

KSBDC can help veterans gain key certifications for small businesses

VA designations allow access to federal procurement funds set aside for veterans' enterprises

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HAYS, Kan. – Military veterans now have a service provided by the Kansas Small Business Development Center to assist them in applying for the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business designation (SDVOSB). In addition, veterans can obtain assistance in verifying their Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) and SDVOSB status with the Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE).

The process of applying for the SDVOSB designation is tedious and often leaves veterans frustrated and in need of assistance to finish the process. KSBDC has teamed up with Karl Monger, owner of DriPowder LLC, a designated Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business, and the founder of GallantFew Inc., an organization dedicated to assisting veterans in transition.

"In 2009, I was laid off from my job. In researching opportunities, I was stunned that President Bush in 2004 signed Executive Order 13360, mandating every federal agency set aside 3 percent of its procurement budget for SDVOSB's," said Monger.

"This has to be the best kept secret in the government," he said. "I took ownership of DriPowder LLC and completed the certification process, achieving the VA's Certified Veteran Enterprise designation in July 2010. I then began sharing this information and coaching other veterans on the process. When I learned of the KSBDC's focus on growing veteran business, I immediately volunteered to help, and that has led to a partnership focused on identifying, coaching and growing Veteran-Owned and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses."

Monger's military background includes commanding an infantry company and serving as a Ranger battalion staff officer. He parachuted into Kuwait at the end of Desert Storm. Following active duty, he joined a U.S. Army Reserve unit and ultimately achieved the rank of major, retiring in 2003. He presented a session on applying for the SDVOSB designation at the KSBDC 2010 Operation Veterans: Start Up and Grow conferences.

"We realized from the attendance at Karl's sessions last year that this was a popular area for veterans," said Greg Panichello, KSBDC state director. "We partnered with Karl because he brings a unique perspective as a veteran business owner and because he can make the process of applying for the SDVOSB designation much smoother for our clients."

In addition to assisting veterans with the SDVOSB process, veteran business owners can obtain counseling for obtaining CVE verification. This verification ensures the business meets the guidelines for participating in the VA's buying authority. The CVE also provides vendor information pages that promote registered veteran-owned businesses to prime contractors and to the federal government. The CVE website (<http://www.vetbiz.gov/>) provides links to the federal procurement pages, assistance program pages and more.

After attending the 2010 Operations Veterans Conference in Kansas City last fall, Dana Ward, co-founder and director of marketing for Great Day Moving, contacted KSBDC to obtain services from Monger.

"My husband and I met Karl at the 2010 Operation Veterans Conference. Since he and my husband are both veterans, they hit it off immediately. When it comes to helping others, Karl is a genuine giver and he basically walked me through the whole process of the CVE designation for our local moving company," said Ward. "Without Karl's help, I would have never known how to navigate the government websites and requirements."

Monger said the VA's CVE distinction is crucial because all federal procurement officers turn to the VA CVE list to identify valid SDVOSBs. Three percent of the federal procurement budget in 2009 represented more than \$18 billion dollars, yet less than half of that mandated amount went to SDVOSBs. This represents an incredible opportunity for veteran business owners.

Funding for KSBDC veteran services are provided by a grant from the US Small Business Administration. The grant does not restrict counseling to Kansas veterans. KSBDC provides the special veteran counseling services to veterans from any state in the United States. In addition, if a veteran initially receives assistance in Kansas but relocates to another state, counseling can continue through the KSBDC or with a local Small Business Development Center in their new location. A complete list of SBDC locations can be found at www.asbdc-us.org

There are 17 KSBDC regional or outreach centers throughout Kansas. Each center is staffed with consultants who provide confidential, one-on-one business consulting at no cost. KSBDC also provides low-cost seminars and workshops in traditional areas of entrepreneurship and in areas of interest based on issues and trends in current events. The statewide host for the KSBDC is Fort Hays State University.

Veterans in Kansas who are interested in KSBDC services may call 785-296-6514 or toll free at 877-625-7232.

About KSBDC:

The Kansas Small Business Development Center Network is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Kansas Department of Commerce. KSBDC is nationally accredited through the Association of Small Business Development Centers by Congressional mandate.

KSBDC receives funding from and partners with higher education and economic development organizations to provide Kansas entrepreneurs with no-cost business consulting and resources for starting, maintaining and growing their businesses. For more information about the KSBDC Network, visit www.kansas.gov/ksbdc or call 877-625-7232.

About GallantFew:

GallantFew Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to eliminating veteran unemployment, homelessness and suicide by a unique blend of coaching and mentoring by veterans for service members departing active duty. Visit www.gallantfew.org or call 316-633-4599 for more information.

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