



# How to Apply America's Seed Fund at NSF

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*SBIR/STTR Program Director and Policy Liaison*

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**America's  
SEED FUND**  
SBIR.STTR

**WE INVEST UP TO  
\$1.5 MILLION IN  
SEED FUNDING  
WE TAKE 0% EQUITY**

→ Get started

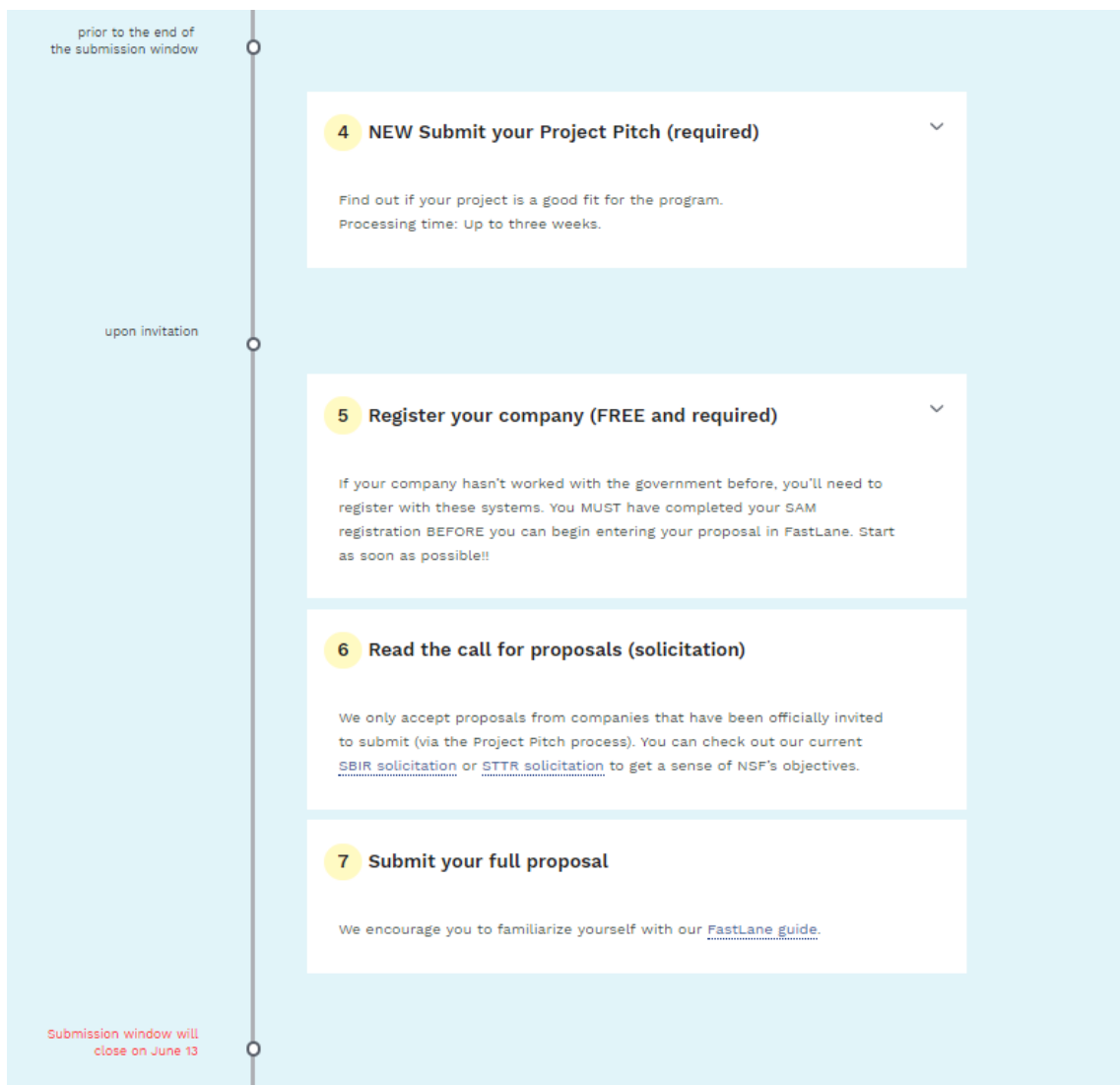
Photo credit

**Submit a Project Pitch NOW and find out if your project is a good fit.**

# The Process



[seedfund.nsf.gov/apply](https://seedfund.nsf.gov/apply)

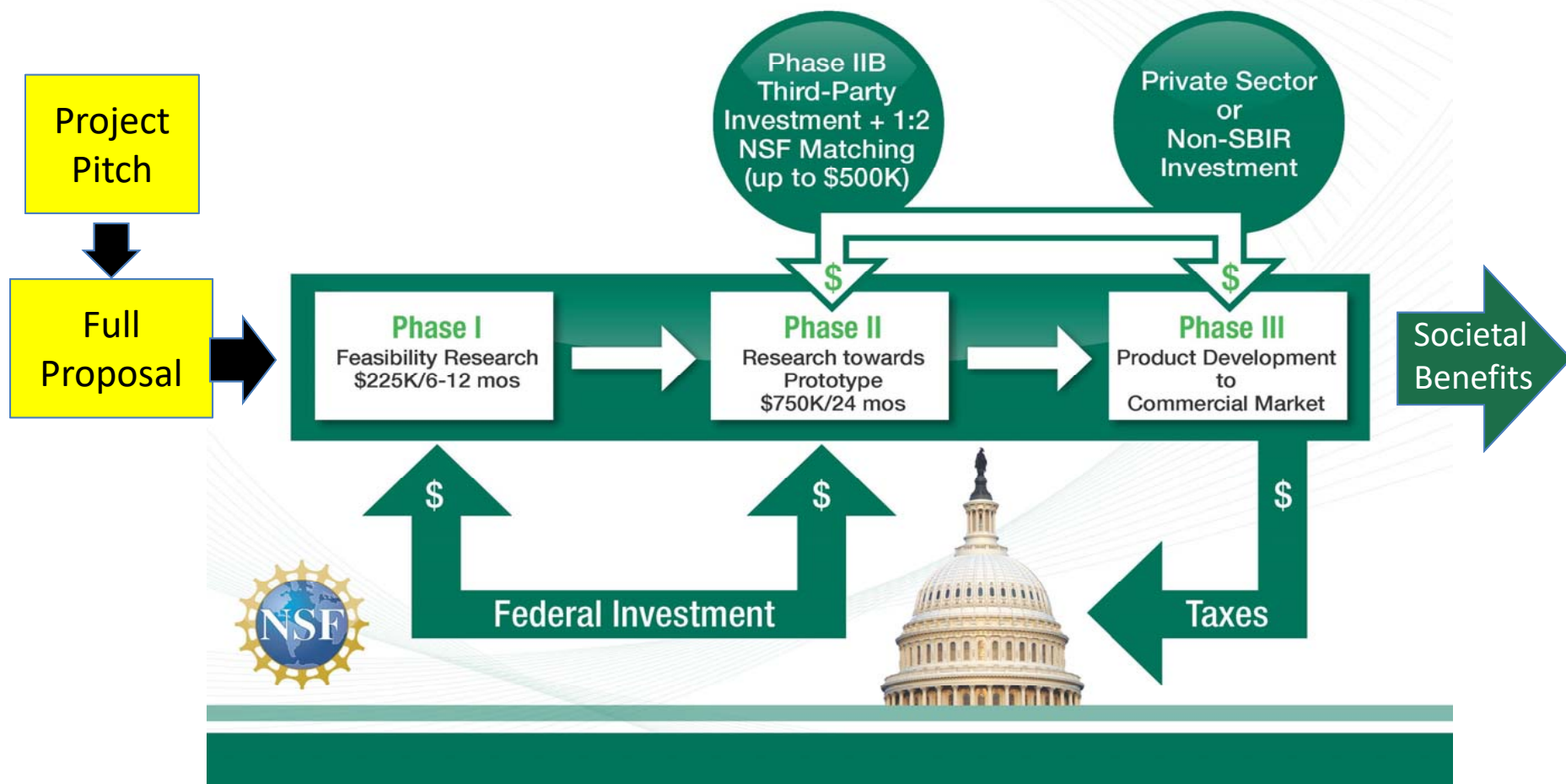


- 1. Submit a Project Pitch**
- 2. Receive invitation to submit a full proposal**
- 3. Register your company**
- 4. Study the solicitation**
- 5. Prepare your proposal**
- 6. Submit your proposal during an announced submission window (next close March 5<sup>th</sup>)**



# What is America's Seed Fund at NSF?

## NSF SBIR/STTR INNOVATION MODEL



# Project Pitch

The required Project Pitch allows startups and small businesses to get quick feedback at the start of their application for Phase I funding from America's Seed Fund powered by NSF.



**Please note!**

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- 1. You must be **invited** to submit a full proposal**
- 2. Registrations take time...**




# Step 1 – The Project Pitch



### 4 **NEW** Submit your Project Pitch (required)

Find out if your project is a good fit for the program.  
Processing time: Up to three weeks.

Submit your Project Pitch using our [online form](#) .

**Submit your Project Pitch:**  
<https://seedfund.nsf.gov/apply>

# Recommendation -

You may want to submit your Project Pitch  
6 weeks prior to the end of a submission window.

## Why 6 weeks?

Project Pitch processing (3 weeks),  
full proposal creation (up to you!) &  
four required registrations (up to 4 weeks).

# The fine print –

- Limited to **two pitches** per window
- If you submitted a pitch, you must wait until you hear back before submitting another
- Full proposal under review – sorry, you can't submit a pitch until you hear back



## **Step 2 – Receive invitation to submit a full proposal**

# Good fit =

You'll be **INVITED** to submit a full proposal.

The program director will be able to provide guidance, feedback and support through the required registrations AND proposal submission process.

**Not a good fit =**

**Immediate feedback**

You'll be told why NSF wouldn't fund your project.

You'll have to go back to the drawing board.

You can submit another pitch (up to 2 pitches total) in a submission window.



## Incomplete Pitch?

NSF will ask for **more information!**

The program director will reach out via email or phone to learn more.



## **Step 3 – Register your company**

## Complete **Four** Registrations!

1. Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)
2. System for Award Management (SAM)
3. Research.gov
4. Small Business Administration (SBA) Company Registration

### **5 Register your company (FREE and required)**

If your company hasn't worked with the government before, you'll need to register with these systems. You **MUST** have completed your SAM registration **BEFORE** you can begin entering your proposal in FastLane. Start as soon as possible!!

## Research.gov v. FastLane

- Register in Research.gov  
(SBIR/STTR proposals are **NOT** accepted in Research.gov)
- Prepare and upload your proposal in FastLane



Register



Submit Proposal



## Step 4 – Read the Solicitation

# The SBIR and STTR solicitations

*They contain anything and everything you need to know about how to prepare and submit your proposal.*

## 6 Read the call for proposals (solicitation)

We only accept proposals from companies that have been officially invited to submit (via the Project Pitch process). You can check out our current [SBIR solicitation](#) or [STTR solicitation](#) to get a sense of NSF's objectives.



### **SBIR Solicitation – NSF 20-527**

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20527/nsf20527.htm>

### **STTR Solicitation – NSF 20-528**

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20528/nsf20528.htm>



# Step 5 – Prepare your proposal

# Prepare your proposal

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Everything you need is in **Section V.**

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### Summary of Program Requirements

#### I. Introduction

#### II. Program Description

#### III. Award Information

#### IV. Eligibility Information

#### V. Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

- A. Proposal Preparation Instructions
- B. Budgetary Information
- C. Due Dates
- D. FastLane Requirements

#### VI. NSF Proposal Processing and Review Procedures

- A. Merit Review Principles and Criteria
- B. Review and Selection Process

#### VII. Award Administration Information

- A. Notification of the Award
- B. Award Conditions
- C. Reporting Requirements

#### VIII. Agency Contacts

#### IX. Other Information

## **Project Description. (15) pages MAXIMUM.**

- **Elevator Pitch (no more than one page)**
- **The Commercial Opportunity (recommended length: 2-4 pages)**
- **The Innovation (recommended length: 1-3 pages)**
- **The Company/Team (recommended length: 1-3 pages)**
- **Technical Discussion and R&D Plan (minimum length: 5 pages, recommended length: 5-7 pages)**

# Prepare your proposal

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## Budget, supplementary documents, etc. **Section V.**

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## Intellectual Merit

- Innovative (i.e. novel and differentiable new approach that will solve a big ongoing problem)
- High-technical risk requiring R&D to prove out

## Broader Impacts

- Potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific societal outcomes

## Commercial Potential

- Market/customers and value proposition identified
- Company/team suited to aggressive commercialization
- Sustainable competitive advantage, credible business model
- NSF funding will “move the needle”






**So, when and  
how do I submit  
a proposal?**

# Proposal Submission




## Submit your proposal via FastLane

 NSF FastLane Home

https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp

Apps | GSA eLibrary Contr... | nsf award search -... | GitHub - 18F/nsf-sb... | Dev | Staging | Federalist builds

NSF Home | News | Site Map | FastLane Help | Grants.gov Help | Contact Us



**FastLane**  
www.fastlane.nsf.gov

**FastLane** is an interactive real-time system used to conduct NSF business over the Internet. FastLane is for official NSF use only.  
[More About FastLane...](#)

**FastLane User Support**

(7 AM to 9 PM Eastern Time • M-F)  
**1-800-673-6188**  
FastLane Availability (recording):  
**1-800-437-7408**

Proposals, Awards and Status | Proposal Review | Panelist Functions | Research Administration | Financial Functions

Honorary Awards | Graduate Research Fellowship Program | Postdoctoral Fellowships and Other Programs

### Quick Link

- ▶ [Special Exceptions to the NSF Deadline Date Policy Due to Natural or Anthropogenic Events](#)
- ▶ [Registration Information](#)
- ▶ [Award Search and Funding Trends](#)
- ▶ [FastLane FAQs \(Opens new Browser Window\)](#)
- ▶ [Grants.gov FAQ \(Opens new Browser Window\)](#)

### Advisories

- 04/29/19 - GRFP 2019 Reviews are available. Awardees can now accept awards and declare fellowship status plans. [Click here to learn more.](#)**
- 02/25/19 - Now Being Enforced in FastLane and Research.gov: PAPPG (NSF 19-1) Policy Updates and New Automated Proposal Compliance Checks. [Click here to learn more.](#)**

# Submission Windows

- Allow a company to submit a full proposal at any time (after invite).

December 18, 2019 - March 05, 2020

March 06, 2020 - June 04, 2020

June 05, 2020 - September 03, 2020

September 04, 2020 - December 03, 2020

- We would encourage you to submit your proposal on or before the end of the submission window.
- NOTE: The systems will NOT accept proposals between 5 p.m. – midnight on the window close date.

## What happens after submission?

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- 1-3 months after the window closes ----> Applications undergo merit reviews.
- 3-5 months after the window closes ----> We'll notify you whether your proposal is accepted or declined.
- 5-6 months after the window closes ----> If your proposal is accepted, you'll receive funding of up to \$256,000.



# Important Links

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[ABOUT](#)[SHOWCASE](#)[PORTFOLIO](#)[RESOURCES ^](#)[CONTACT](#)[FOR APPLICANTS](#)[FOR PHASE I AWARDEES](#)[FOR PHASE II AWARDEES](#)[FOR REVIEWERS](#)[EVENTS](#)

## For applicants

If you're interested in applying for funding, we encourage you to watch our videos, join us at an event, or reach out directly to our program directors to learn more about the program and what we hope to see in your proposal.

## Project Pitch

Wondering if your idea is a good fit? Submit your [Project Pitch](#) and find out in three weeks.

## Review Guidelines

Read the [Peer Review Guidelines](#) to determine if your proposal fits the merit review or broader impacts criteria that we use to make funding decisions.

## Q&A webinars

Thinking of applying for Phase I funding? Ask all your application-related questions during our [Q&A webinars](#). Can't make it to a webinar? Watch a [recorded webinar](#) about the Project Pitch Pilot. (We offer a [PDF version of program basics](#) [\[A\]](#), too.)

## Startup profiles

Get to know our awardees better — we've got [video profiles of startups and small businesses that have received NSF funding](#) [\[A\]](#).

## FastLane guide

Before you start your proposal, take a look at our [FastLane guide](#).

## FAQ

Have lingering questions? Visit our [FAQ](#), which covers the pre-application process to post-award reporting (and everything in between).



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# Reminders

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1. You must be invited to submit a full proposal (via a Project Pitch)
2. Registrations take time
3. Read the solicitation for guidance on what to include in the proposal
4. Read the FastLane Guide for help submitting your proposal
5. Call FastLane with any technical issues:  
**1-800-673-6188**



# THANK YOU!

**Contact Us:**

[sbir@nsf.gov](mailto:sbir@nsf.gov)

<https://seedfund.nsf.gov>

**@NSFSBIR**

[bschrag@nsf.gov](mailto:bschrag@nsf.gov)