

Welcome to the FY 2026 U.S. DOT Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Webinar

- The webinar will begin shortly.
- This webinar will be view and listen only; **all attendees are muted.**
- Questions will be captured through the Q&A box.
- Closed-captioning is available.
- If participating using a web browser, update to the latest version and allow pop-ups to participate in polls in today's webinar.
- This webinar is being recorded. As soon as possible after the webinar, the recording will be posted to <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/work-with-us/small-business-innovation-research>.

U.S. DOT SBIR

FY 2026 Solicitation Webinar

Solicitation No. 6913G625QSBIR1

June 10, 2026



*The U.S. DOT SBIR Program is
administered by the Volpe National
Transportation Systems Center on
behalf of the Office of the Secretary*

Agenda

- Ground Rules and Logistics
- SBIR Overview
- Eligibility and Requirements
- Proposal Preparation
- Submission of Proposals
- Solicitation Appendices
- Evaluation Factors and Award Information
- SBIR FY 2026 Topics
- Important Dates and Reminders
- U.S. DOT/OIG Fraud Awareness

Presenters

Rachael Sack

U.S. DOT SBIR Program Director

Darren Shaffer

U.S. DOT SBIR Contracting Officer

Ground Rules and Logistics

- **Solicitation process questions may be typed in the Q&A pod.**
 - ***No verbal or written questions regarding the solicitation topics will be accepted.***
 - The Government will answer Q&A pod questions as time allows.
- Unanswered questions may be submitted to DOTSBIR@dot.gov directly after the webinar.
 - Please review the Solicitation and FAQs before sending.
 - Answers to all questions not found in the Solicitation or existing FAQs may be added to the “FAQs” section of the U.S. DOT SBIR Program website:
 - <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/work-with-us/small-business-innovation-research/faqs>
- Administrative and Appendix C questions will be accepted at DOTSBIR@dot.gov through June 30, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. ET.
- Any statements or remarks made during the webinar shall not alter the terms of the solicitation.
- ***The terms and conditions of the solicitation remain unchanged unless an amendment is issued that incorporates any changes discussed or alluded to during the webinar.***

Polling Questions

1. Have you applied to a DOT SBIR before?
(yes/no)
2. Do you work in the transportation
sector? (yes/no)

SBIR Overview



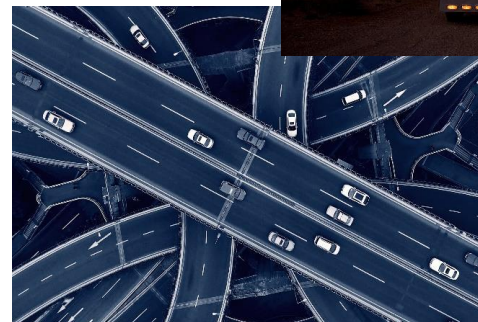
SBIR Background

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program offers competitive awards to stimulate technological innovation among small private-sector businesses while providing government Agencies with new solutions that meet their diverse needs.

- The SBIR program was created by the Small Business Innovation Development Act in 1982. (P.L. 97-219) and it was most recently reauthorized through September 30, 2031. by the Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act. (P.L. 119-83, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/3971/text>).
- Agencies with >\$100M in extramural research funding must set aside 3.2% of that budget for SBIR.
- **SBIR Program Goals:**
 - Stimulate technological innovation.
 - Meet Federal research and development needs.
 - Foster and encourage participation in innovation and entrepreneurship by emerging and undercapitalized SBCs.
 - Increase private-sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal research and development funding.

DOT's SBIR Program

- **The U.S. Department of Transportation's** highly competitive SBIR program awards over \$12 million annually in contracts to U.S. small businesses to pursue research on and develop innovative solutions to our nation's transportation challenges.
- SBIR addresses high-priority research gaps within U.S. DOT's R&D Program.
 - Topics are developed to align with strategic priorities and modal research plans.
 - RD&T Annual Modal Research Plans can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/administrations/assistant-secretary-research-and-technology/rdt-annual-modal-research-plans>.



Phase I Participation by DOT Agency

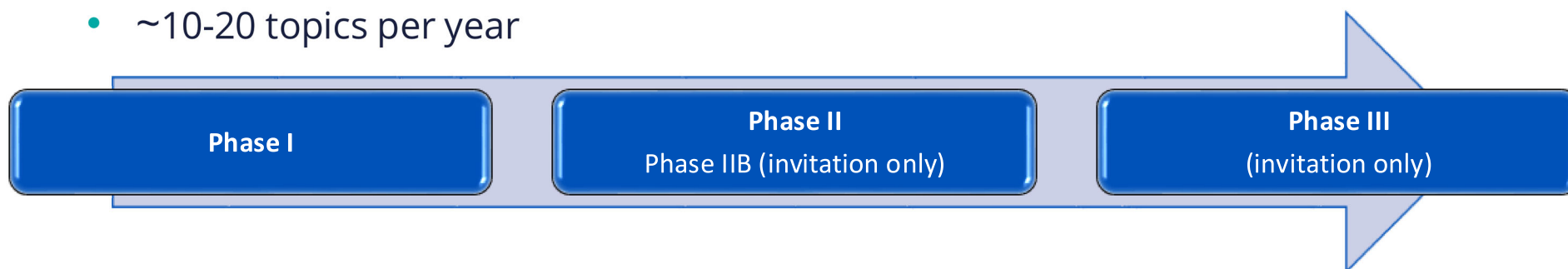
DOT Operating Administration	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Federal Aviation Administration		<i>Voluntary Participation</i>			
Federal Highway Administration/ ITS Joint Program Office	X	X	X	X	X
Federal Railroad Administration	X	X	X	X	X
Federal Transit Administration	X	X	X	X	X
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration			X	X	
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration			X	X	
Office of the Secretary			X		X
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration	X	X	X		X

DOT's SBIR Topic Areas



DOT SBIR Program Details

- Annual SBIR budget ~ \$12M
- One solicitation per year
 - ~10-20 topics per year



Phase I	Phase II & IIB	Phase III
# of awards dependent on number of topics in solicitation	~50-60% of Phase I move on to Phase II ~25% of Phase II move on to Phase IIB	Limited # of awards
Funding: ~ \$100,000 - \$200,000	Funding: ~ \$250,000 - \$1,500,000	Funding: Unlimited (Not SBIR funds)
Period of Performance: 6 months	Period of Performance: Up to 24 months	Period of Performance: Unlimited

Eligibility & Requirements

Section 1 of the Solicitation



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Eligibility

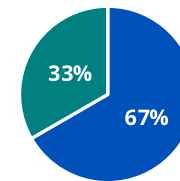
- Your company is eligible to apply for SBIR funding if:
 - It is a for-profit entity located in the U.S.
 - It has fewer than 500 employees (most applicants have <10).
 - It is majority owned and controlled by U.S. citizens or permanent residents.
- For full eligibility details see:
 - SBIR/STTR Eligibility Guide:
 - https://www.sbir.gov/sites/default/files/elig_size_compliance_guide_1.pdf
 - 13 CFR § 121.702 defines “small business concern” for SBIR.
- *Note: Firms that are majority-owned by multiple VCOC, hedge funds, etc. are not eligible for the DOT SBIR program.*
 - *This does NOT include allowable VCOCs per 13 CFR 121.702(a)(1)(i) that are majority-owned by a single VCOC, hedge fund, or private equity firm that is itself a small business concern.*



Requirements

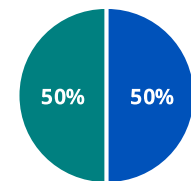
- For Phase I, a minimum of **two-thirds** of the research or analytical effort, measured in total contract dollars (67%), must be performed by the awardee.
- For Phase II, a minimum of **one-half** of the research or analytical effort, measured in total contract dollars (50%), must be performed by the awardee.

Phase I

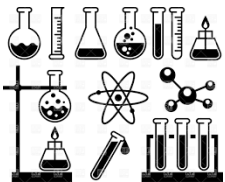


■ Awardee ■ Subcontracts

Phase II



■ Awardee ■ Subcontracts



- More than one-half of the principal investigator's (PIs) employment time must be working for the small business. This precludes other full-time employment.
- The R/R&D work must be performed in the United States and Buy American rules apply (with few exceptions and only with written approval in advance).



Due Diligence Requirements

Make sure you understand eligibility requirements

- Ownership & control of your company
- Place of Performance and American-made Products and Equipment requirements
- Relationships of key personnel/covered individuals
- How requirements also flow down to your subcontractors and consultants

Complete the Disclosures of Foreign Affiliations form

- Required at time of proposal, when there is a change that affects any response, and periodically during the award period of performance
- Disclosure of information related to foreign involvement or investment is required and will not automatically disqualify you from an award
 - ***Failing to disclose affiliations may provide a basis to deny or terminate an award***

Develop a strong Cybersecurity Plan

Be proactive in protecting your technology/IP from others that may try to take it

Certifications

Section 2 of the Solicitation



Certifications & Registrations

- To ensure eligibility, you will be required to complete certifications as part of the required registration processes:
 - Register in System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/>. SAM is where businesses are assigned a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) Number.
 - **Start this early** - registration in SAM needs to be completed prior to proposal submission and can take time.
 - Register in the SBA SBIR Company Registry to receive your SBC ID Number at <https://app.www.sbir.gov/company-registration/overview>.
 - **Review** - Make sure the information is accurate and has been updated in the past 6 months.
 - Complete the required questions within the DOT online submission platform.
 - Similar certifications are used to ensure continued compliance with program requirements throughout the lifecycle of your award.



Proof of SAM and SBIR Company Registrations must be included with your proposal package.

Disclosures of Foreign Affiliation or Relationships to Foreign Countries

- You must disclose information regarding ties to the People's Republic of China and other foreign countries by completing a disclosure form at the U.S. DOT's online page on or before the solicitation closing date.
 - If you are submitting more than one proposal, a separate disclosure form must be completed for each proposal as the "covered individuals" may vary between proposals.
- Note: Foreign involvement or investment does not independently disqualify you from receiving an SBIR award but failing to disclose such affiliations or relationships may result in denial or revocation of an award.

The term "covered individual" means any individual who contributes in a substantive and meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of a research and development project proposed to be carried out with a research and development award from a federal research agency. The U.S. DOT SBIR program considers the Principal Investigator and individuals identified as key personnel in a proposal, to include subcontractors or consultants, to be covered individuals. DOT may further designate covered individuals during award negotiations or the award period of performance.

Proposal Preparation

Section 3 of the Solicitation



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Proposal Package Layout

Proposal Element

Technical Section:

- You must follow the formatting requirements in the solicitation
- The Technical Proposal must not exceed the 15-page limit and must include all required sections
- ***The technical proposal must be submitted as a single PDF***

Appendices A & B:

- Appendix A: Signature Page and Appendix B: Project Summary must use the templates provided by the U.S. DOT SBIR program
- Proof of your SBA SBIR Company Registry confirmation and SAM Registration must be included with Appendices A and B
- ***These four (4) items must be submitted as a single PDF file***

Pricing Proposal (Appendix C):

- The Pricing Proposal (Appendix C) ***must be submitted in Excel using the workbook template provided***

Pricing Worksheet Supporting Documentation:

- Supporting documentation must be provided for all costs proposed
- ***Must be submitted as a single file in PDF format***

Foreign Disclosure Form:

- Completed online at: <https://forms.office.com/g/BmmrYKqhpz>

File Naming Conventions

You must use the following naming conventions for each of the four separate files you submit:

- The first three characters must be the topic number the proposal is associated with (e.g., FH2).
- The remaining characters must include an abbreviation of the SBC's name and a distinct character to designate each file (e.g., 1, 2, 3, and 4).

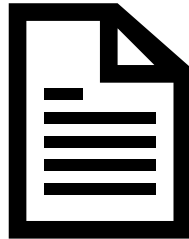
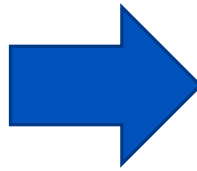
Multiple Proposal Submissions & Naming Conventions:

- If you choose to submit unique proposals to different topics, or multiple separate proposals to the same topic under this solicitation, follow the naming conventions below.
- To submit more than one proposal in the proposal website, add the topic number at the end of the company name in the 'Team Name' field (e.g., SBC, Inc. – FH1). This will create a new team profile for each proposal.
- If submitting multiple proposals under the same topic, please add "a", "b", etc. respectively after the topic number to each Team Name. (e.g., SBC, Inc. – FH2a).

Technical Proposal

Formatting Requirements

- PDF format
- Must include all required sections
- Must not exceed 15 pages
 - Font size must be no smaller than 10 points
 - Proposals must be on standard letter size pages (8.5" by 11") with 1" margins
 - All pages should be numbered consecutively
 - *Table of Contents and Prior Phase II Awards do NOT count towards 15-page limit
 - Letters of support WILL count towards 15-page limit



Required Sections

- A Table of Contents is recommended, but optional*
-
1. Identification & Significance of Problem/Opportunity
 2. Technical Objectives
 3. Work Plan
 4. Related Research
 5. Key Personnel & Their Related Work
 6. Relationship with Future R&D
 7. Facilities
 8. Consultants and/or Subcontractors
 9. Potential Post Applications
 10. Similar Proposals or Awards
 11. Human Factors Applicability
 12. AI Applicability
-
- Prior Phase II Awards*

Appendices, Registrations, and Disclosures

- **These Documents must be submitted as a single PDF file:**
 - Proposal Cover Sheet (Appendix A)
 - Project Summary (Appendix B)
 - SBA SBIR Company Registry Confirmation
 - System for Award Management (SAM) Registration Confirmation
-
- **U.S. DOT SBIR Foreign Disclosure Form** Completed as an online form using the link provided in the Phase II instructions
 - Must be submitted along with or prior to the proposal submission

Appendix C & Supporting Documents

Appendix C

- A detailed Pricing Proposal must be submitted using the Excel template provided.
 - If information submitted in Appendix C is not accurate, contains calculation errors, or does not contain sufficient cost/pricing support data or support documentation (see below), the contract award may be delayed.
- Proposed pricing must be valid for a period of six (6) months from the submission date of the proposal.
- Phase I must be submitted within the funding ceilings described in the solicitation.

Supporting Documentation

- Must be submitted as a separate, single file in PDF format.
- Supporting documentation must be provided for all amounts proposed.
 - e.g., materials quotes, subcontractor proposals, indirect rate calculations, etc.



Completing the Appendix C Template

Schedule	Element	Guidance
A 	Indirect Costs	Provide DCAA Indirect Rate Agreements to support indirect rates, if available. If not, provide detailed cost elements of indirect rates to support rate(s) proposed.
B 	Direct Labor	Provide supporting documentation such as payroll data, online comparisons, Dept. of Labor reference information, etc.
C-E 	Materials/Equipment/Special Test Equipment/Special Tooling	Provide quotes, internet pricing sheets, or other backup to support proposed unit pricing.
F-G 	Subcontracts & Consultants	Complete cost details for subcontract amount, e.g., quote from proposed subcontractor. Include a letter of commitment for any proposed consultant.
H 	Travel	Travel is allowable, but unusual for Phase I given the short period of performance. If proposed, clearly define travel details and proposed costs.
I 	Other Direct Costs (ODC)	Provide internet quote or alternate backup to support ODCs proposed.
J 	Technical and Business Assistance (TABAs)	Provide a detailed explanation for all costs proposed, which will allow your offer to be analyzed quicker and your contract to be awarded sooner.

Proposal Reminders



DO...

- Read and follow the instructions in the Solicitation carefully
- Ensure your technical proposal includes all sections, in order
- If using AI to assist in writing your proposal, carefully review
 - Is the information correct? Can you deliver on what is proposed?
 - Are sources properly cited? (Avoid plagiarism)
- Ensure all appendices are completed and included
 - Sign and date Appendix A
- Include proof of your current SAM and SBIR Company registrations
- Double check all costs and calculations; align to supporting documentation
- Submit your Foreign Disclosure Form

DO NOT ...

- Fail to complete/submit required documents
- Send proposal packages via email
- Create arbitrary overhead, indirect, or profit/fee rates
- Wait until the deadline to submit your offer



Application Tips and Advice

What makes a strong proposal?

- Responsive to the topic requirements
- Clear and concise
- Well organized
- Follows the proposal preparation instructions in the solicitation
- Understands the proposal evaluation criteria

What makes a weak proposal?

- Not responsive to topic requirements
- Lacking required information
- Disorganized
- Failure to follow directions

Advice for first time applicants:

- Read the solicitation – understand what you need to submit, and how
- Review the topic references – understand the need and the customer
- Allow sufficient time to submit – do not wait until the last minute

Evaluation Factors

Section 4 of the Solicitation



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Evaluation Factors

1. Technical Merit and Feasibility

- Demonstration of understanding of the problem and solution; alignment with the topic description; innovative approach; scientific feasibility.

2. Experience, Qualifications, and Facilities

- Description of technical personnel, equipment and facilities, and partnerships/subcontracts (when applicable).

3. Effectiveness of Proposed Work Plan

- Clarity of technical plan and timeline.

4. Commercial Potential

- Market understanding and awareness of regulatory, compliance, or legal issues.

5. Offer Quality

- Quality of narrative and supporting evidence.



Evaluation Process



Contract Considerations

Section 5 of the Solicitation



Award Information

- **Contract Type:** All Phase I awards will be Firm-Fixed-Price bilateral purchase orders.
- **Period of Performance:** For a Phase I award must be no longer than 6 months.
- **Deliverables:** Under Phase I SBIR awards, three reports will be required, consisting of two interim narrative reports and a comprehensive final report.
 - All information and communication technology (ICT) deliverables must comply with the Revised Section 508 Standards of the Rehabilitation Act and the Access Board Standards, available at <https://section508.gov/>.
- **Payment Schedule:** Payments for Phase I efforts will be made in three equal installments for the report deliverables.
 - Requires submission of an acceptable report and invoice, in accordance with instructions in the award document.



Additional Considerations

- **SBIR Data Rights:** Rights in technical data, including software developed under any award resulting from this solicitation remain with the SBC.
 - The Government will have the limited right to use such data for Government purposes.
 - The Government will not release such data outside the Government without permission of the SBC for not less than twenty (20) years from the award date of the SBIR project from which the data was generated.
- **Patents/Invention Reporting:** You must report SBIR inventions to the U.S. DOT through the iEdison Invention Reporting System (<http://www.iedison.gov/>).
- **Awardee Commitments:** Upon award, you will be required to make legal commitments through acceptance of numerous FAR and Transportation Acquisition Regulation (TAR) clauses, and other Government requirements.
- **Order of Precedence:** If the contract terms differ from the proposal or solicitation, the contract document takes priority.

Submissions Requirements

Sections 6 & 8 of the Solicitation



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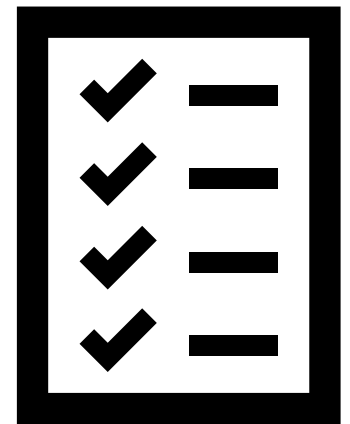
Submissions Requirements

- **Proposal packages must be received no later than 3:00 PM ET on Tuesday, July 7, 2026**
 - Proposals received after that time will be automatically rejected; no exceptions will be permitted.
- **Ensure you allow ample time to complete the multi-step submittal process.**
- The submittal process requires answering several questions within the proposal submission system in addition to uploading the required documents.
 - **Proposals will not be considered received by the Government until the multi-step process is complete.**
 - Submit as early as possible.



Submissions Requirements (continued)

- **Proposals must be submitted through the U.S. DOT's automated proposal submission system at:** https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_2026/signup.
 - The submission system is open throughout the solicitation open period.
 - Proposals received via email or any other means will not be accepted.
 - Do not send duplicate proposals via email or by any other means.
- Documents and appendices must be uploaded in correct format.
 - See Chapter 3 for specific requirements.
- Section 8 provides:
 - A checklist.
 - Sample templates and links to the ones you must use.



Topic Information

Sections 7 & 9 of the Solicitation



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Topic Considerations

Topic Alignment

- Your proposal must align with one of the topics to be considered responsive.
 - Each proposal must be based on a unique innovation, limited to one topic, and submitted only under one topic.
 - Multiple unique proposals may be submitted to the same or different topics, but the same (or substantially equivalent) proposal may not be submitted to more than one topic.
 - If you submit substantially equivalent proposals to several topics, U.S. DOT may decline all proposals.

Funding Levels

- Proposals must not exceed the Phase I estimated award amount stated in the solicitation.
 - For FY 2026, the maximum award value is \$200,000 for all topics
- The Phase II funding level noted in the solicitation is an estimate only.
 - Actual Phase II funding level will be communicated to Phase I awardees with the Phase II instructions.

Topic Information

- Full Topic descriptions are found in section 9 of the Solicitation
- Technical references to better understand the topic may be found in section 7 of the solicitation

FY 2026 Topic Listing

U.S. DOT Operating Administration	Topic # and Title
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	26-FH1: Edge AI-V2X Integrated Practical Solutions for Congestion Prevention and Mitigation
	26-FH2: Automated Mobile Catch-basin Inspection System
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)	26-FR1: Mobile High-Power Emergency BESS De-energizer System for Rail Vehicle Propulsion
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	26-FT1: Person-Centered, Carefree, Complete Trip Planning - Powered by AI
Office of the Secretary (OST)	26-OS1: Predictive Safety Analytics for Commercial Transport Modernization
	26-OS2: Freight Corridor Predictive Intelligence
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)	26-PH1: Increase End-of-Life Battery Safety and Recovery of Rare Earth Minerals
	26-PH2: Thermal Indicator Coatings for Hazardous Materials Packaging Safety
	26-PH3: Self-repairing Hazardous Materials Packaging
	26-PH4: Improved Response to Lithium-ion Battery Fires

Fraud, Waste, & Abuse





Visit the DOT SBIR website to view the full presentation on Fraud, Waste, and Abuse
<https://www.volpe.dot.gov/work-with-us/small-business-innovation-research/report-fraud-waste-and-abuse>

SBIR Common Fraud Schemes and Consequences

Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General



Fraud Defined

- Fraud is described as any false representation about a **material fact or any intentional deception** designed to deprive the United States unlawfully of something of value or to secure from the United States a benefit, privilege, allowance, or consideration to which an individual or business is not entitled."
- OIG does **not** prosecute innocent mistakes. Although the statute requires knowledge that the claim was false, the term "knowledge" includes "deliberate ignorance" or "reckless disregard for the truth."



Four Main Types of Fraud

It is important to note that the presence of one or more indicators does not prove fraud, nor are the indicators shown all-inclusive for each of the schemes described.

- Misrepresentations or factual omissions
- Misrepresentation of expended funds
- Misuse of award funds
- Duplication of funds



Concerns About Foreign Influence

- There is an increasing trend in the U.S. Government to view foreign collaborations with greater scrutiny; e.g. "foreign talent programs" or other foreign state-affiliated partnerships, particularly from countries perceived to be "of risk."
- Accepting money from multiple sources for essentially equivalent research is always a violation, regardless of where it comes from – disclosure is key; the more you share the better the relationship with your project manager. This is particularly notable with "angel investors" who are seeking to invest in small, unestablished entities with little or no promise of return.
- Small business owners are encouraged to conduct due diligence and to "know your investor" practices to ensure they are not taking money from bad actors.



Consequences

What happens when are rules broken?

If you commit fraud or other wrongdoing in applying for or carrying out an SBIR award, OIG will investigate. Those who commit fraud are subject to administrative, civil and criminal action. Violations of civil or criminal law are referred to the Department of Justice (DOJ).





Visit the DOT SBIR website to view the full presentation on Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

<https://www.volpe.dot.gov/work-with-us/small-business-innovation-research/report-fraud-waste-and-abuse>

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Fraud & Safety **Hotline**

<https://www.oig.dot.gov/hotline>

hotline@oig.dot.gov

(800) 424-9071

DOT Inspector General, 1200 New Jersey Ave SE, West Bldg. 7th Floor, Washington, DC 20590

Resources



Other Funding Opportunities

If you have transportation-related research ideas that don't align with an SBIR topic, you may be able to find other opportunities or resources:

- [DOT Navigator](#)
- [U.S. DOT Grants](#)
- [U.S. DOT Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization](#) (OSDBU)
- [U.S. DOT Priorities](#)
- [U.S. DOT Research Hub](#)
- Additional Resources: <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/work-with-us/small-business-innovation-research/additional-resources>
- Check SAM.gov and DOT agency websites for BAAs, RFIs and other research opportunities

Technical and Business Assistance (TABA)

TABA is supplemental funding that helps shape your commercialization roadmap.

TABA may be used for:

- Making better technical decisions on SBIR projects
- Solving technical problems that arise during SBIR projects
- Minimizing technical risks associated with SBIR projects
- Commercializing the SBIR/STTR product or process, including intellectual property protections
- Screening for potential foreign involvement in technology development or commercialization activities

TABA cannot be used for:

- General administrative activities that the recipient can provide internally
- General maintenance/investment in your business, an affiliate, investor, subcontractor, or consultant
- Contributions to the SBIR/STTR fee
- Audit or bookkeeping services, including payroll management or general accounting services
- Contingency costs or costs associated with the research and development activities of the award



Some service examples include: Market research and/or validation to include expert/End-User interviews for insights, market entry launch strategy, assistance with product sales, identifying/outreach to potential commercialization partners, development of regulatory plans/strategy consulting, development of manufacturing plans/strategy consulting, fundraising strategy development, assistance with intellectual property protections, cybersecurity assistance, licensing advisory/deal terms

Contact Us

U.S. DOT SBIR Website

<http://www.volpe.dot.gov/sbir>

DOT SBIR Hotline:

DOTSBIR@dot.gov



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Thank you
for attending this webinar