

Train-The-Trainer COURSE

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SBIR · STTR
America's Seed Fund™
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U.S. Small Business
Administration

Helping Potential SBIR/STTR Applicants— Regional Innovation Clusters

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Course Overview

This course is designed for service providers whose work tangentially touches the **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)** programs. It's for those of you who want to be better prepared to assist clients who appear to be a good match for either of these two programs.

Comprised of 10 lessons, this course will help service providers feel more confident in the guidance they provide to potential SBIR/STTR applicants. Individuals who complete the entire sequence of 10 lessons will receive a **Certificate of Completion from SBA**. This course is designed to fit in with your work schedule and is offered over an eight week period, typically with one lesson per week. The first and last week are exceptions and have two lessons each week. Participants should anticipate that each lesson will require two hours of preparation time in addition to participation in a live, one-hour webinar associated with each lesson. This course is highly recommended as a form of Professional Development.



LESSON 1 Introduction

TUESDAY: 1/21
2:00 p.m. ET

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce you to the two tools that we will be using during this course: (1) The CANVAS Learning Management system (LMS) and (2) the On-Line Tutorials created for small business and which are located on the SBIR.gov website. The latter are publicly available for small businesses to use. You are welcome to freely use the On-Line Tutorials as training materials that you can assign to clients interested in learning more about the SBIR/STTR programs. We will use CANVAS for individual assignments, discussions, and webinars [live and recorded]

LESSON 2 Contracts vs Grants

TUESDAY: 1/28
2:00 p.m. ET

Approximately half the awards made through the SBIR and STTR programs are made as grants; while the other half are made as contracts. This difference in the type of legal instrument used to make an award makes a world of difference to the deliverables, the method of payment, and the latitude provided to the proposer. Via this topic, service providers are introduced to the vast differences in the agency solicitations.

LESSON 3 Proposal Evaluation Criteria

TUESDAY: 2/4
2:00 p.m. ET

Before beginning to work on a proposal, it is important to understand how the proposal will be evaluated. When preparing a proposal, one writes to the evaluation criteria. Therefore, understanding the role that innovation, commercialization, and the team play in the evaluation process will assist both the client and the service provider to understand where the emphasis should be placed. Although all agencies address these three criteria, the emphasis varies among the various agencies.



SBIR/ STTR



LESSON 4 Proposal Preparation Schedule

TUESDAY: 2/11
2:00 p.m. ET

The process of writing one's first SBIR/STTR proposal is filled with surprises. There is far more involved than a novice ever imagined. Understanding what to expect; the sequence in which things should be done; and the importance of developing a schedule to which they will adhere will assist companies to become successful in completing and submitting a proposal. Most service providers have never prepared a proposal and therefore, it is difficult for them to appreciate the complexity of the task the small business is undertaking. The purpose of this lesson is to sensitize the service provider to this process so that she or he can provide the support needed to help a company complete the proposal preparation process.

LESSON 5 Finding the Right Topic

TUESDAY: 2/18
2:00 p.m. ET

A small business that wants to submit an SBIR/STTR proposal, must first find a relevant topic at one of the participating agencies. The SBIR/STTR programs do not accept "unsolicited proposals," but instead require that a company respond to one of their current topics. Most agencies list their topics in their solicitation or Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). However, there are some exceptions such as the Department of Energy which publishes a separate topic list several weeks before it releases its Funding Opportunity Announcement. This lesson focuses on how to find an appropriate topic using a variety of search engines and search strategies.

LESSON 6 Innovation & Commercialization

TUESDAY: 2/25
2:00 p.m. ET

A fundamental evaluation criteria used in the SBIR/STTR program is innovation — an approach or challenge that advances the state of the art. Many small businesses fail to demonstrate in their proposals that they understand the state of the art and/or that their approach will advance a specified frontier. The purpose of this lesson is to coach service providers on how they can assist potential applicants in assuring that their approach is innovative.

LESSON 7 Registrations

TUESDAY: 3/3
2:00 p.m. ET

A major deterrent to becoming involved with the SBIR/STTR program is the number of systems with which a potential awardee must register. All agencies require companies secure a DUNS number, register with the System for Awards Management (SAM), and with the SBIR Registry. In addition, agencies often require that proposals are submitted through complex systems such as Grants.gov, FastLane, ERA Commons and numerous other systems. The purpose of this Lesson is to sensitize the service provider to these systems, so that you can help companies overcome some of the issues that commonly arise when trying to register with these systems.

The Team

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LESSON 8 Winning Team

TUESDAY: 3/10
2:00 p.m. ET

An evaluation criteria that all small businesses must address is whether or not their team has face validity. Can they convince the reviewers that their team has the credentials and access to resources that are needed to implement the work plan presented in their proposal. For startups, as well as established firms that are not accustomed to teaming, finding people resources and developing a good partnership is time consuming and often difficult. The purpose of this lesson is to help service providers prepare to assist their clients with this key requirement.

LESSON 9 Indirect Rates

TUESDAY: 3/17
2:00 p.m. ET

Many companies start the life of their firm without a solid understanding of how to prepare an appropriate budget to submit with their proposals. Often they submit a budget without profit (or fee) and without an understanding of indirect rate calculation methods. With that first proposal, they inadvertently set an inappropriate precedent that may take years to change, and incur the additional expense of hiring an accountant who specializes in government accounting to assist them in developing an appropriate Government accounting system. The purpose of this lesson is to provide service providers with insight into government accounting procedures, so that you are better prepared to help the company start out on the right foot.

LESSON 10 Is SBIR/STTR a Good Fit?

THURSDAY: 3/19
2:00 p.m. ET

A common challenge all service providers face is determining if the SBIR or STTR program is a good fit for a potential client. Having worked with many clients through Phase 0 initiatives, this lesson focuses on how to discern if this is a good fit for a potential proposer.