



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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*Honoring those who served U.S.*

# Legislative Update

# About Legislative Session

- The 2020 Legislative Session begins January 14, 2020.
- Session scheduled to end Friday, March 13, but may be extended by three-fifths vote of each house.
- Special sessions may be called by Governor, or may be convened by joint proclamation of Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- Special sessions may not exceed 20 days, unless extended by three-fifths vote of each house.



# 2020 Budget Request Highlights

- ✓ Funding to complete our two new veterans' homes
  - Ardie R. Copas – May 2020
  - Lake Baldwin – June 2020
- ✓ 104 FTE Positions for our Homes Division
- ✓ 5 FTE for Benefits and Assistance to expand our team of Veterans' Claims Examiners
- ✓ 3 Positions within the Bureau of Information and Research
- ✓ Funding for Finding Florida's Veterans and FDVA Awareness



# Status of 2019 Funding Initiatives

## ■ Florida Veterans Legal Helpline



- Provide direct advice and assistance to veterans over the phone, schedule appointments for extended services with full-time attorneys who focus solely on veterans, and coordinate referrals to partners throughout the State of Florida.

Veterans can apply for civil legal help by calling our Veterans Legal Helpline at **1.866.486.6161**

Veterans can also apply online at **[www.bals.org](http://www.bals.org)**



# Veteran Services Database

Network of Care for Veterans and Military Service – Trilogy Integrated Resources, Llc



ERIE COUNTY

Service Members, Veterans & Their Families

HOME ▾ SERVICES ▾ LIBRARY ▾ LEGISLATE ▾ LINKS ▾ ASSISTIVE DEVICES MY ACCOUNT ▾



Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, qualified responders.

★ Call [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255) and Press 1

★ Text [838255](tel:838255)

★ For deaf/hard of hearing: [1-800-799-4889](tel:1-800-799-4889)

★ [Connect online and chat](#)



## WELCOME

The Network of Care for Service Members, Veterans & Their Families is a one-stop-shop for virtually all services, information, support, advocacy, and much more. This public service is an attempt to bring together critical information for all components of the veterans' community, including veterans, family members, active-duty personnel, reservists, members of the National Guard, employers, service providers, and the community at large.

## FIND AGENCIES, PROGRAMS, OR FACILITIES NEAR YOU

What are you looking for?



Zip Code

SEARCH





# Veteran Care Coordinator Program

- FDVA will be advocating for funding to provide veterans & their families with behavioral health care referral and coordinator services
- From March 2 - August 2019, Tampa Bay Crisis Center has helped 10,579 veterans; 202 vets identified with suicide risk
- Veterans can contact them statewide at:  
**1-844-myflvet**



# Veterans Treatment Courts

- Last year, the legislature expanded eligibility for veterans by including contractors and removing requirements of general discharge.
- This year, FDVA is looking to address standardization and funding for the court statewide.
- The bill specifically addresses:
  - Adding a gatekeeper to Veterans Treatment Courts
  - Allowing the alleged victim the right to participate in the veteran's treatment
  - Provides standards for determination of acceptance into the program



# Alternative Treatment Options

- Last year, the legislature passed the Alternative Treatment Options bill and appropriated \$200,000 for veterans with PTSD, TBI and Military Sexual Trauma.
- Currently, USF working with organizations that provide veterans with HBOT, Music Therapy, Accelerated Resolution Therapy, Equine Therapy and Service Animal Training Therapy.



- FDVA continues to advocate for additional state funding to reach move Florida veterans.



# Homestead Tax Exemption

- The joint resolution proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to allow the same ad valorem tax discount on homestead property for combat-disabled veterans age 65 or older to carry over to the surviving spouse of a veteran.
- The discount would apply to the property until the surviving spouse remarries, sells, or otherwise disposes of the property.

# VA Medical Doctors

- Currently, doctors employed by the VA and practicing in Florida do not have to have a Florida Medical License.
- Proposed bill will allow MDs and Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine employed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who are licensed in other states, to practice in **private medical facilities.**
- The legislation applies only to veterans who are currently receiving care through the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs using their earned benefits.

# Track 2020 Legislation



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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## Florida Veteran Legislation

Regular sessions of the Florida Legislature begin on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March and continue for 60 consecutive days, which may be extended by a three-fifths vote of each house. Special sessions may be called by the Governor, or may be convened by joint proclamation of the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Special sessions may not exceed 20 days, unless extended by a three-fifths vote of each house. The Florida fiscal year starts July 1 of every year.

The 2019 Legislative Session began on March 5, 2019 and will conclude on May 3, 2019.

Provided here is a list of Florida veteran-related legislation and veteran-related appropriation requests that the agency is tracking. Please note, during session and interim committee weeks, this list is updated weekly. Otherwise, this list is updated monthly. If you have any general questions, please contact the FDVA legislative staff. If you have specific questions pertaining to the legislation or appropriation request, please contact the member who is sponsoring the legislation or request. Inclusion of legislation in this report is for informational purposes only.

*Inclusion does not imply endorsement of, support of, or opposition to any particular piece of legislation by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.*

### Florida Veteran-Related Legislation

Legislation Tracking Websites:

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# Questions

**BOLDLY SERVING FOR 30 YEARS**

**FDVA**



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