



PROGRAM REPORT 2024-2025



APEX

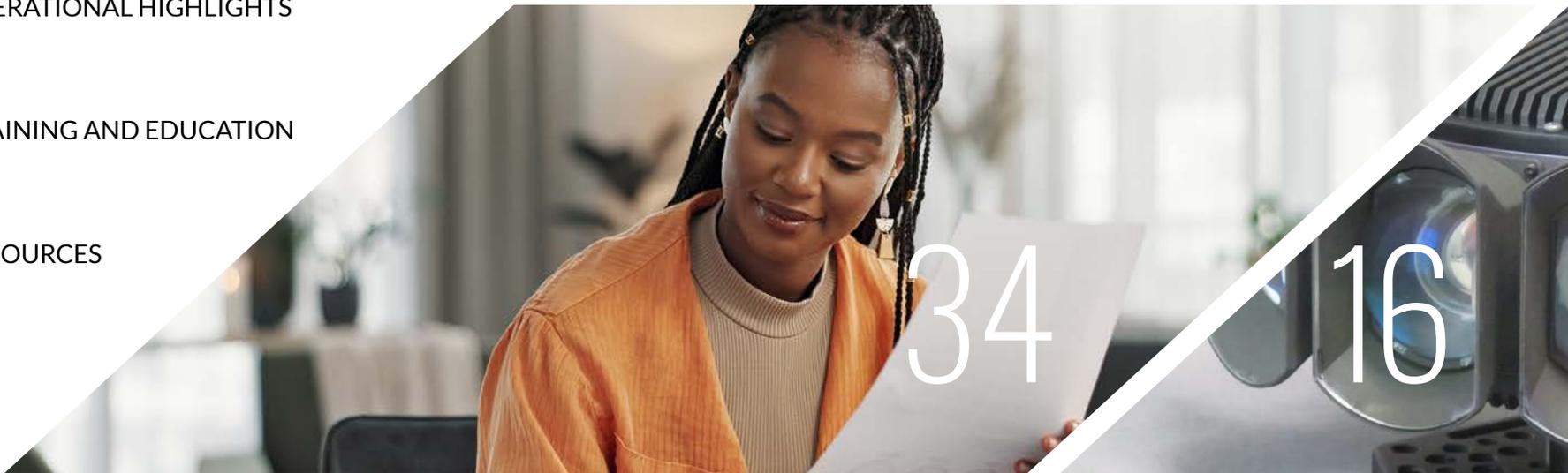
ACCELERATORS

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9^B
09

Contracts &
awarded
APEX clients

\$1,186
ROI
per federal
\$ invested

with an average contract value of

\$118,231



14



Helping businesses enter and participate
in the government supply chain

▶▶ LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

When the APEX Accelerators program transitioned from the Defense Logistics Agency to the Office of Small Business Programs, I shared a simple priority. We needed to understand not just how much activity we were generating, but how that activity translated into real impact for businesses and for the defense and government industrial base.

This year's Program Impact Report shows exactly that. The data tells a clear story of a network delivering stronger outcomes for the Department of War (DoW), for industry partners, and for the thousands of businesses that walk through our doors each year.

During the most recent program year (April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025), more than 26,000 new clients received one-on-one guidance from over ninety APEX Accelerators nationwide. Our teams hosted more than 6,000 training events, giving businesses the skills to compete and win. Clients supported by our network secured \$64.9 billion in contracts and subcontracts, generating a strong return on investment. And over one third of our new clients operate in Critical Technology Areas that matter to the Department's mission and to our national security.

This progress comes as the Department continues to expand opportunities for small businesses across the industrial base. In FY24, small business contract awards grew by \$4.9 billion, and the DoW earned an "A" rating on the Small Business Administration's agency scorecard. These gains are a direct reflection of the commitment shown by programs such as APEX Accelerators and the Mentor-Protégé

Program. Their hands on support, training, and mentorship help develop companies with the capabilities needed to deliver critical technologies, strengthen supply chains, and bolster deterrence.

This was also a year of investment in our own people and systems. Nearly 6,000 Accelerator staff and business clients participated in program led training initiatives, and we launched new on demand webinars so learning is available anytime. These efforts help ensure that technical guidance, compliance support, and market knowledge stay sharp across the entire network.

The Program Management Office also introduced several tools to strengthen performance and responsiveness. A new risk reporting system now helps identify and mitigate risks that could affect program results. We completed a national survey to better understand business attitudes and readiness tied to Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) implementation in DoW contracts. We also launched an Accelerator staff pulse survey to surface gaps, gather input, and guide improvements.

Another milestone was the beta launch of the LYNX Portal with a select group of Accelerators. LYNX is an AI and machine learning platform that connects the most relevant companies from the defense industrial base with government stakeholders, enabling faster, data informed decision making that streamlines acquisitions and accelerates innovation. Input from the beta group and the staff survey is shaping how LYNX can best support collaboration across the Accelerator network.

Behind every one of these efforts is the daily work of program managers and counselors who help businesses learn the system, understand the requirements, and build the confidence to succeed. Their work strengthens supply chains, fuels innovation, and supports the Warfighter in ways that reach far beyond any single statistic.

Thank you for taking a moment to explore this year's results. I am proud of what the program has achieved and excited for what comes next. If your business is looking to enter the government marketplace or expand its footprint, your local APEX Accelerator is ready to help. Your company could be our next success story.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Khalil R. Mack". The signature is fluid and cursive.

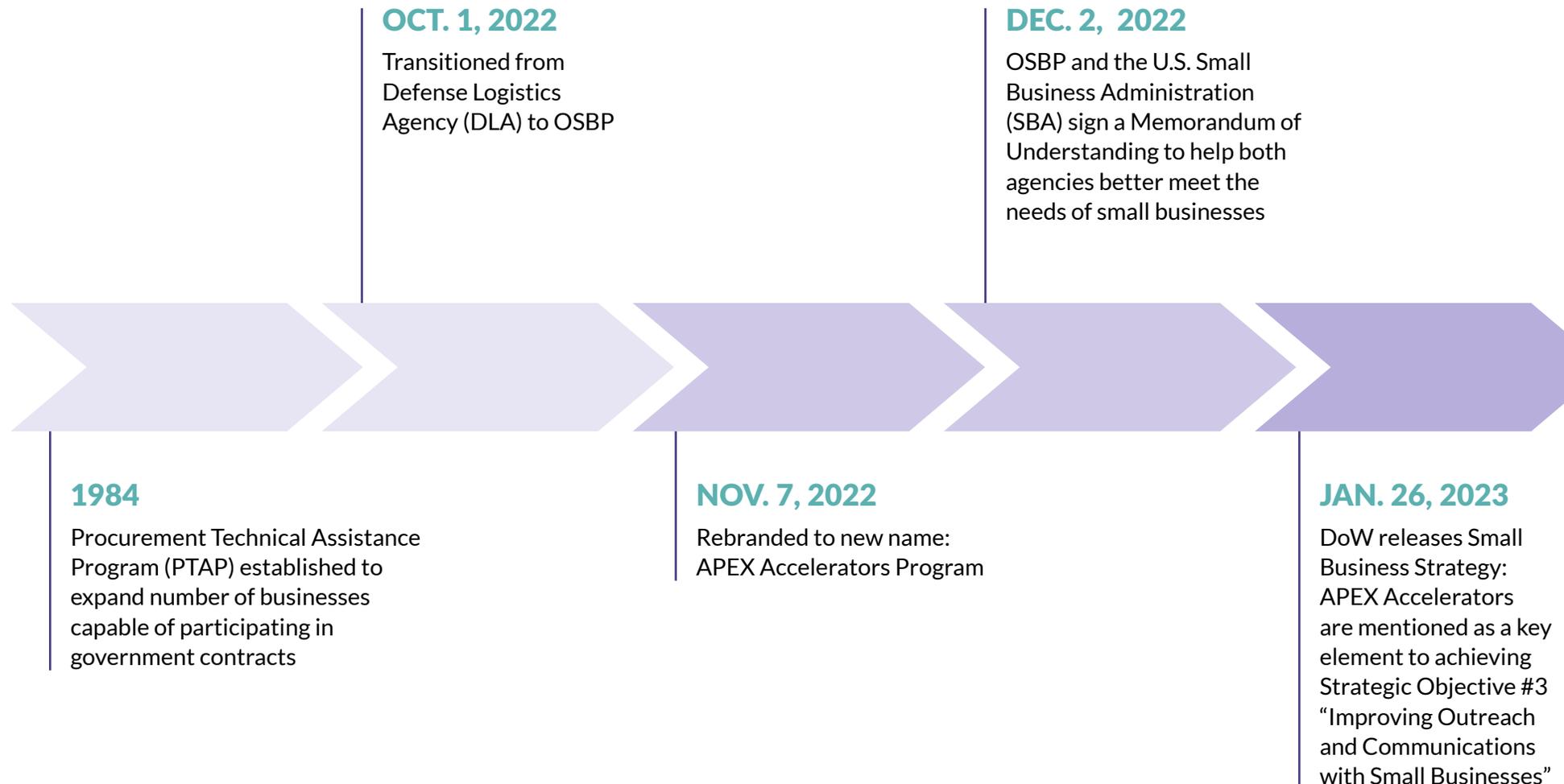
Khalil Mack

Director
APEX Accelerators Program

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 reestablish deterrence.



At the same time, the program continues to broaden the defense industrial base by assisting nontraditional and underserved businesses, including Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs), firms in Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZones), Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs),

Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSBs), and others. Delivered through a national network of cooperative agreements with nonprofit and public institutions, APEX Accelerators offer local, hands-on guidance to help businesses enter and thrive in the government contracting arena.

JANUARY 2025

APEX Accelerators releases its Program Transition Report with bold graphics highlighting the impact and return on investment of the program, client success stories, new goals and metrics and training initiatives.

NOVEMBER 2025

DoW released the Acquisition Transformation Strategy, reshaping how requirements, programs, and industry engagement deliver capability faster. As part of the shift, Defense Acquisition University became Warfighting Acquisition University to emphasize speed and warfighter-focused training.

FUTURE

APEX Centers of Excellence is a new initiative that leverages the unique strengths and specialized expertise of individual Accelerators to provide targeted support to businesses.

APRIL 2025

LYNX Pilot Program launches with Northwest Louisiana APEX Accelerator and the Cross Timbers APEX Accelerator.

JANUARY 2026

LYNX Expanse rolled out to help businesses present capabilities with confidence, identify readiness needs, prioritize next steps through AI/ML-informed roadmaps, and connect to partners and opportunities with greater precision.

OUR SERVICES



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.

OUR IMPACT



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.



The Work We Do Together Matters

Learn about how these seven goals guide our Program Strategy on page 12.

Accelerating Impact: National Results Underscore APEX Accelerators' Strategic Progress

Program Year 2024-25 performance data show expanded reach, smarter service delivery, and sharper alignment with DoW priorities.

The APEX Accelerators program released new impact metrics for the period of April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025, highlighting a strong return on investment, improved efficiency, and strategic alignment with DoW industrial base priorities.

We are delivering more strategic outcomes, not just more activity. By aligning with national security priorities, investing in training, and focusing on quality engagements, our network is helping the Department build a more resilient, innovative, and mission-ready industrial base.

- Khalil Mack, APEX Accelerators Director

The network of 92 APEX Accelerators delivered measurable results:

- 26,232 new business clients served – averaging 100 per day
- 6,284 training events hosted – 24 per day on average
- 549,519 contracts and subcontracts won
- \$64.9 billion in total contract value – with an average award of \$118,231

“This year’s results speak volumes about where the APEX Accelerators program is headed,” said Khalil Mack, Director of the APEX Accelerators program. “We are delivering more strategic outcomes, not just more activity. By aligning with national security priorities, investing in training, and focusing on quality engagements, our network is helping the Department build a more resilient, innovative, and mission-ready industrial base.”

Smarter Delivery, Greater Efficiency

The past year marked a shift toward more intentional engagement:

- Increased daily new business client engagement, serving an average of 8 more clients per day.
- 439 additional training events, signaling expanded outreach and emphasis on education and new supplier capability-building.
- A shift toward quality over quantity, prioritizing strategic client engagement aligned with DoW mission needs.

Strategic Alignment with Critical Technologies

For the first time, APEX Accelerators tracked engagement with firms in DoW’s Critical Technology Areas (CTAs)—which include AI, space, microelectronics, and cybersecurity. The data shows that 35% of new clients supported were active in at least one CTA domain, confirming the program’s growing role in fostering innovation where it matters most.

Statistical information provided by
DoD Office of Small Business Programs

With Federal funding of

\$55 MILLION

90+ APEX Accelerators served

26,232 new business clients

100 new clients per day

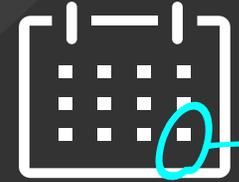
35% from Critical Technology Areas



...and conducted

6,284

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worth

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with an average contract value of

\$118,231!



\$1,186
ROI
per federal \$ invested



OUR STRATEGY, GOALS, AND METRICS



Advancing the Mission: How the APEX Accelerators Strategy Aligns with DoW Priorities

The APEX Accelerators Program continues to play a critical role in strengthening the defense industrial base, and in the past program year its strategy, goals, and performance framework aligned even more closely with Secretary of War Pete Hegseth's priorities. In his first message to the force, Secretary Hegseth emphasized achieving *Peace through Strength* by restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding the military, and reestablishing deterrence. He underscored that progress will be driven by *lethality, meritocracy, accountability, standards, and readiness*. The APEX Accelerators Program—through its structure, goals, and metrics—directly supports these imperatives.

The APEX Accelerators Program Strategy developed in FY23 established seven goals focused on building a stronger, more resilient U.S. supply chain and equipping businesses to perform successfully on defense contracts. This strategic direction is a direct investment in readiness and deterrence. A capable, diverse industrial base ensures our Warfighters have reliable access to the technologies, materials, and services needed to maintain operational advantage.

To sharpen performance and accountability, APEX Accelerators updated its goals and metrics in FY23 to simplify reporting and emphasize outcomes over compliance. These metrics incentivize higher quality assistance, faster improvement cycles, and stronger results across the 90+ APEX Accelerators nationwide. With a full year of data flowing in FY24, the Program is now positioned to assess trends, raise standards, and elevate performance in ways that reflect Secretary Hegseth's call for meritocracy and accountability.

A key component of the strategy is the APEX Risk Management Plan—designed to help the network anticipate disruptions, adapt quickly, and maintain continuity. By embedding risk evaluation and mitigation into day-to-day operations, we are strengthening the reliability of services that businesses new to government contracting depend on. This supports the Secretary's focus on readiness by ensuring that challenges or disruptions do not impact the flow of new and critical suppliers into the defense marketplace.

A diverse, capable industrial base is a direct investment in readiness, deterrence, and the operational advantage of our Warfighters.

- Khalil Mack, Director, APEX Accelerators

Underlying these initiatives is the commitment and professionalism of the APEX Accelerators workforce. Accelerator staff are part of the nation's force structure—connecting businesses to opportunities and stabilizing a supplier base that had been shrinking. Through the Program Strategy and its alignment with DoW priorities, APEX Accelerators continue to drive mission impact, strengthen deterrence, and ensure the needs of America's warfighters are met through a robust and expanding domestic supply chain.

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 of the Defense Industrial Base

Educate on the importance of enhanced cybersecurity to increase the number of security Maturity Model (CMMC) security

METRICS

- Increase the number of security Maturity Model (CMMC) security
- Educate on enhanced cybersecurity



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

Importance of cybersecurity and the role of Cyber-Model Certification for businesses.

Number of Cyber-Model Certified secure businesses launched

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

SUCCESS STORIES



Zack Bishop, President of 4Flutes Machining was recognized as a 2024 APEX Accelerator Best Small Business, by Michigan Celebrates Small Business. Photo courtesy of 4Flutes.



From CNC Shop to SpaceX Supplier: 4 Flutes Levels Up With APEX

What began as a local machining shop is now a rising supplier within the defense industrial base, proving that precision manufacturing and the right guidance can open doors all the way to orbit.

4 Flutes Machining in Vicksburg, Mich., built its operation on producing high-precision, American-made components using materials which meet strict Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) sourcing rules. The company also invested in advanced computer numerical control (CNC) machining, where computer-guided tools shape metal with the accuracy needed for aerospace and defense systems.

The capability was there. The commitment was there. What the company lacked was the know-how and a pathway into the federal contracting world.

That changed when 4 Flutes connected with the Southwest Michigan APEX Accelerator. The Accelerator team helped refine the company's federal contracting profiles, tighten compliance, and position 4 Flutes as a defense-ready supplier. They provided targeted training, introduced the team to government buyers, and facilitated match-making with major prime contractors.

President Zack Bishop says the impact was immediate. "Without the relationship we've cultivated, we would not be in the same position we are now, which is on the brink of being a fully usable source of machined components directly to the military and DoW," he said. "The impact you have had on my company in such a short time is enormous."

The results followed quickly. 4 Flutes has been onboarded as a supplier for SpaceX and now

produces hardware for the Starlink satellite constellation. It has delivered missile components through a Lockheed Martin subcontract and expanded its customer base to include Boeing, Hermeus, Relativity Space, L3Harris, and Torus Inc. Several of these relationships grew directly from Accelerator guidance and connections.

What started as a small machining shop is now a fast-rising contributor to America's defense industrial base, showing how the right support can make all the difference.

WATCH THE STORY COME TO LIFE



Get a closer look at the technology, the team, and the impact of the partnership:

<https://youtu.be/gxYNxaoFPp8>

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 Niazi 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>

From Military Service to Mission-Critical Mapping

Ron Olson founded 1st Call Technical in 2012, drawing on experience from military service and the construction industry, where he was introduced to emerging mapping technologies transforming how complex projects were planned and executed.

Today, he operates the company with his wife, Heather Powell-Olson. 1st Call Technical provides LiDAR-based 3D mapping and data services for architects, engineers, and construction professionals, sup-



Ron Olson, founder of veteran-owned 1st Call Technical, stands with a mobile LiDAR mapping system used to deliver precise 3D data for construction and defense-related infrastructure projects.

porting projects from individual structures and transportation assets to large-scale landscapes.

LiDAR systems can be deployed on terrestrial, airborne, or mobile platforms, enabling efficient data collection across diverse terrain and conditions. These capabilities support defense infrastructure planning, environmental assessments, and mission decision-making.

As Olson sought opportunities to sell to the government, he turned to the Illinois APEX Accelerator for guidance. Center staff at the College of DuPage provided hands-on assistance to help the company understand federal procurement requirements and navigate the early stages of government contracting.

The Accelerator team guided Olson through the different levels of veteran-owned business certifications and how those credentials could be used strategically. With that support, 1st Call Technical successfully applied for and was awarded Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) certification through the Small Business Administration (SBA). The team also ensured the company completed required vendor registrations, positioning it to pursue federal and defense opportunities.

That early assistance led to tangible results. In May 2024, 1st Call Technical was awarded a \$13,485 contract with the Illinois National Guard. While modest, the award marked an important entry point and demonstrated how specialized technical services can support military readiness, infrastructure planning, and critical technology priorities.

With continued APEX Accelerator support, 1st Call Technical is positioned to pursue additional defense-related work and support mission-critical operations.

Engineering Precision for National Security

Millspaw Electronics has spent decades designing and manufacturing custom RF systems, antennas, and communications hardware capable of solving complex signal and power distribution challenges. In 2024, the company decided to pursue the federal contracting marketplace to support national security and critical infrastructure missions.

As a first-time federal contractor, Millspaw faced several common challenges, including meeting Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) requirements and establishing fair and reasonable pricing.

To address these needs, Millspaw turned to the Ohio APEX Accelerator. Center staff provided guidance across multiple fronts, helping the company build a strong foundation for federal participation.

With APEX Accelerator support, Millspaw pursued CMMC Level 2 readiness by enrolling in a structured cyber readiness program aligned with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements. As a result, the company achieved CMMC Level 2 readiness with an active Supplier Performance Risk System (SPRS) score, a completed Systems Security Plan, and a Plan of Action and Milestones to maintain compliance as federal cybersecurity standards evolve.

APEX Accelerator assistance also proved critical during contract execution. Staff helped Millspaw understand fair and reasonable pricing from the government’s perspective, directly contributing to the award of a sole-source Department of Energy (DOE) contract exceeding \$50,000. The company also secured a competitively awarded five-year DOE Blanket Purchase Agreement with no dollar ceiling.

In addition, Accelerator staff reviewed subcontract terms and pricing



ing strategy when Millspaw pursued work with KBR supporting the Department of the Air Force, resulting in the company’s largest firm fixed-price subcontract.

With more than \$500,000 in awards secured, Millspaw Electronics has strengthened its role within the defense industrial base. Through targeted APEX Accelerator support and disciplined execution, the company now delivers secure, reliable technologies that support warfighter readiness, resilient supply chains, and U.S. technological advantage.



Red Bison Services is on the ground at NASA's Stennis Space Center, launching another project for Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southeast and continuing its growing role in federal infrastructure work. *Photo courtesy of Red Bison Services.*

Powered by Partnership: Red Bison's Rise

Red Bison Services, a Native American-owned construction and environmental services firm, turned to the Louisiana APEX Accelerator to accelerate its entry into federal contracting. Founder Rocky Ortego needed clear guidance on proposals, certifications, and compliance. Within months, the outcomes were measurable.

One of the first tests came quickly. A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers solicitation required a National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) cybersecurity score to be uploaded to the Supplier Performance Risk System (SPRS) or bids would be rejected outright. Accelerator staff guided the company through the compliance process, and helped them submit a complete, responsive proposal. That win set the tone for everything that followed.

From there, the Louisiana APEX Accelerator became a strategic partner in Red Bison's growth. Advisors supported the company through Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification, helped them understand Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) subcontracting rules, and guided them through Service Contract Act requirements and multiple federal proposals. They also connected the company to targeted training on prevailing wage, DoW's Wide Area Workflow, and agen-

cy-specific processes, building the company's capacity to compete and perform at a higher level.

The results have been significant. What started in 2015 as a part-time support business is now a full-scale federal contractor with a growing geographic footprint. With APEX Accelerator guidance and new teaming partnerships, Red Bison has secured prime awards and expanded its service offerings across vertical construction, civil infrastructure, marine work, facility maintenance, and environmental restoration.

Recent wins highlight the company's momentum:

- \$3.5 million Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) fuel off-load contract at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS-JRB) New Orleans
- \$2.7 million secure space renovation for NAVFAC Southeast
- \$650,000 maintenance contract with the Louisiana Army National Guard

Red Bison is now pursuing larger opportunities through teaming agreements and joint ventures, including major Multiple Award Task Or-

APEX has helped us stay compliant, competitive, and ready. We're moving faster than ever toward our goals.

- Rocky Ortego, Founder, Red Bison

der Contract (MATOC) and Single Award Task Order Contract (SATOC) efforts in Alabama and Oklahoma. Their rise has earned statewide recognition, including Louisiana APEX Accelerator's 2025 Government Contractor of the Year and the 2025 Louisiana SBA Small Business Person of the Year Award.

"As a Native American-owned business, we take pride in being 'Native Built,'" Ortego said. "APEX has helped us stay compliant, competitive, and ready. We're moving faster than ever toward our goals."

WATCH THE STORY COME TO LIFE



Get a closer look at the company and the impact of the partnership: https://youtu.be/NsOeGZF_Rys



A Master-at-Arms mounts the M240B machine gun on a Metal Shark security boat during a simulated small-boat attack drill at Naval Base San Diego. WMD Squared Engineering contributes 3D modeling support that improves the precision and efficiency of Metal Shark's design and manufacturing process. *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Austin Haist/Released.*

Engineering Precision Meets Federal Opportunity for WMD Squared

After nearly 20 years supporting customers such as the U.S. Coast Guard, the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA)—the largest of the Navy’s five system commands—and major industrial clients, WMD Squared Engineering made a strategic move in 2024. The company relocated to Colorado Springs to be closer to engineering talent, defense partners, and a stronger technology ecosystem. The shift created new opportunities but also brought new requirements: navigating state incentive programs, preparing for federal cybersecurity standards, and building a path into direct DoW work.

CEO Willem Mast turned to the Colorado APEX Accelerator for support, and he credits that partnership with saving the company time and money. “State application processes are complex, and without APEX expertise, there would have assuredly been rejections or costly delays in advancing our growth plans,” Mast said. While the company’s 19 years of experience provided a strong foundation, the Accelerator’s tailored support was essential for navigating Colorado’s incentives and the federal contracting landscape. The team guided WMD through eligibility rules

and each step of the process, ensuring the company could fully leverage the state’s business-growth programs.

The Colorado APEX Accelerator’s role was just as important in helping WMD meet NIST 800-171 and prepare for the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification, known as CMMC 2.0. These standards are technical and time-intensive. With the Accelerator’s guidance, WMD built a compliant framework without unnecessary spending. Meeting these requirements opened the door to new opportunities and directly contributed to \$1.7 million in subcontracts.

With this groundwork in place, WMD enters 2026 with strong momentum and a wider set of federal pathways. Meanwhile, WMD’s work on NAVSEA’s arctic vessel project provides a steady revenue stream within a multi-billion-dollar effort.

Key outcomes enabled by APEX Accelerator support:

- Smooth navigation of Colorado’s incentive programs

- Completion of NIST 800-171 and preparation for CMMC 2.0
- \$1.7 million in subcontracts after achieving compliance
- Five SBIR submissions completed; six more in development
- Lockheed Martin support for two SBIR proposals
- Eligibility to pursue direct federal awards
- Continued participation in NAVSEA’s arctic vessel program
- Stronger financial footing through the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade award

Mast notes that while the company had a strong foundation, the APEX Accelerator’s support sped progress. “Success may have eventually arrived,” he said, “but at a higher cost and slower pace.”

WATCH THE STORY COME TO LIFE



Get a closer look at the company and the impact of the partnership: <https://youtu.be/2z2NKvDR7b0>

Scaling from Vision to Defense-Ready Growth

Inspired by the Veterans First Program and *Shark Tank*, Jackson Dalton, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran with a decade of experience at 3M, launched Black Box Safety in 2017. Initially focused on serving the Department of Veterans Affairs, the company quickly expanded as early demand and broader federal opportunities reshaped its direction.

As demand grew, Black Box Safety turned to the San Diego, Orange, and Imperial APEX Accelerator offices for help navigating federal contracting requirements. Counselors worked closely with Dalton to refine the company's capability statement, identify gaps, and strengthen its positioning for government buyers. They also provided hands-on assistance with essential registrations, including resolving issues within SAM.gov to ensure the company was eligible to compete for federal opportunities.

APEX Accelerator support extended to guidance on Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) eligibility, helping the company establish a compliant structure that supported future growth and the addition of a business partner. Dalton credits the program's one-on-one consultations with helping the company resolve specific challenges and make informed decisions in a complex contracting environment.

That foundation enabled rapid growth. By 2024, Black Box Safety reached \$33 million in annual revenue and expanded to a team of 15 employees. The company also became an approved Department of War SkillBridge provider, supporting service members transitioning to civilian careers while strengthening the defense industrial base workforce.



Founder Jackson Dalton and Vice President Griffin Forsyth representing Black Box Safety at Sony Pictures Studios, the filming location of *Shark Tank* and one of the early sources of inspiration for the company.

Today, Black Box Safety continues to grow its federal footprint while maintaining strong commercial partnerships, including with Grainger. With ongoing Accelerator support and deep engagement in the SDVOSB and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE is a California-specific designation) communities, the company is positioned to pursue larger defense contracts, mentor other veteran-owned firms, and deliver safety solutions that directly support military readiness.

Precision Cleaning Finds Dual Use for Mission-Critical Platforms

G.C. Laser Systems' automated laser technology was originally developed for art and architectural conservation, where precision and surface protection are critical.

As G.C. Laser Systems explored government contracting opportunities to apply its capabilities within industrial and defense environments, the company turned to the Illinois APEX Accelerator to better understand federal requirements and align its technology with defense priorities.

Local APEX Accelerator staff provided an overview of government contracting fundamentals and guided the company through targeted market research and competitive analysis. This included helping G.C. Laser Systems identify federal agencies and buyers using laser cleaning technology, potential industry partners and prime contractors, and key points of contact.

Counselors also reviewed competitors' award histories to show how similar technologies are acquired across the federal government and provided training on interpreting solicitations and developing a bid profile aligned with the company's specialized capabilities.

That support positioned G.C. Laser Systems to engage directly with defense customers whose acquisition cycles require extensive testing and validation. The company is currently demonstrating and testing laser-based scuff sanding applications for the F-35 with the U.S. Air Force in Yuma, Ariz. These demonstrations are part of a longer sales process designed to ensure performance, repeatability, and platform compatibility.

G.C. Laser Systems has also completed a recent sale to the U.S. Army, delivering a laser system integrated with a robotic arm to clean large components and parts. This work supports improved maintenance efficiency, reduced environmental impact, and greater consistency across sustainment operations.

With ongoing APEX Accelerator support and growing defense customer adoption, the company is strengthening its position in the defense industrial base by supporting aircraft readiness, platform longevity, and maintenance modernization.



G.C. Laser Systems' automated laser technology, originally developed for art and architectural conservation, is now used across industrial and defense environments.



Dolche Truckload on the move. Strengthened by APEX Accelerator support, the company is now positioned to support DoW logistics missions and FEMA operations nationwide. *Photo courtesy of Dolche Truckload.*

Dolche Truckload Corp Finds Its Lane in Government Contracting

When Dolche Truckload set out to expand in the freight logistics market, government contracting felt out of reach. The opportunity was clear, but the pathway was complex. That changed when owner Desi Evans connected with the Illinois APEX Accelerator at

the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC).

What began as a referral from the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) quickly became a working partnership. The Illinois

APEX Accelerator team helped Dolche prepare for the federal marketplace by:

- Identifying potential government buyers
- Strengthening its capability statement

- Completing required registrations and certifications

“From our very first interaction, the APEX Accelerator provided not only expert guidance but also a sincere, collaborative partnership,” Evans said. “They helped us qualify for opportunities and prepared us to perform at the highest level once awarded.”

That preparation proved critical in 2024, when the Accelerator learned that Crowley Transportation had secured a major DoW Freight Transportation Services (DFTS) contract. Seeing a strong fit for Dolche, the team reached out to Crowley, arranged a statewide training session, and helped Dolche understand subcontractor requirements. This support gave the company a clear path through a process that often challenges small carriers.

In February 2025, after meeting all onboarding requirements, Dolche became an approved small business carrier for Crowley Transportation. Around the same time, the company completed onboarding to provide freight services for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), marking another major milestone.

“The APEX Accelerator’s support made navigating the often-complex world of government contracting feel far more achievable,” said Dave Regnier, Dolche’s government sales manager. “They helped us craft a strong capability statement, refine our small business profile, and understand what it takes to be a successful government partner.”

Dolche’s progress continued through the Illinois APEX Accelerator’s eight-week FedCon

Cohort program, completed in March 2025. The company is now supporting DoW logistics missions and expanding its ability to support FEMA operations.

Key outcomes supported by the APEX Accelerator:

- Approval as a small business carrier for a major DoW freight prime contract holder
- FEMA onboarding completed
- Strengthened capability statement and small business profile
- Deeper understanding of federal procurement through FedCon Cohort
- New DoW logistics opportunities under SDDC and GFM, which manage global freight movement and DoW cargo contracting
- Investments in compliance tools, fleet growth, and staffing

Evans credits the momentum to the Accelerator’s guidance: “We’re not just stepping up to the challenge. We’re stepping into our moment as a trusted leader in government logistics.”

WATCH THE STORY COME TO LIFE



Get a closer look at the company and the impact of the partnership:
<https://youtu.be/3hfPgUAclS8>



David Regnier, Dolche Truckload Manager of Government Procurement and Supplier Diversity, at an Illinois APEX Accelerator Government Contracting Summit in March 2025. Photo courtesy of Dolche Truckload.

Strengthening Radar Innovation Through a Cyber-Ready Foundation



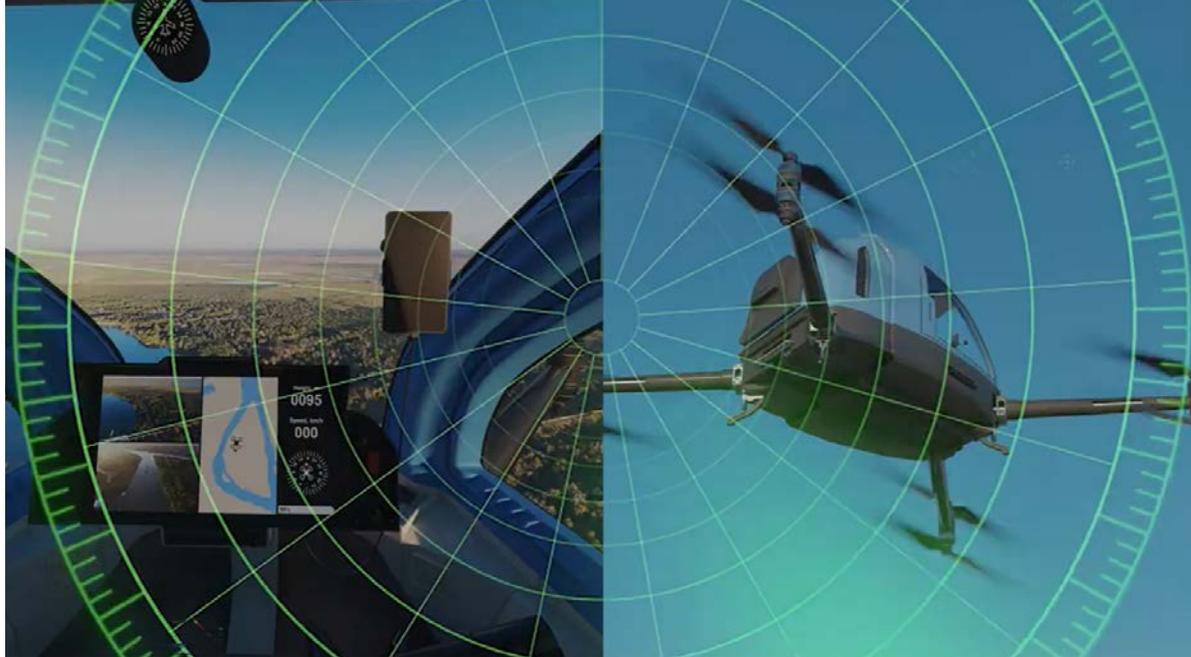
Raider Technologies, based in Dayton, Ohio, set out to solve a clear problem in the radar market: the need for low-cost, high-capability sensors that could support emerging autonomous air and ground systems. Founded by Dr. Aaron Jones, a former lead scientist at the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), Raider applies deep scientific expertise to building scalable radar technologies for national defense, aviation safety, and autonomous navigation.

But to pursue federal research opportunities, especially with the U.S. Air Force, the company first needed to meet advanced DoW cybersecurity requirements.

The Ohio APEX Accelerator helped the company get there.

Raider Technologies turned to its local APEX Accelerator for support in understanding and

In September 2025, Raider Technologies founder Dr. Aaron Jones (right) accepts recognition as a Top Three Finisher in the national TechConnect Drone Dominance Innovation Challenge for the company's innovative radar approach to counter-UAS and swarm detection.



The benefits extend beyond contract eligibility. CMMC readiness has allowed Raider Technologies to:

Save time and resources by streamlining system upgrades and meeting federal expectations early

Gain a competitive advantage in pursuing Air Force and DoW research and technology development efforts

Support the local economy by demonstrating how a small business can overcome regulatory barriers with the right guidance

Looking ahead, CMMC compliance sets the stage for Raider’s next phase of growth. The company is now positioned to pursue additional DoW contracts while ensuring its radar innovations remain secure in an increasingly contested digital environment. With support from the Ohio APEX Accelerator, Raider Technologies has built not just advanced sensing capabilities—but the cyber foundation needed to deliver them to the missions that matter most.

implementing the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Level 2 standards, a prerequisite for working with Air Force programs and other DoW agencies. The

hands-on assistance at no cost. Through this partnership, Raider completed a full readiness assessment, mapped its compliance pathway, and implemented the controls needed to protect sensitive data.

“Without the guidance and assistance from APEX Accelerators, Raider Technologies would still be trying to navigate and understand DoW cybersecurity requirements,” Jones said.

Achieving CMMC Level 2 readiness marked a major milestone in the company’s growth. The compliance effort not only strengthened Raider’s internal systems but also positioned the company to compete for Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) awards and other advanced research and development opportunities with the U.S. Air Force and across the DoW.

The strategic guidance and direct support from our APEX team really helped propel Raider to secure a significant Direct to Phase 2 Small Business Innovative Research Contract with the USAF.

- Aaron Jones, Founder, Raider Technologies

Accelerator team provided clear, step-by-step guidance and connected Raider to a state-led cybersecurity pilot program that offered

WATCH THE STORY COME TO LIFE



Get a closer look at the company and the impact of the partnership: <https://youtu.be/IMdtcvk22Tg>

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MISSION

APEX Accelerator Counselors Strengthening the Industrial Base Every Day

Across the country, APEX Accelerator counselors and procurement specialists work one-on-one with businesses to help them navigate government contracting, build capability, and become contract ready. These profiles highlight two of the many professionals behind the scenes whose dedication, expertise, and commitment power the mission every day. Their stories reflect the skill and service that define the APEX Accelerators network.

From Contracting Officer to Counselor: The Mission to Help Businesses Succeed

Paula Kramer brings deep defense contracting experience to her role as a counselor with the Utah APEX Accelerator. Before joining the program, she spent years as a Department of War contracting officer, advising commanders on acquisition strategies and working closely with both public and private sector partners. Her background spans federal regulations, negotiation, contract administration, and developing bid strategies. She also helped Tooele Army Depot secure the Center of Industrial and Technical Excellence

designation, paving the way for new public private partnerships.

Paula's education and training reflect the depth of her expertise. She studied business at Utah State University and marketing at Salt Lake Community College, completed the U.S. Army Logistics Management College's Program in Contracting Management, holds a Level III Contracting Certification, and has logged more than 2,000 hours of military sponsored training across finance, logistics, law, and leadership.

Her motivation for this work is simple. As both a former program manager and contracting officer, she understands the stakes of the DoW mission and the importance of responsible stewardship of public funds. What drives her now is helping companies navigate government contracting, win awards, and grow. "Seeing clients succeed never gets old," she says. "Helping them build confidence and reach that win is why I do this."

At the Utah APEX Accelerator, Paula supports a diverse set of industries including construc-



Paula Kramer
Counselor
Utah APEX Accelerator

tion, aircraft component manufacturing, molecular testing and science, life sciences, energy technologies, and the medical sector. Her team is also adopting new AI tools, leading training on Other Transaction Authorities (OTAs), supply chain strategies, and tariffs, and connecting businesses with opportunities across federal agencies.

Paula has seen firsthand how APEX Accelerators can influence local economies. Among the program's success stories are manufacturers who pivoted during the COVID pandemic, minority owned firms securing critical Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts, and advanced manufacturing clients whose compliance and preparation positioned them to work with BAE, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman.

Outside of work, Paula recharges in the mountains and lakes of Utah and Idaho, spending time camping, traveling, golfing, and playing pickleball.

From Client to Counselor: Turning Experience Into Practical Support

Rebecca Younk has been serving small businesses in Michigan for six years as a procurement specialist with the Saginaw Future APEX Accelerator, a sub center of the Northwest Michigan APEX Accelerator. Her path to the role began as a client herself. As the mar-

keting director for a veteran owned small business working in federal contracting, she managed all aspects of the company's government contracts and frequently turned to the APEX Accelerator for guidance. The quality of support she received inspired her to join the program and help deliver that same experience to other businesses.

Rebecca holds a B.A. from Grand Valley State University and brings hands on knowledge of the full contracting lifecycle. Today, she works with companies across the region to strengthen their contracting strategies and expand their opportunities in the federal market.

What excites Rebecca most is seeing the direct link between government contracting and local economic vitality. "When businesses grow through federal opportunities, they don't just support national security. They create momentum that lifts the whole community," she says.

Michigan's strong manufacturing base positions many companies to work with emerging and critical technologies. Rebecca regularly introduces clients to programs such as Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS), Defense Production Act (DPA) Title III, and the DoW Mentor-Protégé Program to help them play a role in building a resilient defense supply chain.



Rebecca Younk
Procurement Specialist
Saginaw Future APEX Accelerator

Rebecca's approach to work life balance is grounded in gratitude for the clients she serves and the colleagues she works alongside. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling and has visited 23 countries to date. When home, she spends time playing table tennis, crocheting, and reading.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Innovation in Action Across the APEX Accelerators Program

During the past program year, the APEX Accelerators Program advanced on multiple fronts, driven by a clear mission: to strengthen the nation's defense industrial base by helping small businesses succeed in the government marketplace. This year's key initiatives reflect a continued commitment to innovation, operational excellence, and elevating best practices across the national network.

From launching new tools and pilots to building capacity through Centers of Excellence, APEX Accelerators are evolving in real time—harnessing technology, data, and collaboration to better serve small businesses and meet the growing demands of the defense ecosystem.

Strengthening the Backbone: DoW Earns an 'A' on SBA Small Business Scorecard

The Department of War earned an 'A' on the Small Business Administration's FY24 scorecard, backed by a \$4.9 billion increase in contract awards to small businesses. This performance reinforces the vital role small businesses play in national security—and the impact of support programs like APEX Accelerators and the DoW Mentor-Protégé Program.

The 90+ APEX Accelerators across the country continue to serve as critical access points for companies seeking to enter or grow within the defense industrial base. Their work helps build supplier readi-

ness, resilience, and capacity—contributing directly to the DoW's ability to meet small business participation goals.

LYNX Pilot Launch: Matching Innovation with Mission

This year also saw the launch of the LYNX Pilot Program, a strategic move toward acquisition modernization. LYNX leverages artificial intelligence and machine learning to match qualified businesses with government needs—connecting capability with opportunity in real time.

With initial pilots underway at the Northwest Louisiana APEX Accelerator and the Cross Timbers APEX Accelerator, the platform is already demonstrating its value in streamlining acquisition and accelerating connections between primes and subcontractors, buyers and suppliers. As more sites join the pilot, LYNX is poised to become a transformative tool in the way government and industry collaborate to meet defense priorities.

Proactive and Prepared: Risk Notification and Reporting System

Recognizing that early awareness is key to operational continuity, the Program Management Office (PMO) introduced a Risk Notification Form and Reporting System. This new tool empowers Program Managers across the APEX network to flag potential risks early, enabling quicker response, better mitigation, and data-driven decision-making.

The Risk Notification Form feeds into a broader APEX Risk Register, helping the PMO identify trends, strengthen oversight, and ensure that challenges don't derail mission outcomes. It's a forward-looking approach to risk: proactive, transparent, and essential for a high-performing program.

New Resource: APEX Accelerators Financial Lifecycle Graphic

To further support consistency and visibility across the network, the PMO also introduced the new APEX Accelerators Financial Lifecycle graphic. This visual resource offers a clear, at-a-glance view of key financial activities throughout the fiscal year. It outlines critical processes such as obligations, solicitations, awards, de-obligations, close-outs, and funding opportunities—helping Program Managers and stakeholders stay aligned, informed, and on track.

This tool reflects the PMO's broader commitment to transparency and operational clarity, reinforcing financial best practices and improving planning across the network.

Coming Soon: APEX Centers of Excellence

Looking ahead, the Program is preparing to launch the APEX Centers of Excellence, a new initiative designed to harness and scale specialized expertise across the network. These Centers will allow any Accelerator to tap into concentrated knowledge, tools, and technical



assistance focused on high-priority areas of government contracting and the defense industrial base.

The Centers of Excellence will build on what's already working, replicating best practices and expanding access to high-value resources for new entrants and seasoned contractors alike. The Centers represent a strategic investment in quality, equity, and outcomes.

Looking Forward

Each of these initiatives—LYNX, the Risk Reporting System, Financial Lifecycle Graphic, the Centers of Excellence, and recognition on the SBA scorecard—reflects how the APEX Accelerators Program continues to evolve: building smarter, performing better, and staying mission-focused. Together, they signal a program that's not only keeping pace with change but helping lead it.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION





Strengthening the knowledge base of APEX Accelerator staff, and by extension, the clients they serve, remained a key priority this program year. The Program partnered with federal agencies and partners to deliver a broad lineup of workshops, seminars, and practical tools designed to support staff development across the national network.

New this year was the launch of a Small Business Webinar Series, focused on the key topics of cybersecurity, Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI), and the DoW Mentor-Protégé Program. These sessions were tailored to help Accelerator staff deepen their understanding of the regulations, programs, and resources available.

Several of the training opportunities offered participants the chance to earn Continuous Learning Certificates, adding formal recognition to the skills gained.

These collective efforts reflect the Program's ongoing commitment to supporting the professional growth and expertise of the team on the front lines advising businesses who seek to become suppliers to the defense and governmental industrial bases.

▶▶ TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC TRAININGS

PROGRAM YEAR: APRIL 1, 2024 - MARCH 31, 2025

BRAND TRAINING FOR ACCELERATORS

Presenter: Suzanne Zurn, Strategic Communications Lead (CTR), DoW OSBP

Presentation of brand audit findings and guidance on transitioning from PTAC to APEX branding requirements.

GOALS AND METRICS TEMPLATE TRAINING

Presenter: Julie Smith, Curriculum Developer (CTR), DoW OSBP

Overview of revised reporting templates with practical demonstrations and reference guides to support consistent data collection across the network.

FY 2024 PROGRAM FUNDING

Presenters: John Favara, Branch Chief/Division A, and Monica Wideman, Grants Officer, ACC-APG

Discussion on FY 2024 program funding and a Q&A session with Program Managers.

▶▶ FEDERAL AGENCY TRAINING SESSIONS

DEFENSE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY (DARPA)

Presenter: Effie Fragogiannis, Senior Procurement Executive, DARPA

Insight into DARPA's innovation mission and how small businesses can engage in research and development contracting.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE)

Presenter: Tamara Miles, Deputy Director, Office of Small Business Programs, DOE

Summary of DOE's OSDBU mission to streamline small business engagement and maximize contract awards.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

Presenter: Shannon Jackson, Executive Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), HHS

Detailed overview of HHS small business programs, including strategies for accessing contracting opportunities across underserved business categories.

MXD - DIGITAL MANUFACTURING & CYBERSECURITY INSTITUTE

Presenter: Eric Rancatore, Partnerships Manager, MxD

Introduction to MxD's mission and DoW designation as the National Center for Cybersecurity in Manufacturing.

NAVALX

Presenter: Scott Bewley, Deputy Director, NavalX

Overview of NavalX's innovation ecosystem and strategies to engage non-traditional and emerging tech companies in Department of the Navy contracting.

▶▶ SPECIALTY TOPIC TRAININGS

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP, CONTROL, OR INFLUENCE (FOCI)

Presenter: Dr. Bryson Reynolds, Associate Director, DoW OSBP

Three sessions conducted as part of the Small Business Webinar Training Series on the implications of FOCI for small businesses and how to identify and mitigate associated risks.

MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM (MPP)

Presenter: Jerry Smith, Senior Program Analyst (CTR), DoW OSBP

Three sessions conducted as part of the Small Business Webinar Training Series covering the benefits of MPP and how it helps small businesses build capacity through developmental partnerships.

PROJECT SPECTRUM - CYBERSECURITY EDUCATION & SUPPORT

Presenter: Kareem Sykes, Industry & Engagement Analyst (CTR), DoW OSBP

Three sessions conducted as part of the Small Business Webinar Training Series introducing Project Spectrum's mission, available resources, and best practices for small businesses working to meet cybersecurity requirements.

RAPID INTEGRATED SCALABLE ENTERPRISE (RISE)

Presenter: Ken Bloch, Lead Program Analyst (CTR), DoW OSBP

Overview of RISE as a tool to accelerate small business technology integration into defense acquisition pipelines.

WIDE AREA WORKFLOW (WAWF)

Presenter: Russell Williams, Deputy Director, Customer Care, WAWF

Introduction to WAWF and its use in DoW contract shipment acceptance and invoicing.

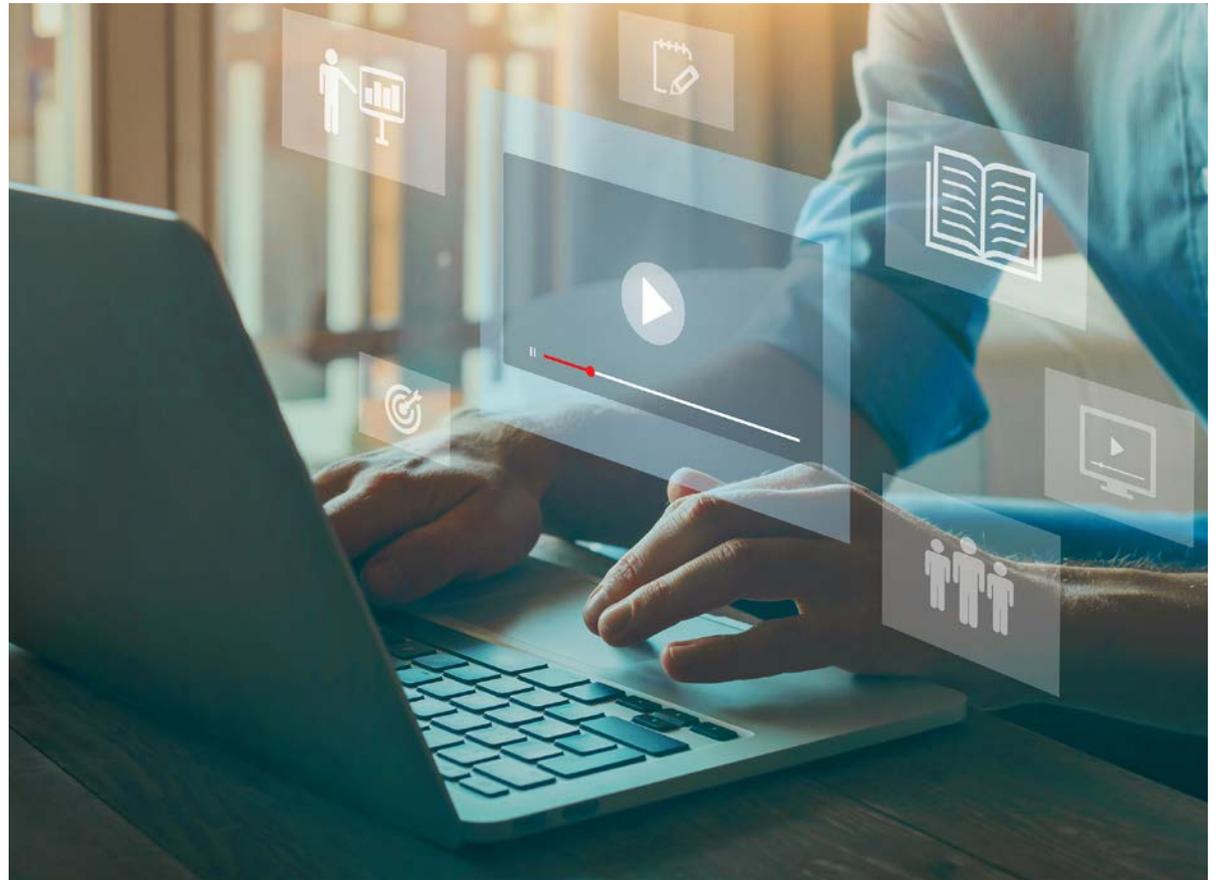
DAU Learning Access Extended to Accelerator Staff

A new collaboration with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), recently rebranded as the Warfighting Acquisition University (WAWU), gives APEX Accelerator staff access to DAU's extensive library of more than 60,000 learning assets including online courses, blogs, podcasts, videos, and other resources.

DAU, the Department of War's corporate university, exists to strengthen the defense acquisition workforce through talent management, acquisition training, online resources, and organizational support that enables delivery of effective, affordable capabilities to the Warfighter.

This partnership brings valuable professional development benefits to APEX Accelerator staff. For example, DAU offers specialized training on the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, helping staff better guide their business clients in pursuing funding for innovative technologies.

In addition, DAU's cybersecurity and data protection courses offer timely insights



into federal contracting requirements—resources that can help Accelerator staff better support clients navigating today's complex compliance landscape.

This new access enhances professional development opportunities for APEX Accelerator staff and strengthens their ability to serve clients more effectively.



New Course Teaches Acquisition Professionals about APEX Accelerators

In partnership with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) - recently rebranded to Warfighting Acquisition University - a new training course in February 2025 was launched to introduce acquisition professionals to the critical tools and services offered by APEX Accelerators. Previously tailored for contracting professionals, the updated course now serves a broader audience across the acquisition workforce.

The ACQ 0690 APEX Accelerators Awareness curriculum hosted by DAU consists of four structured lessons, beginning with a foundational overview and progressing to a detailed examination of APEX Accelerators' capabilities. The training concludes with a final assessment to reinforce key concepts.

This 2-hour course is particularly valuable for professionals involved in market research, small business outreach, or contract management. Participants earn two continuous learning points and gain strategic insights that enhance acquisition outcomes and strengthen collaboration between government and industry.

For more information or to enroll, please visit the ACQ 0690 course page at <https://www.dau.edu/courses/acq-0690> or consult the DAU iCatalog Concept Card at https://icatalog.dau.edu/onlinecatalog/courses.aspx?crs_id=13592.

New DoW Webinar Series Equips Thousands to Strengthen the Defense Industrial Base

Nearly 6,000 trained to date; series now available on demand to expand reach and impact

In November 2024, the APEX Accelerators Program launched a powerful new webinar training series designed to strengthen the defense industrial base by equipping small businesses, APEX Accelerator staff, and acquisition professionals with practical knowledge and tools to navigate the federal contracting landscape.

This ongoing initiative delivers targeted, web-based education on topics and programs critical to supporting small businesses seeking opportunities with the Department. To date, nearly 6,000 participants have completed one or more of these trainings, and the entire series is now available on demand, making the content accessible to anyone, anywhere, at any time.

Focused Topics, Real-World Value

Led by subject matter experts from the DoW Office of Small Business Programs, the series covers essential topics that directly affect current and prospective defense suppliers, including:

- The DoW Mentor-Protégé Program, which promotes knowledge transfer between experienced prime contractors and emerging businesses;
- Project Spectrum, a cybersecurity initiative offering cost-effective tools and training to help businesses improve cyber readiness and meet DoW compliance standards;

- Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI), a national security risk area related to foreign entities potentially influencing U.S. businesses through ownership, investment, or partnerships.

Each session is designed to deliver actionable insights that help participants enhance program familiarity, business readiness, reduce risk, and align with DoW acquisition requirements.

Scalable Training, Strategic Impact

This free, virtual training series supports the broader APEX Accelerators mission. Participants across the APEX network have praised the sessions for their clarity, depth, and relevance.

“The series represents our continued commitment to providing scalable, accessible training and resources that continually educates our workforce, advances business readiness, and deepens program impact nationwide,” said Khalil Mack, Director of the APEX Accelerators Program.

With growing demand and continued expansion, the APEX Accelerators webinar series is helping ensure that more businesses—regardless of size or experience—have the tools and knowledge to compete, contribute, and succeed in the defense marketplace.

Explore on-demand training and upcoming sessions at business.defense.gov.

RESOURCES

Program Leadership and Management Team

Mr. Khalil Mack currently serves as Deputy Director of the Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) and Director of APEX Accelerators. As part of the OSBP leadership team, he oversees Policy, Subcontracting, Workforce Development, Cybersecurity and Supply Chain Readiness, Industry Engagement, Strategic Communications, and the APEX Accelerators program.

With 90+ Accelerators across 49 states and territories, APEX Accelerators provide a critical front door for business and industry to help 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.

The work Accelerators do with businesses, in concert with their partners, strengthens the defense industrial base by accelerating innovation, fostering ingenuity, and estab-

lishing resilient and diverse supply chains. The result is the creation of a domestic industrial base that can deliver preeminent solutions to the military and other government users.

Director Mack previously held the position of Associate Director of Policy, where he was the principal advisor to the OSBP Director on small business industrial base related policy, regulation, and legislation. His experience also includes serving as Branch Chief for the Rapid Prototyping Acquisition Branch at the Washington Headquarters Services Acquisition Directorate, where he planned and executed non-FAR based acquisitions, including Other Transactions, and in various contracting roles for the Army Intelligence and Security Command.

Prior to becoming a federal civilian, Director Mack was a consultant, specializing in acquisition and finance, for several federal agencies including the Department of



Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Director Mack earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Hampton University, and a Master of Business Administration from the George Washington University. He is also a graduate of the Procurement and Contracts Management Certificate program at the University of Virginia.



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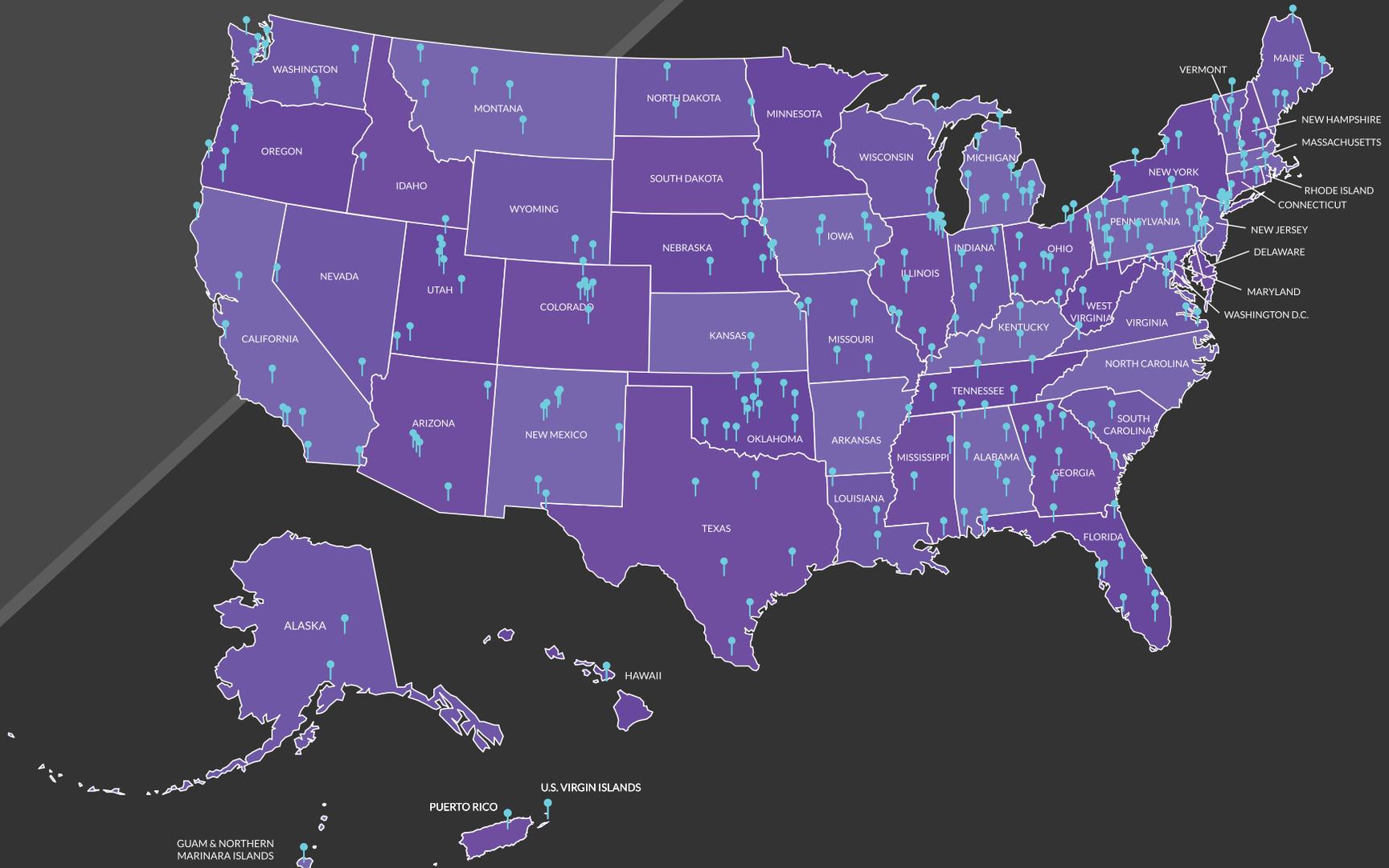


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APEX Accelerators Locations



How to Find Your Local APEX Accelerator

There are two easy ways to find the APEX Accelerator that serves your business.

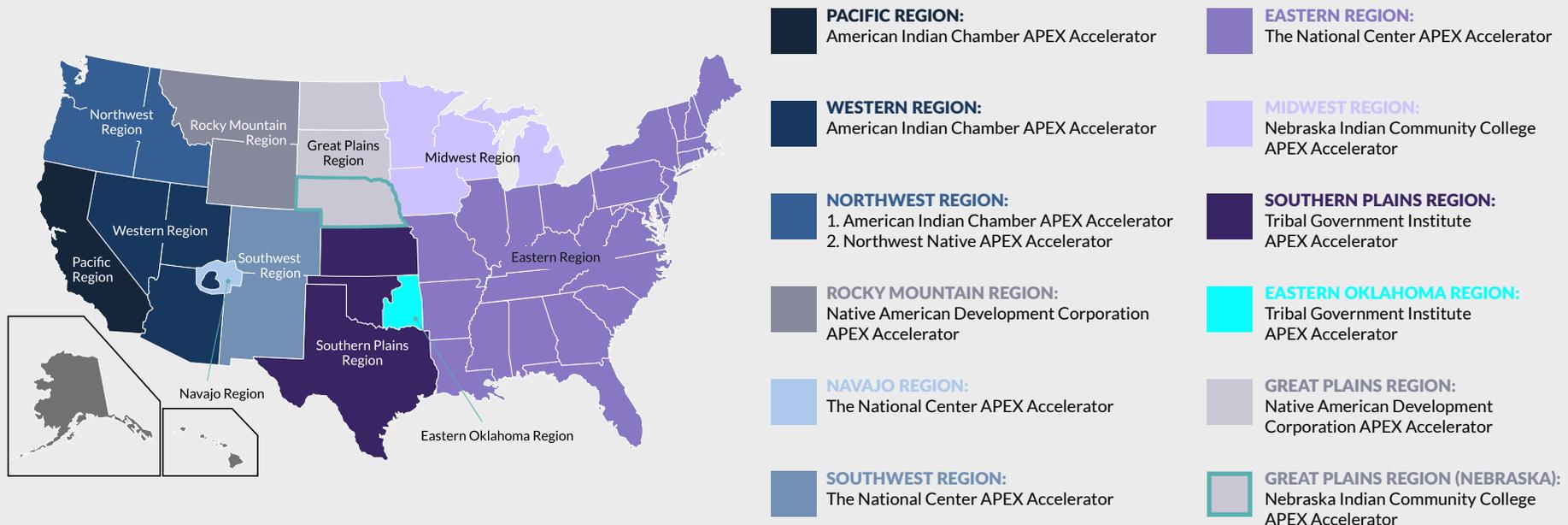
OPTION 1: SEARCH BY BUSINESS ADDRESS

1. Go to www.apexaccelerators.us
2. Scroll to the bottom of the homepage.
3. Enter your business address in the location search.
4. Click the nearest APEX Accelerator pin to view contact details.
5. Review the list of counties served to confirm the Accelerator supports the county where your business is located.

OPTION 2: USE THE SERVICE AREA LOCATOR

1. Go to apexaccelerators.us/#/service-area-locator
2. Use the drop-down menus to select the state and county where your business is located.
3. The result will show the APEX Accelerator that serves your area.

Native American Indian APEX Accelerator Regions



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A bi-monthly roundup of news and events from around the defense industrial base.

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