



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Contracts and Acquisitions Management

Request for Proposals ED-IES-15-R-0005
Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) Phase I
Amendment 0001

Closing Date: January 15, 2015
2:00 P.M. ET

U.S. Department of Education's (Department or ED) responses to clarification questions submitted by December 15, 2014, 2:00 P.M. ET:

WARNING! Offerors must note that there are email attachment size restrictions. The Department of Education cannot accept attachments larger than 25 MB. The Government is not responsible for attachment size restrictions that may exist on offerors' email servers! Offerors are advised to check with their provider for information on email size restrictions and plan accordingly.

If offerors attempt to submit a proposal to Barakat.Shakir@ed.gov and receive an error message, they **MUST** contact the Contract Specialist, Barakat.Shakir@ed.gov, **PRIOR TO THE CLOSING OF THE SOLICITATION** during standard business hours (8:00 A.M. ET to 5:00 P.M. ET, Monday through Friday). The solicitation closes promptly at 2:00 P.M. ET, on January 15, 2015. Late proposals will not be accepted.

NOTE: Offerors are advised they may want to review the Department's responses to clarification questions received for the similar 2015 SBIR Fast Track solicitation ED-IES-15-R-0006 here: <https://www.fbo.gov/index?id=917ff8ba9b93bb11cd921c4abb7405cb>.

1. (Page 26, Paragraph D) the Request for Proposal (RFP) indicates that subcontractors are to be utilized for research and/or analytic work only. On page 46, under the budget information, there is a line that references "Subcontractors (no more than 33% of the total Phase 1 price)". Is this budget line referring to any work related to research and analysis?

Response: Subcontractors can be used for any part of the research and development effort up to a one-third (33%) of the project budget as stated in the RFP.

2. The construction of the work in my proposal will be subcontracted outside the United States. All of the research and analytic work will be performed in the United States. Is this technical work acceptable under the terms of the RFP?

Response: The RFP does not have requirements on where a proposal can be written. However, all project work must occur in the United States, as is stated in the RFP.

550 12th Street SW, 7th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20202-4447

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3. Will a proposal be rejected if the offeror has more than one letter/institution that wants to participate?

Response: No response can be provided to this question at this time.

4. Is the SBIR program open to small business not currently based in the United States?

Response: No, only small businesses in United States registered with the Small Business Administration may submit proposals to the SBIR program.

5. (Reference; Page 20, paragraph 5 Resources) Will this award apply to data analysis software, and the supplies needed to acquire data?

Response: The offeror must detail the nature, components, and requirements of the product that is proposed.

6. The below excerpt is from page 3 seems be a contradiction. Please confirm if 1/3 (one-third) or 1/2 (one-half) of the contract funds is allowed for consultant fees, facility leases, and etc.

For Phase I, the proposing firm must perform at least two-thirds of the research and/or analytic effort. Furthermore, the total of all consultant fees, facility leases or usage fees, and other subcontracts or purchase agreements may not exceed one-third of the total contract price. For Phase I, the proposing firm must perform at least two-thirds of the research and/or analytic effort. Furthermore, the total of all consultant fees, facility leases or usage fees, and other subcontracts or purchase agreements may not exceed one-half of the total contract price.

Response: The RFP includes an error on this matter. It should read: *For Phase I, the proposing firm must perform at least two-thirds of the research and/or analytic effort. Furthermore, the total of all consultant fees, facility leases or usage fees, and other subcontracts or purchase agreements may not exceed one-third of the total contract price.*

7. Will a proposal focusing on a technology project used by both teachers and students be accepted? Specifically, the focus is on enhancing teacher capacity for data driver instructional decisions through product use and professional development. Please confirm that the scope of this type of proposal is permissible.

Response: Offerors must refer to the specifics in the Priority Areas Section (Section IX of the RFP) for specifics on the proposed products that would be acceptable.

8. Will a proposal focusing on ELL and specifically STEM learning goals be acceptable?

Response: Offerors must refer to the specifics in the Priority Areas Section (Section IX of the RFP) for specifics on the proposed products that would be acceptable.

9. (Page 35) Please provide clarification of the Age and Grade Level description.

Response: Offerors must refer to the specifics in the Priority Areas Section (Section IX of the RFP) for specifics on the proposed products that would be acceptable.

10. The solicitation requires 1 one-page letter of agreement from one educator. May I use a larger sample of educators? If so, do I submit only 1 letter from one educator or more than one?

Response: The solicitation provides guidance on the letter that is to be provided in Appendix B.

11. Is it necessary to establish an indirect rate agreement with the government for the contract award?

Response: No, not for a firm-fixed-price contract. Offerors are not required to establish an indirect rate agreement for the contract award.

12. What is the definition of “professional affiliations” as it applies to each key member as stated in the Project Narrative-J?

Response: Offerors must determine the professional affiliation, or main place of work that relates to the proposed project, of each key member.

13. Does an online professional development/instructional tools platform meet the criteria for the SBIR Program?

Response: Offerors must refer to the Priority Areas Section (Section IX of the RFP) for specifics on the proposed products that would be acceptable.

14. In the RFP it states that "For Phase I, the proposing firm must perform at least two-thirds of the research and/or analytic effort. Furthermore, the total of all consultant fees, facility leases or usage fees, and other subcontracts or purchase agreements may not exceed one third of the total contract price.." How can a business model that subcontracts all of the actual constructions still take part in submitting a proposal to the SBIR Program?

Response: The Small Business Concern is required to spend a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the funds in Phase I. Subcontracts can spend up to a maximum of one-third (1/3).

15. Does funding participants for research, or purchasing licenses for one-time use count against the maximum of one-third of the contract price that is not spent by the proposing firm?

Response: Offerors determine what fees are spent by the Small Business Concern during the project period.

16. The Solicitation states that the entire proposal should be submitted in a single document. Please clarify how to submit Appendix G (Certifications), which is supposed to be submitted as a separate document.

Response: Offerors must submit a single document. Required certifications and/or signatures from offerors may be either scanned or included as a digital signature (such as a .jpg). If further technical assistance is required, please notify the Contract Specialist, Barakt.Shakir@ed.gov, BEFORE the closing of the solicitation.

17. Is it possible to gain access to the proposals submitted from previous SBIR years?

Response: Because of the nature of the proprietary information contained in SBIR proposals, most, if not all, of the information contained therein is protected from a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. However, offerors may pursue a FOIA request to view previous proposals that were awarded if they so choose, following the procedures found on the Department's website, ed.gov. Please note the FOIA request can take several weeks or more. Otherwise prior proposals are not available.

18. Can the Principal Investigator role can be shared by more than one person? This is sometimes known as the co-principal investigator or multi-PI model.

Response: The proposal must declare one Principal Investigator, and this individual is represents the project to the Department. Within projects, offerors are free to name co-investigators.

19. The SBIR Program Policy Directive permits an agency to provide technical assistance to an SBIR awardee in an amount not more than \$5,000 per year in Phase I and \$5,000 per year for Phase II.

Does the Department of Education offer the Technical Assistance Program?

How should the offeror make the request for this support within their proposal application?

May the offeror recommend a contractor for technical assistance?

Response 1: The Department does not operate a formal technical assistance program.

Response 2: Offerors may indicate how they will use funds in their project budget.

Response 3: Offerors choose what individuals or entities to include in a proposal.

20. How many contract awards will be made for Phase I, Phase II, and the Phase II Fast Track?

Response: Approximately twelve contract awards will be made for the SBIR Phase I Program, approximately four awards for the Phase II, and approximately two awards for Fast-Track. However, the number of awards for each of the SBIR Programs is contingent on the amount of funds available at the time of award.

21. Does the SBIR Program have a preference of Priority 1 over Priority 2, or vice versa?

Response: No preference is given between Priority 1 or 2 proposals.

22. Does submitting proposals with a similar concept to SBIR Programs outside of U.S. Department of Education negatively impact an evaluation?

Response: Applying to different agencies has no impact on the chances of being awarded an ED SBIR contract. It is noted that offerors are not permitted to accept funds from multiple programs for the same work.

23. (Page 4, paragraph D) The solicitation states that manufacturing-related projects are encouraged, as defined by Executive Order 13329. Is preference given in the evaluation criteria to manufacturing-related projects?

Response: No, this is only reflected in the Certifications.

24. Can the primary investigator change during the SBIR Award?

Response: If needed, awardees can request a change for the principal investigator to the Contracting Officer.