

2020 - 2021 MS-FAST Phase 0 Request for Proposals

MS-FAST Phase 0 Program

Announcement Date: Open year round (**closes August 1, 2021**).
Due Date: Proposal due at least 30 days before Phase 1 due date.
Award Notice: Within 20 days of submission if selected for award.

Program Objective:

The objective of the MS-FAST Phase 0 Program is to provide funding to Mississippi small businesses, university researchers, and others conducting preliminary research and planning in support of a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Phase I and Phase II proposals. Funds from the Phase 0 award may also be used to obtain assistance from a university faculty member in preparing an SBIR/STTR Phase I or II proposal. The SBIR/STTR programs are federal R&D programs providing more than \$ 3 billion annually to small businesses researching and developing innovative new products or technologies.

Applicant Eligibility:

Mississippi registered small businesses (generally defined as businesses having 500 or fewer employees) are eligible to participate in the Phase 0 program. Faculty members, graduate students and other university personnel are also eligible to participate in the Phase 0 program if they either have identified a Phase I Mississippi business partner or intend to start their own business in Mississippi should their Phase I proposal be awarded. Small businesses are encouraged but not required, as appropriate, to partner with universities and faculty and use them to assist the small business in preparing a Phase I or II SBIR/STTR proposal and/or to conduct preliminary research to strengthen a Phase I SBIR/STTR proposal.

Eligible Use of Funds:

Phase 0 program funds may be used to contract with a university faculty member to assist the small business in preparing a Phase I or II SBIR/STTR proposal, to travel to the federal agency to discuss whether the company's plans for an SBIR/STTR Phase I proposal fit the agency's priorities, and/or to conduct preliminary research leading to the submission of a competitive Phase I proposal. Indirect costs are not an allowable expenditure.

Projects may be awarded up to the following amounts:

Research to acquire preliminary data:	\$1500
Proposal writing and assistance:	\$1500
Travel grants:	\$1000

Maximum total grant (using any combination of the above three categories):	\$3000
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Evaluation Process:

Proposals will be reviewed by individuals representing small businesses, university researchers and people with knowledge in the field. For the protection of researchers and businesses, all reviewers will be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement. Proposal review will focus on scientific and technical merit and will consider the following criteria: (1) uniqueness of the proposed concept as technical innovation, (2) scientific quality of the proposed preliminary research*, (3) soundness of the research plan to support a Phase I proposal*, (4) potential of the proposed concept for commercial applications, (5) qualifications of the research team*, (6) relevance of the budget including any matching funds, and (7) clarity of the proposal. Proposals that show a cost-sharing component from the small business will be more favorably reviewed. Because experience has shown that SBIR/STTR proposals having university faculty involvement are more likely to obtain funding, preference will be given to proposals that have a university participant.

* Relates to proposals requesting support for Research to acquire preliminary data only.

Award & Report Process:

Fifty percent of the funds will be paid at the time of the award following a meeting by the awardee with Innovate Mississippi. The last 50 percent will be awarded upon the awardee providing of a copy of the Phase I or II proposal submission receipt from the federal agency to which the proposal was submitted indicating acceptance of the proposal for review.

Application Process:

A 2 to 3 page application (excluding cover page) outlining the proposed project and expected outcomes is requested. The following elements should be included in the application:

Cover Page:

Date, Project Title, Principal Investigator, Business to submit SBIR/STTR, Address, Phone Fax, Email, and Signature.

Project Abstract:

Brief explanation of the proposed innovation and its relationship to SBIR/STTR Phase 1 and 2.

SBIR/STTR Agency:

Identification of Agency(s) to and its topic/subtopic area which SBIR/STTR Phase I will be submitted. In the case of a Phase II a copy of the Phase I award agreement cover sheet. **NOTE:** If NSF is the selected federal agency for submission you are required in addition to submit with the Phase 0 a copy of the NSF Project Pitch Invitation confirming your company has been invited to submit a full Phase 1 proposal. NSF accepts Phase 1 proposals from only invited companies. For more information see: <https://seedfund.nsf.gov/project-pitch/>

Commercial Opportunities:

Identification of product or service to be developed and anticipated value proposition(s) to each identified customer market segment.

Research Team:

Discuss qualifications of the members of the research team.

Phase 0 Technical Objectives**Phase 0 Work Plan & Time Line****Phase 0 Anticipated Results****Phase 0 Budget**

A power point presentation with additional information on *Preparing the Phase 0 Proposal* may be found online at: <https://www.mistcluster.org/phase-0-support>.

Submission Process:

Proposals must be received via e-mail at least 30 days prior to the relevant federal SBIR/STTR solicitation due date. Submit proposals to:

E-mail: Joseph.Graben@usm.edu

Include "Phase 0 submission" in the subject line.

Proposal attachment should be either in MS Word or PDF format.

Question? Contact:

Joe Graben

Director – USM/BIAC

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