

Investing in Florida's Military

Continued Support of the Florida State Guard

Florida's response capabilities continue to strengthen through the re-establishment of the Florida State Guard to aid and respond during emergencies. In 2023, the Florida State Guard was activated for the first time in 75 years during Hurricane Idalia, augmenting manpower and providing important resources to impacted Floridians. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$57 million** to support the Florida State Guard, to provide equipment, including maritime vessels, high-water vehicles, and debris removal resources necessary for rapid search and recovery efforts both during and after disasters. The funding for the State Guard supports the continued training and equipment needs for up to 1,500 soldiers to support units related to search and recovery, medical, logistics, communications, and other support functions.

Supporting Florida National Guardsmen and their Families

Florida National Guard recruitment and retention programs help provide a well-rounded force of soldiers that are supported not only in their National Guard duties but also in their careers. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$8.2 million** for the following initiatives:

- **\$5.2 million** to fully support Florida National guardsmen seeking higher education degrees; and
- **\$3 million** to give \$1,000 bonuses to current and former guardsmen who recruit new members into the Florida National Guard and to current guardsmen who renew their commitment in the Florida National Guard.

Strengthening the National Guard's Camp Blanding

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$159 million** for year two of the multi-year initiative to construct multiple state-of-the-art training facilities for the Florida National Guard at Camp Blanding. In addition, **\$107 million** is included for additional training resource centers at Camp Blanding, including live-fire ranges, infantry battle courses and simulation courses. These initiatives will provide training facilities and barracks to support simultaneous training of 5,000 guardsmen.

Renovating National Guard Readiness Centers Statewide

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$15 million** to make repairs and renovations to outdated readiness centers across Florida. This includes:

- **\$5 million** for year two of the Revitalization and Modernization Program (REVAMP), a multi-year plan to renovate all readiness centers to meet safety standards and building code compliance.
- **\$8 million** for general maintenance at existing readiness centers.
- **\$2 million** for the repair of nearly 9 miles of World War II era railways at Camp Blanding.

Expanding the Florida National Guard Footprint

To maintain the growth necessary to support our Florida National Guard, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes nearly **\$62 million** for the construction, planning, and land acquisition for additional readiness centers and training facilities. This includes:

- **\$41.5 million** to construct a readiness center on the Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB) and demolish and assess current facilities on HARB.
- **\$13.2 million** for land acquisition in Polk County, Hillsborough County and St. Johns County for future Florida National Guard facilities.
- **\$7.1 million** for the design of six new facilities to include two new readiness centers, one readiness center expansion and three new maintenance shops located throughout the state.