



Tips for Successful SBIR/STTR Applications

- Work hard on Phase I proposals - they could guide a 2- to 3-year R&D program. Be prepared to spend a lot of time preparing proposals, up to 200 hours in many cases.
- Do your homework. Do not propose what has been tried (and possibly failed) before. [View abstracts from past winners.](#)
- Write a balanced proposal; a literature review is critical.
- Make sure your proposal will be "on topic" before you start. Call the agency and discuss the topic before proposing; you can even suggest topics for future solicitations.
- Propose innovative ideas. Do not propose incremental improvements.
- Provide clear and credible analysis supporting claims of commercial potential using buyer's guides, marketing consultants, Dun & Bradstreet analyses of companies making similar products, advertisements, outside investments - don't just make wild claims.
- [Read and heed the 70+ SBIR/STTR tips.](#)
- Propose to more than one agency if appropriate, but be forthcoming about that.
- Follow the administrative rules.
- Focus on what you do well and contract with well-recognized experts to fill capability gaps.
- Be aware that the most critical problem must be resolved in Phase I to win a Phase II award.
- Watch the competition; [read the abstracts of Phase I winners.](#)
- Get debriefed if unsuccessful; your odds of winning next time increase.
- Get coaching; attend national and regional SBIR conferences.