

DHA Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) / Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do DHA topics differ from other SBIR/STTR topics?

A: DHA SBIR/STTR topics spark the next generation of medical technologies for the future battlespace. DHA topics focus on innovations in the following:

- 1) Combat Casualty Care
- 2) Directed Energy Health Effects
- 3) Environmental Exposures
- 4) Military Infectious Diseases
- 5) Musculoskeletal Injury
- 6) Psychological Health
- 7) Sensory Systems
- 8) Traumatic Brain Injury

Q: How can I find assistance for my proposal writing process?

A: State or regional proposal writing assistance may be available.

Helpful resources:

- 1) Defense SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal (DSIP) provides proposal submission job aids here: <https://www.dodsbirsttr.mil/submissions/learning-support/training-materials>
- 2) SBIR/STTR proposal writing assistance is available on the Small Business Administration (SBA) Portal: www.sbir.gov. Scroll down to the “Find Local Assistance”.
- 3) Budget calculation assistance for DoD contracting is located at your local Procurement Technical Assistance Center:
<https://www.dla.mil/SmallBusiness/PTAP/PTAC/>

Q: What are the DHA Phase II proposal timelines?

A: DHA SBIR/STTR runs an expedited schedule to shorten the funding gap between Phase I and II. You will generally receive a proposal notification during the fifth month of your contract.

Q: Can I answer a Phase I topic with a Direct to Phase II Proposal?

A: Only Phase I proposals will be accepted for Phase I topics, and only Direct to Phase II proposals will be accepted for Direct to Phase II topics.

Q: Can you list some best practices for DHA SBIR/STTR proposers?

A: Experienced proposers drive down process and goal uncertainty:

- 1) Understand the topic's capability gap and fielding constraints, such as conformance to size, weight, and power restrictions. Affordability is critical. Reviewers expect a better, faster, and cheaper item than currently fielded solutions.
- 2) Ask technical questions during the BAA Pre-Release and open period.
- 3) Ensure budget, subcontracting, and partnerships compliance per the solicitation. Note: Contractors and consultants do not count as employees of your small business.
- 4) Have a PI with adequate technical expertise to manage the project. Could the PI be legally considered as a full-time employee at another organization, such as a university?
- 5) Your work plan is an indicator of potential technical success. Show how the project will be specifically structured.

Q: What are the keys to a successful budget?

A: Budgets should be equal with work proposed, be compliant with instructions, and make rationales clear. DHA does not approve program funds for marketing purposes, to include conference travel, expo booth or public relations costs. Your budget should ordinarily not include work performed outside the U.S. or by a DOD organization.

Q: I met a service member subject matter expert at a conference who was interested in our technology. Should I include them in my proposal as a consultant?

A: DOD personnel should not be listed as contributors. If awarded, the DHA SBIR/STTR Office will provide commercialization assistance and can reach out to service member stakeholders as the project progresses.

Q: Can I provide an in-person demo as part of my Phase I plan?

A: If a demo is arranged with your Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), be aware that the results will not be considered in the Phase II evaluation. Only the submitted proposal will be considered.

Q: Does DHA SBIR/STTR fund pre-clinical (animal) or clinical trial work?

A: DHA discourages animal research in Phase I as approval timelines may delay awards past funding eligibility. Phase II projects, if partner organizations are utilized, related work must remain under specified percentage for subcontractors. Phase III funding is not restricted by the percentage rule.

Review the resource links of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command Office of Human Research Oversight (OHRO). These policies will impact your contracting process:

https://mrdc.health.mil/index.cfm/collaborate/research_protections/hrpo.

Though not related to the SBIR/STTR programs, the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) <https://cdmrp.army.mil/> may fund clinical trial work.

Q: What are DHA Phase II Enhancements, and which Phase II contracts are eligible for enhancement?

A: DHA Phase II awards may be eligible if Phase III, non-SBIR/STTR Program funding that extends, derives, or concludes the Phase II research, is received. An Enhancement is a 1:1 match of program funding up to 50% of the overall DHA Phase II award. The DHA Transition Lead works with performers and CORs to assemble enhancement packages for approval.

Q: How should small business performers think about follow-on military medical funding?

A: DHA SBIR/STTR performers should prioritize dual-use commercialization opportunities, as DOD Research, Development, Testing, and Evaluation (RDT&E) funding is highly constrained. Small businesses should not assume the DOD as their first or only customer. A commercial product for the general marketplace is more beneficial, allowing for a military version to follow.

Q: Does DHA provide Technical and Business Assistance (TABA) funding to awardees?

A: DHA SBIR/STTR does not participate in TABA. DHA provides technical and business assistance through Phase III coaching.