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## December 2025 Newsletter

Minnesota APEX Accelerator <MNAPEX@apexaccelerator.org>  
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To: mahoodie12@gmail.com

Thu, Dec 4, 2025 at 1:36 PM

Minnesota APEX Accelerator December 2025 Newsletter

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## December 2025

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Season's greetings and warm holiday wishes to our clients, stakeholders, and APEX friends from the MN APEX Accelerator Team**

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Be your best every day and celebrate:

- December 1 – Walt Disney Day
- December 2 – National Mutt Day
- December 4 – National Cookie Day
- December 7 – National Pearl Harbor Day of Remembrance
- December 10 – Human Rights Day
- December 12 – Gingerbread House Day
- December 13 – National Guard Birthday
- December 14 – First Night of Hanukkah
- December 14 – Sustainable Entrepreneurship Day
- December 18 – Bake Cookies Day
- December 19 – National Heroes & Heroines Day
- December 22 – Hanukkah
- December 25 – Christmas Day
- December 26 – First Day of Kwanzaa
- December 28 – Pledge of Allegiance Day

Research | Relationships | Responses = Success

Christina Nebel-Dickerson  
MN APEX Accelerator Program Director  
[www.mn.gov/admin/apexaccelerator](http://www.mn.gov/admin/apexaccelerator)

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## Moving Forward with DBE

By now you are aware of the significant rule changes to the US DOT DBE Certification program, specifically the new requirement for all firms to individually demonstrate their social and economic disadvantage with a personal narrative and supporting documentation, and personal net worth, rather than relying on any presumed disadvantage based on gender or race.

This may be disheartening or frustrating for some, but should you choose to move forward with submitting a narrative and you'd like someone to review it - know that our MN APEX team is here to support you and go through the process alongside you.

To prepare for certification or re-certification, here are some steps to get started:

- Review your status and check when your agency will begin the re-evaluation process
- Gather all of your documents including personal and business tax returns for the last three years, financial statements, licenses/permits, any loan rejection letters, etc.

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- Confirm your financial information - recall that the personal net worth (PNW) cap is currently around \$2.047 million, excluding the primary residence and ownership interest in the business
- Draft your strong personal narrative by describing specific instances of hardship (personal and professional), systemic barriers, or any denied opportunities through housing, education, employment, advancements, etc. Then expand on those by explaining how the instances ultimately impacted your business growth.

Best of luck with your efforts and please reach out with questions - you are also encouraged to refer to the [Official FAQs on DBE Program Regulations \(49 CFR 26\)](#) | [US Department of Transportation](#)

## TIP OF THE MONTH

### **Independent Contractors and the FAR's Subcontracting Limits**

Recently, the U.S. Small Business Administration [made headlines](#) by announcing that it was investigating an 8(a) Program contractor for potentially violating the limitations on subcontracting imposed by the [Federal Acquisition Regulation](#) and the SBA's regulations. The SBA's investigation serves as a strong reminder that small business prime contractors must strictly follow subcontracting limits and fully understand how independent contractors are treated under the FAR and SBA rules to avoid compliance issues.

Small businesses often use independent contractors, or "1099s," to supplement their W-2 workforce. Although independent contractors are not employees, it is not uncommon for small businesses to begin thinking of their 1099s as functionally equivalent to employees. For this reason, when it comes to the limitations on subcontracting, many prime contractors assume that work performed by their 1099s counts toward the prime contractor's workshare. Not so.

[FAR 52.219-14\(d\)](#) specifies that "[a]n independent contractor shall be considered a subcontractor." Similarly, [13 C.F.R. 125.6\(d\)\(3\)](#) says that "[w]ork performed by an independent contractor shall be considered a subcontract." This means that, ordinarily, an independent contractor's work counts against the prime contractor's self-performance for purposes of the limitations on subcontracting, not toward it.

For example, consider a case in which a service-disabled veteran-owned small business is awarded a \$150,000 services contract. The applicable limitations on subcontracting specify that the prime contractor cannot subcontract more than 50% of the amount paid by the government to subcontractors that are not similarly situated entities. The SDVOSB pays a 1099 independent contractor \$100,000 to perform a portion of the work. Unless the 1099 is a certified SDVOSB, that \$100,000 counts against the limitations on subcontracting, and the SDVOSB has violated the rule by subcontracting more than 50% of the amount paid by the government.

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As suggested by the example, the only exception is when the 1099 is a “similarly situated entity,” that is, an entity with the same small business status needed to qualify for the prime contract. Because SBA’s four major socioeconomic contracting programs—8(a), SDVOSB, HUBZone, and woman-owned small business—all require formal SBA certifications, it may be difficult to find similarly situated 1099s. On the other hand, when the prime contract is set-aside for small businesses, it may be significantly easier to find 1099 independent contractors who qualify as similarly situated entities.

Prime contractors looking to use the similarly situated entity rule to help meet the limitations on subcontracting are strongly advised to consult experienced legal counsel to ensure that their 1099 independent contractor agreements provide adequate assurances that the 1099 is, in fact, a similarly situated entity.

## APEX ACCELERATOR NEWS YOU CAN USE

### **FAR Overhaul Eliminates WOSB Subcontracting Self-Certification**

With little fanfare, the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul has eliminated a subcontractor’s ability to self-certify as a woman-owned small business under an “other-than-small” prime contractor’s small business subcontracting plan. Moving forward, as agencies adopt the RFO version of FAR Part 19, primes will be able to count only certified WOSBs toward their subcontracting goals. [Read more about this change here.](#)

Would you like assistance with determining whether your company is eligible for a WOSB certification or in moving forward with an application? Your APEX Accelerator can help! Contact your APEX Accelerator counselor today to arrange an appointment.

## GOVCON ROUNDUP LIVE

*GovCon Roundup Live* is a free monthly webcast hosted by Carroll Bernard and Steven Koprince of [Govology](#). The webcast covers policy changes, legislative updates, and industry shifts that signal strategic opportunities for contractors to pivot, reposition, and stay one step ahead. Learn more about [GovCon Roundup Live](#) and register to attend future live sessions (with the opportunity for live Q&A).

Recent *GovCon Roundup Live* webcasts include:

- [WOSB Program + FAR Overhaul & Procurement Thresholds](#)
- [The FAR Revolution: Three Proposed Procurement Reforms Contractors Should Watch](#)
- [Counting What Matters: Small Business Contracting Goals & Metrics](#)
- [The Pending FAR Overhaul](#)

## THE MINNESOTA APEX ACCELERATOR EVENTS

***Our no-cost trainings are open to the public. For more information, contact [apexaccelerator.adm@state.mn.us](mailto:apexaccelerator.adm@state.mn.us) or 651-201-2604.***



### 2025 Upper Midwest Defense Industry Roundtable

**Date:** December 4

**Time:** 7:45 am – 12:00 pm CST

**Format:** In-Person

CHS Field  
360 Broadway St.  
Securian Club Room  
St Paul, MN 55101

**[Click here to register](#)**

Join the Defense Alliance for an update on and conversation about the U.S. defense industry including the DoD strategy and budget outlook, the state of the region's defense industry, and the major challenges and opportunities ahead for businesses supporting our national defense technology base. The event will also feature briefs from key players in the growing ecosystem of defense related partners in the region. The event will feature:

- Keynote speaker, Carlton Haelig, Ph.D., Fellow CNAS Defense Program, Center for a New American Security
- Panel on Dual Use Technology Commercialization and Access to Capital
- Overviews from Partner Organizations including:

- Defense Innovation Unit (DIU)
- Minnesota National Security Ecosystem (MN-NS-ECO)
- UMN National Security Research Institute (NSRI)
- Presentation of the 2025 Defense Alliance ***Champion of Defense*** Awards
- Sponsorship and exhibit opportunities

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## **Understanding State of MN Government Contracting**

**Date:** December 9

**Time:** 9 am – 10 pm CST

**Format:** Virtual

**[Click here to register](#)**

Are you ready to test the waters of state contracting? Have you considered diversifying your customer base to include the government as a customer? The Department of Administration's APEX Accelerator and Office of Equity in Procurement (OEP) will be offering this session so you can learn about registering as a vendor, understanding the SWIFT system, possible certifications, and how to find contract opportunities. You will also hear about how the State of Minnesota purchases, types of buying methods, what's required of you as a vendor, procurement programs, as well as basic steps to getting started.

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## **WEBINAR – Finding Opportunities – Learn to Navigate DIBBS Webinar**

### **Working Group**

**Date:** December 12

**Time:** 11 am - 1 pm CST

**Format:** Virtual

**[Click here to register](#)**

The DLA Internet Bid Board System (DIBBS) is a web-based application that provides the capability to search for, view, and submit secure quotes on Requests for Quotations (RFQs) for DLA items of supply. DIBBS also allows users to search and view Request For Proposals (RFPs), Invitations For Bid (IFBs), Awards, and other procurement information related to DLA. In this informative session, you will learn how to register for a DIBBS account and how to navigate the website to find opportunities on which to bid to expand your business.

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## **TG/ED/VO – Small Business Program Certification for the State of MN**

**Date:** December 16

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**Time:** 9 am - 10 am CST**Format:** Virtual**Click here to register**

Is your small business at least 51% owned, operated and controlled by women, ethnic minorities, veterans or persons with disabilities? Or is your small business located in an economically disadvantaged Minnesota county? If so, attend this session to learn about the state's Small Business Procurement Program and the benefits of certification, including receiving preferences when responding to state opportunities, being hired without going through a competitive procurement process by state agency buyers for use on certain contracts under \$100,000, and being listed in the public Directory of Certified Businesses. Learn more about the Program and how to apply for certification in this workshop.

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### **Understanding Types of Government Solicitations**

**Date:** December 30**Time:** 9 am -10 am CST**Format:** Virtual**Click here to register**

The government is a great customer to add to your business - but competition can be fierce and the process has become increasingly difficult. Join us for this session to learn about the different types of federal and state government solicitations and different types of contracts and we'll go Live for federal and state opportunity searching and more, so that you can become a competitive and competent bidder ready to position yourself for success.

### **GOVOLOGY WEBINARS**

***Please contact Christina Nebel-Dickerson (651) 201-2629 for a free code to register for Govology webinars.***

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### **Marketing Your GSA Schedule**

**Date:** December 2, 2025**Time:** 1:00 p.m. EST**Presenter:** Brittany Opoku (First Foster Consulting, LLC)**Click Here to Learn More**



## Evolving DoD Contractor Cybersecurity Requirements (Q4-2025 Update)

**Date:** December 4, 2025

**Time:** 1:00 p.m. EST

**Presenter:** Adam Austin (Totem Technologies)

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



## The 2025 Government Contracting Year-End-Review

**Date:** December 11, 2025

**Time:** 1:00 p.m. EST

**Presenter:** Shane McCall and Nicole Pottroff (Koprince McCall Pottroff, LLC)

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

## RECOMMENDED INSIGHTS & UPDATES

### FAR Part 19 Overhaul: What It Means for Size Recertification, M&A, and Contract Eligibility

When the FAR Council issued its long-awaited rewrite of FAR Part 19 as part of the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul, many in the government contracting community focused on headline issues like the preservation of the “Rule of Two” and the streamlining of small business policies. But tucked within the reorganization is one of the most impactful—and potentially disruptive—changes for contractors: [the treatment of size recertification](#).

### FAR Council Finalizes Increases to Micro-Purchase, Simplified Acquisition, and Other Thresholds

A number of key dollar-related thresholds have recently increased by way of a final rule released by the FAR Council. Among these changes are increases to the micro-purchase threshold, the simplified acquisition threshold, and the thresholds under which other-than-small prime contractors must adopt small business subcontracting plans. [Read more about these threshold changes](#).

### Contracting Through the Long Haul: Maximizing Recovery During a Protracted Government Shutdown

When the federal government shuts down, contractors are left to grapple with uncertainty regarding whether certain costs are recoverable or whether certain work can be performed. This article: (1) provides actionable advice for contractors who received a stop-work order and need to ensure compliance with contractual requirements—such as the ability to restart work as soon as the shutdown ends—while also maximizing recovery of standby costs and (2) helps contractors navigate scenarios in which no stop-work order was

issued. [Read the full article on contractor responsibilities and cost recovery during a government shutdown.](#)

## CMMC & FOCI RESOURCES AND NEWS

This section highlights items of special interest and importance to the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs (DOD OSBP). Please take a moment to visit the sites listed below for additional information.

### **Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC)/Cybersecurity Compliance Resources**

[DOD CMMC Resource Page](#) – Resources to assist government contractors with understanding and complying with CMMC/cybersecurity requirements.

[Project Spectrum](#) – Project Spectrum is working with APEX Accelerators to assist small businesses in achieving compliance with CMMC/cybersecurity requirements.

### **Foreign Ownership, Control, and Influence (FOCI) Resources**

[FOCI Frequently Asked Questions](#) – FOCI is a status or situation in which a contractor with access to classified information has some foreign investment or association with foreign interest. Learn more about the federal government's requirements relating to FOCI.

<https://business.defense.gov/> – The official website of DOD OSBP. It contains additional information, news, events, and other items for those interested in doing business (or currently engaged) with the DOD.

### **How FedRAMP Impacts CMMC Compliance**

As the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) program enforcement nears, defense contractors face a double challenge: securing their own systems and validating the cloud services they rely on. That's where FedRAMP comes in. By meeting FedRAMP standards, contractors can streamline one of the key components of achieving CMMC certification, cloud security. [Read the full article on how FedRAMP supports CMMC compliance for defense contractors.](#)

### **Is CMMC 3.0 on the Horizon? How Defense Contractors Can Prepare Now**

The Department of Defense recently sent defense contractors a clear signal: an update to the recently finalized CMMC 2.0 is likely coming and the time to prepare is now. [Read the full article on the upcoming CMMC 2.0 updates and how contractors can prepare.](#)

### **Preparing for DoD's Upcoming DFARS Rule on Beneficial Ownership and FOCI Vetting**

The Department of Defense is preparing to roll out new requirements that will significantly

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expand how it evaluates and mitigates foreign ownership, control, or influence (FOCI) across its contractor base. [Read the full article on the DoD's expanded FOCI evaluation and mitigation requirements.](#)

### About the Minnesota APEX Accelerator:

The Minnesota APEX Accelerator provides technical and marketing assistance to all Minnesota businesses interested in selling their products and services to the government. Using market identification, registration assistance, contracting regulations/compliance assistance, and ongoing technical support, we help businesses navigate through the complicated intricacies of obtaining federal, state, and local government contracts. Our staff are located throughout the state to better assist all of Minnesota.

Email us at [apexaccelerator.adm@state.mn.us](mailto:apexaccelerator.adm@state.mn.us) or visit the [staff contact page](#) to reach out to a member of the team directly.

The Minnesota APEX Accelerator is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense.

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