

# 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*

# Community Veteran Engagement Board



- 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.

## Community Veteran Engagement Board 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 boards

### 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



# U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Resources

## 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. 15986

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.abilitiesfoundation.com/home.html)

Frank De Lucia, President/CEO

[fdelucia@abilities.org](mailto: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](http://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](http://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 ACCESS**

11351 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL  
(866) 762-2237

### **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](http://www.rclub.net)

### **Boy Scouts of America**

(727) 391-3800  
11046 Johnson Blvd., Seminole, FL  
(727) 391-3800  
[www.wcfbsa.org](http://www.wcfbsa.org)

### **Big Brothers & Big Sisters**

711 S. Dale Mabry Hwy., Suite 300, Tampa, FL  
Samantha Fenger  
(727) 518-8860, ext. 227  
[samanthaf@bbbspc.org](mailto:samanthaf@bbbspc.org)

### **Boys & Girls Clubs of the Suncoast**

7790 61st St. N., Pinellas Park, FL  
(727) 547-5437  
[www.bgcsun.org](http://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](http://www.militarykidsconnect.dcoe.mil)

### **Our Military Kids**

[www.ourmilitarykids.org](http://www.ourmilitarykids.org)  
Toll-Free: (866) 691-6654

# Community Resources

## 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](http://Abilitiesfoundation.com)

### For Single, Homeless Men

#### Beacon House

863 3rd Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL  
(727) 821-1200  
[Stpetersburgfreeclinic.org](http://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](http://www.libertymanor.org)

### American Legion: Project Homefront

Healthcare, employment, homelessness, education,  
suicide prevention, PTSD  
(800) 273-8255  
mail@floridalegion.org  
[www.projecthomefront.com](http://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](http://www.angelwheels.org)  
info@angelwheels.org

**PSTA** (*Public Transportation*)

(727) 540-1900  
[www.psta.net](http://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 / Veterans' Mall

(Warrior Bridge)  
2735 Whitney Road, Clearwater, FL  
(727) 538-7370  
[www.servicesource.org](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.svdpsp.org/ssvf)

### Alliance for Affordable Housing

(727) 224-0645

### Goodwill Suncoast

Low-income housing  
[www.goodwill-suncoast.org](http://www.goodwill-suncoast.org)

### HUD-VASH Pinellas County Housing Authority

(727) 443-7684

### CASA for Domestic Violence Victims

(727) 895-4912

### 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc.

Dial 2-1-1  
[www.211tampabay.org](http://www.211tampabay.org)

# Community Resources

## 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 Program

(727) 210-4211

## 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

### **Family Emergency Treatment Center (PEMHS)**

11254 58th St. N., Pinellas Park, FL  
(727) 541-4628  
[www.pemhs.org](http://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

## Legal Services

### **Bay Area Legal Services, Inc.**

4948 Central Ave., St. Petersburg, FL 33707  
(727) 490-4040

### **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

### **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**

818 4th St. N., St Petersburg FL 33701  
(727) 898-3111

## **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



## 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



## 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



## 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



## Coast Guard

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



# VA Disability Claims Process

<p><b>Step 1)</b> <b>Claim Received</b></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><b>Step 2)</b> <b>Under Review</b></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><b>Step 3)</b> <b>Gathering of Evidence</b></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><b>Step 4)</b> <b>Review of Evidence</b></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><b>Step 5)</b> <b>Preparation for Decision</b></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><b>Step 6)</b> <b>Pending Decision Approval</b></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><b>Step 7)</b> <b>Preparation for Notification</b></p>	<p>▶ Your entire claim decision packet is prepared for mailing.</p>
<p><b>Step 8)</b> <b>Complete</b></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/](http://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



## VA Facility Locator

<b>VA Facility Locator</b>	VA facilities including additional state and local resources	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.va.gov/landing2_locations.htm">www.va.gov/landing2_locations.htm</a>
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## Transition and Veteran Employment Services

<b>Veterans Employment Services Office (VESO)</b>	Helps Veterans and transitioning Military Service Members find federal careers  Military skills translator, resume builder and federal job search functions	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.vaforvets.va.gov">www.vaforvets.va.gov</a> (855) 824-8387  <a href="http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs">www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs</a>
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<b>Transition Assistance Program (TAP)</b>	TAP may include transition from service briefings and assistance	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/TAP">www.benefits.va.gov/TAP</a>
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## Veterans Health Administration

<b>Health Care Benefits or Application Questions</b>	VHA provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary care</li> <li>• Mental health care (including Veteran-specific treatment for PTSD, TBI care, etc.)</li> <li>• Preventative care</li> <li>• A wide variety of specialty care</li> <li>• Inpatient and outpatient pharmacy</li> <li>• Geriatric care</li> <li>• Long term care and support</li> </ul>	<b>Program Information:</b> <a href="http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits">www.va.gov/healthbenefits</a> (877) 222-VETS (8387)  <b>Eligibility Information:</b> <a href="http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/veterans.asp">www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/veterans.asp</a>  <b>How to Apply:</b> <a href="http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov">www.1010ez.med.va.gov</a>
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<b>Access to Patient Medical information</b>	• My HealtheVet is VA's online personal health record system designed to help VA patients manage their healthcare records and notes from medical providers	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.myhealth.va.gov">www.myhealth.va.gov</a> (877) 327-0022
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<b>Women Veteran Support</b>	• 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	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.womenshealth.va.gov">www.womenshealth.va.gov</a>  <b>Women Veterans Call Center:</b> (855) VA-WOMEN
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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.

<b>Rural Veteran support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The VA Office of Rural Health helps rural Veterans access medical care through VA facilities</li> </ul>	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov">www.ruralhealth.va.gov</a>
<b>Mental Health support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authoritative mental health information and resources for Veterans and their families.</li> <li>• Self-help toolbox</li> <li>• Where to get help</li> <li>• Comprehensive guide to VA Mental Health Services</li> </ul>	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov">www.mentalhealth.va.gov</a>  <b>Guide to VA Mental Health Services for Veterans and Families:</b> <a href="http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/MHG_English.pdf">www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/MHG_English.pdf</a>
<b>Veteran (Vet) Center information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual and group counseling</li> <li>• Discharge upgrade information</li> <li>• Community, social service and medical referrals</li> <li>• Employee assistance referrals</li> <li>• VA Benefits assistance referrals</li> </ul>	<b>Information:</b> (877) WAR-VETS (927-8387)
<b>Homeless Veteran</b>	Immediately call the 24-hour National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (877) 4AID-VET (4243-838)	

## National Cemetery Administration

<b>Burial and Memorial Benefits Information</b>	VA offers Veterans and their dependents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burial and honoring services, including gravesites and grave liners</li> <li>• Maintenance of national cemeteries</li> <li>• Headstones, markers, and presidential memorial certificates</li> </ul>	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.cem.va.gov">www.cem.va.gov</a> (800) 827-1000
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# "How Can We Help You?"

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



## Veterans Benefits Administration

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

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.

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

## Board of Veterans Appeals

<b>Claims Appeal Process Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<b>Information:</b> <a href="http://www.bva.va.gov">www.bva.va.gov</a>  <b>Appeal Process Pamphlet:</b> <a href="http://www.bva.va.gov/docs/Pamphlets/How-Do-I-Appeal-Booklet--508Compliance.pdf">www.bva.va.gov/docs/Pamphlets/How-Do-I-Appeal-Booklet--508Compliance.pdf</a>
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# Managing Stress

## 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)*



# myVA311

VA at your fingertips 1-844-698-2311

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.

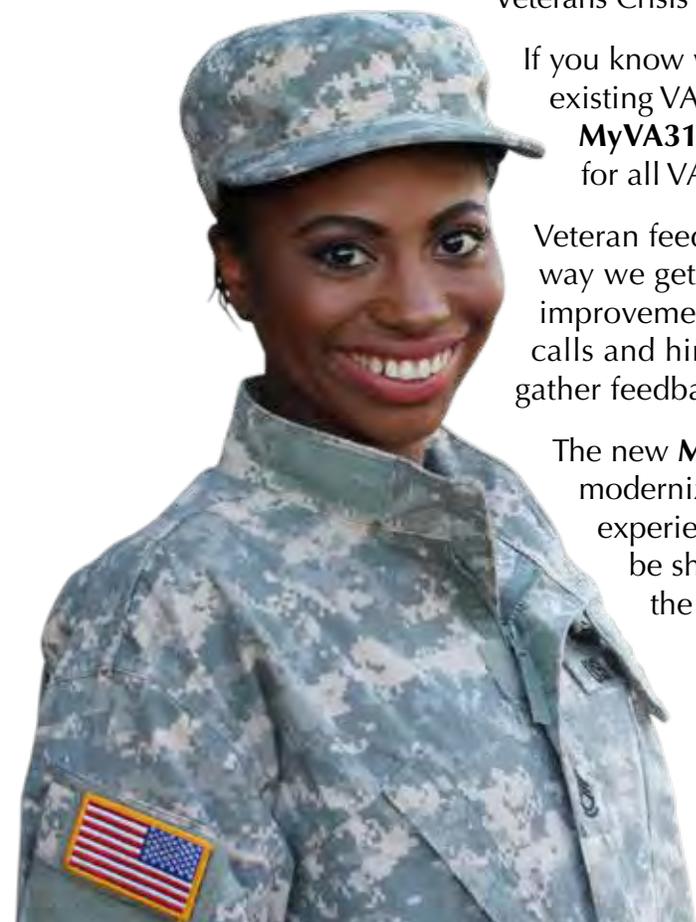
VA is introducing **1-844-MyVA311** (1-844-698-2311) as a go-to source for Veterans and their families who don't know what number to call. This new national toll-free number will help eliminate the feeling of frustration and confusion that Veterans and their families expressed when navigating the 1000-plus 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:va@usfsp.edu)



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