Maryland
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF SMALL, MINORITY & WOMEN
BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Welcome,Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) Program Liaison!

We would like to take this time to welcome you as a VSBE Program liaison and look forward to working with you! As a VSBE liaison, you may assist your agency/department with performing duties to enhance procurement opportunities to the VSBE small business community, prepare/be responsible for VSBE reports to our office and provide outreach to the veteran entrepreneurs.

In this packet, you will utilize this information as a guide to help complete the role you play and other information that is pertinent to your position as an VSBE liaison. The following outlines the VSBE Program specific information for you to be successful in your new role:

- VSBE Mission and Historical Information
- Role of a VSBE Liaison
- Statues and Regulations/BPW Advisory
- Procurement Review Group Policy & Procedures
- Communication and Outreach
- VSBE Program Guide
- VSBE Certification/Directory
- VSBE Toolkit/Resources
- VSBE Procurement Documents
- VSBE Waiver & Guidance
- VSBE Reporting Requirements & Forms
- VSBE Best Practices

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me, as I look forward to supporting your unit with the success of the VSBE Program.

Danielle Davis
VSBE Program
Compliance Manager



Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) Program

VSBE Program Overview

Mission: Maryland's VSBE Program provides contracting opportunities on state-funded procurements for qualified veteran-owned small businesses. Designated agencies and departments are directed to spend at least 1% of the dollar value of their procurement contracts with certified VSBE firms.

Only the work of a certified VSBE firm, performing as either a prime contractor or a subcontractor, can be counted toward an established VSBE contract goal. There is no cost to obtain certification, and once certified, firms must renew annually.

Historical Information: Maryland's VSBE Program was enacted in 2010 to enhance opportunities for veteran-owned small businesses to participate in State funded procurements. Authority for administering the VSBE Program was transferred from the Board of Public Works to the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs in 2018.

VSBE Liaisons were added to COMAR regulations June 2022. All participating VSBE agencies/departments are also legislatively mandated to submit performance and outreach data to the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs annually.

What is the role of an VSBE liaison?

COMAR 21.11.14.05

> "The head of each procurement agency shall designate an employee to be a VSBE liaison officer in the administration of that agency's VSBE Program. The VSBE liaison officer shall be a high-level employee reporting directly to a Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or head of a procurement agency. The VSBE liaison officer is responsible for coordinating agency outreach efforts to the veteran business community, reviewing agency contracting procedures to ensure compliance with this chapter, assisting in the resolution of contracting issues, and for submitting required VSBE Program reports or information."

These duties also include being apart of the PRG process, submission of VSBE Waivers to our office and advocacy for the certified VSBE vendors.

Statutes and Regulations

STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLES § 14-601—14-606 - https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gsf&section=14-601&enactments=false

COMAR 21.11.14 https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/21.11.14.01.aspx

Board of Public Works VSBE Advisory

https://bpw.maryland.gov/Pages/adv-2012-1.aspx

Procurement Review Group (PRG) Policies and Procedures

https://procurement.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2023/05/PP-Procurement-Review-Group-PRG-v5-2023.pdf

Communication

Several Communications methods: To ensure VSBE Liaisons are supported in their duties, GOSBA makes sure to provide several opportunities for group and individual communications. We take pride in offering platforms for training, collaboration, and open communication. We have 2-3 combined and program specific trainings each fiscal year with updates, best practices and news for all three socioeconomic programs (MBE, SBR, and VSBE).

Compliance Calls: Compliance calls are hosted quarterly as an open space to give updates and feedback to liaisons and procurement staff. Liaisons are encouraged to send in topics and/or questions to the compliance.gosba@maryland.gov email box to be discussed at the compliance call. The compliance call library is updated a week after the compliance call to all toolkits just in case you were unable to attend and needed to know any updates discussed at the call.

Compliance Bulletins: We send out Procurement Compliance Bulletins once a month with reminders

and news for all three socioeconomic programs (MBE, SBR, and VSBE).

Combined Compliance Trainings: We schedule multiple times a fiscal year for combined program Liaison and procurement training. These trainings are recorded and are also posted in each toolkit. Many times these are topic specific and deep dives into best practices.

One on Ones: The compliance managers for all three socioeconomic programs (MBE, SBR, and VSBE offer one on one appointment times, you may schedule to speak with them individually. We are happy to assist and provide compliance guidance. If interested in setting up a VSBE One on One, please email danielle.davis2@maryland.gov.

VSBE Program Outreach

As a regulation requirement to complete outreach to the veteran-owned small business community, it is imperative that each VSBE unit develop an outreach strategy to target veteran entrepreneurs. Concepts for outreach also include collaboration with other veteran resources and the military calendar. GOSBA provides VSBE specific outreach each fiscal year to help facilitate statewide veteran prime and subcontractor outreach.

In addition, there is a VSBE outreach reporting component, which all participating agencies/departments are required to complete at the end of each fiscal year. See Reporting Requirements & Forms for additional information.

VSBE Program Guide

For your convenience, we have provided internal guidance regarding the VSBE Program on a one-pager. This allows you to have reference information specifically on VSBE Goal Setting, VSBE Vendor Verification, VSBE Participation, Vendor Certification and Outreach.

Please refer to the VSBE Program Guide found in the VSBE Toolkit.

https://gomdsmallbiz.maryland.gov/SiteAssets/Pages/Reporting-Tool-VSBE/VSBE%20Program%20Guide.png

VSBE Certification

Vendors must meet the eligibility standards for size, veteran ownership, and obtain verification of their veteran status. There is no cost to obtain VSBE certification, and once certified, firms must renew annually. Registration and renewal of certification takes place in the state's online procurement portal, eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA). The VSBE certification is a 3-step electronic process in eMMA, which consists of the following steps below:

- Step 1- Register as a vendor in eMMA at https://emma.maryland.gov/
- Step 2- Complete the Veteran Verification (Maryland Veteran Verification path or Federal Veteran Verification)
- Step 3- Complete the VSBE Application in eMMA with providing veteran verification information.

Below is the Quick Reference Guide to assist vendors with both the certification and recertification process. https://mdprocurement.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/70000584604

All certified VSBE vendors are assigned a VSBE Certification Number (VB##-######) in eMMA.

Liaisons and Procurement Officers are encouraged during the PRG process to invite veteran businesses to become VSBE certified, if not already so, using the 3-step process verbiage above. Only the work of a certified VSBE in eMMA, performing as either a prime contractor or a subcontractor, can be counted toward achievement of an established contract goal.

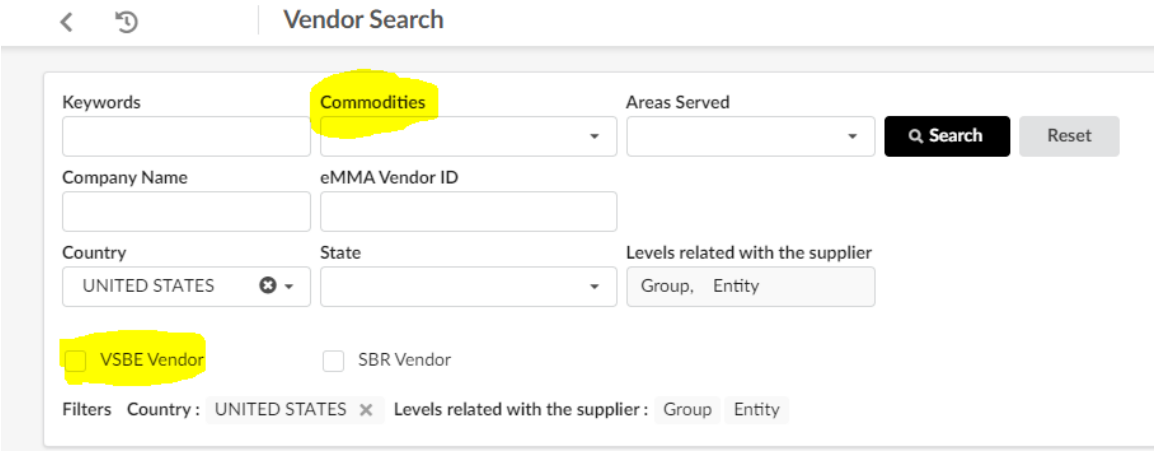
VSBE Directory

eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA) is the official system of record for the VSBE Database. As such, it is the only platform to use for verifying certified vendors in the VSBE Program. Do not use any other source to confirm certification in the state's VSBE Program.

How to Search for Certified VSBE vendors in eMMA:

1. Go to https://emma.maryland.gov/
2. Click on Vendor Search in the bottom right hand corner
3. Select the VSBE Vendor checkbox
4. Use additional search functions such as Keywords or Commodities to identify VSBE vendors.
5. Hit the Search button

Note: Using the Keywords search box will only extract data from a vendors company name using that exact keyword. Commodities search is recommended.



VSBE Toolkit & VSBE Resources

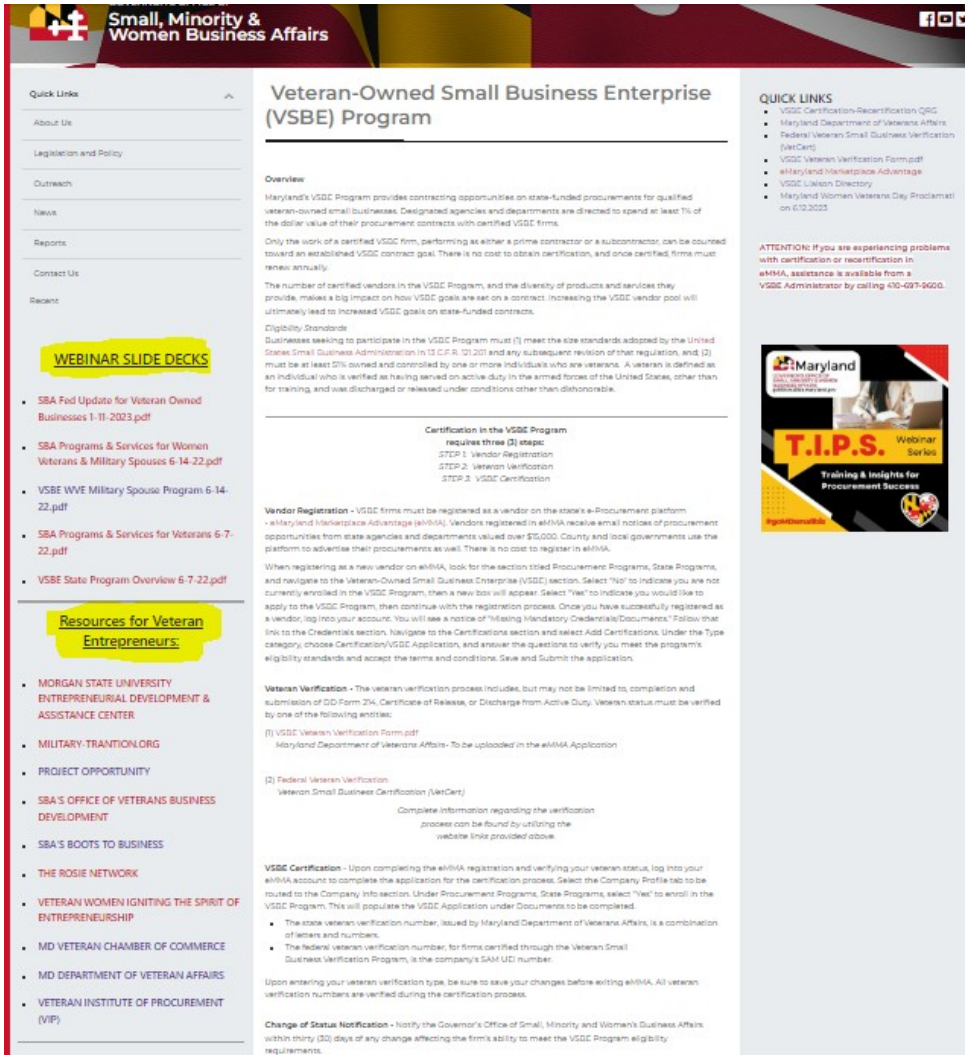
Each program has a specific toolkit that contains valuable information to assist units with management and compliance. Contained on the VSBE Toolkit is a one-stop hub to be successful in this role. Please familiarize yourself with it and check it often, as we are constantly updating it.

https://gomdsmallbiz.maryland.gov/Pages/Reporting-Tool-VSBE.aspx

Please pay close attention to sections that include Liaison Trainings, Annual Reporting, Solicitation Templates and Attachments and Announcements.

As we continue to grow the VSBE Program, more resources and partners help to move this program forward. We strongly encourage veteran-related small business organizations that can provide support to connect with other veteran business owners and engage with the VSBE Program. We offer some of their information on our website, under Resources for Veteran Entrepreneurs (right-hand side of page) and are adding more resources monthly to our VSBE Page.

In the future, we plan to have more VSBE recorded trainings for liaisons to utilize as there have been some updates since 2022. https://gomdsmallbiz.maryland.gov/Pages/VSBE-Program.aspx



VSBE Vendor/Procurement Participation Documents

It is important to know VSBE Vendor Participation documents called Attachment E- VSBE Utilization Affidavit and Prime/Subcontractor Participation Schedule. This form also contains the VSBE Waiver component and the Pai/Unpaid Invoice report. See next section on VSBE Waivers. These details are critical in advocacy, if a vendor is reaching out due to their contract and non-payment.

https://procurement.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2018/04/AttachmentE-VSBEForms.pdf

VSBE Waiver & Guidance

Regulations regarding VSBE Program waivers were implemented in 2022 (COMAR 21.11.14.06). Follow the MBE & VSBE Goal Waiver Guidance when determining a MBE/VSBE waiver, determining good faith efforts, and universal language to use when notifying a vendor of a waiver determination.

https://procurement.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2022/11/BP-MBE_VSBE-Waiver-Guidance-v1-10.17.2022.pdf

Under this new guidance, each participating procurement unit is required to provide GOSBA with a copy of the waiver determination at the time it is made. The waiver determination shall be submitted to the following email box: vsbe.gosba@maryland.gov.

GOSBA prepares the statewide annual VSBE Waiver Data Report based on this information. If your unit granted any VSBE waivers during FY2023, but did not notify GOSBA, please send a copy of the waiver determination(s) no later than September 15, 2023.

VSBE Reporting Requirements and Forms

All participating agencies/departments are required to submit cumulative annual VSBE performance data and reports to GOSBA on or before the close of business on October 1st each year (COMAR 21.13.01.15). The reporting cycle runs from July 1 through the following year, ending June 30th.

GOSBA will provide the data collection templates, and all other pertinent information for reporting VSBE data. The VSBE report preparers shall rely upon the VSBE Reporting Toolkit, housed on GOSBA's website and specifically the VSBE Reporting Manual to complete all reporting requirements.

The latest VSBE Annual Report Templates will be available from GOSBA at the beginning of each reporting cycle. Only the latest template should be used to submit the VSBE Annual Report. This ensures that any changes or updates are captured. All reports and supporting backup data should be emailed to vsbereports.gosba@maryland.gov by the reporting deadline.

GOSBA compiles the legislatively mandated VSBE Annual Reports for publication to the governor, the legislators, and the public at large. **If your unit does not comply, it is reported as "non-responsive."**

VSBE Annual Reporting requirements are:

1. *VSBE Annual Report Data*
2. *VSBE Backup Data for all VSBE Awards and Payments*
3. *VSBE Outreach Form*

Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) Annual Report

VSBE Program utilization data is being collected by the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs for publication to the Governor, the Letislative Policy Committee, and the public.

Fiscal Year 2023

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2019, the work of firms verified by the Center For Veterans Enterprise of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs may be counted toward a defined VSBE contract goal (see COMAR 21.11.14).

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete all yellow cells. Automatic calculations will appear in blue cells. Do not edit this template.

Agency Reporting:

Individual Completing Report:

Awards to VSBEs

Measure	Procurement Contracts	Corporate Credit Card	Direct Voucher	Total
Total # All Procurement Contracts Awarded				
Total $ All Procurement Contracts Awarded				
Total # Contracts Awarded to VSBEs as Prime Contractors				

Measure	Procurement Contracts	Corporate Credit Card	Direct Voucher	Total
Total $ Contracts Awarded to VSBEs as Prime Contractors				
Total # VSBE Subcontracts Awarded		Not applicable	Not applicable	
Total $ VSBE Subcontracts Awarded		Not applicable	Not applicable	
Percentage of VSBE Participation				

Note: In the template, the VSBE subcontract cells for Corporate Credit Card and Direct Voucher are blacked out (not applicable), and the Total column and Percentage of VSBE Participation are blue calculated cells.

Payments to VSBEs

Payment measure	Amount
Total $ Payments to All Prime Contractors (Total of ALL Payments)	
Total $ Payments to VSBEs as Prime and Subcontractors	
VSBE Payments as % of All Payments	

Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) Program Outreach Form

Fiscal Year 2023

Starting for fiscal year 2023, every participating agency must report their VSBE Program outreach to veteran businesses and overall program evaluation. (see COMAR 21.11.14).

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete all yellow highlighted cells. Do not edit this template.

Agency Reporting:

Individual Completing Form/Title:

Number of Employees Engaged in VSBE Outreach:

What channels do you engage for your VSBE Outreach? **Please check all that apply:**

- ☐ Live/In-Person
- ☐ Virtual
- ☐ One on One
- ☐ Print
- ☐ Social Media Platforms
- ☐ Other

Number of outreach events (live or virtual) targeting VSBE's hosted by your Agency/Department?

Number of outreach events (live or virtual) targeting VSBE's attended (not hosted) by your Agency/Department?

Number of Total VSBE outreach events

Does your Agency/Department have a defined outreach strategy for engaging veteran-owned small businesses? Yes or No?

Does your Agency/Department VSBE Liaison or designee attend pre-bid meetings on solicitations that include VSBE goals? Yes or No?

If Yes to the preceeding question, how many during this fiscal year?

What factors of your outreach efforts contributed to your overall VSBE Program performance?

Add any other information relevant to your veteran-owned small business outreach efforts:

The VSBE Reporting Manual is a deep-dive into data collection, formatting requirements, and supplemental reporting guidance.

VSBE Best Practices

- Prepare as much as possible
- Make sure to have all parties involved for VSBE data needed, collaboration is key
- Discuss with department/agencies unit heads of updated reporting requirements and/or legislative mandates
- Complete all MBE reporting requirements first, as overall total awards and payments data is also captured in VSBE Reporting
- Listen to the vendor community to become familiar with issues and concerns that may allow better implementation of your unit's policies and procedures
- Documentation is required for your unit's PRG process, Outreach Strategies, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the VSBE Program, please send the VSBE Program Compliance Manager an email.

VSBE Program Compliance Manager Contact Information

Danielle Davis

danielle.davis2@maryland.gov

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