Program Announcement
for
MXO Pitch Day 2026

Multi X Office

DARPA-PA-26-07
June 25, 2026

OVERVIEW INFORMATION:

- **Federal Agency Name:** Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Multi X Office (MXO)
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** MXO Pitch Day 2026
- **Solicitation Type:** Program Announcement (PA)
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** DARPA-PA-26-07
- **Eligibility:** Participation is restricted to:
  - Non-traditional defense contractors that have not previously received a DARPA contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or other transaction award as a prime performer.
  - Universities whose proposed Principal Investigator has not previously served as a Principal Investigator under a DARPA-funded award.
- **Dates/Time: All Times are Eastern Time Zone (ET)**
  - Initial Announcement Posting Date: June 25, 2026
  - Questions Submission Deadline: July 15, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.
  - Required Abstract Due Date: July 29, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.
  - Anticipated Abstract Feedback Letter Date: September 4, 2026
  - Pitch Day Package (PDP) Due Date: To be provided to invitees only
  - MXO Pitch Day (In-Person): November 2, 2026
- **Anticipated Individual Awards:** Multiple awards are anticipated
- **Types of Instruments That May Be Awarded:** Other Transaction for Research under 10 U.S.C. § 4021.
- **NAICS code: 541715**
- **Required CMMC Level:** Level 1 (Self) – Basic Safeguarding of Federal Contract Information (FCI)
- **Funding Scope:** Proposed efforts are limited to a period of performance not to exceed twelve (12) months and a total proposed price not to exceed $500,000. Government funding will only cover labor and materials, equipment, other direct costs, and reasonable profit. Travel costs, publication costs, and subawards are not permitted.
- **Agency Contact:**

  Email: General inquiries can be sent to MXO-PitchDay@darpa.mil

  Mailing Address:
  DARPA/MXO
  ATTN: DARPA-PA-26-07
  675 North Randolph Street
  Arlington, VA 22203-2114

Program Announcement

DARPA-PA-26-07

MXO Pitch Day 2026

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)
Multi X Office (MXO)

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is soliciting for revolutionary discovery solutions in the following thrust areas: a world beyond electronics, foundations beyond components, and materials beyond nature and current synthetic practice. Proposed discovery solutions should investigate innovative approaches that enable revolutionary advances in science, devices, or systems. Specifically excluded is research that primarily results in evolutionary improvements to the existing state of practice.

A. Background

The DARPA Multi X Office (MXO) (formerly known as Microsystems Technology Office) will host an invitation-only, in-person Pitch Day on November 2, 2026, in Chicago, Illinois, in conjunction with the MXO Spark Tank event (event details available in the MXO Spark Tank Special Notice DARPA-SN-26-73).

As stated in the MXO Office-wide Innovative Solutions Opening Program Solicitation (PS), DARPA-PS-26-115, Section 3.3, "Periodically, DARPA may endeavor to hold a Pitch Day(s). A Pitch Day entails DARPA soliciting proposals for a specific, targeted aspect under one or more thrust areas. During a Pitch Day, proposers pitch their proposals to DARPA via oral presentations." Accordingly, DARPA's MXO will host a Pitch Day for engagement with proposers and to catalyze future efforts in specific topics of interest.

B. MXO Pitch Day 2026 Description

The goals of the MXO Pitch Day 2026 are to: 1) fund scientific discovery solutions for short-term efforts with the intent to advance scientific understanding, generate new concepts or methods, reduce technical uncertainty, and potential to catalyze future research efforts, and 2) employ an acquisition strategy to encourage participation by non-traditional organizations and small businesses that have not previously received a DARPA-funded award as prime performers and university teams whose Principal Investigators have not previously served as a Principal Investigator under a DARPA-funded award. MXO Pitch Day 2026 aims to broaden DARPA's goals to break down barriers of entry for performers new to DARPA and the national security space.

C. MXO Pitch Day 2026 Structure

1. **Abstract Submissions:** Interested organizations (identified by a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code) will be required to submit an Abstract for evaluation in response to any of the following Thrust Areas:

<u>Thrust Area 1: A world beyond electronics</u>
The "a world beyond electronics" thrust seeks to develop non-electronic and hybrid physical approaches

to advance sub-functions and unit operations to create future warfighting systems and capabilities. These sub-functions and unit operations include but are not limited to:

- **Sensing and communications beyond electronics**. While we will continue to need sensing and communications, novel approaches can not only improve upon what modern radio-frequency systems deliver for the existing battlespace but also invent functions leading to new capability for the future battlespace. Examples of non-electronic developments could include optical, quantum, organic, and acoustic devices. The addressable physical stimuli (e.g., optical thermal, acoustic, chemical, etc.) and/or appropriate information buses (e.g., photonic, fluidic, or otherwise) for the proposed device should be provided in detail as well as performance estimates.

Thrust Area 2: Foundations beyond components

The "foundations beyond components" thrust explores technologies and methods that survive and even thrive in hostile and challenging environments. Production and use of these components can then be used in novel and previously unforeseen applications.

- **Extreme environments** are both natural and man-made. The natural extreme environments of interest include space, undersea, and the arctic. Technologies and methods should lead to systems subjected to a wide range of environmental conditions and natural attacks such as corrosion. Man-made environmental impacts, including the actions of adversaries, add system effects such as shock and vibration.
- **Advanced capabilities** will require increasing amounts of intelligence, automation, endurance and survivability. Assuming that humans are not present, a heterogeneous mix of distributed uncrewed systems may be warranted requiring advanced sensing, actuation, orientation, processing, communication, and power. Each of these has its own research challenges.
- **Making and sustaining** these components and systems require unique approaches to leverage the local environment itself, use what is in place, and erase the line between equipment and environment.

Thrust Area 3: Materials beyond nature and current synthetic practice

The "materials beyond nature and current synthetic practice" thrust seeks the discovery and fabrication of new materials that exceed what can be found in nature or are currently produced. MXO believes that novel applications, research breakthroughs, and advanced capability development will benefit from new materials used in new ways.

- **Material properties realized after fabrication**. Beyond phase change materials, how do we identify future programmable material and synthesize component properties? Examples include ad-hoc tunable electrical, magnetic, optical, and mechanical properties beyond the state of the art.
- **Built-in autonomous property resiliency of materials/components.** Imagine if we could maintain pre-determined material and component properties without humans in the loop. Examples include self-healing (recovery of material properties or improvement in their reliability), self-deformation (material as sensor and actuator), or self-protection (anti-break, anti-rust, anti-aging).
- **Artificially created new material properties.** How do we identify previously unattainable material properties followed by the manufacturing and realization of this new material? Examples include room temperature superconductor and inorganic-like electrical characteristics in organic material systems.

For additional context, see the "MXO Program Manager Interest" section of Special Notice DARPA-SN-26-73.

Note: efforts that include human or animal subjects research are out of scope for this solicitation.

2. **Pitch Day Presentation (PDP) Package:** After Abstract evaluation, only selected organizations will be invited to submit a Pitch Day Presentation (PDP) package and pitch their discovery solutions via in-person oral presentations to a panel of DARPA MXO Program Managers during the MXO Pitch Day 2026 event.

3. **MXO Pitch Day 2026 event** is occurring in conjunction with the MXO Spark Tank event, which will be held at the same venue in Chicago, Illinois, on November 2-4, 2026. Those selected organizations invited to submit a PDP package and pitch their discovery solutions at MXO Pitch Day will be required to register for the MXO Spark Tank event. See MXO Spark Tank website: https://cvent.me/8oLRbr.

   DARPA will announce the organizations selected for award at the end of the MXO Spark Tank event on November 4, 2026.

4. **Awards** may be issued within fifteen (15) business days after the end of the MXO Spark Tank event. DARPA does not expect to negotiate changes to the terms and conditions of the award. Intellectual Property shall remain the property of the Performer. However, in consideration of the Government funding, the Performer grants to the Government a nonexclusive, irrevocable, worldwide, royalty-free license to use, reproduce, modify, analyze, evaluate, test, integrate, display, disclose, distribute, and otherwise use for Government Purposes. Proposers unable or unwilling to grant the Government such license should not submit a proposal under this solicitation.

Section II: Evaluation Criteria

Abstracts will be evaluated using the following criteria listed in ***descending order of importance***: Defining the Problem and Understanding the Current State of the Art; Potential to Catalyze Future Research Efforts; and Team Vision, Expertise, and Experience.

- **Defining the Problem and Understanding the Current State of the Art**: The Abstract clearly defines the scope and significance of the problem being addressed and demonstrates an understanding of the current state of the art and existing approaches relevant to the problem. The Abstract identifies limitations, gaps, or opportunities within the current state of the art that motivate the proposed effort.

- **Potential to Catalyze Future Research Efforts**: The proposed concept demonstrates the potential to significantly advance, redefine, or establish a new state of the art within its relevant field(s). If successful, the effort could inspire new research initiatives, enable transformational capabilities, and create opportunities for breakthrough advances beyond current approaches.

- **Team Vision, Expertise, and Experience:** The Abstract demonstrates that the key personnel possess the vision, expertise, and relevant experience necessary to effectively pursue the proposed effort and provide confidence in advancing the concept toward meaningful technical outcomes.

Evaluation Criteria for the PDP package submissions will be provided along with the invitation to submit a PDP.

Section III: Submission Information

A. General Submissions

- **Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions**: Proposer Instructions and General Terms and Conditions

- **Other Transaction agreements**: https://www.darpa.mil/about/offices/contracts-management/proposer-transactions

B. Abstract Submissions

Abstracts are required. Abstracts are due no later than the due date and time stated in the Overview section. Additional instructions for abstract submission are contained within **Attachment A**. Abstracts that do not use the template outlined in Attachment A will be deemed non-conforming and removed from consideration.
DARPA will only accept unclassified Abstract submissions.
Abstracts must clearly be marked as responding to one (1) of the Thrust Areas identified in Section I.C.

Abstract Submission Limitations:

- A proposing organization, identified by a unique CAGE Code, may submit no more than **one Abstract per Thrust Area**
- **Each Abstract** submitted by the same organization **must identify a different Principal Investigator, technical team, and represent a distinct technical approach.**
- DARPA reserves the right to reject, without review, Abstracts determined to be duplicative or substantially similar.

Organizations are responsible for clearly identifying proprietary information. Submissions containing proprietary information must have the cover page and each page containing such information clearly marked with a label such as "Proprietary" or "Company Proprietary." NOTE: "Confidential" is a classification marking used to control the dissemination of U.S. Government National Security Information as dictated in Executive Order 13526 and should not be used to identify proprietary business information.

See Attachment B for guidance on how to submit abstracts through the use the Broad Agency Announcement Tool (BAAT) portal.

- DARPA is interested in whether, and to what extent, proposers are using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to contribute to the Abstract and PDP submitted in response to this solicitation. Therefore, proposers must answer the following questions on the cover sheet of the Abstract:

  - Did you use AI tools to assist in preparing this proposal?
  - If yes, what tools did you employ?

  Any content in the Abstract and PDP that utilized an AI tool to generate information, assist in technical understanding, or guide the technical work should have a citation and a corresponding reference in the Bibliography section of the Abstract or PDP. The citation should specify the tool, content, and purpose. For example, "[AI tool] was used to understand existing state of the art in manufacturing."

NOTE – THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE USED FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES. Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria outlined in the solicitation regardless of whether AI tools were employed.

C. PA Attachments

- Attachment A – Abstract Instructions and Template
- *(Informational)* Attachment B – DARPA BAAT Submission Portal Guide

Section IV: Special Considerations

- This solicitation, stated attachments, and websites incorporated by reference constitute the entire solicitation. In the event of a discrepancy between the solicitation, attachments, or websites, the solicitation shall take precedence.

- All eligible and responsible sources capable of satisfying the Government's needs, including both U.S. and non-U.S. sources, may submit an Abstract that shall be considered by DARPA. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Small Businesses, Small Disadvantaged Businesses and Minority Institutions are particularly encouraged to submit proposals; however, no portion of this solicitation will be set aside for these organizations' participation due to the impracticality of reserving discrete or severable areas of this research for exclusive competition among these entities. Non-U.S. organizations and/or individuals may participate to the extent that such participants comply with any necessary nondisclosure agreements, security regulations, export control laws, and other governing statutes applicable under the circumstances.

- As of the time of publication of this solicitation, all Abstract and PDP submissions are anticipated to be unclassified.

- **Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification Requirements**
  The Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Program, established in 32 CFR Part 170, applies to the protection of Federal Contract Information (FCI) and Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) processed, stored, or transmitted on performer information systems.

  The required CMMC level for this solicitation is **Level 1 (Self)**.

  To be eligible for award under this solicitation, the CAGE code associated with the proposal must have a valid, unexpired Final Level 1 CMMC status recorded in the Supplier Performance Risk System (SPRS). Additionally, the proposer must have a current annual CMMC affirmation submitted by an authorized Affirming Official and recorded in SPRS.

  Note: SPRS is accessed through the Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment (PIEE). See SPRS FAQs and SPRS-CMMC Reference Materials for additional information.

- Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC), University Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs), and Government Entities are not eligible to propose to this solicitation.

- **Research Type: This solicitation may result in awards for either fundamental research or non-fundamental research, depending on the nature of the proposed work. The Government retains sole discretion to determine the applicable research designation, and any resulting award will incorporate appropriate publication requirements and other restrictions consistent with that designation.**

- Effective June 30, 2025, the DARPA Fundamental Research Risk-Based Security Review (FRRBS) will be conducted on all fundamental research awards executed through non-FAR-based instruments. FRRBS is an adaptive risk management security program designed to help protect the critical technology and performer intellectual property associated with DARPA's research projects by identifying the possible vectors of undue foreign influence. The DARPA team will create risk assessments of all proposed Senior/Key Personnel selected for negotiation of a fundamental research award. The DARPA risk assessment process will be conducted separately from the

DARPA scientific review process and adjudicated prior to final award. For any proposal where fundamental research is included, proposers must submit the (1) Common Form for Biographical Sketch, and (2) Common Form for Current and Pending (Other) Support Information form for all covered individuals, in addition to the volumes and required attachments specified elsewhere in this Program Announcement. Both forms are available via the NSF website - NSPM-33 Implementation Guidance.

- Organizations are expected to have an active CAGE code at the time of Abstract submission. Organizations must have an active CAGE code before Award.

- The APEX Accelerators program, formerly known as the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP), focuses on building a strong, sustainable, and resilient U.S. supply chains by assisting a wide range of businesses that pursue and perform under contracts with the DoD, other federal agencies, state and local governments and with government prime contractors. See https://www.apexaccelerators.us/ for more information. APEX Accelerators helps businesses:
  - Complete registration with a wide range of databases necessary for them to participate in the government marketplace (e.g., SAM)
  - Identify which agencies and offices may need their products or services and how connect with buying agencies and offices
  - Determine whether they are ready for government opportunities and how to position themselves to succeed
  - Navigate solicitations and potential funding opportunities
  - Receive notifications of government contract opportunities on a regular basis
  - Network with buying officers, prime contractors, and other businesses
  - Resolve performance issues and prepare for audit, only if the service is needed, after receiving an award

- Project Spectrum is a nonprofit effort funded by the DoD Office of Small Business Programs to help educate the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) on compliance. Project Spectrum is vendor-neutral and available to assist businesses with their cybersecurity and compliance needs. Their mission is to improve cybersecurity readiness, resilience, and compliance for small/medium-sized businesses and the federal manufacturing supply chain. Project Spectrum events and programs will enhance awareness of cybersecurity threats within the manufacturing, research, and development, as well as knowledge-based services sectors of the industrial base. Project Spectrum will leverage strategic partnerships within and outside of the DoD to accelerate the overall cybersecurity compliance of the DIB. www.Projectspectrum.io is a web portal that will provide resources such as individualized dashboards, a marketplace, and Pilot Program to help accelerate cybersecurity compliance.

- Stay connected to MXO: Subscribe to DARPA MXO's newsletter for timely updates on research opportunities, upcoming events, ways to work with us, and more.

- DARPAConnect offers free resources to potential performers to help them navigate DARPA, including "Understanding DARPA Award Vehicles and Solicitations," "Making the Most of Proposers Days," and "Tips for DARPA Proposal Success." Join DARPAConnect at https://www.darpaconnect.us to leverage on-demand learning and networking resources.

- DARPA has streamlined our Solicitations and is interested in your feedback on this new format. Please send any comments to DARPAsolicitations@darpa.mil.