



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, DC

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

12 APR 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

FROM: SAF/AQ

SUBJECT: AFWERX Strategic Intent

AFWERX accelerates agile and affordable capability transitions by teaming innovative technology developers with Airman and Guardian talent. Given the rapidly growing percentage of dual-use technologies developed outside of defense-specific requirements, harnessing the full power of American and allied innovation for competitive advantage demands a cultural transformation. The catalyst for this transformation is a deliberately-developed innovation corps, creating unprecedented collaboration beyond DAF traditional networks, while reinvigorating those existing networks. To preserve enduring operational advantage, AFWERX uses this cultural transformation to shape both future DAF operational systems and the capability development structures necessary to field those systems. All AFWERX activities will align to one or more of the following lines of effort:

1. Build a path to field capabilities via non-traditional means
2. Build an innovation culture
3. Access new sources of ideas
4. Reduce barriers to new entrants
5. Harness commercial R&D investments

AFWERX will lead and inspire innovation throughout the Department of the Air Force by building collaborative teams of technologists, operators, and acquirers through three core divisions: AFVentures, Spark, and Prime. AFVentures partners with industry, investors, and academia to broaden access to innovative technology. One tool for accessing these innovative technologies is the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) program, which AFWERX will target to use for Open Topics (40%), Specific Topics (40%), and the Supplemental Funding Pilot Program (20%). AFWERX will also continuously innovate and consider other tools. Spark provides innovative concepts for employing those technologies on operational problems by networking, training, and empowering Airman and Guardian talent. Prime drives the transition of emerging technologies to the field. The success of this model is predicated on new relationships with academia, industry, investor, interagency, and international collaborators. To accelerate change, the AFWERX cadre will continue to grow the innovation corps of technologists, operators, and acquirers and broaden collaboration with the associated organizations across the Department.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darlene J. Costello".

DARLENE J. COSTELLO

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air
Force (Acquisition, Technology & Logistics)