Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

What is the SBIR Program?

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program is a highly competitive program that encourages domestic small businesses to engage in Federal Research/Research and Development that has the potential for commercialization. Through a competitive award process, SBIR enables small businesses to explore their technological potential and provides the incentive to profit from commercialization. By including qualified small businesses in the nation's research and development (R&D) arena, high-tech innovation is stimulated, and the United States gains entrepreneurial spirit as it meets its specific R&D needs.

What is the STTR Program?

The Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program expands funding opportunities in the federal innovation arena. Central to the program is the expansion of the public/private sector partnership to include joint venture opportunities between small businesses and nonprofit research institutions. The unique feature of the STTR program is the requirement for the small business to formally collaborate with a research institution in Phase I and Phase II. STTR's most important role is to bridge the gap between performance of basic science and commercialization of resulting innovations.

How does the STTR program differ from SBIR program?

STTR differs from SBIR in several ways, including:

1. For and STTR award, the small business must perform at least 40% of the work and the single partnering research institution must perform at least 30% of the work.
2. STTR requires the Small Business Concern (SBC) and its partnering institution to establish an intellectual property agreement detailing the allocation of intellectual property rights and rights to carry out follow-on research, development or commercialization activities.

What are the objectives of the SBIR/STTR Program?

The mission of the SBIR program is to stimulate technology innovation by strengthening the role of innovative SBCs in Federal Research/ R&D.The program’s goals are four-fold:

- Stimulate technological innovation.
- Use small businesses to meet Federal R&D needs.
- Foster and encourage participation in innovation and entrepreneurship by socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses.
- Increase private-sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal R&D funding.

Which Federal Agencies participate in the SBIR Program?

Each year, Federal agencies with extramural R&D budgets that exceed $100 million are required to allocate a certain percentage of their R&D budget to the SBIR program. Currently, eleven Federal agencies participate in the program:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology
- Department of Commerce - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Department of Defense
- Department of Education
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Transportation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Science Foundation

Each of these agencies has an SBIR program office and administers the program within guidelines established by Congress in the Small Business Act and by SBA in the SBIR Policy Directive. The agencies designate R&D topics in their solicitations and accept proposals from small businesses. Awards are made on a competitive basis after proposal evaluation.

Does the Small Business Administration (SBA) make any awards under the SBIR/ STTR Program?

No, the SBA does not directly administer the awards. The SBA has the responsibility for directing the participating agencies in the administration of the program. It helps the participating agencies implement SBIR/STTR, reviews their progress, reports annually to Congress on its operation, and aggregates agency solicitation announcement information.

What are the three phases of the SBIR Program?

Phase I. The objective of Phase I is to establish the technical merit, feasibility, and commercial potential of the proposed Federal Research /R&D efforts and to determine the quality of performance of the small business awardee organization prior to providing further Federal support in Phase II. SBIR Phase I awards normally do not exceed $150,000 and have a six-month period of performance.*Phase II.* The objective of Phase II is to continue the Federal Research/R&D efforts initiated in Phase I. Funding is based on the results achieved in Phase I and the scientific and technical merit and commercial potential of the project proposed in Phase II. Generally, only Phase I awardees are eligible for a Phase II award. SBIR Phase II awards normally do not exceed $1,000,000 and have a two-year period of performance.*Phase III.* The objective of Phase III, where appropriate, is for the small business to pursue commercialization objectives resulting from the Phase I and Phase II Federal Research/R&D activities. The SBIR program does not fund Phase III awards. In some Federal agencies, Phase III may involve follow-on non-SBIR funded R&D or production contracts for products, processes or services intended for use by the U.S. Government.

What are the three phases of the STTR Program?

The STTR Program is structured in three phases: *Phase I.* The objective of Phase I is to establish the technical merit, feasibility, and commercial potential of the proposed Federal Research/R&D efforts and to determine the quality of performance of the small businesses prior to providing further Federal support in Phase II. STTR Phase I awards normally do not exceed $150,000 total costs for 1 year.*Phase II.* The objective of Phase II is to continue the Federal Research/R&D efforts initiated in Phase I. Funding is based on the results achieved in Phase I and the scientific and technical merit and commercial potential of the Phase II project proposed. Only Phase I awardees are eligible for a Phase II award. STTR Phase II awards normally do not exceed $1,000,000 total costs for 2 years.*Phase III.* The objective of Phase III, where appropriate, is for the small business to pursue commercialization objectives resulting from the Phase I/II R/R&D activities. STTR does not fund Phase III awards. In some Federal agencies, Phase III may involve follow-on non-STTR funded R&D or production contracts for products, processes or services intended for use by the U.S. Government.

What is an SBIR/STTR funding agreement?

An SBIR/STTR funding agreement is a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement entered into

between an SBIR/STTR participating Federal Agency and a small business for the performance of research, experimental, or developmental work funded by the Federal Government.

Which Federal Agencies participate in the STTR program?

Each year, Federal Agencies with extramural R&D budgets that exceed $1 billion are required to reserve a certain percentage of the extramural research budget for STTR awards to small businesses. These agencies designate R&D topics and accept proposals. Currently, five agencies participate in the STTR program.

- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health and Human Services
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Science Foundation

Each agency administers its own program within guidelines established by Congress in the Small Business Act and by SBA in the STTR Policy Directive. These agencies designate R&D topics in their solicitations and accept proposals from small businesses. Awards are made on a competitive basis after proposal evaluation.

What is my SBC Control ID? / How do I get my registration PDF?

Step 1. Go to www.sbir.gov >> log into your SBIR.GOV user account.
Step 2. Click on Dashboard.
Step 3. Click 'Download SBC Registration (Proof of Registration/Certification)' from MY DOCUMENT BOX