

### Government Leaders and Procurement Specialists Lining Up for Largest Nationwide Conference of Its Kind

WASHINGTON – The upcoming National Veterans Small Business Conference and Expo, Aug. 15-18 in New Orleans is taking shape. Hosted by VA for the first time, it will be the largest nationwide conference of its kind focused on helping Veteran-owned and service-disabled Veteran-owned businesses succeed in winning federal contracts and expanding their businesses.

"This conference offers a new approach to providing Veteran-owned businesses and service-disabled Veteran-owned businesses the access and tools they need to thrive in the Federal marketplace," said Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Our primary goal is to help more Veterans start and grow their own businesses."

In addition to Secretary Shinseki and other senior VA leaders, conference speakers will also include Jane Lute, Deputy Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security, and Frank Kendall, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

The conference will offer valuable insight to assist both new and seasoned Veteran-owned and service-disabled Veteran-owned small businesses to succeed. More than 100 sessions will address a range of topics, including branding, marketing, management, financing and business opportunities within the federal government as well as how to secure loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA) and its new Express & Pilot Programs, which offer streamlined and expedited loan procedures for certain borrowers such as Veterans.

Participants will also have an exceptional opportunity to network via the VetGovPartner platform that will enable them to view extensive business profiles of all participants at the conference as well as to identify business opportunities associated with the more than 200 government procurement decision makers in attendance.

The conference will also offer on-site assistance to Veterans and Veteran business owners on how to become eligible for VA's Vets First Contracting Program.

For those Veterans or Veterans-owned businesses new to the process, the conference will provide a learning session that explains current requirements to become verified accompanied by lessons learned and tips to help applicants navigate the process. In addition, VA staff will be on-site to assist firms to initiate verification applications, and to provide updates on status of applications in process.

The conference learning sessions will be targeted at a variety of businesses--from new business owners to well-established Veteran-owned businesses looking to expand opportunities or increase market share.

Additionally, the state directors of VA from 10 states will attend to share their 'best practices' on Veterans-owned business development with conference attendees.

The National Veterans Small Business Conference and Expo is open to both government and non-government personnel. For more information and to register for the conference, go to [www.nationalveteransconference.com](http://www.nationalveteransconference.com).

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