NIH Omnibus Solicitations: Key Changes

The funding opportunity announcements, or Omnibus solicitations for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) SBIR and STTR programs were released on January 24, 2013. Some provisions of the SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act of 2011 will be implemented with these Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs), including: new award budget language implementing new award guidelines, maximum award size and a waiver process to exceed award caps; allowing applicants to sub-contract with a federal laboratory without the need for an SBA waiver (as was previously required); and allowing applicants to request up to $5,000 to obtain their own Technical Assistance vendor if they wish. Please note that applicants that pursue this option cannot qualify for NIH-provided Technical Assistance Programs.

Note that NIH is in the process of updating its electronic system and forms, and intends to revise or reissue the Omnibus FOAs in the middle of 2013 to implement additional reauthorization provisions. However, these solicitations currently do not allow the following: applicants cannot skip Phase I and apply directly for a Phase II SBIR award (“Direct to Phase II” provision of the Act); small business concerns that are majority-owned by multiple venture capital operating companies (VCOCs), hedge funds and/or private equity firms cannot apply to the HHS SBIR program at this time (this is because the Small Business Administration did not release its final size rule until January 28, 2013, and NIH needs to update its system and processes); applicants cannot apply for Phase II SBIR funding based on a Phase I STTR award or conversely a Phase II STTR based on a Phase I SBIR award (“switching mechanisms at Phase II” provision of the Act).

NIH has provided a website to inform the SBIR/STTR community of its plan to implement additional changes.

SBA Webinars on Program Changes

The Small Business Administration (SBA) recently held a webinar on size rule updates to the SBIR/STTR programs, and has indicated on the SBIR.gov website that it plans to hold monthly webinars on key changes to these programs.

For applicants curious about eligibility requirements, SBA has developed a simple checklist to help small businesses quickly determine eligibility, as well as an FAQ guide to answer questions regarding eligibility.

Also note that applicants submitting proposals to solicitations issued after January 28, 2013 must be registered in the Company Registry, in addition to registering in SAM and other sites, in order to submit proposals.
NCI Phase IIB Bridge Awards

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has announced the availability of $10 million for up to ten new Phase IIB Bridge awards in FY2013. Under RFA-CA-12-023, NCI is soliciting applications for continued support of previously funded Phase II SBIR projects in the areas of cancer therapeutics; cancer imaging technologies, interventional devices and in vivo diagnostics; or in vitro and ex vivo cancer diagnostics and prognostics. The award is designed to encourage partnerships with strategic partners and/or third party investors with significant commercialization experience in emerging technologies. The SBIR Program expects applicants to secure non-federal matching funds, with preference given to applications demonstrating a substantial funding commitment from independent third-party investors. In addition, because this funding opportunity announcement is intended to support products or technologies that require Federal regulatory approval, projects may address preclinical/clinical development, including clinical trials. Budgets of up to $1 million per year for up to three years may be requested under this FOA. Letters of intent are due by February 6, and the application deadline is March 6, 2013. For more information, visit: http://sbir.cancer.gov/funding/phase2bridgeaward.asp.

SBA-Approved NIH Topics that Can Exceed Award Cap

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently made available a list of Small Business Administration (SBA)-approved research topics for which proposed budgets can exceed the statutory caps of $225,000 for Phase I and $1,500,000 for Phase II. Under the 2011 SBIR/STTR reauthorizations, agencies may not exceed statutory guidelines for Phase I and Phase II award ceilings ($150,000 and $1,000,000, respectively) by more than 50% unless the agency requests and is granted a waiver by the SBA; the waiver must also be for a specific topic. Applicants wishing to exceed the funding caps are strongly encouraged to contact NIH program officials prior to submitting a SBIR or STTR application that exceeds the funding caps. Applicants must also follow NIH Institute- and Centers-specific budget guidance. A list of the SBA approved topics that can exceed the award caps is available here.

NIH FOAs

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has recently issued a pair of Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for proposals for Improved Biomaterials for Urinary and Dialysis Catheters. Under PA-13-050 and PA-13-051, NIDDK is seeking SBIR and STTR applications, respectively, for research and development of biomaterials that reduce or eliminate the adherence of cells and microorganisms and the systemic and local inflammatory response to indwelling catheters used for dialysis or urinary drainage (e.g., intravenous, intraperitoneal, or intravesical). The FOAs also list several R & D issues that applicants should address in their proposals, such as testing with inflammatory cells. Standard application deadlines apply, and applicants must be registered in Grants.gov, the System for Award Management, the eRA Commons, and SBIR.gov. For more information on NIH’s SBIR/STTR program, visit http://grants.nih.gov/grants/ funding/sbir.htm.
Key Solicitation Dates

- The deadline for ED’s Institute of Education Sciences Phase I and Fast-Track SBIR solicitations is February 5, 2013.
- The due date for letters of intent for NSF’s FY2013 Phase I STTR Release 2 solicitation was January 8, 2013. The application deadline is February 6, 2013.
- The deadline for NOAA’s FY2013 Phase I SBIR solicitation is January 30, 2013.
- The deadline for DOE’s FY2013 Release 2 solicitation is February 5, 2013.
- The deadline for NIST’s FY2013 Phase I SBIR solicitation is February 25, 2013.
- The deadline for USDA’s FY2013 Phase II solicitation is February 28, 2013.
- The deadline for ED’s National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research Phase I SBIR solicitation is March 1, 2013.
- The deadline for DOT’s FY13.1 Phase I SBIR solicitation is March 4, 2013.
- The deadline for NCI’s FY2013 Phase II Bridge Awards is March 6, 2013.
- The deadline for DoD’s FY2013.A STTR solicitation is March 27, 2013.
- The deadline for non AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is April 5, 2011.

For more information on these solicitations, visit: www.sbir.gov

STTR Partnering Service Back by Popular Demand

The SBIR Gateway has recently that it will bringing back by popular demand its free partnering service for the current DoD STTR FY13.A solicitation. This service, which debuted for the DoD FY09 STTR solicitations, allows universities, federally funded research and development centers (FFDRCs), and other qualifying non-profit research organizations to review the topic offerings, check topics of interest, and fill out a contact information form. Small businesses seeking research partners can in turn query their topics of interest and identify what research organizations may be interested in partnering.

Completing the form and searching for partners is quick and easy. Anyone interested in this solicitation is encouraged to visit the partnering link here. Note that the SBIR Gateway is offering this service independently of the DoD.

USDA FY2013 Phase II Solicitation

The USDA has released its FY2013 Phase II solicitation. All FY 2013 Phase I grantees are eligible to apply for FY 2013 Phase II grants; in addition, past Phase I awardees that have not previously submitted a Phase II application are also eligible to apply. The USDA SBIR program will award up to $450,000 for Phase II projects up to two years in duration, and anticipates making approximately 35 awards under this offering. Note that the USDA requires its Phase II awardees to participate in its Commercialization Assistance Program (CTAP), and that applicants may include in their proposed budget the travel and time needed to participate in and complete the CTAP (but should not include the USDA budgeted costs for this program).

The Phase II application deadline is February 28, 2013, and applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov.

For more information on the USDA’s SBIR program, visit: http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir.html.
**Technology Spotlight**

**Standing Wave Axial Nanometry (SWAN) for Superresolution Microscopy** *(ISURF #4045)*

Despite its importance as a research tool for understanding cellular functions, the optical resolution of light microscopy has imposed limitations on observing and measuring cellular components and structures. The advent of superresolution microscopy techniques, which enable imaging of nanostructures and processes at X-Y resolutions of approximately 20 nm, opens new opportunities for exploring cell biology and has many other applications. However, current superresolution microscopy approaches may have limitations with respect to whether live or fixed cells can be imaged because of image acquisition and processing speed, and may also have limitations in terms of resolution along the Z axis.

To overcome these drawbacks, ISU researchers have developed a new technique call SWAN (standing wave axial nanometry) for determining the axial location of nanoscale fluorescent objects with sub-nanometer accuracy and several nanometer precision. Unlike other approaches, SWAN does not require custom optics or specially engineered substrates, which makes it easy to use with biological samples and live cells. SWAN can be easily integrated with other superresolution and super-accuracy techniques to image with nanometer resolution along the lateral and axial directions. As a consequence, this approach has broad utility for a variety of applications, such as life science research (e.g., biomolecular interactions, structure-function studies, cell imaging), drug discovery (e.g., direct observation of targeted drug delivery and drug interactions in vitro and in living cells and tissues), nanotechnology (e.g., characterization of nano-scale materials), material science (characterization of materials with novel optical properties), and optical MEMs devices by improving their efficiency through more accurate and precise imaging.

For more information on this and other technologies available for licensing, go to: [www.techtransfer.iastate.edu](http://www.techtransfer.iastate.edu).