

VFW Auxiliary
Department of Florida



January 2026



Veterans & Family Support Program

Building Bridges for our Veterans

NAVIGATING THE VA SYSTEM: WHERE TO REFER FOR ASSISTANCE

One of the most frequent questions I get asked as I visit different Posts, Auxiliaries, and other Veteran groups is, ***"Can you help me with the VA?"*** Knowing how and where to refer Veterans to one of the four VFW Service Officer locations in Florida is crucial because these accredited professionals provide expert, free assistance navigating the complex VA benefits system. VFW Service Officers in Florida — located in St. Petersburg, Orlando, West Palm Beach, and Miami — are trained and certified to help veterans identify all benefits they are entitled to, from disability compensation and pensions to healthcare and education benefits.

The VA's benefits structure can be extremely complicated, and even small errors or missing information can delay or jeopardize a veteran's claim. Service Officers have in-depth knowledge of VA regulations and access to VA systems, so they can accurately prepare, file, and follow up on claims. They also review decisions for accuracy and, if needed, represent veterans through appeals up to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Importantly, **you do not need to be a VFW member to use these services — they are available to all veterans and dependents at no cost.** Referring Veterans to these officers ensures they receive professional, accredited support, maximizes their chances of securing earned benefits, and helps prevent costly mistakes or gaps in coverage. This advocacy can make a significant difference in a veteran's quality of life and long-term well-being.

Approved by:
Dept. President
Mike Yates

VFW UNMET NEEDS PROGRAM IS OPERATIONAL

The VFW Unmet Needs program provides financial grants to active-duty service members, Veterans, and their families facing unexpected financial hardships tied to military service, helping pay basic life needs like rent, utilities, food, medical bills, and more. To apply, visit the VFW Unmet Needs page at vfw.org/UnmetNeeds and complete the online application, including required documentation. Once submitted, a caseworker reviews the application. For assistance or questions, call the toll-free number **1-866-789-6333** or email unmeneeds@vfw.org.



Ryan M. Harris
Program Chair
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SUPPORT SPOTLIGHT: FLORIDA VFW SERVICE OFFICER LOCATIONS

For the most up-to-date information, please visit:
vfwfl.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=153595

THE VFW VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

Saint Petersburg, Florida
Director: Jason Smith
E-mail: jason.k.smith@va.gov
Phone# 727-319-7493

VA Medical Center, Orlando

13800 Veterans Way
RM 1N 202
Orlando, Florida 32827
E-mail: alyice.rivers@va.gov
Phone: 407-631-1828

VA Mini Service Center, West Palm Beach

73058 N. Military Trail, Building 10
West Palm Beach, Florida 33410
Monday - Wednesday

VA Mini Service Center, Miami

1201 NW 16th Street (RM 2A149) Miami, FL 33125
Thursday & Friday

For more information from the VFW National Veterans Service program, including VA Claim Assistance and Pre-Discharge Support, visit

vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits



Veterans Crisis Line



**DIAL 988 then
PRESS 1**

NEW YEAR, CONTINUING CRISIS

The Veterans Crisis Line is a vital, confidential resource available 24/7 for Veterans, service members, and their families. Every season is the season to remember Veterans in crisis—struggles do not pause for holidays, end with the new year, or change with the weather. One Veteran suicide is one too many. By calling 988 and pressing 1, texting 838255, or chatting online, lives can be saved and hope restored.

One life lost is one too many.

**Ryan M. Harris
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