

## MicroVoucher Pre-Proposal Assistance - Program Guidelines

12/2021

[The Innovation Partnership \(IPart\)](#) assists technology-driven companies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (PA) in preparing high-quality SBIR/STTR grant proposals for submission to ANY of the 11 offering, federal funding agencies.

This program offers a no-cost opportunity to receive valuable, critical feedback from professional, technical reviewers on planned Phase I SBIR/STTR proposal concepts.

Further financial support is offered to those applicants whose proposal concepts are judged to have strong potential for submitting a competitive, SBIR/STTR federal proposal submission. These candidates will be awarded a MicroVoucher (MV) from IPart that reimburses one-half of the cost incurred in preparing the proposal itself, **with up to a maximum of \$5,000 being awarded for the client to engage a [Preferred Provider](#)** to assist in the proposal preparation. *(Award amount is always at the discretion of the IPart Investment Committee)*

All proposal concepts under review are fully protected by non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) to ensure confidentiality of proprietary information.

### Industry Focus

IPart offers assistance to technology-driven companies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in preparing high quality SBIR/STTR grant proposals for submission to federal funding agencies.

IPart's mission is consistent with other initiatives in the Commonwealth designed to grow the industry and technology sectors, expected to drive Pennsylvania's future economy.

IPart is particularly interested in supporting businesses showing early signs of commercial success in the following sectors:

- Clean Energy & Energy-Related
- Bioscience/Life Sciences
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Communications Technology

## MicroGrant (MV) Award Amount

Companies who are awarded a MV for proposal preparation consultant services should:

- Vet & choose a consultant from either the IPart [Preferred Provider](#) (PP) List or;
- Self-select a Provider approved in advance by your IPart Sponsor or IPart Director;
- Have the [Preferred Provider](#) send you their invoice for services rendered for up to \$5,000 of the proposal preparation costs.
- Date and endorsed the Provider's invoice; and,
- Forward the invoice to the IPart Director for payment directly to the Provider.

Clients are responsible for payment to the [Preferred Provider](#) of any amount exceeding the allowable MV Award amount, of up to \$5,000. Costs for PP Services should be discussed upfront with the Provider. *(IPart is not a party to or responsible for any terms/conditions/Agreements etc. executed between the client and the PP.)*

## Allowable Use of Funds

The MV, while awarded to the client, will actually pay the consultant's (PPs) invoice for services directly. IPart will pay for the following consultant services related to proposal preparation costs:

- Professional services, including market studies or writing, proofreading and/or editing, and providing review/comment/feedback/iterative redlining of the client's actual federal proposal.
- Consulting fees supporting technology development, commercialization, or both.
- Consulting fees associated with budget preparation and/or ensuring appropriate alignment with proposed project work and conformance with agency rules/mandates.
- Other costs directly related to preparing the proposal, including fees for market studies or technical database research, as performed by the consultant.
- Any other SBIR/STTR proposal-related assistance.

## Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants, including: sole-proprietorships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies must have a primary business location in Pennsylvania.
- Subsequent primary manufacture or production of commercial products resulting from the proposal is planned to take place within the same general geographic area.
- Applicants must meet the requirements set forth in the applicable federal agency solicitation and demonstrate reasonable capability to complete the work outlined in the project.
- Applicants accepting an IPart financial assistance with the cost of preparing their federal proposal are required to provide an equivalent investment, either in the form of cash or in-kind contribution.

## Award & Application Limits

- A single applicant may submit no more than five (5) applications to either the MicroGrant/MicroVoucher/FMA (Federal Marketing Assistance Program: Phase II Assistance Program, (client **MUST** ask IPart Sponsor Partner to participate in this program) per calendar year, and no more than three (3) MicroVoucher and/or MicroGrant and/or FMA awards (combined) will be made to a single applicant per calendar year;
- Additionally, any individual or company whether with one single company or with multiple companies, may be awarded **no more than \$20,000 in total support** through the IPart MicroGrant/Micro-Voucher/Federal Marketing Assistance and Other IPart Assistance Programs, combined for the lifetime of their program usage; and,
- Clients who reach the \$20,000 award limit, **may continue to utilize the IPart's Pre-Proposal Assistance Technical Review** while continuing to adhere to the submission limits noted previously.

## Terms of Participation

Program participants agree to comply with the following responsibilities:

- Provide the IPart with the itemized Consultant Invoice, endorsed and dated by you, the client.
- Provide IPart with a copy of any resulting proposal submitted to the federal agency, along with email submission confirmation by the due date. IPart will treat this information as proprietary to the applicant.
- Provide IPart with a copy of the notification that federal funds have been awarded or denied. The recipient agrees to request a debriefing from the federal agency and forward a copy of all comments from the debriefing to IPart.
- If financial assistance is offered and accepted, both parties will sign the IPart MicroVoucher Agreement defining the terms and conditions for the award.
- Promote the successful pursuit of federal funding among other small high-technology firms in the region. Participate in good faith as requested by IPart in activities designed to encourage others in the region to pursue similar federal funding. This participation may include serving as a speaker or panel discussion member at an organized event or providing interviews for published informational or instructional materials.
- Report economic impact data (jobs, sales, investment) to IPart upon the completion of the project and then annually for a period of 3 years. This information will only be used in aggregate form by IPart – confidentiality of data by individual respondent is always protected.

## Application Deadline

Applicants must submit their MG Pre-Proposal 1<sup>st</sup> draft to the IPart Director or Partner Member for review and feedback, **at least 5-6 weeks prior to the agency submission deadline**. Pre-Proposals must be ready to send for Tech Review (in good final form), **four (4) weeks in advance** of the federal agency's solicitation submission deadline. Applications received less than four weeks before the solicitation due date will be addressed on a case- by-case basis and may only be eligible for a Pre-Proposal Application Program (PPAP) Review. Applications are reviewed on a first-received basis.

## The Review Process

- Two reviewers chosen from a national, qualified pool are assigned to each submitted application.
- Using an on-line evaluation system, each reviewer accepts a confidentiality agreement and proceeds to read and technology/sector-specific critical feedback about the application.
- This feedback is then summarized and presented to an IPart Investment Committee comprised of IPart business consulting professionals from our Partner Organizations.
- The Technical Evaluation Report, together with the application itself, forms the basis for the Investment Committee's decision regarding eligibility for financial assistance (MG).
- The decision criteria include the strength of the fit between the project and a specific announced SBIR/STTR topic area, as well as the potential to effectively commercialize an innovative application of technology.

## Notification

Applicants are notified via e-mail of funding decisions. Regardless of further funding eligibility, each applicant receives a copy of the evaluation summary, including technical reviewer comments. This feedback is intended to be constructive in helping the applicant plan/submit a high-quality proposal – if not the one submitted, perhaps another in the future.

## MicroVoucher Funds Disbursement for Consultant/PP Services

IPart will release funds (pay the PP's invoice) to the professional consultant after the proposal has been submitted to the federal agency and acceptable proof of compliance with the program requirements has been received.

## How to Apply

For additional information about this program or other supporting federal funding for technology development, contact one of the Innovation Partnership Member Organizations.

[Innovation Partners Sponsor Contacts](#)