

April Holland

Business Counselor, University of Mississippi – Gulf Coast SBDC

By Hannah Newbold



“I have always enjoyed helping people,” said April Holland, a veteran of the US Navy and Business Counselor for the Mississippi Small Business Development Center (MSBDC). April is located at the Gulf Coast MSBDC and assists clients as they begin the first steps of starting a business. Her story as a business counselor begins as a personellman in the United States Navy.

April served from 1983 to 2003 in the Navy. After 20 years, she retired in 2003. April served in human resources as a personellman. After she retired, she became a business counselor for the MSBDC. She said, “As a veteran they empower you to come up with

solutions to problems and that translates well to a business owner. I personally have had a few businesses in my lifetime; I started my first business when I was 12.” Finding solutions to problems is a big part of being an entrepreneur. “And if it doesn’t work, you go back, and you fix it. I think that’s something great that being in the military taught me where it translated over to entrepreneurship.”

April was a graduate of the INC Military Entrepreneur Program, started by INC Magazine. She was recognized by INC Magazine as a military entrepreneur back in 2015. April was also a graduate of the National Veteran Entrepreneurship Program and the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities. Today, she particularly enjoys assisting veterans who aspire to start a business.

Now as a business counselor, April assists individuals from all over the South Mississippi area. She strives to help all her clients and points to the network of counselors around the state that provide answers to questions she doesn’t know. The entire MSBDC team is comprised of people with varied different experiences who are here to help Mississippi residents achieve success. Her most important piece of advice to people interested in starting a business is to “Follow through if they have questions. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Don’t be afraid to say you don’t understand what the counselor tasked you with.”

“April Holland is such an asset and valuable member of the Mississippi SBDC team. Her enthusiasm and unwavering support for her team members and clients is infectious! She lifts up everyone and is a joy to work with,” says fellow veteran and director Sharon Nichols.