

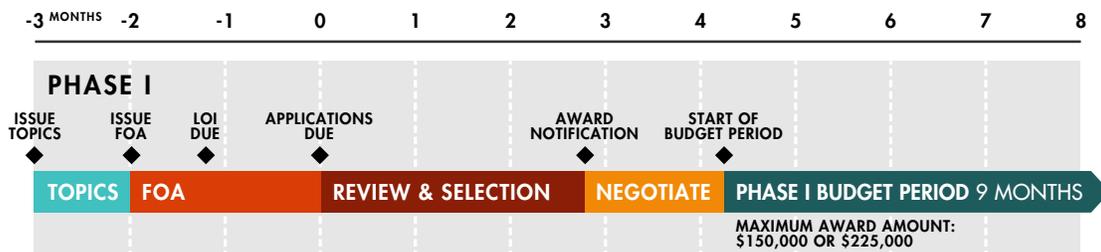


COURSE 3, TUTORIAL 3

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY SBIR/STTR SOLICITATIONS

The Department of Energy's SBIR/STTR Program Office releases two solicitations each year. DOE is a granting institution and calls its solicitations Funding Opportunity Announcements or FOA. The FOA are released in August and November annually. To view current and past solicitations it is best to go directly to DOE's website. On the FOA page you will find many useful resources for applicants and awardees including examples of a Letter of Intent and a Phase I SBIR/STTR Commercialization Plan. Guidance for Indirect Rate Submission and Detailed Instructions for Completing a DOE SBIR/STTR Phase I Grant Application are also available. These are just a few of the many useful resources that you will find on the DOE website.

APPLICATION & AWARD TIMELINES



UNIQUE FEATURES OF DOE PROCESS

The DOE solicitation process has a number of unique features. Most of the federal agencies include their topics within the solicitation itself. However, DOE releases its topics in a separate document about a month before each Funding Opportunity Announcement is released. The names of the topic managers are prominently noted under each topic description along with their contact information. Interested parties are encouraged to

contact the topic managers, also called TMs as early as possible to seek clarification on topics of interest. Once the FOA is released interested parties have approximately three weeks in which to prepare and submit a two page Letter of Intent. The LOI, as it is called, is a unique feature of the DOE process. The LOI provides the information needed for the agency to select reviewers and thereby adhere to the desired schedule for proposal evaluation. Submission of the LOI is mandatory. If you fail



to submit one, you may not submit a proposal. Therefore be very cognizant of the due dates for the Letters of Intent.

Letter of Intent (LOI)

» **Unique to DOE**

» **Is submitted about 3 weeks after FOA release**

» **If you do not submit the LOI you may not submit a proposal**

Most agencies have separate solicitations for their SBIR and STTR programs. However, as DOE allows many, but not all of its topics to be submitted as either an SBIR or STTR application each release contains both.

IMPORTANCE OF REGISTRATIONS

With all agencies, it is important to have the required registrations in order. In addition to being registered with Dun and Bradstreet; the System for Awards Management (SAM) and the SBA Company Registry, there are four other systems with which you must be registered. The most important is the Portfolio Analysis and Management System or PAMS. You must be registered with this system in order to submit your LOI - so this registration should be done early. Other required registrations include grants.gov; Fed-Connect and the FSRS.

Let's take a quick look inside a typical DOE Funding Opportunity Announcement. The section called Award Information tells you about the type of instrument DOE uses to make its awards. In the case of DOE all awards are made as grants. This section also indicates how many awards DOE anticipates making, the size of the awards; and the period of performance. This section is followed by a discussion of the eligibility criteria. Next you come to the Application and Submission Information section. This is where you will find all of the information about the application process. By the way, DOE refers to your submission as an application, rather than a proposal. The application will be submitted through grants.gov and is submitted as a collection of documents that are uploaded in the fashion described in the guidelines. To learn more about the submission process, please explore the DOE on-line tutorials. Make sure that you know where; when; and how to submit your application.

MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

The next section of the FOA provides the Application Review Information. It is very important that you understand the merit review criteria that DOE will use; as all applications will be judged on a competitive basis using these criteria.

First, the Strength of the Scientific/Technical Approach as evidenced by (A) the innovativeness of the idea and the ap-

proach, (B) the significance of the scientific or technical challenge, and (C) the thoroughness of the presentation.

Second, the ability to competently carry out the project as evidenced by (A) the qualifications of the Principal Investigator or PI, other key staff, subcontractors and consultants, if any, and the level of adequacy of equipment and facilities; (B) the soundness and level of adequacy of the work plan to show progress toward proving the feasibility of the concept; and (C) the degree to which the DOE investment in the project would be justified by the level of proposed research effort.

Third, the Impact as evidenced by (A) the significance of the technical and/or economic benefits of the proposed work, if successful, (B) the likelihood that the proposed work could lead to a marketable product or process, (C) the likelihood that the project could attract further development funding after the SBIR or STTR project ends, and (D) the appropriateness of the data management plan for the proposed work. Please refer to Part IV, C. of this FOA for guidance on what to include in your Commercialization Plan and Commercialization History.

When preparing a proposal, always begin by being aware of how proposals will be evaluated and assure that your proposal thoroughly addresses each criteria.

DOE proposals are reviewed by both internal and external reviewers to identify weaknesses relative to these three evaluation criteria. Because the DOE supports only high quality research and development, applications will be considered candidates for funding only if they receive the highest rating with respect to at least two of the three criteria.

The applications that are considered candidates for funding are ranked in order of the highest quality and strongest program relevance based on the results of the evaluation. The Selection Official may also consider program balance, funds distribution, and needs of the technical programs.

If the challenges presented by the Department of Energy are of interest to you; take the opportunity to review previous funding opportunity announcements and topics, so that you are familiar with the DOE solicitation process and better prepared to respond to new FOA as they are released.

DOE SBIR/STTR Help Desk

For questions or concerns contact the DOE SBIR/STTR Help Desk at SBIR-STTR@science.doe.gov or call (301) 903-5707 (Monday–Friday 8:00am–8:00pm EST).