

Air Force Office of Small Business Programs takes two of the top five honors in the Department of Defense's Small Business Vanguard Awards Program. The Vanguard Awards honor small business professionals, teams, and organizations that influence small business participation in Defense acquisitions. The Vanguard Awards recognize the significant contributions awardees make in supporting the warfighter and the Department of Defense.

The top award, the *Vanguard Award*, recognizes the Component that best exemplifies a commitment to the Defense Small Business Programs in a variety of functional areas, to include training, outreach, and optimizing small business participation. The Air Force Office of Small Business Programs was recognized for its efforts spanning from October 2017 to September 2018. Through the dedicated efforts of the men and women that support the Air Force Small Business Programs, the Air Force awarded a record \$11.7 billion in prime contracts to small businesses during Fiscal Year 2018, surpassing the Fiscal Year 2017 record by almost \$1 billion. The Air Force Office of Small Business Programs, along with 158 small business professionals around the world, delivered exemplary results for the Air Force, the defense industrial base, and the U.S. economy.

The *Ms. Tracey L. Pinson Small Business Professional of the Year Award* is given to the individual who embodies the small business mission to ensure a healthy and modernized industrial base as well as tirelessly advocates for small business. Ms. Mary Urey of the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center not only embodied the small business mission of the Air Force, but her stellar performance led to her rightful acknowledgement as the Small Business Professional of the Year for the Department of Defense. Ms. Urey is a tireless ambassador, ensuring the small business industrial base flourishes and the Department of Defense benefits from all that small businesses offer. Ms. Urey influenced over 24 strategic acquisitions set aside for small businesses worth approximately \$2.5 billion. In addition, her efforts on a \$28 billion Department of Defense/Department of Homeland Security acquisition increased opportunities for small businesses to bring agile, creative solutions to some of our nation's most vexing problems. Ms. Urey enthusiastically shares her extensive knowledge with others, thereby preparing the next generation of acquisition professionals for the challenges of the future.

The *Vanguard Award* and the *Ms. Tracey L. Pinson Small Business Professional of the Year Award* signify a commitment to excellence by the entire Air Force team. Ms. Valerie Muck, the Director of Air Force Small Business Programs, stated "These awards recognize the hard work and dedication by every member of the Air Force small business community. In coordination with our acquisition brethren, we will continue to pursue the innovation, agility, and efficiencies that small businesses bring to the fight." Air Force small business professionals are the catalysts that link our Nation's small business capabilities and performance to our National Defense Strategy and our mission to fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace.