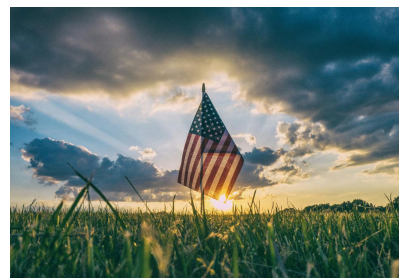




Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

State of the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator – July 2026

by James F. Gerraughty
 SAP&DC APEX Accelerator Program Manager



Hot enough for you? I'll say that the activity and change-ups in government contracting have been heating up for sure: It's the first quarter of PA's budget and the last quarter of the federal government's fiscal year. APEX Accelerators (including our 4 centers) are keeping cool, both literally and figuratively, by keeping track of these changes and helping clients navigate.

Just got word of the CMMC change, with the plans for phase 2 delayed for at least 60 days as of 13 JUL 2026 pending a review. CMMC and NIST 800.171 are not going away, however, and your APEX Accelerator will be keeping on top of these developments. More info in the newsletter article below. Official press release: <https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4542329/forging-the-arsenal-of-freedom-department-of-war-suspends-cmmc-phase-ii-require/>

Please review our training opportunities that are coming up in July 2026 (and beyond) for our APEX Accelerator and PREP Partners. We have:

- "DPA Title III and IBAS" webinar to break down and educate on these two powerful yet often-overlooked programs for manufacturing. 29 JUL 2026 @ 1100 EDT. Free to attend, but you must register: <https://sancnt.ecenterdirect.com/events/5591>.
- "CUI Enclaves Explained" webinar with Core Business Solutions on 16 JUN 2026 @ 2 PM EDT, discussing a deep-dive into scoping and enclaving options for CMMC compliance. Free to attend, but you must register: <https://sancnt.ecenterdirect.com/events/5589>.
- **Save the Date:** The 7th Annual Tri State APEX Accelerator Mega Matchmaker on 1-2 DEC 2026. More details as they come along.

Please review and register for upcoming events on our eCenter page, <https://sancnt.ecenterdirect.com/> Stop back often, as the training events do pop up there pretty frequently!

If you have ideas for topics, or would like to learn more about a government contracting-related topic, please drop us a line at (814) 949-6500 or at apex@sapdc.net. We'd love to hear from you!

Pentagon halts Phase 2 of CMMC Cybersecurity certification program, launches 60-day 'reform' review

By Nick Wakeman, Editor-In-Chief, Washington Technology

The Defense Department will keep cybersecurity self-assessments, but will not require third-party certifications as planned.

The Defense Department has essentially ended the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification program by suspending its second phase requirements.

The Pentagon will keep in place Phase 1, which requires self-assessments for how companies protect controlled unclassified information in their systems. But the department said Monday it is suspending Phase 2, which was to begin on Nov. 10 and requires third-party certifications.

DOD is also launching a review of CMMC to make sure it aligns with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's acquisition initiatives, which prioritize speed, and lowering barriers for new entrants. The Acquisition Transformation System directives also aim to replace bureaucratic compliance with what DOD calls "scalable, resilient cybersecurity measures."

Read more at: <https://www.defenseone.com/business/2026/07/dod-suspends-cmmc-phase-2-launches-60-day-reform-review/414746/>

Navy teases next step in key drone boat program

By Lauren C. Williams, Business Editor, Defense One

The Navy plans to launch the next phase of its marketplace for high-capacity, medium-sized drone boats on August 1, according to a [contract notice](#).

The medium unmanned surface vessel, or MUSV, program "uses modular design principles to create adaptable and resilient solutions that can effectively counter evolving threats," the July 7 notice states. "Interested parties with expertise in vessel construction, autonomy, perception systems and complex maritime problem solving experience are invited to participate in this opportunity."

Earlier this year, the Navy [changed](#) its approach to buying medium unmanned surface vessels, favoring a marketplace format and spurring a [competition](#) and [sea trials](#).

The coming request for prototype proposals will have "detailed requirements for high-capacity MUSV solutions used for logistics support and capable of transporting containerized payloads," the Navy wrote in the notice.

Read more at: <https://www.defenseone.com/defense-systems/2026/07/navy-teases-next-step-key-drone-boat-program/414683/>

Pentagon opens applications for cyber apprenticeship program

By Edward Graham, Managing Editor, Nextgov FCW

DOD Chief Information Officer Kirsten Davies said last month that the apprenticeship had "already generated more than 70,000 inquiries" since it was first announced in late April.

The Department of Defense announced this week that it officially opened the application window for its Cyber Registered Apprenticeship Program, a new initiative to onboard more skilled cybersecurity professionals into its workforce.

DOD's Office of the Chief Information Officer, which is directing the program, said on Monday that the job posting is now open through July 17 on the government's USAJobs hiring site. The annual salary for the apprenticeship is listed as \$22,584.

Cyber RAP, as the pilot is being called, was first announced in late April by the Pentagon. The 12-month apprenticeship is designed, in large part, to prioritize skills-based hiring

over academic experience — part of a broader Trump administration push to place greater emphasis on experience over educational requirements in the federal hiring process.

Read more at: <https://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2026/07/pentagon-opens-applications-cyber-apprenticeship-program/414662/>

About US

The Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC is an economic development entity that bridges the gap between supplier and buyer in the government marketplace. The APEX Accelerator stands ready to support businesses across 18 counties in the central PA Alleghenies region in the pursuit to secure contracts with local, state and/or federal government agencies nationwide.



Due to the generous support of our Commonwealth and Federal funding partners, services provided by the APEX Accelerator are free of charge.

Whether you are an experienced contractor or new to the government marketplace, the APEX Accelerator will provide one-on-one counseling utilizing all of the program resources necessary to increase your share of contract awards. We will also coordinate assistance, if needed, with our PA PREP partners.

Contact us today at the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC to get started!

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