TEDCO's SBIR/STTR Proposal Lab FAQ Sheet

TEDCO's SBA FAST SBIR/STTR Proposal Lab provides companies with expert support for developing a compelling, compliant, and competitive NSF Phase I proposal. This intensive writing lab includes 8 focused day-long workshops, expert guest lectures, additional seminars, and two full proposal review cycles with six expert reviewers before proposal submission.

For more information about the SBIR/STTR Proposal Lab, contact:

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Who is eligible to apply?

Maryland businesses in good standing in the state (check your status here: https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch) and individuals with a promising innovation that have not yet formed a business. The FAST program's goals focus on supporting Small Disadvantaged Businesses, woman-owned businesses, and rural-based businesses.

What is a Small Disadvantaged Business?

You may register your business (with the SBA) as an SDB if you meet the following criteria:

- The firm must be 51% or more owned (Link is external) and controlled (Link is external) by one or more disadvantaged persons.

- The disadvantaged person or persons must be socially disadvantaged(Link is external) and economically disadvantaged.

- The firm must be small, according to SBA's size standards.

For more information, visit https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/small-disadvantaged-business

How much does it cost?

TEDCO's SBIR/STTR Proposal Lab is funded by a FAST grant from the **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)**, TEDCO, and OST Global Solutions. This keeps the costs low for qualified businesses. The fee for Part 1 is $250, and the fee for those selected to continue to Part 2 is $500. Fees are payable upon acceptance into each Part of the program and are non-refundable after the end of the admissions period.

What is my time commitment?

It typically takes a first-time SBIR or STTR proposal writer 150-160 hours to write their first proposal. Your commitment to the Proposal Lab team – your TEDCO program managers, faculty, and expert reviewers – is attending each workshop, using the platform and tools

provided, and meeting Lab deadlines. At the end, you'll be ready to submit a compelling, compliant, competitive Phase I proposal to NSF.

Workshop Topics and Review Dates

- **Part I: Building Foundations**
  - Workshop 1: Kickoff, Customer Discovery, and Business Model
    - **Date: 15 January 2025**
    - Cohort Introductions
    - Primer on the NSF SBIR/STTR Program
    - Overview of the SBIR/STTR Proposal Lab program
    - How to win an NSF grant
    - Outline walk-through and content requirements
    - Business Model Development
    - Expected deliverables and assignments prior to next workshop
  - Workshop *2*: Pitch Preparation
    - **Date: 29 January 2025**
    - SBIR/STTR Requirements for Presenting R&D
    - Satisfying NSF High Risk Requirements
    - Framework for Innovation Subject to R and to D in R&D
    - Properly Articulating the Pitch
    - Hands-on Pitch Development
    - Pitch Review (re-review as needed)
- **Part II: Advanced Proposal Development**
  - Workshop 3: Outline Content Walk-Through, Compliance, and Response Planning
    - **Date: 12 March 2025**
    - Part 2 overview
    - Proposal Lab SharePoint Portals
    - Time management
    - Outline content walk-through
    - Expected deliverables and assignments prior to next workshop
  - Workshop 4: Brainstorming Techniques, Speed-Writing Process, and Using AI
    - **Date: 19 March 2025**
    - Group & Individual brainstorming on section content

- Foundations of writing faster and better
- The psychology of writing
- The correct writing process
- Group & Individual brainstorming on section content
- Speed writing proposal sections
- Using tools to help write better and faster
- Expected deliverables and assignments prior to next workshop

- Workshop 5: Project Plan, Commercialization Section
  - **Date: 16 April 2025**
  - Proposal Status Check
  - Project work plan preparation
  - Group brainstorming on Commercialization
  - Individual brainstorming on Commercialization
  - Getting Ready for the Pink Team 'Pens Down'

- Pink Team: 60% NSF-ready Proposal Review
  - **Review starts on 22 April 2025**
  - Lab participants submit their proposals to 2 reviewers each, matched to the participant's topic
  - Pink Team Review lasts 1 week
  - Reviewers provide group and individual feedback on participant's proposal content and quality
  - Reviewers also offer recommendations for improvement
  - The standard for Pink Team is that the proposal draft is 60% NSF-ready and is compliant

- Workshop 6: Budget Proposal and Graphics
  - **Date: 7 May 2025**
  - Proposal Status Check
  - NSF Budget proposal walk-through (hands-on)
  - Proposal graphics and visuals, and principles of the design
  - Expected deliverables and assignments prior to next workshop

- Workshop 7: Editing and Desktop Publishing (DTP)
  - **Date: 21 May 2025**
  - Proposal status discussion

- Proposal editing
- Desktop publishing
- Assignments review
- Upcoming deliverable dates
- Preparation for the Red Team 'Pens Down'

- Red Team: 90% NSF-ready Proposal Review
  - **Review starts on 04 June 2025**
  - Lab participants submit their proposals to 3 reviewers each, matched to the participant's topic
  - Review lasts 1.5 weeks
  - Reviewers provide group and individual feedback on the proposal's compliance and competitiveness
  - The review includes full proposal including technical narrative, budget, resumes, and letters of support
  - Reviewers offer recommendations for improvement
  - The standard is that the proposal is 90% NSF-ready, within 10% of the page count, and compliant and compelling

- Workshop 8: Preparation for Submission and Submission
  - **Date: 14 June 2025**
  - Proposal Status Check
  - "Proposal wall" reviews to catch the last issues
  - Loading proposals in the portal
  - Hitting the "submit" button
  - Submission Confirmation planning and process