NATIONAL VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS COALITION

NATIONAL VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS COALITION EDUCATION FOUNDATION

VETS27
Speaker Resource Book

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS GUIDE

May 18-21, 2027

A guide for industry professionals proposing pre-conference, breakout, Showcase Theater, and Master Class education sessions.

NATIONAL VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS COALITION

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OVERVIEW

The National Veteran Small Business Coalition Education Foundation (NVSBC-EF) VETS Conference is the largest event in the country for Veteran-owned government contractors. VETS27 will bring together industry professionals, business leaders, subject matter experts, and partners to share practical strategies that help Veteran-owned businesses compete, grow, and build durable organizations.

The Call for Presentations is intended for industry professionals interested in delivering relevant, educational, and actionable content. NVSBC anticipates selecting approximately 20 proposals for 50-minute education sessions, approximately 10 proposals for 25-minute Showcase Theater sessions, 5 pre-conference sessions, and 6 master classes, maintaining a program format similar to VETS26.

Selected content should serve companies at different stages of maturity, including newer federal contractors and established small businesses seeking to scale, diversify, or strengthen operations. Proposals must be educational rather than promotional and should clearly explain the value attendees will receive.

Contact: Questions about the Call for Presentations may be directed to vets@nvsbc.org.

VETS27 PROGRAM DIRECTION

Conference Theme: Winning in a Changing Marketplace

Program Priorities

- Business readiness, not procurement readiness alone
- Practical content that helps Veteran-owned businesses grow and remain competitive
- Business fundamentals that support strong execution, sound decision-making, and sustainable operations
- Commercial diversification that connects logically to the capabilities and experience of government contractors
- Market intelligence, opportunity capture, and organizational resilience
- Data, real-world examples, case studies, and lessons learned rather than high-level theory
- Understand how emerging acquisition approaches and alternative acquisition pathways are changing how government buys products and services
- Integrate artificial intelligence as a practical business tool that strengthens operations, growth, decision-making, and competitiveness

Audience Pathways

VETS27 is designed to support Veteran-owned businesses at different stages of growth. To help attendees build a personalized learning experience, each proposal must identify a single primary audience pathway.

Market Entry (for businesses that are...)	**Growth and Scale (for businesses that are...)**
Entering a new market	Actively growing revenue
Pursuing initial contract opportunities	Expanding into new markets
Building foundational business systems	Diversifying revenue streams
Validating products, services, or technologies	Building organizational capacity
Establishing business development processes	Managing increasing complexity
Learning new acquisition or sales models	Pursuing scalable growth strategies

The focus areas below translate these priorities into a concise framework for the VETS27 Call for Presentations.

TIMELINE

Date	Milestone
October 26, 2026	Call for Presentations opens
December 18, 2026	Call for Presentations closes
January 4-29, 2027	Committee proposal review
February 1-26, 2027	Speaker notification and confirmation
May 18-21, 2027	VETS27 conference dates

SESSION FORMATS

Pre-Conference

Extended, skill-building education scheduled before the core conference program. Content should provide structured instruction, useful tools, and meaningful interaction.

Breakout Session

A 50-minute education session designed to examine a timely business challenge, strategy, or capability in practical depth.

Showcase Theater

A 25-minute education session that delivers a concise, focused takeaway. Showcase Theater sessions must remain educational and may not serve as sales presentations.

Master Class

An advanced, highly practical session for experienced professionals. Content should move beyond introductory concepts and include frameworks, examples, or applied exercises.

Important scope note: General sessions and federal government speakers are developed through direct solicitation and are not part of this Call for Presentations.

FOCUS AREAS

NVSBC-EF is seeking forward-looking session proposals aligned with the following five focus areas. Topic examples are illustrative and do not limit consideration of other relevant ideas.

FOCUS AREA 1: Business Fundamentals and Growth

Strong businesses win and execute work successfully. This focus area helps Veteran-owned businesses strengthen the operational, financial, leadership, and organizational foundations required for sustainable growth.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Business planning, strategy, and business readiness assessments
- Financial management, cash flow, working capital, forecasting, and access to capital
- Building scalable operations, processes, systems, and internal controls
- Leadership development, organizational design, and executive decision-making
- Talent acquisition, retention, performance systems, and workforce planning
- Risk management, insurance, bonding, and business continuity
- Contract execution, project delivery, and operational excellence
- Growth planning for small businesses, including firms approaching $50 million in revenue
- Integrating AI into financial management, operations, workforce development, decision-making, and performance measurement
- Understanding alternative acquisition pathways including OTAs, CSOs, SBIRs, and BAAs

FOCUS AREA 2: Marketplace Intelligence and Opportunity Capture

Help attendees understand changing markets, identify the right opportunities, and apply disciplined strategies to build and convert a qualified pipeline.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Federal market, budget, mission, and acquisition trends relevant to industry
- Market research and customer intelligence
- Pipeline development, opportunity qualification, and bid/no-bid decision-making
- Capture planning and customer engagement
- Proposal strategy, proposal writing, and competitive differentiation
- Pricing strategy and price-to-win analysis
- Building past performance and using debriefings to improve competitiveness
- Strategic account development and relationship-based growth
- Marketing, brand positioning, digital presence, and capability communications

- Applying AI to market research, pipeline development, opportunity qualification, capture, pricing, and proposal processes
- Preparing for and executing oral presentations, technical demonstrations, and customer engagements as part of competitive opportunity pursuit and capture strategies

FOCUS AREA 3: Advanced Growth and Organizational Resilience

Designed for established companies seeking sophisticated strategies to scale, increase enterprise value, manage transition, and remain resilient in a more competitive marketplace.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Graduating from small to large and scaling beyond socioeconomic programs
- Joint ventures, mentor-protege relationships, and strategic alliances
- Mergers and acquisitions, integration, and accretive growth
- Private equity, investment readiness, and capital strategy
- Succession planning, exit planning, and leadership transition
- Enterprise value creation and long-term strategic positioning
- Managing rapid growth, organizational complexity, and change
- Portfolio, customer, contract, and revenue concentration risk
- Supply chain resilience, manufacturing capacity, and operational continuity
- Cybersecurity, technology modernization, and future-ready business models
- Scaling innovation through OTAs, CSOs, SBIRs, and BAAs
- Commercialization strategies for innovative technologies
- Using AI to support scaling, scenario planning, enterprise risk management, knowledge management, and organizational resilience

FOCUS AREA 4: Commercial Diversification and New Markets

Commercial diversification is more than simply selling into commercial markets. It requires businesses to evaluate how their products, services, technologies, and capabilities align with validated market needs outside traditional government contracting channels. This focus area is intended to help attendees determine whether diversification is appropriate for their business, understand how government experience translates into commercial value, and develop practical strategies for entering, validating, and scaling in new markets.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Commercial diversification strategy and market selection
- Commercial acquisition models and how they differ from federal procurement

- Cross walking government capabilities and past performance to commercial customer needs
- From GovCon to dual-use: building a balanced revenue engine
- Productizing services and developing repeatable commercial offerings
- Commercial sales cycles, buyer expectations, positioning, and value propositions
- Commercial certifications, supplier diversity, and corporate market access
- Adjacent market, geographic, and product-line expansion
- Strategic partnerships, teaming, and alliances that accelerate market entry
- Commercial financial models, payment terms, funding, and cash flow requirements
- Establishing commercial references and demonstrating return on investment
- M&A as a diversification or market-entry strategy
- Using AI for market validation, customer discovery, product development, commercial positioning, and market-entry decisions

FOCUS AREA 5: Regulatory, Policy, and Compliance Environment

Provide practical guidance on regulatory developments and compliance requirements that affect growth, competitiveness, contract performance, and risk management.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Federal Acquisition Regulation fundamentals and significant updates
- SBA certification and compliance requirements affecting Veteran-owned and other small businesses
- GSA Multiple Award Schedule rules and compliance
- Set-asides, preferences, subcontracting requirements, and size-status considerations
- Wage and labor requirements affecting federal contractors
- Cybersecurity mandates and technology-related compliance
- Export controls, ITAR, EAR, and security requirements
- Debriefings, bid protests, claims, disputes, and risk management
- Mentor-protege, joint venture, and subcontracting regulations
- Emerging policy changes and practical strategies for monitoring and adapting to new requirements
- Establishing responsible AI governance, data controls, cybersecurity practices, and compliance processes

GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Submissions must offer professionally relevant education and may not market a product, individual, organization, or business service.
- Submitters must be available to attend VETS27 in person during May 18-21, 2027.
- Panels are encouraged when multiple perspectives materially improve the session. Every proposed panelist must be identified by name in the submission.
- Speakers selected through the Call for Presentations will receive complimentary conference registration.
- NVSBC-EF does not provide speaker compensation for speakers selected through this process.
- Each submitter may submit no more than two presentation proposals.
- Proposals should identify the intended audience level and avoid attempting to serve every attendee with the same content.
- Proposals should include specific learning outcomes and explain what attendees will be able to do differently after the session.
- Whenever appropriate, proposals should incorporate data, case studies, practical tools, measurable results, or lessons learned.
- Submitters should review this resource book in full before completing the Call for Presentations form.
- As a speaker, you are a key component of the conference, not just during your session, but throughout the conference. With NVSBC-EF 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.
- Selected speakers will receive a VETS27 template for slide decks to accompany presentations. This will be included in the speaker service center after selection.

Cross-Cutting Priority: Practical AI Integration

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing how businesses operate, market, sell, make decisions, and compete. VETS27 seeks practical education focused on integrating AI into existing business functions rather than introductory discussions about the technology itself.

Proposals that address AI should:

- Demonstrate how AI supports business outcomes
- Focus on implementation and adoption
- Provide practical use cases and lessons learned
- Explain how AI improves capability, efficiency, or competitiveness

WHAT MAKES A STRONG VETS27 PROPOSAL?

The most competitive proposals will demonstrate a clear understanding of the VETS audience and present a specific plan for delivering attendee value.

- Addresses a pressing challenge or meaningful opportunity facing Veteran-owned businesses
- Aligns clearly with one focus area and the developing VETS27 program direction
- Provides practical strategies attendees can apply to business decisions or operations
- Defines specific, observable learning outcomes
- Uses credible data, real-world examples, case studies, tools, or lessons learned
- Offers the appropriate level of depth for the stated audience
- Presents a clear, logical session structure with meaningful audience engagement
- Demonstrates strong subject-matter expertise and effective presentation capability
- Remains educational, balanced, and free from sales or promotional content

A useful proposal test: After attending the session, what should participants understand, decide, create, improve, or do differently? Strong proposals answer this question clearly.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria	Review considerations
Alignment and relevance	Alignment with the VETS27 program direction and one designated focus area; relevance to Veteran-owned businesses and industry professionals
Attendee value and growth impact	Potential to strengthen business operations, improve competitiveness, support growth, or expand market opportunity
Practical application	Specific, actionable strategies that attendees can apply; credible use of tools, examples, case studies, data, or lessons learned
Clarity and learning outcomes	A well-written proposal with a logical structure, clearly defined audience, and specific learning outcomes
Depth and originality	Appropriate treatment of the topic, including new insight, an original perspective, or meaningful application beyond basic information

Speaker qualifications	Demonstrated subject-matter expertise, credible experience, and evidence of effective presentation or training skills
Audience engagement	A thoughtful plan for Q&A, facilitated discussion, polls, exercises, case analysis, or other appropriate participation
Program balance	Contribution to a balanced agenda with limited duplication and value across attendee experience levels

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare the following information before beginning the online submission form:

- A session title of 10 words or fewer.
- A 200- to 400-word session description explaining the audience value.
- A 50-word promotional summary that tells attendees what they will gain.
- The primary VETS27 focus area and intended audience level.
- Clear learning outcomes describing what attendees will be able to do after the session.
- A 150- to 300-word biography for each presenter.
- A concise explanation of each presenter's qualifications for the proposed topic.
- Names and contact information for all co-presenters or panelists.
- Examples of other conferences or settings where the content has been presented, if applicable.
- A 1- to 2-minute video demonstrating the presenter's public-speaking ability. The video is used as a screening tool to evaluate presentation quality, communication skills, audience engagement, and delivery effectiveness. The video does not need to explain the full proposal. If proposing a panel, all proposed panelists should appear in the 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-EF 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.

SPEAKER AGREEMENT

All proposed speakers must accept the VETS27 Speaker Agreement as part of the submission and confirmation process. If a proposal is selected, all co-presenters and panelists must also accept the agreement through the Speaker Service Center.

By accepting the Speaker Agreement, speakers acknowledge applicable NVSBC-EF policies and authorize NVSBC-EF to provide a PDF version of approved session slides to registered attendees after the conference, subject to the final terms of the agreement.

Speaker Agreement

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

After reviewing this Speaker Resource Book, use the VETS27 Call for Presentations form to review all required fields and submit a proposal. Drafting responses in the provided template before entering them into the form is strongly recommended.

Call for Presentations Form