

Veterans First Buying Authority

The Veterans First Buying Authority redefines priorities for contracting preferences within VA, and gives service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSBs) and veteran-owned small businesses (VOSBs) first and second priority, respectively, in satisfying VA's acquisition requirements. It allows sole-source contracts over the Simplified Acquisition Procedures Threshold up to \$5,000,000 (including options). It implements restricted competition via set-aside procedures for each category of SDVOSBs and VOSBs. And it allows additional credit evaluation factors for SDVOSB or VOSB status.

Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about the Veteran First program:

Do I qualify?

In order to qualify for the Veterans First Buying Authority, you must be a veteran, a service-disabled veteran, or an eligible surviving spouse; you must be at least 51% ownership and control of your small business; and you must have your business verified by CVE through the procedures listed at Verification Guidelines . To review the definitions of a veteran, service-disabled veteran, or an eligible surviving spouse, go to <http://www.vetbiz.gov/vip/eligible.htm>.

What are the requirements?

The requirements are to be a veteran, a service-disabled veteran, or an eligible surviving spouse; to be at least 51% ownership and control of your small business; and to have completed the verification process, including registering your business in the Vendor Information Pages (VIP) database at <http://www.vip.vetbiz.gov> and to be in receipt of your letter stating you have a verified veteran-owned or service-disabled veteran-owned small business.

Must I provide my SSN?

Yes, you must provide your Social Security Number, once the verification program begins and you decide you want your status and your company ownership to be verified. In order for CVE to verify your veteran or service-disabled veteran status in the Veterans Benefit Administration's BIRLS system, we must have your Social Security Number.

How will you verify me?

Once CVE receives your authorization to check your veteran or service-connected disabled veteran status in the BIRLS system, by electronically submitting to CVE your VA Form 0877, CVE will check the Veterans Benefit Administration's BIRLS system to see if you have a discharge of "other than dishonorable," and if you are listed in BIRLS as a veteran, or a service-disabled veteran.

What will I get as proof of being a verified veteran-owned or service-disabled veteran-owned small business?

Once you have been verified as a veteran-owned or service-connected disabled veteran-owned small business, you will receive a letter from CVE, on VA CVE letterhead, stating that as of the date of verification, your company has been found to be either a verified veteran-owned small business (VOSB) or a verified service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB). The letter will state that the verification is good for one year from the date of the letter, providing your ownership and organizational structure remains

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the same. After that time, you will need to re-verify your business. In addition, you will receive a lapel pin indicating your verified status and a copy of a logo which can be used on your marketing material.

How do I report fraudulent businesses?

There are very specific procedures to report fraudulent businesses. The Small Business Administration (SBA) is responsible for investigating potentially fraudulent businesses. You can contact SBA's Office of Government Contracting. The SBA has six Offices of Government Contracting, and you should contact the office nearest you. You may also contact the VA's Office of Waste, Fraud, and Abuse at 800-488-8244, or by email at vaoighotline@va.gov.

What is the procedure for businesses found to be fraudulent?

Any business concern or any veteran determined to have misrepresented the status of that concern as a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans or as a small business concern owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans shall be debarred from contracting with VA for a period of five years.

What is a service-connected disability?

A service-connected disability is a disability due to an injury or disease incurred in or aggravated during military service, and certain conditions which may develop after release from active duty, if you were released from active military duty with anything other than dishonorable discharge.

How do I file for a service-connected disability?

Veterans can file for service-connected disability by contacting their regional Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) office at 800-827-1000. You can also apply online at <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. Veterans are recommended to have a copy of their service medical records, other medical records pertaining to the service-connected ailment or condition, and their military discharge paper (DD Form 214 copy 4) to expedite the processing.

How do I prove I am a veteran?

You can prove you are a veteran by providing copy number 4 of your DD 214 to the closest VA Regional Office to your home. If you don't know where the closest VA Regional Office is located, you can call 800-827-1000.

Where do I go to request another DD 214?

Contact your regional VBA office at 800-827-1000 and they will provide you with instructions on obtaining another copy of your DD 214.

What is the Records Examination Program?

The Records Examination Program is an investigation by VA's CVE officials which verifies the accuracy of any statement or information provided as part of the VetBiz VIP verification application process. Thus, examiners may verify that the concern currently meets the program's eligibility requirements, and that it met such requirements at the time of its application or its most recent size recertification. Examiners may conduct the review, or parts of the review, by phone, by electronic message exchange or in person

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at one or all of the concern's offices. Representatives from the department will determine the location of the examination. Examiners may review any information related to the concern's eligibility requirements including, but not limited to, documentation related to the legal structure, ownership, and control of the concern. At a minimum, examiners shall review all documents supporting VA Form 0877. These include: financial statements; federal personal and business tax returns; personal history statements; and a Transcript of Tax Form, obtained by submitting an IRS Form 4506. Two to three years of transcripts are preferred. Other documents, which may be reviewed when necessary based on the application of these regulations to a particular application include: articles of incorporation/organization; corporate by-laws or operating agreements; organizational, annual and board/member meeting records; stock ledgers and certificates; state-issued certificates of good standing; contract, lease and loan agreements; payroll records; bank account signature cards; and licenses.

How often must I get verified?

Once a year. Verification status lasts for one year.

Where do I register?

You can register your business on <http://www.vip.vetbiz.gov>.

What information is needed to register?

You would need a Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number assigned to your business to complete the registration. If you do not have a DUNS number, you can request a free DUNS number by contacting the D&B customer service at <http://www.dnb.com> and stating that you intend to conduct business with the federal government.

Taken from <http://www.vetbiz.gov/acquisition/vetfaqs.htm>