

Resources for veteran-owned businesses

SPRING 2023

State certification can mean more contracting opportunities for veteran-owned businesses



David Puente Jr.
WDVA Director

While 22,000 veteran-owned businesses operate in Washington state, fewer than 1 in 10 has signed up for a benefit that can be worth thousands, even millions, of dollars to a company's bottom line.

Why take just a few moments to enroll and get certified? Because state government and its biggest contractors are required to look for you!

Under an executive order by the governor, Washington state agencies must aspire to award at least 5% of their procurement and construction contract dollars to veteran-owned businesses. That means they're searching state databases to find certified veteran-owned companies.

At the Washington State Department of Transportation, the agency requires its prime contractors to award up to 5% of their state-funded contracts' value to veteran-owned firms.

Collectively, state contracts total in the billions. But companies owned by veterans aren't recognized as such unless they're certified by the state. What's more, state certification gives these companies an edge in competing for public works projects.

"Certification doesn't just verify your company's eligibility as veteran-owned. It makes the business easier to find," said David Puente Jr., director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). "Prime contractors use the certification list as an online directory for recruiting veteran-owned businesses. When you are certified, you are seen."

[Washington's Electronic Business Solution](#), or WEBS, manages the certification of veteran-owned companies. [See page 3 to learn more about WEBS.] The process is quick, free and easy.

"My commitment to Washington's veterans and families, and to the team at WDVA, is to continue our journey toward providing effective programs and services that honor the service and sacrifice of our veterans," said Puente, an Army veteran.

For help, contact Shamekia Moultrie at WDVA.
Phone: (360) 791-1788 | Email: vob@dva.wa.gov

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



Roger Millar
Secretary of Transportation

The Washington State Department of Transportation currently devotes about \$4.5 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 a share 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 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/

New task force seeks to boost state contracts with veteran-owned firms, hire more veterans

A new Veterans Recruitment Task Force held its inaugural meeting in January with the goal of boosting public contracts with veteran-owned businesses and promoting more veteran hiring by public sector agencies.

The idea for the task force sprang from a conversation at the Governor’s Equity Summit in November between Regina Glenn, Diversity and Inclusion Manager for WSDOT Megaprograms, and Rafael Lozano, Outreach and Community Partnerships Coordinator with the state Department of Veterans Affairs.

“We saw the task force as a way to enhance our outreach to veterans and veteran-owned firms,” Glenn said. “We want to let them know of the business and employment opportunities to be found with public agencies, and strengthen their connections with our prime contractors.”

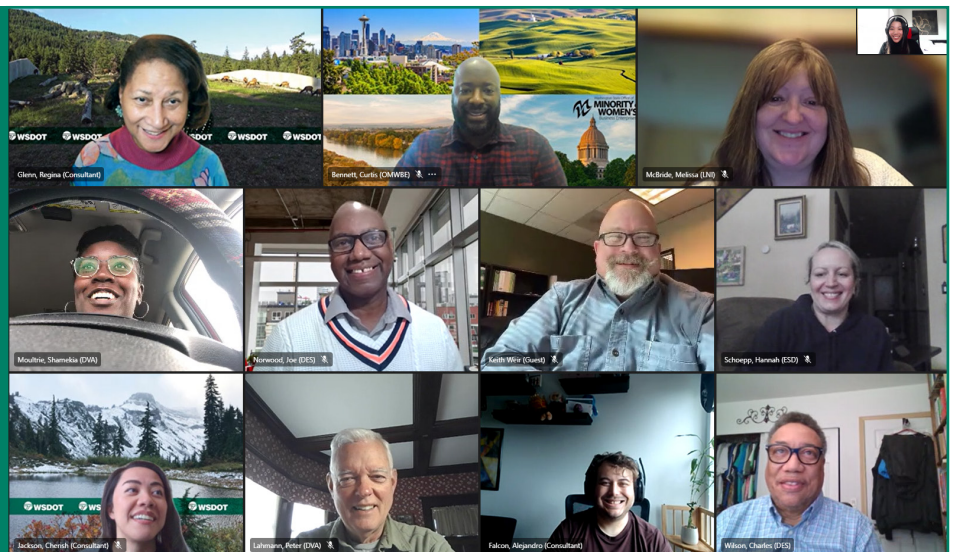
One of the group’s first tangible outcomes produced a list of some 200 state-certified veteran-owned companies that specialize in design and construction services. The group shared that list with the large construction contractors vying for WSDOT contracts on the upcoming SR 520 Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project and the I-405/SR 167 megaprogram.

Those two programs, Glenn noted, now have an enforceable goal for awarding contracts to veteran-owned firms. Failure to reach that contracting goal can result in WSDOT sanctions on the prime contractors.

Going forward, the Veterans Recruitment Task Force plans to meet monthly to gather relevant information, develop outreach strategies and potentially enlist more partnering agencies.

Participants have included Patrick Hughes (a veteran-owned business owner) and representatives from WSDOT, Department of Veterans Affairs, state Employment Security Department, Department of Labor and Industries, Department of Enterprise Services, Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Society of American Military Engineers, Hiring our Heroes, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Veteran Business Outreach Center, Northwest District Council of Laborers, and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Pictured to the right: Snapshot of a portion of task force members during a virtual meeting.



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)? Federal certification maintains race and gender neutrality. 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 federal 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 SBE program strives to increase small business utilization overall.

To get certified or to learn more, visit the Washington State Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises (OMWBE) website at omwbe.wa.gov/certification.



Steps for veteran-owned certification on WEBS (Washington’s Electronic Business Solution)

- 1** When [registering as a vendor](#), select “Yes” to “Display company contact information to other companies or partnering opportunities.” This allows potential business partners to see your company’s information.
- 2** Make sure you select the “Washington Veteran-Owned Business certification” check box. This sends an email to the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to verify your eligibility as a veteran-owned business.

Don’t forget! To obtain certification as a veteran-owned business, you must be a Washington state enterprise. Ensure you send the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) the following:

- Proof of honorable discharge (a copy of your DD214 can be obtained at [archives.gov](#)).
- Proof of at least 51% veteran ownership of business.

Need help navigating or registering on WEBS?

Contact DES Customer Service at (360) 902-7400 or WEBSCustomerService@des.wa.gov.

Reach out for more information:

Department of Veterans Affairs: (360) 791-1788 | dva.wa.gov
 Department of Enterprise Services: (360) 902-7400 | des.wa.gov



I’m 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 on WEBS 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.



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.

Contract Type	Agency or Program	Website
State agencies Local municipalities Prime contractor	Washington Department of Veterans Affairs Washington Department of Enterprise Services Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises Washington Department of Labor & Industries	Agency website: dva.wa.gov/ WEBS registration: pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/ State certification: omwbe.wa.gov/certification/ Contractor registration: lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/contractors/register-as-a-contractor/
Federal agencies	U.S. Small Business Administration: Veteran Small Business Certification (VetCert) U.S. General Services Administration System for Award Management (SAM)	Registration: veterans.certify.sba.gov/ Registration: sam.gov

More organizations that can help veterans start and grow their business

Alliance Northwest: The largest government to business connection event in the Pacific Northwest. alliancennorthwest.org

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

Department of Enterprise Services (DES): Manages business and operational services for state and local governments. des.wa.gov DES also manages WEBS. [See page 3 for more information]. webcustomerservice@des.wa.gov | (360) 902-7400

Employment Security Department (ESD): In partnership with 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. esd.wa.gov

Department of Labor and Industries (L&I): Offers support for identifying and registering construction and specialty contractors. Also hosts training and workshops for Washington contractors. lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/contractors

Department of Transportation (WSDOT): Conducts events to connect small businesses and contractors with state and local agencies. Contact the Office of Equity and Civil Rights at WSDOT. wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/equal-opportunity-contracting

Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA): In partnership with DES, helps veteran-owned businesses get certified. dva.wa.gov

Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE): Provides business development assistance, and is the sole certifying authority for state and federal minority-owned, women-owned and disadvantaged businesses. omwbe.wa.gov | (360) 664-9750



Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), an APEX Accelerator: Provides no-cost government contracting advising services to Washington firms to help them find, bid and win public sector contracts and subcontracts. washingtonptac.org | (360) 464-6041

Regional Contracting Forum: A large annual event for contracting and networking opportunities with government agencies and prime contractors. 2023 webpage: des.wa.gov/about/news-center/events/2023-09/washington-regional-contracting-forum

Small Business Guidance: Connects entrepreneurs and small businesses to Washington state resources. business.wa.gov | (800) 917-0043

Society of American Military Engineers (SAME): Offers training, education, and professional growth opportunities to veterans who are architects or engineers. same.org

The Washington Small Business Development Center (WSBDC): A network of business advisors who provide no-cost, one-on-one business advice, business training, and marketing advice. wsbdc.org

Veteran Business Outreach Center (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. businessimpactnw.org/services/vboc | (206) 324-4330

Veterans Incubator for Better Entrepreneurship (VIBE): Provides veteran assistance to develop successful startups. Located on the UW Tacoma Campus. tacoma.uw.edu/vibe

Contact us if you need help:



Washington State Department of Transportation

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Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

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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.

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