

Demystifying Defense Acquisition for Startups

Is the thought of doing business with the Department of Defense enticing? Does it also make your head spin?! It's true there are a lot of nuances that can be confusing, and in some cases conflicting, but it is possible to understand how to find and pursue opportunities of interest. The DoD recognizes the need to expand beyond the traditional defense industrial base to pursue innovative solutions and technologies and has numerous organizations and initiatives focused on doing business with startup and non-traditional vendors.

MITRE's Acquisition in the Digital Age (AiDA) team recently created a collection of pages specifically focused on industry. AiDA is a publicly available web-page offering guidance, solutions, and resources to support government acquisition and contracting activities. The "Demystify DoD Acquisition and Contracting for Industry" pages offer content to help **non-traditional vendors**, who may not have previously done business with the government, understand the DoD environment and navigate to the many opportunities to do business with the DoD. These pages offer a variety of information to include, fundamentals for doing business with the DoD (i.e., registrations/certifications, types of government contracts, timelines to awards), entry points for connecting and finding opportunities via DoD contracting portals, intellectual property considerations, and scenarios to offer starting points based on goals and objectives for working with the DoD. The material presented on these pages is intended to simplify how to do business with the DoD and provides resources and links to official government sites.

The image shows a screenshot of the MITRE AiDA website. At the top left is the MITRE AiDA logo with the tagline "acquisition in the digital age". To the right is a navigation menu with links for "Hot Topics", "Blog", "Policies", "Resources", and "About Us". Below the navigation is a purple and blue gradient banner with the title "Demystifying DoD Acquisition and Contracting for Industry". The main content area has a white background with the following text:

Doing business with the DoD can be difficult...but it doesn't have to be.

Do you have leading commercial technologies and solutions? Are you seeking investment capital, funding, or test markets for your technology? Do you need help entering the DoD marketplace?

The DoD needs your help to strengthen our national security!

These pages help demystify doing business with DoD so that you can become a part of the \$300-500B annual defense marketplace.

Below the text is a section titled "Find out how to do business with the DoD" with four icons and corresponding labels:

- getting started
- understanding DoD
- what are you trying to do?
- key considerations

The Innovation Ecosystem

A growing DoD focus area is innovation to continuously explore and infuse new technology and new applications of existing technology into DoD programs. To support this initiative, DoD relies on a network of organizations focused on curating start-ups and non-traditional organizations offering technological solutions applicable to the DoD. *“Tap the Innovation Ecosystem”* page provides an overview of DoD innovation organizations – to include technological focus areas and how to engage – as well as alignment against six categories: Accelerator, Challenge, Connector, Funding Opportunity, Government Contracting Opportunity, and Incubator. The categories distinguish the objectives of the innovation organizations. For example, Accelerators offer structured programs (often with seed funds) for corporate and technology maturation aligned with DoD objectives, while Government Contracting Authority organizations seek to award contracts and agreements for government projects. Many DoD innovation organizations fit within more than one category. The categories enable industry to quickly identify DoD innovation organizations that may be particularly well-suited to enable entry into the DoD business sector. Coming soon is a visualization tool offering a capability to sort DoD innovation organizations aligned to maturity level of desired technological solutions – ranging from practical application exploration/development to proven demonstration.

MITRE’s AiDA aims to support the DoD and the federal government to deliver better solutions faster. The *Demystify* pages provide information to enable industry, specifically start-ups and non-traditional vendors, to understand how and where to find opportunities and connect with the DoD to impact the future of defense technological advancement.

Please visit <https://aida.mitre.org/demystifying-dod/> to view AiDA’s *“Demystify”* pages for information and valuable resources.