



DISCOVERING THE FUTURE. POWERING THE POSSIBILITIES.

Enduring partnerships in our public-interest mission.

As an independent, leading technology research and development company, MITRE serves as a trusted national resource. We deliver a data-driven, systems engineering approach to serve our government sponsors' missions.

Through our federally funded R&D centers (FFRDC), we work across government and industry to tackle challenges on behalf of our nation's agencies in civil and defense domains.

By law, FFRDCs can't manufacture products or compete directly with industry. But they can and do help industry work effectively with government to address complex national challenges. As a not-for-profit organization, MITRE acts in the public interest by delivering objective, cost-effective solutions to many of the world's biggest problems.

Because of this lack of commercial conflicts of interest, trust lies at the heart of every FFRDC—and at the heart of everything MITRE does.

MITRE OPERATES SIX FFRDCS

The FFRDCs we operate deliver cross-domain technical expertise that benefits our government sponsors, the nation, and the world.

- **Department of Defense**
National Security Engineering Center
- **Federal Aviation Administration**
Center for Advanced Aviation System Development
- **Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service**, and co-sponsored by **Department of Veterans Affairs**, **Social Security Administration**, and **Department of Commerce**
Center for Enterprise Modernization
- **Department of Homeland Security**
Homeland Security Systems Engineering and Development Institute™
- **Department of Health and Human Services**
The Health FFRDC
- **National Institute of Standards and Technology**
National Cybersecurity FFRDC

What Is an FFRDC?

The [Federal Acquisition Regulation 35.017](#) governs the relationship between FFRDCs and their sponsoring agencies. This detailed set of guidelines provides the roadmap for how FFRDCs operate, ensuring they meet or exceed expectations—all while sustaining the highest level of ethical conduct.

The FAR also requires that FFRDCs provide their sponsors with access to a specialized, agile workforce—one that's difficult to assemble using federal personnel or commercial contractors. This enables agencies to tap into resources with the dual capacity to respond quickly to complex national challenges as well as focus on long-standing R&D needs.

The combination of objectivity and dedicated expertise means FFRDCs possess another unique feature: Government and industry can (and do) entrust them with sensitive or proprietary information without fear of improper use or disclosure for a competitive advantage.

Finally, because they operate in the long term (typically a minimum of five years), FFRDCs take the long view. To ensure accountability, quality, efficiency, and appropriateness of their work programs, all FFRDCs undergo periodic comprehensive reviews.

For more than 75 years, the government has continually affirmed the value of FFRDCs as long-term partners for mission success. MITRE operates six of the nation's 42 FFRDCs. Each brings an in-depth understanding of its sponsoring agencies' vision, challenges, and constraints.

FFRDCs: A Brief History

Following World War II, the federal government needed a strong pipeline of technical capabilities to meet the demands of the post-war era—unbiased, strategic guidance unavailable within government or the private sector. This would require the creation of a new type of organization that would work solely in the public interest.

These independent entities, funded by but not controlled by the government, would neither compete with industry nor replace government. Rather, they would serve as trusted advisers, develop innovative technologies, and provide system-wide perspective. By taking on our country's biggest challenges, they're among the first public-private partnerships at the national level.

First established in 1948, the original FFRDCs focused on national security challenges. Many still do. Today, these centers also tackle our country's thorniest problems across health, aviation, veterans' affairs, U.S. global competitiveness, cybersecurity, homeland security, and more.

This relatively small number of FFRDCs, compared to other research and commercial organizations, has delivered enormous impact. The result: safer skies, stronger defense, advanced cancer treatments, and increased prosperity and security.

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The FFRDC must conduct business as befits its special relationship with the government, operate in the public interest with objectivity and independence, and be free from organizational conflicts of interest ...

Federal Acquisition Regulation 35.017

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