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*For Immediate Release*

## Veteran Accelerator Program Launches in New Orleans

*VetLaunch Program Culminates during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week in March 2015*

(New Orleans) November 10, 2014 – Today, **VetLaunch** announces that applications for its inaugural business accelerator program are now open. Founded in 2014, VetLaunch is a New Orleans-based 501c3 nonprofit organization devoted to providing resources to veterans that will help them effectively make the change from military to civilian life.

The VetLaunch Accelerator is a nine-week program for up to five early-stage, veteran-owned businesses in New Orleans, with a goal of harnessing the leadership experience of military veterans and using it as a resource for creating successful businesses. **The Idea Village** is assisting with the development of the program, which will culminate during **New Orleans Entrepreneur Week** (NOEW) in March 2015. Qualified entrepreneurs can apply at [www.vetlaunch.org](http://www.vetlaunch.org) until 11:59pm CT on Thursday, December 4, 2014.

“My military experience taught me the fundamentals necessary to build a successful business,” said Robert Armbruster, Retired United States Marine Corps Captain and Founder of VetLaunch. “Thanks to the support from The Idea Village, the VetLaunch Accelerator will help other veterans learn how to leverage their military backgrounds to launch and scale viable ventures.”

“The City of New Orleans has a deep military history and is continuing to build upon that with the ever growing National World War II Museum and the VA hospital opening in 2016,” said Tim Williamson, Co-founder and CEO of The Idea Village. “The VetLaunch Accelerator is strategically positioned to leverage these assets to establish New Orleans as leading entrepreneurial hub for military veterans.”

Kicking off on January 12, 2015, the VetLaunch Accelerator program will provide strategic consulting, mentorship, capital access, and peer networking opportunities to selected entrepreneurs. Each participating founder will meet weekly with a dedicated Entrepreneur-in-Residence, who will help them hone in on key aspects of their business, develop their business model, and navigate a curated network of experts. The program will conclude with a pitch competition at NOEW, during which each entrepreneur will present their venture to a panel of business experts for seed capital and free office space at the Landing Zone, a collaborative workspace for veterans in New Orleans opening in January 2015.

In order to be eligible for the VetLaunch Accelerator, entrepreneurs must have served, currently serving in the U.S. armed forces, and/or married to a veteran or active member of the armed forces. Companies must be organized as a for-profit, must be located in the Greater New Orleans region, and have less than five full time employees. All applicants will be notified of their selection no later than December 15, 2014.

### **About VetLaunch**

VetLaunch is a 501c3 non-profit organization devoted to providing resources to our veterans that will help them effectively make the change from military to civilian life. From business start-up help to job training and placement, VetLaunch is here to assist in your transition from combat to career. [www.vetlaunch.org](http://www.vetlaunch.org)

### **About The Idea Village**

In 2000, The Idea Village was formed by a group of New Orleans citizens who believed entrepreneurship is a catalyst for positive change. The Idea Village formalized in 2002 as an independent 501c3 non-profit organization with a mission to identify, support, and retain entrepreneurial talent in New Orleans by providing direct service to high impact entrepreneurs, educating the broader community, and supporting initiatives that strengthen our entrepreneurial infrastructure. From 2009-2014, The Idea Village has provided direct support to over 3,411 New Orleans entrepreneurs by engaging over 2,600 professionals to allocate 68,543 consulting hours and \$2.5 million in seed capital. In addition, The Idea Village hosts New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, a business festival that has become the platform for the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem. [www.ideavillage.org](http://www.ideavillage.org)

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