

# NVBDC Expands Leadership to Advance Digital Readiness and Global Growth for Veteran-Owned Businesses

*New appointments & expanded programming strengthen NVBDC's commitment to preparing veteran-owned businesses for procurement, digital readiness, & global growth.*

TROY, MI, UNITED STATES, May 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Veteran Business Development Council today announced a series of strategic leadership updates, board restructuring efforts, and programmatic initiatives designed to accelerate growth, expand global access, and equip veteran-owned businesses with the tools needed to compete in today's digital economy.

These developments [mark a significant step forward in NVBDC's continued evolution](#), reinforcing its commitment to delivering measurable value to both certified veteran-owned businesses and corporate partners.



John Oleson, Interim Chief Executive Officer

## Strengthening Leadership and Governance



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*Fernando Hernandez*

As part of its strategic path forward, NVBDC has implemented key updates to its leadership structure and Board of Directors to enhance governance, accountability, and long-term organizational performance.

Central to this transition is the appointment of [Elaine M. Taylor as Executive Director](#). In this role, Taylor will work closely with NVBDC's Board of Directors to lead day-to-day

operations, execute strategic initiatives, and expand engagement across corporate and veteran business communities.

Taylor brings more than 25 years of experience across the defense, aerospace, government, and nonprofit sectors, with a proven ability to align strategy with execution and drive measurable growth.

“This is a pivotal moment for our organization,” said John Oleson, Interim CEO of NVBDC. “With Elaine’s leadership and our strengthened governance structure, we are well-positioned to scale our impact while maintaining the integrity and trust that define NVBDC certification.”

Jim Cowper, Chair of the NVBDC Board of Directors, added: “Our board restructuring reflects a clear commitment to strong governance and strategic alignment. We are building the foundation necessary to support long-term growth and deliver increased value to the veteran business community and our corporate members.”

#### Advancing Digital Readiness for Veteran-Owned Businesses

In parallel with its leadership expansion, NVBDC has launched a major initiative to advance digital readiness among veteran-owned businesses, led by Board Member Annette Stevenson through a targeted grant program.

This initiative is designed to provide veteran entrepreneurs with practical tools and training to compete in an increasingly digital and competitive marketplace.

Key focus areas include:



Jim Cowper, Chair of the NVBDC Board of Directors.



Fernando Hernandez, Global Supplier Diversity Leader

- Leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) tools for business growth
- Developing effective private-sector capability statements
- Building export readiness and entering global markets
- Strengthening cybersecurity practices to meet corporate requirements
- Enhancing overall digital infrastructure and competitiveness

This effort aligns with NVBDC's broader Digital Readiness Initiative and Services Committee programming, which continues to deliver high-impact training across marketing, exporting, and AI-driven business strategies.

### Expanding Global Reach and International Certification

NVBDC is accelerating its global strategy with the addition of Fernando Hernandez, a globally recognized supplier diversity lead from The Coca-Cola Company. Hernandez, who led Coca-Cola's \$800 million global Supplier Diversity program, will support NVBDC's international certification expansion and global corporate engagement, bringing prior experience overseeing Microsoft's \$5 billion Supplier Diversity program, establishing AT&T's \$1 billion Supplier Diversity program, and earning membership twice in the Billion Dollar Roundtable.

"Expanding access to global markets is a critical next step for veteran-owned businesses," said Hernandez. "NVBDC is uniquely positioned to bridge that gap, and I am excited to support the organization's efforts to connect certified businesses with international opportunities."

These efforts build on NVBDC's [recent global initiatives](#), including export strategy programming in partnership with the International Trade Administration and export financing education delivered with the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

### A Strategic Focus on Outcomes

Together, these leadership enhancements, governance updates, and programmatic investments represent a unified strategy: moving veteran-owned businesses from readiness to results.

By strengthening its internal foundation while expanding external opportunities, NVBDC is creating a comprehensive ecosystem that supports veteran entrepreneurs at every stage—from certification to corporate engagement to global expansion.

"Our focus is clear," added John Oleson. "We are building an organization that not only prepares veteran-owned businesses for opportunity, but actively connects them to it."

### About the National Veteran Business Development Council (NVBDC)

The National Veteran Business Development Council (NVBDC) is the leading third-party

certification organization for service-disabled and veteran-owned businesses (SD/VOB's). Recognized as the Gold Standard in Veteran Business Certification, NVBDC connects certified veteran suppliers with corporate, government, and global contracting opportunities through trusted certification, education, international initiatives, and strategic partnerships.

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