

Headquarters U.S. Space Force



Paving the Right Path to Rapid Space Acquisition

NSSA Space Time Address

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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*

- **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**

- **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.”

- 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)



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

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 Undefined 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



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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
- 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)

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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

- On Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/TheSpaceRapidCapabilitiesOffice/>
- On LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-space-rapid-capabilities-office>
- Speaking/Engagement/Interview Requests:
SpRCO.PublicAffairs.Workflow@us.af.mil
- Business Development Engagement Requests:
SpaceRCO.Innovations@spaceforce.mil

Questions?