

Department of Transportation (DOT) SBIR Quick-Start Guide

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

The current solicitation for DOT can be found at this [link](#). This provides a general idea of all requirements necessary to complete a DOT proposal package and what DOT is interested in funding under their SBIR solicitation. Additionally, the New Mexico APEX Accelerator 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 APEX Accelerator offices can be found at the bottom of their [Contact Us](#) page.

For DOT, 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.

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. **DOT's SBIR submission portal:** DOT uses their own submission portal for SBIR packages. Though there is no real "registration" for the portal, you will need to keep the link handy for submitting your proposal. https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_2024_2/signup

DOT recently announced a few changes to their SBIR program:

- **Pre-Solicitation Interchange:** Small businesses will have the opportunity to review the technical topics and submit clarifying questions to the Technical Expert/Topic Authors at the Operating Administrations during this period.
- **Streamlined Solicitation Process:** The solicitation period will be shortened to 30 days and the proposals requirements will be streamlined, reducing the page requirements for the technical proposal.
- **Evaluation Down-Selection:** DOT evaluation teams will down-select the finalists being considered for awards. Finalists will be invited to participate in DOT's Pitch Day.

- **Pitch Day:** Following on the success of the U.S. Air Force’s SBIR Pitch Day, DOT will introduce its own version of an in-person Pitch Day event for SBIR finalists to take place at DOT Headquarters in Washington, D.C. This event will allow DOT evaluators to interact with the finalists to both hear their 15-minute “pitch” and engage in a Q&A session. Real-time evaluation enables quicker decision-making and streamlined Phase I awards.
- **Foreign Disclosure Notice:** The SBIR and STTR Extension Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-183), Section 4(c), requires each SBC submitting a proposal or application for a federally funded award to disclose information in the proposal or application regarding ties to the People’s Republic of China and other foreign countries. As such, all offerors submitting in response to this solicitation are required to complete a disclosure form at the U.S. DOT’s online page at: <https://forms.office.com/g/BmmrYKqhpz>

Though DOT does not require an executive summary to be submitted for idea validation, it is a good idea to reach out to a cognizant program manager for idea validation before starting your proposal narrative. When performing a topic match, NM FAST staff can put you in touch with the most relevant DOT program manager to discuss the fit of your innovative idea.

1. **Budget** – Phase I awards fund up to \$200,000 over a period of 6 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. You will also want to start putting together rough numbers for a budget figure for this collaboration, as any administrative signatures or authorizations at your partner could delay the process.
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. **Key Personnel and Bibliography of Directly Related Work** – This portion of the proposal must identify key individuals involved in Phase I including their directly related education and experience. Though there is not a required or specified format for this, offerors will need to cover the most relevant information that ties this individual’s capabilities to the proposed work, providing summaries that focus on their most relevant experience or publications.
 - b. **Facilities** – 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 and proposal sections 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 Milica Tenic (tenic@nmsu.edu) for more information.