



Present: Mr. Joe Higgins, Chair
Ms. Samantha Brown-Parks, Secretary
Ms. Vivian Greentree, Member
Mr. Bob McMahon, Member
Mr. John Phillips, Member
Mr. Destry Rogers, Member
Ms. Patricia Ross, Commissioner
Mr. Pete Peterson, Veterans Service Board Member
Ms. Shelley Seinberg, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Amy Sillmon, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Foundation CEO, Homeless Coordinator, GDVS
Ms. Raven Holstick, Foundation COO, Transition and Employment Coordinator, GDVS
Ms. Julie Hammond, Foundation CFO, Commissioner's Executive Assistant, GDVS
Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information and External Affairs, GDVS
Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS

On Thursday, October 2, 2025, the Veterans Service Foundation Board meeting was held by video/tele-conference. The members listed above were present.

Mr. Higgins called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Mr. McMahon made a motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting, which were previously distributed to members to review. Ms. Brown-Parks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OFFICER REPORTS

Ms. Thompson shared that she submitted the paperwork to the Secretary of State's office to renew the Charitable Organization Permit for the Foundation. She picked up the new certificate, which will expire on 10/19/2027.

Ms. Holstick did not have any updates to share.

Ms. Hammond stated that she had sent out the report below for members to review before the meeting. There were no questions.

The funds in the account are allocated as follows:

General Funds	\$38,499.69
Annual Training	\$ 171.42
Homelessness	\$ 106.21
New Homes	\$ 1,025.00
State Benefit Book Ads	\$ 59.23
Suicide Prevention Hardware	\$ 1,700.00
Suicide Prevention Summit	\$ 4,662.07
<u>Women & Diversity</u>	<u>\$ 314.53</u>
TOTAL	\$46,538.15

DIRECTOR ACTIVITY REPORTS

Mr. Higgins reported that he is working on a grant proposal to VyStar Credit Union and is requesting \$5,000. VyStar is interested in promoting veteran causes.

OLD BUSINESS

A draft copy of the trifold that highlights veteran homelessness was put on the screen for everyone to see (see attached). Ms. May and Ms. Thompson worked on developing the trifold. The following discussion ensued.

Mr. McMahon suggested that we offer more than a QR code on the flyer, such as an address where checks can be mailed and a link to the online giving portal on the website.

Mr. Phillips suggested meeting with DCA to learn more about PIT counts and how they are determined. He also relayed information about veterans in Cherokee County not qualifying for an apartment or house because of the six times equation used there. They would have to make six times the amount of rent to qualify and that is an issue. He also asked if Ms. Thompson had a list that shows what resources are available outside of the Metro Atlanta area. She has a list of emergency shelters throughout the State listed by county, and she will send that list to him. Mr. Higgins also asked for the list, and she agreed to send it to him.

Mr. Rogers asked about different ways to give, who writes grants for us, and the status of the homes regarding bed count. Regarding grants, Commissioner Ross answered that she is the grant writer for the

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department, though we have two others going through grant writing classes. Regarding giving, we have the State charitable contribution campaign that Ms. Holstick is working on getting us into. We receive grant/charitable giving through various companies, such as J. P. Morgan and Benevity. Regarding the Homes, we are at the highest numbers we've ever had for both Augusta and Milledgeville. Augusta is capped out and can't accept more at 132 patients. Milledgeville has increased to 166 and is admitting 3-4 new patients per week. You must have a VA physician's signature stating you need skilled nursing care to be admitted. Milledgeville can take those with mental and behavioral health issues as long as we have the appropriate staff in place to care for their individual needs. She cautioned about the articles being published in Southeast Georgia regarding the Homes that are based on old information. The legislature gave us enough funds to open the Sub-Acute Therapy Unit and the Transitional Support Unit, as well as an increase in bed count in the amount of \$5.5 million total.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Ross announced that we are requesting funding for a new home in the new budget request. It is a flat budget, but we are cautiously optimistic.

Mr. McMahon announced that the Cherry Blossom Festival will donate a portion of their proceeds to the Foundation, just as they did last year. It should be same amount - \$5,000.

Commissioner Ross announced that the Governor's Veterans Day Celebration will be Nov. 6 at 10am. There will also be a celebration of the 250th Birthday of the Marine Corps at 1pm. These events will take place at the Capitol.

Mr. Higgins announced that he wants to set up a meeting with Mr. Greg Parker, the owner of a popular gas station in Savannah called Parker's. They do round up campaigns and support Wounded Warrior and homeless women projects. He is going to ask them to add the Foundation to their list.

Commissioner Ross announced that the license plate is going through road testing now. Once it is accepted, we need to have 1,000 orders so that they will produce the plate. Then 500 renewals are needed each year to keep it active.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Ross explained that the goal for the Foundation Board is to raise funds for homelessness. She recommended that we use those funds by sending them to organizations that are

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already set up to serve the homeless. Mr. McMahon stated that he fully supports this idea of source funding to support those local entities already set up to serve the homeless.

Ms. Greentree suggested we look into Groundswell as a giving platform like Benevity. Ms. Hammond will look into it.

Mr. Higgins announced that the next meeting will be on November 13 at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Higgins thanked the staff at GDVS for everything they do.

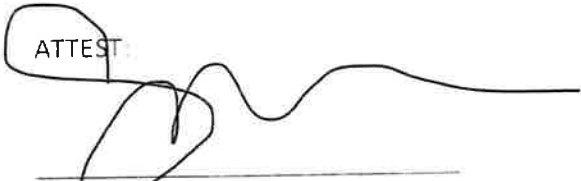
Mr. Higgins adjourned the meeting at 10:57 a.m.

SIGNED:



Joe Higgins, Chair

ATTEST



Samantha Brown-Parks, Secretary

Nearly 700 veterans in Georgia are homeless or have unstable housing.

Every veteran deserves a place to call home after serving their country. With your support, we can help end veteran homelessness.

Veterans may face challenges resulting from their military service which have led to housing instability.

Some of the most common factors contributing to veteran homelessness include:

- Unemployment / Underemployment
- Substance Abuse / Misuse Disorders
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Justice Involvement
- Unmet Childcare Needs



Serving Those Who Have Served.

We are dedicated to meeting the needs of Georgia's veterans.

The Georgia Veterans Service Foundation, Inc. (GVSF) is a federal 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in an effort to help our community partners better meet the needs of Georgia's veteran population.

The GVSF strives to meet the needs of veterans living in Georgia through the identification of and prompt referral to trustworthy resources who are directly serving our veterans in every community across the state.

Learn more about how you can help by scanning the code.



<https://gaveteransfoundation.org/>

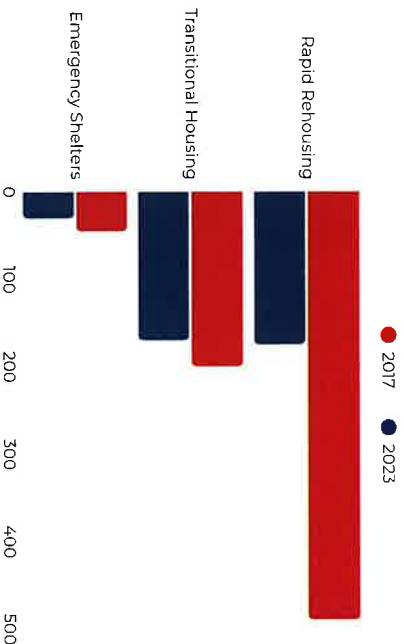
From Service to Shelter: Supporting Homeless Veterans in Georgia



Rising Housing Costs

Rental and mortgage payments have risen for all Georgians; however, veterans encounter greater challenges in securing safe and stable housing compared to non-veterans.

Since 2017, there has been a notable decline in housing designated for homeless veterans, even as demand for assistance from programs has risen significantly.



Average Hotel Costs



? Cost calculated per week

Lack of Resources

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.

Georgia identified a need for **701 beds** designated for veterans based on the 2023 PIT count, but there are **only 420** available. Most are located in the Metro Atlanta region.

276 Metro Atlanta Beds

126 Balance of State Beds

State Assistance

Georgia Department of Veterans Service

Since July 2024, the GDVS Homeless Coordinator has aided 75 individuals by addressing critical housing-related needs, including utility support, prevention, extended stay accommodations, shelter placement, and connections to local food and clothing pantries. The GDVS Homeless Coordinator attends stand-downs and outreach events while distributing materials, like hygiene packs, to veterans in need. These kits are typically composed of basic daily care items.

5 Hygiene packs cost about \$20

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS.

Your donation can make a difference in the lives of Georgia's veterans and their families, caretakers, and survivors.

Donations to the Georgia Veterans Service Foundation are used to support organizations who house veterans and families, connect veterans with mental health care providers, and provide career assistance.

Assistance caps:

Utility Assistance: \$500/year per family

Rental Assistance: \$5,000/year per family

Job Search Transportation: \$95 30-day MARTA pass

Stand with those who stood for us.

Scan the code to make a donation today.



SCAN ME!

The Georgia Veterans Service Foundation has **no** administrative costs. Your donation directly benefits veterans in need.