![bbc Entrepreneurial Training & Consulting logo]

I want to submit an SBIR/STTR proposal to the NIH. Where do I start?

So you've decided that you would like to submit an SBIR or STTR to the National Institutes of Health and you've asked BBCetc to help. *What happens next?*

It depends a little on where we are in the 'grant cycle', i.e., how long it is to the next NIH submission deadline. Ideally we like to work with people for at least 6 - 8 weeks prior to a deadline. With less than that, the process in working with BBCetc may be a little different as you will already have missed some of the steps in our strongly-suggested grant timeline. We will plug you into the process (see below), but you will have some catching up to do!

How long does it take to write a proposal?

One of the most common questions we get asked is "how long will it take me to write a proposal?" The answer is that it depends on many factors, some of which are outside of your control. Here are just a few factors:

- Have you formed your company yet?
- Are you registered at all the places online to allow you to submit your proposal electronically?
- Have you written SBIRs or other grants before?
- Are you familiar with the NIH process?
- Do you already have a good idea of what the scope of the project will be?
- Do you have a team put together to do the work?
- Have you identified a Principal Investigator?
- Do you have outside collaborators (e.g. university), and consultants?
- Will you have human subjects or vertebrate animals in your project?
- Can your proposal writers devote sufficient time to writing?

Our clients often find that writing the research part of the proposal is the easiest part. Putting together all of the other required components, letters of support, agreements and approvals from outside collaborators, or even having discussions with any partners to come to an agreed plan can take a lot longer than you think.

How does BBCetc help us do this?

First, we give you a recommended timeline We will provide a recommended timeline for completing the different parts of the proposal, which ends on the date we strongly encourage you to submit your application, i.e., January 2 (for January 5), April 1 (for April 5) and September 1 (for September 5). For a week before the deadline we are typically checking application forms and budgets, and not reviewing for technical content.

Then we give you the tools to meet the timeline requirements

If you are working with BBCetc toward one of the standard NIH deadlines (January 5, April 5, September 5), we will enter you into our NIH grant pipeline process. This process involves a series of instructive emails from BBCetc that will commence around 8 weeks prior to the submission deadline. At first there may be an email or two each week, but as the deadline gets closer, you'll receive these more often to help you all the way through the last phase of submitting your proposal electronically. The emails will contain tips and templates for the most components of the proposal, and other helpful reminders and 'nudges' to keep you on track toward submitting successfully by the proposal deadline. People have found it helpful to save these emails (and attached documents) in a folder to reference as they go through the process. They'll answer a lot of your questions.

Review of your drafts

At any point as you receive these emails, you are welcome to send us drafts of any part of the proposal. The Specific Aims should be the first document we see, but once that is "finalized", we are happy to look at and provide you with feedback on any other part of the proposal. This includes the Research Strategy parts, as well as the administrative sections, e.g. Key Personnel Biosketches, Facilities and Other Resources, and of course, budgets. We are also happy to discuss general SBIR/STTR strategy, and any other SBIR/STTR-related issues with you at any time. We can do this by email, phone, Skype, in person, or any combination of those. We try to give you feedback on your drafts within 1-3 days, although as the deadline approaches and demand increases, that timing may stretch. So get your drafts to us early!

So where do I start?

For applications to the NIH we recommend that you start by drafting your **Specific Aims** page. This one page serves as an Executive Summary and an outline of the rest of the proposal, so getting it in great shape early is critical before moving on to the other components. After that we send out section outlines, templates and instructions gradually leading up to the deadline. We are there to guide you through the process and help you make your proposal the best it can be!

Interested in working with BBCetc? Complete our brief Assessment Form at:

http://bit.ly/bbcassess

This gets you into our system after which one of our consultants will schedule a call with you to discuss your project further and decide on next steps if appropriate. There is no charge for this call.

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