

Veteran Small Business Owner Support

- [Veteran-Owned Small Business Registration \(VetBiz\)](#) - Every year, the U.S. Federal Government allocates \$500 billion for contracts. They also have the goal of spending 3% of this sum on service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSB). When opportunities designated to these set-asides are posted, you will get moved to the front of the line for bidding.

Although not a set-aside, the veteran-owned small business (VOSB) certification has its own array of benefits. This includes access to resources offered by the Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD). This includes exclusive funding opportunities and entrepreneurship training programs.

If you are a veteran business owner, registering in the Vendor Information Pages (VIP) is one of the best investments you can make.

- [Simple steps for achieving your VA Veteran Owned Business Verification \(Assoc of Procurement Technical Assistance\)](#)
- [The National Center for Veteran Institute for Procurement \(VIP\)](#)- This program trains veteran service-disabled and veteran-owned small businesses to succeed in the federal contracting market. VIP provides comprehensive training to owners, principals, and c-level executives of veteran-owned businesses nationwide over a 27-hour, 3-day period, residential program at no cost to veterans. The program takes place at the Bolger Center in Potomac Maryland. Enrollment is open for VIP START (designed for companies wanting to enter the federal market and become procurement-ready) and VIP GROW (designed for veteran owned businesses who are already in the federal space to increase their ability to win government contracts).
- [Maryland Department of Commerce](#) - As the state's primary economic development agency, we stimulate private investment and create jobs by attracting new businesses, encouraging the expansion and retention of existing companies, and providing workforce training and financial assistance to Maryland companies. Commerce also promotes the state's many commercial advantages and its outstanding quality of life to spur economic development, international investment, trade and tourism.
 - [Business Resources](#)
 - [Military Personnel and Veteran-owned Small Business Loan Program \(MPVSBLP\)](#) provides no interest loans of up to \$50,000, from one to eight years, for businesses owned by military reservists, veterans, National Guard personnel and for small businesses that employ or are owned by such persons.
- [Ready, Set, GROW! Workshop Series](#) - The Governor's Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs is helping small, minority and women business owners compete for State contracting opportunities with a new life workshop series entitled Ready, Set, GROW! The two-hour workshop will include information about certification in the State's Minority Business Enterprise Program, vendor enrollment in the Small Business Reserve Program, and where to find procurement opportunities within the 70 participating agencies and tips on how to navigate the procurement process. [Watch a video on the series here.](#)

- [**Military Personnel and Veteran Owned Small Business No-Interest Loan Program**](#) – The Maryland Department of Commerce administers this no-interest loan program (loan amounts up to \$50,000) for business owners who fall under any one of the following categories: Military reservist or National Guard member called to active duty, Small business owner who employs a military reservist or National Guard member who was called to active duty, a Veteran small business owner – or a veteran seeking to start a small business or a small business owner who employs a service-disabled veteran

- [**The State's Veteran Owned Small Business Enterprise \(VSBE\)**](#) provides contracting opportunities on state-funded procurements for qualified veteran-owned small businesses. Sixty-five agencies/departments are directed to spend at least 1% of the total dollar value of their procurement contracts either directly (prime contractors) or indirectly (subcontractors) with certified VSBE firms. Only the work of a certified VSBE firm can be counted toward meeting an established VSBE contract goal. All solicitations over \$200,000 are reviewed to consider placing a VSBE goal on them.

Businesses seeking to participate in the VSBE Program must (1) meet the size standards adopted by the United States Small Business Administration in 13 C.F.R. 121.201 and any subsequent revision of that regulation, and; (2) must be at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are veterans. A veteran is defined as an individual who is verified as having served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, other than for training, and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

Certification as a VSBE vendor requires 2 elements:

- (1) Veteran Verification and
- (2) Vendor Registration.

Veteran Verification – The veteran verification process includes, but may not be limited to, completion and submission of DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty. Veteran status must be verified by one of the following entities:

- (1) VSBE Program Verification of Veteran Status Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
- (2) Center for Validation and Evaluation (VetBiz) United States Department of Veterans Affairs

Complete information regarding the verification process can be found by utilizing the website links provided above.

Vendor Registration – VSBE firms must complete the vendor registration in eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA), Maryland's eProcurement platform. Vendors registered in eMMA receive email notices of procurement opportunities available across all state agencies/departments valued over \$15,000. County and local governments use the platform to advertise their procurements as well. There is no cost to register in eMMA.

During the registration process, vendors who meet the VSBE Program 's eligibility standards should select VSBE under the Procurement Programs category and enter your verification

number in the box provided. If you do not have a verification number at the time you register as a vendor, you can update your vendor profile once you receive the number.

Change of Status Notification – Notify the Governor’s Office of Small, Minority and Women’s Business Affairs within thirty (30) days of any change affecting the firm’s ability to meet the VSBE Program eligibility requirements.

- Your business may also qualify for procurement opportunities through the [Small Business Reserve \(SBR\)](#) and/or [Minority Business Enterprise \(MBE\)](#) Programs.

Program Qualification Warning - A person providing false information to the State in connection with retaining, obtaining or attempting to obtain a contract or subcontract under VSBE Program may be subject to one or more of the following:

A determination by a Procurement Officer that a bidder or offeror is not responsible;
A determination by a Procurement Officer that the company is ineligible to participate in a VSBE goal designation;
A determination that a contract entered into is void or voidable under §11-204 of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland;
Suspension and debarment under Title 16 of the State Finance and Procurement Article;
Criminal prosecution of procurement fraud under §11-205.1 of the State Finance and Procurement Article, perjury, or other crimes;
Civil penalties under the Maryland False Claims Act under Title 8 of the General Provisions Article; and
Other actions permitted by law.

- **Howard County Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise Program (VOBE)** which includes an overall aspirational goal of 1% of the County’s total dollar value of procurement contracts to be made directly or indirectly with Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises. For the purposes of the Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise Program, a Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (VOBE) is defined as a business enterprise that is verified by the Center for Verification and Evaluation of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as a Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise.

Here are different ways to find out about the current open procurement opportunities in the County:

1. COUNTY WEBSITE

You can check Bid opportunities by following this link on the County website:

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/County-Administration/Purchasing/Current-Solicitations>

2. REGISTER ONLINE - PLANETBIDS VENDOR PORTAL

On the above link in #1, you will also find information on the PlanetBids (PB System) - The County has implemented a web-based procurement system hosted by PlanetBids (PB System), provided at no cost to all interested businesses. The PB System allows suppliers to

self-register online and to receive automated email notifications of solicitations for goods and services pertinent to their business. The PB System allows registered suppliers to download bid documents, receive addenda, submit electronic bids, and view bid results.

3. eMARYLAND MARKETPLACE (STATE PORTAL)

You can also register on the State of Maryland portal eMaryland Marketplace for notifications <http://procurement.maryland.gov/>

Maryland conducts the majority of its procurements through eMaryland Marketplace, the online procurement system that is a business tool to provide vendors with easy access to State procurement information. Vendors have the ability to:

- Receive notice of bid opportunities
- Search for contracting opportunities
- Submit bids electronically
- Obtain bid results online

➤ **Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA)**– provides business support through financing, Howard County Tech Council, catalyst fund loans, workforce and local business initiative.

- **Innovation Center** – is for serious entrepreneurs. Combining in-house expertise with established technology and business leadership resources, the Center serves as a beacon of innovation to the Baltimore-Washington corridor community and beyond. With a roster of world-class entrepreneurs and partners, the Center’s focus is on giving entrepreneurs what they need to move to the next level. Ready to get down to business?
- **Maryland Center for Entrepreneurship (MCE)** - Entrepreneurs need a place to call home, a community to grow in, and resources to take their business to the next level. Whether you are looking to become a resident company with an office or take advantage of our facilities and services through an affiliation membership, we can connect you with the resources you need to start and grow.
- **Business Resource Center** - Nontechnical, services-based companies, or businesses that are too early for the incubator can still get support and assistance through the Business Resource Center. The BRC provides experienced guidance and information to help companies start and grow.
- **Howard County Tech Council** - is the epicenter of the local tech community. Our active and engaged membership base spans a variety of industries, providing members with access to a diverse collection of organizations. Founded around the principles of Engage, Collaborate, Learn, and Lead, the HTC is much more than just networking, it is a place for both you and your business to grow. We balance our offerings with a platform of programs, such as our monthly networking events that are targeted to help you grow your business, as well as educational programs to help you grow as a business leader. Our roundtables, affinity groups and semi-monthly MCE Speaker Series are great places to connect and learn from other experienced business professionals in Howard County’s innovative, diverse and thriving technological ecosystem.
 - The Chief Information Security Officer “In-Residence” program known as “HOCO CISO” is based at the Maryland Center for Entrepreneurship (MCE). This first of its kind program

is designed to address the needs of residents of the MCE along with the more than 200 member companies of the Howard Tech Council (HTC) who do not have their own Chief Security or Privacy officer

- **Cyber Resources**

- **Project Opportunity** - is a free entrepreneurship training program which has been designed solely for veterans who want to start their own business. The prerequisite for veterans who wish to be considered to participate is they must have a solid idea of what business venture they want to start because the course is designed to develop and complete a comprehensive business plan instead of just exploring the possibility of entrepreneurship. The program is a 10 week (30 hour) intensive course designed to prepare participants to research and complete a business plan.

We utilize the NxLevel Curriculum which is a nationally recognized entrepreneurship training program and supplement the course material with presentations by subject matter experts in topics such as Marketing Plans, Cash Flow Analysis, the 5 C's of Credit, Commercial Insurance, both a tax based and legal based review of the four business entities, Crowd funding, Web Site Design, and procurement opportunities on the state and federal levels for veteran owned businesses.

Institute of

<https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/veteran-and-family-resources/starting-growing-a-business/>

- **Dog Tag Bakery Inc. Fellowship Program** - empowers service-disabled veterans, military spouses, and caregivers to discover personal and professional fulfillment in the civilian world through an innovative business and entrepreneurship fellowship program. Our comprehensive and multifaceted five month fellowship enables Fellows to dip their toe back into education, gain first-hand experience in a living, breathing small business, explore a wide-variety of civilian career paths, and acquire key soft skills through Learning Labs. Wellness is a cornerstone of our program; from mindfulness to journaling, nutrition to yoga, we believe that our holistic, wellness-oriented approach allows the service-disabled veterans, military spouses, and caregivers we serve to be mentally ready to absorb the lessons and resources our program provides and lay the groundwork for their successful transition into civilian life.
- **Fedbizopps.gov** - Federal business opportunities and resources
- **Maryland Association of Counties(MaCo)** - is a non-profit and non-partisan organization that serves Maryland's counties by articulating the needs of local government to the Maryland General Assembly. The Association's membership consists of county elected officials and representatives from Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City. Several annual conferences and events offering continuing education for elected and appointed county officials are held yearly.

- [The Global Good Fund Fellowship Program](#) supports United States Veterans through its partnership with the Smithfield Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Smithfield Food, Inc. Through this partnership, The Global Good Fund is able to provide its flagship yearlong leadership development program to veteran entrepreneurs. The Program is designed to accelerate the business capabilities, professional growth and leadership skills of each veteran, resulting in long-term community impact. The Fellowship program provides each Fellow with a leadership coach as well as a business executive mentor, leadership assessment resources, a peer network, sector expertise, and \$10,000 grant to invest in their leadership development.

Membership Organizations

- [Howard County Chamber of Commerce](#) - provide advocacy, connections, and access to timely information to advance the growth and success of the business community.
 - [GovConnects](#) - is a specialized program launched by the Howard County Chamber of Commerce and focused on the Federal Government Contracting Industry. This unique government contractors network works to educate and connect local industry participants with opportunities, while representing their interests in the wider community to positively impact the region's economic future.
- [Central MD Chamber](#) – is the voice for the Central Maryland business community on issues impacting our area by providing information about member businesses to those who can use their services, keeping members up-to-date on area issues and trends and offering opportunities for members to meet and do business, as well as support community needs.
 - [Business Resources](#)
- [Fort Meade Alliance](#) - is dedicated to fulfilling a mission to support the work and people of Fort George G. Meade and help Fort Meade drive economic growth in Maryland. Our efforts on behalf of that mission generate real impact for our region through education and workforce development initiatives, transportation solutions, business connections and DoD community support.
- [The BWI Business Partnership](#) - is a nonprofit corporation comprised of governmental organizations, private businesses, and academic institutions, advocating for strong transportation policy and initiatives, driving sustainable economic and workforce development, and facilitating meaningful strategic relationships germane to the growth and development of the BWI Region.

Hiring Veterans, Transitioning Service Members and Military Spouses

- [US Chamber Hiring Our Heroes Employer Webinars](#) - Hiring Our Heroes is a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities.
 - Employer Best Practices – Insight from experienced trainers on recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans
 - Best Practices for Employing Recovering Warriors and Military Caregivers

- Best Practices for Construction Employers Webinar - Insight From Experienced Construction Industry Trainers On Recruitment, Hiring, and Retaining Veterans
- Military 101 - A recruiter/HR manager's guide to navigating the military infrastructure
- Wounded Veteran Employment – A comprehensive guide to hiring veterans with disabilities
- Effective Hiring Initiatives - Building a strong veteran hiring program and employer checklist
- The Military Hire - Why veterans and military service members?

➤ [Howard County Workforce Development Office Business Services](#) - Access thousands of local, state, and national job seekers free of charge using our online jobs database.

- Receive assistance with recruitment, screening and referral of qualified, motivated job applicants.
- Identify qualified candidates by using our assessment tools and resources.
- Obtain labor market information to analyze market trends and remain competitive.
- Take advantage of our on site resource center with access to computers, copy and fax machines, telephones and printers for your business needs.
- Use our office space or conference rooms to conduct job fairs, recruitment and other activities.
- Get Information on possible workforce training funding.

➤ [Military Corps Career Connect](#) – Better known as C3, is Maryland-wide initiative focused on building career success for transitioning active duty service members, active duty spouses, and recently separated veterans. C3 is funded by a \$4.2 million US Department of Labor National Dislocated Workers Grant awarded to Anne Arundel Workforce Development.

Business Services:

- On-the-Job Training
- Work & Learn Training
- Work Opportunities Tax Credits
- Access to Our Network
- Talent Prospector for a list of skilled candidates

➤ [Fort Meade Employment Readiness Office](#) - The Employment Readiness Program (ERP) offers resources to help with your career plan and job search. Whether you're a military spouse or Family member who just moved to a new installation, Retiree, or DoD civilian looking for new opportunities, or active duty Military, active Reserve, National Guard member, or Wounded Warrior, we're here to help. Some services include:

- Up-to-date information on local, national, and international employment opportunities, job market trends and education, and volunteer resources
- Classes and seminars on self-assessment and career exploration, resume writing, interviewing techniques, dressing for success, networking, and entrepreneurship
- Job fairs and other hiring events
- Teen/youth employment information

- Job board with a variety of job announcements