

2026 ETC Background

www.ndiatechexpo.org

General Information

The 2026 Emerging Technologies for Defense Conference and Exhibition (ETC) will take place September 9-10, 2026, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. NDIA will also be hosting classified sessions in conjunction with the event on September 8, 2026, at the Institute for Defense Analyses in Arlington, VA.

The conference focuses on both key emerging defense technologies and how to quickly get them in the hands of the warfighter. Programming will address several of the Department of War's highest priority joint mission areas and provide an opportunity for defense leaders to discuss their warfighting requirements, acquisition and contracting opportunities, initiatives that will deliver critical technology capabilities to operational forces rapidly and effectively, and for one-on-one engagements between industry and government. This is the fourth year of the successful and growing NDIA conference.

Programming Details

At the convention center, NDIA will be hosting keynote presentations, breakout panels, technical presentations, industry-government exchange sessions, networking events, and a large technology demonstration and exhibit floor.

- **Keynote presentations:** NDIA is coordinating keynote and featured presentations with senior leaders from across the Department of War, Combatant Commands, and the defense innovation ecosystem. Confirmed senior speakers for ETC 2026 currently include The Hon. Emil Michael, Under Secretary of War for Research & Engineering; The Hon. Michael P. Duffy, Under Secretary of War for Acquisition & Sustainment; The Hon. Michael Dodd, Assistant Secretary of War for Critical Technologies; The Hon. Joseph Jewell, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary of War for Science & Technology; and Jay Dryer, Director, Strategic Capabilities Office. Additional invited speakers include The Hon. Jules Hurst, Performing the Duties of Under Secretary of War (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer; Gen. Alexus Grynkewich, Commander, U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe; Gen. Dagvin Anderson, Commander, U.S. Africa Command; and LTG Steven Marks, Vice Commander, United States Special Operations Command. NDIA continues to coordinate participation from senior leaders across government, military, industry, and academia and aims to finalize keynote participation at least two months prior to the event.
- **Breakout panels:** NDIA works in coordination with multiple planning groups to organize the concurrent breakout tracks. These groups include NDIA Divisions (e.g., Science & Engineering Technology, Data Analytics & Enterprise Platforms), as well as the COCOMs, A&S, and R&E.
- **Technical presentations:** In addition to breakout rooms, ETC also offers technical abstract speaking or poster presentations on the main exhibit floor. The 2026 topic areas are: Game-Changing Technologies, Allies & Partners, Data Analytics, Digital Engineering, Energy & Power, Biotechnology, and Advanced Technologies for Acquisition and Financial Management Operations.
- **Industry-government exchange sessions:** NDIA organizes 1-on-1 sessions for industry and government to meet during the conference on the exhibit floor. Government participants register their interest, and then industry participants apply to meet with the government groups for 10 minutes.
- **Exhibits:** The exhibit floor is the large 2nd floor Convention Center exhibit space and is located near the keynote/general session room, technical abstract presentations, 1-on-1 industry-government exchange sessions, and networking receptions.
- **Technology demonstrations:** There will be space on the exhibit floor for technology demonstrations of emerging technology systems such as ground robotics, drones, and displays of technologies.
- **Classified breakouts:** The classified sessions (September 8, 2026 at the Institute for Defense Analyses in Arlington, VA) includes two concurrent breakout rooms with programming from government planning partners and NDIA Divisions.

Hackathon

NDIA is also bringing warfighters and problem solvers together for a high-impact, Global Hackathon for Defense, September 7-10. Kicking off ahead of ETC, this event links Department of War challenges with industry innovation in real time across the globe. Hackathon organizers are currently working with DOW partners to identify use cases/challenge problems and data sets for the hackathon participants to work.

Data Analytics/Decision Support

NDIA and the Society of Defense Financial Managers (SDFM) are co-sponsoring the Data Analytics and Decision Support (DA/DS) Conference which will be co-located with ETC. DA/DS will have joint programming sessions including discussions of how emerging technologies can support data analytics and decision support for the FM community; the need for reform of FM policies to support emerging technologies development and deployment; and the need for process reform to better engage private capital.

Previous Conference Highlights

The 2025 NDIA Emerging Technologies Conference featured keynote speakers including Under Secretaries Emil Michael and Michael Duffey, Gen. Alexis Grynkewich (EUCOM), industry CEOs, and a welcome video from Gen. Dan Caine. The conference included more than 50 programming sessions and over 150 speakers. ETC 2025 attracted more than 1,500 attendees, with additional participants taking part in the global hackathon event.

2025 Conference Program Book:

https://cdn.asp.events/CLIENT_NDIA_302620C0_0CD2_CD5E_420CC7D9D75F1BAE/sites/EmergingTech2025/media/2025-et-conference-program-v25.pdf