

Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy, Installations, and Environment



Artificial Intelligence Data Center Frequently Asked Questions

The Department of Air Force (DAF) is moving forward with plans to host Artificial Intelligence (AI) data centers on underutilized land at select Air Force bases through a lease of property. This effort is a response to Executive Order 14179: Removing Barriers to American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence dated 23 January 2025, and Executive Order 14318: Accelerating Federal Permitting of Data Center Infrastructure dated 23 July 2025. On 15 October 2025, a solicitation was released stating the DAF is seeking qualified entities for a long-term lease to develop and operate these data centers, supporting innovation and technological advancement. This list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provides answers to anticipated questions and concerns about this process.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Who will own and operate the data centers built on Air Force land?

The AI Data Centers will be owned by private entities selected from a competitive process. These private entities, who will lease the real property from DAF, are responsible for financing, constructing, operating and maintaining the Data Centers.

How does the DAF benefit from this initiative?

In consideration of leasing its land, the DAF will receive cash and/or in-kind consideration of monetary value. Additionally, at installations where a developer proposes a dedicated energy source for a Data Center, the DAF is requiring first right of refusal of power during a grid outage. Any power the installation obtains from the developer will be negotiated separately.

Which installations were selected for this opportunity?

The DAF offered land for AI Data Center development at five installations: Arnold AFB, TN, Edwards AFB, CA, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL), NJ, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, and/or Robins AFB, GA. The DAF selected these installations based on market analysis, infrastructure availability, and strategic importance. The DAF may consider other installations in the future.

What Government missions are expected to be hosted on these data centers or require on-premise data centers at this scale and size?

AI Data Centers at DAF installations are not meant to primarily support mission data requirements but will primarily support commercial use. The DAF is neither requiring nor guaranteeing DAF use of any on-site AI Data Centers



proposed in response to this solicitation. Although not currently contemplated, if the owners were to successfully market utilization of an on-base AI Data Center to a DAF customer, this would be a separately negotiated agreement by the associated DAF component outside of the lease transaction.

Can you tell us how energy and water usage will be factored into the evaluation of these proposals, to include potential impacts on the availability of those resources both to the installation and surrounding communities?

Data centers can utilize substantial energy and water. The Request for Lease Proposal (RFLP) requires offerors to provide a mitigation and contingency plan to ensure the installations and surrounding communities' utilities service life, resiliency, and capacity are not impacted. Offerors must also address site specific energy markets and other factors such as Regional Transmission Organizations and Independent Systems Operators conditions based on the project development location. For regulated utility markets, the offerors are required to identify how the project will be supported by local electric, gas, communication network and water utilities. Additional coordination will be required for deregulated utilities. Water efficient technologies are of heightened interest.

Have state and local governments and utilities been informed of these potential leases as the data centers could have impacts on both energy/water availability and costs for surrounding communities?

The DAF is requiring offerors to demonstrate in their proposals how they would minimize and mitigate impacts and risk to the surrounding community, specifically related to the access to and affordability, reliability, and quality of energy, water, and communication bandwidth. Offerors will also be required to demonstrate how their proposal will be compatible with the surrounding community; minimize environmental, cultural, and infrastructure impacts; be consistent with best commercial practices; and support positive relations with State and local government authorities and the communities adjacent to the properties. Once best value lease applicants at different sites are selected, the DAF will ensure appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other required regulatory reviews are properly accomplished before entering into a lease.

Will there be an EIS required if we move forward?

The DAF will require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable laws. The NEPA requirements will be assessed once the DAF approves the preliminary scope of work, proposed by the selected applicant at each location, is sufficiently developed and prior to lease closing.

Will projects less than 100 MWs of compute capacity be considered?

Given the realities of utility capacity constraints and onsite generation development timelines, phased projects will be considered as long as they are structured to reach or surpass 100 MWs of capacity in a reasonable timeframe. The DAF is interested in large-scale developments and would like to see good faith bids which provide a roadmap for phased development if appropriate.

Will construction tradesmen and eventual data center operators be required to go through base security daily and be subject to respective background checks?

DAF will make every effort to work with the eventual lessee to establish a new perimeter (move the fence) to provide site access separate from installation security if feasible. However, if that is not feasible given the location of the respective parcels, then personnel associated with the data center development will be required to meet installation security requirements.

