



News Release

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Veterans Small Business Grants Awarded to Stimulate Business Development

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Small Business Administration has awarded more than \$450,000 in Veterans Assistance and Services Grants to fund programs that promote business ownership for veterans and services to small businesses, including those dealing with deployment of key personnel overseas.

The veterans grant award recipients are all SBA Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and were competitively selected based on their range of services provided to veterans. The successful grantees are the Research Foundation at the State University of New York, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the University of Kentucky Research Foundation in Lexington, the University of Texas at San Antonio, and George Mason University in Virginia.

Among the services provided by the grantees are the expanded delivery of services to the nation's 23.8 million veterans, the use of multimedia tools to connect veterans through distance learning and online business counseling. These grants will also help to increase coordination between organizations assisting veterans and promoting services already available to them.

“We are pleased to help educate the courageous men and women who have served this country in areas that will help them grow their businesses,” said SBA Acting Administrator Sandy K. Baruah. “Veterans are a very important part of America’s small business success, and we must work with the members of the nation’s veteran business community who have experienced the disruptive effects of their deployment, and help them to repair and restructure their businesses.”

“Veterans and veteran-owned businesses are significant contributors to our economy,” said Jody Keenan, director of the Virginia Small Business Development Center at George Mason University School of Public Policy. “In particular, we look forward to developing and deploying online tools to support the 4,000 plus registered vet-preneurs in Virginia.”

Each SBDC will provide customized services to reach out to the veteran business community. The New York SBDC will offer a dedicated veterans adviser in New York City to conduct targeted outreach to the city’s 248,000 veterans. The veterans adviser will implement online counseling and distance learning technology, and coordinate resources to improve access for veterans to existing services. To help coordinate services across organizations, the Arkansas SBDC will create an eNewsletter targeting veteran resource organizations. The eNewsletter will promote online counseling, distance education, and other veteran services.

Another important goal of the Veterans Assistance and Services Grants is helping small businesses handle the deployment of key personnel. For states like Kentucky, where approximately 350 Reserve and National Guard units have deployed every year for the past three years, it is crucial. In economic terms, the Kentucky deployments represent more than 2,000 military service men and women across the state absent from their businesses and jobs. Extending services to these small businesses and individuals is an essential objective of the grant awards.

The grant recipients will use technology including social networking sites, blogs, webcasts and streaming video to reach active duty military personnel, veterans living in rural areas, and the growing numbers of younger veterans. For example, the Arkansas SBDC will offer online courses and counseling specifically designed for veterans, as well as a dedicated blog and RSS feeds.

In addition, the Virginia SBDC will produce a series of Web-based training videos and join the Kentucky SBDC in promoting them on YouTube. The Kentucky and Arkansas SBDCs will both create FaceBook profiles, where they can promote their services to FaceBook's 53 million active users.

Business development specialists at the South-West Texas Border Region SBDC of the University of Texas have designed a brick and mortar classroom course called "Boot Camp for Veterans." This class will take veterans through the basics of starting their own small businesses. The SBDC will also offer an integrated Web-portal that will be a one-stop shop for veteran services.

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