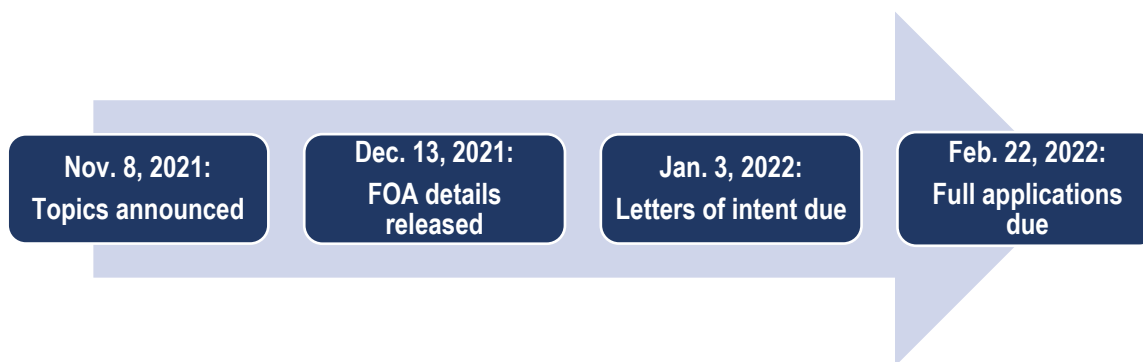


Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer Funding Opportunities

The Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR), known as “America’s Seed Fund,” provides nondilutive grants to help small businesses develop and commercialize technology innovations. The Department of Energy (DOE) has announced topics for the next round of grants.

For the first time, this year’s solicitation includes a focus on making awards to entrepreneurs from underrepresented demographics. The funding topics also include a cross-cutting grant opportunity for community partnerships to enable a just and equitable energy transition.

[View topics for funding](#) (under FY22 Phase I Release 2) and see timeline below.



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EVENT

On **December 7** from 2:30 - 3:30 pm ET, join CEBN for a **SBIR/STTR Webinar & Teaming Event**. This event will include an overview of the program, strategies for success, and opportunities to team up with partners. Participants from minority- and female-owned companies and institutions are particularly encouraged to attend!

[Register Here](#)

Get a head start with these resources!

Technical Assistance:

- **First-time applicants:** [Apply for FREE technical assistance](#) from DOE's Phase 0 Dawnbreaker program to help you prepare a winning application.
- **DOE Power Connectors:** CEBN is teaming up with three other DOE Power Connectors to support applicants. [Make sure you're on our list](#) for updates on office hours, webinars, and other resources.
- **Local programs:** Reach out to your nearest [Federal and State \(FAST\) Partnership Program](#) and other [local resources](#) to find out what types of support they offer.

Other Recorded and Upcoming Events:

- [Watch recording](#): Webinar on the Phase 0 technical assistance program for first-time applicants
- [Recordings available soon](#): DOE webinars on specific funding topics
- [Slide deck](#) and recording: CEBN Power Connector Office Hours: Tips on Getting Started
- [Nov. 30, 11 am-12 pm ET](#): UACI webinar on Understanding DOE SBIR/STTR Topics for First Time Applicants
- [Dec. 9, 11 am-12 pm ET](#): UACI Workshop: Finding the Right Topics
- [Dec. 16, 11 am-12 pm ET](#): UACI Workshop: Writing your Proposal
- New events and resources will continue to be posted [here](#).

Alphabet Soup:

- Avoid the last-minute paperwork scramble. Register your business now with [DUNS](#), [SAM](#), [Grants.gov](#), and [PAMS](#) so you're ready to submit when the time comes.

Stay tuned for more events and resources to be announced in the weeks to come!

A new direction for SBIR/STTR: Creating a diverse and inclusive innovation ecosystem

For four decades, the Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR), known as “America’s Seed Fund,” has provided nondilutive grants to small businesses to help them develop and commercialize technology innovations. This program has helped millions of researchers develop high-risk, transformative, high-impact technologies and attract follow-on funding from investors.

The problem? Thus far, a limited subset of the U.S. population is benefitting from this program. The racial and gender disparities vary by agency but for example, only [7-8 percent](#) of the Department of Energy’s Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants in fiscal year 2019 went to woman-owned or socially and economically disadvantaged firms, and only 30 percent of awards from 2014-2018 were to first-time awardees.

As long as structural barriers stifle entry into the clean energy ecosystem by innovators who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), we will squander essential entrepreneurial talent. These barriers prevent the United States from achieving its full potential in terms of both entrepreneurial dynamism and climate leadership. Marginalized and underinvested communities will also be denied the benefits that accompany investments in modernizing energy infrastructure, from job creation to cost reductions to health benefits.

Pursuant to the [Justice40 Initiative](#)—an Executive Order by President Biden to deliver 40% of the overall benefits of federal climate investments to disadvantaged communities—federal agencies are beginning to unlock new programs specifically targeting BIPOC entrepreneurs.

For the first time, this year’s SBIR/STTR solicitation from the Department of Energy includes a directive and outreach focused on funding entrepreneurs from underrepresented demographics. It also includes a cross-cutting funding opportunity on community partnerships to enable a just and equitable energy transition (see p. 28-34 of the [topic descriptions](#)). This is not a panacea, but it’s the first time we’ve seen the DOE initiate intentional outreach to entrepreneurs from underinvested communities.

The [Clean Energy Business Network](#)—a nonprofit organization supporting small businesses—is partnering with [Banks and Company](#)—a Black-owned firm with a proven track record in stakeholder support and engagement—to make sure every eligible applicant knows about these funding opportunities and receives the tools and policy support needed to successfully compete for these funds.

How is the CEBN involved?

The Clean Energy Business Network serves as the small business voice for the clean energy economy. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that enhances opportunities for small businesses across the clean energy sector through policy engagement, market and technology education, and business development assistance.

Founded as a project of The Pew Charitable Trusts in 2009, CEBN spun out in 2017 to become a nonprofit organization in our own right. Our network has since grown to include more than 5,500 small business leaders across all 50 U.S. states and a broad spectrum of technologies.

Most of the small businesses in our network have limited resources, and more than a quarter are startups, so we do not operate like a traditional business association. Much of our funding comes from grants and contracts, enabling us to provide free access to the vast majority of our services and content—including a publicly-available [U.S. Cleantech Funding Database](#). We also offer very low-cost “premium” memberships (starting at \$250/year) tapping into subscription-based resources such as our searchable [business marketplace](#), featured placement in newsletters, or detailed policy memos. Therefore, we not only provide a uniquely comprehensive set of resources to small businesses—but we do so without eating into their bottom line. We also seek to build ties with universities, incubators, and government programs to build an ecosystem of support for small businesses.

We are not a part of the Department of Energy or any other federal agency. In November 2020, we secured a subcontract with DOE and a subsequent grant from the Small Business Administration to support our outreach and assistance to entrepreneurs. Being connected to—but outside—the federal government means that we have an understanding of federal programs but are not hindered by their limitations.

Currently, leadership positions in clean energy companies are dominated by white males, and the overall workforce suffers from a [lack of diversity](#). Marginalized and underinvested communities must be given the lead voice in stating their own needs and shaping their own priorities. But allies must also help promote change from within the industry.

That’s why we are partnering with Banks and Company and numerous other nonprofit organizations, incubators, universities, and government agencies across the [American-Made Network](#) to build a more inclusive ecosystem of support for energy innovators, including:

- Partnering with minority-owned firms and minority-led organizations to conduct intentional outreach to underrepresented and underinvested stakeholders to learn about their priorities and exchange knowledge about relevant resources to support their work (e.g., [DOE’s American-Made Challenges](#) and [SBA’s Growth Catalyst Accelerator Fund](#))
- Providing information, networking opportunities, and public exposure to help entrepreneurs from underrepresented demographics assert their foothold in this growing economic opportunity (e.g., [Mária Telkes Fellowship](#))
- Gathering stakeholder input and advocating for policy change to break down barriers to energy innovation funding (e.g., [Junction Box roundtables](#))
- Educating white CEOs on how to be allies and promote change from within their companies and networks (e.g., [Powering Forward](#) webinars and CEO roundtables with JEDI experts)
- Providing teaming opportunities to help small businesses, researchers, students, and commercialization partners from diverse demographics connect (please join us [Dec. 7!](#))

We recognize that allyship is a long-term commitment of building trust, support, and accountability. Our staff is a small but mighty team of doers who are committed to being agents of change. Like many of the businesses and organizations we work with, we identify with what it’s like to be a startup and be under-resourced, and believe partnerships are key to success.

[Contact us](#) if your business or organization is interested in sharing expertise and relationships in a combined effort to fight climate change, support small businesses, and promote more equitable opportunities in the growing clean energy economy.