

2023 Annual Report



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.



James S. Hartsell

**Major General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)
Executive Director**

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Director's Message	3
Mission and Overview	4
Hall of Fame	5
Employee Salute	6
Department Organization	8
Where We Are (Map)	9
What We Are About - Who We Serve	10
Performance Measures	11
Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance	12
Division of Long-Term Care	17
Fiscal Impact	20
Revenue Report	21
Expenditure Report	22
I. Actions Taken Relevant to Florida Statutes	23
II. County Populations and Federal Benefit Distributions	27
III. Florida Veterans Foundation	31
IV. Florida is for Veterans, Inc. (Veterans Florida)	34
V. Associated Veteran Service Organizations	47
VI. Certified County Veterans Service Officers	48
VII. Annual Summaries of State Veterans' Homes	49
Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home	49
Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home	50
Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home	51
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home	52
Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home	53
Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home	54
Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home	55
Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home	56
Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home	57

Executive Director's Message

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.

I am honored to submit the 2023 annual report for the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. 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.

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) is a nearly 1,500-member constitutionally chartered State Veterans' Affairs department with a \$201 million annual budget responsible for serving the nation's second largest veteran population. Operating as the premier point of entry for Florida's over 1.4 million veterans, FDVA operates a network of nine state veterans' homes and provides statewide outreach to connect veterans with their earned services, benefits and support. The agency's veterans' claims examiners play a major role in the direct infusion of more than \$27.8 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.



We're very appreciative of your unwavering support of Florida's veterans, their families and survivors. Florida offers unique benefits such as in-state tuition rates for veterans and their families using the Post-9/11 GI Bill, several layers of property tax exemptions, expanded veterans' preference, and extensive benefits, licensure and fee waivers for many activities and occupations.

FDVA ensures Florida veterans, their families and survivors have access to earned mental health resources and necessary support. Florida remains 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. The Florida Veterans Support Line, 1-844-MyFLVet (693-5838) or 211 celebrated its ninth anniversary in 2023. The support line continued to provide confidential emotional support and connection to community resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The line, supported by FDVA, the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, and their suicide prevention partners, is available to all veterans in Florida. A new dimension for support was added as FDVA joined the Hope Florida initiative as "A Pathway for Patriots" in 2023.

Working together toward a positive future for Florida veterans and their families, we'll ensure the Sunshine State continues to be the most veteran-friendly and sought after state in the nation. We are honored to serve you and the citizens of Florida!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "James S. Hartsell".

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



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

Following World War II, the State of Florida recognized the need to provide services to returning service members and created a division within state government to connect veterans with their earned benefits. To address the growing Veteran population, Florida voters in 1988 overwhelmingly approved a Constitutional Amendment to create a Cabinet Agency to *"Honor Those Who Served U.S."*

Today with over 1.4 million veterans, Florida is the most veteran-friendly state in the nation. The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is the premier point of entry for Florida veterans to access earned services, benefits and support. We honor you by advocating for your earned benefits and services and by staying abreast of the changing conditions impacting our veterans, active and reserve/guard service members, and their families.

The FDVA operates a network of nine State Veterans' Homes and provides statewide outreach to connect veterans, their families, and survivors with earned services, benefits and support.

If you have questions regarding veterans' issues in Florida, please contact one of our State Veterans' Service Officers at (727) 319-7440 or via email at FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV. We provide our services to you at no charge.

You can also learn more about Veterans' issues by following us on X, formerly Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. A free Mobile App is available for downloading. We also feature a free monthly email subscription newsletter highlighting Veterans' issues. Links to all can be found on the front page of the FDVA website at www.FloridaVets.org.

Working together toward a positive future for Florida veterans and their families, Florida continues to be the most veteran friendly and sought after state in the nation. We recognize we can't do it alone. We depend on our Veterans as force multipliers to accomplish our diverse mission. We honor many of these Veterans who have gone above and beyond the call of duty following their military service by inducting them into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

The Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame recognizes and honors those military veterans who, through their works and lives during or after military service, have made a significant contribution to the state of Florida through civic, business, public service or other pursuits. It is not a traditional military hall of fame, as it focuses on post-military contributions to the State of Florida.

Class of 2023 Inductees

David Abramowitz, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)

Dennis O. Baker, Commander, U.S. Navy (Ret)

John E. Bircher III, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)

David Blair Craig, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)

Dr. Benjamin Findley, Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Ret)

Michael Fleming, Brigadier General, U.S. Army (Ret)

R. Craig Ham, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)

Dr. Gerald Hollingsworth, Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Ret)

Joseph Kittinger, Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Ret) deceased

Henry Lowery, Chief Warrant Officer 5, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)

Bruce Melnick, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret)

Frederic Raymond, Major General, U.S. Army (Ret)

Walter E. Raysick Sr., Master Chief, U.S. Navy (Ret)

Leon J. Roy IV, Command Sergeant Major, U.S. Army (Ret) deceased

Edward C. Sheffield, U.S. Army Veteran

Joseph G. Sicinski, U.S. Air Force Veteran

Alene Tarter, Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force (Ret)

Dewayne Thrift, U.S. Air Force Veteran

Donn Weaver, U.S. Army Veteran

Tony Williams Jr., Major, U.S. Army (Ret)



Employee Salutes

Our employees are the heart and soul of our Agency. None of the accomplishments are possible without them. While we can't highlight all of our agency's roughly 1,480 employees, we wanted to highlight a few whose dedication and service have been instrumental to our success over the years. We offer a special "shout out" to the special people below:



Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Steve Murray serves as FDVA's Communications and External Affairs Director. Serving since 2006, he currently serves on the Board of Directors for Honor Flight Tallahassee, the Florida Health Care Association's Public Relations Committee and the Florida Council of Chapters for the Military Officers Association of America. He serves as the agency's representative to the State Emergency Response Team and is an associate member of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. In addition to supporting agency requirements, he authors our monthly *Forward March* Veterans' Newsletter.



Steve Murray

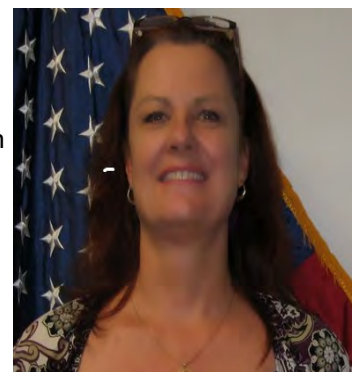


Larry Militello

Larry Militello is the longest serving State Veterans' Home Administrator in the Agency. He started with FDVA in January 2009 and has effectively serviced the veterans and staff of the Alexander "Sandy" Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home since his arrival. During his tenure, Larry has garnered numerous accolades for the facility to include both Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Five-Star and National Healthcare Association Quality Awards. Impressive is that Larry has operated the facility without the use of staffing agency personnel. Kudos to Larry and his great Pembroke Pines team!



Darlene Robinson proudly serves the Agency as Senior Management Analyst I. Darlene has been with the Agency more than 10 years. She has proven her loyalty and dedication to serving our veterans by accepting additional duties and responsibilities over the past several months. Despite the additional assignments, she maintained her history of excellent performance when fulfilling her responsibilities to the billing unit. Her work is critical to the overall Revenue Management goals and is always performed in an accurate, timely, proficient, and consistent manner, aligned with the goals of the Billing Unit and the Agency as a whole. She has confirmed her commitment to teamwork, adaptability, and responsibility.



Darlene Robinson

Employee Salutes



Ginny O'Hare has been the Director of Clifford Chester Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home's exceptional Activities Program since the home's opening 20 years ago. During this time, she has established a variety of contacts with community service agencies, resulting in Sims' residents being able to participate in special events, including the annual Miracle League Baseball Game sponsored by the Panama City Rotary Club. Ginny has also established close working relationships with Tyndall Air Force Base, AMVETS, and the Hope Projects, which continue to afford Sims' residents the opportunity to enjoy fish fries, motorcycle parades, fishing trips, dinners at a number of restaurants in town and most importantly the camaraderie of other veterans in the area. It could easily be said that Ginny is the chief of public relations for Sims as she is passionate about serving our residents. Finally, she works closely with Friends of Sims to provide special goods and services from the donations received from Friends of Sims.



Ginny O'Hare



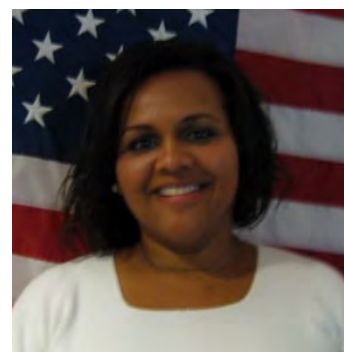
James "Jim" Angles



James (Jim) Angles has provided more than 22 years of exceptional service to the Division of Benefits and Assistance. He has consistently displayed exceptional skill in management of logistical support to the division and has is skilled in anticipating the needs of the division. Time after time, he has exhibited expert skills in managing high volumes of calls and veteran walk-ins with expert skill and knowledge. Jim is a valuable asset and his expertise is sought by many throughout the Agency.



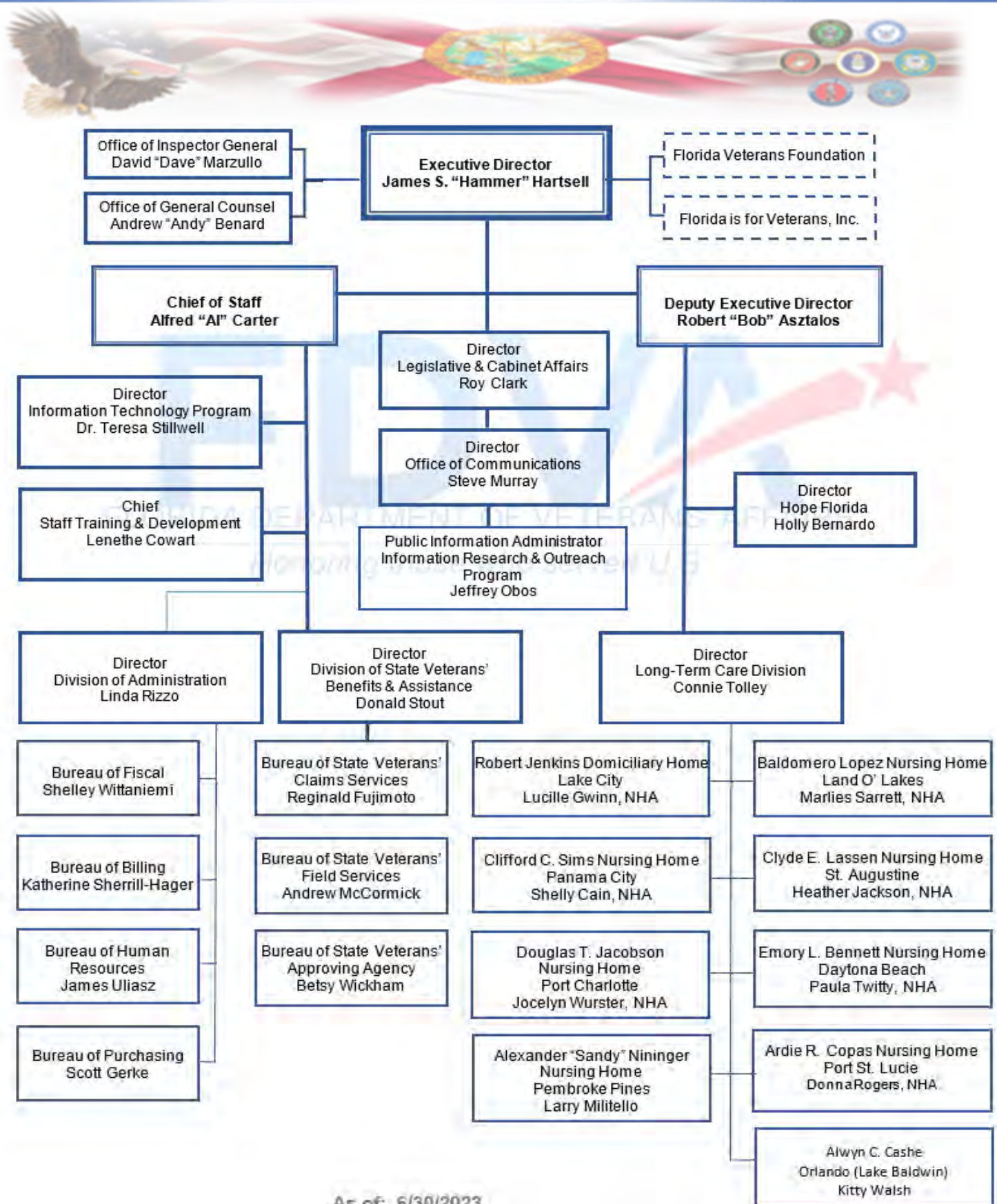
Elizabeth Allen has served the State of Florida for over seven years, beginning as an Administrative Assistant II, and elevating to her current position as Management Analyst II. In addition to her normal administrative, operational, and logistical requirements, Ms. Allen, a veteran of the U.S. Army, handles a myriad of calls from veterans seeking benefit, legislative, and mental health information. Elizabeth also serves as a notary for the Agency and is a primary action officer for the Governor's Five-Star Incentive Program. Extremely knowledgeable, professional and upbeat, Elizabeth is one of the most sought after employees in the Agency.



Elizabeth Allen

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Who We Are



As of: 6/30/2023

Where We Are



What We Are About

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 Capital 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 Long Term Care Services provides comprehensive, high-quality health care to eligible veterans in need of long-term skilled or assisted living care, and adult day health services in the future.

Florida has the third largest veteran population in the nation (1,450,597). Fiscal Year 2022 (Federal Year: 10/1/2021-9/30/2022) demographic information from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Population Projection Model 2022.

World War II

There are 14,823 (1%) World War II veterans in Florida.

Korean War

There are 87,015 (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.

What We Are About

Vietnam War

There are 476,454 (36%) Vietnam-era veterans in Florida, who served from 1961 to 1975. FDVA has seen a slight decrease in this population but an increase in disability claims filed on behalf of Vietnam veterans due to the expansion of the PACT Act and the manifestation of acute diseases brought on by exposure to Agent Orange.

Peacetime

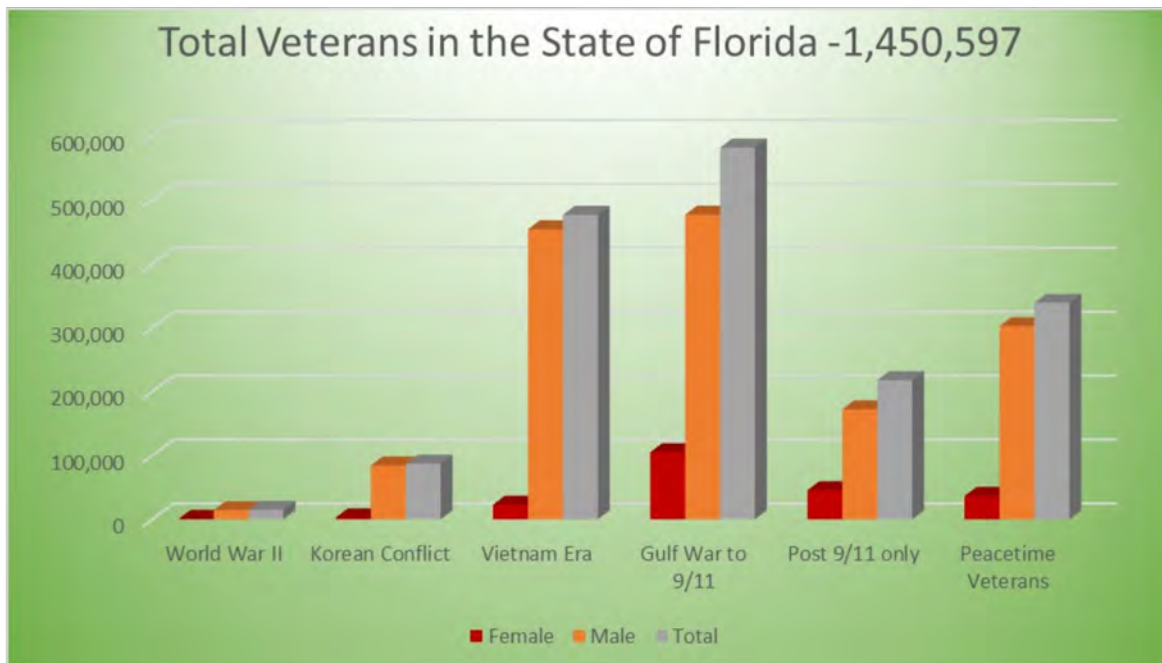
There are 338,634 (25%) peacetime veterans in Florida. Almost a quarter of Florida's veteran population served honorably during a unique and relatively conflict-free time in our history. Many of these veterans do not seek benefits, mistakenly believing that if they did not serve in combat, then they must not qualify for veteran benefits and programs.

Gulf War to 9/11

There are 195,521 (15%) 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 217,613 (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.



- Note:** (1) Veterans serving in more than one period are counted only once in the total.
(2) Period consists of 16 mutually exclusive categories.
(3) Women Veterans comprise approximately 10% of population during conflicts

Agency 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 2021-22	Actual FY 2022-23	Standard FY 2022-23
1. Value of cost avoidance because of retroactive compensation.	\$215,284,006	\$230,331,508	\$226,230,973
2. Value of cost avoidance because of issue resolution.	\$74,897,847	\$66,041,027	\$113,246,259
3. Number of veterans served.	73,852	197,084	186,414
4. Number of claims processed.	14,971	41,100	44,672
5. Number of services to veterans.	169,732	416,673	344,100

Division of Executive Direction and Support Services

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

Measure	Actual FY 2021-22	Actual FY 2022-23	Standard FY 2022-23
1. Administration costs as a percent of total agency costs.	3.7%	3.5%	6.8%
2. Administrative positions as a percent of total agency positions.	2.4%	2.0%	4.4%

Division of Long-Term Care

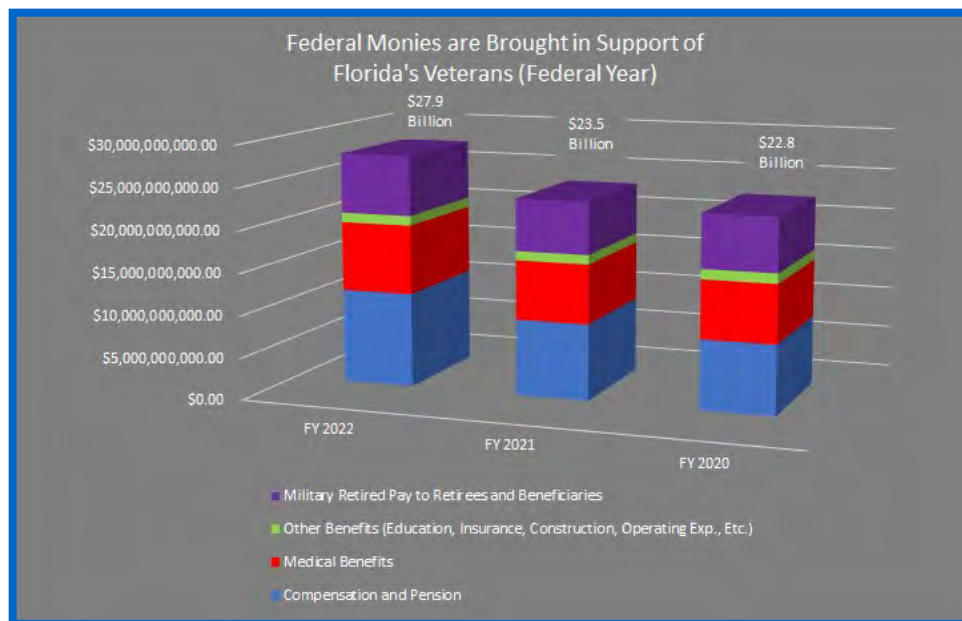
Provide quality long-term health care services to eligible Florida veterans.

Measure	Actual FY 2021-22	Actual FY 2022-23	Standard FY 2022-23
1. Occupancy rate for homes in operation 2 years or longer.	93.1%	85.5%	92%
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	1,102	1,102

Division of 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). State Veterans' Service Officers (SVSO), formerly Veterans' Claims Examiners, perform a myriad of services to include but not limited to: outreach, military record retrieval, appeals processing, emergency management support, and nursing home resident status reviews.

SVSOs are trained to resolve the myriad of issues facing veterans who honorably served in World War II through today's conflicts, with each era having unique issues and challenges. Each day finds State Veterans' Service Officers offering assistance and guidance at Transition Assistance Program briefings for separating service members, congressional veterans' appreciation days, and Veteran Service Organization gatherings. FDVA employees remain proactive in providing services to the more than 1.4 million veterans in Florida; fewer than 438,455 (Compensation of 421,597 plus Pension of 16,858) 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 \$41 in federal monies are brought into Florida.



The Bureau of Veterans' Claims 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.

Division of Benefits and Assistance (Cont.)

The Bureau's secondary focus centered around Camp Lejeune (North Carolina) Water Contamination Claims. State Veterans' Service Officers processed approximately 450 claims for veterans who served at Camp Lejeune or Marine Corps Air Station New River for at least 30 cumulative days from August 1953 through December 1987. Claims included but were not limited to adult leukemia, aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes, bladder cancer, kidney or liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and Parkinson's disease.

The Bureau also provided assistance during one hurricane, two fires, and a tornado during 2023. SVSOs deployed to Disaster Recovery Centers to provide on-the-spot support to veterans and their family members in the aftermath of these catastrophic events. Most veterans sought financial and mental health assistance as these calamitous events destroyed or exacted significant damage to their residences.



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. 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.

Division of Benefits and Assistance (Cont.)

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 Dollars Garnered in Support of Florida Veterans			
	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Compensation and Pension	\$8,317,991,000	\$9,097,791,000	\$11,282,129,000
Medical Benefits	\$6,933,054,000	\$7,074,012,000	\$8,290,308,000
Other Benefits (Education, Insurance, Construction, Operating Expenses, Etc.)	\$1,206,939,000	\$1,105,018,000	\$1,160,000,000
Military Retired Pay to Retirees / Beneficiaries	\$6,388,164,000	\$6,204,864,000	\$7,156,000,000
Annual Federal Dollar Garnered in Support of Florida Veterans	\$22,846,148.000	\$23,481,685,000	\$27,888,000,000

The Benefits and Assistance Division has supported numerous events this year, many of which were as a result of new requirements under the law, or natural disasters. Some of the outreach events and activities are highlighted on the next page:

Division of Benefits and Assistance (Cont.)



State Veterans' Service Officers Providing Support Following Hurricane Idalia

"Honoring Those Who Served U.S."

Division of Long-Term Care



Division of Long-Term Care, formerly 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 Jr. 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 eight State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The homes are supervised 24-hours daily by registered and licensed nurses.

Seven of the eight skilled nursing facilities operated by FDVA have dementia-specific neighborhoods:

- Alexander "Sandy" Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home, Pembroke Pines
- Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home, Land O' Lakes
- Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home, Panama City
- Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home, St. Augustine
- Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home, Port Charlotte
- Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home, St. Lucie
- Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home, Orlando

Comprehensive services and a deep concern for all veterans go hand-in-hand at our FDVA state veterans' nursing homes. A full-time staff of Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants 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.

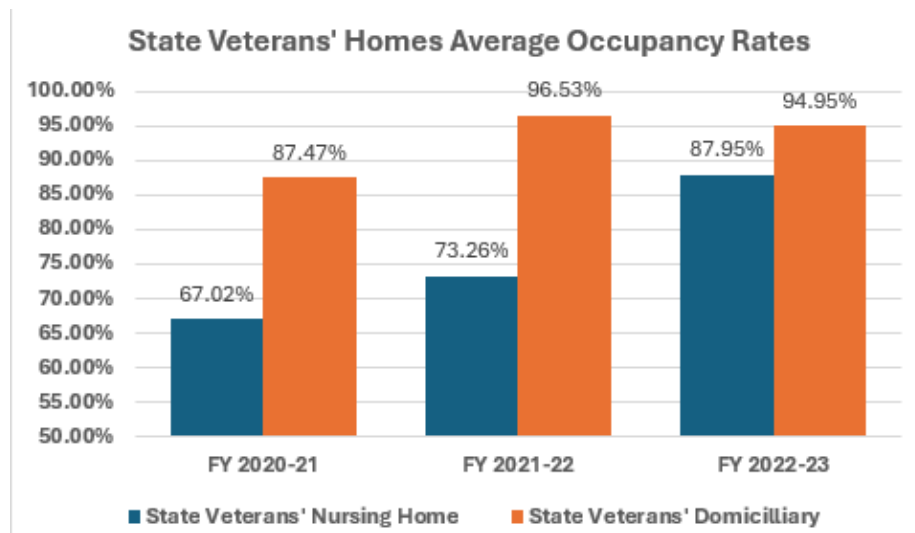
A variety of on- and off-site recreational and social activities are provided to encourage active minds, bodies and spirits, and slow the process of physical and mental decline. A wide range of other medical services is also offered. These include dental, podiatric and dermatological care. In spacious dining rooms, residents are provided with wholesome meals prepared under the supervision of licensed dietitians.

Division of Long-Term Care (Cont.)

The Division of Long-Term Care 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.

Division of Long-Term Care Occupancy Rates

During Fiscal Year 2022-23, the average occupancy rate for State Veterans' Homes in operation two years or longer was 87.95 percent and this was largely due to our ability to admit veterans following COVID. The occupancy rates increased by 14% during this time as end-of-life departures slowed and staffing increased to allow us to service more veterans within our facilities. As of the publication of this document, our facilities have improved to over 92% occupancy.



Assisted living facilities traditionally operate at a lower occupancy than skilled nursing facilities, and the department is proud to announce the Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City had an occupancy rate far above the 90 percent performance measure goal for the year and achieved a 94.95 percent occupancy rate. This is despite having 5% of its rooms down for much needed renovations.

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 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.

Music therapy may also help foster resilience and engage individuals who struggle with stigma associated with seeking professional help.

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.

Division of Long-Term Care (Cont.)

Honoring our Veterans' Home Residents

Celebrating our Centenarians

We honor the legacy of our veterans during historical celebrations such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, the Fourth of July and the like; but we also honor our resident centenarians. One resident, a Coast Guardsman who served during World War II, is seen below celebrating her 100th birthday. On Dec. 16, 2022, Deputy Executive Director Bob Asztalos, select Agency Staff, and three area Coast Guard units supported the 100th Birthday celebration for Jean Strickland, a resident of the Clifford Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home. Jean Strickland served during the war as Seaman 2 Switchboard Operator. Impressive is that Seaman Strickland is alleged to be the oldest living female Coast Guard veteran.



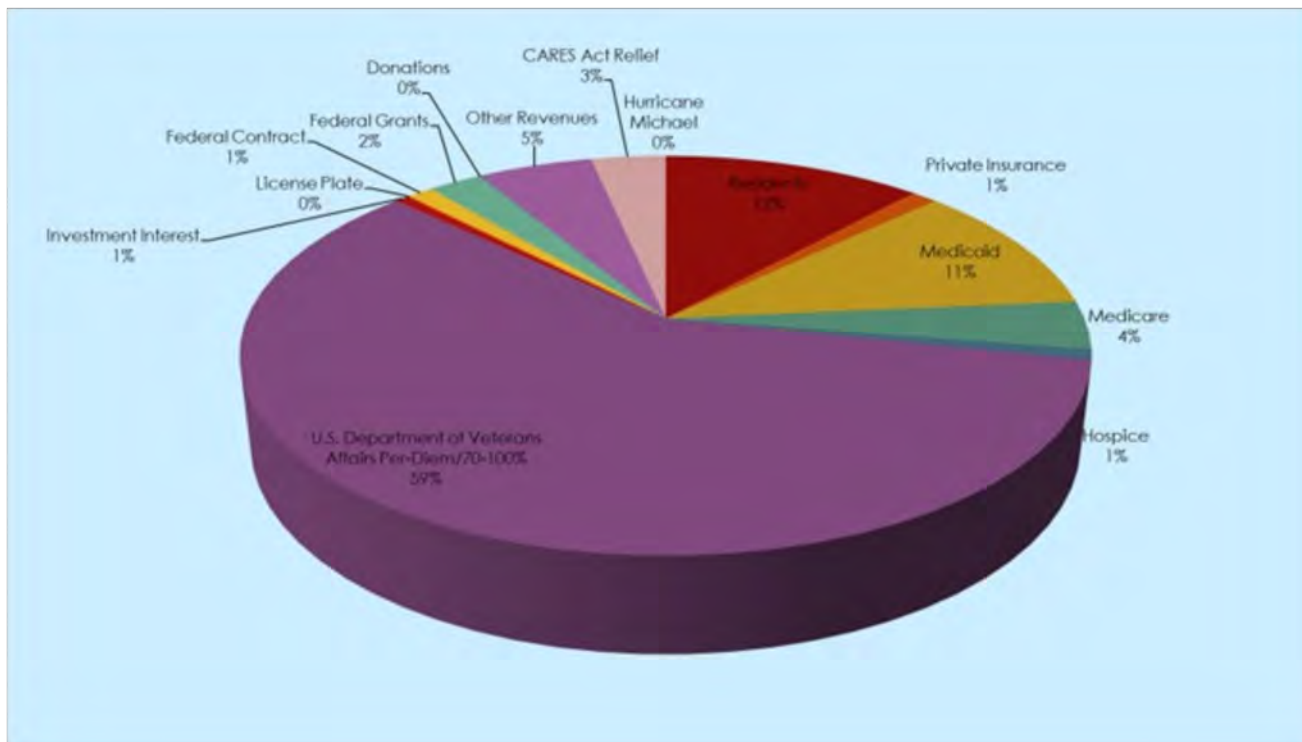
Fiscal Impact

The Division of Administration provides day-to-day management of the agency's financial resources. The revenue is generated through operations of the long-term care facilities and indirectly through the preparation of compensation claims, educational assistance, and State of Florida approved subsidies such as license plates revenue, donations, federal contracts, and donations. The department's revenue was impacted by multiple factors affecting our environment. These include but are not limited to: hurricanes and hurricane recovery, changes in MEDICAID/MEDICARE policy, changes in Per Diem standards and rates, and resident payee source characterization. Below and on the succeeding page is a snapshot of the department's revenues and expenditures:

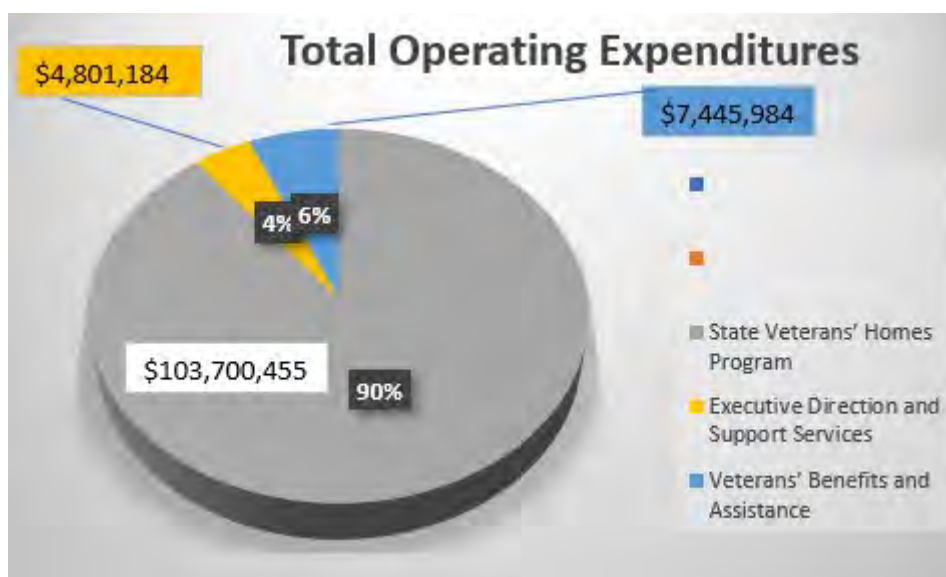
July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023					
	516002	339117	000222	261001	
Revenues	O & M TF	G&D TF	GR	Federal TF	Total
Residents	\$ 12,188,560				\$ 12,188,560
Private Insurance	\$ 1,211,403				\$ 1,211,403
Medicaid	\$ 11,055,599				\$ 11,055,599
Medicare	(1) \$ 4,065,371				\$ 4,065,371
Hospice	\$ 868,590				\$ 868,590
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Per-Diem/70-100%	(2) \$ 60,928,484				\$ 60,928,484
Investment Interest	(3) \$ 604,717	\$ 8,760			\$ 613,478
License Plate	(4) \$ -	\$ 100,000			\$ 100,000
Federal Contract	(5) \$ 1,179,458				\$ 1,179,458
Federal Grants	(6)			\$ 2,523,508	\$ 2,523,508
Donations	(7)	\$ 54,437			\$ 54,437
Other Revenues	(8) \$ 5,396,168		\$ 2,880		\$ 5,399,048
CARES Act Relief	(9) \$ 3,453,268				\$ 3,453,268
Hurricane Michael	(10) \$ 59,250				\$ 59,250
Total Revenues	\$ 101,010,870	\$ 163,198	\$ 2,880	\$ 2,523,508	\$ 103,700,455

Total Revenue
\$103,700,455

Graphical Depiction of Revenue Streams



Agency Total Operating Expenses



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
ANNUAL REPORT INFORMATION**

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

			State Veterans' Homes Program	Executive Direction and Support Services	Veterans' Benefits and Assistance
Operating Expenditures					
	Salaries and Benefits		\$ 57,537,479	\$ 2,799,252	\$ 6,545,931
	OPS		\$ 2,266,427	\$ 40,511	\$ -
	Expenses		\$ 19,379,495	\$ 1,306,186	\$ 311,823
	Other Capital Outlay		\$ 764,848	\$ 88,300	\$ -
	Food Products		\$ 3,865,492	\$ -	\$ -
	Vehicle		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Contracted Services		\$ 26,469,879	\$ 440,854	\$ 517,057
	Contracted Services Pass Thru		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Recreational Equip. Supplies		\$ 70,788	\$ -	\$ -
	Risk Management Insurance		\$ 2,889,072	\$ 87,417	\$ 32,648
	Public Assistance		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Human Resources Assessment		\$ 466,619	\$ 8,545	\$ 36,939
	Data Process/Comm - IT		\$ -	\$ 27,399	\$ -
Total Operating Expenditures			\$ 113,710,099	\$ 4,798,463	\$ 7,444,398
Non-Operating Expenditures					
	Service Charge to General Revenue		\$ 492,619	\$ 47	\$ 1,586
	Refunds-State Revenues		\$ 1,431,352	\$ -	\$ -
	Investment Cost		\$ 41,273	\$ -	\$ -
	Payment Sales Tax		\$ 2,641	\$ -	\$ -
	Transfer to GR		\$ 1,719,958	\$ -	\$ -
	Transfer Inter		\$ -	\$ 2,675	\$ -
Total Non-Operating Expenditures			\$ 3,687,844	\$ 2,722	\$ 1,586
Fixed Capital Outlay					
	New Home Construction		\$ 1,301,001	\$ -	\$ -
	Add & Improvements to State Veterans' Homes		\$ 3,393,179	\$ -	\$ -
	Maintenance/Repair		\$ 1,384,574	\$ -	\$ -
	Deferred Building Maintenance		\$ 274,395	\$ -	\$ -
	Fees		\$ 456,343	\$ -	\$ -
Total Fixed Capital Outlay			\$ 6,809,491	\$ -	\$ -
Total			\$ 124,207,434	\$ 4,801,184	\$ 7,445,984

Appendix I - Actions Taken Relevant to Florida Statutes

Appendix I

Actions Taken Relevant to Florida Statutes

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.

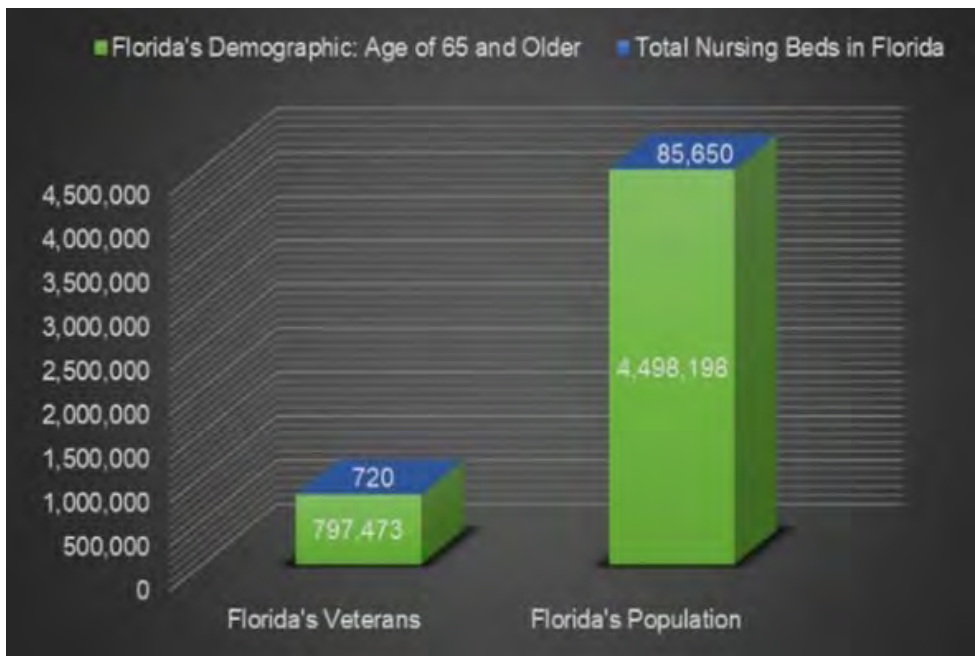
Section 292.05 (5) Florida Statutes, the Department shall conduct an ongoing study on the problems and needs of those residents of this state who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States and the problems and needs of their dependents. The study shall include but not be limited to:

- 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 monies 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 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 interests of the state. Such programs shall be subject to chapters 215 and 216.



The Division of Long-Term Care 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 Long-Term Care is 1,102. Of those, 952 are nursing home beds and 150 are for assisted living care. The veteran population over 65 years old in Florida is estimated to be 797,473.

According to Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), Florida has about 702 skilled nursing facilities with a total of 85,650 nursing home beds and 3,132 assisted living facilities with a total of 110,849 assisted living care beds. Florida's over-65 population is estimated to be about 4,498,198, with more than half a million diagnosed with Alzheimer's or related dementias.

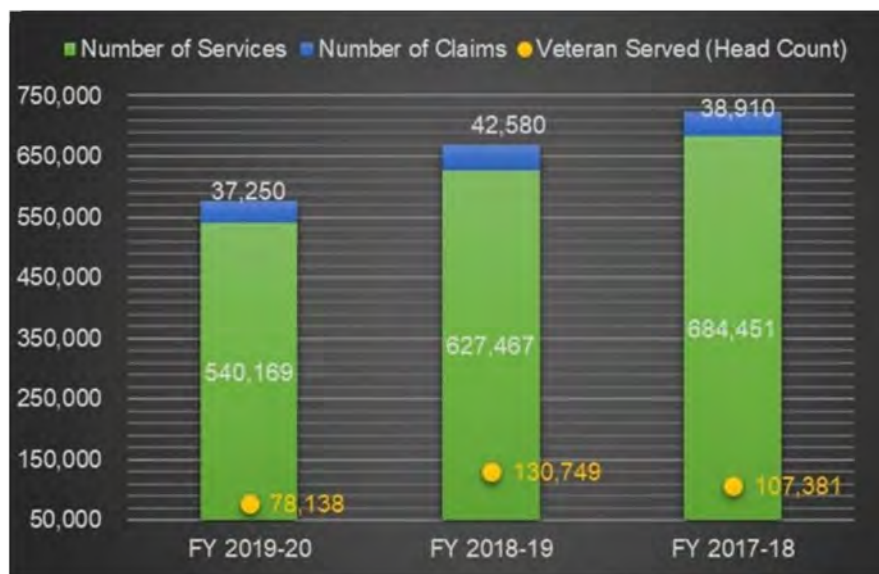
The construction of new state veterans' nursing homes is subject to approval by the Governor and Cabinet, with 35 percent of the funding provided by the Florida Legislature and 65 percent of construction costs that are matched by VA grant funding.

Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

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



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 2021-22	Actual FY 2022-23	Standard FY 2022-23
1. Value of cost avoidance because of retroactive compensation.	\$215,284,006	\$230,331,508	\$99,582,672
2. Value of cost avoidance because of issue resolution.	\$74,897,847	\$66,041,027	\$23,929,137
3. Number of veterans served.	73,852	197,084	105,172
4. Number of claims processed.	14,971	41,100	24,076
5. Number of services to veterans.	169,732	416,673	523,792

(3, 4, & 5 were impacted due to COVID-19 restrictions – unable to see veterans at offices)

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

Under the provisions of Title 38 United States Code and the contract maintained between the 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. **The Bureau is 100-percent federally funded.**

Chapter 295, FLORIDA STATUTES

Office of Inspector General: Veterans' Preference

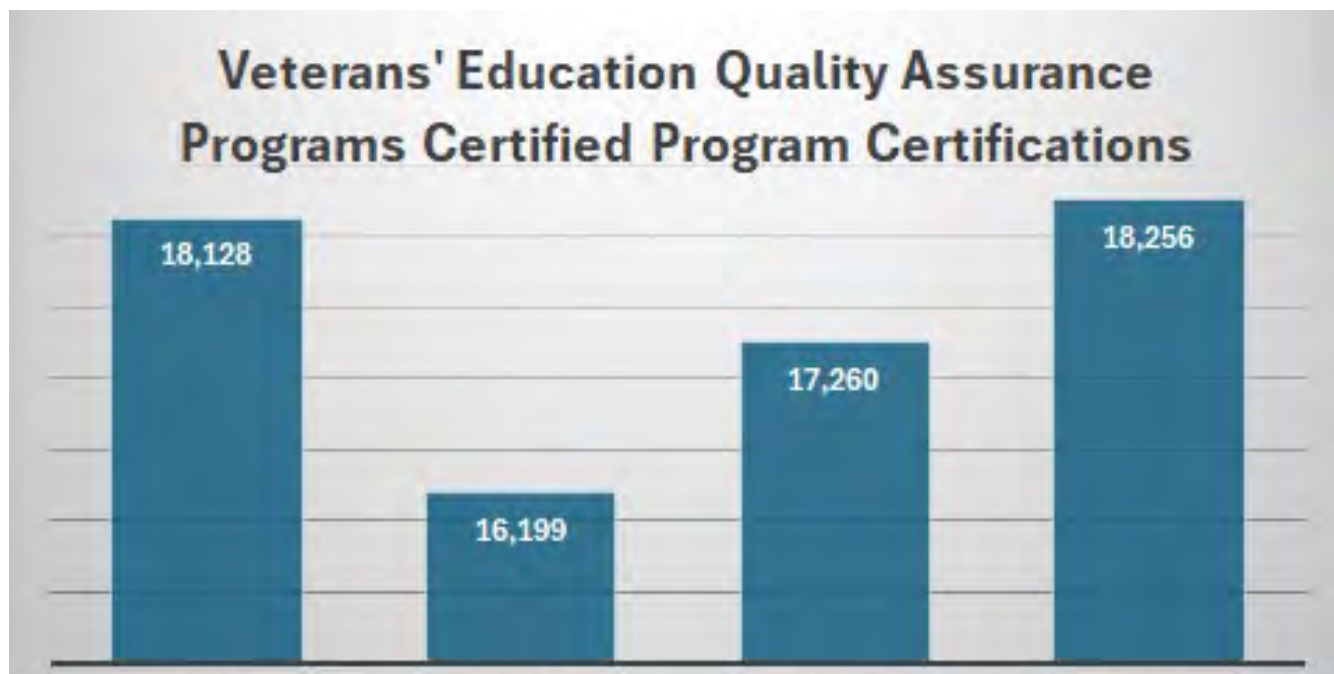
Under Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, provisions of Title 5, United States Code “*The state and all political subdivisions of the state shall give preference in employment, promotions after being deployed, and retention.*” The FDVA Office of Inspector General coordinates Veterans' Preference investigations 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 Populations and Federal Benefits Distributions

County Populations and Federal Benefits Distributions Cont.

County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Other Expenditure (Construction & Operating Expenses)	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care
ALACHUA	17,595	\$297,396	\$5,039	\$100,862	\$11,331	\$1,457	\$173,667
BAKER	1,817	\$23,546		\$11,383	\$1,032	\$44	\$11,087
BAY	21,921	\$226,056		\$160,519	\$10,794	\$751	\$53,991
BRADFORD	2,008	\$30,877		\$11,759	\$748	\$82	\$18,287
BREVARD	64,644	\$826,900	\$111	\$491,844	\$39,942	\$4,064	\$290,827
BROWARD	81,913	\$739,669		\$378,676	\$57,561	\$4,945	\$298,487
CALHOUN	1,104	\$10,721		\$6,357	\$171	\$21	\$4,172
CHARLOTTE	21,851	\$195,235		\$110,277	\$3,835	\$1,530	\$79,593
CITRUS	19,794	\$224,667		\$116,935	\$4,022	\$995	\$102,715
CLAY	25,389	\$336,335		\$217,454	\$27,146	\$1,619	\$90,115
COLLIER	27,499	\$146,075		\$86,122	\$5,650	\$2,608	\$51,695
COLUMBIA	6,502	\$135,639		\$46,956	\$1,433	\$438	\$86,812
DE SOTO	2,053	\$20,629		\$10,924	\$282	\$24	\$9,400
DIXIE	1,606	\$23,191		\$7,995	\$196	\$15	\$14,985
DUVAL	86,702	\$895,635	\$7,706	\$513,658	\$78,183	\$4,531	\$283,852
ESCAMBIA	37,977	\$430,862	\$2,213	\$281,636	\$25,136	\$1,825	\$117,840
FLAGLER	11,849	\$126,667		\$73,850	\$4,669	\$852	\$47,297
FRANKLIN	1,051	\$10,043		\$5,327	\$68	\$36	\$4,612
GADSDEN	2,949	\$38,173		\$19,623	\$737	\$152	\$17,663
GILCHRIST	1,500	\$24,100		\$9,345	\$331	\$43	\$14,380
GLADES	949	\$8,733		\$2,566	\$54	\$76	\$6,037
GULF	1,564	\$14,186		\$9,689	\$464	\$43	\$3,990
HAMILTON	873	\$17,529		\$7,491	\$368	\$73	\$9,597
HARDEE	1,271	\$10,257		\$5,254	\$225	\$74	\$4,704
HENDRY	1,685	\$17,601		\$9,247	\$626	\$92	\$7,636
HERNANDO	17,791	\$264,791		\$140,702	\$7,992	\$1,671	\$114,426
HIGHLANDS	10,137	\$103,625		\$55,614	\$1,692	\$532	\$45,787
HILLSBOROUGH	93,257	\$1,694,653	\$37,344	\$794,437	\$108,943	\$6,311	\$710,274
HOLMES	1,736	\$20,052		\$14,675	\$354	\$101	\$4,921

County Populations and Federal Benefits Distributions Cont.

County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Other Expenditure (Construction & Operating Expenses)	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care
INDIAN RIVER	16,407	\$139,337		\$79,381	\$3,636	\$1,872	\$54,448
JACKSON	3,946	\$45,770		\$30,029	\$784	\$264	\$14,693
JEFFERSON	1,055	\$10,002		\$5,469	\$211	\$25	\$4,298
LAFAYETTE	469	\$6,770		\$1,889	\$63	\$21	\$4,797
LAKE	30,446	\$375,990		\$215,141	\$12,095	\$2,580	\$146,174
LEE	60,134	\$508,040		\$263,515	\$18,908	\$3,836	\$221,782
LEON	17,682	\$161,169	\$2,700	\$82,716	\$11,961	\$1,080	\$65,466
LEVY	3,961	\$69,312		\$23,558	\$873	\$159	\$44,722
LIBERTY	457	\$4,374		\$2,440	\$64	\$11	\$1,859
MADISON	1,156	\$18,082		\$9,024	\$378	\$0	\$8,680
MANATEE	33,652	\$285,247		\$160,960	\$12,261	\$2,432	\$109,594
MARION	37,103	\$424,391		\$198,934	\$9,568	\$2,091	\$213,798
MARTIN	13,758	\$106,643		\$52,929	\$3,446	\$1,399	\$48,869
MIAMI-DADE	64,622	\$739,493	\$4,662	\$332,029	\$52,226	\$3,051	\$342,862
MONROE	7,667	\$63,731		\$35,665	\$5,298	\$362	\$22,405
NASSAU	8,402	\$87,902		\$56,475	\$6,040	\$471	\$24,916
OKALOOSA	36,406	\$405,390		\$302,815	\$32,601	\$2,250	\$67,724
OKEECHOBEE	2,892	\$39,893		\$19,198	\$724	\$134	\$19,836
ORANGE	71,582	\$988,995	\$30,038	\$467,412	\$74,748	\$4,386	\$382,373
OSCEOLA	18,122	\$355,415		\$183,993	\$18,576	\$788	\$152,058
PALM BEACH	82,730	\$767,043	\$9,772	\$319,373	\$34,200	\$9,219	\$384,708
PASCO	48,799	\$666,203		\$325,533	\$27,515	\$2,920	\$310,235
PINELLAS	81,888	\$1,182,298	\$50,659	\$457,696	\$37,809	\$5,333	\$580,141
POLK	47,970	\$602,076		\$316,339	\$26,096	\$2,365	\$257,276
PUTNAM	7,002	\$94,688		\$37,276	\$1,457	\$225	\$55,729
SAINT JOHNS	21,152	\$223,246	\$0	\$144,341	\$16,178	\$1,731	\$60,997
SAINT LUCIE	24,632	\$282,647		\$150,306	\$12,317	\$1,077	\$118,947
SANTA ROSA	22,243	\$331,744		\$247,022	\$25,673	\$858	\$58,191
SARASOTA	41,250	\$287,478	\$286	\$165,228	\$9,980	\$3,385	\$108,313

County Populations and Federal Benefits Distributions Cont.

County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Other Expenditure (Construction & Operating Expenses)	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care
SEMINOLE	31,184	\$301,365		\$157,273	\$19,128	\$1,850	\$123,115
SUMTER	18,275	\$199,460	\$16,610	\$96,854	\$2,118	\$1,060	\$66,208
SUWANNEE	3,938	\$59,022		\$23,292	\$898	\$148	\$34,684
TAYLOR	1,496	\$23,455		\$9,447	\$220	\$103	\$13,684
UNION	1,070	\$11,968		\$5,478	\$249	\$21	\$6,221
VOLUSIA	49,317	\$603,260		\$341,561	\$30,365	\$2,996	\$228,338
WAKULLA	2,316	\$28,370		\$14,621	\$959	\$90	\$12,700
WALTON	8,012	\$66,270		\$45,945	\$2,878	\$341	\$17,106
WASHINGTON	1,995	\$23,294		\$15,461	\$520	\$100	\$7,213
FLORIDA (Total)	1,492,175	\$17,503,676	\$164,413	\$9,097,795	\$907,006	\$96,039	\$7,074,009

Notes:

* Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2021, are produced by the VA Predictive Analytics and Actuary Service (VetPop 2018).

Prior to FY 08, "Loan Guaranty" expenditures were included in the Education & Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (E&VRE) programs. 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 are 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.

Hope Florida

Hope Florida, an initiative led by First Lady Casey DeSantis, utilizes Hope Navigators to guide Florida veterans towards prosperity, economic self-sufficiency, and hope on an individualized basis. These dedicated professionals play a crucial role in assisting individuals to recognize immediate barriers, set long-term goals, and create strategic plans. They ensure inclusive community involvement, fostering collaboration among the private sector, faith-based communities, nonprofits, and government entities. Hope Navigators work closely with veterans, breaking down silos and maximizing support by engaging various sectors within the community. Regardless of discharge status, age, or gender, these navigators extend their support to all Florida veterans, including Gold Star Families, veteran widows, and spouses and children of veterans. They address common obstacles like housing, employment, disability and education benefits, mental health care, and financial matters. The soft launch of *Hope Florida - A Pathway For Patriots* transitioned into a public launch on November 24, 2024, officially becoming part of the *Hope Florida* family.

In 2023, Hope Navigators made a significant impact, serving 164 Florida veterans. Notably, 98% of veterans facing housing challenges achieved more stable housing, resulting in 100 program participants sustaining housing and saving taxpayers an estimated \$1,550,000 annually. Two program participants successfully moved from homelessness to housing, saving taxpayers an estimated \$62,000 per year. The commitment to meeting basic needs was evident, with 100% of veterans requesting services having their needs met. Additionally, 100% of veterans with benefit barriers were able to access services to address their specific needs. This data undeniably reflects the effectiveness of the FDVA Hope Navigator program.



The Governor's Initiative on Lawyers Assisting Warriors (GI LAW)

The GI LAW offers legal representation in civil cases to help reduce the burden that some active military members may face. Governor DeSantis is committed to ensuring our service members have the support of the state's legal community and its best legal minds. To achieve this goal, the Governor's Initiative on Lawyers Assisting Warriors (GI LAW) draws from the talent of Florida's leading law firms to provide pro bono services for military members. Through the initiative, our state's men and women in uniform will receive local counsel in a variety of civil matters, including actions in local courts. Participating attorneys will dedicate time and expertise to ensure a prompt and fair resolution of legal matters. The program is a collaboration between the Governor's Office, the Department of Military Affairs, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and Enterprise Florida, Inc.



GI Law took effect in 2019 and has continued to grow. There have been 198 cases undertaken by law offices throughout Florida to assist military members with their legal matters. The program does not provide access to legal services for a) criminal, b) family law, or c) UCMJ cases. The program acts as a clearing house only and does not assign cases to firms or attorneys. The program does not provide legal services itself.



In 2008, the Florida Legislature established the Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF) as a Direct Support Organization for 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 (SVSO) 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, some 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 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.

FVF Chairman Commander Dennis O. Baker, USN (Ret) is past president of the Foundation, and continues to lead the charge to help our Veterans. Raymond Miller was hired as the Chief Operating Officer in February 2023, and is in charge of day-to-day operations. Brooke Dennison is the Outreach Coordinator and is responsible for Social Media and is the foundation's webmaster.

Fiscal Year 2022/2023

The Florida Veterans Foundation has aggressively approached service to Florida veterans through collaboration with statewide associations, organizations, private businesses 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, 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. Our efforts continue to be successful within the veterans' 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. This fiscal year the Foundation received \$360,000 from legislative appropriations. These funds are directed at Emergency Financial Assistance. Additionally, \$300,000 was allocated toward the Governor's Challenge for Veterans Suicide Prevention. This campaign is being managed by the FVF.

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 175,000 benefits guides in FY 2022-2023.

Suicide Prevention, Opioids/Mental Health Services

FVF is a working member of the Florida Governor's Challenge program to help develop an aggressive implementation plan for the prevention of suicide among service members, veterans and their families.

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.

Florida Veterans Support Crisis Hotlines

In addition to the Foundation's Veterans Crisis Support Line, our partnership continues with the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay to support Suicide Prevention, Opioid Addiction and Mental Health issues. Approximately 12,000+ calls per quarter.

Emergency Financial Assistance

The FVF's successful Financial Aid Program continues its partnership with the Project Vet Relief, which is managed by the American Legion of Florida.

Forward March Ambassadors for Veterans Council

This program was created in January 2020, to help FVF with a program of sustainability and now has over 47 Ambassadors that include individuals and businesses. Ambassadors pay \$1,000 a year for three years or a lump sum of \$2,800. This 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.

Gadsden Flag License Plate

FVF continues to promote the sale of Gadsden Flag License Plate. Funding helps the foundation continue its mission of helping veterans in need. As of January 2024, 18,701 license plates have been purchased. This continuous funding has helped expand the services provided by FVF.



Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

The foundation has entered into an agreement to supply two Ford transit vans to aid in transportation of Florida Veterans to their VA appointments. The two vans were purchased based off of the needs of DAV.

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.

Category	Program	Veteran & Families Served	
Veterans & Organizations	Emergency Direct Financial Assistance	Served Population	Dollars
FVF Marketing Programs	Governor's Suicide Challenge		\$181,246.16
Veteran Direct Support	Veterans Nursing Homes		\$96,387.85
FVF Partners Funding	Outreach Partners		\$31,028.00
Veterans Benefit Guides	Educational + Emergency Services	175,000	\$25,100.00

Chairman, Staff & Board of Directors' Participation Events

Veteran Treatment Courts, City & County Council Meetings, Veterans 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.



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. This year we began implementing 2021 House Bill 435: Veterans' Employment and Training, establishing the nation's first statewide SkillBridge initiative and designating *Veterans Florida* as the state's principal Department of Defense SkillBridge awareness and assistance organization. The Florida SkillBridge Initiative creates unprecedented opportunities for transitioning service members across the country to come to Florida, builds a highly skilled talent pipeline for employers, and firmly plants Florida's flag as the top destination for military families.

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 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 Career Services Program. This program houses our largest grant program, the Workforce Training Grant, which reimburses eligible companies for 50 percent of the training cost for every new veteran hired and trained, up to \$8,000 per employee.



The Workforce Training Grant provides resources to Florida's targeted industry employers to hire, retain, and train veterans to augment their 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 a network of Florida employers. Veterans can register at veteransflorida.org for assistance. Veterans Services Specialists or Coordinators reach out to every veteran who contacts *Veterans Florida* to provide employment services such as resume assistance, interview preparation, career matching, and counsel veterans on additional resources available to them.

During FY 2021-22, a total of 2,668 veterans in Florida and from across the nation were served seeking career assistance or job placement in Florida. Over 90 employers used *Veterans Florida* Workforce or Career Services this year.

Workforce Grant Reimbursements FY 2016-23		
Fiscal Year	Trained	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
FY 2021-22	118	\$406,269
FY 2022-23	197	\$918,750
Total	1,553	\$5,178,971

Workforce Veteran Training Grant Program began January 2016 after receiving initial funding from the State.

Florida SkillBridge Initiative

The DOD SkillBridge program allows transitioning service members, with commander approval during their last six months of military service, the opportunity to work for a civilian employer to sharpen critical industry skills and obtain specialized training, while retaining their full military pay and benefits and help ease their military separation into their new civilian career. In fiscal year 2020, *Veterans Florida* became an authorized DOD SkillBridge provider with our Agriculture Program in partnership with the University of Florida.

In 2021, Governor DeSantis signed a new law to create the nation's first statewide SkillBridge Initiative and designating *Veterans Florida* as the principal organization to execute the initiative. In fiscal year 2022, *Veterans Florida* continued to expand the program working with more than 100 employers. This past year, 96 service members completed SkillBridge training, 70 percent of whom came to Florida from other states or from overseas.

SkillBridge Program	
Fiscal Year	Trained
FY 2020-21	1
FY 2021-22	35
FY 2022-23	96
Total	132

SkillBridge Program			
Fiscal Year	Applications Received	Participants Served	Participants Completed
FY 2020-21	48	16	1
FY 2021-22	68	67	35
Total	116	83	36

Agriculture Program

For fiscal years 2020-23, Veterans Florida received a \$745,245 prime award from the United States Department of Agriculture AgVets Program, to expand the Veterans Florida Agriculture Program and build on the success of a Pilot Program. Our objective for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) award was for thirty (30) veterans to complete the program to become the next generation of Florida agricultural leaders.



Veterans Florida exceeded the program's milestones with support from the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and placed 34 veterans through training by the end of the program on August 31, 2023. Most of the veterans who completed the Agriculture Program were placed into related employment, started their own farms, or furthered their education in an agriculture-related degree. Additionally, we strengthened our outreach and developed relationships with thirteen (13) of the UF/IFAS Research and Education Centers (RECs)

and demonstration sites around the state.

The *Veterans Florida* Agriculture Program is a six-month training fellowship that provides veterans and servicemembers a comprehensive, hands-on experience and equips them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be competitive for leading careers in Florida's \$149 billion agriculture industry. The hands-on training takes place at the UF/IFAS RECs in Florida, where cutting edge research and innovations in food safety, crop production, and disease-resistant plants have played a vital role in advancing the industry. Each research center develops 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.

Agriculture Program			
Fiscal Year	Applications	Served	Trained
FY 2020-21	24	12	10
FY 2021-22	44	24	18
FY 2022-23	27	8	6
Total	95	44	34

Agriculture Program			
Fiscal Year	Applications	Served	Trained
FY 2020-21	24	12	10
FY 2021-22	44	24	18
FY 2022-23	27	8	6
Total	95	44	34

Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program

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

The Entrepreneurship Program conducted its seventh year of operation in Fiscal Year 2021-22. Since the inception of the program in early 2016, the program has received more than 6,500 applications from veterans across the state and served 4,975 veterans.

The program features several opportunities to meet the needs of veteran entrepreneurs at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey. This approach favors tailored training over information overload. Veterans can participate in cohort-based training, workshops, networking or coworking.



Cohort-based training provides multiple training modules to a small group of prescreened participants in a facilitated discussion environment over the course of several weeks. Cohorts are designed to help veteran entrepreneurs with starting their business or growing their business after startup. These cohorts delve deeply into all aspects of entrepreneurship and are hosted by one of our entrepreneur partners. Cohort attendance is reserved for a maximum of 15 veterans. Acceptance into this portion of the program is managed by the partners.

Workshops provide veteran entrepreneurs with topical general business training to groups of participants of any size over the course of a few hours. Training in general business topics such as legal structures, stakeholders, launching, marketing, franchising, acquisitions, and other issues that business owners frequently face. Workshops are open to all interested veteran entrepreneurs and are hosted by one of our entrepreneur partners.

Networking events provide veteran entrepreneurs opportunities to network with peers and connect with

resources. Networking offers entrepreneurs personal growth, developing professional connections and building a sense of community. Networking events are conducted by our entrepreneur partners and provide veterans interested in entrepreneurship the ability to learn about program opportunities, network with peers, and connect with resources to assist them on their entrepreneurial journey. Networking events are open to all interested veteran entrepreneurs, mentors, entrepreneurs and community business leaders.

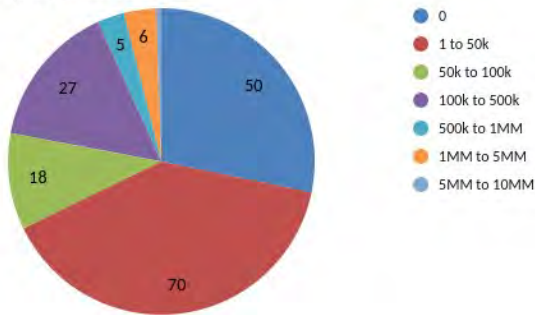
Coworking space provides veteran entrepreneurs with shared office space and access to local resources. Partners offering coworking space may provide unlimited or near unlimited 24/7 access to office space, desk (private preferred), member-only events and workshops, conference room access, discounted venue rental, mailing and business address, access to mentorship from local business leaders and professional consultants, and Lean Startup programming.

Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program Network Partners for 2022-2023

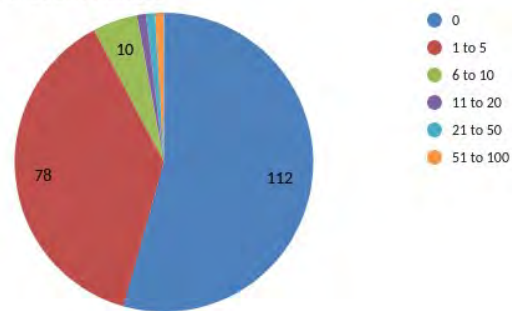
Entrepreneurship Program Partners FY 2022-23		
 Tampa	 Destin	 Jacksonville, Orlando, Panhandle, Space Coast, Tampa
 Boca Raton	 Fort Myers	 Bonita Springs
 Jacksonville	 Orlando	 Tampa
 Fort Lauderdale	 Tampa	 Orlando
 Miami	 St. Petersburg	 Miami
 Tampa		

Entrepreneur Program Participants Survey Respondents FYs 2020-23

Annual \$Revenue Ranges



Employee Count Ranges



Low Range Total: \$6,100,070

Low Range Total: 304

High Range Total: \$23,800,000

High Range Total: 830

Starting in 2022 respondents report ranges for revenue and employees for improved capture of metrics; this table reflects responses after completing Startup or Growth training. These results are from respondents who attended cohort training between FYs 2020-2023.

Entrepreneur Program Participants					
Fiscal Year	Served*	Cohort Trained	Fiscal Year	Served*	Cohort Trained
FY 2015-16	424	167	FY 2020-21	525	262
FY 2016-17	300	147	FY 2021-22	989	132
FY 2017-18	393	82	FY 2022-23	1,614	173
FY 2018-19	426	96			
FY 2019-20	304	108			
* Served includes veteran participation in any program element offered in the Entrepreneurship Program including			Total	4,975	1,167

Marketing Program

The Veterans Florida marketing and communications campaign supports the organization's primary goals: Career Assistance; Entrepreneurship Training; and promoting Florida's status as the nation's top state for veterans, transitioning servicemembers, and their families. The marketing team also produces all content and executes all advertising for the Veterans Florida Expo each year in coordination with the administration and VETS teams. The target audience is servicemembers and veterans in the 12 months leading up to and following separation from the military.

The marketing team works closely with VISIT FLORIDA to carry out the annual marketing campaign. The marketing focus has shifted in recent years from high-volume web traffic to longer-form storytelling content, with a specific priority placed on LinkedIn. The success of that strategy is born out not only in engagement and audience size, but significant growth in targeted industries and demographics. Along with LinkedIn, email campaigns are primary drivers of inbound leads and Veterans Florida consistently outperforms competitors and industry averages in key metrics such as engagement and open rates. Other channels include public relations, traditional print advertising, radio, and paid search through Google's \$10,000 per month AdGrants program.

The in-house writing team produces regular content around monthly themes highlighting our participants' success and opportunities in targeted Florida industries. These blog posts are among the highest-performing content pieces, and have contributed to earned media coverage in major target markets. The marketing team executes topical webinars with veterans, servicemembers, and economic development partners to promote our programs, answer questions, and increase visibility of Florida's veterans support initiatives.

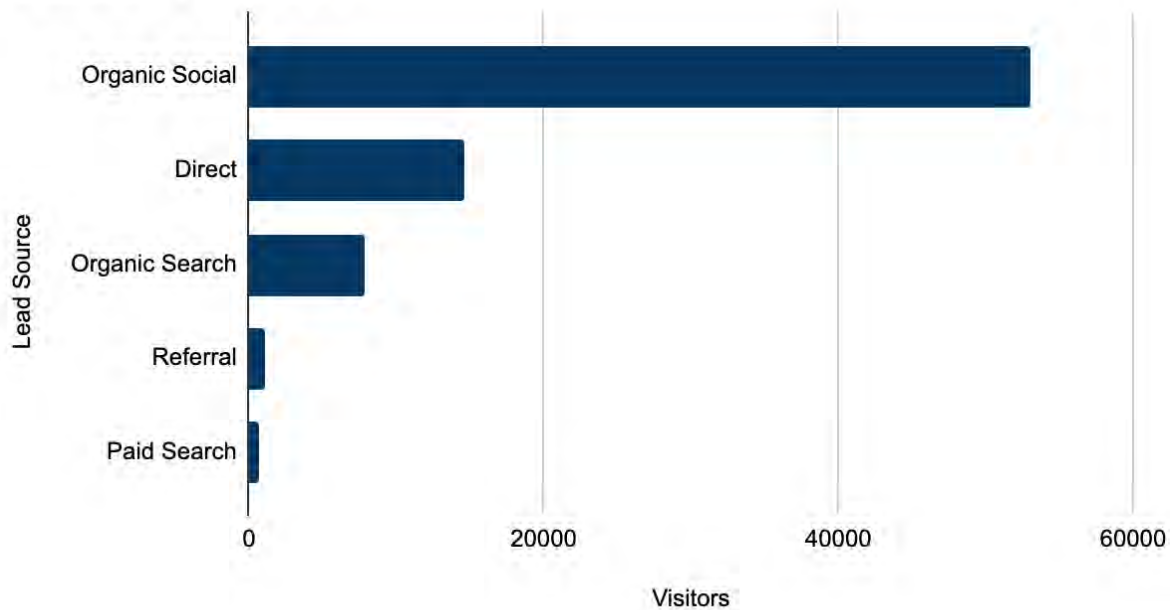
The marketing team has full web development, video production, and creative capabilities, allowing Veterans Florida to operate with the flexibility to quickly capitalize on opportunities and maximize our reach and impact. The team built our website, handles all public relations, and creates all of the content distributed on social media and the web.

The 2023 Veterans Florida Expo moved to Tampa and was conducted on June 9 and 10. The two-day event featured 244 total attendees, 31 employers, 22 exhibitors, 28 speakers, and 15 pitch competitors in a statewide Battle of the Pitches. MK3 Industries won gold and received \$10,000, Jun Cyber took silver and won \$5,000, and OLGS won \$2,500 for bronze. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from attendees, sponsors, and exhibitors.



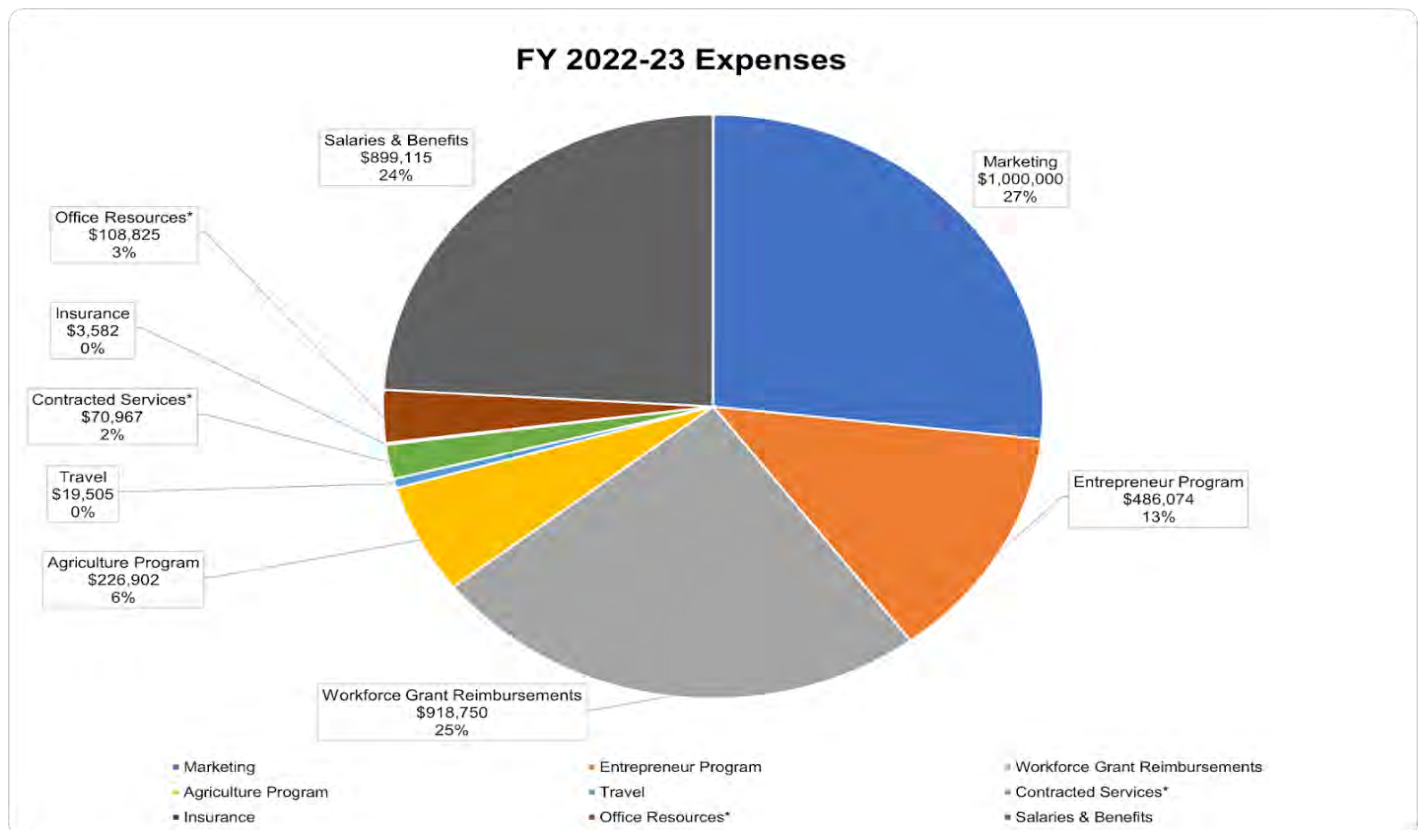
Marketing Metrics				
	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	% Change	Notes
Total Unique Website Visitors	93,419	78,051	-19.69%	Google Analytics system changed. No data before Feb. 2023
Total Facebook Page Likes	79,317	78,394	-1.18%	Standard Facebook Scrub of Inactive Accounts
Email Newsletter Subscribers	33,725	26,750	-24.4%	Scrubbed Inactive Users
LinkedIn Followers	7,004	8,148	16.33%	Result of Prioritizing LinkedIn
Twitter Followers	785	844	7.52%	Result of increased activity
Instagram Followers	1,263	1,457	15.36%	Result of content optimization

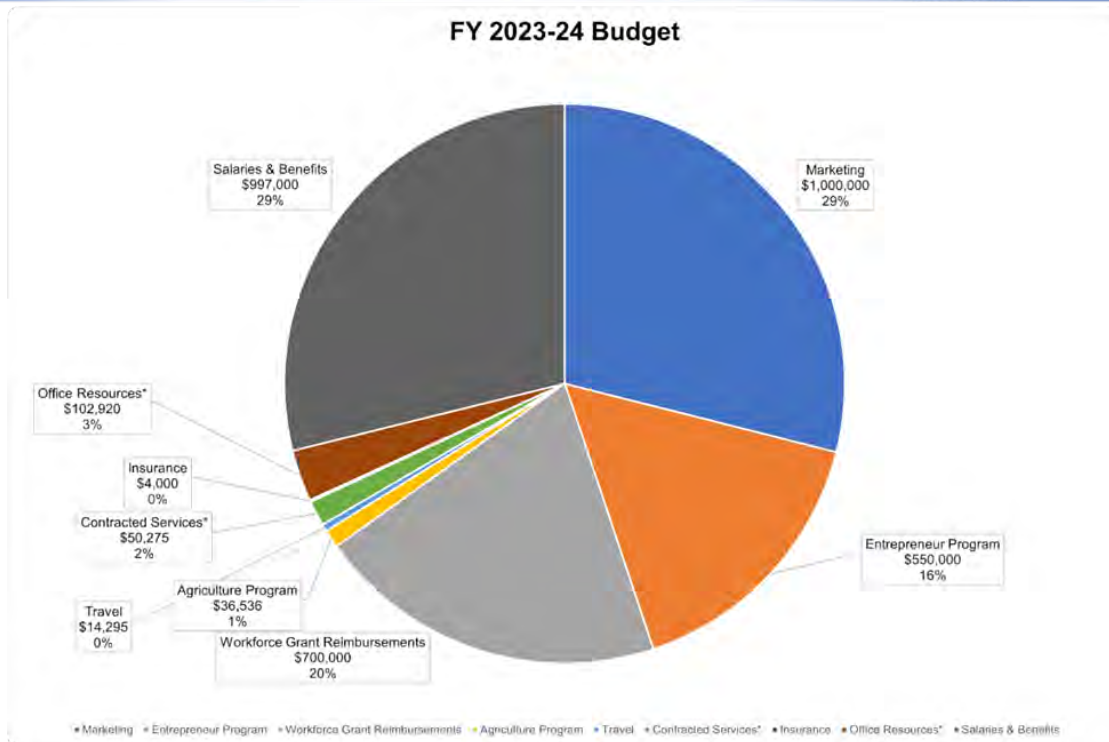
Visitors - FY22-23



Financial Summary

Veterans Florida derives revenue from many sources, with the primary funder being the State of Florida.





*Office Resources include operational expenses such as office supplies and equipment, lease of office space, software, telecommunication services, printing, and postage. Contracted Services such as accounting, auditing services, HR/Payroll, legal services, and website development and management help support the organization's internal operations.

Contracts FY 2021-2022

The corporation entered into the following contracts to carry out its duties.

Contracts				
Date Entered	Contractor	Service Provided	Amount	Date Completed
July 12, 2021	930 TVR, LLC	Office Lease	\$184,372	Aug 31, 2024
May 20, 2022	US Army Installation Management Command's G9 Family and Morale, Welfare	2022 DoD Warrior Games Sponsor	\$25,000	Aug 29, 2022
July 6, 2022	Association of Defense Communities	2022 Sponsorship	\$5,000	Sept 23, 2022
July 25, 2022	Hilton Garden Inn Ft Walton Beach	Board Meeting Venue	\$400	Sept 21, 2022

Development

Contracts Continued

July 25, 2022	Group Victory	Strategic Planning Consult	\$12,000	Nov 15, 2022
July 25, 2022	RecruitMilitary	Job Fair Registrations	\$8,685	Dec 15, 2022
Sept 29, 2022	Florida Veterans Foundation	Florida Veterans Benefits Guide	\$5,000	Dec 31, 2023
Oct 3, 2022	Capital IT, LLC	IT Network Upgrade	\$1,127	Oct 31, 2022
Oct 4, 2022	Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore	Expo Venue	\$20,000	June 11, 2023
Oct 7, 2022	Diversity Group & Associates	Agriculture Program Quarterly Audits	\$18,695	Oct 31, 2023
Oct 17, 2022	Doubletree by Hilton	Board Meeting Venue	\$250	March 15, 2023
Oct 24, 2022	A National Salute to America's Heroes, LLC	2023 Hyundai Air Sea Show Sponsorship	\$100,000	May 28, 2023
Nov 14, 2022	DocuSign	eSignature Software	\$2,393	Nov 8, 2023
Dec 14, 2022	PCB Entertainment, LLC	2023 Gulf Coast Jam Sponsorship	\$100,000	June 4, 2023
Jan 6, 2023	Sun 'n Fun Fly-In, Inc	2023 SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo	\$100,000	April 2, 2023
Feb 16, 2023	Silver Productions	Expo Video Production	\$5,750	June 30, 2023
June 22, 2023	Carr, Riggs & Ingram	Auditing & Form 990 Tax Preparation	\$13,610	Dec 31, 2023

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/Sponsorships			
Organization	Amount	Type	Purpose
USDA - AGVETS Program (Year two of three)	\$249,310	Grant	Agriculture Program
Bank of America	\$20,000	Sponsorship	Expo Sponsor
Boeing	\$10,000	Sponsorship	Expo Sponsor
Career Source Florida	\$10,000	Sponsorship	Expo Sponsor
Concerned Veterans For America	\$1,000	Exhibitor	Expo Exhibitor
Florida Association of Veteran-Owned Businesses	\$1,000	Exhibitor	Expo Exhibitor
Learning Alliance Corporation	\$1,000	Exhibitor	Expo Exhibitor
SEA Experience	\$1,000	Exhibitor	Expo Exhibitor
Western Governors University	\$1,000	Exhibitor	Expo Exhibitor
Amazon - Tampa	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
AshBritt Inc.	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Associated Asphalt	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Avistock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Broward County Sheriff's Office	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Builders FirstSource	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Citrus County Sheriff's Office	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Creative Management Technology	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Florida International University	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
GardaWorld	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
General Dynamics Corporation	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Hillsborough County Aviation Authority	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Home Builders Institute Inc	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
HT Hackney Company	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor

Awards/Sponsorships			
Iron EagleX	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Kaman Aerospace Corporation	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Keiser University	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Navy Recruiting Reserve Command	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
NextEra Energy Inc.	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Onward to Opportunity	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Orange County Sheriff's Office	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Palm Beach Sheriff Office	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
RoadSafe Traffic Systems, Inc.	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Sarasota County Government	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Tampa Armature Works	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Universal Orlando	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
University of West Florida/Haas Center	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
VetCor LLC	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Vets2PM, LLC	\$500	Exhibitor	Expo Employer Exhibitor
Other Supporters	\$735	Donation	General Mission
Total FY 2022-23	\$309,545		

Outlook

Veterans Florida SkillBridge initiative continues to gain momentum as it is becoming our best vehicle for retaining and attracting separating and retiring servicemembers and veterans to the state. We tripled the amount of placements into SkillBridge training over the year before, and more employers are signing up as they learn of the benefits to their workforce.

All funds from the Workforce Training Grant were disbursed to partnered employers ahead of schedule for the third straight year, allowing us to raise the bar on their training plans to strengthen military-to-employer talent pipelines and Florida's future veteran workforce. Additionally, overall budget savings allowed us to increase funds disbursed to employers to nearly \$1 million.

The Entrepreneurship Program served the most veterans in its seven-year history by expanding our footprint across the state to meet veterans where they are and at any stage of their venture. The success of adding new partners and increasing the cohort, coworking, and networking opportunities bear out in the quality of Florida veteran small business startups at the 2023 Battle of the Pitches, where proprietary inventors and software developers took the top spots in our largest and most competitive statewide pitch competition yet.

The 2023 Expo moved to Tampa this year, and the event attendance and visibility continued to grow as Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nunez joined us as our keynote speaker. The 2024 Expo will be June 7-8 at the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore to allow more veterans to experience the State of Florida's official economic opportunity event for the military community.

Our partnership with the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences for the Agriculture Program fulfilled the 2020-23 United States Department of Agriculture grant's mission, and we will reapply for the award after maintaining a 100 percent job offer rate to veteran graduates. Adding SkillBridge to the fellowship opened the door for servicemembers to apply, leading us to expand the program to more research farms across the state to keep pace with growing demand.

Equipped and guided by a new three-year strategic plan, Veterans Florida aims to build on the successes from 2022-23 state funding and explore additional private funding partners that support our programs and services. The unwavering support from the State of Florida, those who served, statewide partners, and industry leaders push us each day to connect those who served to the powerful career and entrepreneurship tools, training, and resources that make Florida the nation's most veteran-friendly state.

The Veterans Florida Trade Magazine is available on our website. Look for the symbol below on our website:



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



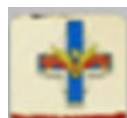
Non-Commissioned Officers Association



The American Legion



The Retired Enlisted Association



Veterans of World War I (Family Members)

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 email 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.



State Veterans' Home Annual Summaries



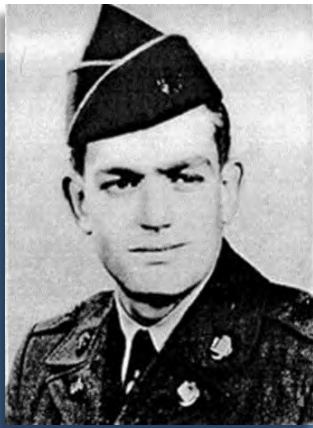
Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home

Lake City (Columbia County), Staffing: 69
FY 2022-23 Occupancy Rate: 96.0% (26 Admissions, 23 Discharges)

The 150-bed Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City 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) facility provides a special combination of housing, personalized support services and incidental medical care to its veteran residents.

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.





Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home

Daytona Beach (Volusia County), Staffing: 141

FY 2022-23 Occupancy Rate: 82.1% Admissions 93, Discharges 73

The 120-bed Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home in Daytona Beach opened to residents in December 1993. Situated on 30 acres, the 69,222 square foot (appraised square footage) skilled nursing facility provides quality care and a secluded respite for our seasoned veterans. This Four Star Quality Rated home ranks in the top 20 percent of skilled nursing homes.

At the veterans' home resides a tight-knit family of residents and staff. They not only enjoy the love and care of the staff, but enjoy great support from local volunteer organizations. Every day the Bennett staff focuses on serving the residents with compassion and top-notch care, sharing their lives, and providing peace of mind for their families.



Agency for Health Care Administration
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating





Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home

Land O' Lakes (Pasco County), Staffing: 148
FY 2022-23 Occupancy Rate: 76.0% (62 Admissions, 22 Discharges)



The 120-bed Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home in Land O' Lakes opened to residents in 1999. The 73,000 square foot (appraised square footage) veterans' 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.

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.

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





Alexander “Sandy” Nining State Veterans’ Nursing

Pembroke Pines (Broward County), Staffing: 145

FY 2022-23 Occupancy Rate: 80.2% (63 Admissions, 44 Discharges)

The 120-bed Alexander “Sandy” Nining State Veterans’ Nursing Home in Pembroke Pines opened to residents in 2001. The 83,896 square foot (appraised square footage) skilled nursing facility offers quality care and is equipped to 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.

Life in the Nining Home is anything but sedentary. Frequent outings provide the residents with and open forum to the surrounding community. Sandy Nining, residents and staff commune together as family. They host events for all special occasions, and receive superb support from community Volunteer service organizations.



Agency for Health Care Administration
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating





The 120-bed Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home in Panama City opened to residents in 2003. The 75,394 square foot (appraised square footage) facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. The home is located strategically in the state to care for our north Florida veterans in their time of need. The home provides residents with 24-hour nursing care, daily living and recreational activities, rehabilitative therapy and nutritional cuisine.

The skilled nursing facility is located in a beautiful, wooded setting, surrounded by wildlife and nature. The residents enjoy regular outdoor activities and frequent offsite events such as ballgames, movies, restaurants and shopping.

Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home

Panama City (Bay County), Staffing: 143
FY 2022-23 Occupancy Rate: 86.1% (33 Admissions, 56 Discharges)



Agency for Health Care Administration
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating





Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home

Port Charlotte (Charlotte County), Staffing: 143
FY 2022-23 Occupancy Rate: 77.0% (69 Admissions, 52 Discharges)



The 120-bed Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port Charlotte opened to residents in 2004. The 68,700 square foot (appraised square footage) facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/ Alzheimer's disease. The skilled nursing facility offers veterans 24-hour nursing care, daily living and recreational activities, rehabilitative therapy and nutritional cuisine.

A modern skilled nursing facility surrounded by an involved community of supportive public and civic organizations, the veterans' home 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



Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home

St. Augustine (St. Johns County), Staffing: 159
FY 2022-23 Occupancy Rate: 91.0% (23 Admissions, 45 Discharges)



The 120-bed Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home in St. Augustine opened its doors to residents in 2010. The 89,150 square foot (appraised square footage) 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. The home provides residents with 24-hour nursing care, daily living and recreational activities, rehabilitative therapy and nutritional cuisine.

The veterans' 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.



Agency for Health Care Administration
Nursing Home Overall Inspection Rating



Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home

Port St. Lucie (St. Lucie County), Staffing: 117

FY 2022 – 23 Occupancy Rate: N/A 46 Admissions, 7 Discharges



The 120-bed Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie opened to residents in July 2022. The veterans' home is named in honor of a Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War - Fort Pierce and St. Lucie native Sergeant Ardie R. Copas, an Army Specialist at the time, who died in 1970 while serving in the Vietnam War.

The state-of-the-art 28.5 acre facility offers private and semi-private rooms with 24-hour nursing care and can accommodate residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease.

The veterans' home, situated in a lodge-like setting, offers superb residential care and services. Residents enjoy a wide variety of special events and diverse activities as it is collocated near entertainment, recreational and dining venues.





Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home

Orlando at Lake Baldwin (Orange County), Staffing: 122
FY 2022-23 Occupancy Rate: 25 – Pending final inspection.

The 112-bed Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando opened its doors to residents in August 2022. It was named in honor of U.S. Army Sergeant First Class Alwyn C. Cashe, who is noted as the First African-American Gulf War Servicemember to receive the Medal of Honor. The veterans' home is the first in the Nation and Florida's first to be named after a Post-9/11 Medal of Honor Recipient.

The 60,388 square foot (appraised square footage) facility, a former VA Community Living Center, offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 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.





FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.

FDVA Benefits & Assistance Hotline

727-319-7440

FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV

Florida Veterans Foundation

850-488-4181

Florida Vets Support Line

988 or 1-844-693-5838