



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO AND REP. JOE MORELLE ANNOUNCE EXPANSION OF APEX ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

High-performing program will serve the entirety of the NY-SMART I-corridor, enabling seamless support for businesses across Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse, strengthening the region's semiconductor and defense manufacturing ecosystem

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello and Rep. Joe Morelle today announced the expansion of the Monroe County-Finger Lakes APEX Accelerator program to include Erie and Niagara Counties in western New York. The APEX Accelerator, which helps businesses provide their goods and services to the Department of Defense and other federal agencies, currently services the Rochester and Finger Lakes region, as well as Onondaga and Cayuga Counties in Central New York.

By expanding into Erie and Niagara Counties, this high-performing program will now serve 13 counties and the NY-SMART I-corridor, enabling seamless support for businesses across Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse, and strengthening the region's semiconductor and defense manufacturing ecosystem in support of the defense and government industrial base.

As part of the expansion, the program is being rebranded as the **Monroe County-Upstate NY APEX Accelerator**.

"Our APEX Accelerator has helped hundreds of local companies secure contracts with the Department of Defense, helping to grow their businesses and to support our nation's military," **said County Executive Bello**. "This expansion helps us bring this highly successful program to a wider geographic area, and solidifies our efforts to grow the NY-SMART I-corridor. I'm grateful to my partners in government, Congressman Joe Morelle, and Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand for their support in making this expansion possible and for their efforts to establish our region as a critical tech hub."

With new partnerships in the Buffalo-Rochester-Syracuse regions, it makes sense for government agencies, industry and partners to now have a seamless point of contact with the DoD APEX center focused on accelerating innovation and industrial readiness. Working with federal and state partners, the program will provide targeted programs and training to help local businesses acquire the know-how to become suppliers at all levels of the supply chain.

APEX Accelerators provide government contracting assistance, readiness assessments, and customized training to diverse small businesses, major contractors, and underserved communities. In doing so, they further advance the NY SMART I-Corridor's capacity as a leading contributor to America's crucial semiconductor and defense microelectronic commons.

"We're fortunate to have the Monroe County Finger Lakes APEX Accelerator based here in Rochester, helping businesses develop growth plans, secure funding, foster collaboration, and scale their success," **said Congressman Joe Morelle**. "By expanding their reach, the Accelerator will now have the resources to support innovation on a broader, more regional scale, something we're no stranger to Upstate New York. Thank you to County Executive Bello, Director Anna Vulaj Fitzsimmons, and everyone at the APEX Accelerator for everything they do for our community, and I look forward to our continued collaboration."

"This expansion of Monroe County's APEX Accelerator across the entire upstate NY-SMART I-Corridor boosts local job growth by helping local businesses compete for and win federal contracts." **said U.S. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer**. "By connecting businesses from Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse with the tools to land federal contracts, we're creating more good-paying jobs, sparking innovation, and building a stronger industrial base that keeps America competitive on the world stage. I fought tooth and nail to pass my CHIPS and Science Act, which powers the NY-SMART I-Corridor, because I know that Upstate New York has the talent, ingenuity, and grit to lead the industries of the future. I was pleased to partner with County Executive Bello and Congressman Morelle to expand the Accelerator's reach, giving more businesses – large and small, urban and rural, established and emerging – the chance to compete, win contracts, and grow jobs across Upstate."

"We know when organizations like the US Small Business Administration and DOD's APEX Accelerator unite our efforts, we create a powerful force for the growth and success of small business," **said Victoria Reynolds, District Director of SBA's Buffalo District** which serves 14 counties in Western NY and the Finger Lakes. "The expansion of MCFL APEX into Erie and Niagara Counties will be a valuable asset to Buffalo area entrepreneurs and we look forward to our continued collaboration."

Over the past five years, the Monroe County-Finger Lakes APEX Accelerator team has supported businesses in securing roughly 20,000 contracts totaling more than \$1.1 billion in awards. And it has achieved a remarkable return on investment — last year, every dollar spent on the program generated more than \$1,500 in economic impact.

The APEX Accelerator program works with large and small businesses as a point of entry and re-entry into the supply chain, and helping identify critical technologies. Part of the readiness work includes required registrations and certifications for the procurement process. It also provides training and networking opportunities and helps match business capabilities with contracting opportunities.

The APEX program is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency, known as COMIDA. All services are free of charge.

Morelle and Bello made the announcement at the headquarters of Rochester Optical Manufacturing, a minority-owned business that has benefited from the APEX Accelerator program. Rochester Optical supplies manufactures eyeglasses and other optical equipment for the U.S. military.

“As an advanced ophthalmic supplier with DoD, we have utilized APEX services to discuss critical partnerships and supply chain integrity,” **said Patrick Ho, President of Rochester Optical Manufacturing Company.** “The continuous innovative work we offer the Department of Defense has led us to additional new products and a newly let contract valued in excess of \$50 million.”

“The APEX Accelerator has been an invaluable partner, elevating our region's manufacturing reputation nationwide and providing hands-on guidance to navigate complex DoD contracts,” **said Jordan Amoia, President of Aurora Machine.** “Their dedicated support has empowered our growth, and we are deeply grateful for their transformative impact.”

“We have worked with the APEX Accelerator team on a number of projects and events this year,” **said Annette Warren, president of iSecure, LLC.** “We love working with the team for matchmaker events have received great direction from the staff and best practices to do business in government contracting.

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