SCORE®
Counselors to America's Small Business

SOUTH PALM BEACH SCORE

"Honoring Our Veterans"

Business Grant and Training Program

WHAT IS IT?

A business grant program, supervised and vetted thru South Palm Beach SCORE, designed to assist deserving veterans and/or their family members achieve their business dreams. *(See eligibility requirements at end of this announcement).*

SCORE is recognized nationally as the pre-eminent Pro Bono source of Business Counseling and Mentoring, by both Startups and those already in business, assisting over 350,000 clients in 2009 alone**. In 2010 the Boca Raton South Palm Beach Chapter served over 6000 small businesses in the South Florida area.**

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

While December 2010's national unemployment rate was at its lowest level since May 2009, the average unemployment rate for veterans continues to climb year after year. The Bureau of Labor Statistics released unemployment data for December 2010 which states that while the unemployment rate decreased slightly to 9.4 percent for the general population, the rate for Iraq and Afghanistan-era veterans increased to 11.7 percent, up from 10 percent in November. At 11.5 percent in 2010, the average annual unemployment rate for these veterans has nearly doubled since 2007. **These numbers are incredibly troubling.**

The South Palm Beach SCORE Chapter, located in Boca Raton, has developed a program to aid eligible veterans and/or family members in

utilizing their talents and experience in starting businesses. To do this we are offering the following:

1. Establish satellite offices in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach. All offices will be linked to Boca, utilizing broadband and Skype so as to be able to take advantage of the extensive expertise available among our Counselors, and make it available to the veterans. We also will maintain a national link so we may call upon any needed expertise from our network of over 13,500 SCORE Counselors. Additionally, veterans will be invited to come to the Boca Raton SCORE office for face-to-face counseling.
2. Our Chapter will coordinate its efforts with all the VFW's and other veterans organizations to spread the word as to the variety of free services we will provide
3. Our Chapter will work with every eligible veteran in developing his/her Business Plan and funding requirements.
4. Any eligible veteran interested in starting a business will be trained by our business experts in the basics of starting and successfully operating a business. Following a thorough evaluation of the client's needs, South Palm Beach SCORE will provide a training curriculum that typically could include a minimum of 20 hours of learning, featuring counseling sessions, seminars, and workshops. Training will also be offered to any of the eligible veteran's immediate family members at or over the age of 16 who would be capable of assisting the veteran in operating the business.
5. From generous donations made to a private foundation which our chapter has access to and dedicated specifically for this program, qualified veteran applicants, mentored by our chapter, will receive Business Assistance grants at the discretion of the foundation. Eligible veterans and/or family members who successfully demonstrate to our chapter's experts, both a need and a viable business plan, can qualify for grants from the foundation up to $10,000 and in some cases may be larger. The grants will be for the purpose of obtaining business equipment (e.g., computers) marketing and PR services, as well as other uses, which in the opinion of our experts will contribute to the success of the business.

WHEN IS THE PROGRAM TO START?

Program details and set-up will be finished by fall of 2011. It is envisioned that the program itself will commence January 2012 and be repeated annually. However, Iraq/Afghanistan veterans may notify our office of their interest in the program any time prior to the January, 2012 kick off date.

ELIGIBLE MILITARY COMMUNITY MEMBERS INCLUDE:

1. You must be a Veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan-era wars or an Active-duty service member eligible for the military's Transition Assistance Program or Reservists and National Guard members serving in theater.
    a. Current spouses of any of the above
    b. The widowed spouse of a service member or veteran who served in Iraq or Afghanistan who died during service or of a service-connected disability.

For further information contact:

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