



## Fund RIF in FY2021

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*The Rapid Innovation Fund (RIF) program is a vital DOD advanced development program to rapidly transition the most promising next-gen small business technologies into DOD acquisition programs*

The US is losing its technological advantage over the rest of the world, and nations like China are rapidly closing the gap. DOD has recognized that in order to maintain US edge, there is a need to identify ways to speed up and streamline its technology transition. Leveraging nimble, responsive high-tech small businesses is essential to ensuring the American warfighter continues to have access to the most advanced and innovative technology.

RIF is the only statutory program designed specifically to help high-tech small businesses bridge the valley of death and rapidly transition highly successful new technologies to the field or programs of record. Its process is designed to ensure only the best, most essential technologies necessary to protect national security are funded:

- **Mature Technologies:** RIF targets technologies at TRL 6-9, those that are already set to be transitioned, but need funding to get over the hump
- **Highly Competitive:** Over 20 white papers are submitted for every contract awarded, resulting in only a 5% award rate, and award size limited to typically \$3 million or less.<sup>1</sup>
- **National Security:** Topics, proposals, and white papers are required satisfy an operational or national security need in order to be considered.
- **Small Business Preference:** 90% of the awards go to small businesses, awards go to large firms only if it is impracticable for small firms to produce the deliverable.
- **SBIR Technologies:** 77% of RIF awards go to fund SBIR-developed technologies, which have already gone through rigorous, competitive screening and development process.<sup>2</sup> RIF provides a key bridge for many successful SBIR technologies in reaching DOD procurement.
- **Proven Effective:** Recent surveys report 90% of awardees said RIF helped build their business, 57% said RIF helped transition technology effectively.<sup>3</sup> A GAO study of the RIF program showed that 50% of RIF projects are successfully transitioned. Into acquisition programs.<sup>4</sup>

In the Congressionally Mandated Sec 809 Panel 2018 report on streamlining DOD acquisition recommended **tripling** the RIF allocation, to **\$750 million** per year.<sup>5</sup> However, despite being made permanent by Congress in fy2017 NDAA, RIF funding was not included in the fy2020 Defense Appropriations bill. We urge Congress to restore funding to RIF for fy2021 at the Sec. 809 panel report's recommended \$750 million level.

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<sup>1</sup> Bujewski, Ted. *Fiscal Year 2019 Defense Rapid Innovation Fund*. Presentation to Congressional Staff, April, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Ibid,

<sup>3</sup> Ellen Purdy and Ted Bujewski, *Rapid Innovation Fund (RIF): Program Overview*, December 2017

<sup>4</sup> GAO, *DOD Rapid Innovation Program*, May 2015

<sup>5</sup> Sec. 809 Panel. "Subrecommendation 21b: Build on the successes of the SBIR/STTR and RIF programs.". *Report of the Advisory Panel on Streamlining and Codifying Acquisition Regulations*. January, 2018