

SBIR Grants and Non-Dilutive Funding to Bootstrap your Startup Company

Perspective from a Proposal Writer and Principal Investigator

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Boston Entrepreneurs Network
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EVERSON BIO

- Founded consulting practice in 2011 for Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program

Mission: to be the catalyst between your laboratory and the market place

- Support client technical areas: Sensor Systems, Sensor Technology, Renewable Energy Technologies, Nano Technologies, Autonomous Vehicles
- Previous Positions:
 - Director of Business Development at QinetiQ North America, Waltham, MA
 - Senior Engineer, Foster-Miller, Inc., Waltham, M A
- Won SBIR Tibbetts Award
- Earned PhD, Physics, Boston College

SBIR Program Overview

SBIR Program Goals:*

- Stimulate technological innovation
- Meet Federal research and development needs
- Foster and encourage participation in innovation and entrepreneurship by women and socially or economically disadvantaged persons
- Increase private-sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal research and development funding

* www.sbir.gov

SBIR Program Overview, continued

- There are 11 Government agencies that participate in the SBIR program
- SBIR funding is distributed over 3 phases:
 - Phase I: initial proof on concept; 6 months, \$150K
 - Phase II: extension of Phase I work leading to engineering prototype; up to 2 years, up to \$1M
 - Phase III: commercialization; non SBIR funds, few \$M
- Intended for small businesses < 500 employees
- SBIR solicitations listed on SBIR Gateway (www.zynsys.com)
- Check with www.SBIR.gov for complete information

Before Writing that SBIR Proposal: a Reality Check

- What is your innovation (hardware, software, process)?
- What problem does it solve?
- What is the demand for it? (Intense, or “nice to have, but...”)
- Is it disruptive or simply evolutionary?
- Why is your company superior to your competition?

Reality Check, continued

- Who are your potential customers (military, civilian)?
- Do they have funding?
- What is your preliminary data: breadboard, computer simulation?
- What is your preliminary business plan? Staffing needs?
- Do you have a timeline with milestones and required funding estimates?

Reality Check, continued

SBIR proposal submission dates

- Department of Defense: Feb., June, Sept.
- National Science Foundation timeline:



- There is a 6 month lag from submission until award for NSF. Similar for the DOD. Can you wait that long?
- Chance of winning SBIR Phase I: 15%; Phase II: 40%

Hints on Getting Started

- Read solicitations carefully!
- Understand agency mission and how development of your innovation would support that mission.
- Does your innovation fit a specific need of the DOD (i.e., a contract) or broader areas defined by the National Science Foundation (i.e., a grant)?
- Memorize proposal writing rules (e.g., page count)!
- Register your company: DUNS, SAM (System for Award Management), SBC (Small Business Concern).
- Allow 2-3 weeks for registration.

Proposal Writing Hints

- Expect to spend 120-150 hours on a Phase I proposal.
- “Grab” the proposal reviewer during the first few opening sentences. Otherwise forget it!
- Illustrate your innovation early in the proposal to create credibility.
- User fewer pages than allowed if possible. Some poor soul has to read your “epistle”

Want Assistance?

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Back Up Slides

Your Facilities and Equipment

- Your backyard garage
- Incubator facilities:
 - North Shore Innoventures (www.nsiv.org)
 - Greentown Labs (www.greentownlabs.com)
 - Cambridge Innovation Center (www.cictr.com)

SBIR Award Databases

Was the current SBIR topic of interest done previously in some form?

Check:

- SBIR.gov
- *SBIRSource*
- Inknovation.com