



**NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON SCIENCE, INNOVATION, AND
TECHNOLOGY**

Notice of Funding

for

***Round 2 matching Grant for Federal and State Technology (FAST)
Partnership Program, to provide technical assistance to New Jersey Small
Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology
Transfer Program (STTR) Federal grant applicants - Technical
Assistance - FAST***

1. INTENT / SUMMARY:

This grant opportunity is issued by the NJ Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology (CSIT) with support provided by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) seeking applications from qualified NJ based organizations interested in applying for the Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership Program, to provide technical assistance services to NJ small businesses seeking or applying to the Federal SBIR/STTR program.

Program Summary

The purpose of the program is to enhance NJ's innovative economy by providing technical and financial support to NJ's small businesses seeking to or participating in the federal SBIR/STTR program. The program has two core components; (i) Technical Assistance–FAST and (ii) Direct Financial Assistance.

Component 1 (Technical Assistance - FAST). This component will;

- Provide grant funding of \$225,000 to one (1) NJ-based organization to: (i) offer technical assistance to NJ small businesses intending to engage in the federal SBIR/STTR programs and (ii) apply to the Federal FAST program. \$125,000 of the grant funding will be used as the match requirement for the Federal FAST program and the remaining \$100,000 for technical assistance prior to the start of the federal FAST Program.
- The aim of the technical assistance is to enable NJ small businesses to learn about and engage in the SBIR/STTR process, improve the quality of proposals, enhance the competitiveness of applications and thereby increase the number of State winners
- The selected organization will offer technical assistance to NJ small businesses through informational and technical seminars on SBIR/STTR, one on one support for proposal preparation, specialized reviews, webinars, online assistance, critiques and suggestions on how to create competitive proposals and submission guidance and or any other necessary support

2. PROGRAM BACKGROUND:

[The Small Business Innovation Research \(SBIR\)](#) and the [Small Business Technology Transfer Program \(STTR\)](#) are highly competitive three-phase award programs, which provide qualified small businesses with opportunities to propose innovative ideas that meet the specific research and development needs of the federal government. The goals of the programs are to:

- Stimulate technological innovation
- Meet federal research and development need
- Foster and encourage participation in innovation and entrepreneurship by women and socially or economically disadvantaged populations
- Increase private-sector commercialization of innovations derived from federal research and development funding.

[The Federal and State Technology \(FAST\) Partnership Program](#) currently provides one-year funding to organizations to execute state/regional programs that increase the number of SBIR/STTR proposals leading to an increase in the number of SBIR/STTR awards. FAST provides an estimated \$3 million in total funding per year (up to \$125,000 per applicant) for outreach, financial support, and technical assistance to next generation research and development (R&D) focused small businesses. Eligible applicants for FAST funding include state and local economic development agencies, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), accelerators, incubators, Women's Business Centers, Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs), colleges, universities, and more. Only one proposal is allowed per state, with an accompanying letter from a state's governor or equivalent.

The FAST awards are intended to build the SBIR/STTR ecosystem through:

1. **Outreach:** increase the pipeline of possible applicants (participation of women, socially/economically disadvantaged individuals, and small businesses in underrepresented areas) and build the capacity of partner organizations and individuals to refer possible SBIR/STTR applicants through train-the-trainer activities
2. **Technical and business assistance:** support new business formation through programs or services that improve proposal development and team creation; provide assistance that leads to the commercialization of technology developed through SBIR/STTR program funding; and form or encourage relevant mentoring networks to provide business advice and counseling
3. **Financial support:** make grants or loans to applicants to pay a portion or all the cost of developing SBIR/STTR proposals, attending relevant conferences, and bridging gaps between phases

3. The New Jersey SBIR/STTR Support program

In 2018, Governor Murphy, signed legislation that re-established the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology, formerly known as the New Jersey Commission on Science and Technology, to spur long-term planning, research and entrepreneurship in the

Garden State. The FAST -Technical Assistance program aligns with Governor Murphy's vision of re-establishing NJ as an innovation leader and recognizing the role and importance of the State's small businesses and higher education organizations in the innovation ecosystem and the economy.

The NJ SBIR/STTR support program builds on CSIT's mandate in creating a vibrant innovation economy and supporting the growth of early-stage companies in NJ. CSIT has ran two cycles of Direct Financial Assistance awards to small businesses. This Notice of Funding complements that funding by providing technical assistance through a technical assistance provider to businesses seeking to apply to the Federal SBIR/STTR program.

The NJ SBIR/STTR Support Program has four key objectives, all of which are geared towards accelerating the growth of the innovation economy in the State:

1. Increase the success rate of NJ grant applications seeking federal funding for SBIR/STTR programs
2. Support a NJ based organization to win Federal and State Technology (FAST) grant to provide technical assistance for SBIR/STTR programs
3. Reduce the financial burden for small NJ companies that have won Phase 1 of the federal SBIR/STTR program
4. Increase success and maximize growth of small NJ companies in moving from Phase I to Phase II of the SBIR/STTR federal program

This Notice of Funding falls under component 1 only (Technical Assistance - FAST).

Grant for Technical Assistance and matching funds for FAST application:

The CSIT program for FAST, will provide a **grant of \$225, 000** to one selected NJ-based partner organization and will coordinate with the Governor's office to provide the required corresponding **supporting letter** necessary for the organization to apply to the Federal FAST program. This will allow the organization to submit a competitive application while also providing 1-to-1 matching leverage for the CSIT's funds (if successful).

Technical assistance to be offered by the organization will consist of informational and technical seminars on SBIR/STTR, one-on-one support for proposal preparations, specialized reviews, webinars, online assistance, critiques and suggestions on how to create competitive applications and submission guidance. The aim of the technical assistance is to enable NJ small businesses to learn about and engage in the SBIR/STTR process, improving the quality of proposals, enhancing the competitiveness of applications and thereby increasing the number of State winners.

The selected organization must demonstrate how they will partner with universities and other economic development entities in an effort to build a strong SBIR/STTR network throughout the State addressing all technology areas and all Federal Agencies that have SBIR/STTR

programs. The selected organization must demonstrate how the program will be effectively delivered throughout the State. The selected organization must deliver informational and technical seminars statewide (within the tech and life sciences eco-systems) in conjunction with its partner network.

The goal of the Technical Assistance - FAST grant is to provide technical assistance to NJ small businesses participating or seeking to participate in the Federal SBIR/STTR program, as such, the selected organization will be eligible to receive CSIT funding even if the organization is not successful in winning a Federal FAST award. The CSIT Grant will be subject to terms and conditions to be detailed out in the Grant Agreement.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To ensure that the selected organization can fulfill all of the application requirements for the FAST program and has a chance of winning a federal grant; the NJ program requirements (eligibility criteria, application process and review criteria) are aligned to that of the Federal program.

To be eligible for the NJ grant for the FAST program, an organization **must** meet the following criteria:

1. Meet the standard eligibility requirements of the Federal FAST program
2. Have at least three (3) years of experience in administering technical assistance programs including outreach activities and financial support activities
3. Applicants must be a NJ based organization (located and registered to do business in NJ)

5. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Round 2 applications will be accepted from March 22 through April 5, 2021.

All interested applicants must provide their submissions by 11:59pm EST on April 5, 2021, in order to be considered. You must submit your application via email to csit@njeda.com in PDF format. Only electronic submissions will be accepted. The subject line of the e-mail should state: "NOF_Response_CSIT_FASTgrant_2021". Furthermore, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Include a table of contents
- Include page numbers
- Include all required documentation
- Submit all requested information, denoted with a "must" or "shall"

An electronic copy of the CSIT Legal Debarment Questionnaire will be included as part of the application materials, Applicants are able to provide an electronic signature to the document (Please note that for an application to be considered complete, this document **must** be signed by the application deadline).

If an applicant prefers not to provide an electronic signature, the applicant may:

1. Mail a hard copy of the signed CSIT Legal Debarment Questionnaire post marked by the application deadline to CSIT at:
Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology
Attn: Judith Sheft (Executive Director)
P.O. Box 990
36 W State Street
Trenton, NJ

AND

2. Email the signed CSIT Legal Debarment Questionnaire to CSIT with the subject line: ***“MAILED Signature Document Notice of Funding Technical Assistance - FAST Round 2 Application”*** indicating that the document has been mailed. The signed CSIT Legal Debarment Questionnaire should be mailed; the rest of the application must be submitted via email to CSIT.

PLEASE NOTE THAT APPLICATIONS WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED COMPLETE ONCE THE ORIGINAL SIGNED CSIT LEGAL DEBARMENT QUESTIONNAIRE POST MARKED BY THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS RECEIVED BY CSIT.

Required Documentation

This Notice of Funding will be posted on CSIT’s webpage (<https://www.njeda.com/about/Public-Information/CSIT>). Eligible applicants should submit applications with all supporting documentation to CSIT at csit@njeda.com by the application deadline date.

As applications are received up to the application deadline date, they will be reviewed for completeness by CSIT staff. Applicants with missing documentation will receive an email notification from CSIT, following the completeness review, to re-submit any missing or incomplete required documentation within five (5) business days of notice (extension date).

Applicants should submit missing documentation to csit@njeda.com within the resubmission timeframe with the email subject line *“Round 2 Technical Assistance – FAST Program-Missing Documentation Submission-Company Name”*.

Due to the COVID pandemic, it may take longer than usual for applicants to obtain certain NJ state documents (NJ Business Registration Certificate, NJ Tax Clearance Certificate). If an applicant has attempted to obtain the missing NJ state documents and has not received them by the extension date the applicant may provide correspondence or receipts that demonstrate the attempt to obtain the missing documents to enable the application to be deemed complete for scoring purposes only. The missing documentation **MUST** be submitted before any recommendation of an award will be made to that applicant.

If after an email notification for missing documents from csit@njeda.com is sent to applicants and the requested documents are NOT submitted by the extension date, CSIT will consider the application as incomplete; the application will not be scored and will be rejected. **Only complete applications after the document extension deadline will be evaluated and scored.**

In addition to the online application form, all applicants must include the following documentation:

Required documentation

1. Technical proposal (should detail the following) 10 pages max

a. Organizational experience

- i. Describe your organization's present capacity to provide technical and business assistance to next generation technology firms, including outreach and financial support
- ii. Describe experience and capacity for conducting outreach and facilitating mentoring networks projects, including number of years conducting such projects
- iii. Provide a record of receiving grants or contracts for conduct of technical and business assistance projects, including the names of the awarding agencies, grant or contract numbers, award amounts and performance outcomes/results achieved (chart suggested but not required)
- iv. Sources of operational capital for the applicant organization

b. Past performance

- i. If your organization has received a FAST Award in the past, how has the award, both impacted the number of SBIR/STTR proposals and awards in NJ (chart suggested), as well as impacted the strength of NJ's SBIR/STTR stakeholder network
- ii. If the Applicant organization has not received a FAST Award previously, give examples of past performance on other state or federal funding and how it impacted project goals/objectives
- iii. Describe previous work related to the SBIR/STTR programs, and the unique capabilities your organization will employ in order to reach the goals of the FAST program
- iv. Describe general activities (from other entities) that have taken place in New Jersey over the past 3-5 years to increase SBIR/STTR proposals and awards and provide insight into their effectiveness

c. Program design

- i. General program details
- ii. Provide the number and description of training courses/seminars/counseling sessions/accelerator cohorts etc. your organization expects to conduct
- iii. Provide a description of plans to leverage available tutorials (SBIR.gov)

- or other) or training tools for clients including webinars and online tools
- iv. Describe where, within the state, the training programs will be delivered.
- v. Proposed evaluation plan or schedule
- vi. Projected milestones (timeline of program accomplishments and activities) - can be included as an attachment

d. Collaboration and leveraging of resources

- i. Define plans to expand the scope and reach of the grant program in collaboration with other entities. Include the proposed strategy for partnerships, with clear explanations regarding the purpose of implementing any joint activities. In particular, preferred partners will provide particular strengths such as event space, an eco-system of potential applicants as well as SBIR expertise
- ii. Provide a summary description of NJ's SBIR ecosystem, identifying where your organization sees its role, and how FAST grant funds would impact other entities in the ecosystem

e. Ability to Reach Special Target Markets

- i. Describe experience and expertise with assisting women-owned, socially/economically disadvantaged, and/or small firms that would be a fit for SBIR/STTR (include number of these firms assisted over the prior 1-3 years and impact of assistance)
- ii. Describe experience working with organizations representing the interests of described special target markets
- iii. Describe methods of outreach, number of these clients it expects to assist, and how it arrived at such estimates

f. Program management structure

- i. Identify the program director, key management personnel and staff and describe their expertise and their roles in conducting/overseeing the grant program, stipulate the amount of time they will devote to the project
- ii. Include an organizational chart (can be an attachment)
- iii. If applicable, identify contractors and consultants and the way they were selected (i.e., competitively or non- competitively). Identify the employees or officials of the organization who will be responsible for overseeing and administering those agreement; copies of contracts and consulting agreements (either signed or samples as applicable) must be included as attachments. A clearly defined contracting plan with an established SBIR consultant team may substitute key personnel.
- iv. If applicable, describe any subcontracting plan, addressing how subcontractors will be selected, the amount or range of funding each subcontractor will receive, and the purposes for which subcontracts will be made.
- v. Describe your organization's financial management structure, internal controls, and identify all staff members who will be responsible for financial recordkeeping, reporting, the receipt and expenditure of award

funds, and addressing audit findings

g. Risk management

- i. History of performance: detail your organization's record in managing Federal awards, if applicable, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements, conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards;
- ii. Describe your organization's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory or other requirement imposed on non-Federal entities;

2. Project Milestone Chart (1 page max)
3. Resumes of key personnel (2 pages max per individual)
4. List of an contractors or consultants or partner organizations
5. Letters of collaboration from partner organizations indicating commitment to collaborate if the CSIT grant is awarded
6. Budget information – template – detailed spreadsheet
7. Budget Narrative – (2 pages max.)- provide a brief explanation of the components of each cost item listed in the budget spreadsheet
8. CSIT Legal Debarment Questionnaire
9. NJ Tax Clearance certificate (listing Commission of Science, Innovation and Technology; any certificates listing another state agency will be rejected) at https://www16.state.nj.us/NJ_PREMIER_EBIZ/jsp/home.jsp
10. Federal Eligibility Checklist to apply for the Federal FAST program

BECAUSE SOME STATE SYSTEMS HAVE EXPERIENCED LONGER THAN USUAL PROCESSING TIMES DUE TO COVID-19, APPLICANTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO OBTAIN COPIES OF NJ DOUMENTATION EARLY IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLETING THEIR APPLICATIONS TO AVOID ANY DELAYS IN SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

6. APPLICATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be accepted from March 22nd, 2021 through April 5th, 2021. To qualify for funding, applications **must be complete** after the re-submission deadline and in full compliance with all requirements. At its discretion, the Commission may request supplemental materials from the applicant and such materials must be received within five (5) days of the date of the request or the application may be rejected.

All complete applications will be scored against the evaluation criteria mentioned below and a summary of scored applications will be forwarded to the Program Committee.

The Program Committee will review scored applications and make recommendations to approve or disapprove to the CSIT Board. The CSIT Board will make the final decision on the one applicant to be awarded the Technical Assistance – FAST grant.

Evaluation criteria

The maximum score an application can receive across the evaluation criteria is 100 points, with highest overall score determining which organization will be selected for the Technical Assistance - FAST Program. However, only those applications that meet or exceed the minimum requisite score of seventy (70) points will be eligible for consideration for the Technical Assistance - FAST matching grant Program. The complete submissions will be reviewed and scored based on the following categories:

a. Organizational experience and capacity

Applicants will be evaluated on their ability to conduct outreach, provide technical/business assistance and financial support to R&D-focused small businesses. Applicants must provide adequate evidence and documentation, including specific examples

b. Past performance – organization and NJ’s SBIR efforts

c. Program design

Applicants will be evaluated on their understanding of the purpose of the FAST Program and their proposed approach for performing any projects. *Innovation* and *creativity* in designing programs is strongly encouraged.

- i. General program details
- ii. Collaboration and leveraging of resources
- iii. Ability to Reach Special Target Markets

d. Program management structure

Applicants will be evaluated on the strength of their staffing and management plans. Applicants must demonstrate they will devote adequate numbers of personnel having sufficient experience to the project, establish clear and direct lines of responsibility and authority for managing and overseeing the project, and show they will have sufficient facilities and other physical resources at their disposal in order to accomplish the proposed project.

e. Risk management

7. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The organization selected for the Technical Assistance - FAST grant must commit to:

- Report economic impact data to CSIT upon the completion of program for a period of three (3) years
- Agree to Participate in future CSIT alumni activities
- Agree to provide a non-exclusive paid up irrevocable license to the state of NJ to utilize

any materials developed with FAST funding from CSIT for State purposes.

The initial funds of \$100,000 will be disbursed upon execution of the FAST grant agreement with CSIT , and the remaining amount of \$125,000 will be disbursed upon written notice from the applicant regarding its federal FAST award application.

8. SOLICITATION PROJECTED MILESTONE DATES:

- **Solicitation release date:** February 22, 2021
- **Application period (via email to CSIT@njeda.com):** March 22, 2021 through April 5, 2021
- **Application deadline:** Monday, April 5, 2021 11:59pm via email to csit@njeda.com

9. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Questions and inquiries concerning this Notice of Funding will be accepted through the application deadline and may be submitted via e-mail to csit@njeda.com . Phone calls and/or faxes shall not be accepted
- The subject line of the e-mail should state: “QUESTIONS - CSIT Technical Assistance -FAST-grant”
- All questions received and answers given in response to this Notice of Funding will be answered in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to be posted and continuously updated on CSIT’s webpage (<https://www.njeda.com/about/Public-Information/CSIT>)

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

Applications received will be reviewed only by CSIT and NJEDA. All proposals submitted will be subject to requests for disclosure, including but not limited to, a request pursuant to the Open Public Records Act ("OPRA"), N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq. If the applicant believes that information contained in its proposal merits confidential treatment pursuant to OPRA, any such purportedly confidential information submitted to the Authority shall be specifically identified and marked by the applicant.

Exhibit A: Document Check List

1. Technical Proposal (10 pages max)
2. Milestone Chart (1page max)
3. Resumes of Key Personnel (2 pages max/individual)
4. List of contractors/consultants/partner organizations (if applicable)
5. Letters of support and/or agreements from partner organizations (if applicable)
6. Budget Template
7. Budget Narrative (2 pages max)
8. CSIT Debarment Questionnaire
9. NJ Tax Clearance Certificate (listing NJ Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology)
10. Federal Eligibility checklist to apply to Federal FAST program
11. Signed Application Checklist
12. Application Cover Sheet with Contact Information

