



State Veterans Entrepreneur Programs

Executive Summary

Military veterans bring technical expertise and problem-solving skills developed through their service, which may support entrepreneurship. However, the transition from active duty to civilian employment or business ownership can present challenges, including limited access to capital and professional networks, as well as difficulty translating military experience into civilian qualifications and business opportunities.

Across the Southern region, states have adopted a range of policies and programs to support veteran-owned businesses. These efforts include state-established entrepreneurship programs, tax incentives, university-based business incubators, and partnerships with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Although approaches vary by state, several common strategies have emerged that may help inform future policy considerations.

Research Methods

The information provided in this memorandum was retrieved and reviewed using Quorum and state Department of Veteran Services (or equivalent) webpages.

Findings and Analysis

Veterans historically represented a substantial share of small-business owners. Nearly 50 percent of World War II veterans reportedly started businesses, compared with a considerably smaller percentage of more recent veterans. Approximately 26 percent of veterans express interest in starting a business, while fewer than 5 percent of post-9/11 veterans have done so.ⁱ

In response to this gap, some states have incorporated veteran entrepreneurship into their economic development and workforce transition strategies. In addition to providing employment assistance, these states offer services intended to help veterans establish and grow small businesses.

State initiatives generally seek to:

- Improve access to business education and technical assistance.
- Expand financing opportunities for veteran-owned businesses.
- Increase participation in government procurement.
- Connect veterans with mentors and professional networks.
- Coordinate state, federal, university, and nonprofit resources.

Programs are administered through a variety of entities, including departments of veterans affairs, economic development agencies, universities, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs), and nonprofit organizations.

Several CSG South member states have adopted a range of approaches to supporting veteran entrepreneurship.



Alabama established the Alabama Veterans Resource Center through [Senate Bill 70 \(Act 2025-20\)](#). The center serves as a centralized resource that provides career counseling, job placement, transition assistance, and support for veteran business development through public-private partnerships.

Florida created Veterans Florida through [House Bill 7015 \(2014\)](#) as a nonprofit corporation operating under the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. The organization promotes veteran employment, workforce development, and entrepreneurship initiatives.

Georgia supports veteran entrepreneurs through the Veterans Education Career Transition Resource (VECTR) Center. The center uses state appropriations and federal Veterans Business Outreach Program funding to provide business development assistance.ⁱⁱ

Louisiana established the Louisiana Initiative for Veteran and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Entrepreneurships and later created the Veterans First Business Initiative through [House Bill 391 \(2019\)](#).

Mississippi emphasizes university-based programming through the Veterans Business Outreach Center and the Boots to Business Revenue Readiness program and Mississippi State University.ⁱⁱⁱ These programs provide veterans with resources and assistance related to transition planning, business-model development, and business ownership.

Missouri supports veteran entrepreneurship through university-based programs, including the Veterans Business Outreach Center and the Boots to Business Revenue Readiness program at Mississippi State University.^{iv, v}

North Carolina supports veteran entrepreneurs through the Veterans Business Outreach Center at Fayetteville State University, reflecting a university-based approach also used in other states.^{vi} The nonprofit North Carolina Veterans Business Association also connects and supports veterans and military spouses with business resources.^{vii}

Oklahoma supports aspiring veteran entrepreneurs through several programs, including Oklahoma State University's Veterans Entrepreneurship Program (VEP), OKVetWorks, and the REI Oklahoma Veteran Loan Program. VEP provides learning and development opportunities for veterans, with an emphasis on disabled veterans.^{viii} OKVetWorks offers events, training, and consultations related to starting and managing a business.^{ix} The REI Oklahoma Veteran Loan Program provides eligible veterans with loans of up to \$15,000 at a fixed interest rate of 7.5 percent to support business formation.^x

South Carolina supports veteran entrepreneurs through the the South Carolina Veterans Business Outreach Center at the Citadel and the South Carolina Small Business Development Center Veterans Business Program through the University of South Carolina Moore School of Business.^{xi, xii}

Tennessee is home to the National Veterans Entrepreneurship Program at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, which provides entrepreneurship education and business planning assistance for veterans.^{xiii}

Texas has established a statutory framework to support veteran entrepreneurship. [Senate Bill 1476 \(2013\)](#) established the Veteran Entrepreneur Program within the Texas Veterans Commission. Subsequent legislation provided franchise tax exemptions and filing fee waivers for qualifying veteran-owned businesses, with [House Bill 346 \(2025\)](#) making those incentives permanent.

Virginia supports veteran-owned businesses through the Old Dominion University Veterans Business Outreach Center, the Virginia Small Business Development Center (VSBDC), and the VSBDC's Veterans Award Program.^{xiv, xv}



West Virginia supports veteran entrepreneurs through its Certified Veteran-Owned Business Program..^{xvi} The state also established the Boots to Business Waiver Program through [Senate Bill 316 \(2015\)](#). The program waives the initial business registration fee and annual-report filing fees for a qualifying veteran-owned business's first four years..^{xvii}

Conclusion

Southern states have adopted a variety of approaches to supporting veteran entrepreneurship, reflecting differing administrative structures and economic development priorities. Common elements include centralized coordination, partnerships with higher education and federal programs, technical assistance for business development, and targeted financial support. These state initiatives offer examples of policy options that may inform future legislative discussions throughout the region.

ⁱ "Veteran Entrepreneurs: Challenges and Opportunities on the Path to Small Business Ownership." 2026. Commemorative Air Force. 2026. <https://commemorativeairforce.org/news/veteran-entrepreneurs-challenges-and-opportunities-on-the-path-to-small-business-ownership>.

ⁱⁱ "GA VECTR: Georgia Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center." n.d. www.gavectr.org/. Accessed August 11, 2026.

ⁱⁱⁱ ITS Web Development Team. 2026. "Home | VBOC." [Msstate.Edu](https://www.vboc.msstate.edu/). 2026. <https://www.vboc.msstate.edu/>.

^{iv} "Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans | Research, Innovation & Impact." 2026. [Missouri.Edu](https://research.missouri.edu/entrepreneurship-bootcamp-for-veterans). 2026. <https://research.missouri.edu/entrepreneurship-bootcamp-for-veterans>.

^v "Veterans Startup Ventures | MU Extension." 2026. [Missouri.Edu](https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/veterans-startup-ventures). 2026. <https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/veterans-startup-ventures>.

^{vi} "Home - Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)." 2017. [Fsuvboc.Com](https://www.fsuvboc.com/). 2017. <https://www.fsuvboc.com/>.

^{vii} "North Carolina Veterans Business Association." 2026. [Ncvetbiz](https://www.ncvetbiz.org/). 2026. <https://www.ncvetbiz.org/>.

^{viii} "Veterans Entrepreneurship Program - Oklahoma State University | Oklahoma State University." 2021. [Business.Okstate.Edu](https://business.okstate.edu/riata/vbp/vbp). January 29, 2021. <https://business.okstate.edu/riata/vbp/vbp>.

^{ix} "OKVetWorks." 2024. Oklahoma Specific Transition Education Program - OKSTEP. 2024. <https://oklahoma.gov/okstep/okvetworks.html>.

^x "Veteran Loan Program | REI Oklahoma." 2026. [REI Oklahoma](https://www.reiok.org/business-lending/loans/veteran-loan-program/). June 29, 2026. <https://www.reiok.org/business-lending/loans/veteran-loan-program/>.

^{xi} "South Carolina Veterans Business Outreach Center - Tommy and Victoria Baker School of Business." 2024. Tommy and Victoria Baker School of Business. October 24, 2024. <https://www.citadel.edu/business/sc-vboc/>.

^{xii} "History | SC Small Business Development Centers." 2023. Index. <https://www.scsbdc.com/history>.

^{xiii} "University of Tennessee at Chattanooga." 2025. [Utc.Edu](https://www.utc.edu/gary-w-rollins-college-of-business/outreach-programs/national-veterans-entrepreneurship-program). University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. 2025. <https://www.utc.edu/gary-w-rollins-college-of-business/outreach-programs/national-veterans-entrepreneurship-program>.

^{xiv} "Veterans Business Outreach Center." 2023. <https://www.odu.edu/lie/vboc>. April 2023. <https://www.odu.edu/lie/vboc>.

^{xv} "Veterans - Virginia SBDC." 2012. Virginia SBDC. November 26, 2012. <https://www.viriniassbdc.org/programs/veterans/>.

^{xvi} "The WV Veteran and Military Personnel Owned Business Certification Programs." 2026. [Wv.Gov](https://sos.wv.gov/WVCVOB). 2026. <https://sos.wv.gov/WVCVOB>.

^{xvii} "Veteran Owned Business Waiver." 2026. [Wv.Gov](https://sos.wv.gov/business/registration-and-waivers/veteran-owned-business-waiver). 2026. <https://sos.wv.gov/business/registration-and-waivers/veteran-owned-business-waiver>.