



# DISCOVERING THE FUTURE. POWERING THE POSSIBILITIES.

## Enduring partnerships anchored in our public-interest mission.

As an independent, leading technology and research and development company, MITRE serves as a trusted national resource. We apply our cross-domain technical knowledge and expertise to deliver a data-driven, system-of-systems engineering approach with a single shared mission: solving problems for a safer world.

Through our public-private partnerships and federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs), we work across government and in partnership with industry and academia to tackle challenges on behalf of our nation's agencies in both the civil and defense domains.

By law, FFRDCs can't manufacture products or compete directly with industry. But they can and do help industry work more effectively with government to address complex national challenges. FFRDCs serve as force multipliers, providing the government with organizational advice, long-term institutional memory, and deep technical know-how. Other benefits include cooperative research and development agreements, technology licensing, open source participation, and contributions to industry standards.

Because of this lack of commercial conflicts of interest, trust and objectivity lie 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](#) (called the FAR) 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 longstanding research and development needs.

The combination of objectivity and dedicated expertise means FFRDCs have another unique feature: Government and industry entrust them with sensitive or proprietary information without fear of improper use or disclosure or 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. As a nod to their special status, there are [only 42 FFRDCs](#), each with an in-depth understanding of its sponsoring agencies' vision, challenges, and constraints. MITRE operates six FFRDCs—a high honor.

## 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—objective, strategic guidance unavailable within government or the private sector. Achieving this goal would require the creation of a new type of organization that would work solely in the public interest.

These independent entities, funded by the government but not controlled by it, would not 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 are among the first public-private partnerships at the national level.

The first FFRDC was founded in 1948. The original FFRDCs focused on national security challenges, and many still do. Today, FFRDCs also tackle our nation's thorniest problems across health, aviation, energy, veterans' care, benefits and service provision to citizens, climate change risk, U.S. global competitiveness, cybersecurity, homeland security, and more.

Despite the small number of FFRDCs in comparison to other research organizations and commercial companies, their impact has been enormous—resulting in safer skies, stronger defense, cancer treatments, better customer services, 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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*Through our public-private partnerships and federally funded R&D centers, we work across government and in partnership with industry to tackle challenges to the safety, stability, and well-being of our nation*

**MITRE**

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