

COCC PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT



CENTRAL OREGON community college SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Veterans with Business Ambitions Can Apply Benefits at COCC's Small Business Center

For veterans with entrepreneurial ambitions, a newly established benefit program — the first of its kind in the state — will allow them to enroll in educational programming at Central Oregon Community College's (COCC) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) using GI Bill assistance. Veterans can contact the SBDC at 541-383-7290 or sbdc@cocc.edu to learn more and get started by scheduling a benefits appointment.

The recently approved certification by the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs will open new doors of opportunity for eligible veterans throughout Central Oregon, funding access to non-credit business classes, entrepreneurial workshops and an immersive business management program.

Ken Betschart, director of the SBDC since early last year, recognized that this specific benefit for veterans — signed into federal law in 2003 — was missing from the application process of the statewide SBDC network, which comprises 19 different education centers. In fact, Betschart noted that the benefit has yet to catch on in many states.

"Ours was the first SBDC approval for the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs state approving agency," he said. "We're honored to be on the leading edge of this benefit service in Oregon, helping connect veterans with this supported educational path."

There are approximately 304,000 veterans in the state of Oregon, with 47% under the age of 65, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Current COCC

enrollment figures indicate that 306 credit-seeking and 14 non-credit-seeking students disclosed as veterans on their college application.

“Our team is really looking forward to helping more regional veterans follow their business dreams,” added Betschart.

The college’s SBDC has supported veterans in the past with a scholarship program that provided for a 40% discount on all business classes. Recently, some local veteran business owners received a scholarship to join the center’s yearlong small business management program.

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