

Virginia Small Business Veteran of the Year Award



Procedures and Requirements



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Program Overview

The mission of Virginia Small Business Development Center (VSBDC) is to contribute to the development of Virginia's economy and provide technical business assistance to small and medium sized businesses throughout Virginia. From the Federal mandate of the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, Public Law 106-50, plus a deep sense of indebtedness to all Veterans, VSBDC has continued to include Virginia veterans as a target group for special assistance. The **Small Business Veteran of the Year Award** has been established to recognize the accomplishments of this special group of Virginia entrepreneurs.

Program Objectives

1. Recognize veterans who have made a significant contribution to the economy through ownership in a Virginia small business.
2. Recognize veterans who have made a significant difference in their communities by promoting a sense of duty, volunteerism and an appreciation of country, democracy, and freedom.
3. To provide VSBDC and veterans in their service area, opportunities for mutual networking, thus increasing awareness of the Small Business Development Center's (SBDC) services, and allow the SBDCs to make veteran's business needs assessments.
4. To increase the number of Virginia veterans served by the SBDC.

Eligibility Guidelines

- Any veteran who has been honorably discharged from active duty or retired from any United States of America branch of military service. Nominees for this award may still be active in Reserve or National Guard units. Veteran must possess a DD214 and include a copy with their application.
- The veteran must own, or have owned, at least 51 percent of a Virginia based business.
- The veteran must have owned their business for at least one year.
- The veteran and his/her business must be (or have been) located in Virginia.
- Nominees must be living in Virginia at the time of their nomination.
- All nominating material becomes the property of VSBDC and may not be returned.
- Past local winners, who do not win the state award, are eligible to compete again for the local award, and thus the state award, after one year. They are only able to win the local award two out of five years.
- Past state winners are not eligible for a second award, including the local award.

- In the event two or more veterans own and operate a company and the local committee wishes to nominate that company, only one of the company's veterans may be selected as the nominee. The selection determination will be left up to the company and local SBDC director.

Nomination Process

A veteran business owner may be nominated for the local award through one of two processes.

1) Each SBDC will establish a nominating committee made up from members located within its service area. It is the local SBDC director's decision as to how the nominating committee will be determined. Nominating committee members may vary by center, but may consist of (suggestions only):

- Local Veterans Councils
- Chamber of Commerces
- Local veteran business owners
- Local veteran business executives

2) A veteran may also be nominated either through self nomination or by another nominator by visiting www.smallbizvetaward.org and downloading application. The completed application would then be forwarded by the nominee to the local SBDC office where the veteran's business is located.

Each local SBDC office will establish a deadline for the nomination process which will be listed on the award website. Local SBDC nominations will be screened and selected by the local committee with the local award winner, (one local winner per center), being selected no later than **December 31 of each year**. The local winner may be announced and presented his/her award at a time and place chosen by the local SBDC director.

A completed nomination packet of the local SBDC winner must be sent to the State Committee in order to compete for the **Virginia Small Business Veteran of the Year award**. These packages must be received at the VSBDC George Mason University office by **December 31 of each year**.

State Selection Committee

The Veteran's Award State Selection Committee is recruited by the VSBDC Network Lead Center and will be comprised of the following:

- Committee Members will be chosen by the state office and preferably be comprised of veteran business owners, veteran business executives or veteran academics.

- The committee will be comprised of at least three members.
- Committee members will not be chosen from within the VSBDC Network.

The state nominating committee will evaluate all the local SBDC winners and select two candidates that best meet the criteria guidelines. The committee will then send its list of two top candidates, with each candidate's nominating package, to all SBDC Directors by February 15 of each year. Each SBDC Director will, by written ballot, vote on the candidate as to his/her selection for the Virginia Small Business Veteran of the Year award. Each director should base their decision solely on the following criteria:

- The nominee's business success and achievements
- The nominee's community involvement, with a special emphasis on veteran causes
- The nominee's military history and achievements

Voting may be returned by fax, e-mail, or regular mail. The ballot will be furnished by the VSBDC network office.

To be counted in the voting, each SBDC director must send his/her **completed ballot** to the VSBDC Network office no later than **by February 28 of each year**.

Criteria for Judging

Nominees will be considered on the following:

- The nominee should be innovative and/or highly successful in his/her efforts to promote small business development and growth through ownership/partial ownership (51 percent or more) in a small business. ***This will count towards 60 percent of total score.***
- The nominee should demonstrate community involvement in his/her promotion or advocacy of patriotism, country, duty and freedom with a special emphasis of working with veteran causes. ***This will count towards 20 percent of total score.***
- The nominee's military history, awards and achievements should also be considered. ***This will count towards 20 percent of total score.***

The State Selection Committee will use a 1-5 rating system to determine the nominee's ranking in each category of the criteria and using the weighted averages listed above. Nominees will be ranked by total score to determine the top two finalists.

State Nomination Package

- **Nomination Letter**

The nominating package will include a letter, not to exceed one page, single spaced, explaining why the nominee is being nominated. This letter should describe the qualities and performances that merit the award. The letter should have one-inch margins, 12 pitch and Times New Roman font. The nomination letter must include the nominator's name, address, and phone number.

- **Resume and/or Biography**

Nominations must include the nominee's resume and/or biographical profile.

- **Permission Form 1000sbvya**

Nominations must include a completed VSBDC form 1000 sbvya granting permission to use the information for promotional purposes. The form is included in the instruction packet, or can be obtained from the area's Small Business Development Center. On the publicity form, please note that a brief summary of the nominee's service time and activity is requested. This information is vital, especially for the person who makes the winner announcements and presentations.

- **DD214 Veteran's Proof of Military Service**

Nomination packages must include a copy of the veteran's DD214 (Proof of Service). Depending on the veteran's year of service the DD214 form may have a different number. Some proof of service must be provided.

- **Letters of Recommendation**

Nominations may include up to three letters of recommendation or examples of media coverage. All information must be in printed format as electronic format will not be accepted.

Mail nomination packet to:

SMALL BUSINESS VETERAN OF THE YEAR AWARD
Virginia Small Business Development Center Network
Attention: Jody Keenan, Director
4031 University Drive, Suite 200
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Announcement of State Award

The local SBDC award will consist of a certificate signed by the VSBDC director, along with plaque, or other appropriate award (paid for by the local SBDC office). The local SBDC director may select whatever venue they wish to present this award. Each local director should make all efforts to coordinate the award with another business or veteran event, or have it presented by local, state or congressional political representative.

Each SBDC should gather as much media exposure as possible to bring attention to the veteran, their business, and the local SBDC.

The state award is a specially designed and crafted award accompanied with a similar certificate signed by the VSBDC, director. In addition, each annual state award winner will have his/her name inscribed on the base of a Virginia metal crafter's brass urn that will be permanently and prominently displayed at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond.

We are greatly indebted to the director and members of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation for allowing the VSBDC to display the state award at the Memorial. Part of the significance of the location is:

- The Virginia War Memorial to honor our veterans has been described as one of the most beautiful and inspiring War Memorials in the United States.
- It is located in downtown Richmond with a commanding view of the city skyline and the James River. The setting, on the most prominent point in the city, is an appropriate one to honor those who sacrificed so that America would remain free.
- The Virginia War Memorial stands at one of the most accessible points in Richmond; directly on U.S. Route 1, just north of the Robert E. Lee Bridge, one mile south of I-95.
- It is open every day of the year from 8:00 AM until 10:00 PM, and is lighted at night.
- The memorial is secured by a Capital Police Officer 24 hours a day. Admission is free and ample parking is provided.
- It is believed that the display of the Small Business Veteran of the Year Award at the Virginia War Memorial greatly enhances the meaning and value of the award, allows for a prominent site to promote the award and publicize each annual winner, and creates a closer partnership with Virginia veterans and the VSBDC.