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City of Chicago and Veteran Business Project Partner to Launch New Certification Assistance for Veteran-Owned Businesses

Program to help Veterans become certified to compete for City contracts

CHICAGO, IL – The City of Chicago proudly announces a major partnership with Veteran Business Project (VBP), marking a major milestone in the city’s continued commitment to empower veterans and stimulate economic growth. This initiative aims to assist local veterans in becoming Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE) certified so they can take advantage of the City of Chicago veteran programs and incentives.

"At Veteran Business Project, we see firsthand the power of entrepreneurship in the lives of veterans. Our collaboration with the City of Chicago, led by Mayor Brandon Johnson and his administration, exemplifies our commitment to empowering veterans through strategic partnerships. Together, we aim to connect more veterans with business opportunities and provide ongoing support throughout their entrepreneurial journey," said Lynn Lowder, CEO and Co-Founder of VBP. "Together, we can continue to build momentum in offering hope and building brighter futures for our veterans."

"By designating Veteran Business Project as an Assist Agency, we're making it easier for veteran-owned businesses to get certified and actively work toward increasing the number of veterans certified," said Kevin Barszcz, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs. "Our goal is to help more of them secure city contracts successfully, and VBP's strong connection with veterans positions them as an ideal partner for the city in achieving this goal."

Key Highlights of the Initiative:

1. **Certification Opportunities:** VBP will collaborate with the Mayor's Office of Veteran Affairs to guide veterans through certification. In addition to Veteran-Owned Business



Enterprise (VBE), VBP will assist veterans who qualify for certification as Business Enterprises Owned or Operated by People with Disabilities (BEPD), Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE), and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE).

2. **Contract Qualifications:** Veteran-owned businesses will gain access to various city contracts spanning industries such as construction, work services, professional services, and information technology. For the complete list of the City's buying plan, please refer to <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dps/Outreach/4Q2023BuyingPlan.pdf>.
3. **Application Process:** VBP will assist veterans in applying for certifications, making it easier for more veterans to discover the opportunity and successfully apply for the certification. Here is a direct link to the certification webpage: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dps/provdrs/cert/svcs/Certification_VBE.html

About Veteran Business Project:

The Veteran Business Project (VBP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to guiding veterans and military spouses through entrepreneurship by providing them with the tools, resources, and mentorship needed to succeed. Our core mission is "Offering Hope and Saving Lives" by recognizing that entrepreneurship can serve as a lifeline, offering hope and purpose to veterans transitioning to civilian life. In addition to the VBE certification process, our innovative "vharmony™" model connects veterans looking to purchase a business with existing owners wanting to sell – all at zero cost to veterans.

Learn more at veteranbusinessproject.org.

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