

2018 - 2019 Annual Report



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

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

The Florida Veterans Foundation collaborates with 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.

We welcome the inspirational leadership of Chairman Bob Asztalos, who was appointed to his position this summer. He is very optimistic about the future through his creative ideas on securing recurring funding. The following initiatives will affect veterans in a positive productive manner.

Forward March

The Florida Veterans Foundation led the way through district networking to support FDVA with the Governor announced initiative *Forward March*. To date, the FVF has been in lock step with FDVA in making this program viable. FVF continues to stand ready to assist FDVA in execution of taking "ideas to action!"

Veterans' Financial Literacy

FVF has completed the Attorney General's Veterans Literacy Grant in the amount of \$200,000. The benefit of Aid and Attendance, Pension and Disability claims helps connect veterans with Federal VA funding, thereby freeing up state Medicaid money. Another bi-product is of this outreach that for every 800 veterans registered with the VA, the state earns an additional of five federally funded medical professionals.

Suicide Prevention, Opioids/Mental Health Services

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

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Aging Veteran Outreach

The program provides statewide support to veterans' outreach on the benefit of Aid and Attendance, Pension, and Disability Claims. The program makes it possible for veterans to remain for longer periods of time in their own homes for their health and welfare. The grant was awarded for \$300,000 in partnership with the National Association of Veterans and Families (NAVF).

Veteran Treatment Court Statewide Leadership and Legal Assistance:

The Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) is a hybrid court, blending aspects of the traditional Drug, Criminal, Mental Health and Diversionary Court processes. The VTC statewide committee, Rehabilitation vs. Incarceration supports veterans suffering from PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) from roadside bombs and suicide bombers improvised explosive devices. Its primary focus is on the effective identification, treatment and successful reintegration of every enrolled veteran back into his or her local community. There are currently over 30 VTCs in Florida, serving more than 225 veteran defendants. The FVF has been connecting VTC's throughout the state to one common thread for effective, shared best practices.

Homeless Veterans Stand Down Best Practices

FVF is currently in development of best practices of Homeless and At-Risk Veteran Stand Downs through the *Forward March* Initiative. FVF is working to build county models to serve homeless and at-risk veterans to develop a program of a day of service for effective, meaningful support, which will allow greater resources for year-round service.

Chartered Functions of the Foundation:

FVF primary functions are to provide direct and indirect services to veterans and their families through collaborating with the appropriate federal, state and local government agencies, veteran service organizations, and education entities.

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- FVF develops and facilitates best practices for programs to benefit the overall health, welfare, education, employment and housing for Florida veterans. These best practices will be in collaboration with other agency initiatives to ensure the greatest impact on veteran assistance.
- FVF provides financial and administrative support to the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council and Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.
- FVF provides support to the FDVA to distribute the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide.
- Under Chapter 322.08 Florida Statutes, FVF serves veterans' through the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) for education and benefits.

FVF's direct support of FDVA is "proactive" to ensure success of military personnel prior to discharge. We are producing needs assessments to create roadmaps for new veterans to educate them on their journey from cradle to grave. FVF is becoming the "Systems Management" of the statewide processes to support the Florida veterans. Listed below are some other notable support functions accomplished in fiscal year 2018-19.

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The Foundation's Program Participants Successes			
Organization	Program	Veteran Served	
		"#"	"\$"
American Legion	Emergency Financial Assistance	370	\$70,981
Five Star Veterans Center	Mental Health / Wellness Grant	845,569	N/A
Disabled American Veterans	Transportation Disadvantaged	16,429	\$65,000
FVF	Through Personal Contact and Media	921,515	N/A
Bay Area Legal Services	Veterans Legal Helpline	158	\$20,000
FVF	Services to Homeless Veterans	520	N/A
Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV)	Education and Benefits	77,338	N/A
Northeast Florida Women Veterans	Women Veterans Wellness Program	125	N/A
Florida Dental Association and Mission of Mercy	Veterans First Event	166	\$182,000
American Patriot Services Corporation and the National Association of Veterans and Families	Educational Outreach to Aging Veterans	58	N/A
Bay County Veterans Council	Educate Hurricane-affected Veterans	N/A	\$5,000
FVF annual weighted performance score: 5			

