

Federal Design-Build Symposium Draws Record-Breaking Crowd and Agency Leaders

Federal Owners and design-build practitioners gather as agencies focus on moving from authorization to implementation

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Design-Build Institute of America's (DBIA) 2026 Federal Design-Build Symposium drew a record crowd of nearly 700 federal Owners, design-build practitioners and industry leaders to Reston, Virginia, Aug. 11-12, reflecting growing momentum around the use and implementation of design-build in the federal sector.



2026 Federal Design-Build Symposium, Reston, VA.

Centered on the theme "From Authorization to Implementation," this year's Symposium focused on the practical decisions federal agencies and their industry partners face as they work to

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*Lisa Washington, CAE,
ED/CEO, DBIA*

deliver successful design-build projects. The Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) explicitly authorized progressive design-build (PDB) for military construction projects, bringing new attention to how federal Owners move from authority to implementation. Discussions examined how Owners prepare for design-build, structure procurements and build the conditions for successful project delivery from team selection through execution.

“The record attendance at this year's Federal Design-Build Symposium tells us something important about where the federal market is right now,” said Lisa Washington, CAE,

Executive Director/CEO of DBIA. “Federal Owners and industry teams are looking beyond whether design-build can be used. They are asking how to structure programs, procure the right

teams and create the conditions for successful project delivery. That is exactly the conversation DBIA is here to support.”

The Symposium brought together representatives from across the federal government and industry to examine both long-standing design-build practices and emerging opportunities in the market. Participating agencies included the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. General Services Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, along with the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard and other public-sector Owners.

FBI and GSA leaders brought the implementation discussion down to the project level, sharing lessons from federal design-build work and the decisions agencies face as they put PDB into practice. FBI representatives highlighted experience from projects including the Higher Altitude Research Lab. Other discussions examined procurement and qualifications-based selection, as well as questions around phased funding and Owner readiness.

A recurring message throughout the two-day event was that authorization alone does not ensure project success. Effective design-build delivery starts with informed Owners and clear procurement strategies. It also requires early alignment among project participants and contracting approaches that support collaboration from the outset.

“What we heard throughout the Symposium was that constrained resources and increasing project complexity have created a federal imperative to optimize design-build project delivery,” Washington said. “Federal Owners are working through procurement, organizational readiness and project-level decisions in real time. Bringing together Owners who have achieved extraordinary success with design-build to share what they have learned with other federal Owners, while also creating opportunities for engagement with industry, is one of the most valuable things DBIA can do.”

DBIA continues to provide [federal-specific resources](#) to support Owners as they implement design-build, including Federal Design-Build Best Practices and guidance on qualifications-based selection. DBIA will also release its Owner Readiness Assessment tool at the [2026 Design-Build Conference & Expo in Cleveland](#) this November, giving Owners another resource to evaluate their preparedness for successful design-build delivery.

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