



Veteran & Military

Resource Guide



With more than 100,000 veterans residing in Pinellas County, Veterans Services is committed to providing comprehensive services to connect our veterans and dependents to the benefits they have earned. The Veterans Services officers provide guidance and assistance to veterans, their dependents and survivors in applying for benefits provided by the State of Florida and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Veteran & Military Resource Guide was created in a joint effort with our community partners to provide Pinellas County veterans and their families a better access to available services.

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“For those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, we are grateful that such men and women were among us. For those who continue to serve, we honor their commitment. For those who return to civilian life, we honor their service.”

Steve Buyer

MyVA Community Objectives



- To bring together local resources and advocates to improve outcomes for Veterans, transitioning Service members, and their families.
- To enable Veterans to easily identify and reach resources available to them, voice their opinions, and provide valuable input.
- To resolve concerns at the local level and improve service delivery methods.

MyVA Communities Philosophical Model Framework

Inclusive

- Open to all Veterans, Service members, their families, stakeholders, resources, advocates and existing community engagements/efforts
- Establish a collaborative network within the community and provide the opportunity to connect with other MyVA Communities

Accessible

- Conduct public forums to provide open lines of communication and opportunities to collaborate
- Public forums will be held in geographically-diverse locations to encourage broad participation

Community-driven

- Focused on local issues identified by the community
- Guided by a community veterans engagement board that understand the issues and is actively engaged in them

Flexible

- Locally-led by communities to reflect their unique characteristics and populations
- Allow for customization to meet local needs

Integrated

- Connecting and leveraging local resources and capabilities to maximize impact and improve Veteran outcomes
- VA provides an integrated presence with representation from all three administrations



VA General Info Hotline

(800) 827-1000
(855) VA-WOMEN (829-6636)

Homeless Assistance

(also see community resources)

VA's National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
(877) 4AID-VET (424-3838)

Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program
(must check for deadlines) (877) 424-3838

Coordinator for Women, Elderly & Minority Veterans
VA Regional Office
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines, FL
(727) 319-5830

Homeless Outreach Social Worker
Bay Pines Homeless Walk-in Clinic
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bldg 102, Bay Pines, FL
(727) 398-6661 ext. 15986
Hours: 8 - 11 a.m. and 1 - 3:30 p.m.

Social Work
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines, FL
(727) 398-6661, ext. 17814

Housing

Domiciliary
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines, FL
(727) 398-6661, ext. 14457

Homeless Veterans Employment Specialist
Employment Re-Entry Services
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bldg 1, 3rd Floor
Bay Pines, FL
(727) 398-6661, ext. 18816

Health Care

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines, FL
(727) 398-6661 | (888) 820-0230

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL
(813) 972-2000 | (888) 811-0107

Financial Assistance

VA Debt Management Center | (800) 827-0648
E-Benefits | www.ebenefits.va.gov



Readjustment Counseling

Team Leader (VA Vet Center)
6798 Crosswinds Dr. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 549-3633

Social Worker (VA Vet Center)
6798 Crosswinds Dr. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 549-3633

VA Vet Center
29259 US Hwy 19 N., Clearwater, FL
(727) 549-3600

OEF/OIF/OND Transition Patient Advocate
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines, FL
(727) 398-6661, ext. 15893

Employment

For Disabled Veterans
U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs Human Resources
Recruitment Office
(202) 461-4131
odi@va.gov

ABILHouse Program
(727) 373-9568 - Deveney Ching
(813) 480-6894 - Dianne Duncan

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
Human Resources | (727) 398-6661, ext. 14124
Employment Specialist | (727) 398-6661, ext. 17593

Vet Success
Employment Coordinator
(727) 319-7928

Abilities Foundation of Florida
2735 Whitney Road, Clearwater, FL
www.abilitiesfoundation.com/home.html
Frank De Lucia, President/CEO
fdelucia@abilities.org
(727) 538-7370

Veterans' Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
9500 Bay Pines Blvd., Room 226
St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 319-7902

Support

Multiple Sclerosis Support Group
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines, FL
Bldg. 1, Room B214
(727) 398-6661, ext. 12790

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
10000 Bay Pines Blvd., Bay Pines, FL
(727) 398-6661, ext. 14249

PTSD Coach
Mobile App-download
Google Play or iTunes
www.ptsd.va.gov

Smoking Cessation Support Group
To quit smoking
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
(727) 398-6661, ext. 14922 / 14061

Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST)
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
(727) 398-6661, ext. 14516

Women in Transition
Bay Pines VA Medical
Case Manager
(727) 398-6661, ext. 17219
OEF/OIF/OND

Grief Support
Loss of a loved one
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
(727) 398-6661, ext. 17676

Transportation

Veteran Transportation Service
(727) 398-6661, ext. 10308

PSTA (*Public Transportation to Bay Pines*)
Bay Pines area - Rt 18 & 68
(727) 540-1900
www.psta.net

Wellness

MOVE! Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
(727) 398-6661, ext. 10085

Walk with Ease Program
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
(727) 398-6661, ext. 17759

Child Care & Family Services

Dept. of Children / Families AC-CESS
11351 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL
Phoebe Quarterman
(727) 639-2631

Kinship Services Network – Pinellas
1700 N. McMullen Booth Rd., Suite D3,
Clearwater, FL
Ashley Spring
(727) 785-2762

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Neighborhood Family Center
900 North Dr. MLK Ave., Clearwater, FL
Erma Boateng
(727) 442-5355

4R Club Child Care Inc
(727) 578-5437
4140 49th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 578-5437
www.rclub.net

Boy Scouts of America
(727) 391-3800
11046 Johnson Blvd., Seminole, FL
(727) 391-3800
www.wcfbsa.org

Big Brothers & Big Sisters
711 S. Dale Mabry Hwy., Suite 300, Tampa, FL
Samantha Fenger
(727) 518-8860, ext. 227
samanthaf@bbbbspc.org

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Suncoast
7790 61st St. N., Pinellas Park, FL
(727) 547-5437
www.bgcsun.org

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program
(727) 824-6913 or (727) 824-6914

Camelot Community Care
Children's Mental Health
(727) 593-0003
(727) 791-3131 Emergencies

Military Kids Connect
www.militarykidsconnect.dcoe.mil

Our Military Kids
www.ourmilitarykids.org
Toll-Free: (866) 691-6654

Homelessness

Homeless Emergency Project (HEP)

1120 N. Betty Lane, Clearwater, FL
Zak White, Director of Programs
(727) 442-9041, ext. 114 | Cell: (727) 637-8088
zacharyw@ethep.org

Abilities Foundation

2735 Whitney Road, Clearwater, FL
Frank De Lucia, President / CEO
(727) 538-7370
fdelucia@abilities.org
Abilitiesfoundation.com

For Single, Homeless Men

Beacon House

863 3rd Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 821-1200
Stpetersburgfreeclinic.org

For Single Males & Females only

Boley Centers Inc.

445 31st St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 821-4899
Sharon Nivens
(727) 686-7490 | (727) 499-2352
sharon.nivens@boleycenters.org

Tampa Crossroads

Robyn Larson, Women's Residential Director
4203 N. Nebraska Ave., Tampa, FL
(813) 238-8557, ext. 500
rlarson@tampacrossroads.com

Liberty Manor

Tampa, FL
(813) 900-9422
www.libertymanor.org

American Legion: Project Homefront

Healthcare, employment, homelessness, education,
suicide prevention, PTSD
(800) 273-8255
mail@floridalegion.org
www.projecthomefront.com

Abe Brown Ministries, Inc

2921 N. 29th St., Tampa, FL
Robert Blount
(813) 247-3285 ext. 205

Holistic Coaching, Housing for Those in Crisis

3201 Freemont Terrace S., St. Petersburg, FL
Christopher Keaton
(910) 599-3383 (males)
Janet Harper
(727) 678-1751 (females)

Faith House

302 15th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
Rebecca Russell-Gootee
(727) 822-4981

A New Direction for Women and Men, Inc.

2365 5th Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL
Pamela Dixon
(727) 494-0203

One Unique Transition

402 East Palm Ave., Tampa, FL
Margaret Torres
(704) 277-8714

Simply Hope, Inc.

5540 Park Blvd, Suite 2, Pinellas Park, FL
Rob Harris
(727) 754-3414

Transportation

DART (*Services for those unable to use PSTA buses due to disability*)

3201 Scherer Drive, St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 540-1900

Wheelchair Reservations: (727) 540-1960

Sedan Reservations: (727) 540-1897

Day Star (One-time help with travel expenses)

226 6th St. S., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 789-5275

Yellow Cab

(727) 222-2222

The Angel Wheels

(800) 768-0238
www.angelwheels.org
info@angelwheels.org

PSTA (*Public Transportation*)

(727) 540-1900
www.psta.net

Burial Services

Bay Pines National Cemetery

(727) 319-6479

National Cemetery Scheduling Office

(800) 535-1117

Food, Clothing & Household Items

RCS Food Bank

700 Druid Road, Clearwater, FL
(727) 443-4031 one-time basis
24-hour crisis: (727) 442-4128

F.E.A.S.T. Food Pantry

2255 Nebraska Ave., Palm Harbor, FL
(727) 789-5275

Shepherd Center

304 South Pinellas Ave., Tarpon Springs, FL
(727) 939-1400

Free Clinic Food Bank

863 3rd Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 821-1200

St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen

1345 Park St., Clearwater, FL
(727) 823-2516
401 15th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 441-3950

Helping Hands

Free food and clothing
2565 Blackburn St., Clearwater, FL
(727) 724-1290

Service Source

(Warrior Bridge)
2735 Whitney Road, Clearwater, FL
(727) 538-7370
www.servicesource.org

Salvation Army

1521 Druid Road E., Clearwater, FL
(727) 446-4177

Local Food Park, Inc. – The Local Food Project

6037 21st Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 804-0694

Family Shelters

Pinellas: **Grace House** | (727) 446-5964
Salvation Army | (727) 822-4954
YWCA | (727) 823-2859
ASAP | (727) 823-5665
Kimberly Home | (727) 443-0471

Hillsborough: **Metropolitan Ministries** | (813) 209-1081
New Beginnings | (813) 443-0251
Amen Ministry | (813) 935-7333
FSJ House | (813) 294-4993
Meridian House | (813) 957-1117

Housing

Haven of RCS Domestic Violence Shelter

Victims of domestic violence and their children
Clearwater, FL
(727) 442-4128
FL Hotline: (800) 500-1119

Neighborhood Home Solutions

Down Payment Assistance
1600 Dr. MLK Jr. St. S., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 821-6897

Community Service Foundation, Inc.

Peggy Eaton, Housing Placement Specialist
925 Lakeview Road, Clearwater, FL
(727) 461-0618, ext. 6
peg@csfhome.org

American XPOW Ex-Prisoner of War, FL Gulf Coast Chapter

8735 Doral Oaks Drive #1617, Tampa, FL
Ed Cement (813) 985-3783
Ann Still (727) 360-2005

Tampa Bar CDC

2139 N.E. Coachman St., Clearwater, FL
(727) 442-7075

Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (SSVF) Pinellas

Society of St. Vincent de Paul
South Office:
384 15th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
North Office:
2735 Whitney Road, Clearwater, FL
(727) 823-2516, ext. 101
www.svdpsp.org/ssvf

Alliance for Affordable Housing

(727) 224-0645

Goodwill Suncoast

Low-income housing
www.goodwill-suncoast.org

HUD-VASH Pinellas County Housing Authority

(727) 443-7684

CASA for Domestic Violence Victims

(727) 895-4912

Employment

Florida State Vocational Rehab

Largo Office:

11351 Ulmerton Road, Suite 123, Largo, FL
(727) 518-3457

St. Petersburg Office #1:

701 94th Ave. N., Suite 107, St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 217-7930

St. Petersburg Office #2:

525 Mirror Lake Dr. N., Suite 100
St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 552-1589

CareerSource Pinellas Gulf-to-Bay

2312 Gulf to Bay Blvd., Clearwater, FL
Tel: (727) 524-4344 | Fax: (727) 791-5891

CareerSource Pinellas St. Petersburg

3420 8th Ave. S., St. Petersburg, FL
Tel: (727) 524-4344 | Fax: (727) 328-3394

CareerSource Pinellas Tarpon Springs

St. Petersburg College Campus - Bilirakis Bldg
682 E. Klosterman Road, Tarpon Springs, FL
Tel: (727) 524-4344 | Fax: (727) 324-2855

CareerSource Pinellas USF St Petersburg

USF St. Petersburg Campus
Military and Veterans Success Center
140 7th Ave. S., TER 301/302, St. Petersburg, FL
Tel: (727) 873-4467 | Fax: (727) 873-4428

CareerSource Pinellas Tyrone

7701 22nd Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL
Tel: (727) 524-4344 | Fax: (727) 800-9941

Veterans Employment

Outreach Program Specialist
Service Source
2735 Whitney Road, Clearwater, FL
(727) 538-7370, ext. 336

SCORE Pinellas Veterans' Initiative

4707 140th Ave. N., #311, Clearwater, FL
(727) 532-6800
score@scorepinellas.org

CareerSource Pinellas

South Clearwater
16432 US Hwy 19 N., Clearwater, FL

Goodwill Suncoast Inc.

10596 Gandy Blvd
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Wanda Dunmore
(727) 523-1512 ext. 1517

Nicole Zack
(727) 523-1512 ext. 1515
Kelly Wagner
(813) 877-2257

Financial Assistance

Pinellas Opportunity Council Emergency Financial Assistance

Electric & Water Bill
1201 Douglas Ave., Clearwater, FL
Administration: (727) 823-4140 ext. 10
South St. Petersburg: (727) 822-4492
North St. Petersburg: (727) 894-5176
Pinellas Park: (727) 541-0896
Clearwater & Tarpon Springs: (727) 937-9393

Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
384 15th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 823-2516, ext. 101

Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program

Administration: (727) 823-4101, ext. 10
St. Petersburg: (727) 821-0584
Largo: (727) 202-6803

Pinellas County Human Services

Electric, water, rent, rental deposit assistance
2189 Cleveland St., Suite 266, Clearwater, FL
(727) 464-8400

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

emergency aid for electric bill payment
(727) 327-0977

American Legion's Family Support Network

Clearwater: (727) 446-4177
1521 E. Druid Road, Clearwater, FL
Tarpon Springs: (727) 934-4476
209 S. Pinellas Ave., Tarpon Springs, FL

Salvation Army Social Services

209 South Pinellas Ave., Tarpon Springs, FL
(727) 934-4476

Social Security Administration

(800) 772-1213

Adult Emergency Financial Assistance

(727) 210-4211

Florida Veterans Foundation

(850) 488-4181

Health Care

Healthnet Pinellas | (727) 562-1545

Medicare | 800-633-4227

Clearwater Free Clinic

707 N Fort Harrison, Clearwater, FL
(727) 447-3041

Clinic Hours:

Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

St. Petersburg Free Clinic

863 3rd Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 821-1200

Marriage & Family Counseling of Pinellas

Adult Mental Health
(727) 726-9408

National Alliance on Mental Illness

(NAMI) Pinellas County
8800 49th St. N. #302, Pinellas Park, FL
(727) 623-4953

Community Health Centers of Pinellas

Johnnie Ruth Clarke
(727) 821-6701
(727) 544-2284 (Pinellas Park)

Directions for Living

Children/Adult Mental Health
(727) 524-4464

Clearwater Center:

1437 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater, FL
(727) 524-4464

Largo Center:

8823 115th Ave. N., Largo, FL
(727) 547-4566

St. Petersburg College – Dental

7200 66th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 341-3668

Legal Services

Community Law

(727) 582-7402

Pinellas County Office of Human Rights

400 S. Ft. Harrison Ave., 5th Floor
Clearwater, FL
(727) 464-4880

Florida Commission on Offender Review

1313 N. Tampa St., Suite 310, Tampa, FL
(813) 233-2530



Family Emergency Treatment Center (PEMHS)

11254 58th St. N., Pinellas Park, FL
(727) 541-4628
www.pemhs.org

Suncoast Center | (727) 388-1220

Metro Wellness and Community Centers

3251 3rd Ave. N., Suite 125
St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 321-3854

St. Petersburg Vet Center

6798 Crosswinds Dr. N., Bldg. A
St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 549-3633

Palm Harbor Community Based

Outpatient Clinic
(727) 734-5276

St. Petersburg Community Based

Outpatient Clinic
(727) 502-1700

West Care GulfCoast Florida Inc.

33 6th St. S., Suite 301, St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 490-6768

Pinellas County Navigators

647 1st Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL
Erin Richards
(727) 582-7478

Gulfcoast Legal Services

(727) 821-0726

Medical-Legal Partnership Program

(Tues & Weds Only)
Bldg 100 Room 1E-241
CW Bill Young VA Medical Center
(727) 398-9592

Public Defenders Office

14250 49th St. N., Clearwater, FL
(727) 464-8095

Veterans Service Organizations

Pinellas County VSO

301 S. Disston Ave., Tarpon Springs, FL
(727) 942-5457 ext. 6142 *Appointment only, Thursdays*

Pinellas County VSO

8751 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL
(727) 524-4410 ext. 7694
Appointment only, Tuesday & Wednesday

Pinellas County VSO

2189 Cleveland St., Suite 263, Clearwater, FL
(727) 464-8460 *Appointments preferred*

Pinellas County VSO

501 1st Ave. N., Suite 514, St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 582-7828 *Appointments preferred*

American Ex-Prisoners of War

Ann Still
(727) 360-2005

Fleet Reserve Association

Alphonse Vacca
(727) 421-3774

American Legion

David Miller
(727) 331-1652
usmcdavevet@tampabay.rr.com

Forty & Eight

Howard Hoover
(727) 232-6669
dartman0322@gmail.com

American Red Cross

Darlene Mentor
(727) 656-7074
darlenementor@yahoo.com

Korean War Veterans Association

John Leahy
(727) 343-3643

AMVETS

Leo "Bob" Fair
(727) 465-8476
debbob08@yahoo.com

Marine Corps League

Bob Koch
(727) 954-4980
bobusmc@tampabay.rr.com

Army & Navy Union U.S.A.

Patricia Myers
(727) 392-1841

Military Women Across the Nation

Vivian Cunningham
(727) 391-0291

Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

Ed Flowers
(727) 321-7464
edwardflowers992@yahoo.com

Universities and Colleges

St. Petersburg College Clearwater Campus

9200 113th St, Room SS-102, Seminole, FL
(727) 791-2676

Seminole Campus

2465 Drew St., PB 601, Clearwater, FL
(727) 394-6204

USF St. Petersburg

Veterans Success Center
140 7th Ave. S., TER 301/302
St Petersburg FL
(727) 873-4467

Stetson University College of Law

Veterans Law Institute
1401 61st St. S., Gulfport FL
(727) 562-7333

Military Recruiters



Air Force

- Downtown Seminole LLC
11223 Park Blvd. N., Seminole, FL
(727) 391-6716
- 908 58th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 347-7706
- 25861 US Hwy. 19 N., Clearwater, FL
(727) 797-0340



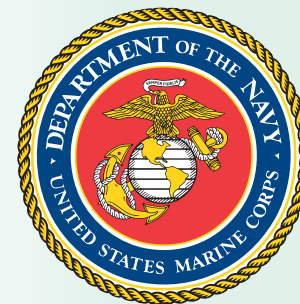
Army

- 25841 US Hwy. 19 N., Clearwater, FL
(727) 791-9900
- 910 58th St. N., #19b, St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 343-5633
- 11223 Park Blvd., Suite 3, Seminole, FL
(727) 391-6716
- 2801 Grand Ave., Pinellas Park, FL



Coast Guard

- 11022 4th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 579-3849



Marines

- 25861 US Hwy. 19 N., Clearwater, FL
(727) 797-7774/7685
- 910 58th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 343-4515
- 11125 Park Blvd., Suite 101, Seminole FL
(727) 392-7511



Navy

- 7985 113th St. N., Suite 340, Seminole, FL
(727) 391-6367
- 910 58th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 381-3682
- Cypress Point Shopping Center
25857 US Hwy. 19 N., Clearwater, FL
(727) 797-4702



VA Disability Claims Process

<p>Step 1) Claim Received</p>	<p>▶ Your claim has been received by the VA. If you applied online with VONAPP Direct Connect, you should see receipt in your list of Open Claims within one hour. If you applied through the U.S. mail, please allow mailing time plus one week for us to process and record receipt of your claim.</p>
<p>Step 2) Under Review</p>	<p>▶ Your claim has been assigned to a Veterans Service Representative and is being reviewed to determine if additional evidence is needed. If we do not need any additional information, your claim will move directly to the Preparation for Decision phase.</p>
<p>Step 3) Gathering of Evidence</p>	<p>▶ The Veterans Service Representative will request evidence from the required sources. Requests for evidence may be made of you, a medical professional you identify, a government agency, or another authority.</p>
<p>Step 4) Review of Evidence</p>	<p>▶ We have received all needed evidence. If, upon review, it is determined that more evidence is required, the claim will be sent back to the Gathering of Evidence phase. Such a situation can occur when a benefits claim for an additional disability is made.</p>
<p>Step 5) Preparation for Decision</p>	<p>▶ The (Rating) Veterans Service Representative has recommended a decision, and is preparing required documents detailing that decision. If more evidence is required, the claim will be returned to the Gathering of Evidence phase.</p>
<p>Step 6) Pending Decision Approval</p>	<p>▶ The recommended decision is reviewed, and, as applicable, a final award approval is made. If it is determined that more evidence or information is required, the claim will be returned to the Gathering of Evidence phase.</p>
<p>Step 7) Preparation for Notification</p>	<p>▶ Your entire claim decision packet is prepared for mailing.</p>
<p>Step 8) Complete</p>	<p>▶ The VA sends you a decision packet by U.S. mail. The packet includes details of the decision and, as applicable, is awarded to the applicant.</p>

How Long Will This Process Take?

VA's open-ended duty to assist Veterans and Survivors in developing their claim, established in law, prevents VA from deciding all claims within 125 days. VA will always consider additional evidence or new medical conditions added – no matter how late in the claims process. VA's legal duty to assist Veterans in fully developing their claims is an obligation we take seriously.

Examples of claims that could take longer than 125 days to process include:

- Veterans who add a new disability to their claim or identify additional evidence well into VA's processing of their claim.
- Veterans who are unable to make scheduled medical exams for personal reasons, such as travel, living overseas, etc.
- Complex disability claims, such as radiation claims that require the collection of scientific and medical data and opinions from radiation experts.
- Difficulty in obtaining National Guard and Reserve records for still-serving members.



Fully Developed Claims (FDCs)

The Fully Developed Claims (FDC) program is an optional initiative that offers Veterans and survivors faster decisions from VA on compensation, pension, and survivor benefit claims. Veterans and survivors simply submit all relevant records in their possession, and those records which are easily obtainable, such as private medical records, at the time they make their claim and certify that they have no further evidence to submit. VA can then review and process the claim more quickly; it also places a priority on processing FDCs.

For more information on the FDC Program, visit us at www.benefits.va.gov/fdc/ or contact VA at (800) 827-1000 (toll free), between the hours of 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

Financial Hardship, Homelessness and Terminal Illness

VA prioritizes benefits claims of Veteran's experiencing an extreme financial hardship, homelessness, or a terminal illness. If such a situation applies to you, and you have a pending claim with VA, please notify, (800) 827-1000 (toll free), between the hours of 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

"How Can We Help You?"

To help a Veteran in crisis, call the 24-hour Crisis Hotline at (800) 273-8255 option 1

For information about VA Health Care, call the VHA Helpline: (877) 222-VETS (8387) Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-8 p.m. EST | Call back service may be available after hours.

VA Facility Locator		
VA Facility Locator	VA facilities including additional state and local resources	Information: www.va.gov/landing2_locations.htm
Transition and Veteran Employment Services		
Veterans Employment Services Office (VESO)	Helps Veterans and transitioning Military Service Members find federal careers Military skills translator, resume builder and federal job search functions	Information: www.vaforvets.va.gov (855) 824-8387 www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs
Transition Assistance Program (TAP)	TAP may include transition from service briefings and assistance	Information: www.benefits.va.gov/TAP
Veterans Health Administration		
Health Care Benefits or Application Questions	VHA provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary care • Mental health care (including Veteran-specific treatment for PTSD, TBI care. etc.) • Preventative care • A wide variety of specialty care • Inpatient and outpatient pharmacy • Geriatric care • Long term care and support 	Program Information: www.va.gov/healthbenefits (877) 222-VETS (8387) Eligibility Information: www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/veterans.asp How to Apply: www.1010ez.med.va.gov
Access to Patient Medical information	• My HealtheVet is VA's online personal health record system designed to help VA patients manage their healthcare records and notes from medical providers	Information: www.myhealth.va.gov (877) 327-0022
Women Veteran Support	• The Women Veterans Health Program addresses health care needs of women Veterans to ensure that timely, equitable, high-quality, comprehensive health care services are available and provided	Information: www.womenshealth.va.gov Women Veterans Call Center: (855) VA-WOMEN

Rural Veteran support	• The VA Office of Rural Health helps rural Veterans access medical care through VA facilities	Information: www.ruralhealth.va.gov
Mental Health support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritative mental health information and resources for Veterans and their families. • Self-help toolbox • Where to get help • Comprehensive guide to VA Mental Health Services 	Information: www.mentalhealth.va.gov Guide to VA Mental Health Services for Veterans and Families: www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/MHG_English.pdf
Veteran (Vet) Center information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and group counseling • Discharge upgrade information • Community, social service and medical referrals • Employee assistance referrals • VA Benefits assistance referrals 	Information: (877) WAR-VETS (927-8387)
Homeless Veteran	Immediately call the 24-hour National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (877) 4AID-VET (4243-838)	
National Cemetery Administration		
Burial and Memorial Benefits Information	VA offers Veterans and their dependents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial and honoring services, including gravesites and grave liners • Maintenance of national cemeteries • Headstones, markers, and presidential memorial certificates 	Information: www.cem.va.gov (800) 827-1000

"How Can We Help You?"

To help a Veteran in crisis, call the 24-hour Crisis Hotline at (800) 273-8255 option 1

For information about VA Health Care, call the VHA Helpline: (877) 222-VETS (8387) Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-8 p.m. EST | Call back service may be available after hours.

Veterans Benefits Administration		
Benefits Information & Eligibility Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Videos and easy to understand, 30-second eligibility quiz are available at explore.va.gov A hardcopy and online handbook is available for benefits and qualifications information Further benefits and eligibility information is available at www.ebenefits.va.gov 	<p>Information: www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/ (800) 327-1000</p> <p>Benefits Handbook: www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp</p> <p>Videos about all VA programs and eligibility: explore.va.gov</p>
Benefits Applications & Claim Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information, forms, and phone numbers are available online for Veterans and their dependents 	<p>Forms and Applications: www.ebenefits.va.gov</p> <p>Videos that explain how to fill out select forms: www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/videos.asp</p>
Home Loan Guaranty Program Questions or Payment on a VA Provided Home Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA guarantees loans made by private lenders. The VA provides Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grants for severely disabled Veterans 	<p>Forms and Information: www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans (377) 327-3702</p>
Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program Information	<p>The VR&E Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance in finding employment with programs such as vocational assessments, counseling, education tuition/stipends related to employment and employment planning 	<p>Information: www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab</p>
Education and Post - 9/11 GI Bill Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The post - 9/11 GI Bill pays higher education tuition, housing and stipends for Veterans, service members or their dependents Eligibility: served at least 90 days on active duty after 9/10/2001 	<p>Information: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill (888) GIBILL-1 (442-4551)</p>
Pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pension benefits descriptions, eligibility, and application forms are available online 	<p>Information: www.benefits.va.gov/pension</p>

Fiduciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program for Veterans and other beneficiaries who, due to injury, disease, or age, are unable to manage their financial affairs Apply for benefit or to become a fiduciary for a Veteran 	<p>Information: www.benefits.va.gov/fiduciary</p>
Insurance and TSGLI/SGLI Questions	<p>Veterans are eligible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance Service members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI), Veterans' Group Life Insurance, and/or Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance TSGLI - SGLI Traumatic Injury Protection 	<p>Forms and Information: www.benefits.va.gov/insurance (800) 419-1473</p>
Disability Compensation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability compensation is a tax-free benefit paid to eligible Veterans Eligibility is determined by injuries/diseases from/aggravated by service 	<p>Forms and Information: www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/types-disability.asp</p>
Dependency & Indemnity Compensation for Veteran's Dependents	<p>Dependents may be awarded tax-free benefits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Death during military service or post-service related to a service-connected disability Death after extended period of 100 percent disability 	<p>Forms and Information: www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/types-dependency_and_indemnity.asp</p>

Board of Veterans Appeals

Claims Appeal Process Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Veteran or dependent/ caregiver has a full year to appeal a denied claim regarding any VA benefit. To appeal, file a Notice of Disagreement with the Administration that denied the benefit The appeals process has many stages, and most of the appeals processing and resolutions take place in the Administration that made the initial claims decision 	<p>Information: www.bva.va.gov</p> <p>Appeal Process Pamphlet: www.bva.va.gov/docs/Pamphlets/How-Do-I-Appeal-Booklet--508Compliance.pdf</p>
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Stress Management: How to Reduce, Prevent, and Cope with Stress

Look at how you currently cope with stress.

Unhealthy ways of coping with stress:

- Smoking
- Drinking too much
- Overeating or undereating
- Zoning out for hours in front of the TV or computer
- Withdrawing from friends, family and activities
- Using pills or drugs to relax
- Sleeping too much
- Procrastinating
- Filling up every minute of the day to avoid facing problems
- Taking out your stress on others (lashing out, angry outbursts, physical violence)

Stress Management Strategy #1

Avoid unnecessary stress – Not all the stress can be avoided and it's not healthy to avoid situation that needs to be addressed. You may be surprised by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

Stress Management Strategy #2

Alter the situation – If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem doesn't present itself in the future. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

Stress Management Strategy #3

Adapt to the stressor – If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

Adjusting your attitude: How you think can have a profound effect on your emotional and physical well-being. Each time you think negative thoughts about yourself, your body reacts as if it were in the throes of a tension-filled situation. If you see good things about yourself, you are more likely to feel good; the reverse is also true. Eliminate words such as "always," "never," "should" and "must." These are telltale marks of self-defeating thoughts.

Healthy ways to relax and recharge:

- Go for a walk.
- Spend time in nature.
- Call a good friend.
- Sweat out tension with a good workout.
- Write in your journal.
- Take a long bath.
- Light scented candles.
- Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea.
- Play with a pet.
- Work in your garden.
- Get a massage.
- Read a good book.
- Listen to music.
- Watch a comedy.

Stress Management Strategy #4

Accept the things you can't change - Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you can't change.

Stress Management Strategy #5

Make time for fun and relaxation - Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by nurturing yourself. If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors when they inevitably come.

Stress Management Strategy #6

Adopt a healthy lifestyle - You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health.

(Literature received at L.O.V.E. Workshop: Mental Health Awareness by Dr. Carleah East, Psychology Instructor, St. Petersburg College / Gibbs Campus (727) 341-4662)



When the VA Secretary first started evaluating business and customer service practices across VA to improve the Veteran experience, the need for a revamped phone system was clear. Instead of navigating dozens of automated phone trees with no guarantee of success, Veterans needed one place to call to get connected to the right place quickly.

VA is introducing **1-844-MyVA311** (1-844-698-2311) as a go-to source for Veterans and their families who don't know what number to call. This new national toll-free number will help eliminate the feeling of frustration and confusion that Veterans and their families expressed when navigating the 1000-plus phone numbers that currently exist.

With **1-844-MyVA311**, Veterans, families, and caregivers can access information about VA services like disability, pension, healthcare eligibility, enrollment, and burial benefits, in addition to a self-service locator to find the nearest VA facility. And if they're looking for immediate assistance with housing or are having a mental health crisis, MyVA311 will route callers to the Homeless Veteran Help Line and the Veterans Crisis Line.

If you know what number you're calling – keep calling it. None of the existing VA numbers will go away. The future vision is that **1-844-MyVA311** will become a 24/7 one-stop information service platform for all VA services.

Veteran feedback has been instrumental in helping us streamline the way we get callers routed to the right place at VA. VA is also making improvements to the overall Veteran experience eliminating blocked calls and hiring more people to reduce wait times. We will continue to gather feedback from our Veterans to ensure VA is meeting their needs.

The new **MyVA311** phone number is just one step in a larger effort to modernize VA contact centers so Veterans have a seamless, positive experience when reaching out VA. In the coming months, we will be sharing more on additional steps as we continue to improve the Veterans experience.





VA Website: www.va.gov

VA Benefits Info: (800) 827-1000

VA Health Care Info: (877) 222-VETS (8387)

24-Hour Hotline for Homeless Vets: (877) 4AID-VET (4243-838)

24-Hour Veteran Crisis Hotline: (800) 273-8255 option 1

Find this resource guide online at PinellasCounty.org/Veterans

If your organization would like to be included in this resource guide, please contact USMC MSgt (Ret) Milton White at: va@usfsp.edu



Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To obtain accessible formats of this document, please call (727) 464-4062 (V/TDD). Funding for this guide was provided by Pinellas County Veterans Services. 2,000 copies were printed at a cost of \$2,000 or \$1 each. Produced in cooperation with the Pinellas County Marketing & Communications Department.

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