

DCSA MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM WHITE PAPER

DEFENSE COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY AGENCY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of War (DoW) Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP) is a strategic asset designed to increase the nation's Defense Industrial Base (DIB) by addressing the significant barriers small businesses face when entering the defense marketplace. As the oldest continuously operating federal Mentor-Protégé Program, the MPP pairs eligible small businesses (Protégés) with experienced Prime contractors (Mentor) firms to provide structured guidance and support. Through these formal partnerships and targeted developmental assistance, protégés enhance their technical and business capabilities, gain access to federal contracts, and strengthen the DoW supply chain. This initiative not only fosters the growth of small businesses but also makes a direct and positive contribution to national security readiness by expanding and reinforcing the supplier pool.

OVERVIEW

Established in 1990, the MPP is a premier business development initiative that cultivates innovative partnerships between seasoned defense contractors and small businesses. The program's core function is to provide a structured pathway for protégés to establish a firm presence in the defense marketplace. Mentors deliver targeted guidance, specialized training, and strategic support, enabling their protégés to become more competitive and capable of meeting critical DIB needs.

STRUCTURED MPP RELATIONSHIPS

Mentor-protégé relationships under the DoW MPP are formal, goal-oriented, and guided by an approved developmental plan. Each agreement clearly outlines the types of assistance a mentor will provide, measurable milestones, and expected outcomes.

DCSA MPP AGREEMENTS

Participation is contingent upon the execution of a formal MPP agreement, which must be approved by the DCSA Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) and DoW OSBP. This agreement establishes the foundational framework governing the relationship, ensuring transparency, accountability, and the measurable progress of the protégé firm. Key requirements include:

- The agreement is only valid once officially authorized.
- Must specify a clear start and end date.
- Must detail specific technical and business development tasks.
- Participation must be entirely voluntary for both parties.

REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE

Mentors must submit semi-annual progress reports detailing developmental assistance provided, expenditures, and subcontract awards credited toward small business subcontracting



goals. Reports are reviewed by the DCSA OSBP and DoW OSBP and, when applicable, the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA).

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the DoW MPP, both mentor and protégé entities must meet specific eligibility criteria established under the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations Supplement (DFARS) and statutory requirements.

PROTÉGÉ ELIGIBILITY

To participate as a protégé in the DoW MPP, a firm must qualify as a small business and meet the following criteria:

- Must be a "small business concern" as defined by SBA size standards for its primary NAICS code.
- Must be eligible to receive Federal contracts and subcontracts.
- To prevent affiliation conflicts, the firm cannot be owned or managed by individuals or entities holding stock options or convertible securities in the proposed mentor firm.
- The firm must also fall into at least one of the following categories:
 - Qualified HUBZone.
 - Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB).
 - Women-Owned (WOSB).
 - Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned (SDVOSB).
 - Entity owned by an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization.
 - Organization employing severely disabled individuals.
 - Non-traditional defense contractor or entity providing goods/services that address critical DIB needs.
- Must maintain an active registration in SAM.gov.

MENTOR ELIGIBILITY

To act as a mentor providing developmental assistance under a DoW MPP agreement, the firm must meet these baseline requirements:

- Must be available for award of Federal contracts and not be debarred or suspended from federal procurement.
- Must be an "other than small business" concern (Large Business).
 - Firms that have graduated from the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program may also serve as mentors if they provide documentation of their ability to do so.
- Must be currently performing under at least one active, approved subcontracting plan negotiated with the DoW or another Federal agency.
- Must have received DoW contracts and subcontracts totaling at least \$25 million during the previous fiscal year.



- Mentors must maintain an active SAM.gov registration.

PARTICIPATING IN THE DCSA MPP

Participation in the DCSA Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP) requires a two-phase process, involving a White Paper submission followed by a final proposal for selected participants. Applicants shall submit a White Paper not to exceed fifteen (15) pages. The submission must include a CEO signed letter of endorsement, a cost proposal allocating no less than fifty percent (50%) of the proposed budget to technical assistance, and a Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI) questionnaire. All submissions must demonstrate alignment with DCSA strategic goals, national security and mission priorities.

BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

BENEFITS TO THE DOW

- Modernizes and expands the defense supplier base by integrating innovative small businesses.
- Help lower costs for the government by fostering a more competitive marketplace.
- Ensures a reliable and agile supply chain capable of delivering specialized technical and managerial expertise.
- Introduces new technologies and flexible solutions from small businesses into the military supply chain.

BENEFITS TO THE MENTOR

- Mentors can receive direct reimbursement for developmental assistance costs or subcontracting goal credits.
- Participation can be used as a positive factor in source selections for future government contract awards.
- Develops a loyal, high-quality pool of small business partners who are already trained and compliant with DoW standards.
- Allows mentors to pursue new market opportunities and non-competitive subcontracts through their protégés.

BENEFITS TO THE PROTÉGÉ

- Receives critical training in areas like technology transfer, engineering, cybersecurity, and business infrastructure.
- Improves the firm's ability to successfully compete for prime and subcontract awards.
- Establishes stable, lasting partnerships with major prime contractors and DoW agencies.
- Gains access to the mentor's resources, personnel, and occasionally direct financial assistance such as loans or equity investments.