



Advancing Veteran Entrepreneurship Through Education

SVA NatCon 2021



National Survey of Military-Affiliated Entrepreneurs

The Need

- ▶ Several limitations and missed opportunities with existing data sources
- ▶ Increasing interest in research on veteran entrepreneurs:
 - Studies narrowly focus on a specific aspect of business ownership
 - Redundant
 - May lack cultural competency of the population
- ▶ Declining research participation (e.g., “survey fatigue”) in the absence of a coordinated approach
- ▶ Consequently, our collective understanding of veteran entrepreneurial activity is limited—this limitation will only worsen with time
- ▶ There is a clear need and demand to assess military-affiliated business ownership on a more frequent, systematic basis.

DATA GAPS

Critical gaps and missed data opportunities in our understanding of veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs:

- X Limited to a finite set of questions nested within broader population surveys
- X Draw from small samples
- X Conducted at lengthy time intervals



National Initiative

- ▶ With support from the Kauffman Foundation, we launched a multi-year study of **veteran and military spouse** entrepreneurs.
- ▶ The first national initiatives to develop data-driven research focused on military-affiliated entrepreneurship.
- ▶ Initiative is designed to address knowledge gaps in understanding of veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs and the supports and resources needed to assist throughout their entrepreneurial journey.

Aim 1

Fill persistent knowledge gaps in public data on military-connected entrepreneurial behavior over time

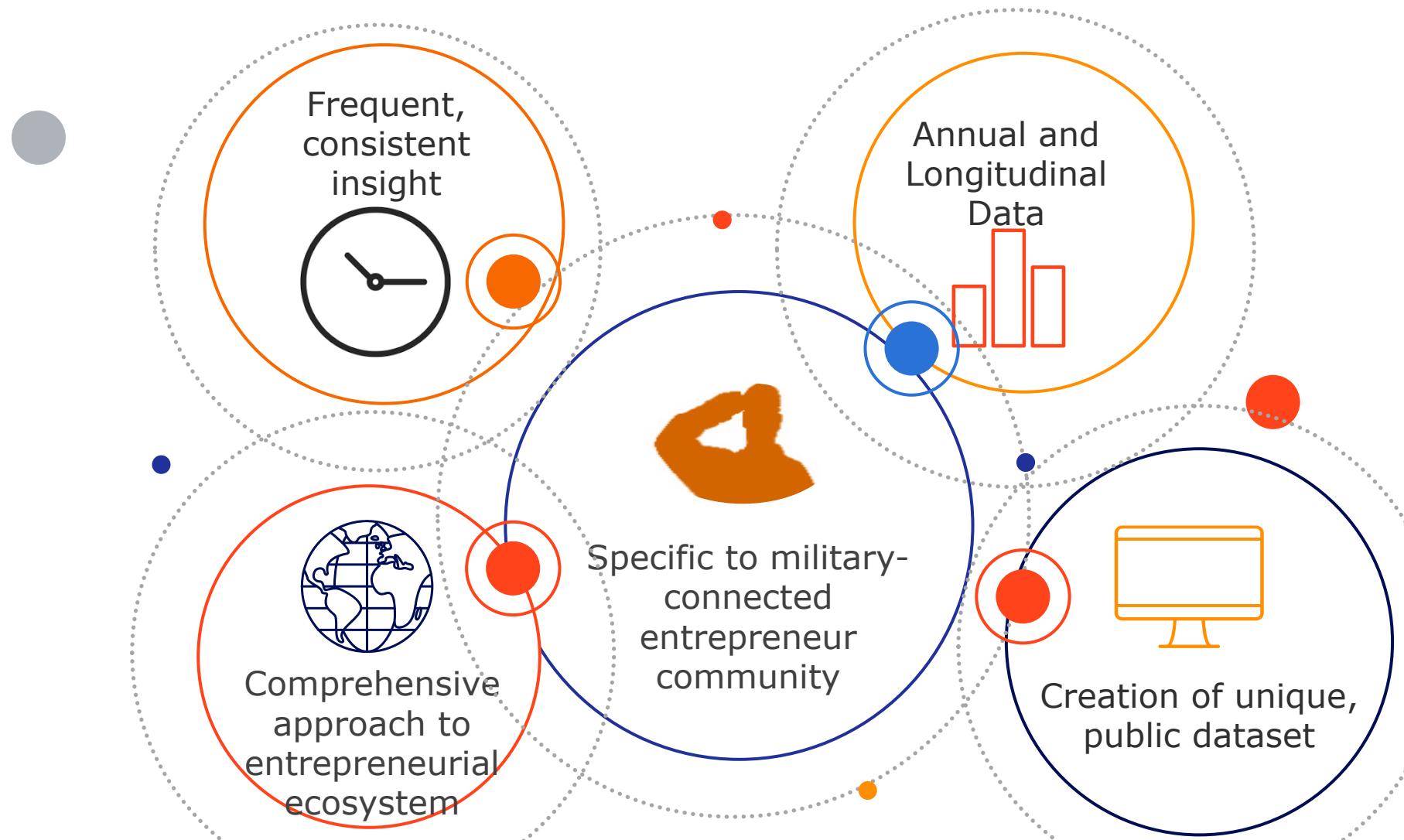
Aim 2

Track veteran and military spouse entrepreneurial experiences and behaviors at different points in the business life cycle

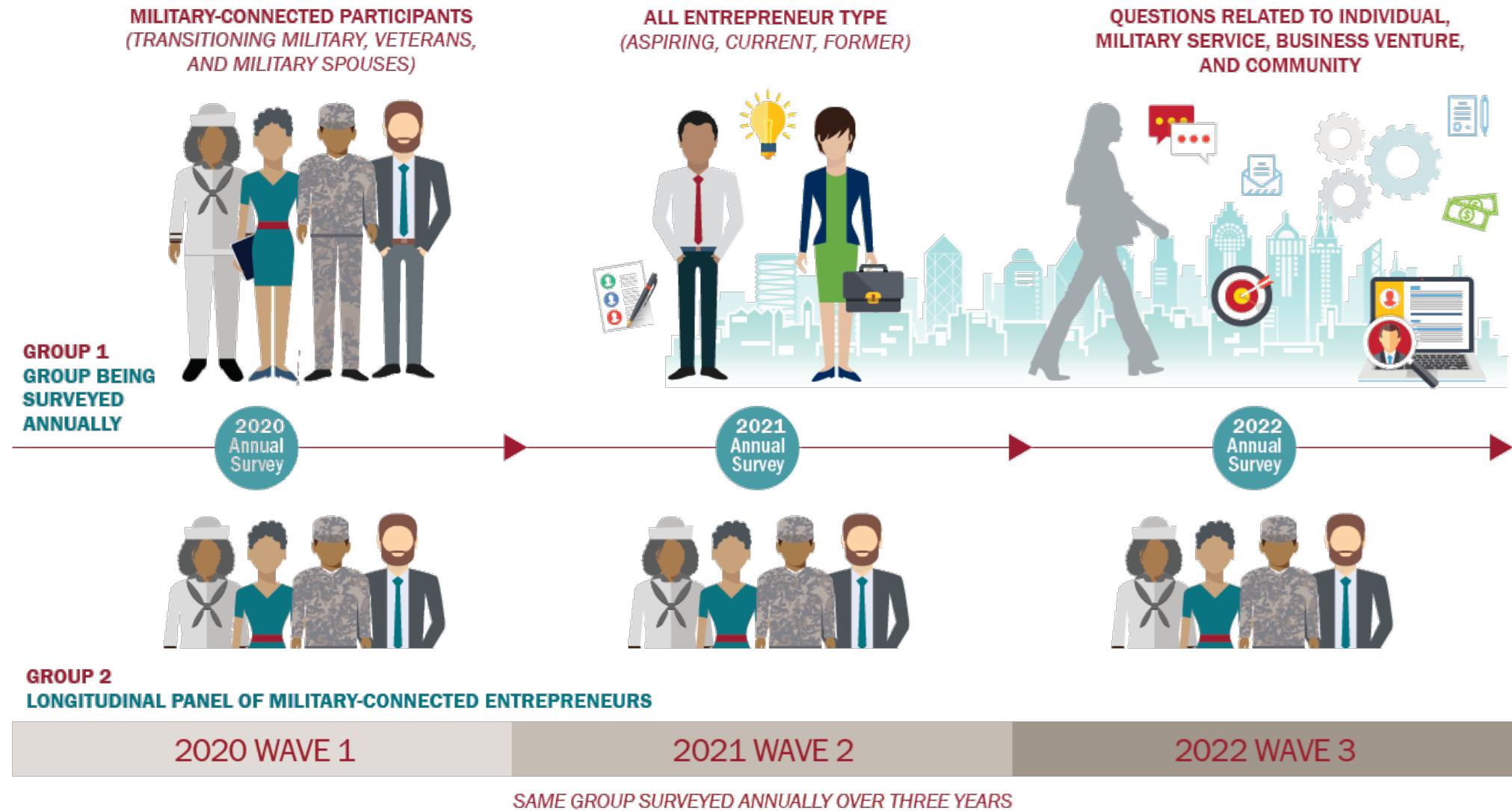
Aim 3

Gather more timely perspectives on the impact of contemporary issues and policies on veteran and military spouse business ownership and entrepreneurship

Key Differentiators



Three-Year Initiative





2020 Survey

Results, Key Highlights, and Insights

Sample

Have you ever (or ever wanted to): started a business, grew a business, worked for yourself, done freelance or contract work, or become self-employed?	Frequency	Percent
Yes, I do something like that now.	2,534	86.57%
Yes, I used to do something like that, but not anymore.	141	4.82%
Yes, I have wanted to or thought about it, but I have not actually done it.	252	8.61%
Total	2,927	

Which of the following best describes your current military status and/or affiliation?	Frequency	Percent
Veteran/Retiree	2,554	88.19%
Spouse/Partner/Family	177	6.11%
Active Duty/NGR	165	5.70%
Total	2,896	

Motivations

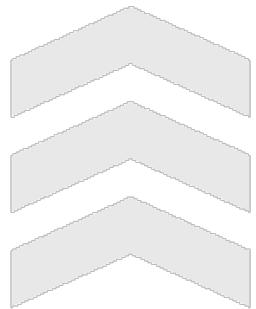


Military Skills & Attributes that Apply to Entrepreneurship

- ▶ Work ethic/self-discipline (55%)
- ▶ Teamwork (46%)
- ▶ Leadership and management skills (40%)
- ▶ Mental toughness (37%)
- ▶ Perseverance (33%)

93%

INDICATED THESE
SKILLS HELPED THEM
in their business/venture



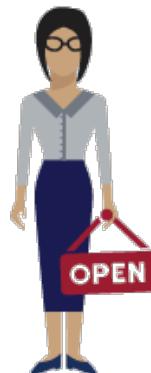
Interest in Entrepreneurship

61%

interested in
entrepreneurship
prior to military

21%

were not interested in
entrepreneurship prior
to serving in the military



What does entrepreneurship success look like to you?

“Success is being in a position of mentorship to other new business owners or entrepreneurs.”

- Marine Corps Veteran Entrepreneur, CEO, and Business Owner
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services Industry

ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

Top Motivations to Entrepreneurship

- ▶ Make own decisions (44%)
- ▶ Chance to implement own ideas/creating something (43%)
- ▶ Opportunity to be financially independent/increase personal income (43%)
- ▶ Maintain personal freedom (39%)
- ▶ Helping society/supporting community (34%)

Attitudes and Perspectives

94% do not give up easily even in the face of difficulties

83% use creativity to overcome difficulty

79% work consistently on a goal when met with obstacles

70% feel responsible for their local community

Barriers to Entrepreneurship

Top Problems or Barriers in Pursuing or Achieving Business Goals

42%

Lack of initial capital



29%

Problems finding good employees/contracted personnel

24%

Irregular income



23%

Current economic situation

22%

Lack of mentors for my business

21%

Taxes & legal fees



20%

Lack of experience in entrepreneurship or business ownership



Transition Difficulty and Key Challenges

44%

HAD DIFFICULTY WITH THE TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE

- ▶ 53% indicated that they needed time to figure out what to do in their civilian life
- ▶ 41% indicated that adjusting to civilian life was difficult



Top Transitional Challenges for Veteran Entrepreneurs



- ▶ Getting socialized to civilian culture (35%)
- ▶ Loss of connection with military community (31%)
- ▶ Loss of sense of purpose/camaraderie (30%)

MAJOR FACTORS

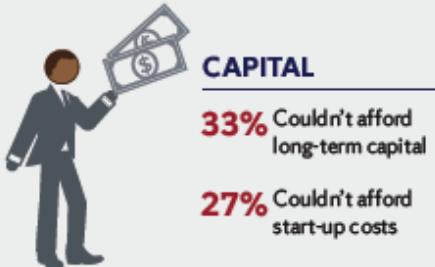
that Impact Starting a Business

PEOPLE & SOCIAL CAPITAL

LACKED THE FOLLOWING:

Formal help to start business 40%

Experience or exposure to someone who has run a business 32%



EXPERIENCE/KNOWLEDGE

DIDN'T KNOW THE FOLLOWING:

Practical details to start a firm. 27%

Legalities of starting business. 23%



Financial Related Barriers



Participants reported difficulty with:

APPLYING FOR GRANTS FROM NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS 66%

IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF FUNDING TO START THE BUSINESS 53%

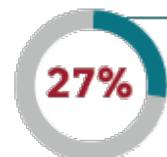
APPLYING FOR LOANS 49%

DENIAL OF CREDIT

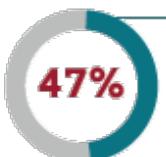
34% were turned down by lender or creditor when applying for financing

OF THOSE THAT WERE TURNED DOWN:
59% did not reapply anywhere
28% did reapply and were turned down again
14% did reapply and got funding later

People & Social Capital Barriers



do not know anyone that they can rely on for help for their business



reported difficulty finding local business incubator/ nonprofit that helps business owners

Regulation Barriers

55% REPORTED THAT THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS IS DIFFICULT

- ▶ 28% reported difficulty obtaining the necessary licenses to operate business
- ▶ 19% reported difficulty registering your company with e-verify



Disability Related Barriers

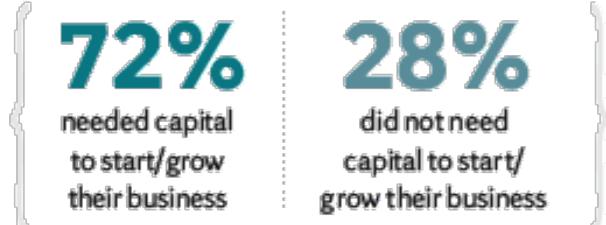
OF THOSE WITH A SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY

56% DO NOT FEEL SUPPORTED BY THE MEDICAL AND DISABILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS

- ▶ 28% INDICATED THAT IT CREATES OBSTACLES IN BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Capital

Sources of Capital



TOP THREE SOURCES OF CAPITAL USED IN 2019 ARE:

- ① Personal/family savings of the owner (63%)
- ② Business credit card (38%)
- ③ Personal credit cards (35%)



Credit Card

43% of business debt is on credit cards
66% pay an interest rate that is higher than 10%
19% pay an interest rate between 20-29.99%

CAPITAL FOR DIFFERENT STAGES

STARTUP

- ▶ **59% NEEDED LESS THAN \$25,000** to start or acquire their business
- ▶ **60% WERE ABLE TO SECURE THE INITIAL FUNDING** for starting or acquiring the business in 2019 while 25% were not able to secure any funding at all
- ▶ **36% DO NOT FEEL PREPARED** for the traditional lending process



GROWTH

- ▶ **54% NEEDED MORE THAN \$25,000** to grow their business
- ▶ **41% WERE ABLE TO SECURE THE FUNDING** needed to grow the business in 2019 while 31% were not able to secure any funding at all
- ▶ **27% DO NOT FEEL PREPARED** for the traditional lending process

Support and Resources for Entrepreneurship



Entrepreneurship Resource Needs in Local Communities

Financial Resources

44 % did not know about resources for grants in their local area

OF THOSE THAT KNEW:

59% indicate the resource need improvement, 32% indicate this resource is sufficient, and 19% indicate this resource is outstanding

52 % did not know about Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in their local area

43% indicate the resource need improvement, 44% indicate this resource is sufficient, and 14% indicate this resource is outstanding

Educational Resources

36 % did not know about local incubators and accelerators in their local area

OF THOSE THAT KNEW:

34% indicate the resource need improvement, 41% indicate this resource is sufficient, and 25% indicate this resource is outstanding

76 % know about college/university academic program in their local area

16% indicate the resource need improvement, 47% indicate this resource is sufficient, and 37% indicate this resource is outstanding

79 % know about SBA resources (SBDC, WBDC, VBOC, etc.) in their local area

24% indicate the resource need improvement, 45% indicate this resource is sufficient, and 31% indicate this resource is outstanding

Networks and Membership Organizations

79 % know about networking and engaging with other military-affiliated business owners in their local area

OF THOSE THAT KNEW:

37% indicate the resource need improvement, 40% indicate this resource is sufficient, and 23% indicate this resource is outstanding

80 % know about Veteran Serving Organizations in their local area

32% indicate the resource need improvement, 42% indicate this resource is sufficient, and 26% indicate this resource is outstanding



70% of veteran entrepreneurs had support from friends and family to start their business

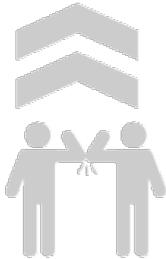
46% of veteran entrepreneurs indicated that navigating the resources in their local community was not easy

20% of veteran entrepreneurs do not feel supported by their local community

COVID-19 Pandemic

Preparedness for Entrepreneurship

65% OF VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS
INDICATE THAT THEIR MILITARY EXPERIENCE has prepared them for their business challenges associated with Covid-19 pandemic



76% OF VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS INDICATE THAT THEY LOST BUSINESS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

OF THOSE THAT ANTICIPATE CLOSING:
13% CAN OPERATE FOR LESS THAN 3 MONTHS
47% CAN OPERATE BETWEEN 6-12 MONTHS
40% CAN OPERATE MORE THAN A YEAR

- CLOSURE DURING COVID-19:**
- ▶ 68% indicate that they do not anticipate closing their business
 - ▶ 31% anticipate closing their business
 - ▶ 1% already closed their business



- TOP RESOURCE NEEDS DURING COVID-19:**
- ▶ General funding (financing, loans, grants) (37%)
 - ▶ Government contracting assistance (28%)
 - ▶ Day-to-day operations (25%)
 - ▶ Emergency funding (20%)
 - ▶ Assistance with adjusting marketing efforts (16%)



CARES ACT'S PAYROLL PROTECTION PROGRAM (PPP):

- ▶ 53% were approved and received funding
- ▶ 4% approved, waiting for funding
- ▶ 6% applied, pending approval
- ▶ 12% eligible, have not applied yet
- ▶ 5% turned down

CARES ACT'S ECONOMIC INJURY DISASTER LOAN (EIDL):

- ▶ 24% were approved and received funding
- ▶ 8% approved, waiting for funding
- ▶ 12% eligible, have not applied yet
- ▶ 5% turned down
- ▶ 31% not sure about eligibility

Support

56%
Believe that their business
HAS BEEN SUPPORTED
by the federal government
during the pandemic



60% Believe that their business has NOT been supported by local government

60% Believe that their business has NOT been supported by state government

45% Believe that their business has NOT been supported by local community

22% Were NOT aware of the resources available to them and/or business during the pandemic

Syracuse University

INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES
ARSENAL
FOR SUCCESS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

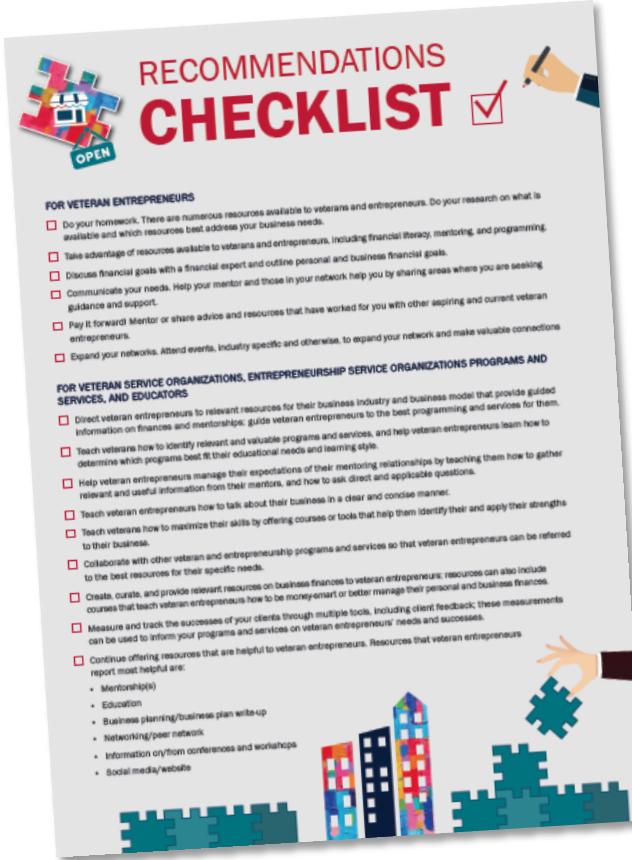


Recommendations

Veterans, Institutions of Higher Education, and Practitioners

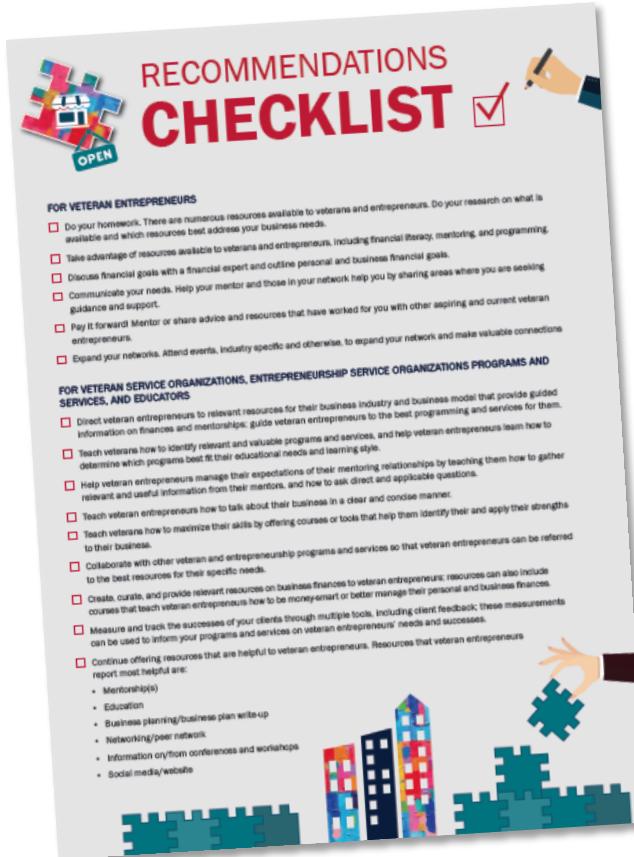
Veterans

EDUCATION & TRAININ



- ✓ Gather market intelligence: find out what resources are available to veterans and entrepreneurs locally and what assistance and support they offer. Start with your SBA resources, i.e., VBOC, SBDC, WBDC, SCORE, and PTAC. Make the connection today as these resources will not only provide business planning assistance but offer access to entrepreneurship networks, clubs, and mentors within your local community.
- ✓ Seek assistance with the certification process, i.e., PTAC offers training and mentoring. Leverage certifications within the private sector, work with corporations and their supplier diversity programs that provide technical assistance and seek diversity suppliers.
- ✓ Invest time in market research and analysis. Seek assistance from mentors, advisors, and service providers to help with market research, setting sales goals and objectives, and developing and implementing a marketing strategy, etc.
- ✓ Expand your network: find out what resources are available to veteran entrepreneurs nationally and what assistance and support they offer, i.e., IVMF's ARSENAL of programs. Center of Excellence (COE) for Veteran Entrepreneurship, Kauffman's Fastrack and 1 Million Cups, etc. There may also be resources available in your local community, but national organizations can be a good first step.

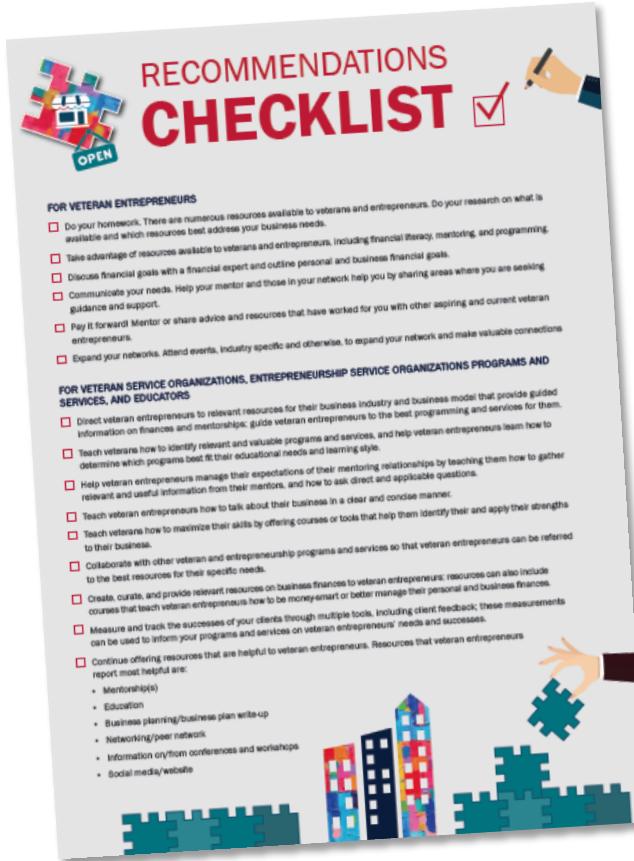
Veterans CAPITAL



- ✓ Discuss financial literacy and financial education with your mentors, bankers, and small business advisor. Invest time in financial education, understand the various sources of capital, and when and how to access them.
- ✓ Locate your local Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI), reach out, connect, and learn about their financing and educational programs. They offer financial literacy training and low-cost financing for startups and growth companies. There is a list of CDFIs at <https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/FAQ.aspx>
- ✓ Leverage crowdfunding platforms to test your products and get your business funded. Ninety percent of a successful crowdfunding campaign is done before the campaign is launched; therefore, it is about having a plan, network, and community, so don't do it alone: seek assistance from mentors, local community members, family, friends, BAIL team members, veteran and military community members, and others.

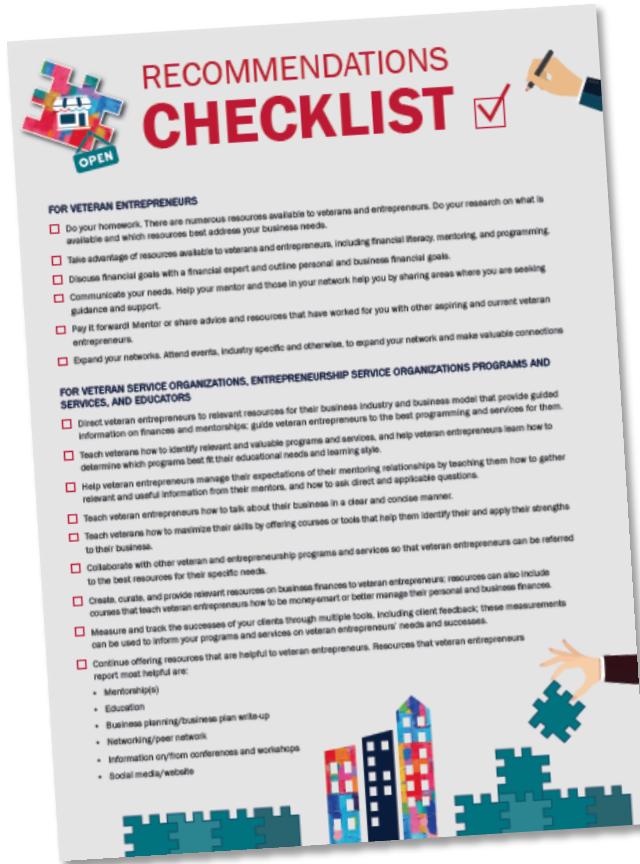
Veterans

NETWORK & Resources – It is OK to ask for assistance!



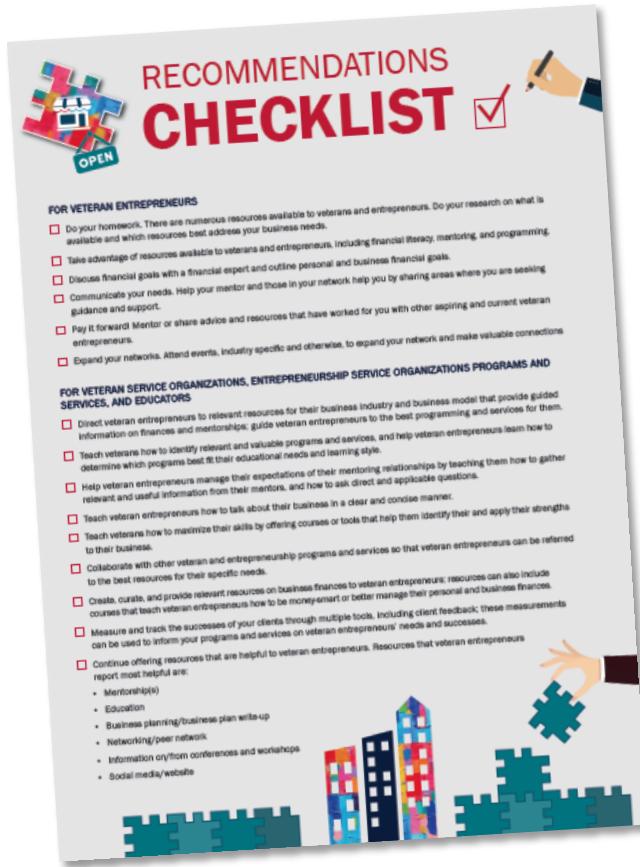
- ✓ Start vetrepreneuring: join veteran entrepreneurship networking groups and programs, attend their events and conference, i.e., IVMF Arsenal, Center of Excellence (CoE) for Veteran Entrepreneurship, etc.
- ✓ Join industry-specific associations, clubs, and groups. Attend networking events and conferences to expand your network within your industry.
- ✓ Give back: network, mentor, and share access to resources with other veteran entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Conduct customer discovery and/or customer follow-ups. Seek assistance from mentors and advisors with these critical tasks.
- ✓ Explore local, regional, and virtual business incubators and accelerators.
- ✓ Build your BAIL team as part of your startup and growth strategy.
- ✓ Connect with local universities and colleges, i.e., the business school, understand what programs and resources they offer to assist you with your business. For example, student consulting clubs, student entrepreneurship clubs, student veterans' organizations, internship programs, and other similar resources can help you with your business needs and expand your network.

Institutions of Higher Education



- ✓ Provide assistance and educational opportunities related to market research and analysis, establishing marketing strategy, goals, and objectives, and implementation of the marketing plan.
- ✓ Provide assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to pivot during the current business climate and adjust their marketing goals and efforts, e.g., build an online store, develop an online brand, etc.
- ✓ Educate yourself and your organization about (other) veteran entrepreneurship resources. Connect with them, collaborate, and educate the veteran entrepreneurs you serve about these resources, too.
- ✓ Provide resources to assist in the development of a BAIL (Banker, Accountant, Insurance, and Lawyer) team relevant to their business and industry.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself and your team/schools with the various certification options and resources both nationally and within your state to provide assistance and guidance to veteran entrepreneurs and educate aspiring veteran entrepreneurs about certification needs, so they can incorporate it within their business planning process .

Institutions of Higher Education



- ✓ Encourage faculty and research centers to research military-connected entrepreneurs
- ✓ Raise awareness of the NSMAE data base that can be used by faculty to conduct research
- ✓ Host and participate in Veteran Entrepreneurship symposiums, colloquiums, seminars/webinars, and other research and education related efforts that are related to military-affiliated entrepreneurs.

- ✓ Connect veterans to financial literacy training and/or create incentives within your programs and services to encourage financial literacy training.
- ✓ Encourage awareness of CDFIs, where to find them, how to work with them, and how to leverage them to grow their business and their network.
- ✓ Increase awareness of crowdfunding opportunities and assist with planning and execution.
- ✓ Promote available small business grants, as well as business plan competitions and other sources of nontraditional capital.

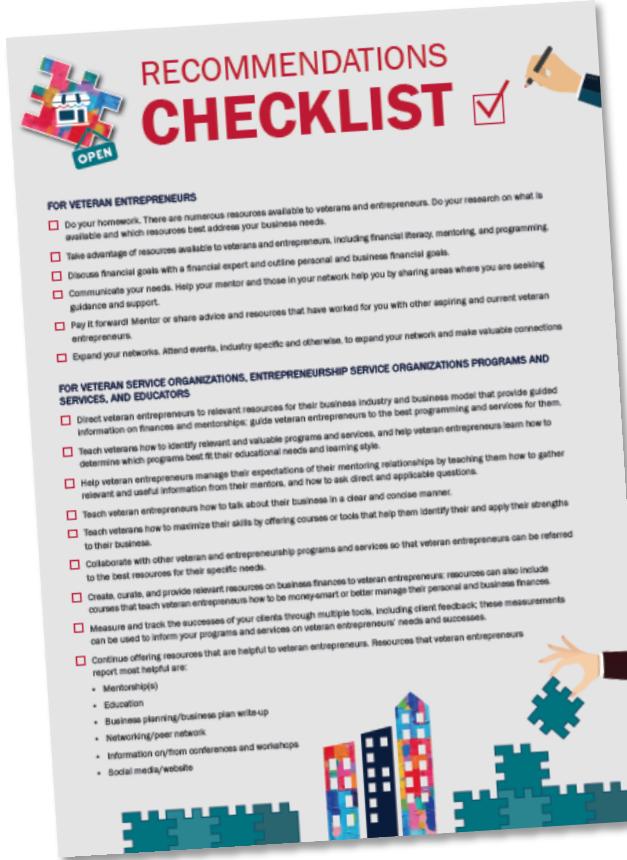
Institutions of Higher Education



- ✓ Entrepreneurship and small business services and programs should self-evaluate. This study's findings indicate programs need improvements.
- ✓ This study shows there is a need for greater collaboration between resource and service providers. Veteran entrepreneurs seek assistance with various organizations that have no access to each other's databases and often fail to understand what resources and services veterans are eligible for or have already accessed. Assist small business service providers in more collaborative effort to track the progress.
- ✓ Overall, veterans are not familiar with business incubators as a resource, and those utilizing such a resource believed the services needed improvements. If you have an incubator, encourage more veteran friendly practices. If you don't have one, consider starting one or collaborating with one in your region.

Veterans

Resources & Tools



- ✓ Veterans and Institutions of Higher Education should familiarize themselves with following resources, these resources provide assistance, tools, guidance, and everything else that support veteran entrepreneurs:
- ✓ SBDC: <https://americassbdc.org/find-your-sbdc/>
 - ✓ VBOC: <https://www.vbocix.org/about1>
 - ✓ SCORE: <https://www.score.org/find-location>
 - ✓ WBDC: <https://www.wbdc.org/about-us/wbdc-offices/>
 - ✓ IVMF Arsenal:
<https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/programs/entrepreneurship/>
 - ✓ Center of Excellence for Veteran Entrepreneurship:
<https://veteranentrepreneurship.org/>
 - ✓ PTAC: <https://www.aptac-us.org/find-a-ptac/>
 - ✓ INBIA: <https://inbia.org/>
 - ✓ CDFI: <https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/FAQ.aspx>
 - ✓ Bunker Labs: <https://bunkerlabs.org/>
 - ✓ VR&E Self-Employment: <https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/programs/self-employment/>
 - ✓ NSMAE: <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/nsmae-series/>
 - ✓ VetFran: <https://www.vetfran.org/>



Discussion

2021 NSMAE, Experiences, and Feedback

Questions & Discussion

- How can you assist us with the NSMAE 2021 data collection?





Institute for Veterans
& Military Families

JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

THANK YOU



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