

Start your application →

Deadline: June 17, 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.

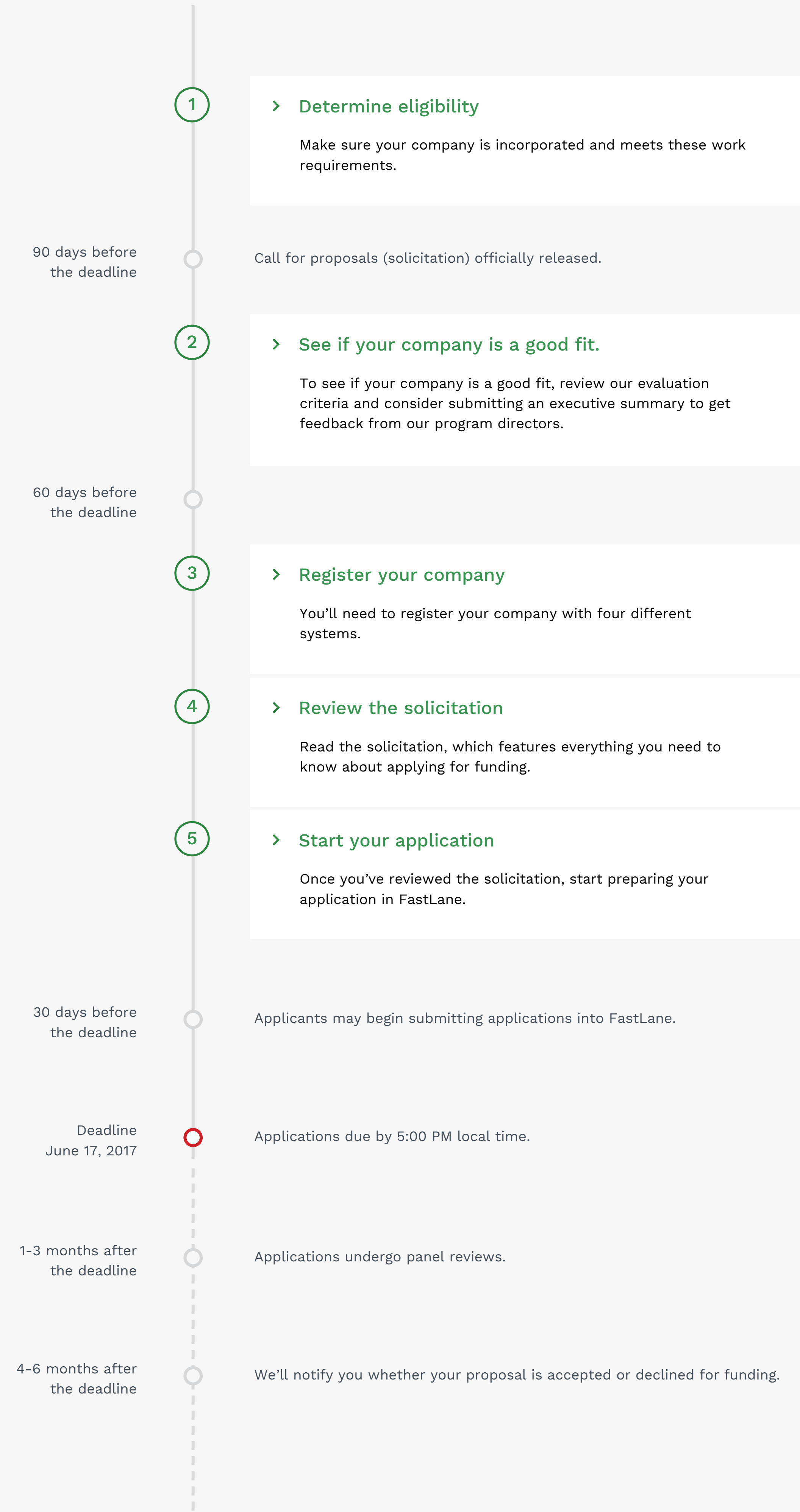
→ [Am I a good fit?](#)

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. <div>REGISTER</div>
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. <div>→ View event details</div>
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. <div>→ View event details</div>
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 <div>REGISTER</div>
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 <div>REGISTER</div>
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. <div>REGISTER</div>
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. <div>→ View event details</div>

How to apply



How to apply

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 to at least 20 hours a week on the project.

90 days before the deadline

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:** Early-stage company that's conducting research or prototyping (or both).
- Pre-traction:** Has identified the market for their product and made customer development efforts, but hasn't yet created the minimum viable product to solve their 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 and see the diverse technology topic areas our program directors oversee.

Soliciting 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.

60 days before the deadline

3

^ Register your company

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

→ [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.

30 days before the deadline

4

> Review the solicitation

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

Deadline June 17, 2017

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^ Start your application

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

→ [Start your application in FastLane](#)

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

[Check out our FastLane guide](#) for detailed steps on how to submit your application and [watch our video on how to apply](#).

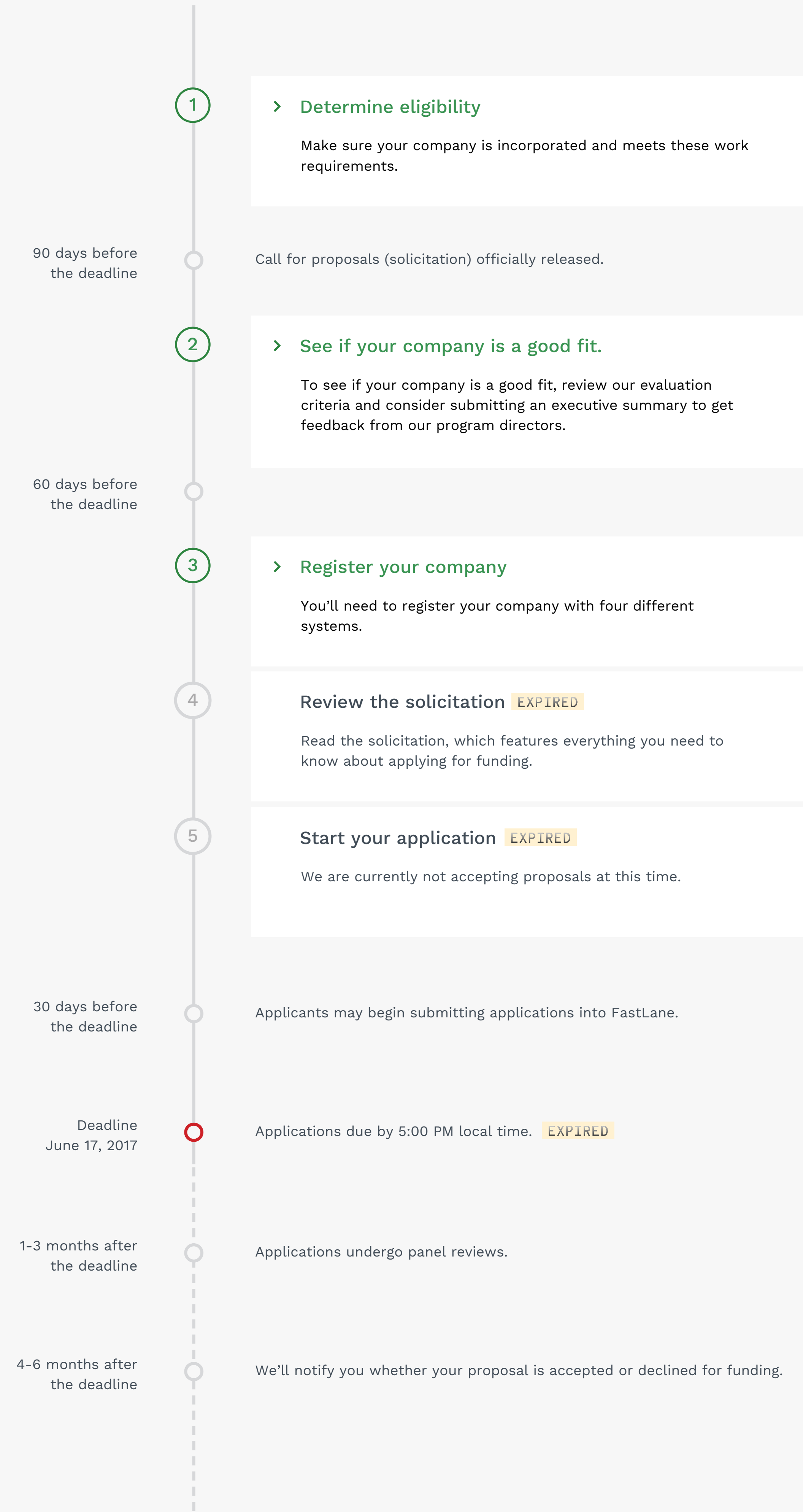
1-3 months after the deadline

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



Portfolio

We’re technology-agnostic. Since 1977, we have funded hundreds of early innovation each year that have potential for large-scale commercial and societal impact.