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LONG RANGE PROGRAM PLAN

28 September 2012

Jerry L. McDaniel, Director
Office of Policy and Budget
Executive Office of the Governor
1701 Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

JoAnne Leznoff, Staff Director
House Appropriations Committee
221 Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Terry Rhodes, Staff Director
Senate Budget Committee
201 Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Directors:

Pursuant to Chapter 216, Florida Statutes, our Long Range Program Plan (LRPP) for the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is submitted in the format prescribed in the budget instructions. The information provided electronically and contained herein is a true and accurate representation of our mission, goals, objectives, and measures for Fiscal Year 2013-14 through Fiscal Year 2017-18. The internet website address that provides the link to the LRPP located on the Florida Fiscal Portal is http://floridavets.org/?page_id=5, under 'Long Range Program Plan'.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Prendergast".

Mike Prendergast
Colonel, US Army, Retired
Executive Director

Long Range Program Plan



**Fiscal Years 2013-14
through 2017-18**



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.

AGENCY MISSION

MISSION

To advocate with purpose and passion for Florida veterans and link them to superior services, benefits and support.

VISION

FDVA is the premier point of entry for Florida veterans to access earned services, benefits and support.

AGENCY GOALS

“Always do more than is required of you.”

~ Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. ~

Agency Goals

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) has identified three goals from the Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat Analysis. Goals One and Two concentrate on external customer service improvement and enhancement. The services and activities of the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance are directly focused on Florida veterans, their families, and survivors. Goal Two ensures that Florida veterans have the availability of much needed long-term health care services by establishing, maintaining, and, as needed, expanding the State Veterans' Homes Program. Goal Three directly supports FDVA's mission to advocate for and effectively meet its statutory responsibility to all Florida veterans. Objectives and associated outcomes are defined to measure and evaluate the progress towards each goal and are directly correlated to the Legislature-approved Agency Performance Measures.

- Goal One:** Provide information and advocacy to Florida veterans, their families and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.
(Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance)

- Goal Two:** Provide quality long-term healthcare services to eligible Florida veterans.
(State Veterans' Homes Program)

- Goal Three:** Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving veterans.
(Executive Direction and Support Services)

AGENCY OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To increase value of cost avoidance due to retroactive compensation.
- ❖ To increase value of cost avoidance due to veterans' issue resolutions.
- ❖ To maintain a minimum occupancy rate at State Veterans' Homes in operation two years or longer.
- ❖ To operate FDVA State Veterans' Homes in compliance with Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) rules and regulations.
- ❖ To provide quality, cost effective and efficient executive leadership and administrative support services.

Agency Service Outcomes and Performance Projection Tables

DIVISION OF VETERANS' BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE

GOAL ONE: Provide information and advocacy to Florida veterans, their families and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

Objective 1A: To increase value of cost avoidance due to retroactive compensation.

Outcome: Increase value of cost avoidance due to retroactive compensation by 2% per year.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-2018
\$70,747,000 2005-2006	\$83,326,326	\$84,992,852	\$86,692,709	\$88,426,563	\$90,195,094

Objective 1B: To increase value of cost avoidance due to veterans' issue resolutions.

Outcome: Increase value of cost avoidance due to veterans' issue resolutions by 2% per year.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-2018
\$17,417,140 2006-2007	\$20,022,832	\$20,423,288	\$20,831,754	\$21,248,389	\$21,673,357

Agency Service Outcomes and Performance Projection Tables (cont'd)

STATE VETERANS' HOMES PROGRAM

GOAL TWO: Provide quality long-term healthcare services to eligible Florida veterans.

Objective 2A: To maintain a minimum occupancy rate at State Veterans' Homes in operation two years or longer.

Outcome: Percentage occupancy for homes in operation two years or longer.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-2018
≥90%/1999-2000	≥90%	≥90%	≥90%	≥90%	≥90%

Objective 2B: To operate FDVA State Veterans' Homes in compliance with Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) rules and regulations.

Outcome: Percentage of State Veterans' Homes in substantial compliance with AHCA, CMS, and USDVA rules and regulations.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-115	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-2018
100%/2002-03	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Agency Service Outcomes and Performance Projection Tables (cont'd)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

GOAL THREE: Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving veterans.

Objective 3A: To provide quality, cost effective and efficient executive leadership and administrative support services.

Outcome: Maintain administrative costs as a percentage of total agency costs under 6.8%.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-2018
6.8% 2005-2006	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%

Outcome: Maintain administrative and support positions as a percentage of total agency positions under 4.4%

Baseline/ Year	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-2018
4.4% 2005-2006	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%

LINKAGE TO GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) provides assistance to all former, present, and future members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their dependents.

FDVA's Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance provides professional assistance to Florida veterans and their dependents in obtaining financial benefits and health care treatment. Accessing these earned federal benefits brings funding into the state, contributing to the cost of health care and other services, and providing dollars for veterans and their families to support the growth of the economy. As part of the veteran support initiative, FDVA has a major focus on reintegration and reemployment for separating active duty service members with a special emphasis on members returning from military conflicts.

FDVA's State Veterans' Homes Program provides quality skilled nursing and assisted living care for Florida veterans. As a result of the partnership with USDVA, the homes receive a VA per diem to assist with the operations of the home.

FDVA affirms its goals as veteran advocate and provider of long-term health care services to eligible Florida veterans. FDVA's mission is to be an advocate and facilitator for progress on Florida veterans' issues consistent with Governor Scott's top priorities.

GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

Accountability Budgeting

Goal Three: Provide effective and responsive management to support the divisions and programs serving veterans.

Reduce Government Spending

Goal One: Provide information and advocacy to Florida veterans, their families and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

Goal Two: Provide quality long-term health care services to eligible Florida veterans.

Goal Three: Provide effective and responsive management to support the divisions and programs serving veterans.

Focus on Job Growth and Retention

Goal One: Provide information and advocacy to Florida veterans, their families and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

Goal Two: Provide quality long-term health care services to eligible Florida veterans.

World Class Education

Goal One: Provide information and advocacy to Florida veterans, their families and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

Reduce Taxes - Although not directly linked, achieving FDVA's goal of providing information and advocacy to Florida veterans may have an indirect benefit to the Governor's priority of reducing the tax burden of those veterans.

Regulatory Reform – N/A

Phase Out Florida's Corporate Income Tax - N/A

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS STATEMENTS

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) advocates with purpose and passion for Florida veterans and links them to superior services, benefits, and support. We assist Florida veterans, their families, and survivors improve their health and economic well-being through quality benefit information, advocacy, education and long-term health care.

FDVA has two primary program areas: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance and the State Veterans' Homes Program. These programs and the services they provide depend on the significant leadership and support of FDVA's Executive Direction and Support Services (EDSS).

The agency's primary responsibility is to provide assistance to all former, present, and future members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their dependents in preparing claims for and securing such compensation, hospitalization, career training, and other benefits or privileges which such persons earn under any federal or state law or regulation by reason of their service in the military. All services provided by the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance are without charge to the claimant. (Chapter 292, Florida Statutes) This division also acts as the state approving agency for veterans' education and training (in accordance with 38 U.S.C. s. 1771) through an annual contract between the state and the federal government (Chapter 295, Florida Statutes).

In 1990, FDVA expanded services provided to Florida veterans by opening the Robert H. Jenkins, Jr., State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City. The home assists eligible veterans who are disabled by age or disease, but who are not in need of hospitalization or skilled nursing home services. In addition, from 1993 through 2010, six State Veterans' Nursing Homes were built and opened in Daytona Beach, Land O' Lakes, Pembroke Pines, Panama City, Port Charlotte, and St. Augustine. These facilities provide comprehensive, high-quality health care on a cost-effective basis to eligible veterans who are in need of long-term care in a skilled nursing facility (Chapter 296, Florida Statutes).

As the needs of the veteran population of the state are assessed, and new requirements emerge, the department will pursue opportunities to expand their role in the long-term care arena. Multiple source data compiled by the USDVA, Census Bureau, and healthcare entities relate that veteran illnesses/conditions or service-connected infirmity have grown substantially with each conflict. This trend points to an increased need for short- and long-term healthcare for veterans beyond the capacity that exists in the state today. In exercising due diligence, FDVA will continue assessing market opportunities and needs to meet growth requirements and current needs while maintaining the quality of care in existing State Veterans' Homes. FDVA will strive to address new initiatives while maintaining the operations of the State Veterans' Homes Program in a manner that is fiscally neutral to the state.

FDVA's Long Range Program Plan (LRPP) for fiscal years 2013-14 through 2017-18 includes goals and priorities consistent with the needs of veterans residing in the state. The department's priorities take into account the statutory mandates as well as the character and complexity of FDVA with its focus on responsiveness to the population it serves. These goals acknowledge the changing needs for veterans, from the decreasing World War II and Korean War veteran population to the increasing number of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) service members transitioning to veteran status.

While each division/program established within the department has distinct priorities and functions, each division serves their respective stakeholders pursuant to the duties and responsibilities conferred upon the department. The priorities and policies of each of the division/programs are considered when determining the department goals and objectives. In providing a wide range of services, it is also necessary to consider the trends and conditions that affect Florida as a whole when formulating the strategic direction of FDVA. Without funding assistance by state government, many worthwhile programs, projects and services would not be undertaken.

Department Priorities for the Five-Year Period 2013-14 through 2017-18

Department priorities were selected in terms of greatest positive impact for Florida veterans. Whether in outreach with Veterans' Benefits or services provided in our State Veterans' Homes, direct positive impact was selected as the primary criteria. Over the past several years, the department, specifically Executive Direction and Veterans' Benefits and Assistance Division, has experienced notable reductions to its recurring base budget. Historically, staffing levels have been one deep in a number of critical positions, and budget reductions have only served to exacerbate the issue. With the reduction in force, department staff have assumed additional responsibilities and roles to maintain the least visible loss in service to our veteran constituents. The department understands the need for governmental fiscal responsibility. The Governor's Strategic Plan for Economic Development strategy #25 states a goal of improved efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies at all levels. FDVA will present budget issues with salary rate and FTE only when it is deemed necessary to improve the effectiveness of our agency. FDVA does not make these requests lightly. It is important to note that performance measures limit EDSS positions to less than 4.4% of the total positions in the department. Currently, EDSS positions comprise only 2.3% of the department total, and if all department Full Time Equivalent (FTE) requests are approved by the governor and legislature, that number will only rise to 3.0%. The department understands the importance of addressing the current economic conditions and the mandated recurring budget reductions. However, the department continues to recognize the need for minimally mission essential key staffing increases as well as maintaining essential operating budget levels in order to carry out the general support function for the agency to serve an increasing population of separating service members with significant issues.

Essential Transportation Requirements (2013-2014)

The State Veterans' Homes Program will request the replacement of five vehicles, four are aging resident transport vans/buses and the fifth is a staff vehicle driven in excess of 15,000 miles a year to reach veterans' homes locations. Fifteen passenger specialty wheelchair transport buses would replace the vans that have long surpassed useful life. The requested vehicles are specialized wheelchair buses that are used to transport veteran residents to medical appointments and activity outings. These buses are essential to the safety and well-being of the residents, meeting newer highway safety standards, and providing reliable transportation to medical appointments and quality of life excursions. FDVA understands the Governor's statewide Enterprise Efficiency Initiative in consolidating fleet management. Recognizing the special 24/7 requirements of the State Veterans' Homes and the specialization of these vehicles, coupled with the distances to motor pools, FDVA is not a candidate for this program.

Essential Staffing Requirements (2013-2014)

The growth in the State Veterans' Homes Program and operations and outreach of the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance has generated increased demand. Based on a thorough assessment, additional staffing will be requested as follows:

The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance will request the following staffing increases:

- The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance (B&A), Bureau of Field Services will request seven (7) Veterans Claims Examiners (VCE), one (1) Veterans Claims Examiner Supervisor, and two (2) Staff Assistants. The primary responsibility of the B&A Bureau of Field Services is to help veterans initiate, develop, submit, and prosecute claims and appeals for state and federal veteran entitlements through face-to-face contact at 25 statewide locations. VCEs working as advocates filing VA claims can easily save millions of Medicaid dollars. USDVA provides free office space and utilities for the presence of B&A Field Service advocates in all facilities.

The new VA Medical Center in Orlando, due for completion in 2013, a new 226 bed tower in Gainesville, and a new VA Outpatient Clinic in Jacksonville will likely triple veterans' needs for counseling and advocacy regarding VA benefits, as millions of USDVA dollars are currently left uncollected by veterans and family members who do not understand their eligibility. Given the new programs and initiatives the USDVA is undertaking, the Division must be prepared to respond to the needs of Florida veterans. The VCEs will aid in providing outreach to the state's veteran population and assist in compilation of claims for the pending influx of claims from the Orlando and Jacksonville area, and the growing demands of multiple entities requesting our assistance. Currently limited staff require FDVA to judiciously screen and prioritize services. The supervisor will be in the high need area of north Florida, and be based in Lake City. Two of the requested VCE positions will be in the new VA Outpatient Clinic in Tallahassee and the new VA Medical Center in Orlando. The remaining positions will augment the heavy demand areas in Tampa, Gainesville, Bay Pines, Miami, and Viera. A staff assistant is required for the new VA Medical Center in Orlando for voter registration, greeting clients, reception entry, and ordering supplies to allow the highly trained VCEs to concentrate on obtaining disability and healthcare benefits for veterans and their families.

- The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance (B&A), Bureau of Claims Services, provides direct advocacy in support of claims processing and appellate review of appeals of USDVA decisions. The Bureau will request adding one (1) VCE supervisor and two (2) VCEs to assist in bridging the growth gap between FDVA and the USDVA new hires of U.S. Board of Veterans Appeals Judges and Rating Veteran Service Representatives, the ensuing increase in number of appeals due to greater number of ratings reviewed and hearings, and to ensure the highest level of advocacy and service, or quality, accuracy and advocacy will be compromised. One of these positions will be dedicated as the State Women Veterans' Coordinator. This position will be responsible to assist female veterans requiring gender-specific information and services. Female veteran needs are very different from those of their male counterparts, and most states already have coordinators to target the specific needs of this veteran group. A staff assistant is required to generate Welcome Home letters to military members whose separation documents arrive in Florida, re-integration letters from Florida veterans who return to other

states and request information regarding veterans benefits in Florida, database reports, state ID cards, and voter registration.

- The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance, Bureau of State Approving will seek to add one (1) Staff Assistant position. The Bureau is 100% funded by contract with the federal government, and the terms of the contract have changed to include a vastly more complex set of inspection guidelines for school visitations and oversight. The requested position would increase the capability of the Program Specialists in meeting the contractual obligations by accomplishing much of the oversight paperwork, thus freeing the Program Specialists to perform the on-sight visitations. The cost of this position will be covered by the contract with the federal government.

The State Veterans' Homes Program will request the following staffing increase:

- The State Veterans' Homes Program will request one (1) Senior Management Analyst to support mission-critical systems analysis work. Accounting and billing functions are an overlooked, yet integral part of long-term healthcare. The requirements of a Medicare Cost Report, for example, cannot be run in FLAIR. This position would be utilized to write reliable computer programs to enhance department use of the FLAIR system, create accounting enhanced subsystems, design and model user interfaces, object behavior, database entities, and processes surrounding systems.

Executive Direction and Support Services (EDSS) will request the following staffing increases:

- The Office of Legislative and Cabinet Affairs is responsible for all aspects of the legislative process and statutory Cabinet interaction. Currently, the office is comprised of one (1) FTE, who simply cannot be in the variety of meetings and hearings required, maintain the level of department interaction required with the various offices, and still provide analysis of economic opportunities and veteran trends which the function requires. The department will request one (1) Legislative Specialist to assist in the role of fulfilling the department functions in this area.
- The Office of Communications is responsible for building and maintaining support for FDVA through effective community outreach, media relations, and employee communications. The office is tasked with answering queries from media, government entities and the general public; developing and maintaining public information sources through the internet; and developing and presenting speeches, briefings, articles, policy statements, etc. The current staffing in this office is one (1) FTE. The department will request a Communications Coordinator to assist the role of fulfilling department functions in this area.
- The Office of Executive Director is responsible for administering all aspects of the department, including long-term strategic analysis and planning. Currently there are no dedicated personnel within the EDSS structure to conduct or assist in the conduct of future planning or associated research. The department will request one (1) Senior Management Analyst to assist with this functional area.

Repair and Replacement of Equipment, Furniture, and Capital Improvements at the State Veterans' Homes (2013-2018)

The State Veterans' Homes currently range in age from two years to twenty-two years. The maintenance staff work to ensure proper preventive maintenance and repair is provided to all equipment and furnishings. On an annual basis, a review of equipment and furnishings is completed. The lists are then reviewed and prioritized to determine which items will be included in a budget issue. Numerous equipment items have reached the end of their viable lifetime use and need to be replaced. In addition to furniture and equipment review, Homes Program staff and facility staff plan major capital improvements for the facilities which are included in the annual Capital Improvement Plan. Currently there are two major renovations planned for the Land O' Lakes and Daytona Beach homes. Additional long range plans include future renovations at the Pembroke Pines home. The department will submit grant applications to the USDVA to secure 65% federal funding of the renovation projects. The state is required to fund the remaining 35%.

Replacement of UltraCare for Windows and Subsystems/Healthcare Information Exchange (2013-2018)

This fiscal year the State Veterans' Homes Program will complete the procurement for replacement of the current multi-facility integrated clinical and financial database application, UltraCare for Windows. FDVA has effectively used this commercial off-the-shelf database application since 2000 to support all current Homes Program facilities, and over the past two years researched, evaluated, and purchased a newer system to support more current medical model designs. This year, to close the issue, the department will request a recurring budget for the annual maintenance and upkeep of the new system.

Nursing Home Quality Assessment (2013-2014)

This request completes the budget amendment (EOG Log#: B0075) approved by the Legislative Budget Commission in August 2012. The department will request additional budget authority to cover rising costs of the Agency for Health Care Administration Quality Assessment fee, charged to all skilled nursing facilities for every non-Medicare resident day. This rate has increased 55.9% in four years. Additionally, the new home in St. Augustine combined with increased occupancy in all homes resulted in an increase in the number of non-Medicare resident days of 26.5%. Additional spending authority is required to meet these increases.

Increase in Expense and Contracted Services Funding (2013-2018)

Expense funding for the State Veterans' Homes Program has been based on facilities with an average occupancy of 92%. Occupancy in the State Veterans' Homes has risen to 98%. The Consumer Price Index for all consumer goods has risen 3% in the last twelve months. Higher utilization results in increased spending on utilities, pharmacy drugs, medical supplies, and therapy services. The department will request increased authority for those items and services.

Funding for Future Needs Assessment Study (2013-2014)

Increasing numbers of service members returning from conflicts overseas have brought with them an expanded set of needs including education and job training and placement, and the aging veteran population in the state

brings an ever-increasing demand for age-related services including expanded long-term care and home health care options. FDVA must strive to get ahead of the trends, and a professional future needs assessment will be an invaluable tool in determining the future course of FDVA. The department will request non-recurring increase in authority to contract with an outside firm to perform a study and report the conclusions to the Governor and Cabinet.

Funding for the Bureau of Information and Research (2013-2018)

When the department was established in 1988 the legislature set up a Bureau of Information and Research in the Division of Administration. The bureau was tasked with performing ongoing research into the needs of Florida's veteran population. This bureau has never been funded. The department will request this funding, as now, more than ever, an analysis of current veteran needs and a long-term strategy for reaching underserved veteran communities is essential.

Fund Adjustment (2013-14)

The department will request a marginal fund shift from the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance to the State Veterans' Homes Program, to correct a misalignment of Human Resource services funds that inadvertently were credited by the department to the wrong budget entity during the Fiscal Year 2012-13 start up process for eight Other Personal Services positions.

Data Center Consolidation (2013-14)

The department will request an exemption from the requirement of data center consolidation. If the request is not granted, the department will seek recurring general revenue funds to cover the additional costs of that consolidation.

Marketing and Outreach (2013-14)

The department is rebranding and aggressively reaching out to Florida veterans to make them aware of the services we provide and how we can best assist them in obtaining unclaimed benefits. The department seeks to create and air public service announcements on both radio and television, and produce high-quality print media to distribute in a wide array of locations. Only 16.3% of current Florida veterans receive any benefit from the federal government. The department seeks to raise awareness of the benefits available and assist veterans in securing them.

Summary (2013-2018)

During the coming five years, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs will strive to ensure Florida maintains its special place as the most veteran-friendly state in our nation.

FDVA will continue to work closely with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and monitor the requirements and feasibility of future long-term care needs for Florida's veterans. The department currently has placeholders for future homes in the federal budget.

FDVA will monitor and adjust to changes in federal programs, always remaining current on USDVA directives and new benefits regulations, such as the Nehmer decision resulting in massive increases in claims for Vietnam-era veterans with exposure to Agent Orange.

FDVA will remain mindful of state budget constraints and realities, and only request personnel and funding that are essential to its mission of veteran advocacy and providing quality long-term care.

Through the years, FDVA has supported legislation to bring additional benefits to Florida veterans including property tax discounts, certain state license, park and building fee waivers, education benefits, the creation of veteran-friendly court intervention programs, the establishment of Purple Heart Day, and much more.

A consolidated list of benefits available to veterans and their families is located on the department's web site at www.FloridaVets.org.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE FINAL PROJECTION FOR EACH OUTCOME AND IMPACT STATEMENT RELATING TO DEMAND AND FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The standard for each outcome measure will remain stable at current target levels with one exception: the number of beds available in the State Veterans' Homes Program will be adjusted to 869. The Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City is licensed for 149 beds, not 150, a change that has never been corrected in this measure. No fiscal impact will result from this change.

LIST OF POTENTIAL POLICY CHANGES AFFECTING THE AGENCY BUDGET REQUEST

The department has not identified any policy changes affecting the Legislative Budget Request or the Governor's recommended budget.

LIST OF CHANGES WHICH WOULD REQUIRE LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The current FDVA policy initiatives include: **Amendment of Section 215.22, Florida Statutes to exempt DEPARTMENT** This bill request an exemption under s. 215.22, Florida Statutes of the 8% General Revenue service charge under s.215.20. Per sections 296.11(2), 296.15, and 296.38(2), Florida Statutes

LIST OF ALL TASK FORCES AND STUDIES IN PROGRESS

Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology, Long Term Care Post Acute Working Group
Data Center Consolidation
DOH Coordinated NAACP Health Summit
Executive Steering Committee State CIO Council
Florida Consumer Council
Florida Defense Alliance
Florida Health Information Exchange Coordinating Committee
Florida Homeless Coalition
Florida Physician Workforce Leadership Task Force
Florida Team on Returning Veterans and their Families Task Force
Florida Service 2 Scholars
Florida Veterans Hall of Fame Council
Jail Diversion and Trauma Recovery-Priority to Veterans State Advisory Council
National Association of State Approving Agencies
National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs
National Association of State Veterans Homes
National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators
Rural Veteran Health Care Outreach Initiative
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
State Chief Information Officer Council
State Council for the Transportation Disadvantaged
State Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program
St. Petersburg Veterans' Coalition
Task Force on Substance Abuse and Mental Health in Florida Courts
Veterans Employment Task Force
VISN 8 Management Assistance Council
VISN 8 OIF OEF Community Partners
VISN 8 Women Veterans' Council

Performance Measures and Standards

LRPP Exhibit II



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.

Assessment of Performance for Approved Performance Measures

LRPP Exhibit III



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.

LRPP Exhibit III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: State Veterans' Homes Program
Measure: Number of State Veterans' Homes Beds Available

Action:

- Performance Assessment of Outcome Measure Revision of Measure
 Performance Assessment of Output Measure Deletion of Measure
 Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percentage Difference
870	869	1(under)	0.1%

Factors Accounting for the Difference:

Internal Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Factors | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Estimate Incorrect | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Explanation:

Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary Home (Lake City, Columbia County) is licensed for 149 beds, not 150 as previously reported. This makes the total number of possible beds available in the State Veterans' Homes Program 869.

External Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Unavailable | <input type="checkbox"/> Technological Problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Legislative Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target Population Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This Program/Service Cannot Fix The Problem | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Laws Are Working Against The Agency Mission | |

Explanation:

The facility license was changed several years ago, but the performance measure has never been updated.

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Recommendations:

LRPP Exhibit III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: State Veterans' Homes Program/State Veterans' Domiciliary Home (Lake City)
Measure: Occupancy Rate for Homes in Operation 2 Years or Longer

Action:

- Performance Assessment of Outcome Measure Revision of Measure
 Performance Assessment of Output Measure Deletion of Measure
 Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percentage Difference
90%	85%	7 res. beds (under)	6%

Factors Accounting for the Difference:

Internal Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Factors | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Estimate Incorrect | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Explanation:

External Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Unavailable | <input type="checkbox"/> Technological Problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Legislative Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target Population Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This Program/Service Cannot Fix The Problem | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Laws Are Working Against The Agency Mission | |

Explanation:

The State Veterans' Homes Program as a whole reached the performance measure standard with an average occupancy rate of 96%--well above the performance measure. The Robert H. Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary Home individually fell short, but the facility has been slowly increasing census. Quarterly census ranged during the fiscal year from 82% to 89%, for an annual average of 85%.

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Recommendations:

Staff has been working on marketing the facility. Marketing and outreach is increasing to reach more potential resident sources. Facility will work to reach the 90% measure in the near future.

Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP Exhibit IV



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: State Veterans' Homes Program
Measure: Number of State Veterans' Homes Beds Available

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: Requesting to revise current measure from 870 to 869.

Data source is the operating license for each state veterans' home (one assisted living state veterans' domiciliary home, and six state veterans' skilled nursing facilities).

Each of the skilled nursing facilities was constructed and licensed for 120 beds. The assisted living state veterans' domiciliary home was constructed for 150 beds but due to physical layout is only licensed for 149 beds. It is that licensing issue that forces a request for performance measure revision. That facility can never be licensed for the full 150 beds, so the measure of 870 total beds is not realistic or attainable.

Methodology: Examine 7 facility licenses and add total beds

Validity: The measure is valid because it measures the numbers of state veterans' homes beds in Florida.

Reliability: The measure is reliable because number of beds is quantifiable, i.e., additional homes (beds) are constructed and licensed or they are not. The process of construction and licensure is formal, measured and certifiable. Collection method is standardized.

Office of Policy and Budget – July 2012

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: State Veterans' Homes Program
Measure: Occupancy Rate for Homes in Operation 2 Years or Longer

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The measure reflects the need for and utilization of veterans' homes in Florida. The data source is the UltraCare for Windows database—the software tool utilized by the department for billing and resident care tracking.

Methodology: A 'patient care day' is a unit of time (one calendar day) during which the services of the facility are used or held for their use (bed hold) by a resident. When the billing month closes, the total number of patient care days is added, then divided by the number of days in the month. That quotient is further divided by the total number of beds in the facility. The final number is the occupancy rate for the facility, reflecting the percentage of occupancy for the month. Each month's average is added at the end of the fiscal year, and then divided by twelve to give the occupancy rate for the fiscal year.

Validity: The measure is valid because it gauges the actual utilization of state veterans' homes. Use of a facility is a signal of need, and if the facilities are needed the state is justified in their operation. The number of beds is quantifiable and fixed, as are the number of days in each calendar month.

Reliability: The measure is reliable because it is verifiable and repeatable. The number of patient care days is constantly audited by the various insurance companies and Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services in the billing cycles, and the accuracy is validated through those audits

Office of Policy and Budget – July 2012

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: State Veterans' Homes Program

Measure: Percent of State Veterans' Homes in Compliance with Quality of Care Health Care Regulations.

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The data sources are the survey results from the Agency for Health Care Administration, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The methodology involves extensive onsite inspections by each of the regulatory agencies listed. Upon completion of the inspection, results are given with explanations of findings. FDVA staff participate in the exit conference and examine the final reports for notices of non-compliance with quality of care regulations.

Validity: The measure is a valid gauge of quality of care in a facility because the licensing and inspecting organizations are recognized authorities in the long-term care field. The application of inspection interpretations are standardized by state policy and training.

Reliability: The measure is reliable because the surveys represent a uniformly applied standard to which all long-term care facilities are held in Florida and the United States. The surveys are repeated at unannounced periods, and none are at the same time, so high standards of care must be maintained at all times.

Office of Policy and Budget – July 2012

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Executive Direction and Support Services

Measure: Administration Costs as a Percent of Total Agency Costs

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The data source is the Legislative Appropriations System/Planning and Budgeting Subsystem and the General Appropriations Act. The expenditure portion is from the Florida Accounting Information Resource (FLAIR).

The amount of EDSS expense is divided by the total agency expense for the fiscal year, yielding a percent of administrative support cost within the agency as a whole.

Validity: The performance measure is valid because keeping administrative costs low allows an agency to focus their resources to the direct benefit of their constituents—Florida's veteran population.

Reliability: The measure is reliable because it is a measurable quantity for both the agency as a whole and the division. The definition of 'expense' is clearly outlined by the Legislature, as are the processes for completing year-end expense reports. The General Appropriations Act sets a budget that will maintain the EDSS costs within the parameters of the performance measure, and fiscal year end expense reports validate those goals have been met. FLAIR has tight controls by the Comptroller to ensure accurate reporting of expenditures.

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LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: Executive Direction and Support Services
Measure: Administrative Positions as a Percent of Total Agency Positions

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The data source is the General Appropriations Act (GAA), listing the number of positions allocated to a budget entity and the total number of positions allocated to the agency.

The number of Executive Direction and Support Services positions is divided by the total number of agency positions, yielding a percent of administrative support positions within the agency as a whole.

Validity: The performance measure is valid because the bulk of agency positions should be in direct contact with veteran clients, assisting them with their needs.

Reliability: The measure is reliable because it is a verifiable quantity for both the agency as a whole and the division. The GAA is a public document that anyone can cross check. A simple ratio will always generate a value that is comparable and repeatable across multiple years.

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LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

Measure: Value of Cost Avoidance Because of Retroactive Compensation

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The data source is the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance in-house database, Veterans Benefits On Line Tracking System (V-BOLTS).

A veteran files a claim for benefits on a specific date, but the determination is not made on that date. The process is lengthy and cumbersome, and can take years. If a veteran is awarded a monetary benefit each month, that monthly benefit is judged to have become valid back to the date of the original claim. While he will receive that amount for each month in the future, 'retroactive compensation' refers to a bulk award given to a veteran for those months when the claim was in process.

The value of the retroactive award garnered by a veteran is entered into the V-BOLTS system upon notice of the claim decision. That figure can be retrieved and totaled with other awards whenever warranted.

Validity: The performance measure is valid because it measures the increase in the dollar amount associated with "Retroactive Compensation" activities of the Division of Benefits and Assistance, Bureau of Claims Services and compares that quantifiable amount to prior years' data. The dollar value of 'retroactive compensation' is a direct cost avoidance to the State of Florida, which would otherwise be required to provide needed services. Also, the veteran is able to take this money and insert it directly back into Florida's economy in the form of housing, goods, and services.

Reliability: The performance measure is reliable because amount of "Retroactive Compensation" is a quantifiable value. "Retroactive Compensation" amounts are entered into V-BOLTS. The dollar value of the service can be accessed and totaled for any given time period (usually quarterly/annually). USDVA costs and Bureau quantification methods are standardized.

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LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

Measure: Value of Cost Avoidance Because of Issue Resolution

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The data source is the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance in-house database, Veterans Benefits On Line Tracking System (V-BOLTS).

The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance help veterans navigate the confusing and cumbersome process to obtain benefits from the USDVA. The services can result in monthly monetary benefits, but often result in determining, verifying, and obtaining eligibility for medical treatment, medications, wheelchairs, hearing aids, ambulance bill reimbursement, lost check replacement, eye glasses, home improvement disability grants, clothing allowances, parking placards, prosthetics, and other benefits within the VA system. This service provides Florida veterans with significant economic value. These activities are called 'issue resolutions.' Issue resolutions are measured in terms of the dollar value of the benefit received. Those dollar benefits are either clear (ambulance bill reimbursement) or given a consistent value (parking placards).

The value of the issue satisfied for the veteran is entered into the V-BOLTS system by the Claims Examiners. That figure can be retrieved and totaled with other awards whenever warranted

Validity: The performance measure is valid because it measures the increase in the dollar amount associated with "Issue Resolutions" and compares that quantifiable amount to prior years' data. The values are consistent and clearly defined for the Claims Examiners.

Reliability: The performance measure is reliable because amount of "Issue Resolution" is a quantifiable value. "Issue Resolution" amounts are entered into V-BOLTS. The dollar value of the service can be accessed and totaled for any given time period (usually quarterly/annually). USDVA costs and Bureau quantification methods are standardized.

Office of Policy and Budget – July 2012

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance
Measure: Number of Veterans Served

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The data source is the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance in-house database, Veterans Benefits On Line Tracking System (V-BOLTS).

FDVA personnel providing any form of service to a veteran record the data in V-BOLTS. The system uses a variety of factors (name, birth date, social security number, etc) to determine if the veteran has been seen during the fiscal year. All first visits are determined to be 'unique veterans' and a count of those veterans results in the number of veterans served in a given period.

Resources consist of the FDVA representative entering the information into V-BOLTS and resulting database reports.

Validity: The performance measure is valid because demonstrating that the number of veterans served each year is growing proves the department mission of outreach to all veterans across the state is working. It is a valid determination of workload for the Claims Examiners.

Reliability: The performance measure is reliable because the information is consistently recorded in the database and can be replicated in the multiple reports required each year. The process is clearly defined and the database is set up to determine if the veteran is unique to the fiscal year.

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LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance
Measure: Number of Claims Processed

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The data source is the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance in-house database, Veterans Benefits On Line Tracking System (V-BOLTS).

A claim is a request filed by a veteran in search of a benefit or service. Each one of these processed by Veterans' Claims Examiners is entered into V-BOLTS. The database can determine the number processed in any given period.

Validity: The performance measure is valid because increasing the number of claims processed shows the increase in value of service of what the department offers veterans in Florida. It is a valid determination of workload for the Claims Examiners.

Reliability: The performance measure is reliable because the process is clearly defined and the database can make a simple count of claims filed in a fiscal year. The information is consistently recorded in the database and can be replicated in the multiple reports required each year.

Office of Policy and Budget – July 2012

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance
Measure: Number of Services to Veterans

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology: The data source is the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance in-house database, Veterans Benefits On Line Tracking System (V-BOLTS).

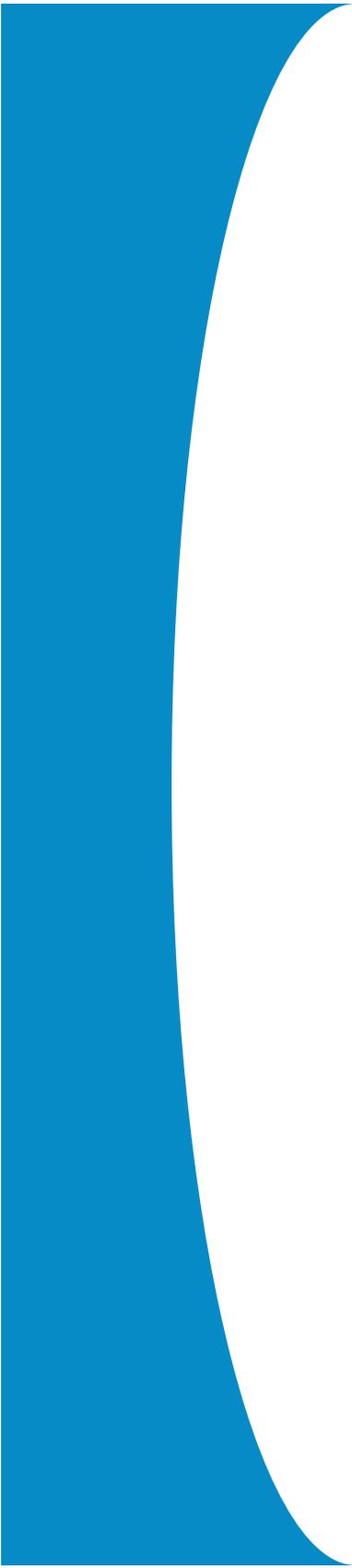
The number of services to veterans is determined by tallying the total number of all activity processes performed in support of the needs of veterans, their dependents, and survivors. The services tallied are: correspondence processed, telephone calls made/received, walk-in clients assisted, personnel interviews held, bedside interviews, outreach visits conducted, medical records reviews, claimed reviewed/forwarded to USDVA, dependent scholarship applications processed, VA Regional Office/VAMC hearings scheduled/held, Board of Veterans' Appeals cases processed, and disabled veteran ID cards processed.

FDVA personnel providing the service enter the data into V-BOLTS. The database can generate reports on the number of services during any given period.

Validity: The performance measure is valid because the process and services are clearly defined and the database can track services for the fiscal year. It is a valid determination of workload for the Claims Examiners, and an indicator of the success of department outreach efforts.

Reliability: The performance measure is reliable because the information is consistently recorded in the database and can be replicated in the multiple reports required each year.

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Associated Activities Contributing to Performance Measures

LRPP Exhibit V



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.

LRPP Exhibit V: Identification of Associated Activity Contributing to Performance Measures

Measure Number	Approved Performance Measures for FY 2012-13 (Words)		Associated Activities Title
1	Increase value of cost avoidance due to retroactive compensation. Measure: \$80,090,664. Outcome: \$216,741,916		
2	Increase value of cost avoidance due to issue resolution. Measure: \$19,245,320. Outcome: \$57,804,381		
3	The number of veterans served. Measure: 86,279. Output: 100,712.		
4	The number of services to veterans. Measure: 429,692. Output: 578,337		
5	The number of claims processed. Measure: 19,750. Output: 28,360.		Veterans' Education Quality Assurance: Programs Certified: 8,923
6	Occupancy rate for state veterans' homes in operation 2 years or longer. Measure: 90%. Outcome: 96%. 260,954 total days of resident care provided = 95.5% avg. occupancy		State Veterans' Domiciliary Home-Lake City/Columbia Co: 46,070 = 84.7% State Veterans' Nursing Home-Daytona Beach/Volusia Co: 41,187 = 94.0% State Veterans Nursing Home-Land o' Lakes/Pasco Co: 43,746 = 99.9% State Veterans Nursing Home-Pembroke Pines/Broward Co: 42,708 = 97.5% State Veterans Nursing Home-Panama City/Bay Co: 43,748 = 99.9% State Veterans Nursing Home-Port Charlotte/Charlotte Co: 43,495 = 99.3%
7	Percent of state veterans' homes in compliance with quality of care health care regulations. Measure: 100%. Outcome: 100%		
8	Number of state veterans' homes beds available. Measure: 870. Output: 869.		
9	Administration costs as a percent of total agency costs. Measure: 6.8% Outcome: 4.0%		
10	Administrative positions as a percent of total agency positions. Measure: 4.4%. Outcome: 2.5%		

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ACTIVITY ISSUE CODES SELECTED:

TRANSFER-STATE AGENCIES ACTIVITY ISSUE CODES SELECTED:

1-8:

AID TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACTIVITY ISSUE CODES SELECTED:

1-8:

THE FOLLOWING STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES (ACT0010 THROUGH ACT0490) HAVE AN OUTPUT STANDARD (RECORD TYPE 5) AND SHOULD NOT:

*** NO ACTIVITIES FOUND ***

THE FCO ACTIVITY (ACT0210) CONTAINS EXPENDITURES IN AN OPERATING CATEGORY AND SHOULD NOT:
(NOTE: THIS ACTIVITY IS ROLLED INTO EXECUTIVE DIRECTION, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)

*** NO OPERATING CATEGORIES FOUND ***

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES DO NOT HAVE AN OUTPUT STANDARD (RECORD TYPE 5) AND ARE REPORTED AS 'OTHER' IN SECTION III: (NOTE: 'OTHER' ACTIVITIES ARE NOT 'TRANSFER-STATE AGENCY' ACTIVITIES OR 'AID TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' ACTIVITIES. ALL ACTIVITIES WITH AN OUTPUT STANDARD (RECORD TYPE 5) SHOULD BE REPORTED IN SECTION II.)

*** NO ACTIVITIES FOUND ***

TOTALS FROM SECTION I AND SECTIONS II + III:

DEPARTMENT: 50	EXPENDITURES	FCO
FINAL BUDGET FOR AGENCY (SECTION I):	80,082,444	1,435,000
TOTAL BUDGET FOR AGENCY (SECTION III):	85,689,744	6,630,500
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DIFFERENCE:	5,607,300-	5,195,500-
(MAY NOT EQUAL DUE TO ROUNDING)	=====	=====

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA): State of Florida agency that champions accessible, affordable, quality healthcare for all Floridians.

Trends and Conditions Analysis (TCA): Consolidated statements that review the trends in the veteran population, veterans' needs, opportunities to address veterans' needs, threats/problems, and factors that influence related outcomes as they apply to department priorities.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA): Federal agency with the responsibility to grant or deny entitlements for veterans.

Veterans' Benefits Administration (VBA): Component of the USDVA responsible for providing benefits and services to veterans and their families in a responsive, timely, and compassionate manner in recognition of their service to the nation.

Veterans' Claims Examiners (VCE): Skilled paralegal advocates responsible for assisting veterans in pursuing benefits from the USDVA through the claims process.

Veterans Healthcare Administration (VHA): Component of the USDVA responsible for delivery of quality medical care on a timely basis within the law to all authorized veterans and eligible dependents and survivors.