



State of Florida
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
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James S. "Hammer" Hartsell
Deputy Executive Director

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

DATE: April 13, 2021

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

FROM: James S. "Hammer" Hartsell
Deputy Executive Director

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

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

The Quarterly Report is submitted pursuant to the procedures authorized by Rule 55-1.003 Florida Administrative Code (06/10/2008).

If you have any questions regarding any matter covered by this report, please contact Deputy Executive Director James S. Hartsell at (727) 518-3202 or Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director Roy Clark at (850) 487-1533.

CC:

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

Attachment 1: FDVA Quarterly Report

ATTACHMENT 1
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SECOND QUARTER REPORT
October 1 – December 31, 2020

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

1) Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Administrative Highlights

a) Current Issues/Concerns

i) Executive Direction:

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) revitalized visitation rights for State Veterans' Homes with an amended visitation policy. On March 11, 2020, in conjunction with the Governor's Executive Order 20-52, the FDVA senior leadership made a difficult decision which restricted all visitor access at the State Veterans' Homes, except for those who are receiving end-of-life care.

On October 22, FDVA leadership amended and expanded state veterans' homes visitation policies which had been in effect since September 1, per Governor's Executive Order 20-112 and revised guidelines from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and COVID-19 Task Force.

In continued efforts to eliminate the risk to our residents and staff while continually providing exceptional services and loving care to our residents, FDVA has taken the following steps:

- Enhanced periodic facility deep cleaning.
- Incorporated screening the staff, vendors and visitors at the entrance of all seven State Veterans' Homes.
- Provided weekly COVID-19 tests to the residents and staff.
- The COVID-19 positive tested residents were immediately admitted to a hospital.
- COVID-19 positive tested or asymptomatic staff members were asked to stay at home in self-isolation for two weeks and were advised to seek medical treatment as needed. Following that, two sequential negative tests were required before the infected staff member can return to work. Procured test kits and prioritized Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) purchases.
- Leadership conducted safety briefings with personnel on PPE to keep the facilities staff and residents safe.
- In compliance with CDC guidelines, FDVA facilities provided COVID-19 testing training to the caregivers.
- Developed agency policies for the State Veterans' Homes reopening timelines under the DMS's guidance and the COVID-19 Task Force's recommendations.
- Office of Communications posts daily COVID-19-related updates on the FDVA website at www.FloridaVets.org.
- Worked with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and Department of Health on a vaccination schedule to inoculate veteran residents and staff within the State Veterans' Homes.

- The St. Petersburg VA Regional office opened to limited operations in the reporting period due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deputy Executive Director James S. “Hammer” Hartsell participated in national COVID-19 briefing teleconferences on October 14 and December 16. At the meeting, state and local government leaders discussed best safety procedures in compliance with the Department of Health (DOH) and CDC guidance for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations and prioritizing immunizations at skilled nursing facilities.

On December 7, Deputy Executive Director Hartsell conducted a site visit to the Baldomero Lopez State Veterans’ Nursing Home in Land O’ Lakes. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell, Home’s Administrator Marlies Sarrett and staff discussed best practices to minimize the spread of COVID-19 within the facility, and developed a strategy to provide appropriate care and attention for COVID-19 asymptomatic residents.

As of December 2020, FDVA received notification of \$5.3 million in the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Being issued to the State in March 2020, the grant funds were authorized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to assist with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. FDVA has designated the funds to offset the incurred revenue losses, address staffing shortfalls, purchase PPE equipment and supplies, and other COVID-19 related matters.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Al Carter facilitated coordination for support services and provided updates to the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs (FDVA) team leaders on COVID-19. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell addressed communication and coordination support for the agency budget, pending constituent issues, and operational challenges and resources.

Division of State Veterans’ Homes Director Connie Tolley and State Veterans’ Homes Administrators developed a strategic plan for new residents’ admissions at SVHs. The new residence admissions opened without compromising the continued efforts on the health and safety of the State Veterans’ Homes staff, residents, and their families. Director Tolley provided emergency plans and status updates relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and weather threats to the agency.

Communications and External Affairs Director and Agency Emergency Coordinating Officer Steve Murray provided continuous updates to the agency through the Executive Office of the Governor’s mitigation and remediation efforts on COVID-19. Director Murray also responded to news media inquiries regarding the impact of COVID-19 in the State Veterans’ Homes.

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

- Hurricane Delta, October 5-7.
- Tropical Storm Zeta, October 26-30.
- Tropical Storm Eta, November 2-14.

The Florida Health Care Association honored Reina Beck, a Licensed Practical Nurse at the Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans’ Nursing Home in Port Charlotte as LPN of the Year for 2020.

❖ **Veterans Education and Awareness**

FDVA Office of Communications produced the *Forward March* Veterans’ Newsletter for October, November and December.

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

- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in virtual Town Hall meetings with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Under Secretary for Benefits Paul R. Lawrence on October 5 and October 29.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended the Florida Suicide Prevention Interagency Action Committee (SPIAC) meetings on October 8, November 5, November 19 and December 3.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended virtual meetings with the Special Populations/Risk Reduction (SPRR) committee on October 12 and December 7.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in a virtual conference with the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame (FVHoF) committee on October 13. Also, Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with the Governor's Director of Communications, Fred Piccolo, to coordinate a virtual FVHoF Induction ceremony for the class of 2020.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and FDVA Leadership met with North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Director Thomas Wisnieski in a Town Hall meeting on October 13.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended virtual meetings with the Florida National Cemetery Joint Veterans Committee on October 14, November 19, and December 9.
- Chief of Staff Carter attended virtual meetings with the Suicide Prevention Steering Committee on October 14 and December 10.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in virtual conferences with the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) on October 15, November 5 and December 19.
- Communications and External Affairs Director Murray attended the board of directors meeting with the Florida Veterans Foundation on October 15.
- Communications and External Affairs Director Murray provided veterans related legislative updates to the Florida Veterans Council on October 22 and November 18.
- FDVA Leadership participated in a joint venture with the Bay Pines VA Health Care System to promote public awareness on available VA health care benefits to veterans and their families. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell served as keynote speaker at their awareness event on October 28.
- FDVA Leadership participated in a virtual session with the Governor's Challenge Workgroups on October 29.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell and Chief of Staff Carter participated in a virtual meeting with the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 8 on October 30.
- Communications and External Affairs Director Murray participated in a Public Relations Committee teleconference with the Florida Health Care Association on October 30.
- FDVA hosted the eighth Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame induction ceremony on November 11. Twenty veterans were inducted via a virtual ceremony. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell made remarks in honor of the Class of 2020 for their selfless services to our nation and the local community.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the U.S. Marine Corps 245th Traditional Birthday Cake Cutting ceremony at the MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa on November 5.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in a teleconference with Senior Mentor David Abramowitz at Veterans Treatment Court on November 6.

- Communications and External Affairs Director Murray represented the State of Florida at the salute to the European Theatre of World War II veteran ceremony on November 10. The award ceremony was organized by the Consulate General of France in Miami, Florida.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the Gold Star Family Monument committee meetings in Tampa on November 7 and a virtual meeting on December 7.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in weekly virtual conferences with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Substance and Mental Health Service Agency (VA/SAMHSA) and HHS on November 16 and December 14.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Veteran Claims Examiners at the Tallahassee VA Outpatient Clinic on November 18. Deputy Executive Director Hartsell also attended the National SAMHSA webinar on November 18.
- Communications and External Affairs Director Murray attended the Board of Directors meeting with Veterans Florida in Tallahassee on November 24.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell joined Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie and VA Chief Veterans Experience Officer Lynda C. Davis at a VA Community Town Hall virtual meeting on November 30. The meeting was focused on the veteran's electronic health record (EHR) system for the VA mental health care programs.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated in a virtual meeting with the Florida Department of Children and Families' Suicide Prevention committee on November 30.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with the President of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) John A. Scocos via Zoom on December 1.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with the Executive Director of Veterans Florida Joe Marino on December 14. At the meeting, Director Marino addressed Deputy Executive Director Hartsell on available veteran training, employment, and entrepreneurial programs and possible other veteran benefits opportunities within the State.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended a virtual meeting with the National Association of State Veterans' Homes (NASVH) on December 16.

❖ **Community Outreach**

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

- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with retired U.S. Army Sergeant Major Michael Schultz at the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office in Largo on October 8.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Southeastern Guide Dogs board member Bobby Newman on October 28.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell attended the 2020 Leatherneck Scramble Golf Tournament award ceremony in Tallahassee on November 16. The Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF) and the Marine Corps League honored veterans for their contribution to the community.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated in a Hamilton County Health care Strategic Planning committee meeting on November 18.
- Chief of Staff Carter participated in a virtual ceremony of the 2020 Florida TaxWatch Productivity Awards on December 15. FDVA received four awards for its significant and measurable innovations and collaborations that have improved services and saved money for Florida taxpayers and businesses.

- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in a virtual holiday celebration with the U.S. Southern Command on December 16.
- Deputy Executive Director Hartsell visited the Quantum Leap Farm Equine Assisted Therapeutic Center on December 18. Quantum Leap Farm is a horse breeding center that provides comprehensive therapeutic riding and occupational therapy to service members and veterans living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI).

❖ **Legislative Activities**

Governor DeSantis recently signed Senate Bill 294 / Chapter 163, Florida Veterans Protection Act of 2020, which improves the existing White Collar Crime Victim Protection Act. The law protects veterans against any person who commits aggravated white collar crimes against the victimization of ten or more veterans.

The following two veteran-related federal bills were signed into law on October 17:

Senate Bill 785 / U.S. Law No: 116-778. The Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019, which improves the service delivery method for VA mental health care services. The bill amends several authorities related to helping veterans transition from military to civilian life, including suicide prevention, mental health care research and oversight, mental health care staffing, care for women veterans, and tele health care.

Senate Bill 2661 / U.S. Law No: 116-172. The bill National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to designate 9-8-8 as a universal telephone number for the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic Director Karen Blanchette at the Legislative Strategy Planning on the mental health care treatment options committee meeting on October 15. Later that afternoon, he met with the Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell met with Florida Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services Nicole “Nikki” Fried in Tallahassee on October 13.

Deputy Executive Director Hartsell participated in a virtual meeting with Senator Tom A. Wright to discuss veterans’ alternative therapies and wellness programs on December 8.

FDVA Leadership attended the 2020 State Leaders Holiday Reception at the Florida Governor’s Mansion in Tallahassee on December 15.

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

- On November 9, Governor released Paychecks for Patriots Hiring Fairs Proclamation.
- On November 10, Governor released Veterans Day in Florida Proclamation.
- On December 7, Governor released Florida Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Proclamation.
- On December 16, Governor released Battle of the Bulge Day in Florida Proclamation.

ii) **Division of Veterans’ Benefits and Assistance:**

Bureau of Veterans’ Claims Services:

The Bureau of Veterans’ Claims Services second quarter production review of rating decisions continues from the previous quarter. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been acutely affected by the pandemic as its operations are slowed. This reduction has echoed in our operations as we have a symbiotic relationship. The Bureau of Claims Services processed 10,055 rating decision reviews of disability benefits claims through the Veterans Benefits

Management System (VBMS). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Petersburg Regional Office has remained closed for in-person visits. The Board of Veterans Appeals has partially opened for virtual hearings only. Personal Hearings continues to be affected due to the closure of the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office. However, the Bureau has shifted to telework operations and adjusting accordingly. The Veterans' Benefits and Assistance Statewide phone and email box received 5,987 inquires throughout this period. The Bureau anticipate a continued reduction in reported services for the foreseeable future meeting with the public. It is anticipated that St. Petersburg VA Regional Office will begin virtual appointments in place of in-person visits in the next quarter. Accordingly, The Bureau have expanded the use of virtual hearings with the VA and have conducted 260 hearings. As always, we continue to stand ready to meet the increasing demands of Veterans' appeals requirements.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	Second Quarter YTD FY 2019-20
Retroactive Compensation	\$41,616,436	\$47,772,997	\$89,389,433	\$65,306,133
Largest Single Retro. Benefit (1)	\$496,582	\$705,032	\$705,032	\$424,831
Debt Waiver Resolutions	\$12,107	\$0	\$12,107	\$510,684
Notices of Disagreement	2,304	2,403	4,707	8,531
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases (2)	232	136	368	121
Act as Representative at Hearings*	97	64	161	1,164
Veterans' Appeals Hearings*	96	153	249	1,389
Number of Ratings Reviewed	10,256	10,055	20,311	28,432

(1) The "Largest Single Retro. Benefits" Year to Date for FY 2019-20 and the Actual for FY 2018-19 reflects only the largest benefit amount that was received for the quarter.

(2) The appeals representation process includes formal filing of the appeal application, and paralegal representation with the veteran at the Regional Office and in teleconferences with the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Bureau of Veterans' Field Services:

The Bureau of Field Office (FO) advocated for 29,114 veterans and their families. Field Services completed 5,486 disability claims. FO gained two offices at the new VA Outpatient Clinic in Middleburg. The office expansions is a result of the continuous efforts of Veterans Claim Examiner Supervisor Mark Johnson (A.J.). The addition of Middleburg offices expanded our outreach ability to serve veterans and families in the surrounding area. Field Services' supervisors assisted the Bureau of Veterans' Claims by reviewing and entering 880 rating decisions. FO operations are restricted for face-to-face interactions with veterans due to COVID-19 pandemic protocols and requirements at VA medical centers and VA clinics.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	YTD Second Quarter FY 2019-20
Number of Issue Resolutions	4,227	3,288	7,515	12,282
Total Amount of Issues Resolution	\$14,532,515	\$19,097,847	\$33,630,362	\$42,234,066
Outreach Visits	42	47	89	629
Veterans Served at Outreach (FV SVD)	647	1,132	1,779	22,543
Bedside Interviews	8	17	25	590

Walk-ins / Counseling	3,853	7,860	11,713	73,056
Disability Claims	4,546	5,486	10,032	23,827
Voter Registration	824	720	1,544	3,674
Homeless Walk In	39	43	82	145
Ratings Reviewed	934	880	1,814	820

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	YTD Second Quarter FY 2019-20
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve Units	0	2	2	5
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	0	2	2	13
Medical Center Welcome Home Events	0	0	0	3
Congressional Open House Events	0	0	0	5
National Conferences	0	0	0	0
New Patient Orientation	6	6	12	117
Transition Assistance Briefings	5	9	14	48
Other Events	31	28	59	430

Supervisors and VCEs throughout the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance provide presentation, orientations and briefings on state, federal and local veterans' laws and benefits.

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

The SAA's primary duties are fulfilling U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contract specific requirements for monitoring the quality and the integrity of veteran education programs and the oversight and enforcement of approval-related laws according to the GI Bill® VA Education Benefits program. The SAA's annual performance goals review by the Federal government.

The SAA team had a seamless transition to 100 percent telework when the Bay Pines VA Campus and State Veterans' Homes prohibited access to their buildings. During state travel restrictions, SAA maintained electronic communications with VA contractual obligations. Upon approval from VA, the SAA performed all compliance survey audits of facilities remotely. U.S. Code Title 38 § 3637, the VA requires SAA to perform Risk-Based Surveys (RBS) at facilities and determine the cause of the change in the risk factor. VA contract stipulates 25 percent of RBS had to be completed within the first federal quarter. The SAA exceeded the goal, completed 29 percent of assigned RBS visits and conducted 21 compliance surveys this quarter.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the significant enactment of the following laws created incredible opportunities for veteran beneficiaries. These laws also helped to ensure financial security for the thousands of employees of our 700 plus Florida schools approved to participate in GI Bill® education programs.

- Senate Bill 3503 / U.S. Law No: 116-128. The law enables most facilities approved to participate in VA Education Benefit Programs to deliver their programs online. The law also provides the VA the authority to remit benefit payments to veteran students and schools, as if the students were taking the classes in-residence, the benefits extended through December 21, 2021.

- HR 6322 / U.S. Law No: 116-140. The bill authorizes the VA to continue paying educational assistance and subsistence allowances for a specified amount of time for education programs suspended due to an emergency, the benefits extended through December 21, 2021.

VA requirements for the SAA's performance may continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the new fiscal year, including documentation and all electronic work performance. However, the SAA's dedicated team is prepared to provide consistent, accessible and reliable assistance to the veterans' beneficiaries and the participating facilities.

Event	First Quarter	Second Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21	YTD Second Quarter FY 2019-20
SAA Programs Approved	4,682	3,662	8,344	10,369
Other Approval	894	724	1,618	2,505
Compliance Visits	43	21	64	25
Inspection Visits	2	8	10	17
Outreach Activities (1)	190	73	263	304
Liaison Activities (2)	246	150	396	315
Technical Assistance (3)	1,022	814	1,022	2,073

- (1) Outreach Activities are any activity designed to inform or encourage those with entitlement to use it. SAA contact with non-approved schools and training facilities, inviting them to apply for approval to participate in GI Bill® programs, also are considered outreach.
- (2) Liaison activities are those that foster education about the SAA with other education and training professionals, which promote and encourage the exchange of information and support to raise awareness of the professional nature of the SAA approval function.
- (3) Technical assistance is any interaction designed to assist an individual or a facility with any aspect of the approval function.

iii) Division of State Veterans' Homes:

❖ State Veterans' Homes COVID-19 Updates

SVH continues with mandatory COVID-19 screening protocols for all patients, residents, and employees. In addition, every SVH has enhanced their cleaning protocols/services and provided safety briefing and training for use of personal protective equipment. During the second quarter, SVH has opened limited admission to new residents by following CDC guidelines. The Agency also reopened the facility to limited "in-person" visitation of residents. Skype, Telehealth, GoToMeeting, window visits, scheduled phone calls, and letters/gifts from family members, schools, and other veteran service and civic organizations are continuing. Our Agency implemented care giver training across the portfolio of nursing homes to allow family members an opportunity, after screening, to provide limited care to their Veteran loved ones. Also, to meet this end state, the Nursing Homes facilitated rapid testing of residents and staff to support reopening of facilities to visitation and admission of residents. Finally, the Agency procured HealthE ultraviolet lighting to prevent promulgation of virus throughout facilities.

❖ State Veterans' Homes Current Projects

The homes program administration diligently working on the construction projects of the two new State Veterans' Nursing Homes.

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

The Home is scheduled to open for new resident admissions in the second half of 2021. If punch list construction items remain on track and funding is received. The home’s construction is making good progress; furniture installation, IT system migration, and staff recruitment/hiring are in progress with the core staff hired. The street sign and light fixtures are installed. The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) completed their initial inspection for the licensure approval is complete and the certificate of occupancy received. The last two critical steps are to receive AHCA licensure and VA per diem certification.

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

The home schedule opens for new resident admissions in the second half of 2021. Indoor construction projects continue and include: heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) certifications and plumbing rerouting for drainage pipes line and freshwater, etc. to delink it from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs campus. The furniture purchases and installation at the facility are in progress. FDVA received its final inspection from AHCA and the City of Orlando with results pending. The favorable outcome of these inspections will lead to the facility receiving its certificate of occupancy.

Second Quarter						
Facilities	Licensed Beds	Dementia/Alzheimer’s Services	Resident Occupancy Rate	Direct Care Staff Ratio Per Resident (1)	Resident Vacancy	New Admissions
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	150	No	80%	3.1	31	12
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	120	No	73%	3.1	32	5
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O’ Lakes	120	Yes	71%	3.0	35	3
Alexander “Sandy” Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	120	Yes	64%	3.2	41	2
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	120	Yes	58%	3.0	49	3
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	120	Yes	58%	3.1	48	2
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	120	Yes	66%	3.0	43	3

(1) Direct care staff ratio includes Agency contract staffing.

(2) Admissions were hampered by COVID-19. Facilities were not allowed admissions if COVID-19 was resident among residents and/or staff.

(3) Find more information for State Veterans’ Homes at: <https://floridavets.org/locations/state-veterans-nursing-homes/>

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

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

- i. Purchase Orders processed: 844 for total of \$3,322,754.
- ii. E-Quotes processed: 25
- iii. FDVA “VISN-8 Pharmacy Services” contract Amendment No. 7 (Copas SVNH address correction), with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), executed on 12/7/2020. Approximate annual contract amount \$2,750,000.

- iv. Ardie R. Copas SVNH & Lake Baldwin SVNH CLC “New TV’s and Installation” contract, with BES Industries, Inc., closed out 11/16/2020. Total contract amount \$212,464.
- v. Alexander “Sandy” Nininger SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 11/20/2020. Pre-bid meeting 12/9/2020. Bid opening to be held 1/6/2021. Total project budget amount \$150,000.
- vi. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” contract Amendment No. 7 (contract extension), with Santa Fe Professional Solutions, Inc., executed on 11/17/2020. Total contract amount \$114,767.
- vii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Fluid Cooler Replacement” contract Amendment No. 2 (contract extension), with EMCOR Services, Inc., executed on 10/6/2020. Total contract amount \$187,200.
- viii. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Fluid Cooler Replacement” contract Amendment No. 3 (contract extension), with EMCOR Services, Inc., executed on 11/6/2020. Total contract amount \$187,200.
- ix. Baldomero Lopez SVNH “Fluid Cooler Replacement” contract Amendment No. 4 (contract extension), with EMCOR Services, Inc., executed on 12/7/2020. Total contract amount \$187,200.
- x. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Rooftop Vents Replacement” contract, with Comfort Systems USA Southeast, Inc., closed out 10/27/2020. Total contract amount \$79,070.
- xi. Clifford C. Sims SVNH “Parking Lot Lights” contract Amendment No. 5 (extension and scope change), with A&K Energy Conservation, Inc., executed 12/1/2020. Total contract amount \$152,293.
- xii. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Concrete Curb and Sidewalk Repairs” contract Amendment No. 4 (additional services), with Huffman, Inc. d/b/a NuWave Concrete, executed 10/13/2020. Total contract amount \$47,402.
- xiii. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Concrete Curb and Sidewalk Repairs” contract Amendment No. 5 (additional services), with Huffman, Inc. d/b/a NuWave Concrete, executed 10/16/2020. Total contract amount \$48,252.
- xiv. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Concrete Curb and Sidewalk Repairs” contract, with Huffman, Inc. d/b/a NuWave Concrete, closed out 11/2/2020. Total contract amount \$48,252.
- xv. Emory L. Bennett SVNH “Automatic Transfer Switch” solicitation (Invitation to Bid – ITB) issued 12/2/2020. Pre-bid meeting 12/18/2020. Bid opening to be held 1/13/2021. Total project budget amount \$150,000.
- xvi. Lake Baldwin SVNH CLC “Remodel/Retrofit” DMS contract Amendment No. 1 (for back of bill funding), with Rogers Lovelock, and Fritz (architect services), executed and received on 12/10/2020. Total contract amount \$9,505,448 (65% federally funded; 35% state funded).
- xvii. Robert Jenkins SVDH “Resident Primary Medical Care” contract Amendment No. 5 (annual renewal), with USDVA North FLA/South GA VHS, executed 12/2/2020. Annual contract amount \$35,000.
- xviii. Robert Jenkins SVDH “Replacement of Wall Rails and Guards” contract Amendment No. 2 (extension), with Shine and Company, Inc., executed 12/22/2020. Total contract amount \$229,000.

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

i. None

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

i. FDVA made no additions, alterations or modifications to leased space this quarter.

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

- i. **1 - General Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending.
- ii. **2 - Employment Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter), 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 2 pending.
- iii. **0 - Other Liability Claims:** (0 new this Quarter) 0 won, 1 settled, 0 lost, 0 pending.

e) Contracts and agreements required to carry out programs approved by the Legislature or Governor and Cabinet (F.A.C. 55-1.003(3) (e))

i. None

f) Professional Services (F.A.C. 55-1.003(3) (k))

i. None

g) Notifications to State Attorneys, Sheriffs or other Law Enforcement (F.A.C. 551.003(3) (m))

i. None.

h) Donations (F.A.C. 55-1.003(n))

i. Non-Cash Donations Received by State Veterans' Homes

Second Quarter				
Facility	Item	Quantity	Value	Total
	No Donations this Quarter			
Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary, Lake City				\$0
	No Donations this Quarter			
Ardie R. Copas SVNH, Port St. Lucie				\$0
	Vostro Notebook 5502	1	\$1,249	
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach				\$1,249
	75" TV Hisense 4K	1	\$598	
Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home, Land O' Lakes				\$598
	No Donations this Quarter			
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines				\$0
	Apple iPad	3	\$319	
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City				\$957
	Wheel Chair	1	\$25	
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte				\$25
	No Donations this Quarter			
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine				\$0
Total Non-Cash Donations				\$2,829

ii. Cash Donations Received by State Veterans' Homes

Facilities	First Quarter	Second Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21
Robert H. Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$120	\$850	\$970
Ardie R. Copas SVNH, Port St. Lucie	\$0	\$0	\$0
Emory L. Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$4	\$150	\$154
Baldomero Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$5,630	\$1,848	\$7,478
Alexander "Sandy" Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$13,378	\$0	\$13,378
Clifford C. Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$250	\$25	\$275
Douglas T. Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$522	\$3,680	\$4,202
Clyde E. Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Cash Donations	\$19,904	\$6,553	\$26,456

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

Second Quarter	
The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Inc.	\$1,050



3) Veterans Florida (VF)

During the second quarter of the fiscal year 2020-21, the Governor released his official budget request for FY 2021-22 and approved \$2.5 million for our recurring operation expenses and the workforce and entrepreneur program.

❖ Internal Operations

In November, we reverted to “work from home” after monitoring Leon County COVID-19 rising numbers.

❖ External Operations

VF participated in the following webinars to continue spreading awareness of services.

Events	Location	Date	Team Members
Tampa Bay Startup Week	Virtual	Oct 5-9	Entress
2020 Talent Innovation Summit	Virtual	Oct 7	Livingston, Marteeny
Work Group for Post-Secondary Credit for Military Courses and Occupations	Virtual	Oct 7	Marino
2020 County Job Fair presented by Commissioner Sandy Murman	Virtual	Oct 8	Livingston, Marteeny, Mendez
FDVA Board of Directors Meeting	Virtual	Oct 13	Marino
CEO Mindset Phase I Cohort	Virtual	Oct 14	Entress
Onward 2 Opportunity Mock Interview Prep for Veterans	Virtual	Oct 15	Livingston
Construction & Trades Sector Roundtable Meeting	Virtual	Oct 15	Marino, Sinnemaki, Mendez
Onward 2 Opportunity Employer Spotlight	Virtual	Oct 16	Mendez
Florida Trend Interview	Virtual	Oct 21	Marino
Florida Makes Manufacturers Virtual Tours	Virtual	Oct 19-23	Sinnemaki, Mendez
Future of Florida Forum and Annual Meeting	Virtual	Oct 20-22	Marino, Sinnemaki, Meinhardt, Barrow
HR Florida Leadership Conference	Sarasota	Oct 23-24	Sinnemaki, Mendez
Tampa Bay EDC Annual Meeting	Virtual	Oct 29	Meinhardt, Entress, Mendez
FAVOB Tampa Monthly Meeting	Tampa	Oct 29	Entress
FAVOB Power Hour	Virtual	Nov 3	Sinnemaki
Paychecks for Patriots Job Fair (Multiple Locations)	Virtual	Nov 4	Livingston, Marteeny
Work Group for Post-Secondary Credit for Military Courses and Occupations	Virtual	Nov 4	Marino
Paychecks for Patriots Job Fair (Multiple Locations)	Virtual	Nov 5	Livingston, Marteeny
Florida Military Huddle - DMA, DVA, EFI, Space Florida, VF	Virtual	Nov 5	Sinnemaki, Barrow, Meinhardt
Broward County Library Vet Fest	Virtual	Nov 7	Marino
Florida Gulf Coast University Pitch Competition	Virtual	Nov 7	Sinnemaki, Entress
Action Zone Mission Mapping Cohort	Virtual	Nov 7	Sinnemaki

FDVA Board of Directors Meeting	Virtual	Nov 10	Marino
Paychecks for Patriots Job Fair (Multiple Locations)	Virtual	Nov 10	Livingston, Marteeny
Paychecks for Patriots Job Fair (Multiple Locations)	Virtual	Nov 12	Livingston, Marteeny
Veteran Success Conference	Virtual	Nov 12-13	Sinnemaki, Meinhardt, Entress, Mendez, Livingston, Marteeny
Wish Farms Grand Opening	Tampa	Nov 14	Entress
Synapse Converge	Virtual	Nov 16-19	Sinnemaki, Entress
USDA NIFA Project Directors Meeting	Virtual	Nov 17	Sinnemaki, Entress
Tampa Community Roundtable	Tampa	Nov 18	Entress
Paychecks For Patriots Job Fair (Multiple Locations)	Virtual	Nov 18	Livingston, Marteeny
Florida-Israel Agriculture Summit	Virtual	Nov 18-19	Sinnemaki, Entress
Farmer Veteran Coalition Annual Stakeholders Conference	Virtual	Nov 18-19	Sinnemaki, Entress
2020 Celebration of Valor Military and Veteran Job and Resource Fair	Jacksonville	Nov 20	Livingston, Marteeny
Draken International Site Visit	Lakeland	Dec 3	Sinnemaki, Mendez
FDVA Board of Directors Meeting	Virtual	Dec 8	Marino
FEDC Economic Recovery Task Force	Virtual	Dec 10	Marino, Sinnemaki, Meinhardt
Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council Meeting	Virtual	Dec 10	Marino, Sinnemaki
Recruit Military Eastern Region Virtual Career Fair	Virtual	Dec 15	Livingston, Marteeny

❖ Marketing

Casey Speers joined the marketing department as the Social Media & Content Specialist. The marketing department has nearly completed a large Mailchimp list hygiene project as part of the efforts to sync Podio and Mailchimp. Field standardization will allow VF to fully automate email drip campaigns based on the information of inbound leads.

Governor DeSantis and FDVA Deputy Executive Director Hartsell promoted the Veterans Florida Agriculture Program in a press release on November 23. VF executed a successful announcement of the Pitch Competition campaigns via TV, radio and emails and received over 40 applications in the first week.

VF continues to publish articles on our success stories of the agriculture interns who have been placed into agriculture-related positions or own businesses.

Network Partner	Performance		
	October	November	December
Unique Website Visitors	3,207	3,308	3,348
Facebook Organic Post Reach	3,306	6,108	5,418
Newsletter Subscribers	32,204	33,414	33,364
LinkedIn Post Reach	4,341	4,885	5,525
Twitter Post Reach	5,115	5,053	5,322

❖ Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS)

The VETS team continues contacting and assisting veterans who are looking for employment and training services. Veterans Florida continues to provide services to veterans and employers amidst the COVID-19. VETS Director Jeremy Sinnemaki and Workforce Development Manager

Fernando Mendez attended the HR Florida Leadership conference in Sarasota. They also attended the Florida Makes Manufacturers virtual tours and Construction Trades Sector Roundtable virtual events.

❖ **Career Services Program**

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

Month	Grant Reimbursement Amount
October	\$129,444
November	\$149,899
December	\$68,734
Total	\$348,077

Second Quarter Veteran Leads Metrics			
	Job Fair	Website	Total
October	7	77	84
November	335	144	479
December	20	129	149
Total	362	350	712

❖ **Veteran Agriculture Program**

Veterans Florida was awarded a federal three-year Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Program grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), to conduct the Veterans Florida Agriculture Program. The Veterans Florida Agriculture Program is an immersive, hands-on six month paid fellowship, and selected veterans study at the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Research and Education Center.

We are now accepting applications from veterans to fill fellowship opportunities at Research and Education Centers throughout the state. Director Jeremy Sinnemaki and Entrepreneurship Development Manager Amy Entress attended the USDA and NIFA Project Directors meeting, Farmer Veteran Coalition Annual Stakeholders conference, and Florida-Israel Agriculture Summit events virtually. Additionally, Manager Entress attended the Wish Farms grand opening in Tampa.

Second Quarter Research and Education Status				
Partners	Location	Pending	Active	Completed
Gulf Coast REC	Wimauma	0	1	0
Mid-Florida REC	Apopka	1	0	0
North Florida REC	Quincy	1	0	0

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

Veterans Florida began expanding the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) SkillBridge fellowship offerings with employers throughout the state of Florida to better serve our transitioning active duty service members. We have authorized DoD SkillBridge Organizations for our agriculture fellowship in partnership with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural

Sciences Research and Education Centers, and intend to expand into other industries throughout the year.

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

❖ **Entrepreneurship Program**

Our entrepreneurship partners; Action Zone, Florida Gulf Coast University, Julo Strategy, and University of North Florida have wrapped up their fall entrepreneurship programs. All partners are preparing and recruiting for their spring cohorts. Partners are able to conduct their respective facilitated cohorts virtually and plan to return to in person cohorts when permitted. Many provide one-on-one coaching and mentoring with veteran entrepreneurs facing unique challenges.

Partner	Cohort	Attended	Start Date
Action Zone, Inc.	Startup Cohort 1	15	8/8/2020
Action Zone, Inc.	Growth Cohort 1	10	10/17/2020
Florida Gulf Coast University	Startup Cohort 1	10	8/19/2020
Julo Strategy	Growth Cohort (40 Seats)	48	Ongoing
University of North Florida	Startup Cohort 1	15	9/17/2020
University of North Florida	Workshops	82	Ongoing

Partner	Contracted Amount	Payments to Date
Action Zone, Inc.	\$77,519	\$34,010
Florida Atlantic University	\$61,500	\$0
Florida Gulf Coast University	\$76,500	\$0
Julo Strategy	\$41,500	\$29,600
University of North Florida	\$48,900	\$31,200
University of West Florida	\$74,500	\$0
Veterans Entrepreneurship Initiative	\$54,840	\$0
Total	\$427,259	\$94,810



NO FLORIDA VETERAN LEFT BEHIND

4) Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF)

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

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

All FVF board of directors donate volunteer time and resources to support the Foundation’s mission and its programs. Members provided the following total hours of services at events to help veterans in need.

Team Members	Hours	Events	Veterans Served
Board of Directors	1,742	104	3,162
Partners & New Volunteers	2256	11	26,555
FVF Headquarters Staff Received Calls	195	26	430

Outreach Metrics	Reach	Followers
Facebook Organic Reach	53,418	7,315
Newsletter Subscribers	3,054	30% Opens
Veteran Data Services	23,400	
Website Page Views	12,240	Unique – 9,405

❖ **Grants, Fundraising and Donations**

FVF created a new donation webpage for donors to select veterans in need options. FVF received the following funds.

Grants, Fundraising & Donations	First Quarter	Second Quarter	YTD FY 2020-21
Corporate / Business Grants	\$3,000	\$100,500	\$103,500
Corporate / Individual Contributions	\$9,283	\$18,270	\$27,553
Agency Grants		\$25,000	\$25,000
Leatherneck Scramble Golf Tourney	\$10,680	\$24,165	\$34,845
American Heroes Concert		\$1,400	\$1,400
Affiliated Organization Contributions		\$1,500	\$1,500
Government Grant		\$1,000	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$22,963	\$171,835	\$194,798

FVF Grants Pending Approval	\$60,000
Homeless Shelter Grants Also Pending Approval	\$5,000

❖ **FVF Outreach Programs**

Programs	
Veterans Homeless Shelter Programs	60,000 Veterans Benefits Guides
VA Pension Claims Assistance	COVID-19 Project Vet Relief Fund
Emergency Referral Services	Holiday Cards for Heroes
Toys for Tots / JROTC Program	Veterans Recognition Awards

Veterans Assistance provided \$128,095 for outreach programs during, July 1 - December 31, 2020.

❖ **Aging Wartime Veterans**

VA Pension - Aid & Attendance Financial Workshops Claims partners provided 23 free seminars with 625 attendees across the state.

Events	Performance
Forgotten Warrior Project – Kenan Trust Claims Approved YTD	*76
Average Benefit Per Veteran Over 3 Years	\$151,200
Average Total Veteran Benefits Over 3 Years	\$11,491,200
Economic Impact	X 2.39%
Total Amount with Economic Impact	\$27,463,968

**Figures based on three-year life expectancy after claim approval*

❖ **Volunteer Florida Grant**

In October 2020, FVF signed an agreement with Volunteer Florida to recruit 400 volunteers in three regions to help veterans with referrals, counseling services, job training transitioning and financial management. Year to date, we have cataloged over 211 new volunteers to assist with the grant requirements. The Salesforce.com Inc. sponsored a Human Resources Management software package to recruit the volunteers and data tracking.

❖ **Military Veteran Legislator Recognition**

FVF created a webpage to recognize military veteran legislators in the state.
<https://helpflivets.org/meet-the-military-veteran-legislators/>

❖ **Initiative for Veterans**

FVF has collaborated with the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) for Florida’s Workforce Education Initiative to connect veterans with available educational resources and career pathways in the state.

❖ **Gadsden Flag License Plate**

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

❖ **COVID-19 Project Relief Fund**

The Foundation has partnered with the American Legion of Florida and created the COVID-19 Project Relief Fund to help veterans affected by the pandemic.

❖ **Florida Veterans Support Line**

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

❖ **Leatherneck Scramble Golf Tournament**

FVF collaborated with the Marine Corps League in Leon County to raise funds for Veterans Village, Homeless Shelters, COVID-19 Vet Relief, U.S. Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) and Toys for Tots programs. The tourney raised a total of \$34,845, received \$26,560 in a net donation.

❖ **Holiday Cards for Heroes**

FVF "We Care" Project partner Duke Energy provided hundreds of holiday cards for Florida veterans residing in the 3,100 assisted living facilities, 7,000 nursing homes, and veterans living in the community.

❖ **Forward March Ambassadors for Veterans Council**

FVF Ambassadors include veteran advocates from around the state and encourage them to invest in FVF with sustainable funding and extended outreach.

❖ **State Troopers Recognition Program**

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

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

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



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