



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Walinda P. West

Howard County Economic Development Authority

(410) 313-0720

PROJECT OPPORTUNITY DESIGNED TO HELP VETERANS START BUSINESSES

10-Week Training Program to be Offered at Maryland Center for Entrepreneurship

COLUMBIA, MD (January 22, 2013) – The Howard County Economic Development Authority today announced a new training program aimed at helping veterans interested in starting a business. The program, “**Project Opportunity**,” is a 10-week program that will offer training, outreach services, technical assistance and financing opportunities to veterans who are considering starting a business.

“When veterans are returning from the battlefield, among the first questions they ask is ‘what’s next?’” said Laura A. Neuman, HCEDA CEO. “We want to be able to answer that question for them. **Project Opportunity** will provide step-by-step guidance on what it takes to start and maintain a business. The fact that the program will be offered at our Maryland Center for Entrepreneurship with all of its support, is another benefit to participating veterans.”

Project Opportunity was started three years ago by Joe Giordano, Executive Director of the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, which received a \$25,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation to expand the program beyond the Eastern Shore in response to inquiries from veterans statewide. Since its inception, more than 35 veterans on the Eastern Shore have taken advantage of the program. Anne Arundel and Howard counties will offer the program this year; the Howard County program is expected to begin in April, with an orientation in March.

“Expanding this program around the state is a dream come true for me,” said Giordano, also a veteran. “I know how hard it is to reenter the community after time in the military. I patterned this program after what I would like to have had and I know other veterans need.”

In addition to the HCEDA, other area **Project Opportunity** partners include the Howard County office of the Md. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Howard Community College and the Md. Technology Development Corp. (TEDCO).

For more information about **Project Opportunity**, visit <http://www.hceda.org/maryland-center-for-entrepreneurship/about-the-mce/project-opportunity.aspx>, or call 410-860-6664.

###