
Alachua County Veteran Services Advisory Board

Annual Work Plan and Accomplishments Report: 2023-2024

Chair: John Murdoch

Board Liaison: Kim Davis

Brief History of Board/Committee

The Veteran Services Advisory Board was established by Resolution 83-50 on July 12, 1983. Currently operating under a Resolution 2022-38.

Responsibilities and Duties

1. Make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the Veterans Community in Alachua County.
2. Review provisions for the operation of the Advisory Board.
3. Receive reports from Alachua County Veteran Services Division Director.
4. Assist and advise the County on needs concerning Veterans.
5. Promote community awareness of the Alachua County Veteran Services, and Veterans organizations.
6. Carry out the responsibilities of a Community Veteran Engagement Board, to work with the Department of Veterans Affairs.
7. Prepare and update an Annual Work Plan and Report of Accomplishments.

Prior Year Accomplishments

1. Supported Alachua County Veteran Services for Veterans Day Celebration, through organizations coming together in harmony and successfully assisting in “Veterans Row”, Parking assistance and other supporting roles.
2. Promoted the PACT ACT legislation throughout the Alachua County Veteran community, creating a greater understanding of VA benefits and how they relate to Alachua County Veterans.
3. Made a recommendation to create an amendment to the State Law regarding 100% P&T Permanent and Total Veteran Exemptions to include TDIU Total Disability Individual Unemployability, allowing numerous Veterans on a fixed income with economic relief.
4. Promoted and participated at the Veterans Resource Fair and Homeless Veteran Stand Down. This assisted 48 Veterans in accessing resources such as Veteran services, housing, employment, counseling, medical benefits etc.

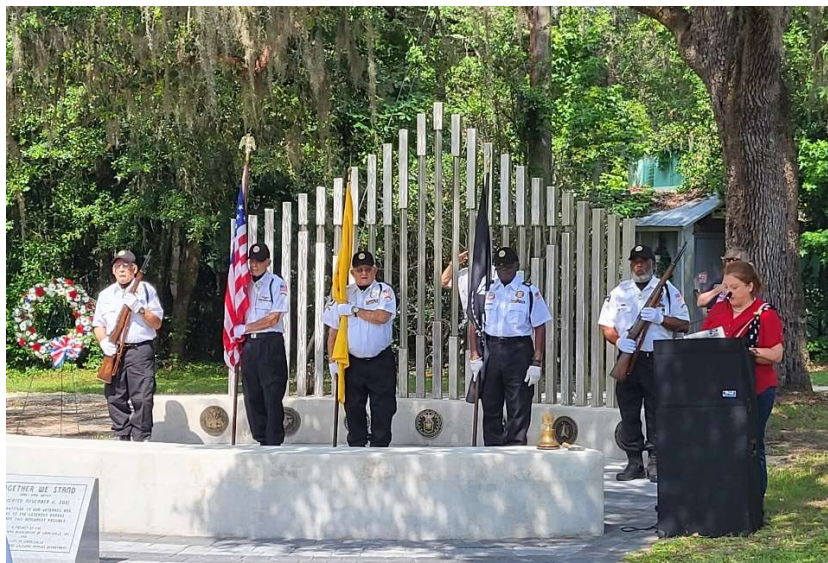
5. Promoted the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event in Newberry which drew Vietnam Veterans to a celebratory gathering connecting them with resources and services.
6. Coordinated with Santa Fe College Veteran and Military Success Services to increase the capacity and number of student Veterans with the donation of two picnic tables to allow for increased socialization.
7. In partnership with the Alachua County Veteran Services, The City of Gainesville, Parks Recreation and Cultural Affairs Evergreen Cemetery held the Alachua County Memorial Day Ceremony. This meaningful and solemn event drew well over 100 people and provided support and comfort to our community.
8. Provided the Alachua County Communications Office with recommendations supporting a change in Senate Bil 1720, a bill that prevented Veterans who are Florida Residents from utilizing their VA Educational benefit for developmental classes, providing an almost unpassable roadblock for countless Veterans and their educational pipelines. The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs now interprets the law to allow Veterans and their families to finally use their earned benefit for these classes.

Goals for Upcoming Year

1. Continue to support the creation of a North Central Florida Honor Guard.
2. Make recommendations to the BoCC about items of interest to the Veterans community.
3. Assist in dissemination of information for the Veteran community throughout Alachua County.
4. Provide information and feedback to the VA Hospital about Veterans care and services.
5. Continue to support Veterans events as planned and presented by Alachua County Veteran Services.
6. Continue to collaborate with the Department of Veteran Affairs.



Palatka Skydive Bringing the American Flag to the Alachua County Veterans Day Celebration
2023



The Vietnam Veterans Color Guard and Alachua County Veteran Services Director, Kim Davis
at Memorial Day Ceremony 2023



Commander of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Gainesville FL Forest Hope, Director of Alachua County Veteran Services, Kim Davis and Interpreter for Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida, Kenny James.



Commissioner Anna Prizzia and Director Kim Davis



Milton Lewis Young Marines, Director Kim Davis and Interpreter Kenny James.