

New Report: Northeast Florida Continues to Experience Best-in-State Veteran Suicide Reductions

The Fire Watch Publishes Two Annual Reports on Progress Toward Ending Veteran Suicide



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VETERAN SUICIDE**

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JACKSONVILLE, FL, UNITED STATES, May 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today

The [Fire Watch](#), a Florida nonprofit dedicated to ending Veteran suicide by providing free suicide intervention training, released two annual reports – one on Veteran suicides in Northeast Florida and the other on Veteran suicides across the entire State. These reports cover data from 2019, the year of The Fire Watch's founding, to 2023, the most recent year of available data provided by the Florida Department of Health.

“

Our Watch Stander program, modeled after CPR, trains Floridians to recognize the warning signs of Veterans in crisis and direct them to the help and resources they need.”

Executive Director and Navy Veteran Nick Howland

For the 4th consecutive year, Veteran suicides in Northeast Florida (Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, St. Johns counties) were 25% or more below the nonprofit's 2019 baseline year. This decline outpaces both Veteran and non-Veteran suicides in Northeast Florida and throughout the entire State.

The Fire Watch formed in Northeast Florida in 2019 and grew statewide in 2022 to support the expansion of its [Watch Stander program](#). The program equips community members with the skills they need to identify and engage

with Veterans in crisis, then refer them to resources. To date, more than 9,000 Floridians have completed the Watch Stander program, serving an estimated 1.5 million statewide Veterans.

“Our Watch Stander program is modeled after CPR, and it's working. Across Florida, our neighbors, co-workers, friends, and family members are completing the free training, standing vigilant to the concerns of Veterans, and, when necessary, referring them to life-saving resources,” said Executive Director and Navy Veteran Nick Howland. “Where we've grown the program across Florida, Veteran suicides are down 12%. Where we haven't, Veteran suicides are down only 2%. Northeast Florida's best-in-state reductions drive those results.”

“We reject the notion that only Veterans can help Veterans,” said Board Chairman Brigadier General (Ret.) Mike Fleming, “What is unique about the Watch Stander program is that it also engages the broader community to help – the 90% across our nation who have not served. Veterans are heroes who have written blank checks for amounts up to and including their lives to protect our communities. Our Florida communities are now joining together to protect them.”

Veteran suicide data in the 2025 annual reports was compiled by NLP Logix using primary source information from the Florida Department of Health and the American Community Survey. Key findings include:

The Fire Watch has achieved a 4th consecutive year of Northeast Florida Veteran suicides 25% or more below the 2019 baseline. The Fire Watch team refers to this as “bending the curve.”

Northeast Florida Veteran suicides in 2023 were 25% below 2019 levels, while Civilian suicides in Northeast Florida rose 8% and statewide Veteran suicides fell 5% over the same 4-year period.

Where The Fire Watch has focused its Watch Stander network (Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, St. Johns, Broward, Palm Beach, Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Escambia Counties), there was a 12% decrease from 2019 to 2023. In all other counties, there was a 2% decrease.

Consistent with prior years, the large majority (94%) of Veteran suicide deaths were males and most Veterans (77%) died by firearm.

According to a University of Kentucky study of Suicide Bereavement in Veterans and Military Families, 135 people are affected by every suicide. That means, when considering the overall reduction in Veteran suicides from 2019 to 2023 in Northeast Florida alone, there are 16,600 fewer community members mourning the loss of a Veteran friend, colleague, or loved one.

To review the full data or to register to become a Watch Stander and join our fight to end Veteran suicide, please visit www.thefirewatch.org

About The Fire Watch:

Based in Florida, The Fire Watch Project, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to ending Veteran suicide by raising awareness of the urgent need for intervention. By training community members to recognize suicidal behaviors in Veterans, The Fire Watch strives to build a life-saving network of coworkers, family, and friends that stands watch over our nation’s heroes and directs Veterans in need to vital upstream services and crisis care resources. Learn how you can stand watch at www.thefirewatch.org.

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