

Grant Engine Unites with Akela Consulting to Form the Leading Federal Funding Platform for Deep-Tech Innovators

The combined team brings unmatched success in SBIR and advanced research programs, catalyzing companies from concept to contract.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Grant Engine, the leader in non-dilutive funding for life science companies through NIH, BARDA, DoD, NSF, and ARPA-H programs, has acquired Akela Consulting, a premier grant writing firm focused on dual-use technology companies seeking funding from DoD, AFWERX, XTech, NASA, and Department of Transportation initiatives. Founded by Daniel Kolos and Zev Orzy, Akela Consulting guides dual-use innovators from opportunity identification through proposal development and contract execution, with proven expertise securing SBIRs and larger awards across defense and emerging technology sectors.



Grant Engine

This union strengthens America's innovation pipeline and accelerates how dual-use and deep-tech startups access billions in federal R&D funding. In recent years, Grant Engine has achieved record-breaking growth by delivering industry-leading client satisfaction, the highest win rate in company history, and built the largest and most capable team that delivers on an unprecedented volume of both small awards and strategic non-dilutive funding exceeding \$15 million per project. Grant Engine's record-setting performance in client satisfaction and win rates isn't just a milestone, it's the model we're now bringing to defense and dual-use technologies.

"This acquisition is about ensuring America's most promising innovators - whether in life

sciences, defense tech, space, or infrastructure - get the funding to make their breakthroughs real. Zev Orzy and Daniel Kolos have built Akela into an exceptional team that blends deep federal expertise with strategic insight and an entrepreneurial spirit. With Akela, we're not just expanding our footprint, we're redefining how America's innovators engage with the federal ecosystem to bring their breakthroughs to life," said Sam C. Tetlow, CEO of Grant Engine. "I'm also thrilled to have Dr. Madhav Sankunny, a key leader at Grant Engine, lead the integration of Akela's capabilities and drive continued success."

Co-Founded by Daniel Kolos and Zev Orzy, Akela Consulting has supported dozens of high-potential startups in winning competitive contracting strategies, proposal narratives, and long-term funding roadmaps. Collectively, the group has secured millions of dollars in awards from the U.S. Air Force (AFWERX), Army (SBIR and XTech), Navy, National Science Foundation, NASA, and other federal agencies. Akela maintains strong partnerships with leading venture firms, accelerators, and incubators - including Techstars, gener8tor, and NSIN - providing their cohorts with hands-on training and strategies to integrate with the Department of Defense to help secure government funding.

"Joining Grant Engine marks an exciting new chapter for our team and our clients," said Zev Orzy, Executive Director of Grant Engine. "Grant Engine's excellent brand, expertise in the non-dilutive funding space, process maturity, and operational excellence will enable us to support more startups, deliver greater outcomes, and help our clients move from research concepts to funded innovations faster than ever before."

Through this acquisition, Grant Engine now provides its clients comprehensive federal contracting support across all federal agencies, serving American businesses of all sizes with the knowledge, tools, and expertise to effectively and efficiently leverage government funding to accelerate technology development and government commercialization.

Strengthened Structure, Unified Vision

Now part of Grant Engine, Akela's legacy of helping founders win government contracts becomes a national resource available to every deep-tech innovator. Operating under the Grant Engine name, the expanded Akela team will continue focusing on Department of Defense and dual-use commercialization, while leveraging Grant Engine's data-driven analytics that deliver higher funding success, evidence-based insights, and faster, stronger proposals - all supported by robust infrastructure and cross-agency expertise. With a dedicated defense technology team and Grant Engine's proven culture of excellence, we're delivering market-defining capabilities for clients across defense and deep-tech verticals. Together, we are building the nation's most powerful engine for non-dilutive funding - one that helps innovators find, win, and manage funding for the technologies that define our future.

"Working with Akela Consulting has been a game-changer for our business. Their expertise, hands-on support, and willingness to go the extra mile have helped us secure nearly \$3.5M in funding from federal agencies, including the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and the Department of

Transportation. The expert team has been all-in on our success, driving our growth through non-dilutive funding, sharp business insights, rigorous analysis, and no-fluff business development. This partnership fast-tracked our U.S. go-to-market and laid the foundation for the necessary first step in growing our business into what it is today. Now, combined with Grant Engine we envision a broader and deeper collaboration to significantly fuel our mission.” - Gabriel Bendheim, COO, Tenna Systems

To mark this evolution, Grant Engine is also launching its [2026 Defense Innovation Funding Series: The Power of Access](#) - a national initiative to decode and improve access to the federal funding ecosystem. Kicking off with The Power of Access, the series delivers a clear roadmap across programs like SBIR, AFWERX, SPACEWERX, DARPA, and PEOs, pairing tactical how-to with strategic insight on funding across a company’s lifecycle, proposal development, and emerging national priorities from AI to border security. [Register here](#).

About Grant Engine

Grant Engine wins federally funded grants and contracts at a rate 2 to 4 times higher than the national average. Our success comes from understanding your product and positioning its unique value against the standard of care or state-of-the-art. We stand out through our expert team with proven success across life sciences, energy, and high-tech sectors; our proprietary, rigorous External Review process; and unmatched in-house research on what drives funding wins. We help identify the right non-dilutive opportunities, confirm competitiveness, and write the grant or contract application - highlighting your differentiation and leading you through the process to secure funding. Based in New York City and Research Triangle Park, Grant Engine is in its tenth year. More information and a media kit at grantengine.com.

By the numbers:

- 2x - 4x better than national average win rate
- >5% of SBIRs submission volume annually
- >\$25M average strategic award value
- 10 years of impact, hundreds of funded innovators, and over \$1 billion in awards

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