

# Headquarters U.S. Space Force

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**USSF**



## *Paving the Right Path to Rapid Space Acquisition*

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**Mike Roberts, SES, Director and PEO  
Space Rapid Capabilities Office**

*For additional info, please contact: Space RCO Strategic  
Communications [Space.RCO.PublicAffairs.Workflow@us.af.mil](mailto:Space.RCO.PublicAffairs.Workflow@us.af.mil)*



- Who we are and what we do
- How we go fast:
  - Use of authorities, supported by culture
  - Tailored contracting approaches
  - Robust Business Intelligence (BI) outreach program
- How have we done: Success metrics



# Who We Are



- **We are the rapid acquisition arm for the US Space Force (USSF)**
  - Created in U.S. law via the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act; call to go faster in space acquisition
  - Office subsequently stood up at Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque, NM, USA
  - First programs assigned by the Board of Directors (BoD) 31 January 2019
  - Designated as the USSF's first Direct Reporting Unit 20 October 2020; Director reports to the Chief of Space Operations (CSO)
  - Director is also the Program Executive Officer (PEO) of the Space RCO Portfolio

**Space RCO Mission: “Develop and Deliver Operationally Dominant Space Capabilities at the Speed of Warfighting Relevance.”**



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# What We Do



- We tackle the most critical and time sensitive of space capability gaps, and deliver operational capability within ~2-5 years
  - We are exempt from the primary Department of Defense requirements process (the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System [JCIDS] process)
  - Our time-sensitive requirements can initiate from many sources, but can only be validated by the Commander, U.S Space Command (USSPACECOM)
  - Programs assigned by the Board of Directors (BoD), chaired by the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF)

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# *How we go fast: Authorities and Culture*



- No “magic wand” that makes us exempt from the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), but we do maximally use the authorities we do have:
  - JCIDS exemption: We go from CDR, USSPACECOM Requirement Validation to BoD Assignment in 3-6 months, pending BoD availability
  - PEO Authorities: Functionally reports to the Service Acquisition Executive (SAE) for acquisition (Operationally reports to the Chief of Space Operations [CSO])
  - Contracting Authorities: Many; discussed further in next slides
  - Security Authorities: Originating Classification Authority and Access Approval Authority (AAA) allow us to more quickly manage our own security posture
  - Hiring authorities: Execute Direct hiring Authority for civilians, and utilize Air Force “Green Door” hiring for military (fast-track for highly cleared military)
- All authorities maximally delegated to cultivate short chain of command throughout the organization; PMs have direct access to PEO



# How we go fast: Contracting Authorities



- Senior Contracting Official (SCO) Authority
  - Director of Contracting (O-6) is designated SCO
  - SCO direct report to Air Force Contracting (SAF/AQC)
  - \$1B business and contract clearance authority on competitive and non-competitive acquisitions
  - Approve Undefinitized Contract Actions, tailor commercial acquisitions, grant Contracting Officer warrants
- Competition and Commercial Advocate (CCA)
  - Approve Sole Source Justification and Approval
  - Coordinate Acquisition Strategies
  - Government-Industry liaison for Space RCO
- Other Transaction Authority (OTA)
  - Enter into, approve & terminate





# *How we go fast: Tailored Contracting Approaches*



- “One Size Fits All” is *NOT* part of Space RCO strategy
- Every acquisition is approached with creativity to identify what works best
- Default is always competition, but make sole source awards when appropriate
- Conducted both traditional single award as well as multi-award competitions
- Conducted competitive “Other Transaction Authority (OTA)” awards—which allow for speed, flexibility, as well as exposure to non-traditional companies
- Executed an “Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ)” contract early on; supports rapid award of task orders as needed to pool of qualified vendors
- Endorsed several Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) efforts with potential for inclusion in Space RCO programs



# *Contracting and Acquisition Successes*



- Meeting our mission—executing **13 acquisition programs** on schedule with small, integrated program teams of ~5 people on average
- Space RCO has awarded more than 40 contracts in just over 2 years with only ~13 contracting professionals
  - Average less than 9 months from program assignment to release of RFP, and 5 months from RFP release to award
  - Successfully executed major engineering and technical assistance support contract re-compete; Went from acquisition approval to award without protest in 156 days
- **Competitively selected and awarded the first large acquisition program for the Space Force, successfully awarding 3 contracts in a 6 week period**
  - Accomplished 8-months faster than the DoD average for similar systems
- **Awarded 9 small biz contracts in market generally dominated by large businesses**
- **Awarded 10 no-cost contracts to facilitate secure discussions with potentially new vendors and help expand competitive opportunities**



# *How we go fast: Robust Business Intelligence Program*



- Tailored insight into all the organizations and businesses that could help us execute our mission despite our tight security posture
  - Combination of targeted and broad market research into mature technology
  - Open invitation for industry to talk to us: [SpaceRCO.Innovations@spaceforce.mil](mailto:SpaceRCO.Innovations@spaceforce.mil)
- Space RCO is heavily networked – connected to innovation hubs, labs, other acquisition organizations, Venture Capital, end users
- Multiple approaches to potentially influence external investment toward Space RCO Objectives
  - Frequent Independent Research and Development (IRAD) discussions with industry
  - Held first-ever Space RCO Portfolio Days (for cleared Govt and Industry)
  - Provided technology interest input to innovation ecosystems (Techstars Accelerator; Catalyst Accelerator; Hyperspace Challenge; International Space Pitch Day, AFWERX's Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR); Space Prime)
  - Helped draft problem statements to external investment (In Q Tel; various other Venture Capital entities)



# *How we go fast: Examples of BI in action*



- **2020 SpaceCom Entrepreneur Summit**
  - Judged competition and mentored small business/start-up participants
  - Competition winner reached out to Space RCO
  - Space RCO endorsed SBIR Phase II contract
  - Technology now being engineered into Space RCO portfolio
- **Continuous and targeted market research has greatly expanded our insights and reach**
  - Allows Space RCO to quickly focus on key tech when required
  - Latest targeted search identified seven new companies in less than five days
    - Saved program manager hours of effort and weeks of schedule
    - Previously unknown vendors opened acquisition strategy to greater competition with a wider range of potential solutions



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# Questions?