Senator Ernst’s Entrepreneur Expo
A Small-Business Government Contracting and Innovation Conference
Iowa State University, Scheman Building
1805 Center Dr, Ames, IA 50011
Sept. 22, 2023

8:00 AM  Registration for Conference Opens

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM  Welcome and Small Business Agenda on the Senate Small Business Committee

Wendy Wintersteen, President, Iowa State University
Senator Joni Ernst, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship

9:00AM – 9:15AM  Keynote: Experience as a Small Business Contractor for GSA

Diana Kautzky, President & Owner, Deaf Services Unlimited


Senator Joni Ernst, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship
The Honorable Doug Bush, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology
Moderator: Michael MacKay, National Security Advisor, Senator Joni Ernst

9:50AM – 10:30AM  Break

10:30AM – 11:30AM  Breakout Session #1

Beginner GovCon Track: GovCon 101 – How to Start Selling in the Government Market

Samantha Ferm-LeClare, Government Contracting Specialist, CIRAS APEX Accelerator

Intermediate GovCon Track: Meet the General Services Administration, Heartland Team! Learn about current and future small business opportunities and learn how to write a successful technical proposal

Maria Doedtman, Capital Construction and IDV Branch Chief, AMD Construction, Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration

Advanced GovCon Track: SBA’s Mentor-Protégé Program – A Game Changer

Shane McCall, Equity Partner, Koprince McCall Pottroff LLC
Beginner Innovation Track: SBIR 101 and Application Best Practices

*Anne McMahon*, SBIR/STTR Statewide Program Coordinator, BioConnect Iowa

Intermediate Innovation Track: Q&A on SBIR Solicitations

*Jason Kessler*, NASA SBIR/STTR Program Executive  
*Dr. Genevieve Lind*, NOAA SBIR Program Manager  
*Dr. Ben Schrag*, NSF SBIR/STTR Program Director and Policy Liaison  
**Moderator:** Ray Hansen, Counselor, Iowa Small Business Development Center

11:30AM – 12:30PM **Breakout Session #2**

Beginner GovCon Track: Finding Opportunities in Your Government Market - Who is Buying What You’re Selling?

*Justin Niceswanger*, Government Contracting Specialist, CIRAS APEX Accelerator  
*Arveice Washington*, Deputy Director, U.S. Navy Office of Small Business Programs

Beginner GovCon Track: Small Business Certifications

*Kelly Freel*, CPPB, Government Contracting Specialist, CIRAS APEX Accelerator

Advanced GovCon Track: Joint Ventures – A Powerful Small Business Tool

*Shane McCall*, Equity Partner, Koprince McCall Pottroff LLC

Innovation Track: Blueprint for Defense - Identifying Nontraditional Small Business Opportunities within the DoD

*Col. Elliott Leigh*, AFWERX Director and Chief Commercialization Officer of the U.S. Air Force  
*Lisa Sanders*, USSOCOM Director, Science and Technology  
*Dr. Matthew Willis*, Director of Army Prize Competitions and the U.S. Army Applied SBIR Program  
*Katherine Koleski*, Director of Congressional Affairs and Policy, Defense Innovation Unit  
**Moderator:** Michael MacKay, National Security Advisor, Senator Joni Ernst

Innovation Track: A Conversation with NIH

*Jon Darsee*, Chief Innovation Officer, University of Iowa  
*Stephanie Fertig*, Director, NIH Small Business Program

12:30PM – 1:15PM **Lunch**
1:15PM – 3:30PM  **Networking Session**

*See list of participating agencies below*

3:30 PM  **Closing Remarks & Conference Recap**

*Meredith West*, Staff Director, U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship

**Participating Agencies**

Government Contracting (Meet the buyers!)

- DoD- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- DoD- U.S. Navy
- DoD- U.S. Air Force
- Dept. of Veterans Affairs
- Dept. of Transportation
- Dept. of Energy
- General Services Administration
- Dept. of Interior
- Iowa Department of Administrative Services Purchasing Dept.
- Iowa Dept. of Transportation
- Iowa State University Purchasing
- University of Iowa Purchasing
- University of Northern Iowa Purchasing
- Iowa National Guard
- Iowa Economic Development Authority

Innovation (Learn about federal grants for basic/applied research & development!)

- National Institutes of Health
- National Science Foundation
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- DoD- Special Operations Command (SOCOM)
- DoD- AFWERX
- DoD- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)
- DoD- Army Applied SBIR
- DoD- Defense Innovation Unit (DIU)
- Ames National Laboratory

**Resource Partners/State Partners:**

- Iowa State University Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS)
- APEX Accelerator
- America’s Small Business Development Center Iowa
- US Small Business Administration, Iowa District Office
- Ames Chamber of Commerce
- BioConnect Iowa