



How do I know if NIH is interested in funding my project?

The NIH is one of the 'easier' federal agencies to apply to because every year it issues an Omnibus Solicitation, requesting investigator-initiated topics. This means that rather than telling you exactly which projects they will fund, the NIH asks you, the investigator, to come up with the ideas. As long as these ideas are related to Human Health, have the requisite level of Technological Innovation and Commercial Potential, they may be appropriate for SBIR/STTR.

However, you still need to do some homework to make sure your idea fits within the research interests of the NIH's Institutes and Centers. So before you put a lot of work into developing your proposal, there are a couple of things you can do:

1. Search NIH's RePORTER Database

[RePORTER](#) is an online searchable database tool that allows users to search all previously and currently NIH-funded research projects. You can use keywords to search for projects, view their abstracts, and determine whether NIH has previously-funded projects in your research topic, and which NIH Institutes might be most likely to fund particular projects.

You can use the drop-down menus to restrict your search by funding mechanism (e.g. SBIR/STTR or other NIH funding mechanism such as R01, R21 etc.), by state, by year, by Principal Investigator etc. Identify the Institutes and Centers that funded projects (both Phase I and Phase II) in your area.

2. Check the SBIR/STTR Program Descriptions and Research Topics Document

Another good place to start is to look at the SBIR/STTR '[Program Descriptions and Research Topics](#)'. This can be downloaded as a pdf or Word document from [here](#). The document lists all of the Institutes and Centers at NIH and outlines their areas of interest. It also gives the contact details for all of the program staff in each institute.

3. Speak with Program Staff at NIH

Once you think you have identified an Institute within the NIH that might be appropriate for your research idea, NIH strongly encourages you to contact the relevant Program Staff to discuss your idea with them. Some Institutes have several program staff, responsible for different areas, so make sure you find the one most appropriate for your project. BBCetc recommends that you first send an email to the program staff listed, and ask to follow up with a phone call. If your proposal might be a possible fit in more than one NIH institute, you can contact program staff from both Institutes.

You can also ask Program Staff whether your idea fits the goals of the Institute, the scope of your Phase I and Phase II aims are appropriate for SBIR/STTR, and/or your project budget can exceed the published guidelines of \$150 K for a Phase I and \$1 million for a Phase II.

As always, let us know if we can help - info@bbcetc.com, 734-930-9741.