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Turn your  
Fallout Funds into  
Innovation with  
Emerging Tech

dcode

The end of the fiscal year can be a chaotic time. Agencies and organizations across the government know all too well if they don't spend what they've been allocated, they may be facing budget cuts next year. The funds that need to be used up go by a few different names: fall-out funds, expired funds, or end-of-year funds. But the goal is the same.

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We've put together a guide to help make the best use of those funds and ensure the money you spend moves your agency forward and solves challenges, particularly when it comes to bringing in commercial tech.

## Step 1: Find the right tech

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Here's where you start: by scoping your problems. It may seem most straightforward to think about what solutions you need most, but the way to find the best tech to fit your needs is by narrowing down the problem you need to solve, rather than deciding on a solution.

This opens up the opportunity to a variety of solutions, all of which may be able to solve the same problem in different ways. Being overly prescriptive ensures you limit your options.

Consider this: an interagency employee transfer process takes too long. This is because records are kept in paper, maintained by facility clerks, and stored in secure facilities. There's a variety of different solutions that can digitize, secure, and centralize these records — all solving the same problem with a different solution.

### **Acquire an Innovative Mindset**

Scoping problems to identify tech needs and bring in the right solutions can require an innovative mindset and an organizational culture shift, something that can be achieved through government innovation training. If your training budget is underutilized, the end of the fiscal year is a great time to spend it to work towards a more innovative future with commercial tech solutions.

## Step 2: Find the right tech

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### Finding the right tech can be a challenge, but fear not.

First and foremost, turn the process over to those who are experiencing the problem that needs to be solved. It's better for the requirements holder to decide what they need and where to find it.

To conduct market research successfully, expand your horizons. That means instead of searching through traditional catalogues and contracting vehicles, think outside the box and research like an investor.

### Here's a few ways to research like an investor and uncover the best tech:

- **Look at other customers.** Large-scale customers, especially on the commercial side, are a good sign that this company can execute a contract of federal market magnitude.
- **Find out who's investing.** Top-tier investors paint a good picture that this tech has staying power.
- **Get comfortable with a bit of risk.** Risk aversion inadvertently leaves you stuck in a rut.

### After identifying potential solutions, how can you evaluate them?

Not all commercial tech companies are well-equipped to support government missions. It's important to rigorously evaluate the solutions you choose to ensure the best possible outcomes.

These steps can give you much-needed insight into whether the tech you've found is well-equipped to support your mission. To start evaluating the tech your market research uncovered:

- **Work** with federally-focused partners to find viable solutions that are the right tech fit and vetted for federal quickly.
- **Research** prior commercial success. Past performance and a proven track record can give you confidence in the solutions.
- **Find** out if companies are set up for future success and scalability by learning about their people operations and maturity.
- **Discover** how committed they are to the federal market. Have they gone through any federally-focused acceleration programs? Do they have buy-in from leadership & board? If the answer to both of those is yes, you've likely found a company that is ready to support federal missions.
- **Partner** with private sector experts that are focused on the federal market.

## Step 3: Get the tech in the door

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We know the end of the year is upon us, and it's crunch time. There are plenty of commercial and non-traditional tech companies on existing contract vehicles or programs that are already able to work with the government.

### **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contracts and open Commercial Solutions Openings (CSOs) can help you work with tech fast.**

You can execute a Phase III SBIR with companies that are on a Phase I or II, even if your agency isn't involved with the Phase I or II award. To learn about companies with Phase I and Phase II SBIRs, use the **sbir.gov database**.

SBIRs aren't the only way to work with nontraditional tech quickly.

If you need to compete and downselect innovative tech quickly, but effectively, look at leveraging an open CSO, a source selection authority that is available across DoD and at select civilian agencies. CSOs allow you to assess a broad set of solutions quickly and spend less time at the procurement phase and more time on the implementation phase.

End of year funds can help you capitalize on the broad nature of an open CSO and bring in additional nontraditional solutions.

The chaos around spending end of year funds can be an opportunity to set your team and innovation efforts up for success in the year to come. To learn more about getting tech on contract fast, reach out to the experts at Dcode's GovHub. The GovHub is the one, central place where government leaders get started with commercial tech and our experts can help you make the best use of your funds before the clock runs out.

### **Get in touch at [dcode.co/gov](https://dcode.co/gov) and learn more about all the ways to work with Dcode.**

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## Ways to work with Dcode

### **dcode** advance

Dcode Advance is a foundational course on innovation in government, showing leaders how to apply entrepreneurial, startup methods and best practices to government processes and challenges. Learn to develop and evaluate ideas from an end-user perspective, launch those ideas into execution and scale, and tap into a massive community of innovators.

### **dcode** sustain

Dcode Sustain is a direct follow-on course to Dcode Advance. If Dcode Advance covers how to innovate like an entrepreneur, Dcode Sustain focuses on evaluating solutions and technologies like an investor. Learn to assess a vendor pitch, proposal, MVP, prototype, or solution like a venture capital investor.

### **dcode** procure

Dcode Procure is our course for acquisitions-focused professionals looking to better understand and execute rapid, innovative procurement methods. Dcode Procure covers FAR and non-FAR contracting methods, effective solicitation structure and marketing, and working relationships between innovation enablers and operators.

### **dcode** eureka

Dcode Eureka is a one-day training for government leaders looking to implement specific technology solutions in support of their missions. Dcode Eureka topics include but are not limited to AI/ML, cybersecurity, 5G, data analytics, 3D printing, and devops.