DEFENSE SBIR/STTR PROGRAM QUARTERLY REVIEW

Q2 Volume 3 Issue 2

Message from the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Director

Regina "Gina" Sims
Director
Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense
for Research and Engineering

SBIR/STTR Community -

I want to thank the ecosystem for the very warm welcome and enthusiasm I've received since starting my role as Defense Small Business Innovation Research / Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Program Director. I have the privilege of working every day with a skilled team committed to ensuring the programs' mission and goals are on track. In my first few months as Director, I have already seen innovative initiatives across this deserving ecosystem, and I'm looking forward to the unlimited opportunities ahead of us.

In addition, I've had the privileged opportunity to meet with leadership, including The Honorable Heidi Shyu, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E)) to review my guiding principles for the program, which are: 1) ensure the DoD is investing taxpayer money wisely, 2) focus on SBIR/STTR support to the Warfighter, and 3) provide an accessible and supportive SBIR/STTR process to the small business community. I also met with newly appointed Honorable Aprille Ericsson, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Science and Technology (OASD(S&T)) and Mr. Michael Holthe, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Science and Technology (OASD(S&T)) to ensure my SBIR/STTR initiatives are fully aligned with OUSD(R&E) and OASD(S&T)'s strategy.

The Defense SBIR/STTR Program has adapted and improved immensely to a changing landscape because of the efficient leadership overseeing this program. One leader in particular, Mr. Matthew Williams, Director, OSD Transitions SBIR/STTR Technology (OTST) Program, OSD(R&E) Technology Portfolio Manager, has made a significant impact on SBIR/STTR. Mr. Williams established the OTST Program, developed program execution enhancements, and greatly empowered the FY2022 Reauthorization of our program. Under Matt's leadership, the OTST program has obligated or committed over $192M in Phase II awards comprising 150 efforts.

On 30 June, Mr. Williams will retire after 24 years active duty in the United States Navy and 18 years civilian duty. His depth of knowledge will be greatly missed; however, his legacy will forever be carried out through this ecosystem. Thank you for your many years of service Matt, and I wish you the very best! Happy Retirement!

Sincerely,
Regina "Gina" Sims

Inside This Issue

Defense SBIR/STTR News

Farewell from Matthew B. Williams, Director, OSD Transitions SBIR/STTR Technology (OTST) Program, OSD(R&E) Technology Portfolio Manager

Dear Defense, and all DoD/Component SBIR/STTR Program Managers and Staff,

With mixed feelings, I am writing to let all my fellow colleagues and the Defense SBIR/STTR staff know that my retirement from OUSD(R&E), OSD Transitions SBIR/STTR Technology Program is effective June 30, 2024. It was not an easy decision for me because of you and my amazing coworkers, but it is time for me to spend time with my seven grandchildren, pursue some personal projects, and fulfill my dream of being able to golf and boat whenever I want.

As I reflect over my 24 years of Naval Service as a Flight Engineer, three years running an Armor Company, and 18 years as a civil servant for the KC/C-130J and the SBIR/STTR Programs, here are some of the highlights that stand out for me:

- *Establishing a successful SBIR/STTR transition program for NAVAIR and OUSD(R&E).*
- *Getting the SBIR/STTR Program reauthorized through a team effort.*
- *Designing and implementing the DoD Due Diligence Program collaboratively with team members.*
- *Designing and implementing a depot level repair process for the KC/C-130J propellers.*
- *Designing a ballistic blanket for the C-17 A/C LOX bottles.*
- *Designing a quick release hard armor kit for the KC/C-130 A/C.*
- *Renegotiating, as a team, a contractor maintenance support contract w/Lockheed Martin for the new KC/C-130J Aircraft – resulting in a cost avoidance of $250K+ annually.*

Finally, I want to thank you all for the care and concern you have demonstrated toward our DoD and SBIR/STTR customers and for each other. I credit you, the team, for the high quality of our services and the Defense SBIR/STTR Programs success.

Thank you for making work rewarding and fun. I will miss you.

Warm regards,

Matthew B. Williams
Director, OSD Transitions SBIR/STTR Technology (OTST) Program
OSD (R&E) Technology Portfolio Manager

Hicks Establishes SBIR/STTR Due Diligence Policy and Implementation Guidance

Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks signed a memorandum to establish policy and provide implementation guidance for the Defense Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Due Diligence Program May 13.

In accordance with the SBIR and STTR Extension Act of 2022, the goal of the Due Diligence Program is to mitigate security risks when small business concerns (SBCs) with ties from any foreign country of concern seek SBIR/STTR funding.

Under Department of Defense policy, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E)) ensures consistent application of common minimum standards across all DoD services and components making SBIR/STTR awards to small businesses. The Defense SBIR/STTR Program, oversees DoD services' and components' establishment and implementation of their SBIR/STTR Due Diligence Programs.

"We value the innovations and technologies derived from SBCs that enhance warfighter capabilities to support the DoD mission," said Gina Sims, Defense SBIR/STTR Program director. "Working closely with the R&E leadership and DoD services and components, we will successfully implement this plan to vigilantly protect taxpayer funds and small businesses from foreign influence."

In early 2023, Defense SBIR/STTR Program worked with the services, components, and key stakeholders to coordinate and plan the Due Diligence Program's rollout. Additionally, DoD worked closely with the Small Business Administration to revise SBIR/STTR policy to incorporate due diligence requirements. As a result, all proposals submitted to the Defense SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal (DSIP) must include forms that assess security risks. Proposals without these forms are non-compliant and will not receive an evaluation.

To assist small businesses, the department introduced an online course on foreign ownership, control, or influence (FOCI), which defines the issue, explains what being under FOCI means, and details FOCI's effect on a company seeking a SBIR/STTR award.

"As we strengthen our Due Diligence Program policy and implementation guidance, we want to assure small businesses that we are with them every step of the way and will provide the necessary support to ensure success," Sims said.

To sign up for the FOCI course, visit https://www.projectspectrum.io/#/signup. For information on the Defense SBIR/STTR Program, visit www.defensesbirsttr.mil or follow the program's LinkedIn page at: www.linkedin.com/company/dodsbirsttr.

Defense SBIR/STTR Program's LinkedIn Page Taking Off!

In support of the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office's guiding principles to ensure transparency to the taxpayer, focus on supporting the Warfighter, and be accessible and supportive of U.S small businesses, the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office launched its LinkedIn Page in October 2023; https://www.linkedin.com/company/dodsbirsttr. It has more than 13,700k followers, which grows daily, and, according to Hootsuite analytics, has reached more than four million people.

Defense SBIR/STTR Program Director, Ms. Sims, endorsed LinkedIn as the social media presence of choice because it is strictly a business/industry-focused platform repeatedly cited at industry and government conferences as an information source. Additionally, LinkedIn provides a full-service platform for Government and Industry to host conversations/thought exchanges associated with the SBIR/STTR ecosystem. Finally, the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office utilizes the platform to share information on funding, education, events, and other research and development opportunities.

If Services/Components do not already have LinkedIn, the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office encourages the establishment of a public presence on the platform. This will enable Services/Components to disseminate announcements, education, and outreach opportunities more efficiently to a broader audience of innovative small businesses and academia to encourage their participation in DoD's SBIR and STTR programs. In addition, Services/Components should also work collaboratively and share messages and pertinent information.

This request is also part of larger Small Business Administration SBIR and STTR Program Policy Directive-mandated initiatives to increase the participation, award, and outreach to small businesses underrepresented in the SBIR and STTR programs.

For more information or idea sharing, please contact the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office's Outreach team at dod.sbir-sttr-outreach@mail.mil.

The Hill

The past few months have been jam-packed with congressional engagements, budgetary briefings, and legislative planning for Fiscal Year 2025. As we move into the busy legislative season, our office will continue to pursue improvements to the SBIR and STTR programs, such as permanency for the programs and increased flexibility in awarding funding to our innovative small business partners.

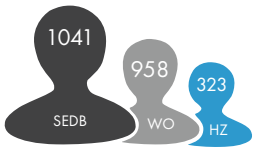
Additionally, as the Defense SBIR/STTR Due Diligence Program approaches its one-year mark, our office continues to monitor and evolve the process, implement best practices in risk adaptation, enhance mitigation procedures, and ensure small businesses' innovative research and technology are protected.

DoD SBIR/STTR Program Statistics

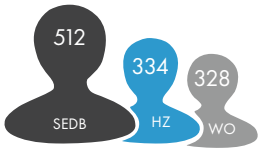
The following statistics, as of April 22, 2024, provide a snapshot of proposal and award data in DSIP for FY23. Note: statistics change as Services/Components update their data.

SBIR/STTR Proposals

SBIR Phase I proposal submissions by socioeconomic category

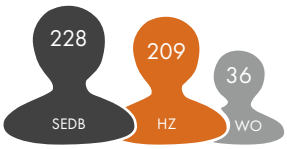


SBIR Phase II proposal submissions by socioeconomic category



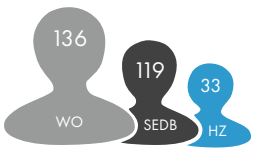
STTR Phase I proposal submissions by socioeconomic category

STTR Phase II proposal submissions by socioeconomic category

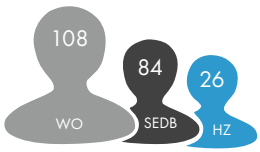


SBIR/STTR Awards

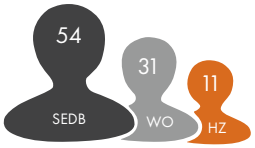
SBIR Phase I Awards by socioeconomic category



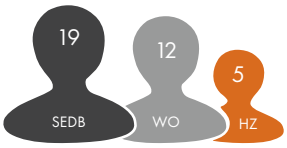
SBIR Phase II Awards by socioeconomic category



STTR Phase I Awards by socioeconomic category



STTR Phase II Awards by socioeconomic category



TERMINOLOGY KEY:

SEDB = Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Business

HZ = HUBZONE Historically Underutilized Business Zone

WO = Woman-owned Small Business

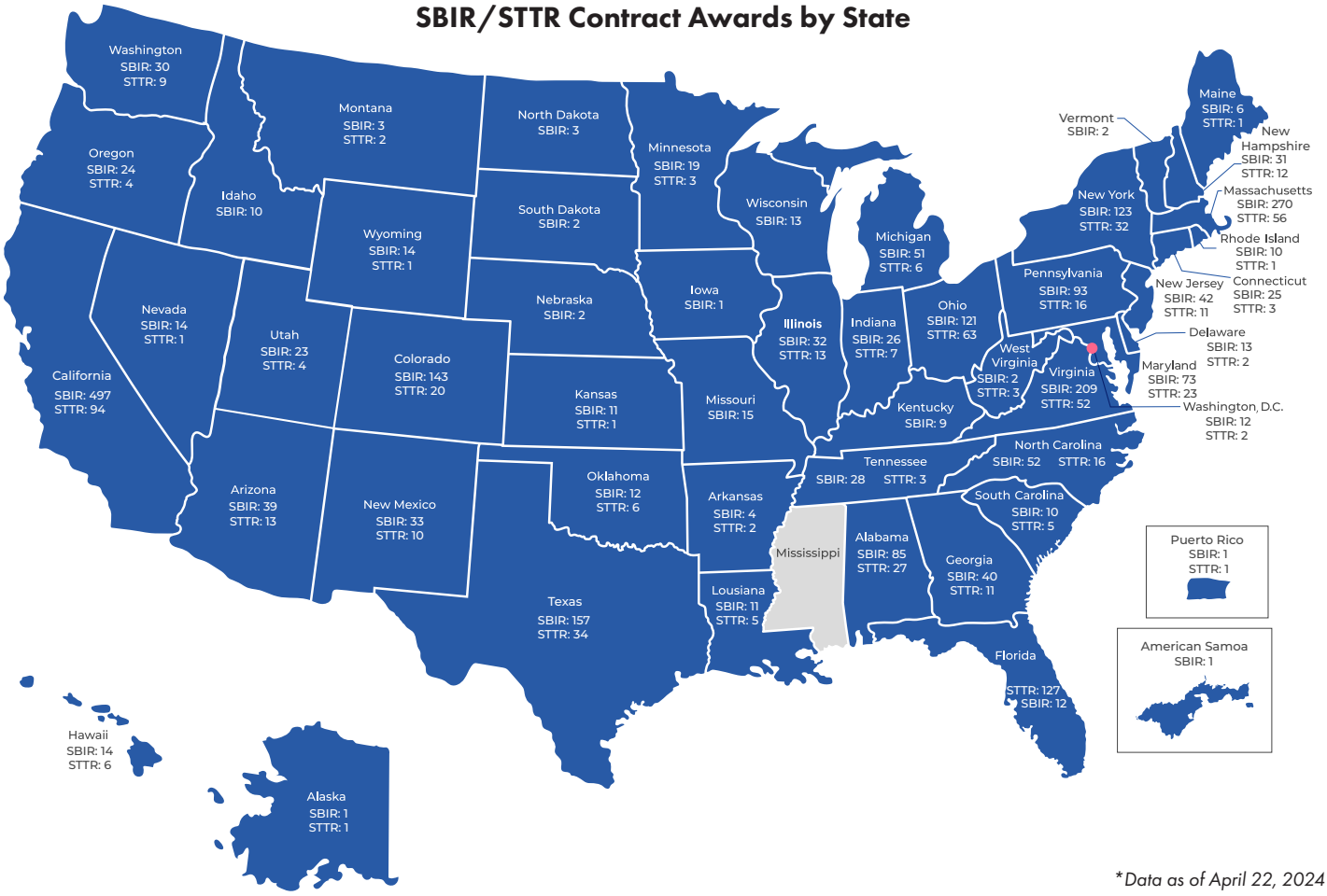
SBIR Awards by Component

ARMY Phase I: 175 Phase II: 135	**CBD** Phase I: 15 Phase II: 18	**DARPA** Phase I: 7 Phase II: 95	**DHA** Phase I: 20 Phase II: 37	**DLA** Phase I: 29 Phase II: 33	**DMEA** Phase I: 12 Phase II: 4	**SOCOM** Phase I: 19 Phase II: 24
DTRA Phase I: 21 Phase II: 6	**MDA** Phase II: 46	**NAVY** Phase I: 324 Phase II: 187	**NGA** Phase II: 6	**OSD** Phase I: 1 Phase II: 4	**SDA** Phase II: 19	**USAF** Phase I: 757 Phase II: 594

STTR Awards by Component

ARMY Phase II: 29	**CBD** Phase II: 4	**DARPA** Phase I: 2 Phase II: 14	**DHA** Phase II: 10	**DLA** Phase I: 11	**SDA** Phase II: 3	**USAF** Phase I: 240 Phase II: 83
DTRA Phase I: 4 Phase II: 3	**NAVY** Phase I: 89 Phase II: 33	**MDA** Phase I: 37 Phase II: 6	**OSD** Phase I: 9 Phase II: 9	**NGA** Phase I: 1	**SOCOM** Phase I: 4 Phase II: 3	

SBIR/STTR Contract Awards by State



*Data as of April 22, 2024

Funding Opportunities

In the second quarter, the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office released approximately 24 SBIR topics and four STTR topics during the DoD-wide Annual 24.4 SBIR and 24.D STTR BAAs and the Air Force X24.5 and X24.D CSOs. During this time frame, approximately 6,400 proposals were submitted across all topics and solicitations, including the Joint 24.1 SBIR and 24.B STTR BAAs.

As always, please be sure to send any Warfighters or Small Business Concerns interested in participating here https://www.defensesbirsttr.mil/SBIR-STTR/Opportunities/ for a full list of current and upcoming funding opportunities.

Additionally, continue to recommend subscribing to listserv at https://www.dodsbirtsttr.mil/submissions/login to receive notifications of new funding opportunities and e-mail updates on the Defense SBIR and STTR Programs. Simply click "DSIP Listserv" located under "Quick Links".

Meet the Program Manager (PM)

Jennifer Thabet
Program Director
Small Business Programs Office (SBPO)
Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)

Ms. Jennifer Thabet is an experienced program manager with an extensive background supporting DARPA and the DoD. Enhancing the ability of the small business community to create and transition revolutionary technologies that benefit the Warfighter, federal government, and commercial marketplace is of paramount importance in Ms. Thabet's role of program director, DARPA Small Business Programs Office (SBPO). Ms. Thabet also leads the agency's inaugural Partnership Intermediary Agreement (PIA), DARPAConnect — an effort designed to break down barriers to entry for performers new to DARPA and the national security space, and educate them on how to engage and work with DARPA.

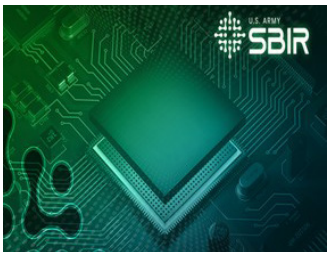
Since joining SBPO, Ms. Thabet has reimagined the DARPA SBIR/STTR programs to be program manager-centric with topics released on a just-in-time basis to link SBIR/STTR efforts to larger DARPA programs, and avail small businesses with additional benefits and transition opportunities. Additionally, the establishment of DARPA's SBIR XL Pilot, which has increased award values with a focus on transition and commercialization, is the only program of its kind with a zero barrier to entry within the DoD SBIR system. Finally, DARPA ensures SBIR/STTR performers are given the tools and opportunities to successfully transition their technologies through early and often engagement, such as technical interchange meetings with primes, accelerator programs, and various outreach opportunities.

Prior to joining SBPO, Ms. Thabet spent more than 13 years with Booz Allen Hamilton supporting DARPA and the DoD in program and project management of complex government contracts focused on project and financial management. Before her time at DARPA, Ms. Thabet spent time as an attorney, specializing in contract law and general litigation.

Ms. Thabet holds a B.A. from Washington University in St. Louis, a Juris Doctorate degree from the George Washington University School of Law, and a Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification from the Project Management Institute.

Components Connection

Army Invests Nearly $50 million in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning



The U.S. Army invested nearly $50 million in small and nontraditional businesses to develop a variety of artificial intelligence and machine learning solutions under its AI/ML open-topic solicitation. Released in December 2022, the U.S. Army Small Business Innovation Research Program's solicitation sought to enhance the Army's operational capabilities and address broader national security efforts by tackling critical information gaps via AI technologies. With the help of industry, the Army prioritized the development of solutions ranging from radio-frequency identification to language translation. During the Phase I performance period, 39 small and nontraditional vendors delivered concepts within these priority areas that highlighted their technologies' commercial viability and technical feasibility. Now, the Army will fund 26 selected businesses nearly $50 million to transform their concepts into prototypes ready for demonstration. The successful pilot program selected five small businesses to receive up to $15 million each in May 2023.

xTechScalable AI 2 Offers Cash Prizes and Contracts Toward Project Linchpin

Led by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, the U.S. Army xTech Program launched xTechScalable AI 2 — a competition prioritizing the development of disruptive, artificial intelligence solutions in support of Project Linchpin. In coordination with Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors, the competition provides a forum for innovators to share their novel, world-class AI technologies with the Department of Defense. With focus areas aligned to Project Linchpin, xTechScalable AI 2 also helps the DoD integrate nontraditional vendors into its science and technology ecosystem by offering up to $603,000 in cash prizes and an opportunity to submit proposals for a Phase I or Direct to Phase II Army Small Business Innovation Research contract valued at up to $250,000 and $2 million, respectively.

Eligible vendors submitted their concept white papers on May 17. Once approved, these vendors will progress through xTech-Scalable AI 2's three competition rounds and an accelerator program, culminating in a final demonstration during an in-person event at or around the 2024 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition in October 2024.

Read more: [xTechScalable AI 2 offers cash prizes and contracts toward Project Linchpin – xTechSearch (army.mil)]

Navy's BAAs Now in Pre-Release

The Department of the Navy's 24.2/B Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs) are now open for proposal submission. This funding opportunity includes 35 SBIR Phase I topics, 8 Direct to Phase II topics, and 6 STTR Phase I topics from five Navy SYSCOMs – MCSC, NAVAIR, NAVSEA, ONR, and SSP.

Proposals are accepted through the Defense SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal (DSIP) at https://www.dodsbirsttr.mil/submissions/login until Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 12:00 PM EDT.

More information (including complete BAA instructions) is available at https://navysbir.com/.

Navy STP Prime Liaison Fosters Transition Opportunities between Small Businesses and Defense Primes

A Raytheon Technologies representative meeting with a Navy STP small business participant. Photo: Navy

The mission of the Navy SBIR Transition Program (Navy STP) is to support participating small businesses with transitioning their technologies into follow-on Phase III contracts and delivering vital capabilities to warfighters. With the goal of transition in mind, Navy STP created a prime liaison role.

The prime liaison works with defense prime contractors to understand their requirements and the capability gaps that must be solved to increase warfighting capability, reduce sustainment costs on current Program of Record contracts, and address future market adjacency requirements.

Once the needs of the defense contractor are understood, the prime liaison works to match Navy STP small businesses' innovative technologies with prime requirements to deliver warfighting capabilities to the Navy.

The prime liaison attends all Navy STP Showcase events, Navy community tradeshows and industry events. This direct contact with primes stimulates collaboration and a positive working relationship with them. "Big commercial trade shows are great venues to meet a lot of the prime representatives," explained Don Williamson, Navy STP's prime liaison.

"I'm looking for what the primes need in three areas: gaps in current Programs of Record, such as more fighting capability gaps that the primes identify; opportunities to lower sustainment costs; and emerging technology needs."

Williamson has organized technical interchange meetings (TIMs) with several primes. "In a TIM we set up and facilitate a conversation between a defense prime and one or more of the small businesses from our current cohort. Always our goal is to match up a prime with a small business to help lead to that transition, to find pathways for these small business transitions."

For more information on Navy STP and participating small businesses, visit the Navy STP Virtual Transition Marketplace (VTM) at https://vtm.navyfst.com/ or the Navy STP website at https://navystp.com/

AFWERX Attends CES

The AFWERX Team manning the AFWERX table at CES, (left to right) - Vanessa Perner, Captain Kristina Johnson, Sarah Perry and Senior Airman Natalie Zea. Photo credit: Vincent Madero

AFWERX participated in the USPTO booth at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), Jan 9 - 12 in Las Vegas, NV. Immersed in cutting-edge technology, the team connected with hundreds of forward-thinking startups, small businesses, and entrepreneurs in Eureka Park.

We look forward to seeing what unique technologies make their way into our AFWERX programs!

AFWERX, SpaceWERX Announce Strategic Funding Increase Selections

AFWERX, the innovation arm of the Department of the Air Force and powered by the Air Force Research Laboratory, and SpaceWERX, the innovation arm of the U.S. Space Force and a unique division within AFWERX, announced the Program Year 2024 Strategic Funding Increase, or STRATFI, contract award selections from its Phase II eligible applicants at the SXSW® conference in Austin, Texas in early March.

AFWERX Director and Chief Commercialization Officer for the Department of the Air Force, Col. Elliott Leigh, made the announcement during his keynote speech titled "Chasing Innovation: Lessons Learned."

Col. Elliott Leigh, AFWERX director and chief commercialization officer for the Department of the Air Force, delivering keynote address at SXSW® in Austin, TX. Photo: Matthew Clouse

"Our growth stage investment programs, Strategic Funding Increase and Tactical Funding Increase, are an integral part of the AFWERX and SpaceWERX vision to forge an innovation ecosystem that delivers disruptive Air and Space capabilities," Leigh said. "By deliberately engaging with Space Force Deltas, Air Force Major Commands, Program Executive Offices and Department of the Air Force Senior Acquisition leadership, we are employing dollars at scale, both government and private investment, to accelerate the development of strategic capabilities. I am impressed by the scope and diversity of capabilities submitted in response to the Program Year 24 opportunity and am excited to see the outcome of the continued development of these capabilities over the coming years."

Click HERE to read the press release in its entirety including the Program Year 24 STRATFI selections.

Happening Soon

DARPA to Host DARPAConnect Virtual Pop-Up in June

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) launched the DARPAConnect initiative to broaden DARPA's reach with small businesses and educational institutions. DARPAConnect breaks down barriers of entry for performers new to DARPA through national and local events, networking opportunities, and a robust online curriculum. Since its inception, DARPAConnect has held a series of regional pop-up events, workshops, and coaching sessions to support new potential performers as they become acclimated to the DARPA enterprise.

The next DARPAConnect Pop-Up event will be held virtually on June 12, 2024. Featured speakers will include DARPA office leadership, program managers, and staff. In addition to a series of informational sessions, this event will feature an Ask Me Anything live Q&A panel, as well as a limited number of 30-minute one-on-one coaching sessions for participants interested in sharing their ideas with DARPA.

Visit www.DARPAConnect.us for event registration details and to join the DARPAConnect community.

Army SBIR invites you to Letterkenny Army Depot's Depot Days Event

Letterkenny Army Depot has over eight decades of experience in building, sustaining and modernizing complex weapon systems. Its tradespeople have a broad range of competencies, and they seek partnerships with nontraditional vendors. If your small business is interested in entering or expanding its portfolio within the Defense Industrial Base, join us for Letterkenny's Depot Days to learn about opportunities within the U.S. Army through a depot tour, briefings and discussions. Sponsored by the Army Small Business Innovation Research Program, this is an informational event in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, on July 9. For more information and to register, click HERE.

Read more: https://www.letterkenny.army.mil/

Success Stories

OKSI Build Systems to Improve Army's Weapon Platforms

The U.S. Army issued a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) call in 2017 for the integration of an automatic target recognition (ATR) into small caliber/close-combat weapon systems for infantry squads. The overall goal was to detect, classify, recognize, and identify all potential targets (i.e., weapons or objects) within the engagement range of small caliber weapon systems in a variety of environmental conditions.

Leveraging deep learning and machine learning tools, OKSI (formerly known as: Opto-Knowledge Systems, Inc.) developed algorithms that improved and provided real-time ATR, masking, target tracking, and masking for aim-point selection on military relevant targets ranges using mid-wave infrared/long-wave infrared/visible spectrum imagery sets. OKSI also created prototype algorithms and solutions for weapon and object detection, single frame super resolution (SFSR), human activity recognition (HAR), threat assessment, and passive ranging for the advanced fire control system (AFCT) system. The algorithms are expected to achieve high reliability with a correct detection rate of 80 percent (tracking), or 95 percent or higher (object detection) on appropriately sized objects and weapons.

The Defense SBIR program's funding supported OKSI's effort from start to finish to create programming that fulfilled the DoD's requirements. During Phase I, OKSI used SBIR funding to research the algorithms' parameters. Under SBIR Phase II funding, OKSI developed a prototype of the algorithms to improve the targeting and detection statistics. Under Phase III, OKSI is integrating the systems into existing weapons platforms.

OKSI enhanced their initial algorithms and implemented real-time aim-point selection and correction on an AIMLOCK small caliber weapon system in an operationally relevant scenario. These improvements enhance the lethality of Army munitions and reduce the risk to DoD personnel engaged in combat operations, while also ensuring enhanced targeting accuracy against enemy locations and interests.

OKSI's Phase III contract work will translate into support to several DoD interests, including small arms aimpoint selection for guns and common remotely operated weapon stations (CROWS), improved ATR for seekers, rockets, and other munitions, and improved targeting efficiency and lethality for next generation combat vehicles.

**This story represents an OSD Transitions SBIR/STTR Technologies "OTST" Program success.*

Valkerie Enterprises Creates ODIN-EL a Learning Management System Monitoring Navy Readiness by Defining Proficiencies

Over the past decade, there have been significant changes in Navy personnel training and expectations for Sailor competency. Training and intermediate level maintenance activities, where Sailors receive training and practice their skilled trades, have decreased or been removed altogether. The Navy has reintroduced and emphasized individual and team training on the waterfront to address the decreased ability for Sailors to practice their warfare skills, learn self repair techniques, perform maintenance procedures, and troubleshoot to repair these systems. In response to this need, Commander, Navy Regional Maintenance Center (CNRMC) required engineering services to build and sustain a learning management system to manage Sailor shipboard equipment, systems, and subsystems (ESS) maintenance and repair training.

The Operationally Directed Instructional Network-Engineering Library (ODIN-EL) is a learning management system that monitors progress toward achieving Navy readiness by objectively defining apprentice, journeyman, and master craftsman (AJM) proficiencies. Developed with support from Old Dominion University, ODIN-EL provides a framework for intelligent training with feedback. This includes learning and practice as content, and the delivery of training through modern learning management systems, knowledge and skill assessment via competency-based assessment rubrics and subject matter expert guidelines linked to a competency model through a competency framework, learning artifact and information storage, a decision-making and competency assessment engine, and meaningful outputs for learners and program stakeholders. These outputs include real-time interactive dashboard visualizations and competency-based resumes.

During Phase II, Valkyrie Enterprises partnered with Old Dominion University to develop the project into a more comprehensive training system called ODIN-EL, which became an extension of the Naval Afloat Maintenance Training System (NAMTS) program. Valkyrie Enterprises was subsequently awarded Phase III funding to continue support of ODIN-EL for NAVSEA.

ODIN-EL is an extension of the Navy Afloat Maintenance Training System (NAMTS) program, which is designed to improve shipboard organic maintenance, self-assessment capabilities, and material self-sufficiency, with the overall goal of improving Naval fleet readiness. The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) established NAMTS in 1996, and Sailors are trained through the program by CRNMC. While NAMTS training occurs at Regional Maintenance Centers (RMC), Naval Shipyards (NSY), and Intermediate Maintenance Facilities (IMF), many afloat NAMTS programs have been established aboard ships across several different platforms. Managing Sailor knowledge that constitutes proficiency and competency in performing shipboard repairs is essential to improving Naval fleet readiness.

Currently, the NAMTS Program supports over 4,000 Sailors and 20 Job Qualification Requirements (JQR), including associated NAMTS Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) codes, comprised of over 450 competencies. NAMTS is anticipated to expand to more than 6,000 Sailors and over 25 JQRs, with more than 800 competencies, to support Naval readiness goals. Valkyrie Enterprises' resultant SBIR Phase III technology, ODIN-EL, creates an environment where Naval leadership can monitor progress toward achieving Navy readiness.

Outreach Events

Defense SBIR/STTR Program Kicks Off Second Quarter Heading West for CES® 2024

Members of the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office headed to Las Vegas, Nevada for the 2024 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES®) in early January. Touted as "the World's most powerful tech event," this year's conference has over 138,000 attendees, many of whom engaged the team at the Defense SBIR/STTR booth in the Government Pavilion in Eureka Park.

DoD SBIR/STTR Staffers at CES®

CES® Exhibition Hall

Defense SBIR/STTR Program Conducts Outreach at the AFCEA WEST 2024

For two days in mid-February, members of the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office attended AFCEA WEST 2024, in San Diego, California. The team operated a booth in the exposition hall and fielded questions about the Defense SBIR/STTR and OTST Programs. Staffers also had the opportunity to network with small businesses and share information about the Defense SBIR/STTR program with companies interested in doing business with DoD.

Defense SBIR/STTR staffers and colleagues at AFCEA West 2024.

Defense SBIR/STTR Program Wraps Second Quarter Outreach at AUSA Global Force in Huntsville, AL

The Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office attended the 2024 AUSA Global Force Symposium in Huntsville, Alabama, March 26-28, as the quarter's last outreach event. The team visited the exposition hall and engaged with conference attendees, shared information, and fielded questions about the Defense SBIR/STTR and OTST Programs. Staffers also had the opportunity to network and chat with firms that won SBIR awards through the program.

Chad Rogers, Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office (left), with symposium attendees from SBIR award-winning firms, Steve Reed from All Points Logistics, and David Chenault from Polaris Sensor Technologies.

Defense SBIR/STTR Program Hosts Panels at Capital Factory House during South by Southwest (SXSW) 2024

Rear Adm. Kurt J. Rothenhaus, Chief, Office of Naval Research chatting with Regina "Gina" Sims, Director,Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office. Photo: Chad Rogers

For the first time, leadership and staffers of the Defense SBIR/STTR Program Office hosted panel sessions at Capital Factory House during SXSW 2024, in Austin, Texas. The objectives of the five panels were to educate small business concerns (SBCs) on the benefits and processes associated with the SBIR/STTR programs and improve the connections between SBCs and the DoD entities interested in their potential technology. Themed, "The Cutting Edge", the event kicked off with a meet and greet opportunity for attendees to network and SBIR awardees to showcase their technology share success stories, best practices, and lessons learned.

The sessions that followed covered topics such as, current critical technology areas of focus; venture capital; success stories; due diligence and transition. Sessions were well attended and top highlights from the weekend included:

- *Rear Adm. Kurt J. Rothenhaus, Chief, Office of Naval Research, visiting the pre-panel exhibitors' hall showcasing eight SBIR/STTR success story companies, who displayed their technologies and shared their journey with other small businesses. In addition, several agency officials spoke one-on-one with companies about how they might fit into their programs.*
- *The opening panel of Principal Directors from Advanced Materials, OASD (S&T), Biotechnology, 5G/FutureG, Microelectronics and JHTO discussing their critical technology areas for investment.*
- *The panel of Navy, Army, Air Force, and DMEA evaluators and TPOCs fielding audience questions about the SBIR/STTR process, tips for a successful proposal, and the ins and outs of technology readiness levels and manufacturing readiness levels.*

Here is a short summary of the SXSW panels and their takeaways:

During the panel "Why We Are Worth Your Time and Money" SBCs heard from Navy, DMEA, AFWERX, DARPA and Army SBIR/STTR Directors who shared their organizations' goals and learned how SBIR/STTR-funded technology contributes to everyday life.

The "It's Not a Sprint, It's a Marathon... Successes with SBIR/STTR" panel had five multi-award winners share their experiences with the SBIR/STTR program. Presenters shared both what has and what has not worked for them over the years and lessons learned.

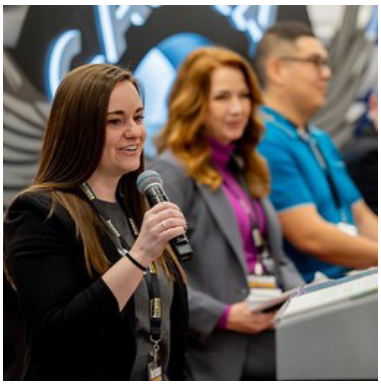
The panel on venture capital and SBIR/STTR featured panelists from DARPA, AFWERX, NavalX, NSIC, SBA and AIN Ventures who discussed how venture capital could play a pivotal role in accelerating technology development.

The "Foreign Influence and Due Diligence and Why It Matters to DoD and Small Business" panel included OASD (S&T), OCEA, DARPA and DCSA panelists who defined foreign ownership, control, or influence (FOCI), and shared best practices associated with due diligence. Participants came away with an understanding that due diligence is not just a DoD requirement, it is a good business practice.

Finally, another "first of its kind" panel discussion was "Innovation Accelerators: Navigating DoD programs for Transition and Production Advancement," where Matthew Williams, Director, OSD Transitions SBIR/STTR Technology (OTST) Program, hosted Navy, STRATFI/TAFCI, APFIT, RDER, AFWERS and OSD I&M subject matter experts to discuss various DoD programs aimed at accelerating both innovative technology acquisition and transition from development to production. SBCs learned how to better position themselves to capitalize on this assistance, as well as the role companies play in the process and how to secure a DoD champion.

The DoD SBIR/STTR social media team highlighted the panel sessions on the various platforms, which resulted in over 127k impressions, 2,315 page views, and over 740 new LinkedIn followers.

The "Cutting Edge" Defense SBIR/STTR Programs photo gallery featuring Defense SBIR/STTR Programs and Services/Components leadership, panel experts, and guests.
Photo credit: Capital Factory House
















UPCOMING EVENTS

SBIR/STTR Spring Innovation Conference
June 17 – 19, 2024
National Harbor, MD
www.techconnectworld.com/SBIRSpring2024

Space & Missile Defense Symposium
August 6 - 8, 2024
Huntsville, AL
www.smdsymposium.org

Navy Gold Coast 2024
August 19 – 21, 2024
San Diego, CA
www.navygoldcoast.org

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