



# Training and Educational Development for “Vetpreneurs”

## PUBLICATION

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## ABSTRACT

“The Problem. Over the last decade, specialized training programs have emerged to assist veterans in launching their own businesses. An initial search for information on entrepreneurship training programs for veterans, however, reveals that there has been no systematic research undertaken to summarize programs available and no comparison of what these various training efforts include. In addition, there has been no examination of whether these programs provide the requisite skills to engage in venture creation, result in the launch of veteran start-ups, and improve the odds of long-term venture success. The lack of empirical studies reporting on the assessment of these programs makes it difficult to judge the relevancy of the curriculum in meeting the nascent veteran entrepreneurs’ needs. The Solution. This article brings together a wide range of information on veteran entrepreneurial training programs offered by the government, academia, and nonprofits in the United States. Data were gathered through websites and other literatures. Concern about the lack of reported results of these programs is noted, and a framework is proposed for the systematic evaluation of learning outcomes that could be used across veteran entrepreneurial education programs. The Stakeholders. The article is aimed at training development professionals, universities, policy makers, veterans, and human resource development (HRD) professionals.”

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- The past decade has seen a significant increase in the number of veteran entrepreneurship programs. But there has been limited attention on the evaluation of these programs. In this paper, Cumberland discusses the types of programs available to veterans and presents a framework for evaluating the performance of veteran entrepreneurship programs.
- There is a diverse set of veteran entrepreneurship programs. Programs for veteran entrepreneurs focus on three areas: basic entrepreneurial education (e.g., VetToCEO, SBA online training), comprehensive online coaching (e.g., V-WISE, Veteran Fast Launch), and education on a range of business ventures (e.g., EBV, Vet Start). These training programs range from online classes to 2-15 day classes, with some catering to specific veteran populations, such as female veterans, post-9/11 veterans, and veterans with disabilities.
- To measure the performance of veteran entrepreneurship programs, evaluators should consider assessing them using the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship’s (NCGE) eight entrepreneurial outcomes which describe what entrepreneurs should learn from programs (e.g., gaining business process knowledge, gaining awareness of life as an entrepreneur).



## IMPLICATIONS

### FOR PRACTICE

Aspiring and current veteran entrepreneurs should continue taking advantage of entrepreneurship programs available to them. Veteran entrepreneurs at all stages should evaluate which program best suits their entrepreneurship needs, utilizing resources from both researchers and programs. To evaluate the effectiveness of offered programs, veteran entrepreneurship programs should assess participants' knowledge before and at the conclusion of the program or training. Veteran entrepreneurship programs should collaborate with researchers to determine the best assessment(s) for their respective programs and trainings. Outcomes veteran entrepreneurship programs might use to evaluate the success of the program or training can include whether the veteran has developed an entrepreneurial mindset, understands the business process, and possesses entrepreneurship competencies, such as finding an idea and evaluating an idea. To gather more outcomes and determine how their program can be further improved, veteran entrepreneurship program directors and managers should consider review the eight outcomes provided by the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) in the UK.

### FOR POLICY

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) might continue supporting veteran-owned businesses through its many programs and services. Considering the growth of women-owned businesses, the VA and policymakers might continue supporting women veteran entrepreneurs, especially those with disabilities. Policymakers might continue supporting small businesses through various efforts, including small business friendly policies and funding allocation to entrepreneurship programs for both veterans and civilians. Policymakers might explore how they can continue to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among disenfranchised people and communities. Policymakers might allocate funds to research that explores the unique experiences of women, racial/ethnic, and gender minorities. The Small Business Administration might continue offering courses, trainings, and funding to support veteran entrepreneurs and the services that best support their entrepreneurial aspirations.

### FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This article presents many of the veteran entrepreneurial training programs offered at various levels, including governmental, academic, and nonprofit. Future researchers should continue evaluating the success of entrepreneurship programs, especially those serving veterans. Future researchers should utilize evaluate what learning outcomes veterans should have developed after participation in an entrepreneurship program or training. Researchers and entrepreneurship program directors and managers should collaborate on the development of metrics for programs and trainings. To better understand veteran entrepreneurs' learning needs, future researchers should examine the social and personal motivations for owning a business, and how these motivations affect the success of said businesses. Research on entrepreneurial training programs in the civilian sector indicate that the programs increase the chances of business planning and ownership, but they do not influence work satisfaction, household income, business size, and profitability. More research is needed on the long-term implications of entrepreneurial training programs, and measures of success for the programs and veteran-owned business owners. Researchers should determine if there are specific types of programs that are most beneficial to veteran entrepreneurs. To accurately identify program effectiveness, learning outcomes should be diversified to reflect the method of the program, such as online, boot camp, and mentoring/counseling.

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