

## Phoenix Business Journal

May 17, 2016

*Written by: Angela Gonzales covers health, biotech and education.*

### Veterans Directory launches to connect veterans to resources

After four years of preparation and fundraising, The Veterans Directory is live, offering military veterans free access to resources and services throughout Arizona.

The Phoenix-based nonprofit is the only comprehensive directory in Arizona, said Danita Rios, CEO of The Veterans Directory. It offers a listing of resources in the areas of education/employment, financial/legal, health/wellness, housing/real estate and community services.

Rios became involved in the organization in 2012 when the founder (who wishes to remain anonymous) was looking for funding. She was a financial advisor consulting to billionaires at the time.

"He said, 'Danita, get this funded,'" she said. "It was a defining moment for me. The need is so great."

She found that she wanted to do more than just raise money for the 501(c)3 organization, becoming CEO full time.

And now she has an eye toward a national expansion.

"We found the need is just as great nationwide," she said.

This summer, she plans to expand to surrounding states in the Southwest, including Nevada, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico.

"We will be perfecting the model with the goal of going nationwide toward the end of the year," Rios said.

Last fall, former Phoenix mayor Phil Gordon was named chairman of the organization.

"After leaving the position of mayor, i was approached by several veterans to help them organize what became the Veterans Directory," Gordon said. "Unfortunately, I missed a meeting and not only was elected to the board but was appointed chairman, which I still serve. In all seriousness, I am honored to serve on the board and continue to help in any way I can."

Veterans can be connected to job and training opportunities in real time, Gordon said.

Rios said the directory also provides veteran-owned businesses a chance to promote their businesses to a targeted audience of veterans and their families who use the directory.

"We ask for an annual donation of \$500 per year, which includes a professionally made video to help the VOBs reach their audience," she said. "Our attractive feature for businesses looking to employ or appeal to the veteran is that we have thousands of vets using our website. We provide a targeted audience."

Rios said the organization's annual operating budget is about \$470,000.

Her goal right now is to fund 90-second commercials for local nonprofits on the directory website.

"We took on the expense of funding the first 15," she said.

For a look at The Veterans Directory, [click here](#).