Office Hours
FY25 Phase II
August 19, 2026 (3PM ET)

Eileen Chant – SBIR/STTR Program Manager, DOE
Benjamin Shrager – SBIR/STTR Program Manager, DOE
Felipe Barcia – PIA Program and Management Analyst, DOE

Grayson Dorr – Program Manager, ConnectWerx
Kelsey Hamilton – Sr. Project Manager, ConnectWerx

[Grayson Dorr] 14:59:54
Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to give just one more minute for folks to get into the webinar, and we'll get started here momentarily.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:01:04
All right. It's just after 3 Pm. Eastern time. So we're going to go ahead and get started again. Welcome, everyone. I know a few folks will still be joining over the next couple of minutes, but we're excited to be joining you all this afternoon for this SBIR STTR webinar for the FY 25 Phase 2.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:01:23
For many of you, you received perhaps a direct invite from our ConnectWerx team, and so we're happy to have you join us for today's session.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:01:37
A few of the key members that will be sharing their screens and speaking today, both from the DOE's Office of Technology Commercialization with Eileen, Ben, and Felipe, as well as on the ConnectWerx side, myself, Grayson Dorr serving as the program manager, and Kelsey Hamilton will be facilitating much of our Q&A session with OTC and others on the call as well.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:02:03
Just a couple housekeeping items for those of you joining us. Recognizing some may have even joined us over the last couple of weeks.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:02:12
If there was any interest on the overall new announcement for Phase 1, but if this is your first time, we just ask that you use the chat for specific questions pertaining to audio settings or difficulties you're having. We will not be monitoring that.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:02:28
Once we get past the first few minutes, as we just troubleshoot and make sure everything is good to go. So we'll… we will have a Q&A portion, and we'll give… go through instructions on that of how you submit your questions once we reach that portion. So please, again, just use the chat feature for that.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:02:44
And try to keep that clear for everyone. There will be a QR code once we reach that. We'll also post a link to the question segment, so you can either use that on your computer or your phone, whatever your preference may be. Once we reach out.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:03:01
And at the very end, there will be a very brief survey. We really appreciate.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:03:06

the time you'll take to complete that. It just helps us better prepare, gain some valuable feedback from you all, and really ensure you're getting the correct information you need, and that we're driving the right folks to these webinars.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:03:21
A little bit about who we are. So ConnectWerx, if you're not familiar, we are managed by Advanced Technology International, or ATI. We represent one of the 3 partnership intermediaries with the Department of Energy's OTC office, and we're excited to be.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:03:36
Um, involved in helping manage the application process, uh, the overall intake for OTC with our… with the SBIR program.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:03:48
Again, just a little bit about us, and then I'll turn it over to Ben to really kick us off. The mission for ConnectWerx. When you think of it, our role is to really match and collaborate with small businesses, academia, really pressing to meet the needs of.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:04:06
OTC's challenges and across the divisions at DOE. And so, some of the easy ways that you can stay connected with us is by joining our SBIR mailing list. I do recognize many of you on the call. We did direct outreach.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:04:20
Uh, in late July to you all, but a great way, if you didn't already, just stay in contact with us by joining that mailing list. We'll keep it very specific to key updates, announcements, and that sort of thing. We also do have a standalone ConnectWerx page.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:04:37
and social media account with LinkedIn. So please encourage you to follow us over there as well. A little bit different on ConnectWerx is there's a network form. There's no cost to join, but it just allows you to hear about upcoming opportunities we have with ConnectWerx as well, not just SBIR.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:04:55
You'll see an email address here, sbir-str@connectwerx. That is the best way to stay in contact with us. We will not be supplying direct DOE contacts. I know many of you have worked prior with some of the PMs and others, but.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:05:12
We just ask that all questions be fielded through us, and that way we can help support you all and ensure timely responses.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:05:18
And as I mentioned, as ATI's overall is our overall organization, a division of ATI is TechConnect. Some of you may have joined or heard of some of the TechConnect series. There will be a fall SBIR Innovation Conference at the Gaylord.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:05:33
Uh, here, uh, in the DC area, and so we'll be in booth 615. We'd love to see you and stop by. We'll be joined alongside OTC and some other PIs as well. So, uh, there will be a separate SBIR pavilion with all the federal agencies there as well.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:05:49
Definitely stop by if you're in town or interested in joining, and if not, check out TechConnect for future events, as they often have in the spring and the fall as well.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:05:59
So with that, I will conclude and turn it over to Ben to kick us off. Thanks, Ben.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:06:06
Perfect. Thanks so much, Grayson, and thanks to the whole team, and it's great to see everyone on here today. We're looking forward to diving in. My name is Ben Schrager. I'm a program manager with DOE's Office of Technology Commercialization. I am not to be confused with Ben Schrag, who works for NSF.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:06:23
and the SBIR team there we are 2 different people, but we have met. So the Bens have joined forces at times.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:06:32
I'm going to give an overview of our phase two opportunity eligibility requirements and evaluation before kicking it over to a few other speakers. And we'll have plenty of time for questions. So we're looking forward to getting to talk through the program.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:06:48
So for those who've heard us speak in in some session before, you might be aware of the program restructuring going on at DOE. And I apologize if this is repeat information, but I think it is really, really good to talk through.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:07:04
Because we have undergone a lot of changes in the SBIRSTTR program at DOE in the last year or so.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:07:12
Previously, as you know, being our awardees, the program here was managed and administered by the Office of Science, the DOE's Office of Science. You applied for FAR-based cooperative agreements or grants.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:07:28
And there were a number of different details that went along with the type of grant structure that our old awards were.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:07:37
We are now transitioning, we have now transitioned to the program being managed by the Office of Technology Commercialization, or OTC, and administered by ConnectWerx. And that's Grayson and the incredible team from ConnectWerx that's on the panel today, and that.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:07:52
You've probably visited the website of already. These new agreements are not far-based agreements. They're milestone-based payments, but they still, in many ways act the same. You're still applying for SPIR funds to do some kind of innovative project.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:08:11
Also in the last year we saw the reauthorization of the SBIR program after a 6-month lapse. And with this new reauthorization came a new focus on commercialization and market offtake.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:08:23
So now, as we're restructuring the program within OTC with these new priorities in mind.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:08:31
We are very excited to get to launch some of the new parts of this program, starting with this new opportunity.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:08:39
So, for you all who applied originally with the Office of Science, this is now your everyone's 1st chance to get to apply within DOE's Office of Technology Commercialization. Let's go on to the next slide, please.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:08:56

So, as I mentioned, we in OTC, we are leveraging connect works. They are a partnership intermediary organization so that they can administer the SBIR and STTR program. So connect works gets to do a lot of day-to-day administrative functions of the program, like.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:09:14
Outreach, managing the solicitation, running collaboration events, hosting webinars like this one. But all topics and selections are still at the direction of DOE as they've been in the past.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:09:27
Um, we're just very excited to have this partner on board, ConnectWerx, to help make a lot of the administrative functions even more efficient and more slick. That website looks great so that we at DOE can still focus on the technical mission and ensuring that.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:09:44
Our awardees are provided with sufficient support to have a successful project during the course of their project and beyond.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:09:52
So our move to connect works as our partner is not the only change in the program. And we've put together these circles that show some of the main changes in our program going forward. And you all as Phase 2 or 2.2 applicants.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:10:10
Um, you will start to see some of these immediately. Already, we're doing what we can to simplify the application. We've reduced the number of fields by a lot, so hopefully that that's something that's appreciated as you go through the application process.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:10:24
We're moving towards broader, more open topics as well. For this phase 2 opportunity.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:10:30
Of course, we're pretty locked into the prior topics that were posted a few years ago. But you see how on the website we've now reconfigured how those topics are arranged and what topics you'll be applying under in these broader topic areas.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:10:46
And then we're planning to provide closer project management support over the course of the award to all of our awardees. So we're really looking forward to getting to work even closer with you so that we can help you reach your commercialization goals.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:11:02
And with that, with that enhanced commercialization focus, we're planning to provide a number of other services over the course of an award, like easier to navigate Tabis support, annual showcase and events, and a phase three consortium.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:11:17
So this could be its own hour-long presentation. I do not have time for it. So this is… think of this like a little sneak preview of what's to come, but there is a lot of very exciting changes coming to your award. Let's go to the next slide, please.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:11:33
All right. So this is very important. Not all of our prior awardees are eligible for this Phase 2 opportunity. If you were eligible, you should have received an email from connect works letting you know that you are eligible, and there are 3 different opportunities that are now eligible for this phase two.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:11:56
One of the big ones is the Fy 24 phase one release 2, all of those awardees are now eligible for their first Phase 2 opportunity.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:12:06
Also, Fy 22 phase 2, release 2, a lot of twos, and the Fy 23 phase 2 release twos are now eligible to apply for their next phase 2. So those are phase 2 awardees who are eligible to apply for their next phase 2, which we're calling now a 2.2.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:12:26
One important note, there are a few awardees who fall under one of those old Phase 2 opportunities, but received the opportunity to apply for their Phase 2 last year in FY 25 announcement.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:12:40
Anyone who was already eligible to apply for the next round of Phase 2 is not eligible for this round. So in short, as long as you got that email from ConnectWerx, you are good to go. And if you're not sure about your status, just email sbir-str@ConnectWerx.org, and they'll help you track down your award and figure out if you're eligible to apply for this round.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:13:02
Or perhaps a future round, and some of the opportunities listed there on the right who are eligible for the next round are listed.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:13:12
So we will be in touch with you at a future time when it is your turn.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:13:17
Let's go to the next slide, please. Alright, so a couple process details, a few steps to participate. As you probably have done, make sure to go to the Fy. 25 phase two opportunity page to read all about eligibility, evaluation, how to apply.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:13:35
Next, attend the virtual office hours on August 19th. You're all doing a great job at that one, unless you're watching the recording, then, well, that's okay. You get partial credit. And then continue to gather materials for your application from the application checklist, and make sure to get everything posted in the AMP application portal.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:13:54
By September 25th at 12 pm. So you have over a month, but don't delay, because some of these things do take time, as you know, from your prior SBIR applications and awards. So make sure to be reading the checklist early so you can start gathering those materials.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:14:11
Gathering letters of support and all the required documentation so that you're ready to go by the September 25th deadline.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:14:19
Let's go to the next slide, please. All right, a few, uh, sort of eligibility or rather SBIR and STTR requirements. These are unchanged from how they are in the past. These are all baked into the statute. So this shouldn't be too surprising.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:14:38
Um, but for SBIR, the PI's primary employment must be with the small business. And primary employment means that you spend more than 50% of your employment hours with that small business. So that's really important.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:14:53

Also, in terms of minimum level of effort for phase 2, the small business must perform at least one half of the effort. You can't subcontract out more than a half of your total level of effort for your award.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:15:09
And you can definitely partner for at less than a half level of subcontracting, but it is optional.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:15:15
And let's go to the next slide. I won't read all of it, but for STTRs, you're probably aware, you must partner with a research institution, including a college or university.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:15:28
nonprofit organization or an FFRDC, which would be like a DOE national lab.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:15:33
Um, and there are some additional minimum level of effort requirements and some nuances for STTR. I'm technically out of time, so I'll kind of breeze past those, but you can read those at your leisure, and feel free to ask us or email the ConnectWerx box if you have questions about any of these.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:15:49
specific requirements for STTR. Let's go to the next slide, please.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:15:54
All right. Application checklist. So the good news is, while a lot has changed in the program, a lot of these requirements should look pretty similar to what you've seen in the past. You still have to submit a commercialization plan. You still have to submit a project narrative.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:16:10
New this time, though, is a pitch video. So we have detailed guidance on what we're looking for out of your pitch video. But we're really excited to see what you come up with in terms of your video. And we're looking forward to watching your pitch. But that is a new, important part of the.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:16:27
application process. And as well, we're looking for CVs, current and pending support, your pro forma references. Let's go on to the next slide.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:16:38
and some additional requirements in the checklist, which I will not read all of, but, you know, you can read and make sure to look at all the different guides, examples, documents that we have posted so that you know what we're looking for, and that you can submit everything.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:16:53
Um, you know, by that 25th deadline. All right. One more set of application requirements are letters of commitment and support. Keep in mind that we do view letters of commitment, letters of funding commitment, and letters of support as different attachments and as different.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:17:12
types of documents to your application. So just make sure you carefully read what we count as each of the three, so that you're submitting the right, um, you know, you're submitting your letters in the right category. Um, but, you know, these are, of course, an important staple of many SPIR applications.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:17:29

All right. Next slide, please. All right. And finally, evaluation criteria. So once you get in your application, the natural question always is, well, what comes next? And the answer is we evaluate. And so again, this shouldn't look too different from what you're used to in the past for SBIR application evaluation.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:17:50
We are still evaluating your technical promise. So is your technology feasible? Is your idea innovative? Is it significant? Does it not break the laws of thermodynamics? The good news is, if you're here, it probably doesn't. So great job.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:18:06
Um, but we look for all of that, right? Is your next round, your proof of concept, is it all feasible and significant?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:18:12
Um, and then there's commercial potential, and this is perhaps more important than ever in our new.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:18:19
commercialization-focused program, and now we're looking for things like your value proposition, your competitive advantage, your go-to-market strategy, um, how well you're able to meet.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:18:30
specific customer needs. Assess your competitive landscape and lay out a plan for how you're going to implement and go to market.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:18:39
And then finally, team qualifications. So do you have the team, the partners, the financials to actually execute on on the project that you outline both again on the technical and commercial axes. But do you have the team to do so?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:18:54
And so more is listed here, but I just wanted to read through that at a fairly high level.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:19:00
And I believe with that, I will turn it over to AJ Ferrari to talk through some OIG requirements. Thank you

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:19:07
Nice. Uh, yeah, thanks, Ben. A lot of what Ben covered is what we really care about. We just look at the enforcement angle of, you know, being truthful in those applications and all the information you're giving to, you know, the Us. Government as part of asking for funding and receiving funding.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:19:22
So, real quick, um, I'll try to get through this, but the Inspector General Act of 1978. So for 50 years, Oygs have existed in order to ensure efficiency and economy of all the different agencies within the government. Essentially, that means we try to fight fraud, waste, and abuse.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:19:39
Uh, within that, I am within the Office of Investigations, and I am one of a few dozen special agents within the Department of Energy. There are probably a couple hundred others with NASA, DCIS, NSF, etc, that do similar work, and we do investigations of criminal and civil statutes.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:19:58
Uh, see if people are violating them regarding fraud, false claims, bribery kickbacks. And then we, as part of doing that, we can draft and serve IG subpoenas. So that can be subpoenas to your business, that can be subpoenas to banks.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:20:12

So it is something serious when you apply for federal government grants that there are a lot of things that we can do in order to ensure that those funds are spent wisely within the law. Then we refer matters to DOJ if we, you know, think that there's a civil or criminal nexus there.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:20:28
And then, potentially, there's even search and arrest warrants, and we work with those partners that I have listed. Next slide.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:20:35
And then, you know, what we see with SBIR fraud. So things will be a little bit different with the change from cooperative agreements. So this is kind of focused backwards. But you know, as we get up to speed, you know, they're going to be similar things where, you know, individuals may try to get funds that they aren't supposed to.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:20:52
So that could be duplicative proposals. Typically, you can do that if you inform DOE and NASA and whoever else you're applying for funding. You can say, hey, we really want to do this project, but if it's to multiple agencies, let us know, because.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:21:07
If you get funding from two different agencies to do the same thing, that can be a big problem. Let's see, false statements. So again, if you say that you're under 501 employees and really you're, you know, at 800 and you don't actually qualify, that would be a problem. You know, the entire award could be damages against the government.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:21:26
Uh, again, like, ownership, if you're not owned by the specific percentage of US owners, if your affiliations are with big, you know, um.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:21:36
Even industry, whether it's an industry or institutes of higher education, if you are affiliated with those in certain ways and you don't qualify for the SBIR program and still apply and receive that funding, that's the stuff we look into.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:21:51
Um, you know, uh, the PIs and the key personnel, if those individuals are not employed, uh, those restrictions that, you know, Ben talked about, that would be, uh, stuff that we look into. Uh, whether they have enough time to do this, or they're overcommitted, whether the current pending support means that they're receiving funding from.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:22:07
you know, sources that, you know, we would look into, or if there's conflicts of interest. And if those PIs are in another country, then they can't perform the work here. So that's something we've seen a lot of.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:22:20
Let's see... falsities regarding the work to be performed. So, you know, if you're actually going to be doing that work by, you know, your employees, if it's actually going to be subcontracted, that can be a problem, and that definitely has to be done within the United States without going and saying, hey, you know, am I allowed to do this particular part of the research?

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:22:37
In another country where the facilities are different, you need to talk with your contracting officer about that before that happens. And then, obviously, you know, buying stuff that you're not supposed to with the funds. I'm sure it'll be a little bit different with firm fixed price, but, um, you know, look into the rules for that, and submitting those false reports to get funding.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:22:55

can be a really big deal. And so, these are going to be false certifications a lot of times to us, uh, Department of Energy, other funding agencies, or sam.gov, and so just, you know, these are all places where we've seen false certifications, and it can cause problems.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:23:10
I do have a quick the next slide has what our previous.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:23:16
Uh, current and pending support, um, certifications look like. I'm not sure if they're going to look exactly the same, but you can see it's a big block of text there. Make sure you are… sure that all this is true when you are signing to this, because even if it's material omissions, you can open yourself up to those criminal and civil federal statutes, um, and then you are saying, putting your name on the line saying, hey, I understand that this is all material.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:23:44
Um, so each certifications will be a little bit different, but just make sure you're aware of those. And then the next slide, I think. Yeah, so different things. These are, you know, criminal and civil violations like we have sent people to prison. Judges have sentenced individuals to prison.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:24:00
who have committed fraud for research fraud from the Department of Energy. There's also probation and other things. Civil False Claims Act can open up the company or individuals to triple damages, so if you receive, you know, um.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:24:16
you know, $100, you'd have to pay $100, $300 back, potentially, but also every single claim could be up to $11,000. So, you know, reasons why, you know, to make sure that you are not violating the Civil False Claims Act, which has a lower standard of proof, where, you know, you should have known something.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:24:32
Uh, and you still ask for the money, well, you know, you could potentially be violating that.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:24:37
And one of the administrative or administrative remedies that we see be really on the lookout for suspension and debarment. If we find that you are not presently responsible and we refer this, the Department of Energy, NSF, NASA can decide that for the time being, you are not presently responsible to receive funding.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:24:54
For 3 years or even more, you could not be eligible to receive grant funds or contract funds. I think there's one more… So this is just an example. This is a case that I worked several years ago. I've sanitized it for the individuals involved and the companies involved. But this was an SBIR company that, you know, submitted the same work, multiple different applications using fake businesses.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:25:20
In order to get the funding, you can see this is off of the Department of Justice's website. You search this, you will see those individuals' names. These are researchers who I'm sure are still out there working, but.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:25:31
You know, now when you Google their names, this can come up and they also can be suspended, debarred and pay back all the funds. And then the last one, the last slide is just a real quick how to report violations to us. Mandatory disclosures typically in the contracts, it says if you know that one of your employees or the company has.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:25:51

violated criminal civil law. Then you need to report it to DOE, but also to us, the OIG specifically. And so we have our hotline right there. If you do see something like that. And then also I want to put a pitch out there for PTAMS. If you do know if you're working for a company, or if you know of another company.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:26:09
That is, you know, violating the Civil False Claims Act. You can go through a KETAM whistleblower lawsuit. Typically, you find an attorney first, and then would report it to the Department of Justice, and you yourself can receive those recovered funds up to 15 to 30%.

[A.J. Ferrari] 15:26:24
So that was all for me, but thanks for the time. And if you do have any questions or you want, you know, something specific for your company or for an industry trade group, reach out to us and we can give another similar presentation that's a little more in-depth.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:26:55
Okay, Ben, or one of your team members? Would you like to quick give an overview of the topics? We don't need to spend much time here today, because they are on the application hub.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:27:02
Yes.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:27:07
Yeah, you got it. So here are our 6 topic areas. As I mentioned earlier, these are a bit broader than they've been in the past. What we've done is we've grouped together some of the main priorities or main areas by grouping together the.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:27:24
previous phase one or old phase 2 topic areas. So.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:27:28
essentially, if you're on the call, you're eligible to apply, and you can just read each topic to see where does my… the old topic that I applied to two years ago. Where does that fit in? And if you're coming with a Phase 2 project already, applying for your Phase 2.2.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:27:46
Um, you can basically apply to whichever of these high-level topics fits your project best.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:27:52
Um, we're still going to be making independent evaluations and decisions, so it's not that it doesn't matter which topic area you applied to, but you do have a little bit of flexibility to choose which one fits your project best. Again, if you're applying with a 2.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:28:08
application. For phase ones, applying for their phase twos, it should be very clear which topic area you fit under.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:28:20
Um, I don't think this slide is relevant, so I think we can continue moving on. Thank you.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:28:26
All right. Great. Thank you, Ben. So my name is Kelsey Hamilton. I'm a project manager with connect works, and our next few slides are just going to go over the application process. Now that we are utilizing the amp application portal.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:28:42

So this is our application portal. Currently, the applications for phase two are not yet open, but we encourage you to use this website to register to request access to AMP. So you're ready to go.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:28:58
This link will bring you to this AMP access request form. Please make sure you are using an individual email address, not a company email address when you sign up. We need that for security reasons, and you should be selecting the SBIR STTR.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:29:15
option for a program. I'll just note that the AMP application portal is used for other ATI consortiums. You do not need to be a member of an ATI consortium to access AMP and to access this application.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:29:32
Next slide, please. So, if you have already requested access for AMP, great. If not, I encourage you to do so as soon as you get off this webinar, because we do plan to open the portal for submissions tomorrow. We'll send out an email to the group as soon as that happens, and we also now have a helpful resource guide on the application hub we can link in the chat as well.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:29:57
But currently, if you go in there tonight, this is what it will look like. Welcome to the portal, and there will be either no open solicitations, or perhaps you might see the phase one solicitation that we opened last week. But rest assured, the Fy 25 phase 2 application will show up there tomorrow.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:30:16
Next slide. Yeah, and it will look a little bit like this when it does. It would just say phase 2.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:30:25
A key option I wanted to point out here is the to-do list will read as 0 items pending until you start your first draft submission. In terms of submissions, we encourage you to start your draft, save, you can even submit, but then re-edit your submission up until the deadline.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:30:45
And as you are going in your application, we encourage you to do so, um, because one thing we cannot do is after 12 noon on the 25th, we will not be able to review any solicitations that were still in draft.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:31:00
We will only be able to review ones that were submitted, so make sure you don't wait until the last minute to do that.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:31:07
Next slide. Just a final reminder before we get into Q&A, there will be a post webinar survey and we would be very thankful if you fill it out as it will help us estimate how many of you plan to respond to this opportunity, as well as to let us know your thoughts about how we're doing.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:31:25
In this new format. Now what everyone is waiting for, for Q&A, we will be using the tool Vevox. So you can either take out your smartphones and scan this QR code, or we'll drop a link in the chat. This will bring up a tool. Feel free to submit your questions.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:31:46
Please review the published questions first to see if someone's already asked your question. You will have the ability to upvote questions you want answered, and they'll rise to the top so we can kind of crowdsource the ones I'm able to get to with our limited time.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:32:02
Next slide. And if you don't see your question you submitted on the board. That just means some one of our reviewers determined it likely fell into one of these 2 criteria. So today we want to prioritize questions that are novel, not answered somewhere in the FAQs or resources on the website.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:32:24
Um, just to make the most of our time. And we also will not be answering questions about phase one or future opportunities today. So please do try to keep those questions on topic and use those thumbs up to push the ones you care about.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:32:42
Um, up to the top.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:32:49
All right. And we will be they are starting to trickle in. Thank you, guys.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:32:58
Um… Let's see.

[Eileen Chant] 15:33:02
Hi, Kelsey. Can I say something while you all are waiting?

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:33:04
Oh, hi, Eileen. Sure.

[Eileen Chant] 15:33:08
Um, there was a slide on the NERSC High Performance Scientific Computing Facility at DOE. Just a reminder for those awardees who have computationally intensive projects. You do have access to DOE scientific computing facility.

[Eileen Chant] 15:33:26
By applying, once you're an awardee, you would apply for time on our computer.

[Eileen Chant] 15:33:31
on our computers, and that information is on one of the prior slides. So, just wanted to mention that.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:33:46
Great. Okay. So I see we are already getting questions about budget. Ben, could you maybe give us an overview of how this Pia opportunity is different from the NOFO FOA that everyone's used to, or.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:34:02
if Felipe is on, maybe he can help as well.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:34:04
Yeah, I may even ask Felipe or Sarah on the team. They probably have the best words to describe it.

[Sara Harvey] 15:34:10
Yeah, I can jump in here. So these agreements are handled a little bit differently from grants for cooperative agreements in that they're paid based on milestone based payments. So what you'll see in the project narrative template is there will be a table at the end of it for your work plan.

[Sara Harvey] 15:34:28
that will go through the specific, you know, budget you need to accomplish certain major tasks and goals throughout the project. And so what that total budget should equal should be, you know, equal to or less to.

[Sara Harvey] 15:34:43
2 million over 2 years, plus the addition of Tabith. You're also planning to use those funds. So.

[Sara Harvey] 15:34:51
2 million 50,000.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:34:58
Okay. All right.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:35:03
Will multiple people from our organization be able to access the applications? So I can take this one. You will need to register within the AMP portal in that system as a single entity, and that person is responsible for submitting the application. So if you are going to work as a team to.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:35:22
you know, put together an application. We suggest that you do that offline, and then one person will be responsible for submitting everything in its entirety to help you do that, I would recommend that you navigate to that opportunity page and pull down that checklist resource, which would have.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:35:40
Everything you need to get ready for the application itself, including links to all of the templates and resource guides and important definitions on what all of those components are. So that's a great tool that is already up on the application even before the solicitation opens in the portal tomorrow.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:35:59
Um, that you can start working from.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:36:07
Are all phase 2 applications for 2 million dollars across all topics.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:36:13
Yes, that is the maximum award size for this whole Phase 2 opportunity for each application.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:36:22
It is following question to that, Ben. Are people defining their budget up until 2 million, or is that just one flat rate that everybody will receive?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:36:34
you would define your budget. If you want to propose a 1 million dollar project, you may one and a half million dollars. You may 2 million. It's it's sort of up to you and what your needs are. But it's not a flat rate necessarily.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:36:54
All right. Okay, how many letters of support are allowed? It was limited to 5 in the last phase 2. I can speak to what the application will physically allow, which is a single Pdf. Where you should collate or coalesce all of these letters of support.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:37:12
Um, but I would turn to Ben or one of the DOE members here to speak to if there is a limit.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:37:21
Yeah. We do not have a limit for the number of letters of support.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:37:27

Okay? But they should be collated into one single Pdf and uploaded as a single document. So.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:37:35
Please remember to do that. All right.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:37:41
What is a period of performance? for these phase 2 projects.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:37:51
So the award length would be up to 2 years. And perhaps Sarah or Felipe can speak a little bit.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:38:00
how the milestones fit into the period of performance and what an award looks like.

[Sara Harvey] 15:38:05
Yeah, so we expect most of these awards to finish their work in two years. However, if you know there will be no go periods at the end of those two years to decide if you get, you know, a second phase two if this is your first phase two.

[Sara Harvey] 15:38:21
Um, and also because these are milestone-based payments, they're paid out on the schedule that you complete the invoiceable work. So, for example, you don't have to invoice on a particular schedule. We have like an estimated schedule based on when we expect certain work to be done.

[Sara Harvey] 15:38:38
But for example, if you finish a few weeks early on a particular milestone, you can then invoice for that milestone public

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:38:56
Can a milestone be modified in mid-performance if early technical results change in a project's direction?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:39:04
Yeah, so that's exactly the kind of flexibility that this new structure allows for. So if things change, or you meet a milestone early, you would get to work with your program manager at DOE and ConnectWerx to make sure that the milestones are properly tracking.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:39:22
the course of your project for however long it takes.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:39:33
Is it required that while narrating the video pitch, speakers need to be visible on video?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:39:44
is that is stated. I forget exactly where we landed on that, but it is stated clearly in the video requirements guide in the application checklist. So as long as your video meets the requirements as outlined in the application checklist.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:39:59
Um, then you've met that requirement.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:40:03
Thank you, Ben.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:40:08

All right, I see we've gotten a couple questions about what can change from your phase one award to your phase two. And I believe someone had typed an answer below, but Ben, correct me what we had gone with is that you are able to change the name of your project, or.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:40:25
Even some of the team members associated with your project from phase one to phase two, and all of this new information should be updated as it's included in your Phase 2 application.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:40:36
Yeah, definitely. So, phase one, much smaller scale award, and for many, this was, you know, a year ago, more than a year ago that I know that you finished. So things change, partners change, even titles change, and we want to see the best.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:40:51
scope and the best team that you can put together for your phase two in this new opportunity. So we're open to things changing. We just want to see you propose your best ideas.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:41:04
Okay? Okay. Is there a maximum amount of funding that sub recipients can receive?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:41:16
So, as long as you meet the minimum level of effort requirements that I spoke about briefly.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:41:23
There are no other sort of specific requirements. But there is that 50%. So 50% of the effort of the award has to be done by the small business for an SBIR award.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:41:37
Um, that would probably be the main, you know, limit as we think about how much you can put towards subcontractors.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:41:46
Okay. Is cost share required for these proposals?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:41:52
not for this opportunity. No, no cost share is required.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:41:58
Okay. I do see a question about the video pitch. Is it replacing a letter of intent? In other words, is it acting as a gateway prior to the full proposal?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:42:10
The letters of intent from the past and these video pitches have pretty different intents. So the old letters of intent were a stage date. You would submit your letter of intent. We would review the letter of intent, and then we would either encourage or discourage you to submit a full application.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:42:29
But for this phase two, you've all had now phase one projects. We expect that everyone would probably be encouraged to at least apply to phase two. So the video pitch is one more application requirement that we will evaluate alongside all parts of your application.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:42:46
to determine if you are given an award.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:42:55

Will the deliverables and milestones in the project narrative be the only priced or billable deliverables? Are more frequent standard deliverables, for example, a quarterly or monthly report possible from a cash flow perspective, more frequent payments are useful.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:43:15
Yeah, I may pivot over to Sarah to talk through or Felipe to talk through milestones.

[Sara Harvey] 15:43:21
Yeah, we're still finalizing what these agreements will look like, but we are looking at something similar to like a quarterly payment structure, and there will be, you know, an initial payment of the start of the award so that you have some seed funding to actually get.

[Sara Harvey] 15:43:39
or going sign your subcontractors and travel providers.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:43:54
Okay. Oh, sorry, go ahead, Eileen.

[Eileen Chant] 15:43:55
Hi. No, I just want to clarify in this funding opportunity. There's 1st phase twos or second phase twos, and then there are some awardees that have a second phase 2 and are eligible to apply for a third phase two award, which is to see.

[Eileen Chant] 15:44:12
And those would be fiscal year 23, Phase 2.

[Eileen Chant] 15:44:18
release to awardees from the old opportunity. Those applications do require cost sharing, just so you know, they do require 50% cost sharing, and there are very specific cost-sharing requirements associated with them. If you have.

[Eileen Chant] 15:44:34
Additional questions about that, feel free to reach out to us.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:44:40
Yeah, thanks, Eileen. Apologies for missing that. But that is stated within each topic language, there's sort of an additional paragraph, and that is stated in that paragraph. So just make sure to read that closely.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:44:51
Yes, and while you are using the application to try to help you through that, there will be a question where you have to identify the prior solicitation for your most recent award that you're moving on from. And if, for example, matching funds are required for that 3rd phase 2 award.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:45:10
That becomes a required upload, whereas for others, it would be only optional. So we did try to build the application in a way to help. But if you have any questions, as always, feel free to reach out to SBIR, STTR.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:45:25
at ConnectWerx.org, and we can get you an answer. And if we don't know it ourselves, we will find the people who do.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:45:33
All right. I did see a question that's worth mentioning. If you had previously been an SBIR project or an STTR project, you are able to switch to one or the other for phase 2 for your new phase 2 application.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:45:48

Please just view the eligibility and requirements page on the application hub. And in your application, you will be able to select to apply to SBIR, STTR, or both, provided you meet those requirements.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:46:11
We'll reviewers have access to prior phase reporting? Or should we include a summary of the prior efforts in our technical narrative?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:46:22
You should include some baseline. description of your prior phase work complete.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:46:34
For commercialization milestones, what does DOE consider an appropriate business or commercialization milestone for a phase 2.2 project? How should they relate to the technical milestones in the project narrative and the longer term milestone driven development roadmap in the commercialization plan?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:46:55
Yeah, that is a great question. I don't know if, Sarah, you might have a better answer to that about setting out those milestones ahead of time.

[Sara Harvey] 15:47:04
Yeah, I think Eileen can speak to 2.2 awards in particular, but commercialization milestones can be, you know, things from customer discovery to meetings with potential investors, market size.

[Sara Harvey] 15:47:23
refining things like that. Eileen, I don't know if you have any other ideas for what can be some good milestones for commercialization.

[Eileen Chant] 15:47:29
No, I think that was a good response, Sarah. I don't have a lot to add, but these are going to be steps that you're taking towards weaning yourself off of SBIR or STTR funding and moving into phase 3, which is non-SBIR funding, whether it's.

[Eileen Chant] 15:47:45
preparing your pitch deck, going to, you know, conferences and meeting customers, customer discovery.

[Eileen Chant] 15:47:55
Demonstration plans and that kind of thing. So things that are helping you pivot towards having your own customers or investors and along in the second phase two award, you should be further along.

[Eileen Chant] 15:48:12
Um, then you are in your first phase two, in terms of your milestones and your terms of the development of your technology and being ready for commercialization. Hopefully that makes sense.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:48:26
All right. For phase 2.2 applicants that would have previously pursued a 2A award, how explicitly should our application distinguish between work needed to complete or refine the Phase 2 prototype versus additional R&D needed to move towards commercialization?

[Eileen Chant] 15:48:45
Yeah, the prior 2A and 2 B had that distinction. And then we're not distinguishing now with the 2.2. It's a second phase 2 award. So you really just need to focus in your application on what it is that you are working on, whether it is more.

[Eileen Chant] 15:49:04

Research and development, because there were certain things about your Phase 2 award that need to kind of a change direction or something like that, or more testing or research that needs to be done, or you are.

[Eileen Chant] 15:49:19
Doing more work specifically around commercialization your technology. Just explain in your application what it is and why you need the second phase 2 award. We're not distinguishing so much between those 2 cases.

[Eileen Chant] 15:49:34
Anymore.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:49:34
Thanks, Eileen. As a follow up, are there any recommended or required TRL levels or tech readiness levels for these phase 2 applications?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:49:51
But I don't think we've… I don't think we've explicitly laid out TRLs. We recognize that across the different topic areas and the different projects that are out there, we might see a pretty wide range of starting and ending TRLs. We just want to see significant development and significant steps towards commercialization. And then we'll work with you to define your starting and goal ending TRLs.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:50:21
And since letters of support are encouraged, but not required. What types are most valuable? So, for example, prospective customers, pilot partners, industry partners, or sneeze.

[Eileen Chant] 15:50:36
I would say that you need to include letters of support that are appropriate for your level of development. So early in phase two, you might want to have potential customers who are willing to test your technology.

[Eileen Chant] 15:50:51
or subject matter experts who write… talk about the need for what it is that you're doing, but later on in Phase 2, or the second phase two, it will be more important to show commercialization pathways, or phase… what we call phase three.

[Eileen Chant] 15:51:07
pathways. So, it depends on where you are, sort of, in your technology development.

[Eileen Chant] 15:51:13
Certain supporters are more important in different phases of development.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:51:21
All right. Thank you. Can you clarify any sub awardee requirements? Do they require their own budget justification or project narrative?

[Sara Harvey] 15:51:34
While sub awardees don't require their own separate project narrative or budget justification. You should be addressing in your project narrative and work plan how you're planning to utilize some subcontracts and sort of what proportion of.

[Sara Harvey] 15:51:50
work they're going to be doing.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:51:54
Who are the technical reviewers for phase 2 applications? Will they be DOE programs that overlap with the technical area as they were before?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:52:04
Yeah. So we are lucky to get to pull from such a great knowledge base within DOE, as well as qualified expert external reviewers as well. For every reviewer to make sure that there's no conflict of interest.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:52:20
between themselves and the application that they are reviewing so that we can have a independent merit review for every single application, so that we can get back these scores to make those final decisions.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:52:39
Um… So the web page mentions Taba, but no instructions on how and when to submit a TABA proposal. I can speak to the application itself. The only question in the application regarding Taba is whether or not you are interested.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:52:56
in receiving TAVA. Maybe Ben or Sarah, you can speak to what more would be required after the application is submitted?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:53:08
I'll bump it over to Sarah, who I think has the best handle on this one.

[Sara Harvey] 15:53:13
Yeah, so similarly in your project narrative, you should be describing what you plan to use your TAVA for. So what types of services you're interested in. And then OTC is also partnering with the Foundation for Energy Security and Innovation for recommending to providers.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:53:41
Okay. Since the award will be firm fixed price, and indirect rates are not applicable. What information is needed in support of a budget since labor rates are burdened?

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:54:02
or more generally, we could use the related question of, can you explain how the milestone based question or reimbursement will work?

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:54:09
I think there's still some confusion around moving towards these milestone based payments that are defined in the project narrative.

[Sara Harvey] 15:54:21
Yeah. So for the milestone based payments, you're basically saying.

[Sara Harvey] 15:54:26
you know, for we are planning on. you know, developing this technology, and we have these different stage gates that we're trying to hit.

[Sara Harvey] 15:54:37
For each milestone, you don't need to define, you know, all the labor required to get to that step, all the equipment you have to purchase. We're just trying to see, you know, in order to get to this step, this is how much funding is required, and then you're justifying that, saying, like, hey, we have to buy this equipment by this time, we have to.

[Sara Harvey] 15:54:54
you know, work with these staff members, and you're telling the story of how you're trying to get this project off the ground.

[Sara Harvey] 15:55:01

So it's not as detailed as these prior budget forms you may have had to fill out for your phase one. It's really, you know, separating things into discrete overarching tasks and what funding is needed to get you to that.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:55:18
A useful follow up question, Sarah might be when thinking about how to propose the budget. Is there any restriction, or can you have a year one budget of, say, 700k and a year 2 budget of 1.3 million.

[Sara Harvey] 15:55:38
I think he can propose. You know, if you make a justification for why you need the budget split a certain way in your work plan proposal. But generally, we, you know, we're obviously not going to award all of it up front, and.

[Sara Harvey] 15:55:53
None of it the second year. So, uh, you know.

[Sara Harvey] 15:55:56
I think there can be some shuffling around, but.

[Sara Harvey] 15:56:00
We do have to, you know, a

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:56:05
Okay. Is there an RFP? Or is the ConnectWerx portal the only document to guide proposers?

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:56:18
So this is it. It's the Application Hub, and that is probably a question based on how things used to be, but since moving to the PIA, ConnectWerx is functioning as the PI, and we've put together this application hub. If you are not able to find an answer to a question you have, please just reach out, and we'll make sure we can.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:56:38
get that answer for you.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:56:42
Hey, Kelsey. Actually, I want to clarify one of my answers from.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:56:45
Sure.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:56:46
A little while ago, I think another question we got to about the, um, the video pitch requirements, and if you have to be visible. So what we state is that you can record your video of the presenter physically next to or in front of the slides.

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:57:01
or record the presentation where your video box is visible. So in some way, we do have to see your face. We do have to show you speaking, but you do have a little bit of flexibility with how you do that.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:57:16
Perfect. Thanks, Ben, because as someone who is doing this right now, I do hate having my face on video, so y'all get to suffer with me. So, uh… you know. Thank you, Ben. All right. One question. What should we use for a start date?

[Benjamin Shrager] 15:57:40
It's a great question. Grayson or Sarah, do you have any clarity?

[Sara Harvey] 15:57:45

Um, a good faith, I think should be. Let's say 3 months after the.

[Sara Harvey] 15:57:53
applications close. So I would say like December or January. But you know, in your proposal, the start date doesn't necessarily matter. It can be, you know, notice to proceed. It's more just like, you know, how many months after which each after your start date does each.

[Sara Harvey] 15:58:11
Milestone occurred.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:58:14
Yeah, so previously we've structured agreements in a way where if milestone one happens at N and milestone two is at N plus six months or something like that. So would something like that be acceptable, Sarah?

[Grayson Dorr] 15:58:14
Yeah.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:58:38
Yeah, just I don't know if we lost or just jumping in, because I know we've had a lot of questions around that. So I think what I'm hearing is.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:58:40
Oh.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:58:45
for planning purposes, again, we cannot… we're not stating today when reviews will be completed, when selections will go out, when they'll be notified, but for planning, when you're setting up your project as a best practice, then your schedule you can use.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:59:01
Start date plus one month, plus two months, or whatever your sequence of your timeline would be. And then for the group, um, I think it's fair to use, say, the beginning of the new year as a start date if you're being asked or have questions.

[Grayson Dorr] 15:59:16
Um, Ben, Eileen, Sarah, please, um, please jump in if that's not a fair recap. And Kelsey, after that, I'll turn it over to you to as we're almost out of time.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:59:29
Yeah. Oops, I was going to say we are almost at time, and I do think I I saw one question that I definitely want to give an answer to. So we've been working really hard. We have over 250 questions that were submitted. So anything we were not able to get to during this Q&A session.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 15:59:47
We will be working offline to produce a Q&A resource. Will we be posting answers to all of the questions that were asked today. So we'll get a transcript of the ones that we were able to ask and answer live, but we also will be working to fill in answers to any of the ones that were unpublished. So appreciate your patience there.

[Kelsey Hamilton] 16:00:07
I, like, again, I think these numbers just speak to the overall excitement about this opportunity, and we're thrilled to have as many of you here joining us today.

[Benjamin Shrager] 16:00:19

Yeah, thank you all so much. Let me look forward to answering the rest of your questions and meeting you at future events and webinars like this one.