



**James S. "Hammer" Hartsell**  
Executive Director

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

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

DATE: September 13, 2022

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 2021 - 2022

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The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs submits the Quarterly Report for the Third Quarter of the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year, covering the period January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022.

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, Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security  
Robert Tornillo, Senior Cabinet Aide, Office of Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis

Attachment 1: FDVA Quarterly Report

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS**  
**THIRD QUARTER REPORT**  
January 1 – March 31, 2022

This report covers the activities of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for the Third Quarter of the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year.

**1) Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Administrative Highlights**

**a) Current Issues/Concerns**

**i) Executive Direction:**



*Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Executive Director James S. "Hammer" Hartsell was confirmed by the Florida Senate during a unanimous floor vote at the Capitol, Feb. 3, 2022. Hartsell, a retired Marine Corps Major General, was appointed FDVA Executive Director by Gov. Ron DeSantis and unanimously approved by Florida's three Cabinet Officers during the May 4, 2021 Cabinet Meeting.*

FDVA Executive Director James S. Hartsell traveled throughout Florida representing our state's 1.5 million veterans in a variety of settings.

On January 6-7, Executive Director Hartsell served as a Keynote Speaker at the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of Florida Service Officer Certification Training Conference in Lake Mary. He provided remarks on his military career and continued service to veterans and the state, as well as opportunities to improve benefits and services to disabled veterans and their eligible family members.

FDVA Communications and External Affairs Director Steve Murray provided an FDVA and Florida veterans' update to the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Winter Conference in Orlando, Jan. 7.

On January 7, Chief of Staff Al Carter and key FDVA staff participated in a teleconference with Scarlet Pigott, budget chief at the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee, to provide her an overview of the Agency, its operations and priorities for the upcoming 2022 Legislative Session. Discussions included the FY 2022-2023 budget, long-term nursing facilities, veteran resident benefits and staffing challenges, as well as initiatives that support Florida's 1.5 million veterans and their families.

On January 11, Deputy Executive Director Bob Asztalos participated in a weekly conference call with American Rescue Plan (ARP) to discuss the American Rescue Plan Act, State Fiscal Recovery Fund, offsets and economic opportunities to enhance benefits and services to servicemembers, veterans and their families. Funding from all sources is key to the successful operation of the State Veterans' Homes.

Communications and External Affairs Director Steve Murray provided an FDVA and Florida veterans update to the delegation from Palm Beach County Day, Jan. 12 at the Capitol.

FDVA hosted the leadership of The American Legion, Department of Florida at the Capitol, Jan. 19. They are steadfast partners in connecting Florida veterans and their families with earned services, benefits and support.

Executive Director Hartsell presented his staff incentive plan for state veterans' homes to the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee, Jan. 18. Recruiting and retaining health care staff increases resident census rates while upholding quality care.

Executive Director Hartsell joined K9s for Warriors CEO Rory Diamond and Army Veteran Becca Stephens and her service dog, Bobbi at the Capitol, Jan. 19. Diamond and his supporters were at the Capitol advocating for his successful program that trains rescue dogs to be service animals for veterans.

Executive Director Hartsell led a discussion of veteran-related issues at the Florida Defense Support Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee, Jan. 20. Following his presentation, he presented State Sen. Tom Wright, the task force's chairman, and all board members with an FDVA Challenge Coin in commemoration of the task force's 100th meeting.

Executive Director Hartsell provided remarks at the Grand Opening of the Veterans Center of Excellence at Indian River State College in Port St. Lucie on Jan 21.

Executive Director Hartsell paid his respect to Florida's fallen warriors, while visiting the national "Remembering Our Fallen" traveling memorial and photo exhibit at the Capitol, Jan. 27.

Communications and External Affairs Director Steve Murray, in his role as Emergency Coordinating Officer, participated in Emergency Management Day at the Capitol, Feb. 10. The event provided an opportunity for state and county emergency management to raise awareness on urgent situations, natural disasters and accidental calamities in efforts to prepare, respond,



recover and mitigate against emergency impacts. Deputy Executive Director Asztalos attended the Emergency Management Day Reception that evening.

Communications and External Affairs Director Steve Murray provided welcoming remarks for participants in the 2nd Annual Run for the Fallen at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Tallahassee, Feb. 11.

Executive Director Hartsell led a group of walkers supporting WalkforVets.org in their 2.2 mile walk raising awareness for Veteran Suicide Prevention efforts on Feb 17.

Executive Director Hartsell and Communications and External Affairs Director Steve Murray represented Florida at the Mid-Winter Conference of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) in Washington, D.C., Feb. 20-23. During the third quarter, Hartsell served as district vice president (southeast region) of the association.

On March 4, Executive Director Hartsell and Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met with DEP Secretary Shawn Hamilton to provide him an overview of the Agency, and discuss opportunities, benefits and resources, to include park and recreational services offered to Florida's servicemembers, veterans and their families.

The Agency promotes a shelter in place strategy for its nursing facilities. This strategy typically applies during hurricane season. However, forest fires are now the exception as demonstrated by a mandatory evacuation of Bay County areas impacted by wildfires. Executive Director Hartsell was in Panama City on March 7 to meet with residents and staff of the Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home. The 89 residents of the home and their caregivers were safely evacuated to the Bay County Fairgrounds the prior afternoon due to a series of rapidly approaching wildfires in Bay County. While in Panama City, he also thanked state and local first responders including Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie, and oversaw the successful return of residents and staff to the veterans' home later that evening.

Retired Marine Corps Maj. John Haynes, a member of the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame, received the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor during March 9 ceremonies at the Florida Capitol. Haynes, a Veteran of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War, was joined by State CFO Jimmy Patronis and FDVA Executive Director Hartsell.

The Florida Veterans Hall of Fame is an annual event honoring Floridians who have served their county and state honorably. Their acts of kindness and commitment are the hallmarks of this prestigious nomination. Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Cabinet voted unanimously to induct 15 veterans into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. The names for the Class of 2021 were presented for a formal vote during the March 29 Cabinet Meeting by Executive Director Hartsell.

The Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando, scheduled to open to residents later in 2022, will be renamed in honor of the late Army Sgt. First Class Alwyn C. Cashe, a Medal of Honor recipient who grew up in nearby Oviedo. The announcement was made at the Florida Capitol during the March 29 Cabinet Meeting by Executive Director Hartsell.

#### ❖ **Veterans Education and Awareness**

FDVA Leadership continuously connects and collaborates with other organizations that support veterans and their families. During the third quarter, Executive Director Hartsell and Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met with many veteran organization outreach programs, projects and initiatives to assist veterans and their families. Organizations include the Florida Health Care Association (FHCA), FHCA Workforce Committee, FHCA Reimbursement Committee, Concerned Veterans for America - Florida, the Patriot Services Group, Mission United Advisory Council of United Way of Hillsborough and Broward Counties, Tampa Bay HEAT Homeschool Resource Center, Bay Area Legal Services, the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, and the St.

Petersburg VA Regional Office.

Education includes special moments in history that make our State a great place to live and work. On February 4, Executive Director Hartsell and Deputy Executive Director Asztalos joined family, friends and veterans in Tallahassee to honor retired Marine Corps Maj. John Haynes, as they celebrated his 92nd birthday. The festivity commemorated Major Haynes' milestone anniversary, military service, civic contributions and his selfless sacrifice to the State and Nation. Major Haynes has been a mainstay at the Capitol for more than 30 years, lending support to a host of veterans' bills, events, initiatives and activities.

On February 7, Executive Director Hartsell met with David Webb, host of daily talk show on SiriusXM Patriot 125. The interview focused on the Agency's outreach initiatives, promoting awareness of the Governor's Challenge veteran suicide prevention initiatives, and community resources for Vietnam and women veterans.

On February 10, Executive Director Hartsell met with John Davis, Secretary of the Florida Lottery, to provide him an overview of the Agency, its operations, and discuss community support services and programs design to better the quality of life for veterans and their eligible family members. This meeting highlighted the need for a veteran-related lottery scratch off ticket with proceeds supporting the Florida Veterans Foundation.

On February 11, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met with Dustin Fairbanks, executive producer of The American Dream TV Show." The interview focused on the Agency's initiatives to connect Florida's 1.5 million Veterans to benefits and services, available resources and military and veteran friendly organizations through outreach events. He also highlighted FDVA's participation in the Governor's Challenge initiative and mission to unite elected officials and community stakeholders on common issues like emergency assistance, housing and homelessness, health and wellness, legal services and providing transitioning servicemembers with earned benefits.

On March 2, Executive Director Hartsell met with Dr. Damon Friedman, founder of Shield of Faith Missions (SOF Missions) and Dr. Marissa McCarthy, MD, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation/Neurorehabilitation at James Haley VAMC, to discuss alternative health care services, available rehabilitation care, massage therapy and wellness programs offered to veterans.

#### ❖ **Suicide Prevention/Governor's Challenge Efforts**

FDVA continued its collaboration with veteran and military organizations to unveil the initiative to prevent suicide among servicemembers, veterans and their families. The initiative is known as the *Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Servicemembers, Veterans and their Families*. The initiative uses evidence-based practices to address mental health needs to prevent and reduce suicide attempts. The program is in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In addition, the program encourages interested stakeholders to increase their statewide suicide prevention efforts. The effort is online at [www.SaveFLVets.org](http://www.SaveFLVets.org).

Chief of Staff Alfred Carter and FDVA Leadership participated in monthly virtual sessions with the Governor's Challenge Workgroups and the Florida Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council. Chief of Staff Carter also participated in the Florida Suicide Prevention Interagency Action Committee (SPIAC) monthly meetings.

FDVA continued its collaboration with The Fire Watch following its launch of an innovative Veteran Suicide Prevention Program.

On January 26, Chief of Staff, Carter virtually participated in the Communities of Practice: Lethal Means Safety and Safety Planning Conference hosted by Aaron Motschmann, project assistant with Policy Research Associates. In support of the Governor's Suicide Prevention Challenge Initiatives, the discussion focused on alternative strategies, effective policies and expanding resources and access to community-based services in efforts to prevent weapon involved suicide attempts.

On February 21-22, Chief of Staff Carter served as a Keynote Speaker for the 2022 Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition Conference 'Florida Taking Action for Suicide Prevention' in Wesley Chapel. He promoted community awareness and veterans' resources as it relates to suicide prevention, current state initiatives, and policies and programs including the *Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Servicemembers, Veterans and their Families*. He also discussed the Florida Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council and its recent initiative, the Five Star Incentive Awards Program, which urges participants, sponsors, supporters and volunteers to join the efforts in combating mental health illnesses, substance abuse and sharing best practices that reduce suicide among Florida's citizens.

### ❖ **Community Outreach**

With COVID-19 subsiding, getting back out and into Florida's communities has been priority one for the FDVA Benefits and Assistance Division and the Executive Director himself.

Executive Director Hartsell met with Randy Holyfield, American Legion Commander Post 108, Department of Florida and Legionnaires on January 8, to speak on his career and current role. He provided an overview of the Agency and current initiatives, and offered feedback on how to improve benefit access to Florida's veterans and their family members.

On January 8, Executive Director Hartsell attended the Homes For Our Troops Community Kickoff Event to honor Army Specialist Michael Monthervil for his selfless sacrifice to the State and Nation.

Deputy Executive Director Bob Asztalos met with Commissioner Maria Sachs, Palm Beach County from the 5th District, on January 10, to discuss the upcoming Veterans' Benefits Fair and opportunities to improve benefits and services to Florida's veterans and their family members.

On January 12, Chief of Staff, Alfred Carter attended the Falls Prevention Program Steering Committee Meeting via teleconference to discuss fall prevention policies and interventions, as well as best practices within healthcare facilities aimed at reducing the risk of fall injuries to patients. They also discussed how to conduct fall risk assessments for nursing home residents.

Executive Director Hartsell visited the Soldiers Freedom Outdoors in Melrose on January 16, to discuss their alternative therapy and mental health programs for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders. The program provides an opportunity for servicemembers and veterans to connect with nature and interact with service animals.

Executive Director Hartsell met with Jerry Brandt, American Legion Department of Florida Commander and Florida Legionnaires on January 19, to provide them an overview of the Agency, its current initiatives, and feedback on how to improve benefit access to Florida's veterans and their family members.

On January 19, Executive Director Hartsell met with the leaders of Operation New Uniform, a nonprofit organization, to provide them an overview of the Agency, and to discuss veteran training, job advancements and employment opportunities available to veterans and their families.

Executive Director Hartsell served as Keynote Speaker at the 2022 Broward Days Event in Tallahassee on January 19. He provided an agency overview and discussed outreach initiatives to connect Florida veterans with earned services, benefits and support.

Chief of Staff Carter participated in the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and Community Health Advisory Person (CHAP) hosted by the Florida Department of Health in Columbia County on January 20. He discussed barriers and challenges when accessing healthcare services, community partnerships and healthcare (dental, mental health and substance use treatment) improvement for residents.

On January 20, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos attended the Caregivers FL Career Program, hosted by the Florida Health Care Education and Development Foundation and the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration to discuss marketing and media strategies to attract skilled nurses and employment opportunities for medical personnel.

Executive Director Hartsell met with Dr. David Clark, MD-Aging Clinical Research and Rehabilitation Science at the University of Florida, on January 20, to discuss alternative therapy for veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injuries. The research focuses on enhancing walking function in people with neurological impairments, particularly older adults and persons post-stroke.

On January 27, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met with Bruce Comer, department adjutant at The American Legion, Department of Florida to discuss the Agency's priorities for the FY 2022-23 Legislative Session. They also discussed various state initiatives, veterans' homes staffing challenges, and access to benefits and services offered to Florida's 1.5 million veterans and their families.

On February 5, Chief of Staff Carter and select FDVA staff participated in the 2022 Florida Honor Ride – Ride to Recovery event, hosted by Project Hero at the Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg. The Florida Honor Ride has become a Florida tradition as cyclists from across the globe descend on Florida to train and simultaneously support a very worthy cause – veteran education and athletics. The event honors veterans and first responders who suffer from various wounds and helps fund life-changing rehabilitation services for these healing heroes.

On February 26, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met with Don Gerteisen, executive board chairman and managing president of Heroes Not Forgotten – An Americanism Film, to provide an overview of the Agency and discuss educational opportunities including military and veteran filmmaking and arts and culture programs offered to veterans.

#### ❖ **Legislative Activities**

FDVA Leadership's desired endeavor is that the agency continues to assist with strengthening the state's support for Florida's 1.5 million veterans and their families with education, healthcare, mental health, employment and family programs. Throughout 2021, Executive Director Hartsell provided progressive updates 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. This endeavor continued in 2022 with a strong push by Executive Director Hartsell and key staff leaders to educate legislators on the Agency's needs and initiatives.

On January 11, Executive Director Hartsell and key Agency staff attended the Joint Legislative Session in support of Governor's Ron DeSantis' "State of the State Address" before the opening of 2022 Legislative Session. Later that evening, General Hartsell attended the State of the State



Reception hosted by Governor Ron DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis at the Florida Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee.

With the onset of the FY 2022 Legislative Budget Session, the Agency engaged legislators and committees to ensure Agency equities were maintained. Some key highlights of these engagements follows:

On January 11, Executive Director Hammer Hartsell, Deputy Executive Director Bob Asztalos and select FDVA staff attended the House Appropriations Committee to support Governor Ron DeSantis' Freedom First FY 2022-23 Recommended Budget presented by Chris Spencer, Director of Policy and Budget.

On January 11, Executive Director Hartsell attended the Senate Committee on Agriculture in support of veteran-related bills and future initiatives.

On January 11, the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space and Domestic Security met to confirm Hammer Hartsell's appointment as executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. General Hartsell brief the committee on his 37 years of military service and continued services to the State of Florida. The general served as the FDVA Deputy Executive Director for 18 months until appointed to his current position on May 4, 2021, by Governor Ron DeSantis and the Cabinet.

On January 12, Executive Director Hartsell and key agency staff attended the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee in support of the Agency's Legislative Budget Request for FY 2022-23 and top financial issues that could impact veterans' resources and programs. General Hartsell discussed challenges to state veterans' homes including increased costs due to COVID-19, as well as staffing challenges due to a national shortage of health care providers in a post-COVID environment.

On February 23, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos participated in Volunteer Florida's 7th Annual Suits for Session Service Project, which urges Florida Legislators and staff, state agency employees and other Capitol professionals to donate new or gently-worn business attire to encourage job-seekers to dress for success and help prepare those in need of appropriate clothing for job interviews, opportunities and career advancements.

The Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director and staff leadership met with the following legislative leaders during the quarter:

- State Senator Jason Pizzo, to provide him an overview of the Agency's priorities for the FY 2022-23 Legislative Session, to include FY 2022-2023 budget, Agency's initiatives, challenges and impacts due to the COVID pandemic and the *Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families*.
- State Representative Jackie Toledo, to provide her an update on the Agency's priorities for the FY 2022-23 Legislative Session, to include FY 2022-2023 budget, current initiatives, opening status of Ardie R. Copas SVNH, the renovation of Lake Baldwin SVNH and staffing challenges that continue to impact the SVNHS' occupancy rates.
- State Senator Jason Brodeur, to provide an overview of the Agency, address veteran-related bills and initiative proposals, and improved benefit access and the enhancement of social support programs to veterans and their families.
- State Senator Ileana Garcia, to provide her an overview of the Agency and address veteran-related bills and initiative proposals, staffing challenges, the SVNHS' occupancy rates and opportunities to improve benefits and services to Florida's veterans and their family members.
- State Senator Kelli Stargel, to provide her an overview of the Agency, its operations and current initiatives, and offer feedback on how to improve benefit access to Florida's veterans and their family members.



- Vice Chairs of House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee, Dana Trabulsy and Kamia Brown, and State Representative David Smith, to provide them an overview of the Agency, address veteran related bills and current issues including professional staffing, and to discuss state resources and wellness programs that are available to veterans and their families
- Florida Board of Governors Member Alan Levine, chairman and chief executive officer of Ballad Health at the State University System of Florida, to provide him an overview of the Agency, its operations and current initiatives. The discussion focused on an integrated health system, long-term nursing facilities, veteran resident benefits, and educational advancements and services for Veteran students and their families.
- During the week of February 7-11, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met separately with Florida House of Representatives Mike Caruso, Tom Fabricio, Wyman Duggan, Joe Casello, Nick DiCeglie, Alex Andrade, Chuck Brannan, Adam Botana, Vance Aloupis, James V. Buchanan and Tracie Davis, to provide them an overview of the Agency and its operations. They also discussed the Agency's challenges and priorities for the FY 2022-23 Legislative Session, to include increased cost to SVNHs due to COVID, staffing issues and contractual services impacting the SVNHs occupancy rates and state initiatives that support Florida's veterans and their families.
- During the week of February 28 – March 4, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met separately with Florida State Senators Tom Wright and Jim Boyd, and Florida House of Representative Dana Trabulsy, to provide them an overview of the Agency, its operations and discussed the Agency's challenges and priorities for the FY 2022-23 Legislative Session. He updated them on the May 2022 targeted admission date into Ardie R. Copas and Lake Baldwin SVNHs, as well as initiatives and programs that improve the quality of life, benefit access and eligible services offered to servicemembers and veterans and their families, to include the veteran homeless population.
- During the week of February 21-25, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met separately with Florida State Senators Lorraine Ausley, Joe Gruters, Jason Pizzo and Shevrin Jones, as well as Florida House of Representatives Michelle Salzman, Andrew Learned, Traci Koster, Michael Grant, Jason Shoaf, Bob Rommel, Cyndi Stevenson, Dan Daley, Matt Willhite, and Thad Altman to provide them an overview of the Agency and its operations. They also discussed the Agency's challenges and priorities for the FY 2022-23 Legislative Session, May 2022 admission date into the Ardie R. Copas SVNH, staffing issues and contractual services impacting SVNH occupancy rates. Deputy Executive Director Asztalos focused on state initiatives, including the Governor's Challenge, educational opportunities and benefits that support Florida's veterans and their families.
- During the week of March 7-11, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos met separately with Florida State Representative Allison Tant, Representative William Cloud "Will" Robinson Jr., Representative Linda Chaney, Representative Dana Trabulsy, Representative Patt Maney, Representative Elizabeth Fetterhoff, Representative Nicholas X Duran, Representative Jenna Persons-Mulicka, Representative Clay Yarborough, Representative Joe Harding, Representative Paul Renner, Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Senator Tina Scott Polsky, Senator Douglas "Doug" Broxson, Senator Lori Berman, Senator Dennis Baxley, Senator Kathleen Passidomo, and Senator Kelli Stargel.

Ensuring Veteran equities are a part of the legislative session process, the Executive Director and key agency Tallahassee staff members attended the following committee and subcommittee meetings/sessions to vocally support or wave in support of veteran-related bills:

- Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services in support of veteran-related bills, including SB 806 – Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia-related Disorders Awareness presented by Senator Keith Perry and SB 890 – Telecommunicator Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation presented by Senator Danny Burgess Jr.
- Senate Committee on Education in support of Senate Bill (SB) 0896 – Educator Certification Pathways for Veterans, presented by Senator Danny Burgess Jr.
- House Session in support of House Bill (HB) 0539 – Nursing Home Financial Reporting, presented by Representative Jay Trumbull Jr.
- Senate Committee on Health Policy in support of SB 1324 – Nursing Home Financial Reporting, presented by Senator Danny Burgess Jr.
- Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services in support of Agency’s veteran-related bills on the agenda under consideration.
- House Finance & Finance Subcommittee in support of veteran-related bills, including HB 1239 - Nursing Home Facility Staffing Requirements, presented by Representative Lauren Melo.
- Senate Committee on Community Affairs in support of veteran-related bills, including SB 0974 - Sovereign Immunity, presented by Senator Joe Gruters.
- Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services in support of Agency’s veteran-related bills on the agenda to include SB 0438 - United States Space Force, presented by Senator Danny Burgess Jr., and SB 0562 - Military Occupational Licensure, presented by Senator Janet Cruz.
- House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services in support of veteran-related bills, including HB 1239 - Nursing Home Facility Staffing Requirements, presented by Representative Lauren Melo.
- Senate Appropriation Committee and House Appropriation Committee in support of Agency’s veteran-related bills under consideration. Following the committee meetings, Deputy Executive Director Asztalos attended the House Session in support of veteran-related bills, including HB 7021 - Covid-19-related Claims Against Health Care Providers, presented by Health & Human Services Committee, HB 0063 - Recognizing Veteran Suicide, presented by Representative Matt Willhite and SB 0302 - Recognizing Veteran Suicide, presented by Senator Danny Burgess Jr.
- Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space and Domestic Security in support of veteran-related bills, including Senate Bill (SB) 0466 - Military Medics and Corpsmen of Florida Program, presented by Senator Victor Torres Jr.
- Senate Committee on Appropriations in support of veteran-related bills, including Senate Bill (SB) 0466 - Military Medics and Corpsmen of Florida Program, presented by Senator Victor Torres Jr. and SB 0554 - Educational Opportunities for Disabled Veterans, presented by Senator Janet Cruz.
- House State Affairs Committee Appropriations in support of veteran-related bills, including House Bill (HB) 0131 – Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., presented by Florida Representative Marie Woodson.
- Senate Session in support of veteran-related bills, SB 1712 - Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program, presented by Senator Danny Burgess Jr.
- Senate Session in support of veteran-related bills, SB 0438 – United States Space Force and SB 0896 – Educator Certification Pathways for Veterans, both presented by Senator Danny Burgess Jr.
- Senate Committee on Appropriations in support of veteran-related bills, SB 1712 - Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program, presented by Senator Danny

Burgess Jr.

- Senate Committee on Regulated Industries in support of veteran-related bills, including Senate Bill (SB) 0394 – Residential Associations, presented by Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez.
- House Children, Families & Seniors Subcommittee in support of veteran-related bills, including House Bill (HB) 0987 – In-person Visitation by Essential Caregivers, presented by Representative Jason Shoaf.
- House Finance and Facilities Subcommittee in support of veteran-related bills, including HB 1443 - Dependent Eligibility Verification Services and HB 1445 - Public Record/ Dependent Eligibility Verification Services, both bills presented by Representative Mike Giallombardo.

#### ❖ **Proclamations**

Governor DeSantis signs proclamations annually to recognize veterans for their selfless dedication to the nation. FDVA Office of Communications drafted the following proclamation(s) for the Governor this quarter.

- Vietnam Veterans Day in Florida on March 29.

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

##### ❖ **Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services**

The Bureau of Veterans' Claims Service's third quarter production review of rating decisions picked up by 1/3 from the previous quarter, partly due to the return to in-office work coupled with an increase of appellate hearings.

The Bureau continues to have an increase of virtual hearings for the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). The Bureau of Claims Services processed 11,674 claims rating decision reviews of disability benefits claims through the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS).

Claims Services provided walk-in services, and the St. Petersburg Regional Office returned to limited office claims. BVA hearings again increase by nearly 30 percent since the second quarter.

Local in-person Personal Hearings also have seen an increase of 25 percent from the last quarter. Our group email address ([vso@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:vso@fdva.state.fl.us)) and telephone helpline service (727-319-7440) has also increased nearly 40 percent; receiving 10,427 inquiries throughout this period. We conducted 755 hearings. As always, we continue to stand ready to meet the increasing demands of veterans' appeals requirements.

##### **- Outreach Events:**

- Zero Suicide Partnership of Pinellas (Veterans Initiative) - Invited by DR Bone, USF Professor. Collaborating with veteran organizations to have a suicide prevention symposium to help veterans who are in immediate distress. Many organizations found they were either not aware of what other organizations were doing or unaware of the existence of other organizations.
- Pinellas County Veteran Task Force - Provides cross-collaboration among service providers, and promotes the sharing of a strategic focus of vision, mission and goals.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2021-22
Retroactive Compensation	\$54,895,241	\$45,088,978	\$60,345,271	\$215,284,006
Largest Single Retro. Benefit (1)	\$433,959	\$421,176	\$378,198	\$1,233,333
Debt Waiver Resolutions	\$79,744	\$36,222	\$52,322	\$168,288
Notices of Disagreement	2,983	2,517	3,210	11,714
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases (2)	102	71	54	227
Act as Representative at Hearings*	216	420	516	1,152
Veterans' Appeals Hearings*	142	131	117	516
Number of Ratings Reviewed	13,690	10,823	13,673	38,186
(1) The "Largest Single Retro. Benefits" Year to Date for FY 2020-21 and the Actual for FY 2021-22 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.				

## ❖ Women Veterans

Deputy Executive Director Bob Asztalos collaborated with the Florida Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. At monthly committee meetings, he proposed an initiative to increase outreach to our state's 164,000 women veterans through social media and produce a survey to identify the needs of women veterans.

Florida Women Veterans Coordinator Vanessa Thomas attended a monthly teleconference with the National Center for Women Veterans (NCWV). She provided updates to the department on medical services available for women veterans and earned services supporting women veterans. Key topics included: 1) "She Wears the Boots," a Podcast for Women Veterans presented by the Veterans Health Administration, with a focus to get more listeners; and 2) the Million Veteran Program (MVP) with a focus to encourage ambassadorship in enrolling more women veterans into the program. MVP has targeted an 11 percent increase in the number of women veterans for the coming year.

Celebrating Women History Month was the hallmark of this quarter. Agencies, businesses, and organizations alike used social media to highlight women and their achievements.

FDVA Women Veterans Coordinator Thomas conducted a class about compensation and pension to the Northeast Women Veterans Organization in Jacksonville.

### Outreach Events:

- HerVOICE Virtual Series continues. The Series encompasses the voices of women veterans with topics of serving in the military, the evolution of the military and transitioning back to civilian life.
- Monument to Women Veterans - the Monument to Women Veterans, Inc., a 501c3 Charitable Non-Profit Corporation established in 2011, has been paramount in recognizing and empowering our military women through various community outreach and awareness efforts. Their goal is two-fold: first to provide critical resources for women veteran care, and second to pursue the construction of a monument to honor all women veterans.
- The Wounded Warrior Project expressed a desire to assist FDVA with women veterans' issues and offered to sponsor the upcoming Women Veterans Conference in June 2022. Preparations include venue, guest speakers, promotional items and vendor invites.



### ❖ Bureau of Veterans' Field Services

The Bureau of Veterans' Field Services continues to provide face-to-face and virtual services to veterans and their families. Miami and Broward areas remain closed to VCE's due to COVID-19 pandemic protocols. West Palm Beach is closed due to asbestos in the offices. Field Services advocated for 39,430 veterans and their families completing 7,913 new disability claims. Attended 118 outreach events to include 2 Yellow Ribbon Reintegration events for Guard and Reserve Units and 3 Homeless Veteran Stand Down events. Field Services' supervisors assisted the Bureau of Veterans' Claims by reviewing and entering 642 rating decisions.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21
Number of Issue Resolutions	7,694	5,150	5,463	18,307
Total Amount of Issues Resolution	\$22,304,715	\$16,246,772	\$19,844,031	\$58,395,518
Outreach Visits	92	127	219	89
Veterans Served at Outreach	2,132	4,232	6,364	18,307
Bedside Interviews	11	12	43	66
Walk-ins / Counseling	12,116	10,418	15,259	37,793
Disability Claims	7,910	7,061	8868	23,839
Voter Registration	687	640	1,164	2491
Homeless Walk In	101	96	118	315
Ratings Reviewed	631	690	612	1933

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	YTD FY 2021-22	YTD FY 2020-21
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve Units	2	2	2	6
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	1	5	5	11
Medical Center Welcome Home Events	0	0	4	4
Congressional Open House Events	0	0	1	1
National Conferences	0	0	2	2
New Patient Orientation	0	0	10	10
Transition Assistance Briefings	19	17	36	14
Other Events	68	102	172	342

### ❖ The Bureau of State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans' Education and Training

The SAA's primary duties are fulfilling U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contract specific requirements for monitoring the quality and 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 will affect VA Education Benefits. The impact of this law will be felt in the coming months as more stringent requirements for the approval of facility participation in VA Education Benefit programs will go into effect.

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 audits of facilities remotely. U.S. Code Title 38 § 3673 now requires SAAs to perform Risk Based Surveys (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% of the RBS assigned for the year and 52% of the Compliance Surveys assigned.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21
SAA Programs Approved	4,428	5,581	1,517	11,526
Other Approval	681	780	2,881	4,342
Compliance Visits	18	13	28	59
Inspection Visits	3	8	6	17
Outreach Activities (1)	118	104	111	333
Liaison Activities (2)	119	159	205	483
Technical Assistance (3)	720	550	516	1786

### iii) Division of State Veterans' Homes:

The Division of State Veterans' Homes 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 to residents in mid-2022. For admission, a veteran must be a Florida resident, honorably discharged from the armed services and have a certificate of need from a VA physician.

The 120-bed home in Port St. Lucie is named after Fort Pierce resident Sgt. Ardie R. Copas, who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1970. The home has 60 beds reserved for residents with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The home also includes six bariatric rooms for patients with chronic and severe obesity. The home is equipped with additional facilities such as beauty and barbershop, café, chapel, a multi-purpose room, dining area and an in-house kitchen to serve daily fresh meals to the residents. The 121,000 square-foot facility is designed with the best effort to create a feel-like home atmosphere for the veterans' residents.

- **Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando:**

The home is scheduled to be open for resident admissions in the summer of 2022. Indoor construction projects are on final stages and continue on track. Projects include HVAC certifications, plumbing rerouting, etc. The furniture installation and IT system migration at the facility is in progress. We continue to work with Department of Management Services to complete final projects while simultaneously working toward a certificate of occupancy and final inspection 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: 687 for the total of \$4,597,723.77
- E-Quotes processed: 47
- Confirming Order Justification (COJ): 22
- Processed two Surplus Property requests.
- NEW** - FDVA "Media Outreach & Branding Services" solicitation (Request for Proposal - RFP) issued 11/3/21. Addendum No. 1 issued 11/17/21. Proposal opening held 12/1/21. Evaluation

Committee Meeting held 12/13/21. Intent to Award to Quest Corporation of America, Inc., issued 12/13/21. Contract executed 12/21/21. Total six-year contract amount \$327,280.

- vi. PRIOR - FDVA "Media Outreach & Branding Services" contract with Quest Corporation of America, Inc., closed out 3/3/22. Total contract amount \$325,555.00.
- vii. FDVA "Professional Nurse Agency Staffing" solicitation (Invitation to Bid - ITB) issued 12/14/21. Addendum No. 1 issued 12/29/21. Bid opening held 1/7/22. Contract awarded to Hopper Consulting and Staffing, The Rose Group, and Clinical Staffing Resources 1/25/22. Contracts executed by 2/9/22. Total contract amount \$2,357,377 (estimated Year 1; with two additional 1 year options).
- viii. Jacobson SVNH "Automatic Transfer Switch" contract Amendment No. 2 (extension), with Santa Fe Professional Services, Inc., executed 1/28/22. Total contract amount \$201,250.
- ix. Nininger SVNH "Automatic Transfer Switch" contract Amendment No. 5 (extension), with Santa Fe Professional Services, Inc., executed 12/29/21. Total contract amount \$181,000.
- x. Nininger SVNH "Automatic Transfer Switch" contract Amendment No. 6 (extension), with Santa Fe Professional Services, Inc., executed 2/24/22. Total contract amount \$181,000.
- xi. Sims SVNH "Automatic Transfer Switch" contract Amendment No. 4 (extension), with Zabatt Engine Services, Inc., executed 2/23/22. Total contract amount \$225,322.
- xii. Sims SVNH "Lightning Rod System" contract, with Bonded Lightning Protection, Inc., closed out 3/17/22. Total contract amount \$48,600.
- xiii. Bennett SVNH "Automatic Transfer Switch" contract Amendment No. 3 (extension), with Zabatt Engine Services, Inc., executed 3/15/22. Total contract amount \$173,857.
- xiv. Bennett SVNH "Kitchen Line Replacement" contract Amendment No. 3 (extension and funding), with Direct Supply, Inc., executed 1/31/22. Total contract amount \$89,000.
- xv. Lassen SVNH "Sink Alcove" contract, with Avid Construction & Consulting, closed out 2/17/22. Total contract amount \$43,573.
- xvi. Lassen SVNH "Exterior Painting" solicitation (Invitation to Bid - ITB) issued 1/13/22. Pre-bid meeting held 1/27/22. Addendum No. 1 issued 2/4/22. Bid opening held 2/10/22. Contract awarded to Five 12 Painting & Remodeling, LLC 2/15/22. Contract executed 2/23/22. Total contract amount \$58,372.

**b) Consultants (F.A.C. 55-1.003(h))**

- i. None

**c) Leases (F.A.C. 55-1.003(i))**

- i. FDVA Office of General Counsel prepared updates to the Land Use Management Plans for six State Veterans' Homes in accordance with Section 253.034(5), Florida Statutes, pertaining to BOTIITF leases: 3873, 4007, 4261, 4339, 4415, and 4462. Short-term accomplishments will be next reported on 11/29/2026, and next updates to the Land Use Management Plans will be due on 11/29/2031.

**d) Lawsuits/Claims in Litigation or Settled this Quarter (F.A.C. 55-1.003(3) (k) and (3) (l))**

- i. **3 - General Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 3 pending.
- ii. **1 - Employment Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 1 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.
- iii. **0 - Other Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.

- e) **Contracts and agreements required to carry out programs approved by the Legislature or Governor and Cabinet (F.A.C. 55-1.003(3) (e))**
  - i. None.
- f) **Professional Services (F.A.C. 55-1.003(3) (k))**
  - i. None.
- g) **Notifications to State Attorneys, Sheriffs or other Law Enforcement (F.A.C. 55-1.003(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
	Robert H. Jenkins SVDH had a 75" TV donated this quarter.			
<b>Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City</b>				<b>\$698</b>
	Ardie R. Copas SVNH had no donations this quarter.			
<b>Ardie R. Copas SVNH, Port St. Lucie</b>				<b>\$0</b>
	Emory L. Bennett SVNH had no donations this quarter.			
<b>Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach</b>				<b>\$0</b>
	1 - 24" TV			\$50
	2 - Cell Phones			\$200
<b>Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes</b>				<b>\$250</b>
	Sandy Nininger SVNH had no donations this quarter.			
<b>Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines</b>				<b>\$0</b>
	2 - Wheel Chairs			\$50
<b>Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City</b>				<b>\$50</b>
	Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH had no donations this quarter.			
<b>Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte</b>				<b>\$0</b>
	Clyde E. Lassen SVNH had no donations this quarter.			
<b>Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine</b>				<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total Non-Cash Donations</b>				<b>\$998</b>
(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 2021-22
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$810	\$530	\$0.00	\$1,340
Ardie R. Copas SVNH, Port St. Lucie	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$0.00	\$1,300	\$3,025	\$4,325
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$651	\$1,598	\$6,280	\$8,529
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$1,100	\$1,000	\$2,170	\$4,270
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$1,025	\$500	\$1,100	\$2,625
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$0.00	\$1,481	\$1,505	\$2,986



Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$1,454	\$1,000	100,000	\$2,454
<b>Total Cash Donations</b>	<b>\$5,040</b>	<b>\$7,409</b>	<b>\$114,080</b>	<b>\$125,189</b>

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

Third Quarter		
Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	Florida Health Care Association	\$1,662.50
Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	Florida Health Care Association	\$4,316.00
Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	Florida Health Care Association	\$4,353.50
Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	Florida Health Care Association	\$4,353.50
Sims SVNH, Panama City	Florida Health Care Association	\$4,316.00
Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	Florida Health Care Association	\$4,341.00
Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	Florida Health Care Association	\$4,341.00
Ardie R. Copas, Port St. Lucie	Florida Health Care Association	\$0
Alwyn C. Cashe, Orlando	Florida Health Care Association	\$0
		<b>Total: \$27,683.50</b>



### 3) Veterans Florida (VF)

The 2022 Regular Session ended and the legislature met our full budget request, to include streamlined Proviso. We await the Governor's review and signing of the state budget. For FY 22-23 we are seeking:

Operations Funding	\$400,000 Recurring	Increase of \$55,894 Recurring
VETS Program Funding	\$2,000,000 Non-recurring	Increase of \$700,000 Nonrecurring; restores to FY 2020-21 funding level

Lesli Sullivan has resigned as Office Manager after two years. We will begin advertising to fill the open position in early April.

Employer partners for SkillBridge are currently being signed for the fiscal year.

Veterans Florida staff traveled to in-person events and continue to participate in virtual events and webinars to spread awareness of our services.

#### ❖ Marketing

Quarter three marketing themes included law enforcement, aviation and aerospace, and Veterans Florida 2022 Expo (June 17-18, 2022). The South and Central Florida regional videos are finished and the North Florida and statewide videos are in post production. In March, we attended a Military Agriculture Tour trip and contracted with a media company to film and produce a promotional video from participant interviews we conducted. In April, we will be attending a ceremonial SkillBridge MOU signing with Legends Airways at their Lakeland facility. VISIT Florida briefed us on their plans for the final campaign of the fiscal year that will include \$60,000 in retargeting ads that drive users to our website.

Network Partner	Performance		
	January	February	March
Unique Website Visitors	4,960	4,726	5,521
Facebook Organic Post Reach	5,348	8,943	10,578
Newsletter Subscribers	36,273	36,316	32,589
LinkedIn Post Reach	11,484	9,303	8,378

Twitter Post Reach	3,958	2,446	2,012
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### ❖ Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS)

The VETS team continues contacting and assisting veterans who are looking for employment and training services.

### ❖ Career Services Program

Veterans Florida continues the work to expand both workforce grant employers as well as career matching opportunities to the benefit of our veterans. The team attended many job fairs and events around the state.

Veteran Leads Metrics				
Month	Grant Reimbursement Amount	Job Fair	Website	Total
January	\$171,821	48	104	152
February	\$94,575	104	153	257
March	\$0	23	266	289
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$266,396</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>698</b>
* Budget has been depleted.				

### ❖ Veteran Agriculture Program

In October, we began our second year of the Veterans Florida Agriculture Program three-year award. The team continues to recruit agriculture fellows to fill openings at partner research and education centers. The Veterans Florida Agriculture Program is an immersive, hands-on six month paid fellowship, veterans or transitioning service members study at a University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Research and Education Center, learning about Florida agriculture. Veterans under the program are funded by our USDA funds, and service members under the program are through SkillBridge. The team attended the Military Agriculture Tour in Seffner.

Research and Education Partnership Status				
Partners	Location	Pending	Active	Completed
Fort Lauderdale REC	Davie	0	1	1
Gulf Coast REC	Wimauma	1	2	1
Mid-Florida REC	Apopka	0	1	1
Tropical Aquaculture Lab	Ruskin	0	1	0
Southwest Florida REC	Immokalee	1	0	0
Tropical Agriculture Lab	Ruskin	0	1	1
West Florida REC	Milton	1	0	0

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

We continue to expand our Skillbridge fellowship offerings with employers throughout the state of Florida to better serve our transitioning active duty service members. Veterans Florida added Cosco & Associates, Legends Airways, and Career Source Escarosa to the SkillBridge catalog this month. The team attended the 50strong EmployerConnect SkillBridge Job Fair virtually.

SkillBridge Partnership Status				
Partner	Location	Pending	Active	Completed
ARES Technical Services	Kennedy Space Center	0	1	0

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity	Statewide	3	1	1
Florida Highway Patrol	Statewide	25	7	5
Boca Aircraft Maintenance	Boca Raton	1	0	0
S&B Metal	Lakeland	5	3	1
University of Florida IFAS	Statewide	7	12	8
Vineyards Country Club	Naples	1	1	1
Vets2PM	Statewide	5	1	5
Florida Department of Corrections	Statewide	2	0	0
Iron Eagle X	Tampa	1	0	0
Legends Airways	Lakeland	1	0	0
Maritech Marine	Panama City	1	0	0
Pensacola Police Department	Pensacola	7	0	0
Piper Aircraft	Vero Beach	1	5	0
Randy Wise Homes	Crestview	0	1	0
Santa Rosa Sheriff's Office	Milton	4	0	0
Seaside Claims	Jacksonville	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>

#### ❖ Entrepreneurship Program

The entrepreneurship team added several partners during this quarter including Florida Association of Veteran Owned Businesses (FAVOB) in Orlando, Florida Association of Veteran Owned Businesses (FAVOB) in Tampa, Jetty IOT in Pensacola, The Spring in Pensacola, Groundswell in Melbourne, and Tampa Bay Wave in Tampa. The team also added virtual startup cohorts to Action Zone, Inc, to offer to veterans in South Florida and Veteran Entrepreneurship Initiative to offer to veterans in North and Northwest Florida. Entrepreneurship partners have been holding various workshops and networking events to help address specific challenges and create a pipeline of participants for the spring cohorts.

#### ❖ Development

We recently received a corporate donation from Boeing for SkillBridge and VETS Program support.

Funder	Amount	Purpose	Status
Boeing Corporate Donation	\$10,000	General Support	Received 3/16/2022
Bank of America	\$20,000	Expo Sponsor	Awarded/received 3/22/2022
CareerSource Florida	\$10,000	Expo Sponsor	Pending

#### ❖ Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors met March 30 in the Space Coast. The Board received regular program updates to include the results of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session and approved a budget plan to guide staff for crafting the FY 2022-23 budget.

The next scheduled Board of Directors meeting is planned for June 17 in Orlando at the Veterans Florida Expo. The primary agenda item will be discussion and approval of the FY 2022-23 budget.



## NO FLORIDA VETERAN LEFT BEHIND

### 4) Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF)

- ❖ The Foundation operates for the direct and indirect benefit of the Veterans of Florida, the FDVA and the state Veteran's Service Organizations (VSO). FVF is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit operating for charitable and educational purposes. The Foundation operates solely on grants, donations and fundraisers. The Foundation has two full time contracted employees, one part-time intern paid by outside source and one contracted grant writer.

#### ❖ 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	4,505	190	7,701
New Volunteers & Staff		12	3,697

Outreach Metrics	Reach	Followers
Facebook	212,607	72,333
Newsletter Subscribers	3,375	22%
Veteran Data Services	29,934	
Website Page Views	33,441	Unique Views – 30,061

#### ❖ Incoming Grants, Fundraising and Donations

Created a new donation webpage for donors to select Veterans in need options.

Below is an overview of funds raised FY 2021-22 fiscal year to date.

Grants, Fundraising & Donations via Donations Webpage	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	YTD FY 2021-22
Corporate / Business Grants	\$56,300	\$115,230	\$3,599	\$175,129
Direct Public Support	\$68,358	\$84,737	\$15,285	\$168,380
Agency Grants	\$21,000	\$107,784	\$48,499	\$177,283
Special Events	\$7,950	\$22,874	\$0	\$30,824
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$153,608</b>	<b>\$330,625</b>		<b>\$551,616</b>

#### ❖ FVF Grants and Funds

Revenue / Projections	Amount
Incoming Grants Approved	\$116,900
Incoming Grants Pending Approval	\$95,000

#### ❖ Florida Veterans Support Crisis Hotline

In addition to the Foundation's Veterans Crisis Support Lines, 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.

❖ **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.

❖ **FVF Outreach Programs**

YTD Veterans Assistance = \$262,948 July 1, 2021 thru February 2022	
Veterans Homeless Shelter Programs	COVID-19 Project Vet Relief Fund
VA Pension Claims Assistance	Homeless Meals and other Assistance
Emergency Referral Services	Veterans Recognition Awards
Volunteer Recruitment Program	Emergency Shelter Assistance
Veterans Nursing Home Packages	Blankets, Socks & Meal Drives
Medical Equipment Drives	Emergency Dental Services

❖ **Aging Wartime Veterans**

VA Pension - Aid & Attendance Financial Workshops Claim partners provides free seminars and received approvals for Aids & Attendance Claims.

Forgotten Warrior Project Approved Year to Date		*267 Claims
Average Benefit Per Veteran Over 3 Years		\$51,200
Average Total Veteran Benefits Over 3 Years		\$13,670,400
Economic Impact		x 2.39
<b>Total Amount with Economic Impact</b>		<b>\$32,672,256</b>
<i>*Figures based on three-year life expectancy after claims approval.</i>		

❖ **Legacy of Service**

The Foundation signed a recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sachs Media who has designed a “Legacy of Service” campaign to further the mission of the Foundation to help veterans in need. It is fully funded by outside sources who support the project through paid advertising.

- ❖ **NEW:** Veterans First, Mission of Mercy, Emergency Dental Services  
In March 2022, the Foundation provided \$15,000 to provide emergency dental services to more than 300 Veterans at this event. Event was a huge success.

❖ **Gadsden Flag License Plate**

FVF continues to promote the sale of the License Plate Vouchers. Funding helps the foundation continue its mission of helping Veterans in need. The plate goes into production when 3,000 vouchers are sold. Current count is approximately 665 sold.

❖ **Volunteer Florida Grant (VFG)**

Ongoing grant to recruit and track 500+ volunteers, their hours and participation, etc. As of March 30, 2022, we have catalogued more than 446 new volunteers who assist with the grant requirements and have logged in over 6,300 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 percent of all monies for the project along with future DVDs and other sales.

❖ **Forward March Ambassadors for Veterans Council**

- ❖ FVF recruited nine new Ambassadors that support the FVF with sustainable funding and extended outreach. FVF has a total of 30 ambassadors as of March 30, 2022.

❖ **DHSMV Veterans Recognition Program**

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



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

Veteran Treatment Courts	Veterans Council Meetings	PTSD Awareness Summits
Transport Fallen Veterans	Community Veterans Fundraiser	Women Veterans Workshops
Veterans Task Force Seminars	Florida Veterans Council	Veterans Claims Seminars
WWII Project Presentations	Homeless Vets Meal Deliveries	Flag Dedications
Burial & Memorial Services	Senior Veterans Events	FVF Board Meetings
Veterans Workforce Meetings	Virtual Networking Events	Veterans Transition Consulting
Veterans Graves Maintenance	Veterans Workshops	Veterans Death Transportation
Veterans Flag Presentations	HUD Vash Programs	
Veterans Recognition Events	Afghanistan Withdrawal Group	
DAR & SAR Events	Gold Star Families Events	

*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.*