

CHIEF'S MESSAGE

Welcome to this edition of *The Signal*, your quarterly newsletter designed to keep you informed, connected, and engaged with the latest happenings within the small business community.

At DCSA, we recognize that small businesses play a vital role in strengthening and securing the Defense Industrial Base (DIB). Your innovation and agility bring valuable capabilities that support national security and help advance mission success across the Department. We also understand navigating the federal marketplace can sometimes feel complex. As policies evolve, requirements shift, and your path to partnership requires your persistence and patience, your DCSA Small Business Team remains committed to educating, engaging, and connecting with you to build a more resilient and capable industrial base.

In this edition of *The Signal*, we highlight the launch of DCSA's Mentor-Protégé Program and what it means for strengthening partnerships and developing the next generation of capable small businesses within the DIB. We also provide important insights on the implementation of the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) program and why safeguarding sensitive information remains critical to protecting national security. We also share some quick updates related to Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 19, details about receiving email alert notifications to help you stay connected to opportunities and announcements, and spotlight future opportunities where you can engage with our team.

This issue aims to keep you informed, connected and aware of opportunities that support your growth and engagement. Together, let's continue opening doors to connection, innovation, and partnerships that focus on modernizing, strengthening, and securing the DIB with advanced capabilities that support national security priorities.

I hope the updates, insights, resources, and tips shared in this issue keep you informed, engaged, and connected to the *Signals* guiding your work ahead.



Dr. Ruby Crenshaw-Lawrence Chief,
*Office of Small Business Programs and Industry Engagements
Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA)*

SPOTLIGHT



Building the Future

DCSA Launches the
Mentor-Protégé Program

February 27, 2026: We are proud to announce the launch of the Department of War (DOW) Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP), a significant step forward in strengthening partnerships that support national security priorities.

Designed to connect experienced industrial base partners with emerging small businesses to foster knowledge sharing, build capabilities, and expand opportunities for growth and collaboration, the program helps accelerate innovation, strengthen supply chains, and create meaningful pathways for small businesses to grow and compete in the federal marketplace.

Interested in responding to the Agency's announcement? Submit your response here: [DCSA's MPP Broad Agency Announcement on SAM.gov](#)

Questions?

Contact our office at:
dcsa.quantico.hq.mbx.dcsa-mpp@mail.mil



SIGNAL ALERTS: Updates that Matter

CMMC Program Implementation

The Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) rule went into effect this past November. The rule launched a three-year rollout to implement mandatory cybersecurity requirements across all Department of War (DOW) contracts.

Phase 1: Focuses on self-assessments for CMMC Level 1.

Higher-level requirements, including third-party assessments for CMMC Levels 2 and 3, will be introduced in subsequent yearly phases.

For businesses who are not currently CMMC compliant, this is an opportunity to strengthen your cybersecurity posture.

Helpful Tips and Resources:

- Understand CMMC requirements
- Conduct a self-assessment to identify any gaps in your current cybersecurity practices
- [DOW Office of Small Business Programs CMMC guidance and resources](#)
- [Small Business Administration cybersecurity guidance and resources](#)
- [DCSA Center for the Development of Security Excellence cybersecurity resources](#)

FAR Part 19 Updates

On September 26, 2026, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Council proposed updates to [FAR Part 19](#) as part of a larger overhaul initiated by Presidential Executive Order 14275, [Restoring Common Sense to Procurement](#).

As FAR overhaul activities are ongoing, current changes include:

Reorganization: Content is now structured by the acquisition life cycle; Presolicitation, Evaluation/Award, and Post Award.

Set Asides: Contracting officers have more discretion in determining set asides for multiple award contracts.

Socioeconomic set asides are no longer a mandatory precursor to small business set asides.

8(a) Program: Follow-on contracts awarded under WOSB, SDVOSB, or HUBZone programs are automatically released from the 8(a) requirement. Additionally, competitive 8(a) orders through Government Wide Acquisition Contracts must be considered before sole-sourcing.

Learn More: [Acquisition.gov](#)

Stay Connected: Subscribe to receive updates and future announcements [here](#).

Questions? Contact: MBX.OMB.OFPPv2@OMB.eop.gov

SIGNAL BROADCASTS: Connection Corner

DCSA Email Alerts from



The Federal System for Award Management website ([SAM.gov](#)) enables users to keep track of and stay informed about contract opportunities by saving your searches and setting up email notifications. This [tutorial video](#) explains how to get the most out of SAM.gov search and email notification capabilities. Additional resources on how to optimize your use of search tools on SAM.gov are available [here](#). Click [here](#) to access a search query of active DCSA announcements on SAM.gov.

2026 Mentor-Protégé Program Summit

The Department of War (DOW) Office of Industrial Base Growth will host the 2026 [DOW Mentor-Protégé Program Summit](#) April 7–9, 2026, in Arlington, VA. This year's theme, Bridging Opportunities: Scaling Innovation for National Defense, reflects the summit's focus on education, networking, and hands-on workshops designed to strengthen the national defense industrial base. Come Find Us in the Exhibit Hall and don't forget to register to meet with us during the Matchmaking Session!

Signal on the Road

We welcome opportunities to engage with industry stakeholders. If interested, submit a request for our participation at your upcoming event via our online [DCSA Speaker Invitation Request Form](#).

Send us a Clear Signal...When filling out the form, select the Office of Small Business Programs and Industry Engagements option under the *Request A Senior Leader* section on the form so we can connect with your event right away!



STRENGTHENING THE INDUSTRIAL BASE - SECURING THE NATION

<https://www.dsa.mil/osbpie> | dcsa.small-business@mail.mil