



Invitation to Negotiate

Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program

Network Partner

Proposal Acceptance & Negotiation Period: July 26, 2019 ongoing through October 31, 2019

Only written questions will be accepted, please email questions to itn@veteransflorida.org.

1. ITN Purpose

Florida is for Veterans, Inc., d/b/a Veterans Florida, seeks responses from qualified Florida entities to serve as Network Partners for the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program (“Program”). The Program is a comprehensive entrepreneurship initiative implemented across a network of Florida-based partner entities throughout Florida. The Program may include activities and assistance such as peer-to-peer learning sessions, mentoring, technical assistance, business roundtables, networking opportunities, support of student organizations, speaker series, or other tools within a virtual environment. Portions of the Program are based on the Lean Startup method and designed to introduce veterans to entrepreneurship education appropriate for their abilities and the stage of their business idea. Veterans Florida seeks to contract with multiple entities or regional partners to administer and facilitate the Program to Veterans. Interested entities may submit proposals addressing Program activities further outlined in this ITN.

2. Veterans Florida Overview

The State of Florida created Veterans Florida under the Florida GI Bill signed into law on March 31, 2014. Section 295.21, Florida Statutes, identifies the purpose of Veterans Florida to promote Florida as the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

Veterans Florida’s mission is to:

- Attract and retain Veterans and their families by connecting them to employment, training, and educational opportunities.
- Strengthen Florida businesses through educating them on the value and skill sets Veterans bring to the workforce and providing training resources for their Veteran hires.
- Enhance the entrepreneurial skills of Veterans.

Veterans Florida lives by the values of Integrity, Service, Caring, Commitment, and Excellence.

3. Program Objectives and Overview

[Section 295.22\(3\)\(e\)](#), Florida Statutes, establishes the criteria for the entrepreneur initiative program for veterans in Florida, the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program (“Program”). Veterans Florida administers the Program and may work with multiple or regional Network Partners to facilitate and implement an instance of the Program.

Objectives:

- 1) Total veterans served.
- 2) Number of businesses registered and made into a legal entity.

- 3) Number of employees hired by business entity.
- 4) Capital invested into business entity.
- 5) Revenue generated by business entity.

These objectives are tracked by Veterans Florida, reported to stakeholders, and will be used to evaluate overall performance.

Overview:

The Program is designed to meet the needs of the veteran entrepreneur regardless of where they are in their entrepreneurial journey. For Fiscal Year 2019-20 and beyond, Veterans Florida is creating a year-round program with multiple opportunities to engage veterans with quality entrepreneurship education and courses.

These portions of the program shall be included in this ITN:

Cohorts. The core portion of the Program is facilitated (not lectured) cohort-based, entrepreneurship courses. This portion of the Program is designed as an intensive study in entrepreneurship for veteran entrepreneurs with vetted business ideas or young companies that need to accelerate growth. The cohort-based course should be rooted in the Lean Startup method that teaches veterans to validate their business models with real customer feedback. Mentoring has been the key to success in past cohort-based classes. Veterans Florida encourages respondents to include mentorship opportunities from business and community leaders, successful entrepreneurs and other professionals in their proposals.

Workshops and Networking. Network Partners may hold workshops on topics such as how to use common accounting software (QuickBooks, Xero, etc.), social media marketing for small businesses, commercial real estate, commercial insurance, and other issues that business owners frequently face. Specialized industry based workshops are also encouraged such as government contracting and franchising to address specific needs of veteran entrepreneurs that they may not get from a general course in business. The goal of these events are to build a community and pipeline of veterans interested in entrepreneurship.

Incubators and Co-working Space. Business incubators and co-working spaces generally offer startups shared operation space. In doing so, entrepreneurs enjoy a collaborative work environment with invaluable mentoring and networking opportunities, funding support and shared equipment. Network Partners are encouraged to have relationships with these entities to assist Program participants during the program.

4. Scope of Work

Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program (“Program”) is a comprehensive entrepreneurship program implemented across a network of Florida-based partner entities throughout Florida. Veterans Florida’s objective is for veterans to finish the Program with the skills and confidence to become successful business owners. The Program offers a pipeline for veteran entrepreneurs to take a business idea from conception through execution and scalability. The program does not guarantee that an idea will turn into a fully operational business. Participants can expect to understand the entrepreneurial process and put their newly learned skills to work. Responsibility for this program extends to our Network Partners through this ITN. The scope of work may include one of the following or a combination of the following:

- A. Facilitated Start-up Program.** A facilitated start-up program is an intensive multi-week program of instruction designed for a small cohort (10-15 veterans) of vetted participants to attend the cohort-based course. Veterans Florida requests proposals that include two or more cohort-based courses per year.

At a minimum, cohort-based participants should meet the following criteria:

- Be able to articulate a well thought out business concept that is realistic, achievable, and likely profitable.
- Be able to launch within 6-12 months of completion of the class.
- Be able to leverage the veterans or co-founders experience, education, skills, knowledge or abilities.
- Can generate enough revenue and profit to support the entrepreneur and employees.
- Solve a unique problem, or an old problem in a new/interesting way.
- Demonstrate commitment to his or her business idea.
- Have a product prototype, model, drawings, website or other tangible evidence of business activity.
- Present business model, financial projections, and any other pertinent information to a group.

The culminating event of the cohort-based courses is a business “pitch” competition in which program participants develop and make a presentation or “pitch” to a panel of judges. Pitch competitions are not required to include prizes or startup capital. *Under no circumstances shall funding provided by Veterans Florida to the Network Partner be used as seed funding or capital for the pitch competition.*

Cohort sizes should be between 10 and 15 veterans to ensure that each participant receives one-on-one attention and time with the cohort facilitators and mentors. Veterans Florida will pay for the licensing, training and material cost for the

CO.STARTERS curriculum for Network Partners. For more information on CO.STARTERS visit: <https://costarters.co/>

Veterans Florida will also accept proposals from respondents to use their own curriculum. Respondents that wish to use their own curriculum should include in the proposal:

- An overview or syllabus of the curriculum.
- Demonstrate that they have significant experience facilitating the curriculum.
- Outcomes from entrepreneurs who have completed the curriculum.

Cohorts do not need to be exclusively made up of veterans. Veterans Florida welcomes proposals from respondents that can show a clear path to incorporating veterans into their existing cohort-based startup courses. ***Veterans Florida funding must only be used to fund veterans attendance in courses. Please clearly describe your financial management structure and internal controls to ensure appropriate record keeping of Program funds.***

Metrics will be collected from the participants by the Network Partner before the Program begins as a baseline and at the end of the program to measure growth. Network Partners agree to share data and metrics with Veterans Florida and assist in the maintenance of data to keep metrics up to date. At a minimum before beginning a course, at the completion of the course, and at least annually following the course a Network Partner shall collect if applicable to the veteran:

- Total veterans served.
- Number of businesses registered and made into a legal entity, including the legal name and doing business as name used for the state registration, and federal tax ID numbers.
- Number of employees hired by business entity.
- Capital invested into business entity.
- Revenue generated by business entity.

B. Facilitated Growth Program. A facilitated growth program is an intensive multi-week program of instruction designed for a small cohort (6-10 veterans) of vetted participants to attend the cohort-based course. Veterans Florida requests proposals that include one or more cohort-based courses per year.

At a minimum, cohort-based participants should meet the following criteria:

- Have a registered business entity or be incorporated. Has launched and registered their business with the State of Florida on Sunbiz and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- Be able to leverage the veterans or co-founders experience, education, skills, knowledge or abilities.
- Has already generated some revenue with potential to grow to generate enough revenue and profit to support the entrepreneur and employees.
- Demonstrate commitment to his or her business idea.
- Have evidence of ongoing business activity.

Under no circumstances shall funding provided by Veterans Florida to the Network Partner be used as seed funding or capital for the pitch competition.

Cohort sizes should be between 6 and 10 veterans to ensure that each participant receives one-on-one attention and time with the cohort facilitators and mentors. Network partners should facilitate peer-to-peer discussions and mentorship.

Veterans Florida will only accept proposals from respondents who use their own curriculum. Respondents should include in their proposal:

- An overview or syllabus of the curriculum.
- Demonstrate that they have significant experience facilitating the curriculum.
- Outcomes from entrepreneurs who have completed the curriculum.

Cohorts do not need to be exclusively made up of veterans. Veterans Florida welcomes proposals from respondents that can show a clear path to incorporating veterans into existing cohort-based startup courses. ***Veterans Florida funding must only be used to fund veterans attendance in courses. Please clearly describe your financial management structure and internal controls to ensure appropriate record keeping of Program funds.***

Metrics will be collected from the participants by the Network Partner before the Program begins as a baseline and at the end of the program to measure growth. Network Partners agree to share data and metrics with Veterans Florida and assist in the maintenance of data to keep metrics up to date. At a minimum before beginning a course, at the completion of the course, and at least annually following the course a partner will collect:

- Total veterans served.
- Number of businesses registered and made into a legal entity, including the legal name and doing business as name used for the state registration, and federal tax ID numbers.
- Number of employees hired by business entity.

- Capital invested into business entity.
- Revenue generated by business entity.

C. Workshops and Monthly Events. Network Partners may offer frequent workshops on business topics such as social media marketing, the basics of cloud-based accounting software, negotiation tactics, and other subjects that would be helpful for small business owners. Include the following items in your proposal (be as specific as possible):

- Proposed workshop topics.
- Frequency of workshops.
- Location of workshops.
- Any outside organizations that you may partner with to deliver workshops.
- Proposed cost for veterans to attend workshops.

Network Partners including these activities as part of their response shall, at a minimum, hold one monthly event to provide an opportunity for new veterans interested in entrepreneurship to learn about the Program, network with peers and your staff, and be connected with resources or information to assist them in their entrepreneurial journey. These meetings can be a morning coffee and mingle event, after hours (happy hour) networking or other similar format. These monthly events will be open to any veteran interested in entrepreneurship and will be conducted by selected Network Partners and be located at their primary place of business or suitable alternative locations. Veterans Florida encourages Network Partners to invite local resource providers, subject matter experts, vendors, and other successful entrepreneurs to participate in these monthly meetings.

D. Incubators and Co-Working Space. Network Partners providing incubator or co-working space should have, in addition to the space, a way to assist and track progress of veterans participating in their program. Activities should include either direct support or partnerships with providers of workshops, cohort based instruction, mentorship activities, and other business resources such as marketing, accounting, or legal advice or support. Submissions for incubator and co-working space should include detailed information on:

- Partnerships both disclosing connections and what types of resources the partner will provide.
- Detail resources to be provided, including any qualifying criteria.
- Frequency of workshops, instruction, events, and mentorship.
- Location of workshops, instruction, events and mentorship.
- Any proposed cost to veterans to attend workshops, instruction, events and mentorship to include membership dues or other fees.

Proposal Requirements

The entities selected to be Network Partners must successfully demonstrate their administrative, staffing, and financial resources to develop, implement, and deliver a successful program. All Network Partners are encouraged but not required to match Veterans Florida's investment. The match may be a dollar for dollar match or matched with in-kind. The duties of each Network Partners include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- A. Staffing.** Network Partners shall be responsible for the staffing and organization of the Program. Proposal submissions must include a staffing plan that clearly identifies: facilitators and instructors who are sufficiently knowledgeable and experienced in teaching entrepreneurship; staff members who will serve as a liaison to the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program Manager, complete and submit reports and invoices to Veterans Florida, and be the primary point of contact with program participants; and mentors, resource providers and guest lecturers (if known/identified).

Proposal Requirement: Include a staffing plan.

- B. Promote/Marketing.** Market and promote their programs and services to veterans, veterans groups and their families. Promote the economic benefits of the program to the community and state through marketing efforts and communications to the general public, local government officials, and internal and external stakeholders. Additionally promotion/marketing efforts should increase program attendance and participation of veterans. All promotion/marketing efforts must be co-branded with Veterans Florida in accordance with Veterans Florida's brand guide. Veterans Florida may provide supplemental marketing support on a case by case basis.

Proposal Requirement: Include a promotion/marketing plan.

- C. Recruit.** Recruit veterans interested in entrepreneurship to attend monthly networking events, scheduled workshops or lectures and cohort-based classes and incubators and co-working space.

Proposal Requirement: Include a participant recruiting plan.

- D. Collaborate.** Collaborate with other Network Partners, Veterans Florida, and other stakeholders throughout the duration of the program, to include after-action reviews, to provide for a continually improving program. Refer program alumni to other programs and services offered by Veterans Florida partners. In addition, Network Partners shall recruit a pool of qualified mentors to be matched with veteran participants. Mentors shall be entrepreneurs, successful in business or retired business executives that can dedicate time to helping program participants become successful entrepreneurs. The goal for the cohort-based courses is to have mentors assigned to each veteran. Network

Partners should make every reasonable effort to match the mentor's experience and interest to those of the veteran participants. Local resources are also essential to the success of the participants in the Program. Network Partners should ensure that veterans have ample follow-on services and support from outside entities at no cost to the veteran upon completion (i.e. SBDC, local incubators or accelerators, co-working spaces, veteran business groups.)

Past best practices include:

- Incorporated graduate students in need of service hours to support program or that have projects or skills that match what the Program participants need.
- Coordinated with deans and department heads to find undergraduate students that have projects or skills that match what the Program participants need.
- Utilized campus resources such as campus Military Resource Centers for volunteers, mentors, instructors, and recruitment.
- Leveraged local resources such as workshops offered by other entities that related to entrepreneurial participants.
- Leveraged unique campus resources such as research facilities, computer labs, art & film schools, web development/computer science departments.
- Collaborated with community partners, i.e. industry subject matter experts, to provide support during and after formal program.
- Provided facilitators and administrators with real-world experience who provided relevant examples, case studies, and guidance to participants.

Proposal Requirement: Identify proposed partnerships and demonstrate previous collaborative efforts or projects.

E. Implement. Implementation of curriculum/program activities to support Program.

Proposal Requirement: Include proposed curriculum/program activities and dates.

F. Collect and Report. Collect information about the veteran applicants, students, and their businesses. Additionally, collect student satisfaction through surveys and other feedback. Report activities, achievements, performance metrics, and quantitative data to Veterans Florida monthly and as requested.

Proposal Requirement: Demonstrate reporting experience with examples.

G. Identify. Identify additional local resources, such as business incubators or “co-working labs”, small business or entrepreneur networking groups, and/or any online virtual tools, for entrepreneurial veterans available to them throughout the duration of course work

and afterwards. Identify local business leaders for inclusion as course instructors or veteran entrepreneur mentors.

Proposal Requirement: Identify and demonstrate (through letters of support or other documentation) relationships with resource providers that you will refer veterans to for assistance.

Program Deliverables

The Network Partner shall provide to Veterans Florida the following program components and deliverables on or before the 10th day of the month for the previous months activities:

A. Monthly Reports. Monthly Reports shall include (See Attachment A for example):

- Date and time of meetings or events held during the reporting period, and include the number and names of veteran participants.
- Significant activities.
- Marketing and promotional activities undertaken, including any match contributions to the program.
- Financials.

B. Ongoing participant tracking.

- Network Partners shall report and maintain applications, contact information, demographics, veteran verification, metrics and other data for use by the program, entered into Veterans Florida's Salesforce database by the Network Partner. At a minimum the data shall be collected before starting and at the commencement of any event and program.
- Database management:
 - All participants will be entered into Veterans Florida's database for tracking.
 - Participant statuses and contact information will be maintained as accurately as possible.
 - Resources provided, connections/introductions made to resource providers, funders, investor shall be captured.
 - Business creation and success metrics shall be collected and input into the database.

C. Final Program Report. Upon completion of the program, Network Partners are expected to provide a final report that shall include:

- Total number of participants from all meetings and events.
- Total number of participants completing cohort-based courses.

- A biography of all cohort class participants. Biographies may be posted on Veterans Florida’s website to highlight our participants and their businesses.
- A summary of media coverage about the Network Partner’s instance of the program (with clippings, image of article or link to online copy).
- Seed funding raised for pitch competition (if any), and a listing of participants that received seed funding (include amount).

5. ITN Schedule and Process

| Activity | Dates |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| ITN Issued | July 22, 2019 |
| Question and Answer Period | July 22, 2019 ongoing through October 25, 2019 |
| Proposal Acceptance and Negotiation Period | July 26, 2019 ongoing through October 31, 2019 |

Veterans Florida may review proposal submissions against Evaluation Criteria, conduct negotiations, and execute a contract with an entity at any point during the Proposal Acceptance and Negotiation Period.

Interested entities must direct any and all communications relating to this ITN to the designated Procurement Officer:

Heather Collins, Director of Administration
itn@veteransflorida.org
 Subject Line: Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program ITN

6. Questions from Entities

Written questions may be submitted to itn@veteransflorida.org. Please include “Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program ITN” in the subject line and be as clear and specific as possible when wording your question. Additionally, be sure to include your contact information - Name, Company, Title, Telephone, and email address.

Veterans Florida will respond to questions within three business days. Veterans Florida will post a link on <http://veteransflorida.org/itn/> that will contain a list of each question and response.

7. Proposal Submission Process

All proposals should be submitted electronically to itn@veteransflorida.org. Proposals submitted after the deadline may be rejected and not considered.

Veterans Florida will notify each entity that their proposal has been received via email within two business days. Please be sure to include your email address with your proposal.

8. Proposal Format

Proposal submissions should be submitted in the format described below and include all of the information requested. As mentioned above, entities may respond to networking, workshops, cohort-based classes, incubators or co-working spaces, or a combination of services.

| No. | Proposal Section | Content/Deliverable |
|-----|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Cover Letter | Include the name of the institution/entity, contact person, title, address, email address, and telephone number. |
| 2. | Summary | Include a summary of your proposal. |
| 3. | Organization Overview | Include: history, organization chart, types of programming offered, outcomes for entrepreneur clients, specialized resources, collaborators (i.e. university affiliates,) and the number of clients/entrepreneurs served annually. |
| 4. | Organization Capabilities | Include responses to requirements listed in Section 4 Scope of Work under Proposal Requirements. *Any outsourcing or contracting needs to include a name and description of the organizations being contracted. |
| 5. | Proposed Pricing | Provide the information requested in Section 9. |

9. Pricing Information

Veterans Florida requests that each entity provide pricing in a fixed fee format for services outlined in the ITN. Pricing should be all-inclusive to include: staffing, travel, outsourced or

contract work, and any other expenses for the Program. Proposals should include a breakdown of the proposed pricing so that Veterans Florida may evaluate the proposed pricing.

Veterans Florida will allow Network Partners to charge reasonable fees for workshops, lectures and other events to veteran entrepreneurs. Please clearly identify any fees that you are proposing to charge to veteran entrepreneurs for these activities. The fees should be included in the proposed budget as program income. All funds collected through official Program activities shall be used for further enhancing the Program at the entity locations.

10. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated with the following criteria in mind:

| Criteria | Weight |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>Experience and Capabilities</p> <p>Administrative support and staffing, additional resources/relationships to benefit veterans, reporting experience/capabilities, and previous experience working with veteran entrepreneurs.</p> | Moderate |
| <p>Entrepreneurship Community Connectivity</p> <p>Relationships with resource providers, documented collaboration with other entrepreneurship resources, letters of support, and local resources.</p> | Moderate |
| Recruitment | Heavy |
| Promotion/Marketing | Moderate |
| <p>Implementation</p> <p>Curriculum or program activities, facilitators or instructors, and post-program support.</p> | Heavy |
| <p>Price</p> <p>Total cost, value of program, and matching funds.</p> | Heavy |

11. ITN Terms

Veterans Florida may adjust the specifications of this ITN throughout the process. This ITN does not constitute an offer by Veterans Florida to agreement, but rather represents a definition of the specific services being sought and invites entities to submit proposals. Issuance of this ITN, the preparation and submission of proposals and the subsequent receipt and evaluation of any such proposals by Veterans Florida does not commit Veterans Florida to award an agreement to any entity. Entities, by submitting a proposal, agree that any cost incurred by it in responding to this ITN or participating in the ITN process, is to be borne solely by the Entity. Veterans Florida shall incur no obligations or liability whatsoever to anyone by reason of the issuance of this ITN or the actions of anyone relative thereto. Only the execution of a written agreement with an entity related to one or more services described herein will obligate Veterans Florida and then only in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such agreement.

No action or communication of Veterans Florida other than the execution of a written agreement shall constitute acceptance of such offer, and even then, shall legally obligate Veterans Florida only in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in the written agreement.

Veterans Florida adheres to Chapter 119, F.S., and those portions of Chapter 286, F.S., relating to public meetings and records, and may only withhold and keep confidential those records in its possession that are made confidential or exempt from disclosure by Florida law. The entity shall fully cooperate with Veterans Florida regarding its efforts to comply with the requirements of Florida's public records laws. In the event of a dispute concerning the disclosure of a document in Veterans Florida's possession that entity asserts is confidential under Florida law, the entity shall be responsible for taking the appropriate legal action and agrees to fully defend, hold harmless and indemnify Veterans Florida in connection with any legal proceeding and/or disclosure. All communications and any other information concerning this ITN provided to Veterans Florida may be made public at any point in time unless otherwise made confidential by Florida law.

Attachment A: Monthly Report Format

The following items are hereby reported for the period Month, Day, Year to Month, Day, Year (report due on the 10th day of the following month).

1. Recruitment and attendance efforts:
2. Collaboration efforts with:
3. Activities and achievements for the month:
4. Promotion and advertising efforts to the:
 - a. General Public:
 - i.
 - b. Local Government Officials:
 - i.
 - c. Internal Stakeholders:
 - i.
 - d. External Stakeholders:
 - i.
5. Media Coverage (if possible include date, web address and/or content location, scanned copies if not online, how the media became aware of program or veterans story).
6. Local resources identified that are/will be available to the Veteran throughout the duration of the course and beyond.