

**State:** Florida

**Center:** SBDC/VBOC Pensacola FL

**Bummer:** Karen Gregory, Veteran Business Owner “HRSS Consulting Group, LLC”

**Story:** I joined the US Air Force in 1997 as a Behavior Scientist. My undergraduate degree is in Psychology with a minor in Sociology and my graduate degree is a dual track MS in Human Resource Development and Management. As a Behavior Scientist in the USAF, my work focused on Industrial/Organizational Psychology so my educational background was a great foundation to build experience upon. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to develop my leadership skills as a supervisor and leader throughout my career; but also afforded the opportunity to enhance my skill-set through developing Specialty Knowledge tests as a



Test & Quality Control Psychologist; teaching as an Assistant Professor and serving as the Organizational Behavior Course Director at the US Air Force Academy; and developing and administering organizational climate assessments as the Division Chief of Assessment and Development at DEOMI. At about the 10-year mark in the military I moved from the support to the operational side of the house as a Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Officer, becoming the leader for a team of Information Aggressors. This provided me the opportunity to further expand my public speaking and training expertise to large operational audiences. In 2009 I separated from the active duty Air Force and joined the Air Force Reserve as a full-time IMA working PSYOP Training and Education at USSOCOM. At that time a DoD client, who I had worked for while in uniform, asked me to take a position with a contractor who was working for them. I initially declined the offer because I was not ready to shed my uniform and was very happy with my work at USSOCOM. They then countered and asked if I would consider part-time consulting work with them instead. I accepted and worked as a part-time consultant working for a contractor. The contractor was looking for someone to be the project lead and content manager for a new cross-cultural competence (3C) knowledge portal. The target audience was the military and the focus was on training, education, assessments and 3C requests. My background matched their needs perfectly. It was then that I accepted the full-time consulting work. This DoD organization was my only client until summer 2011, when I accepted work from a new client and decided I wanted to grow the company into a sole proprietorship. In March 2012, I was accepted and attended V-WISE, committed to veteran women who have a passion for entrepreneurship. It was there I had the fortune to meet Mr. Brent Peacock of VBOC Region IV. He was so passionate about assisting me and helping my company to grow. He has always been there for me as a sounding board and to ask questions, as I was pursuing growing HRSS Consulting Group, LLC, he most recently reviewed our capability statement to ensure it was polished and ready for clients. The support I have received from VBOC is unmatched. They are people who care about supporting and encouraging small businesses like ours, and ultimately seeing us through to success. Furthermore, I attended a couple of business-related courses offered through SBDC and recently the SBDC at Brevard Community College asked me to be a panel member twice; speaking on our ‘Secrets of Their Success.’ What an honor to be asked. Mr. Peacock further supported HRSS Consulting Group, LLC by attending the most recent panel presentation at the 12th Annual Veteran’s Conference held at B.B.C. I must say, it is not always easy and is a daily challenge to stay focused and motivated – keeping your eye on the prize is hard work. However, just two months ago HRSS Consulting Group, LLC, Was nominated for the Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce’s “Business Champion of the Year;” and in the past six months I was asked to take the lead on establishing a Women In Defense (WID) Chapter, to follow on as a newly formed Chapter President and to serve as a board member for the Military Affairs Council, CBRCC. Being the leader and owner of HRSS Consulting Group, LLC has come with its challenges; work/life balance, loss of contract funding, loosing bids, growing and maintaining talent, and the list goes on, but so far we have met the challenges and overcome. We continue to focus toward and move with determination and perseverance towards our goals. In March, 20012 HRSS Consulting Group officially became an LLC and we have since partnered with a handful of small clients and we continue to aggressively pursue our business development in the strategic human resource and organizational development service arenas.

CLIENT QUOTE: "The support I have received from VBOC is unmatched. They are people who care about supporting and encouraging small businesses like ours, and ultimately seeing us through to success. I highly recommend connecting and building a strong relationship with the VBOC. They have proven they are knowledgeable and connected, but more importantly they care about veteran-owned small businesses and seeing their owners to achieve success." - Karen Gregory Owner "HRSS Consulting Group, LLC"