

For Immediate Release

AFWERX Hosting USAF New Helmet System Open Challenge Finalists

The U.S. Air Force aims to award millions in government contracts to innovative problem solvers

LAS VEGAS – October 31st, 2018 – Since first envisioned by Secretary of the Air Force, Heather Wilson, the AFWERX program has been dedicated to solving some of the toughest challenges the Air Force faces through innovative collaborations between our nation’s top intrapreneurs, industry experts, academic professionals, and non-traditional contributors.

Through crowdsourcing our nation’s best and brightest, AFWERX has the unique ability to cultivate accelerated results that can serve the warfighters and operators of the U.S. Air Force during a time when new technologies, new threats, and new opportunities reveal themselves every day.

Part of AFWERX’s creative approach to collaborative problem solving is providing unclassified, Air Force ‘Challenges’ that startups, garage tinkerers, academia, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and established defense companies can submit their ideas to in hopes of attaining funding, additional resources and ultimately government contracts to benefit the warfighter.

“We’ve created the AFWERX Challenge to accelerate inventive solutions from individuals, startups, small business, large enterprises, academia and research labs in the most collaborative way and get them to America’s Airmen at the speed of relevance” - General Stephen Wilson, Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force.

Most recently, AFWERX asked for innovators to submit components, materials or technologies that could improve the [USAF Helmet](#) used by pilots and aircrew. Since the initial crowdsourcing campaign, 100+ companies submitted ideas that have been down selected to 30+ solutions to feature as part of its exhibition at Enclave Las Vegas on November 14th — which will be followed by an evening mixer on the rooftop deck.

The next day, November 15, a select number of invited teams will then meet with the project management office at the 30,000-square-foot AFWERX Vegas Innovation Hub, which will give the finalists the opportunity to attain \$500K+ of prototype and experimentation funding, a \$20M+ government contract, or potential SBIR funding while allowing for customer collaboration with industry and government and official recognition of companies or ideas.

“We’ve realized that to stay ahead of our adversaries, we can no longer rely on just a few large companies to solve Air Force problem sets,” explains Colby Edwards, Deputy Director of AFWERX Vegas. “Instead, our approach here at AFWERX, is to crowdsource a nation’s worth of talent and ideas to ensure that the best possible solutions reach the warfighter and in turn, ensure our national security.”

And that talent, and those ideas, are more than grateful for the opportunity to reach those warfighters and ensure that security.

Trevor Rose, a senior studying mechanical engineering from UNLV, praises the program by revealing that “as a student, resources to do projects are very limited. Being able to go to the Air Force, present a project, then have it be picked up — whether it’s with funding, or human resources, or experience that they have to help make those projects a reality — is a big benefit.”

To learn more, visit: <https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/373741?&t=26212713db8e475406c0e2606820e98b>

Schedule of Events:

11/14 — 9:00 am to 4:00 pm: Exhibit Floor Opens at Enclave (5810 S. Eastern Avenue; Las Vegas, Nevada)

11/15 — By invite only- Project Management Office one on one time with select teams.

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