

2019 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Informational Webinar June 6, 2019 Questions and Answers

General

Can we get a copy of today's presentation?

Yes. Today's presentation and questions & answers (Q&As) from the presentation are posted on the EPA SBIR website at <https://www.epa.gov/sbir/informational-webinar-2019-2020-small-business-innovation-research-sbir-phase-i-solicitation>.

Where can I get more information on EPA's SBIR Program?

[Learn more about EPA's SBIR program through the SBIR website \(https://www.epa.gov/sbir\)](https://www.epa.gov/sbir) and [information trifold \(https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/new_final_epa_sbir_trifold_2019_edited.pdf\)](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/new_final_epa_sbir_trifold_2019_edited.pdf).

What is the address to sign up for the new EPA SBIR listserv?

[Sign up for EPA's new SBIR listserv at https://www.epa.gov/sbir/sbir-listserv](https://www.epa.gov/sbir/sbir-listserv).

How is an Agency's SBIR budget determined?

The SBIR Program funding is mandated by law and requires an Agency's SBIR budget set aside to equal 3.2% of their extramural research & development budget.

Where can I get more information on the SBIR Program in general?

[Learn more about the SBIR program at www.sbir.gov](http://www.sbir.gov).

Does the EPA also fund STTRs?

No, the EPA does not have an STTR program. Only the 5 largest SBIR programs have STTRs. (The STTR program is another program that requires the small business to formally collaborate with a research institution.)

Eligibility

Who is eligible for the SBIR program?

For the purposes of SBIR, a small business must:

- Be for profit,
- Located in the U.S., and
- Have not more than 500 employees.

For more information on eligibility, please see <https://www.sbir.gov/faqs/eligibility-requirements>.

Can nonprofits or academic institutions apply for SBIR?

Only small businesses are eligible for SBIR. Academic institutions and nonprofits could be a subcontractor to a small business on an SBIR award. Additionally, academic institutions could partner with a small business through the STTR Program (at one of the 5 agencies that have STTR).

When is eligibility determined?

Eligibility is determined at time of award, BUT to apply to EPA SBIR, a small business must have completed the 4 registrations listed below and described in the webinar slides.

- DUNS #
- SBA Company Registry
- SAM
- FedConnect

Topics

What are the solicitation topics for 2019-20?

The proposed topics for this year are listed below. The official solicitation will include the finalized topic description. Given the EPA's modest budget, proposals should be responsive to this year's topics.

CLEAN AND SAFE WATER

- Sampling devices for microplastics
- Technologies for the rehabilitation of water infrastructure
- Technologies for the destruction of PFAS in water and wastewater
- POU treatment for opportunistic pathogens
- Technologies for detection and treatment of antibiotic resistant bacteria in wastewater
- Treatment for cyanobacteria and cyanotoxins in drinking water
- Resource Recovery for Decentralized Wastewater Systems

AIR QUALITY

- Air monitoring technology for Ethylene Oxide
- Air monitoring technology for Sulfur Dioxide

LAND REVITALIZATION

- Mining site characterization and remediation

HOMELAND SECURITY

- 3-D Gamma Camera to Map Radiological Contamination
- Water distribution and stormwater system sensors

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

- New Applications for Industrial Non-Hazardous Secondary Materials
- Preventing Food Waste

SAFER CHEMICALS

- Safer paint and coating removal products

Will there be more information on the topics provided in the solicitation?

Yes, the solicitation will provide more detailed descriptions of the topics and typically a reference document to provide background on the topic.

Does EPA accept unsolicited proposals?

No, proposals should be responsive to the topics listed in the solicitation.

How much focus is put on any one topic? How many projects do you fund in each topic?

We will fund projects across all topic areas depending on how many (quality) proposals we receive in each topic area.

Do projects have to focus on U.S. Issues?

While only U.S. businesses are eligible for SBIR and work must be done in U.S., the application, impact, and market for the project can extend beyond the U.S.

Schedule

What is the deadline to submit?

The solicitation will close approximately 45 days after it opens. The current close date is scheduled to be July 31st, 2019.

Do you anticipate opening another solicitation this year?

No, EPA only releases one solicitation per year. The next EPA SBIR Phase I solicitation will be released in 2020.

Funding Rates/Program History

What is the typical EPA funding rate for SBIR?

The Phase I funding rate has averaged approximately 25% over the last five years. For Phase II, the funding rate is approximately 40%.

How much are Phase I awards?

EPA provides up to \$100,000 for each Phase I award. This year, we intend to fund approximately 20 Phase I proposals.

Can you please provide a link to last year's funded proposals?

Yes, all previously funded projects are listed on our website at https://cfpub.epa.gov/ncer_abstracts/index.cfm/fuseaction/outlinks/sbir/.

Other Agencies/Opportunities

Could you please provide information on other SBIR Agencies that fund environmental technologies?

Information on all 11 SBIR agencies can be found at www.SBIR.gov.

Some other agencies that support environmental technologies include:

- National Science Foundation (NSF)
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)
- Department of Energy (DOE)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Do the different agencies have different application processes?

Yes, each agency has their own application process. Please check the agency's solicitation for specifics on their application process.

Can you please provide information on the Sensors Funding Opportunities Website?

More information about the Sensors Funding Opportunities is located at <https://www.sbir.gov/Sensor-technology-for-the-21st-century>.

Can you apply to more than one agency?

Yes, you can apply to more than one Agency. If you apply with the same project/technology, you can NOT get funded by more than one Agency for the same work. If you did apply to multiple agencies and were funded by one, you would withdraw your other proposals. You can also apply to different agencies with different projects.

Applying

Where can I find the actual solicitation?

The official solicitation will be posted on FedConnect. Use the following steps to access the solicitation via FedConnect:

1. Go to FedConnect: <https://www.fedconnect.net/FedConnect/Default.htm>
2. Use the FedConnect search function to Search Public Opportunities Only.
3. Select Reference Number in the Search Criteria drop-down menu.
4. Enter "68HE0D18R0010" into the text box and select the search option.
5. Select the SBIR solicitation title with Reference Number 68HE0D18R0010.

What is the link to register at FedConnect?

Register at FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net/FedConnect/Default.htm>.

Does EPA require a letter of intent or white paper?

No, letters of intent and white papers are not required for Phase I or Phase II.

Can a small business submit more than one application to this solicitation?

Yes, a small business can submit multiple applications.

Can a small business apply under two topics?

Yes, a small business can submit different proposals under different topic areas.

What if a project fits under two topic areas? How do we choose?

It is the company's responsibility to choose the topic that is the best match for their technology. Read the full topic description in the solicitation. Also, remember that the peer review panel will be made up of experts with expertise in the topic area.

Can a company apply directly to Phase II?

No, EPA does not allow direct applications to Phase II. **Only Phase I recipients are eligible to apply for Phase II awards.**

Does EPA keep our information confidential?

Yes, EPA will keep your proposal confidential through all phases of the review process. The proposal summary is intended for publication and should not contain any confidential information.

Contacts

How do we contact the program manager?

General questions can be addressed to the SBIR Program Manager, April Richards (richards.april@epa.gov).

Contractual questions should be addressed to the contracts specialist, Lisa Mitchell-Flinn (Mitchell-Flinn.Lisa@epa.gov). Please note, it is the responsibility of the small business to determine whether they think their technology is appropriate to a specific topic and whether they should submit a proposal or not.

Review Process

How are proposals reviewed at EPA?

Proposals go through a 2-stage review process. The first stage is an external peer review for technical and commercial strength. The technical and commercial criteria are equally weighted. If proposals are recommended or highly recommended in this stage, they will move forward to the second stage, which is an internal programmatic review where proposals are evaluated for responsiveness to the topics and EPA priorities. Additionally, the official solicitation will provide detailed guidance on the EPA's evaluation process.

Will lack of commercialization experience count against a new company?

EPA makes funding decisions based on the peer and relevancy review criteria provided in the solicitation. If a company is a new business, then they need to demonstrate that they are capable of responding to the commercialization criteria as part of the peer review. That could mean adding commercialization expertise to their team. On the flip side, if the company is an experienced company, then they must demonstrate that they've been able to commercialize past technologies (within and outside of the SBIR program).

Does partnering with a University increase the probability of selection?

EPA makes funding decisions based on the peer and relevancy review criteria provided in the solicitation. Partnering with a university does not increase the probability of selection. However, it is the company's responsibility to determine the expertise and composition of its team to meet review criteria, which may include partnering with a university or another business.

How do you ensure the confidentiality of proposals? Do peer reviewers sign a confidentiality agreement?

Yes, EPA will keep your proposal confidential through all phases of the review process. All peer reviewers are required to sign an agreement to protect the confidentiality of all proposal material and certify that no conflict of interest exists between them and the offeror.

How can I serve as a peer reviewer? Do they receive compensation?

If you are interested in serving as a peer reviewer, please send an email with your resume to the EPA SBIR Program manager, April Richards (richards.april@epa.gov). Your information will be submitted to the Peer Review division who will contact you when there is a panel that matches your expertise. Peer reviewers do receive modest compensation and must participate in a virtual panel meeting lasting one to three days.

Projects

Do you require preliminary data for Phase I?

Phase I of the SBIR Program is designed for "proof of concept" of the proposed technology. The technology should be beyond a literature search, should have some data to demonstrate its

performance but should not be commercially viable yet. It could be for a new application for an existing technology, but not solely for effectiveness testing of an existing technology. For more general information on the SBIR program, see <https://www.sbir.gov/about/about-sbir#sbir-program>.

Do we need to have a prototype?

A prototype is not required but depending on the type of technology being developed may be an important step towards commercialization.

Will it affect EPA SBIR award if we have SBIR awards from other agencies such as NSF?

Many companies have multiple SBIR awards from different agencies. Per the solicitation, we would like to see that the small business has been successfully commercialized with prior investments.

What are the limitations on subcontracting to an academic institution?

For Phase I, a small business must perform a minimum of 2/3 of the research and/or analytical effort. One third may be subcontracted to another firm or research organization. For more FAQs on SBIR, see <https://www.sbir.gov/faqs/other>.

Does EPA provide commercialization assistance? Who is the commercialization contractor?

Yes, EPA provides commercialization assistance to both Phase I and Phase II awardees. EPA provides this assistance through an outside contractor, which has historically been Foresight Science and Technology. Small businesses must use the EPA contractor and are not allowed to select their own provider. The amount provided per award will go up to \$6500 this year.