

*(Abbreviated Version – Full version provided upon request)*

**Case Study: Signs by Saenz takes the National Defense University to a new level with visual communication enhancements**

**Project Title:** Exhibit Displays, Art and Framing, Display Cases, Signage, Conference Room Enhancements for the National Defense University  
**Current Contract Award:** Multiple contracts to provide services around the University

**Point of Contact:**  
(furnished upon request)  
National Defense University  
300 Fifth Avenue, Fort McNair, DC 20319

The Federal Government uses Exhibit Displays and other visual communications to help educate and communicate missions, legacies, and objectives. Considering the size of the Federal Government and its large concentration within the DC Metro area, several challenges arise:

- Large Exhibit companies formed and have been in place for decades. These companies have dominated the Exhibit business within Government, creating challenges for small businesses and other new entrants to come in with new products, methods, and cost saving strategies.
- The large concentration of agency HQ's and other buildings within the DC area has brought in Exhibit vendors from around the country to offer services. Many of the federal contracts that have been awarded to companies outside the region have struggled with the need for ongoing surveys, consultation, delivery, and installation efforts.
- With an increase in Federal Government small business requirements, agencies are finding it increasingly difficult to find small businesses that have the resources to perform to high satisfaction levels.

The National Defense University (NDU) is not exempt from the challenges faced by many agencies. When Signs by Saenz began providing services to NDU in 2009, the initial assessment was that:

- There was a need for Dimensional Crests and Lettering of NDU schools to help visitors understand where they were and to further build pride amongst the NDU faculty and staff.
- Many of NDU's wall spaces had a sterile appearance; i.e. plain white walls around the newer building. All the floors looked alike making it difficult to navigate around the NDU campus.
- NDU receives students and visitors that are foreign dignitaries from around the world. Enhanced visual communication was needed to educate the students and visitors on NDU and U.S. History.
- NDU receives artifacts from military figures and foreign dignitaries on an ongoing basis. There was a lack of display cases to present such items, which resulted in many prominent items being stored.

\*Note: Signs by Saenz has partnered with Blair, Inc. (woman-owned small business Exhibit house in the Washington DC area) for design concepts, fabrication, and installation of a few large Exhibits around the University.

Signs by Saenz is an SBA certified 8(a) Woman-Owned small business located in the Washington DC area that focuses on creating impactful environments that support client missions. We achieve this through in-house design, fabrication and installation of exhibits, art and framing, signage, and other interior finishes. Our focus is on timely delivery, expert consultation and superior service, which has resulted in successful performance on numerous Federal Government projects across the country.

One of the main benefits Signs by Saenz provided to NDU is an Exhibit that runs the length of the main hallway in the new building (in partnership with Blair, Inc.). The display provided a timeline of military and political activity in the U.S. since the Civil War. Included in the Exhibit were light box structures that displayed moving shades of color. The timeline panels, light boxes, and conclusion of the timeline featuring current humanitarian efforts, give the space the legacy of the U.S. with a real “present day” feel.

Regarding the sterile nature of some of the campus, Signs by Saenz has produced and installed dimensional lettering and seals around the campus that enhances the space. Within NDU schools, Signs by Saenz has designed, produced, and installed various plaques, art and framing pieces, and signage to help fill the space with pertinent pieces. Regarding the artifacts, Signs by Saenz has refurbished several display cases as well as provided additional display cases. This is an ongoing need as the donors continue to present themselves.

Signs by Saenz is passionate about serving NDU, as we are a military family and understand the culture and language. Considering Signs by Saenz is a small business, the ownership is personally involved with all NDU projects. Our location within the DC area allows us to be responsive and available for frequent meetings as needed. Hence, you have a small business that has the expertise, resources, and past performance to handle any Exhibit project.

NOTE: The SBA 8(a) designation allows for any Federal Agency to sole source contracts up to 4.5 Million for services rendered and up to 6 Million for manufactured goods. Please contact your contracting officer for more information on the program to see if it is a right fit for your project.