



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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News Release

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Veterans Affairs Helps Veteran Small-Business Owners

WASHINGTON – More than 1,000 Veterans who own small businesses and seek to do more contracting with the federal government recently heard Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki extol the importance of small businesses and reaffirm the commitment of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to help veterans start or expand their companies.

“If Veterans tell us their definition of success, we’ll put our capabilities behind them,” Shinseki said July 21 at the government-sponsored National Veteran Small Business Conference in Las Vegas.

Speaking at the largest annual conference to help Veteran-owned and service-disabled Veteran-owned firms do business with the federal government, Shinseki encouraged potential suppliers to seek VA’s business, telling them his Department leads the government in prime-contract dollars spent with businesses owned by service-disabled Veterans and other Veterans.

He said last year VA spent more than \$2 billion with Veteran-owned small businesses – 15 percent of its procurement dollars, up 5 percent from the previous year. Of that amount, \$1.6 billion – or 12 percent of VA’s purchasing -- was spent with service-disabled Veteran-owned businesses.

Even though VA has exceeded government-wide goals for supporting Veteran-owned small businesses, Shinseki said VA should raise its support for them even higher. VA will set goals to increase Veteran subcontractors’ work for VA, as well.

To help Veterans win bids and perform the work successfully, he said VA is launching contractor certification training to explain the complexities of federal contracting. The VA secretary said he has urged other presidential Cabinet departments to increase contract opportunities for Veterans.

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Shinseki suggested Veterans get state and local governments to partner with Veteran-owned businesses. He said the nation's defenders earned the right to participate in all taxpayer-funded contracts.

Finally, he urged Veteran entrepreneurs to find ways to assist men and women returning from service in Iraq and Afghanistan to find meaningful work. Shinseki said, "We'll do our part at VA, but we can't do it all."

VA has a special unit, the Center for Veterans Enterprise, which offers a variety of services to Veterans wanting to start or expand a business. These include one-on-one coaching, referrals for business training, listing in an online database for potential clients and verification of the Veteran status of those registrants.

More information about the Department's services to the owners of small businesses is available on the Internet at www.va.gov/oamm.

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