



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
SMALL BUSINESS



VANGUARD AWARDS  
FY2022

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



### MR. FAROOQ MITHA

*SES Director*

**Office of Small Business Programs,  
Department of Defense**

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The Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) is proud to announce the winners of the 8th annual Vanguard Awards. Each year, this program honors the exemplary contributions of Defense acquisition individuals, teams, and a component organization that influence small business participation in Defense acquisitions and make significant contributions toward assuring the preparedness of warfighters and the Department of Defense.

Small business participation in the Defense Industrial Base provides immense value and is the cornerstone of our supply chain. The DoD has committed to a department-wide approach to unlock the potential of small businesses in supporting our national defense. The innovation and exploration of small businesses strengthen our nation's economy and security, ensuring a better future for our country.

The Biden Administration pledged to meet small businesses where they are by reducing traditional barriers to doing business with the U.S. Government. We proudly carry that mission forward and are actively engaged in creating opportunities for small businesses to become indispensable partners in our mission to protect national security.

Thank you for your collaboration in this important work and all that you do for the Department and our nation. Our success is reliant on the innovation, agility, and ingenuity you provide.



## MISTRESS OF CEREMONY



### DR. JACQUELINE CHARLES

*Associate Director*

**Policy, Legislative Affairs and  
Workforce Development, Office of  
Small Business Programs,  
Department of Defense**

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As the Associate Director of Small Business Policy, Legislative Affairs and Workforce Development, Dr. Charles serves as the Principal Advisor to the Director on small business industrial base related policy, regulation, and legislation.

Prior to joining the DoD OSBP, Dr. Charles served as a Product Support Manager in the Combat Data Systems Program Office within the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program. Dr. Charles advised on logistics policies. She led efforts to sustain various software and hardware tools that Combat Data Systems provides to its operational units that are responsible for developing combat mission data files with the latest capabilities for the F-35. She also held other key leadership roles in her 24-year career in support of various DoD acquisition and sustainment programs.

Dr. Charles earned her Ph.D. in Education with a specialization in Leadership for Higher Education and an MBA with a specialization in Global Operations and Supply Chain Management from Capella University. She is also a member of the Defense Acquisition Corps.



# WELCOME MESSAGE



## HONORABLE RADHA IYENGAR PLUMB

*Deputy Under Secretary of Defense*

**Acquisition and Sustainment,  
Department of Defense**

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Dr. Radha Iyengar Plumb was confirmed as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (DUSD(A&S)) on April 18, 2023. In this role, she is responsible to the Under Secretary

of Defense for all matters pertaining to acquisition; contract administration; logistics and materiel readiness; installations and environment; operational energy; chemical, biological, and nuclear defense; the acquisition workforce; and the defense industrial base.

Prior to this appointment, she served as Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, where she was responsible for leading the executive staff, providing counsel and advice to the Deputy Secretary, and ensuring Deputy-led governance processes were aligned with key leadership priorities. Most recently, she served as Acting Deputy Director of Administration and Management within the Department of Defense.

Prior to her appointment as Chief of Staff, she was the Director of Research and Insights for Trust & Safety at Google and had previously served as Global Head of Policy Analysis at Facebook. Before her Silicon Valley work, Dr. Plumb was a senior economist at the RAND Corporation where she focused on improving measurement and evaluation of readiness and security efforts across the Department of Defense. In that capacity she served as lead author on a number of critical reports including assessing the implications of open service of Transgender Service members and review of security and suitability screening efforts.

Dr. Plumb received her Ph.D. in economics from Princeton University. Her research has covered empirical evaluations of policies aimed at reducing violence, including criminal violence, sexual assault, terrorist behavior, and sexual and intimate partner violence. At the outset of her career, she was an assistant professor at the London School of Economics and a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Scholar at Harvard.

# KEYNOTE ADDRESS



## MR. DILAWAR SYED

*Special Representative*

**Bureau of Economic and Business  
Affairs, U.S. Department of State**

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Special Representative Dilawar Syed advances trade, commercial, and economic policies for America's workers and the middle-class to help create well-paying jobs. Serving in the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business

Affairs, Special Representative Syed leads efforts to support the export activities of U.S. companies through commercial advocacy and create a level playing field for U.S. companies overseas. Syed draws from his experience as an entrepreneur and a public servant who has advocated for inclusive entrepreneurship at the federal and state level.

In an entrepreneurial career spanning over two decades, Dilawar Syed has built global businesses that are driving a major impact across technology, healthcare, and business services. Most recently, Syed was CEO at Lumiata, a healthcare AI company. Previously, Syed was President at Freshworks where he helped scale the software company's products to thousands of small and medium businesses. Earlier in his career, Syed was an executive at Yahoo! Platforms and Data Division.

Special Representative Syed has driven civic efforts at the federal and state level in addition to his global work in business and entrepreneurship. In the Obama Administration, Syed played an active role in promoting the State Department's Global Entrepreneurship Program and connecting Silicon Valley innovators with emerging entrepreneurial ecosystems – from South Asia to the Middle East and Turkey. As the founding chair of the California Entrepreneurship Task Force with Governor Newsom's Office of Business and Economic Development, Syed drove inclusive entrepreneurship bridging coastal regions with the state's rural heartland and helped small businesses struggling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Syed also served on President Obama's White House Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and chaired the White House Initiative on AAPIs' Economic Growth Committee. In that role, he led the administration's engagement with small businesses across the U.S. after the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Syed served as a liaison with the Small Business Administration and the Department of Commerce on federal initiatives such as the President's Export Council.

Syed holds an M.B.A. from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and earned a B.A. in Economics and Computer Science from The University of Texas at Austin.



# VANGUARD AWARDS CEREMONY FY2022



**12:30PM - 2:30PM**

## MISTRESS OF CEREMONY

**Dr. Jacqueline Charles**

*Office of Small Business Programs, Department of Defense*

## LUNCH

## WELCOME

**Honorable Radha Iyengar Plumb**

*Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense*

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Mr. Dilawar Syed**

*Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State*

## VANGUARD AWARDS PRESENTATION

**Mr. Farooq Mitha**

*Office of Small Business Programs, Department of Defense*

**Mr. Dilawar Syed**

*Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State*

## THANK YOU AND CLOSING

# DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SMALL BUSINESS VANGUARD AWARDS

Established in 2015, the DoD Small Business Vanguard Awards Program recognizes the exceptional contributions of DoD small business professionals and members of the acquisition community that influence small business participation in Defense procurements. The awards process is managed on behalf of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) by the Director, Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP). The nominees selected for the awards demonstrated excellence and significantly contributed to the small business mission during the period of October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

## The Revolutionary Leadership Award

This award goes to the individual that advocates for the inclusion of small business participation, responds to challenges with inventive ways, brings innovation to the DoD through small business utilization, and demonstrates strong leadership abilities.

## The Ms. Tracey L. Pinson Small Business Professional of The Year Award

In Ms. Tracey L. Pinson's honor, this award goes to the individual who embodies the small business mission to ensure a healthy and modernized industrial base and tirelessly advocates for small businesses.

## The Small Business Innovation Research Award

This award goes to the individual or team that exhibits innovative approaches, outstanding support, and implements processes to significantly advance the Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) programs.

## The Verdure Award

This award goes to the team that demonstrates innovative approaches to balancing the development of efficient buying methods and the utilization of small businesses.

## The Vanguard Award

This top small business award is presented to the DoD component organization that best exemplifies a commitment to Small Business Programs in a variety of functional activities.



## MS. TRACEY L. PINSON

*A Lifelong Public Servant*

The Ms. Tracey L. Pinson Small Business Professional of the Year Award, in honor of Ms. Pinson's lasting legacy, recognizes an individual's commitment to small business utilization. Ms. Pinson was a tireless advocate for small businesses, dedicating her professional career to public service in support of small business equities.

From 1982-1986, Ms. Pinson served as counsel to the Committee on Small Business, U.S. House of Representatives, under the leadership of the Chairman of the House Small Business Committee, Congressman Parren J. Mitchell. In this position, she developed and analyzed legislation for the purpose of assisting small businesses in efforts to contract with the federal government.

From 1986-1995, Ms. Pinson served as Assistant to the Director, Office of Small Business Programs, Office of the Secretary of Defense. During this time, she served as the program manager of the DoD Small Disadvantaged Business Programs and Minority Institutions Program. She developed the implementation strategy for the DoD Mentor-Protégé Program resulting in over 250 participants with a budget allocation as high as \$120 million. This program has served as the model business mentoring program for all federal government agencies.

In April 1995, Ms. Pinson was appointed by the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Togo West, as the Director, Office of Small Business Programs, Office of the Secretary of the Army. Ms. Pinson advised the Secretary of the Army, the Undersecretary of the Army and Army Staff on all small business issues. She was responsible for the management and leadership of the Department of the Army small business programs valued over \$17 billion per year, providing management oversight of the Army mentoring program for small businesses. Throughout her nearly 20 years as the Army's Small Business Program Director, Ms. Pinson served as a principal member of the Army Secretariat, and the highest-ranking female civil servant in the Army Acquisition career field. Additionally, Ms. Pinson led the Army with the highest total contract dollars awarded to small businesses in the federal government.

During her 32-year career as a public servant, Ms. Pinson received numerous awards and commendations including the Presidential Rank Award of Meritorious Executive from President George W. Bush and the Presidential Rank Award of Distinguished Executive Award from President Barack H. Obama. She received her Bachelor of Science in Political Science from Howard University and a Juris Doctor from Georgetown University Law Center. She was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®.

# THE REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP AWARD

IS PRESENTED TO \_\_\_\_\_

**Myaleca R. Malone**  
Department of the Air Force

Ms. Malone distinguished herself as a Revolutionary Leader at 763d Enterprise Sourcing Squadron, Air Force Installation Contracting Center, Air Force Materiel Command, at Scott Air Force Base, IL from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022. During this period Ms. Malone expertly managed the squadron's Small Business Program, providing incomparable dynamic small business professional support for air mobility command and beyond. While serving as the Small Business Professional Ms. Malone led the squadron to exceed its Fiscal Year 2022 56 percent prime small business goal by 10 percent, a historic benchmark for the squadron. Ms. Malone embodied the Department's small business mission, and spearheaded SDB initiatives to include an Advancing Equity in Procurement Industry Day to increase small business industrial base. The distinctive accomplishments of Ms. Malone reflect great credit upon herself and the United States Air Force.



# THE MS. TRACEY L. PINSON SMALL BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

IS PRESENTED TO \_\_\_\_\_

**Heather I. Scherer**  
U.S. Army Materiel Command

Ms. Heather I. Scherer is hereby recognized as the recipient of the prestigious Ms. Tracey L. Pinson Small Business Professional of the Year Award for her diligent pursuit of excellence and efficiency in supporting Small Business programs. She did so by breaking down barriers to entry through her innovative approaches in analyzing data and her leadership and expertise in executing the Mission & Installation Contracting Command's annual outreach brief to industry one hundred percent virtually. These unique and transformational initiatives provided greater awareness of upcoming opportunities for industry and provided the MICC's mission partners with greater insight into small business capabilities to meet their requirements. As a direct result of Ms. Scherer's expertise and steadfast focus on the small business mission, the MICC's Office of Small Business Programs, maximized opportunities for small businesses resulting in increased small business achievements in all categories over the past three years. Ms. Scherer's commitment and personification of the small business mission reflects great credit upon herself, the Mission Installation Contracting Command, the United States Army Contracting Command, United States Army Materiel Command, and the United States Army.



# THE SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH AWARD

IS PRESENTED TO \_\_\_\_\_

## Army Applications Laboratory U.S. Army Futures Command

The Army Applications Laboratory, Army Futures Command is hereby recognized as the recipient of the Small Business Innovation Research Award, for their exceptional service in growing the national security innovation base and providing unparalleled access to small businesses in 2022. The Army Applications Laboratory, Army Futures Command has provided improved access, transparency, and speed to capital for small businesses, making the Army a trusted business partner. These efforts have succeeded in developing novel technologies for the Army and new revenue streams for small businesses. This achievement is in the finest traditions of military and civilian service and reflects great credit on them, Army Futures Command, and the United States Army.



# THE VERDURE AWARD

IS PRESENTED TO \_\_\_\_\_

## Defense Threat Reduction Agency Office of Small Business Programs and Acquisition Management Department

Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) has long emphasized thorough acquisition planning among its program management acquisition workforce to drive efficient buying and small business engagement. Together DTRA's Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) and Acquisition Management Department (AL-AQ) excel in innovative outreach both internally to DTRA's acquisition workforce and externally to Small Business Industry representatives, while promoting efficient procurement practices.

In 2022 specifically, OSBP and AL-AQ joined together several initiatives to update DTRA's internal acquisition architecture and processes to build greater efficiency and opportunities for small business engagement, including: a Fresh Start Initiative, which revamped DTRA's entire acquisition process and supportive documentation following Working Groups with Agency-wide Stakeholders; the incorporation of Small Business Advocate representation in preparation of each procurement effort's acquisition planning; continued outreach among qualified small business vendors through innovative channels, such as dedicated Industry Office Hours; and incorporation of small business considerations in formal market research, including a Vetted Vendor Database. DTRA's Fiscal Year 2022 procurement metrics solidly demonstrate DTRA's continued commitment to efficient buying and utilization of small business performers.

Overall, DTRA OSBP's and AL-AQ's combined efforts reflect excellence and innovation in efficient buying with small businesses.



# THE VANGUARD AWARD

IS PRESENTED TO \_\_\_\_\_

## Department of the Air Force Office of Small Business Programs

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) exemplified excellence in Small Business program management, instilling a culture that looks to small businesses to meet the warfighter's needs and ensuring small business participation is optimized throughout Department's acquisitions process. The DAF Office of Small Business Programs and the combined efforts of leaders and acquisition professionals at all levels demonstrated extraordinary diligence in all aspects of policy, advocacy, and execution of Small Business strategic objectives. Through the persistent and dedicated efforts of the men and women supporting the DAF Small Business Program, the DAF awarded a record \$15.57 billion prime small business contracts during Fiscal Year 2022. This achievement surpassed the Fiscal Year 2021 record by \$400 million, marking another consecutive year the DAF has increased prime contracting obligations. The DAF Office of Small Business Programs, along with the Department's 162 small business professionals around the world, delivered and continues to pursue exemplary results for the Department, the Defense Industrial Base, and the United States economy. The distinctive accomplishments of the combined Air Force and Space Forces Small Business Program reflect great credit upon the Department of the Air Force.



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