

Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs (ACVBA)
Thursday, September 2, 2021 | 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. ET
Virtual Meeting Minutes

ACVBA Members:

Robert Bailey, Jeff Hall, Glenett Hannah, Valerie Lewis, Lynn Lowder, Fran Perez-Wilhite, Mike Phipps, Kandis Porter, and Matt Wiggins

SBA Participants:

Larry Stubblefield, Associate Administrator, Office of Veteran Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration

Stan Kurtz, Director Policy and Engagement, Office of Veteran Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration

Amy Garcia, Veterans Business Analyst, Policy and Engagement, Office of Veterans Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration

Cheryl Simms, Program Liaison, Office of Veterans Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration

Guest Presenters:

Sharon Ridley, Executive Director Acquisition Policy, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Department of Veterans Affairs

Tom McGrath, Deputy Director, Program and Resource Management
Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration

Cordell Smith, Deputy Director, Acquisition Policy, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Department of Veterans Affairs

Bob Carpenter, Senior Regulatory Specialist, Financial Analyst, Office of Financial Assistance, U.S. Small Business Administration

Vicky Mundt, Associate Director of Office of Undersecretary of Defense Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense

Sam Le, Deputy Associate General Counsel, Procurement Law and
Mihaela Ciorneiu, Goaling Manager, U.S. Small Business Administration

Bibi Hidalgo, Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration

Louis Celli, Executive Director, Policy Vets

Wendy Baumann, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)

Seda Goff, Director of Veteran Entrepreneurs, Veteran Entrepreneurship Investment Program, PenFed Foundation

Call to Order

Larry Stubblefield, ACVBA Designated Federal Officer (DFO), called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. ET.

Opening and Welcoming Remarks

Larry Stubblefield introduced himself, welcomed the committee, and introduced Chairwoman Fran Perez-Wilhite.

Fran Perez-Wilhite, North Carolina Military Business Center

Ms. Perez-Wilhite talked about the recent activities overseas and addressed how ACVBA members can help. Ms. Perez-Wilhite stated that it's not just the physical and mental health of veterans, but also that the financial health of our veteran businesses is tantamount. The ACVBA will continue to keep this crucial factor in the forefront. She also stated that the ACVBA position is to help our fellow business owners that are on the front lines of the business arena.

Larry Stubblefield, Associate Administrator, Office of Veteran Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration

Mr. Stubblefield talked about OVBD's Boots to Business program, which is an entrepreneurial training program for transitioning service members, veterans, military spouses, reservists, and National Guardsmen. Since the pandemic, OVBD has trained over 28,000 and in Fiscal Year 2020, nearly 22,000 individuals were trained. The training was done in a virtual environment and OVBD is in the process of transitioning to in-person classes. The Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC) have served nearly 108,000 for FY20 and 56,000 to date in FY21. They also conducted nearly 40,000 counseling sessions and close to 70,000 training attendees.

OVBD has also opened two new VBOCs located at Humboldt State University in Northern California and at the University of Maryland, which will serve Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. He also mentioned the possibility of adding 12 new VBOCs in Fiscal Year 22. There are 22 VBOCs that serves all 50 states and U.S. Territories. On September 1, 2021, OVBD awarded the Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurial Training Program to the Veteran Institute of Procurement in Montgomery County, Maryland. National Veterans Small Business Week will take place on November 1-5. Mr. Stubblefield said that there are multiple purposes of National Veterans Small Business Week: introduce communities all around the country to the veteran small business resources that are in their communities and highlight those veteran small businesses and the important role that they play in the economic success of those communities. Mr. Stubblefield spoke about the CVE transfer and that OVBD is responsible for communication and outreach to inform the community of the progress regarding the transfer. The transfer must be completed by January 1, 2023. OVBD will be sending out

monthly updates regarding the transfer. Questions regarding the CVE transfer should be sent to cvetransfer@sba.gov.

Sharon Ridley, Executive Director Acquisition Policy, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Department of Veterans Affairs

Ms. Ridley gave the status of VA's Small Business Program by giving an update on outreach and direct access program efforts. The office continues to conduct virtual industry events to highlight business opportunities for subcontracting or partnering relationships and collaborated with the U.S. Postal Service to provide entrepreneurs an opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with buyers.

The VA has provided training to the Department of Education and other Federal agencies to increase utilization of service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses or veteran-owned small businesses. This training consisted of an overview of how companies can apply to become a VA-verified SDVOSB or VOSB.

The VA continues to look at ways to improve their performance on the woman-owned small business goal as a response to the President's direction. SBA has authorized use of set-asides for woman-owned small businesses or economically disadvantaged woman-owned small businesses.

The President committed to a 50 percent increase in the dollars awarded through the small disadvantage business program and SBA is in the process of determining how this commitment will translate into the Government's small disadvantage business program goals for FY 2022. Ms. Ridley stated that the VA has a strong track record of exceeding the 5 percent small disadvantage business program goal in past years and in FY 20, the VA achieved 9.3 percent.

Cordell Smith, Deputy Director, Acquisition Policy, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Department of Veterans Affairs

Mr. Smith talked about how the VA tracks its small business performance by getting data from the System for Award Management (SAM) the system includes solicitations and a report generating feature that allows users to obtain data from the Federal Procurement Data Systems about agency transactions. Mr. Smith also mentioned that Congress has directed as part of disaster response that certain double credit be given to agencies, if certain set-asides were done to make sure that local small businesses perform the work. He said that's one way to try to leverage those dollars to the local community that had suffered a disaster and try to help those local small businesses.

**Tom McGrath, Deputy Director, Program and Resource Management
Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration**

Cordell Smith assisted Mr. McGrath on the update on the 2021 NDAA CVE Transfer

Mr. McGrath and Mr. Smith gave an update about a bill that was passed in Congress called the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2021, that became law January 1, 2021. The verification function that is currently at VA will transfer to the Small Business Administration, stating that the transfer will be completed in two years from the enactment of this bill on January 1, 2023 and at the same time, SBA will also be implementing a certification requirement for the rest of the Government.

Bob Carpenter, Senior Regulatory Specialist, Financial Analyst, Office of Financial Assistance, U.S. Small Business Administration

Mr. Carpenter gave an update on loan program numbers and stated that business loan program numbers do not include disaster assistance such as EIDL, COVID EIDL, RRF, and the Shuttered Venue Operator Grants program. He explained that they are not included in the current brief because those are all under the Disaster Program and that the Office of Capital Access is generally responsible for 7(a), 504, surety bonds, and microloans.

Vicky Mundt, Associate Director of Office of Undersecretary of Defense Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense

Ms. Mundt spoke about their office's mission which is to maximize opportunities for small businesses, to contribute to the national security by providing combat power for our troops and economic power for our nation. Ms. Mundt also stated that her office is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary, and their goal is to advocate for small businesses and to get as many contracts as possible for them to help them to do business with the Department of Defense.

The Office of Small Businesses concentrates specifically on small, disadvantaged businesses, woman-owned, historically underutilized, the HUBZone and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses. Ms. Mundt said that they have representatives for each of those categories to help maximize the contracts. Ms. Mundt also mentioned the procurement technical assistance centers (PTAC) and what they are responsible for.

Sam Le, Deputy Associate General Counsel, Procurement Law and Mihaela Ciorneiu, Goaling Manager, U.S. Small Business Administration

Ms. Ciorneiu talked about the policy of the United States; that small businesses have the maximum practical opportunity to participate in providing goods and services to the Federal Government. She explained the history between SBA and contracting goals started during the second World War, that Congress found out that the existence of thousands of small business concerns was being threatened by the war-induced shortage of materials, as well as the inability to obtain defense contracts or financial assistance at that time meant that small businesses may not survive without government backing. In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Small Business Act into law, which authorized the Small Business Administration. Ms. Ciorneiu said that the SBA is in the process of establishing the goals for Fiscal Year 2022.

Ms. Bibi Hidalgo, Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration

Ms. Hidalgo said her office is serving and supporting veteran-owned small businesses across the country through both current and new program initiatives. The Government Contracting Business Development office's job is to make sure that veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses take part in these new opportunities, leading the charge in this next generation of innovators. GCBD has technical support programs, mentor-protégé, joint venture, and most likely going to be gaining additional programs through budget reconciliation. Ms. Hidalgo stated that not only do they want to over communicate and connect with you as we transfer CVE, but we also want to start communicating regularly about the different programs we have to support your business, to make sure that you can take full advantage. Also, because of the

huge challenge for small business owners competing in the federal marketplace, the Office of Government Contracting has started a manufacturing hub office.

GCBD is working on the President's EOs on supply chain, Buy America, fuel emissions, across the board, to maximize the utilization of domestic small businesses in prime and as well as subcontracting opportunities.

GCBD is suspending the bona fide place of business rule for 8(a) construction firms.

Mr. Louis Celli, Executive Director, Policy Vets

Mr. Celli said his company is a non-profit and was started a couple of months ago. He explained that Policy Vets are not advocates, that their job is just to collect good information and present it so that policy and lawmakers can decide for themselves what direction they need to go in.

Ms. Wendy Baumann, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)

Ms. Baumann presented her topic on microlending, specifically for veterans. She also discussed KIVA, which is a crowdsourcing microlending. WWBIC focuses its efforts on women specifically, on people of color, and specifically black entrepreneurs and black-owned businesses, Hispanic and LatinX-owned businesses and individuals who were lower wealth.

Seda Goff, Director of Veteran Entrepreneurs, Veteran Entrepreneurship Investment Program, PenFed Foundation

Ms. Goff stated that PenFed Foundation was established immediately after the attacks on the Pentagon on 9/11 to help with emergency financial assistance for those that were affected by the terrorist attacks and since has grown to where the PenFed Foundation empowers military service members, veterans, and their communities with the skills and resources to realize both financial stability and opportunity. In March 2018, the PenFed Foundation Veteran Entrepreneur Investment Program was started. Ms. Goff also mentioned that PenFed is currently working with the VA's OSDBU on a veteran women government contracting startup accelerator bootcamp.

Fran Perez-Wilhite, North Carolina Military Business Center

Chairwoman Perez-Wilhite stated that there were three subcommittees that focused on the ACVBA 2021 Annual Report. Each subcommittee gave an update regarding their status briefs. The three subcommittees are: 1). Access to Capital 2). Social Media and Public Relations and 3). Federal Contracting and Veteran Businesses Concerns.

Adjourned

3:52 p.m. ET. - The meeting was adjourned.