National Science Foundation (NSF) SBIR Quick-Start Guide

This quick-start guide has been designed to get you started with a NSF SBIR proposal package.

The current solicitation for NSF can be found at this link. This provides a general idea of all of the requirements necessary to complete a NSF proposal package and what NSF is interested in funding under their SBIR/STTR solicitation.

For NSF, you will need the following registrations. It is important that you complete these registrations as soon as possible, as some can take up to 14 days to issue, and not having these in place can impact your ability to submit a proposal. Please reach out to the NM FAST team if you need assistance with any of these registrations. Additionally, the New Mexico Procurement and Technical Assistance Centers (NM PTAC) can assist you in the SAM registration processes, including securing a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). You can contact one of their offices to receive one-on-one help. A list of NM PTAC offices can be found at the bottom of their Contact Us page.

1. **SAM**: The System for Award Management, or SAM, is the first registration to complete in terms of priority. There are a few steps to getting your SAM registration in place. The first one is that you must create a Login.gov account, which you will be prompted to do when you click the registration link below. If you have never registered your business, you will also create a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) during this process; if you have already registered with the government, you will be able to transition your DUNS into a UEI, or it is already available to you in a SAM registration. While the digital portion of this registration can take up to an hour, as it requires quite a few markers for your business, including your foundation date, points of contact (which can all be the same person), and your ACH banking information, the information you input will go through a series of government checks. It is not unheard for it to be a four to six week process. Please plan accordingly. https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration. The following video walks you through this process: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uv1YNAsINk
2. **SBC Control ID**: This registration is required by the Small Business Administration (SBA), which coordinates the SBIR/STTR programs. You have to have your UEI, at minimum, to complete this registration. https://www.sbir.gov/registration
3. **Research.gov:** This is the new single sign-on site for NSF. You must have your UEI and SAM registrations completed, as it generates an email to your registered authorized representative to complete the process. https://www.research.gov/accountmgmt/#/registration

Instead of a submission close date, NSF now carries three submission windows a year:

1. November 22, 2022 - March 1, 2023
2. March 2, 2023 - July 5, 2023
3. July 6, 2023 - November 1, 2023

All submission windows close at 5PM submitter's local time. Along with the switch to submission windows, NSF also requires the submission of a "Project Pitch" in order to submit a full proposal. The Project Pitch is accepted 24/7, 365 days a year. If the Project Pitch is accepted, the small business will receive an official invitation (via email) from the cognizant NSF SBIR/STTR Program Director. If your Project Pitch is not accepted, the small business will receive feedback on why the proposed innovation is

not a good fit for the NSF SBIR/STTR programs as it has been pitched. More information on the Project Pitch can be found here.

While you wait to get the Project Pitch back, there are some action items you can complete to start putting together your package.

1. **Budget** – Phase I awards fund up to $275,000 over a period of 6 to 12 months for a feasibility study. The feasibility study will typically include researching the proposed methodology, laboratory testing and environment replication if necessary, and any other markers to verify that your idea has merit for prototype production (Phase II). As you know the tentative scope of the work and the budget threshold, it is a good idea to start formulating some costs and making decisions on materials and equipment needs (if available).
2. **Collaboration** – If you are working with any other entities for a consultancy or subcontract to the project, it is a good idea to start formulating a work plan and action items for that relationship. This can also shape the budget for that line item.
3. **Required Forms** – Though we will send you a compliance matrix that lays out all of the necessary formatting requirements, sections, and content for your proposal, it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the information that needs to populate those sections, as well as begin any necessary research.
    a. **Project Summary** – This is a one-pager that contains the Intellectual Merit for the project, or the ability to advance scientific knowledge and understanding, and the Broader/Commercial Impact for the project, or the potential market for the product and any benefits to society as a whole. (Further explanation of these requirements can be found in the solicitation document here.)
    b. **Elevator Pitch** – This is a one pager covering the customer, the value proposition, and the innovation
    c. **Biographical Sketch** – This will include a resume for the PI and any senior personnel (those who will be working on the project that are employed by the small business or research institution). Follow the template found here.
    d. **Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources** – This will specify the availability and location of significant equipment, instrumentation, computers, and physical facilities necessary to complete the project and the manner in which the small business has access to these items. This is also a place to report equipment you have (teleconferencing, office computers, etc.) that will assist in communicating with project stakeholders.

The forms referenced above are simple to generate even if you only have a vague idea of what you would like to accomplish. Once you have a concrete idea of your path forward, the bulk of the writing will be done in other sections.

The NM FAST team has a suite of resources (e.g. YouTube instructional videos, check-lists, compliance matrices, etc.) available for use in proposal creation. Please reach out to Dana Catron (dderego@nmsu.edu) for more information.