Start your application →
Deadline: June 14, 2017

Equity-free seed funding to help transform your innovative idea into a scalable product or service.

→ About the seed fund
→ How to apply

Already submitted your application? Check for updates on FastLane.

Up to $225,000 for early-stage product development.

- We offer seed-stage startups with the funding they need to commercialize — up to $225k for proof-of-concept product development or research.
- We take no equity in exchange for funding. You retain full control over your team and the direction of your work.
- You'll get access to year-round events and join a prestigious network of scientific innovators and founders.

Upcoming events

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM ET

Webinar NSF seed funding Q&A

Program Director Pete Atherton will answer your questions about the NSF seed fund and what you need to apply for the upcoming deadline.

REGISTER

THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM ET

Webinar NSF seed funding Q&A

Program Director Ruth Shuman will answer your questions about the NSF seed fund and what you need to apply for the upcoming deadline.

REGISTER

→ View more upcoming events

We provide funding for the high-risk, early product development stage

Portfolio

Since 1977, the NSF seed fund (powered by SBIR/STTR) has helped startups develop their ideas and bring them to market. We support tech innovation — not just in traditional scientific fields — but across all tech sectors, including edtech, IoT, big data, smart health, hardware, even social networks. Between 2007 and 2016 alone, we funded roughly 400 companies each year.

We're diverse

Great ideas aren't limited by geography, and we seek to fund companies both inside and outside of the major tech hotbeds. We also have a mission to promote the innovations of women, people of color, and other folks from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in tech.

Are you a good fit?

We're always looking to support innovative, high-risk work that needs a bit more research and development. As we review applications, we also consider your company's potential for commercial and social impact — your technology needs to have a good market fit and the potential to meaningfully benefit society.

→ Am I a good fit?

Events / All events

Our onsite and online events will help you learn about our program, and connect with program staff and other founders.

DATE/TIME	EVENT TYPE	DETAILS
April 19, 2007 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET	Online webinar	**NSF Seed Fund Q&A Webinar: Pete Atherton** Program director Pete Atherton will answer your questions about the NSF seed fund and what you need to apply for the upcoming deadline. REGISTER
May 2, 2007	Boise State University Hatch Ballroom 1700 University Dr. Boise, ID 83725	**SBIR Road Tour: Boise, ID** Our road tour gives you the chance to meet with program directors and learn more about your state's innovation programs; it's a great chance to make one-on-one connections with our staff and get answers to all your questions. → View event details
May 3, 2007	Salt Lake Community College Miller Campus 9750 South 300 West Sandy, UT 84070	**SBIR Road Tour: Sandy, UT** Our road tour gives you the chance to meet with program directors and learn more about your state's innovation programs; it's a great chance to make one-on-one connections with our staff and get answers to all your questions. → View event details
May 4, 2007 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET	Online webinar	**NSF Seed Fund Q&A Webinar: Ruth Shuman** Program director Ruth Shuman will host this Q&A. She'll answer your questions about the NSF seed fund and share how to prepare for the upcoming application deadline: June 17, 2017 REGISTER
May 19, 2007 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET	Online webinar	**NSF Seed Fund Q&A Webinar: Rajesh Mehta** Program director Rajesh Mehta will host this Q&A. He'll answer your questions about the NSF seed fund and share how to prepare for the upcoming application deadline: June 17, 2017 REGISTER
May 30, 2007 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET	Online webinar	**NSF Seed Fund Q&A Webinar: Jesus Soriano** Program director Jesus Soriano will host this **final Q&A session before the June 17 application deadline.** He'll answer your questions and cover what you need to do to apply. REGISTER
July 17, 2007	McNamara Alumni Center University of Minnesota 200 SE Oak St. Minneapolis, MN 55455	**SBIR Road Tour: Minneapolis, MN** Our road tour gives you the chance to meet with program directors and learn more about your state's innovation programs; it's a great chance to make one-on-one connections with our staff and get answers to all your questions. → View event details

How to apply

Learn more about our application timeline, preparing your proposal, and what to expect once you submit.

1

Determine eligibility

Make sure your company is incorporated and meets these work requirements.

90 days before the deadline

Call for proposals (solicitation) officially released.

2

See if your company is a good fit

To see if your company is a good fit, review our evaluation criteria and consider submitting an executive summary to get feedback from our program directors.

60 days before the deadline

3

Register your company

You'll need to register your company with four different systems to apply for funding.

4

Review the solicitation

Read the solicitation, which features everything you need to know about applying for funding.

5

Start your application

Once you've reviewed the solicitation, start preparing your online application.

Deadline
June 14, 2017

Applications due by 5:00 PM in your time zone.
Note: Your time zone is based on your company's address as you listed it in your application.

1-3 months after the deadline

Applications undergo panel reviews.

4-6 months after the deadline

We'll notify you whether your proposal is accepted or declined for funding.

How to apply

Learn more about our application timeline, preparing your proposal, and what to expect once you submit.

1

Determine eligibility

Make sure your company is incorporated and meets these work requirements.

- Your company must be a legal entity at the time you apply for funding.
- At least 50% of your company's equity is owned by U.S. citizens or permanent residents, and all funded work must take place in the United States (including work done by consultants and contractors).
- The project's designated lead (principal investigator) must be legally employed by the company seeking funding. The project lead needs to commit to at least 20 hours of work per week and at least one month (173 hours) of work on the funded project. The lead doesn't need any advanced degrees.
- Finally, you can designate a university faculty member as the lead only if they can commit at least 20 hours a week on the project.

90 days before the deadline

Call for proposals (solicitation) officially released.

2

See if your company is a good fit

To see if your company is a good fit, review our evaluation criteria and consider submitting an executive summary to get feedback from our program directors.

Criteria

Here are the criteria we use to determine which companies to fund:

- **Seed stage**: Yours is an early-stage company that's conducting research or prototyping (or both).
- **Pre-traction**: You've identified the market for your product and have made customer development efforts, but you haven't yet created the minimum viable product to meet your target market's need.
- **High-risk**: The product is based on unproven technology that needs further testing (and funding for that testing).
- **Scale**: If the product is found to be successful, it could have a major social impact and/or venture scale.

Portfolio

You can check out our portfolio to see what companies we've recently funded.

Technology topic areas

We're technology agnostic. We invest in high-risk innovations in virtually all tech sectors.

- Advanced Manufacturing and Nanotechnology (MN)
- Advanced Materials and Instrumentation (MI)
- Biological Technologies (BT)
- Biomedical Technologies (BM)
- Chemical and Environmental Technologies (CT)
- Educational Technologies and Applications (EA)
- Electronic Hardware, Robotics and Wireless Technologies (EW)
- Information Technologies (IT)
- Internet of Things (I)
- Semiconductors (S) and Photonic (PH) Devices and Materials
- Smart Health (SH)
- Other Topics (OT)

Download the searchable technology topic descriptions (PDF).

Get pre-submission feedback

You can send an executive summary to one of our program directors to discuss your work and get feedback. Download our executive summary form (PDF) and return your completed form to the program director whose topic area best reflects your product's focus.

STTR

If you're applying for funding for academic research (STTR program), you must partner with an academic, non-profit, or federally funded research institution. If you're funded through STTR, 30% of your funding must go to your research partner and 40% must go to your company.

SBIR

If you're not applying for funding for academic research (SBIR program), at least 2/3 of the funding you receive must go to your company.

60 days before the deadline

3

Register your company

You'll need to register your company with four different systems to apply for funding.

→ **Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS number)**

Processing time: Up to five business days

A DUNS number is a unique, nine-digit number that identifies each physical location of your company. You'll need one in order to receive government funding. Because you're applying for a DUNS number for government funding, processing time should take about five business days.

→ **FastLane (NSF's electronic submission system)**

Processing time: Up to 48 hours

Before applying, you need to register your principal investigator and company in FastLane. Within 48 hours, you'll get a confirmation email with login instructions. We recommend you explore FastLane before submitting your application.

→ **System for Award Management (SAM)**

Processing time: Up to three weeks

Any company that does business with the government needs a SAM account. When you register, you'll have to share EFT information.

→ **SBIR Company Registry**

Finally, you need to register with the SBIR Company Registry (operated by the Small Business Administration). Post-registration, you'll receive a Business Concern Control ID (SBC ID), which you'll need to include in your FastLane application.

4

Review the solicitation

Read the solicitation, which features everything you need to know about applying for funding.

Successful applicants will receive a funding for up to $225,000 over a period of 6 to 12 months (the period to be decided by the company). Companies that receive such an award (Phase I) are eligible to apply for a Phase II award (award amount up to $750,000; duration 2 years). Read the solicitation for a complete explanation of terms and conditions.

If you're looking to fund academic research, review the STTR solicitation. Otherwise, view the SBIR solicitation.

→ **SBIR solicitation**

→ **STTR solicitation**

5

Start your application

Once you've reviewed the solicitation, start preparing your online application.

→ **Start your application in FastLane**

Please note that you can only submit your application between May 17 and June 17, 2017.

Download our FastLane guide for detailed steps on how to submit your application and watch our videos on how to apply.

Deadline June 14, 2017

Applications due by 5:00 PM in your time zone.

Note: Your time zone is based on your company's address as you listed it in your application.

1-3 months after the deadline

Applications undergo panel reviews.

4-6 months after the deadline

We'll notify you whether your proposal is accepted or declined for funding.

How to apply

Learn more about our application timeline, preparing your proposal, and what to expect once you submit.

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Determine eligibility

Make sure your company is incorporated and meets these work requirements.

90 days before the deadline

Call for proposals (solicitation) officially released.

2

See if your company is a good fit

To see if your company is a good fit, review our evaluation criteria and consider submitting an executive summary to get feedback from our program directors.

60 days before the deadline

3

Register your company

You'll need to register your company with four different systems to apply for funding.

4

Review the solicitation EXPIRED

Read the solicitation, which features everything you need to know about applying for funding.

5

Start your application EXPIRED

We're not currently accepting proposal applications.

Deadline June 14, 2017

Applications due by 5:00 PM in your time zone. EXPIRED

Note: Your time zone is based on your company's address as you listed it in your application.

1-3 months after the deadline

Applications undergo panel reviews.

4-6 months after the deadline

We'll notify you whether your proposal is accepted or declined for funding.

Portfolio

Advanced portfolio search

Since 1977, we've awarded funding to more than 11,000 companies to research and develop high-risk technologies.

FEATURED ALUMNI AND EXITS:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

We're technology agnostic.

Each year, we fund roughly 400 companies from nearly all technology sectors.

- Advanced Manufacturing and Nanotechnology (MN) ↓
- Advanced Materials and Instrumentation (MI) ↓
- Biological Technologies (BT) ↓
- Biomedical Technologies (BM) ↓
- Chemical and Environmental Technologies (CT) ↓
- Educational Technologies and Applications (EA) ↓
- Electronic Hardware, Robotics and Wireless Technologies (EW) ↓
- Information Technologies (IT) ↓
- Internet of Things (I) ↓
- Semiconductors (S) and Photonic Devices and Materials (PH) ↓
- Smart Health (SH) ↓
- Other Topics (OT) ↓

Advanced Manufacturing and Nanotechnology (MN)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Rajesh Mehta

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Advanced Manufacturing and Nanotechnology (MN): Personalized Manufacturing (M1) —— Maker Manufacturing (M2) —— Maker-to-Manufacturer (M3) —— Additive Manufacturing (M4) —— Modeling & Simulation (M5) —— Machines and Equipment (M6) —— Transportation Technologies (M7) —— Rare Earths and Critical Materials Processing Technology (M8) —— Manufacturing Technologies (M9) —— Bio-Inspired Manufacturing (M10) —— People-Centered Industrial Technologies (M11) —— Manufacturing for Emerging Markets (M12) —— Sustainable Manufacturing Technology (M13) —— Nanomaterials (N1) —— Nanomanufacturing (N2) —— Nanotechnology Based Solutions to Grand Challenges (N3) ⟶ **More on this topic**

Advanced Materials and Instrumentation (MI)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Debasis Majumdar

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Advanced Materials and Instrumentation (MI): Metals and Ceramics (MI1) —— Structural and Infrastructural Materials (MI2)—— Coatings and Surface Modifications (MI3) —— Multiferroics and Specialized Functional Materials (MI4) —— Materials for Sustainability (MI5) —— Other Materials (MI6) —— Instrumentation for Characterization and Imaging (MI7) —— Instrumentation for Detection, Actuation, Control, and Manipulation (MI8) —— Other Instrumentation (MI9) ⟶ **More on this topic**

Biological Technologies (BT)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Ruth Shuman

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Biological Technologies (BT): Agricultural and Food Safety Biotechnology (BT1) —— Biosensors (BT2) —— Life Sciences Research Tools (BT3) —— Bioinstrumentation (BT4) —— Synthetic Biology and Metabolic Engineering (BT5) —— Fermentation and Cell Culture Technologies (BT6) —— Computational Biology and Bioinformatics (BT7) —— Advanced Biomanufacturing (BT8) —— Advanced technologies for functional genomics in organismal systems (BT9) —— Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine (BT10; formerly BM3). ⟶ **More on this topic**

Biomedical Technologies (BM)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Henry Ahn

⟶ Jesus Soriano (BM3, BM4)

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Biomedical Technologies (BM): Pharmaceutical Manufacturing (BM1) —— Materials for Biomedical Applications (BM2) —— Biomedical Engineering (BM3) —— Noninvasive Imaging of Brain Function (BM4) —— Medical Imaging Technologies (BM5) —— Diagnostic Assays and Platforms (BM6) —— Drug Delivery (BM7). ⟶ **More on this topic**

Chemical and Environmental Technologies (CT)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Anna Brady-Estevez

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Chemical and Environmental Technologies (CT): Biobased Chemicals and Biochemical Processes (CT1) —— Chemicals, Polymers, Plastics and Derivatives (CT2) —— Novel Catalysts and Processes (CT3) —— Chemicals from Carbon Dioxide and Methane (CT4) —— Food Technology (CT5) —— Energy Efficiency, Capture, Storage and Use (CT6) Energy Generation, Bioenergy, Renewable Fuel Technology (CT7) —— Separation Technology (CT8) Resource and Water Conservation, Treatment and Reuse, Waste Minimization and Environmental Sustainability (CT9) —— Environmental Sensing, Environmental Pollution Control and Mitigation (CT10) —— Plant-Based Products and Sustainable Agricultural Innovations (CT11) —— Chemical Production Efficiency and Productivity (CT12) —— Sustainable Chemistry and Green Engineering Technology (CT13) —— Emerging Technologies and Applications (CT14). ⟶ **More on this topic**

Educational Technologies and Applications (EA)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Glenn Larsen

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Educational Technologies and Applications (EA): Pre K-12 Education (EA1) —— Global, Distance, and Higher Education (EA2) —— Simulations and Gaming Technologies (EA3) —— Entrepreneurial, Informal, and Maker Education (EA4) —— Information, Computer Science, and Engineering (EA5). ⟶ **More on this topic**

Electronic Hardware / Robotics / Wireless Technologies (EW)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Murali Nair

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Electronic Hardware / Robotics / Wireless Technologies (EW): Wireless Technologies (WT): Systems and Devices (WT1) —— Wireless Devices and Components (WT2). **Energy and Power Management (EP):** Electronic Devices, Boards and Interfaces (EP1) —— Sustainable Energy Harvesting, Storage and Management — Device and System Level (EP2) —— Smart Grids and Infrastructure (EP3) —— Power Management (EP4). **Robotics and Human Assistive Technologies (RH):** Learning, Intelligence and Motion (RH1) —— Robotic Applications (RH2) —— Robotics in Agile Manufacturing (RH3) —— Co-Robots (RH4) —— Human-Machine Interfaces and Control/Architecture (RH5) —— Human Assistive Technologies and Bio-related Robotics (RH6). **Micro-electronics Packaging, Thermal Management & Systems Integration (MT)**. ⟶ **More on this topic**

Information Technologies (IT)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Peter Atherton

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Information Technologies (IT): Artificial Intelligence; Machine Learning; Natural Language Processing (IT1) —— Image and Video (IT2) —— Quantum Information Technologies (IT3) —— Cybersecurity; Authentication; Privacy (IT4) —— Cybersecurity for the Internet of Things (IT5) —— Networking Technology (IT6) —— Mobile Computing; Internet of Things (IT7) —— Cloud Computing; High-Performance Computing (IT8) —— Cloud-based IT Services (IT9) —— Big Data; Advanced Data Analytics (IT10) —— Human-Computer Interaction; Virtual Reality; Augmented Reality (IT11) —— Social Media; Collaborative Networking (IT12) —— Software (IT13) —— Other (IT14). ⟶ **More on this topic**

Internet of Things (I)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Rick Schwerdtfeger

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Internet of Things (I): IoT Sensors and Actuators (IoT1) —— IoT Energy and Power Systems (IoT2) —— IoT Communications (IoT3) —— IoT Integrated Systems (IoT4) —— IoT IT: Cloud, Big Data and Security and Privacy (also see IT portfolio topics). ⟶ **More on this topic**

Semiconductors (S) / Photonic Devices and Materials (PH)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Rick Schwerdtfeger

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Semiconductors (S) / Photonic Devices and Materials (PH): Photonics (PH): Lighting and Displays (PH1) —— Communications, Information, and Data Storage (PH2) —— Energy (PH3) —— Advanced Metrology and Sensors (PH4) —— Advanced Optical Components and Systems (PH5). **Semiconductors (S):** Electronic Materials (S1) —— Electronic Devices (S2) —— Processing and Metrology Technology (S3) —— Integrated Circuit Design (S4). ⟶ **More on this topic**

Smart Health (SH)

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Jesus Soriano

FEATURED COMPANIES:

Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name
Company Name	Company Name	Company Name

Smart Health (SH): Business Models for User-Centered Healthcare (SH1) —— Digital Health Information Infrastructure (SH2) —— From Data to Decisions (SH3) —— Interoperability of Health Record Systems, Medical Sensors, Devices and Robotics (SH4). ⟶ **More on this topic**

Other Topics (OT)

SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

⟶ Ben Schrag

The **Other Topics (OT)** area is intended to be a home to any proposed project which does not seem to fit into one of the other technology topic areas, but still seems to meet our goals of supporting research and development of innovative, risky, unproven technology, with commercial viability and the potential to benefit society. ⟶ **More on this**

Current awardees / Phase I

329

Number of companies with active awards

Phase I seed funding

$224,567

Average $ amount of funding awarded for each company

44

From 44 states including Washington DC and Puerto Rico

12,345

Total applications received June 2016 – Dec 2016

26	Advanced Manufacturing and Nanotechnology (MN)
5	Advanced Materials and Instrumentation (MI)
42	Biological Technologies (BT)
42	Biomedical Technologies (BM)
16	Chemical and Environmental Technologies (CT)
41	Educational Technologies and Applications (EA)
34	Electronic Hardware, Robotics and Wireless Technologies (EW)
39	Information Technologies (IT)
/	Internet of Things (I)
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26 Advanced Manufacturing and Nanotechnology (MN)

COMPANY	LOCATION	AWARD AMOUNT	AWARD DATE
Mantis Composites	CA	$225,000.00	12/01/2016
KiteFrames, LLC	WY	$225,000.00	07/01/2016
American Manufacturing, LLC	CO	$225,000.00	01/15/2016
ORB Technologies, LLC	KY	$225,000.00	07/01/2016
Mantis Composites	CA	$225,000.00	12/01/2016
Mantis Composites	CA	$225,000.00	12/01/2016
Mantis Composites	CA	$225,000.00	12/01/2016
Mantis Composites	CA	$225,000.00	12/01/2016
Mantis Composites	CA	$225,000.00	12/01/2016
Mantis Composites	CA	$225,000.00	12/01/2016

5 Advanced Materials and Instrumentation (MI)

42 Biological Technologies (BT)

42 Biomedical Technologies (BM)

16 Chemical and Environmental Technologies (CT)

41 Educational Technologies and Applications (EA)

34 Electronic Hardware, Robotics and Wireless Technologies (EW)

39 Information Technologies (IT)

/ Internet of Things (I)

/ Semiconductors (S) and Photonic Devices and Materials (PH)

42 Smart Health (SH)

Current awardees / Phase II

395

Number of companies with active awards

Phase II seed funding

$1,234,567

Average $ amount of funding awarded for each company

42

From 44 states including Washington DC and Puerto Rico

29%

Some other factoid goes here and looks like this

26	Advanced Manufacturing and Nanotechnology (MN)
5	Advanced Materials and Instrumentation (MI)
42	Biological Technologies (BT)
42	Biomedical Technologies (BM)
16	Chemical and Environmental Technologies (CT)
41	Educational Technologies and Applications (EA)
34	Electronic Hardware, Robotics and Wireless Technologies (EW)
39	Information Technologies (IT)
/	Internet of Things (I)
/	Semiconductors (S) and Photonic Devices and Materials (PH)
42	Smart Health (SH)

Grant management

Current awardees: This page is a launchpad for the Phase II application process in addition to managing your Phase I or II grant.

Current grantees and alumni, learn how you can help spread the word about the NSF SBIR/STTR program.

Phase I

Information for current Phase I grantees

⟶ Phase I Grant General Conditions
⟶ CAAR Videos for Phase I Awardees (YouTube): Financial Capability, Accounting, and Phase II Budgeting
⟶ Phase I Reporting Requirements
⟶ How to Apply for a Phase II Award

Phase II

Information for current Phase II grantees

⟶ Phase II grant general conditions
⟶ Supplemental Funding Opportunities
⟶ Phase II reporting requirements

Award activities

Information for both Phase I and Phase II grantees

⟶ Common Forms and Checklists
⟶ Revising a Budget
⟶ Time Extension (no cost extension)
⟶ Changes at Your Organization
⟶ Change of PI