



U.S. Small Business
Administration

Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs (ACVBA) Meeting Minutes March 2, 2023

Members Present:

- Timothy Green, Acting Associate Administrator, Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Robert Bailey, Chairman, ACVBA; President, Bailey Information Technology Consultants, LLC
- Gregory Bier, Executive Director of Entrepreneurship Programs, Griggs Innovators Nexus
- Glenett Hannah, CEO/President, Hannah Innovative Solutions
- Fran Perez-Wilhite, Program Manager, North Carolina Military Business Center
- Jorge Rodriguez, CEO, Steri-Tech Medical Innovations, LLC.
- Isaac Belden, CEO/Co-Founder, Veteran Entrepreneur Alliance
- Scott Jensen, Executive Director, National Veteran Small Business Coalition
- Gregory Hill, Owner, G.B. Hill Medical Supply
- Dan Clare, Chief Communications & Outreach Officer, Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Melissa Washington, CEO & Founder, Women Veterans Alliance

1. Call To Order: The regular meeting of the ACVBA was called to order at 9:00 AM ET on March 2023, by Timothy Green.

2. Welcoming Remarks - Timothy Green

3. Opening Comments by ACVBA Chairman – Rob Bailey: Thanked committee members, veterans, family members, and the general public who are supporting the meeting today. Mr. Bailey stated that today's meeting is an opportunity for not only the committee members, but the public at large to ask questions regarding the committee's focus areas such as the Rule of 2 as it pertains to Part 13 and access to capital. He encouraged the public to ask questions regarding who is accountable for assisting the veteran-owned small business community and assist the committee in knocking down barriers and making it more equitable for all.

4. Presentation #1 OVBD Updates, Timothy Green, Acting Associate Administrator

a. Veteran Business Outreach Center Program: OVBD is expanding the VBOC program.

The new VBOCs will be added on May 1, 2023. SBA is finalizing all the selections for the administrator's approval. Currently, there are 22 VBOCs across the country which are the lead instructors for the Boot to (B2B) Program. There are 850 to 1000 B2B classes conducted a year across 160 installations. The Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University conducts B2B overseas. Currently, there are 60,000 clients being served and with the newly expanded VBOC program, SBA is hoping to have more.

b. Joining Forces Military Spouse Program : OVBD met with the White House Joining Team, the First Lady's initiative that supports military families, caregivers, and family members of veterans. Their focus area is employment including entrepreneurship. The Team wants to partner with SBA to do an event in May 2023 focused on connecting Military Spouses with B2B and other SBA resources.

- c. Military Accelerator Program:** The White House Joining Team also reached out to SBA regarding DOD's Military Accelerator Program. It is a pilot 12-week fellowship program for spouses of active-duty service members. The pilot is at no cost to employers, with DOD providing the compensation for all military spouse fellows placed through the program. For more information, please visit <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/events/live/mscap> or contact mscap@uschamber.com
 - d. Transition Assistance for Military Spouses and Caregivers Program:** The SBA is partnering with the Department of Labor (DOL) on a Transition Assistance Program for Military Spouses and Caregivers. DOL also has an off-base transition training program that includes a 2-hour module for military spouses. SBA partnered with the Chamber of Commerce's Amplify program for helping military spouses in-person and virtually across the country.
- 5. Presentation #2 Office of Government Contracting and Business Development (GCBD), Updates Larry Stubblefield, Deputy Associate Administrator**
- a. SBA Veteran Small Business Certification Program (Vet Cert):** certifies Veteran Owned Small Businesses (VOSB)s and Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB)s. The final rule was published on November 29, 2022, in the [Federal Register](#). The program launched to the public and began accepting new applications on January 9, 2023. Go to veterans.certify.sba.gov to learn more. The program is a top priority for Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman. She wants to ensure that veteran and service-disabled veteran business owners receive their certification and have access to the federal marketplace. VOSBs and SDVOSBs that were verified in the VA's CVE before January 1, 2023, received a 1-year extension. No further action is needed on their part. The VA is working to process all applications/recertifications submitted prior to the closure of its system in October. The extension allows the SBA to process applications from new entrants into the program and grow the base of certified firms. New applicants certified by the SBA after January 1, 2023, will receive the standard 3-year certification period.
 - b. One Year Grace Period for Self-Certified Businesses:** VOSBs and SDVOSBs may self-certify through 2023 but must also submit an application to SBA. Self-certification is still in SAM.gov. Certification will not be for a specific NAICS code; as long as a business is small in one NAICS code, it has listed in its SAM.gov registration, it meets the definition for "currently operates" and can be certified. It also must be small and currently operate in the NAICS code of any contract for which it is claiming SDVOSB status. The Final Rule takes steps to harmonize and simplify definitions of ownership, control, day-to-day operations, and standard hours across certification programs. SBA's Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) handles appeals & protests. GSA's Surplus Property Program is available to certified VOSB & SDVOSB businesses. To log in or to register a new account, please visit: <https://Veterans.certify.sba.gov>.
- 6. Presentation # 3 US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Small Business Program Update, Sharon Ridley, Executive Director, Office of Small and Disadvantage Business Utilization**
- a. Fiscal Year 2023 Goals and Performance:** The total procurement for the first 4 months of FY23 was 8.7 billion compared to 5.9 billion a year ago. Some of the first QTR express reports came in during the past month, so that accounts for about 2.2 billion of the difference compared to last year. VA reported results for pharmaceuticals home oxygen and hearing aids and even one report for integrated veteran Care Region 5. This means our

numbers in the federal procurement data system are more reliable than last year, but we continue to have concerns about these express reports.

- b. OSDBU Strategic Outreach and Communications Program:** The VA continues to offer entrepreneur training and tactical outreach to the veterans in the business community, and equip small business owners with tools and information to find and prepare for contract opportunities. We incorporated new 10-minute training sessions and resource overviews, added the Mentor Protege Program and Joint Ventures Training, and network with service members before they transition to civilian life in collaboration with the Transition Assistance Team at Fort Belvoir, VA. In February, the OSDBU took part in the National 8 (a) Association National Small Business Conference in New Orleans and received feedback from the small business community. The strategic outreach communications team is looking forward to another year of meaningful connections with small business owners. Our aim is to keep them primed to do business with BA other federal agencies and commercial businesses. OSDBU website: <https://www.va.gov/osdbu>. OSDBU Helpdesk: 866-584-2344. Email: vip@va.gov
 - c. Direct Access Program (DAP):** The VA will continue to provide a variety of engagement opportunities for small businesses and procurement decision makers. Our direct access program hosted 11 virtual business opportunity sessions since September 2022. Construction Professional Services and Enterprise Learning Management Solution where some of the products and services which procurement decision makers sought during our networking events. To view the entire list of upcoming events, visit <https://www.vetbiz.va.gov/events/>
 - d. United States Agency for International Development (USAID):** VA co-hosted a series of one-on-one meetings between USAID representatives and small businesses.
 - e. Women's History Month:** The VA's Women Veteran on Small Business Initiative fosters the growth of development of women and women veteran entrepreneurs. A USA Today article published in November 2022, highlighted some of the 40 women graduates of the Inaugural VetBiz Lady Start Cohort Program. It emphasized the power of interagency collaboration to affect change for underserved communities and acknowledged the strides OSDBU has made to support women and women veteran-owned small businesses and the efforts of Executive Order 13985.
- 7. Presentation # 4 Dr. Benjamin Brunjes and Dr. Sean Webeck, Assistant Professors, Evan School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Washington Presented Studies on Federal Contract Bundling and Veterans Representation and Contracting Out:** Evidence from Federal Agencies
- a. Dr. Brunjes's research topic:** Contracting Bundling: Effects on Small, Disadvantage Firms. His research question was "How has the increased use of contract bundling affected small, disadvantage businesses?"
 - 1.** He discussed the two types of bundling, horizontal and vertical bundling. Horizontal bundling is where different organizations combine forces to purchase a single good. Vertical bundling is when different organizations combine many services into one contract and find one firm that can offer all those different services.
 - 2.** Pros and Cons: The pros of bundling are usually lower costs and better performance. The cons are usually less equitable and reduced competition.
 - 3.** His conclusion- based on his research, bundling makes contracting less equitable, it essentially prices and sizes out many different small firms, who then become reliant on getting sub-contracts rather than serving as primes. He concluded that many

of these equity programs are designed to help firms grow a small entity into larger entities. His concern is that if these firms are forced to rely on subcontracts, are they learning the same things they would be learning if they were the prime. Because of this, we are limiting the development of these kinds of firms. Also, it likely impacts the marketplaces that the government going to encounter as contracts get bigger and there are fewer vendors who can compete for those contracts.

b. Dr. Webeck's research was focused on "How does veterans' representation in federal agencies influence the allocation of federal contracts to small, disadvantaged firms?"

- 1. His Hypotheses were: Hypotheses 1** - Departments and agencies with higher overall proportions of employees who are veterans will have more contracts and spend more on contracts with veteran-owned businesses; **Hypotheses 2a** - When analyzed together, the representation of veterans in departments and agencies will have a greater effect on the number of contracts and contract spending than the representation of minorities and women in those agencies; **Hypotheses 2b** -The representation of veterans in defense- and national security-related departments and agencies will have a greater effect on contracting activity with veteran-owned firms than in civilian (non-defense) departments and agencies.
- 2. His conclusion:** based on his research, he determined that hypotheses H1 and H2a were supported and H2b was supported but with small differences. Advantaged groups have an advantage – in ways that outweigh disadvantaged groups. Result of social construction: high level of representation, positions, expertise, and transaction costs.

8. Presentation # 6 Legislative Updates by the Madison Services Group Elizabeth Sullivan, Madison Services Group, Inc. & Women Veterans Business Coalition. The Landscape of the 118th Congress –

- a. House and Senate:** Republicans take the House with 222 Republicans and 213 Democrats in the Chamber. Democrats have a majority in the Senate with 51 seats, and 49 Republican seats. Last Congress, it was a 50/50 split. The House Small Business Committee on Oversight - Roger Williams (R) from Texas will chair the Small Business Committee on Oversight. Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez is remaining as top Democrat as the committee ranking member. Chair Williams and Congresswoman Velázquez want to continue the bi-partisan nature of the small business committee. In the Senate, Minority Leader Mitch McConnell is the top Republican and Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is the top Democrat in the Senate. Sen. Ben Cardin (D) of Maryland will remain the Small Business Committee Chair. Senator Tony Ernst (R) from Iowa is the new top Republican and will be running the committee from the Republican side. They are working on the effort to re-authorize/or modernize the Small Business Administration. The Small Business Administration authorization is congresses way to basically conduct oversight of an agency.
- b. The President's Budget :** The president's budget request is supposed to be released on March 9th. The Appropriations Committees will begin their work in the coming weeks.
- c. FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act:** the expansion of data requirements on Small Business Procurement Scorecards will increase transparency in federal contracting; The update on annual reporting on contract consolidation, requires federal agencies to share bundling data with the SBA.

- d. FY2023 Omnibus Bill :** \$20 million for the CVE transfer from the VA to the SBA; \$17.5 million for SBA's Veterans Business Outreach, an increase of \$1.5 million from FY2022.
 - e. Legislative and Committee Action - Starting Over:** Bills that fail to become law at the end of a Congress must be reintroduced in a new Congress with a new number. Bill reintroduced at beginning of new Congress are referred to appropriate Committee and restart of the legislative process.
 - f. Committee Hearings:** Feb 28 – House & Senate VA Committee Joint Hearing – Legislative Presentation of Disabled American Veterans; Feb 28 – House VA Committee Meeting on Authorization & Oversight Plan for the 118th Congress; Feb 29 and March 1 – House & Senate VA Committee Joint Hearing – Legislative Presentation of the American Legion and Multi VSOs; and March 8 – House & Senate VA Committee Joint Hearing – Legislative Presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States & Multi VSOs
 - g. Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2023:** Reintroduced by Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) Amends the Small Business Act to authorize the SBA's Boots to Business Program through 2028. Boots to Business is not currently codified into law.
 - h. VA Agency Actions:** New Grant Funding to Assist Formerly Homeless Veterans; VA Begins Processing PACT Act Benefits; and VA Proposed Rule Waives Copays for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.
 - i. Agency Actions for Government Contractors:** Final Rule to update Manufacturing Industry Size Standard, will be effective on March 17, 2023. The OMB's Fall 2022 Regulatory Agenda Proposed Rule will require all construction materials to be made in America as a part of the Build America/Buy America requirements. The new memorandum will provide guidance to agencies on how to use the new supplier base dashboard to increase diversity in the industrial base and procurement equity.
- 9. Next meeting:** The next meeting will be held June 8, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. ET. Platform to be determined.
- 10. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m. EST by Laura Wages

All SBA programs and services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.