



## **TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION**

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# News Release

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## **Houston selected to host the Veteran Entrepreneur Academy**

**AUSTIN** – In honor of Veterans Day, the Texas Veterans Commission will begin accepting applications for the Veteran Entrepreneur Academy on November 11, 2015. The Veteran Entrepreneur Academy (VEA) is a 150-day program that consists of 4 onsite classes conducted on Saturdays and 6 evening one hour online sessions followed by a two-year mentorship with the Texas Veterans Commission. The Veteran Entrepreneur Academy leverages a curriculum designed to provide Veteran Entrepreneurs with a strong foundation in small business basics.

“Through the continuing mentoring relationships and resources provided I feel this program has presented me with the perfect recipe to make my entrepreneurial dreams come true,” said Brenda Taylor-Harris, graduate of the first academy, held in Austin.

To facilitate the launch of these Veteran-owned enterprises, the Texas Veterans Commission has partnered with PeopleFund, an Austin based nonprofit business lender, to provide start-up or growth capital to graduates. Active duty and honorably discharged Veterans or their spouses who complete the training will receive a Certificate of Completion and are eligible for up to a \$35,000 loan at a fixed interest rate of five percent, though some restrictions apply.

“We are very enthusiastic to advance our relationship with the Texas Veterans Commission’s Veteran Entrepreneur Program and this new initiative,” says Gary Lindner an Air Force Veteran and President of PeopleFund. “Our partnership with the Veteran Entrepreneur Program over the past 24 months has been superb. Veterans who complete the Veteran Entrepreneur Academy program elevates the relationship to a new level of excellence.”

The application period for the Houston Veteran Entrepreneur Academy will open on Veterans Day, November 11, 2015 and close on Monday, January 11, 2016. Classes begin in Houston on May 21, 2016, and end October 15, 2016. Only complete applications postmarked on or before January 11, 2016 will be considered and applicants

must attend all onsite and online classes to be certified and qualify for the \$35,000 loan. To learn more about the Veteran Entrepreneur Program or to apply for the Veteran Entrepreneur Academy, please visit the Texas Veterans Commission's Veteran Entrepreneur webpage at <http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Entrepreneur-Program.aspx>.

#### Texas Veterans Commission

The mission of the Texas Veterans Commission is to advocate for and provide superior service to Veterans and their families in the areas of disability claims assistance, employment services, education benefits and grant funding. Over 200 skilled counselors in 75 cities provide one-on-one guidance to Veterans and their families to ensure they receive all of the benefits to which they are entitled.

#### About PeopleFund

PeopleFund is an Austin Texas based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that serves the entire state. Established in 1994, it is a U.S. Treasury certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and SBA certified lender. PeopleFund provides business loans up to \$250,000 to Texas businesses that lack access to traditional financing, along with relevant business education and training. Its target market encompasses minority, women, and veteran business owners and those residing in low to moderate income census tracts. Through access to capital and education, PeopleFund creates economic opportunity and financial stability to build healthy businesses.

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