

VETERAN SERVICES CONNECT

***Please note:

- **HIGHLIGHTED INFORMATION IS A COUNTY SERVICE**
 - If not highlighted, then it is an external agency service/referral

- **OUTERMOST BOLDED AND UNDERLINED HEADING:**
 - These are the 6 general services Health, Housing, Employment, Critical Services, Education, and Leisure/Activities/Events

- **INDENTED BOLDED AND UNDERLINED HEADING:**
 - These are the subservices are more specific and help determine what you are looking for.

- **NON-BOLDED INDENTATION**
 - These will be the county services or external resources/referrals, it will give a description and contact information.

HEALTH

MCVS VA Healthcare Assistance:

- Help understand and receive healthcare benefits from a VA facility. Call to schedule an appointment.
 - Forms
 - Information needed:
 - Complete 1010EZ for
 - Veterans DD214
 - Driver's License or State ID
 - Copies of current insurance card
 - Veteran must be present.
 - 941-745-3795
 - 1401 3rd Ave West, Bradenton, FL 34205

- Veteran Affairs Local Location Information
 - Bradenton Community Based Outpatient VA Clinic
 - 5520 State Route 64, Suite 101, Bradenton, Florida 34208
 - www.baypines.va.gov
 - Main Number: 941-721-0649
 - Mental Health: 727-398-6661
- Dental
 - Following separation or retirement from service, veterans have 180 days to receive one-time separation dental care from the VA, if the certificate of discharge does not certify that the veteran was provided a complete dental examination and treatment prior to discharge. (38 CFR 17.161)
 - VA with Delta Dental
 - <https://www1.deltadentalins.com/federal/vadip.html>
 - VA with MetLife
 - <https://www.metlife.com/vadip/>
- Health Care
 - More Information on VA healthcare
 - <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home>
 - If affected by Camp Lejeune
 - Information
 - www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp

Medicare Waivers Referrals:

- SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) (Manatee)
 - <https://www.floridashine.org/Counseling-Sites/Manatee.aspx>
 - 1-800-336 2226

General Medical Services Referrals:

- TRICARE
 - <https://tricare.mil/PatientResources/ContactUs>

- TRICARE East
 - Humana Military (East Region Contractor) 1-800-444-5445
- TRICARE West
 - Health Net (West Region Contractor) 1-800-866-9378
- **Florida Department of Health – Manatee County**
 - Clinical health services for adults and children in Manatee County
 - Main Office - 410 6th Ave. East, Bradenton, Florida 34208
 - www.manatee.floridahealth.gov
 - 941-748-0727
- **We Care Manatee County**
 - We Care Manatee connects eligible low-income uninsured residents in Manatee County to medical specialists free of charge.
 - 353 6th Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.wecaremanatee.org
 - 941-755-3952

Pregnancy & Women Supportive Services Referrals:

- **Care Net Manasota Pregnancy Center**
 - Care Net affirms the sanctity of human life and offers unconditional love, encouragement, and support to all those that seek assistance.
 - 5111 26th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34207
 - www.carenetmanasota.com
- **Family Creations Adoptions**
 - A non-profit private Adoption Agency licensed by the State as a child-placing agency includes birth mother counseling, case management, wrap-around services, and adoption support groups.
 - 3010 Manatee County Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.familycreationadoptions.com
 - 941-747-9225
- **Healthy Start Coalition**
 - Healthy Start is dedicated to enhancing maternal and infant health care for pregnant women and infants.
 - 612 7th Street West, Palmetto, Florida 34221
 - www.hsmanatee.com

- 941-714-7541

- Mom's Place
 - One-stop maternity education for mother, child, and family.
 - 250 2nd Street East, Suite 3F, Bradenton, Florida 34208
 - www.manateememorial.com/hospital-services/momms-place
 - 941-745-6925

- North River Care Pregnancy Center
 - Manatee southern Baptist Association
 - The life-affirming center offers hope and encouragement to those pregnant women and offers realistic alternatives to abortion.
 - 1020 10th Ave. West, Suite #100, Bradenton, Florida 34211
 - www.northrivercare.org
 - 941-729-9004

- Solve – Maternity Homes
 - Operates maternity residential housing, case management, education, counseling, healthcare services, childbirth, parenting classes, adoption assistance, and spiritual support.
 - www.solvehomes.org
 - 941-728-0094

- Women, Infants, Children
 - Provides a free nutrition program to pregnant and post-partum women with infants and children birth to age 5.
 - www.flroidawic.com

 - WIC Main Office
 - 212 6th Ave. East, Bradenton, Florida 34208
 - 941-728-0727

 - Manatee County Health Department
 - 410 6th Ave. East, Bradenton, Florida 34208
 - 941-728-0747

- My Breast Friends 491
 - Breast cancer patients and survivors are supported with free grocery gift cards, meals, housecleaning, rides to treatment, peer support, inspiration, and more.
 - P.O. Box 14122 Bradenton, Florida, 34208
 - www.mybreastfriends941.org
 - 941-807-3357

HOUSING

MCVS Home Loan Assistance:

- Our Veterans Service Officers will help you understand Home Loan Benefits and assist with applying for programs. Detailed information is available on the following topics:
 - Eligibility for a VA Loan
 - Forms
 - 941-745-3795
 - 1401 3rd Ave West, Bradenton, FL 34205
- VA Home Loans
 - Do you have a VA.gov log-in?
Yes = Search for Home Loan COE (certificate of eligibility) at va.gov.
No = Monday-Friday from 8-6 EST, call 877-827-3702 and ask for the St. Pete Jurisdiction

Note

This phone number does nothing, but process VA COEs and the turnaround is fast. MCVS can assistance fill it out, but the processing takes longer (7-14 days versus 24-48 hours). If veteran is working with a Realtor, they should have COE information.

- GI Home Loan Guarantee and Adaptive Housing Grants
 - www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans
 - 877-827-3702

Home Loan Referrals:

- Salute our Soldiers Military Loan Program
 - Offers military members and veterans 30-yr, fixed-rate first mortgage, loans, at a lower rate and with several down payment assistance options.
 - www.floridahousing.org
 - 850-488-4197

Homelessness and Temporary Housing Referrals:

- JFCS OMAP (Operation Military Assistance Program)
 - 941-366-2224, Ext 194
- St. Vincent De Paul Hope in Action
 - www.svdpusa.org

- 941-794-1328
- To access the SVDP grant, need to call 211 first.
- Housing at Veterans Village
 - 1430 55th Ave. W., Bradenton
 - 941-896-9714
 - **Note:** This is usually a 3-6 months program.
- **Note :** JFCS OMAP AND SVDP distribute HUD-VASH vouchers.

Housing & Shelter Assistance Referrals:

- Bradenton Housing Authority
 - Oversees Section 8 voucher program and operates several affordable housing and subsidized housing complexes offering rental units.
 - www.bradentonhousing.org
 - 941-748-5568
- Desoto towers
 - Low-income housing for seniors 62 years of age or older who can live independently.
 - [www.publichousing.com/deails/Bradenton-Desoto Towers](http://www.publichousing.com/deails/Bradenton-Desoto_Towers)
 - 941-809-2231
- Habitat for Humanity
 - The home ownership program provides opportunities for low-income homeownership at a 0% interest rate for 30 years.
 - 1901 Manatee Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.manateehabitat.org
 - 941-728-9100
- Manatee County Redevelopment & Economic Opportunity
 - Offers a housing program to low and moderate-income county residents to help them achieve the dream of homeownership.
 - 1112 Manatee Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34203
 - www.mymanatee.org
 - 941-756-3974

- Manatee County Housing Authority
 - Provides housing for low and moderate-income families. It also provides rental assistance through HUD, Section 8, to eligible low-income clients.
 - 5631 11th Street East, Bradenton, Florida 34203
 - www.manateehousing.com
 - 941-756-3974

- Volunteers of America Florida
 - Provides veterans, seniors, low-income families, and individuals with mental illnesses with resources for housing, health services, training, education, and employment services.
 - 4234 20th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.voafloida.org
 - 941-209-1573

CRITICAL SERVICES

MCVS VA Assistance:

- 941-745-3795
- 1401 3rd Ave West, Bradenton, FL 34205
- Please schedule an appointment if you need assistance with any of the services below:
 - Disability Claim
 - Our Veterans Services Counselors can assist in:
 - Initial claim for service-related Injuries or presumptive illnesses
 - Reconsiderations of previous denials
 - Claims to increase current disability rating.
 - Claims for secondary or residual disabilities
 - Submitting an appeal of a previously denied claim.
 - Pension
 - Our Veterans Services Counselors can assist in:
 - Supplemental income for lower-income, war-time Veterans
 - Increased income to help reimburse war-time Veterans for in-home care.
 - Aid & Attendance allowance for war-time Veterans in assisted living care or hired long-term in-home medical care.
 - Life Insurance
 - Officers will help you understand Life Insurance Benefits and assist with applying for the program. Detailed information is available on the following topics:
 - Insurance Forms
 - Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance
 - Service Members and Veterans Group Life Insurance
 - Survivor Benefits
 - Our Veterans Service Officers will help you understand Survivor Benefits and assist with applying for the benefits. Detailed information is available on the following topics:
 - Benefits Estimators
 - Department of Defense (DOD) Benefits and Services

- Forms
 - Online Applications
 - Partners Benefits
 - State Benefits
 - VA Benefits and Services
- Burial and Family Support
 - MCVS can assist you to receive benefits and services including headstones, markers, burial flags, and burial in a national cemetery.
 - MCVS may assist indigent or unclaimed veterans receive proper funeral services through our local national cemetery in Sarasota, Florida.
 - Our Veterans Service Counselor will help you understand Burial and Memorial Benefits and assist with applying for programs. Detailed information is available on the following topics:
 - Burial Benefits available from the National Cemetery Administration
 - Eligibility
 - Preparing in Advance
 - How to make burial arrangements in a National Cemetery at the Time of Need
 - Burial of Unclaimed, Indigent Veterans
 - Burial Flags
 - Donating Burial Flags to National Cemeteries
 - Burial Allowance Benefits
 - Survivor Benefits
 - Burial in a Private Cemetery
 - Burial at Sea

Mental Health, Abuse, Addiction Referrals:

- National Veteran Crisis Hotline:
 - Veterans in acute suicidal crisis may go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost - including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit.
 - 988 (press 1)
 - <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

- Academy at Brandon – Mental Health
 - Provides a pathway to success, friendship, and careers for adults seeking to improve their mental health.
 - 601 12th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.academysrq.org/bradenton
 - 941-921-9930

- Baker Act – Mental Health
 - Centerstone of Florida
 - Act is a means of providing individuals who may be harmful to themselves or others with emergency services and temporary detention for mental health evaluation and treatment when required.
 - 2020 26th Ave. East, Bradenton, Florida 34208
 - www.dcf.state.fl.us
 - 941-782-4600

- Centerstone – Mental Health or Alcohol & Drug Addiction
 - Administrative Office
 - Provides inpatient and outpatient services to help diagnose, treat, and manage mental health disorders and addictions. Services are available for children, teens, adults, seniors, and veterans experiencing trauma, substance abuse, psychiatric illnesses, and emotional disorders.
 - 391 6th Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.centerstone.org/locations/florida
 - Main: 941-782-4150
 - Inpatient: 941-782-4610

 - Outpatient Services
 - Bradenton – Sixth Ave. West
 - 379 6th Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - Community Action Team
 - Bradenton – Sixth Ave. West
 - 383 6th Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - Hospital and Addiction Center
 - 2020 26th Ave. East, Bradenton, Florida 34208
 - 941-375-4321

 - Walk-In Center
 - 371 6th Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205

- Main: 941-782-4150
 - Inpatient: 941-782-4610

- First Step of Sarasota - Mental Health or Alcohol & Drug Addiction
 - Offers innovation treatment programs for children and adults experiencing mental health or substance abuse challenges.
 - Administrative Offices
 - 4579 Northgate Court, Sarasota, Florida 34234
 - www.fsos.org
 - 941-366-5333

 - Case Management and Care Coordination – Outpatient Locations
 - Manatee Office
 - 1144 Tallevast Road, Suit 112, Sarasota Florida 34243
 - 941-753-1823

- Family Integrity Training - Mental Health or Alcohol & Drug Addiction
 - Faith-based comprehensive “100 hour” curriculum focuses on life skills development, basic mental health, and sound educational practice for the incarcerated, addicted, homeless, broken-hearted, and those recently transitioning back into society.
 - 3855 Pro AM Ave. East, Bradenton, Florida 34203
 - www.100hour.org
 - 941-799-4975

- Genesis Health Services – Mental Health
 - Administrative Office
 - Behavioral health and mentoring services for underinsured, needy, or low-wage individuals and families in Sarasota, Manatee, and North Port.
 - 707 7th Street West, Palmetto, Florida 34221
 - www.genesishealthagency.org
 - 941-957-1970

- MCR Health – Mental Health – gets county money
 - Offers discounted behavioral health counseling and psychiatric medication services to the uninsured and underinsured in Manatee and Sarasota County.
 - 101 Riverfront Blvd, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.mcr.health
 - 941-776-4000

Legal Assistance Referrals:

- If in VA Healthcare
 - VA Legal Aid at 727-398-6661.
 - Meghan Booth Ext 15191
 - Fred Liggett, Ext 15893
 - Location is Bay Pines
- Medical-Legal Partnership
 - 941-745-3795
 - Locations at VA Clinics: Bradenton, Sarasota, Bay Pines, and James Haley
 - Times change every year
- Legal Aid for Veterans
 - When you call, you will speak to a screener who will determine your eligibility and set your appointment with an attorney. Florida Veterans Legal Helpline can assist with Landlord-Tenant Matters, Consumer Credit Issues, Foreclosure, Divorce/Child Support, Driver Licenses/ID cards, Social Security, Public Benefits, Discharge Upgrades, VA Benefits and other Civil Legal Matters (No Criminal or Traffic Matters).
 - 1 (866) 486-6161
 - Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- The Governor's Initiative on Lawyers Assisting Warriors (GI LAW)
 - Draws from the talent of Florida's leading law firms to provide pro bono services for military members.
 - www.enterpriselawflorida.com/floridadefense/lawyers-assisting-warriors/
- Legal Clinics in VA Facilities
 - www.va.gov/ogc/docs/LegalServices.pdf
- American Bar Association resources for veterans:

- www.americanbar.org/groups/committees/veterans_benefits
- The Florida Bar, in conjunction with the American Bar Association
 - Free virtual legal advice clinic for Floridians
 - <https://florida.freelegalanswers.org>
- **Veterans Courts**
 - Veterans returning from combat may suffer from post-traumatic stress or may have difficulty reintegrating into society. Due to alienation and lack of support, some veterans fall into drug and alcohol abuse or develop mental health issues. Thirty-one Veterans Courts in Florida have been established as of 2022 to address these issues.
 - Section 394.47891, Florida Statutes, established the T. Patt Maney Veterans' Treatment Act, which authorizes a veterans' court with the purpose of addressing the substance abuse and mental health needs of veterans within the criminal justice system. Successful completion of Veterans Court has helped decrease the recidivism rates of its participants through the proper diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues and as a result of the supportive roles mentors play in the process. Recent legislation has expanded the pool of eligible veterans.
 - For more information, visit <https://www.flcourts.gov/Resources--Services/Office-of-Problem-Solving-Courts/Veterans-Courts>
 - There is a helpful Veterans Resources Guide for the Florida State Court System at www.flcourts.org/content/download/217060/1968306/VETERANS_RESOURCE_GUIDE.pdf.
 - For additional information of Veterans' legal resources www.floridavets.org/resources
- **Victim Assistance Program**
 - Manatee County Sheriff's Office
 - The local Victim Assistance Unit advocates meeting the needs of victims of crime or witnesses to a tragic event. It also assists families experiencing a sudden, traumatic death because of suicide, overdoses, or traffic accidents.
 - 600 Hwy 301 Blvd, West, Suite 202, Bradenton, Florida 34205

- www.manateesheriff.com
 - 941-747-3011
- Life Insurance
 - Veteran Affairs
 - <https://www.va.gov/life-insurance/>
- Bural and Family Support
 - Veteran Affairs
 - For eligibility requirements, contact an FDVA Veterans' Claims Examiner or County Veteran Service Officer. You may also visit www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/factsheets.asp or call toll free (800) 827-1000.
 - Note: The programs, processes and criteria for receiving Social Security and VA disability benefits are different. Visit <https://www.ssa.gov/people/veterans/> or call toll free (800) 772-1213 for more information.
 - Gold Star Families:
 - www.floridavets.org/our-veterans/gold-star-families.
- Certification of Discharge or Separation
 - www.archives.gov/veterans

Basic Needs (Supplies, Food, Etc) Assistance Referrals:

- Blessing Bags Project
 - Assists the homeless and those less fortunate by providing basic critical needs such as hygiene items, clothing, food, etc.
 - 1802 14th Street West, Suite 6, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.theblessingbagsproject.org
 - 941-720-1720
- Bring on the Ministry

- Faith-based Ministry provides the homeless and underserved with food supplies, hygiene projects, showers, and resource networking.
- 4814 18th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34207
- www.bringontheministry.com
- bringontheministry@gmail.com
- 330-333-9873

- Stillpoint Mission
 - Mission is to reach out within the community to meet basic daily essentials of those in need.
 - 1608 14th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34207
 - www.stillpointmission.org
 - 941-728-6835

- Turning Points
 - Offers various free services, providing basic needs to individuals and families on their path to financial stability and independence.
 - 701 17th Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.tpmanatee.org
 - 941-747-1509

- United Way
 - 211 helpline, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is a FREE service that connects area residents of Manatee to critical health and social service resources when they need help.
 - 4215 Concept Court, Bradenton, Florida 34211
 - www.unitedwaysuncoast.org
 - 941-748-1313

- Food Bank of Manatee County
 - Operated by Meals on Wheels PLUS, offering a mobile produce pantry, emergency family food program for nonprofits, a baby basket program to support the nutritional and essential needs of children from birth to 2yrs. Old, and an informative website listing of current food pantries and soup kitchens in Manatee County.
 - 811 23rd Ave. East, Bradenton, Florida 34208
 - www.mealsonwheelsplus.org

- 941-747-4655 ext.2
- Salvation Army
 - Provides meals to those participating in the various programs at the shelter complex.
 - 1204 14th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34205

Financial Assistance Referrals:

- Christian Care Alliance of Manatee
 - Provides screening to individuals needing financial assistance paing their rent or utility bills.
 - 518 13th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.cca-manatee.us
 - 941-752-4271
- Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program
 - Step Up Sunocast
 - 6248 Parkland Drive, Sarasota, Florida 34243
 - www.benefits.gov/benefit/1533
 - 941-827-0188
- Bank
 - <https://veteransbenefitsbanking.org/>

Motor Vehicle. Licensing & Fee Exemptions:

- Veteran Designation on Driver License
 - Florida veterans can add a veteran designation to their driver license or ID card by visiting any Florida driver license office, to include those operated by county tax collectors.
 - Requirements:
 - Present a discharge document which shows an Honorable or Under Honorable Conditions discharge from active duty;
 - Visit [www.flhsmv.gov/driver-licenses-id-cards/ what-to-bring](http://www.flhsmv.gov/driver-licenses-id-cards/what-to-bring) to ensure you have all other documents.
 - Veterans who need to obtain a copy of their DD-214 may request it online at www.archives.gov/veterans. While renewing or replacing a driver license or ID

card, veterans may also voluntarily request information on veterans' benefits be forwarded to them.

- 100% Disabled Veteran State ID Card
 - A disabled veteran ID card may be issued by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs to any veteran who is a permanent resident of the state and is determined by the VA or Department of Defense to have a 100% service-connected, permanent and total disability rating. (FS 295.17) The card may be used as proof of eligibility for any state benefit except exemption of homestead property taxes.
 - For application information, call (727) 319-7440.
- Disabled Veteran Motor Vehicle License Plate
 - A veteran discharged honorably or under honorable conditions who has been a resident of Florida continuously for the past five years or who has established a domicile in Florida, as provided by FS 222.17, may apply for one free disabled veteran ""DV"" license plate for an owned or leased vehicle.
 - The veteran must provide proof of a service-connected 100-percent disability rating or that the vehicle was acquired through VA financial assistance.
 - Note: Free license plates with a wheelchair emblem are available for those veterans permanently confined to a wheelchair and who otherwise qualify for a DV plate.
 - Service charges may apply (FS 320 on, call (850) 617-2000 .084)
 - [www.flhsmv.govrequirements /pdf/and more proc/rs/rs-17.informatipdf](http://www.flhsmv.govrequirements/pdf/and%20more%20proc/rs/rs-17.informatipdf)

EMPLOYMENT

MCVS VA Employment Services Assistance:

- Help understand and Vocational/Employment benefits and assist with applying for the program. Call to schedule an appointment.
 - 941-745-3795
 - 1401 3rd Ave West, Bradenton, FL 34205

Vocational Rehabilitation Referral:

- Veteran Readiness and Employment Service
 - Veterans may receive Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) services to help with job training, employment accommodations, resume development and job seeking skills coaching. Other services may be provided to assist veterans in starting their own businesses or independent living services for those who are severely disabled and unable to work in traditional employment.
 - www.benefits.va.gov/VOCREHAB/index.asp

Employment Assistance Referrals:

- CareerSource Suncoast
 - The one-stop center is dedicated to helping the area employees look for employment.
 - www.careersourcesuncoast.com
 - 941-358-4200
 - Will Colazzo: 941-309- 7437
 - Gilbert Humphrey (disabled Vet Outreach Program Coordinator for Suncoast): 941-358-4200 x3163
- Goodwill Manasota
 - 2705 51st Ave. East, Bradenton, Florida 34203
 - <https://www.experiencegoodwill.org/jobconnection>
 - 945-355-2721
- Employ Florida Vet
 - The Florida Veterans Program Portal is an online resource from the Employ Florida for veterans' employment and employer recruitment information. The

portal provides information and resource links to assist veterans, their families, and employers in accomplishing their employment goals and is available 24/7.

- <https://veteran.employflorida.com/vosnet/default.aspx>
- 800-438-4128

- Troops to Teachers

- DoD career transition program designed to help transitioning service members and veterans begin new careers as K-12 school teachers. You can qualify for a Professional Certificate in about nine months while working as a teacher or in other employment. You can qualify for a Temporary Certificate much quicker, which will allow to apply for full-time teaching positions. In fact, you may be able to qualify for the certificate even if you do not hold a bachelor's degree.
- 833-358-7667
- t2t@tcc.fl.edu

- Business License Waivers

- The Department of Business and Professional Regulation may waive the initial licensing fee, application fee and unlicensed activity fee for military veterans and their spouses at the time of discharge who apply for a state professional license. The application must be submitted within 60 months after the veteran has been honorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces including the Florida National Guard. The waiver does not include examination or other incidental fees. The law applies to new licenses for more than 20 professions under DBPR's jurisdiction, including construction, real estate, certified public accountants, and cosmetologists.
- www.myfloridalicense.com/DBPR/militaryservices/veterans-services
- 850 - 487 -1395

- Health License Fee Waivers

- The Florida Department of Health has programs in place to aid veterans in finding employment in health-related fields. The department offers expedited health care practitioner licensure through the Veterans Application for Licensure Online Response (VALOR) system. They also offer expanded licensure fee waivers for military veterans and their spouses applying for health care licensure in Florida.
- www.flhealthsource.gov/valor#Veterans
- 850- 488-0595

- Veterans Florida
 - Non-profit corporation created by the State of Florida and the state's designated SkillBridge assistance organization. They provide powerful tools to help veterans find a new career, start a business, and connect with helpful resources in the Sunshine State.
 - Career Opportunities from Veterans Florida
 - www.veteransflorida.org/careers
 - Agriculture Opportunities from Veterans Florida
 - www.veteransflorida.org/agriculture

Business/Entrepreneurship Assistance Referrals:

- Veterans Florida
 - Leadership, discipline, and attention to detail - your military skills directly correlate to becoming a successful entrepreneur, and the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program is a proven world-class training initiative designed specifically for veterans. They've joined forces with Florida's top universities, startup incubators, and coworking spaces to equip veterans with tools to start or grow a business and provide access to vitally important small business development resources.
 - www.veteransflorida.org/entrepreneurship
- 941Vets
 - Group that helps veterans to start their own business, as well as promote and grow it. They provide business coaching and accountability and weekly events.
 - 26 West Center State College of Florida
 - 5840 26th St W, Bradenton, FL 34207
 - <https://26west.scf.edu/entrepreneurship/>
 - 941-752-5285
- Florida Veteran Certified Business Enterprises
 - The Department of Management Services' Office of Supplier Diversity certifies eligible Florida-based veteran-, woman- and minority-owned small businesses. The Office of Supplier Diversity also provides technical assistance, certification support and pertinent information about state contract opportunities, special events and networking activities.
 - www.dms.myflorida.com/osd
 - 850- 487-0915

- U.S. Small Business Administration
 - Offers programs and services for veterans seeking to establish or expand small businesses.
 - (800) 827-5722

EDUCATION

MSCS VA Education Benefits Assistance:

- Help understand and VA education benefits and assist with applying for the program.
Call to schedule an appointment.
 - 941-745-3795
 - 1401 3rd Ave West, Bradenton, FL 34205

- Post 9/11 GI Bill
 - Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients (Ch 33), and those receiving the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship who transitioned out of the military after January 1, 2013, no longer have a 15-year delimiting date for the use of their awarded education benefits (PL 115-48). Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries must also now verify their enrollment at a school to VA, monthly (PL 116-315, Section 1010).
 - <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/post-9-11/>
 - For complete VA educational assistance information:
 - www.benefits.va.gov/gibill

- STEM Program - The Edith Nourse Rogers Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) Scholarship provides a maximum award of \$30,000 to Post-9/11 or Fry Scholarship students who have exhausted or will exhaust entitlement, within 180 days.
 - Eligible veterans and Fry Scholarship students must be pursuing an undergraduate STEM degree at an Institution of Higher Learning or must be enrolled in a clinical training program for health care professionals.
 - Eligible veteran and Fry Scholarship students who have already obtained an undergraduate degree in a STEM field and who are enrolled in a teaching certification program to teach in a STEM field, are also eligible to apply (PL 115-48).
 - To learn more, visit [https://www. va.gov/education/other-va-education-benefits/stem-scholarship/](https://www.va.gov/education/other-va-education-benefits/stem-scholarship/)

- VET TEC Program - VA's 5-year Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Pilot Program.
 - The program commenced August 1, 2018 to provide training benefits to eligible veterans who enroll in high technology education programs

- (Information Science, Computer Programming, Data Processing, Media Applications, or Computer Software) at approved Noncollege Degree schools. Only one day of GI Bill® entitlement is needed for eligibility and program does not use beneficiary's entitlement. Training and a monthly housing allowance (MHA) is provided to students. Students may also train as online only students; however, the MHA would be ½ of national average (PL 115-48).
- To learn more, visit <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits/vettec-high-tech-program/>
- National Call to Service Program
 - Qualified MGIB veterans may choose a benefit as an alternative to the Montgomery GI Bill®
 - <https://www.va.gov/education/other--va-education-benefits/national-call-to-service-program/>
 - 888-442-4551

Florida Veteran Education Benefits List:

- Out-of-state Tuition Waiver
 - Florida waives out-of-state tuition and fees for all honorably discharged veterans who reside in the state and who are enrolled in Florida public, post-secondary institutions, through the ""Congressman C.W. Bill Young Veteran Tuition Waiver Act."" The out-of-state tuition and fee waiver is extended to spouses and dependent children receiving educational assistance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and who reside in Florida while enrolled in Florida public, postsecondary institutions (see FS 1009.26(13)).
 - Out-of-state tuition and fees are waived for active-duty members residing or stationed outside of the State of Florida (FS 1009.26(14)).
- Purple Heart or other combat-related decorations tuition waiver
 - Florida waives undergraduate-level, certificate or diploma tuition at state universities, colleges, career and technical centers for Florida residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart and other combat related decorations superior in precedence to the Purple Heart (FS 1009.26(8)).
 - 850-245- 0407

- Postsecondary Tuition Waiver
 - Florida postsecondary institutions will waive the transcript fee of active-duty members or honorably discharged veterans, including his or her spouse and dependents (FS 1009.26(17)).

- Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans program
 - The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) provides scholarship opportunities for dependent children and spouses of veterans who died from a service-connected disability or who are 100 percent service-connected permanent and total disabled veterans (FS 295.01).
 - www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org
 - 888-827-2004

- Dependent children of service members Missing in Action or Prisoners of War may also be eligible for scholarship benefits. This scholarship may be received in addition to VA's Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA - Ch 35).

- Priority Registration in College
 - Each Florida College System institution and state university offering priority course registration for segments of the student population shall provide priority course registration to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces who are receiving GI Bill educational benefits (FS 1004.075). The benefit also applies to spouses and dependent children receiving transferred GI BiW' education benefits.

- Academic College Credit
 - Florida State Colleges and Universities also allow current members of the U.S. Armed Forces and honorably discharged veterans to earn academic college credit for college-level training and education acquired in the military. Consult your local campus for details. Active-Duty Service members using DoD's Military Tuition Assistance for enrollment in Florida College System institutions may have fees waived by the institution (FS 1009.25(15)).

- High-School Diploma
 - Honorably discharged veterans who were inducted into the U.S. Armed Forces prior to completing their high school education can be awarded a State of Florida High School Diploma.

- <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/veterans-diplomas.shtml>
- 850-245-0446

Local Education Programs Referrals:

- Manatee Technical College
 - Offers adults age 18 or over a variety of classes in career and technical education.
 - Main Campus
 - 6305 State Road 70 East, Bradenton, Florida 34203
 - 941-751-7900
 - East Campus
 - Medical & 1st Responders Program
 - 5520 Lakewood Ranch Blvd, Bradenton, Florida 34211
 - 941-752-8100
 - www.manateetech.edu
- Women's Resource Center
 - Offers various services and classes to the community, including employment services and coaching, computer tutoring, ask an attorney, money empowerment, divorce, estate planning, social security planning, and enrichment support groups.
 - 1926 Manatee Ave. West, Bradenton, Florida 34205
 - www.mywrc.org
 - 941-747-6797

LEISURE, ACTIVITY, EVENTS

Leisure Benefits Referrals:

- Florida State Park Discount
 - The Florida Department of Environmental Protection provides a
 - 25-percent discount on the purchase of Individual and Family annual passes to Florida's State Parks for all active duty and honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserve units of the U.S. Armed Forces or National Guard. Honorably discharged veterans with service-related disabilities, surviving spouses of members of the U.S. military who have fallen in combat, and parents of members of the U.S. military who have fallen in combat are eligible to receive a free-for-life Military Entrance Pass.
 - www.FloridaStateParks.org.
 - (850) 245-2157

- National Parks
 - All veterans and Gold Star Families are eligible for free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests. In addition to receiving access to National Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have indefinitely waived entrance or standard amenity fees for veterans and Gold Star Families.
 - Please visit the National Parks Service at www.nps.gov

- Hunting and Fishing
 - The Military Gold Sportsman's License is available for a reduced fee of \$20 to any resident who is an active or retired member of the U. S. Armed Forces, Armed Forces Reserve or National Guard upon submission of a current military ID card.
 - For more information, visit <https://myfwc.com/license/recreational/military-gold/>
 - The license is available through an online verification process at www.GoOutdoorsFlorida.com. The license may also be obtained at Florida tax collectors' offices with proof of residency and a current military identification card.
 - State hunting and fishing licenses and permits shall be issued without fees for five years to any veteran who is a Florida resident, certified or determined to be 100% totally and permanently disabled by the VA or the U.S. Armed Forces, or

who has been issued a valid disabled veteran ID card by FDVA. For more information, visit www.myfwc.com. (FS 379.353).

Events, Activities Referrals:

- State Women Veterans' Coordinator
 - The Sunshine State is home to approximately 164,000 women veterans. Many women veterans don't know they are eligible for the full range of federal and state benefits. To help connect women veterans with earned benefits and services, FDVA hosts an annual state women veterans' conference. A Woman Veteran license plate is also available for purchase.
 - www.FloridaVets.org/our-veterans/women-veterans
 - (727) 319-7418

Useful websites

- "<https://macdillfss.com/id-cards/> All about military ID cards. How to get them, what documents are needed, DOD facilities that can provide them.
- <https://www.floridavets.org/> FDVA – Lots of helpful information
- SHINE - Manatee (floridashine.org): Helps counsel Veterans looking to drop medicare/Medicaid in the tax and other implications
- Manatee County Handbook (flcourts.org): Veterans Court handbook, hours, phone numbers, etc
- srq vets - Search (bing.com): non-profit organization that helps in various ways in Manatee/Sarasota county. A by veterans for veterans group.
- https://manatee.hosted.civiclive.com/departments/public_safety/community_paramedicine/lending_closet/donations: Community Paramedicine Medical Equipment Lending Closet
- <https://www.manateepao.gov/>: Quickly check what exemptions the veteran has
- <https://manateehabitat.org/habitat-for-heroes/> Have a veteran repair program
- https://www.voaflorida.org/housing_properties/manatee-veterans-village: Manatee Veterans Village
- <https://www.va.gov/sarasota-vet-center/#counseling-services>: Sarasota Vet Center, confidential help/counseling
- <https://26west.scf.edu/entrepreneurship/> For veterans interested in entrepreneurship, starting business, etc
- Leave No Female Veteran Behind - Home (servingoursheroes.org): New to us and we haven't heard any feedback about this group. If giving out this information, please ask for Veteran feedback.
- Find a Ride Florida <https://findarideflorida.com/>: Can help veterans find a ride to various places (also recommend the Handy bus)
- Military & Veterans Information - Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (flhsmv.gov): For veterans with questions about driver's license fees, etc
- Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs | Connecting veterans to federal and state benefits they have earned. (floridavets.org) Veteran Certified business
- Direct Express (treasury.gov): If a veteran does not have a bank account, they can use this resource or <https://veteransbenefitsbanking.org/> to get a bank card without the account.

VA Websites

- "The VA Claim Process After You File Your Claim | Veterans Affairs:
<https://www.va.gov/disability/after-you-file-claim/> Gives the average wait time for Disability claims (Heavily skewed by priority processed claims)
- Income limits and your VA health care | Income Limits | Veterans Affairs:
<https://www.va.gov/health-care/income-limits/introduction> Income limits for VA healthcare, customized by zip code and number of dependents
- Helpful VA Phone Numbers | Veterans Affairs:
<https://www.va.gov/resources/helpful-va-phone-numbers/> Helpful VA phone numbers, exactly as advertised.
- Eligibility For Veterans Pension | Veterans Affairs
<https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility/> : Pension eligibility. Helpful for the quick explanation of wartime service.
- Public Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) - Compensation
https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/dbq_publicdbqs.asp : Contains all DBQs needed for filing a disability claim
- Regional Loan Center Contact Information - VA Home Loans:
https://www.benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/contact_rlc_info.asp?_ga=2.207010963.1014173115.1552847440-1173244138.1525894550 : If anyone has a question about COEs (Certificate of Eligibility) or home loans.
- How To Request A VA Home Loan Certificate Of Eligibility (COE) | Veterans Affairs:
<https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/how-to-request-coe/> How to request a COE
- VA Home Loan Types | Veterans Affairs: <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/loan-types/> VA home loan types
- Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Health Issues | Veterans Affairs
<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/camp-lejeune-water-contamination/> – Contains dates and a presumptive list
- Camp Lejeune Family Member Program (va.gov)
<https://www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov/> For CL family members hurt by the CL water. (but in general, they should get a lawyer)
- Agent Orange Exposure And VA Disability Compensation | Veterans Affairs
<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/> – Same at the CL list above. Contains dates, countries and a presumptive list of cancers and other diseases from Agent Orange exposure
- <https://www.va.gov/sarasota-vet-center/#counseling-services>: Sarasota Vet Center, confidential help/counseling
- 2023 Veterans Disability Compensation Rates | Veterans Affairs
<https://www.va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veteran-rates/> : Rates for veteran disability housing, including with dependents"