



# **Strategic Technology Office-wide Announcement**

## **Innovation Solutions Opening**

**DARPA-PS-26-09**

**Strategic Technology Office**

**December 19, 2025**

This publication constitutes a long term open call following and satisfying competitive requirements of 10 U.S. Code § 4001, 10 U.S.C. § 4021, 10 U.S.C. § 4022, and 10 U.S.C. § 4023. Any resultant award negotiations will follow all pertinent law and regulation, and any negotiations and/or awards as required by statute and as specified in the Innovation Solutions Opening.

## OVERVIEW INFORMATION:

- **Federal agency name** – Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Strategic Technology Office
- **Funding opportunity title** – Strategic Technology Office-wide Innovation Solutions Opening Announcement
- **Announcement type** – Initial announcement
- **Funding opportunity number** – DARPA-PS-26-09
- **Assistance listing number** – Not applicable
- **Dates/Time - All times are Eastern Time Zone (ET)**
  - Posting date: December 19, 2025
  - Abstract due date: Abstracts may be submitted on a rolling basis until 11:59 PM ET on the closing date.
  - Proposal due date: By Government request; Proposals will be requested after successful completions of abstract reviews, to be submitted on a rolling basis until 11:59 PM on the closing date.
  - Closing date: October 31, 2027
- **Submission Requirements: An Abstract must be submitted and an invitation to submit a Proposal must be received, prior to any Proposal submission. A proposal will not be reviewed if it is submitted without:**
  1. Submitting an abstract, and
  2. Receiving an invitation to submit a Proposal.
- **Anticipated individual awards** - Multiple awards are anticipated.
- **Types of instruments that may be awarded** – Other Transaction Agreements (OTAs), Procurement for Experimental Purposes, or Cooperative agreements.
- **NAICS code**: 541715
- **Agency contact**
  - Points of Contact  
The Innovation Solutions Opening Coordinator for this effort may be reached at:

DARPA-PS-26-09@darpa.mil  
DARPA/ STO  
ATTN: DARPA-PS-26-09  
675 North Randolph Street  
Arlington, VA 22203-2114

## **1. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) anticipates funding a limited number of proposals under this solicitation. Specifically excluded is research that primarily results in evolutionary improvements to the existing state of practice. Proposed research should investigate innovative approaches that enable revolutionary advances in science, devices, or systems.

The Strategic Technology Office (STO) at DARPA regularly publishes solicitations requesting responses to specific program topics. This announcement seeks revolutionary research ideas for topics not addressed by ongoing STO programs or other published DARPA solicitations.

To avoid proposals that duplicate existing activities or are responsive to other published STO solicitations, potential proposers are highly encouraged to review current STO programs and solicitations, respectively listed at <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices/sto> and <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/opportunities>. Contacting STO program managers to discuss their research interests is also encouraged. A current list of program managers is available at <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/people>.

This Innovation Solutions Opening solicits under the procurement authorities of 10 U.S. Code § 4001, 10 U.S.C. § 4021, 10 U.S.C. § 4022, and 10 U.S.C. § 4023, that allow procurement activities authority to enter into agreements with industry, academia, and other organizations to fund research and development through cooperative agreements, Other Transaction Agreements (OTAs) for research, OTAs for prototypes, and procurement for experimental purposes. Proposals received as a result of this Innovation Solutions Opening will be evaluated by the Government in accordance with the evaluation criteria specified herein through a scientific review process.

DARPA solicitations are posted on the SAM website under the Contract Opportunities link at <https://sam.gov/>. The following information is for those wishing to respond to the Innovation Solutions Opening.

### **1.1. STO MISSION AND THRUST AREAS**

DARPA's STO is a systems warfare office that seeks innovative and disruptive technologies for existing and future battlespaces. STO programs deliver solutions at speed and scale for today's warfighters while developing the resilient "breakthrough" systems and technologies across all physical domains (Air, Space, Sea, and Land) and across the spectrum of competition, deterrence, and conflict. STO does not focus on one area of responsibility or phenomenology. Instead, STO programs capture the strategic, logistical, and tactical complexity of today's national security environments. STO seeks to create new "proof-of-concept" mission systems.

### **1.2. TOPIC AREAS OF INTEREST**

Research areas of current interest to STO include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Acoustic communication and sensing
- Adaptability
- Advanced computing
- Additive manufacturing

- Architecture and advanced systems engineering
- Applied artificial intelligence
- Autonomy and control algorithms
- Combat identification
- Command and control (C2)
- Communications and networking, virtual and adaptive
- Complexity management
- Contested logistics
- Critical infrastructure defense
- Decision aids and C2 technology
- DevOps and novel software development and integration
- Distributed autonomy and teaming (machine-machine, human-machine)
- Economic security
- Effects chain functions (disaggregated find, fix, track, target, engage, assess)
- Electro-optic/infrared sensors
- Electromagnetic warfare (EW)
- High-frequency (HF) communications and sensing
- High voltage electric power systems and architecture
- Human behavior modeling
- Human-machine symbiosis
- Industrial engineering
- Integration and reliability technologies
- Interoperability
- Modeling and simulation
- Microwave and millimeter wave communications and sensing
- Novel kinetic effects
- Non-kinetic effects (EW, DE, cyber)
- Optical technologies
- Photonics
- Radio technologies (especially software-defined and novel waveforms and processing)
- Radar and adaptive arrays
- Resilient systems
- Robotics
- Scaled directed energy (DE)
- Seekers and other expendable sensors and processing
- Sensors and analytics
- Signal processing
- Space sensors, communications, autonomy, and architectures (especially supporting proliferated low earth orbit constellations)
- Strategy analysis technology
- Supply chain analytics
- System of systems
- Undersea and seabed technology
- Tactics development technology

- Testing and data collection
- Very low earth orbit (VLEO) technology
- Very low frequency (VLF) technology

### 1.3. GENERAL ADVICE FOR SUBMITTING NEW IDEAS TO STO

In response to this STO Office-wide Innovation Solutions Opening, written abstracts are **required in advance of submitting a full proposal**. The government's aim is to lower the administrative burden to entry, and reduce program risk, while fully appreciating the opportunity cost of developing a robust proposal across industry, academia, and other organizations. Specific abstract evaluation criteria used to make the assessment can be found in Section 2.1.

Typically, abstract submissions proposing short-duration exploratory projects, such as analytical studies or proof of concept experiments, to inform new program ideas will be given priority. An ideal study helps a program manager answer some of the Heilmeier Questions (see <https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/heilmeier-catechism>), such as: "Why do you think your approach will be successful?"; "What are the risks?"; and "What difference will it make?" STO is a mission-centric office and aligns answers to these questions with how a new capability will change the character of warfare and the manner in which the U.S. defends itself and its interests.

If the Proposer's<sup>1</sup> abstract is assessed as selectable during the abstract phase, the government will request in writing the Proposer provide a written or oral proposal, dictated by the instructions provided, where the proposed technical solution will be evaluated. Specific evaluation criteria used to make the assessment can be found in Section 2.3. The Government team reserves the right to inform the Proposer of specific challenges, scope, and deliverables required to be addressed in the written or oral proposal in the successful abstract notification letter.

## 2. ABSTRACT AND PROPOSAL GUIDELINES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

This announcement allows for multiple award instrument types to be awarded, including cooperative agreements and other transactions. Some award instrument types have specific cost-sharing requirements. The following websites contain additional information regarding overall proposer instructions, general terms and conditions, and each specific award instrument type:

- **Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions:** <https://www.darpa.mil/about/offices/contracts-management/propo...>
- **Cooperative agreements:** <https://www.darpa.mil/about/offices/contracts-management/grants-agreements>
- **Other Transaction Agreements:** <https://www.darpa.mil/about/offices/contracts-management/propo...>

Prior to submitting a full proposal, proposers are required to first submit an abstract as described below. This process allows a proposer to ascertain whether the proposed concept is (1)

---

<sup>1</sup> As used throughout this solicitation, "proposer" refers to the lead organization on a submission to this solicitation. The proposer is responsible for ensuring that all information required by a solicitation—from all team members—is submitted in accordance with the solicitation.

applicable to the STO Innovation Solutions Opening and (2) currently of interest. For the purposes of this Innovation Solutions Opening, applicability is defined as follows:

- The responsive concept is applicable to the technical areas described herein.
- The responsive concept is important to STO's current investment portfolio.
- The responsive concept aligns with STO Program Manager expertise and research interests.
- The responsive concept investigates an innovative approach that enables revolutionary advances, i.e., will not primarily result in evolutionary improvements to the existing state of practice.
- The responsive work has not already been completed (i.e., the research element is complete, but manufacturing/fabrication funds are required).
- The Proposer has not already received government funding or a positive funding decision for the proposed concept (whether from DARPA or another Government agency).

Abstracts that are evaluated as not applicable to the STO Office-wide Innovation Solutions Opening, as defined above, or currently not of interest, may be deemed non-conforming and removed from consideration. All abstracts must provide sufficient information to assess the validity, feasibility, and comply with the requirements outlined herein for submission formatting, content, and transmission to DARPA. Proposers will be notified of non-conforming determinations via letter.

Full proposals may be requested via the Government abstract response letter before the due date outlined in this announcement. Attachments C, D, E, and F contain example templates that may be used if a proposal is requested. Please visit Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions for additional information regarding submission methods through the Broad Agency Announcement Tool (BAAT).

## **2.1. ABSTRACT EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Abstracts will be evaluated using the following criteria listed in descending order of importance: Overall Scientific and Technical Merit; Potential Contribution and Relevance to the DARPA Mission; and Price Realism/Rough Order of Magnitude.

**1. OVERALL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MERIT:** The proposed technical approach is innovative, feasible, achievable, and complete. The proposed technical team has the expertise and experience to accomplish the proposed tasks. Task descriptions and associated technical elements provided are complete and in a logical sequence with all proposed deliverables clearly defined such that a final outcome that achieves the goal can be expected as a result of award. The proposal identifies major technical risks, and planned mitigation efforts are clearly defined and feasible. The proposal clearly explains the technical approach(es) that will be employed and provides ample justification as to why the approach(es) is feasible.

- **Technical Comprehension:** The proposed technical understanding is accurate, and key technical challenges and risks are identified.
- **Technical Ability:** The proposer demonstrates an ability, if selected, to achieve the proposed program, and the team comprises the expertise required to achieve program goals

- 2. POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION AND RELEVANCE TO THE DARPA MISSION:** The potential contributions of the proposed effort bolster the national security technology base and support DARPA's mission to make pivotal early technology investments that create or prevent technological surprise. The proposer clearly demonstrates its plans and capabilities to contribute to U.S. national security and U.S. technological capabilities. The evaluation will consider the proposer's plans and capabilities to transition proposed technologies to U.S. national security applications and to U.S. industry. The evaluation may consider the proposer's history of transitioning or plans to transition technologies to foreign governments or to companies that are foreign-owned, controlled, or influenced. The evaluation will also consider the proposer's plans and capabilities to assist its employees and agents to be eligible to participate in the U.S. national security environment. In addition, the evaluation will take into consideration the proposed technology transition strategy and the extent to which the proposed intellectual property (IP) rights will potentially impact the government's ability to transition the technology, as applicable.
- 3. PRICE REALISM/ROM:** The evaluation may consider how the proposers price/ROM are realistic and support the details provided in the abstract. The proposed Price/ROM are consistent with the risk profile and reflect a sufficient understanding of the anticipated costs and level of effort needed to successfully accomplish the proposed technical approach. Ideally, the price/ROM should include a high-level description and estimate of the resources required to accomplish the abstract submission, to include: type and number of labor hours, the types and quantities of materials. It is expected that the effort will leverage all available relevant prior research. DARPA recognizes that undue emphasis on price may motivate proposers to offer low-risk ideas with minimum uncertainty and to staff the effort with junior personnel in order to be in a more competitive posture; DARPA discourages such strategies.

## **2.2. ABSTRACT GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- a. Do not include elaborate brochures or marketing materials; only include information relevant to the submission requirements or evaluation criteria.
- b. Use of a diagram(s) or figure(s) to depict the essence of the proposed solution is encouraged.
- c. Proposers are responsible for clearly identifying proprietary information. Submissions containing proprietary information must have the cover page and each page containing such information clearly marked with a label such as "Proprietary" or "Company Proprietary." NOTE: "Confidential" is a classification marking used to control the dissemination of U.S. Government National Security Information as dictated in Executive Order 13526 and should not be used to identify proprietary business information.
- d. Abstract Presentations sent in response to this STO Office-wide Innovation Solutions Opening shall be submitted via DARPA's BAA Website (<https://baa.darpa.mil>). Note: If an account has already been created for the DARPA BAA Website, this account may be reused. If no account currently exists for the DARPA BAA Website, visit the website to complete the two-step registration process. Submitters will need to register for an Extranet account (via the form at the URL listed above) and wait for two separate e-mails containing a username and temporary password. After accessing the

Extranet, submitters may then create an account for the DARPA BAA website (via the "Register your Organization" link along the left side of the homepage), view submission instructions, and upload/finalize the proposal. Proposers using the DARPA BAA Website may encounter heavy traffic on the submission deadline date; proposers should start this process as early as possible. All documentation submitted electronically through DARPA's BAAT Website must be uploaded as zip files (.zip or .zipx extension). The final zip file should be no greater than 50 MB in size. Only one zip file will be accepted per submission, and submissions not uploaded as zip files will be rejected by DARPA. Technical support for DARPA's BAAT Website may be reached at [BAAT\\_Support@darpa.mil](mailto:BAAT_Support@darpa.mil), and is typically available during regular business hours (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Eastern Time).

- e. **Submissions sent through other mediums or channels not described above or after the prescribed STO Innovation Solutions Opening deadline will not be considered, reviewed, nor evaluated.**
- f. **Written Abstracts** should not exceed three (3) single-sided 8.5" by 11" written pages using 12-point Times New Roman font with 1" margins all around. Footnotes and text inside of graphics are not required to be 12-point font but must be legible. The written part of the abstract must include the following clearly labeled sections:
  1. **Title page:** Proposer Name, Abstract Title, Date, Point of Contact Name, E-Mail Address, Phone, Address, and CAGE Code. (The Title Page does not count against page limits).
    - The proposer shall include a truthful statement that no people on the proposer's team are also working for DARPA as Systems Engineering Technical Assistance (SETA), Advisory and Assistance Services (A&AS), or similar support services, as DARPA has a policy prohibiting such people from working as a technical performer. Include this statement on the title page; it will NOT count as part of the written page limit. Refer to Section 1.14 for additional eligibility requirements.
    - The proposed concept is applicable to the technical areas described herein.
    - The proposed concept is important to STO's current investment portfolio.
    - The proposed concept investigates an innovative approach that enables revolutionary advances, i.e., will not primarily result in evolutionary improvements to the existing state of practice.
    - The proposed work has not already been completed (i.e., the research element is complete, but manufacturing/fabrication funds are required).
    - The proposer has not already received government funding or a positive funding decision for the proposed concept (whether from DARPA or another Government agency).
    - Price Realism/ROM: Provide a Price/ROM for the total proposed solution with minimal, high-level instantiations of said cost. This cost can be given as a range. The Price/ROM should not be more than ½ page and does not count against the page limit.

## 2.3. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

If selected to provide a proposal, the proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria listed in ***descending order of importance***. The affirming abstract notification letter may also specify additional or tailored evaluation criteria the Proposer needs to be responsive to if requested to submit a proposal:

- 1. OVERALL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MERIT:** The proposed technical approach is innovative, feasible, achievable, and complete. The proposed technical team has the expertise and experience to accomplish the proposed tasks. Task descriptions and associated technical elements provided are complete and in a logical sequence with all proposed deliverables clearly defined such that a final outcome that achieves the goal can be expected as a result of award. The proposal identifies major technical risks, and planned mitigation efforts are clearly defined and feasible. The proposal clearly explains the technical approach(es) that will be employed and provides ample justification as to why the approach(es) is feasible.
- 2. POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION AND REVELANCE TO DARPA MISSION:** The potential contributions of the proposed effort bolster the national security technology base and support DARPA's mission to make pivotal early technology investments that create or prevent technological surprise.

The proposer clearly demonstrates their plans and capabilities to contribute to U.S. national security and U.S. technological capabilities. The evaluation will consider the proposer's plans and capabilities to transition proposed technologies to U.S. national security applications and to U.S. industry. The evaluation may consider the proposer's history of transitioning or plans to transition technologies to foreign governments or to companies that are foreign-owned, controlled, or influenced. The evaluation will also consider the proposer's plans and capabilities to assist its employees and agents to be eligible to participate in the U.S. national security environment.

In addition, the evaluation will take into consideration the proposed technology transition strategy and the extent to which the proposed intellectual property (IP) rights will potentially impact the government's ability to transition the technology, as applicable

- 3. PRICE, VALUE, AND COST REALISM:** The proposed price, value, or costs are realistic for the technical and management approach and accurately reflect the technical goals and objectives of the solicitation. The proposed price, value, or costs are consistent with the proposer's Task Description Document (TDD) and reflect a sufficient understanding of the price, value, or costs and level of effort needed to successfully accomplish the proposed technical approach. The price, value, or costs for the prime proposer and proposed sub-awardees are substantiated by the details provided in the proposal (e.g., the type and number of labor hours proposed per task, the types and quantities of materials, equipment and fabrication costs, travel and any other applicable costs and the basis for the estimates). It is expected that the effort will leverage all available relevant prior research in order to obtain the maximum benefit from the available funding. For efforts with a likelihood of commercial application, appropriate

direct cost sharing may be a positive factor in the evaluation. DARPA recognizes that undue emphasis on cost may motivate proposers to offer low-risk ideas with minimum uncertainty and to staff the effort with junior personnel in order to be in a more competitive posture. DARPA discourages such cost strategies.

Unless otherwise specified in this announcement, for additional information on how DARPA reviews and evaluates proposals through the Scientific Review Process, please visit [Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions](#).

#### **2.4. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

This announcement allows for multiple award instrument types to be awarded, including cooperative agreements, other transactions, and procurement for experimental purposes. Some award instrument types have statutorily driven cost-sharing requirements.

If warranted during the proposal response phase, resulting awards may be segregated into pre-priced options. Additionally, DARPA reserves the right to act on proposals in their entirety or to select only portions of proposals for award. In the event that DARPA desires to award only portions of a proposal, negotiations may be opened with that proposer. The Government reserves the right to fund proposals in phases with options for continued work, as applicable. The Government reserves the right to request any additional, necessary documentation once it makes the award instrument determination.

### **3. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **3.1. CLASSIFIED ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Specific information regarding classified submission methods can be found in [Attachment C](#). Should a proposer wish to submit classified abstracts, an unclassified email must be sent to the STO Office-wide mailbox to coordinate contact with, and submission instructions from DARPA STO. If a determination is made that the abstract may result in access to classified information, an SCG and/or DD Form 254 may be facilitated by DARPA. Classified submissions must **NOT** be submitted through BAAT or Grants.gov.

#### **3.2. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This announcement, stated attachments, and websites incorporated by reference constitute the entire solicitation. In the event of a discrepancy between the announcement, attachments, or websites, the announcement takes precedence.

All responsible sources capable of satisfying the Government's needs, including both U.S. and non-U.S. sources, may submit a proposal that shall be considered by DARPA. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Small Businesses, Small Disadvantaged Businesses and Minority Institutions are encouraged to submit proposals and join others in submitting proposals; however, no portion of this announcement will be set aside for these organizations' participation due to the impracticality of reserving discrete or severable areas of this research for exclusive competition among these entities. Non-U.S. organizations and/or individuals may participate to the extent that such participants comply with any necessary nondisclosure agreements, security regulations, export control laws, and other governing statutes applicable under the circumstances.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.414(c), all new financial assistance awards to Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) issued under this announcement will be subject to a mandatory indirect cost rate cap of 15% of total modified direct costs. This cap aligns with the Department of War policy issued on May 14, 2025, and represents a deviation from previously negotiated indirect cost rates.

Indirect cost rates above 15% will not be approved and must conform to the definitions and criteria outlined in 2 CFR Part 200, encompassing both “Facilities” and “Administration” expenses. Furthermore, awardees must ensure that indirect costs are accurately reported in accordance with Departmental requirements and the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014. By submitting a proposal in response to this announcement, performers acknowledge and agree to comply with this indirect cost limitation.

DARPA encourages technical solutions from all responsible sources capable of satisfying the government’s needs. To ensure fair competition across the ecosystem, DARPA prohibits contractors/performers from concurrently providing Systems Engineering Technical Assistance (SETA), Advisory and Assistance Services (A&AS), or similar support services and being a technical performer, unless the DARPA Deputy Director grants a written waiver. DARPA extends this prohibition to University-Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs) and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) including National Labs, who as a result of their specialized expertise and areas of competencies, are able to accomplish integral tasks that cannot be met by government or contractor resources. Therefore, these entities are **highly discouraged** from proposing against this solicitation as award to a UARC or FFRDC will only be made by exception. UARCs and FFRDCs interested in this solicitation, either as a prime or a subcontractor, **must** contact the Agency Point of Contact (POC) listed in the Overview section prior to the proposal (or abstract) due date to discuss potential participation as part of the government team or eligibility as a technical performer.

Additionally: Government Entities (e.g., Government/National laboratories, military educational institutions, etc.) are subject to applicable direct competition limitations. Government Entities must clearly demonstrate that the work is not otherwise available from the private sector and provide written documentation citing the specific statutory authority and contractual authority, if relevant, establishing their ability to propose to Government solicitations and compete with industry. This information is required for Government Entities proposing to be awardees or subawardees.

Proposers shall identify and disclose all facts relevant to potential Organizational Conflicts of Interest (OCI), involving the proposer’s organization, and any proposed team member (subawardee, consultant). The proposer is responsible for providing this disclosure with each proposal submitted to the solicitation. The disclosure must include the proposer’s, and as applicable, proposed team member’s OCI mitigation plan. The OCI mitigation plan must include a description of the actions the proposer has taken, or intends to take, to prevent the existence of conflicting roles that might bias the proposer’s judgment and to prevent the proposer from having unfair competitive advantage.

## **Disclosure of Information and Compliance with Safeguarding Covered Defense Information Controls**

The following provisions and clause apply to all solicitations and contracts; however, the definition of “controlled technical information” clearly exempts work considered fundamental research and therefore, even though included in the contract, will not apply if the work is fundamental research.

Proposers should implement the security requirements specified by National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication (SP) 800-171, “Protecting Controlled Unclassified Information in Nonfederal Information Systems and Organizations” (see <https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-171r2.pdf>) and DoDI 8582.01 that are in effect at the time the solicitation is issued.

For awards where the work is considered fundamental research, the contractor will not have to implement the aforementioned requirements and safeguards. However, should the nature of the work change during performance of the award, work not considered fundamental research will be subject to these requirements.

As of the date of publication of this solicitation, the Government cannot identify whether the work under this solicitation may be considered fundamental research and may award both fundamental and non-fundamental research. For additional information on fundamental research, please visit [Proposer Instructions: General Terms and Conditions](#).

- Proposers should indicate in their proposal whether they believe the scope of the research included in their proposal is fundamental or not. While proposers should clearly explain the intended results of their research, the Government shall have sole discretion to determine whether the proposed research shall be considered fundamental and to select the award instrument type. Appropriate language will be included in resultant awards for nonfundamental research to prescribe publication requirements and other restrictions, as appropriate. This language can be found at <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/additionalbaa>.
- For certain research projects, it may be possible that although the research to be performed by a potential awardee is non-fundamental research, its proposed sub-awardee’s effort may be fundamental research. It is also possible that the research performed by a potential awardee is fundamental research while its proposed sub-awardee’s effort may be nonfundamental research. In all cases, it is the potential awardee’s responsibility to explain in its proposal which proposed efforts are fundamental research and why the proposed efforts should be considered fundamental research.
- DARPA’s Fundamental Research Risk-Based Security Review Process is an adaptive risk management security program designed to help protect the critical technology and performer intellectual property associated with DARPA’s research projects by identifying the possible vectors of undue foreign influence. DARPA will create risk assessments of all proposed senior/key personnel selected for negotiation of a fundamental research grant or cooperative agreement award. The DARPA risk assessment process will be conducted separately from the DARPA scientific review process and adjudicated prior to

final award. For additional information on this process, please visit Proposer Instructions: Grants/Cooperative Agreements.

The APEX Accelerators program, formerly known as the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP), focuses on building strong, sustainable, and resilient U.S. supply chains by assisting a wide range of businesses that pursue and perform under contracts with the DoD, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and government prime contractors. See [www.apexaccelerators.us/](http://www.apexaccelerators.us/) for more information. APEX Accelerators helps businesses:

- Complete registration with a wide range of databases necessary for them to participate in the government marketplace (e.g., SAM).
- Identify which agencies and offices may need their products or services and how to connect with buying agencies and offices.
- Determine whether they are ready for government opportunities and how to position themselves to succeed.
- Navigate solicitations and potential funding opportunities.
- Receive notifications of government contract opportunities on a regular basis.
- Network with buying officers, prime contractors, and other businesses.
- Resolve performance issues and prepare for audit, only if the service is needed, after receiving an award.

Project Spectrum is a nonprofit effort funded by the DoD Office of Small Business Programs to help educate the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) on compliance. Project Spectrum is vendor-neutral and available to assist businesses with their cybersecurity and compliance needs. Their mission is to improve cybersecurity readiness, resilience, and compliance for small/medium-sized businesses and the federal manufacturing supply chain. Project Spectrum events and programs will enhance awareness of cybersecurity threats within the manufacturing, research and development, and knowledge-based services sectors of the industrial base. Project Spectrum will leverage strategic partnerships within and outside of the DoD to accelerate the overall cybersecurity compliance of the DIB.

[www.projectspectrum.io](http://www.projectspectrum.io) is a web portal that will provide resources such as individualized dashboards, a marketplace, and Pilot Program to help accelerate cybersecurity compliance.

DARPAConnect offers free resources to potential performers to help them navigate DARPA, including “Understanding DARPA Award Vehicles and Solicitations”, “Making the Most of Proposers Days”, and “Tips for DARPA Proposal Success”. Join DARPAConnect at [www.DARPAConnect.us](http://www.DARPAConnect.us) to leverage on-demand learning and networking resources.

This announcement, stated attachments, and websites incorporated by reference constitute the entire solicitation. In the event of a discrepancy between the announcement, attachments, or websites, this announcement shall take precedence.

Notwithstanding any prior Department of War (DoW) guidance or memoranda regarding indirect cost rate limitations, this award is issued in compliance with the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) entered on June 17, 2025, in *Association of American Universities v. Department of*

*Defense*, No. 25-cv-11740 (D. Mass.). Accordingly, the indirect cost rate applied to this award reflects the institution's current negotiated rate and does not incorporate the 15% indirect cost rate cap outlined in the Department's memoranda dated May 14, 2025. However, if the TRO is lifted, dissolved, or otherwise modified by court order, and such order permits the implementation of the Rate Cap Policy, the policies of the memos (Rate Cap Policy Memo dated May 14, 2025 and OUSD (R&E's) Implementation Memo dated June 12 2025) will be applicable for the entirety of the award.

DARPA has streamlined the office wide solicitation mechanism and is interested in your feedback on this new format. Please send any comments to [DARPA.solicitations@darpa.mil](mailto:DARPA.solicitations@darpa.mil).