

FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF JUDGES@1BIZJOURNALS.COM

From the Orlando Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/orlando/news/2025/12/04/us-trump-golden-dome-central-florida-money-benefit.html>

SUBSCRIBER CONTENT:

TECHNOLOGY

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Central Florida firms are in prime position to benefit from President Trump's \$150B Golden Dome project.

President Donald Trump's \$150 billion Golden Dome project aims to achieve satellite interception and destruction of foreign threats.

BRANDEN BARKER



By [Lucy Dillon](#) – Contributing Writer, Orlando Business Journal
Dec 4, 2025 **Updated** Dec 4, 2025 4:39pm EST

Listen to this article 9 min

Story Highlights

- President Donald Trump's Golden Dome defense project could cost \$542 billion over 20 years.
- Central Florida firms including Lockheed Martin pursue multibillion-dollar Golden Dome contracts.
- The satellite-based system aims to intercept hypersonic weapons by 2028.

As the massive federal defense project known as Golden Dome for America promises to pour significant financial backing into Florida, Orlando-area firms are seizing the moment.

Central Florida offers the infrastructure to secure major deals, with a robust defense and simulation industry which Orlando Economic Partnership reports as having more than \$6 billion in regional impact.

Gearing up to lock in multibillion-dollar contracts and provide support on the gargantuan project are contractors including [Lockheed Martin](#) and L3Harris Technologies, institutions such as the [University of Central Florida](#), as well as smaller firms across the region.



Lockheed Martin in 2021 tested 5G-enabled modems in a pair of Hummers.

LOCKHEED MARTIN CORP.

Proposed by President Donald Trump's administration and known formally as the Scalable Homeland Innovative Enterprise Layered Defense (SHIELD), the Golden Dome aims to achieve satellite interception and destruction of foreign threats.

The project currently has a price tag of more than \$150 billion spread over a 10-year delivery period. Some [experts estimate](#) the ultimate cost of the project over the next two decades could reach as much as \$3.6 trillion. For now, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) caps its estimate at \$542 billion over 20 years.

"A lot of the industry is anticipating the opportunity that the Golden Dome is saying it's going to afford," said Iain Boyd, director of the Center for National Security Initiatives at Colorado University Boulder.



Iain Boyd, director of the Center for National Security Initiatives at Colorado University Boulder
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - BOULDER

Contractors were given more than a month to turn in their pitches, with the proposal-submission window closing Oct. 16. Now, the industry awaits official contract rollouts, which are beginning to come in waves, as Elon Musk's SpaceX secured a \$2 billion contract in late October.

As of the launch of the contract-submission process – early September – the Missile Defense Agency plans to award contracts of some kind to all qualifying bidders.

Here is how Central Florida fits into the context of the most expansive and expensive federal defense project ever pursued.

Orlando-area players

Lockheed Martin Missiles & Fire Control (MFC), located at 5600 W. Sand Lake Road, is one of the local facilities prepared to contribute to the large-scale federal defense project.

“Golden Dome for America will be a whole-of-nation effort across government, industry and academia,” a Lockheed Martin spokesperson told *Orlando Business Journal* in an email response.

Nationwide, Lockheed Martin will also hire thousands of employees this year, according to the spokesperson. Currently, MFC in Orlando has more than 300 job openings, ranging from software engineering and administration to early-career and hourly positions.



President Donald Trump signs the tax overhaul into law.

SAUL LOEB

Lockheed Martin has roughly 10,000 employees in Orlando, and an estimated impact of \$36 billion over the next decade to Florida’s economy, the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, L3Harris Technologies completed a \$100 million, 94,000-square-foot expansion of its satellite integration and test facility in Palm Bay in August, setting the stage for its role in the Golden Dome initiative, [OBJ reported](#) previously.

The Melbourne-based aerospace and defense company has also invested hundreds of millions of dollars into its facilities nationwide to expand its technology portfolio. This includes developing advanced space satellites, data links, multi-domain ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance), precision fire-control sensing, and propulsion and control systems for interceptors, a company spokesperson told *OBJ* in an email.

UCF also threw its hat in the ring for funding, though the exact amount it will receive is unclear, Wayne Fogel, director of business development for UCF's Institute for Simulation and Training, said.

"I don't know how big of a piece of pie we're [UCF] going to get of this, but we are positioned properly to be able to do a substantial amount of work on [Golden Dome]," Fogel said.



Image: University of Central Florida

Wayne Fogel, director of business development for UCF's Institute for Simulation and Training
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

A report released in December 2024 noted UCF ranks second in the state for Department of Defense funding and in the top 11% nationally.

“Knowing where we rank nationally, and knowing the kind of population that we have in our students, I feel very confident that [Golden Dome] is going to be a very positive effort for UCF and for the Central Florida area,” Fogel said.

Mergers, acquisitions on the table

Lynda Weatherman, president and CEO of the Space Coast's Economic Development Commission, believes the Sunshine State – especially Central Florida – is poised to benefit from and contribute to the Golden Dome.

“The fact that we have a heavily defense-centric sector puts us in a good position,” she said.



Lynda Weatherman, president and CEO of the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast, takes the first question on successful areas of Brevard business.

JIM CARCHIDI

On the table are mergers and acquisitions of smaller companies by larger defense firms, Weatherman added.

“We're certainly looking at the smaller companies, because this is going to be a very reactive, nimble, responsive [Department of Defense] strategy, and a lot of these smaller companies will respond,” Weatherman said. “I think you'll see a lot of mergers, possibly mergers and acquisitions. So, we need to also watch the investment opportunities taking place here.”

Because the [Missile Defense Agency](#) plans to award contracts of some kind to all qualifying bidders, small businesses stand to gain from the project.

“There might be smaller companies that have a niche product ... so they either can get a contract or could be merged with a bigger company,” Weatherman said.

Whether smaller companies merge with larger ones or the firms continue to produce their own product individually, Weatherman noted the eagerness as details emerge.

“It's a very exciting time,” she said. “It's still early stages, but the EDC ... we've always been preemptive in our strategy. So, right now, we're focusing this last quarter on developing that strategy.”



Panelists at the OneWeb Satellites Grand Opening. From right to left, Frank DiBello, CEO of Space Florida; Lynda Weatherman, president and CEO of the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast; and FCC Chairman Ajit Pai.

MALAK SALEH

Symbiosis in Central Florida

Beneficial partnerships between area institutions and contractors create a symbiosis in Central Florida that feeds into operations like the Golden Dome.

The Lockheed Martin College Work Experience Program (CWEP), as outlined by the company's spokesperson, is one of the partnerships preparing local students

for the workforce. Many of Orlando's CWEP employees are UCF students, because of proximity and the university's nationally recognized STEM programs.

"UCF is the state leader in developing engineers," Fogel said. While students pursue their degrees, they have the opportunity to work directly in the defense field, he added.

Often, students in CWEP get the opportunity to apply for full-time positions upon graduation, filling the company's need for talent at all levels.

Nearly a quarter of UCF's undergraduate students are part of the College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS), according to UCF Institutional Knowledge Management.

As of the fall 2025 semester, 14,284 students are enrolled in majors that fall under CECS, making the college the second-largest by undergraduate enrollment in the university. The College of Sciences – containing popular degree programs such as psychology, political science and biology – ranks No. 1 in undergraduate enrollment.



Nearly a quarter of UCF's undergraduate students are part of the College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS), according to UCF Institutional Knowledge Management.

BERNARD WILCHUSKY

Targeting modern defense threats

The U.S. has been testing space-based defense programs on-and-off since the Reagan era.

Defense contractors that are part of the Golden Dome, including Lockheed Martin, contributed to the Reagan administration's Exoatmospheric Reentry-vehicle Interceptor Subsystem. Dubbed "Star Wars," the project was never deployed and perhaps too ahead of its time.

"Star Wars was all about having lasers in space that would shoot down missiles," CU Boulder's Boyd said. "While that sounds very appealing, at the time it was very clear that was not technologically feasible anytime soon."

The Golden Dome is expected to offer an approach more applicable to modern threats, including hypersonic weapons, according to the U.S. Space Force Association. A hypersonic threat is a weapon with an unpredictable flight path that travels faster than Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound.

When a hypersonic weapon launches, the Golden Dome would detect the threat using infrared satellites, track the threat's path and intercept it using the closest satellite.

Tight timeline and unanswered questions

President Trump has set a deadline of 2028 for the completion of the Golden Dome – a timeline some experts view as a challenge, given the project's scale.

Boyd said the deadline of 2028 will likely not be completely met. He does, however, believe some components will go live by the end of Trump's term.

The next unanswered question is whether the subsequent administration will continue the lofty plans, which was not the case in 1989 when former President Ronald Reagan left office.

The Golden Dome is not “Star Wars,” though, Boyd said. “If the Golden Dome fizzles out, it'll fizzle out into other things.”

Should the Golden Dome for America be realized, the defense project will be the largest and most costly homeland missile system designed in the history of the nation.

“It’s obviously going to be a big deal for the industry,” Boyd said, “and it’s going to be interesting to see how it all evolves.”