



FRONTIER  
**MISSION  
NETWORK**

SUPPORT THE MISSION.

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FRONTIER**MISSION**  
**FORUM**

CHICAGO  
SPRING 2024

**PROSPECTUS**

## WHO WE ARE

The Frontier Mission Network is a nonprofit organization serving the region's national security sector, including research laboratories, startups and small- and medium-sized businesses, capital investors, and federal acquisitions authorities. We provide a unified process to catalyze growth of alternative defense suppliers and develop technologies of critical importance to our national security and the security of America's allies. We drive and accelerate value creation centered on national security imperatives through targeted operations, including:

- Understanding and disseminating national security technology concerns that can be addressed by regional stakeholders.
- Clarifying the defense procurement process for suppliers who may not have worked with the Pentagon or the Department of Defense before.
- Connecting applied research being conducted at our region's laboratories with defense interests.
- Supporting small businesses and new ventures that are competing for federal grants that frequently enable the development and prototyping of high-risk technologies.
- Supporting dual-use product development that answers national security and commercial demand signals.
- Facilitating knowledge sharing and retention among our portfolio companies and partners.
- Enabling long-term, patient capital financings of new ventures commercializing defense technologies.

## OUTCOMES

The Frontier Mission Network is driven to deliver thematic outcomes *and* precise, quantifiable short- and long-term outputs. Specifically, the Frontier Mission Network will:

- Increase the number of technologies transitioned into the Department of Defense acquisitions process.
- Increase the number of Department of Defense expenditures in the region.
- Increase the number of federal grants awarded to small businesses and startups in the region, including Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants.
- Increase the number of dual-use technologies acquired both by regional corporate partners and the Department of Defense.
- Increase the number of venture capital deals in the national security sector.

We will conclude 2024 with a year-end report, gathering and sharing the knowledge we gained during the previous year.

## WHERE THE FRONTIER MISSION NETWORK FITS IN THE MIDWEST REGION

As is explored in detail later in this document, the Department of Defense has built several channels for nontraditional suppliers to engage in the procurement process. Concurrently, public and private stakeholders in the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, and Midwest region have built an impressive infrastructure for supporting economic development and the growth of new ventures. The Frontier Mission Network does not seek to supplant any of these stakeholders. Rather, **we seek a supporting role, serving as the region's focal point for technology development in the national security industry.**

The process for developing a new technology to address a national security need frequently involves licensing and commercializing an invention, capturing federal grants to enable initial prototyping, exploring defense uses and commercial pathways, and private financing to enable completion of a product. We will enable this process by engaging all stakeholders along this value-creation chain, reaching into research laboratories at one end of the process and warfighter at the other end.

## THE FRONTIER MODEL

Our model is not simply to merge startups with the national security sector and hope for the best. Rather we have a very intentional, detailed plan to commercialize inventions from research laboratories, compete for federal grant dollars, build products with defense applications, and rapidly transition technologies into the national security acquisitions process.

### IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND COMMAND SIGNALS

The Frontier Mission Network will regularly engage Department of Defense procurement officials on urgent operational and technology needs of frontline commanders. We will then inform partners of Department of Defense needs through our email newsletter, conference calls, and in-person events.

### LICENSE AND COMMERCIALIZE RESEARCH

Understanding the needs of the national security community, the Frontier Mission Network will then engage research laboratories to identify research projects and inventions that can address urgent operational requirements. We will also host regular showcase events featuring inventors discussing their research and potential commercial applications. Through our partners in the legal community, we will provide support in licensing patented technology from research laboratories.

### SUPPORT FOR STARTUPS AND SMALL BUSINESSES COMPETING FOR FEDERAL GRANTS

Each year the federal government awards more than \$3 billion in grants under the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program; the Department of Defense alone awards more than \$1 billion in SBIR grants. We will communicate to our partners current SBIR opportunities and other Department of Defense grant programs, upcoming deadlines, and requirements. We will also provide counsel and writing support to small businesses and startups with technologies of potential defense applications. And we will facilitate stakeholder support, including letters of recommendation from civic and corporate partners.

### DRIVE DUAL-USE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The Frontier Mission Network will guide a curated process to validate an idea and build a product that can achieve commercial sales *and* solve a defense challenge. This will include facilitating discovery-oriented conversations between a startup or small business and corporate partners and defense users to identify needs and requirements. To the most secure extent possible, we will support a product development process that responds to national security command signals. Finally, the Frontier Mission Network will build an organization of corporate partners that will actively discuss shared interests in product development that align with national security needs.

### ENGAGE INVESTORS

The Frontier Mission Network will engage financial institutions, family offices, and corporations in the region to educate investors on the potential for value creation through new ventures in the national security industry. Defense technologies have unique funding requirements, and we will ensure investors in the region understand how patient investment strategies have rewarded investors in this sector.

## REVENUES

As a nonprofit organization, our revenues will be tax deductible for the donor. We will seek philanthropic support, public grant funding, and funding from corporate partners with an interest in the fields of technologies that we are commercializing. We also plan on raising significant revenues from our Frontier Mission Forum event, planned for early 2024. More detail on our 2024 budget is provided in Appendix B.

## Launch Event

We will launch the Frontier Mission Network with a one-day event to convene Department of Defense acquisitions officials and commanding officers, city and state officials, representatives of Chicago's business and finance community, Chicago's research laboratories, and Chicago startups. This event will increase understanding of the defense procurement process, inform businesses of support resources, showcase regional defense tech, and understand DoD procurement priorities. It will also initiate a channel connecting the Chicago tech community with Department of Defense acquisitions officials and front-line commanders.

## Tentative Schedule of Events

- 8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.      Arrival of guests**
- 8:30 a.m. – 9:25 a.m.      Opening Remarks**
- The opening remarks of the event will be provided by the Frontier Mission Network leadership, explaining the functions of the organization, our operations and business model, and how we can support stakeholders in the audience. The introduction will be followed by additional remarks from a senior elected official.
- 9:35 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.      Panel: Chicago's place in the national security sector**
- Our first panel will convene leaders of Chicago's business and technology community in a directed conversation about our region's competitiveness in the national security sector, and how we can collectively better serve defense customers.
- 11:00 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.      Keynote**
- The event keynote will be delivered by a senior leader of the U.S. Department of Defense. The speaker will be asked to provide an overview of current Department of Defense efforts to acquire technologies from small- and medium-sized businesses.
- 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.      Lunch**
- 1:05 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.      Panel: Chicago research, commercialization, and national security**
- The second panel of the day will convene research industry leaders, representing the Chicago region's research laboratories, and technology transfer professionals, to discuss current research projects and potential commercialization opportunities.
- 2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.      Defense Technology and Capital Requirements**
- A representative of the Department of Defense acquisitions community will provide a presentation on the unique early-stage capital financing needs in the national security space.
- 3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.      Closing remarks**
- A Frontier Mission Network leader will discuss follow-on action items and avenues to engage with the organization to ensure the event catalyzes real and value-creating activities. A representative of the four-star sponsor will also be invited to give some remarks.

# Event Sponsorship Levels



**Four-star sponsor:** One available sponsorship

- The four-star sponsor will be featured on all event collateral, including the logo of the event itself.
- The four-star sponsor will also be invited to provide a representative to give remarks during the event program.
- The four-star sponsor will be provided 20 tickets to the event.

\$100,000



**Three-star sponsor:** Two available sponsorships

- Three-star sponsors will be recognized prominently on the event program and will be recognized on social media.
- Three-star sponsors will be provided 10 event tickets.

\$50,000



**Two-star sponsor:** Four available sponsorships

- Two-star sponsors will be recognized on the event program.
- Two-star sponsors will be provided five event tickets.

\$25,000



**One-star sponsor:** Ten available sponsorships

- One-star sponsors will be recognized on the event program and will be provided two event tickets.

\$10,000