MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS, FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, FLORIDA
FLORIDA STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AGENCY FOR WORKFORCE INNOVATION

1. Purpose. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to define the mutually agreed upon requirements, expectations, and obligations of the Florida National Guard (FLNG) (which includes the Army National Guard (ARNG) and the Air National Guard (ANG)), the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Administration (VHA), the Florida State Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA), the Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training (VETS), and the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) regarding assisting Florida National Guard (FLNG) personnel who are returning from mobilizations in support of the Global War on Terrorism to receive services and benefits. This agreement will focus primarily on assisting military members with problems and issues they often face several months or years following deployment.

2. Background. It is recognized that the Department of Defense (DoD) and VA are providing seamless transition services to veterans upon their return from Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other mobilizations in support of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). This MOU will focus on augmenting the current ongoing and comprehensive efforts to ensure that Florida National Guard veterans and their families receive the services and benefits from VA and other agencies they have earned.

3. Responsibilities.

   a. The Florida National Guard will:
(1) Designate a point of contact (POC) to work interactively and collaboratively with VA and other agencies as required.

(2) Establish opportunities for VA personnel to provide information on VA benefits and services to returning Florida National Guard (FLNG) service members and families.

(3) Provide VA with timely, appropriate data regarding:

(a) Demobilization of FLNG service members such that VA knows "where and when" groups of demobilizing service members will be available to receive support in their local communities.

(b) Family Activity Days and follow-on events hosted by the FLNG.

(4) Promote Family Activity Days and other events hosted by the FLNG where VA and other agency personnel will provide information on benefits within three to six months of a unit's return from mobilization or as part of their normal training assembly schedule. These events will assist the Veterans and their families in applying for and receiving the benefits they have earned.

(5) Coordinate Employer Support to the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) involvement in Family Days and other events.

(6) Provide a website dedicated to providing service members and their families with information on obtaining benefits, links to agencies providing benefit information, as well as events taking place throughout the state.

b. The VBA will:

(1) Designate POCs at the Regional Office level to work interactively and collaboratively with state and local FLNG officials. These POCs will facilitate the communication of information on VBA benefits and services to FLNG service members and families.

(2) Support Family Activity Day functions and other events with necessary and appropriate VBA personnel and information materials based on the number of returning service members.

(3) Provide details of each visit in advance to allow commanders to coordinate the activities.

(4) Place the emphasis on "providing assistance" beyond briefings; to include but not limited to: individual interviews, benefits specific to need of the individual service member, assistance with forms and paper work, and follow-up where needed.
(5) Collaborate with FDVA and other agencies to facilitate cooperation with Florida National Guard organizations.

c. The VHA will:

(1) Designate POCs at the Veteran Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC) level to work interactively and collaboratively with state and local FLNG officials. These POCs will facilitate the communication of information on VHA benefits and services to FLNG members and their families.

(2) Support Family Activity Day functions and other events with necessary and appropriate VHA personnel and information materials, placing emphasis on filling out forms and initiating enrollment.

(3) Collaborate with FDVA and other agencies to facilitate cooperation with Florida National Guard organizations.

d. The FDVA will:

(1) Designate POCs to work interactively and collaboratively with state and local FLNG officials. These POCs will facilitate the communication of information on state benefits and services to FLNG service members and families in Florida.

(2) Support Family Activity Day functions and other events with necessary and appropriate FDVA personnel and information materials.

(3) Collaborate with VA and other agencies to facilitate cooperation with FLNG organizations.

e. The AWI will:

(1) Designate a POC to work interactively and collaboratively with state and local FLNG officials. The POCs will facilitate the communication of information on AWI benefits and workforce services utilizing Florida’s statewide network of One-Stop Career Centers (www.employflorida.net) to FLNG service members and families. Place the emphasis on “providing assistance” beyond briefings; to include but not limited to: individual interviews, benefits specific to need of the individual service member, assistance with forms and paper work, and follow-up where needed.

(2) Provide a broad spectrum of workforce services to FLNG Members utilizing AWI’s statewide network of Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists.

(3) If appropriate, provide Mobile One-Stop Career Center services to FLNG Members and their families.
(4) Utilize Military Family Employment Specialists to provide workforce services to spouses and dependents of Florida National Guard Members.

(5) Support Family Activity Day functions and other events with necessary and appropriate VA personnel and information materials.

(6) Collaborate with State Director of Veterans Affairs and other agencies to facilitate cooperation with Florida National Guard organizations.

f. The DOL VETS will:

(1) Provide a POC for issues pertaining to the Roles & Responsibilities of DOL VETS. The Director VETS (DVET) or his designated Assistant Director (ADVET) will serve as the primary POC.

(2) Support Family Activity Day functions with necessary and appropriate information on USERRA.

(3) Provide, upon request, pre or post mobilization USERRA briefs.

(4) Conduct, upon request by eligible persons, USERRA Investigations.

(5) Provide, upon request, Transition-Like Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops in coordination with AWI, which will be tailored to the needs of the requesting FLNG Units. The other members of this MOU will be contacted and requested to share in the delivery of the TAP or a TAP-Like Work Shop.

g. All organizations will:

(1) Maintain routine, regular contact to exchange information and identify and solve problems.

(2) Provide these services in a combined effort (one team concept) at the Family Activity Day functions.

(3) Collaborate and provide feedback following each family day activity, and as needed, focused on improving communication, concepts, and procedures to improve support to Veterans and their families.

(4) Provide updated POC information as needed.

4. This MOU will remain in force until any party determines that it is no longer required.
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