



# Innovate Rhode Island Small Business Fund

SBIR/STTR Matching Grant

Program Guidelines

July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

RI Science & Technology Advisory Council

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[www.stac.ri.gov](http://www.stac.ri.gov)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **About the Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC)**

The Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC) is a coalition of business, academic, medical and government leaders with the mission to recommend to state leadership strategic investments that drive economic development and job creation by maximizing the economic impact of research, technology and innovation. STAC initiatives support the state's research and development activities by promoting collaboration across institutions and encouraging entrepreneurship and new company creation through the transfer of new technologies and discoveries into the marketplace. As a program initiated within Commerce RI, STAC programs also support Commerce RI's mission to work with public, private and non-profit partners to create the conditions for businesses in all sectors to thrive and to improve the quality of life for our citizens by promoting the State's long-term economic health and prosperity.

### **About the Innovate Rhode Island Small Business Fund (IRSBF)**

Through the Fund, eligible Rhode Island small businesses may apply for grants and loans to defray the cost of applying for SBIR/STTR awards, to match SBIR/STTR Phase I and Phase II awards and to hire interns. The goals of the program are to leverage state funds to encourage and support Rhode Island entrepreneurial participation in the federal SBIR/STTR programs, increase the amount of federal research dollars received by Rhode Island firms, sustain companies through the early stages of product development, encourage the establishment of high potential, high quality, high growth ventures in Rhode Island and enhance the talent pipeline in the life sciences and engineering fields.

### **Availability of Funds**

The Innovate Rhode Island Small Business Account is a special revenue fund to be administered by the Rhode Island Science & Technology Advisory Council. The State of Rhode Island FY16 budget appropriated \$1,000,000 to this account to support Innovate Rhode Island Small Business Fund programs.

### **Release of Information**

All applicants are advised that any and all records (documents, correspondence, memoranda, etc.), received or maintained by STAC and the Commerce Corporation may be a matter of public record and subject to release upon a request from a member of the public under the Rhode Island Access to Public Records Act ("APRA"), R.I. Gen. Laws §38-2-1 et seq. In response to a request, STAC and the Commerce Corporation have the right, in its sole discretion, to redact or withhold information which is

exempt from disclosure under APRA, including trade secrets and commercial or financial information which is of privileged or confidential nature.

**As such, we suggest that any portion of the application or materials provided by the applicant that contains such information (including for example, customer lists, processes, etc. or financial information) be clearly labeled with a legend or marking such as "Confidential information -- Not Public Record".** This does not guarantee that the information so marked will necessarily be exempt from public release, as the Commerce Corporation will make any final determination about which information is to be made available to the public, but this will be helpful in identifying any records which may be exempt. The full list of exemptions can be found in R.I. Gen. Laws §38-2-2(4).

## **MATCHING GRANTS FOR SBIR/STTR PHASE I**

### **Overview**

The federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Programs represent the largest source of early-stage, high-risk technology financing in the United States. Eleven federal agencies participate in this program which provides over \$2 billion for early stage research and development projects leading to commercialization of resulting products or services. The programs are designed to benefit entrepreneurs and small businesses -- while increasing the competitiveness of the U.S. economy -- by funding the development of innovative products and services.

Phase I awards assist entrepreneurs to determine feasibility of products and services. Agencies generally award grants to explore the technical merit of an idea or technology in response to a specific agency topical need. The IRISBF provides matching grants to assist recipients of SBIR/STTR Phase I awards to pursue the more substantial Phase II awards.

### **Who May Apply**

Recipients of a SBIR/STTR Phase I federal award who satisfy all the following conditions may apply for funding:

- Is a for-profit Rhode Island based-business with fifty (50) or fewer employees. For purposes of this program, a Rhode Island-based business is one that has its principal place of business and at least fifty-one percent (51%) of its employees residing in this state;
- Has received an SBIR/STTR Phase I award credited to Rhode Island from a participating federal agency.

Funding is distributed in two stages. Applicants meeting the above eligibility criteria may apply for Stage One grant distribution. Applicants may apply for Stage Two grant distribution upon meeting the following additional conditions:

- Submitted an accepted final Phase I report;
- Demonstrated that the sponsoring agency has interest in the Phase II proposal;
- Submitted a Phase II proposal to the agency;
- Satisfy all federal SBIR/STTR requirements;
- Certified that at least fifty-one percent of the research described in the SBIR/STTR Phase II proposal will be conducted in Rhode Island and that the business will remain a Rhode Island based business for the duration of the SBIR/STTR Phase II project;
- Demonstrated Freedom to Operate;
- Pledges it has not received and will not seek concurrent funding support from other sources that duplicate the purpose of the matching grant;

### **Amount of Award and Restrictions**

Applicants may receive a matching grant of 30% of the amount of the recipient's federal award with a maximum matching grant not to exceed \$45,000. Stage One funding is equal to 75% of the total amount

of state funding the company is eligible to receive. Stage Two funding is equal to 25% of the total amount of state funding the company is eligible to receive.

**Example:** ABC Company receives a \$150,000 SBIR/STTR Phase I award. The total amount of Phase I match the company is eligible to receive is \$45,000. Upon successful application to the Innovate Rhode Island Small Business Program, ABC Company receives a \$33,750 Stage One matching grant. Upon completing the conditions required for Stage Two funding, the company receives a second matching grant of \$11,250 bringing the total state matching funds received to \$45,000.

A business may receive only one Phase I Matching Grant per year and may receive only one grant with respect to each federal proposal submission. Over its lifetime, a business may receive a maximum of six (6) awards.

Use of matching funds is restricted to costs that are directly related to the project funded by the federal Phase I SBIR/STTR award. These costs include but are not limited to direct costs for additional technical work, product testing and validation, intellectual property protection, market research, patent search, business development plan, hiring of new high paying technical and business employees and small equipment.

### **Intellectual Property**

The Principal Investigator representing the applicant business must have demonstrated the Freedom to Operate and perform research and commercialization activities related to the proposed activity funded by the SBIR/STTR award. Acceptance of this grant does not transfer any intellectual property rights. All information and findings derived from activities funded by the Rhode Island Science & Technology Council and the Innovate Rhode Island Small Business Program remain the property of the grantee.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Businesses receiving matching funds must submit a Final Report to STAC. A Final Report is due within 30 days of notification that a Phase II award will or will not be granted. If the Phase II is granted, the Final Report should include the amount of the award, a description of how the matching funds contributed to the business receiving the award and any plans for expansion or investment due to the receipt of the award. If the Phase II is not granted, the Final Report should describe whether the company will continue the proposed R&D using its own resources. Program staff may, from time to time, require project updates via email.

Businesses receiving matching funds must agree to provide STAC with information on an annual SBIR/STTR Matching Funds Program survey for five (5) years. Failure to file reports as required or participate in the survey may cause the recipient to be barred from receiving future IRISBP funding.

Businesses must also agree to maintain records and accounts that properly document and account for the use of STAC funds for a period of five (5) years and agree to comply with any audit requests. In the event that an audit results in the determination that the recipient has expended contract funds on unallowable costs, they shall reimburse STAC in full for all such costs.

Any funds unused before notification or denial of a Phase II award must be returned to STAC. Businesses may request to keep the funds by submitting a budget justification outlining how the unused funds will be used to continue the goals of the research project. STAC may approve or deny the request based on its sole determination whether the continuation of funding supports the original goals of the Matching Funds program.

### **Application Instructions**

Solicitation notices will be posted on the STAC website. Eligible companies that have received a federal SBIR/STTR Phase I award during the time period noted in the solicitation **and** are still in active Phase I status may apply for matching funds. If the amount of funding requested exceeds the amount of funding available, a lottery will be conducted. Solicitation notices will be posted pending available funding.

Businesses seeking to apply for matching funds should electronically submit an application form found in the Appendix of these Guidelines to STAC following the directions on the STAC website. In addition to the electronic application, businesses must submit to STAC a hard copy of the following documents:

**Stage One**

- Completed and signed Application
- Official Notification of Award from the federal funding agency **or** a copy of the executed Phase I contract
- Section of grant proposal that explains nature of project

**Stage Two**

- A copy of the Phase I final report
- Verification of the final payment to the applicant under the Phase I contract or the final invoice
- A copy of the Phase II application and proof that it has been submitted

STAC will review applications to confirm compliance with the requirements stated in these Guidelines and has the discretion to request supplemental materials from applicants as part of its review. Applicants will be notified if their application meets compliance with all requirements and is approved or if the application does not meet compliance and is denied.

### **Application Checklist**

- Completed Application Form (below).
- Official Notification of Award from the federal funding agency **or** a copy of the executed Phase I contract with contract number and total award amount.
- Section of grant proposal that explains nature of project **or** project abstract.
- Current company W9 (if first time applicant or change in business address since last application).
- ACH form for direct deposit (below)

**Please submit an electronic copy of this application using the application portal on the STAC website.**

# APPENDIX

**Application for SBIR/STTR Matching Grant**

To qualify for funding, applications must be complete and in full compliance with all stated requirements. Applications that are incomplete or non-compliance may be returned to the applicant without further review.

Applicant Firm: \_\_\_\_\_  
Firm Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Form of Business: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Established: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principals, Titles & \_\_\_\_\_  
% of Ownership: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Website: \_\_\_\_\_

RI House District: \_\_\_\_\_  
RI Senate District: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of employees \_\_\_\_\_  
Scientific \_\_\_\_\_  
Managerial \_\_\_\_\_  
Technical \_\_\_\_\_  
Skilled \_\_\_\_\_  
Unskilled \_\_\_\_\_

Use of Match(%) \_\_\_\_\_  
Salaries/Wages \_\_\_\_\_  
Supplies \_\_\_\_\_  
R&D Equipment \_\_\_\_\_  
Computer \_\_\_\_\_  
Consultants \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

PI Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Agency to  
which proposal  
was submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Award or Solicitation  
number: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CERTIFICATION OF APPLICATION**  
**SBIR/STTR Phase I Grant**

**Please Note**

Eligibility for financial assistance under the Innovate Rhode Island Small Business Program will be determined by the information presented in the application. Any changes in the status of the proposed project from the facts presented herein could disqualify the project.

**Certification and Acknowledgment**

I hereby represent and certify that the information submitted in the application, to the best of my knowledge, is true, complete and accurately and fairly describes the project for which financial assistance is requested.

I further certify that I understand the following terms and conditions and accept these terms and conditions as a basis for financial assistance and the continuation of any such funding.

- 1) The applicant is current with all federal taxes.
- 2) The applicant is current with all state taxes.
- 3) The applicant is current with all city/town taxes.
- 4) The applicant is a for-profit, RI based business with 50 or fewer employees.
- 5) The applicant shall not receive concurrent funding support from other sources that duplicate the purposes of this award.
- 6) At least 51% of the research described in the federal SBIR/STTR Phase I will be conducted in RI.
- 7) The applicant will remain in RI for the duration of the SBIR/STTR Phase I.
- 8) The PI of the proposal has the Freedom to Operate and perform research and commercialization activities related to the proposed activity funded by the SBIR/STTR award.
- 9) The applicant hereby certifies that the applicant or his/her spouse or any member of the ownership of the applicant, in the event that the applicant is a corporation or a limited liability company or a limited partnership, is not related by blood through marriage, to any member of or staff of the Rhode Island Science & Technology Advisory Council.

I affix my signature on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_