



Webinar:

Small business funding for learning technologies during and beyond COVID-19

Hosted by:

Peter Atherton

SBIR/STTR Program Director

May 5, 2020

<https://seedfund.nsf.gov/>

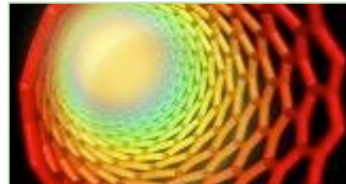


**America's
SEED FUND**
SBIR.STTR

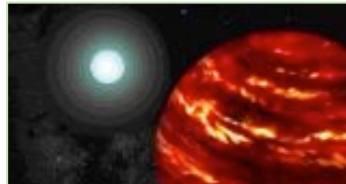
NSF supports all areas of science and engineering



**Biological
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Engineering



**Mathematical
& Physical
Sciences**



**Computer &
Information
Science &
Engineering**



**Geosciences
(including
Polar
Programs)**



**Integrative
Activities**



**Education &
Human
Resources**

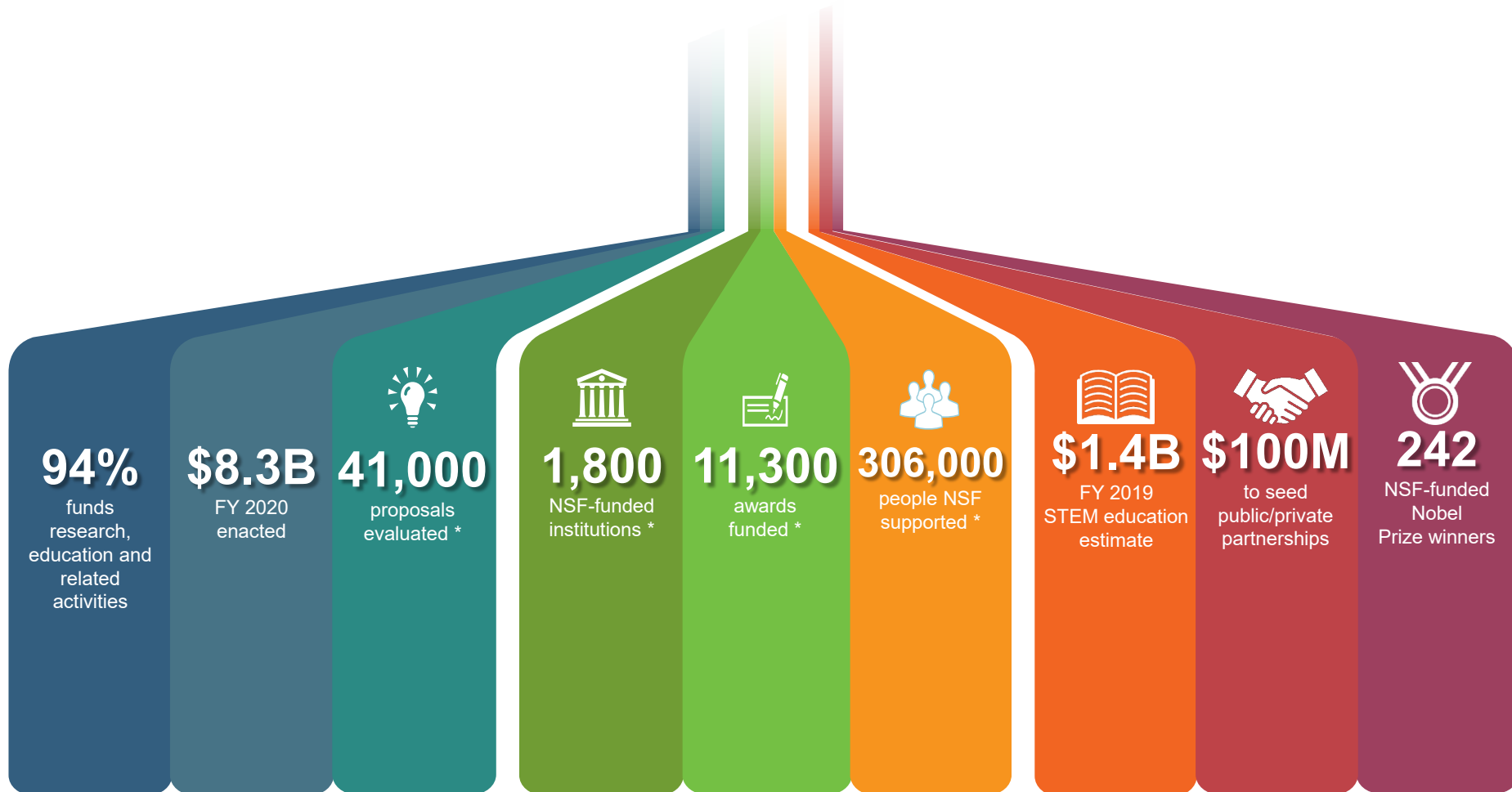


**Social,
Behavioral &
Economic
Sciences**



**International
Science and
Engineering**

NSF by the Numbers



** Numbers shown are based on FY 2019 activities, the last full year of data.*



Basic Research

\$8 B



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

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small
Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program

Research and Development funding for small businesses

\$200 M

America's Seed Fund powered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) funds startups in the development of groundbreaking, high-impact, high-risk technology, transforming scientific discovery into products and services with commercial and societal potential. NSF funding goes toward research and development (R&D), helping companies like yours de-risk technology for commercial success.



Critical need to support commercialization of technologies to assist in the global response to COVID-19.



NSF supports basic research across all disciplines, SBIR/STTR focuses on translation of the research outcomes.



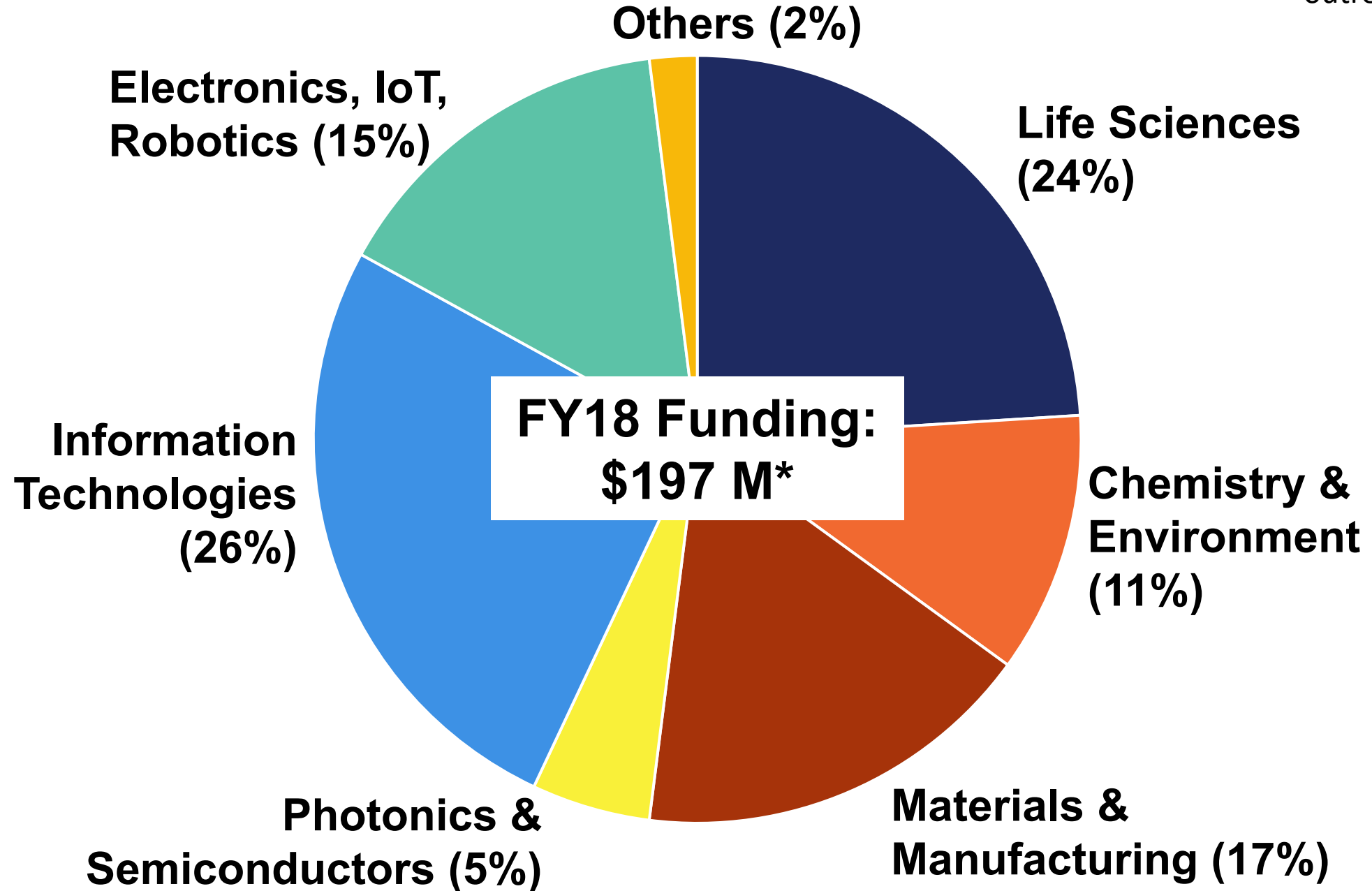
Our portfolio includes technologies that are transforming industry and society.



SBIR/STTR DCL clarifies COVID-19 funding objectives

SBIR/STTR Funding by Topic Area

*excludes admin & outreach funding



Phase I

Feasibility Research

6-12 Months

\$256,000



Phase II

Research Toward

Prototype

24 Months

\$1,000,000



Phase IIB

Third-Party Investment Plus

1:2 NSF Match

(up to \$500,000)



Development of learning technologies to address issues related to COVID-19 and beyond

For eligible US-based, US-owned
small businesses

- COVID-19 Impact on Education: 1,268,164,088 affected learners; 72.4% of total enrolled learners; 177 country-wide closures – *UNESCO, 5-5-2020*¹
- Estimated 43.9 million school students were enrolled in at least 95,000 public or private schools that are closed now, are scheduled to close or were closed and reopened – *Politico, 3-19-2020*²
- At least 1,102 colleges and universities in the U.S. have closed their campuses due to coronavirus, choosing to move classes online, impacting over 14 million students – *CNBC, 3-26-2020*³

- The likely result is a generation of students forced to play catch-up, perhaps for years to come. Most vulnerable are those who are always the most vulnerable: homeless children, those living in deep poverty and students with disabilities. – *WP*, 4-13-2020¹
- Testing is being postponed or scrapped entirely as schools rush instead to gear up for remote learning and figure out how to distribute school meals. – *Politico*, 3-19-2020²
- Online learning currently isn't an option for many students - e.g. in Arkansas 23% of households lack internet service. Alternatives include classes via local TV and physical mail. – *NBC*, 4-19-2020³

- Harness technology to build more robust, accessible learning systems
- Enable or enhance the delivery, practice and/or assessment of distance learning
- Fund innovations that will have impact at scale and help solve problems created or revealed by COVID-19

Examples of innovation areas:

- Distance learning, including online learning
- Cyberlearning
- Learning engineering – use of data sciences to extract actionable evidence-based insights about learning
- Efficient delivery methods that account for socioeconomic and technology disparities
- Solutions may draw on technical tools from IT, AI, AR/VR, HCI, social or technical networking platforms, communications technologies, etc.



How to get started

Dear Colleague Letter: Request for SBIR/STTR Phase I Proposals Addressing COVID-19



The screenshot shows the NSF website header with the NSF logo and the tagline "WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN". A search bar is located in the top right. Below the header is a navigation menu with links to Research Areas, Funding, Awards, Document Library, News, and About NSF. The main content area displays the title "NSF 20-065 Dear Colleague Letter: Request for SBIR/STTR Phase I Proposals Addressing COVID-19" and the date "March 25, 2020". The text of the letter begins with "Dear Colleagues:" and describes the invitation for US-based small businesses to submit Phase I proposals focused on the development and deployment of new technologies, products, processes, and services with the potential to positively impact the nation's and world's ability to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The letter also includes sections for "ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION" and "PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS".

NSF 20-065

Dear Colleague Letter: Request for SBIR/STTR Phase I Proposals Addressing COVID-19

March 25, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

The Division of Innovation and Industrial Partnerships (IIP) of the Engineering Directorate invites US-based small businesses to submit Phase I proposals focused on the development and deployment of new technologies, products, processes, and services with the potential to positively impact the nation's and world's ability to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Areas of research that might be considered include, but are not limited to: artificial intelligence, digital health, diagnostics, distributed ledger, environmental technologies, medical devices, pharmaceutical technologies, disinfection and sterilization, and filtration and separations. Interested proposers are invited to submit to the NSF Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Phase I Program.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All active NSF SBIR/STTR awardees, and other interested US-based small businesses are eligible to submit a Phase I proposal. Please reference the [NSF SBIR and STTR Phase I solicitations](#) for more details regarding eligibility.

PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Small businesses who are interested in submitting NSF SBIR or STTR Phase I proposals in response to this DCL must follow the guidelines outlined in the [NSF SBIR and STTR Phase I solicitations](#), including the submission of a required Project Pitch. Companies who already have an active SBIR/STTR award with NSF may submit a new Phase I

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20065/nsf20065.jsp>

New funding process for expedited Phase I SBIR/STTR proposals:

- NSF 20-065 Request for SBIR/STTR Phase I Proposals Addressing COVID-19
- Proposals must directly focus on an urgent requirement related to the COVID-19 crisis
- Requires a Project Pitch to be submitted first
- Requires registrations (SAM.gov) in order to submit a proposal – get started ASAP!
- Funding available as soon as possible



The Technology Innovation



The Technical Objectives and Challenges



The Market Opportunity



The Company and Team

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

Questions to consider:

- What is the impact of your project for the current pandemic?
- What is the advantage vs. the state of the art or what is available on market?
- What will enable your team to move fast?
- Is there meaningful research or development required? (There will be more flexibility in considering projects that are closer to scale up and implementation than for regular NSF SBIR/STTR proposals.)
- We are looking for a diversity of companies and approaches to offer solutions to problems resulting from COVID-19.

- Processing time: **Five business days** ~~three weeks max.~~
- Limits: Still limited to 1 Project Pitch under review at a time. If your Project Pitches are declined, **you are NOT limited to just two COVID-19 Pitches per submission window.**
- Select “**COVID-19**” as the SBIR/STTR topic area on the Project Pitch form.
- Reference the word “**COVID-19**” and this Dear Colleague Letter (NSF 20-065) in the “Describe the Technology/Innovation” field.

What about the normal rules that prohibit a new Project Pitch if my company already has an invited Pitch or proposal under review?

- These rules will be waived for new Pitches aimed at the COVID-19 issue.
- If you are a current awardee, we strongly suggest consulting your PD before proceeding with a new Pitch/proposal.

Given the urgency of the COVID-19 situation, will the SBIR/STTR program consider projects that are closer to commercial reality (or involve relatively more development, and less research) than is normal for the program?

- All SBIR/STTR projects, including those issued under this opportunity, must be performed by eligible small businesses and all funds must go toward research and development.
- Your Program Director will use your Project Pitch to gauge appropriateness for this opportunity.



What happens after you submit your Project Pitch?

Good fit =

- You'll be **INVITED** to submit a full proposal.
- Please follow Phase I submission requirements
- **MUST HAVE “COVID-19” in proposal title**
- Registrations are **STILL required**
 - System for Award Management (SAM) – “financial assistance”
 - Research.gov
 - SBIR.gov

Not a good fit =

- Immediate feedback, but you'll have to go back to the drawing board.
- If you are not invited, you can submit another Project Pitch (**COVID-19 projects are not limited to 2 Project Pitches per submission window**).

Full Proposal preparation

- Consider the submission of a briefer-than-normal Project Description
- Prioritize fast submission if supporting documents (budget supporting documentation, letters of support) are not at hand
- Don't sweat the small stuff!


Review Criteria for Full Proposals

- Intellectual Merit
- Commercial Potential
- Broader Impacts
- *Magnitude and speed of impact on COVID-19 response*

Full review criteria: <https://seedfund.nsf.gov/resources/review/peer-review/>

- We expect invited proposals to be submitted quickly: <6 weeks
- DCL is not permanent
- Post-DCL, will still be able to submit COVID-19 proposals to regular SBIR/STTR topics – mark proposal as COVID-19

NSF's Coronavirus Updates & Community Guidance



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WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

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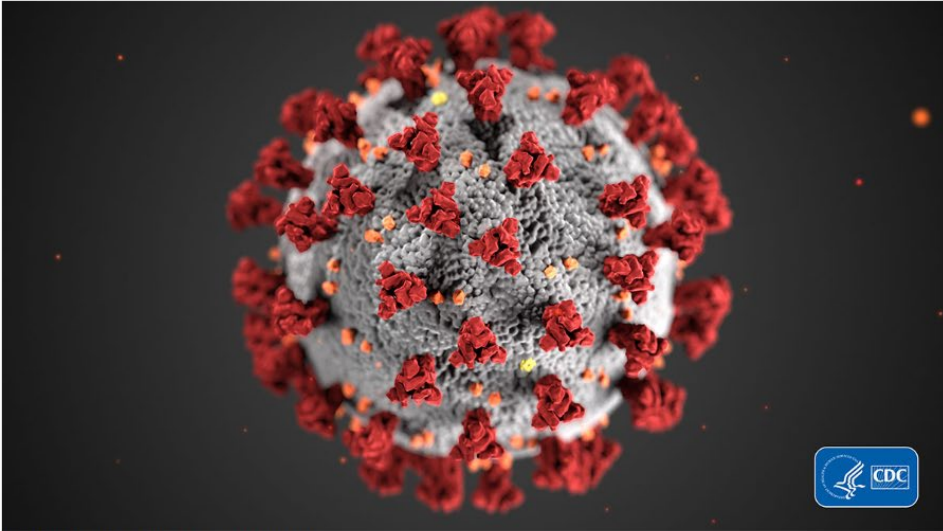


Image credit: Alissa Eckert, MS; Dan Higgins, MAM

Coronavirus Information

NSF encourages you to take extra precautions to protect yourselves and your families against COVID-19. If you are an NSF employee looking for guidance, please visit [InsideNSF](#). If you are a member of the public, please visit [cdc.gov](#).

https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/coronavirus/



Questions?

Peter Atherton: patherto@nsf.gov

sbir@nsf.gov
@NSFSBIR



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