



**Florida is for Veterans, Inc  
dba Veterans Florida**

**Request for Qualifications (RFQ):  
Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program**

**July 16, 2024**

## **1. RFQ Overview**

The objective of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is to select qualified vendors, known as Partners, to administer the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program (“Program”) throughout Florida. Veterans Florida seeks to contract with one or more Partners to administer the Program, and the resulting relationship is intended to last at least three years, depending on state appropriations. All relationships are reviewed and renewed on an annual basis.

## **2. About Veterans Florida**

Veterans Florida is a non-profit created by the State of Florida to help military veterans and their families transition to civilian life and to promote Florida’s status as the nation’s most veteran-friendly state under Florida’s Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) Program, s. 295.22, F.S. Our mission can be summed up in the theme – Your Pursuit. Our Power. – because we recognize military veterans are incredibly focused and will succeed in achieving their personal and professional goals when they take advantage of our tools and resources.

For more information, visit <https://www.veteransflorida.org/>.

## **3. Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program Overview**

The Program, established under [s. 295.22, F.S.](#), connects business leaders in the state with participants seeking to become entrepreneurs and 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. The Program purpose is to provide participants a comprehensive suite of training options designed to enhance their entrepreneurial skills wherever they may be in their entrepreneurial journey. The Program references the five most commonly used stages of business to determine a participant’s potential level of needed training: Idea, Startup, Growth, Maturity, and Exit.

Under the Program, a participant shall be an entrepreneur who is a veteran of the United States military, an active duty member of the United States military within 12 months of separation or retirement, a member of the Florida National Guard or United States Reserves, or a spouse who resides in Florida.

## **4. Key Principles of the Program**

The driving principle for the Program is for training and assistance to meet the entrepreneur where they are in the entrepreneurial journey. This approach favors tailored training over information overload and facilitated discussion over lecture-formatted instruction.

Training for participants in the Idea or Startup business stages shall be based on the Lean Startup method which uses the Business Model Canvas, Lean Canvas, or similar derivation to test an entrepreneur's risks and assumptions about their idea or business. The general goal for a participant in Business Model Canvas training is to determine the validity or marketability of their business idea or startup. Business Model Canvas is the "gateway" to the broader journey of entrepreneurship, and lays a foundation to build upon for validated businesses or business ideas. In some cases, it may be useful for an entrepreneur with an established business to receive Business Model Canvas training to confirm certain fundamental principles, such as key customer segments and unique value proposition, or to prepare for a new service or product launch.

A new type of training is being added in FY 2024-25 called Getting Started. This will be a package of workshop-style training on various general business topics such as how to register a business, market a business, or seek funding for a business. This training is best conducted for a participant after successfully completing Business Model Canvas training since this training assumes the participant has a viable business or idea.

Training for participants in the Growth business stage may be more flexible. The Program assumes that an entrepreneur in this stage may or may not have employees and has a business generating revenue. The Program will require an introduction or refresher to the Business Model Canvas to help the entrepreneur identify any risks or assumptions that may need addressing. While a finite goal for participants in Growth training is difficult to determine since all businesses grow at their own speed, entrepreneurs should come out of training with a general and practical understanding of scaling, streamlining, and expanding their business.

Business Model Canvas, Getting Started, and Growth training shall be conducted in small groups, or cohorts. The training shall be through facilitated group discussion among the entrepreneurs with little to no lecture-formatted instruction. Guest speakers at the beginning of training modules are encouraged and may cover general business topics outside the specific training module, as long as the general business topic discussion is a small portion of the total time dedicated to the training module.

Ideally, Partners should understand that while the number of participants is important, quality of training and guidance is desired more. For example, if after an entrepreneur completes Business Model Canvas training and they do not have a business or idea that is viable or marketable, and not likely to be in the future, it is of no value for them to later be in Growth training with the same business idea. Instead, the entrepreneur with an unviable business idea, yet who demonstrates proper mindset and skills for owning their own business, may be better served by being directed to resources in franchising or acquisition.

## 5. Program Components

**Cohorts.** Cohort-based training provides multiple training modules to a small group of prescreened participants in a facilitated discussion environment. In addition to providing proficiency in the training topics, the cohorts should build camaraderie among participants. Training is likely to occur over several weeks and usually at a particular set time of the week for the participants. Business Model Canvas, Getting Started, and Growth training shall be conducted in cohorts. Veterans Florida prefers that in-person cohort training be offered to participants. In-person cohorts are offered live and include a meeting location for all attendees to meet and participate. However, Partners may offer virtual cohorts with participation via Zoom, Teams, GoogleMeet, or similar software.

Partners are encouraged to include mentorship opportunities for participants during the duration of the cohort from local business and community leaders, successful entrepreneurs, and other professionals.

**Workshops.** Workshops provide topical general business training to groups of participants of any size over the course of a few hours. Training in general business topics such as legal structures, stakeholders, launching, marketing, franchising, acquisitions, and other issues that business owners frequently face shall be conducted in workshops. Workshops may also provide training for topics covered under the Business Model Canvas, Getting Started, and Growth cohort training, but should not be conducted in a manner to replace cohort training. Specialized industry based workshops are also encouraged, such as government contracting, food services, or other, to address specific needs of local participants. Camaraderie building and networking is encouraged during the workshop, but training is the primary purpose. Workshop events shall be open to any eligible participant. Veterans Florida prefers that workshops be offered to participants live and in-person and include a meeting location for all attendees to meet and participate. However, Partners may offer virtual workshops with participation via Zoom, Teams, GoogleMeet, or similar software.

**Networking.** Networking provides opportunities for expanding personal and professional connections and building a sense of community to groups of participants of any size over the course of a few hours. General business topics may be presented during networking, but community building is the primary purpose of networking. Networking events shall be open to any eligible participant, mentors, entrepreneurs, and community business leaders.

## 6. Scope of Work

Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program (“Program”) is a comprehensive entrepreneurship program implemented across a network of Florida-based partner entities throughout the state of Florida. Veterans Florida’s objective is for veterans to finish the Program with the skills and confidence to become successful business owners or grow their business. The Program offers a

pipeline for veteran entrepreneurs to take a business idea from conception through execution and scalability. The Program does not guarantee participants that an idea will turn into a fully operational business. Program participants can expect to understand the entrepreneurial process and put their newly learned entrepreneurial skills to work. Responsibility for facilitating this Program is extended to our Partners through this RFQ.

The Program fiscal year 2024-25 budget is \$655,000. Veterans Florida fiscal year is July 1 - June 30. Veterans Florida will determine the number of program offerings provided by Partners (“Partners”) based on the veteran needs in the state of Florida. These needs will determine the quantity of programs and geographic location within the state.

Entities may provide a proposal on one or all services included in the Program. Agreements will be customized based on the services provided by the Partner. The anticipated scope of work for services sought by Veterans Florida is listed below:

**A. Facilitated Business Model Canvas Program**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Number of Participants       | 10 (minimum attendance) to 15                               |
| Training Modules             | 10  |
| Training Module length       | not less than 2 and no more than 3 hours                    |
| Participants’ Business Stage | Idea, Idea to Startup, Startup, post Startup (if necessary) |

The Partner shall conduct a Business Model Canvas program of a cohort with 10-15 participants based upon Business Model Canvas, Lean Canvas, or similar derivation to test an entrepreneur’s risks and assumptions about their idea or business. The goal for a participant in Business Model Canvas training is to determine the validity or marketability of their business idea or startup and to complete and produce a Business Model Canvas (or similar Canvas) at the end of training.

Participants are expected to attend 70% of the cohort. The Partner is expected to develop the necessary curriculum and training schedule. The curriculum, attendance method (in-person or virtual), and timelines must be approved by Veterans Florida. The training schedule may adjust based on the needs of participants.

Participants that do not attend 70% of the cohort are not included in the minimum attendance. Additionally, repeat participants may only participate if they are not taking a seat away from a first-time participant or testing a new idea or business model. The repeat participant will not count towards the minimum. This applies to veterans repeating the same cohort training within the previous two years. Any and all exceptions must be approved by Veterans Florida.

The cohort shall include a maximum of ten (10) training modules, which include instruction on the following topics based on the Canvas offered to participants:

|   | Business Model Canvas                | Lean Canvas                                  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1   | Customer Segments                    | Customer Segments; Early Adopters            |
| 2   | Value Propositions                   | Problem; Existing Alternatives               |
| 3   | Channels                             | Unique Value Proposition; High-Level Concept |
| 4   | Customer Relationships               | Solution                                     |
| 5   | Revenue Streams                      | Channels                                     |
| 6   | Key Resources                        | Revenue Streams                              |
| 7   | Key Activities                       | Cost Structure                               |
| 8   | Key Partners                         | Key Metrics                                  |
| 9   | Cost                                 | Unfair Advantage                             |
| 10  | Prepare to Pitch Your Business Model |  |
| Additional concepts to be provided throughout these modules: Iteration, Pivoting, Minimum Viable Product, and others deemed necessary by Partner. |                                      |  |

The table above provides a generally recognized order for each of the two leading Canvas models, but Partners may deviate from these orders based upon their experience or other factors.

Guest speakers at the beginning of training modules are encouraged and may cover general business topics outside the specific training module, as long as the general business topic discussion is a small portion of the total time dedicated to the training module.

Partners are encouraged to include mentorship opportunities for participants during the duration of the cohort from local business and community leaders, successful entrepreneurs, and other professionals. Local resources are also essential to the success of Program participants, and Partners are encouraged to expose participants to ample follow-on services and support from outside entities upon completion (i.e. SBDC, local incubators or accelerators, co-working spaces, veteran business groups).

The Partner may host 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 Partner be used as seed funding or capital for the pitch competition.

Business Model Canvas participants must be vetted by the Partner and meet the following criteria (documentation collected by the Partner):

- A Florida resident.
- Discharged veteran with other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge; Partners must collect participant's DD214 Member 4 copy or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs letter verifying other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge.
- Active duty member of the United States military within 12 months of End Term of Service (ETS), or a member of the Florida National Guard or United States Reserves; Partners must collect the letter confirming guard/reserve or active duty status.
- Spouse or unremarried former spouse of a veteran or servicemember with documentation of letter verifying marriage or former marriage to a veteran or servicemember, their DD214 Member 4 copy or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs letter verifying other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge or letter confirming guard/reserve or active duty status.
- An entrepreneur with a for-profit idea, startup business, or established business and a need to test their risks and assumptions for a new product or service.

The Objectives of Business Model Canvas training are:

- Participants complete and produce a Canvas.
- Participants individually determine if their idea, business, or new product or service is or is not validated and marketable.
- Partner determination on each of the participants' viability and marketability.

## **B. Facilitated Getting Started Program**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Number of Participants       | 10 (minimum attendance) to 15                  |
| Training Modules             | 6  |
| Training Module length       | Not less than 2 hours and no more than 3 hours |
| Participants' Business Stage | Idea, Idea to Startup, Startup, post Startup   |

The Partner shall conduct a Getting Started program with a cohort of 10-15 participants on workshop-style topics to include subject matter experts and topics such as legal structures, stakeholders, launching, marketing, acquisitions, or other issues that business owners frequently face. Specialized industry based workshops are also encouraged, such as

government contracting, fundraising, or franchising, to address specific needs of veteran entrepreneurs.

Participants are expected to attend 70% of the cohort. The Partner is expected to develop the necessary curriculum and training schedule. The curriculum, attendance method (in-person or virtual), and timelines must be approved by Veterans Florida. The training schedule may adjust based on the needs of participants.

Participants that do not attend 70% of the cohort are not included in the minimum attendance. Additionally, repeat participants may only participate if they are not taking a seat away from a first-time participant or testing a new idea or business model. The repeat participant will not count towards the minimum. This applies to veterans repeating the same cohort training within the previous two years. Any and all exceptions must be approved by Veterans Florida.

The cohort shall include a maximum of six (6) training modules, which include instruction on the following training:

| Combination of the following or optional and related topics:  |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Registering business</li><li>● Marketing</li><li>● Accounting</li><li>● Funding</li><li>● Franchising/Acquisition</li><li>● Local Resources (SBA, SBDC, VBOC, etc.)</li></ul> |

Guest speakers during training modules are encouraged.

Partners are encouraged to include mentorship opportunities for participants during the duration of the cohort from local business and community leaders, successful entrepreneurs, and other professionals. Local resources are also essential to the success of Program participants, and Partners are encouraged to expose participants to ample follow-on services and support from outside entities upon completion (i.e. SBDC, local incubators or accelerators, co-working spaces, veteran business groups).

Getting Started participants must be vetted by the Partner and meet the following criteria:

- A Florida resident.
- Discharged veteran with other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge; Partners must collect participant's DD214 Member 4 copy or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs letter verifying other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge.
- Active duty member of the United States military within 12 months of End Term of



Service (ETS), or a member of the Florida National Guard or United States Reserves; Partners must collect the letter confirming guard/reserve or active duty status.

- Spouse or unremarried former spouse of a veteran or servicemember with documentation of letter verifying marriage or former marriage to a veteran or servicemember, their DD214 Member 4 copy or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs letter verifying other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge or letter confirming guard/reserve or active duty status.
- An entrepreneur with a for-profit idea, startup business, or established business and a need to test their risks and assumptions for a new product or service.

The Objectives of Getting Started training are:

- Participants attend, learn important topics, and network with other local veteran and spouse entrepreneurs.

**C. Facilitated Growth Program**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Number of Participants       | 6 (minimum attendance) to 8              |
| Training Modules             | 6  |
| Training Module length       | not less than 2 and no more than 3 hours |
| Participants' Business Stage | Growth, Maturity, Exit                   |

The Partner shall conduct a facilitated growth program (Growth) of a cohort with 6-8 veterans in a program of training designed to provide participants plans to grow and expand their business. Participants in this training may or may not have employees and should have a business generating revenue.

Participants are expected to attend 70% of the cohort. The Partner is expected to develop the necessary curriculum and training schedule. The curriculum, attendance method (in-person or virtual), and timelines must be approved by Veterans Florida. The training schedule may adjust based on the needs of participants.

Participants that do not attend 70% of the cohort are not included in the minimum attendance. Additionally, repeat participants may only participate if they are not taking a seat away from a first-time participant or testing a new idea or business model. The repeat participant will not count towards the minimum. This applies to veterans repeating the same cohort training within the previous two years. Any and all exceptions must be approved by Veterans Florida.

The cohort shall include a maximum of six (6) training modules, which includes the following training:

|   |
|---|
| Required:   |
| Introduction or refresher to Business Model Canvas/Lean Canvas/Lean Startup   |
| Combination of the following or optional topics:  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Timing</li><li>● Managing Stakeholders</li><li>● Constraints</li><li>● Growing your Team/Operations</li><li>● Raising/Accessing Capital/Business Plans</li><li>● Financials</li><li>● Scalability</li><li>● Infrastructure</li><li>● Exit Strategy</li><li>● Pitching Your Business</li></ul> |

Guest speakers during the training modules are encouraged and may cover general business topics outside the specific training module, as long as the general business topic discussion is a small portion of the total time dedicated to the training module.

Partners are encouraged to include mentorship opportunities for participants during the duration of the cohort from local business and community leaders, successful entrepreneurs, and other professionals. Local resources are also essential to the success of Program participants, and Partners are encouraged to expose participants to ample follow-on services and support from outside entities upon completion (i.e. SBDC, local incubators or accelerators, co-working spaces, veteran business groups).

The Partner may host 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 Partner be used as seed funding or capital for the pitch competition.

Growth program must be vetted by the Partner and meet the following criteria:

- A Florida resident.
- Discharged veteran with other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge; Partners must collect participant’s DD214 Member 4 copy or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs letter verifying other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge.
- Active duty member of the United States military within 12 months of End Term of

Service (ETS), or a member of the Florida National Guard or United States Reserves; Partners must collect the letter confirming guard/reserve or active duty status.

- Spouse or unremarried former spouse of a veteran or servicemember with documentation of letter verifying marriage or former marriage to a veteran or servicemember, their DD214 Member 4 copy or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs letter verifying other than bad conduct or dishonorable discharge or letter confirming guard/reserve or active duty status.
- Registered for-profit business entity or incorporated with the State of Florida on Sunbiz and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

The Objectives of Growth training are:

- Participants complete and produce a Canvas.
- Participants individually determine if their business:
  - is or is not validated and marketable
  - is or is not scalable or expandable
- Partner determination on each of the participants':
  - viability and marketability
  - scalability or expandability

#### **D. Cohort Metrics and Reporting**

The Partner shall collect metrics from the participants at the start of a cohort as a baseline and at the end of the training to measure growth. Additionally, the Partner shall collect participant satisfaction through surveys and other feedback. The Partner shall report activities, achievements, performance metrics, and quantitative data to Veterans Florida as requested and assist in the maintenance of data to keep up to date.

The Partner shall collect data/information about veteran applicants/program participants and their businesses. Partner shall be responsible for obtaining participants' program application, contact information, demographics, veteran verification, and confirm program eligibility. At a minimum Partner shall collect:

- Veteran name, address, email and phone number;
- Veteran verification documentation;
- Business legal name (doing business as name) used for state registration and federal tax identification number;
- Number of employees hired by business;
- Capital invested into business;
- Revenue generated by business; and
- Biography of cohort participants.

The Partner shall adhere to the following reporting requirements:

1. Cohort reporting shall include:
  - Veteran program application, if applicable;
  - Veteran name, address, email and phone number;
  - Veteran verification documentation;
  - Business name, federal tax identification number, number of employees, capital invested, and revenue generated;
  - Veteran biography;
  - Total number of participants with detailed attendance records;
  - Pitch competition (if any) participation, seed funding raised, and list of participants receiving funding (include amount);
  - Results of participant survey, if any;
  - Documentation of the Objectives listed under Sections A, B and/or C;
  - Documentation of marketing efforts to secure participation. Documentation may include, but not limited to: screenshots of social or digital marketing, copies of emails distributed, or copies of any other marketing efforts; and
  - Photos of cohort participants and presenters in action. Photos may be used by Veterans Florida for future marketing efforts, which may include digital or social.
  
2. Status reporting shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Any updates to future meetings or events, such as location, time or dates;
  - Marketing and promotional activities to general public, local government officials, internal or external stakeholders;
  - Recruitment and attendance efforts;
  - Collaboration efforts with other organizations;
  - Significant activities/achievements of Partner or veteran participant (past or present);
  - Media coverage secured; and
  - Local resources identified to the veteran.

Reporting listed above must be provided for payment processing.

### **E. Workshops**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Number of Participants       | minimum 10                               |
| Training Modules             | minimum 4 workshops                      |
| Training Module length       | not less than 2 and no more than 3 hours |
| Participants' Business Stage | Any                                      |

The Partner shall conduct workshops to include subject matter experts and topics such as legal structures, stakeholders, launching, marketing, acquisitions, or other issues that business owners frequently face. Specialized industry based workshops are also encouraged, such as government contracting, fundraising, or franchising, to address specific needs of veteran entrepreneurs. Workshops should be treated as stand alone events and not as an extension to the cohort education materials. Workshops should be open to all interested veteran entrepreneurs. The Partner shall develop a workshop schedule to include topic list, location, date and time, and instructor information for workshops for Veterans Florida approval. Workshop minimum attendance is 10 veterans. Partners may not include the speaker(s), Partner staff/leadership, or Veterans Florida staff in the attendance count to reach minimum attendance. Veterans Florida allows for veteran self identification for workshop attendance.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Local Resources (SBA, SBDC, VBOC, etc.)<br/>         Government Contracting<br/>         Franchising &amp; Small Business Acquisition<br/>         Legal Structures<br/>         Stakeholders<br/>         Accounting<br/>         Marketing<br/>         Website and Social Media<br/>         Food Services<br/>         Etc.</p> | <p>Optional - potential but not mandatory topics, provided as examples:<br/>         Non-profit organization</p> |
|--|--|

The Partner shall be responsible for collecting and reporting the following information upon completion of the workshop and must be provided for payment processing:

- Workshop topic with date, time and location;
- Veteran name, email, and phone number;
- Business name;
- Total number of participants;
- Documentation of marketing efforts to secure participation. Documentation may include, but not limited to: screenshots of social or digital marketing, copies of emails distributed, or copies of any other marketing efforts; and
- Photos of cohort participants and presenters in action. Photos may be used by Veterans Florida for future marketing efforts, which may include digital or social.
- Any updates to future meetings or events, such as location, time or dates;
- Marketing and promotional activities to general public, local government officials, internal or external stakeholders;
- Collaboration efforts with other organizations;
- Significant activities/achievements of Partner or veteran participant (past or present);
- Local resources identified to the veteran; and
- Results of participant survey, if any.

## F. Networking

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Number of Participants       | minimum 10                               |
| Training Modules             | minimum 4 networking                     |
| Training Module length       | not less than 2 and no more than 3 hours |
| Participants' Business Stage | Any                                      |

The Partner shall conduct networking events to provide veterans interested in entrepreneurship the ability to learn about Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program opportunities, network with peers, and connect with resources or information to assist them on their entrepreneurial journey. Veterans Florida encourages the Partner to invite local resource providers, subject matter experts, vendors, and other successful entrepreneurs to participate in networking events. These events can be a morning coffee and mingle, after hours networking, or other similar format. Veterans Florida allows for veteran self identification for attendance at networking events. Networking minimum attendance is 10 veterans. Partners may not include the guest speaker(s), Partner staff/leadership, or Veterans Florida staff in the attendance to reach minimum attendance.

The Partner shall be responsible for collecting and reporting the following information upon completion of the networking event and must be provided for payment processing:

- Networking date, time and location;
- Veteran name, email, and phone number;
- Business name;
- Total number of participants;
- Documentation of marketing efforts to secure participation. Documentation may include, but not limited to: screenshots of social or digital marketing, copies of emails distributed, or copies of any other marketing efforts; and
- Photos of cohort participants and presenters in action. Photos may be used by Veterans Florida for future marketing efforts, which may include digital or social.
- Any updates to future meetings or events, such as location, time or dates;
- Marketing and promotional activities to general public, local government officials, internal or external stakeholders;
- Collaboration efforts with other organizations;
- Significant activities/achievements of Partner or veteran participant (past or present);
- Local resources identified to the veteran; and
- Results of participant survey, if any.

## **G. Program Marketing/Promotion**

The Partner shall promote/market program offerings and services available to veterans, veterans groups, and their families. Marketing efforts may include, but not limited to, social/digital marketing, email marketing, print publication, and/or broadcast. All promotion/marketing efforts must be co-branded and include the Veterans Florida logo. Logo inclusion must be in accordance with the Entrepreneurship Program Brand Guideline, Attachment 1. The Guideline contains all details to use the Veterans Florida logo.

Veterans Florida may assist with Partner marketing efforts by promoting or resharing on social media channels. LinkedIn is Veterans Florida's primary social media marketing tool.

Veterans Florida may provide supplemental marketing support on a case by case basis. Additionally, Partners shall 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.

Veterans Florida must approve and provide at least one quote for press releases. The Partner must report contacts with media personnel, media outlets, and scheduled press conferences or press releases in their reporting.

## **H. Veterans Florida Expo**

Veterans Florida may host an annual statewide pitch competition during the Veterans Florida Expo where the Partner may recommend a pitch contestant. Expo 2025 may be hosted in Florida in June. Partners conducting cohort-based training will be expected to attend and participate in the annual Expo which is a two-day event targeting veterans, separating or retiring service members, entrepreneurs, and spouses. At Expo, Veterans Florida may host a career fair, host an entrepreneur resource fair with a pitch competition, and provide an exhibition to showcase everything veterans and their families need to know about working and living in Florida. In lieu of reimbursing for Partner travel expenses, Veterans Florida shall compensate the Partner a \$1,500 participation fee.

## 5. RFQ Schedule and Process

### A. Schedule

| Activity                                    | Dates                            |
|---|----------------------------------|
| RFQ Issued                                  | Tuesday, July 16, 2024           |
| Webinar                                     | Friday, July 19, 2024 at 11AM ET |
| Questions Due                               | Monday, July 29, 2024 at 5PM ET  |
| Veterans Florida Question Response Deadline | Friday, August 2, 2024 by 5PM ET |
| Proposal Deadline*                          | August 19, 2024 at 5PM ET        |
| Award Notification                          | On or before August 30, 2024     |

\*Proposals will not be accepted after close of business on August 19, 2024.

Proposals received at 5:01PM ET will be considered late submissions. Late submissions will only be considered should any funds remain unallocated. Additionally, Veterans Florida may seek and negotiate agreements for services directly with potential Partners should any funds remain unallocated or Veterans Florida determines that the needs of the veterans are not met based on the outcome of this RFQ.

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

Heather Collins, Director of Administration

[itn@veteransflorida.org](mailto:itn@veteransflorida.org)

Subject Line: Entrepreneurship Program RFQ

Ms. Collins is the sole contact for entities. All other Veterans Florida team members are prohibited from discussing the RFQ with entities outside of the scheduled process.

### B. RFQ Issued and Webinar

Veterans Florida shall issue/post the RFQ on

<https://www.veteransflorida.org/about/submit-a-proposal/> in accordance with the Schedule.

Veterans Florida will host a webinar on the date and time listed in the Schedule. The webinar will include program overview, program goals, procurement method, and timeline. Veterans



Florida may elect to respond to questions regarding the program or the procurement method during this webinar.

Information regarding the webinar will be posted on <https://www.veteransflorida.org/about/submit-a-proposal/>, including login information. For interested entities unable to attend the webinar, Veterans Florida will post a link to recording of the webinar within one to two business days of hosting the webinar.

### **C. Questions and Responses**

Veterans Florida will accept written questions pertaining to this RFQ. All questions must be submitted via email to the Procurement Officer at [itn@veteransflorida.org](mailto:itn@veteransflorida.org) on or before the deadline listed in the Schedule. The Procurement Officer will confirm receipt of questions within one business day. Questions should be relevant to the program or RFQ requirements. All questions and responses will be shared with all interested entities. To review questions and responses, visit <https://www.veteransflorida.org/about/submit-a-proposal/> on or before the response deadline listed in the Schedule.

### **D. Proposal Deadline and Submission Process**

Veterans Florida will accept proposals on or before the deadline listed in the Schedule. Proposals may be submitted prior to the deadline, however early submission does not guarantee funds to be awarded.

All proposals should be submitted electronically as one (1) PDF document to [itn@veteransflorida.org](mailto:itn@veteransflorida.org) in accordance with the Proposal Format listed below.

Veterans Florida will notify each entity that their proposal has been received via email within two business days. Please be sure to include a contact person and email address with the proposal submission.

Veterans Florida will review proposal submissions against the Evaluation Criteria.

## 6. 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 Business Model Canvas Cohort, Getting Started Cohort, or Growth Cohort, workshops, networking, or any combination of services. Total page count for Proposal submission should not exceed ten (10) pages.

| No | Proposal Section                             | Content/Deliverables   |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | <b>Authorization Letter and Signature</b>    | Include a letter signed by an authorized representative with authority to negotiate on behalf of the organization. |
| 2. | <b>Executive Summary</b>                     | Include a summary of the proposal.   |
| 3. | <b>Organization Information and Overview</b> | Provide the information requested in section 6.A.  |
| 4. | <b>Organization Experience</b>               | Provide the information requested in section 6.B.  |
| 5. | <b>Organization Capabilities</b>             | Provide the information requested in section 6.C.  |
| 6. | <b>Pricing</b>                               | Provide the information requested in Section 6.D.  |
| 7. | <b>Letters of Support</b>                    | Optional and does not count against Proposal Submission page count.  |

### A. Organization Information

Organization information must include:

1. **Organization Information:** Legal name, address, primary contact for RFQ purposes, and company history information.
2. **Organization Overview:** Include history of organization, specialized resources, collaborators, and outcomes of entrepreneur clients, and number of clients/entrepreneurs served annually.
3. **Proposed Team:** Include a staffing plan that clearly identifies:
  - a. Facilitators and instructors who are sufficiently knowledgeable and experienced with entrepreneurship;
  - b. Full-time, paid staff member(s) responsible for delivery of program, including:
    - i. Primary point of contact for Veterans Florida's Grants Manager for reporting, proof of performance, and invoicing;
    - ii. Primary point of contact for Veterans Florida's Program Manager; and

- iii. Primary point of contact for program participants;
  - c. Identify mentors, local resource providers, and potential guest lecturers.
4. **References:** Provide contact information for at least **two current clients and two former clients** that Veterans Florida can contact. For each reference, indicate the following:
- Client Name;
  - Contact Name and Title;
  - Contact Phone Number and Email Address;
  - Industry of Client;
  - Service Description;
  - Length of Relationship; and
  - Brief explanation regarding the end of the business relationship, if applicable.

### **B. Organization Experience**

Organizations must demonstrate their experience and community connectivity to the Scope of Work detailed in this RFQ.

1. Discuss organization's history of providing cohort based instruction, workshops, networking, or coworking space. Detail any previous experience working with veteran entrepreneurs.
2. Discuss organization's success of collaborating with other organizations to provide necessary support or services to Program participants for mentorship, local resource providers, and other opportunities. Provide an example relevant to Scope of Work.

### **C. Organization Capabilities**

Organizations should include relevant information on capability, capacity, recruitment, delivery and implementation of program elements to be provided. Organizations may assume the Program timeline is September 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. Organizations may provide a proposal on one or all services outlined in the Scope of Work.

1. Discuss organization's ability to provide service(s) as outlined in the Scope of Work including information regarding administrative support and staffing, additional resources/relationships to benefit veterans, and reporting capabilities.
2. Discuss organization's data collection methods and reporting capabilities. Provide samples of reporting.
3. Discuss organization's plan to facilitate cohort training. Specify if attendance will be in-person or virtual. Provide a sample curriculum for cohorts that includes topics outlined in the Scope of Work, if applicable. Provide cohort training timeline and location.
4. Describe the process used to ensure veteran participation meets minimum attendance expectations for cohorts.
5. Discuss organization's plan to recruit and secure cohort participation. Provide samples of recruitment efforts with demonstrated success.
6. Discuss organization's plan to market and promote programs and services to veterans,

veterans groups, and their families; program benefits to the community and state; and increase attendance and participation. Provide samples of marketing efforts with demonstrated success.

7. Discuss organization's workshop plan. Specify if attendance will be in-person or virtual. Provide workshop topic list, location, proposed timeline, and instructor information for workshops, if applicable.
8. Discuss organization's networking plan. Provide networking proposed timeline, location, and potential attendees, if applicable.
9. Program participation does not need to be exclusively made up of veterans. Veterans Florida welcomes proposals from organizations that can show a clear path to incorporating veterans into existing programs. Organizations must demonstrate their ability to meet or exceed objectives. Veterans Florida funding must only be used to fund veteran's attendance in cohorts, workshops, and networking events. Clearly describe the financial management structure and internal controls to ensure appropriate record keeping of Program funds.

#### **D. Pricing**

Veterans Florida shall compensate Partners using a fixed fee format for services outlined in the RFQ as follows:

- Facilitated Business Model Canvas Program
  - In-person cohort: \$25,000/cohort (minimum 5 modules in-person)
  - Virtual cohort: \$16,500/cohort
- Facilitated Getting Started Program
  - In-person cohort: \$15,000/cohort (minimum 3 modules in-person)
  - Virtual cohort: \$10,000/cohort
- Facilitated Growth Program
  - In-person cohort: \$15,000/cohort (minimum 3 modules in-person)
  - Virtual cohort: \$10,000/cohort
- Workshops
  - In-person workshop: \$1,500
  - Virtual workshop: \$1,000
- Networking: \$750/networking event (in-person only)
- Expo Participation Fee (Cohort Partners only): \$1,500

As outlined above, in-person cohorts or workshops are offered live and include a meeting location for attendees to meet and participate. Virtual cohorts or workshops are offered via online participation only, using Zoom, Teams, GoogleMeet or similar software.

Veterans Florida will determine the number of program offerings provided by Partners based on the veteran needs in the state of Florida.

Entities are also invited to recommend program elements that exceed the requirements outlined

in the Scope of Work, however Veterans Florida will only fund the portion of the program that aligns with requirements outlined in the Scope of Work.

For example, a Partner may propose a Business Model Canvas Cohort that has 13 modules and aligns with the requirements outlined in the Scope of Work. Veterans Florida would only fund 10 out of the 13 modules for a total not to exceed the fixed fee outlined above. Partners may seek an additional funding source from other entities or organizations.

Program participation does not need to be exclusively made up of veterans. Veterans Florida welcomes proposals from organizations that can show a clear path to incorporating veterans into existing programs. Veterans Florida funding must only be used to fund veteran's attendance in cohorts, workshops, and networking events. Partners may propose a per participant fee format. Included in the proposal should be details regarding per participant fee format, attendance requirements, and pricing.

Veterans Florida will allow Partners to charge reasonable fees for workshops, lectures, and other events to participating veteran entrepreneurs. Partners must clearly identify in the proposal any fees that are proposed to veteran entrepreneurs for these activities. All funds collected through official Program activities shall be used for further enhancing the Program at the entity locations.

#### **E. Payment Terms and Financial Consequences**

All payment terms will be outlined in a signed agreement between Veterans Florida and Partner.

Partners offering Business Model Canvas, Getting Started, and/or Growth Cohorts may invoice Veterans Florida upon the start of the cohort for 50% of the cohort fee. The invoice must include a list of participants and documentation outlined in the Scope of Work. Upon completion of the cohort, the Partner shall invoice Veterans Florida for the balance of the cohort fee and provide any additional documentation as outlined in the Scope of Work. Workshops and networking events are invoiced by the Partner upon conclusion and must provide documentation outlined in the Scope of Work.

In the event the Partner fails to meet the minimum attendance requirement for a cohort, workshop or networking event as outlined in the Scope of Work, Veterans Florida may withhold 10% of the total cohort, workshop or networking fee. As a reminder, participants that do not attend 70% of a cohort are not included in the minimum attendance. The financial consequence for cohorts may be applied to the final payment.

Additionally, Veterans Florida may impose financial consequences for any declared in-person cohort that offers less than 70% of the instruction modules actually in-person. Attendance sheets should indicate if the participant attended in-person or virtually. The financial consequences for failing to secure in-person participation is 10% of the total cohort fee. The financial consequence for cohorts may be applied to the final payment.

All invoices will be paid via check or electronic funds transfer (ACH) within thirty (30) days upon receipt of invoice and proper reporting documentation outlined in the Scope of Work. Failure to provide invoice and reporting as indicated will delay payment processing.

## 8. Evaluation Criteria

Veterans Florida is committed to fairness, objectivity, and impartiality. Veterans Florida will assess proposals on the following criteria:

| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Weight</b> |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Capabilities, Capacity, Data Collection, and Reporting</b>     | Heavy         |
| <b>Experience and Entrepreneurship<br/>Community Connectivity</b> | Moderate      |
| <b>Recruitment Plan</b>   | Heavy         |
| <b>Overall Program Promotion/Marketing Plan</b>                   | Moderate      |
| <b>Prior Implementation of Program, if applicable</b>             | Heavy         |

## 9. RFQ Terms

Veterans Florida may adjust the specifications of this RFQ throughout the process. This RFQ 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 RFQ, 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 RFQ or participating in the RFQ 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 RFQ 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 RFQ provided to Veterans Florida may be made public at any point in time unless otherwise made confidential by Florida law.

## Attachment 1: Entrepreneurship Program Brand Guideline (Updated July 12, 2024)

### OVERVIEW

The **Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program (“Program”)** is a statewide program and must be marketed accordingly. As a statewide collaborative program, it is essential that the Program be marketed and branded consistently to build the statewide equity needed to ensure continued state investment. All promotion/marketing efforts must be co-branded with Veterans Florida in accordance with this Brand Guideline.

Entrepreneur Partners (Partners) must include the Veterans Florida logo on all websites, emails, and social media marketing efforts when promoting the Program or its elements to veterans, veteran groups, their families, governmental officials, stakeholders, or the general public. **Partners must tag Veterans Florida when promoting the Program or its elements by posting content on social media platforms.**

### OFFICIAL LOGO [Download the Veterans Florida Logo here](#)

- Alterations to the logo are prohibited.
- The full color logo is to appear on a white or light neutral background.



- The two-color logo is to appear on a dark background.



- Logos must be surrounded by a clear area; no other graphics or words are permitted to touch, appear, or overprint in this area.

NOTE: UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES CAN U.S. MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH LOGOS BE USED. THEY ARE TRADEMARKED AND USAGE WOULD IMPLY ENDORSEMENT. THE ONLY LOGOS THAT ARE AUTHORIZED FOR USE ARE VETERANS FLORIDA AND ENTREPRENEUR PARTNER LOGOS.

### PRIMARY COLORS

The official Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program colors are yellow, blue, white, and red. These are the foundational colors of the Veterans Florida brand and should be used as the primary colors in the Program’s marketing. Pantone and Hex Codes are provided below:



## Yellow

Hex code: #F2CA00

Pantone: 7405C

## Old Glory Blue

Hex code: #0A3161

Pantone: 648C

## White

Hex code: #ffffff

## Old Glory Red

Hex code: #B31942

Pantone: 4636C

## FONTS

Arial is preferred but Partners may use any sans serif font.

## PROGRAM MESSAGING

The Program is a unique statewide program. The collective efforts offer a competitive advantage and must capitalize on it by using the same language to speak to customers and stakeholders. Partners should use the following language as outlined below when communicating to customers or stakeholders:

- **The “Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program” should always be written out completely and never abbreviated.**
- To help translate the skills learned in the military to entrepreneurship, *Veterans Florida and statewide partner organizations* have joined forces to offer the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program.
- Program expenses for all participants will be covered *through funding provided by the Florida Legislature and Veterans Florida.*

Partners may request additional messaging guidance at any time.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an important part of how we, as a Program, communicate with applicants, participants, stakeholders, and other key audiences. Social media can help enhance the Program’s reputation, increase initiative visibility, engage new audiences, and promote news and participant or Program accomplishments.

Veterans Florida’s marketing team will manage all Veterans Florida official social media channels. Partners are not permitted to create individual accounts but are encouraged to promote the Program through their existing social media platforms. **Partners must tag Veterans Florida when promoting the Program or its elements by posting content on social media platforms.**

## **BRANDING STANDARDS**

Vanity URL - [veteransflorida.org/entrepreneurship](http://veteransflorida.org/entrepreneurship) is the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program's official URL.

Press releases - articles that mention the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program must include the following:

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About Veterans Florida

Veterans Florida is a state-created and funded nonprofit organization. We provide free career, SkillBridge, and entrepreneurship training and opportunities for separating or retiring servicemembers, veterans, and their spouses residing in or moving to Florida. We also assist employers seeking to strengthen their workforce with military talent.

For more information, please visit [www.veteransflorida.org](http://www.veteransflorida.org).

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**There may be exceptions to some of these standards; however, prior approval by Veterans Florida is required.**