SBIR/STTR Programs Extended Again

The tenth in a long series of continuing resolutions (CRs) stretching over 28 months has extended the SBIR/STTR and the DoD’s CPP (Commercialization Pilot Program) programs through May 31, 2011. H.R. 366, "To provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes", was signed by the President on January 31, 2011. This CR means the programs will continue “as is”; meanwhile, reauthorization efforts are underway in both the Senate and the House, with the hope that the four month long CR will be enough time to craft and pass reauthorization legislation. In other SBIR/STTR-related news, the National Institutes of Health has released its PHS 2011 Omnibus SBIR/STTR solicitations. These include a parent Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for SBIR, a parent FOA for STTR, and narrative descriptions of research topic interests. The Department of Defense has also pre-released its FY2011A STTR solicitation, and the SBIR Gateway is once again offering a partnering service where small businesses and research institutions can register their interests with respect to the topics offered under this solicitation. Simply check out the “find a partner” link on the SBIR Gateway website to search for partners or list your interests.

Registration Open for Spring Conference

Registration is now open for the Spring National SBIR/STTR Conference, to be held April 10-13, 2011 at the Monona Terrace in Madison, WI. The conference is a great way to connect with federal program managers, innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers, and others, as well as being a forum for learning about the program, and strategies for successful applications and commercialization. Early registration fees are $395 through March 10. On-site registration fees will be $595. For more information or to register, go to: http://conferencing.uwex.edu/conferences/sbir2011/.
NIH FOAs

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has recently issued two Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for proposals to improve access to hearing health care. Under RFA-DC-12-001 and RFA-DC-12-002, NIH is seeking SBIR and STTR proposals, respectively, to improve hearing health care outcomes and reduce health disparities through the development and commercialization of improved devices for hearing health care. The types of technology that might achieve the objectives of this initiative includes, but is not limited to:

- telehealth technologies for remote evaluation and monitoring;
- devices or sensors for point-of-care assessment or treatment;
- devices for in-home monitoring; mobile, portable assessment and therapeutic systems;
- devices which integrate assessment, diagnosis and treatment;
- devices that do not require special training;
- devices that can operate in low-resource environments;
- non-invasive technologies for assessment, diagnosis and treatment;
- and integrated, automated systems to assess or monitor a specific condition.

Note that non-standard deadlines apply to these FOAs and are March 18, 2011; November 18, 2011; and July 18, 2012, by 5:00 PM local time of applicant organization. Also note that letters of intent are required with due dates of February 18, 2011; October 18, 2011; and June 18, 2012. Applicants must be registered in Grants.gov and the eRA Commons.

For more information on NIH’s SBIR/STTR programs, visit: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir.htm.

NCET2 Offers Free SBIR Webinar

The National Council of Entrepreneurial Tech Transfer (NCET2) is sponsoring a free webinar entitled “SBIR, The 11 Participating Federal Agencies and the Important Ways in Which They Differ”. This general overview, presented by Clara Asmail, Sr. Technical Advisor, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Frank Barros, SBIR Program Manager, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), will focus on major differences among the agencies that participate in the SBIR program, as well as how these differences affect the way proposals are accepted and reviewed.

The webinar is being held as part of NCET2’s monthly SBIR series on February 9 from 1:00-2:30 pm ET. While the webinar is free, advanced registration is required.

For more information, visit: http://center.ncet2.org/.

NIH Eliminates Error Correction Window

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has eliminated its error correction window beginning with applications that have due dates of January 25, 2011. The error correction window was implemented in 2005 as part of NIH’s transition to electronic submission of applications, and allowed an applicant an opportunity to correct missing or incorrect information or other errors flagged by the eRA Commons during the submission process. Note that errors stop applications from being processed and must be corrected by the submission deadline if the application is to move forward through the submission process.

If you are planning an NIH submission, you should try to submit several days before the deadline to make sure any errors are corrected in time. For more information, see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-od-10-123.html.
What Flavor is Your Agency?

If you are relatively new to the SBIR/STTR programs, you may not realize that the participating agencies fall into two general flavors or categories for the types of awards they make (and they’re not chocolate and vanilla). Contracting agencies, like the Department of Defense or NASA view the SBIR/STTR programs as an important procurement mechanism, and there’s a good chance they will be your customer in Phase III. Contracting agencies have more highly focused research topics in their solicitations, tend to establish the plans, protocols and requirements for the solutions that they are seeking, and are apt to have more stringent fiscal requirements.

In contrast, granting agencies like the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health view the SBIR/STTR programs as an assistance mechanism. Granting agencies tend to have less specified research topics in their solicitations, with an investigator-initiated approach. These agencies may also offer more flexibility in their programs. Knowing the flavor of your agency is important for understanding how to communicate with program managers, how your proposal will be reviewed, performance expectations, and how you can gain a competitive edge for your proposal.

NCI Launches New Assistance Program

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has recently announced the availability of a new pilot Regulatory Assistance program to help SBIR/STTR awardees navigate the regulatory process. The Regulatory Assistance Program will be open to NCI SBIR & STTR Phase II grantees and contractors with projects that are current, or have ended within the last two years, and awardees will receive up to 30 of regulatory consultant time in the areas of therapeutics and/or medical devices with the goal of developing a comprehensive regulatory plan to facilitate the company’s advancement through the FDA approval process. Applications are due February 4, 2011 at 5:00 pm ET, and only one application per company will be accepted. For more information, see: [http://sbir.cancer.gov/resource/assistance/](http://sbir.cancer.gov/resource/assistance/).

Key Solicitation Dates

- The deadline for the Department of Education’s OSERS/NIDRR Phase I solicitation is February 11, 2011.
- The deadline for USDA’s FY2011 Phase II solicitation is March 1, 2011.
- The deadline for DoD’s FY2011 A STTR solicitation is March 30, 2011 at 6:00 am ET.
- The deadline for non AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is April 5, 2011.
- The deadline for AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is May 7, 2011.
- The deadline for the DOT’s FY11.2 Phase I SBIR solicitation is June 13, 2011. For more information on these solicitations, visit: [www.sbir.gov](http://www.sbir.gov).
About OIPTT:

**OIPTT was formed in 1990 to provide support services to the university community in matters related to intellectual property, to be the first contact related to new innovations, and to market the innovations and negotiate the agreements for transfer of the technology for the Iowa State University Research Foundation's signature. OIPTT reports to the office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development.**

**OIPTT's mission is to** serve the university as the primary resource for intellectual property and related matters and facilitate the disclosure and utilization of university innovations for the benefit of society, the university and its faculty and staff, and contribute to economic development in Iowa when possible.

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Vietnam Era Veteran. Inquiries can be directed to the Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, 3680 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-7612.

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**Technology Spotlight**

**Macro-Molecular Interface Software Prediction Tool (ISURF #3839)**

Protein-protein and RNA-protein interactions play central roles in the mechanisms that govern cellular processes. A variety of experimental approaches, including genetic, biochemical, and biophysical, have been used to elucidate the amino acid residues that are responsible for specific protein-protein and RNA-protein binding events. Advances in DNA sequencing technology and efforts to sequence the genomes of various animals have lead to increasing availability of protein sequence information. Computational approaches to parse this information can lead to more rapid identification and characterization of macromolecular interfaces, and as a consequence, facilitate the elucidation of biochemical pathways, regulatory mechanisms, and potential drug targets. ISU researchers have now developed a sequence-based approach, HomPPI, which rapidly and reliably predicts residues involved in the interfaces of protein-protein pairs and peptide-protein complexes. HomPPI overcomes drawbacks of other software prediction tools, such as structure based prediction methods that require a solved protein structure and may not reliably predict interface residues in proteins that undergo conformational changes upon binding to their partners. Two variants of HomPPI are currently available: non-partner specific HomPPI (NPS-HomPPI) and partner-specific HomPPI (PS-HomPPI). NPS-HomPPI has utility for predicting interacting residues of a protein when the sequence of its binding partner is unknown, and has been demonstrated to be reliable for predicting the interfaces of disordered proteins and interfaces involved in permanent interactions. PS-HomPPI can perform partner-specific interface prediction, including reliable prediction of interfaces that are involved in transient protein-protein interactions. Non-exclusive free licenses for NPS-HomPPI and PS-HomPPI are available for research institutions; commercial licenses are also now available.

For more information, visit [http://homppi.cs.iastate.edu/](http://homppi.cs.iastate.edu/).