

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

Straight Talk, Straight Answers on Verification and Kingdomware Wednesday, August 16, 2017

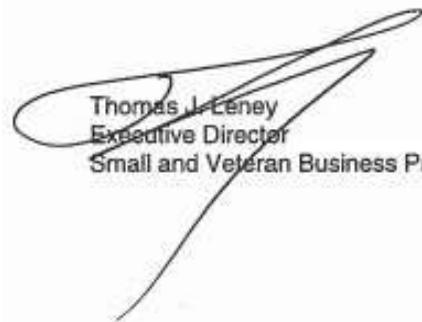
Message from the Executive Director, Small and Veteran Business Programs

Dear Veteran Small Business Owner:

Thank you for participating in our Straight Talk, Straight Answers Town Hall on Wednesday, August 16, 2017. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Veteran-Owned Small Businesses regarding issues pertinent to you. Several of you had questions that we were unable to get to during the live session. Answers to the questions are posted below. Private questions will be followed up individually.

If you do not see your question listed below, we will be posting answers to those questions by Friday, August 25, 2017.

Sincerely,
Thomas J. Leney



Thomas J. Leney
Executive Director
Small and Veteran Business Programs



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General Questions

	Last Name	First Name	Email	Question	Response
1	Bennett	Jerry	jerry.bennett@privateerit.com	How can we as a verified SDVOSB get an IT decision maker/technologist to make a meeting with us or our large prime? An example is no response or refusing access to Cloud decision makers.	You can check with the Vendor Management office in the Office of Information and Technology but the best way is to participate in the National Veterans Small Business Engagement (NVSBE). I suspect that our Cloud decision maker will be there.
2	Bond	Joseph	joseph.bond@dynmgt.com	Does the law to use certified SDVOSBs apply to all federal agencies/departments?	In order to be eligible for SDVOSB set-asides anywhere in the federal government, you must be self-certified. VA and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) do require that self-certification be verified.



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3	Casey	Randell	randell.casey@cyberdefenses.com	Could you please give an example regarding that the ESOP stock is excluded from consideration of ownership change?	<p>38 CFR § 74.3(a), in pertinent part, provides “...For employee stock ownership plans where 5 or fewer persons who are individuals, estates, or trusts own 50 percent or more of the total combined voting power of the corporation, the employee plan will be determined to be “excluded stock” and eligible parties must control 51 percent or more of the combined voting power of the corporation...”</p> <p>CVE does not regularly see applications in which a portion of the Veteran 51 percent ownership interest is held by an Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP). ESOPs are a very involved business association which cannot be fully evaluated without a full review of the entire Plan document. However, if there is a specific Plan that you would like reviewed, we can refer you to a verification counselor who may be able to assist you with any questions that you have regarding your Plan.</p>
4	Chester	Linnes	lchester@mihsolutions.com	Is it possible to provide temporary support to the CVE contract firm? I like to attend details and believe I can be very helpful in resolving the CVE backlog.	This is a private question. We will pass your name to the contractor.



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5	D	J	jd-mcs@swbell.net	What is the quantified percent difference for Fair and Reasonable Pricing on a Tiered Evaluation?	There is no specific price differential at this time. The only place in the Federal Acquisition Regulations we see that is in bundling which is 5 percent above \$90 million and 10 percent below or 10 percent for HUBZones.
6	Dumler	Steve	sdumler@frontlinemedicalmil.com	Is it true that VA Medical Centers are being pushed toward buying products from MSPV and not from VIP SDVOSB. If so, it seems like you are making it more difficult for SDVOSBs to sell their products to VA because (now) we must work with a MSPV.	As part of the supply chain transformation, as a standardization, VA Medical Centers are buying more and more of their products from MSPV and not from SDVOSBs.
7	Gibson	Ronald	appenx@appenx.com	Are there any conditions that would allow procurement decision makers (PDMs) to "skirt" the Rule of Two and also have all the PDMs been retrained on the Supreme Court decision in regards to procurements?	VA policy is not to skirt the Rule of Two. All PDMs have been retrained on the Supreme Court decision.
8	Mattocks	Steven	smattocks@maxm-sol.com	Can Fair and Reasonable be quantified (in calculation or percentages)?	We are currently unable to quantify Fair and Reasonable Pricing but there are benchmarks that we can use such as Federal Supply Schedules, IDIQs, Strategic Sourcing vehicles, and historical pricing.



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9	Ogletree	Nia	ariellegroup@gmail.com	As a CVE verified SDVOSB "service-based" business (management consulting), should we attend the Bay Pines Innovation Expo?	<p>If anybody wants to attend the Bay Pines Innovation Expo, I invite you to do so. Seek to register as soon as possible.</p> <p>To register, please contact Anne Johnson Orsillo at anne.johnson-orsillo@gov-expo.com or 1-305-357-7449.</p>
10	Olsen	Robert	rolsen@northstargroupplc.com	Does that mean that the BVA appeal process will change?	I cannot answer anything about the BVA appeals process because I have insufficient knowledge about it at this time.
11	Pedzich	Chris	cpedzich@greengatetechnology.com	We have been trying to market our services but have limited experience and require a contract vehicle for consideration of our services. Is there any consideration from the VA for SDVOSB who are certified that can respond for a contract vehicle/IDIQ for SDVOSB who have limited capabilities or past performance.	If you do not have experience on a required contract vehicle, it would be important for you to partner with a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business that has that particular contract vehicle.



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12	Rawls	Philip	phillydoh@gmail.com	Hi, I am a VOSB one person company, real estate appraiser. I have been trying to get on the VA list for appraisers to no avail. I get the run-around when I ask who is in charge of the approved list. I have never met an appraiser who is on the VA list who is VOSB certified. I took the time and made the effort to become a VOSB. I want to be on the VA approved list for appraisers in my Central Florida market area. Can you give me any guidance for this?	This question requires further dialogue. A VA OSDDBU small business expert will contact you directly for more information. In the meantime, you may review the list of resources available for VA Home Loan Appraisers at https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/appraiser.asp ; and contact VBA at colenders@vba.va.gov about your concerns.
13	Serrano	Doug	dougserrano@quietexcellence.com	Would it be helpful/feasible for VBA to provide underwriting support to VOSBs seeking capital investments, similar to how they guarantee home loans?	The Small Business Administration (SBA) does provide loans and loan guarantees for VOSBs.
14	Sorensen	Travis	travis@oddball.io	How do I market my business to the VA digital services group?	We will seek to include VA digital services at NVSBE.
15	Thompson	William	bthompson@rsotogo.org	We provide Health Physics support for VA hospitals. What event can we attend to meet with prospective clients?	In 2018, we plan to expand our local events at VA Medical Centers (VAMC). Those events would be excellent opportunities to meet with prospective VAMC clients.



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16	Ubamadu	Dominic	dominic@dggovserv.com	Are you planning to share the slides and/or recording with the attendees?	Yes. You may view the town hall video and presentation slides using the following links. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight Talk, Straight Answers on Verification and Kingdomware Video • Straight Talk, Straight Answers on Verification and Kingdomware Slide Presentation • Proposed Rule Change for 38 CFR Part 74 – Top Eleven Changes Affecting VOSBs
17	Versoza	Alfredo	aversoza@sentinelgrpllc.com	Can I attend the NVSBE is my business is not CVE certified yet?	Yes, you can attend NVSBE even if you are not a verified Veteran-Owned Small Business.
18	Wenig	Tony	tonywenig@artimconsulting.com	I didn't catch it, but when are you going to verify the attendees at the 2017 National Veterans Small Business Engagement in December?	We do not verify attendees at the 2017 NVSBE. But if you are a VOSB that is not yet verified, I suggest that you apply for verification so that you can be verified before December.
19	shupe	mike	mike@twinportsmunitions.com	My question is will all contracting purchase card always be denied and need to be forced if one owns a sporting goods store and the VA is purchasing ammunition through the SDVOB? Thank you.	I do not know the answer to that question.



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Verification Questions

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20	Yaro	Jeff	iyaro@onevet4u.com	Why is a 0 percent disability allowed to be used for the Certification program?	I do not know, but it is.
21	Richardson	John	john.richardson@oberallc.com	Our verification is set to expire August 2018, a 2-year period. Will we receive a new letter stating that our verification will be extended for the third year?	Your verification has been extended. Contact CVE Help Desk to request a copy of your letter. Monday–Friday 8 a.m.–6 p.m. (Eastern) VA OSDBU Call Center: 1–866–584–2344 Status Update: verificationfollowup@va.gov Profile Questions: vip@va.gov
22	Nathaniel	Duane	duane.nathaniel@kalani-consulting.com	Will the split voting rule change also apply to entities such as Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHO)? If so can a NHO be certified by CVE?	The split voting rule will only apply to the regulation covering SDVOSBs and VOSBs.
23	Kesler	Mike	mkesler@keslerinc.com	If a firm hasn't submitted for verification, should they submit now or wait for the new MIS?	I recommend that you wait unless you are pursuing a particular opportunity.



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24	Dickens	Eugene	agsgetsresults1@gmail.com	You say if my SDVOSB is earning no revenue, I can work full time. I'm starting and revenue will go 3 months on short-term contracts and periods of no revenue. How does this impact my ability to work outside the business?	If your business does not provide a viable living, with an explanation, working outside the business does not preclude you from being eligible unless your work prevents you from performing the functions required of a Veteran owner.
25	Foster	Nicole	nicole.foster@msaonline.com	Solicitations from Dept. of Veterans Affairs sometimes stipulate a requirement for the contract awardee to be listed in the VIP database. Can a verified VOSB listed in the VIP database pursue a contract set aside for SDVOSB because they are verified?	A VOSB listed in the VIP database cannot pursue a contract set-aside for a SDVOSB as that is a separate socioeconomic category.
26	DeBerry	Bruce	bdeberry@tekvets.com	I saw something about SBA taking over CVE's certification. Is this true and if so, how will this affect my current SDVOSB certification?	There has been no decision about SBA taking over VA's Verification Program managed by CVE. We are in discussion with SBA to explore that possibility. It would have an effect on self-certification but not on the verification process.



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27	Bacik	Matthew	matt.bacik@bacikgroup.com	Beat Navy...regarding the minority partner protection; I'm a 90 percent owner and provide the capital. My partner is a 10 percent owner. Our operating agreement leaves all control with me; I would not want to provide additional protections to the partner. Assume that would be ok? Also, could I provide different protections to different minority partners?	<p>You need to call the CVE Help Desk for direct answers to your questions.</p> <p>As long as you have all control, you should be able to be verified. You can provide different protections to different minority partners if you have full control, but none of those protections can preclude your total control.</p> <p>Monday–Friday 8 a.m.–6 p.m. (Eastern) VA OSDBU Call Center: 1–866–584–2344 Status Update: verificationfollowup@va.gov Profile Questions: vip@va.gov</p>
28	Cizerle	Frank	frank@recoverytrek.com	How far in advance of certification termination should we start re-verification efforts?	You should start re-verification at 120 days.
29	Katin	Bob	bobkatin@katinengineering.com	I have found certification and recertification as a SDVOSB to be harassment. I have certification by VA as being Service-disabled. I have a business license. I find the additional questioning as harassment. How will SBA verification differ from Center AGAINST Veteran Businesses?	I do not anticipate that the SBA verification will be different materially from the current VA Verification Program.



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Additional Questions

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30	Sharrar	Richard "Dick"	jbiinc@att.net	<p>Why do 8a contractors have first opportunity to obtain NAVFAC Southwest construction projects?</p> <p>As a SDVOSB, we cannot get on the bidding list here in Southern California at NAVFAC Southwest. Their first choice is 8a, allowing no choice for SDVOSB contractors. Can you look into this or advise where I need to go?</p>	<p>Report what is happening to the Department of the Navy Office of Small Business Programs at OSBP.info@navy.mil. Tell them we referred you.</p> <p>Federal agencies outside of VA look at each socioeconomic program as having parity. With the Veterans First Contracting Program, VA seeks SDVOSBs/VOSBs first.</p>
31	Hawtin	David R.	dhawtin@chpsolutionstoday.com	Does the SBA intend, and if so when, to put the same requirements for CVE certification as does the VA for SDVOSB?	Yes. The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requires CVE to use the SBA regulation on ownership and control once a joint regulation is issued. VA has worked closely with SBA to develop a proposed rule that incorporates modified CVE requirements that are more business friendly that will be included in 13 CFR Part 125. This joint rule is nearing publication and should be out for comment by the end of the current fiscal year. Once the joint rule is published, the public will have 60 days to review and comment. All comments will be addressed, and if anything needs to be modified, it will happen at that time. Once addressed, the joint rule will be published as a final rule and become effective for both SBA and VA.



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32	Gotham	John	www.redcedargroup.com	Is there a presentation available?	Yes. You may view the town hall video and presentation slides using the following links. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Straight Talk, Straight Answers on Verification and Kingdomware Video• Straight Talk, Straight Answers on Verification and Kingdomware Slide Presentation• Proposed Rule Change for 38 CFR Part 74 – Top Eleven Changes Affecting VOSBs
33	Bond	Joe	joseph.bond@dynmgt.com	Also, if SBA is going to take over the registration and renewal role, will they use different criteria to determine whether firms are qualified?	There is the possibility in the future that SBA will run a federal-wide verification process but the planning for such a program is in its infancy.



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34	Cosby	Cliff B.	cbc Cosby@cncfederal.com	<p>I have a question regarding our company and doing business with the VA in our geographic area. My company holds a GSA Schedule 75 contract for office solutions. Due to the FSSI contracts in place, we have been told we are precluded from doing business with VA in this category due to the mandatory use of the FSSI contract.</p> <p>Are you able to provide insight if this is correct? It seems from the presentation yesterday, SDVOSB concerns should get a fair shot at that business provided they can provide the same items at a fair/reasonable price. Querying GSA Advantage, many of the items we sell on contract are competitively priced versus other FSSI contractors.</p>	<p>This is a mandated government initiative. We have heard from a number of other business concerns with the same complaint and encourage you to look into the pricing of your offering.</p> <p>If you can demonstrate that your firm offers the government a quality product at pricing that beats those firms that are under Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI), let us know. We are not certain how long FSSI will run, but FSSI open seasons are available where vendors are added or additional opportunities are coming forth. There are a few SDVOSB/VOSB firms under FSSI that are marketing to the VA, thus we are meeting the dictates of the public law—but if there is a way to save the government money, please let us know.</p>



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35	Cizerle	Frank	Frank@recoverytrek.com	Can VA use a certified/verified SDVOSB who is a TPA (Third Party Administrator) to direct random drug testing nationwide, establish relationship with certified laboratories, & monitor and report results for vets in a substance abuse treatment program?	Yes. VA can use such an individual. VA forecasts requirements for the fiscal year that runs from October 1–September 30. Lab Corps and other large firms currently have nationwide contracts but should have subcontracting opportunities that may interest you. Use VA Forecast of Contracting Opportunities to search by Centralized Facilities, state, keywords, and more. Contact the individuals whose names are shown.