

APEX Accelerator Program Overview

APEX Accelerators: Your Resource for Government Contracting

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Our Mission

Rebranded as APEX Accelerators in 2022, the program began as the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs), established in 1984 to help businesses navigate government contracting. From the outset, PTACs offered hands-on guidance and training to companies pursuing federal, state, and local contracts.

Over the past year, APEX Accelerators have placed greater emphasis on supporting companies with capabilities that align to the Department of War's (DoW) Critical Technology Areas—advancing efforts to rebuild military readiness and re-establish deterrence.

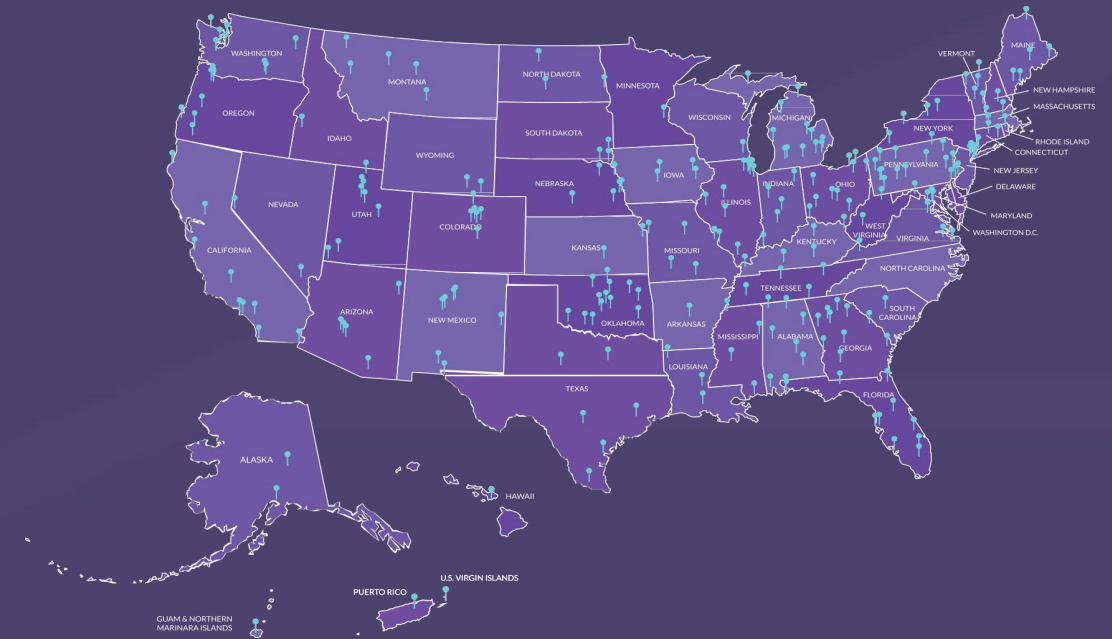
At the same time, the program continues to broaden the defense industrial base by assisting nontraditional and underserved businesses, ...APEX Accelerators offer local, hands-on guidance to help businesses enter and thrive in the government contracting arena.

90+ APEX Accelerators

- Regional
- Statewide
- Native American

<https://www.apexaccelerators.us/#/>

<https://www.apexaccelerators.us/#/service-area-locator>



APEX Accelerators Program Strategy



1 GOAL: Fortify the Defense and Government Industrial Bases

Advance small business development, technology adoption, workforce development, compliance, and market expansion for economic prosperity.

METRICS

- Facilitate achievement of DIB readiness for new entrants
- Facilitate achievement of GIB readiness for new entrants
- Restore former DIB and GIB participants
- Sustain the DIB and GIB

2 GOAL: Increase Small Business Certifications and Participation

Aid underrepresented businesses in capacity development, compliance, targeted outreach, mentorship, networking, cultural support, and collaboration.

METRICS

- Increase number of DIB and GIB-ready Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs)
- Increase number of DIB and GIB-ready Historically Under-utilized Business Zone (HUBZone) businesses
- Increase number of DIB and GIB-ready Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs)
- Increase number of DIB and GIB-ready Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSBs)
- Promote subcontracting opportunities for SDBs, HUBZone businesses, SDVOSBs, WOSBs, and other underrepresented small businesses
- Encourage and support participation in the DoW Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP)

3 GOAL: Increase Awareness of and Compliance with Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence

Improve Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI) awareness and compliance through education, counseling, networking, compliance assistance, partnerships with government agencies, and collaboration with industry stakeholders.

METRIC

- Educate businesses in the DIB and GIB on FOCI

4 GOAL: Improve Cybersecurity of the Defense and Government Industrial Bases

Educate on the importance of enhanced cybersecurity and increase the number of Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) secure businesses.

METRICS

- Increase the number of Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) secure businesses
- Educate on enhanced cybersecurity

5 GOAL: Facilitate Innovation for the Defense and Government Industrial Bases

Drive innovation in national security by aiding businesses in procurement, supporting small business innovation, ensuring supply chain resilience, and connecting to government-led innovation programs.

METRIC

- Connect innovative businesses to Government-led Innovation Programs

6 GOAL: Strengthen the Supply Chain

Strengthen the U.S. supply chain through training, promoting diversity, supporting Defense Production Act (DPA) initiatives, and promoting industrial base analysis.

METRICS

- Support DPA Title III activities
- Support Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment activities

7 GOAL: Capture Market Data in Key Industries

Support DoW and government agencies in market and tech assessment, identifying key players, conducting analyses, and promoting innovation in technologies.

METRIC

- Identify businesses working on critical and emerging technologies and capture information about the businesses

Traditional Critical Technology Areas

- Advanced Computing and Software
- Advanced Materials
- Biotechnology
- Directed Energy
- Energy Resilience
- Future Generation Wireless Technology (FutureG)
- Human-Machine Interfaces
- Hypersonics
- Integrated Network Systems-of-Systems
- Integrated Sensing and Cyber
- Microelectronics
- Quantum Science
- Space Technology
- Trusted AI and Autonomy

<https://discover.dtic.mil/ctalist/>

Office of the Under Secretary of War for
Research and Engineering

Critical Technology Areas

<https://www.cto.mil/cta/>

The Office of the Under Secretary for Research and Engineering's Critical Technology Areas are essential to addressing the United States' most pressing national security challenges. These 6 CTAs reflect the complex environment for technology investment, development, and application in the 21st century. By focusing efforts and investments in these areas, the Department of War accelerates the transition of key capabilities to the Military Services and Combatant Commands. These are the most crucial areas that our military will achieve dominance in, ensuring that our warfighters never enter a fair fight.



Applied Artificial Intelligence



Biomanufacturing



Contested Logistics Technologies



Quantum and Battlefield Information
Dominance



Scaled Hypersonics



Scaled Directed Energy

*Contested logistics is an environment in which the armed forces engage in a conflict with an adversary that presents challenges in all domains and directly targets logistics operations, facilities, and activities in the U.S., abroad, or in transit from one location to another, according to U.S. Code, Title 10.

Contested logistics technologies are tools and systems designed to sustain military operations in environments where an adversary can actively target and disrupt supply chains across all domains—air, land, sea, space, cyber, and electromagnetic spectrum.

Acquisition Transformation Strategy



Rebuilding the Arsenal of Freedom



U.S. Department of War

In transforming the existing acquisition processes, there are five pillars with nested actions to achieve the President's direction:

- Rebuild the Arsenal of Freedom: Rebuild the Defense Industrial Base
- Elevate and Empower the Acquisition Workforce to Rapidly Deliver Capability
- Maximize Acquisition Flexibility through Reduced Regulations and Process
- Develop High Performance Systems through Rigorous Enterprise Technical Execution Excellence
- Improve Lifecycle Risk Management

Cybersecurity: ProjectSpectrum.io

PROJECT SPECTRUM

CONTINUOUSLY MONITORING AND SECURING CYBER

MAKE YOUR SMALL BUSINESS CYBER SECURE

Take our cyber readiness assessment to determine how prepared your business is to deal with cyber attacks.

ProjectSpectrum.io

Project Spectrum is a comprehensive, cost-effective platform that provides companies, institutions, and organizations with cybersecurity information, resources, tools, and training. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes Project Spectrum as a premier resource for the tools and training needed to increase cybersecurity awareness and maintain compliance in accordance with DoD contracting requirements.



CORE MISSION

Our mission is to improve cybersecurity readiness, resilience, and compliance for small/ medium-sized businesses and the manufacturing supply chain. We develop and deliver world-class education and training materials and state-of-the-art tools to strengthen the cybersecurity hygiene and compliance processes and programs throughout the nation's supply chain.

CORE COMPETENCIES



- Cyber Readiness Checks
- Cybersecurity Dashboard
- Secure Collaboration Platform



- Cyber Curriculum Development
- Cybersecurity Training Courses
- Tool Reviews



- Continuous Threat Research
- Security and Risk Assessments



- Compliance Guidance
- System Security Plan (SSP) Reviews
- Plan of Action and Milestones (POAM) Reviews

Foreign Ownership, Control and Influence

WHAT IS FOCI?



Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI) happens when a foreign entity has the power to direct or influence the management or operations of a company. This can lead to unauthorized access to sensitive information and potentially compromise national security. FOCI can involve legal means like joint ventures and acquisitions or illegal methods like cyber espionage.

FOCI CAN NEGATIVELY AFFECT YOUR BUSINESS

Reduced economic competitiveness

Reduced domestic investor interest

Limited government aid, awards, and contracts

FOREIGN INFLUENCE CAN TAKE MANY FORMS



Ability to direct or decide company matters



Position in foreign government



Debt liabilities or obligations



Supply chain located in a foreign country of concern



Contract between the company and foreign person or entity



Foreign government-connected customers



Collaborations with a foreign government-connected entity

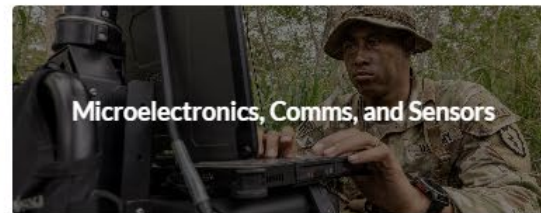
OSW Industrial Base Policy

Industrial Planning and Analysis

MISSION:

IPA strengthens and secures the defense industrial base by providing actionable supply chain and risk insights that accelerate resilience and inform Department of War decisions.

FOCUS AREAS



What We Do

Industrial Planning and Analysis is dedicated to enhancing the security and resilience of the nation's defense industrial base in delivering capabilities to the warfighter. Through rigorous and repeatable data-driven analysis, the office provides critical, cross-cutting supply chain and risk insights and solutions to senior leaders within the Department of War (DoW).

By fostering cross-functional collaboration among supply chain partners across the Department and military components, industry, interagency, and international partners, the office develops and implements actionable plans to address vulnerabilities and strengthen the industrial base.

•<https://www.businessdefense.gov/ibr/ipa.html>

Mentor Protégé Program



THE DEPARTMENT OF WAR **2026**
**MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ
PROGRAM SUMMIT**

APRIL 7 - 9, 2026 | ARLINGTON, VA

Whether you are a newcomer to the program or a long-standing participant, the DoW MPP Summit offers insight, connections, and tools to help drive mission success.

The DoD Mentor-Protégé Program strengthens and modernizes the defense industrial base by connecting businesses new to government contracting with more experienced government contractors to provide broader and deeper capabilities to the military supply chain.

<https://business.defense.gov/Programs/Mentor-Protege-Program/How-to-Participate/>

OBJECTIVES



Help eligible businesses expand their footprint in the defense industrial base to meet national security priorities while enhancing competition and cost savings for the government.



Increase the capabilities of small businesses to perform on DoD contracts.



Facilitate and enhance long-term business relationships.



Increase and strengthen the defense industrial base.

Discover



Fresh Data. Smarter Matches.

-  Curated Opportunity Matches
-  Built In AI/ML Roadmaps
-  Enhanced Vendor Discovery

Join the first wave of LYNX users.

Create your profile today!

The [Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs](#) has launched LYNX, a digital platform designed to help small businesses, non-traditional suppliers, and growing defense contractors better understand readiness, showcase capabilities, and connect with mission-aligned opportunities.

“LYNX reflects our commitment to reducing barriers to entry and expanding participation across the defense industrial base,” said James Mismash, Director of Small Business Programs. “By providing a common framework for readiness and capability, LYNX supports faster engagement, smarter collaboration, and more resilient supplier growth.”

Registration is open now at <https://lnkd.in/ecP7uzR4>. Create your profile today!

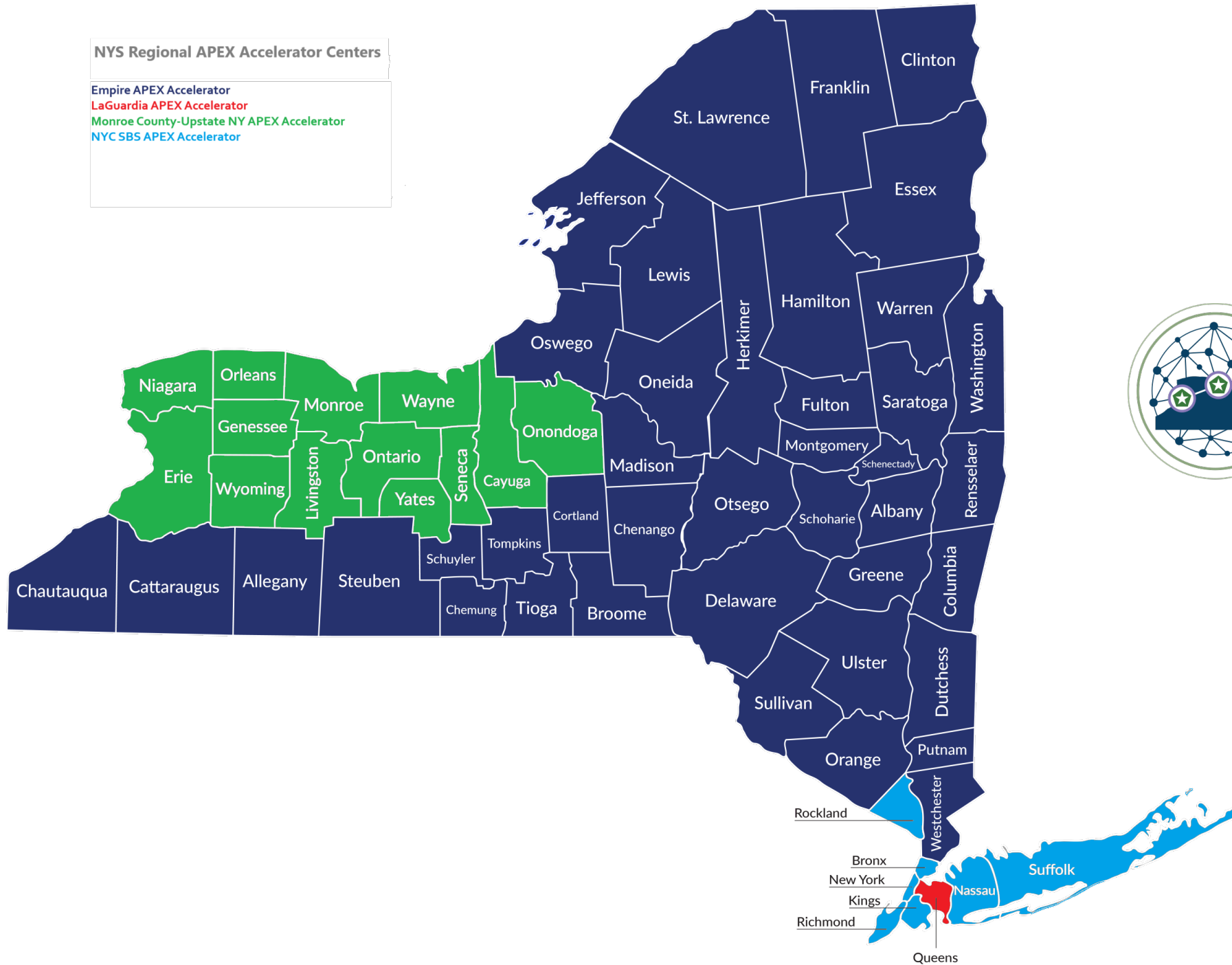
NYS Regional APEX Accelerator Centers

Empire APEX Accelerator

LaGuardia APEX Accelerator

Monroe County-Upstate NY APEX Accelerator

NYC SBS APEX Accelerator



MONROE COUNTY ► UPSTATE NY

APEX

ACCELERATOR



COUNTY OF MONROE
COMIDA
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

APEX Accelerators Help Businesses



SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT

Evaluating your company's readiness for government opportunities and guide you on effective positioning for success.



NETWORKING

Extending opportunities to meet buying officers, prime contractors, and other businesses.



REGISTRATION ASSISTANCE

Registering with essential government databases to facilitate your company's participation in the government marketplace.



PROPOSALS

Supporting complex solicitation packages, securing specifications, drawings, and understanding pricing, ensuring you capture every contract opportunity.



MARKET RESEARCH

Pinpointing the agencies in need of your product or service.



CONTRACT SUPPORT

After winning a contract, help is available for some contract performance issues and audits.



BID OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION

Setting up daily notifications of government contract opportunities your company is eligible to bid on.

We're Better Together

APEX Accelerators provide a critical front door for industry. We work with federal, state, and local partners to expand suppliers to the federal, state, and local government marketplaces and provide opportunities for companies new to government contracting to acquire the skills and know-how to compete.

Our work increases economic opportunity across the entire country which advances our national security. A strong economy with a modernized industrial ecosystem creates a strong military that deters potential adversaries.



We Achieve Together

APEX ACCELERATORS BY THE NUMBERS: APRIL 1, 2024 – MARCH 31, 2025



With Federal funding of

\$55 MILLION



90+

APEX Accelerators served

26,232

new business clients



100

new clients per day



35%

from Critical Technology Areas



...and conducted

6,284

training events



24

per day

resulting in

549,519

contracts & subcontracts awarded to APEX clients

worth

\$64.9B

with an average contract value of

\$118,231!

**\$1,186
ROI**

per federal
\$ invested



Monroe County – Upstate NY APEX Accelerator

Nationwide OSBP Success Story

Circle Optics Turns Breakthrough Imaging Into Mission-Ready Capability

Circle Optics came to the Monroe County Upstate New York APEX Accelerator with a powerful technology and a big challenge. The Rochester, N.Y. company had invented the first real-time, stitch-free 360-degree camera system.

Unlike traditional 360° imaging systems that require stitching or stabilization, Circle Optics' proprietary polygonal lens technology delivers real-time, parallax-free imaging—with the potential for supporting mission-critical use cases like immersive soldier training, enhanced situational awareness, and autonomous system navigation.

The company had strong commercial traction but needed help explaining its value to the DoW, a key step toward expanding into defense markets.

APEX Accelerator staff stepped in with focused, hands-on support. Over six strategy sessions and several matchmaking events, the Monroe County Upstate New York team helped Circle Optics refine military use cases for its Pegasus and Hydra camera systems. They also improved the company's profiles on

SAM.gov, the federal contract database, and the Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS) tool used by government buyers. The Accelerator helped to align Circle Optics' messaging with real defense mission needs and map the company to key innovation pathways including:

- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR), federal programs that fund early-stage technology
- AFWERX, the innovation arm of the U.S. Air Force

- Outreach to nine DoW stakeholders and major defense contractors, known in the industry as “primes,” such as L3Harris

Through this support, Circle Optics gained visibility, secured a \$250,000 Phase I SBIR award from the U.S. Army, and built direct relationships with government buyers and prime contractors. That momentum marked a turning point, moving the company from promising technology developer to an emerging supplier within the defense industrial base. As Principal Investigator

Circle Optics has developed a novel lens technology where fields of view between cameras conjoin, creating a composite panorama errorlessly at the speed of light. Photo courtesy of Circle Optics.



The Circle Optics team at XPONENTIAL 2025, the premier event driving innovation across defense, aerospace, robotics, and public safety.

and Opto-Mechanical Engineer Cody Hatch noted, “We’re developing tools that enhance how soldiers train, operate, and respond—technology that keeps pace with complexity on the ground.”

With that foundation in place, the impact came quickly. Circle Optics is now supporting contracts with AFWERX, NASA, and SpaceWERX and has participated in Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) training at

Fort Drum, where precision imaging directly supports mission readiness. The company is transitioning from prototype to full commercial deployment for defense applications, positioning its 360-degree systems as tools the military can depend on.

Circle Optics CEO Zak Niaz summed it up: “The APEX Accelerator has been a strategic partner every step of the way. They’ve given us the confidence and positioning to turn

groundbreaking technology into real-world solutions for national defense.”

WATCH THE STORY COME TO LIFE

Get a closer look at the technology, the team, and the impact of the partnership:
<https://youtu.be/qzXsYL0xYgc>

Why Government Contracting is Different

Commercial

- Buyer-initiated conversations
- Flexible negotiations
- Relationship = sale
- Quick decision cycles
- Price flexibility

Government

- You must initiate contact
- Strict procurement rules (FAR)
- Relationship ≠ guaranteed sale
- Long lead times (6-18 months)
- Competitive pricing required

THE BOTTOM LINE

Government contracting strategy is about positioning – being known, trusted, and ready BEFORE the opportunity drops. If the first time an agency hears about you is when you submit a proposal, you're already behind.

Understanding the Government Buyer

Contracting Officer (CO/KO)

Has legal authority to bind the government. Makes final award decisions. Must follow FAR regulations.

Program Manager (PM)

Defines requirements and technical needs. Evaluates contractor capability. Primary technical contact.

Small Business Specialist

Advocates for small business participation. Reviews set-aside opportunities. Your inside ally.

Contracting Officer Representative (COR)

The CO's eyes and ears for actual technical execution.

Contracting Specialist (CS)

They work with vendors to establish the contractual framework.

WHAT GOVERNMENT BUYERS CARE ABOUT

Mission success

Risk mitigation

Compliance

Fair pricing

Past performance

| FAR Part 9: Contractor Responsibility



Before any award, the Contracting Officer MUST determine you are "responsible." You should address each standard.

7 RESPONSIBILITY STANDARDS

- **Financial Resources** – adequate funds to perform
- **Technical Capability** – ability to meet requirements
- **Performance Record** – satisfactory past performance
- **Integrity** – business ethics and conduct
- **Organization** – management capability
- **Equipment** – or ability to obtain
- **Legal Eligibility** – not debarred

WHY THIS MATTERS

Contracting Officers evaluate responsibility using these standards. Your marketing and proposals must demonstrate ALL seven.

PRO TIP

For small businesses, past performance can include commercial contracts and subcontracts – not just government primes.

[Part 9 - Contractor Qualifications | Acquisition.GOV](https://www.acquisition.gov/part-9-contractor-qualifications)

FAR Part 52.204.21

Basic Safeguarding of Covered Contractor Information Systems



15 Basic Safeguarding Controls

1. **Access Control:** Limit system access to authorized users and devices.
2. **Transaction Control:** Restrict the types of actions authorized users can execute.
3. **External Connections:** Verify and limit connections to external systems.
4. **Public Systems:** Control information posted or processed on publicly accessible systems.
5. **User Identification:** Identify system users and devices.
6. **User Authentication:** Authenticate users before granting access.
7. **Media Sanitization:** Sanitize or destroy media containing FCI before disposal.
8. **Physical Access:** Limit physical access to systems, equipment, and operating environments to authorized individuals.
9. **Visitor Control:** Escort visitors and monitor visitor activity; maintain audit logs of physical access.
10. **Asset Control:** Control and manage physical devices connected to the internal network.
11. **Flaw Remediation:** Identify, report, and correct system flaws in a timely manner.
12. **Malware Protection:** Provide and protect organizational systems from malicious code.
13. **Malware Updates:** Update malicious code protection mechanisms as new releases become available.
14. **System Scanning:** Periodically scan systems and perform real-time scans of files downloaded from external sources.
15. **Threat Monitoring:** Monitor information systems for unauthorized use or anomalous activity.

WHY THIS MATTERS

FAR 52.204-21 (Basic Safeguarding of Covered Contractor Information Systems) is a federal acquisition clause that mandates baseline cybersecurity controls for contractors and subcontractors. It applies to any non-public Federal Contract Information (FCI) processed, stored, or transmitted on a contractor's information systems.

Perform and Perform Well

Meet and Exceed Expectations

- Execute requirements
 - As specified or better
 - On time
 - Within cost
- Communicate
 - Give constructive feedback
 - Receive constructive feedback
 - Ask questions
- Get help when needed
 - Small Business Administration
 - APEX Accelerators
 - Agency Small Business Office

| Finding Bids



- www.sam.gov
 - Agencies are required to post procurements of \$25,000 or more;
 - Some agencies post their lower procurements on this site
- Through APEX Accelerator Free Bid Matching
- Registering as a vendor with Agencies or Primes
- The solicitation may be sent to you by the agency or contracting officer

Remember Pre-Requisite to Bidding

- System for Award Management registration is active and up-to-date
- **AND**, must have the NAICS code listed corresponding to the bid's NAICS code before submission
 - <https://www.SAM.gov>

Marketing your business is key!

Get Found:

- Appropriate registrations and certifications
- Government Capability Statement
- Complete SBA Small Business Profile
- DoW LynxConnect
- Buyer Vendor Portals

2026 Upcoming Events www.MonroeUpstateNYapex.org



UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN
JOSEPH D. MORELLE
REPRESENTING NEW YORK'S 25TH DISTRICT



ADAM J. BELLO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

6th Annual Defense and Government Contracting Forum

MISSION CRITICAL
Merging Strengths and Multiplying Success



OCTOBER 13, 2026

Woodcliff Hotel | Rochester, NY

• Training

• Networking

• Matchmaking

REGISTER TODAY



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Featured presenter:

Mr. John McCanney

Director

OSW Accelerated Research for
Transition Program (ART)



DOW SBIR/STTR TRANSITIONS PROGRAM: KEY 2026 UPDATES

This Hybrid session features updates on:

- Reauthorization
- DoW SBIR/STTR Strategy
- Funding & Solicitations
- New Funding Vehicles
- Security & Due Diligence
- Proposal Limits

Including: How to Partner with a Large Prime Contractor on SBIR/STTR

Presented by Ms. Orysia D. Buchan
Corporate Government Programs Program Manager
Lockheed Martin Corporation



Thursday, June 25, 2026

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



Hybrid Event

LIVE: NextCorps, 260 E. Main St.
Ste. 6000, Rochester, NY 14604

and

Online: Join us via Zoom



Registration

<https://monroeapex.ecenterdirect.com/events/1154>



SCAN HERE

*In collaboration with the U.S. Small
Business Administration*

Participating Partners



COUNTY OF MONROE
COMIDA
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



nextcorps

Next Steps

monroeupstatenyapex.org



About Resources Services Newsletter Events DoD NERC 2025 Sign Up

SUPPORTING THE DEFENSE AND GOVERNMENT
INDUSTRIAL BASE

BECOME A CLIENT



ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING



FREE BIDMATCH



TRAINING & NETWORKING
OPPORTUNITIES

Military | Federal | State | Local | Prime Contractors



Questions?

Thank You!

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Connect with us!



www.monroeUpstateNYapex.org

