



VIB NETWORK
**EXPRESS
CONNECT**

PRESENTED BY



VIB NETWORK

Veterans In Business
Networking for Success

HOSTED BY



Fannie Mae®

- Tactical Networking
- Connections
- Speakers & Panelists
- Opportunities



April 24, 2025

VIBExpressConnect.com



AMERICAN WATER

WE KEEP LIFE FLOWING®

WE KEEP OPPORTUNITIES FLOWING



American Water is committed to growing a diverse workforce and supplier base. Become part of this dynamic group of individuals committed to delivering safe, clean, reliable and affordable water and wastewater services.

amwater.com/careers

amwater.com/corp/partners-suppliers



American Water Awards & Recognition Highlights

The company was recognized as one of:

- Forbes 2025 Most Trusted Companies in America
- Forbes 2024 America's Best Large Employers
- Newsweek's 2025 America's Most Responsible Companies
- Barron's 2024 100 Most Sustainable U.S. Companies
- America's Most JUST Companies by JUST Capital and CNBC

Dear Veterans, Advocates, and Sponsors:

On behalf of the Veterans In Business Network, I would like to welcome you to Express Connect – a one day, action packed, networking and educational event aimed at helping Veteran Businesses grow and succeed. We're excited to join our East Coast partners and ambassadors here in Washington D.C.

As we progress through today's program, we hope you make meaningful connections and gain useful insights for improving your businesses. From our panel discussions with subject matter experts, to our Tactical Networking exercise, we have done our best to craft an agenda that everyone can benefit from and I personally look forward to meeting with you and discussing how, together, we can improve and grow the Veteran Business Community.

The VIB Network is honored to serve and support the 2.5 million Veteran-Owned Businesses across the country through all stages of their business development. In addition to hosting events like Express Connect, the VIB Network website offers a library of educational webinars, training, business development programs and networking efforts for Veterans, all at no cost thanks to our corporate sponsors and supporters.

I look forward to growing with you and your businesses in the future and hope you'll join us in San Diego this November for our Annual National Conference.

Best Regards,



Cole Woodman, Chairman



For more information about the VIB Network, visit our website at www.vibnetwork.org

★ Navigating government contracting, certification processes, and federal opportunities can be challenging without the right connections and resources. That's where the Veterans in Business (VIB) Network steps in.

Agenda

0700-0900 (7-9 am)

Capital Hilton (Statler Room) for breakfast and final prep

0900-1000 (9-10 am)

Leave via Lyft from the Capital Hilton for the US Capitol (45 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20515)

1000-1300 (10 am-1 pm)

Meetings at the Capitol with lawmakers and congressional staff (Meeting Room: 2360 Rayburn House Office Building)

1300-1400 (1-2 pm)

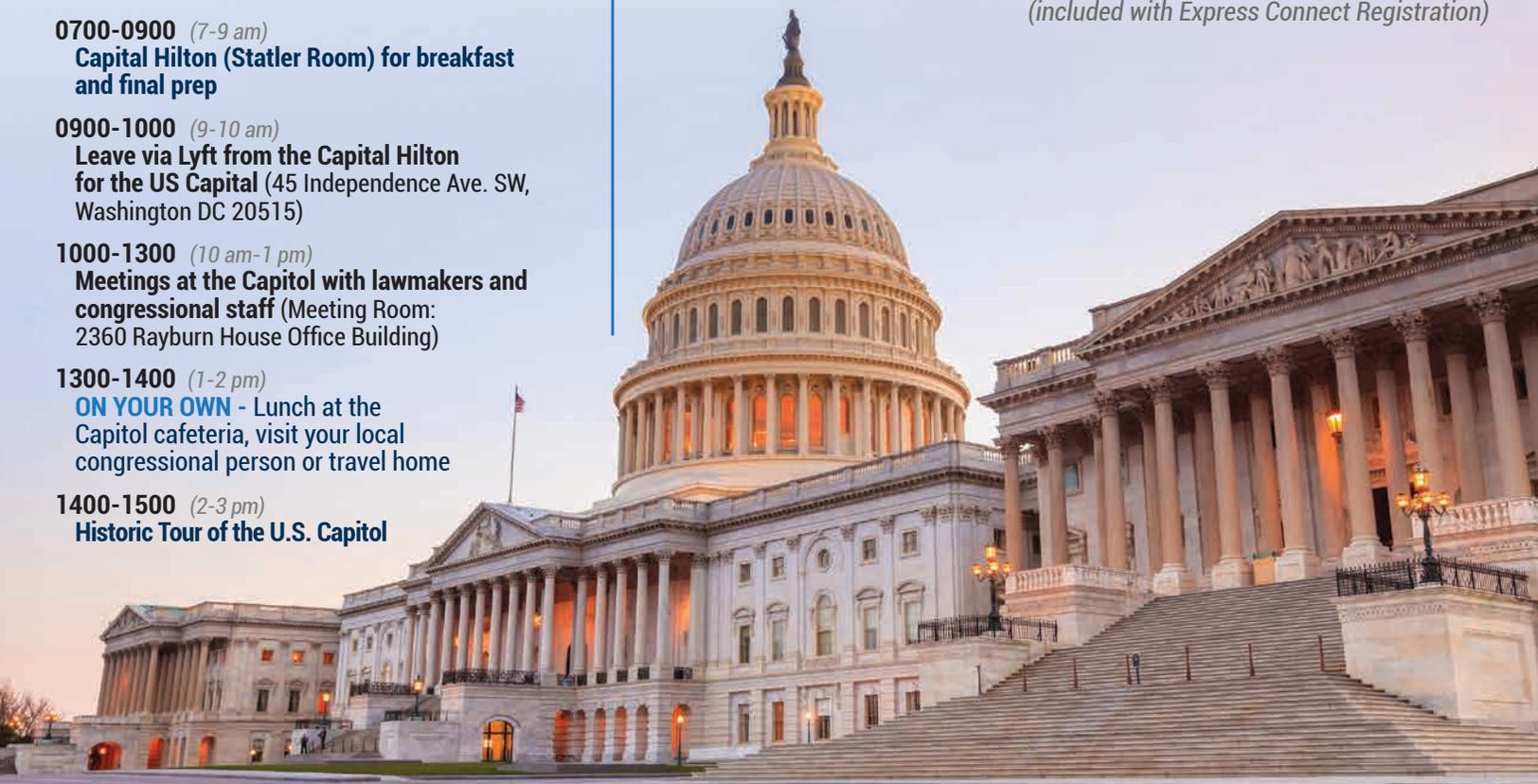
ON YOUR OWN - Lunch at the Capitol cafeteria, visit your local congressional person or travel home

1400-1500 (2-3 pm)

Historic Tour of the U.S. Capitol

An Extension of VIB Express Connect: VIB ON THE HILL Friday, April 25, 2025

(included with Express Connect Registration)



Thank You Corporate Members, Government Agencies and Veteran Businesses for partnering with us throughout the year.



BECOME A MEMBER or PARTNER



Be Part of the Network

- FREE Veteran Business Directory
- Workshops & Webinars
- Outreach Events
- Business Development Programs
- Newsletter & Opportunity Board
- SDVOSB/DVBE Support
- Podcast
- Peer-to-Peer Coaching
- Scholarships
- National Events

Veterans In Business (VIB) Network is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization for Veteran business owners nationwide. With your support, we are able to offer so much more – and at no cost to Veteran businesses.

Supporting Veteran Businesses Nationwide



Thanks to these Corporate, Government and Veteran Business partners, the VIB Network directory is free to join!



Dexcom

Dexcom, Inc. empowering people to take control of health through innovative continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) systems.

Headquartered in San Diego, California, Dexcom has emerged as a leader of diabetes care technology. Our products are part of people's daily lives, empowering them to live confidently and feel more in control, free to pursue their dreams.

Our **Supplier Diversity program**

is committed to the growth, development and well-being of underrepresented communities. This program increases the breadth of our supply base, creates competition and innovation, and more importantly represents our corporate values and business culture in meeting the expectations of our customers and aligning in best practices with our suppliers.

If you are interested in participating in our supplier diversity program please contact us at:

suppliers@dexcom.com

Smart device sold separately



Learn more today
www.dexcom.com/dexcom-suppliers



Together

We Have the Power to Keep the Future Bright

Southern California Edison proudly supports diverse business enterprises through bidding opportunities, technical assistance and capacity building.

We are proud to sponsor the Veterans In Business Express Connect.

For information on Supplier Diversity and Development, please visit [sce.com/sd](https://www.sce.com/sd), call 1-800-275-4962 or email us at SupplierDiversityDevelopment@sce.com

Energy for What's Ahead®





VETERAN Owned. AMERICAN Made.

Customized **Apparel** for your
Business,
Organization, or
Non-Profit.

(at-cost pricing available
for all non-profits)



AUTHENTICALLYAMERICAN.US



**The Total
Management Group**
Excellence in Strategy Execution

Is Your Company a Top Workplace?

The battle to attract & retain top talent is intensifying among today's Federal Contractors. Workplace culture is no longer optional – it's your competitive advantage!

Gain Recognition with The Washington Post's Top Workplaces.

Nominate your company now, at the QR code – it's fast, simple, and there is no cost to participate or win!



**TOP
WORK
PLACES
2026**

The Washington Post



Find our podcast at
vibnetwork.org



Tune in to hear the latest from the Veterans In Business Network! At the Reveille Podcast, you'll hear directly from our Corporate Partners, Government Agencies, and from our own Veteran Business owners. Be sure to listen up when you hear that sound, this is the Reveille Podcast!



for Insider Info,
**Listen through
your favorite
podcast app!**

**Veteran Business Advocate
& Air Force Veteran
COREY VICKERS**

EXPRESS AGENDA Schedule subject to change – check website for latest updates.

THURSDAY, April 24

0800 (8 am)	Express Connect Check-in Opens <i>(NOTE: All sessions will be in the New Hope Room on the 14th floor)</i>
0800-0900 (8-9 am)	Networking Breakfast (Plattsmouth Room)
0900-0920 (9-9:20 am)	Welcome - VIB Chairman Cole Woodman, and Fannie Mae Multifamily COO and Senior VP Chuck Walker
0920-0930 (9:20-9:30 am)	Welcome by Elias Hernandez, SBA Associate Administrator for the Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD)
0930-1015 (9:30-10:15 am)	PANEL DISCUSSION: Procurement Today: New Opportunities with Corporations & Government Agencies
1015-1025 (10:15-10:25 am)	Networking Break
1025-1040 (10:25-10:40 am)	Geopolitical Tensions and How It May Impact Your Business with Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Stoss of Bancroft Capital
1040-1100 (10:40-11 am)	What's Great and Terrible About Using A.I. in Federal Contracting with Gloria Larkin of TargetGov
1100-1115 (11-11:15 am)	Networking Break
1115-1145 (11:15-11:45 am)	Update from U.S. Small Business Administration with Sam Le , Director of Policy Planning & Liaison
1145-1215 (11:45-12:15 pm)	B.R.A.V.O. Corporate Mentor/Veteran Business Protege Fireside Chat / Tactical Networking Tips
1215-1300 (12:15 - 1 pm)	Lunch Break (Plattsmouth Room)
1300-1345 (1-1:45 pm)	Legislative Update by Elizabeth Sullivan of Madison Services Group SBA VetCert Update by John Perkins , Director Veteran Small Business Certification Program
1345-1400 (1:45-2 pm)	Networking Break
1400-1450 (2-2:50 pm)	PANEL DISCUSSION: Procurement Insight from the Experts
1450-1500 (2:50-3 pm)	Tactical Networking Set Up (Plattsmouth Room)
1500-1600 (3- 4 pm)	Tactical Networking - Interactive Roundtable Networking. For more information and tools to help you succeed, visit the Tactical Networking Tab (Plattsmouth Room)
1600-1800 (4-6 pm)	Rooftop Networking Reception (Cafe 13 & 14) - Join us and enjoy live music by Navy Veteran Blues Musician Memphis Gold Chester Chandler , delicious food and drinks. Don't miss this networking opportunity!

SPEAKERS



Chuck Walker

Multifamily Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President | US Navy
Fannie Mae



Elias Hernandez

Associate Administrator | Office of Veterans Business Development | US Army
SBA



Fred Stoss

Editor-In-Chief | US Air Force (Major General, Ret.)
Bancroft Capital



Gloria Larkin

CEO | Veteran Business Advocate
TargetGov



Sam Le

Director of Policy Planning & Liaison | Veteran Business Advocate
SBA



Trevor Boylston

Economic Inclusion Manager | US Army
Boston Scientific



Kenneth King

President | US Army
KingFisher Services, LLC



Ed Simon

Founder | Veteran Business Advocate
EA Simon Company



Elizabeth Sullivan

President | Veteran Business Advocate
Madison Services Group



John Perkins

Director Veteran Small Business Certification Program | US Navy
SBA

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Procurement Today: New Opportunities with Corporations & Government Agencies



MODERATOR

Jeffrey Rodriguez
Principal Manager
Operational Procurement |
US Navy
Southern California Edison



Kimberly Ayers
Director, Supplier
Diversity | Veteran
Business Advocate
AARP



**Dina
Cooper-Williams**
Supplier Diversity Program
Manager | Veteran Business
Advocate | American Water



Sandy Garcia
Project Manager | US
Marines
Sony Pictures
Entertainment



Will Marm
SETA contractor |
US Army
New Frontiers Innovation

Procurement Insights from the Experts



MODERATOR

Diane Dempsey
Director, Small Business
Programs | Veteran
Business Advocate
BAE Systems



David Canada
Associate Director,
Supplier Diversity |
Veteran Advocate
Boeing



Gwen Johnson
Associate Director,
Supplier Diversity |
Veteran Advocate
Parsons



Claressse Jackson
Small Business Program
Manager | Veteran
Business Advocate
HII



Shawn Ralston
Small Business Program
Manager | Veteran
Business Advocate
AECOM

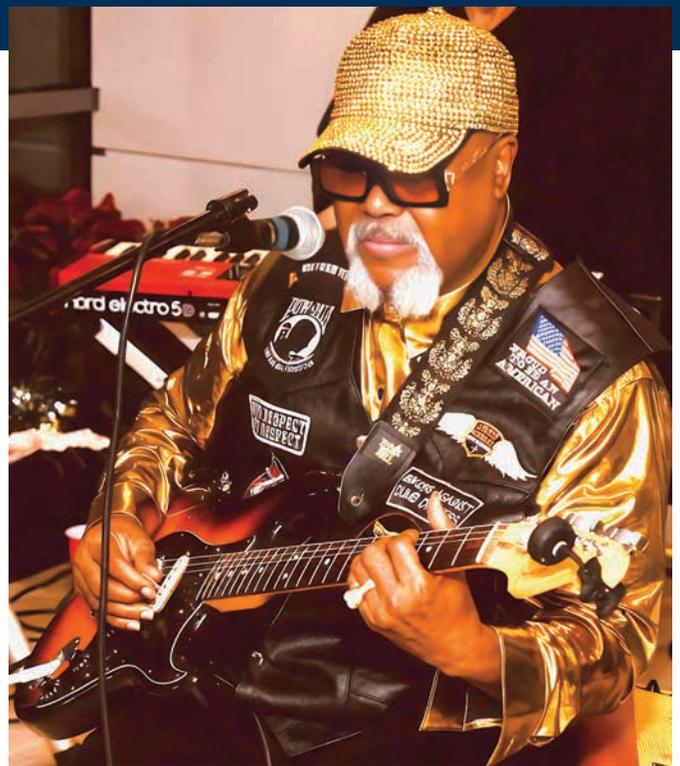
RECEPTION MUSICIAN

Memphis Gold - Chester Chandler

After decades of juke joints, blues festivals, and Navy military duty, Memphis Gold landed in the nation's capital, Washington, DC. Friendships and regular performances with famed blues harp player, Charlie Sayles (W.C. Handy Award nominee, JSP Records) and noted D.C.-based bluesman Bobby Parker made Memphis Gold a regular staple of the DC music scene.

In 1995, he served a year-long stint as lead / rhythm guitarist in Blues Artist Deborah Coleman's touring band (with the late Willie Hicks on bass). By 1998, he issued his first and very well-received eponymous CD which was produced by Parker, the beginning of a stretch of very successful album releases.

The blues world continues to discover and love the music of Memphis Gold. Living Blues Magazine, the oldest authoritative Blues Magazine in America placed him on the cover of their February/March 2009 edition, and Gibson Guitars recognized Memphis Gold by awarding him with a custom guitar and endorsement. He was thrilled to perform at the Red, White and Blue Ball, the Official Military Inaugural Ball in January 2009, and 2017 the Heroes Inaugural Ball opening for Brett Micheals. His music can be found on BB King's Bluesville on XM Radio, Comcast Music on Demand, and radio stations throughout the world.



VIB NETWORK BRAVO

BUSINESS READINESS AND VETERAN OPTIMIZATION

The VIB Network is excited to announce the latest graduates of our signature business development program, the **BRAVO (Business Readiness And Veteran Optimization) Corporate Mentor/Veteran Business Protege Program**, under the guidance of Ed Simon of EA Simon Company.

During this 6-month program, participating Veteran business proteges connected with their Corporate Mentors for guidance and honest feedback on how to work within the Corporate space. During the BRAVO Program, proteges worked with their mentors and the VIB Network's professional graphic designer to update their capabilities statements and PowerPoint templates. **Congratulations to our graduating proteges!**

We would like to extend our thanks to all of the participating corporate mentors that shared their knowledge, time and experience with these Veteran business proteges. You have all gone above and beyond to personally impact these Veteran businesses with your commitment to their growth and development. **Bravo Zulu, mentors!**



View completed Capabilities Statements »
tinyurl.com/ycxyxkcd

"Being part of the BRAVO program has been an enormous gift to my company. My mentor guided me through the process of achieving two important business certifications, and the BRAVO team helped to create a dynamite new capabilities statement that I know is going to help us bring in new business."
- Mike O'Donnell, New York Safety and Training



CORPORATE MENTORS:





CORE SERVICE OFFERINGS

Consulting and Strategy Development

- Workplace Inclusion & Belonging
- Supplier Inclusion, Program Development, and Annual Reporting
- Advocacy Support Programs
- Operational Excellence and Efficiency

Training & Workshops (Virtual or In-Person)

- Inclusion & Belonging
- Diversity Event Facilitation
- Supplier Diversity
- Small Business Development
- Advocacy and Community-Based

All services can be offered Ala carte or by retainer.

Small Business Development

- Develop and Facilitate Mentorship Programs
- Outreach Program Strategies
- Supplier Workshop Facilitation
- Certification and Business Development Assistance

Legal Shield – Individual and Small Business

CAPABILITIES SUMMARY

With over 23 years of experience in the water utility sector, I have honed my skills in operations, customer service, diverse supplier inclusion, and workforce inclusion. My extensive experience and creative/innovative approach have consistently delivered outstanding results. At EA Simon Company, we believe in the transformative power of impact. We're not just in the business of consulting. We're in the business of driving meaningful change that reshapes organizations and strengthens operations. Every partnership we engage in is an opportunity to elevate performance, foster inclusion, and build a more effective organization. We are passionate about helping organizations meet their operational and inclusion goals and become catalysts for broader sectoral change. Through strategic partnerships, tailored solutions, and a dedication to excellence, we position ourselves as a firm dedicated to making a lasting impact that ripples far beyond immediate results.

KEY PROJECTS

FACILITATOR OF VIB NETWORK'S 2024-2025 B.R.A.V.O. MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

-  **Operations**
Water Meter Upgrade Project (AMI) and Field Service Work Order Optimization
-  **Customer Service**
Developed and Implemented Streamlined Customer Efficiency Workflow Processes (Operations and Support Functions)
-  **Supplier Inclusion**
Achieved over 48% Spend with Diverse Suppliers, Utility and Prime Supplier Mentorship Programs, Facilitated Annual Supplier Inclusion Showcases, and Developed Robust Capacity Building and Technical Assistance Programs
-  **Workforce Inclusion**
Developed Employee Suggestion Programs, Employee Resources Groups, and Workforce Inclusion Strategies



DIFFERENTIATORS

- Industry-specific Expertise
- Holistic Approach to Excellence
- Proven Track Record
- Strategic and Sustainable Solutions
- Impact-Driven Philosophy
- Change Management Expertise

CLIENTS



Ed, thank you so much for leading such an incredible presentation and Q&A! That was really great, and we saw such positive feedback in the chat. Thanks for kicking off our 2025 Heritage Month series. What a success! We appreciate you.

-Carly Specht Associate Director, Affiliate Relations & External Affairs
National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)

RECOGNITION

- Influential LGBTQ+ Leader 2022/2024
- Toni Cornelius Special Innovation Award
- VIBN Corporation of the Year
- LA ABA Advocate of the Year



CERTIFICATIONS



TACTICAL NETWORKING

CONNECTING YOUR VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS WITH CORPORATIONS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PRIME CONTRACTORS READY TO WORK WITH YOU

Timed Interactive Networking/Matchmaking

Each table has a mix of Government agencies, Corporations, Veteran business owners and one facilitator. Each participant has **one** minute to pitch their organization. The facilitator keeps time and moves the conversation along to allow everyone to be engaged.

After the allotted time (~10 minutes), Corporations and Government agencies move to the next table, giving Veteran business owners the opportunity to get facilitator feedback. Participants coach each other and create camaraderie to help one another improve their pitch each round.

Instructions



Tactical Networking is timed roundtable matchmaking.

EACH TABLE: Mix of Government Agencies, Corporations, Veteran Business Owners and a Facilitator.

Each **Participant** has **1 minute** to pitch their organization.

The **Facilitator** helps to keep the time and move the conversation along to allow everyone to be engaged.

When time is up, **Corporations and Government Agencies** move to next table.

Facilitator and other participants provide feedback, coach, and help improve pitches for each round.



How to Sign Up

1 CHECK IN for the Express Connect event, then visit the Tactical Networking Sign Up Table (open during breaks)

- Sign-ups are ONLY on-site at the event.
- To ensure all participants are present, we do not offer online sign ups for Tactical Networking.

2 Tell the Tactical Networking Sign Up Table about your business.

- Type of Business
- Veteran OR Corporation OR Government Agency OR Small Business (non-veteran)
- Number of participants from your organization

If more than 1 person from your organization is participating, you will be at separate tables.

3 You'll be assigned a table number (on a sticker)

Place sticker on your name badge to ensure you're directed to your correct table when the session begins



TIPS for Success

Get the most out of Tactical Networking

- Use the provided Elevator Pitch Form to develop an elevator pitch for your business and prepare you to speak effectively and efficiently.
- Bring lots of business cards
- Make sure your contact and business information is up to date and ready to be handed out
- Practice, practice, practice
- Being succinct and focused in your pitch in one minute takes work, so practice your pitch!

SIGN UP TABLE OPEN DURING BREAKS!

TACTICAL NETWORKING

PERFECTING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Join us for Tactical Networking! Please complete the elevator pitch script on the reverse side of this sheet by answering the questions and following the format below.

Your elevator pitch should not exceed 1 minute. You need to succinctly convey who you are, what you do, and why someone should do business with you. Tell the listener the types of problems you solve. You may include the types of customers or opportunities you seek. EXAMPLE:

Hi! My name is *Robert Jones*.

My company is *Left Brain Professionals*, located in *Westerville, OH*.

We are a *boutique accounting firm serving government contractors nationwide*.

We practice (provide, offer, sell, service, make, manufacture) *operational and strategic support services*.

Our services (products) include *accounting system approvals, indirect rate calculations, incurred cost proposals, audit support and remediation*.

Uses for our service (product) include (the problem we solve is) *government contract compliance, winning more awards, and improving profitability*.

Some of our clients/customers include (We work with) *small and medium-size businesses from four employees in an SBIR firm all the way to up some top-tier government and defense contractors*.

We're known for (proud to boast) *that we've achieved 100% audit pass rates with our clients*.

Complete below to practice your pitch!

Hi! My name is _____.

My company is _____, located in _____.

We are _____.

We practice (provide, offer, sell, service, make, manufacture) _____.

Our services (products) include _____.

Uses for our service (product) include (the problem we solve is) _____.

Some of our clients/customers include (We work with) _____.

We're known for (proud to boast) _____.

FREE MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

Your dream opportunity is one touch away!



U.S. Veterans Magazine is proud to sponsor VIBN
Download your complimentary issue:

<https://usveteransmagazine.com/vibn2025>

Join the Conversation!



The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

Connect with...

»
**OUR
HOST**



Fannie Mae®



VIB NETWORK

Veterans In Business
Networking for Success

See you in San Diego!

November 12-13 • San Diego, CA

Registration opens May 1!

Sponsorship opportunities available.

petco park



HOST HOTEL: Paradise Point
San Diego's Island Resort