



**Senate Appropriations Committee
Government Operations Division
HB 2018
March 10, 2023**

Chairman Wanzek and members of the Committee. My name is Dave Kleppe, Program Manager of the North Dakota Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), now called by a new name, the North Dakota APEX Accelerator (APEX). The program is hosted by the University of North Dakota's Center for Business Engagement and Development (led by Tiffany Ford) within the Nistler College of Business and Public Administration. Federal program funding is provided by the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP). Match funding has been provided by the North Dakota Department of Commerce (DOC).

The APEX Accelerators program (formerly PTAC) was established in 1985 to expand the number of businesses capable of participating in government contracts. It is administered by DoD OSBP in cooperation with the states, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. Under the program, we assist businesses with pursuing and performing in contract awards with the Department of Defense, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and also subcontracting with government prime contractors.

Our services are provided at no cost to businesses based in North Dakota and include:

- Assisting with state and federal registrations in procurement systems such as the federal System for Award Management (SAM)

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- Creation of a bidmatch search profile unique to each business to help identify contracting and subcontracting opportunities
- Providing training on federal and state contracting and cybersecurity requirements
- Guiding them through government certifications
- Conducting solicitation reviews and providing advice on preparing bid proposals

APEXs have a local presence nationwide with 96 locations. The North Dakota APEX currently operates with three full-time positions: a senior procurement specialist located in Fargo, a procurement specialist located in Minot, and a program manager located in the Entrepreneur Center at the Bank of North Dakota.

The federal APEX Accelerator Program provides 65% federal funding with a 35% match requirement. For the past many years, the required state match has been provided by the Department of Commerce from within their **discretionary funds line**. Without the required state match funds, the ND APEX Accelerator program will cease to exist. While the amount of the state's investment is small, the economic impact of this program is not. During July 2020 – June 2022, the **ND PTAC assisted 413 small and large North Dakota businesses**. Many of them have been successful in the government marketplace and have been awarded more than **\$279 million** in government contracts during the period, meaning **expansion and diversification of revenue streams, creating jobs in our state, and positively impacting our communities**. Program return-on-investment is **\$1,713 in contracts for every state dollar invested**.

ND APEX Accelerator – Dave Kleppe, Program Manager

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We have a very good working relationship with DOC. Without the matching funds DOC provides, there would be no APEX program to assist our businesses in navigating the complex path involved with government contracting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members, for your time and for your support of the North Dakota APEX Accelerator.

Link to 3 ½ minute video about the DoD APEX Accelerator Program:

https://assets.apexaccelerators.us/videos/APEX_Final2.mp4

North Dakota APEX Accelerator website: <https://ndptac.org/>

This APEX Accelerator is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense. The North Dakota APEX Accelerator is hosted by the University of North Dakota Nistler College of Business and Public Administration. State matching funds are provided by the North Dakota Department of Commerce.