

Appendix III



FLORIDA VETERANS

— F O U N D A T I O N —

In 2008, the Florida Legislature established the Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF) as a Direct Support Organization 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 (VSO) and County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO). The FVF is also a nonprofit organization operating for charitable and educational purposes under Section 501(C)(3). While many of Florida's Veterans successfully transitioned to a post-military career, 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 and educational services and programs to help 1) find veterans to register for VA benefits 2) help veterans in emergency crisis situations 3) make veterans aware of the many resources available to them to enhance their quality of life. This is accomplished through the enlistment of services and resource organizations with similar missions. 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 Veteran's 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 Governors 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 born 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 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	
		Served Population	Dollars
Veterans & Organizations	Emergency Direct Financial Assistance		
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, Veteran Day Ceremonies, Mission United Advisory Council, Florida Veterans Council, Commanders Meetings, Veteran Awards, Homeless Veterans Events, Burial & Memorial Services, Senior Veterans Coalition Meetings, Statewide Association Conferences and more

