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VELO for Vets to benefit housing-related legal aid for veterans

35-mile bike ride from St. Augustine to Jacksonville Oct. 3 will benefit Jacksonville Area Legal Aid's Shelter for Elders Endowment – Veterans Initiative

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. —[VELO for Vets](#), a 35-mile cycling event Oct. 3, will raise funds for [Jacksonville Area Legal Aid's Shelter for Elders Endowment – Veterans Initiative](#), which will focus on helping older veterans remain safely and independently housed.

Beginning at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center in St. Augustine at 7:30 a.m., the scenic ride will travel north under police escort before concluding in Jacksonville at the celebration surrounding the K9s For Warriors Armed Forces Tri-Bridge Challenge, which will be held near the USS Orleck Naval Museum in downtown Jacksonville.

Sponsored by [St. Johns Law Group](#), VELO for Vets brings together cyclists, veterans, law enforcement officers, first responders, attorneys, and community supporters around a simple mission: protecting the homes of those who protected us.

Many older veterans face legal problems that can threaten their housing, independence, and financial security. These challenges can include wrongful evictions, mortgage foreclosure, housing scams, unsafe living conditions, home repair fraud, predatory lending, landlord disputes, and public benefits issues affecting housing.

Without access to legal assistance, seemingly manageable problems can ultimately lead to the loss of a home or even homelessness.

“We know that more than half of renters and nearly a quarter of homeowners in Northeast Florida are cost-burdened, meaning they spend over 30% of their household income on housing and utilities, and that includes many veterans,” said JALA President & CEO Jim Kowalski. “No veteran should lose their home because they cannot afford an attorney, and that is why we are working to establish the Shelter for Elders Endowment and devote a portion of it to older veterans, and we are thrilled to combine our event with K9s Tri-Bridge Challenge.”

VELO for Vets builds on the tradition of the former Freed to Run bike ride, which began at the same St. Augustine courthouse and traveled to the Duval County Courthouse in Jacksonville.

The ride's Jacksonville finish connects participants with the K9s For Warriors Armed Forces Tri-Bridge Challenge, where hundreds of athletes and supporters will gather to celebrate service, sacrifice, and community.

The Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund matches gifts to the Shelter for Elders Endowment of \$25,000 from a single donor, dollar-for-dollar, where at least \$50,000 can be raised from additional major donors.

Event Details

VELO for Vets – Ride for Those Who Served

Date: Sat., Oct. 3

Distance: 35 miles

Start: Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, St. Augustine, Florida

Start Time: 7:30 a.m.

Rider Check-In: 6:45 a.m.

Estimated Finish: 10:45 a.m.

Finish: K9s For Warriors Armed Forces Tri-Bridge Challenge festivities, near the USS Orleck Naval Museum in downtown Jacksonville

Average Pace: Approximately 12 mph

Rest Stop: One supported rest stop approximately halfway through the ride

Support: Police escort, water, and refreshments

Riders are encouraged to arrive by 6:45 a.m. for check-in, bicycle safety inspection, announcements, and the rider briefing.

Get Involved

Community members can support the mission in several ways:

Register to ride 35 miles in support of elderly veterans at <https://www.jaxlegalaids.org/veloforvets/>

Donate to help provide legal services to veterans facing housing challenges.

Become a Sponsor and help expand the reach and impact of VELO for Vets.

For registration, donations, sponsorship opportunities, and additional event information, visit: <https://www.jaxlegalaids.org/veloforvets/>

About Jacksonville Area Legal Aid

Jacksonville Area Legal Aid is a nonprofit law firm focused on delivering economic, social, and housing justice to low-income and at-risk individuals and families on the First Coast.

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