

Getting started with Veteran-Owned Small Business Support



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

This guide will help Veterans get started on establishing a small business as well as qualify for VA contracts targeted for a Veteran-Owned Small Business.

Choose VA

I've never owned a business before and would like to start one. Where do I start?

Visit <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide> for information to assist you in your decision making process. The steps you will take will depend on how you intend to fund your business.

- If self-funding will be used follow these steps:
 - Determine appropriate location for your business based on local zoning requirements. Zoning requirements can be obtained through your local government office.
 - While you are there, ask about requirements to obtain a business license.
 - Check with your Secretary of State office to determine business license requirements.
 - Write a business plan – see <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>.
 - Begin operating after all requirements have been met.
- If loans will be required to get started, determine if you are eligible. Many banks provide SBA Small Business Loan funding or contact the SBA directly by:
 - Call 800-827-5722.
 - Visit <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans>.
 - Once you are satisfied you meet the requirements, follow steps 1 through 5 under self-funding as these requirements will also apply to your business model.
 - For information, visit <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/buy-existing-business-or-franchise>.

What other resources are available to me to start my own business?

The SBA has several additional resources available to Veterans. The eligibility requirements may vary for each program. Some of the programs are:

Boots to Business: An entrepreneurial education and training program for transitioning Service members and their spouses.

- <https://www.sba.gov/sba-learning-platform/boots-business>

Veteran-Owned Small Business Growth Training Program: SBA no-cost peer-to-peer training program is designed to help Veteran-owned small businesses grow their professional networks.

- https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/SBA_VOSB_Growth_Training_Program_OnePager.pdf

Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC): This program has multiple locations around the country which are designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling and resource partner referrals to transitioning Service members, Veterans, National Guard & Reserve members and military spouses interested in starting or growing a small business.

- <https://www.sba.gov/page/veterans-business-outreach-center-vboc-program>

For more information on these programs and additional SBA Veterans Business Development Resources, visit <https://www.sba.gov/vets>.

WHAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST ME IN OBTAINING CONTRACTS WITH VA?

OSDBU HOME PAGE
<https://www.va.gov/OSDBU/index.asp>

CVE VERIFICATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
<https://www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/assistance>

VERIFICATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW
<https://www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/index.asp>

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR VA
<https://www.va.gov/OSDBU/docs/Required-Documents-for-VIP-Application-4Dec2018.pdf>

VERIFICATION ASSISTANCE COUNSELORS
<https://www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/assistance/counselors.asp>

VERIFICATION PROGRAM WEBINARS
https://www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/you_asked_we_listened.asp

VERIFICATION FACT SHEETS
<https://www.va.gov/osdbu/library/factsheets.asp>

VENDOR INFORMATION PAGES
<https://www.vetbiz.va.gov/vip>

OSDBU HELP DESK
866-584-2344 (Monday – Friday)
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (EST).

How can I qualify for contracts with VA?

Eligibility

VA has contracts set aside for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) or Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB). In order to bid on these contracts, your business must first achieve VA's designation as a "verified" SDVOSB or VOSB. The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) processes applications for SDVOSB or VOSB verification.

Qualification

To see if your business may qualify to become a VA verified SDVOSB or VOSB, you are encouraged to take the verification pre-qualification quiz. This quiz is strictly voluntary and your responses are not considered part of your application.

- Visit <https://www.vetbiz.va.gov/vip/prequal-quiz/> to take the quiz. If the results of your quiz indicate that your business may be eligible, you may then proceed to the formal application process where you will be required to provide additional information and several business documents. After submitting the application, a case manager will be assigned to communicate with you directly throughout the process. By regulation CVE has 90-days to process a submitted application; however, processing time will be much shorter if your initial application package is complete and you submit timely responses to any requests for additional information.

Verification Process

The verification process for SDVOSB and VOSB consists of validating Veteran eligibility, ownership, and control of the small business. VA will make this verification free of charge. Many Veterans successfully achieve verification without outside assistance. Nonetheless, CVE provides an array of no-cost support services to help applicants which includes webinars and a nationwide network of Verification Assistance Counselors who are trained by CVE to help Veterans better understand eligibility requirements and navigate the application process. Verified businesses are listed on the Vendor Information Pages (VIP).

What are the steps to start the verification process?

Follow the steps below to begin the verification process:

- Create a user account in the System for Award Management (SAM) registry at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM>.
- Create a DS logon Premium Account (Veterans) at <https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil> or an ID.me account (non-Veterans and representatives) at <https://api.id.me/en/registration/new>.
- Create a Vendor Information Page (VIP) account at <https://www.vip.vetbiz.va.gov/>, select "Apply for Verification". Gather the required documents as guided by the matrix located at <https://www.va.gov/OSDBU/docs/Required-Documents-for-VIP-Application-4Dec2018.pdf>.
- Upload the required documents and submit a complete application (i.e., fully executed with all supporting documentation).

For assistance with your application, contact a local Verification Assistance Counselor at <https://www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/assistance/counselors.asp>. You can also contact the OSDBU Help Desk at 866-584-2344.

What is the Direct Access Program?

One mission of OSDBU is to serve as an advocate for U.S. Government purchases through the use of the procurement ready VOSB process. This is enabled by providing VOSBs opportunities to attend Direct Access Program (DAP) events. DAP events provide unique opportunities for firms to build partnerships, maximize networking, and gain access to Procurement Decision Makers (PDMs) through structured events. A PDM represents a program office's interest in acquiring professional services or products to support the Department's primary customer, our nation's Veterans. A DAP event may entail a PDM from the Department, another government agency or industry informing the audience about an upcoming procurement opportunity. The information presented at a DAP event helps participants gain insight about upcoming procurement opportunities. Upcoming and new events are added periodically; view current events at <https://vetbiz.va.gov/events>.

Who is the Strategic Outreach and Communications Team?

The Strategic Outreach and Communication (SOC) team provides VOSBs and firms in other socioeconomic categories small business training. Free training topics include the below:

- **Doing Business with VA** at <https://www.va.gov/osdbu/library/dbwva.asp> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic2CrKR6bWE&feature=youtu.be>.
- **Procurement Readiness Training Guide** at https://www.va.gov/osdbu/docs/procurementReadiness_FULL.pdf.
- **On-Demand Training** at <https://www.va.gov/osdbu/outreach/soc/learning-sessions.asp>.
- **Small Business Liaisons (SBL)** are located nationwide to offer advice to Veteran-owned and other small businesses on doing business with VA. To see the list of VA SBLs visit <https://www.va.gov/osdbu/about/contacts.asp#sbl>.

If I'm already open for business who can assist me with selling to the federal government?

A Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) can help with the required documentation and registration to bid on government contracts. Find the nearest PTAC at <http://www.aptac-us.org>.