



NBDC SBIR/STTR Phase 0 Program RFP:

Introduction

The Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) announces **Nebraska SBIR/STTR Phase Zero**, a grant program available to Nebraska's small businesses, university-affiliated small businesses, and college and university faculty entrepreneurs. These funds are for the development of Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) proposals for submission to any of eleven participating federal agencies.

The goal of the SBIR/STTR Phase Zero program is to help Nebraska's new and existing small businesses and college and university faculty compete more effectively and increase participation in federal SBIR and STTR programs by providing a grant to develop concepts and to prepare high-quality, competitive proposals. Of particular focus is to increase SBIR/STTR submissions by those who have traditionally not participated in the SBIR/STTR Program, including minority-owned small businesses, woman-owned small businesses, veteran-owned small businesses and those located in rural areas.

The SBIR/STTR Phase Zero program is **administered by** the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC), which is managed by the University of Nebraska Office of Sponsored Programs.

The **Phase I and Phase II Grants** under the **SBIR and STTR programs** provide funds for research, development and demonstration of high-risk, innovative ideas during the proof-of-concept phase and technology-prototype-development phase prior to commercialization, thus minimizing the risk to cash-starved small businesses. Visit the websites listed below for the appropriate descriptions and guidelines relevant to the agency missions and topic interests.

Agency Web Sites:

Department of Agriculture (USDA) <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir.html>

Department of Commerce (DoC) - NIST http://patapsco.nist.gov/ts_sbir

NOAA www.oar.noaa.gov/ORTA/SBIR

Department of Defense (DoD) www.acq.osd.mil/sadbu/sbir

DARPA www.darpa.mil/sbir

DoD – Air Force www.afrl.af.mil/sbir/index.htm

DoD – Army www.aro.army.mil/arrowash/rt/

DoD – Navy www.navysbir.com

Department of Education (DOEd) www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/SBIR

Department of Energy (DOE) www.er.doe.gov/sbir

Dept. of Health and Human Services (NIH) <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir.htm>

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.hsarpasbir.com/
Department of Transportation (DOT) www.volpe.dot.gov/sbir
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <http://es.epa.gov/ncer/sbir>
National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) <http://sbir.nasa.gov>
National Sciences Foundation (NSF) www.eng.nsf.gov/sbir

The SBIR-STTR Phase Zero Application

Funding Uses

Eligible applicants can request up to \$3,000 to defray any reasonable costs incurred in directly developing a SBIR or STTR proposal.

Funds **can** be used for:

- Direct costs such as costs to gather information (e.g. literature search, market research);
- Registration fee for an SBIR proposal writing workshop/course;
- The services of external technical consultants to help develop proposal plans, and/or that of a technical writer or proposal reviewer to develop and submit a high-quality proposal;
- Travel (detailed justification required) to develop partnerships for the proposal including travel to a Nebraska university for STTR proposal development.

Exceptions to these allowable costs will be considered on a case by case basis.

The SBIR/STTR Phase Zero grant funds **will not** be provided to cover:

- Indirect costs;
- Purchase of equipment;
- Salaries for individuals employed by the applicant's small business;
- Salaries of the principal or co-principal investigators of the proposed project, including the individuals entered in Section A. Company information line #4 and Section B.
- University/Non-Profit Partner Information line #4 of the online application;
- Travel to Washington, DC to meet with personnel from the Federal Agency for which the SBIR/STTR application is being prepared; or
- Cost of travel and registration to attend SBIR/STTR outreach conferences.

Multiple Submissions

The proposed idea in the SBIR/STTR Phase Zero grant proposal must be original. Only one Phase Zero grant will be awarded to develop a specific SBIR/STTR proposal. An applicant (business or a person) shall not receive more than three SBIR/STTR Phase Zero awards in one calendar year.

A Phase Zero proposal may be submitted independently for each targeted application up to a limit of two proposals per calendar year. A maximum of \$3,000 may be awarded for the first grant and up to \$2,000 for the second Phase Zero grant in one calendar year. The maximum award then would be: \$3,000 for one grant and \$5,000 for two grants.

Eligible Applicants for SBIR Grants

Interested applicants should meet all the eligibility requirements of the federal agency to which the SBIR/STTR application will be submitted. The eligibility requirements for submission of the **Nebraska Phase Zero SBIR/STTR** include but are not limited to the following:

Small Businesses

1. Applicant must meet federal agency ownership/eligibility requirements and be **American-owned**, and **located in Nebraska** with proof of “good” standing with the Nebraska Secretary of State. Total employees of the parent company and its subsidiaries **do not exceed 500**.
2. The applicant business has **identified the project team** from current employees and consultants or will have hired qualified team members before starting the grant work.
3. The principal investigator (**PI**) **on the proposal is employed** by the applicant small business for more than **50% of his/her time, except in the case of an STTR program, at the time of the Phase I award**.
4. In SBIR grants, partnership with an academic/non-profit organization is allowed but not required. The majority of the proposed work is to be conducted by the applicant and **not more than 33% (for Phase I) and 50% (for Phase II) of the dollar amount of the proposed work can be subcontracted**.
5. **Preference will be given for minority and socially-disadvantaged small businesses** including woman-owned small businesses, veteran-owned small businesses, minority-owned small businesses, Indian-owned small businesses, and rural Nebraska-located small businesses.

University Faculty

Interested applicants must meet all the eligibility requirements of the federal agency to which the Phase I STTR application will be submitted. The eligibility requirements for the **Phase Zero STTR** are nearly identical to those for a Phase Zero SBIR grant with a few additions. These additional requirements are:

- The principal investigator (**PI**) on a **STTR** proposal is either a **university faculty member or an employee of the small business**.

- The small business partner must be a Nebraska small business
- The STTR application is submitted by the small business in **partnership** with one or two non-profit organizations, one of which must be a university.
- **Small businesses** must undertake a minimum of **40%** of the work and the academic/non-profit **partners** must be responsible for a minimum of **30%** of the work. Up to **30% of the work may be performed by a subcontractor**.
- A **university faculty** can apply for an **SBIR** grant but must create a company before the award can be received from the federal agency.

Application Process

Applications for Nebraska SBIR/STTR Phase Zero grants will be **accepted all-year-round basis**, but **must be submitted at least six (6) weeks prior to the deadline of the federal agency or applications accepted via RFP process made public through the NBDC SBIR/STTR website** to enable NBDC to complete the review and the decision making processes. If a Phase Zero application is submitted to NBDC less than 45 days prior to the federal agency deadline, NBDC reserves the right to decline the application. Only **Nebraska small businesses, university-affiliated businesses and college and university faculty** are eligible to seek Phase Zero funds.

Applications can be submitted **by mail or electronically** through our **online application** which can be found on our website at <http://nbdc.unomaha.edu/sbir> In addition to the online application, the following three attachments can be included for both the SBIR and STTR Phase Zero submissions and will be given further evaluation:

- 1. Biographical information on the PI and other key personnel** (limit one page per person), uploaded in a single file via the web application form;
- 2. A letter of commitment from non-profit or public institution team members and collaborators** (this letter should be a signed statement of the individual's commitment to participate in the project, uploaded in a single file via the web application form;
- 3. Letters of support from commercialization partners** (this letter should be a signed statement of the individual's support of the project and act as an indication of market validation for the proposed innovation and add significant credibility to the proposed effort. Letters of support should demonstrate that the company has initiated dialog with relevant stakeholders (potential customers, strategic partners or investors) for the proposed innovation and that a real business opportunity may exist should the technology prove feasible. The letter(s) must contain affiliation and contact information for the signatory stakeholder, uploaded in a single file via the web application form; and
- 4. (Optional): A diagram or diagrams to assist with the project description**, put in a pdf file and emailed or mailed with application.

Mail or E-Mail to:

SBIR-STTR Phase Zero Program
Attn: Lisa Tedesco, SBIR/STTR Program Manager, NBDC
Nebraska Business Development Center
University of Nebraska at Omaha
67th and Pine Streets, MH 200
mtedesco@unomaha.edu

All applications will be treated in confidence and are subject to an independent review.

Receipt of each online application will be acknowledged. Applications with incomplete information may not be considered. Additional information may be requested of the applicant for clarification and responses must satisfy the NBDC SBIR/STTR Program Manager before the proposal is put before the review panel (see below).

Application Evaluation and Selection Process

An independent, external review panel or external individuals will review submitted proposals. The NBDC SBIR/STTR Program Manager will constitute the review panel with one or more representatives from academia, local and state governments, economic development agencies or other similar entities. The names of the review panel will remain confidential. The review panel will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria:

1. Match between soliciting agency's topic, proposed grant proposal and company's existing and past business experience;
2. SBIR/STTR proposal concept, innovativeness and the proposed objectives;
3. End product for commercialization and identification of its customers and market;
4. Knowledge of related R&D and the existence of previous intellectual property;
5. Applicant's ability in resource development and utilization (people, facilities, budget);
6. Qualifications of the project team;
7. Facilities to conduct the proposed work;
8. Previous experience in SBIR/STTR application submission;
9. Phase II development objectives and general plans for commercialization; and
10. Level of risk involved in the concept and its impact.
11. Letters of support by phase III supporters

The review panel will provide recommendation to fund or not to fund as well as subjective comments on rationale. Verbatim copies of the reviewer's comments will be sent to the applicant after a decision has been made on the application.

Grant Award Process

Based on the recommendations of the review panel and other available information, the NBDC SBIR/STTR Program Manager will recommend to the NBDC Advisory Board funding of Nebraska SBIR/STTR Phase Zero grant awards for only those small businesses and individuals that demonstrate the ability to prepare a competitive SBIR/STTR federal agency proposal. Final action is determined by NBDC. After a complete application is received by NBDC, the applicant will be **notified generally within one (1) week** whether or not his/her application was approved for funding.

Review of the Phase I Draft

Two (2) weeks after Phase Zero award notification, the applicant is required to send an electronic copy of the Phase I draft proposal to NBDC prior to submission to the agency who will then provide applicant with review and feedback. A copy of the e-mail should also be sent to NBDC (vdog@unomaha.edu). **The critique of the draft will be returned within one week.**

Award Amount and Payment Schedule

The maximum amount of the award will not exceed \$3,000 for a single proposal and \$5,000 for up to two proposals by a single business.

Payment will be administered on a “cost-reimbursement” basis only at the conclusion of services rendered and by invoice to ensure fund allocation, adequate proposal development and timely submission of high-quality SBIR/STTR proposals.

The Phase 0 grant will only be evaluated and awarded based on receiving copies of:

- **Phase 0 application (as laid out in this RFP) and budget justification**
- The signed and submitted hard copy of the full **SBIR/STTR Phase I final proposal**;
- Accompanying **cover letter** to the federal agency;
- **Proof of online submission or receipt of the Phase I application** by the agency prior to the federally posted deadline.
- **A signed sub-award agreement, provided to the applicant by UNO**
- **All invoices and expense information for Phase 0 services rendered**

The payment of the award amount will be contingent upon signing of a sub-contract agreement between UNO/NBDC and the applicant small business.

Post Award Notification

The applicant is **required** to inform NBDC on the outcome of the Phase I Application. After receiving notification from the Federal Agency, an e-mail with the following information should be sent to NBDC (vdog@unomaha.edu):

Funding Outcome

- Not funded
- Funded

Funding Details

- Funding amount;
- Date of award;
- Term of award;
- Title of award, and
- Awarding agency.

HYPOTHETICAL TIME LINE of the Phase Zero and Phase I application Process.

Below is an example layout for a Federal Agency Due date of May 1. For actual deadlines contact the specific federal agency (see agency list on page 2).

Time Line	Example Dates	Applicant's Action
60 days	March 1	Submit Phase Zero application and budget to NBDC online and mail signed hard copies at least six (6) weeks prior to the federal agency Phase I deadline
	March 2	Begin work on Phase I application
7 days	March 9	Receive Phase Zero award notification; sign and return one copy of the executed sub-contract agreement to NBDC
14 days	March 23	Applicant submits first draft of Phase I proposal to NBDC with 2 weeks of Phase 0 award, prior to submission of Phase I proposal to agency.
7 days	April 1	Applicant receives critique back from NBDC within one week of sending
Phase I Due Date	May 1	Submit final proposal to federal agency and send a copy to NBDC, including proof of submission.
7 days	May 7	Within one week, applicant submits invoices and sub agreement to UNO Grants Accounting
14 days	May 21	Within 30 days of receiving invoices and signed sub-grant agreement, a check for phase 0 grant will be sent to applicant.
	November 1	...or soon thereafter, notify NBDC of the outcome of the Phase I application

NBDC Contact Person

For clarifications on the above program, please direct your inquiries to:

Lisa Tedesco, SBIR/STTR Program Manager
Nebraska Business Development Center
University of Nebraska at Omaha
67th and Pine Streets, MH200
Omaha, NE 68182
Telephone: 402-554-2421
E-mail: mtedesco@unomaha.edu
Website: <http://nbdc.unomaha.edu/sbir>