



## FAA Increasing Access to Automated Airspace Approval for Drone Operators

The Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") recently announced a nationwide expansion of its automated airspace approval system, the Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability ("LAANC"), and that it will take applications for new UAS Service Suppliers ("USSs"), which provide LAANC services to the public.

Commercial small UAS operators must obtain FAA authorization to fly in controlled airspace, generally found near airports. LAANC is the system through which drone operators are able to receive almost real-time authorization to fly in those areas. Drone operators provide flight information to a USS through an internet portal and the USS responds electronically based on FAA provided data about permissible flight locations and altitudes. LAANC is currently available for airspace approvals in only a few parts of the country.

Businesses that use drones, or are thinking of using drones, will benefit from LAANC's nationwide expansion. More users will be able to obtain the benefit of rapid airspace authorizations rather than having to wait for individual review by the FAA, which can take weeks or months. It will also free FAA resources to focus on more complex requests, which are reviewed by its staff. The FAA intends to expand the program region by region beginning in April and finishing in September.

Companies interested in UAS traffic management or reaching a segment of drone users may consider applying to become a USS. The FAA will be taking new USS applications for the first time since selection of the first four providers in 2017. Potential candidates should have a mature product or the capability to develop one before onboarding, and should carefully review other application requirements such as including information about how their system will accurately process airspace requests and correctly reflect regulatory and airspace requirements. The FAA will review the submission, conduct technical interviews, and, in July, begin formal onboarding for selected applicants. Applications are due May 16.

---

### CONTACTS



Dean E. Griffith  
Washington



James E. Gauch  
Washington



John D. Goetz  
Pittsburgh



Paul V. Lettow  
Washington

---

SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE TO RSS



---

Jones Day is a global law firm with more than 2,500 lawyers on five continents. We are One Firm Worldwide<sup>SM</sup>.

**Disclaimer:** Jones Day publications should not be construed as legal advice on any specific facts or circumstances. The contents are intended for general information purposes only and may not be quoted or referred to in any other publication or proceeding without the prior written consent of the Firm, to be given or withheld at our discretion. To request reprint permission for any of our publications, please use our "Contact Us" form, which can be found on our website at [www.jonesday.com](http://www.jonesday.com). The mailing of this publication is not intended to create, and receipt of it does not constitute, an attorney-client relationship. The views set forth herein are the personal views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Firm.