

27 Florida Is For Veterans, Inc. The purpose of the program is to
 28 stimulate investment in the state's economy by providing grants
 29 to small businesses that hire and employ honorably discharged
 30 veterans or disabled veterans with service-connected
 31 disabilities.

32 (1) As used in this section, the term:

33 (a) "Corporation" means Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.

34 (b) "Small business" means an independently owned and
 35 operated, for-profit, and privately held business that employs
 36 200 or fewer persons; generates \$2 million or less in annual
 37 revenue; and has maintained its principal place of business in
 38 this state for at least the previous 4 calendar years.

39 (2) The corporation may accept and administer moneys
 40 appropriated to the department, for transfer to the corporation,
 41 for providing grants to encourage small businesses in this state
 42 to hire and employ veterans.

43 (3) A small business that hires a veteran as an employee
 44 may receive a one-time grant of:

45 (a) Three thousand dollars for each veteran, as defined in
 46 s. 1.01(14).

47 (b) Five thousand dollars for each disabled veteran, as
 48 described in s. 295.07(1)(a)1.

49 (4) The grants awarded to a participating small business
 50 under subsection (3) may not exceed \$25,000 per fiscal year.

51 (5) A small business must apply to and enter into an
 52 agreement with the corporation in order to participate in the

53 program. The agreement must require that the small business:

54 (a) Employ a qualifying veteran for at least 1 year in
55 order to become eligible for grants awarded under subsection
56 (3).

57 (b) Upon the request of the corporation, report
58 information regarding the employment status of each qualifying
59 veteran.

60 (c) Pay each qualifying veteran an amount equal to at
61 least 80 percent of the annual median income for veterans in
62 this state, based on the most recent federal census or the most
63 recent American Community Survey 5-year estimates published by
64 the United States Census Bureau.

65 (d) Invest any awarded grant moneys in the small business
66 to facilitate further job creation and employment of veterans.
67 Expenditures allowed under this paragraph are limited to
68 manufacturing, equipment, and facilities expenses or other
69 operating costs or fixed capital outlay projects.

70 (e) Not receive an additional grant for rehiring a veteran
71 previously claimed as an employee by the same small business for
72 purposes of obtaining funds under the program.

73 (f) Is eligible to receive a grant award only for a
74 veteran initially hired on or after October 1, 2016.

75 (6) The corporation shall notify the regional small
76 business development center serving the county in which a
77 participating small business is located of the small business'
78 participation in the grant program in order to facilitate

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79 improved access to the resources of the Florida Small Business
80 Development Center Network.

81 (7) The grant program terminates on the date that all
82 funds appropriated for the program are expended or on October 1,
83 2026, whichever occurs first.

84 (8) The Department of Veterans' Affairs may adopt rules to
85 implement and administer this section, including, but not
86 limited to, rules specifying requirements for the application
87 and approval process and the documentation necessary to claim
88 grant moneys awarded under this section.

89 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.