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MILLIONS IN CONTRACTS AND COUNTING: HOW THE NEW JERSEY STATE VETERANS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FUELS VETERAN BUSINESS SUCCESS



When Veterans return home, they shouldn't have to fight for access to opportunity—but too often, that's exactly what happens. In 2018, CEO Jeff Cantor and President Francisco Cortes set out to change that by co-founding the **New Jersey State Veterans Chamber of Commerce (NJSVCC)**, a statewide organization dedicated to leveling the economic playing field for Veteran-owned businesses.

What began as a mission to support local entrepreneurs has since grown into a powerful network that has helped its members secure millions in contracts—and continues to open doors across the public and private sectors.

“Our goal is to make New Jersey’s economy fairer to Veteran-owned businesses,” Cortes said. “We’re here to create opportunities—for Veterans, their spouses, and student Veterans—and to make sure they’re not left behind.”

NJSVCC offers its members more than just advocacy. It hosts multiple procurement events each year, connecting Veteran-owned businesses with key decision-makers from government agencies and major corporations. Members gain access to resilience training, marketing support, and networking opportunities that range from formal business forums to community-building events like fishing, music festivals, and golf outings.



Tunes for Troops 2025.

NJSVCC also provides support to help Veteran business owners register and certify their businesses at both the state and federal levels. Members are guided through important processes such as the annual New Jersey Veteran-owned business and service-disabled Veteran-owned business registration forms, and are connected to key federal resources.

The chamber also works closely with regional partners, and connects members to procurement opportunities through platforms like the State of New Jersey Business Portal, NJ Selective Assistance Vendor Information, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and other contracting systems across New York and Pennsylvania.

While its roots are in New Jersey, NJSVCC's vision aligns with the national goals of the National Veterans Business Development Council: advancing the economic power of the Veteran business community through certification, credibility, and connections. “NVBDC shares our values and mission,” Cortes said. “Together, we’re opening doors for Veterans who deserve a shot at real success.”

That means creating spaces for business development as well as personal well-being—blending formal procurement strategies with relationship-building events that foster collaboration, confidence, and community. Whether it's through contract wins, strategic partnerships, or education, the goal is always the same: empowerment through action.

A guiding principle for Cortes and the organization is best captured in a phrase they live by: **“Aut viam inveniam aut faciam” — I will either find a way or make one.**

Discover Veteran resources and new opportunities at the NJSVCC Warrior Portal at warriorportal.com.

To learn more about NJSVCC, attend an upcoming event, or become a member, visit njveteranschamber.com.