

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

by Mary Ellen Clark

Whereas many Florida agencies exist to regulate certain activities that impact the state, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) exists to assist an important class of citizen, our veterans. Florida is home to the nation's second largest population of veterans, currently estimated to be more than 1.7 million. A Cabinet agency, the FDVA's duties are established in section 292.05(1), Florida Statutes, and its mission is to assist, without charge, Florida's veterans, families and survivors to improve their health and economic well being through quality benefit information, advocacy and education. With approximately 1,000 employees, the agency has benefits counselors co-located at the VA Regional Office in St. Petersburg, each VA Medical Center and most VA Outpatient Clinics throughout the state. FDVA also operates five veterans' nursing homes (with a sixth one under construction), one assisted living facility and is a clearing house for all state and federal veterans' benefits with an informative website and comprehensive benefits guide.

Much of the FDVA's staff is located in the Largo/St. Petersburg area where the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs maintains a large facility. The Tallahassee office moved to the Southwood state office complex in 2003 and is co-located with the Florida Departments of Elder Affairs and Health.

Headquarters:

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs
4040 Esplanade Way, Suite #180
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0950
(850) 487-1533
www.FloridaVets.org

Head of the Agency:

LeRoy Collins Jr., Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy Reserve (Ret.), Executive Director

General Counsel & Agency Clerk:

David Herman

One of two attorneys at the FDVA, Mr. Herman is a graduate of the Florida State University College of Law and Rollins College. Prior to becoming General Counsel in 2005, Mr. Herman served as the Privacy Officer at AHCA, was a prosecutor for DOH and an Assistant Attorney General in civil litigation.

The General Counsel's office represents FDVA in litigation concerning employment issues, fair hearings (resident discharge appeals), collections, and veterans' advocacy. FDVA also investigates complaints from veterans denied benefit of preference in public employment (see §§ 295.07 and 295.11, Fla. Stat.), which are then litigated before PERC. Don Post is the Veterans Preference Coordinator and complaints are filed at this address:

State of Florida, Department of
Veterans-Affairs
Post Office Box 31003
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