

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: April 13, 2022

CONTACT: Cassandra Alvarez

646-891-8637 or calvarez@veterans.nyc.gov

NYC Launches Leadership Association to Support Veteran Entrepreneurs

New York – The New York City Department of Veterans’ Services (DVS) announced today the launch of the Veteran Business Leadership Association (VBLA) to empower and support Veteran business owners across the city. The VBLA is a specialized program that offers monthly educational workshops, networking opportunities, and one-on-one support to help Veterans grow their businesses. Workshops will focus on business development, government contracting, and Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business (SDVOB) and Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) certification support.

“Our Veterans put their lives on the line and fought for all of us, and now it’s our time to do our small part and fight for them,” said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. “This leadership program will empower and support New York City’s Veterans by providing them with the tools to grow their businesses and succeed. As a former NYPD officer, I know what it is like to answer that higher calling, and the sacrifice and resilience shown by each of our Veterans inspires us every day. Now is our time to support our Veteran small business owners and help them recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“As New York City continues on our path towards a full economic recovery, I am proud to support the efforts of our local Veteran business owners and the Department of Veterans’ Services,” said **New York City Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. “Empowering veterans to be leaders across the business community ensures they continue to play an integral role in our city. This program will provide valuable training, information on certifications, and access to support that ensures NYC Veterans thrive as small business owners.”

“The Veteran entrepreneur community is one of our city’s greatest assets,” said **New York City Department of Veterans’ Services Commissioner James Hendon**. “As New York City bounces back from the pandemic, it is imperative that we ensure Veteran business owners have access to the resources and support they need to prosper within NYC’s small business ecosystem. Our goal is to help these businesses flourish by creating a space for learning, peer support, and networking to foster growth and economic opportunity. We encourage every NYC Veteran business owner, regardless of the size and scope of their enterprise, to become part of the VBLA in 2022.”

“The Department of Small Business Services is fully committed to helping all Veteran entrepreneurs launch, operate, and grow their businesses right here in NYC. Towards that end, SBS is proud to support this important Veteran business networking event hosted by the Veteran Business Leadership Association,” said **Department of Small Business Services Commissioner Kevin D. Kim**.

"By launching the VBLA, DVS really shows their commitment to helping our Veterans succeed in their businesses by providing some much-needed resources and information," said **U.S. Army Veteran business owner Brian Worthington, Owner of Flight King NYC LLC, and President of New York Metro BPA Flying Club**.

"As a Veteran business owner, I applaud the VBLA for their focus on small business development and their commitment to serve those that have served our nation," said **U.S. Army Veteran business owner Wendell Niles, President of Niles Advertising & Display Solutions, Inc.**

This program was created to provide support to Veteran small business owners as New York City continues to successfully recover from the pandemic. The VBLA also responds to recommendations made in the “Roadmap for Supporting Veteran Owned Businesses” report that was developed by the Department of Small Business Services and the Mayor’s Office of Contract Services in 2014 to promote economic growth among Veteran entrepreneurs.

The program kicked off with a roundtable discussion that was held earlier this week on Monday, April 11th at Brooklyn Borough Hall with roughly 50 Veteran small business owners present. Attendees heard from DVS Commissioner James Hendon, SBS Commissioner Kevin D. Kim, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, and other leaders in the Veteran entrepreneurship space.

In July of 2021, DVS launched another effort to support Veteran entrepreneurs—VetBizNYC. VetBizNYC is an interactive map that showcases more than 300 Veteran owned businesses to help drive commerce throughout the five boroughs. The map also includes information about each business’ certification status, in addition to contact and website information.

Members of the VBLA are encouraged to also register their businesses on the VetBizNYC map to promote their enterprises more broadly.

If you are a Veteran business owner who would like to become part of the Veteran Business Leadership Association, please visit www.nycvbla.org and click “Register.” If you are a Veteran business owner who would like to be featured on the VetBizNYC map, or if you wish to support a local Veteran owned business in your neighborhood, visit www.nyc.gov/vetbizmap.

###

About the New York City Department of Veterans' Services

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services' mission is to connect, mobilize, and empower New York City's Veteran community to foster purpose-driven lives for US Military Service Members—past and present—in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families. We assist NYC Veteran community members on issues that include, but are not limited to: employment, housing, food security, wellbeing, benefits, culture, and targeted advocacy. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/vets, call (212) 416-5250, email connect@veterans.nyc.gov, or follow us on social media @nycveterans.