



*Richard Jones, Founder, 305 Aero Supplies, LLC*

## **Background**

Richard Jones experienced firsthand how essential receiving aircraft parts and equipment on time can be to safety and operations. As a U.S. Army veteran, Jones served as a 15N Avionics mechanic in Afghanistan and Iraq. Following his military service, he worked as a defense contractor for a number of major aerospace companies.

Given his background and experience, Richard decided in November 2021 to take flight himself as an entrepreneur. 305 Aero Supplies LLC is an aircraft distribution company specializing in acquisitions of components, hardware and spare parts.

Being a veteran with defense industry experience, Jones naturally began looking into government contracting as a viable market for his new business. One of his first steps was to register with the Florida Small Business Development Center (FSBDC) at Florida International University (FIU) under the newly launched U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Community Navigator program. FSBDC at FIU, housed under FIU's College of Business, provides no-cost one-to-one business consulting for small businesses in Miami-Dade County, as well as access to trainings and webinars.

Funded in part through an SBA Community Navigator grant, the Miami-Dade Business Navigator (MDBN) program is a group of community partners, including FSBDC at FIU, who are connecting with underserved local entrepreneurs in Miami-Dade County to launch, grow and revitalize their businesses.

## **Solution**

After registering for the MDBN program in January 2022, Richard was paired with FSBDC procurement specialist Myrtha Wroy. Myrtha talked with Jones about his company, background, and potential opportunities for his business. They narrowed down getting 305 Aero Supplies certified as a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business as this opened up opportunities with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). Together, they reviewed the DLA websites for small Request for Qualifications that the company could secure to build up experience. After submitting some quotes, Jones got the call

contractors want to get – he heard from a potential buyer! The buyer had a small contract, which Richard was successful in securing for his company. While small, the contract was a first step on his journey as a government contractor. He is currently building on this initial success by following up on a second potential government contract.

### **From the Business Owner**

“Florida SBDC at FIU and the Miami-Dade Business Navigator program has been very helpful to my business. Myrtha guided me in the right direction from day one and has played a vital role in the development and early success of 305 Aero Supplies,” said Richard Jones, founder. “I was awarded my first government contract following the assistance I received from Myrtha. We are also excited that the company is line to receive my next government contract as well.”

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