

**A Guidebook
for
Incarcerated
Veterans
in
*Florida,
Southern Georgia,
Puerto Rico and
the US Virgin Islands***

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Forward

This handbook can be an important tool. Review all of the programs thoroughly to understand the opportunities available. When these programs are used properly, the benefits will be a minimization of the outside pressures you may be confronted with if released; social acceptance, economics, and re-establishment as a productive member of society.

This booklet is a tool for Veterans Incarcerated and their families who wish access to services to support a new and better way of life. Be aware, this guidebook is designed to assist veterans incarcerated in the State of Florida, Southern Georgia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands and their families, laws do vary from state to state. Therefore, check your state laws and regulations against this guide. (See map on page 9 that outlines area of coverage for this guidebook).

Thank you,

Veterans Incarcerated Workgroup
Miami/Tallahassee, Florida

Agency staff names and addresses, phone numbers and website addresses change. If you attempt to contact one of the resources in this guidebook and it is not current, do your best to obtain the current information through phone information or a Google web search. To perpetuate the value of this document, we respectfully request that if you discover any incorrect, conflicting, or out-of-date information in this Guidebook please send the discrepancies, and updated information if you have it, to:

VISN 8 Homeless Coordinator
1492 West Flagler Street
Miami, Florida 33135

OR

Florida Department of Corrections
Project ReConnect
2601 Blair Stone Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500

Acknowledgements: We would like to recognize and thank: 1) the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans which provided basic concepts and core information for this guide through its "Planning for Your Release" guide funded by the U.S. Department of Labor; 2) the Veterans Incarcerated Workgroup of Walla Walla, Washington, for the concept of state-specific information in its "Guidebook for Incarcerated Veterans" and for allowing the use of its guide as a template for this publication; 3) Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. for developing the first incarcerated veterans guidebook, which has inspired and informed subsequent efforts; and 4) We also appreciate any public domain and agency resources included in the guidebook.

Last date revised: January 13, 2006

SECTION I

USING THIS GUIDE AND SEEKING HELP

This guide is for you to use to plan for your release and to keep as a reference after your release. It includes addresses, phone numbers, and web sites that you can use to find out about programs and other help available after your release. You may want to ask a friend or family member to help you find the information you need if you don't have phone or internet access. Keep in mind that **this guide does not include all of the services available**. What is available in one area may be different from what is available in another, so be sure to check with local resources to learn about services in your area.

While you are in prison, find out which unit in your facility can help you plan for your release (often the education or transfer unit). Classes may be offered so you can work on skills development and prepare for life after release. **You don't want to risk homelessness once you are released, so take advantage of the opportunities available to you.**

Begin thinking about what specifically you will need upon release. Ask yourself these kinds of questions: Will I need housing? Will I need medical, substance abuse, or mental health care? Do I need to learn a job skill? Do I have any other legal issues, such as child support? How do I restart my VA checks or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

Make a list of your needs. Remember that this is just a tool to help you get organized. A sample list might look like this:

- I need a place to live.
- I need a job.
- I need clothing to wear to work.
- I need to find out what benefits I can get as a veteran.
- I want to get addictions treatment.
- I owe child support.

- Think about your list as you read through this guide. Who do you think can help you with each of your needs? Is there one organization that may be able to work with you, on many different things, or do you need to contact several agencies? Keep track of the steps you take, including the dates and names of people you contact for information or assistance. Although this guide provides *national and state* addresses for many organizations, we recommend you **check your phone book for local, county, and state agencies that know what help is available in your area.**

When writing a letter to request information, **be clear.** Keep your letter short, to the point, and write legibly. Include the following information:

- Your name and contact information.
- A brief statement about your current situation.
- Your specific request.
- What you have done so far (Example: I have written to _____ X _____ organization and they suggested I contact you).
- Any restrictions for mailings (Example: Mail with staples or paper clips will not be accepted by my prison facility).

When contacting an agency for help by mail, email or phone, **be persistent and polite** in order to get results. Ask questions if information is not clear to you. Remember that many organizations are staffed by volunteers who are eager to help, but may not have the answers you are looking for. If **someone cannot help you, ask about who can.**

The Internet can also be helpful to find information about VA benefits and community resources in your area. This guide includes web addresses, when available. If computer access is not available at your facility, you can visit the public library after release. Computer access may also be provided at WorkSource and WorkSource Affiliate sites, WorkForce Development Council member locations, and Employment Security Department offices (referred to as Job Service Centers or Unemployment Offices).

Section II of this guide provides information about assistance for specific needs. **Section III** covers basic information about seeking VA benefits. The next to the last page contains a **Checklist** that summarizes each section of this guide.

SECTION II

HELP FOR VETERANS

This section includes resources that can help you get back on your feet. Remember to check the phone book for local, county, and state agencies that know what services are available in the area to assist you. Some organizations may have waiting lists, require an interview, or have specific rules about whom they serve. It is best if you **start asking about services and requirements now**, so that you will be prepared when you are released. You may even ask if your name can be put on a waiting list when you get closer to your release date.

TOLL-FREE NUMBERS / WEB SITES

Crisis and other toll-free numbers are often listed in the front cover or first few pages of the phone book. You may also want to check under "Social Services" in the blue or yellow pages for hotlines and local numbers.

- **US Department of Veterans Affairs** — www.va.gov
 - ✓ Benefits: 1-800-827-1000
 - ✓ Medical Centers: 1-877-222-8387, or www1.va.gov/visn8/
 - ✓ Persian Gulf War Helpline: 1-800-749-8387
- **National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information** - 800-729-6686
- **National AIDS Hotline** - Talk to someone who knows about HIV / AIDS and can tell you about AIDS services in your city or state: 1-800-822-7422
- **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans** — 1-800-838-4357, www.nchv.org
- **National Suicide Support Number** - 1-888- 784-2433 (1-888-SUICIDE)
- **Toll Free Mental Health Directory** - <http://members.aol.com/cmhproject/tollfree.htm>
- **Florida Coalition for the Homeless – Directory of Service Providers Assisting Homeless People in Florida** <http://www.flacoalitionhomeless.com/rg.pdf>

WHERE TO START

Check the local phone book yellow pages under "Homeless" or "Social Service Organizations" for a list of many local organizations that offer different services, which may include clothing, public transportation tokens, emergency shelter, and more. You may need to contact several agencies to find all the services you need. Services provided by *government* agencies are listed in the blue pages found near the front of the phone book. Check with your local Public Assistance Office to find out what programs are available and what their guidelines are. We have included some guidance below, but your local organizations are your best resources. **Remember, it never hurts to ask!**

- Every **VA Medical Center** has a **Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Coordinator** who is responsible for helping homeless veterans access VA and community-based care to end homelessness among veterans. The HCHV program provides outreach, clinical assessments and referrals for medical and mental health care, long-term transitional residential assistance, case management and employment assistance with linkage to permanent housing. To locate your nearest HCHV Coordinator call 1-877-222-8387 or go to <http://www1.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=21>.
- **Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA)** provides assistance with Veterans benefits & entitlements information, VA claims process, representation and advocacy, Trauma (PTSD) counseling, Veterans Homes for those in need of nursing care, and employment assistance through federal funded reintegration projects.
Contact:

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs
Mary Grizzle Building, Rm. 311-K
11351 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL 33778-1630
Call TEL: (727) 518-3202 FAX: (727) 518-3216 or go to www.floridavets.org
- **National Coalition for the Homeless** has a directory of shelters and homeless assistance programs online at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>. This does not list every program in the country, so be sure to check your phone book for local programs.

Directory of Local Homeless Service Agencies / Organizations

The following map of **VISN 8 (Veterans Integrated Service Network 8)** indicates the 5 Areas of Service for VA Medical Centers in this network, broken down by county:

Area 1 - Gainesville VAMC / Lake City VAMC (North Florida / South Georgia VA Health Care System)

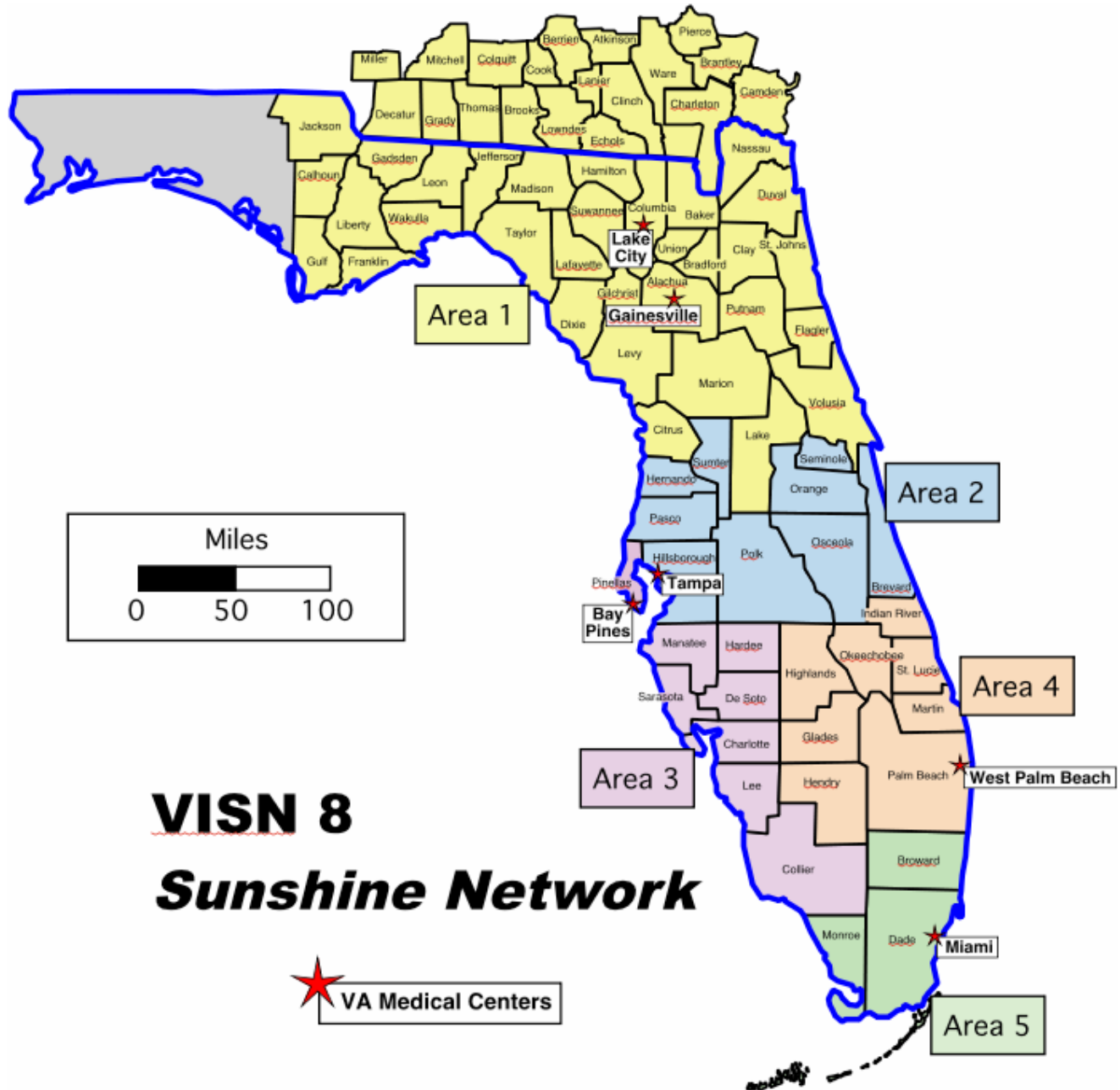
Area 2 - Tampa VAMC

Area 3 - Bay Pines VAMC

Area 4 - West Palm Beach VAMC

Area 5 - Miami VAMC (Miami VA Health Care System)

Puerto Rico / US Virgin Islands - San Juan VAMC (Not indicated on map)



Area 1 – Gainesville VAMC / Lake City VAMC

North Florida / South Georgia VA Health Care System Area Information:

BENEFITS

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.floridavets.org/>

For information call (727) 518-3202

Georgia Department of Veterans Service

For information call (404) 656-5933

http://www.state.ga.us/dvs/georgia_benefits.shtml

Malcom Randal VA Medical Center

1601 S.W. Archer Road

Gainesville , FL 32608-1197

Phone: 352-376-1611

SHELTERS

City Rescue Mission

234 W. State Street

Jacksonville, FL 32201

Phone: (904)353-5565

FAX: (904)350-1059

I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless

611 East Admas Street

Jacksonville, FL 32202

Shelter Phone: 904-359-0457

Health Center Phone: 904-359-0647

Dental Center Phone: 904-355-6100

Lighthouse Ministries

117 East Magnolia Street

Lakeland, FL 33802

Phone: (863)687-4076

Christian Care Center Rescue Mission

205 N. 13th Street

Leesburg, FL 34748

Phone: (904)787-9904

Daytona Rescue Mission

910 Beville Road

Daytona, FL 32115-9978

Phone: (904)252-1269

FAX: (904)528-2124

Refuge House

P. O. Box 4356d

Tallahassee, FL 32315
Phone: 850-922-6062/24-Hour Crisis Line: 850-681-2111

Main Shelter
480 West Tennessee Street
Tallahassee FL 32301
Phone (850)224-8448
email: shelter@hcsmail.com

The Waterfront Rescue Mission (This facility is in VISN 16)
16 W. Main Street
Pensacola, FL 32594
Phone: (850)438-4027
FAX: (850)436-7856

Albany Rescue Mission
604 N. Monroe St.
Albany, GA 31701
Phone: 229-435-7615

Albany-Dougherty Coalition to End Homelessness
222 Pine Avenue
P. O. Box 447
Albany, GA 31702
Phone: 229-431-3234

LEGAL SERVICES

Florida Institutional Legal Services Civil Legal Assistance Project Gainesville
Christopher Jones, Esquire, Executive Director (352) 955-2260
FJI is a public interest law firm providing legal services to institutionalized persons and handling impact work on behalf of low-income persons.

Florida Legal Services
Tallahassee
Kent R. Spuhler, Esquire, Executive Director (850) 385-7900
FLS is the state support center for legal services providers in Florida. FLS provides legislative and administrative advocacy on issues impacting the poor. FLS also trains and provides technical assistance to field program advocates and volunteer attorneys.

Florida Rural Legal Services
Lakeland
Donald Isaac, Esquire, Executive Director (863) 688-7376
FRLS is a large federally funded, general legal services provider serving 14 counties in south central Florida. FRLS assists individuals and families in the areas of public benefits and housing law.

Florida State University, College of Law, Pro Bono Project
Tallahassee
Donald Weidner, Acting Dean (850) 644-3400

This law school program offers students an opportunity to provide pro bono civil legal assistance to indigent clients.

Legal Services of North Florida

Tallahassee

Kristine Knab, Executive Director

(850) 385-9007

LSNF is a federally funded, general legal services provider serving 14 counties in north Florida. Its service emphasizes support for families, preserving the home, maintaining economic stability, and safety/health outreach to special populations.

Georgia Law Center for the Homeless

Sherry Sinclair

Executive Director

60 Walton Street, #300

Atlanta, GA 30303

404/681-0680

404/681-0681

www.galawcenter.org

HOMELESS ORGANIZATIONS

Georgia Coalition to End Homelessness (GCEH) is a statewide network committed to fostering strategic initiatives that build a collaborative response to the needs of homeless persons in Georgia.

<http://www.gahomeless.net/AboutUs.html#region5>

Angela Barker, Region 11 Representative

P.O. Box 3502

Valdosta, GA 31604

Tel: 229-245-7102 x221

Fax: 229-245-1398

Email: Angela_Barker@yahoo.com

South Georgia Coalition to End Homelessness

601 N Lee St.

PO Box 206

Valdosta, Georgia 31603-0206

Direct services made available by Coalition offices:

- 1) HAAP Program: Housing and utility assistance for persons with HIV/AIDS. Also provides case management services.
- 2) 2-1-1 Information and Referral line (www.211scg.org). Provides problem solving assistance and empowers callers with options to resolve issues.
- 3) Community Case Management for individuals without access to any other case management services. Provides access to soft skills training and limited utility assistance.

Women of Excellence Inc.

P.O. Box 776

Hampton, GA 30228

Phone/Fax: 770-897-0840

laverna@woeinc.org

gloria@woeinc.org

Website: woeinc.org

Women of Excellence is a non-profit organization designed to house and service women re-entering society through the justice system, battered women and homeless women with children. We offer: Educational Programs, G.E.D. Programs, Career Development/Job Links, Housing Assistance, H.I.V. Counseling, Mental Health, Health Services, Substance Abuse Treatment Re-entry Programs, Battered/Abused Women Services, Dwellings for Mother and Child.

Augusta Task Force for the Homeless, Inc.

Joan S. Stoddard

Executive Director

730 East Boundary Street

Augusta, GA 30901

706/723-0040, 1-866-256-7021 (homeless emergency hotline)

706/432-0570

atfh@bellsouth.net

Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless

*Anita Beaty (NCH Board Member)

Executive Director

*Robert Ferrell (NCH Board Member)

477 Peachtree St.

Atlanta, GA 30308

404-230-5007

404/589-8251

anitalawbeaty@aol.com

Metro Columbus Taskforce f/t Homeless

Elizabeth Dillard

Director

PO BOX 811

Columbus, GA 31902

706/571-3399 or 800-341-9371

homeless@fiac.net

www.mctfh.org

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

North Florida/South Georgia VA Health System of Gainesville FL

Substance Abuse Services

Gainesville

1601 SW Archer Road

Gainesville FL 32602

Phone: 352-374-6089

Primary Focus: Substance abuse treatment services

Services Provided: Substance abuse treatment, Detoxification, Halfway house

Type of Care: Residential short-term treatment (30 days or less), Residential long-term treatment (more than 30 days), Outpatient

Special Programs/Groups: DUI/DWI offenders

Forms of Payment Accepted: Self payment, Medicare, Private health insurance, Military insurance

Payment Assistance: Sliding fee scale based on income and other factors, payment assistance

Special Language Services: ASL or other assistance for hearing impaired

WOMEN VETERANS

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.floridavets.org/publications/art6.htm>

Area 2 – Tampa VAMC

Tampa VA Service Area Information

BENEFITS

James A. Haley Veterans Affairs Medical Center

13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.

Room D-209 Bldg.#19

Tampa , FL 33612

813-972-2000 ext.6589

VA Out Patient Clinic Viera

2900 Veterans Way, Ste A700

Viera, Fl. 32940

321-637-3693

Hillsborough County Veterans Service Office

Thomas Fletcher, Manager

1101 East 139th Avenue

Tampa, FL 33613

Telephone: (813) 975-2181 Main Phone

Fax: (813) 975-2187

SHELTERS

Metropolitain Ministeries

2002 North Florida Avenue

Tampa, FL 33602

813-209-1000

Salvation Army

610 West Waters Avenue, Tampa, FL 33604

813-915-1004

The Salvation Army - Community Worship Center Corps, Hospitality House Women's Shelter

1100 West Sligh Avenue, Tampa, FL 33604

813-226-0055

Salvation Army the: Corrections Program

(813) 223-3781

1603 N Florida Ave

Tampa, FL 33602

EMPLOYMENT / JOB TRAINING

Employment Spot (web site)

<http://www.employmentspot.com/state/employment/Tampa-FL.htm>

Jobs.net (web site)

<http://www.jobs.net/Florida-Tampa.htm>

Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services, Inc. – Employment and Training

14041 Icot Blvd. Clearwater, FL 33760

727-538-7150, 800-888-5066, Fax 727-535-4774

General Information info@gcifs.org Employment Information HR@gcifs.org

Job-Hunt.org (web site)

<http://www.job-hunt.org/jobs/florida.shtml>

State of Florida.com – Employment and Labor (web site)

<http://www.stateofflorida.com/Portal/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=10>

CRISIS HELPLINES

TAMPA

Hillsborough County

2-1-1 & Hotline Services

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

24 hours / 7 days

Dial 211 or

Suicide & Crisis Hotline

(813) 234-1234

LEGAL SERVICES

Bay Area Legal Services is a nonprofit public interest law firm. Our commitment is to provide quality civil legal services to individuals and nonprofit community groups whose circumstances limit their access to legal assistance. We pledge to help our clients prevent and solve problems so that they will have a chance for a more self-reliant life.

Home Office

829 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., 2nd Floor

Tampa, FL 33603-3336

(813)-232-1343

WOMEN VETERANS

Women Veterans Comprehensive Health Centers

James A. Haley VA Medical Center

13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.

Tampa, FL 33612 Phone: 813-972-2000 Ext. 3678

Fax: (813) 972-7673

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.floridavets.org/publications/art6.htm>

Area 3 – Bay Pines VAMC

Bay Pines VA Service Area Information:

BENEFITS

Bay Pines VA Medical Center

10,000 Bay Pines Blvd

Bay Pines , FL 33744 Phone: (727) 398-6661 Fax: (727) 398-9442

Pinellas County Veteran Service Offices

1100 Cleveland Street, Suite 1406,

Clearwater, FL 33755

(727) 464-8460 / TDD (727) 464-4388

Call for appointments

3160 5th Avenue N., Suite 116,

St. Petersburg, FL 33713

(727) 893-1196

Call for appointments

301 Disston Avenue S.

Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

(727) 943-4743

Wednesdays only

SHELTERS

Salvation Army the: Red Shield Lodge/Men's Shelter

(727) 221-4440

1514 Florida Ave N

Saint Petersburg, FL 33701

Salvation Army the-Sarasota Corps: Shelter Services/Emergencies/Social Services

(941) 954-4673

1400 10th St

Sarasota, FL 34236

Salvation Army the: Emergency Lodge

(727) 821-9123

1400 4th St S

Saint Petersburg, FL 33701

CRISIS HELPLINE

ST. PETERSBURG

Serving Pinellas County

Helpline

Pinellas Cares - Family Resources

24 hours / 7 days (727) 344-5555

LEGAL SERVICES

Community Law Program

CLP is a bar sponsored pro bono legal services program that utilizes volunteer attorneys to represent low-income residents of south Pinellas County.

St. Petersburg
Kelly Rauch, Esquire
Executive Director
(727) 582-7402

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Society of St. Vincent DePaul, Inc.
384 15th St. N.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33705-2016
Tel. 727-823-2516
(Ask for veterans' representative)

EMPLOYMENT / JOB TRAINING

Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services, Inc. – Employment and Training
14041 Icot Blvd. Clearwater, Fl. 33760
727-538-7150, 800-888-5066, Fax 727-535-4774
General Information info@gcifs.org Employment Information HR@gcifs.org
Jobs.net (web site)
<http://www.jobs.net/Florida-StPetersburg.htm>

Yahoo – Hot Jobs (web site)

<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/jobs/FL/St-Petersburg/Education-Training-jobs>

Area 4 – West Palm Beach VAMC

West Palm Beach VA Service Area Information:

BENEFITS

WEST PALM BEACH VA HOSPITAL

FEDERAL: 561-422-8302

Jimmie Faison

STATE: 561-422-8204

Lloyd Estes

Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

7305 North Military Trail

West Palm Beach Fl. 33410

1-800-972-8262

Persian Gulf War Helpline: 800-749-8387

CRISIS HELPLINES

Focus Recovery Helpline

www.aa.palmbeachcounty.org

1-800-888-9383

West Palm Beach Medical Center Suicide Support:

MHC Crises Team

561-422-7515

After 4PM same as above

Hepatitis C: 1-877-435-7443

West Palm Beach Aids Hotline: Comprehensive Aids Program (561) 844-3393

HOMELESS SERVICES / ORGANIZATIONS / SHELTERS

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

www.nchv.org <<http://www.nchv.org>>

WPB Hotline 1-800-493-5902

Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County Inc

PO Box 7396

WPB FL. 33405-7396

561-478-5351

Sheila J. Smith

Sheila@hcpalmbeach.org <<mailto:Sheila@hcpalmbeach.org>>

Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council-Resource Center

772-778-4234

Economic Services: St. Lucie County

772-467-3700

Economic Services: Okeechobee County

772-941-763-6421

Economic Services: Martin County

772-223-2500

Salvation Army FT. Pierce

772-464-4846

First Baptist Church Samaritan Gardens

1201 S Flagler Drive

West Palm Beach FL. 33401

561-650-7400

Salvation Army Center of Hope

1577 N Military Trail

WPB FL. 33409

561- 682-1118

No money needed to get in, must be able to work,

Stay up to one year

Meals included

Provides services including shelter,

Transitional Housing for Homeless Veterans

Single Males & Females

Substance Abuse Treatment

Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

7305 N Military Trail

WPB FL. 33410

561-422-5695

West Palm Beach County Hot Team

Local # 1-800-493-5902

LOCAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT OFFICE

Human Resources West Palm Beach Fl

561-494-1000 Job Hotline: 561-494-1001 or www.cityofwpb.org

Department of Community Services Division of Veteran Services

810 Datura Street, 2nd Floor

West Palm Beach FL. 33401

Office hours: M-F 8am-5pm

561-355-4761

Craig Carr

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

7305 N Military Trail

West Palm Beach FL. 33410

1-800-972-8262x8204

561-422-8204

American Ex-POWs

Rm. # 1A-157

561-422-7456

American Legion

Rm. # BC-248

561-422-6418

Disabled American Veterans

RM. # 1A-161

561-422-8203

Military Order of the Purple Hearts

Rm. # 1A-143

561-422-5647

Paralyzed Veterans of America

RM # 1A-163

561-422-6954

Veterans of Foreign Wars

RM # 1A-163

561-422-8206

Jewish War Veterans

Rm # 1A-161

561-422-8294/8773

Vietnam Veterans of America

561-616-9981

<http://www.vvoachapters.org/Chapter25.htm>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES / LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA)

<http://www.floridavets.org>

WPBVA 561-422-8204

The American Legion -Dept. of FL

<http://www.floridaalegion.org>

WPBVA 561-422-6418

Disabled American Veterans:

<http://www.davfla.com>

WPBVA 561-422-8203

Veterans of Foreign Wars:

<http://www.myfloridavfw.com>

WPBVA 561-422-8206

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 25

561-616-9981

Work Force Development:

4100 Okeechobee Blvd.

West Palm Beach FL. 33409

561-616-5200

Vet Center West Palm Beach

2311 10th Ave

Lake Worth FL. 33460

561-585-0441

Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)

Medical Center WPBVA

561-422-8279

Social Security Administration:

3650 Shawnee Ave.

West Palm Beach FL. 33409

561-684-3752

1-800-772-1213

WOMEN VETERANS

West Palm Beach VA Medical Center

7305 N Military Trail

West Palm Beach FL. 33410

561-422-6272

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Joshua House

2701 Broadway
West Palm Beach FL. 33402
561-712-8586

No fees charged

Eligibility: Homeless indigent males with history of chronic substance abuse. Prior residential treatment preferred. Service Area: West Palm Beach

Center of Hope

1577 N Military Trail
West Palm Beach FL. 33409
561-682-1118

Office hours : Every day / 24 Hours a day

Eligibility: Must be referred by another agency or contact Social Service. Client will receive a comprehensive substance abuse/ mental health evaluation.

Service Area: Palm Beach County

Provides transitional living with support services, which includes the following onsite services: comprehensive substance abuse treatment; Mental health counseling; anger management classes; GED prep and testing; Adult basic education; budget management; interviewing skills.

Step by Step Residence, Inc

1310 N Sapodilla Ave.
West Palm Beach FL. 33416
561-802-3254

Office hours: Every day/ 24 hours

Probono services provided.

Eligibility: Women only

Intake procedure: Contact by phone.

Service Area: West Palm Beach and surrounding areas.

Provides emergency housing for homeless women.

Area 5 – Miami VA Medical Center

Miami VA Health Care System service area information:

BENEFITS

Miami VA Medical Center

1201 NW 16th Street Rm A-213
Miami, Florida 33125
305-325-3325

VA Outpatient Clinic Oakland Park

5599 N. Dixie Hwy.
Oakland Park, Fl 33334
954-229-7727

HOMELESS SERVICES / ORGANIZATIONS

Food stamps/"Economic Self Sufficiency" offices

Northeast Service Center

18301 N. Miami Ave.

Miami, Fl 33169

Opa-Locka Service Center

200 Opa-Locka Blvd.

Opa Locka, Fl 33054

Hialeah North Service Center

7925 NW 2nd Court

Miami, Fl 33014

Caleb Service Center

5400 NW 22nd Ave.

Miami, Fl 33142

Juanita Mann Service Center

7900 NW 27th Ave.,

Miami, Fl. 33147

North Central

7900 NE 2nd Ave

Miami, Fl 33138

Central

1490 NW 27th Ave.

Miami, Fl 33125

Coconut Grove Service Center

2750 S. Dixie Hwy.

Miami, Fl 33133

Miami Beach Service Center

945 Pennsylvania Ave.

Suite 300

Miami Beach, Fl 33139

Biscayne Service Center

225 NE 34th St.

Miami, Fl 33137

Hialeah South Service Center

5700 NW 37th Ave.

Miami, Fl 33010

University Service Center

1605 SW 107th Ave

Miami, Fl 33165

South Miami Service Center
6600 SW 57th Ave.
Miami, FL 33143

Perrine Service Center
11241 SW 184th St.
Miami, FL 33157

Quail Roost Service Center
12314 Quail Roost Drive
Miami, FL 33177

Florida City Service Center
755 West Palm Drive
Florida City, FL 33034

SHELTERS FOR MEN

Salvation Army
1907 NW 38th St
Miami, FL 33142
305/637-6720
No transient beds – beds per admission into programs

Camillus House
726 NE 1st Ave
Miami, FL 33132
305/577-4840
7 nights shelter yearly
Health Clinic connected with the shelter
Drug and Alcohol Program
Showers
**must stand in line for bed//first come first serve basis

Community Partnership Homeless Assistance Center (HAC)
North HAC: 305 329-3000
South HAC: 305 416-7143
MUST BE REFERRED BY THE CITY OF MIAMI HOMELESS SERVICE PROGRAM
OR OUTREACH TEAM. WILL ACCEPT EMERGENCIES AFTER 6PM IF ESCORTED
BY POLICE.

Miami Homeless Program 305/638-6368
Manages the Homeless, Assessment and Tracking for the incarcerated program/HART.

Camillus House/Beckham Hall
90 day program
Intake is from 6-7am only
2735 NW 10th Ave.
Miami, FL 33127
305/634-2294

SHELTERS FOR WOMEN

Miami Rescue Mission for Women and Children

Intake is from 4-5 pm – no boys over 6

2250 NW 1st Ave.

Miami, Fl 33127

305/571-2250

Salvation Army (see location/information above)

Mother Theresa's Missionaries of Charity

Intake is from 4-5pm

724 NW 17th St.

Miami, Fl. 33136

305/545-5699 or 305/326-0032

Miami Rescue Mission – Center for Women and Children

Local faith based housing and education program

305/571-2250

SHELTERS FOR HOMELESS MEN AND WOMEN

Metro-Dade Dept of Human Resources Emergency Housing

Call or walk-in

2301 NW 54th St.

Miami Fl. 33142

305/638-6001

VA SPECIALTY PROGRAM

Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (HCHV)

Assists with signing veterans up for medical and/or psychiatric services and educating them about transitional housing/treatment programs from VA and community programs.

Assists with getting DD214's and linkage with other services.

1492 W. Flagler Street

Miami, Fl 33135

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

VA Outpatient Substance Abuse Clinic

305/541-8435

Detox Center – Miami-Dade Central Intake

2500 NW 22nd Ave

Miami, Fl 33142

305/638-6540

Salvation Army Adult Rehab Center (substance abuse and for males only)

2236 NW Miami Court

Miami, Fl 33127

305/573-4200

SOUP KITCHENS

Camillus House

726 NE 1st Ave, Miami, Fl.
MONDAY-FRIDAY FROM 6:30-7:30pm
SATURDAY & SUNDAY FROM 1000am-1200pm

Miami Rescue Mission

2020 NW 1st Ave, Miami, Fl.
FROM 4:30pm-6:00pm

Trinity Cathedral

464 NE 16th St, Miami, Fl.
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY AT 6:15pm

LEGAL SERVICES

Public Defenders

1320 NW 14th St
Miami, Fl 33125
305/545-1600

Legal Aid Society - Family Law

123 NW First Ave
Suite 117
Miami, Fl 33128
305/579-5733

Catholic Charities Immigration/Citizenship Services

7101 Biscayne Blvd.
Miami, Fl 33138

Legal Services

3000 Biscayne Blvd
Suite 500
Miami, Fl 33137

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

South Florida WorkForce Offender Service Center

390 NW 2nd St
Miami, Fl 33128
305/374-1987

www.transitioninc.org

VOTING RIGHTS

Coordinator, Office of Executive Clemency

2601 Blairstone Road
Building C, Room 229
Tallahassee, Fl 32399-2405
850/488-2952 or

DOE@mail.dos.state.fl.us

WOMEN VETERANS

Womens Health Center

Miami VA Medical Center

1201 N.W. 16th Street

Miami , FL 33125

Phone: 305-575-7000 Ext. 7001

Fax: 305-575-3266

Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

HEALTH CARE

San Juan VA Medical Center

10 Casia Street

San Juan, PR 00921-3201

Fax 787-641-4557

Toll Free 1-800-449-8729, ext. 75865

Arecibo VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic

Calle Gonzalo Marin #50

Arecibo, PR 00612-4702

Voice 787-816-1818 Fax 787-816-1824

Guayama VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic

FISA Building, First Floor

Paseo Del Pueblo, km 0.3, lote no. 6

Guayama, PR 00784

Voice 787-866-8766 Fax 787-866-8795

Mayagüez VA Outpatient Clinic

Avenida Hostos #345

Mayagüez, PR 00680-1507

Fax 787-265-8825

Toll Free 1-800 569-2356

Ponce VA Outpatient Clinic

Paseo Del Veterano #1010

Ponce, PR 00716-2001

Voice 787-812-3030 Fax 787-651-4321

Toll Free 1-800-563-5086

St. Croix VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic

The Village Mall

R R 2 Box 10556

Kingshill, VI 00850-4701

Voice 340-778-5553 Fax 340-778-9497

St. Thomas VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic

Buccaneer Mall #8

Charlotte Amalie

St. Thomas, VI 00802

Voice 340-774-6674 Fax 340-774-2069

Listing of Homeless & Housing Advocacy Coalitions

The following is a list of Homeless and Housing Advocacy Coalitions for the State of Florida, Georgia, and Puerto Rico. Not all of these coalitions provide direct services, but they may be able to tell you about local programs or services.

Florida Coalition for the Homeless www.flacoalitionhomeless.com/

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs www.floridavets.org/benefits/homeless.asp

Florida's Homeless Shelters (listing)

www.gtii.com/members/lannin/shelters/florida.htm#miami

This site also provides link to Florida homeless services providers

Florida Veterans Mobile Service Center, Volunteers of America of Florida (VOAF)

www.voa-fla.org/Prog-Veterans_MSC.htm

South Georgia Coalition to End Homelessness www.sgceh.org/

Georgia's Homeless Shelters www.gtii.com/members/lannin/shelters/georgia.htm

National Center for Homeless Education, Puerto Rico

www.serve.org/nche/states/pr.php

Web site for social service agencies in Puerto Rico

www.busregister.com/asp/br-summary.asp?sic_code=92313

- **Salvation Army** - provides services, including shelter and transitional housing, for homeless individuals and families. For local services and information contact: The Florida Divisional Headquarters is located at 5631 Van Dyke Road. Lutz, Fl. 33558 Phone 813-962-6611 http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org/uss/www_uss.nsf
- **United Way** - provides a variety of services through local organizations. Check the phone book for a local post or locate local organizations online at www.unitedway.org.
- **Local churches and faith-based organizations**, such as Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, and Volunteers of America, may have a variety of programs to assist you. Find these organizations by calling your county or city Department of Social Services. Check the blue pages of the phone book for the number.

FINDING & KEEPING A JOB

Finding a job may be hard and can seem overwhelming, but it is possible and very important! When released you may find that you are completely starting over. You should ask for job counseling and training while incarcerated so you are prepared to

work when released. **Don't wait** until you get out to start thinking about what you will do. **Start planning now!**

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

U.S. Department of Labor -

Employment Information Handbook for Ex-Offenders

Purpose:

The Department of Labor's goal is to help prison inmates get good paying jobs after they return to their homes. Our experience has shown that most inmates do not know how to go about this. Even in prison, inmates can do a number of things that will increase their future employability. Once ex-offenders return to their communities they can do more. The Employment Information Handbook provides prisoners with contacts and other information that can help them to prepare for release and know where to go for assistance in finding a job. All of the materials in the Handbook have been gathered from a variety of public sources and you may freely copy, share, and use these materials. This resource is found on the internet at:

http://www.westernvaworkforce.com/download/Updates/2005-11-a_Exoffende_Hanbook_010705.doc

Florida Department of Corrections- Project ReConnect

Project ReConnect is a program that provides post-release job placement services to ex-offenders, age 25 and under, who complete either a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or vocational education programs during their last incarceration.

Project ReConnect is also a community outreach project that brings potential employers into the institutions through speaking engagements and activities such as employer presentations.

Workforce Florida

Workforce Florida, Inc. was created by Governor Jeb Bush and the Florida Legislature with the passage of the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000, Chapter 445, Florida statutes. A 45-member board appointed by the Governor oversees and monitors the administration of the state's workforce policy, programs and services carried out by the 24 business-led Regional Workforce Boards and the Agency for Workforce Innovation. Direct services are provided at nearly 100 One-Stop Centers with locations in every county in the state.

Find out details on the internet at:

<http://www.workforceflorida.com/wages/wfi/about/index.htm>

Hire Vets First

One-Stop Career Centers

Veterans can find the services they need at a convenient One-Stop Career Center. Work with a veterans employment specialist to find jobs, acquire skills and education, plan your career, attend workshops and take advantage of other resources. Search the

directory for the [directory for the One-Stop Career Center](#) near you or just pick up the phone and dial 1-877-US2-JOBS for direct assistance!

- **WorkSource Centers** provide all the information, technology and services business needs to thrive; and job seekers need to achieve successful careers. They represent a unique concept in the labor market - everything in one place. WorkSource Center Services are delivered to customers in a variety of ways, including:
 - Self-directed efforts, such as kiosks or via the Internet
 - Group programs and activities, such as workshops
 - One-on-one consultations
 - Training programs and business consultations

- **WorkSource Affiliates** serve special populations and are electronically linked to the system. All affiliates offer self-service resource rooms and job search activities. Services for job seekers include:
 - Free use of computers, copiers, phones, faxes and other career resources
 - Internet access to jobs
 - Job referral and placement
 - Classes on how to get and keep a job
 - Information on the fastest growing jobs and wages
 - Referral to training and other community services
 - Access to Unemployment Insurance
 - Translation services

- **Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist** assigned by the **State Employment Security Department** to help veterans find and keep jobs. LVERs are located with the local WorkSource site or affiliate Job Service Centers (JSC). DVOP Specialists work under the supervision of the LVER to develop job and training opportunities for veterans with service-connected disabilities, linking veterans with employers and making sure follow-up services are provided. To find a LVER or DVOP near you, visit your state employment service office listed in the phone book blue pages under "State Government, Employment Security Department," or go to www.stateofflorida.com/Portal/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=10.

- The following web site is an information brief produced by the Welfare Information Network provides a listing of useful resources regarding transitional job opportunities for ex-offenders.

URL: www.financeprojectinfo.org/publications/transitionaljobsRN.pdf

- **Work Opportunity Tax Credit**

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) can save an employer as much as \$2,400 in taxes when they hire a worker who historically has had a hard time landing a job. And it's easy. All an employer has to do is hire a qualified worker, fill out the Pre-Screening Notice (8850) and Individual Characteristics Form (9061) and drop them in the mail within 21 calendar days from the start date of employment. An ex-felon who has a hiring date, which is not more than one year after the last date on which they were convicted or released from prison, and is a member of an economically **disadvantaged family is qualified for WOTC.**

An employer can get a tax break of 40 percent up to first \$6,000 of the wages paid to a qualified worker who worked at least 400 hours during the first year of employment. That adds up to a \$2,400 tax credit for filling a job they planned to fill anyway. However, if the new employee only works 120 to 399 hours an employer can still receive a credit of up to 25 percent of the qualified first year wages up to \$6,000. This allows a credit amount up to \$1,500.

The Employment Security Department is the "Right Connection" to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. If an employer wants more information and forms, they can call the WOTC Unit at 1-800-669-9271, or contact their local WorkSource Center.

- **Workforce Innovation - Federal Bonding Program**

Purpose—Bonding is a unique and innovative tool for marketing an applicant to an employer. As an employer incentive, it conveys a businesslike approach. The employer gets the worker's skills, abilities and knowledge without taking risk of potential employee dishonesty. There are **no forms** or other papers for the employer to sign, and **no processing** to delay matters – **the insurance can be put into effect instantly.** The **bond insurance can apply to any job** and covers any employee dishonesty that occurs on or away from the employer's

work facility. Full or part-time employees' paid wages (with federal taxes automatically deducted from pay) can be bonded; these Fidelity Bonds cannot cover self-employment.

Why bonding is needed -Job seekers who have in the past committed a fraudulent or dishonest act, or who have demonstrated other past behavior which casts doubt upon their credibility or honesty, often experience a special barrier to gaining employment due to their personal backgrounds. Such persons are routinely classified as “at-risk” job applicants when their past life experience raises an obstacle to their future ability to secure employment. More specifically, *employers view these applicants as being potentially untrustworthy workers.* This fear is further heightened by the fact that Fidelity Bond insurance commercially purchased by employers to protect against employee dishonesty usually will not cover those at risk – these persons are designated by insurance companies as being “NOT BONDABLE.” As a result, at risk job applicants are routinely denied employment. **Ex-offenders**, including anyone with a record of arrest, conviction, or imprisonment, and anyone who has ever been on probation or parole, are at-risk job applicants. Others, similarly at risk and NOT BONDABLE are **ex-addicts** (persons with a history of alcohol and drug abuse), persons having a **poor credit record**, or who have declared bankruptcy, **economically disadvantaged persons who lack a work history**, and individuals who were **dishonorably discharged** from the military. Other job seekers also can be classified as at-risk if bonding can eliminate the barrier to their employment.

What is a Fidelity Bond? -Fidelity bonding is a form of business insurance usually purchased to indemnify employers' for loss of money or property sustained through the dishonest acts of their employees (i.e. theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement). This “employee dishonesty insurance” is generally considered a good business management practice, and is purchased by many employers. However, while other types of insurance set premiums that vary according to the degree of risk, Fidelity Bond premiums are always set based upon taking no risk. As a result, insurance companies usually will not cover at-risk persons under Fidelity Bonds, a practice that has created a special barrier to employment for the growing large number of persons (i.e. ex-addicts, credit risks, etc.) whose personal credibility is questionable due to other dishonest or deviant

past acts.

To find out more about the Federal Bonding Program contact:

AGENCY FOR WORKFORCE INNOVATION - AWI_comments@awi.state.fl.us

107 East Madison Street

Caldwell Building

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4120

Phone: (850) 245-7105

Fax: (850) 921-3223

The Veterans Service Division, Department of Veterans Affairs, provides employment and training services to homeless veterans to help them get back into the workforce through DOL-VETS funded **Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Projects (HVRP)**. HVRP assists veterans with job search preparation, vocational counseling, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, trade skills certification and licensing, and job placement assistance and referral to supportive services. To find out if you may be eligible and how to access HVRP contact FDVA at 1-800-562-2308

- The VA's **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment** services help veterans with service-connected disabilities by providing job training and counseling to those who have an employment handicap. Services include help finding a job, on-the-job training, job development, and vocational training. If you are not eligible for these services, a VA counselor may help you find other options, goals, or programs. Contact your VA Regional Office (VARO) at 1-800-827-1000, or go to <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm>.
- Through its' **Veterans Industries and Compensated Work Therapy programs**, the VA offers structured work opportunities and supervised therapeutic housing for at-risk and homeless veterans with physical, mental health and addictions problems. VA contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by these veterans, who learn job skills, re-learn successful work habits, and regain a sense of self-esteem. Veterans are paid for their work and given assistance with employment in the community. For further information go to www1.va.gov/vetind.
- The State of Florida has a **Vocational Rehabilitation** program that helps people with disabilities find and keep jobs. Apply for these services immediately after your

release. Look in the phone book blue pages under "State of Florida Department of Veterans Affairs", or search the internet for "Vocational Rehabilitation" in your state.

HEALTH CARE

If eligible for veteran's benefits:

- We encourage you to enroll in the VA Health Benefits System as soon as you are released. Every **VA Medical Center** has a **Health Care for Homeless Veterans Coordinator** who helps veterans and their families find resources inside and outside the VA Health Care system. Call 1-877-222-8387 or go to www1.va.gov/visn8/ to find the medical center nearest you. See the following facility chart.

[VISN 8: VA Sunshine Healthcare Network](#)

North Florida South Georgia Veterans Health Care System

North Florida/ So. Georgia

Malcolm Randall VAMC, NF/SG VHS
1601 S.W. Archer Road
Gainesville , FL 32608-1197
Phone: 352-376-1611
Fax: 352-374-6113

Lake City VAMC, NF/SG VHS
619 S. Marion Avenue
Lake City , FL 32025-5808
Phone: 386-755-3016
Fax: 386-758-3209

Central Florida

James A. Haley VAMC
13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa , FL 33612
Phone: (813) 972-2000
Fax: (813) 972-7673

Southwest Florida

Bay Pines VAMC
10,000 Bay Pines Blvd
Bay Pines , FL 33744
Phone: (727) 398-6661
Fax: (727) 398-9442

Southeast Florida

West Palm Beach VAMC
7305 N. Military Trail
West Palm Beach , FL 33410-6400
Phone: 561-422-8262
Fax: 561-422-8613

**South
Florida
and
Florida
Keys**

Miami VAMC
1201 N.W. 16th Street
Miami , FL 33125
Phone: 305-575-7000
Fax: 305-575-3266

**Puerto
Rico / US
Virgin
Islands**

San Juan VAMC
10 Casia Street
San Juan , PR 00921-3201
Phone: (787) 641-7582
Fax: (787) 641-4557

If ineligible for veteran's benefits, free or low-cost health care may be available from the following sources:

- **Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)** can tell you where to find health care facilities for the homeless. Check the phone book blue pages under local, city, or county government for the number.
- **National Health Care for the Homeless Council** has a list of health care providers working with homeless people across the nation. For a list of providers in your state, go to www.nhchc.org.
- **Free clinics** are run by many local organizations and communities. Look in the phone book blue pages under "Public Health" to contact local government office for clinics in your area.

Special Health Information for Veterans:

- If you think you may be at risk for AIDS and HIV infection after your release, contact the nearest VA Medical Center to get tested, and seek counseling. Those at highest risk for AIDS and HIV infection are:
 - people who share needles or syringes to inject drugs or steroids;
 - men who have sex with other men;
 - those born to mothers who have HIV
 - people who received blood transfusions before 1985;
 - anyone who has sex with anyone who is at risk for HIV / AIDS.

- Veterans, homeless, and incarcerated people are at high risk for **Hepatitis C** (HCV), a serious disease that can cause cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and liver cancer. If you think you are at risk after your release, contact the nearest VA Medical Center to get tested and seek HCV counseling. You are at risk if:
 - you ever used a needle to inject drugs;
 - you had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992;
 - you were a health care worker and had contact with blood;
 - you were on long-term kidney dialysis;
 - your mother had hepatitis C when she gave birth to you.

- The Veterans Health Administration also recommends testing if:
 - you are a Vietnam-era veteran;
 - you have had exposure to blood on your skin;
 - you have had multiple sex partners;
 - you have tattoos or body piercing;
 - you have ever snorted cocaine;
 - you have liver disease;
 - you have a history of drinking a lot of alcohol;
 - you have had an abnormal liver function test.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

If eligible for veterans' benefits:

- Contact the Homeless Veteran Services Coordinator at the local **VA Medical Center** or **Vet Center**. See VAMC facilities chart above, call 1-877-222-8387, see Vet Center chart, or go to www1.va.gov/visn8/, to find the medical center nearest you.

VISN 8 VET CENTERS

Fort Lauderdale Vet Center

713 N.E. 3rd Avenue,
Fort Lauderdale , FL 33304
Phone: 954-356-7926
Fax: 954-356-7609

Miami Vet Center

2700 S.W. 3rd Ave., Suite 1A,
Miami , FL 33129
Phone: 305-859-8387
Fax: 305-530-7870

Jacksonville Vet Center

300 East State Street,
Jacksonville , FL 32202
Phone: 904-232-3621
Fax: 904-232-3167

Palm Beach Vet Center

2311 10th Avenue N, Suite 13,
Lake Worth , FL 33461
Phone: 561-585-0441
Fax: 561-585-1330

Tampa Vet Center

8900 N. Armenia Avenue, #312,
Tampa , FL 33604
Phone: 813-228-2621
Fax: 813-228-2868

Orlando Vet Center

5575 S. Semoran Blvd, Suite 36,
Orlando , FL 32822
Phone: 407-629-1599
Fax: 407-857-5005

Saint Petersburg Vet Center

2880 1st Avenue North,
Saint Petersburg , FL 33713
Phone: 727 893-3791
Fax: 727-893-3210

Sarasota Vet Center

4801 Swift Road,
Sarasota , FL 34231
Phone: 941-927-8285
Fax: 941-927-8307

Tallahassee Vet Center

548 Bradford Road,
Tallahassee , FL 32303
Phone: 850-942-8810
Fax: 850-942-8814

If not eligible for veterans' benefits, the following sources may be able to tell you where you can go to get help:

- **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill** lists community mental health services providers at: www.nami.org, or call 1-800-950-6264.
- **National Mental Health Association** offers support groups, rehabilitation, socialization, and housing services through 340 community organizations located across the country. Call 1-800-969-NMHA, or find a local office online at www.nmha.org.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

If eligible for veterans' benefits:

- Contact the Addictions Treatment Center at the local **VA Medical Center**. Call 1-877-222-8387 to or go to www1.va.gov/visn8/, to find the medical center nearest you.

If not eligible for veterans' benefits, the following sources may be able to tell you where you can go to get help:

- The Department of Health and Human Services **Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service** can refer you to local programs. Call 1-800-662-4357.
- **Focus On Recovery Helpline** - A 24-hour national alcohol and drug abuse addiction and treatment hotline: 1-800-374-2800 or 1-800-234-1253

FINANCIAL HELP

- The American Legion provides **Temporary Financial Assistance**, (TFA) from its national headquarters to help maintain a stable environment for children of veterans. To obtain an application, look in the phone book to contact a local post, or contact the National Headquarters (see page 48) to find the post nearest you.
- If you are unemployed with little or no income, you may be able to get **food stamps**. A person may normally qualify for \$85 to \$100 worth of food stamps per month. Call the toll-free information number at 1-800-221-5689, or find a list of food stamp hotlines for each state at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/contact_info/hotlines.htm. You can also contact the local Department of Human Services, many drop-in shelters, or legal aid services to ask for an application.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** benefits can be applied for before your release, even though you won't receive the benefits until after you are released. Food Stamps can be applied for together with SSI. Normally, it takes about three months to review an application, so apply well before your release date. It is best to get help filling out the application. For detailed information or assistance, call 1-800- 772-1213, call or your local

Social Security Administration office listed in the phone book blue pages, or go to:

<http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income/>.

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** has a program called Emergency Food and Shelter Program to help prevent homelessness. Contact the local Office of the Mayor *or* United Way to ask who awards this money in your area and what the rules are.

LEGAL HELP

Veteran status issues:

- You should talk to a **Veterans Advocate Service Officer** for help with discharge upgrades, seeking benefits, and filing a VA claim (call 1 800 827-1000 ext. 7400 for the nearest Service Officer).

Other legal issues:

- Most law is state-specific. Most common legal problems are governed by the law in the state where you live or where the problem occurred. When looking for legal help, make sure that information you find applies to your state, or that the lawyer or other service provider is qualified to work in your state.
- The **American Bar Association** has a web site with guidelines about free legal services and links to directories of legal aid offices and pro-bono programs. Go to: www.abanet.org
- **Legal Services or Legal Aid offices** have staff lawyers to provide free legal help to poor clients. The lawyers are usually experts in the types of problems that poor clients often have. Look in the yellow pages for a local Legal Aid office or check online for the program, nearest you. Go to www.floridalawhelp.org .
- **Pine Tree Legal Assistance** has an online list of organizations across the nation that provides free legal help to clients who qualify. Go to www.ptla.org/links/services.htm.
- Lawyers in private practice sometimes volunteer in "pro-bono" programs to take cases for poor clients free of charge. Check the yellow pages to contact your **Local Bar Association** to learn if there is a pro-bono program in your community, or go to www.abanet.org/barserv/stlobar.html.

WOMEN VETERANS

- Most VA **Medical Centers** and readjustment offices have a designated Women Veterans Coordinator to assist women veterans in accessing VA benefit programs and healthcare services. Call 1-877-222-8387 or go to www1.va.gov/visn8/, to find the medical center nearest you.
- **The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs** has a designated Women Veterans Coordinator to help women veterans. Call 1 800 827-1000 ext. 7400 or go to www.floridavets.org
- Many women in prison had similar histories, problems, and personal issues before their arrest and conviction. Mentors with **Women in Community Service (WICS)** help women preparing to leave prison and those who are just getting back into society. WICS' prison programs help women think about their behavior, gain job skills, and build self-esteem. For Florida, Southern Ga., Puerto Rico contact **the U.S. DOL, Job Corps at 1-800-733-JOBS** <http://www.wics.org/offices.asp> to find the nearest WICS program.

SECTION III

SEEKING FEDERAL BENEFITS

The Department of Veterans Affairs publishes a booklet called "**Federal Benefits for Veterans and Their Dependents**" that describes the types of benefits available and lists the addresses and phone numbers for VA facilities nationwide. Write the VA Regional Office (VARO) to request a copy.

U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs - Regional Office Saint Petersburg

*VARO Regional Office
9500 Bay Pines Blvd
Saint Petersburg, FL 33708*

Call 1-800-827-1000 or find information about benefits at www.vba.va.gov/.

ELIGIBILITY FOR VA BENEFITS DURING INCARCERATION

Veterans incarcerated and incarcerated dependents may apply for the same compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) – service connected death benefits – and pension benefits as veterans who are not incarcerated. However, Congress has greatly restricted the amount of benefits that may be paid to a veteran or dependent while he or she is incarcerated. These benefits are institutionalized as part of law: *38 U.S.C Sec 5313 (a), 38 C.F.R., Sec. 3.665 (a), (d)*, which reads as follows:

If a veteran is incarcerated as the result of a "felony" conviction as defined by law: "Any offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, unless specifically categorized as a misdemeanor under the law of the prosecuting jurisdiction,"

Then, the amount paid to a veteran incarcerated for a service-connected disability is generally limited by law to the 10 percent disability rate or half the amount of the ten percent rate if the veteran's disability rating is 10 percent. (If the veteran is rated before incarceration as 20 percent disabled or higher, he will receive only the amount payable to a 10 percent disabled veteran.) Incarcerated DIC recipients will receive one-half the amount paid to a veteran receiving compensation payments for a 10 percent-rated disability.

A veteran may not receive non-service connected VA pension benefits, or any portion of these benefits, while incarcerated for a felony. However, his family may receive an apportionment of such benefits under the procedure described above. (See 38 C.F.R. Sec.3.666)

One important requirement for eligibility for VA benefits is that the veteran has to have been issued either an honorable or general discharge, or would have received one if not for re-enlisting. If a veteran had two periods of service, one honorable and the other less than honorable, he may still be eligible for VA benefits based on the honorable period of service.

VA Medical Care is not provided to veterans in prison, but VA health facilities may provide care to you after your release. Contact 1-877-222-8387 or go to www1.va.gov/visn8/, to find the medical center nearest you.

BENEFITS PAYMENTS WHILE INCARCERATED

There is a 60-day "**grace period**" following a conviction when you may still receive full benefits. **To avoid an overpayment**, it is important that you notify the VARO immediately when you go to prison if you are receiving payments. If you do not notify the VA and receive overpayment, you and your family will lose all financial payments until the debt is paid.

*For example, Joe is a veteran who receives a VA pension of \$807 per month. He commits a crime and is incarcerated, but doesn't tell the VA right away and keeps getting paid for 6 months. **Joe is overpaid a total of \$4,872.** After serving his sentence of 18 months, he is released and applies to the VA to have his pension restarted. The new pension rate is \$830 per month, but the VA will use that amount to start repaying the \$4,872 debt. **Joe's first real check will start 5 months after he is released and will be for \$30!** Joe has to go at least 5 months without that income.*

Your award for compensation or pension benefits should resume from the date you are released, as long as the VA receives notice of release within one year. This includes placement in a community treatment center or halfway house. **Remember, you must notify the VA when you are released to restart your payments.**

APPORTIONMENT

Although legally, the veteran can only receive a portion of the full amount payable for his or her disability rating, the remaining balance may be "apportioned to the individual's dependent family". To apply for apportionment, send a letter to the VA Regional Office (VARO) that has

jurisdiction over the veteran's case. VA regulations clearly specify this apportionment amount will only go to family members if they can show financial need for such amount. This applies to the spouse, children, or dependent parents who are involved in the application.

In deciding whether any apportionment is appropriate, the amount of the apportionment, and to whom it will go, the following factors are considered:

- The family member's income and living expenses;
- The amount of compensation available to be apportioned;
- The needs and living expenses of other family members; and
- Special needs of any of the family members.

For example: a veteran incarcerated rated as 80 percent disability can only receive the amount he or she would get if he or she were 10 percent disabled. However, his or her family may be apportioned up to 70 percent, the difference of the 80 percent rating. (DIC may also be apportioned with similar restrictions.)

There is a 60-day "**grace period**" following conviction where the veteran, or DIC recipient, may still receive full benefits. If the veteran continues to receive benefits after the 60-day period, it will result in an "over-payment". The VA considers it to be the recipient's responsibility and fault if this occurs because the recipient failed to notify the VA of his or her incarceration. Attempts to obtain a waiver in these situations of overpayment are often unsuccessful. As a rule, the veteran loses most, if not all, financial benefits until the entire overpayment is recovered by the VA. It has also been a standard procedure that the family will not be entitled to receive an apportionment until the debt is completely recovered.

For more information concerning VA debt collection rules that may affect the veteran incarcerated, telephone: 1-800-827-1000 and request a Veterans Service Organization representative or, write to a Veterans Service Organization (attention SR list) at the address listed on page 45 in this document.

It is important that each disabled veteran receiving compensation or DIC payments promptly notify the VARO. Regular full benefit payments should begin upon release, providing the VA is notified of the veteran's release, including placement within a community treatment center or halfway house in the community, within one year of release.

One other relevant restriction on veteran’s incarcerated eligibility for service connected disability compensation is that: “No total disability rating based on un-employability, may be assigned to an incarcerated veteran”.

It is important to remember that most VA decisions, including those on apportionment, can be appealed to the Board of Veterans Appeals and, if need be, to the Court of Appeal for Veterans Affairs.

HELP SEEKING BENEFITS

If you would like to get benefits or think you have a pending claim before the VA, it is best to get professional help to assist you.

- Many Veterans **Service Organizations** have trained staff who can help you with your VA claim, and can legally represent your claim before the VA. Some also help homeless and at-risk veterans find the support services they need. You can contact any VSO listed below to see if there is a service representative near you.

National & Department Service Officers are located at the VARO- St. Petersburg, FL unless otherwise noted. Address as follows:

*[Service Organization Name]
VARO Regional Office
9500 Bay Pines Blvd
Saint Petersburg, FL 33708*

American Ex-POWs	Room 222	727-319-5914
AMVETS	Room 222	(727)-319-7492
American Legion	Room 222	(727)-319-7400
Disabled American Veterans	Room 222	(727)-319-7444
Florida Department of Veterans Affairs	Room 222	(727) 319-7400
Military Order of the Purple Heart	Room 222	(727)-319-7488
Paralyzed Veterans of America	Room 222	(727)-319-7470
Veterans of Foreign Wars	Room 222	(727)-319-7483
Vietnam Veterans of America	Room 222	(727)-319-7400

- Although we encourage you to seek the aid of a service representative, you may choose to apply for VA benefits on your own. Write the VARO or find the forms online at: www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms1.htm. You can also apply for certain benefits online at: <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>.

Below are brief descriptions of forms needed to file for certain VA benefits. Be sure you use a return address where mail will get to you as quickly as possible. Make photocopies of all forms for your records before sending your packet to the VARO nearest you.

- **Standard Form-180 – Request Pertaining to Military Records** - is used to get copies of your Record of Discharge (DD-214), military personnel and medical records. You will need a copy of your DD-214 when applying for any benefits. Requests may also complete online at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.
- **VA Form 21-526 - Application for Compensation or Pension**- must be filed to apply for compensation -or pension. This form, along with your DD-214 and the following forms should be mailed directly to the VARO nearest your release destination 30 to 45 days before our release.
- **VA Form 21-4138 - Statement in Support of Claim** - lets you explain why you deserve the benefits you are asking for because of your disability or disorder. It is best to have an experienced service representative help you complete' the form.
- **VA Form 21-4142 - Authorization for Release of Information** - If you have received medical or mental health care, that may be relevant to your claim, from anyone other than a VA Medical Facility, you need to fill out a **VAF 21-4142** giving permission for release of medical records to the VA..
- **VA Form 10-10EZ - Enrollment for Medical Benefits** - is used by the VA to determine if you can receive medical benefits. Complete the form and bring it with you to the VA medical facility where you will seek evaluation for treatment.

- **VA Form 28-1900 - Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans** - is needed to apply for the vocational rehabilitation program to help veterans who were disabled during their service reach maximum independence in daily living, to learn the skills needed to get a job, and to find and keep a job. Send Form 28-1900 to the VARO in your area 10 to 15 day's before your release.
- **VA Form 70-3288 - Request for and Consent to Release of Information from Claimant's Records** - is used to get records relevant to your claim from VA facilities (regional offices, medical centers, outpatient clinics, and vet centers). Request a fee waiver under section 38 C.F.R. Sec.1.526 (h), which requires the VARO to provide a veteran with one set of his or her records free of charge.

CHECKLIST

Using This Guide

- Ask about classes or resources to help you plan for your release.
- Make a list of your needs.
- Make a list of who may be able to help you.
- Write letters and/or contact organizations by phone or email.
- Write down the steps you take so that you do not repeat them.

Just for Veterans

- Know where to call toll-free for help.
- Contact organizations about what services they have to offer.
- Think about your housing needs and gather information about what is available locally.
- Learn about job resources and create a plan to find a job.
- Learn about health issues, and what services are available.
- Learn about the resources available for substance abuse and mental health treatment in your area.
- Learn about your options to get financial help.
- Begin to take care of other legal issues.
- Learn about homeless veterans services.
- Learn about resources for women veterans
- If you are not currently receiving benefits, find out if you can or should be.
- If you are receiving benefits, notify the VA when you go to prison to avoid an overpayment.
- Contact a veteran service representative to represent you and help you file a claim.
- Apply for apportionment so that some of the money withheld may be given to eligible family members.

Resource Web Addresses

US Dept of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) www.va.gov/

Veterans Health Administration – VISN 8 www1.va.gov/visn8/

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) <http://www.floridavets.org/>

FDVA Veterans Reintegration Services

www.floridajobs.org/pdg/vets/VETPlanServices121203.rtf

The American Legion - Dept of FL <http://www.floridalegion.org>

Disabled American Veterans – Dept of FL <http://www.davfla.com>

Veterans of Foreign Wars – Post Locations <http://www.myfloridavfw.com>

Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA Chapter 787, Tampa, FL

<http://members.aol.com/VVA787/index.html>

WorkSource Florida <http://www.worksourcefl.com>

Florida Department of Children and Family Services http://www.state.fl.us/cf_web/

Social Security Administration www.ssa.gov/

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans www.nchv.org/index.cfm

Florida Coalition for the Homeless www.flacoalitionhomeless.com