



# Growth Accelerator Fund Competition

## Official Competition Details

Announced May 17, 2019

### Description

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announces the 2019 Growth Accelerator Fund Competition, pursuant to the America Competes Act, to recognize the nation's most innovative accelerators and award them cash prizes they may use to fund their operations costs focused towards helping entrepreneurs apply for Government R&D funding. Prize competition applications consist of a brief twelve slide presentation and an optional two-minute video.

**DATES:** The submission period for entries begins 12:00 p.m. EDT, June 10, 2019 and ends June 20, 2019 at 4:59 p.m. EDT. Winners will be announced no later than Fall 2019.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Office of Investment and Innovation, U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 Third Street, SW, 6th Floor Washington, DC 20416, [accelerators@sba.gov](mailto:accelerators@sba.gov).

### Competition Details

#### Subject of Competition

SBA is seeking to identify the nation's most innovative and promising small business accelerators and incubators that work with high tech entrepreneurs that are potential SBIR or STTR program applicants (see more information about SBIR/STTR below). These accelerators and incubators help entrepreneurs speed the launch, growth, and scale of their businesses and, ultimately, the creation of jobs. The Competition awards will infuse the accelerators and incubators with additional resource capital to help these entities provide focused assistance to high tech entrepreneurs, including support for company formation as well as awareness and education of the SBIR and STTR programs. Specifically, the awards are to be used to fund the accelerators' and incubators' operating budgets, not for direct investing in the entrepreneurs' small businesses.

For the purposes of this Competition, the accelerators and incubators are referred to as Growth Accelerators (or Accelerators) and include accelerators, incubators, co-working startup communities, or other models to accomplish similar goals. SBIR and STTR refer to the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Tech Transfer programs. These programs provide small businesses with financial capital and research and development funds to develop high-tech, high-growth, commercially viable innovations. Additional information can be found at [www.sbir.gov](http://www.sbir.gov).

## Eligibility Rules for Participating in the Competition

This Competition is open to established private entities, such as corporations or nonprofit organizations that are already incorporated, have been in business for at least two years, and maintain a primary place of business and operations in the United States. Entities that have an outstanding, unresolved financial obligation to, or that are currently suspended or debarred by, the Federal Government are not eligible for this Competition. Federal, state, local and tribal agencies are also not eligible for this Competition.

1. **Entrepreneur Groups** - Participants in this Competition must target at least 60 percent of the Growth Accelerator’s effort under this funding opportunity to entrepreneurs of one of the following groups:
  - 1.1.1. Entrepreneurs that are women.
  - 1.1.2. Entrepreneurs that are socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. See [13 CFR 124.103](#) and [13 CFR 124.104](#).
  - 1.1.3. Entrepreneurs that live in states or territories that are underrepresented by SBIR/STTR awardees, or whose businesses are located in *and* operate out of states or territories that are underrepresented by SBIR/STTR awardees. *Growth Accelerators in states or territories that meet the underrepresented criteria can still have a primary focus in one of the other Entrepreneur Groups. Be sure to note which Entrepreneur Group will be the primary focus.*

*List of Qualifying States and Territories:*

Alaska	Indiana	Nebraska	South Carolina
American Samoa	Iowa	Nevada	South Dakota
Arkansas	Kansas	North Dakota	Tennessee
Delaware	Kentucky	Northern Mariana Isle.	U.S. Virginia Islands
District of Columbia	Maine	Oklahoma	Vermont
Guam	Mississippi	Louisiana	West Virginia
Hawaii	Missouri	Puerto Rico	Wisconsin
Idaho	Montana	Rhode Island	Wyoming

- 1.1.4. Entrepreneurs that live in an Opportunity Zone, or whose businesses are located in *and* operate out of an Opportunity Zone.
  - 1.1.4.1. Refer to the list of designated Opportunity Zones at [www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx](http://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx)

2. **Model of Operation Elements** - Lastly, the Growth Accelerator’s model of operation must include most, if not all, of the following elements:
  - Selective process to choose participating startups.
  - Regular networking opportunities offered to startups.

- Introductions to customers, partners, suppliers, advisory boards and other players.
- High-growth and tech-driven startup mentorship and commercialization assistance.
- Shared working environments focused on building a strong startup community.
- Resource sharing and co-working arrangements for startups.
- Opportunities to pitch ideas and startups to investors along with other capital formation avenues to startups.
- Small amounts of angel money, seed capital or structured loans to startups.

## **Registration and Entry Submission Process for Contestants**

Contestants must submit their 2019 Growth Accelerator Fund Competition applications online using the link designated for that purpose on [www.sbir.gov/accelerators](http://www.sbir.gov/accelerators), where the link will be posted on June 10, 2019. Applications may not include any confidential and/or proprietary information. No organization may submit more than one entry to the Competition.

Information/Documents to Be Included as Part of Application:

- Basic contact details collected in the short application form provided via the link.
- A PowerPoint presentation/deck similar to one used in a pitch competition. The deck should be no more than twelve (12) slides and must address all items identified below in the order listed. The presentation/deck must be submitted as a PDF.
- Optional: A video of not more than two (2) minutes that describes the applicant’s organization and how the applicant is uniquely qualified to address the needs of the entrepreneurs it serves currently and is going to serve as part of its proposed GAFC plan. Examples of items to highlight include the Accelerator’s leadership, facilities, and overall energy. The video must be posted to either YouTube or Vimeo. The URL link to the video must be included in the application form and must be accessible to Competition judges.

### **1. Items to Be Addressed in the Application Deck:**

**Slide 1:** Summary Information *(Slide needs to have a plain white background and numbered as indicated below)*

- Name of Growth Accelerator
- City of Accelerator
- State or Territory of Accelerator
- Website of Accelerator
- Contact Person (First Name, Last Name)
- Contact Email Address
- Contact Phone Number
- Other Team Members (First Names, Last Names; separated by “;”)

**Slide 2:** Summary Information *(Slide needs to have a plain white background and numbered as indicated below)*

- Has the Accelerator been in operation for at least two years? Yes/No
- Has the Accelerator been awarded a Growth Accelerator Fund Competition prize previously? Yes/No
  - If previously awarded, which year(s)?
- Which of the following has the Accelerator provided to entrepreneurs regarding the SBIR/STTR programs (pick one):
  - Regularly teach courses/workshops and provide individual counsel.
  - Teach a few courses/workshops and provide individual counsel regularly.
  - Provide individual counsel regularly.
  - Provide individual counsel only when requested.
  - Have had little to no experience with the programs.
- Participants in this Competition must target at least 60 percent of the Growth Accelerator's effort under this funding opportunity to support entrepreneurs of one of the groups listed below (See Item 2). Indicate the Entrepreneur Group chosen by the Growth Accelerator (pick one):
  - Women
  - Socially and Economically Disadvantaged
  - State or Territory that has been underrepresented by SBIR/STTR awardees
  - Opportunity Zones
  - Not Applicable

**Slide 3:** Mission and Vision

What is your Growth Accelerator's mission in one sentence?

What specific elements make your Accelerator model stand out?

**Slides 4 and 5:** Organization's Approach

Per the models of operation elements listed in Item 2, discuss the Accelerator's approach and how it addresses these elements.

Discuss how the Accelerator leverages other available resources to support the organization's entrepreneurs.

Does the Accelerator help entrepreneurs raise capital and what has been the organization's approach and success in this area?

**Slide 6:** Overall Plan for Award

What is the Accelerator's plan for the Competition funds if awarded a prize?

What type of assistance will be provided?

Per the entrepreneur groups listed in Item 2, which group will the Accelerator focus on? *(Note: It is required that at least 60 percent of the Accelerator's effort under this award supports individuals in one of the targeted Entrepreneur Groups. See "Entrepreneur Groups" in Item 2 for more details.)*

Discuss the approach to identify and help the targeted entrepreneur group with understanding and applying to the SBIR/STTR programs.

**Slide 7: Working with the SBIR/STTR Programs**

What is the Accelerator's experience in working with science-focused entrepreneurs?

What is the Accelerator's experience in working with the SBIR/STTR programs?

Discuss the unique connections the Accelerator can provide to science-focused entrepreneurs (i.e. potential partners that can support the entrepreneurs in preparing their SBIR or STTR proposals).

**Slides 8: Working with Targeted Entrepreneur Group (Women, Socially and Economically Disadvantaged, Underrepresented SBIR/STTR State, or Opportunity Zone)**

What are the potential challenges and opportunities for the Accelerator to work with the targeted entrepreneur group?

How is the Accelerator uniquely qualified to work with this group?

**Slides 9 and 10: Implementation**

Provide the basics of the plan and phases for implementation (i.e. tasks and timeline).

What makes the Accelerator's staff uniquely qualified to implement the plan?

What are the primary risk factors the Accelerator anticipates to successfully implement the plan?

**Slides 11: Metrics**

Amount of capital raised for entrepreneurs last year (approximate).

Estimated number of clients/entrepreneurs the Accelerator anticipates assisting with the award by entrepreneur group listed item 2.

Estimated number of training hours (general topics; in-person and virtual; via Growth Accelerator or partners) to be provided to science-focused entrepreneurs as part of this award.

Estimated number of business and technical assistance hours (specific to client; in-person and virtual; via Growth Accelerator or partners) to be provided to science-focused entrepreneurs during the award year.

If awarded a prize, any additional key metrics the Accelerator will use to self-evaluate/measure the success of the proposed plan and the estimated results.

*(Note: Winners will be asked to submit a written Assessment (see Item 4). As part of this Assessment, additional questions may include: What worked? What did not? What would the Accelerator do differently? What impact did the award have on the Accelerator and the entrepreneurs helped?)*

#### **Slide 12: Additional Information at Applicant's Discretion**

Applicant may use this slide to provide any additional information that would be useful for the application.

### **Prizes for Winners**

In total, SBA will award up to 60 prizes of \$50,000 each for a total of \$3 million in prizes under this announcement.

1. Prizes will be disbursed in two payments via the Automated Clearing House (ACH).
2. The first payment, equal to 80 percent of a winner's total prize amount (\$40,000), will be disbursed once all initial requirements have been met (i.e. account information received, SAM registry). It is estimated the payment will be made within 90 days of SBA receiving all required information.
3. The second payment, the remaining 20 percent (\$10,000), will be disbursed after a winner submits a written Assessment to be provided by SBA. The Assessment must be submitted to SBA no earlier than nine (9) months and no later than 12 months after a winner receives its first prize payment.
4. The written Assessment will include, but is not limited to, a brief evaluation of the outcomes and outputs of the Growth Accelerator's activities as measured by the metrics outlined in the Accelerator's Competition application (see Item 2), a summary of any lessons learned and best practices, and suggestions for any improvements to the design or implementation of similar competitions in the future. The written Assessments, or portions thereof, may be made public.

### **Additional Requirements for Winners**

- Create an account in the System for Award Management (SAM). This will include sharing bank account information with the SBA so funds can be transmitted electronically. Paperwork and system's credentials should be established prior to receipt of the award.
- Make themselves available to provide success stories
- Allow for SBA participation in Demo Days and other events

If SBA hosts or co-hosts an event for winners in Washington, D.C., the winner may use a portion of the award to pay for travel expenses that are reasonable and economically prudent. The travel expenses may equal costs for one person to travel from the Accelerator's location to Washington, D.C. to attend one event for two days.

### **Selection of Winners**

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness (See Items 2 and 3). If an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria and does not provide the basic contact details and the information outlined for the PowerPoint presentation/deck (See Item 3), the application will be deemed ineligible. Eligible applications will be evaluated by a review committee that may be comprised of SBA officials, including District Office employees, other federal agencies, and/or private sector experts. Winners will be selected based upon how well they address the criteria identified in Items 1, 2, and 3 of this Competition announcement.

In addition, in order to achieve nationwide distribution of prizes for the purpose of stimulating the growth and development of startups across the entire United States, SBA may take into account applicants' geographic locations and areas of service when selecting winners, including support to geographic regions that traditionally have limited access to capital, the underserved, women, and minorities.

### **Additional Terms and Conditions**

- 1. Applicable Law:** This Competition is being conducted by SBA pursuant to the government wide prize competition authority at [15 U.S.C. 3719](#). By participating in this Competition, each contestant gives its full and unconditional agreement to the Official Rules and the related administrative decisions described in this notice, which are final and binding in all matters related to the Competition. Contestants remain solely responsible for complying with all applicable federal laws, including licensing, export control, and nonproliferation laws, and related regulations. A contestant's eligibility for a prize award is contingent upon their fulfilling all requirements identified in this notice. Publication of this notice is not an obligation of funds on the part of SBA. SBA reserves the right to modify or cancel this Competition, in whole or in part, at any time prior to the award of prizes.
- 2. Conflicts of Interest:** No individual acting as a judge at any stage of this Competition may have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of any contestant or have a familial or financial relationship with a contestant.
- 3. Intellectual Property Rights:** All entries submitted in response to this Competition will remain the sole intellectual property of the individuals or organizations that developed them. By registering and entering a submission, each contestant represents and warrants that it is the sole author and copyright owner of the submission, and that the submission is an original work of the contestant, or if the submission is a work based on an existing application, that the contestant has acquired sufficient rights to use and to authorize others to use the submission, and that the submission does not infringe upon any copyright or upon any other third party rights of which the contestant is aware. Additionally, by registering and entering a submission, each contestant agrees to grant SBA an irrevocable, non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free license to use materials, concepts, and other similar items of intellectual property proposed in, or developed during operations conducted pursuant to, its submission for purposes consistent with the Agency's mission.
- 4. Publicity Rights:** By registering and entering a submission, each contestant consents to SBA's and its agents' use, in perpetuity, of its name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions, and/or hometown and state information for promotional or informational purposes through any form

of media, worldwide, without further payment or consideration.

- 5. Liability and Insurance Requirements:** By registering and entering a submission, each contestant agrees to assume any and all risks and waive claims against the Federal Government and its related entities, except in the case of willful misconduct, for any injury, death, damage, or loss of property, revenue, or profits, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, arising from their participation in this Competition, whether the injury, death, damage, or loss arises through negligence or otherwise. Given this Competition does not involve potentially hazardous activities or the use of government property, contestants are not required to obtain liability insurance or demonstrate financial resources to cover claims by a third party for death, bodily injury, or property damage or loss resulting from any activity it carries out in connection with its participation in this Competition, or claims by the Federal Government for damage or loss to Government property resulting from such an activity.
- 6. Record Retention and Disclosure:** All submissions and related materials provided to SBA in the course of this Competition automatically become SBA records and cannot be returned. Contestants should identify any confidential commercial information contained in their entries at the time of their submission to SBA. SBA will notify Contestants of any Freedom of Information Act requests the Agency receives during the Competition related to their submissions in accordance with 13 C.F.R. § 102. Award Approving Official: John R. Williams, Director, Office of Innovation and Technology, U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 Third Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20416.
- 7. Disclaimer:** SBA and its agents are not responsible for:
- Any incorrect or inaccurate information, whether caused by contestants, printing errors, or by any of the equipment or programming associated with or utilized in the Competition;
  - Technical failure of any kind, including, but not limited to malfunctions, interruptions or disconnections in phone lines or network hardware or software.
  - Unauthorized human intervention in any part of the entry process or the Competition.
  - Technical or human error which may occur in the administration of the Competition or the processing of entries; or
  - Any injury or damage to persons or property which may be caused, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, from Contestant's participation in the Competition or receipt, use or misuse of any prize.

If for any reason a contestant's entry is confirmed to have been erroneously deleted, lost, or otherwise destroyed or corrupted, contestant's sole remedy is to submit another entry in the Competition, provided it is submitted before the initial screening of entries is completed.

- 8. General Conditions:** SBA reserves the right at any time, for any reason, to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the Competition, or any part of it.

Participation constitutes each Contestant's full and unconditional agreement to the rules in this notice and administrative decisions which are final and binding in all matters related to the Competition. This contest notice is not an obligation of funds; the final award of prizes is contingent upon the availability of appropriations.