VETS26 Speaker Resource Book

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

The National Veteran Small Business Coalition (NVSBC) VETS Conference is the largest event in the country for Veteran owned government contractors.

Due to shifts in regulations, we expect exponential growth in the Veteran small business community over the next several years.

As a result, we expect more than 150 session proposals to be submitted.

We will be selecting approximately 40 session proposals for 50-minute education sessions and about an additional 25 session proposals for 30-minute Showcase Theater sessions.

Join us in shaping the future of Veteran small businesses. Let's empower Veterans with the strategies and knowledge they need to succeed!

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact vets@nvsbc.org.

TIMELINE

- **Deadline for Submission:** February 27, 2026
- **Acceptance Notifications:** April 3, 2026
- **Draft Presentations:** May 11, 2026 (Due in PowerPoint format)
- **FINAL Presentations** May 25, 2026 (Due in PowerPoint format)
- **VETS26:** June 1-4, 2026 | New Orleans, LA

GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES

- **Submissions must offer professionally relevant topics and avoid marketing any product, person, or business service. Submissions will be considered for inclusion as part of (4) unique session types below not including General Sessions:**
  - Pre-Conference
  - Breakout Session
  - Showcase Theatre
  - Master Class
- **Please do not submit a presentation proposal if you are unable to attend VETS in-person during June 1-4, 2026.**
- **Panels are favored over solo Speakers.**
- **Speakers attending VETS will be provided with complimentary registration**
- **As a speaker, you are a key component of the conference, not just during your session, but throughout the conference. With NVSBC providing complimentary registration for speakers, we expect that speakers, regardless of the day you speak, to attend the entire conference in order for attendees to seek you out. This is part of the value that VETS provides.**
- **NVSBC does not provide compensation for speakers selected through this process.**
- **Please submit no more than (2) presentation proposals.**
- **We strongly suggest that after reviewing the speaker resource book in its entirety, you review the call for presentation submission form. Next, draft your proposed response in Microsoft Word to ensure you have an appropriate word count and to allow for spell-check.**

FOCUS AREAS

We are seeking innovative and forward-thinking session ideas aligned with the following Focus Areas:

Focus Area #1 – Entering the Federal Marketplace

A guide to innovative promotion and strategic positioning for businesses venturing into federal contracts for the first time. Possible topics but not limited to:

- Business Basics – Organization, Operations, Finance
- Funding – Seed, Working Capital
- Marketing to include Capability Statements
- Focus on building a strong capture pipeline for FY2026
- Insurance / Bonding
- Business Processes
- Contracts – Subcontracts, Teaming
- Federal / Defense Project Delivery

Focus Area #2 – Commercial Diversification and Growth

What key benefits and critical factors are to be evaluated and implemented when expanding your portfolio with commercial contracts. Possible topics but not limited to:

- From GovCon to Dual-Use: Building a Balanced Revenue Engine
- Where Government and Commercial Converge – Defense tech, cybersecurity, health IT, AI, and other sectors where government and commercial demand overlap, allowing you to leverage expertise across both markets
- Productizing Services: Turning Past Performance into Commercial Offers
- The power of certification: Understanding how NaVOBA's VBE®/SDVBE® certification opens private-sector doors that government certifications alone cannot. Understanding the nuanced differences between VOSB/SDVOSB & VBE/SDVBE

- Leveraging Your Government Credentials – How VOSB/SDVOSB certifications translate to commercial credibility, understanding VBE®/SDVBE® and other commercial certifications that open private-sector doors
- How to tell their story: Corporate buyers increasingly want authentic narratives about service, values, and impact—not just capability statements
- Understanding the Buyer, the Process, and the Pitch – How government and commercial procurement differ, what commercial buyers prioritize, and how to adapt sales and positioning strategies accordingly
- Converting Government Expertise into Commercial Revenue Streams – How to take your government past performance and service delivery model and turn it into repeatable, scalable commercial products and offerings
- Using acquisition and partnership strategies to accelerate commercial market entry, fill capability gaps, and achieve faster growth trajectories than organic expansion alone
- Working capital requirements, cash flow management, and financial projections that differ from government contracts; understanding the commercial buyer's payment terms and expectations
- Venture capital, private equity, SBA loans, and other funding mechanisms available for commercial growth; understanding when debt and equity make sense
- Establishing reputation and winning early commercial contracts when you're new to the sector; reference building and proving ROI to commercial clients

Focus Area #3 – Marketing and Business Development

What businesses need to understand about how to promote and position themselves, the uniqueness of selling to the government, and how to build brand awareness. Possible topics but not limited to:

- "Mission-Driven Growth" – Highlights aligning SDVOSB capabilities with federal mission priorities like defense and health.
- Proposal Writing
- Pricing Strategies
- Market / Service / Geographic Expansion
- Networking and Teaming Strategies
- Social Media & Web Presence
- BD / Sales Tactics and Strategies
- Building Past Performance
- AI in Marketing
- Debriefings and Protest

Focus Area #4 – Advanced Business and Procurement Strategies

A suite of sophisticated tactics designed for mature businesses aiming to achieve excellence and drive significant growth. Possible topics but not limited to:

- Graduating from Small to Large
- AI and Acquisition" – Reflects the surge in AI, cybersecurity, and tech modernization in federal budgets
- Innovation through CSO, BAA, and Other Transactions (OTA)
- Future-Proof Your Business" – Prepares SDVOSBs for evolving federal priorities and tech disruptions
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Managing and Mitigating Risk
- Attracting and Retaining Talent
- Leveraging Agency and DOD Mentor-Protégé Programs
- Joint Ventures and Mentor-Protégé
- M&A and Strategic Alliances for Accretive Growth

Focus Area #5 – Regulations, Policies, and Mandates

Essential knowledge and capabilities small business professionals need to stay compliant with current regulations, adapt to legislative changes, and manage practical business impacts. Possible topics but not limited to:

- GSA Multiple Award Schedule
- Policy Shifts and Navigating New Rules" – Addresses FAR updates, SBA certification, and compliance changes.
- REA Case Legislation
- Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Fundamentals and Recent Overhauls
- SBA Certifications and Compliance: VOSB, SDVOSB, HUBZone, and Women-Owned
- GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) Program Rules and Compliance
- Small Business Set-Asides, Preferences, and Procurement Reserved for Specific Categories
- Wage and Labor Regulations: Prevailing Wage, FLSA, and Service Contract Labor Standards
- Export Controls, ITAR, EAR, and Security Compliance for Federal Contractors
- Debriefing, Bid Protests, and Disputes: Rights, Procedures, and Risk Management
- Emerging Regulations: AI Governance, Cybersecurity Mandates, and Tech-Driven Compliance
- Mentor-Protégé Programs, JVs, and Subcontracting Regulations
- Policy Shifts, Legislative Changes, and Staying Ahead of Compliance Curve

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Session Content

- *Alignment with theme, focus topics, and audience*
  - Does the session relate to the conference theme and designated focus areas?
  - Is it relevant to small business professionals, especially veteran-owned businesses?
- *Support for Veteran-Owned business growth*
  - Does the presentation proposal directly support growth in federal contracting and/or commercial markets?
- *Practical impact*
  - Will the session help attendees improve their company operations or strategy?
  - Does it provide tangible, actionable strategies attendees can implement immediately?
- Breadth and relevance
  - Does the topic resonate with a large percentage of attendees?
  - Are niche topics clearly justified and valuable?
- Emerging trends
  - Does the presentation proposal introduce novel approaches or innovative concepts?

Speaker Qualifications

- *Expertise and credibility*
  - Does the speaker demonstrate depth of knowledge and proven experience?
  - Is there evidence of strong delivery and training skills?
  - Will this session be presented as a panel?
  - Has the speaker presented at VETS in the past?
- *Clarity and organization*
  - Is the presentation proposal well-written, with clear objectives and learning outcomes?
  - Does the presentation proposal show a logical structure?
- Audience engagement
  - Are there plans for Q&A, polls, case studies, or other engagement strategies?

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Now Required:** A 1-2-minute video (with link) explaining the basis of your proposal and demonstrating your presentation skills. If submitting as a panel, please have all panelists in video.

- The author must accept the Speaker Agreement terms and conditions at time of submission (if accepted, all other speakers/panelists will need to accept the Agreement upon first logging into the Speaker Service Center). By accepting the Speaker Agreement, you also agree that NVSBC may upload a PDF version of your session slides to the conference website after the event. Only registered attendees will have access to session packets.

- The session title should capture the essence of your session in ten (10) words or less.

- A 200- to 400-word session description should "sell" your session to the reviewers – be concise about the value to the audience.

- A 50-word summary of the session to be used in conference promotional materials should tell attendees exactly what they will get out of your session! Make it catchy so people want to attend.

- A 150- to 300-word biography for each presenter.

- The presenter's qualifications on the subject matter should indicate what makes this person the one who should be chosen to speak on this topic.

- If applicable, other conferences where this information has been presented.

- Co-presenters must be identified by name (do not just say "representative from GSA or ABC Technology") and included in the presentation submission along with their contact information. You will be able to add co-presenters on the submission form.

SPEAKER AGREEMENT

All speakers are required to electronically sign the speaker agreement both as part of a presentation submission and within the conference Speaker Service Center after the speaker's proposal has been selected.

Do not submit a presentation proposal if you are unable to sign the speaker agreement.

Individuals wishing to speak at the VETS Conference must agree to the following speaker agreement which contains NVSBC's Code of Conduct and Health & Safety Policies. **Click here** to review a pdf version of the speaker agreement

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

After thorough review of this speaker resource book, **click here** to begin reviewing all fields in the call for presentation form.

Review all fields in the form and first draft your response in Microsoft Word. This ensures you have the right word count and allows for spell-check. While we haven't experienced any issues with the page timing-out, it's best to draft all responses in Word and then paste them into the form.