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EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES NEW VETERAN SERVICE CENTERS OPENING ACROSS NEW YORK STATE

Seven Entrepreneurial Assistance Program Locations Receive Funding For New Veteran Business Assistance Centers

Empire State Development (ESD) today announced seven Entrepreneurial Assistance Programs (EAP) statewide have been selected to develop Veteran Business Assistance Centers. Each center will receive a grant of up to \$42,000 to fund the current program year and enable the EAP centers to assist veterans with starting a new businesses, or to train veterans in the practices of entrepreneurship to prepare them to pursue self-employment opportunities.

“We are grateful to our veterans for the sacrifices they’ve made and we believe the skills they’ve acquired through their military service will enable them to become successful New York State business owners,” said ESD President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky. “The new VBACs will provide opportunities for veterans to learn the fundamentals of starting a business and allow them to pursue self-employment and support job creation statewide.”

In the 2015-2016 State Budget, Governor Cuomo committed \$350,000 to invest in the development of EAP Veteran Business Assistance Centers (VBACs). Applications were received from nine of the 22 existing EAPs throughout the state, of which seven have been selected to receive \$294,000 to fund VBACs. The remaining funds will be used to provide guidance to VBAC employees about working with veterans, as well as counseling individual EAP staff, training sessions and more.

The following EAPs have been awarded funding to establish Veteran Business Assistance Centers:

Adirondack Economic Development – North Country Region

Service Area: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, Saratoga, St. Lawrence, Warren, and Washington Counties with assistance available in English.

Capital Chamber Foundation / Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce – Capital Region

Service Area: Albany, Town of Colonie; Rensselaer, Schenectady, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Montgomery and Fulton Counties, with assistance available in English.

IBERO American Action League – Finger Lakes Region

Opening locations in Buffalo and Waverly. Service Area: Erie, Niagara, Ontario, Wayne, Seneca, Steuben, Yates, Cayuga, Schuyler, Tioga and Chemung Counties with assistance available in English and Spanish

Renaissance Economic Development Corporation – New York City Region

Service Area: Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn, with assistance available in English, Chinese and Korean.

South Side Innovation Center at Syracuse University – Central New York Region

Service Area: Onondaga, Oswego, Syracuse, Madison, and Cortland Counties with assistance available in English.

Suffolk County Community College – Long Island Region

Service Area: Suffolk County with assistance available in English and Spanish.

Washington Heights Inwood Development Corporation – New York City Region

Service Area: Washington Heights-Inwood, Harlem, East Harlem, and Western Bronx, with assistance available in English and Spanish.

The VBACs are required to meet specific goals in the following areas: new enrollments, businesses started, businesses with increased sales and employment, business plan development, MWBE certification, and financial plans developed and secured.

NYS Division of Veterans' Affairs Eric Hesse said, "This is yet another great opportunity for Veterans in New York State. Many Veterans get out of the service looking to develop a business and VBACs will be a much needed resource for them to get started. I applaud the Governor's leadership in making New York open for Veteran business."

Director of NYS Division of Entrepreneurial Assistance Program Joyce Smith said, "The Entrepreneurial Assistance Program has provided business services for nearly three decades helping entrepreneurs around the state realize their dreams of business ownership by providing training, one-on-one counseling, access to financing and other support services. The creation of the EAP Veteran Business Assistance Centers allows us the opportunity to serve the veterans of NYS who have served our country so well. We salute them and are forever grateful."

New York State's [Entrepreneurial Assistance Program](#) (EAP) was created in 1987 by the NYS Omnibus Economic Development Act. Since its inception, the EAP initiative has helped entrepreneurs create new businesses and has provided in-depth assistance to minorities, women, dislocated workers and individuals with a disability interested in starting a business. The EAP establishes centers in local communities to provide instruction, training, technical assistance and support services to individuals who have recently started their own business or are interested in starting a business. The program's EAP centers are strategically located throughout the state. EAP assists new and aspiring entrepreneurs in developing basic business management skills, refining business concepts, devising early-stage marketing plans and preparation of action plans. In addition, the program actively assists EAP client efforts to obtain business financing.

About Empire State Development (ESD)

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York's chief economic development agency (www.esd.ny.gov). The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I Love NY," the state's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, visit www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov and www.esd.ny.gov.

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