DARPA Small Business Programs Office

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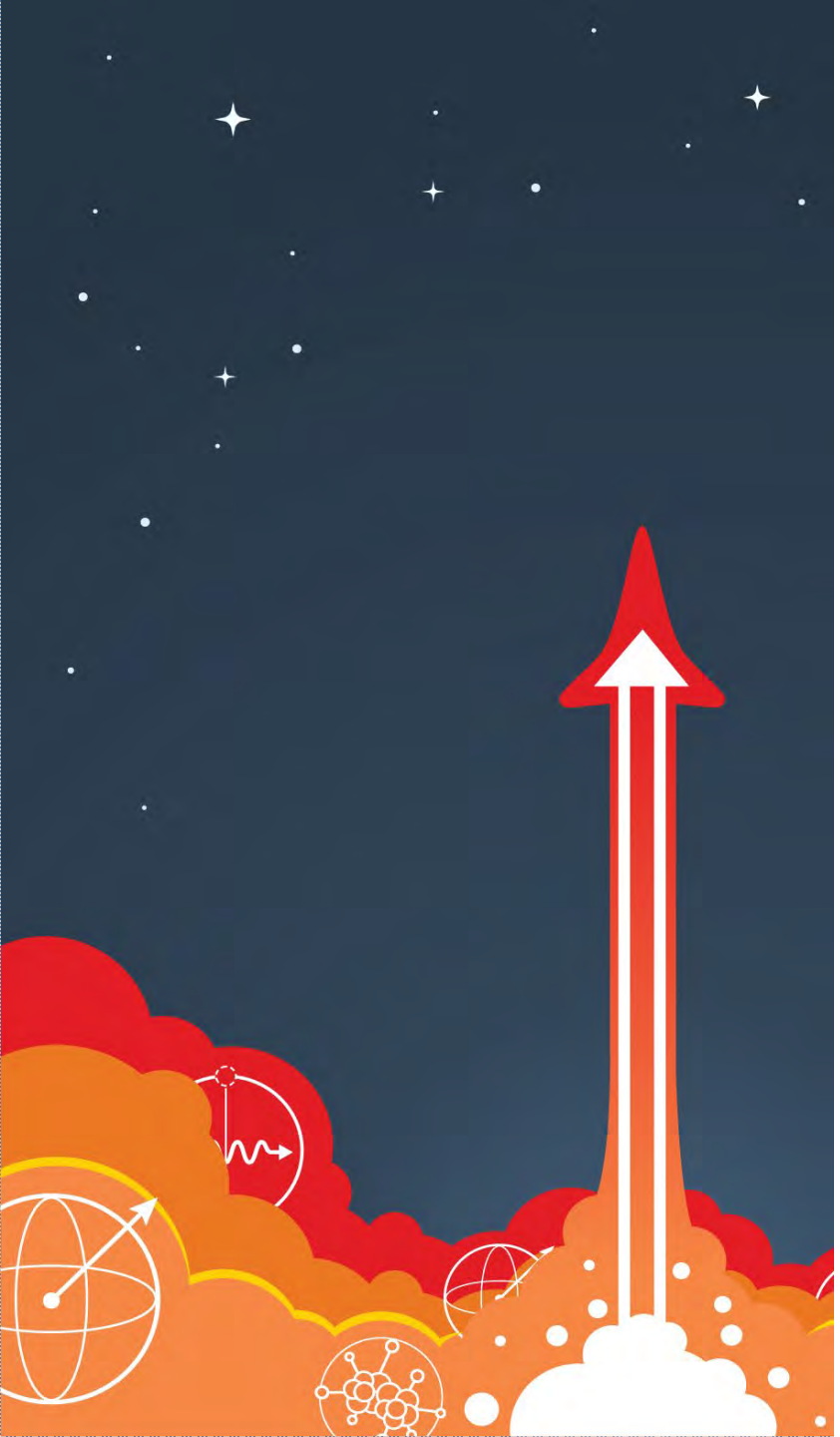


Overview

Pathways to Partnership: Entry Points for Small Businesses
Understanding how to engage with DARPA.

The DARPA SBIR/STTR Advantage
Accelerating early-stage innovation.

DARPA SBIR/STTR Contracting
Rethinking access, speed and support for revolutionary technologies

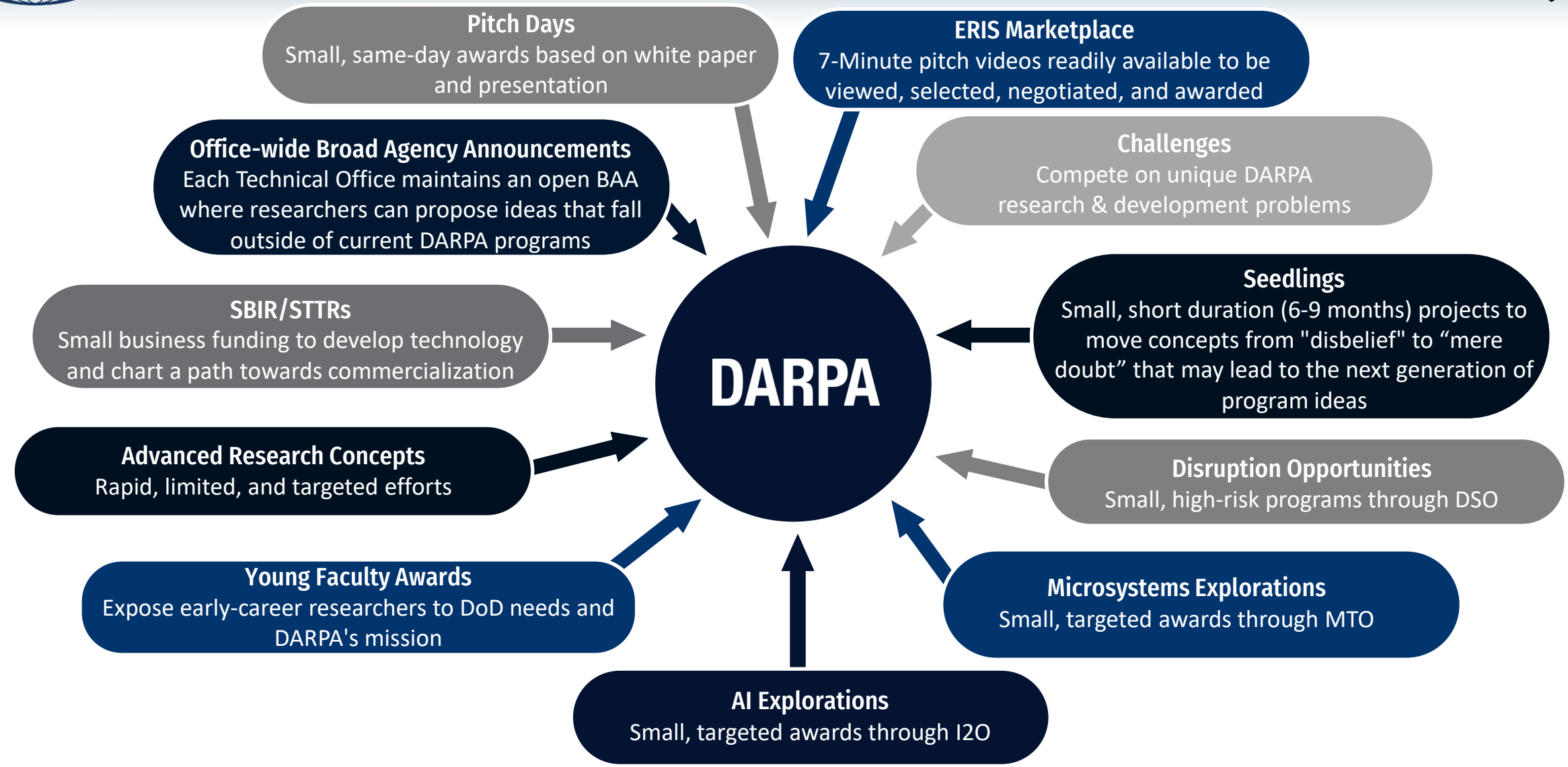
Transition & Commercialization Strategies
Real-world application in government and beyond.

Proven Impact: Small Business Success Stories
Highlighting performers who transitioned from concept to capability.

Pathways to Partnership

Entry Points for Small Businesses

Small Business Entry Points



DARPA leverages small businesses to solve national security challenges, averaging 27-29% of its total obligations to small businesses

The DARPA SBIR/STTR Advantage

Accelerating early-stage innovation

SBIR/STTR Program Overview

Congressionally mandated programs designed to:

Stimulate technological innovation

Foster and encourage participation by socially and economically disadvantaged SBCs and by SBCs that are 51% owned and controlled by women

Increase private sector commercialization of Federal R&D to increase competition, productivity, and economic growth

Stimulate a partnership of ideas and technologies between innovative SBCs and research institutions

The SBIR/STTR programs are the largest source of early stage technology financing in the U.S.

Innovation in DARPA SBIR/STTR Programs

Just-in-time topic development

Topics tied to DARPA programs

Program manager-centric

SBIR XL

DARPA's SBIR/STTR programs are unique and offer flexibility with diverse transition opportunities

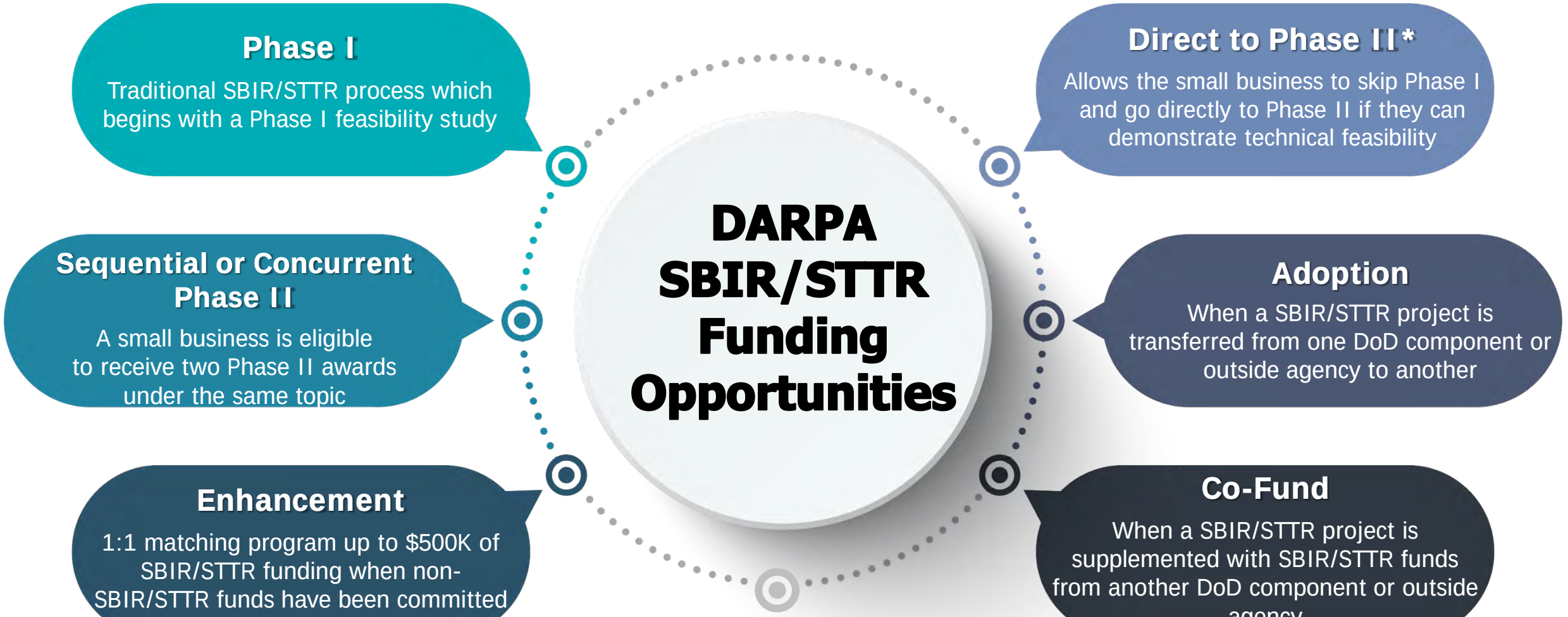
SBIR/STTR Program Structure

Phase	SBA SBIR/STTR Program	DARPA SBIR/STTR Program
Phase I (optional)	$314,363 cap (12 months) Feasibility Study	$250,000 (~6 months) Feasibility Study
Phase II*	$2,095,748 cap (24-36 months) Adoptions/Co-funds Continued Research and Prototype	$1,800,000 (24-36 months) Adoptions/Co-funds Continued Research and Prototype
Phase II Enhancement	$1:$1 Match (up to 12 months)	$1:$1 Match (up to 12 months) Up to $500K
Phase III	No time limit No SBIR funds	No time limit No SBIR funds

*Phase II values can exceed these numbers if funds are available and by using a simple waiver process.

Note: There is no cap on the amount of non-SBIR/STTR funding that can be applied to a SBIR/STTR.

Creatively Enabling SBIR/STTR Program Utilization



Phase I

Traditional SBIR/STTR process which begins with a Phase I feasibility study

Direct to Phase II*

Allows the small business to skip Phase I and go directly to Phase II if they can demonstrate technical feasibility

Sequential or Concurrent Phase II

A small business is eligible to receive two Phase II awards under the same topic

Adoption

When a SBIR/STTR project is transferred from one DoD component or outside agency to another

Enhancement

1:1 matching program up to $500K of SBIR/STTR funding when non-SBIR/STTR funds have been committed

Co-Fund

When a SBIR/STTR project is supplemented with SBIR/STTR funds from another DoD component or outside agency

SBIR XL Pilot*

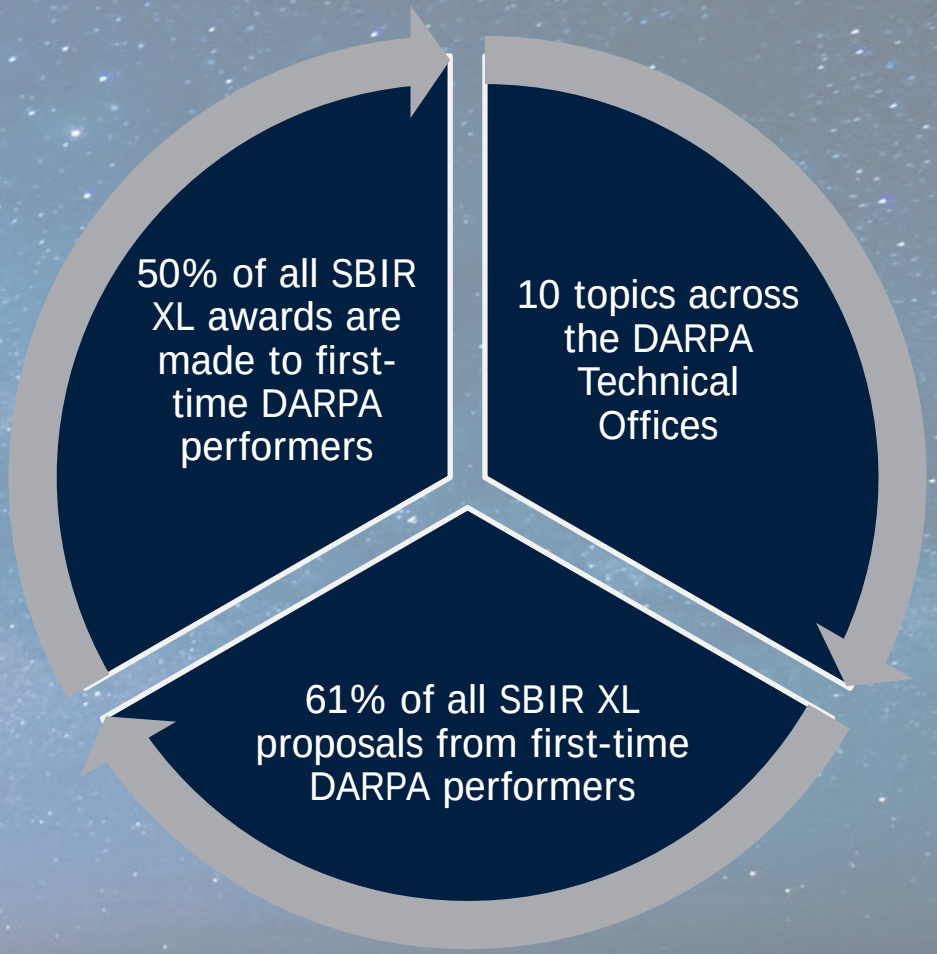
Increases opportunities for DARPA-funded technology by reimagining SBIRs to transform ideas into successful small businesses that scale

***SBIR only (no STTR)**

DARPA SBIR XL Pilot

The SBIR XL Pilot expands the impact of DARPA SBIR-funded technologies, transforming breakthrough ideas into scalable, dual-use small businesses with lasting commercial and national security value.

- Bridge the gap between early-stage research and sustainable growth
- Foster commercialization strategies at kickoff
- Accelerate technologies with strong dual-use potential
- Provide structured pathways for formation, growth, and commercialization



DARPA SBIR/STTR Contracting

Rethinking access, speed and support for revolutionary technologies

SBIR/STTR Contracting

Reimagining Pathways for Breakthrough Technologies to accelerate access, streamline support, and drive real-world impact for innovators.

- Deliver dedicated contracting support exclusively for SBIR and STTR awards
- Enhance the overall experience for Program Managers, Technical Offices, and contractors during the award process
- Accelerate the pace of award execution through streamlined processes and tools

Delivering results that matter to performers through faster awards, fewer barriers, and clearer processes.

- Streamlined the application process – cutting time and reducing complexity
- Sharing OT agreement terms up front – giving performers clarity from day one
- Issue Phase I Purchase Orders quickly - with some issued in less than 1 week
- Awarded a Direct to Phase 2 OT in 4 days - setting a new standard for speed

Transition & Commercialization Strategies

Real-world application in government and beyond

TCSP Principles

Guided by three principles, TCSP's goal is to maximize the potential for SBIR/STTR companies to move their technology beyond Phase II and into other research and development programs for further maturity or into solutions or products for DoD acquisition programs, other Federal programs, and/or the commercial market.

Performer Engagement & Education

- Engage early and often to understand performers' research and to educate them on the importance of developing various transition pathways.

Transition Partner Engagement

- Develop, maintain, and curate relationships to facilitate engagement with SBIR/STTR performers.
- Connect with new stakeholders to maximize transition opportunities for DARPA SBIR/STTR technologies.

Growth Opportunities & Exposure

- Provide opportunities for performers including event participation and attendance, exhibition opportunities, and more.
- Send weekly alerts providing targeted opportunities, trainings, and events relevant to small business growth and development.

How TCSP Powers Performer Success

TCSP helps DARPA SBIR/STTR awardees transform innovative technology from concept to market by guiding them through critical transition phases beyond Phase II.

Guidance from the Start

Provides early resources such as topical information sheets and offers expert advice on Phase II opportunities and potential funding pathways.

Tailored Feedback

Offers customized guidance to develop transition and commercialization strategies.

Weekly Alerts

Sends consistent updates on funding opportunities, events, RFIs, and networking possibilities.

Success Tracking

Documents and promotes commercialization milestones, highlighting performer success stories through reports.

Roadmaps

Develops high-level roadmaps, including matchmaking with government agencies and primes to facilitate commercialization.

Recent Highlights and Accomplishments

Acquisitions

EPISCI

EpiSys Science, Inc. (EpiSci) was acquired in February 2025 by Applied Intuition, Inc., a vehicle software supplier to the commercial and defense industries. The firm has received matching Phase II funding from TTO to support the AIR and VENOM programs, which could allow them to unlock more than $10M in a Phase III SBIR.

TIDELIFT

Sonar recently acquired Tidelift, a former I2O Phase II SBIR performer known for its software supply chain security solutions**.** This acquisition strengthens Sonar's ability to help organizations manage open-source risk at scale, expanding its capabilities to proactively secure the software development lifecycle and deliver enterprise-grade supply chain integrity.

Additional Funding

APFIT

Accelerate the Procurement and Fielding of Innovative Technologies

Since inception: 11 DARPA Performers have received funding, including the two DARPA performers in FY25

MicroLink Devices

Received $18 million in APFIT funding for high-efficiency, flexible, lightweight solar power arrays certified for satellite use

Lynntech, Inc.

Received $10.25M in APFIT funding for advanced mask-on training environment to simulate multiple breathing-related physiological conditions experienced in-flight.

The FY26 APFIT selection cycle is in progress.

Prime Engagement

WEST 2025 | SOFWEEK | TechConnect WORLD INNOVATION CONFERENCE & EXPO

Launched in January 2025, DARPA's Traveling Technical Interchange Meetings (TIMs) have connected 26 innovative small businesses with 8 leading defense primes across three national events—TechConnect, SOFWeek, and WEST 2025.This mobile model brings transition opportunities directly to performers and primes, reducing travel barriers, accelerating commercialization, and aligning emerging technologies with mission needs.

Engaged Primes: BAE Systems, Boeing, Boka Capital, Collins Aerospace, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman, Raytheon Technologies (RTX), and SOCOM.

bluelightai | REDPOLL | Object Security | e-skin Displays | WAVEFRONT RESEARCH Incorporated

BAE SYSTEMS

DARPA SBIR/STTR performers were aligned with three BAE business units through a targeted selection process. Led by FedTech and BAE FAST Labs, the program ensured strong tech alignment through continuous and ongoing feedback. Participants were able to identify potential paths to partnerships and learned valuable information to transition their technology to market.

RTX

Up Next – A funding challenge from DARPA SBPO and RTX - where innovation meets opportunity.

MTO Transition Successes & Highlights

Dr. Jonathan Hoffman

Vector Atomic

With $2.9M in SBIR funding, Vector Atomic developed and commercialized EG-30, the world's first mobile optical clock. Initial units were hand-built; SBIR support now enables scaling to 100+ units/year by reducing costs, building tooling, training technicians, and establishing batch manufacturing. This project advances resilient timing capabilities critical for defense and commercial applications.

Dr. Thomas Ehrenreich

Infleqtion

DARPA SBIR funding helped Infleqtion transition Tiqker from lab prototype to fielded optical clock. With $22M+ in follow-on funding, DoD and commercial adoption, and U.S.-based manufacturing underway, Tiqker is a dual-use success strengthening both security and economic competitiveness. This showcases the power of targeted investment to drive scalable innovation.

Mr. Daniel Ridge

ZEPSOR TECHNOLOGIES

Selected to showcase at CES 2025 with DARPA SBPO support, Zepsor engaged potential partners and secured two venture capital deals totaling over $1M to advance commercialization. This success highlights DARPA's critical role in connecting innovators with investors to accelerate technology transition and economic growth.

Dr. David Abe

Elve

The company raised $15 million in Series A funding on February 22, 2024, in a round led by TomEnterprise, with participation from Lockheed Martin Ventures, Cambium Capital Management, Green Sands Equity, Yu Galaxy, and others. The funding, which valued the company at $50 million pre-money, will support expansion in the space connectivity market and boost manufacturing capacity.

Small Business Programs Office

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https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/for-small-businesses

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