ABOUT NEVADA APEX

Website: goed.nv.gov/programs/nevada-apex-accelerator

The Nevada APEX Accelerator or "APEX," which is under the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), State of Nevada, provides statewide government procurement technical assistance to established Nevada for-profit businesses, especially small businesses, in their pursuit of local, state, and federal government contracting, subcontracting, and other select opportunities, inside and outside of Nevada. An established Nevada business is one that has a primary and physical address/location in Nevada. ***Please note that APEX is not an acronym.***

Government procurement technical assistance helps to enable formal clients to identify government procurement solicitations, that are mostly competitive in nature, for potential contractual opportunities at any level of government. This assists clients to obtain or perform under contracts; innovation and technology grants (at the federal level that are discussed on the next page); and funded instruments (at the federal level that are discussed on the next page). ***Please note that APEX itself does not issue procurement solicitations or resultant contract awards.***

As a no-charge, taxpayer-funded resource to Nevada businesses based on a cooperative agreement, the APEX helps to increase the flow of local, state, and federal government dollars to companies, in any county, to facilitate job creation, job retention, and business expansion in Nevada's growing diversified economy.

By increasing the number of Nevada businesses capable of doing business with the government, the APEX is helping to foster competition and reduce the cost of acquisitions for government agencies, which is beneficial to the American taxpayer, as agencies meet their respective missions.

A Client Questionnaire Form must be completed after reading and understanding this document to be considered to receive no-charge services as a client. If one has ever received or is currently receiving services from another APEX Accelerator in the U.S. or its territories, please do not complete the form and contact the APEX's Las Vegas office below and ask to speak with the APEX Director.

Following are no-charge services provided by the APEX – please call the Las Vegas office 702.486.3514 or Carson City office 775.687.9905, or email **NVAPEXAccelerator@goed.nv.gov,** for a client appointment:

One-on-one counseling – Meet with a Government Contracts Advisor (GCA) (or, depending on the case, some GCAs) to confidentially discuss your business's needs

- To avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest, the company's point of contact shall be the chief executive officer/president/owner and/or an employee of the business
- Review the accepted Client Questionnaire Form together, and discuss product(s)/good(s) and/or service(s) the company sells and what level(s) of govt. (i.e., local, state, and federal) and/or prime contractors
- There are no guarantees govt. agencies and/or their prime contractors will buy what is being offered and when they will issue formal solicitations [e.g., Request for Proposal (RFP), Invitation for Bid (IFB), Request for Quote (RFQ)] for same, if ever
- Depending on ever-evolving procurement/acquisition laws, govt. agencies at the local, state, or federal level have different procedures for procuring goods and/or services depending on their dollar value; study prospective govt. customer websites
- Counseling is customized and tailored to your business's needs; while govt. procurement technical assistance will be provided, APEX is unable to act or serve as a client representative in any way

APEX Bid-matching services – Receive a local, state, and fed. govt. solicitation download on weekdays by email based on keywords, etc.

- Also, as a fail-safe measure, register in "NGEM," "NEVADAePro," "SAM.gov," and others (e.g., Nevada Dept. of Transportation, State Public Works Div., etc.), if interested, and see "SBA SubNet" for prime and subcontracting opportunities

E-newsletter – Receive an APEX newsletter full of information at your desktop via email which may include:

- Client success stories, links to webinars, registration links for upcoming functions, updated regulations, etc.

Educational workshops – Learn how to do business with govt. agencies, etc., and meet their representatives, and network with others

- These events provide firsthand experience and context for doing business with a particular agency, prime contractor, etc.

Educational webinars – Learn from and interact with APEX personnel or special guests on a variety of govt. contracting-related topics

- These functions provide specific information on many types of govt. contracting areas

Networking events – Uncover opportunities with govt. agencies, prime contractors, and others, and meet APEX resource partners

- Grow your professional network, market your business, and share your business card and capability(ies) statement document

Matchmaker events – At one event, meet with procuring entities, APEX and its resource partners, and others

- Share your brief elevator/marketing pitch and how what the business sells can help to solve problems and meet govt. missions

Capabilities statement – Receive constructive feedback on your final draft of your capabilities statement marketing document

- APEX can share what should be included in the document, and can share a sample document

Walkthroughs – Obtain help with certain system registrations (e.g., "SAM.gov") and/or understanding business certification criteria

- Regarding certifications, discuss existing ones and those of interest; some are tied to set-aside and sole source procurements

Getting on a GSA Multiple Award Schedule – Determine whether pursuing a federal level U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) multiple award schedule contract makes sense

- Understand the various business requirements, etc., and the eventual responsibility to market to one or more govt. agencies

SBIR Program and STTR Program – Find out about federal level Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program contract or grant opportunities, and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program contract or grant opportunities

- Certain federal govt. agencies only award contracts, while others only award grants

Federally-Funded Instruments (non-DOW) – Learn about non-U.S. Department of War (DOW), federal level-funded business opportunities, e.g., Other Transactions and others, resulting from federal agency solicitations that are not subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)

- These opportunities may stem from a Notice of Funding Opportunity, Funding Opportunity Announcement, etc.

DOW-Funded Instruments – Learn about federal level, DOW-funded business opportunities, e.g., Other Transactions and those stemming from a Notice of Funding Opportunity, Funding Opportunity Announcement, etc., which are not subject to the FAR

- DOW agencies are involved in awarding funded instruments, and resource partners such as, but is not limited to, AFWERX helps to identify funding sources

Cybersecurity for DOW – Find out about information APEX is aware of regarding DOW cybersecurity for purposes of protecting covered federal contract information (FCI) and/or controlled unclassified information (CUI) under DOW contracts

- This is a highly critical area for the DOW and national security
- Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC)
- Project Spectrum

DOW's Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP) and the separate U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) MPP – Learn about how these programs can benefit a small business partnered with another company

- Typically, eligible small businesses are able to expand their company footprint in the defense industrial base and/or govt. industrial base

LYNX – Learn about the DOW-supported LYNX platform, a digital platform designed to help new entrants, small businesses, non-traditional suppliers, and growing defense contractors' better understanding of readiness, showcasing capabilities, and connecting with mission-aligned opportunities

Tradewinds – Find out more about the DOW's framework for sourcing, funding, and developing solutions to challenges in the artificial intelligence/machine learning, digital, and data analytics space. A core pillar of Tradewinds is the Tradewinds Ecosystem, where industry, academia, and other innovators can connect with the government and identify contracting opportunities.

Strengthening the DOW supply chain and key industries to DOW – Find out about information APEX is aware of regarding these areas and how your business can participate

- For example, see the E1 items of the "FAQs Set B" found at the end of this document

Pre-solicitation assistance – APEX will stress responding to govt. or prime contractor pre-solicitation issuances such as a Request for Information (RFI) or a Sources Sought Notice, in order to influence the future govt. procurement

- Respond to them to help shape the govt.'s requirements/needs and the govt.'s procurement strategy (e.g., set-aside, etc.)

Solicitation assistance – After a client studies and reads a solicitation and any amendments, APEX can provide full-text clauses of by-reference clauses, "mil specs," "mil standards," etc., and, depending, help to educate about what certain govt. language means

- APEX can also advise on next steps when language in a solicitation is not clearly written and is subject to multiple interpretations

Proposal reviews – With the exception of cost or price reviews, and within a reasonable timeframe, APEX can review a client's final draft or similar high-quality draft of its proposal to assess if the proposal follows all solicitation instructions, etc.; APEX provides its services from a govt. procurement technical assistance perspective and is not allowed to help draft or provide professional feedback with respect to, for example, the contents of a proposal, bid, or quote that only a subject matter expert in your particular industry could address

- For example, for section reviews that may be outside of govt. procurement-related technical assistance such as commercialization plans for the SBIR program proposals or STTR program proposals, APEX can refer clients to a resource partner(s) for help

Contract issues – APEX will attempt to provide advice in the event contract issues surface relative to invoicing for payment, non-payment, potential for a late delivery of a contract deliverable, a govt. customer is late in providing govt.-furnished property, etc.

- APEX wants clients to perform successfully under govt. contracts, subcontracts, etc., and uphold professional reputations

Nevada APEX Accelerator Resource Partners – While APEX helps its clients by providing govt. procurement-related technical assistance to understand procurement laws, procedures, processes, etc., APEX is not a subject matter expert in your particular industry

- In the event APEX is unable to assist your business in a specific area, the company will be referred to a resource partner(s) for help

This APEX Accelerator is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Department of War (DOW). It is also funded by GOED.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Set A

1. Question: If the for-profit Nevada business I represent is not yet a formally accepted client by APEX and only has one or a couple of government procurement-related questions for APEX that lead to requests of APEX providing no-charge service offerings as shown on the previous pages, does a company representative have to complete a Client Questionnaire Form? If so, how long will it take for APEX to respond?

1. Answer: Yes. In order for a company to be considered for acceptance as a formal client by APEX, an authorized point of contact for the business must follow the directions for and complete the Client Questionnaire Form after reading the previous pages. Since APEX reviews each form in the order it is received, it may take up to two and a half (2.5) weeks to receive an APEX response.

2. Question: If the company I represent has been formally accepted as a client by APEX to receive no-charge services, will my assigned APEX counselor and/or any other APEX team member perform work on behalf of the business?

2. Answer: No. Since APEX is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of War (DOW), APEX must comply with the scope of the agreement and DOW directives that includes, but is not limited to, APEX team members not being allowed to do any work on behalf of any client. APEX team members are only able to counsel, guide, and teach formal APEX clients regarding government procurement and only provide procurement technical assistance, which leaves any actual work to be performed by the client. If APEX were to provide out-of-scope assistance, APEX would not be complying per its federal funder and would jeopardize both its federal and state program funding.

3. Question: On the previous page, I read that in the event APEX is unable to assist my company in a specific area, the business will be referred to a resource partner(s) for help. Since APEX is not a subject matter expert in my particular industry, who else can APEX recommend aside from a resource partner?

3. Answer: Depending on the situation, the company may consider using LinkedIn, Upwork, or another website, to find a consultant who can help the business with a possible cost or fee.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Set B

Industrial base-related:

A1. Question: My for-profit business is interested in selling its goods and/or services to possibly one or more of the following government/public sector and related entities: DOW federal government agencies, non-DOW federal government agencies, state government agencies, local government agencies, government's prime contractors, and subcontractors at any tier, all within and/or outside the state of my business's primary and physical location. Can this APEX possibly help my business on its journey?

A1. Answer: Yes. Regardless of whether your company is a small business or other than a small business, please launch the link at the top of the first page for this APEX's current contact information and/or registration instructions on becoming a formal client. This APEX helps businesses, especially the small businesses, on their journeys in the government marketplace. To the small businesses, together we can even explore a variety of areas, to include but are not limited to: (a) various small business certifications, especially at the federal government level offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), that may prove advantageous to your small business amidst the field of competitors, and (b) the DOW Mentor-Protégé Program and/or the SBA Mentor-Protégé Program.

A2. Question: As my small business considers becoming a client of this APEX, do you think my business that's successfully competed for and won contracts with federal government civilian agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Department of Energy (DOE) can potentially compete for and win contracts with the DOW?

A2. Answer: Yes. Please launch the link at the top of the first page for this APEX's current contact information and/or registration instructions on becoming a formal client.

A3. Question: My small business has performed well under past subcontracts to prime contractors at the state government level and has even done the same under subcontracts to federal government prime contractors. Can this APEX possibly help me – a prospective formal client – find contracting and/or other business opportunities with DOW agencies within and/or outside the state?

A3. Answer: Yes. Please launch the link at the top of the first page for this APEX's current contact information and/or registration instructions on becoming a formal client.

A4. Question: My small business has been a formal client of this APEX for years, but my business contracts in the private sector haven't afforded me the time to fully engage with the program and explore contracting opportunities in the government marketplace. With my small business now realizing how important it is to diversify the company's business portfolio and revenue streams, and in consideration of other economic factors, can I get back in touch with this APEX? My small business wants to sell its goods and/or services possibly to DOW agencies at the federal government level.

A4. Answer: Yes. Please launch the link at the top of the first page for this APEX's current contact information.

FOCI-related:

B1. Question: Why is the government extremely concerned about U.S. businesses under Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI)?

B1. Answer: As DOW shared in its past Small Business Strategy document dated January 2023 from years ago, U.S. adversaries target U.S. businesses to control access (in whole or in part) to rare raw materials and supply chains and/or to control a U.S. business (in whole or in part) through FOCI operations.

Such access provides or may provide a state's (foreign country's) actors and even non-state actors entry points to American intellectual property, innovations, inventions, ingenuity, and national security information (e.g., federal government classified information such as confidential, secret, and top secret). The type and sensitivity of the aforementioned items and information involved requires the utmost protection.

The above access can be legally gained through business joint ventures, mergers, acquisitions, economic-related means, etc. It can even be illegally obtained through state-run (foreign country-run) unauthorized technology transfers and/or espionage, to include but is not limited to, cyber espionage.

If applicable, the source, nature, and extent of FOCI are considered when determining whether a company is under same and what risks should be mitigated or even eliminated. The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency's (DCSA's) website serves as a resource.

Cybersecurity-related:

C1. Question: Why is the government also concerned about the need for U.S. businesses to improve their cybersecurity?

C1. Answer: As DOW shared in its past Small Business Strategy document dated January 2023 from years ago, cybersecurity threats to the defense industrial base keep expanding in number, frequency, and severity. Protecting DOW information and capabilities from these increasingly sophisticated threats posed by foreign competitors and adversaries remain a critical national security priority for DOW. To the businesses, together – with this APEX – we can explore, as a minimum, a variety of areas relative to cybersecurity, to include but are not limited to:
(a) DOW's Chief Information Officer's (CIO's) Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) webpage, which references among many areas the Project Spectrum webpage which helps businesses strengthen their cybersecurity readiness, and the Supplier Performance Risk System (SPRS) webpage, which serves as a repository for a business capturing cybersecurity compliance self-assessment information.
(b) From a procurement technical assistance perspective when a contract with a non-DOW government agency is pursued, for example regarding a non-DOW federal government agency, seeing what type of Information Technology (IT) system protection- or safeguarding-related language [e.g., Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52.204-21 and other language] is found in the formal solicitation document (e.g., Request for Proposal), and possibly going ahead and using the DOW's Project Spectrum webpage as a resource to take a cyber readiness check, especially if the non-DOW federal government opportunity will involve handling Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) and/or Federal Contract Information (FCI) on the IT system.
(c) Also, as seen in the past in April 2023 from years ago, the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) webpage had contained a launchable link, to connect with your local MEP center. The local MEP center is a resource partner to this local APEX, whereby both complement one another to help manufacturers thrive. As shown on the MEP webpage, your local MEP center can help to make your business aware of cybersecurity resources for manufacturers. Whether your business manufactures anything or not, it may be beneficial to contact your local MEP center to see if the center can help with other areas such as, but are not limited to, process or procedure improvements to improve your company's effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity.

Government innovation-related programs:

D1. Question: My business generates or even I, as an individual entrepreneur, generates ideas, concepts, solutions, intellectual property, innovations, inventions, technology, etc. I view my business, or even myself, as being innovative and that can make professional contributions in a variety of ways. Can this APEX help my business find various innovation-related programs, etc., at the federal government level?

D1. Answer: Yes. To the small businesses and separately to the other than small businesses, together we can explore a variety of programs, challenges, etc., to include but are not limited to those captured in this APEX Accelerator's Useful Website Links document.

Further strengthening the supply chain, and key industries:

E1. Question: In its Small Business Strategy document dated January 2023, the DOW references both the Defense Production Act (DPA) Title III program and the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) program. Can this APEX briefly share what these programs are about?

E1. Answer: As seen in the past in April 2023 from years ago, the webpage for the DPA Title III program says, in part, that the program is dedicated to ensuring the timely availability of essential domestic industrial resources to support national defense and homeland security requirements. The program works in partnership with the uniformed services, other government agencies, and Industry (the business community) to identify areas where critical industrial capacity is lagging or non-existent. Some past and current investment areas, include but are not limited to, castings and forgings, energy storage and generation, rare earth elements, electronics, and small unmanned aerial systems.
Also, as seen in the past in April 2023 from years ago, the webpage for the IBAS program says, in part, that the program is dedicated to ensuring that DOW is positioned to effectively address industrial base issues and support the National Security Innovation Base. The IBAS program has partnered with industry (the business community) and academia and invested in industrial workforce development and training projects to help improve our scalable workforce pipelines. Some past investment areas, include but are not limited to workforce development and training such as industrial, advanced manufacturing, submarine shipbuilding, and manufacturing engineering skills; machine tooling and advanced manufacturing; automated textile manufacturing; pilot mask technology; and freeze-dried plasma.