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\$1.4M grant will help small defense contractors find commercial markets

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Pentagon officials have awarded a [Melbourne](#)-based state high-tech advocacy agency a \$1.4 million grant to help emerging companies find commercial markets for their products, the agency said this week.

Florida's Technological Research & Development Authority received the grant as part of a partnership with the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, officials said. Companies in Florida and New York will receive assistance through a program known as the Defense Department Technology Showcase Initiative.

In all, 45 companies -- 20 in Florida and 25 in New York -- will be selected after a competitive evaluation to receive help from the initiative, according to the Melbourne agency. The companies must have previously received a Phase II Small Business Innovation Research grant from the Defense Department.

Those chosen for the new program will receive help in business planning, sales and marketing, government-contracting strategy and raising capital, officials said.

The Melbourne agency will act as an advocate for each company's Small Business Innovation project and connect the company to potential business opportunities with aerospace contractors, said Chester J. Straub Jr., executive director of the Melbourne agency. It will also link the small companies to high-tech mentors, government acquisition officials and potential sources of venture capital.

"This is a crucial step in moving these companies ahead to the next step in commercialization," he said in a statement.

More information about the agency can be found at www.trda.org.

