

CHALLENGE News

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"DGS Certifies First California Nonprofit Veteran Service Agency"

The California Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Alliance announced the first California nonprofit veteran service agency (NVSA) to be granted a small business bid preference for state contracts.

Success Skills Inc., a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit veteran service agency, was created in response to AB 323, a bill authored by Assemblymember Nicole Parra (D-Hanford). Success Skills plans to utilize the 5% small business preference to win state government and other tax supported agency contract awards. It is expected that these contracts will provide larger and more stable sources of revenue to support veteran services than typical nonprofit fundraising and grant opportunities.

Success Skills Inc. has formed a coalition of successful for profit and nonprofit companies, such as PRIDE Industries, California Emergency Foodlink, Western Blue, Stay Safe Scan and Storage, Stay Safe Shred, Stay Safe Store, and the California Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Alliance, to help provide employment and employment training, housing, substance abuse assistance, and case management services for returning wounded warriors and other veterans. PRIDE Industries is one of the largest employers of the disabled in the U.S. California Emergency Foodlink is the 1999 recipient of the prestigious Drucker Award for nonprofit innovation with their truck driver training program. Western Blue was recently recognized as one of Sacramento's five fastest growing companies. The Stay Safe Group of certified California DVBE firms has a track record of successfully completing hundreds of government contracts. The California DVBE Alliance represents

approximately 1,000 California businesses run by disabled veterans.

In addition to a central focus on assisting returning wounded warriors, Success Skills Inc., and their coalition, will also assist low income veterans, homeless veterans, and their families. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that nearly 200,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans conservatively estimates that one out of every three homeless men who is sleeping in a doorway, alley, or box in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served this country. Assemblymember Parra's legislation seeks to help correct this national tragedy.

Ken Shoemaker, Director, Success Skills Inc., and a service-disabled veteran, credits Assemblymember Nicole Parra for her leadership in recognizing this national problem and carrying proactive legislation that provides a mechanism other than fundraising and grant opportunities to fund these essential services for California's wounded warriors and other veterans. Mr. Shoemaker's for profit company, Stay Safe Shred, was recently announced as the recipient of the 2007 Small Business Partnership Award by the National Institute for the Severely Handicapped (NISB). This award recognizes small business partners for increased employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities. The award will be presented at the annual NISB National Training and Achievement Conference in April in Los Angeles.

Persons desiring to help in this important effort should call Ken Shoemaker at 888.782.7233 x. 3.