



Annual Report

2017

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October 31, 2017

To: The Governor of the State of Florida, Members of the Cabinet, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

It is my distinct honor and privilege to submit Veterans Florida's annual report for 2017. This marks the third full year of operations for our organization and I'm happy to report that we have made great progress in all of our major program areas.

Our nationwide, veteran-focused marketing campaign brought more than 266,000 visitors to our website and provided them with information on the benefits and opportunities available for veterans in Florida. This year's campaign saw continued growth in social media followers and email newsletter subscribers, as well as attracting nearly 1,000 job seekers to submit resumes.

In September, we launched a new version of the Veterans Florida Career Portal. This new tool will allow veterans to submit their resume, search and apply for jobs with companies that Veterans Florida has approved to receive Business Training Grant funds.

The Veterans Florida Business Training Grant program has seen steady growth and to date we have contracted with 32 businesses that have hired more than 200 veterans. These veterans collectively have earned over \$6,000,000 in salary that is going directly back into Florida's economy.

This year marked the graduation of the second class of the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program. The second class saw 147 graduates complete a challenging multi-week program during the spring and early summer. These veterans are well on their way to starting some impressive companies in Florida and our graduates have reported nearly \$5,000,000 in revenue generated. Next year's class is currently being recruited and we expect to serve more than 500 veterans.

The Board of Directors and staff of Veterans Florida take pride in accomplishing this important mission in a transparent and cost-effective manner, always remembering that we have been entrusted with the taxpayer's dollars. I'm proud of what we have accomplished so far and very excited for the future of this program.

Sincerely,

James Sampey, Chairman

Board of Directors

Appointed by the Governor



James Sampey
Chairman

After serving 23 years at Cox Target Media, including roles as President of Valpak and Executive Vice President at Cox Target Media, Jim Sampey founded CIHU (Can I Help You?), LLC, in retirement, helping friends and business associates to take their businesses to the next level. Jim is engaged as Founder, Advisor and/or Investor to several organizations including Live Water Sports, Sky Data Ventures, Sterling Payment Technologies, Valpak, and Shinn and Company, savvycard.com, Prime Medical Apparel, and Performance Health Applied Technologies. He also serves on various

Boards, including the Tampa Bay Partnership, University of Dayton, SunTrust Bank, Now Up Foundation, Vision Integrated Graphics and the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance.

Governor Rick Scott appointed Jim to the Board of Directors and his peers selected him as the Board's Chairman for Fiscal Year 2017-18.



Mark Harden

Mark Harden served in the U.S. Navy for thirty years and retired as a Chief of Naval Operations Directed Master Chief. He currently works as Director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society in Pensacola, Florida. His passion is working on programs that support Veterans and Active Duty military personnel.

Mark is actively engaged in his community in a variety of ways. He is the current Area President Gulf Coast for the Navy League of the United States and is a National Director for that organization. He co-founded the Pensacola Veteran Support Organization Network (PVSON), which is a clearing house of more than 40 veteran support organizations that work together to solve local veteran/military needs. He is also a board member of the Northwest Florida My VA Community Veterans Engagement Board.

In other community activities he is a graduate and an active member of the Leadership Pensacola Alumni Association where he previously chaired the leadership program for Pensacola, and has served as President of the Alumni Association and currently serves on the board.

Warren R. “Rocky” McPherson



Rocky McPherson is recently retired from serving for 10 years as the Vice President, Military and Defense programs, Enterprise Florida, Inc.—a public/private agency responsible for economic development initiatives in Florida. He had previously served five years as the Executive Director, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. He served on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) Veterans and families.

Rocky is a Vietnam veteran who served in combat, both as an Infantry Officer and as a carrier based Naval Aviator flying the A6E. During his Marine career he held key leadership roles as the Deputy Director, Marine Personnel Management Division; Chief of Staff, III Marine Expeditionary Force, and as a Group Commander, Marine Aviation Training Group, NAS Whidbey Island.

He is a 1966 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, and holds a Master of Political Science degree from Auburn University. He is also a graduate of the National War College in Washington, DC. Rocky and his wife Connie reside in Yulee, Florida.

Appointed by the Senate President



Jim Bagby
Vice Chair

Jim Bagby was appointed to the Board of Directors by former Senate President Don Gaetz. He served as Board Chairman from October 2014 through June 2017. Jim grew up near Tyler, Texas. He and his wife, Jennie, have two daughters: Sara, who lives and is studying for her MBA in London and Jennifer, who lives and works in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. Jim has a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from West Point and a Master’s degree in Public Administration from Western Kentucky University.

Jim’s work experience includes 24 years in the U.S. Army with a variety of operational and staff assignments throughout the world. Prior to becoming the General Manager of One Seagrove Place he was the Executive Director of Visit South Walton and prior to that served as the Town Manager of Rosemary Beach.

Jim served two terms on the City of Destin City Council and currently serves on the Walton County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He is a Lector and Eucharistic Minister at Resurrection Catholic Church. His hobbies include reading, golfing and riding his Harley Davidson.



Prebble Ramswell
Secretary

Dr. Prebble Q Ramswell spent six years working in Counterterrorism with the Central Intelligence Agency before moving to Florida. In 2014, Ramswell embraced a new challenge: running for Destin City Council. Her successful bid for Councilwoman led to appointments as Chair of the Growth Management and Economic Development Board with the Florida League of Cities, appointment as Mayor Pro Tem in 2016, and various appointments including Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization, Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation, and the Okaloosa County Economic Development Council Policy Board.

Dr. Ramswell has also served on the Board of Directors for organizations that include the Junior League of Northern Virginia, Junior League of the Emerald Coast, Montessori Learning Center of Fort Walton Beach, Gulf Swimming and the Children’s Museum of Northern Virginia.

Dr. Ramswell earned BA’s in Psychology, Sociology, and Political Science from the University of Houston, a Masters in Liberal Arts/Social Science from Texas Christian University, and a PhD in International Development/Political Science from the University of Southern Mississippi. She is the Academic Program Director for History, Philosophy and Political Science at Columbia Southern University and the author of *Euroscepticism and the Rising Threat from the Right and Left: the Concept of Millennial Fascism*.

Prebble was appointed to the Board of Directors by former Senate President Don Gaetz.



Tom Rice
Treasurer

Tom Rice is the owner and chef of The Magnolia Grill of Fort Walton Beach, which he and his wife, Peggy, opened in 1996. In 2004, the Magnolia Grill received Florida’s Good Neighbor Award from the National Restaurant Association and was the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce’s Small Business of the Year. In July 2007, Congressman Jeff Miller recognized Tom and Peggy for humanitarian work in the Congressional Record of the 110th Congress.

Tom serves as Chairman of the Salvation Army Community Advisory Board of Okaloosa and Walton County, President of the Veterans Tribute Tower Committee, Board Member of the Northwest Florida State College Foundation and the Air Force Enlisted Village Development Committee. He is a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and DAV 72.

Tom is a Veteran and retired as First Sgt. from the U.S. Army. Tom was appointed to the Board of Directors by former Senate President Don Gaetz.

Appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives



John Adams

Brigadier General John Adams retired from the US Army in September 2007, culminating his service as Deputy U.S. Military Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As a Foreign Area Officer, Military Intelligence Officer and Army Aviator, his more than thirty years of active duty service in command and staff assignments included nearly eighteen years in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. He is the founder and President of Guardian Six LLC, a Florida-based Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business that assists clients in successfully analyzing national security issues and addressing U.S. and allied national security requirements. John holds a Master's in International Relations (Boston University), English (University of Massachusetts) and Strategic Studies (U.S. Army War College).



Jamee Graff

Appointed to the Board of Directors by former Speaker of the House Will Weatherford to represent military spouses and families, both active, transitioned, and retired, Jamee Graff brings a wealth of experience to the Veterans Florida Board. As a military spouse and mother, Jamee has been a champion for military spouses and families for more than twenty years. She understands the complex nature of being a military spouse and is passionate about being a voice for military spouses and families.

Jamee attended University of Alaska where she graduated from nursing school. She also received her Bachelor in Science degree in Business Management from Bellevue University. She began her career as a Real Estate professional, focusing on the unique needs of a military family during frequent relocations and change of duty stations.

While in Washington D.C., Jamee led a committee of Air Force General Officer spouses in a program to help the recovery journey of Wounded Warriors and their families at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. This program provided real, personal interaction with Wounded Warriors and their families, encouraging Veterans and their families to interact with their disabilities in simple activities.

While at Tyndall AFB in Florida, Jamee worked with base organizations and personnel to help bridge the gap between military spouse and families with the base leadership. She served as the honorary President and Vice President of the Tyndall AFB Officer Spouse Club, which championed support for spouses during times of need and during service member deployment. Jamee also created new liaisons and worked closely with the Bay County Chamber of Commerce and the Bay Defense Alliance to garner community support for Tyndall AFB families. Jamee also served on the Panama City Habitat for Humanity Board and worked closely with the Wounded Warrior Beach Retreat.

Jamee is currently a Real Estate Professional with ERA Neubauer Real Estate and a Board Member on the Niceville High School Student Advisory Council.



Martin Steele

Enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 1965. He rose from private to three-star general, culminating his military career as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Policies and Operations at Headquarters, US Marine Corps, in Washington, DC, in August of 1999. A decorated combat Veteran with 34-1/2 years of service, he is a recognized expert in the integration of all elements of national power (diplomatic, economic, informational and military) with strategic military war plans and has served as an executive strategic planner/policy director in multiple theaters across Asia. His extraordinary career was chronicled as one of three principles in the award-winning military biography *Boys of '67* by Charles Jones.

Upon his retirement from active duty in 1999, he served as President and CEO of the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum in New York City. Under his leadership, they adopted the mission statement of “Honor our heroes, educate the public, and inspire our youth about the price of freedom.”

Currently, General Steele serves as the Associate Vice President for Veterans Research, the Executive Director of Military Partnerships and Co-Chair of the Veterans Reintegration Steering Committee at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. Additionally, General Steele is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Steele Partners, Inc., a strategic advisory and leadership consulting company.

General Steele is a graduate of the University of Arkansas where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in History ('74) and was recognized as a Distinguished Graduate of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. He is a recipient of the 2013 Arkansas Alumni Award Citation of Distinguished Alumni, which recognizes exceptional professional and personal achievement and extraordinary distinction in a chosen field. He also holds three Masters Degrees from Central Michigan University, Salve Regina College and the Naval War College. General Steele serves proudly on several boards across the country that include the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, Fisher House Foundation, Stability Institute, Call of Duty Endowment, Stay in Step Foundation, Operation Helping Hand, Veterans Advantage, University of Arkansas Veterans Resource and Information Center Board, and the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation.

Former Speaker of the House Will Weatherford appointed General Steele to the Board of Directors.

Committee Structure

Veterans Florida’s Board of Directors comprises four committees that provide oversight and direction to the corporation.

Internal
Operations
Committee

Marketing
Committee

External
Relations
Committee

Audit
Committee

Meet the Staff

Bobby Carbonell, Executive Director – Currently serving Florida Air National Guard officer and Army combat veteran

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and works collaboratively with the Board of Directors to provide direction and leadership to the formulation and achievement of the organization's philosophy, mission, and its annual goals and objectives. Additionally, he works with the Board of Directors and staff to develop and implement policies, procedures, and long-range strategic plans. Oversees administrative, financial and program operations, and all personnel matters such as the design of staff organizational structure, hiring, performance evaluations and discipline.

Joe Marino, Career Services Program Manager – United States Military Academy graduate and Army veteran

The Career Services Program Manager is the lead staff member for all employment assistance efforts of Veterans Florida. This position is responsible for overall implementation and execution of the Business Training Grant program, recruiting efforts to match veterans with employment and outreach efforts to businesses throughout Florida. The Career Services Program Manager implements and maintains technology solutions that support the Business Training Grant program.

Cheryl Townsend, Entrepreneurship Program Manager – Veteran supporter

The Entrepreneurship Program Manager is part of the executive team and responsible for coordinating, maintaining, and monitoring the organization's veteran entrepreneurship program, which includes multiple, geographically diverse Florida educational institutions delivering the curriculum to veterans. The Entrepreneurship Program Manager manages the contracts with the educational institutions and receives and reviews for approval regular reports from the institutions. Additionally, the Entrepreneurship Program Manager maintains a statewide list of all veteran specific entrepreneurship resources.

Stephanie Massengale, Budget and Grants Manager – Mother of Navy Veteran

The Budget and Grant Manager is part of the executive team and responsible for developing, maintaining, and monitoring the organization's budgets and budgetary process. The Budget and Grant Manager operates and supervises the organization's primary grant program. Additionally, the Budget and Grant Manager organizes Board Meetings and other events, and assists the executive team where necessary.

Christopher Meinhardt, Employer Outreach Specialist – Marine Corps combat veteran

The Employer Outreach Specialist conducts outreach activities to encourage Florida employers to hire and train veterans through the Veterans Florida Business Training Grant. He attends business community functions, meets with employers and initiates the application process for the Training Grant.

Joseph Dougherty, Veteran Employment Specialist – Army veteran

The Veteran Employment Specialist provides individual assistance to veterans living in Florida or desiring to move to Florida in employment with our Veterans Florida Business Training Grant funded employers. The specialist sets appointments and works with veterans seeking employment through our case management system. The Veteran Employment Specialist reports to the Career Services Program Manager.

Andrea Hornsby, Administrative Assistant – Navy Veteran

The Administrative Assistant provides duties as directed by the Executive Director to include calendars, meeting schedules, travel arrangements, processing expense reports, production of reports and graphics, arranging monthly meetings, teleconferences, webinars and taking minutes; prepares correspondence on behalf of the Executive Director and transcribe both open and closed meeting minutes; performs general administrative office support functions.

Veterans Florida Career Services Program

To better serve the needs of veteran job seekers and employers, Veterans Florida created the Career Services Program in 2017. This program houses our largest grant program, the Veterans Florida Business Training Grant, which reimburses eligible companies for 50 percent of the training cost for every new veteran hired and trained, up to \$8,000 per employee.

The screenshot shows the Veterans Florida Career Services Program website. On the left is a registration form titled "REGISTER FOR VETERANS FLORIDA CAREER SERVICES". The form includes fields for "First Name*", "Last Name*", "Email*", and "Phone", and a "Resume*" section with a "Choose File" button. A "SUBMIT" button is at the bottom of the form. On the right is a grid of job listings, each with a representative image, a job title, a brief description, and a "learn more" button. The listings include: "Field Technician Information Systems" (server management), "Broadband Technician Telecommunications" (voice/data services), "Associate Propellant Engineer Engineering" (aircraft operations), "Aircraft Mechanic Other Aircraft" (aircraft repair), and "Head Distiller Management" (distillery supervision). A "view all jobs" button is located at the bottom right of the grid.

The Career Services Program allows Veterans Florida to actively recruit qualified veterans to fill Business Training Grant funded positions at companies across the state. Veterans can upload their resume for consideration for any position or apply directly for open positions through the career portal on veteransflorida.org.

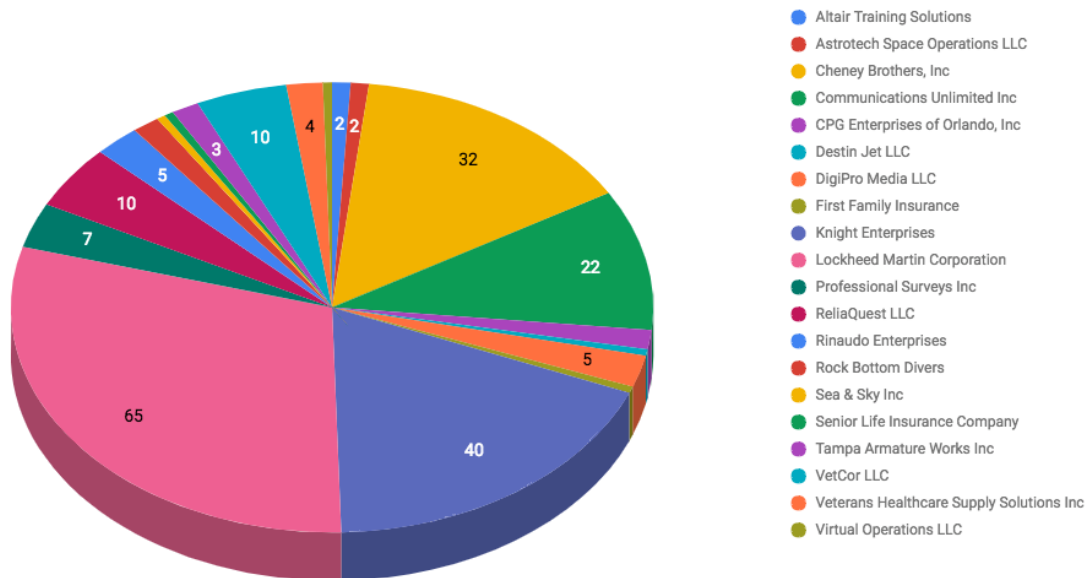
The organization created and filled the position of Employer Outreach Specialist to increase the number of businesses actively using the grant program. Additionally, Veterans Florida is in the process of hiring two Veteran Employment Specialist to work directly with veterans seeking employment and preparing them for interviews with our employers.

To date, Veterans Florida has received more than 1,000 resumes from veterans seeking employment in Florida and is actively matching these veterans with job openings at our training grant employers.

Veterans Florida Business Training Grant Statistics as of 10/31/17

Total Number of Contracted Businesses	30
Total Number of Veterans Hired	238
Total Number of Veterans Who Have Completed Training	205
Total TD Obligated Amount	\$922,552.47
Total TD Training Grant Reimbursements Made	\$838,322.22
Average Training Grant Reimbursement	\$3,885.94
Projected Reimbursements (veterans currently in training)	\$84,230.25
Total Veteran Salary (annual)	\$6,677,116
Average Veteran Salary	\$37,302.32

Total Training Grant Veterans Hired



Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program



Nearly one in four active duty service members and veterans want to open and operate their own business. Opportunity, freedom and challenge attract them to business ownership.

The Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program offers veterans tuition-free, online and on-campus instruction designed to match up with their level of knowledge and their busy schedule.

The Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program is entering its third year of operation in Fiscal Year 2017-18. Since the

inception of the program in early 2016, the program has received more than 1,000 applications from veterans across the state, served over 700 veterans and had 300 veterans graduate from the program. Many of our participants have gone on to open successful businesses who have collectively earned more than \$4.8 million dollars in revenue, accessed over \$1 million in debt and equity financing, and hired 34 employees.

The 2017-18 program will feature three pathways of instruction designed to meet the needs of veteran entrepreneurs at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey. Veterans can enter at any stage of the program (acceptance is required for the advanced class) and the pathways do not need to be done in any particular order or sequence.

The first pathway, Discover, comprises online lessons that will familiarize veterans with basic terminology and concepts. Veterans Florida has licensed an existing online entrepreneurship program for veterans to give our participants a low-risk, low-commitment option to start learning the foundations of entrepreneurship. This pathway will act as a gateway and lead generator for the second and third pathways.

The second pathway, Explore, offers specialized workshops held on the campuses of our six academic partners. This pathway comprises a minimum of six, 2-3 hour workshops held at each network partner's campuses. Designed for veterans with early-stage ideas or early-stage companies. Open to all veterans, no acceptance required.

The third pathway, Master, is an advanced on-campus program that delves more deeply into all aspects of entrepreneurship. This pathway comprises 60 hours of in-class training held at one of our six participating institutions of higher education and is designed to prepare participants for all elements of entrepreneurship. This pathway is reserved for a maximum of 20 veterans with well-defined business ideas or early-stage companies at each network partner. Acceptance into this portion of the program is required. The applications are collected by Veterans Florida, but the final decision on acceptance has been delegated to each network partner.

Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program Network Partners for 2017



Entrepreneurship Program Metrics

Fiscal Year	Applications Received	Participants Served	Program Graduates
FY15-16	612	424	167
FY16-17	458	300	147
FY17-18*	660		

*As of Oct 31, 2017, there have been a combined total of 364 Discover online program signups, 209 Explore Workshop RSVPs, and 87 Master program applications.

Fiscal Year	# of Instruction Hours Delivered	# of Mentors	Mentoring/Consulting Hours Delivered
FY15-16	823	95	951
FY16-17	10,942.92*	224	3,389.65

* Total personnel hours billed to program from Network Partners in 2016-17

Business Loans Received	Capital Invested	Employees Hired	Revenue Generated
\$780,000	\$251,200	34	\$4,854,900

* All data reported by program graduates as of July 2017

Marketing Campaign



Veterans Florida's comprehensive, nationwide marketing campaign is designed to encourage transitioning service members and recently separated veterans to relocate to Florida. This campaign is heavily focused on digital and social media as it is more cost-effective and provides detailed tracking on the performance of the advertising. This campaign is coordinated and funded by Visit Florida, as outlined in section 295.23, Florida Statutes.

All of our marketing efforts are based on our extensive research on the transitioning service members and veteran demographic. Our marketing campaigns are highly focused on specific segments of this audience that we can most likely influence to move to Florida, as identified through research.

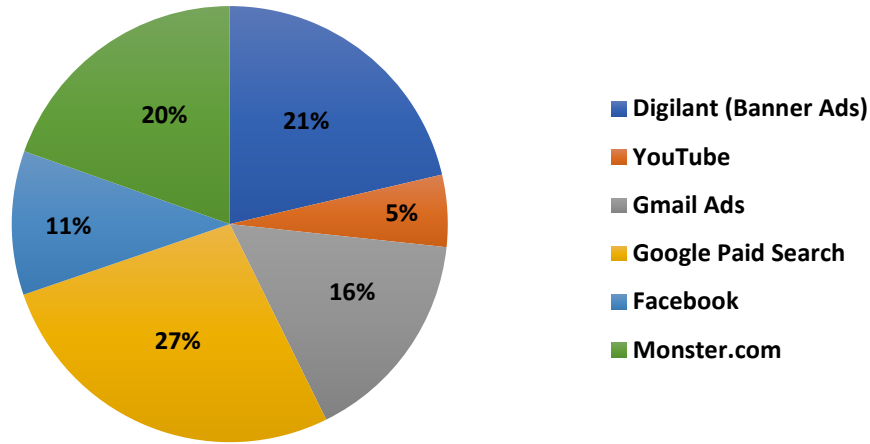
All marketing campaign components center on the three identified topical categories that are relevant to transitioning service members and veterans: lifestyle, employment and education. Program components are tailored to present broad subjects of great interest and relevance to veterans and drill down to Florida specific information and benefits.

In 2017, Veterans Florida created several new videos to highlight the diversity of Florida's district regions (North, Central and South), as well as new videos showcasing success stories from our Entrepreneurship Program and Business Training Grant program.

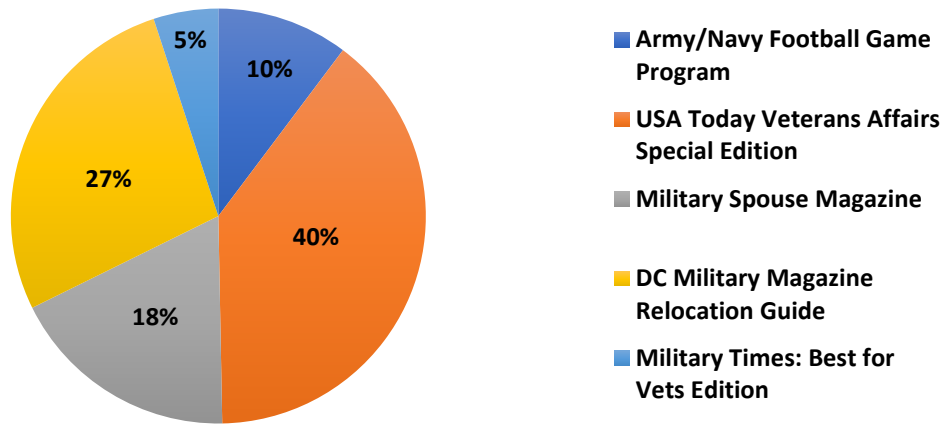
The marketing campaign for Fiscal Year 2016-17 included both print and digital advertisements that have a proven track record of reaching veterans in our target demographics.



FY16-17 Digital Platforms

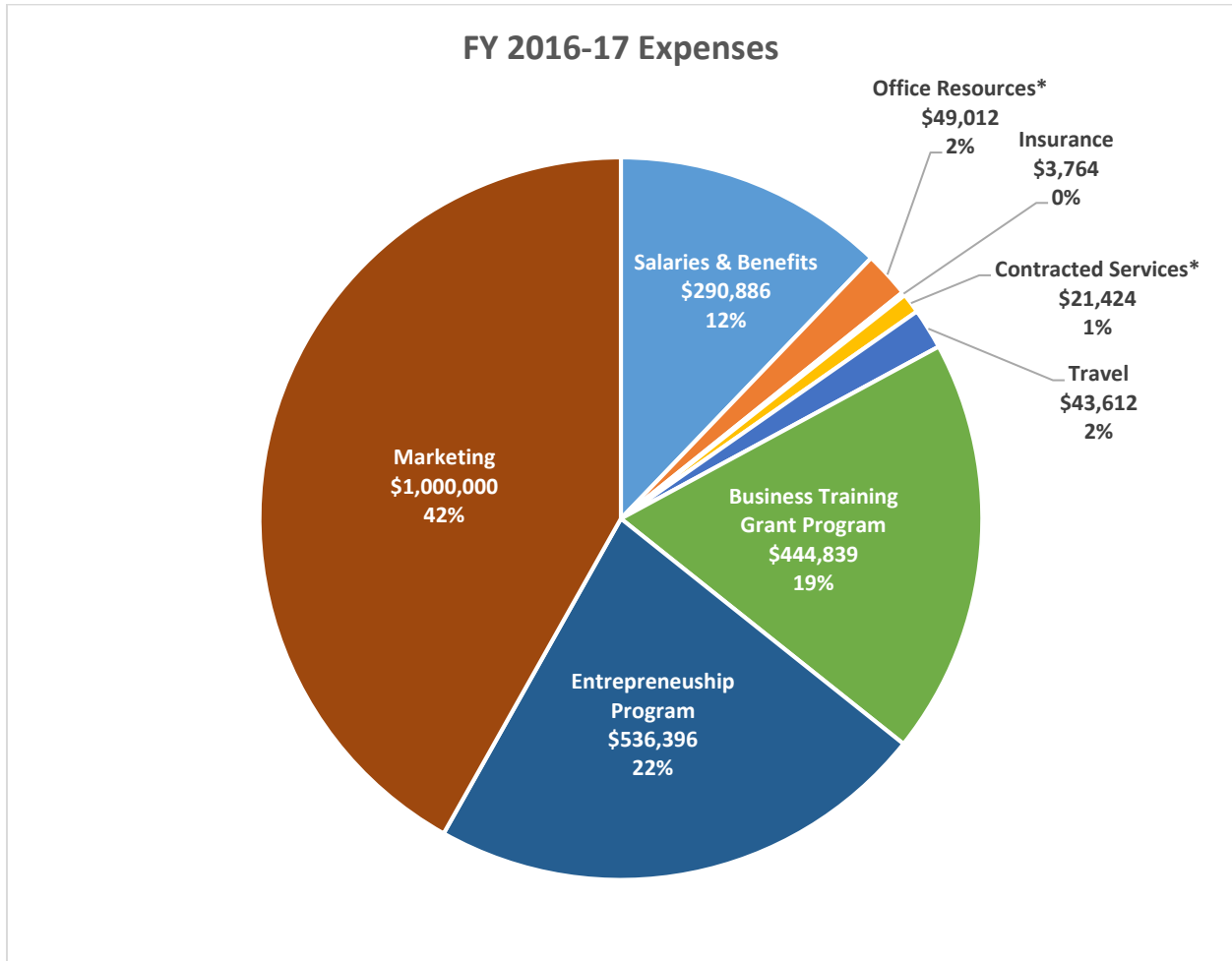


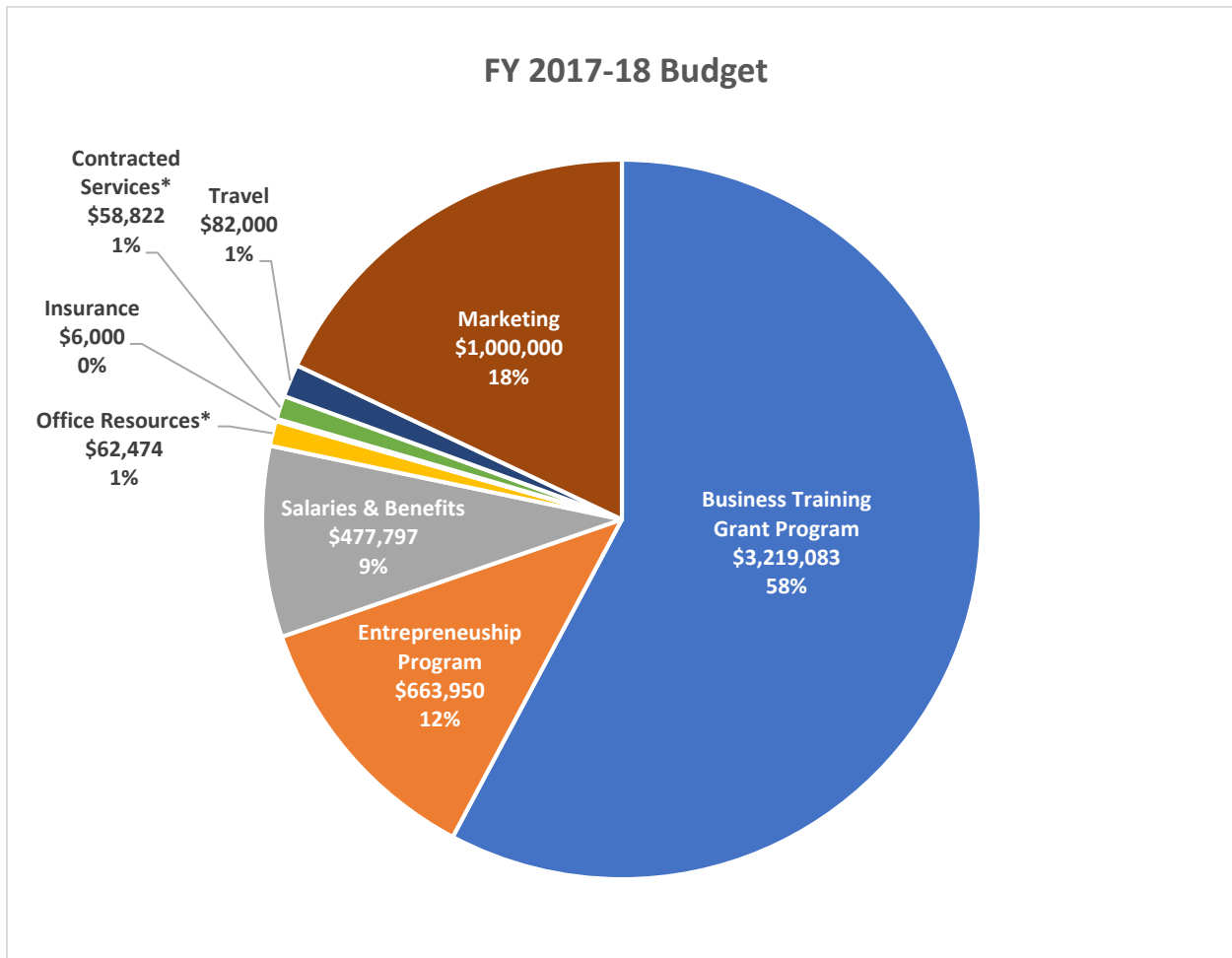
FY16-17 Print Publications



Total Unique Website Visitors (Since January 1, 2016)	266,688
Year to Date Unique Website Visitors (Since January 1, 2017)	61,195
Total Facebook Page Likes	75,756
Email Newsletter Subscribers	13,479
LinkedIn Followers	682
Twitter Followers	298

Financial Summary





*Office Resources include operational expenses such as office supplies and equipment, lease of office space, software, telecommunication services, printing, and postage. Contracted Services such as accounting, auditing services, HR/Payroll, legal services, and website development and management help support the organization's internal operations.

Contracts FY 2016-17

The corporation entered into the following contract to carry out its duties.

Date Contract Entered	Contractor	Service Provided	Amount	Date Contract Completed
6/16/2015	Carr, Riggs & Ingram	Auditing	\$9,750	9/30/2017
2/1/2016	Unite US	Software Licenses & Network Operations	\$53,333.33	2/28/2017
5/27/2016	Monster Worldwide, Inc.	Military Marketing Services	\$85,000	5/26/2017
8/1/2017	Bullhorn	Customer Relations Management/Job Board	\$10,500	Ongoing Services
8/29/2017	Bunker Labs	E-learning Platform	\$20,000	Ongoing Services
9/27/2017	Group Victory LLC	Strategic Planning Services	\$9,000	1/1/2018