Entrepreneurial Training & Consulting

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Exploring NASA SBIR & STTR Opportunities: Key Insights for Small Businesses

Understanding the NASA SBIR/STTR process and aligning your efforts with program goals is key to success. Here's what you need to know about the Fiscal Year 2026 NASA SBIR and STTR Phase I solicitation.

What are the NASA SBIR and STTR Programs?

Both programs fund R&D by small businesses, but they have a key structural difference:

	SBIR	STTR
Research partner	Small business performs at least 2/3 of Phase I work	Requires a formal partnership with a university or nonprofit research institution, which performs at least 30% of the work
Phase I cap	$225,000 / 6 months	$225,000 / 13 months
TABA available	Up to $6,500	Up to $6,500

NASA provides access to its extensive technology portfolios and facilitates post-award opportunities to enhance commercialization for both programs.

Key Updates for FY 2026

The 2026 solicitation introduces several important changes:

- The solicitation is split into multiple appendices filed under a single BAA (80NSSC26R0003). SBIR subtopics appear in Appendix 26A and 26B; STTR subtopics appear in Appendix 26B alongside the SBIR topics.
- Firms may submit up to **two proposals per appendix per program type**. SBIR and STTR are treated as separate funding opportunities, so a firm can submit SBIR and STTR proposals to the same appendix without those counting against each other.
- Technical proposals remain capped at **15 pages** for both programs.
- The budget cap has increased to **$225,000** for both SBIR and STTR Phase I, up from $150,000 in prior years.
- Note that the **submission open period is shorter than prior years**. Proposals for all appendices are due by **May 21, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. ET**, and must be submitted through NASA's ProSAMS system.

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Solicitation Structure: Appendices and ProSAMS Codes

The 2026 solicitation is structured differently from prior years. Subtopics are divided across appendices, each evaluated independently:

	26A (SBIR only)	26B (SBIR)	26B (STTR)
Subtopics	12 subtopics / 10 topics	37 subtopics / 14 topics	11 subtopics / 8 topics
Focus	Space exploration hardware: propulsion, power, EVA, instruments for Moon/Mars	Aeronautics, landing, surface ops, comm/nav, in-situ science, and more	Advanced air mobility, propulsion CFD, quantum tech, biotechnology, regolith ops, and more
ProSAMS code	SBIR 2026A-I	SBIR 2026B-I	STTR 2026B-I

Because proposals cannot be moved between subtopics or appendices after submission, it is critical to confirm you are selecting the correct appendix and ProSAMS solicitation code before starting your submission.