Exemplar Genetics Receives Phase I

Sioux Center, IA-based Exemplar Genetics has been awarded a Phase I SBIR grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The funding will be used to develop a pig model of Batten disease, or juvenile neuronal ceroid lipofuscinosis (JNCL). This devastating neurodegenerative disease results in vision loss, motor and cognitive deficits, seizures, autoimmune irregularities, and premature death. There is currently no cure for JNCL disease, and treatment is limited to symptom management. The lack of an appropriate animal that accurately replicates the multi-systemic nature of this disease has limited the development of improved strategies for its treatment. While several mouse models of JNCL have been generated, they fail to fully replicate the complex human clinical symptoms seen, and also fail to develop the severe neurological phenotype that is the hallmark of human JNCL. The pig model of JNCL being developed by Exemplar may be a better model for the study of human disease since the anatomy and development of the pig brain more closely resembles that of humans.

Exemplar Genetics has also successfully commercialized other pig models of human disease, including cystic fibrosis, and provides regulatory, model development, and animal housing and husbandry services. Other pig models of human diseases the company has under development include cancer, atherosclerosis, and ataxia-telangiectasia.

For more information, visit: http://www.exemplargenetics.com/index.htm.

Save the Date for NIH Conference

The 15th Annual NIH SBIR/STTR Conference will be held in Sioux Falls, SD on October 28-30, 2013. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awards more than $700 annually to small businesses through its SBIR and STTR programs, and this conference will be an excellent forum to learn more about NIH funding opportunities. In addition to an overview on the nuances of the NIH SBIR/STTR programs, conference highlights include one-on-one meetings with NIH program staff, information on NIH’s technical assistance programs, receipt and referral process, and much more.

More information will be available soon on the NIH SBIR/STTR website.
EPA 2013 Phase I SBIR Solicitation to be Released

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has indicated that it will open its 2013 Phase I SBIR solicitation on March 14, 2013. Funding of up to $80,000 for projects up to six months in duration will be available under this solicitation. EPA anticipates awarding approximately 26 firm fixed price contracts under this solicitation.

Research topic areas for this opportunity will include: Water, Innovation in Manufacturing, Green Building, Waste Monitoring, Air Quality, Sustainable Utilization of Biomass, and Homeland Security. Note that it is critical that applications submitted in response to this solicitation directly pertain to EPA’s environmental mission and must be responsive to the EPA program interest included in the topic descriptions identified in the solicitation.

Note that there are also opportunities for funding environmental technologies through the National Science Foundation’s SBIR program (see article on NSF’s Phase I solicitation below).

Applications will be due on May 3, 2013. EPA does not use electronic proposal submission; hard copies must be submitted in time for receipt by the proposal deadline. Proposals will be evaluated through a technical peer review process, and proposals rated as “excellent” or “very good” will then be subjected to programmatic review within EPA for consideration of an award. For more information, see: http://www.epa.gov/ncer/sbir/.

Introducing RFP-EZ

In an effort to make it easier for small businesses to sell to the government, the Small Business Administration (SBA) has launched a pilot project, RFP-EZ. This new online marketplace is designed to make it easier for small IT companies to find and compete for low dollar contracts from federal agencies. The National Academies’ Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR) recently hosted a webinar on how the streamlined bidding process works, how to create a company profile, and how government contracting officers can more easily create requests for proposals (RFPs) and review bids.

For more information, visit https://rfpez.sba.gov/. Web designers or developers may be able to find an opportunity and make a bid within a few minutes!

NSF SBIR Solicitation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) released its FY2013 Phase I SBIR solicitation on March 7, 2013. Four research topic areas, each with several subtopics, are available under this announcement: Biochemical and Chemical Technologies (BC), Education Applications (EA), Electronics, Information and Communication Technologies (IC), and Nanotechnology, Advanced Materials and Manufacturing (NM).

Awards of up to $150,000 for projects up to six months in duration will be made under this solicitation. Proposals should be for projects that are high-risk and have high potential for commercial pay-back. Note that Phase I proposal requirements for NSF differ from other agencies in that proposals must also include a section on commercial potential; other proposal requirements also differ, so applicants should read the solicitation carefully. Contact with the cognizant program manager is strongly encouraged prior to submitting a proposal, and letters of support for the technology are also strongly encouraged. The application deadline is June 11, 2013.
The Office of Research Infrastructure Programs (ORIP) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has released a pair of Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for Development and Commercialization of Technologies to Create, Characterize or Improve Animal Models of Human Disease. Under PA13-092 and PA-13093, NIH is seeking SBIR and STTR applications, respectively for innovative approaches to further develop, improve and facilitate the use of animal models and related biological materials to meet new biomedical challenges related to improvements in the health of humans and animals. Note that applications should address the research interests of two or more NIH Institutes or Centers, and that projects that address primarily the research interests of one NIH Institute or Center but that are peripherally related to the research of other Institutes or Centers will not be considered appropriate for this FOA. Standard application deadlines apply, and applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), Grants.gov, and the eRA Commons. For more information about NIH’s SBIR/STTR programs, visit: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir.htm.

Key Solicitation Dates

- 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 NIST’s FY2013 has been extended to March 4, 2013.
- The deadline for NCI’s 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, 2013.
- The deadline for AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR applications is May 7, 2013.

For more information on these solicitations, visit: www.sbir.gov
Fabric Winding Machine (ISURF #3838)

Conventional techniques for manufacturing cylindrical parts from composite materials, such as the root preform for a wind turbine blade, require many man-hours of labor to individually lay plies of fabric into a mold before being infused using a vacuum-assisted resin transfer molding (VARTM) process. Researchers at ISU have created a mechanism by which cylindrical parts can be made in an automated apparatus using multiple fabric supply rolls and a rotating mandrel. This technique has the capability to increase quality of the product by improving resin infusion through eliminating layer adhesives and providing greater layer uniformity. It also greatly reduces the cost of manufacturing by removing costly hand labor steps and provides an opportunity for changes in downstream manufacture by laying up the cylinder as a whole, rather than in two halves as is done conventionally. A prototype implementation to produce half-scale parts has been created and is available for demonstration, and ISU is seeking partners interested in commercializing this technology.

For more information on this and other technologies available for licensing, go to: www.techtransfer.iastate.edu.