

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

### **For Qualified Pool of**

## **Small Business Innovation Research Consulting Services**

### **1. Project Overview**

The UMass SBIR Center of Excellence (SBIR COE) supported by the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) is seeking a qualified pool of consulting services candidates to perform a range of services that may include but not limited to the following: Technical Support, Technology Evaluation, Manufacturing Assistance, Design for Manufacture, Commercialization Assistance, IT Services, IP Services, Financial/Accounting Services, Marketing and Market Analysis Services.

### **2. UMass Lowell Research Institute and its UMass SBIR Center of Excellence**

From our earliest days as a source of brainpower for the Industrial Revolution unfolding in Lowell's textile mills, to the founding of the first plastics engineering department in the country, UMass Lowell has spent more than a century bringing new technology to the world.

Today, our new UMass Lowell Research Institute is emerging as a leader in bridging the gap between cutting-edge research and its commercial implementation -- solutions that change people's lives and provide world-class technology to our warfighters.

To provide rapid and innovative solutions for defense and commercial customers, the University of Massachusetts Lowell Research Institute (UMLRI) is leading an initiative linking our core competencies, academics, labs, resources, and institutions to Department of Defense requirements. Located in Lincoln, Massachusetts, the Institute is founded on four foundational divisions: Defense Acquisition and Procurement R&D Programs, Additive Manufacturing, Academic Offerings with DoD focus, and the UMass SBIR Center of Excellence.

### **Overview: Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)**

Congress established the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program in 1982 to fund research and development (R&D) by U.S. owned and operated businesses of less than 500 employees. SBIR, the nation's largest source of early-stage technology financing, is administered by the Small Business Administration through 11 federal agencies and is funded at more than \$2 billion annually. The Department of Defense (DoD) accounts for more than half of the federal government's total SBIR/STTR<sup>1</sup> budget. These grants are awarded via a competitive process of proposal submission and review. Eligible projects must fulfill a need identified by the DoD and have the potential to be developed into a commercial product. Typical grant sizes are \$1.15 million.

The DoD SBIR program is made up of 13 participating Components: Army, Navy, Air Force, Missile Defense Agency, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Joint Science and Technology Office for Chemical and Biological Defense, US Special Operations Command, Defense Threat Reduction Agency,

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<sup>1</sup> STTR: The Small Business Technology Transfer program funds joint ventures between small businesses and nonprofit research institutions such as the University of Massachusetts.

National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Microelectronics Activity, the Office of Secretary of Defense, and the Defense Health Program.

SBIR Programs have three phases, each of which typically undergoes a separate, competitive proposal submission and review:

- I. **Phase I** (project feasibility) determines the scientific, technical and commercial merit and feasibility of the ideas submitted. Phase I awards are typically \$150,000 over a period of six months.
- II. **Phase II** (project development to prototype) is the major R&D effort, funding the prototyping and demonstration of the most promising Phase I projects. Phase II contracts are up to \$1 million and usually span 24 months. (Not all Phase I projects make it to Phase II)
- III. **Phase III** (commercialization) is the ultimate goal of the SBIR program. Small businesses are expected to obtain funding from the private sector or government sources outside the SBIR program to commercialize the Phase II project for sale in the military and private sector markets.

### **3. Project Goals**

The OEA has granted UMLRI \$150,000 to distribute on a 50-50 match basis to Small-to-Medium-sized Enterprises (SME's) seeking SBIR assistance. As matched, the funding totals \$300,000. UMLRI will distribute these funds to pre-approved Consulting Firms, upon project acceptance by the SME and UMLRI. To become pre-approved, Consulting Firms will be chosen on a competitive basis based on their response to this RFP, their value proposition, a follow-on interview, and our need to offer a suite of services to our SME's.

The primary goal of the Consulting Services sought in this RFP is to support small businesses as they navigate and perform their SBIR program. The funds may only be used to assist proposal writing, program execution, or commercialization efforts related to the SBIR. Not all services must be provided by one Firm – approximately six Firms will be chosen for our roster such that SME's have access to specialists – e.g. one firm specializing in IT, and another specializing in marketing.

A secondary goal is to engage SME's with UMLRI and the broader business community, in order to provide foundational support as they grow. Exposure to methods used by professional consulting firms is one way to build know-how in the SME.

A tertiary goal is to establish a lasting roster of pre-approved Consultants at UMLRI that we can refer companies to, with or without a follow-on OEA match. Firms working with UMLRI may require consultants from time to time. UMLRI aims to strengthen and expand the ecosystem of DoD-focused R&D in Massachusetts, which includes large and small enterprises, the University of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center, and Consulting Firms.

To complete this effort, our focus will be on providing an array of pre-approved, high-value Consulting services. Services at each Firm under consideration should include one or more of the following (but is not limited to): Technical Support, Manufacturing Assistance, Design for Manufacture, Commercialization Strategy, IT Services, IP Services, Financial/Accounting Services, Market Analysis, and Marketing.

## **5.Scope of Work & Deliverables:**

The Scope of Work and Deliverables will be negotiated between approved Consulting Firm and the defense SBIR SME seeking assistance. Final project approval will be granted by the Director of SBIR/STTR Programs at UMLRI.

## **6 .Principal Point of Contact:**

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## **9.Budget**

UMLRI will make \$150,000 available on a 50-50 match basis to a minimum of six (6) defense SME's seeking SBIR assistance. In this way a total of \$300,000 becomes available. We anticipate the Consulting awards will range from \$10,000 - \$50,000, depending on the SME's need. In order to support at least six SME's, the maximum award size will be limited \$50,000 (e.g. \$25,000 provided by the SME and \$25,000 reimbursable from OEA). UMLRI will be compensated at a rate of 5% of total project cost, in consideration for their services.

## **11.Format & Proposal Timeline**

Proposal submission should be no more than 3 pages. The header must include the name, email, and phone number of the key person to contact. It should further include these three sections:

- (i) Detail the size, location, yearly revenue, and core competencies of your firm. Briefly describe what makes your firm the best choice for UMLRI. Share the expected per diem or rate for the Consulting work.
- (ii) Describe relevant past and/or present experience with SBIR and STTR programs, if any, and your process for engaging with small companies.
- (iii) Provide relevant links to websites, technical papers, and other supporting information.

Proposals will be accepted between the dates of December 3, 2018 and January 11, 2019, after which point this solicitation is closed. Proposals should be emailed to the POC at [stacy\\_swider@uml.edu](mailto:stacy_swider@uml.edu).

## **10.Criteria for Selection**

Candidate qualifications should support the Three-Phased SBIR Program described above. Candidate selection will be based on those that most show a history of successful small-company support in one or more of these areas: Technical Assistance, Design for Manufacture, other Manufacturing Assistance, Commercialization Strategy, IT Services, IP Services, Financial/Accounting Services, Marketing, Market Analysis.