



## **USBLN<sup>®</sup> Partners with IVMF to Further Advance Service-Disabled Veterans in Employment and Entrepreneurship**

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Contact: Anita Howard  
Phone: (800) 706-2710  
[anita@usbln.org](mailto:anita@usbln.org)

WASHINGTON, DC (August 13, 2012) - The US Business Leadership Network (USBLN<sup>®</sup>) is pleased to announce a partnership with the [Institute for Veterans and Military Families](#) at Syracuse University (IVMF) focused on service-disabled veterans in employment and entrepreneurship. The partnership will advance joint initiatives undertaken by both organizations during the past several years into a formal program of collaboration to benefit business and industry who seek well-qualified employees and suppliers, and service-disabled veteran employees and business owners.

According to **Jill Houghton**, USBLN<sup>®</sup> Executive Director, service-disabled veteran-owned businesses have opportunities to become certified diversity suppliers and to work with private industry to meet their needs for products and services. USBLN<sup>®</sup>'s supplier diversity certification is complementary to those of other diversity suppliers, and offers a rigorous evaluation process to certify disability-owned businesses. Certified businesses gain access to networks of corporate and government procurement professionals, and these buyers gain a reliable source for certified suppliers capable of addressing supply chain product and service requirements.

**James Schmeling**, IVMF managing Director and Co-Founder stated that, "IVMF's education and technical assistance programs for entrepreneurs have educated over 500 veterans with disabilities. Providing another avenue for our entrepreneurs to reach their markets is an important component of our collaboration." According to James Schmeling, "We are committed to provide improved access to opportunities and decreased barriers to both employment and entrepreneurship for the veteran and service-disabled veteran community."

"The partnership between USBLN<sup>®</sup> and the IVMF will increase knowledge and information flow between veterans, business and industry, government, and other stakeholders, and will improve opportunities for service-disabled veterans as employees and as business owners, and provide access to both for our membership," says Jill Houghton. "It supports our vision which 'promotes the certification and growth of disability-owned business.'"

The IVMF's focus on veterans, and service-disabled veterans, naturally aligns with the goals and objectives of USBLN in this area. The institute's recently published "[Guide to Leading Policies, Practices & Resources: Supporting the Employment of Veterans and Military Families](#)" and the National Council on Disabilities' "[Empowerment for Americans with Disabilities: Breaking Barriers to Careers and Full Employment](#)" report, for which James Schmeling was project director, both form frameworks for engaging business and industry and preparing veterans for employment.

Each year, more than 250,000 service members transition out of the military. Returning veterans are natural entrepreneurs, possessing skills, experience and leadership to start businesses and create jobs. Additionally, veterans often hire other veterans, and this is particularly the case for service-disabled veterans.

**About the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University (IVMF)**

Launched in 2011 by founding partners Syracuse University and JPMorgan Chase & Co., the Institute for Veterans and Military Families is the first national center in higher education focused on the social, economic, education and policy issues impacting veterans and their families post-service. Through the pillars of educational programming, employment and actionable research, the institute provides in-depth analysis of the challenges facing the veteran community, captures best practices and serves as a forum to facilitate new partnerships and strong relationships between the individuals and organizations committed to making a difference for veterans and military families. <http://vets.syr.edu/>

**About the US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®)**

The US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) is a national non-profit, non-partisan business to business network promoting workplaces, marketplaces, and supply chains where people with disabilities are included. The USBLN® serves as the collective voice of over 60 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. Additionally, the USBLN® Disability Supplier Diversity Program® (DSDP) is the nation's leading third party certification program for disability-owned businesses, including service-disabled veterans. [www.usbln.org](http://www.usbln.org)

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