



OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: VETERAN SERVICES

ALIGNING BOARD PRIORITIES WITH OPTIMIZED RESOURCES

PEOPLE FOCUSED. PERFORMANCE DRIVEN.

Goal Statement

To assist Veterans and their dependents in accessing federal, state and local benefits earned for their honorable military service. Divisional staff manages all Veterans' activities within Leon County and acts as a single point of contact for outside government and private agencies concerning veteran's issues. The staff also provides outreach services and support to veteran service organizations, non-profit entities, community partners, residents in assisted living facilities and nursing homes.

Strategic Initiatives/Support Highlights

Economy

- Helped veterans and their dependents with processing benefit claims and obtaining other benefits entitled to them through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal agencies.
- Continued to fund and administer Leon County's Active Duty Grant Program, to help offset financial obligations for active duty service members and their families.
- Continued to fund and administer Leon County's Veterans Emergency Assistance Program, which provides veterans in need with emergency financial support for expenses such as rent, utilities, temporary shelter and transportation for medical treatment.
- Continued to host the annual Operation Thank You breakfast on Veterans Day in partnership with the American Legion.
- Continued to partner with Career Source Capital Region by referring veterans who require assistance with obtaining employment job search skills.

Contact Us

(850) 606-1940
www.LeonCountyFL.gov/Vets

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS

- Leon County understands that behind every veteran benefits claim is a veteran in need. In FY17, Leon County:
 - » Completed more than 7,600 benefit counseling contacts to veterans and their dependents.
 - » Administered the free Bus Pass Program for veterans. The City of Tallahassee/StarMetro implemented a Bus Pass Program to provide free transportation to low income and disabled veterans good for one year. Leon County has processed over 642 applications totaling 38,959 trips on StarMetro fixed route system.
 - » Facilitated claim actions that resulted in Leon County veterans receiving more than \$36 million in veterans benefits.
 - » Managed the Veterans Resource Center where nearly 200 veterans accessed resources to assist them with employment needs.
 - » Sent "welcome" letters to all separating veterans who designated Tallahassee as their home of record or as the place they will be relocating to after separation. These letters provide a wealth of information on services provided by Leon County's Veteran Services and other community resources dedicated for veterans.
 - » Provided veteran benefits presentations for "Senior Days" at all senior center events throughout Leon County.
 - » Maintained strong relationships with community partners by attending United Vets monthly coordinating meetings.
- To honor and recognize the service of Leon County Veterans, Leon County partnered with the American Legion Sauls-Bridges Post 13 to host the 2016 Operation Thank You breakfast. Over 500 citizens and veterans attended the event.
- Achieved an average of 85% success rate for pension claims, which assists war time disabled and elderly veterans and their survivors.



Honor Flight 2017



Operation Thank You

Veterans Day Parade

Memorial Day

- Assisted homeless veterans through intervention by removing barriers to housing, transportation, employment, and access to community treatment programs.
- Administered and approved funding for the Veterans Emergency Assistance Program, which provides emergency financial assistance to help qualifying veterans meet critical, basic needs such as, rent, mortgage, and utilities. The County distributed more than \$70,000 to veterans through this program in FY16-17.
- Partnered with Honor Flight Tallahassee, which transported 80 World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans and support personnel to Washington, D.C. to visit memorials dedicated to honor their service and sacrifice. An Honor Flight trip is provided at no cost to the veterans, and entirely funded

by local fundraisers and community support. Leon County contributed Emergency Medical Services support and \$15,000 to help offset the costs of this event.

- Continued to support the North Florida Veteran Stand Down. Leon County contributed staff and \$10,000. Leon County Veteran Services processed claims and provided benefits classes to homeless veterans during the three-day event.
- Continued to provide support in planning and coordinating the Leon County Veteran's Day Parade. Each year the County partners with Veterans Events Tallahassee, Inc, hosting this event. According to Vet Events Tally, 27,000 spectators attended the parade.

Leon County Government is dedicated to serving veterans. In 2016, Leon County served more than 3,500 veterans and dependents with face-to-face consultations. For his or her service, a veteran has earned many benefits. But sometimes, the application process can be complicated. Leon County staff works to help veterans and their spouses process medical claims, retirement benefits, and even to receive assistance for certain approved emergency needs like heating and cooling.

But being a one-stop shop for local veterans is not the whole story of what Leon County does. In 2017, Leon County engaged the community on veteran events such as Honor Flight, Operation Thank You, and the Veterans Day Parade. Leon County supported Honor Flight Tallahassee, a program that flies World War II veterans – at no cost – to Washington D.C. to visit memorials dedicated to their service. Leon County Emergency Medical Services staff and others served as chaperones on the day-long trip. For some of the attendees, that day was their first chance to see the memorials honoring their service. Leon County also honored veterans at home. In its continuous and long tradition of supporting local veterans, Leon County has partnered with American Legion Sauls-Bridges Post 13 to host Operation Thank You Veterans Day Breakfast. Each veteran in attendance received an Operation Thank You Commemorative Challenge Coin and Leon County Proclamation.



Did You Know
According U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 19,000 veterans call Leon County home.