

PROSE & PENS

Client: Michael Williams

Industry: Government Contracting

Biography Type: Small Business Administration (SBA) Success Story

Growing up in Boligee, Alabama, the smallest county in the state and a community stricken by poverty, Michael Williams was no stranger to hard work. As a teen, he worked alongside his father in construction building skills in craftsmanship and learning to make quick determinations about what needed to be done and when. He could never have imagined the impact his early start working with his father would have on him personally and professionally.

After high school, Williams enlisted in the United States Army and served with the Army Corps of Engineers for most of his military service. His time with the Corps allowed him to develop skills and experience in demolition, structural work, and road digging and repair. It also sharpened his ability to think outside of the box, especially in the most dire situations.

So when Williams retired, in 2004, after twenty years of service, he was ready for a new challenge. He did what came naturally and partnered with his father, in 2009, to cofound Williams Group, LLC, which is now a HUBZone certified service-disabled, veteran owned, small business (SDVOSB). Around that time, his father was diagnosed with lung cancer and succumbed to the disease in 2012. Although he was shaken by the death of his father and business partner, he wasn't ready to let business fade away. "Dealing with the death of my father was difficult. It was certainly a blow to me personally and to the business," Williams emphasized. "But I couldn't have let his hard work be in vain."

Instead, he was determined to see it thrive and, with help from the SBA, was able to secure training in partnership with the Alabama Department of Transportation University of West Alabama DBE Support Services and the University of Alabama in Huntsville Mentor Protégé Program. Since that partnership, Williams has grown the business and secured both work throughout Louisiana, Texas, Florida, and Alabama and certification as a disadvantaged business enterprise in those areas.

With expansion throughout the country, Williams Group, LLC has seen steady growth. Its average revenue has increased from 1.13 million dollars to over 3 million dollars in awarded contracts for 2017. As proud as he is of his success nationwide, he is most proud of what he has been able to do in his home community. "I'm happy that I can employ people from my community," says Williams. "It's rare to see a company, from this area, earn millions of dollars in contracts." Now he recognizes that even those small moments early in life have contributed to the success of his business today.