



TUTORIAL 9

Where Can I Receive Assistance in Proposal Preparation?

HURDLES IN PREPARING AN SBIR/STTR APPLICATION

Preparing to write a Phase I SBIR or STTR proposal can be a daunting task for a small business, especially if this is the first attempt. As discussed in previous tutorials, there are many steps involved in preparing an SBIR or STTR application to submit to the Department of Energy. Here's a partial list of recurring hurdles:

- » Starting the preparation of the application package early enough.
- » Translating an innovative solution into a compelling work plan.
- » Navigating the numerous registrations such as PAMS, SAM, grants.gov, etc.
- » Assembling a winning team that will succeed at both the technical and commercial aspects of the proposal.
- » Building relationships with potential strategic partners, customers, or investors.
- » Understanding how to develop a budget and appropriately calculating indirect rates.
- » Properly assessing the market need for a solution and developing an appropriate commercialization strategy.





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To overcome these hurdles, small businesses often need one or more forms of assistance in order to help them win their first Phase I SBIR or STTR award. This early assistance at the proposal preparation stage is referred to as Phase 0. Phase 0 assistance can take several different forms and is offered by many different types of organizations.

Let's consider how a small business would go about finding Phase 0 assistance to aid in the preparation of their Phase I SBIR or STTR application. Recognizing the importance of Phase 0 assistance, many states have made concerted efforts to provide support. Be sure to see the [document](#) prepared by SBA in 2020 which provides an overview of state Matching Funds initiatives and Phase 0 programs. This tool is

To apply to the DOE Phase 0 program, register once the DOE Topics are released at <https://doephase0.dawnbreaker.com/>

organized by state and clarifies the type of assistance available with a link to the organization's website.

The Department of Energy also provides a Phase 0 program for first time applicants. This is a limited resource with an application process. Eligible entities may receive one or more specialized services following an initial assessment by a member of the Dawnbreaker team. The services include:

- » Letter of Intent (LOI) writing assistance
- » Phase I proposal preparation, review and submission assistance
- » Small business development training and mentoring
- » Market Research Assistance
- » Technology advice and consultation
- » Intellectual property consultation
- » Indirect rate and financial information assistance



The DOE Phase 0 program also provides education and training in the form of this Online Tutorial site and webinars on topics pertinent to the application process. As every provider has budgetary constraints which limit how much service it can provide, companies are encouraged to level complementary state resources.

MANY FEDERAL AND STATE ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE FREE SUPPORT

There are also many federal and state organizations which provide free assistance to small businesses such as Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), Small Business Technology Development Centers (SBTDC),

Look for federal and state service providers in your state at <https://www.sbir.gov/>

[website](#) to find out about these and resources available in your state. These organizations provide a wide variety

Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), and Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC). Please see the [SBIR.gov](#)

of support services including personalized counseling, aid in identifying relevant agencies and topics, assistance with registrations, market intelligence, cost proposal and budget assistance, help with identifying strategic partners, and coaching on licensing and IP issues. The level and combination of services is varied depending on the state.

As you can see there are many sources available to provide assistance to small advanced technology firms. If you are planning on submitting an SBIR or STTR proposal to a federal agency, explore the service providers in your region as early as possible. In this fashion, when you need assistance, you will have already established a relationship with one or more service providers. Be aware, that the SBIR/STTR application that you prepare should be written and prepared by you, with assistance provided by others to help shape the quality and responsiveness of your application. The application that you submit needs to be yours.