

**HOUSTON**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



# **VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM**

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

**REGISTER ONLINE:  
[hccs.edu/vcp](https://hccs.edu/vcp)**

**Empowering our nation's heroes  
to succeed in the new business world**

A collaboration with the Houston Regional Veterans Chamber of Commerce



# About:

The Veterans Entrepreneurship Program (VEP) is designed to help veterans and military families start and grow a small business. The program offers digital technology training from technology experts, practical Small Business Success Series by HCC© training, access to a local community launch pad, access to HCC's Entrepreneurial Programs (Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, Minority Business Development Agency, HCC Business Plan Competition, Program for Women, Micro-Entrepreneurs), and a special Pitch Competition for Veterans and Military family members interested in growing their Veteran led startups!



## Stage 1: Practical Digital Skills

At the start of the program, tech experts bring relevant digital skills and tech badges that are useful for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Tech experts deliver training tools to communicate with customers, build databases and market business products and services as well as teach practical virtual skills for the digital world.



## Stage 2: Practical Business Skills

At the heart of the Veterans Entrepreneurship Program (VEP) is an intense, immersive, rigorous, practical Small Business Success Series by HCC© Program. It is an opportunity for hands-on learning and interaction with faculty, guest entrepreneurs, business experts, and peer delegates. Small Business Success Series by HCC© shares the "nuts & bolts" of business ownership through experiential workshops and lessons from business coaches and faculty representing nationally ranked programs around the country. Our small business experts deliver interactive trainings in a progressive format that allows you to apply learnings to your business as they facilitate guided small group and peer-to-peer exercises.



## Stage 3: Local Launch Pad

Ready? Set go! Discover resources and funding from HCC entrepreneurial programs and local organizations who serve veterans and military families. Events include a Veteran Higher Education Panel and a Veteran Entrepreneurship Panel with resources partners for Veterans interested in small business and entrepreneurship. Lastly, a Veteran Business Pitch Competition to launch businesses, selected by a panel of distinguished judges, for a chance to win seed capital and scholarships!

This integrated three-stage program covers the key elements of gaining 21st century digital skills, building practical small business and entrepreneurship skills, and offers an innovative combination of local resources and support structure to launch and grow businesses!

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VETERANS**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
★★★★★

# VEP Stage 1: Practical Digital Skills

At the start of program, tech experts brings relevant digital skills and tech badges that are useful for aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners. Tech educators deliver training tools to communicate with customers, build databases, and market products and services as well as teach practical skills for the digital world.

## Teams, Zoom, & WebEx for Small Business

With Online Collaboration Tools, people can use video conferencing to communicate securely with HD video while seeing and talking to other participants in real time. This adds a level of engagement and interaction to the conversation.

## Microsoft 365 & Google Apps for Business

Learn how to get more work done, from anywhere on any device with Microsoft 365 and Google Apps. Discover how industry professionals leverage technology to communicate, collaborate, and improve productivity across the team and organization.

## LinkedIn and Online Learning Platforms

Learn of LinkedIn Learning's library for each learning path also includes collaborative courses, all taught by industry-expert instructors, allowing individuals to move through content and demonstrate their learning with a certificate of completion.

## Cyber Security & Online Safety

Cyber threats aren't just a problem for big corporations and governments – small businesses can be targets too. In fact, there is evidence that small businesses are more vulnerable to cyberattacks, not least because they sometimes lack the resources to protect themselves effectively.

It's important to protect your business from cyberattacks, but with the cyber landscape evolving all the time, it can be daunting to know where to start. Here's a guide to help small businesses navigate the world of cyber threats.



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*digital skills sponsored by*



### Friday & Saturday at Veteran Business Expo

**9/22/23:** 10 a.m. - Teams, Zoom, & Webex for Small Business

**9/22/23:** 2 p.m. - Office 365 & Google Apps

**9/23/23:** 10 a.m. - LinkedIn and Online Learning Platforms

**9/23/23:** 2 p.m. - CyberSecurity & Online Safety

Each training session offers a continuing education credit from HCC Community Learning continuing education program.



# VEP Stage 2: Practical Business Skills

At the heart of the Veteran Entrepreneurship Program (VEP) is an intense, immersive, rigorous, practical Small Business Success Series by HCC© Program. It is an opportunity for hands-on learning and interaction with faculty, guest entrepreneurs, business experts, and peer delegates. Small Business Success Series by HCC© shares the "nuts and bolts" of business ownership through experiential workshops and lessons from business coaches and faculty representing nationally ranked programs around the country. Our small business experts deliver interactive trainings in a progressive format that allows you to apply learnings to your business as they facilitate guided small group and peer-to-peer exercises.

## Vet the Venture - Are My Ideas Lucrative?

Assists entrepreneurs in determining the financial viability of their business idea or growth plan. Covers competition, market need, price positioning, differentiators, revenue projections, start-up costs & more.

## Ignite the Entrepreneur in You!

Understand key traits of successful entrepreneurs; your leadership style & problem-solving skills to negotiate, sell & achieve goals.

## Financials for Small Business Launch & Growth

Prepare for the "why, how & what's next" in understanding your numbers: past, present & how to analyze & estimate numbers you & your funders need to know to propel you to sustained success

## Sales & Marketing Powered Up

Insights & tactics to improve your organization's ongoing market research process, messaging, strategic planning, budget & spending, digital marketing, analytics & measurement and loyalty & brand advocacy.

## Minimizing Risk - Protect Your Assets, Your Business & Your Future!

Minimize risk considering: Liability and tax requirements in business organization; insurance; hiring employees & independent contractors; operational processes & contract negotiation.

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### Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**9/30/23:**

Vet the Venture - Are My Ideas Lucrative?

**10/7/23:**

Ignite the Entrepreneur in You!

**10/14/23:**

Sales & Marketing Powered Up

**10/21/23:**

Financials for Small Business Launch & Growth

**10/28/23:**

Minimizing Risk - Protect Your Assets, Your Business & Your Future



Glenda & David Regenbaum  
Center for Entrepreneurship

Northwest Houston



There are five modules, one per week,  
Complete all 5 modules to earn  
a certificate from HCC!

## Application Procedures

The VEP Stage II (Practical Business Skills Program) has an application process that reflects the unique opportunity and valuable resources being offered to eligible veterans. Successful candidates demonstrate a strong interest in entrepreneurship and venture creation, the motivation to own and operate a business, and commitment to participate and complete the entire VEP program.

# VEP Stage 3: Local Community Launchpad

Ready? Set go! Learn from Local Entrepreneurial Programs and organizations who support veterans and military families.

## Events

### Veteran Higher Education Panel (11/4/23 - 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.)

A panel of local higher education representatives offers veterans an opportunity to pursue their college degree or certificate and have advisors and experts to help them through the process. This session will introduce local college resources who will share program information and procedures for admission. Learn about new programs and certificates in high demand and ways information about how to pay for college.

### Veteran Entrepreneurship Panel (11/4/23 - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

The armed forces teach you lifelong skills, and many of these skills are transferable in becoming a business entrepreneur. Effectively managing risk, operating under pressure, and being resourceful are just a few qualities needed in both business and the military. Hear from a panel of local business owners who will share insightful tips and experiences to help aspiring veteran entrepreneurs.

## The Pitch Competition (11/10/23 - 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.)

### Veteran Business Pitch Competition

HCC and HVCC co-sponsored pitch competition that includes business training, mentoring, and access to seed cash and investment prizes! Top 7 finalists veteran owned companies will pitch in front of a community judge panel for cash awards. See the competition page on [hccs.edu/vcp](https://hccs.edu/vcp) for more details on scoring rubrics and faqs. More than \$10,000 of cash and \$50K Investment Prizes will be distributed to support veteran led businesses and startups!

1st Place: \$2500

2nd Place: \$1500

3rd Place: \$1000

2 Honorable Mentions: \$750 (each)

Pitch Presentation and Awards on 11/10/23 at HCC West Loop Campus Auditorium

Cash Awards Sponsored by:



UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS



**INVESTMENT PRIZE OF up to \$50K from Accredited Investors from "I Am For Heroes" Board & Team**



Indian Americans Serving all US & Allied Military & First Responder Heroes

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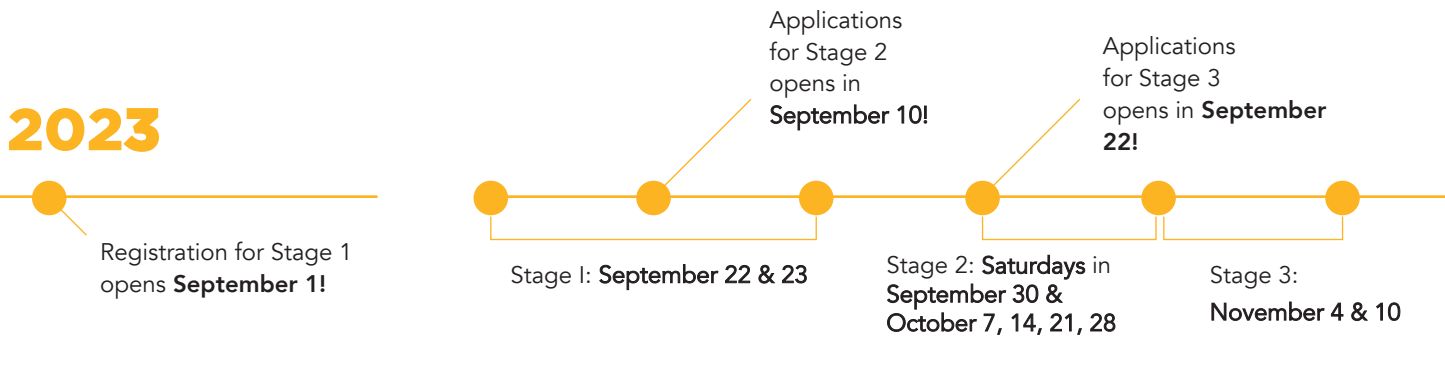
**[hccs.edu/vcp](https://hccs.edu/vcp)**

(click on STAGE 3)



# Program Timeline & Calendar

**2023**



**Stage 1:  
Digital Tech Skills**  
at Houston Veteran Business EXPO  
Friday & Saturday  
**9/22/23:** Teams, Zoom, & WebEx  
  
for Small Business  
  
**9/22/23:** Office 365 and Google  
Apps  
  
**9/23/23:** LinkedIn and Online  
Learning Platforms  
  
**9/23/23:** Cyber Security & Online  
Safety

**Stage 2:  
Small Business Skills**  
Saturdays  
from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
  
**9/30/23:**  
Vet the Venture -  
Are My Ideas Lucrative?  
  
**10/7/23:**  
Ignite the Entrepreneur in You!  
  
**10/14/23:**  
Sales & Marketing Powered Up  
  
**10/21/23:**  
Financials for Small Business Launch  
& Growth  
  
**10/28/23:**  
Minimizing Risk - Protect Your  
Assets, Your Business & Your Future

**Stage 3:  
Launch Pad**  
(Panels are open to the general Public)  
  
**11/4/23:**  
Veterans Higher Education Panel  
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
  
Veterans Entrepreneurship Panel  
12 p.m. to 1 p.m.  
  
**11/10/23:**  
**Veteran Business Pitch Competition**  
  
*Finalists announced by November 1*  
Pitch Presentation and Awards  
Ceremony on November 10th  
at HCC West Loop Campus

## VEP Invites

- ← Veterans who have separated or are in the process of separating from the military.
- ← Family members of Veterans.
- ← The Practical Business Skills program has an application which requires the applicant to have developed a business concept or have an existing business less than three years old.

## VEP Cost

**VEP is free to veterans and military members and family, over the age of 18.**  
The costs of the VEP are underwritten by sponsors and private donors, including our presenting sponsor, the Houston Regional Veteran Chamber of Commerce and Houston Community College Foundation Donors.

# VEP Board & Partners

## VEP Advisory Members

### Coaches, Visionaries, and Administrators

- ← Dr. Maya Durnovo, Houston Community College (HCC)
- ← Mr. Dave Weaver, Houston Regional Veterans Chamber of Commerce (HVCC)
- ← Mr. Robert Dembo III, City of Houston, Veterans & Military Affairs
- ← Mr. David Regenbaum, HCC Foundation & HCC EiR

## VEP Action Team Members

### Cheerleaders, Day-to-Day Operations, Participant Liaison, Participant Communications

- ← Mr. Ravi Brahmhatt, HCC, Student Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- ← John Cacolice, Houston Regional Veterans Chamber of Commerce (HVCC)
- ← Dr. Latrice Rideout, HCC, Community Learnings
- ← Ms. Sandra Louvier, HCC, NW Center for Entrepreneurship

## Outreach Partners

### Community Liaison, Community Promotion, Outreach

- ← Mr. Mark Winchester, SBA
- ← Mr. Henry Banh, Bunker Labs Houston
- ← Ms. Kapree Thomas, HCC VMAS Office
- ← Mr. Scott Drysdale, SCORE Houston



## VEP 2023 Members & Partners



# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. Do I need to have a college degree, or have taken some college courses, to attend?

No. The VEP is designed to take any veteran and military family member, regardless of prior educational experience, through the steps and stages of starting a new business.

## 2. How many spaces are available for this program?

For Stage I: Does not have any limits, as many as possible to fit at the breakout rooms at GRB during the EXPO

For Stage II: We have 40 seats available in the VEP. Participants must submit an application before the deadline for consideration by the VEP Admissions Committee.

For Stage III: Events do not have any limits, Competition does not have any limits, however only **Top 7** Finalists will be invited to pitch in front of panel of Judges.

## 3. Can my spouse or family member register?

For Stage I: Yes! Open to all veterans and military family members.

For Stage II: We have 40 seats available in the VEP. Participants must submit an application before the deadline for consideration by the VEP Admissions Committee.

For Stage III: Events are open to family members. Competition is open to only business founders/co-founders and/or executive team members recommended.

## 4. When can I apply?

Registration for Stage 1 opens on September 1, Applications for Stage 2 opens on September 10, and the Business Pitch Applications for Stage 3 Pitch Competition opens on September 22.

## 5. What are my commitments? Do I need to attend all phases?

The VEP Stage I requires attending Veteran Business Expo on September 22 & 23 and taking part in up to 4 training sessions. The VEP Stage II requires Saturday commitment in completion of the 5 Week Program. The VEP Stage III (Pitch) requires the submission of a Business Pitch Presentation and 1 minute video pitch.

Participants are encouraged to participate in all VEP stages.

## 6. What does the program cost?

There is **no cost** to participate in the Veterans Entrepreneurship Program.

Starting and growing a business is tough, don't do it alone!

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★★★★★