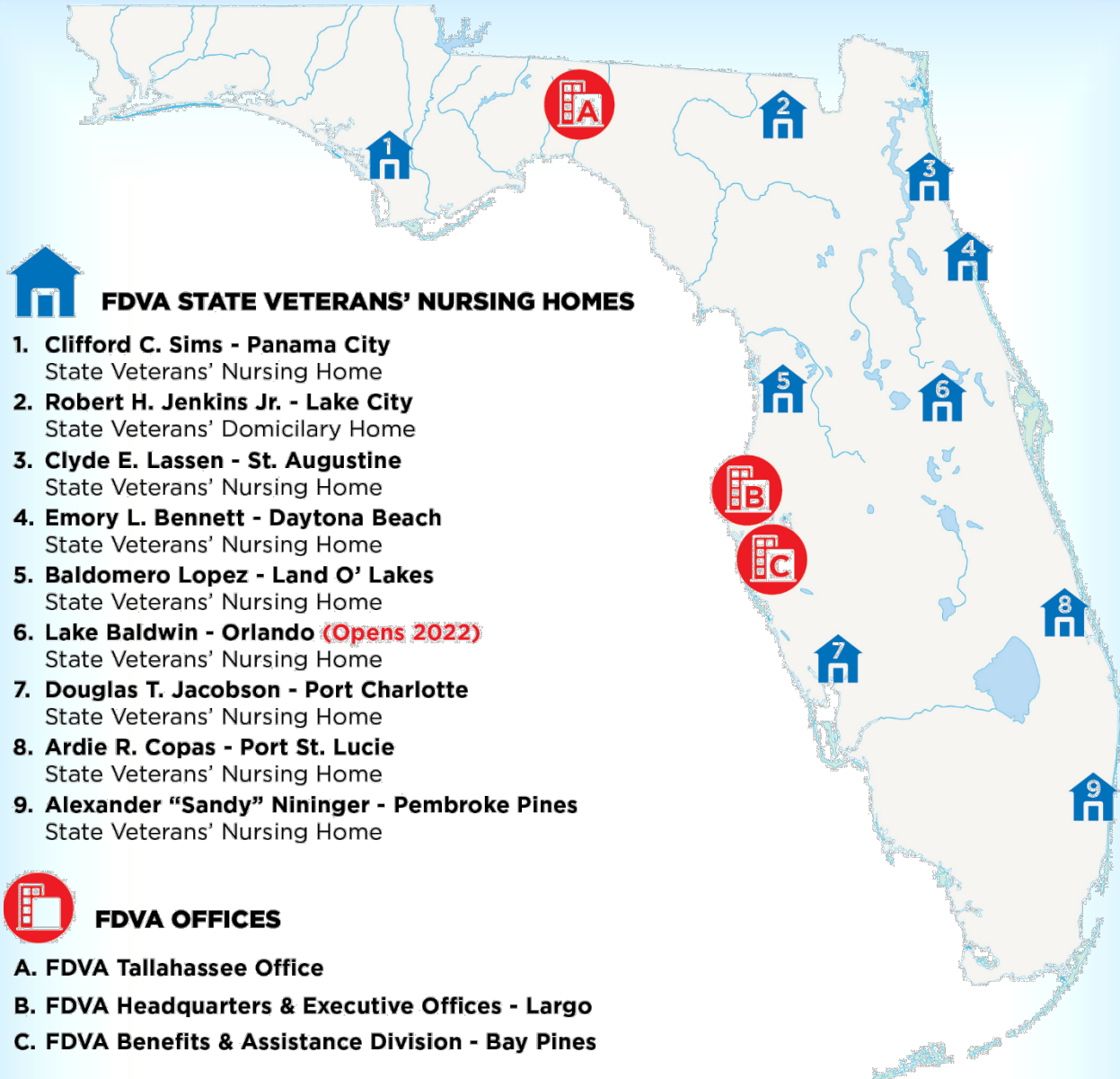
# Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

## Organization Chart (As of June 2021)



**Our Mission:** To advocate with purpose and passion for Florida veterans and link them to superior services, benefits and support.

# Who We Are



The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) is a Cabinet agency responsible for assisting Florida veterans, their families and survivors in improving their health and economic well-being through quality benefit information, advocacy, education and long-term health care.

FDVA's main administrative office is in Largo with a Capitol office in Tallahassee. Its two primary program areas are located throughout the state:

- **The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance** provides professional assistance to Florida veterans and their dependents in obtaining financial benefits and health care treatments from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **The Division of State Veterans' Homes** provides comprehensive, high-quality health care to eligible veterans in need of long-term skilled or assisted living care.

# Who We Serve

Florida has the third largest veteran population in the nation. Fiscal Year 2020 (Federal Year: 10/1/2019-9/30/2020) demographic information from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Population Projection Model 2018 (VetPop2018).

## World War II

There are 31,898 (2%) World War II veterans in Florida.

## Korean War

There are 105,660 (7%) Korean War-era veterans in Florida, who served during 1950 to 1955. Korean War veterans are more prone to suffer from disabilities related to cold injuries as a result of exposure to severe cold climates. Korean War-era veterans may qualify for health care and compensation benefits who were exposed to ionizing radiation or have participated in certain radiation-risk activities such as nuclear weapons testing during military service.

## Vietnam War

There are 498,641 (35%) Vietnam-era veterans in Florida, who served from 1961 to 1975. FDVA has seen an increase in disability claims filed on behalf of Vietnam veterans due to triggered responses to the current wars and the manifestation of acute diseases brought on by exposure to Agent Orange.

## Peacetime

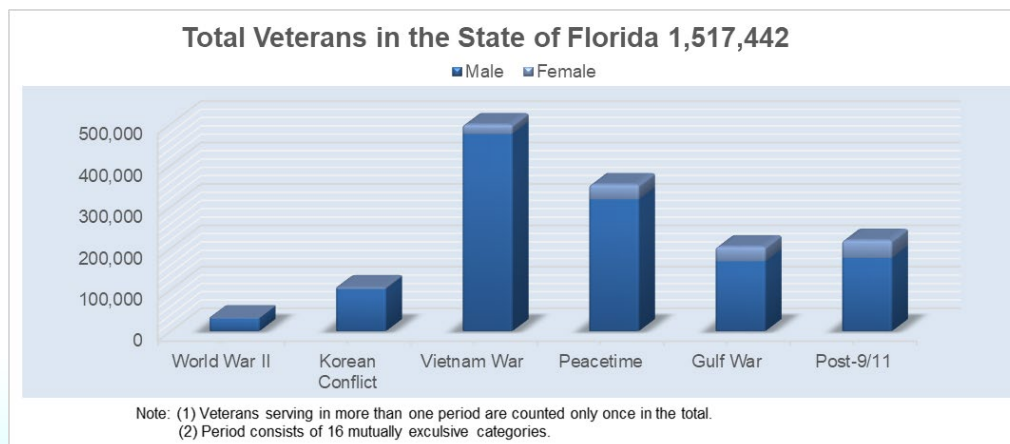
There are 353,881 (25%) Peacetime veterans in Florida. Almost a quarter of Florida's veteran population served honorably during a unique and relatively conflict-free time in our history. Many of these veterans do not seek benefits, mistakenly believing that if they did not serve in combat, then they must not qualify for veteran benefits and programs.

## Gulf War to 9/11

There are 203,970 (14%) Gulf War-era veterans in Florida, from Gulf War 1990 to pre-9/11. The VA recognizes certain illnesses and diseases are presumed to be related to military service in designated areas of Southwest Asia that may entitle to VA disability compensation benefits.

## Post-9/11 Veterans

There are 219,612 (16%) post-9/11 veterans in Florida. Our returning veterans, much like the Greatest Generation of World War II, are seeking employment, housing and education opportunities for themselves, their spouses and families. Research suggests that 10% to 18% of these service members are likely to have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after they return.



# Performance Measures

## Performance Measures

### Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

Provide information and advocacy to Florida veterans, their families and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

Measure	Actual FY 2019-20	Actual FY 2020-21	Standard FY 2020-21
1. Value of cost avoidance because of retroactive compensation.	\$156,994,948	\$194,668,373	\$95,715,756
2. Value of cost avoidance because of issue resolution.	\$69,163,531	\$61,932,620	\$22,999,939
3. Number of veterans served.	78,138	81,423	103,110
4. Number of claims processed.	37,250	25,356	23,604
5. Number of services to veterans.	540,169	313,033	513,522

### Division of State Veterans' Homes

Provide quality long-term health care services to eligible Florida veterans.

Measure	Actual FY 2019-20	Actual FY 2020-21	Standard FY 2020-21
1. Occupancy rate for homes in operation two years or longer.	93.1%	69.2%	90.0%
2. Percent of state veterans' homes in compliance with quality of care health care regulations.	100%	100%	100%
3. Number of state veterans' homes beds available.	870	870	870

### Division of Executive Direction and Support Services

Provide effective and responsive management to support the divisions and programs serving veterans.

Measure	Actual FY 2019-20	Actual FY 2020-21	Standard FY 2020-21
1. Administration costs as a percent of total agency costs.	3.3%	3.8%	6.8%
2. Administrative positions as a percent of total agency positions.	2.1%	2.0%	4.4%



# Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance



The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance provides professional assistance to Florida's veterans and their dependents in an effort to obtain financial benefits and health care treatment from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Success is measured by the number of veterans the department assists and the number of issues resolved for those veterans. "Assistance" is seen in a variety of components, including medical treatment, prescriptions, prosthetic devices, benefit checks, school program approval, veterans' preference investigations and determinations, voter registration and disseminating veteran data to the general public.

The Division is comprised of a Division Director, support staff and three Bureaus:

- Bureau of Veterans' Claims and Assistance (§ 292.05 (1) F.S.)
- Bureau of Field Services (§ 292.05 (1) F.S.)
- Bureau of State Approving Agency (§ 292.05 (4) F.S.)

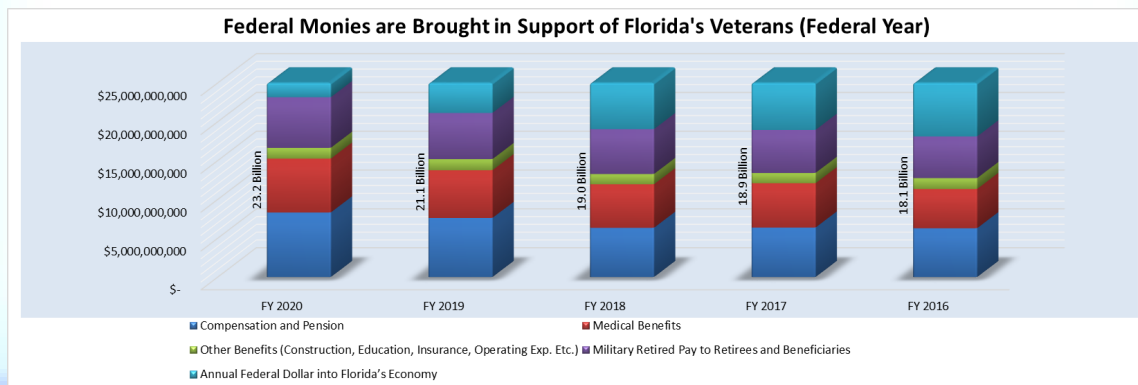
Veterans' Claims Examiners (VCEs) are trained to resolve the myriad of issues facing veterans who served in World War II through today's conflicts, with each era having unique issues and challenges. Each day finds VCEs offering assistance and guidance at Transition Assistance Program briefings for separating service members, congressional veterans' appreciation days, and Veteran Service Organization gatherings through primarily through teleconferences this



year. However, FDVA employees remain proactive in providing services to the 1.5 million veterans in Florida; fewer than 419,989 (Compensation of 401,118 plus Pension of 18,871) currently receive VA service-connected compensation and pension benefits (not to be confused with military retirement benefits). Our efforts to reach these veterans, counsel them regarding benefits they may have earned, and assist them in garnering those benefits are expanding. For every state dollar expended for this division, more than \$35 in federal monies are brought into Florida.

**The Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services** provides counseling and assistance to veterans, their dependents and survivors, with the preparation, submission and prosecution of claims and appeals for state and federal benefits as well as applications to correct military records. The bureau also supports the VA's initiatives of Homeless Outreach, Women Veterans' Integration, and 'Fully Developed Claims' program.

The Bureau's primary responsibility is to work directly with the decision resources in the VA



Regional Office to expedite claims and to influence, through proactive advocacy, the most positive outcome. To this end, Veterans' Claims Services provides a quality control function by reviewing completed VA benefits rating decisions and paralegal due process assistance in the prosecution of veterans' disagreements with and appeals of VA rating decisions and debt identification and relief.

The Bureau is also mandated by statute to train and certify County Veteran Service Officers. To maintain proficiency with the rapid changes in veterans' programs, the bureau provides training twice a year during the counties' semi-annual conferences.

**The Bureau of Veterans' Field Services** provides benefits counseling services in a total of 48 locations; 33 of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities in Florida, one county resource center, four Veterans Affairs VET Centers, three Military bases and seven State Veterans' Homes. The bureau also provides outreach activities for FDVA throughout the State. In addition, Field Services assists in staffing the state's Disaster Recovery Centers when established by the Division of Emergency Management. The bureau's primary responsibility is to work directly with the decision resources in the VA Regional Office to expedite claims and to influence, through proactive advocacy for state and federal veteran benefits with the most positive outcomes. The focus of Field Services is face-to-face contact with the client and the resolution of any number of issues related to the submission of claims for compensation, pension, or medical care. The Bureau had to adjust to serving veterans via virtual platforms due to COVID-19. They also perform extensive outreach and help veterans navigate the confusing and cumbersome process to obtain benefits from the VA. The services can result in monetary benefits, but often result in determining, verifying and obtaining eligibility for medical treatments, medications, wheelchairs, hearing aids, ambulance bill reimbursements, lost check replacements, prosthetics and other non-monetary yet valuable benefits within the VA system. This service provides Florida veterans with significant economic value.

**The Bureau of State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans' Education and Training** is charged under the provisions of Title 38, United States Code and the federal contract entered into between FDVA and the VA and governed by Florida Statute 295.124. The Bureau is 100 percent federally funded. The Bureau reviews, evaluates and approves programs of veterans' education at Florida's institutions of higher learning and non-college degree schools for participation in VA Education Benefit programs. GI Bill® - eligible veteran flight training and employer On-the-Job and apprenticeship training also falls under the SAA's purview.

Education is an essential tool to ensure a successful transition from active duty to veteran status. As emphasized during FDVA outreach activities, the SAA works diligently to safeguard quality education program offerings in the state, they encourage the use of all federal GI Bill® education benefit programs and they also promote the use of State of Florida education benefit offerings. Attracting and retaining a young, educated veteran population is beneficial for all Floridians.

Federal Dollar are Brought in Support of Florida's Veterans (Federal Year)			
	FY 2020	FY 2019	FY 2018
Compensation and Pension	\$8,317,991,000	\$7,608,440,000	\$6,342,479,000
Medical Benefits	\$6,933,054,000	\$6,148,500,000	\$5,606,218,000
Other Benefits (Education, Insurance, Construction, Operating Exp., Etc.)	\$1,389,790,000	\$1,424,546,000	\$1,318,761,000
Military Retired Pay to Retirees and Beneficiaries	\$6,520,704,000	\$5,948,028,000	\$5,781,120,000
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$23,161,539,000</b>	<b>\$21,129,514,000</b>	<b>\$19,048,578,000</b>

# Division of State Veterans' Homes



The Division of State Veterans' Homes program provides comprehensive, high-quality health care on a cost-effective basis to eligible veterans in need of either long-term skilled nursing care or assisted living services. Care is provided to veterans with qualifying war or peacetime service, who are residents of Florida preceding admission, and who require skilled care as certified by a VA physician. Admission criteria are based on the need to maintain a safe environment for all residents. The skilled nursing and assisted living homes only admit those persons whose needs can be met within

the accommodations and services it provides with consideration for all residents.

Assisted Living level care is provided at the Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City, and includes rehabilitative assistance and other therapeutic measures to eligible ambulatory veterans who are not in need of 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 with the veterans participating in an established care plan.

Skilled nursing home care provides full-service, long-term residential nursing care to eligible veterans in 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 neighborhoods:

- Alexander "Sandy" Ninger 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, Port Charlotte



Comprehensive services and a deep concern for all veterans go hand in hand at our FDVA veterans' nursing homes. A full-time staff of Registered Nurses (RN), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) provides around-the-clock medical and nursing care to our veteran residents. Rehabilitative services, such as occupational and physical therapies, speech therapy and recreational activities are provided under the direct supervision of licensed therapists.

A variety of on- and off-site recreational and social activities are provided to encourage active minds, bodies and spirits, and slow the process of physical and mental decline. 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.

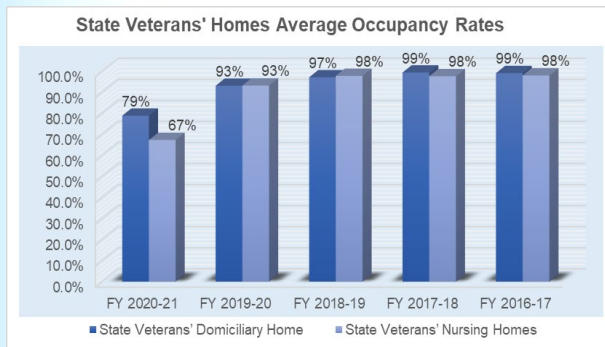
The State Veterans' Homes Program has a proud tradition of commitment to veterans. We

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 the quality of life of each veteran.

FDVA has developed policies and home reopening timelines, taking into account local conditions and prevalence of COVID-19 among residents and staff at each state veterans' home.

### State Veterans' Homes Program Occupancy Rates

During Fiscal Year 2020-21, the average occupancy rate for State Veterans' Homes in operation two years or longer was above 69 percent. The average for all skilled nursing facilities was to over 67 percent. However, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Veterans' Homes have maintained an annual average occupancy of 95 percent and above.



The Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City had an occupancy rate of over 78 percent. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Veterans' Domiciliary maintained an average 96 percent occupancy rate for the last five years, which is above the 90 percent performance measure goal for a year. The department has additional steps to address the COVID-19 impacts to the State Veterans' Homes. The department has provided additional training and purchase of

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and supplies to streamline the COVID-19 risk to facility staff and residents. The department also installed an ultraviolet light sanitization airborne pathogen system at all nine (9) State Veterans' Homes.

### Quality of Care

Delayed onset Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has typically been observed among the elderly, who may develop PTSD stemming the development of symptoms after exposure to single or multiple traumatic events.



Music therapy is offered in addition to standard treatment to address symptoms for PTSD. For example, it will be used as a way to build rapport and allow the residents to express themselves nonverbally since some of our residents with PTSD have a difficult time talking about the trauma. Music can help prompt memories when a resident is unable to reprocess a memory due to not remembering it. It can also be used as a tool to ground the residents because music can prompt feelings of calmness. The State Veterans' Homes use music therapy with residents to help them to express themselves and their emotions in words. Music in a group setting can reduce isolation and

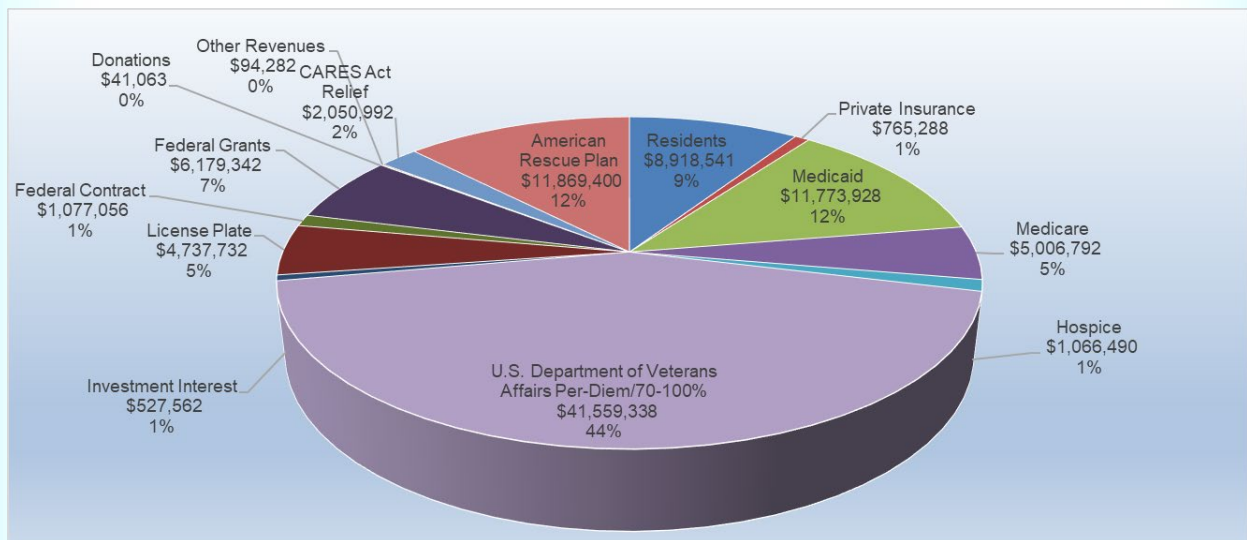
feelings of detachment, and increase pleasurable emotions.

State Veterans' Nursing Homes continue to be the long-term care leaders in providing the most extraordinary programs that produce the highest quality of health care for our Florida veterans.

# Fiscal Impact

The Division of Administration provides day-to-day management of the agency's financial resources. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the department's revenues. Below is a snapshot of the department's revenues and expenditures:

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS	
Revenue Report	
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021	
Revenues	State Veterans' Homes Program
Residents	\$8,918,541
Private Insurance	\$765,288
Medicaid	\$11,773,928
Medicare	\$5,006,792
Hospice	\$1,066,490
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Per-Diem/70-100%	\$41,559,338
Investment Interest	\$527,562
License Plates	\$4,737,732
Federal Contract	\$1,077,056
Federal Grants	\$6,179,342
Donations	\$41,063
Other Revenues	\$94,282
CARES Act Relief	\$2,050,992
American Rescue Plan	\$11,869,400
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$95,667,805</b>



Expenditure Report			
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021			
	State Veterans' Homes Program	Executive Direction and Support Services	Veterans' Benefits and Assistance
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>			
Salaries and Benefits	\$49,980,542	\$2,443,872	\$6,153,101
OPS	\$1,691,656	\$15,666	\$32,475
Expenses	\$15,117,971	\$1,253,232	\$196,860
Other Capital Outlay	\$426,983	\$-	\$-
Food Products	\$2,848,491	\$-	\$-
Vehicle	\$-	\$-	\$-
Contracted Services	\$14,071,198	\$741,926	\$1,127,983
Recreational Equip. Supplies	\$35,788	\$-	\$-
Risk Management Insurance	\$1,711,079	\$140,938	\$18,714
Public Assistance	\$-	\$-	\$-
Human Resources Assessment	\$457,968	\$9,315	\$38,936
Public Assistance COVID-19 (GR)	\$5,383,388	\$560,116	\$588
Data Processing Svc SRC	\$-	\$15,291	\$-
<b>Total Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$91,725,064</b>	<b>\$5,180,356</b>	<b>\$7,568,656</b>
<b>Non-Operating Expenditures</b>			
Service Charge to General Revenue	\$514,149	\$48	\$1,971
Refunds-State Revenues	\$553,750	\$-	\$-
Investment Cost	\$31,528	\$-	\$-
Payment Sales Tax	\$2,418	\$-	\$-
Trust Fund Sweep	\$17,522,290	\$-	\$-
Trust Fund Sweep-Inter Hurricane Irma Payback	\$263,851	\$-	\$-
<b>Total Non-Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$18,887,986</b>	<b>\$48</b>	<b>\$1,971</b>
<b>Fixed Capital Outlay</b>			
New Home Construction	\$6,746,623	\$-	\$-
Add & Improvements to State Veterans' Homes	\$2,892,353	\$-	\$-
Maintenance/Repair	\$2,382,483	\$-	\$-
Fees	\$128,343	\$-	\$-
<b>Total Fixed Capital Outlay</b>	<b>\$12,149,802</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$122,762,851</b>	<b>\$5,180,404</b>	<b>\$7,570,627</b>



# Department Recognitions



## Governor's Gold Seal Award

The Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home in Land O' Lakes and the Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port Charlotte both received the Governor's Gold Seal Award. The Gold Seal program awards were developed and implemented by the Governor's Panel, recognizing nursing home facilities that demonstrate excellence in long-term care. Skilled Nursing facilities receives Governor's Gold Seal Awards in Florida for providing consistence and exceptional high level of care to their residents.

## AHCA/NCAL National Quality Awards

The American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) recognized the Florida State Veterans' Homes with the Silver – Achievement in Quality Award and Bronze Commitment to Quality Award. The National Quality Award Program provides a pathway for providers of long-term and post-acute care services to demonstrate their commitment toward performance excellent for the quality of care to seniors and persons with disabilities.



## National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH)

Following the Civil War, a large number of indigent and disabled veterans were no longer able to earn their own livelihood and needed care. While the Federal Government operated national homes for disabled union volunteer soldiers, the total number of veterans needing care was overwhelming. In recognition of this need, and the debt that a grateful nation owed its defenders, a number of states independently established State Veterans Homes (SVHs) to help care for those who had borne the battle. The first State Veterans Home was established in 1864. With the establishment of the Veterans Administration in 1930 to care for an ever-increasing number of veterans, the state programs were expanded to include three levels of care, increased per diem payments and federal funding for construction of facilities.

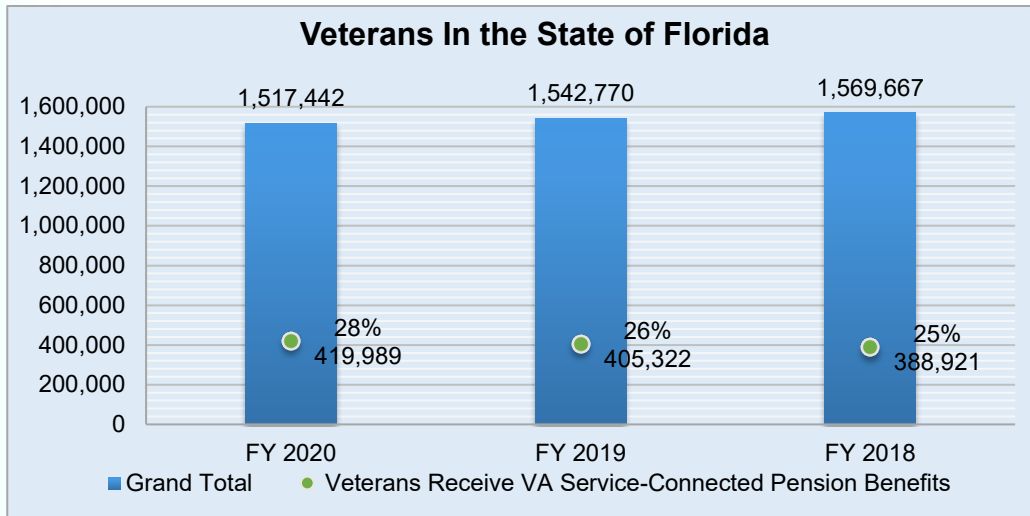
The National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH) was established in 1952 for the mutual need of State Homes to promote legislation at the national level and share common problems and experiences.



# Appendix I

## Chapter 292, FLORIDA STATUTES

*Section 292.05 (4) Florida Statutes, the Department may apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services from the state, the United States Government or any of its agencies, or any other public or private source and may use funds derived from these sources to defray clerical and administrative costs as may be necessary for carrying out its duties.*



### Division of State Veterans' Homes

The Division of State Veterans' Homes created under Chapter 296, Florida Statutes, applies for and receives federal funds from the VA including per diem reimbursements as well as construction and renovation grants. Our homes accept funds from Medicare, Medicaid, hospice, private insurance reimbursements and from individual residents in the form of co-payments for services rendered. Our network of veterans' homes also accepts cash donations as well as gifted items and services for the benefit of the residents.

*Section 292.05 (5) Florida Statutes, the Department shall conduct an ongoing study on the problems and needs of those residents of this state who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and the problems and needs of their dependents. The study shall include but not be limited to:*

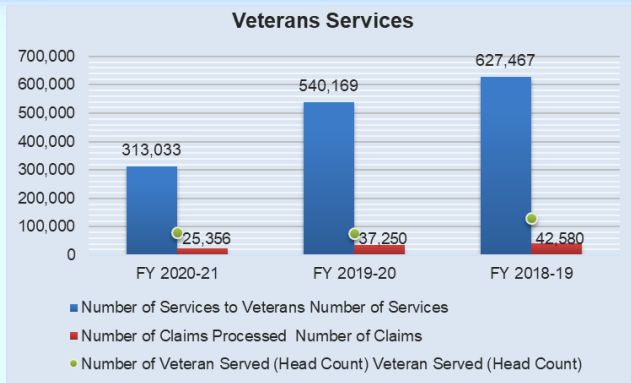
- A survey of existing state and federal programs available for such persons that specifies the extent to which such programs presently are being implemented, with recommendations for the improved implementation, extension or improvement of such programs.
- A survey of the needs of such persons in the areas of social services, health care, education and employment, and any other areas of determined need, with recommendations regarding federal, state and community services that would meet those needs.
- A survey of federal, state, public and private moneys available that could be used to defray the costs of state or community services needed for such persons.



FDVA continually surveys its constituency through feedback garnered while counseling thousands of veterans, receipt of training critiques, participation on numerous veteran-related governmental committees, regular meetings with veterans' organizations and their leadership, and analyses of official VA



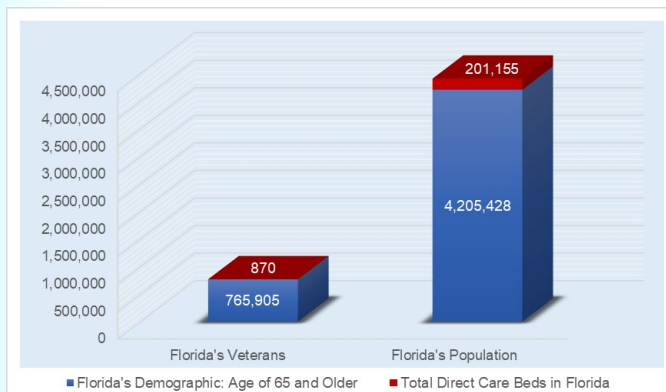
# Appendix I



data and reports. FDVA's Bureau of Research and Analysis reaches out to veteran communities and performs ongoing analyses of veterans' needs. FDVA attends Florida Veterans Council meetings with veteran service organization representatives throughout the state as a best-effort to gather information on veterans and their needs, and to disseminate information on available benefits to as many veterans as we can reach.

*Section 292.05 (7) Florida Statutes, the Department shall administer this chapter and shall have the authority and responsibility to apply for and administer any federal programs and develop and coordinate such state programs as may be beneficial to the particular interests of the veterans of this state. Such programs shall be subject to chapters 215 and 216.*

The Homes' Program may apply to receive federal funds that provide for facility renovations and monthly per diem reimbursements for the cost of care for its eligible residents.



The total number of beds currently available in the Division of State Veterans' Homes is 870. Of those, 720 are nursing home beds and 150 are for assisted living care. The veteran population over 65 years old in Florida is estimated to be 765,905. According to Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), Florida has about 705 skilled nursing facilities with 85,928 nursing home beds and 931 assisted living facilities with a total of 115,227 assisted living care beds.

Florida's over-65 population is estimated to be about 4,205,428, with more than half a million diagnosed with Alzheimer's or related dementias. However, with current skill nursing beds capacity, less than one percent of the aged and disabled veteran demographic can receive skilled nursing care at State Veterans' Nursing Homes. FDVA is diligently working on construction projects for two new State Veterans' Nursing Homes to increase Florida veterans' skilled nursing care beds to meet the gap.

The construction of new state veterans' nursing homes is subject to approval by the Governor and Cabinet, with 35 percent of the funding provided by the Florida Legislature and 65 percent of construction costs that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs matches as a Federal cost-share grant.

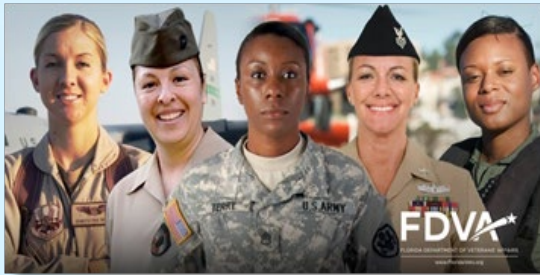
## Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance has 115 employees, 76 of whom are Veterans' Claims Examiners. Their day-to-day role is to connect without charge veterans and their families with earned services, benefits and support. In addition, VCEs provide education and ongoing support to Veterans' Service Officers who serve veterans at the local government (city or county) level.

## State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans' Education and Training

Under the provisions of Title 38 United States Code and the contract maintained between the

# Appendix I



FDVA and the VA, the SAA is charged with inspecting, approving and supervising programs and courses offered by accredited and non-accredited educational institutions (public and private) as well as training organizations, which are approved to participate in GI Bill® education benefit programs. Approval and compliance documents are furnished to VA, by the SAA, so that eligible veterans or other eligible persons enrolled in such courses may receive veteran education benefits.

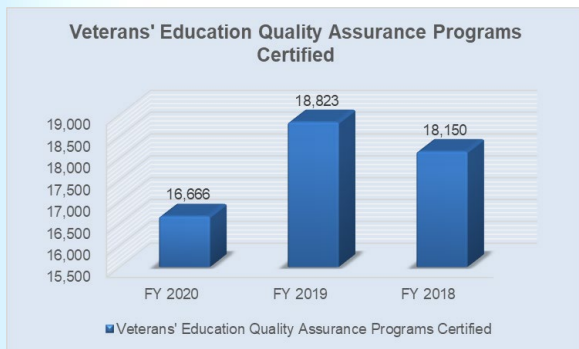
## Chapter 295, FLORIDA STATUTES

### Office of Inspector General: Veterans' Preference

Under Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, provisions of Title 5, United States Code *"The state and all political subdivisions of the state shall give preference in employment, promotions after being deployed, and retention."* The FDVA Office of Inspector General coordinates Veterans' Preference investigations and enforcement for Florida's veterans pursuant to Section 295.065, Florida Statutes et seq.

*Section 295.07 Florida Statutes, provides that the State and political subdivisions shall give preferences in appointment, retention in positions of employment and promotion to eligible veterans.*

*Section 295.11 Florida Statutes, describes the Investigation process, tasking FDVA, upon written request of any aggrieved person who has applied to a state agency or with a political subdivision which was awarded to a nonveteran.*



### State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans' Education and Training

Under Section 295.124 Florida Statutes FDVA maintains a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) which funds the State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education and Training. Costs are reimbursed 100 percent by VA and include coverage of clerical and administrative expenses of the Bureau, which is within the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance.



## Appendix II

### County Population and Federal Benefit Distributions by County

FY20 Summary of Expenditures by State							
Expenditures in \$000s							
County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Other Expenditure (Construction & Operating Expenses)	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care
ALACHUA	17,938	\$288,177	\$4,375	\$93,966	\$12,409	\$1,099	\$176,328
BAKER	1,845	\$21,850	\$-	\$10,545	\$966	\$74	\$10,265
BAY	22,347	\$206,558	\$-	\$144,237	\$10,990	\$1,057	\$50,275
BRADFORD	2,051	\$30,855	\$-	\$10,266	\$806	\$110	\$19,673
BREVARD	65,902	\$761,330	\$2,423	\$453,256	\$38,993	\$4,489	\$262,169
BROWARD	83,306	\$748,496	\$-	\$363,530	\$64,297	\$5,624	\$315,044
CALHOUN	1,133	\$10,130	\$-	\$5,645	\$188	\$24	\$4,273
CHARLOTTE	22,227	\$185,699	\$-	\$101,586	\$3,776	\$1,082	\$79,256
CITRUS	20,308	\$208,028	\$-	\$105,804	\$4,470	\$1,392	\$96,362
CLAY	25,576	\$303,584	\$-	\$188,808	\$30,195	\$2,012	\$82,568
COLLIER	27,807	\$136,092	\$-	\$78,695	\$6,117	\$2,623	\$48,657
COLUMBIA	6,626	\$135,736	\$-	\$43,849	\$2,027	\$206	\$89,653
DE SOTO	2,091	\$19,604	\$-	\$9,615	\$351	\$480	\$9,158
DIXIE	1,646	\$23,042	\$-	\$7,832	\$211	\$114	\$14,885
DUVAL	88,403	\$831,476	\$11,686	\$453,274	\$86,986	\$5,569	\$273,961
ESCAMBIA	38,902	\$405,856	\$6,613	\$257,649	\$27,324	\$1,788	\$112,482
FLAGLER	12,003	\$111,202	\$-	\$66,886	\$4,835	\$515	\$38,965
FRANKLIN	1,075	\$8,894	\$-	\$4,393	\$100	\$10	\$4,390
GADSDEN	3,029	\$33,050	\$-	\$16,738	\$954	\$129	\$15,229
GILCHRIST	1,537	\$21,880	\$-	\$9,060	\$417	\$29	\$12,374
GLADES	989	\$7,318	\$-	\$1,995	\$230	\$3	\$5,090
GULF	1,593	\$13,792	\$-	\$9,193	\$532	\$249	\$3,818
HAMILTON	896	\$17,152	\$-	\$7,876	\$235	\$171	\$8,870
HARDEE	1,308	\$10,671	\$-	\$4,833	\$385	\$64	\$5,390
HENDRY	1,729	\$17,054	\$-	\$8,225	\$618	\$123	\$8,088
HERNANDO	18,050	\$257,240	\$-	\$131,872	\$7,942	\$1,710	\$115,716
HIGHLANDS	10,322	\$105,016	\$-	\$52,856	\$1,439	\$777	\$49,944
HILLSBOROUGH	94,473	\$1,636,117	\$69,423	\$727,160	\$121,084	\$7,896	\$710,554
HOLMES	1,783	\$19,445	\$-	\$13,693	\$466	\$157	\$5,129
INDIAN RIVER	16,598	\$130,528	\$-	\$74,639	\$4,004	\$1,699	\$50,186
JACKSON	4,011	\$44,360	\$-	\$26,784	\$882	\$187	\$16,507
JEFFERSON	1,086	\$10,682	\$-	\$5,515	\$231	\$95	\$4,840
LAFAYETTE	475	\$6,335	\$-	\$1,985	\$60	\$18	\$4,272
LAKE	30,878	\$332,157	\$-	\$187,366	\$12,582	\$3,063	\$129,146
LEE	61,323	\$485,991	\$-	\$240,956	\$20,240	\$3,618	\$221,177
LEON	18,041	\$153,090	\$1,587	\$76,706	\$13,470	\$878	\$60,450
LEVY	4,045	\$63,113	\$-	\$20,720	\$871	\$154	\$41,367
LIBERTY	462	\$3,637	\$-	\$2,014	\$105	\$1	\$1,516
MADISON	1,186	\$17,891	\$-	\$8,549	\$311	\$136	\$8,895
MANATEE	34,114	\$267,122	\$-	\$144,875	\$11,925	\$2,731	\$107,592

## Appendix II

County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Other Expenditure (Construction & Operating Expenses)	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care
MARION	37,733	\$396,352	\$-	\$185,801	\$10,189	\$1,725	\$198,637
MARTIN	13,981	\$108,256	\$-	\$48,444	\$3,831	\$1,309	\$54,670
MIAMI-DADE	65,929	\$755,909	\$3,348	\$315,853	\$60,777	\$2,677	\$373,255
MONROE	7,904	\$64,636	\$-	\$32,137	\$5,656	\$336	\$26,507
NASSAU	8,484	\$79,295	\$-	\$48,385	\$6,043	\$512	\$24,356
OKALOOSA	37,097	\$379,973	\$-	\$280,335	\$34,464	\$1,656	\$63,517
OKEECHOBEE	2,969	\$37,307	\$-	\$19,096	\$657	\$133	\$17,421
ORANGE	72,319	\$883,632	\$7,360	\$439,782	\$81,953	\$4,038	\$350,500
OSCEOLA	18,305	\$323,873	\$-	\$167,103	\$18,946	\$1,156	\$136,668
PALM BEACH	83,678	\$770,587	\$10,073	\$315,776	\$35,648	\$9,592	\$399,498
PASCO	49,586	\$642,835	\$-	\$298,550	\$27,904	\$3,649	\$312,732
PINELLAS	84,091	\$1,253,814	\$172,310	\$440,425	\$42,336	\$5,706	\$593,037
POLK	49,275	\$550,921	\$-	\$272,924	\$26,791	\$2,640	\$248,565
PUTNAM	7,214	\$87,082	\$-	\$31,780	\$1,797	\$241	\$53,264
SAINT JOHNS	21,040	\$193,571	\$57	\$118,026	\$16,062	\$1,681	\$57,745
SAINT LUCIE	24,907	\$268,971	\$-	\$132,549	\$11,374	\$1,358	\$123,690
SANTA ROSA	22,295	\$299,535	\$-	\$218,288	\$25,605	\$1,675	\$53,968
SARASOTA	42,041	\$263,068	\$2,743	\$141,366	\$9,710	\$3,746	\$105,503
SEMINOLE	31,505	\$287,330	\$-	\$146,505	\$21,208	\$1,784	\$117,834
SUMTER	18,500	\$169,667	\$16,115	\$89,910	\$1,888	\$962	\$60,792
SUWANNEE	3,997	\$52,289	\$-	\$19,996	\$942	\$58	\$31,293
TAYLOR	1,539	\$21,572	\$-	\$9,234	\$302	\$36	\$12,000
UNION	1,085	\$11,566	\$-	\$5,063	\$422	\$3	\$6,078
VOLUSIA	50,457	\$541,392	\$-	\$298,690	\$37,082	\$2,836	\$202,784
WAKULLA	2,333	\$25,670	\$-	\$12,780	\$948	\$87	\$11,855
WALTON	8,031	\$58,601	\$-	\$40,602	\$2,469	\$251	\$15,279
WASHINGTON	2,036	\$22,881	\$-	\$15,145	\$578	\$65	\$7,092
<b>FLORIDA (Totals)</b>	<b>1,517,442</b>	<b>\$ 16,640,834</b>	<b>\$308,113</b>	<b>\$8,317,991</b>	<b>\$979,605</b>	<b>\$102,071</b>	<b>6,933,054</b>

**Notes:**

\* Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2020, are produced by the VA Office of the Actuary (VetPop 2018). Only the number of veterans (second column) on the expenditures table were transposed from the VetPop 2018. There were no changes or adjustments made in the expenditures columns.

# Prior to FY 08, "Loan Guaranty" expenditures were included in the Education & Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (E&VRE) program. Currently, all "Loan Guaranty" expenditures are attributed to Travis County, TX, where all Loan Guaranty payments are processed. VA will continue to improve data collection for future GDX reports to better distribute loan expenditures at the state, county and congressional district levels.

\*\* Unique patients are patients who received treatment at a VA health care facility. Data provided by the Allocation Resource Center (ARC).

Expenditure data sources: USASpending.gov for Compensation & Pension (C&P) and Education and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (EVRE) Benefits; Veterans Benefits Administration Insurance Center for the Insurance costs; the VA Financial Management System (FMS) for Construction, Medical Research, General Operating Expenses, and certain C&P and Readjustment data; and the Allocation Resource Center (ARC) for Medical Care costs.

1. Expenditures are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. For example, \$500 to \$1,000 are rounded to \$1; \$0 to \$499 are rounded to \$0; and "\$ -" = 0 or no expenditures.

2. The Compensation & Pension expenditures include dollars for the following programs: veterans' compensation for service-connected disabilities; dependency and indemnity compensation for service-connected deaths; veterans' pension for nonservice-connected disabilities; and burial and other benefits to veterans and their survivors.

3. Medical Care expenditures include dollars for medical services, medical administration, facility maintenance, educational support, research support, and other overhead items. Medical Care expenditures do not include dollars for construction or other non-medical support.

4. Medical Care expenditures are allocated to the patient's home location, not the site of care.

## Appendix III



# FLORIDA VETERANS — F O U N D A T I O N —

In 2008, the Florida Legislature established the Florida Veterans Foundation (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, state Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) and County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO). The FVF is also a nonprofit organization operating for charitable and educational purposes under Section 501(C) (3). While many of Florida's veterans successfully transitioned to a post-military career, many encountered challenges that impede their progress. Veterans report priority services needed during this transition were employment assistance, transportation, housing, legal issues, mental health and utility assistance in emergencies.

The FVF team is composed of a volunteer Chairman and Board of Directors. The majority of the Foundation Directors are retired, military disabled Veterans who donate more than 40 hours per week of their time to support the Foundation's mission to align support with the FDVA mission of Advocacy, to ensure greater impact for Veterans throughout the state of Florida. FVF has taken charge of representing Florida Veterans and their families through congressionally chartered Florida-based Veterans Service Organizations.

The FVF collaborates with various entities and state agencies with an interest in solving issues that ultimately affect Florida and the economy. Our staunch effort is realizing successes throughout the Veteran community and gaining incredible interest at all levels of the government within Florida and through recognized accomplishments.

FDVA has recently appointed Commander Dennis O. Baker, USN (Ret) to be Chairman of the Foundation. He is past president of FVF and is leading the way to help our veterans. Lew Wilson continues as President & Chief Executive Officer and is spearheading the day by day activities to include increased grant and fundraising opportunities. FVF's new programs have received positive reactions from local communities and helped thousands of veterans around the state.

### **Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021**

Florida Veterans Foundation in support of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs has aggressively approached service to Florida veterans through collaboration with statewide associations and organizations and state agencies who have a vested interest in solving those issues that plague veterans and ultimately affect Florida and the economy. Our approach is measured through outreach and educational services and programs to help: 1) find veterans to register for VA benefits 2) help veterans in emergency crisis situations 3) make veterans aware of the many resources available to them to enhance their quality of life.

This is accomplished through the enlistment of services and resource organizations with similar missions as well as an increased Volunteer Corps who support FVF's mission. Our efforts continue to realize successes within the Veteran communities and is gaining the attention of varied levels of government within the state of Florida. These accomplishments are setting the standard for the rest of the nation to follow.

### **FVF Board of Directors & Transparency**

Due to the COVID-19, past participation from the board was limited. Now that the State has opened up, the board has increased its community involvement and continues its boots on the ground assistance for Veterans and their families. FVF continues its transparency with the

## Appendix III

addition of a new 90 percent rating by Charity Navigator to augment the Gold Seal of Transparency from Guide Star.

### **Suicide Prevention, Opioids/Mental Health Services**

FVF continues to collaborate with Tampa Bay's area 2-1-1 Crisis Center to provide support for statewide campaigns that will connect the Veteran population to Veteran Peer service providers at all levels regarding issues such as Suicide Prevention, Opioid Abuse, PTSD, and Mental Health Treatment.

### **Aging Veteran Outreach/Forgotten Warrior Project**

This three-year grant provides for collaboration with the National Association of Veterans and Families to provide educational seminars and claims assistance to aging wartime veterans and their Survivors in Broward and surrounding counties about the VA Pension with Aid & Attendance benefits. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this has been expanded to virtual seminars provided to statewide assisted living associations and facilities in local communities.

### **Emergency Financial Aid**

The FVF's successful Financial Aid Program continues its partnership with the Project Vet Relief which is managed by the American Legion of Florida. In addition to the current program, the FVF created the COVID-19 Project Vet Relief Fund to promote around the state of Florida and recruit donations to help our Veterans in Need caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

### **Volunteer Programs**

FVF received a grant from Volunteer Florida that requires us to recruit 400 volunteers who will provide over 5,000 hours of volunteer services in support of our Veterans. FVF currently has 556 Volunteers who have provided over 26,000 hours to serve our Veterans.

### **Forward March Ambassadors for Veterans Council**

This program was born in January 2020 to help FVF with a program of sustainability and now has over 30 Ambassadors that include individuals and businesses Ambassadors pay a \$1,000 per year for three years or a lump sum of \$2,800. The ongoing program helps the foundation with a dedicated funding source for years to come. The council meets each year to connect with each other and to share ideas and programs that are working in their communities.

### **Veterans Legal Services**

FVF continues its mission to provide education and outreach through its collaborators and partners for the Florida Veterans Legal Helpline, which is run by Bay Area Legal Services, Florida Veterans can get an appointment with an experienced attorney who can provide direct advice and assistance.

### **Florida Veterans Benefits Guides**

FVF continues its mission to support the education, outreach and funding of the Florida Veterans Benefits Guide in print and digital versions. FVF printed 30,000 guides in FY 2020-21.



### **Gadsden Flag License Plate**

FVF continues to market these specialty license plate vouchers statewide. Once 3,000 are sold the plate goes into production. Proceeds from the license plate sales will go to help Veterans in need.

### **FVF Grants**

The FVF has contracted with a full-time grant writer who is responsible for researching and applying for grants to help Veterans in a variety of ways. Volunteer Florida Grant - This \$20,000 grant was awarded to the Foundation to recruit, train and sustain a corps of volunteers to help support our Veterans in each district, statewide. Other Grants - To date we have received grants

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from Target, Walgreens, Leon County, RRF Foundation for Aging and more. We have several grants pending that total over \$250,000.

### **Veterans Served - Foundation Successes - FVF Board/Staff & Collaborations**

The Foundation collaborates with many organizations around the state where we work together in a variety of ways to include the following: Internal, External, Team, Cross-Departmental, Community, Virtual, Strategic Alliance and Online. FVF Direct Financial Assistance included: Individual Veterans & their families, homeless Veterans housing, meals, and other items needed, claims assistance, recognition programs and more. Below are successful Foundation accomplishments.

Organizations	Program	Veterans Served	Value Amounts
Individual Veterans & Organization	Emergency Direct Financial Assistance	217	\$217,587
FVF Staff & Board	Personally Served Veterans	12,871	
FVF Marketing Programs	Educations, Outreach & Benefits	400,448	
Veterans Data Service	Education & Benefits	93,899	
Aging Veterans Benefits Approved	VA Pension w/A&A Claims Assistance	774 Claims	\$39,628,000
Emergency Crisis Lines	Social Services	18,273	
Board of Directors Volunteer Hours	Veterans Education & Outreach	16,118 Hours	
New Volunteers Recruited	556 Volunteers	26,555	

### **Chairman, Staff & Board of Directors' Participation Events**

Veteran Treatment Courts, City & County Council Meetings, Veteran Day Ceremonies, Mission United Advisory Council, Florida Veterans Council, Commanders Meetings, Veteran Awards, Homeless Veterans Events, Burial & Memorial Services, Senior Veterans Coalition Meetings, Statewide Association Conferences and more.

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



## Appendix IV



Veterans Florida (Florida is for Veterans, Inc.) is a non-profit corporation created by the State of Florida in 2014 to help veterans fully transition to civilian life in the Sunshine State. Our mission is to attract and retain veterans to our great state and to make Florida their permanent residence. The signing of House Bill 435 furthered that mission by designating Veterans Florida as the state's principal Department of Defense SkillBridge assistance organization. Establishing the nation's first statewide SkillBridge initiative is a major milestone that creates unprecedented opportunities for transitioning servicemembers, builds a talent pipeline for employers, and firmly plants Florida's flag as the top destination for military families. Initiatives like this further prove Florida's leaders are united in our commitment to bolstering the state's workforce with servicemembers who combine their military skills with training opportunities not available anywhere else.

Veterans Florida is backed by the State of Florida. Our board is appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, and the President of the Florida Senate. Additionally, our staff is composed of veterans with experience in state veterans' programs, economic development, and workforce development. Our unique programs assist Florida businesses recruit, train, and hire veterans and servicemembers to meet workforce needs.

### **Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) Program (s. 295.22, F.S.)**

#### **Veterans Florida Workforce and Career Services Programs**

To better serve the needs of veteran job seekers and employers, Veterans Florida maintains the Workforce and Career Services Program. The program houses our largest grant program, the Veterans Florida Workforce Training Grant, which reimburses eligible companies for 50 percent of the training cost for every veteran trained, up to \$8,000 per employee.



The Workforce Training Grant incentivizes Florida employers to hire and retain veterans who wish to augment their existing skill set developed during military service. The Veterans Florida workforce team actively works with employers to translate military experience into comparable civilian experience requirements. The team educates employers and their human resources teams on the value and capabilities veterans bring to the workforce.

The Career Services Program allows Veterans Florida to actively recruit qualified veterans to fill positions at companies across the state.

Veterans can upload their resume for consideration for any position or apply directly for open positions through the career portal on [veteransflorida.org](https://veteransflorida.org).

Veterans Services Coordinators reach out to provide employment services such as resume assistance, interview preparation, career matching, and counsel veterans on additional resources available.



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Veterans Florida has received more than 2,697 resumes from veterans seeking employment in Florida and is actively matching them with job openings across Florida. More than 80 employers have used Veterans Florida Workforce and Career Services.

Workforce Grant Reimbursements		
Fiscal Year	Veterans Trained	Workforce Grant Reimbursements
FY 2015-16	1	\$ 2,520
FY 2016-17	117	\$ 476,070
FY 2017-18	187	\$ 687,483
FY 2018-19	303	\$ 712,765
FY 2019-20	393	\$1,112,985
FY 2020-21	237	\$862,129
<b>Total Grant Reimbursements</b>	<b>1,238</b>	<b>\$3,853,952</b>

Workforce Veteran Training Grant Program began January 2016

### SkillBridge Program

The DOD SkillBridge program allows transitioning servicemembers, with commander approval and within their last six months of military service, the opportunity to work for a civilian employer.



The program affords servicemembers the opportunity to sharpen critical job skills and obtain specialized training, while retaining their full pay and allowances. The goal is to minimize the employment gap between military separation and beginning their civilian career. In fiscal year 2020, Veterans Florida became an authorized DOD SkillBridge provider for our Agriculture Program in partnership with the University of Florida. Built on the success of the initial SkillBridge opportunity, Veterans Florida began expanding the program with additional employers. This past year we have created 32 SkillBridge opportunities with nine additional employers.

In 2021, the Governor signed legislation passed by the Legislature to create the nation's first statewide SkillBridge Initiative. Veterans Florida is the principal organization to execute the initiative.

In fiscal year 2020-21, Veterans Florida began assisting transitioning servicemembers with matching Florida opportunities. Veterans Florida is also working with employers to expand opportunities for training and internships throughout the state. This effort is directly responsible for attracting and assisting transitioning servicemembers and their families in making Florida their permanent home.

Agriculture Program Fellowships			
Fiscal Year	Applications Received	Participants Served	Participants Completed
FY 2020-21	48	16	1

# Appendix IV



## Agriculture Program

Veterans Florida received a \$745,245 prime award from the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) FY2020 Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Competitive Grants Program to test the Veteran Agriculture Selection Program over an 18-month timeline, which was started in September 2018 and ended in February 2020. Veterans Florida successfully completed the stated objective with support from the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

The Veterans Florida Agriculture Program is a six-month internship program that exposes selected veterans to various modern agriculture production practices. The first six months of the internship took place at UF/IFAS RECs across Florida. Internship positions at the RECs were fully supported by the experienced leadership at each location. Each research center developed a structured rotation plan to introduce veterans to different production methods and challenges such as trial planning, field/site preparations, preparing plant materials, trial maintenance, data collection, harvesting, and various cropping activities depending on season, crop, and individual



research program needs. Veterans in this program earn a \$15 per hour stipend through the USDA NIFA funding. Veterans Florida works with program participants to further their career at an agribusiness or working farm or ranch after completing the training. At the end of their research center internship, participants transitioned into a three-month paid internship with local agribusinesses or farms to use skills learned, develop new skills, and develop relationships within the local agriculture industry.

One more recent graduate, Sara Ferrera received special recognition from Governor Ron DeSantis and Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried for her outstanding accomplishments in the agriculture industry. The Veteran Agriculture Program.

Agriculture Program				
Fiscal Year	Applications Received	Participants Served	Participants Completed	Participants Placed
FY 2019-20	87	54	8	9
FY 2020-21	24	12	10	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>

All participants were either placed into agriculture a related employment, are starting their own farms, or are furthering their agriculture education.

## Entrepreneurship Program

Nearly one in four active duty service members and veterans want to open and operate their own business. Opportunity, freedom and challenge attract them to business ownership. The

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Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program offers veterans virtual and on-site instruction, facilitation, and mentorship designed to meet the veteran where they are in their entrepreneurial journey and accommodate their busy schedule.



The Entrepreneurship Program conducted its sixth year of operation in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Since the inception of the program in early 2016, the program has received more than 3,800 applications from veterans across the state, and served 2,372 veterans.

The program features opportunities to meet the needs of veteran entrepreneurs at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey.

The first pathway, Discover, comprises online lessons which familiarizes veterans with basic terminology and concepts and acts as a gateway to the second and third pathways. Veterans Florida licensed an existing

web-based system to give our participants a low-risk, low-commitment option to start learning the foundations of entrepreneurship.

The second pathway carries a low commitment which consists of 2-3 hour workshops and is designed for veterans' varying states of their entrepreneurial career, those seeking specialized help topics such as franchising or government contracting, or those just seeking to connect with other veteran business owners.

The third pathway, Master, consists of cohorts designed to assist veteran entrepreneurs with starting their business or growing their early stage business after startup. These cohorts delve deeply into all aspects of entrepreneurship, with on location facilitation held at one of our six entrepreneur partner's establishments. This pathway is reserved for a maximum of 15 veterans with well-defined business ideas or early-stage companies at each entrepreneur partner. Acceptance into this portion of the program is managed by the partners.

### Entrepreneur Program Participants Reported Data

Revenue Generated	Capital Invested	Businesses	Hires
\$124,206,298	\$27,949,341	504	744

### Entrepreneurship Program Participants

Fiscal Year	Applications Received	Participants Served	Program Graduates
FY 2015-16	612	424	167
FY 2016-17	458	300	147
FY 2017-18	787	393	82
FY 2018-19	910	426	96
FY 2019-20	449	304	108
FY 2020-21	601	525	262
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,817</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>862</b>

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## Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program Network Partners for 2020-21



### Marketing Program

The Veterans Florida marketing and communications campaign supports the organization's primary goals: Career Training, Entrepreneurship Training, and promoting Florida's status as the nation's most veteran-friendly state. The target audience is service members and veterans in the 12 months leading up to and following separation from the military.

The majority of advertising is invested in digital marketing, including email and social media. This year the marketing team also secured enrollment in the Google AdGrants program, which provides qualified non-profits up to \$10,000 each month of in-kind paid search advertising.

Other channels include public relations and traditional print advertising and radio. The marketing team has full web development, video production, and creative capabilities, allowing Veterans Florida to operate with the flexibility to quickly capitalize on opportunities and maximize our

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reach and impact. The team operates a website, handles all public relations, and creates all of the content distributed on social media and the web.

The 2021 Veterans Florida Expo was scheduled for June 24, 2021, however due to unforeseen issues with the hosting platform, the event was rescheduled to July 29. The event was a success with over 1,100 registrations, 310 attendees, and 10 sponsors. Attendees viewed 23 panels for a total of 1,330 video views. Employers participating in Expo received access to over 387 submitted resumes. My Steady Mind placed first in the Battle of the Pitches and received \$4,000, Accel EQ placed second and received \$2,000, and 1PL8 was third and received \$1,000. Prize funds were provided by Bank of America and Learning Alliance. Overall Veterans Florida received very positive feedback from sponsors, presenters, and viewers, which reflects the strong team effort as staff adapted to a virtual format in a short period of time. The content remains on YouTube providing attendees constant access to panels and speakers and we distribute it throughout the year on email and social media.



Marketing				
Metric	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	Growth	Notes
Total Unique Website Visitors	249,652	73,183	-51.10%	Result of Reduction in Paid Advertising
Total Facebook Page Likes	81,861	80,858	-1.23%	Standard Facebook Scrub of Inactive Accounts
Email Newsletter Subscribers	33,516	34,996	4.42%	
LinkedIn Followers	3,940	4,931	25.15%	Result of Paid Advertising
Twitter Followers	665	702	5.56%	

### Development

The Veterans Florida team works diligently to raise additional public and private funds to augment State of Florida funded programs. Sponsors may choose to target funds specifically to the VETS program, events such as our annual Expo, or for general operations to support the Veterans Florida mission. Our successful development efforts are a direct result of our proactive approach to forging relationships with donors, keeping them engaged, and providing measurable insights into the impact of their support. Given the overwhelmingly positive feedback from existing and potential sponsors and upward trends, we are confident the future will yield even greater outcomes for veterans returning to civilian life and for our economic impact within the state of Florida.

Awards			
Organization	Amount	Type	Purpose
USDA NIFA (Sub-award)	\$745,245	Grant	Agriculture Program

## Appendix IV

Boeing	\$75,000	Grant	VETS Services
Regions Bank	\$5,000	Grant	VETS Services
Bank of America	\$15,000	Sponsorship	EXPO
Learning Alliance	\$5,000	Sponsorship	EXPO
CareerSource Florida	\$2,500	Sponsorship	EXPO
VITAS Healthcare	\$2,500	Sponsorship	EXPO
Florida International University	\$500	Sponsorship	EXPO
Collab Resume	\$500	Sponsorship	EXPO
National Aviation Academy	\$500	Sponsorship	EXPO
Western Governors University	\$500	Sponsorship	EXPO
University of North Florida	\$500	Sponsorship	EXPO
Florida Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve	\$500	Sponsorship	EXPO
Other Supporters	\$444	Donations	Operations
<b>Total FY 2020-21</b>	<b>\$853,689</b>		

### Outlook

Becoming the state lead for the Florida SkillBridge Initiative this year, Veterans Florida outreach saw unprecedented organizational growth despite the lingering effects of COVID-19. The entrepreneurship program served the most veterans in its six-year history and expanded to offer new services such as co-working spaces. All of the funds in the Workforce Training Grant were dispersed to employers for the first time, while the VETS team took on the additional duties of SkillBridge matching of servicemembers to employers. The agriculture program served the most participants to date, with many going on to start agribusinesses or careers in farming. In addition to expanding our services, becoming the state's principal SkillBridge organization has strengthened our statewide partner relations and elevated Veterans Florida's standing to a more prominent role in the economic development community.

The Virtual Expo grew significantly with over five times as many panels, 50 more employers, and over 300 more resumes received. While we look forward to returning to an in-person event, the team gained valuable experience hosting the virtual format that we continue to utilize throughout the year with webinars, conferences, and online career fairs.

The momentum from this year's successes will carry us to next year, with a continued focus on expanding SkillBridge in terms of adding new employers, partnering with more economic development organizations, and raising awareness among servicemembers. Agriculture will remain a priority as we see strong demand for the program through both the USDA grant and SkillBridge.

The 2022 Expo is planned for June 17-18 at the Orlando Hilton and we will build on the success from previous years with the goal of making it the largest and most productive veterans support event yet.

# Appendix V

## Associated Veteran Service Organizations



As the accredited representative of 10 veterans' organizations, FDVA has the opportunity to prosecute claims before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of veterans who have placed their trust in these organizations by completing an "Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative" designation. There are no fees charged to veterans for FDVA services.

Listed are the veterans' service organizations that this department represents in claims processing with the VA.



American Ex-Prisoners of War



American Red Cross



Blinded Veterans Association



Fleet Reserve Association



Jewish War Veterans



Marine Corps League



Non-Commissioned Officers Association



The American Legion



The Retired Enlisted Association



Veterans of World War I (Family Members)

# Appendix VI

## Certified County Veteran Service Officers

In rendering assistance to the veterans of Florida, FDVA works closely with all county and city veteran service officers. A listing of each county veteran service officer, their location, phone number and e-mail address is available at <http://floridavets.org/locations/>. If you are reading the FDVA Annual Report online, your computer will let you go directly to the site by pressing and holding down the Ctrl key on your keyboard and left clicking your mouse on the link.

The FDVA website <http://floridavets.org/> provides many references and programs that can assist veterans and their families at the federal, state, county and city level. All agencies work together in assisting Florida's veterans, their families and survivors to improve their health and economic well-being.





# Appendix VII



## Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home

Lake City (Columbia County), Staffing: 69  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: 78.8% (46 Admissions, 47 Discharges)

The facility is the very first Veterans' Home in Florida and the only Assisted Living Facility, having opened to residents in May 1990. With ongoing maintenance and energy-saving and quality of life renovations, the home is in excellent condition. The 71,648 square foot (appraised square footage) 150-bed Assisted Living Facility provides a special combination of housing, personalized support services and incidental medical care to its veteran residents.

**Home Life:** *Set on a quiet property with deer and wild turkey observed nearly every evening, Jenkins' residents enjoy diverse outings and multiple activities on the grounds and in the local community. The Domiciliary Home prides itself in providing excellent customer service in a home-like environment. We don't just look after residents' essential needs: We integrate opportunities to participate in lectures, book and special interest clubs, celebrations, socials and other programs that promote healthy, vibrant lifestyles.*



# Appendix VII



## Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home

Daytona Beach (Volusia County), Staffing: 141  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: 74.6% (21 Admissions, 43 Discharges)

The facility opened to residents in December 1993 and is in excellent condition. Situated on 30 acres, the 69,222 square foot (appraised square footage) 120-bed facility provides skilled nursing care. This Five-Star Quality Rated home is in the top 10 percent of skilled nursing homes.

**Home Life:** At Emory L. Bennett, we are a tight-knit family of residents and staff. We enjoy great support from our volunteer organizations. Every day we focus on serving our residents with compassion, sharing their lives and providing peace of mind for their families.



Agency for Health Care Administration  
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating

# Appendix VII



## Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home

Land O' Lakes (Pasco County), Staffing: 148  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: 69.0% (24 Admissions, 48 Discharges)



The facility opened to residents in 1999. The 73,000 square foot (appraised square footage) 120-bed home provides skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. The dedicated staff provides stellar care 24 hours a day to our American heroes residing at this residence. This Five-Star Quality Rated home is in the top 10 percent of skilled nursing homes.

**Home Life:** Set on a quiet property, veteran residents enjoy diverse outings and activities. The Home prides itself on incorporating family and community members into our events, and fostering deep friendships among the residents. We encourage resident-driven choices, including the adoption of two cats and adding an aviary to the Baldomero Lopez family.

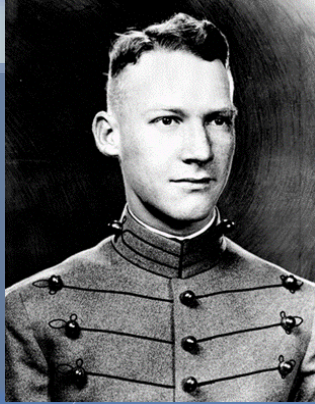
Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home is a recipient of the Governor's Gold Seal Award.



Agency for Health-Care Administration  
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating



Five-Star Quality Rated  
By Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services



## Alexander “Sandy” Nininger State Veterans’ Nursing Home

Pembroke Pines (Broward County), Staffing: 146  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: 68.2% (26 Admissions, 30 Discharges)

The facility opened to residents in 2001. The 83,896 square foot (appraised square footage) 120-bed facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer’s disease. The home provides veterans with 24-hour nursing care, daily living and recreational activities, rehabilitative therapy and nutritional cuisine. This Five-Star Quality Rated home is in the top 10 percent of skilled nursing homes.

**Home Life:** *Life in the Nininger Home is anything but sedentary. The home enjoys superb community and volunteer support.*



Agency for Health Care Administration  
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating

# Appendix VII



## Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home

Panama City (Bay County), Staffing: 144  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: 62.6% (52 Admissions, 65 Discharges)

The facility opened to residents in 2003. The 75,394 square foot (appraised square footage) 120-bed facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. The home remains in excellent condition and is located strategically in the state to care for our veterans in their time of need. The dedicated staff provides stellar care 24 hours a day to our American heroes. This Five-Star Quality Rated home is in the top 10 percent of skilled nursing homes.

**Home Life:** *The skilled nursing facility is located in a beautiful, wooded setting, surrounded by wildlife and nature.*



Agency for Health Care Administration  
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating

# Appendix VII



## Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home

Port Charlotte (Charlotte County), Staffing: 143  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: 57.2% (32 Admissions, 97 Discharges)



The facility opened to residents in 2004. The 68,700 square foot (appraised square footage) 120-bed facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. We provide our veterans with 24-hour nursing care, daily living and recreational activities, rehabilitative therapy and nutritional cuisine.

**Home Life:** A modern skilled nursing facility surrounded by an involved community of supportive public and civic organizations, Douglas T. Jacobson actively celebrates and honors veterans.



Five-Star Quality Rated  
by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services



Agency for Health Care Administration  
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating

# Appendix VII



## Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home

St. Augustine (St. Johns County), Staffing: 159  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: 71.9% (23 Admissions, 45 Discharges)



The facility opened in September 2010. The 89,150 square foot (appraised square footage) 120-bed facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. The Home is a LEED-certified Gold facility that respects the environment while providing a warm, caring atmosphere for its residents. This state of the art facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. The home provides residents with 24-hour nursing care, daily living and recreational activities, rehabilitative therapy and nutritional cuisine.

**Home Life:** *The Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home, situated in a lodge-like setting, prides itself in customer care and services. Residents enjoy a wide variety of special events and diverse activities designed to appeal to individual interests.*



Agency for Health Care Administration  
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating

# Appendix VII



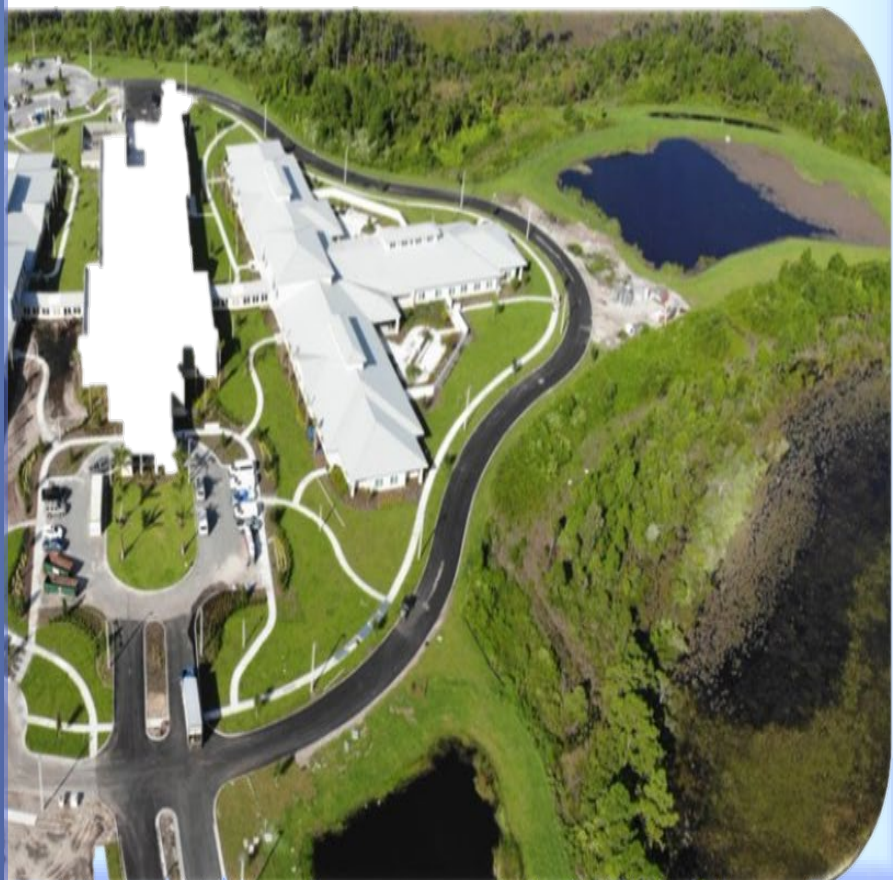
## Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home

Port St. Lucie (St. Lucie County), Staffing: 117  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: N/A - Facility under Construction.



The newest State Veterans' Nursing Home is named in honor of a Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War - Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County native Sergeant Ardie R. Copas, an Army specialist who died in 1970 while serving in the Vietnam War.

This state of the art facility at the 28.5-acre site will offer private and semi-private rooms with 24-hour nursing care and can accommodate residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease.





# Appendix VII



## Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home

Orlando at Lake Baldwin (Orange County), Staffing: 122  
FY 2020-21 Occupancy Rate: N/A - Facility under Renovation.





## ***“Honoring Those Who Served U.S.”***

Our website at [www.FloridaVets.org](http://www.FloridaVets.org) acts as a portal to help veterans find the information they need to access benefits and services more efficiently and effectively. In addition, our free mobile application, offered in the Apple and Android markets, integrates with the website and offers veterans reminders and updates about services. For those of you online, you can also join us on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Thank you for your service. We're honored to represent you.