

2019 - 2020 Annual Report



NO FLORIDA VETERAN LEFT BEHIND

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, many 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 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 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.

We champion the continued leadership of Chairman Bob Asztalos, who was appointed last year. He hired Lew Wilson, a Marine Corps Veteran, who has taken the reins of President for the Foundation and Bob Woods who is a specialized grant writer. Together they have already received several grants and created new programs which has shown positive reactions from local communities and helped thousands of Veterans around the state.

Fiscal Year 2019/2020

Florida Veterans Foundation in support of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs has aggressively approached service to Florida Veterans through collaboration with statewide associations and organizations 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 realize successes within the Veteran 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.

FVF 2019 - 2020 Annual Report - Page 2

Suicide Prevention, Opioids/Mental Health Services

FVF continues to collaborate with Tampa Bays areas 2-1-1 Crisis Center to provide support for statewide campaigns 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.

Aging Veteran Outreach/Forgotten Warrior Project/Kenan Trust

This three year grant provides for collaboration with the National Association of Veterans and Families to provide educational seminars and claims assistance to aging wartime Veterans and their Survivors in Broward and surrounding counties about the VA Pension with Aid & Attendance benefits. Because of COVID-19 this has been expanded to virtual seminars provided to statewide assisted living associations and facilities in local communities.

Emergency Financial Aid

The FVF's successful Financial Aid Program continues its partnership with the Project Vet Relief which is managed by the American Legion of Florida. In addition to the current program, the FVF created the COVID-19 Project Vet Relief Fund to promote around the state of Florida and recruit donations to help our Veterans in Need caused by the Covid Pandemic. Together we have raised over \$82,000 dollars and have helped over 117 Veterans and their Families.

Transportation Disadvantaged & Veterans Ride Program

FVF's funding for the purchase of several vans by the Disabled Veterans Organization, has proved successful to help transportation disadvantaged and isolated Veterans travel to and from medical appointments. Since COVID, FVF also partnered with UBER rides to form the Veterans Ride Program which continued to help Veterans in May/June 2020.

FVF Board of Directors & Transparency

The FVF has appointed Lew Wilson as the new President. He is a United States Marine Veteran and started with the Foundation two years ago as an outreach and educational coordinator hired by an outside firm. He was hired in November, 2019 as an interim president and was appointed full time by the Board of Directors on April 9, 2020. Since then, the FVF board has created their own mission statement and re-dedicated their efforts to support the Foundation through an added variety of opportunities and commitments. The Foundation has added new programs, enhanced its website at www.HelpFLVets.org and earned the Gold Seal of Transparency from GuideStar.

Forward March Ambassadors for Veterans Council

The FVF board of directors approved this program in January, 2020 to help FVF with a program of sustainability. Businesses, individuals and organizations are invited to join as an Ambassador for \$1,000 a year for three years. This will help the foundation with a dedicated funding source and a committed budget every three years.

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.

FVF 2019 - 2020 Annual Report - Page 3

FDVA Benefits Guide

FVF continues its mission to support the education, outreach and funding of the Florida Veterans Benefits Guide in print and digital versions.

FVF Grants

The FVF has contracted with a full time grant writer who is responsible to researching and applying for grants to help Veterans in a variety of ways.

- Veterans Census Grant - This \$10,000 grant was awarded to the Foundation to outreach and educate Veterans and their families to participate in the Census between now and October, 2020. FVF created a dedicated website page to help track this program at www.VeteranCensus.com.
- Other Grants - To date we have received grants from several Walmart's in Florida, Leon County Lean Grant, National League of Cities (Census Grant) and the Elks Lodge of Jacksonville. We have several grants pending that total over \$250,000.

Veterans Served - Foundation Successes - FVF Board/Staff & Collaborations

The below numbers reflect only the one's that are trackable.

Foundation Services and Programs FY 2019-2020 - Participants and Successes			
Organization	Program	Veterans Served	Value Amounts
American Legion	Emergency Financial Assistance	203	\$178,061
Disabled American Veterans	Transportation Disadvantaged	10,948	\$65,000
FL Veterans Foundation	Personally Served	12,871	
FL Veterans Foundation	Education, Outreach & Benefits	436,232	
Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles	Education & Benefits	84,000	
UBER Technologies, Inc.	Veterans Free Ride Program	244	\$6,800
NAVF & APSC	VA Pension w/A&A Claims assistance	690 Claims Approved	\$34,500,000.00
Homeless Veterans	Homeless Meals / Personal Items / Etc.	612	
Crisis Center of Tampa Bay	Social Services	21,524	
Board of Directors Volunteer Hours	Veterans Education & Outreach	7,676 Hours	

