

DEVCOM ARL (UMLARC) VC Investment Initiative RFP Instructions

The University of Massachusetts Applied Lowell Research Corporation (UMLARC) Defense Venture Capital Circle is a strategic partnership between the UMLARC and DEVCOM Army Research Labs (ARL). Its mission is to identify, vet, and align venture capital firms with the operational demands and modernization objectives of the United States Army.

This initiative begins with a focused engagement in the Autonomous and Unmanned Systems (AUS) Division, anchored by the XTechOverwatch V Summit, scheduled to take place from October 27 to 29, 2025. Venture firms selected into the Circle will have the opportunity to:

- Partner with high-potential small businesses showcased at the Summit
- Align venture opportunities with Army SBIR award mechanisms and transition support.
- Engage directly with Army program offices and operators
- Gain insight into Army Transformation in Contact (TiC) priorities and operational needs

By facilitating early-stage investment and structured collaboration, the Circle accelerates the adoption of dual-use technology, strengthens the defense innovation base, and ensures that emerging capabilities are aligned with real-world mission requirements. This effort is designed to create a repeatable model for venture engagement in national defense innovation—starting with AUS and expanding to other modernization priorities as the initiative evolves.

Instructions:

This document will serve as the instructions for filling in and completing all required information. After reviewing these instructions, fill in all questions in the RFP Form. Once you have completed all the fields in the Form and have uploaded Attachment 2 and any supporting documents, click the “Submit” button to complete your proposal.

It is the responsibility of the firm to provide all the required information in order to be considered for as part of the DEVCOM ARL VC Investment Initiative. Responses must be concise but specific, and all supporting documentation must be referenced where applicable. Each document submitted by the firm must be titled: “VC Firm Name_[Current Title of Attached Document]” or “VC Firm Name_ Section# requiring documentation_ Title of requirement being addressed”.

The following are the Attachments to this RFP:

- Attachment 1_VC Investment_RFP_Instructions-Evaluation Criteria
 - Review these instructions
- Attachment 2_Privacy Act for Covered Individuals
 - Fill out and attach to submission
- Attachment 3_Security Risk Review
 - Review these Security Risks

Disclaimer:

Submitting a proposal for this initiative is completely voluntary, and the firm acknowledges that it is not entering into a formal contract/agreement with the United States Government. The firm also understands that there is no intent to fund nor repay the firm for any work associated with this initiative. This effort is meant to be mutually beneficial between all parties through information exchange and access to user and program office communities.

Upcoming Dates:

RFP Release Date: 8 September 2025

Proposal Due Date: NLT 11:59 pm EST, 15 September 2025

Notification of Selection: (Tentative) On or about 10 October 2025

Evaluation Criteria:

Each firm's proposal will be evaluated on its own and against the evaluation criteria for completeness and compliance with the requested information. The number of Firms selected is not capped by a specific number, and is dependent on how the firm stacks up against the evaluation criteria and risk factors.

For this initiative the responses to each section above will be evaluated on a scale from 1-5, with 5 being high, and 1 being low. The following describes the criteria for each section to be scored. Responses to the Security Clearance questions will be reviewed for general understanding of the community for future needs of the VC cohort. Responses to the security questions will not be held against or used to eliminate a company from consideration.

Score	Criteria
5 – Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fully addresses all required elements with exceptional clarity and depth- Strong alignment with DEVCOM ARL priorities and SBIC standards- Demonstrates compelling differentiation and national security relevance- Provides strong, verifiable data (e.g., track record, governance, strategy)- No major concerns or weaknesses identified
4 – Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Addresses most elements with solid detail and relevance- Clear evidence of alignment with DEVCOM ARL priorities- Minor gaps or questions, but nothing that significantly undermines confidence- Demonstrates operational maturity and compliance- Evidence of thoughtful investment strategy and experience
3 – Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meets basic requirements but lacks depth in one or more key areas- Alignment with national security or dual-use priorities is implied but not well developed- Materials are generally complete but may have gaps in data, clarity, or specificity- Acceptable but may require further diligence or clarification

2 – Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several key elements are missing or insufficiently addressed - Strategy lacks clear alignment with DoD/SBIC priorities - Governance, track record, or compliance sections raise concerns - Evidence provided is outdated, vague, or poorly organized - Proposal may not be competitive without significant revision
1 – Poor / Non-Responsive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fails to meet minimum expectations or omits required information - Little or no alignment with national security or dual-use priorities - Proposal is incomplete, inconsistent, or non-responsive to the section - Raises significant legal, operational, or credibility red flags