

COURSE 3, TUTORIAL 1

SBIR/STTR SOLICITATION OVERVIEWS



To become involved with either the SBIR or STTR program, you must prepare a response to a solicitation. Solicitations are known by many names including Request for Proposal, RFP, Funding Opportunity Announcement, FOA, or simply Solicitation. No matter what it's called, this document is a statement that clarifies each agency's interests and provides guidance on how to prepare a response, also called an application or a proposal. Unsolicited proposals, by the way are not accepted by any of the SBIR or STTR programs. You must always respond to a solicitation.

WHEN ARE SOLICITATIONS RELEASED?

The first thing you need to know is when solicitations are released. Thank goodness they are not released all at one time. Release dates are distributed throughout the year. Some agencies, such as NASA have one solicitation release, while others such as HHS have multiple solicitations of various types throughout the year. The Department of Defense provides generic guidance common to all components, as well as separate documents that describe the unique requirements and topics for each of the participating components. The Department of Energy combines its SBIR and STTR guidelines into one Funding Opportunity Announcement while most others have separate solicitations for the two programs. HHS is unique in that it allows three different occasions to respond to its Omnibus SBIR/STTR solicitation, while all other agencies have one closing date for submission of a Phase I SBIR or STTR application.

WHAT DOES A SOLICITATION LOOK LIKE?

Now that you know when solicitations open and close, it's important to understand what to expect when you download a

solicitation to review. Some solicitations have as few as 30 pages; while others may have well over 200. If the first solicitation that you open is one of the large one's you're likely to feel overwhelmed and set the file aside – but wait there's more and it's better. The longer documents are mostly comprised of topics, that is descriptions of the needs that each agency has. Topics can readily be searched, not only in the pdf file, but by using the search engines at zyn.com and sbir.gov. You don't have to read all 100 plus pages of topics – use a search engine to find the one's of interest and review only the topics that seem like a good fit. Review the topics thoroughly and critically. You will find more guidance on finding topics in Course 2 of these tutorials.

The other sections of a solicitation that are vital to understand are the Proposal Preparation Instructions, the Application and Submission guidance, and the Evaluation criteria. Every solicitation contains these sections and you must understand them thoroughly. You don't want your proposal to be eliminated during the administrative review process because you missed the submission deadline, included too many pages, failed to reg-

Solicitation Gantt Chart

(Approximate Time Periods)

Month	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
DOE														
1st SBIR/STTR Solicitation														
2nd SBIR/STTR Solicitation														
DoD														
1st SBIR Solicitation														
1st STTR Solicitation														
2nd SBIR Solicitation														
2nd STTR Solicitation														
3rd SBIR Solicitation														
3rd STTR Solicitation														
HHS														
Omnibus	X			X					X					
Direct to Phase II	X			X					X					
Targeted SBIR/STTR Solicitations														
R&D Contracts														
NASA														
SBIR Solicitation														
STTR Solicitation														
NSF														
1st SBIR Solicitation														
1st STTR Solicitation														
2nd SBIR Solicitation														
2nd STTR Solicitation														

See solicitation for exact release and due dates

ister with an organization specified in the solicitation, or went over the budget limit. These are mistakes that new applicants commonly make. Also make particular note of individuals who are mentioned in the solicitation that you are encouraged to contact. Always take advantage of the opportunity to talk to government personnel and be aware of the times when you can do so. Course 2, by the way also includes guidance on how to reach out to topic authors.

Administrative Review Issues

- » Missed submission deadline
- » Too many pages
- » Failed to complete registrations
- » Exceeded budget limit

In the various Tutorials in this Course, we will review the solicitations of the five largest agencies, focusing on what is unique about each of them. You will find that each agency's solicitation looks quite different, even though they contain the commonalities described here. These differences are a reflection of the topics as well as each agency's culture.