

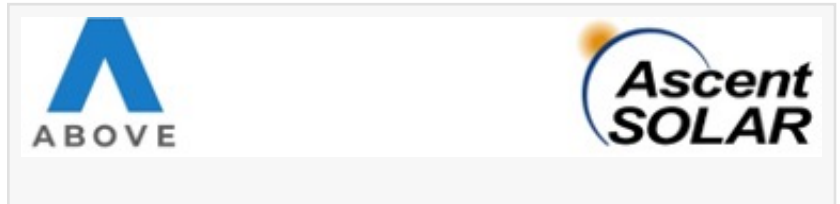
# U.S. Air Force Awards Significant Contract to Above: Orbital and Ascent Solar Technologies

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[/EINPresswire.com/](#) -- [Above: Orbital, Inc.](#)

has been awarded a significant contract from the United States Air Force for On-orbit Manufacturing of

Thin-Film Solar Photovoltaics in partnership with [Ascent Solar Technologies, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: ASTI), the leading U.S. innovator in the design and manufacture of featherweight, flexible, and durable CIGS thin-film photovoltaic (PV) solutions.



The Small Business Innovation Research Program Phase I Award from the U.S. Air Force is to develop a solar heated crucible for the manufacturing of lightweight, thin-film solar photovoltaics (PV) on orbit. This technology will enable the development of mass-efficient PV cells that meet the demand of Air Force and Space Force Systems.

"We're pleased to be partnering with Ascent to develop high efficiency, lightweight solar cells that can be manufactured in space," says Rhonda Stevenson, CEO of Above: Orbital. "This is the second SBIR contract from the U.S. Air Force and we believe it will lead to a larger, Phase II award. We are advancing robust on-orbit systems for both defense and commercial applications."

The Air Force has a vital and urgent need to deploy lightweight, robust, and affordable solar PV across the globe as well as in space to meet operational power requirements for Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles, forward operating bases, and space-based power beaming.

"Above's ability to provide tunable, artificial gravity, coupled with our manufacturing equipment cost and operations, create an ideal scenario for producing thin-film solar in space," said Dr. Joseph Armstrong, CTO/CSO at Ascent Solar. "There is also an increased benefit when you remove some of the manufacturing constraints that are required on earth, enabling more common and widely available materials to be used in orbit. We look forward to demonstrating our product performance for the U.S. Air Force."

Above: Orbital has already begun to make an impact in multiple commercial sectors with use cases ranging from in space servicing, assembly, and manufacturing to photonics and space

tourism.

Earlier this year, Above: Orbital received a \$1.7 million Phase II SBIR Award to develop an efficient, lightweight structure to support solar panels, large power, and communications antenna arrays, as well as other space infrastructure functions.

About Ascent Solar Technologies, Inc.

Backed by 20+ years of R&D, 17 years of manufacturing experience, numerous awards, and a comprehensive IP and patent portfolio, Ascent Solar Technologies, Inc. (ASTI) is a leading provider of innovative, high-performance, flexible thin-film solar panels for use in scenarios where traditional rigid solar panels don't work. Ascent's photovoltaic (PV) modules have been deployed on space missions, multiple airborne vehicles, agrivoltaic installations, in industrial and commercial construction, and in consumer goods, revolutionizing the use cases and environments for solar power. Ascent Solar's Headquarters & Perovskite Manufacturing Center of Excellence are located in Thornton, Colorado, and Ascent's 15MW manufacturing facility is located in Zurich, Switzerland.

To learn more, visit <https://www.ascentsolar.com>.

About Above: Orbital Inc.

Above: Orbital Inc. designs and develops adaptable, space-based platforms for the U.S. Department of Defense and commercial customers. Above is the only company that is addressing the current demand for automated, on-orbit platforms, combining commercial off-the-shelf and proprietary technologies to provide more space in space. Its products are modular, scalable, and can be deployed rapidly to address On-Orbit defense, and commercial demand. Above: Orbital is a subsidiary of Above: Space Development Corporation which envisions a habitable future for the company's technology and innovation in low Earth orbit, cislunar space, and beyond.

For more information, visit [www.abovespace.com](http://www.abovespace.com).

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