

3T Innovations

Grows in Pinellas with help from FL Small Business Development Center



After serving in the Army for 10 years, Francisco Valencia knew he wanted to continue working with and for the government. In 2010 he opened **3T Innovations**, an IT solutions provider that works with the federal government - primarily the Department of Defense – and also does federal civilian work. Recognizing the challenges of growing a small business, in 2012 Valencia contacted the Florida Small Business Development Center (FSBDC) Network for assistance. Since then, Valencia and 3T Innovations have benefitted from the FSBDC’s business workshops, one-on-one consulting, and special events.

“An initial challenge for the company was staffing,” says Yolanda Goodloe of the **FSBDC at Pinellas County Economic Development**. “As a military veteran, Frank wanted to maintain the same standards he’d experienced in military service and was having a hard time finding the right talent to staff his business.”

Goodloe connected Valencia to **CareerSource Pinellas**, which provides services to connect military veterans to training and employment opportunities, and to connect local businesses to those qualified candidates. With CareerSource Pinellas’s assistance, Valencia was able to hire the employees he’d been seeking, and to date veterans comprise 90 percent of 3T Innovations’ staff

Valencia also utilized the FSBDC Network’s expertise in government contracting assistance and registered with **Pinellas County’s Small Business Enterprise program**.

“We initially found it difficult to identify and bid on local government contracts,” he explains. “Yolanda introduced us to government certification programs and encouraged us to immediately start exploring opportunities with the federal government and agencies such as the Department of Defense.”

Through the FSBDC and events such as the **Pinellas County Reverse Trade Show**, 3T Innovations has made connections with local government agencies, as well as the small business office for SOCOM, and has secured contracts with MacDill Air Force Base.

3T Innovations has experienced steady growth over the years, and Valencia says the contract growth has been approximately 150 percent yearly. That steady growth has led to expansion: at the end of 2014, the company moved into a new, bigger location to cater to Valencia’s new goals for the company.

Valencia attributes much of the company’s growth to the connections he was able to make with the help of the FSBDC Network.

“I would recommend the FSBDC services to any business owner interested in resources to strengthen and expand their business,” he attests. “Yolanda connected us to relevant resources that helped us with competitive strategies and solutions to maintain our innovative edge and sustain growth.”

Visit www.pced.org/sbdc to see how your small business can benefit from the FSBDC Network’s resources.