

# @VAVetBiz NEWS

Your connection to VA OSDBU news, information, and resources | Summer 2017

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## “VIP Verified Vendor”

*GSA Partners With VA to Increase Exposure of Verified SDVOSBs and VOSBs*

Thanks to new ‘VA Verified SDVOSB’ and ‘VA Verified VOSB’ icons, it is easier than ever for acquisition professionals at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to know they are purchasing from qualified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs). That’s because—the special icons on GSA’s VA Advantage!® are given only to SDVOSBs and VOSBs listed in VA’s VetBiz Vendor Information Pages (VIP) database and verified through the Department’s Vets First Verification Program.

The special ‘VIP Verified Vendor’ icons are visible at the product and service level of the VA Advantage! online acquisition tool. “These new Verified Vendor icons really make Veteran vendors stand out from the pack on VA Advantage!,” said Thomas J. Leney, Executive Director of VA Small and Veteran Business Programs. “And they make it faster and easier for VA acquisition professionals to identify VOSB partners and conduct market research in order to accomplish their mission and make sound purchasing decisions.”

Vendors that are Veteran-owned, but do not go through VA’s verification process, cannot receive the special icons. Non-verified Veteran vendors are also not qualified to participate in VA’s Veterans First Contracting Program and other business opportunities only available to those listed in Vetbiz VIP.

The addition of these new icons and changes outlined in VA PROCUREMENT POLICY MEMORANDUM (2016-05) are aimed at promoting VA’s use of set-asides to the SDVOSB and VOSB communities under the authority of the Veterans First Contracting Program. These procedures affect all competitive VA contract actions, including those conducted using both GSA and VA Federal Supply Schedules.

Read more in the news release: [GSA and VA Collaborate to Make it Easier for VA Buyers to Identify Verified Vendors.](#) ★



# Letter from the Executive Director

## *New Rule Change Coming to VA Verification Regulation*



*Thomas J. Leney, Executive Director  
VA Small and Veteran Business Programs*

**D**ear Friends:

There is a very exciting development for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs) that I would like to share with you.

This year, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Small Business Administration (SBA) will adopt a joint rule regarding ownership and control. The proposed joint rule is a direct product of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 which requires VA to modify its current Vets First Verification regulation under 38 Code of Federal Regulations Part 74 by adapting the SBA regulation on ownership and control.

As a result of the 2017 NDAA, VA OSDBU has been working closely with SBA to revise the current VA guidelines to form a joint rule that is more consistent with normal business practices. The proposed rule is expected to be published and released by the end of the current Fiscal Year to allow 60 days for public review and comment. Ultimately, we seek to improve our regulation by making it more practical, efficient, and effective for VOSBs.

Some of the changes that you will see in the joint regulation are designed to clarify confusing provisions in existing regulations. There are also important changes that make the joint rule more business friendly.

The joint rule will enable surviving spouses to retain certification for up to 10 years. It also excludes all Employee Stock Ownership Plan stock from consideration in determining ownership. Additionally, some unconditional ownership requirements are being relaxed as long as requirements apply to all owners regardless of Veteran status and adhere to common business practices. These could include the right of first refusal and tag-along provisions. We are also eliminating all community property considerations.

Regarding control, minority owners will have protection in the case of extraordinary business decisions, such as closing down the business, or the addition of new equity members. This will facilitate access to equity financing. Split voting on the board of directors will also be allowed. Previously, all Veteran owners on the board had to vote together, but now if the number of Veterans on the board exceeds the number of non-Veterans, the Veterans will not be required to vote as a block.

All appeals of denials or cancellations—and all SDVOSB/VOSB status protests previously adjudicated by VA will now be heard by SBA's Office of Hearings and Appeals. Finally, we have included a provision that Reserve Component owners who are deployed will not be penalized during the period of deployment regarding the control of daily business operations.

I encourage you to read more about how the top changes proposed by VA for the rule change will affect VOSBs.

Sincerely,  
Tom ★

  
Thomas J. Leney  
Executive Director  
Small and Veteran Business Programs

# Vets First Update: ★★

## VA Proposes Consolidation With SBA for VOSB Verification

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) proposes to consolidate its Vets First Verification Program with the U.S. Small Business Administration to create a government-wide Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) verification process.

With this new merge, SDVOSB/VOSB verification will be applied throughout the entire federal government and consolidated with all SBA-managed small business certification programs to reflect:

- Reduced risk of ineligible SDVOSBs/VOSBs taking advantage of procurement set asides across the federal marketplace
- Reduced costs for federal agencies; saving up to \$45 million per year
- Increased federal government efficiency through consolidated functions at SBA

SBA will verify all SDVOSBs and VOSBs to ensure only eligible firms are doing business with the federal government. ★



Straight Talk, Straight Answers  
Verification and Kingdomware

## Town Hall

**Straight Talk, Straight Answers Verification and Kingdomware Town Hall** (hosted August 16, 2017) offered insights on process changes in the Vets First Verification Program and how they will affect VA procurements, along with perspective on the Vets First proposed joint rule with SBA. **Check out the following:**

>> VIDEO <<

>> PRESENTATION <<

>> Q&A FOLLOW-UP <<

>> PROPOSED RULE CHANGE FOR 38 CFR Part 74:  
TOP ELEVEN CHANGES AFFECTING VOSBs <<

We welcome your feedback. Please email your questions or comments to [OSDBUStratComm@va.gov](mailto:OSDBUStratComm@va.gov).

# Countdown to #NVSBE2017:

## VA Bringing Buyers With Specific Industry Needs

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)—along with other government agencies and corporations—will convene for the seventh National Veterans Small Business Engagement (NVSBE), December 5–7, 2017, at the America’s Center Convention Complex in St. Louis, Missouri.

NVSBE offers unparalleled access to customers from VA, other government agencies, and commercial corporations interested in working with Veterans. Buyers and suppliers will meet for three full days of engagement and reengagement to discuss procurement needs and contracting opportunities. Jack Coley of Coley & Associates, Inc. (a VA-verified SDVOSB in San Antonio, Texas) mentions, “Few events for Veteran business owners will get you this close to decision makers.”

VA is bringing buyers and procurement decision makers (PDMs) with specific opportunities who seek to do business with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs). Furthermore, small businesses, large firms, and prime contractors looking to team with SDVOSBs/VOSBs will also be in attendance.

“One of the greatest challenges for small business owners is to connect with decision makers who can help them grow their businesses,” said Thomas J. Leney, Executive Director of VA Small and Veteran Business Programs. “NVSBE provides small businesses a solution to meet that challenge.”

*Did you know?* Overall, \$1.3 billion in contracts have been awarded to procurement-ready Veteran businesses as a result of attendance at NVSBE.

**What’s New This Year?** Every moment of NVSBE is expected to be packed with energy, inspiration, networking—and most importantly, ACCESS. Unlike other conferences where you listen to presentations and attend sessions outside your distinctive industry, NVSBE created Communities of Interests (COIs) to allow Veteran small business owners to meet and engage with industry PDMs who present business opportunities in Facilities, Medical, Specialty, and Information Technology.

NVSBE is organized by COIs to encourage industry-centered engagement among VOSBs and federal and commercial PDMs.

Key concerns for Veteran-owned and other small businesses are finding and connecting with the right business opportunities. NVSBE is helping to resolve such concerns by offering details on projected opportunities of potential buyers—prior to this year’s event.

VOSBs interested in attending the Engagement are able to view a list of confirmed VA PDMs and their projected product/supply opportunities. This new online feature allows VOSBs to identify business opportunities and connections to help them facilitate meaningful dialogue with buyers at 2017 NVSBE.

Full registration at 2017 NVSBE offers access to:

- Industry-specific business opportunity sessions
- Preliminary capabilities discussions at networking roundtables
- Knowledge-driven learning sessions
- Face-to-face connections at networking receptions
- Live demonstrations in the Expo Hall
- One-on-one invitational meetings with potential buyers

Throughout 2017, VA will host nationwide industry-specific access events to complement NVSBE and expand the mission of its Direct Access Program by offering Veteran-owned and other small businesses access to unique opportunities to build partnerships, maximize networking, and secure connections.

*Registration now open!* For more information and to view both invited and confirmed buyers attending this year’s event, visit [www.nvsbe.com](http://www.nvsbe.com).★



# #VetBizChat on Twitter



## Let's Chat Engagement

Join us September 19, 2017 (12 p.m. EST), to uncover ways to maximize engagement with potential customers in Communities of Interest at **#NVSBE2017**.

## #ICYMI: In Case You Missed It

Monthly—*every third Tuesday*—VA OSDBU hosts its **Twitter #VetBizChat** on trending topics surrounding the Veteran small business community. Check out highlights from our past chats:

### Let's Chat Direct Access

Participants gained insights on how to effectively build relationships with potential buyers at this year's NVSBE.

>> [View August 2017 Conversation](#) <<

### Let's Chat Finding Opportunities

Participants learned tips on exploring opportunities to do business with VA using procurement forecasts, FedBizOpps postings, teaming agreements, and joint ventures.

>> [View July 2017 Conversation](#) <<

### Let's Chat Verification

Participants learned about the benefits of VA verification and the Veterans First Contracting Program.

>> [View June 2017 Conversation](#) <<

### How to Participate in our #VetBizChat

Participants must have a personal Twitter profile. It's free and easy to set-up your profiles.

Follow these steps:

1. Visit [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)
2. Enter your information into the Sign Up fields
3. Once your personal profile is established, search [@VAVetBiz](#) or [#VetBizChat](#)
4. Be sure to Like/Follow [@VAVetBiz](#)

FOLLOW US!  
[@VAVetBiz](#)



# Webinar Series 2.0: Doing Business With VA

Take part in curriculum-based webinar training courses designed with the necessary information, resources, and tools to help Veteran-owned and other small businesses build and grow. The following courses offer guidance and training to help small business owners become procurement ready to do business with VA.

For more information and to register for a course, visit [www.va.gov/osdbu/outreach/soc/training.asp](http://www.va.gov/osdbu/outreach/soc/training.asp).

## Upcoming Topics and Dates

**Procurement Readiness:  
Part III**  
September 19, 2017  
2 p.m. EST

**Navigating FedBizOpps**  
September 20, 2017  
September 27, 2017  
2 p.m. EST

**Building an Effective  
Capabilities Statement**  
September 28, 2017  
2 p.m. EST



**Register Today!**

**WEBINAR  
ONLINE  
CONFERENCE**

**VA** |  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

[www.va.gov/osdbu/outreach/soc/training.asp](http://www.va.gov/osdbu/outreach/soc/training.asp)



## Be Prepared. Be Procurement Ready.

Doing business with VA as a government contractor significantly increases your company's growth in many ways. VA OSDBU encourages all small businesses to be procurement ready. This means your small business is capable to meet the requirements necessary to compete for contracting opportunities with VA and other federal agencies.

## Not Procurement Ready? Get Started.

- Gain knowledge through education by knowing government contracting rules and regulations.
- Attend procurement events and workshops to connect with customers.
- Validate your experience through solid business capabilities and accomplishments.

# Upcoming Events

Gain access via **VA OSDBU Events Calendar** at [www.va.gov/osdbu/library/events.asp](http://www.va.gov/osdbu/library/events.asp).

## Outreach and Procurement

5th Annual B2G Conference & Expo  
**'Doing Business With the Government'**  
September 20  
Glen Burnie, Maryland  
Tidewater TechExpo and Virginia PTAP

2017 AUSA Annual Meeting & Exposition  
**'A Professional Development Forum'**  
October 9–11  
Washington, D.C.  
Association of the U.S. Army

47th CBCF-ALC Meet & Match  
Procurement Outreach Session  
September 22  
Washington, D.C.  
Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee  
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

National Small Business  
Federal Contracting Summit Fall 2017  
November 1  
Washington, D.C.  
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce  
American Small Business Chamber of Commerce

VA Direct Access Program  
Innovation Small Business Expo  
September 27  
Bay Pines, Florida  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

7th Annual National Veterans  
Small Business Engagement (NVSBE)  
December 5–7  
St. Louis, Missouri  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## Vets First Verification Program Webinars and Town Halls

For more information, visit [www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/you\\_asked\\_we\\_listened.asp](http://www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/you_asked_we_listened.asp).

Topic	Date/Time (EST)
<b>Pre-Application</b> Designed for firms that are new to the Vets First Verification Program and have not created a VetBiz VIP profile. SDVOSBs and VOSBs that have been inactive in the program and are interested in submitting an application may also benefit from this session.	<b>Every Friday, 2–3 p.m.</b>
<b>Preparing for Reverification</b> Designed for firms whose verification will expire in 120 days and/or five months from the date of the scheduled webinar.	<b>Every First Tuesday, 2–3 p.m.</b> <i>(new dates available in October 2017)</i>
<b>How to Stay Verified</b> Designed for firms that have been verified for six months and would like to remain verified.	<b>Every Fourth Tuesday, 2–3 p.m.</b>

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

Call Center: 1–866–584–2344 ★ Web: [www.va.gov/osdbu](http://www.va.gov/osdbu) ★ Email: [osdbu@va.gov](mailto:osdbu@va.gov)