



Montgomery County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly
Priorities Hearing
November 20, 2019

Chairs Korman and Zucker, Vice-Chairs Carr and Lee, members of the Delegation, my name is Barbara Ashe, National Director, Veteran Institute for Procurement, and President of the Montgomery County Chamber Community Foundation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening.

The Veteran Institute for Procurement, or (VIP) as we like to call it, trains veteran-owned businesses nationwide on how to accelerate their success in the federal marketplace. It is an in-residence, three-day training program and takes place here, in Montgomery County, at the Bolger Center. **And VIP Programs are offered at no cost to participants.**

Since 2009, VIP has trained over 1350 companies from 49 states, D.C., Guam, and Puerto Rico. Over 400 VIP graduates are here in Maryland and 113 in Montgomery County.

VIP works! Nationwide, VIP graduates grow an average of 63% one year after graduation and 357% after two years.

And, here in Montgomery County, our VIP graduates are some of the fastest growing companies in the nation.

Brian Flood, President & CEO of Decision Point, a Gaithersburg, Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business and 2012 graduate of VIP, wanted to be here this evening to share his success story since attending VIP and request your continued support for the program. Unfortunately, he had a family emergency and could not be here tonight.

DecisionPoint is the Second Fastest Growing IT Management Company Nationwide, ranked No. 164 on Inc. 5000 list this year. It is the 13th fastest growing of all Washington, D.C. area companies.

Last year another VIP Graduate, Ahmed Ali, President & CEO of TISTA, a Rockville Maryland company, testified and asked for your continued support for VIP. This year, **for the 9th time**, TISTA Science and Technology, has made the Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies in America.



Both Brian and Ahmed are now instructors in the VIP program. Sharing their insights and lessons learned and paying it forward for the next generation of veteran-owned businesses here in Montgomery County.

In closing, I ask you for your continued support of \$150,000 for VIP and the veterans it serves. You have successfully fought for this funding in the past and our veteran business community is counting on you.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening.