

SOFWERX Small Business Boot Camp 2023

Tampa, Florida

Trip Report



Image: Day one introduction presentations at the SOFWERX Small Business Boot Camp 2023 Tampa, Florida

Conference Details:

Name: SOFWERX Small Business Boot Camp 2023

Date: 12-14 September 2023

Location: Tampa, FL

Attendee(s):

Steve Carioti

Executive Summary:

SOFWERX was created under a Partnership Intermediary Agreement (PIA) between DEFENSEWERX and the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in 2015. The goal/mission of SOFWERX is to accelerate the delivery of capabilities to the Warfighter by discovering new and novel technologies, facilitating collaboration and divergent thought to help identify solutions, and supporting development of rapid prototypes, proof-of-concept, and proofs-of-theory for evaluation.

SOFWERX, in coordination with the USSOCOM Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP), provided a forum for Small Businesses with technologies that support National Security Interests and/or the USSOCOM technology interest areas to learn more about doing business with USSOCOM. The Boot Camp was held at the SOFWERX foundry, an on-site engineering manufacturing facility supporting the USSOCOM. Additionally, the event provided an opportunity for small business engagement with government stakeholders and investors in the form of *Speed Dating* and *Pitch Day*. A virtual component was also made available for interested parties unable to attend in person; however, speed dating was not an option for attendees on the virtual platform.

Conference Highlights:

1. *Businesses Met*: Throughout the three-day event the NAVSEA SBIR/STTR Outreach Representative met with 56 Small Businesses, 29 through the Speed Dating forum.

- Discussions included an overview of the SBIR/STTR Programs and inclusion requirements.
- An introduction to various resources available to small businesses navigating the government contracting world.
- An overview of the solicitation process including Open Topics and the upcoming Broad Agency Announcements (BAA).

2. *Presentations*: Presentations provided great insights into government contracting, doing business with the government, and acquisitions. Presentations attended included the following:

- USSOCOM 101
- Government Contracting
- Acquisition Pathways
- Florida Small Business Development Center (FL SBDC)
- USSOCOM SBIR/STTR
- Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI)
- Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC)
- Intellectual Property Law

3. *By the Numbers*:

- 190 people signed up for the three (3) day event.
- 40% in attendance represented small business start-ups.
- 75% of the small businesses in attendance provided services.
- 25% - 30% in attendance provided products.

Key Takeaways:

1. *Open Topics*: The Open Topic BAA continues to be of great interest to small businesses. Interest is centered around the broadness of inclusion, proposal submission format, and award structure.
2. *Ecosystem*: The ecosystem structure is an invaluable resource for small businesses and government stakeholders. The DEFENSEWERX structure includes several organizations instituted to assist small businesses including: LANDWERX, FLEETWERX, ERDCWERX, MGMWERX, ICWERX, HSWERX, ENERGYWERX, and SOFWERX.
3. *Local and State Resources*: Local and state resources continue to be great tools for small businesses interested in government contracting. APEX Accelerators and state Small Business Development Centers provide highly beneficial services to small businesses and continue to support the SBIR/STTR programs.