

U.S. Small Business Administration
Office of Investment and Innovation

FEDERAL AND STATE TECHNOLOGY (FAST)
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
FY 2026

Funding Opportunity No. SBA-OIIFT-26-001

Opening Date: **June 2, 2026**

Closing Date: **July 16, 2026**

Proposals responding to this Funding Opportunity Announcement must be posted to Grants.gov by 4 p.m. Eastern Time, **July 16** 2026. No other methods of submission will be permitted. Proposals submitted after the stipulated deadline will be rejected without being evaluated.

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1.0 Section I – Funding Opportunity Description

1.1 Program Overview

- 1.1.1 Federal Agency Name: U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
- 1.1.2 Funding Opportunity Title: Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership Program
- 1.1.3 Announcement Type: Initial
- 1.1.4 Funding Opportunity Number: SBA-OIIFT-26-XXXX
- 1.1.5 CDFA Number: 59.058
- 1.1.6 Closing Date for Submissions: July 16, 2026, 4:00 PM Eastern Time
- 1.1.7 Authority: Public Law 119-75 and 15 U.S.C. 657d
- 1.1.8 Duration of Authority: Annual
- 1.1.9 Funding Instrument: Cooperative Agreement
- 1.1.10 Funding: Funding is from Fiscal Year (FY) 2026
- 1.1.11 Award Amount/Funding Range: A total amount of \$9,000,000 in FY 2026 funding is available for awards through this program. SBA expects to make awards at a maximum amount of up to \$180,000. Only qualified recipients will be funded. There is a matching fund requirement, and resources should be noted in the technical proposal. The match funds apply to each budget period. This cooperative agreement requires that the recipient match the federal funds that will be awarded at the rate of 50/75/100.
- 1.1.12 Project Duration: The period of performance for this agreement is three years. After the first budget period is awarded the following budget years(2) will be awarded at SBA discretion and is subject to continuing program authority, availability of funds and satisfactory performance by the Non-Federal Entity.
- 1.1.13 Project Starting Date: September 30, 2026
- 1.1.14 Proposal Evaluation: Proposals will be reviewed as detailed in Section 5.0. SBA may ask Applicants for clarification of the technical and cost aspects of their proposals. This must not be construed as a commitment to fund the proposed effort.
- 1.1.15 Agency Programmatic Point of Contact: Elden Hawkes, U.S. Small Business Administration
Office of Investment and Innovation
Email: FAST@sba.gov

1.2 *Introduction*

The Small Business Reauthorization Act of 2000, codified at 15 U.S.C 657d, established the Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership program. In accordance with its original statutory language, the program expired on September 30, 2005; however, it has been subsequently appropriated, most recently under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026 (Pub. L. No. 119-75).

1.3 *Background*

Since its inception in 1953, the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA or Agency) has served to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small businesses. While SBA is best known for its financial support of small businesses through its lending programs, the Agency also provides funding to organizations that deliver technical assistance in the form of counseling and training to small business concerns and nascent entrepreneurs to promote growth, expansion, innovation, increased productivity, and management improvement.

SBA's Office of Investment and Innovation (OII) administers the FAST program. OII supports U.S. growth-oriented small businesses and startups by administering federal investment and innovation programs, overseeing policy and compliance, and leading government-wide coordination of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs.

1.4 *Purpose & Goals*

The primary mission of the FAST program is to strengthen the technological competitiveness of small businesses in the United States. The FAST program provides yearly funding to eligible organizations to execute state-based programs, which may also collaborate regionally, that raise awareness of the SBIR/STTR programs, educate small businesses on new and ongoing program requirements, increase application submission and awards, and reach all eligible small businesses.

Under the authority of the Small Business Act (*see* 15 U.S.C. 657d), FAST awards strengthen the SBIR/STTR programs through:

1. **Stakeholder engagement:** increase the pipeline of SBIR/STTR applicants through targeted trainings and stakeholder engagement; and build the capacity of partner organizations and individuals responsible for supporting SBIR/STTR applicants and existing awardees.
2. **Technical and business assistance:** support entrepreneurs and startups through custom programs and/or services that improve proposal development and team creation; provide assistance that leads to the commercialization of technology developed through SBIR/STTR program funding; and form or encourage relevant mentoring networks to provide business advice and counseling.
3. **Financial support:** make grants or loans to applicants to pay a portion or all the cost of developing SBIR/STTR proposals (Phase 0), attending relevant conferences, and bridging gaps between phases.

1.5 *Leveraging of Resources*

Non-Federal Entities selected for awards under this Announcement are required to maximize their efforts to leverage SBA funding by working in conjunction with other public and private entities that provide support or have resources that would benefit SBIR/STTR applicants and/or awardees, including but not limited to:

- a. Partner organizations such as Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), APEX Accelerators (formerly known as Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs)), Growth Accelerators, Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs), Women's Business Centers (WBCs), SCORE, State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) partners, Regional Innovation Clusters (RICs), and more.
- b. SBA District and Regional Offices.
- c. Federal, state, and local government agencies.
- d. Universities, colleges, and other institutions of higher education.
- e. Private organizations to include those that have access or provide private capital.
- f. Trade/industry groups.

1.6 *SBA Involvement and Oversight*

A designated Grants Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) within the Office of Investment and Innovation (OII) will be responsible for overall monitoring and oversight of FAST Award Recipients, including compliance with the cooperative agreement. A designated Grants Management Officer within the Grants Management Division (GMD) will be responsible for issuing the Notice of Award, making modifications to the award, and processing payments.

1.7 *Changes or Cancellation*

SBA reserves the right to amend or cancel this Announcement, in whole or in part, at will and at the Agency's discretion. Should SBA make material changes to this Announcement, the Agency will extend the Closing Date as necessary to afford Applicants enough opportunity to address such changes.

2.0 **Section II – Award Information**

2.1 *Funding Information*

Funds provided under the FAST program must be used solely for the purposes stipulated in this Announcement and the Notice of Award and may not be commingled with any other funds. All costs proposed in an Applicant's budget must meet the tests of allowability, allocability, and reasonableness set forth in the applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cost principles (2 C.F.R. 200, Subpart E). Indirect costs will be stipulated in an Applicant's indirect cost rate agreement. SBA will not reimburse Applicants for their proposal preparation costs, but Non-Federal Entities may request Pre-Award costs. Pre-Award costs must directly relate to the conduct of the project and meet the tests of allowability, allocability, and reasonableness.

- Applicants may waive indirect costs and choose not to include indirect costs in their budget. Applicants may request reimbursement for indirect costs using their established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA, if applicable) or the de minimis rate of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) per 2 CFR § 200.414. o MTDC are calculated as defined in 2 CFR § 200.1 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". For more information on indirect costs for recipients, refer to 2 CFR §§ 200.413 and 200.414.
 - o If applying using a NICRA, a copy of the NICRA is required to be provided.
- Organizations that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect the De Minimis rate (2 CFR 200.414). The Uniform Guidance offers the option of electing to charge a de Minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As detailed in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be charged consistently as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If elected, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which it may do at any time

SBA expects to issue no more than \$9,000,000 in total FY 2026 FAST awards.

2.2 *Matching Requirement*

A non-federal match is required for each budget year within each performance year, and not less than 50 percent of the match provided by a Non-Federal Entity must take the form of cash. The remaining match amount may consist of indirect costs and in-kind contributions. Except for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program (see 42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(9)), no portion of the match may be derived from funds provided under any other federal program. Non-Federal Entities may use up to five (5) percent of their cooperative agreement for Planning Activities which are excluded from the non-federal matching requirements (Refer to Section 8.1 for the definition of Planning Activity.) The non-federal share of the cost of an activity (other than a Planning Activity) carried out under the FAST program is provided below:

- a. 50 cents of non-federal match for each federal dollar (a 1:2 match) for Applicant entities in the twenty-two (22) states and territories receiving the fewest number of SBIR/STTR Phase I awards;
- b. except as noted in (d) below, one dollar of non-federal match for each federal dollar (1:1 match), in the case of an Applicant that will serve small business concerns located in one of the sixteen (16) states receiving the greatest number of SBIR/STTR Phase I awards;
- c. except as noted in (d) below, 75 cents of non-federal match (a 3:4 match) for each federal dollar for all other states not described previously; and,
- d. 50 cents for each federal dollar that will be directly allocated by an Applicant described in sections (b) or (c) above to serve small businesses located in a low-income area - a Qualified Census Tract as that term is defined in section 42(d)(5)(C)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Federal dollars not so allocated by that Applicant shall be subject to the matching requirements of section (a), (b) or (c) above. (Section 8.4)

See Section 8.5 for State ranking and corresponding match requirement.

2.3 *Project Duration*

The Project Period is inclusive of an initial Budget Period of 12 months and up to two (2) additional Budget Periods of 12 months each, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory performance, and compliance with all the terms and conditions of the award. Exercise of the option periods will be solely at SBA's discretion.

- Budget Period 1: September 30, 2026 - September 29, 2027
- Budget Period 2: September 30, 2027 - September 29, 2028
- Budget Period 3: September 30, 2028 - September 29, 2029

3.0 **Section III – Eligibility Information**

3.1 *General*

An Applicant may submit only one proposal in response to this Announcement. Any additional applications from the same organization will automatically be rejected without being evaluated.

Please note that organizations must obtain and maintain an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov before registering with Grants.gov.

3.2 *Eligible Applicants*

To be eligible for this funding opportunity an Applicant must:

- Be a public or private entity, organization, or individual that intends to use funding awarded under this Announcement to provide outreach, technical and business assistance, and/or financial support to small businesses to increase SBIR/STTR proposals and awards; and
- Be endorsed by the appropriate State governor or their authorized designee as the only approved applicant from that State.
- Be a public or private entity, organization, or individual that is in one of the following states or U.S. territories:
 - American Samoa
 - Connecticut
 - District of Columbia
 - Guam
 - Maryland
 - Massachusetts
 - Nevada
 - Northern Mariana Islands
 - Oregon
 - South Carolina
 - Washington
 - Vermont
 - U.S. Virgin Islands

3.3 *Ineligible Applicants*

The following organizations will automatically be considered ineligible, and their applications will be rejected without being evaluated:

- Any organization that owes an outstanding and unresolved financial obligation to the Federal Government.
- Any organization that is currently suspended, debarred or otherwise prohibited from receiving awards of contracts or cooperative agreement/grants from the Federal Government.
- Any organization with an outstanding and unresolved material deficiency reported under the requirements of the Single Audit Act or OMB Circular A-133 within the past three years.
- Any organization that has had a FAST award involuntarily terminated or non-renewed by SBA for cause within the past year.
- Any organization that has filed for bankruptcy within the past five years.
- Any organization that proposes to serve as a pass-through and permit another organization to manage the day-to-day operations of the project.
- Any organization that was convicted or had an officer or agent acting on its behalf convicted of a felony criminal violation under any federal law within the preceding two years.
- Any public or private entity, organization, or individual that is located in a state that has a funded FAST recipient.

4.0 **Section IV - Application and Submission Information**

4.1 *Application Instructions*

Applications must consist of the following elements:

- (i) Cover Letter
- (ii) Technical Proposal
- (iii) Attachments and Exhibits
- (iv) Budget Information
- (v) Certification Forms and Assurances

4.1.1 *Cover Letter (1 page) and Technical Proposal (not to exceed 10 pages)*

The technical proposal serves as the narrative blueprint for the Applicant's planned project and **must include the following sections and subsections in the order listed below**. It must be prepared in single spaced format (or greater) with size 12 font and when read separately from the rest of the application, serve as a succinct and accurate description of proposed work. Applicants should concisely describe the methods for achieving FAST program goals listed in Section 1.4 and respond to each element under the technical proposal according to the evaluation criteria listed in Section 5.

I. Cover Letter includes:

- 1) Funding Opportunity No. **SBA-OIIFT-26-001**
- 2) Applicant's name, physical address, and website address
- 3) Name, phone number, and email address for the designated point of contact
- 4) Dollar amount of assistance being requested (\$0 - \$180,000)

II. Technical Proposal includes:

- 1) Organizational Experience and Capacity (25 points)
- 2) Project Management (10 points)
- 3) Coordination Across State and Regional SBIR/STTR Efforts (25 points)
- 4) Project Design (40 points)
 - General Program and Small Business Support Details (30 of the 40 points)
 - Ability to Reach Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses in Places with Historically Lower Levels of SBIR/STTR Participation, especially Rural Areas (10 of the 40 points)

4.1.2 *Attachments and Exhibits*

Each Applicant must attach copies of the following to its proposal (as applicable). **Bolded words** should be used as attachment description names in the Grants.gov system:

- **Résumés** (or position descriptions if a position is vacant) of Project Director and key management personnel. Résumés must include experience relevant to this project and may not be more than two pages in length.
- **Contracts and Consulting Agreements.**
- **Organizational Chart** with list of Board of Directors or Advisory Board members.
- **Milestones Chart.** Applicants must provide a chart of monthly projections for all activities to be performed under the cooperative agreement.
- **Governor's Letter of Endorsement.** Only those proposals bearing the written endorsement of the State governor(s), or their designee(s) may be submitted for evaluation and funding considerations. The letter should be scanned and uploaded upon submission (mailed copies are not necessary). In the situation where the governor or equivalent (e.g., Mayor of the District of Columbia), assigns the signatory responsibility of the endorsement letter to a designee, the letter must include an acknowledgement that the governor/equivalent has

authorized her/him to sign the letter on their behalf. The governor's correspondence can be addressed to:

- U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 3rd Street SW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20416, Joshua R. Carter, Associate Administrator, Office of Investment and Innovation.
- **Summary of FAST Program Achievements.** Applicants that have previously received FAST funding between 2022-2026 must provide a cumulative one-page summary of their program achievements.
- Any other documentation the Applicant believes supports its proposal.

4.1.3 *Budget Information*

Budget and financial information:

- Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.
- SF-424A, Budget Information (Non-Construction Programs).
 - **Budget Detail Worksheet** Use Attachments A-9 through A-12 Budget Detail Worksheet for 12-month Budget Period.
 - **Budget Narrative** Providing brief, detailed explanation of the components of each cost element listed in the SF-424A. Narratives must support all costs shown on the Budget Detail Worksheet and correlate to all activities to be performed under the cooperative agreement.
- Copy of the Applicant's **Cost Policy Statement**.
- **Match Documentation** (% category and sources for non-federal matching funds).
- Copy of the Applicant's current, government-wide **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** (if the Applicant's budget includes indirect costs). The Applicant must submit a current approved rate. If there is no such agreement, the applicant may negotiate a proposed indirect cost rate in accordance with the procedures set forth in the applicable cost principles outlined in Uniform Guidance for Federal Assistance 2 C.F.R. Part 200 or may accept the 15% de Minimis rate.

Bolded words should be used as attachment description names in the Grants.gov system.

4.1.4 *Certification Forms and Assurances*

Applicants must complete and submit the following forms. Bolded words should be used as attachment description names in the Grants.gov system:

- Most recent **A-133 audit report** no older than 1 year from current date. If Applicant is not subject to the requirements of the Single Audit Act, it must instead submit a copy of the most recent financial statements. If the most recent audit is older than 1 year from time of submission, the Applicant will need to provide the audit report within 6 months of award.

The following Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations are located within the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and will not be submitted with this application:

- *Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, 2 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.*
- *Financial Management Certification – 2 CFR 200.302 & 2 CFR 200.303*
- *Debarment and Suspension – 2 CFR Part 180*
- *Drug-Free Workplace – 41 U.S.C. 8103*

- *Tax Compliance – Section 543 of PL 112-55*
- *Conflict of Interest – 2 CFR 200.112 and 2 CFR 2701.112*

4.2 *Required Proposal Submission Dates*

Each Applicant is required to submit its proposal electronically via Grants.gov no later than 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on July 16, 2026. Because of the pre-conditions for submitting applications via Grants.gov and the potential for encountering technical difficulties in using that site, Applicants are strongly encouraged to log on to Grants.gov and review the submission instructions early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE CLOSING DATE TO BEGIN THE SUBMISSION PROCESS.** Applicants bear sole responsibility for ensuring their proposals are submitted and received before the closing date.

SBA will consider the date and time stamp on the validation generated by Grants.gov as the official submission time. A proposal that is not received by Grants.gov before the closing date of this Announcement will be rejected without being evaluated, unless the Applicant can clearly demonstrate through documentation obtained from Grants.gov that it attempted to submit its proposal in a timely manner but was unable to do so solely because of Grants.gov systems issues. Additionally, SBA will not accept any changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications made after the closing date.

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. If problems occur, the applicant is advised to (1) print any error message received; and (2) contact Grants.gov for immediate assistance. Applicants may obtain advice and assistance with the submission process using the Grants.gov Support Center at www.grants.gov/support.

5.0 **Section V - Application Review Information**

5.1 *General*

Applications will be rejected without being evaluated if they are submitted by ineligible organizations (see Section 3), are illegible, or materially incomplete due to an Applicant's failure to include all required forms and/or provide the required level of detail.

Disclosure of SBA Financial Assistance. Applicants must disclose any current or prior financing received from SBA, including any outstanding SBA loans, prizes, awards, grants, and any other forms of SBA financial assistance, as well as any pending applications for such assistance.

If an applicant currently holds any other financial assistance from SBA or has any other applications for SBA financial assistance still pending, the Applicant must identify how it will avoid duplication of efforts, commingling of funds, and overlapping or double claiming of costs among those projects. Applicants must treat each SBA project as separate and discrete with individual outcomes and deliverables and provide distinct reporting, accounting, and audit trails for each application and award.

Failure to sufficiently distinguish between multiple applications from the same organization, or between an application and one or more current SBA awards, may result in rejection of an application on the ground that it is duplicative of proposed or existing efforts.

Certification. Applicants must further certify that all such obligations (SBA loans, contracts, awards, the like) are current and in good standing, with no history of material delinquency, default, or subject to any unresolved enforcement or adverse action, unless otherwise disclosed and explained.

5.2 *Evaluation Criteria*

All timely, materially complete applications received from eligible organizations will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria listed below.

5.2.1 *Organizational Experience and Capacity (25 Points)*

Applicants will be evaluated on their ability to conduct relevant outreach, provide technical/business assistance and/or financial support to high-growth and/or research and development (R&D)-focused small businesses. Applicants must provide adequate evidence and documentation, including specific examples, of the following:

- Demonstrate organizational capacity (internally and through external partners) to administer technical and business assistance or innovation support programs, including, but not limited to, experience with federally funded programs.
- Track record of supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses engaged in R&D and technology commercialization.
- Have established internal controls, compliance systems, and audit readiness.
- Demonstrate the ability to assist potential SBIR/STTR applicants in the creation of responsive and competitive proposals or to facilitate assistance that provides potential SBIR/STTR applicants with the appropriate expertise to create responsive and competitive proposals.
- Demonstrate experience in creating and facilitating mentoring networks or programs with a mentoring component. Details should include the length of time they have conducted such programs, description of their structure, how they were maintained, and a brief overview of outcomes and lessons learned.
- Record of receiving other cooperative agreements, grants, or contracts for the conduct of technical and business assistance projects, including the names of the awarding agencies, the cooperative agreement, grant or contract numbers, and the performance outcomes/results achieved (chart suggested but not required).
- Sources of operational capital for the Non-Federal Entity.
- Familiarity with eligibility determinations under the Small Business Act, including small business size standards.

5.2.2 *Project Management (10 Points)*

Applicants will be evaluated on the strength of their staffing and management plans. Applicants must demonstrate they will devote adequate numbers of personnel having sufficient experience to the project, establish clear and direct lines of responsibility and authority for managing and overseeing the project, and show they will have sufficient facilities and other physical resources at their disposal to accomplish the proposed project. An Applicant must:

- Identify the Project Director and key management personnel (individuals who will spend a significant portion of their time on project-related activities), describe their expertise and their roles in conducting/overseeing the project, and stipulate the amount of time they will devote to the project by providing a report detailing each individual's effort on the project
- Identify small business contractors and consultants and the way they were selected (i.e., competitively or non-competitively). Identify the employees or officials of the Non-Federal Entity who will be responsible for overseeing and administering those agreements; copies of contracts and consulting agreements (either signed or samples as applicable) must be included as attachments in accordance with Section 4.1.2.

- Describe any subcontracting plan, addressing how subcontractors will be selected, the amount or range of funding each subcontractor will receive, and the purposes for which subcontracts will be made, if applicable.
 - You may not act as a pass-through or fiscal agent channeling award funds to other parties. You may contract with other parties for the performance of project support functions or services. However, you may not contract out more than 51 percent of this project to other parties (as measured by Project Funds). You also may not contract out the overall administration or day-to-day management of this project to any other party.
- Describe its financial management structure, internal controls for compliance and due diligence, any risk management framework, and identify all staff members who will be responsible for financial recordkeeping, reporting, the receipt, and expenditure of award funds, and addressing audit findings.

5.2.3 **Coordination Across State and Regional SBIR/STTR Efforts (25 Points)**

Applicants are asked to demonstrate a strong understanding of previous and ongoing local and regional efforts to support SBIR/STTR applicants and awardees, both within their own institutions as well as from other entities in their area. An Applicant must:

- Provide a description of the area to be served including:
 - Scope of the geographic area to be served
 - Previous and ongoing efforts or programs related to SBIR/STTR
 - Existing financial and business resources, workforce, and R&D infrastructure
- Define plans to expand the scope and reach of the project through collaboration with other entities. Include the proposed strategy for partnerships, with clear explanations regarding the purpose of implementing any joint activities. Differentiate between entities that are more likely to have significant impact on project goals versus those whose effect will be minor but still relevant.
- Where applicable, please explicitly describe the benefits of the potential collaboration (i.e., increased outreach, enhanced proposal development services, etc.) Letters of support from organizations may be included as attachments.
- If a FAST cooperative agreement or grant has been received in the past, describe how the work funded through the cooperative agreement or grant both impacted the number of SBIR/STTR proposals and awards in that state (chart suggested) and any outcomes related to the strength of the state/region's SBIR/STTR stakeholder network.
 - Describe overall SBIR/STTR-related support services that have taken place in the Applicant's state or territory over the past 3-5 years and provide detailed insight into their effectiveness.
 - Provide examples of prominent programming and their impacts that were executed under previous FAST grants.
- If the Applicant has no direct FAST experience, describe previous work related to the SBIR/STTR programs, and the unique capabilities the organization will employ to reach the goals of the FAST program.
 - Describe overall SBIR/STTR-related support services that have taken place in the Applicant's state or territory over the past 3-5 years and provide detailed insight into their effectiveness.

- Provide examples of programming that have been executed and their impact in expanding local and regional SBIR/STTR efforts.
- Describe any funds or in-kind resources the Applicant will devote to the project as well as donation commitments from outside entities.

5.2.4 **Project Design (40 Points)**

5.2.4.1 **General Program and Small Business Support Details (30 of the 40 points)**

Applicants will be evaluated on their understanding of the purpose of the FAST Program and their proposed approach.

- Describe types of support provided
- Number and brief description of training courses/seminars/counseling sessions/accelerator cohorts etc. it expects to conduct and projected number of entrepreneurs and/or small businesses to be served in a one-year time frame
- Describe efforts to connect small businesses with other sources of capital (i.e., venture capital, etc.)
- Describe efforts to assist small businesses with commercialization and bridging Phase II to Phase III (i.e., manufacturing, licensing, patents, distributing, etc.)
- Describe plans to leverage training tools (e.g., available tutorials on SBIR.gov or another platform).
- Proposed evaluation plan or schedule.
- Projected milestones (timeline of program accomplishments and activities) - can be included as an attachment.
- Demonstrated experience educating small business concerns on capital affiliations and structures, ownership structures, foreign ownership, control, or influence (FOCI), and eligibility in accordance with SBIR/STTR program requirements.

Greater weight may be given to applicants demonstrating prior experience conducting eligibility determinations, ownership and control analyses, and foreign risk assessments in connection with federally funded innovation programs.

5.2.4.2 **Ability to Reach Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses in Places with Historically Lower Levels of SBIR/STTR Participation, especially Rural Areas (10 of the 40 points)**

Applicants must demonstrate their ability to reach entrepreneurs and small businesses in places with historically lower levels of SBIR/STTR participation, especially rural areas.

Applicants should show concrete strategies for reaching individuals and businesses that have historically lower levels of SBIR/STTR participation, including proposal submissions and awards.

- Describe track record of supporting SBIR/STTR applicants from places with historically lower levels of SBIR/STTR participation, especially rural areas, and provide outcome examples, such as increase in SBIR/STTR proposals, successful SBIR/STTR awards secured, revenue growth achieved, or advancement of innovative technologies to market.
- Experience working with organizations representing the interests of entrepreneurs and small businesses with historically lower levels of SBIR/STTR participation.

- If no experience is present, describe potential external partners with experience or how these partnerships will be established.
- Methods of outreach/stakeholder engagement, number of these clients it expects to assist, and how it arrived at such estimates. Include any names of existing studies or reports that were used to guide outreach and training activities.

5.3 *Review and Selection Process*

Applications that are not rejected by Grants.gov or SBA's screening process will be evaluated by teams of reviewers and scored based on how well they meet the criteria outlined above. These reviewers may be SBA employees, employees of other federal agencies, or relevant external experts or stakeholders. The maximum score any application can receive is 100 points. Prior to evaluating applications SBA will establish a minimum acceptable score. Only those applications that meet or exceed that threshold will be eligible for funding. Applicants are therefore encouraged to design proposals that address each of the scoring criteria listed above as thoroughly as possible.

In the interest of providing FAST program services to as broad a segment of the small business community as possible, SBA will take the geographical dispersion of Applicants' project service areas into account when making award decisions. An application that exceeds the minimum acceptable score and which scores more highly than other acceptable proposals may nevertheless be passed over for funding if that application proposes to serve the same or substantially the same area or market as another acceptable application that was selected for award.

All Applicants that are recommended for funding will undergo a risk assessment evaluation. This assessment will examine an organization's history of performance including:

- The Applicant's record in managing federal awards.
- Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirement imposed on Non-Federal Entities.
- Verification of a Non-Federal Entity's conflict of interest policy (must be consistent with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. 2701.112 addressing procedures for ensuring its employees, consultants and contractors do not assist clients in which they, their principals, or their immediate family members have a financial interest or fiduciary duty and for ensuring its employees, consultants and contractors do not use their role in the project as a means of marketing their outside services to project clients).

SBA will be evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed use of grant funds; SBA will show preference for proposals that maximize funds leading to greater outcomes. Pursuant to Executive Order 14332—Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking, dated August 7, 2025, all else being equal, SBA will provide preference to organizations with lower indirect costs.

6.0. **Section VI - Award Administration Information**

6.1. *Award Notification*

All Non-Federal Entities selected for awards will receive written notification. **If your organization is selected for an award, you will be given instructions on how to register with GrantSolutions to**

access and sign your award. Applicants not selected for awards will be notified, though they are not guaranteed a debriefing session.

6.2 *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*

All successful Non-Federal Entities will be required to comply with the requirements set forth in 15 U.S.C. § 657d; 2 C.F.R. Parts 200 and 2701, and OMB Circular A-133 (as applicable); and the terms and conditions set forth in their Notices of Award. In addition, SBA may, from time to time, advise Non-Federal Entities awarded under this Announcement of new legal requirements and/or policy initiatives with which they must agree to comply.

6.3 *Reporting*

All Non-Federal Entities are required to submit the reports identified below. SBA may withhold payment if reports are not received or are deemed inadequate. Failure to report in a timely manner will also be weighed against future applications for cooperative agreement or grant funding from the same organization and the exercise of any option periods. The reports provided by Recipients may be made public. In addition, SBA reserves the right to require Recipients to post these reports on their websites.

6.3.1 *Financial Reports*

Non-Federal Entities will be required to submit quarterly financial reports to SBA using SF-425, Federal Financial Report (FFR) within 30 days of the completion of each quarter of the Budget Period. Non-federal Entities will also be required to submit a cumulative final financial report that covers the entire period of performance. The reports will be due 120 days after the period of performance has ended.

6.3.2 *Performance Reports*

Non-Federal Entities will be required to submit quarterly performance reports to SBA using SF-PPR, Performance Progress Report, and include SBA's FAST Quarterly Reporting Form (OMB Control No: 3245-0405), within 30 days of the completion of each quarter. Non-federal Entities will also be required to submit a cumulative final performance report that covers the entire period of performance. The reports will be due 120 days after the period of performance has ended.

6.3.3 *Report Submission*

All reports must be submitted in electronic format in the Grants Management Module (GMM) via GrantSolutions.gov.

7.0. **Section VII - Agency Contacts**

7.1 *FAST Program Point of Contact*

Questions concerning general information contained in this Announcement should be directed to the Grants Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) Elden Hawkes, at FAST@sba.gov.

7.2 *Financial/Grants Management Point of Contact*

Questions regarding budgetary matters related to this Announcement should be directed to the Grants Management Officer, FAST@sba.gov.

7.3 *Grants.gov Technical Support*

For technical support contact the Grants.gov Support Center at www.grants.gov/support.

8.0. **Section VIII - Other Information and Checklist**

8.1. *Definitions*

The following definitions apply to awards made under this Announcement:

8.1.1 *Applicant* – An eligible organization that applies for funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

8.1.2 *Award* – Financial assistance that provides supporting or stimulation to accomplish a public purpose. Awards include grants and other agreements in the form of money or property in lieu of money, by the Federal government to an eligible recipient.

8.1.3 *Budget Period* – The 12-month timeframe during which expenditure obligations will be incurred by the recipient of an award under this Announcement. For the purposes of this Announcement, the initial budget period will be from 9/30/2026 to 9/29/2027. The length of the project is a total of 36 months with three 12-month budget periods. Awards will be made for a base project period of 12 months, plus two continuation periods of 12 months each, if eligible.

8.1.4 *Client* - Someone who attends outreach events/meetings, trainings/workshops, or has received other types of assistance from the FAST grantee (e.g., proposal writing assistance, etc.). There is no minimum number of hours of interaction required nor does the interaction have to be one-on-one or in-person.

8.1.5 *Cooperative Agreement* – A legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the United States government and a Recipient when the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer a thing of value to the Recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation and substantial involvement is expected between the awarding agency and the Recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated in the agreement.

8.1.6 *Cost Policy Statement* – A document describing all accounting policies of an Applicant organization and narrating in detail its proposed cost allocation plan. This plan must stipulate the procedures used to identify, measure, and allocate all costs to each benefiting activity.

8.1.7 *Mentor* – A person or persons associated with a small business concern that has successfully completed one or more SBIR or STTR funding agreements and have agreed to guide small business concerns through all stages of the SBIR or STTR Program process. (Mentor is also defined in section 35(c)(2) [15 USC § 657d].

8.1.8 *Mentoring Network* – Per the Small Business Act (section 35(c)), a Mentoring Network shall: (1) provide business advice and counseling to high technology small business concerns located in the State or region served by the Mentoring Network and identified under section 34(c)(1)(E)(ii) as potential candidates for the SBIR or STTR programs; (2) identify volunteers who (A) are persons associated with a small business concern that has successfully completed one or more SBIR or STTR funding agreements; and (B) have agreed to guide small business concerns through all stages of the SBIR or STTR program process, including providing assistance relating to (i) proposal writing, (ii) marketing, (iii) Government accounting, (iv) Government audits, (v) project facilities and equipment, (vi) human resources, (vii) third phase partners, (viii) commercialization,

(ix) venture capital networking, and (x) other matters relevant to the SBIR and STTR programs; (3) have experience working with small business concerns participating in the SBIR and STTR programs; (4) contribute information to the national database referred to in subsection (d); and (5) agree to reimburse volunteer mentors for out-of-pocket expenses related to service as a mentor under this section.

8.1.9 *Non-Federal Funds* – A recipient’s cash, in-kind and/or program income contribution in fulfillment of matching funds requirements under this Announcement.

8.1.10 *Notice of Award* – The legal document, signed by both SBA and a Recipient, that memorializes the award of funding under a Cooperative Agreement and contains the specific terms and conditions that apply to the award.

8.1.11 *Outcomes* – The assessment of the results of the FAST program compared to its intended purpose utilizing short, intermediate, and long-term performance measurements to assess how businesses benefited from the services provided in addition to how the state’s overall SBIR/STTR performance has improved, including but not limited to an increase in the number and dollar amount of SBIR/STTR Phase I, II, and III awards won by small businesses.

8.1.12 *Phase 0 Awards* – Phase 0 is a general term indicating preliminary grant assistance designed to support the development of a Phase I SBIR or STTR proposal. Such funding can be for initial R&D efforts to support a planned Phase I proposal or as support funds for the planning, preparation, and evaluation of a Phase I proposal.

8.1.13 *Planning Activity* – An activity that a recipient performs in planning for the provision of services to its clients.

8.1.14 *Project Director* – A qualified individual employed by the recipient and approved by the Office of Investment and Innovation to direct the effort under the cooperative agreement. This individual is responsible to officials of the recipient for the proper management and conduct of the project.

8.1.15 *Project Period* – The total period of performance for an award made under this Program Announcement, including the base and all option-year Budget Periods.

8.1.16 *Recipient* – An organization that has had its application accepted and has been awarded funding under this Program Announcement.

8.1.17 *Small Business or Small Business Concern* – A business concern that is more than 50 percent directly owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are citizens or permanent resident aliens of the United States; and does not have more than 500 employees, including its affiliates. The size standards and size determination provision of 13 CFR Part 121, particularly 13 CFR Section 121.701-705, shall apply.

8.1.18 *State* – The fifty (50) States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and American Samoa.

8.1.19 *Technical Assistance* – Counseling and training to small business concerns and nascent entrepreneurs to promote growth, expansion, innovation, increased productivity, and management improvement (as described in 35 (c)(2)(B) [15 USC § 657d] and in accordance with the terms of this Program Announcement and a Recipient’s Notice of Award).

8.1.20 *Training* – A workshop, session, or webinar which delivers a structured program of knowledge, information, or experience on a business-related subject. The training must last for a minimum of one hour and include two or more individuals and/or businesses in attendance.

8.2 *Submission Instructions (Grants.gov)*: <https://www.sbir.gov/community/fast>

8.3 *Attachment Checklist for Completing the Application for Federal Assistance*

Include the following documents as separate attachments, with the corresponding names below:

() Cover Letter and Technical Proposal

Attachments and Exhibits

- () Resumes and Position Descriptions for Key Personnel
- () List of Contractors/Consultants
- () Copy of Contractual/Consultant Agreements
- () Organizational Chart with list of Board of Directors or Advisory Board members
- () Chart of Project Milestones
- () Governor’s Letter of Endorsement
- () FAST Program Achievements Summary

Budget Information and Certification Forms and Assurances

- () Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance
- () Budget Detail Worksheet
- () Budget Narrative
- () Cost Policy Statement
- () Match Documentation
- () Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

8.4 *State Rankings and Match Requirements*

FY 2024 SBIR/STTR award data compiled by SBA’s Office of Investment and Innovation. Information is based on number of awards issued and funding obligations for new awards only.

States Listed in the Following Chart Must Provide a Non-Federal Match of \$1 for each \$1 of Federal Funds

Ranking	State	Phase 1 Awards
1	California	648
2	Massachusetts	321
3	Virginia	183
4	Texas	180
5	New York	133
6	Colorado	121
7	Pennsylvania	110
8	Florida	107
9	Ohio	101
10	Maryland	100
11	North Carolina	81
12	Alabama	64
13	Illinois	62
14	Washington	61
15	New Jersey	58
16	Georgia	49
17	Oregon	42
18	Connecticut	41

States Listed in the Following Chart Must Provide a Non-Federal Match of \$.75 for each \$1 of Federal Funds

Ranking	State	Phase 1 Awards
19	Arizona	39
20	Minnesota	36
21	New Hampshire	34
22	New Mexico	32
23	Wisconsin	32
24	Hawaii	29
25	Indiana	27
26	Delaware	24
27	Utah	24
28	Tennessee	23
29	Wyoming	17
30	District of Columbia	17
31	Vermont	16
32	Kentucky	15

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33	South Carolina	14
34	South Carolina	14
35	Oklahoma	14

States Listed in the Following Chart Must Provide a Non-Federal Match of \$.50 for each \$1 of Federal Funds

Ranking	State	Phase 1 Awards
36	West Virginia	13
37	Missouri	12
38	Kansas	12
39	Nevada	11
40	Louisiana	10
41	Rhode Island	9
42	Idaho	9
43	Mississippi	9
44	South Dakota	7
45	Iowa	6
46	Montana	5
47	Maine	4
48	Arkansas	2
49	Nebraska	2
50	Puerto Rico	2
51	North Dakota	2
52	Alaska	1
53	American Samoa	0
54	Guam	0
55	Virgin Islands	0
56	Northern Mariana Islands	0