

SBIR Advance Program Description

SBIR Advance is an in-depth program covering all aspects necessary for writing winning grants to the federal government, specifically focused on, but not limited to the National Institute of Health (NIH). The program is designed to provide qualified life sciences entrepreneurs and early-stage research and development companies with:

- Grant application strategy advise,
- Proposal writing workshops,
- One-on-one consultation and access to SBIR experts,
- Scientific and editorial review of grant application, and
- Access to state and regional pre- and post-award resources, respectively.

PLSG has contracted Biotechnology Business Consultants, LLC (BBC) to provide technical consulting expertise and to administer the SBIR Advance program. The program will be offered three times a year and each is timed to occur at least ten weeks prior to the NIH's SBIR/STTR grant deadlines of April 5, August 5, and December 5.

Participation in the program begins with the submission of an application followed by an initial assessment call between the company/individual and the SBIR consultants. During the call, eligibility, stage of the company and grant strategy will be reviewed. Eligible parties will be required to attend the two-day workshop in order to later access the scientific and editorial review of their grant proposal application, one-on-one consultation and SBIR expertise.

Proposal Writing Workshop

The two-day workshop will be offered during each cycle of the program. The workshop begins with an overview of the SBIR program, including its purpose as well as a review of the federal agencies highlighting the solicitation, related resources, and the importance of market intelligence. Tools and references are provided to ensure that all attendees leave with the necessary information to research their specific application. Guidelines and requirements that need to be followed while preparing the proposal as well as after the award are also reviewed. Principal investigator requirements and company eligibility are reviewed. The internal agency review process, including the psychology of the reviewers, strategic planning and development and necessary tactics will also be explained. Trainers will share summary statements of other past applications as examples to demonstrate exactly what the study sections look for in a proposal.

The second part of the workshop covers each section of the SBIR proposal application in detail. Copies of all forms are provided and instructions for completing each section are reviewed. An actual SBIR example is used to demonstrate how to complete various components of the proposal.

The third part of the workshop focuses on what will be needed and how to prepare for the Product Development Plan of your proposal. Ideally, applicants will be thinking about their Product Development Plan, required for the Phase II proposal, and incorporate such ideas into their Phase I grant proposal. The workshop will conclude with sources of information necessary to effectively write the Product Development Plan such as market intelligence, and elements including commercialization plans, patent status and marketing plans.

Following the SBIR Advance workshop, Principal Investigators (PI) will have 4 to 5 weeks to work on the draft of their grant proposal application. The PI will then submit his or her company's completed grant proposal to the SBIR consultants for scientific and editorial review. The SBIR consultants will offer editorial and scientific comments to the PI prior to the submission deadline.

In addition, this program provides one-on-one consulting time for participants to use as needed during grant preparation.

Application & Assessment for SBIR Advance

Applicants are required to complete an application form and submit it along with a business plan (if available) and summary of the technology being considered for the SBIR proposal. Applications will be accepted three times per year at the published deadlines and will be evaluated by senior PLSG staff and the SBIR consultants.

Subsequently, an initial assessment call with the SBIR Advance consultants will be scheduled to evaluate the stage of the technology and the company's eligibility for federal funding programs. The assessment is to assist both the applicant and the consultants to familiarize themselves with the company, the technology and the SBIR process. As well as advise on the appropriate grant strategy for the current stage of the company.

The SBIR Advance program director will make final recommendations for acceptance into the program with a final decision made by the Chief Executive Officer of the PLSG.

Application deadlines:

July 24, 2009

SBIR Advance workshops:

August 25 and 26, 2009

Eligibility:

Interested participants must meet the following program criteria.

Companies must:

1. be located in the State of PA;
2. have some rights to the proposed technology or access to innovative life science technology;
3. demonstrate a working knowledge of the SBIR process and show some familiarity with the program (i.e., past SBIR applications, familiarity with grant writing, funds already raised);
4. be incorporated or clearly identify their plans to incorporate;
5. sign appropriate Participant Agreement (inclusive of an NDA) and contract for services;
6. have a plan for dedicated lab space;
7. have a qualified principal investigator (PI) who will attend the mandatory SBIR workshop and be the primary author of the grant application. The PI of an SBIR project must have his or her primary employment with the small business during the conduct of the project and at the time the award is granted.
8. the above qualifications are in addition to the federal SBIR guidelines.

Partner Resources offer additional resources to SBIR Advance participants. They are the Innovation Partnership (IP), and the Institute of Entrepreneurial Excellence (IIE) at the University of Pittsburgh.

Innovation Partnership is a statewide supported consortium of leading economic development organizations in Pennsylvania, including PLSG. The goal of IP is to assist researchers and early-stage technology companies to gain a greater share of federal grant dollars available to develop and commercialize new technology.

The Institute of Entrepreneurial Excellence (IIE) provides post SBIR award management assistance to SBIR Advance winners.

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