

Army Office of Small Business Programs Helps Veteran-Owned Businesses Navigate Army Opportunities at VETS26

Veteran business owners from across the country gathered in New Orleans for the VETS26 Conference from June 1-4, 2026. As one of the nation's premier events for veteran entrepreneurs, the conference brought together small businesses, federal agencies, and industry leaders to discuss opportunities across the marketplace.

Representing the Army Office of Small Business Programs, Ms. Gayna Malcolm-Packnett, Mentor-Protégé Program Manager, and Ms. Ebonie McClintock-Bennett, Procurement Analyst, met with attendees interested in supporting Army missions and learning more about opportunities across the Army enterprise. Some business owners were just beginning their federal contracting journey, while others were looking to expand existing relationships within the Department of War (DOW). Regardless of experience level, many shared a common goal: gaining a better understanding of how to do business with the Army.

Many attendees came looking for practical guidance on working with the Army. Questions ranged from where to find acquisition forecasts and upcoming opportunities to how companies can better position themselves for future requirements. Conversations also touched on the Army Mentor-Protégé Program, subcontracting opportunities, Project Spectrum and resources such as APEX Accelerators that offer no-cost guidance and support services and LYNX the DOW next-generation market research and supplier intelligence platform with the goal of connecting small businesses with vital resources, opportunities and partnerships within DOW components. Throughout these discussions, Army Office of Small Business Programs representatives helped business owners better understand the Army landscape and identify organizations that aligned with their capabilities.

The conference also provided an opportunity for Army representatives to hear directly from industry. Business owners shared their experiences, challenges, and perspectives on entering and growing within the defense marketplace. These conversations help strengthen relationships between the Army and industry while providing valuable insight into the needs and capabilities of the small business community.

Veteran-owned businesses remain an important part of the Defense Industrial Base. Many bring military experience, technical expertise, and innovative solutions that can help address current and future Army requirements. By participating in events such as VETS26, the Army Office of Small Business Programs continues to foster connections that support innovation, strengthen the industrial base, and help deliver capability to Soldiers around the world.



Representing the Army Office of Small Business Programs: Ms. Gayna Malcolm-Packnett, Mentor-Protégé Program Manager (Right), and Ms. Ebonie McClintock-Bennett, Procurement Analyst (Left).