

## Attention veteran-owned businesses: The State of Washington wants to work with you!



**Lourdes E. 'Alfie'  
Alvarado-Ramos**  
WDVA Director

While 22,000 veteran-owned businesses operate in Washington state, only a small percentage have signed up for a benefit that can be worth thousands, even millions, of dollars to a company's bottom line. Why take the time to enroll? Because state government and its contractors are looking for you!

Under an executive order by the governor, Washington state agencies have a goal to award at least 5% of their procurement and construction contracts to veteran-owned businesses. Collectively, those state contracts total in the billions. But companies aren't recognized as veteran-owned unless they're certified as such. What's more, state certification gives a company an edge in securing some of that work. "Certification doesn't just verify your company's eligibility as veteran-owned. It makes your business easier to find," said Lourdes "Alfie" Alvarado-Ramos, director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). "Ultimately, the certification program allows prime contractors to use the list as a Yellow Pages for veteran-owned businesses."

Companies regularly contact the WDVA seeking to enlist veteran-owned businesses as subcontractors, said Jennifer

Montgomery, manager of the agency's veteran-owned business program. "We attend outreach events across the state to connect with veterans one on one. I let them know about opportunities for contracting with the state, and that certifying your business is quick, free, and easy."

Certification is through Washington's Electronic Business Solution, or WEBS. [See page 2 for more about WEBS.]

So what follows certification? Expand, network, and plan, Alvarado-Ramos advises. "Attend some of the veteran outreach events that take place across the state to gain exposure, meet with state agencies, and make personal connections." She also suggests working with agencies across the state that offer free business-development counseling to ensure you have a solid business plan. [A list of recommended agencies is on Page 3.]

Alvarado-Ramos emphasized that none of these benefits are available if a company isn't certified as a veteran-owned business. "Getting certified is the most important thing you can do because when you are certified, you are seen."

For additional assistance, please contact Jennifer Montgomery at the WDVA. Call: 360-485-1809 or email: [vob@dva.wa.gov](mailto:vob@dva.wa.gov)

## WSDOT could put your veteran-owned company on the road to new opportunities



**Roger Millar**  
Transportation  
Secretary

The Washington State Department of Transportation devotes about \$3 billion a year building and maintaining the state's multimodal transportation system. In recognition of the sacrifice America's veterans make for our country, WSDOT, like other state agencies, strives to award at least 5% of its construction and procurement contracts to veteran-owned businesses.

"Everyone benefits from this goal," said state Transportation Secretary Roger Millar. "I'm an Army brat, and I know the technical, project management and leadership skills many veterans acquire in the Armed Services apply perfectly to our work building infrastructure.

It's a proverbial win-win both for WSDOT and for the veteran-owned firms we retain on our projects."

WSDOT prime contractors seek to hire veteran-owned subcontracting businesses on transportation projects across the state, Millar said, but the department's 5% contracting target has room to hire more. "Our hunch is that a lot of veterans who own businesses simply don't know about the opportunities WSDOT may hold for them," he said. "Many veterans have skills and services that complement WSDOT's needs. Our goal is to bring their businesses into our projects."

More information on business opportunities with WSDOT is available on the department's website at: [wsdot.wa.gov/business](http://wsdot.wa.gov/business).

## Washington's Electronic Business Solution (WEBS)

### The first step in working with the state



Tara C. Smith  
DES Director

The Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) can help veterans who own businesses sell goods and services to the state. The first step is to register in Washington's Electronic Business Solution (WEBS). Each year, over 1,500 businesses sell \$1.9 billion worth of goods or services to state and local government agencies, Tribal governments, and nonprofits.

When you register, you can choose to receive email notifications about upcoming bid opportunities for goods and services as well as public works contracts.

"WEBS is a valuable tool for businesses to contract with state and local governments," said DES Director Tara Smith. "Whether you're an architect, engineer or sell goods and services, WEBS can help you connect with thousands of customers in Washington state."

### More ways DES can help

Other ways we work with the Department of Veterans Affairs to support veteran-owned businesses:

- We require inclusion plans for public works projects over \$1 million where prime contractors identify subcontractor opportunities for veteran-, minority-, and women-owned small businesses.
- We give priority points for veteran-owned businesses in for statewide solicitations for goods and services contracts.
- Agencies can search WEBS for veteran-owned businesses and notify them of contract opportunities.
- We conduct outreach with veteran-owned businesses across the state.
- Veteran-owned firms, along with other small and diverse businesses, participate in our Business Diversity Advisory Group, which provides strategies for inclusion and feedback about our programs.

## Steps for veteran-owned certification

- When registering with WEBS, click "Yes" to "Display company contact information to other companies for partnering opportunities." This allows potential business partners to see your company's certification.
- Click "Washington Veteran-Owned Business certification check box." This sends an email to the Department of Veterans Affairs, to verify your eligibility as a veteran-owned business.
- To obtain certification as a veteran-owned business, you need to be a Washington state enterprise and send WDVA the following:
  - Proof of honorable discharge (a copy of your DD214 can be obtained at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov))
  - Proof of 51% veteran ownership of business

## For more information about certification:

- Call WDVA: (360) 725-2169
- WEBS & bid opportunities: [des.wa.gov](http://des.wa.gov)
- Get help with WEBS: (360) 902-7400 or [WEBSCustomerService@des.wa.gov](mailto:WEBSCustomerService@des.wa.gov)



## I am on WEBS — What's next?

1. Find out if the company/prime contractor that hired your firm is required to hire small or minority-, women- or veteran-owned businesses.
2. If the company/contractor has federal government funding, they have hiring targets for disadvantaged and small business enterprises. (Only state government gives companies/primes an advantage for hiring veterans.)
3. Let the prime contractor/company that hired your firm know you are a registered veteran and about any other certifications you may have.
4. Double check that your account notifications are set to "Yes." This will allow you to receive notifications from WEBS about opportunities in your field. Ensure your contact information is updated and correct.
5. Attend outreach sessions. Look for partners. Two or more companies in partnership could bid larger contracts.
6. Check for your listing on the DVA website list of Certified Veteran Owned Businesses.



## Veteran-owned businesses may qualify for federal Small Business Enterprise program

Did you know that a veteran-owned business also may qualify to be certified as a federal Small Business Enterprise (SBE)? This federal certification is gender and race neutral. SBE-certified firms are eligible for U.S. Department of Transportation set-aside goals for small-business contracts.

The SBE program is similar to the disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) program. This means there is an SBE contracting goal, as well as a DBE goal, for WSDOT projects that receive federal funding. The intent of the SBE program is to increase small business utilization in general.

To certify or for more information, visit the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) at [omwbe.wa.gov/certification/federal-certification](http://omwbe.wa.gov/certification/federal-certification).

## Certification and business assistance for veteran-owned firms

Below are government organizations that help veterans become federally and state certified. Their services are free to you.

Type of Contract	Agency and Program	Website
State agencies Local municipalities Prime contractor	Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Enterprise Services  Veteran- and Servicemember-Owned Business Certification Program  Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE)	<a href="http://dva.wa.gov/program/veteran-owned-business-certification">dva.wa.gov/program/veteran-owned-business-certification</a>  Register here and mark the veteran check box: <a href="http://fortress.wa.gov/ga/webs/home.html">fortress.wa.gov/ga/webs/home.html</a>  <a href="http://omwbe.wa.gov/certification/">omwbe.wa.gov/certification/</a>
Federal Veterans Affairs (VA)  Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	Veterans Administration - Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization  Vets First Verification Program	VA business utilization: <a href="http://va.gov/osdbu/verification/">va.gov/osdbu/verification/</a>  Register here: <a href="http://vip.vetbiz.va.gov/">vip.vetbiz.va.gov/</a>  Contact your local PTAC verification assistance counselor for support. <a href="http://www.washingtonptac.org">www.washingtonptac.org</a>
All other federal agencies	U.S. General Services Administration System for Award Management (SAM)	Register here: Self identify as a veteran in SAM, <a href="http://www.sam.gov">www.sam.gov</a>

# More organizations that can help veterans start and grow their business



## **Alliance Northwest:**

[alliancenorthwest.org](http://alliancenorthwest.org) — The largest government to business connection event in the Pacific Northwest.

## **BunkerLabs:**

[bunkerlabs.org/our-locations/seattle](http://bunkerlabs.org/our-locations/seattle) — A national network of veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs that provides networking opportunities, office space, and business education for military connected community members.

## **Department of Enterprise Services (DES):**

[des.wa.gov](http://des.wa.gov) — DES manages business and operational services for state and local governments. DES also manages WEBS. [See page 2 for more information].

## **Employment Security Department (ESD):**

[esd.wa.gov](http://esd.wa.gov) — In partnership with other state and local organizations, helps veteran-owned businesses hire other vets. Connect online and choose a WorkSource location near you to get a contact name and phone number.

## **Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC):**

[washingtonptac.org](http://washingtonptac.org) — Works with business owners who have been in business for minimum of 2 years and want to secure government contracts: (360) 464-6043.

## **Regional Contracting Forum:**

[rcfwashington.org](http://rcfwashington.org) — A large event offering contracting and networking opportunities with government agencies and prime contractors.

## **Small Business Guidance:**

[business.wa.gov](http://business.wa.gov) — Links entrepreneurs and small business to Washington state resources. Connect with advisors at: (800) 917-0043.

## **Society of American Military Engineers (SAME):**

[same.org](http://same.org) — Offers training, education, and professional growth opportunities to veterans who are architects or

engineers. Contact: Mark Ohlstrom (president, Seattle post): (425) 450-6275 or email: [mark.ohlstrom@hdrinc.com](mailto:mark.ohlstrom@hdrinc.com).

## **The Washington Small Business Development Center (WSBDC):**

[wsbdc.org](http://wsbdc.org) — A network of business advisors who provide no-cost, one-on-one business advice, business training, and marketing advice.

## **Washington State Department of Transportation:**

[wsdot.wa.gov](http://wsdot.wa.gov) — Conducts events to connect small businesses and contractors with state and local agencies. Contact: Yolonda Brooks, Office of Equal Opportunity: (360) 522-0856 or email: [brooksy@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:brooksy@wsdot.wa.gov).

## **Washington State Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises:**

[omwbe.wa.gov](http://omwbe.wa.gov) — Provides business development assistance, and is the sole certifying authority for state and federal Minority-Owned, Women-Owned and Disadvantaged businesses. Call: (360) 664-9750.

## **Veteran Business Outreach Center:**

[businessimpactnw.org/services/vboc](http://businessimpactnw.org/services/vboc) — Part of the U.S. Small Business Administration, providing free business counseling and training to entrepreneurs who are veterans, service-disabled veterans, Reservists and Guard members, family members, and active-duty service members. Contact: Steve Watts-Oelrich, program director: (206) 324-4330 or email: [steveo@businessinpnw.org](mailto:steveo@businessinpnw.org).

## **Veterans Incubator for Better Entrepreneurship (VIBE):**

[tacoma.uw.edu/vibe](http://tacoma.uw.edu/vibe) — Provides veteran assistance to develop successful startups. Located on the UW Tacoma Campus. Contact: Noreen Slease: (253) 692-5813 or email: [nslease@uw.edu](mailto:nslease@uw.edu).

## Please email us and let us know how can we help you.

Are there organizations we have missed or essential information you can share with us that would help veterans?

**WDVA:** Jennifer Montgomery, Veteran Owned Business Program Manager.  
Email: [jenniferm@dva.wa.gov](mailto:jenniferm@dva.wa.gov)

**WSDOT:** Contact Regina Glenn, Diversity and Inclusion Manager for WSDOT Megaprograms.  
Email: [GlennRe@Consultant.wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:GlennRe@Consultant.wsdot.wa.gov)

**Title VI notice to public:** It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OECR's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7090.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information:** This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equity and Civil Rights at [wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov) or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.