



MNSBIR, INC.

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Economic Development Finance and Policy
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WHAT IS SBIR AND STTR?

The **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)** and **Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)** programs, also known as **America's Seed Fund**, are two of the **largest sources of early-stage capital for technology commercialization in the United States.**

These congressionally approved programs enable **US-owned and operated small businesses** to **conduct research and development** that has a **strong potential for commercialization.**

Securing an SBIR/STTR award is a **complex and highly competitive** process that results in early-stage **non-dilutive R & D funding** for successful companies.

MNSBIR, INC. BRINGS MILLIONS IN FEDERAL \$ BACK TO MINNESOTA

MNSBIR, Inc. is a non-profit organization that assists Minnesota startups and small businesses in successfully competing for SBIR and STTR funding from 11 federal agencies.

Over the past nine years, **MNSBIR has supported 95 small Minnesota companies in securing \$67 million in federal funding** that in turn created and retained hundreds of jobs, millions of dollars in private investments, patents, and future products and services. This year alone, MNSBIR, Inc. has supported 45 businesses in seeking funding for their novel solutions.

Since October 1, 2022, approximately \$5 million has been secured by five small Minnesota businesses to support the development and commercialization of their products and services.

IMPACT ON SMALL MINNESOTA COMPANIES



"Overall, leveraging a knowledgeable and experienced SBIR/STTR resource can help Minnesota small businesses increase their chances of securing funding, accelerate their R&D efforts, and bring their innovations to market faster."

– Hari Atkuri, PhD, CEO, Smart Glass Labs



"My NSF grant was the catalyst for our growth. The technology we developed under the SBIR grant is core to my business. The guidance from MNSBIR was very helpful for understanding which agencies would be the best fit, and for learning how to communicate my story and technical vision in a clear way."

– Cora Liebig, PhD, CEO, Chromatic 3D Materials



"MNSBIR is our state's secret ingredient for successful innovative companies which will drive stable employment, job growth, and attract talent. They help all companies throughout the state."

– Ping Yeh, CEO, VOCxi Health (UMN Startup)



"I absolutely believe that the MNSBIR program added value to our business. On February 14, 2023, we received our Notice of Award for \$1.9 million from the National Institutes of Health! We are using these funds to develop a new wound care innovation which will have a major impact on patient care."

– Andy Obst, MS, CEO, Fistula Solution



THIS INVESTMENT BE USED TO:

1 **Expand the Minnesota SBIR/STTR Accelerator**

MNSBIR, Inc. will create up to 20 new high wage jobs to expand hands-on professional services to at least 180 small Minnesota companies. This expansion will ensure the training and preparation of the next generation of SBIR/STTR advisors and coaches, and will grow outreach capacity to encourage existing small businesses statewide to apply for funding with 1:1 expert guidance and support.

2 **Create the Innovation 25 Accelerator for Rural MN**

The Innovation 25 Accelerator will drive innovation, research, technology transfer and commercialization for existing rural small businesses with no previous SBIR/STTR experience. The MNSBIR, Inc. vision is to connect a highly curated cohort of small businesses with the vast resources and capabilities from government, industry, and academia to become future SBIR/STTR participants and awardees that contribute to national security and defense needs.

3 **Create a Technology Commercialization Institute**

The Technology Commercialization Institute will deliver 1:1 business and technical assistance including market research and analysis, financing, investment capital, intellectual property, grants and contract administration, and government cost accounting. Deeper support is needed to build stronger and more globally competitive small businesses for the future.

4 **Create a Sole-Source Contracting Program**

The Sole-Source Contracting Program will connect firms with SBIR/STTR funded products and services with federal government procurement offices and leverage SBIR Phase III opportunities per Congressional legislation.

5 **Create a Defense Medical Network**

The Defense Medical Network will connect medical and biotech small businesses to opportunities to deliver critical advancements and support our men and women in uniform.

The Network will be a member of the Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC), a public-private partnership that is managed by the Department of Defense to promote the development and delivery of innovative medical technologies to improve the health and safety of military personnel, veterans, and civilians.

Navy veteran Pat Dillon brings home federal bacon for emerging tech companies



Pat Dillon
CEO & Founder, MNSBIR, Inc

By Neal St. Anthony
Star Tribune

March 2, 2023 — 4:04 p.m.

Minnesota has gotten a pretty good return from Pat Dillon over the last decade.

Dillon is the unheralded founder of MNSBIR Inc., which recently became a stand-alone nonprofit enterprise. Working with several contractors and her budget of \$265,000, **she has managed to bring \$63 million in federal funds for 93 promising Minnesota tech-oriented companies since 2014.**

"There's a lot of companies I've worked with that made it to the winner's circle," Dillon said. "There also have been some that didn't work out. Our goal is to help small businesses improve their technology and become larger businesses."

Dillon's outfit **helps small technology-driven businesses recruit non-lucrative seed capital from more than a dozen federal agencies, including the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health.**

Dillon, a youthful 65, is a retired naval intelligence officer who was activated for a 2011-12 tour in Afghanistan amid a 40-year active-duty and reserve career that started after graduating high school in rural Wisconsin. She got into the federal grant business on a part-time basis while in college at Winona State University in the 1980s.

Over the last decade, **Dillon has increased Minnesota's modest share of federal funding.**

Dillon works through the SBA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, dubbed America's Seed Fund.

The two programs together invest about \$4 billion annually and have **provided 180-plus Minnesota science- and tech-based companies nearly \$900 million in research and development funding since 1983.** Minnesota ranks about 20th over the years among the states in attracting SBIR-STTR funding.

The investment from these programs have resulted in a benefit to the Minnesota economy of more than \$2 billion through "thousands of high-paying jobs," Dillon estimates.

Some of the better-known state companies include: now-booming Cirrus Aircraft in Duluth; Sage Electrochromic, a high-tech glass manufacturer in Faribault; and med-tech firms Surmodics, NVE Corp. and Miromatrix in the Twin Cities.

Two decades ago, Dillon helped family-founded Minnesota Wire of St. Paul secure the research and development grants that enabled it to broaden

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Navy veteran Pat Dillon brings home federal bacon for emerging tech companies

[continued from page 3] and accelerate its product portfolio of custom-designed wire, cable and interconnect assemblies for military, commercial and space industries.

More recently, Dillon helped Chromatic 3D Materials of Golden Valley — which uses 3-D printing to produce specialized molds for med-tech and other manufacturers — raise \$1.4 million that got its products out of the laboratory. The company subsequently raised \$10 million in private capital that has fueled its commercial growth.

The small firms she assists with federal funding include several that license technology developed by the University of Minnesota, Mayo Clinic and other research hubs.

“This is a high-contact sport and not for the faint of heart,” said Dillon, expert at navigating sometimes Byzantine government applications and procedures. “We help a lot small business. Sometimes a little and sometimes a lot.”

The federal investment often spurs significant private investment.

Nationally, huge Qualcomm, Symantec and iRobot have benefited from SBIR investments in their salad days. At least two Minnesota firms that received SBIR grants eventually grew to be publicly owned companies: NVE Corp. and Surmodics. Some grow privately.

Late last year, Minnesota Small Business Innovation Research left Minnesota Technology Association, or MnTech, to become an independent nonprofit business.

The move has been in the works for a couple of years, said Jeff Tollefson, a former venture capitalist who is CEO of MnTech.

“Pat decided that starting her own nonprofit was what she wished to do and we fully supported her in this transition,” he said.

Dillon also is affiliated with the U’s technology commercialization and venture center.

“We will be more effective as a stand-alone organization because we now have a dedicated board of directors who are committed to the vision and mission of MNSBIR,” Dillon said. **“Startups and small businesses require a knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated resource to help them navigate the complicated and competitive federal research and development environment leading to commercialization of their technology.”**

Dillon is on the hunt this winter for \$5 million in support from the Minnesota Legislature. The money is intended to expand MNSBIR’s capacity and ability to expand small-business support and increase federal funding.

Dillon’s \$265,000 budget last year was underwritten primarily by the Small Business Administration, MnTech and industry sources.





MNSBIR, Inc. surveyed more than 200 small Minnesota companies about the value of having a knowledgeable and experienced resource for SBIR/STTR support. Here's what they said.

Why do you think it is important for Minnesota small businesses to lean on a knowledgeable and experienced SBIR/STTR resource?

DISTRICT RESPONSE

- 2A Yes, without MNSBIR'ss help I wouldn't have know about small nuances associated with government grants. She was our Sherpa, mentor, coach, cheerleader and kept us accountable.
- 3A Rural small businesses such as my own must and should be future contributors to the national SBIR/STTR innovation ecosystem. There are many individuals and small businesses that can contribute to solving national problems in an impactful way and they need support in order to gain access to the opportunities that are gobbled up by the larger and more knowledgeable/powerful business. Diversifying the businesses that are selected to take on these challenges will ensure that the country's environmental, economic, social systems are enriched with different perspectives. It is too often that large companies with poor practices in technological innovations get selected to handle national and even global problems, when it is often the smaller companies that provide the more exceptional innovations and grounded perspectives on those issues.
- 24A This is a huge resource to companies as it is not diluted funding and in medtech that is extremely valuable.
- 24A The SBIR/STTR process is complex and lengthy. Having limited time and limited resources when developing a new business or product, it is invaluable to have an expert to guide you through the process. An experienced SBIR/STTR resources allows entrepreneurs to make an informed decision about if and how to apply. The state of MN benefits in that those businesses who do apply are better equipped to be awarded grants and those who aren't a fit were able to spend precious time seeking financial resources elsewhere.
- 25B SBIR funding is challenging to come by and relies on threading the needle between an academic-style grant proposal with a business-centered focus. Knowledgeable and experienced SBIR/STTR consultants dramatically increase win rates and thus economic stimulation.
- 25B Without the right training, people deliver subpar applications, which waste time of the funder, and reduce the likelihood of MN receiving this type of funding.
- 29B It is important to provide support services when attempting to contract with or seek grants from the Federal government. Besides knowing what types of funding is available, navigating through the rules and knowing exactly what information to provide is very time consuming and complicated. Most small businesses do not have the financing, knowledge or resources to do this on their own. Pat provides these support services at little or no cost to small start-ups.
- 32B It helps navigate the unknowns and support the new businesses.
- 33A Complex rules and guidance

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- 33B The process of applying for federal grants is unfortunately arcane and it requires a knowledgeable and experienced resource to navigate the process. We have a very small business and frankly would not have even tried to apply for our NIH grant on our own. The time and effort required just to understand the process are a huge hurdle, and the application process is intimidating.
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- 35A We just submitted our company's first SBIR proposal. When we started, we had no idea which agency to even approach. The whole process was intimidating and I imagine it prevents a lot of small business, like ours, from participating.
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- 36A Applying for SBIR/STTR funding is a significant undertaking. There are so many intricate requirements from Federal and Government agencies with regards to FOAs associated with SBIR/STTR funding, and a small business typically does not have the expertise, bandwidth, or financial means to invest in resources that can help with meeting these requirements. It really requires tremendous guidance from experienced professionals like MNSBIR, Inc. to apply for these funding opportunities.
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- 36B Leveraging an SBIR/STTR resource gives us more time to allocate towards improving our innovation and selecting the right funding opportunities that maximize our chance of award.
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- 37A It is crucial to be able to fund innovative companies that power the economy
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- 37A Funding is the lifeblood of startups. It is extremely difficult for early-stage technology-based startups to raise funding from more traditional sources (VCs and angels) without first generating a lot of evidence and data. SBIR/STTR are great funding sources for tech companies to generate early data and evidence. However - these programs are extremely competitive and without proper guidance, you don't have much chance of success.
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- 37A Access to this capital has proven invaluable for University of Minnesota startups. It is desperately needed to bridge the gap between research and development. It can and has led to helping launch some of the most high potential startups in Minnesota.
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- 40A The SBIR/STTR is a critical resource to establish and maintain a competitive edge for government funding for Minnesota companies. Winning government grants can lead to new innovation remaining in Minnesota and maintaining a strong startup and
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- 40A SBIR/STTR is the best funding mechanism for early stage business ideas, especially those originating from an academic research setting. Funding a medical technology business requires long lead times and seed capital that most individuals cannot raise on their own.
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- 40B there is an art to achieving success with SBIR submissions. It requires submitting to the right agency and group within an agency and it requires crafting the right language to "sell" your concept. These rarely happen by accident. It requires knowing the right people, knowing how the agencies function internally in their decision process, and working with a writer experienced with the intricacies of the targeted agency.
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- 42A SBIR/STTR grants are a great way for early stage companies to get funding to build higher risk or more complex technologies that may not immediately find funding through other sources. The people who seek these grants do not always have the experience in writing grants and understanding the government programs. Having a resource - MNSBIR - that helps guide technologist, researchers, and entrepreneurs in seeking these grants increases the likelihood that these grants are filed and granted to Minnesota businesses. Those initial grants can then lead to future investment, loans, and grants that bring jobs to Minnesota and help grow the small company and startup community in the state.
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- 43A SBIR/STTR grants are a great way to complete critical research for a tech-advantaged company. Grant applications take a ton of time, and guidance is absolutely essential to make sure that the time is spent toward a successful application. Spending the time, and *not winning* is a waste.
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- 44B It was essential for our company. MNSBIR, Inc. saved us from 3 fatal errors in our first application for a Phase 1 STTR grant. Since then and with her incredibly knowledgeable support, we have received \$5M in federal funding.
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- 45A We at Champaign have called on MNSBIR, Inc. over the last 10 years to assist in filling in grants, what grants might be of worth, and helping with competition. We have 3 people in the company. The company started in 2015. We didn't and still don't have the experience and depth which bigger companies have. This resource is crucial for Champaign.
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- 45A The federal government makes hundreds of millions of dollars available to promising startup companies particularly in the life sciences and healthcare fields. The NIH SBIR/STTR programs are an excellent source for MN companies to apply for these grants. However, understanding the protocol and the requirements are critical to being successful in these applications. The federal government offers little in the way of help or support for these applications. Having an organization like MNSBIR is a huge benefit to MN companies who are highly qualified to obtain these grants but need the support to understand the myriad requirements and expectations to succeed.
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- 45B Leaning on a knowledgeable and experienced SBIR/STTR resource can be extremely beneficial for Minnesota small businesses for several reasons:
- Understanding eligibility and requirements: SBIR/STTR programs have specific eligibility requirements and application procedures that can be complicated and time-consuming. An experienced resource can help businesses understand if they qualify for these programs and guide them through the application process.
- Crafting a strong proposal: SBIR/STTR programs are highly competitive, and businesses need to submit a compelling proposal to secure funding. A knowledgeable resource can help businesses craft a strong proposal that highlights their technology's unique value proposition and aligns with the funding agency's priorities.
- Navigating the review process: After submitting a proposal, businesses must undergo a rigorous review process that evaluates their technology's commercial potential and scientific merit. An experienced resource can help businesses navigate this process, respond to reviewers' feedback, and increase their chances of securing funding.
- Leveraging additional resources: In addition to funding, SBIR/STTR programs provide other resources such as business mentoring, networking opportunities, and access to federal facilities. A knowledgeable resource can help businesses take full advantage of these resources and maximize their impact.
- Overall, leveraging a knowledgeable and experienced SBIR/STTR resource can help Minnesota small businesses increase their chances of securing funding, accelerate their R&D efforts, and bring their innovations to market faster.
- Admittedly, I am looking forward to taking advantage of MN based SBIR resources to bring our award winning next generation smart glass technology to the market
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- 46B As a non-PhD, non-university research center medical device startup, I was at a disadvantage applying for an SBIR/STTR. If you haven't done scientific research, you NEED an experienced resource to navigate the detailed, complex instructions and process, know how to write a winning proposal, and know what options are available.
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- 47B Companies cannot afford time to learn only from their mistakes to obtain success know-how in timely fashion.
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- 48A The SBIR process is complex and challenging to navigate, especially for first time small business applicants that do not have experience applying for these extremely beneficial resources. Having someone from MNSBIR to help understand the range of opportunities, the requirements to apply, and the support to ensure applications are competitive can provide tremendous benefit in this highly competitive process.
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- 49A MN Small businesses can greatly benefit from SBIR/STTR funding. Competing against other states for the available funds, by submitting strong proposals, requires a great deal of experience and effort. A knowledgeable and experienced company like MNSBIR can provide an essential service to MN small businesses by supplementing their resources and expertise in this effort.
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49A	The NIH grant application process is complex and very challenging for a small business to navigate. The time and resources needed to apply for grants and financial support takes focus away of developing products, services and market opportunities. The help and trustworthy advice we have received so far from MNSBIR has been invaluable.
49A	Small business owners are generally overworked and underpaid. There are hardly enough hours in the day to complete required essential tasks and roles, let alone devote internal resources to the complex, impenetrable and lengthy process of applying for SBIR/STTR grants.
49A	The process can be daunting, especially for first-time applicants. The funding is meant to reach us, but it shouldn't be the process and forms that keep it from getting to Minnesota companies that merit the funding.
49A	SBIR / STTR are highly competitive and bureaucratic. Most small businesses need help from experts to navigate the process, to some extent.
49B	The SBIR/STTR program is intended to foster new technology developments, but it is a dauntingly complex system that can easily mystify any new entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs need a guiding hand to navigate through and benefit from the SBIR/STTR program. Some items include where, what, and how to file applications, what to put into submissions, understanding the grant budgeting system and knowing what resources in the government or private sectors to contact. Though there are commercial entities specialize in this, the costs tend to be prohibitive. Although Minnesota is known for its medical technology businesses, getting funding for early stages has been deficient and suboptimal. Why shouldn't Minnesota get its fair share of this government program? Pat is a knowledgeable person in this
50A	The Federal SBIR /STTR program is highly competitive and requires a specialized skill set and experience to be awarded the federal dollars. An experienced resource can bring in significant government funding to the small business in Minnesota
50A	It provides key resources for innovative research done at the small businesses.
50B	Small businesses, especially those in technology areas, are the engine of growth in any economy. They create new jobs and tax revenues, and generate new R&D and patents. Stimulating their growth and development is critical for Minnesota's continued success in job creation, revenue creation, and overall economic success, particularly as we are always in competition with other states, and with other countries. Our SBIR/STTR resources are an essential component of this growth. Being competitive in getting these grants is a major part of our being competitive in generating growth, technologies and jobs. Being able to obtain a SBIR/STTR grant is often the crucial difference in an early stage pre-investment tech company achieving success and growth.

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- 52B Applying for SBIR funding through the national government is a complex process that is not easy to navigate. Without guidance and support, it is very difficult to understand what opportunities are available, how to apply, and successfully secure funding. Having the support of experienced SBIR resources increases the number of companies seeking R&D funding, the probability of securing funding, and the amount of funding obtained.
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- 52B An experienced SBIR/STTR resource is absolutely necessary and invaluable in encouraging small business and first-time entrepreneurs to navigate the complex federal SBIR/STTR application process.
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- 59A SBIR/STTR is an invaluable source for a small company with an innovative idea to further develop it and de-risk it as much as possible using non-dilutive funding. However, navigating the federal grant and contract landscape has an extremely steep learning curve even for experienced researchers. Being able to lean on the experience of a local MN organization such as the MNSBIR is critical to submit a solid proposal.
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- 59B Having a skilled and experienced guide to assist during the process of writing SBIR proposals is critical. It is very difficult to succeed at these.
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- 59B MNSBIR, Inc. has been a huge asset to our startup business. We have applied for SBIR funding. Those programs are super competitive with relatively low success rate. They also are complicated. MNSBIR has helped us navigate the various systems and processes. Without help from an experienced coach and advisor, our chances of success are greatly diminished. MNSBIR has helped us improve our odds of receiving funding many times over.
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- 59B MN, more so than many states, has an outstanding technical assistance program to support MN entrepreneurs access federal grants to build their businesses. With venture capital being incredibly hard to access, even more so in the Midwest and for historically marginalized groups, access to the federal dollars are critical to new business creation at scale in MN.
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- 60B Without SBIR, we would have had to sell a substantial share of our company to get a fraction of the capital necessary to conduct the research and build the partnerships that the SBIR program has provided. Without Pat's expertise and network, we would have made fatal errors in our applications and taken far longer to develop the partnerships that cemented our applications and made them successful.
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- 60B It is essential to get timely feedback not only on our proposals but to have someone to walk us through the registrations and application process. Without this help, it is a bit difficult to navigate the process.
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- 60B Minnesota needs as much SBIR/STTR assistance as possible. NIH grants are important to our small businesses, universities, and state. This funding advances research and development and makes MN an attractive and sustainable location to do work related to high tech.
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- 61A It is critical to have a resource to help Minnesota business to navigate the complexities of filing for SBIR/STTR funding. The process is very burdensome and complex which makes it almost impossible for a small business to navigate, especially with limited resources.
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- 61B The intricacies of the SBIR/STTR grant process can be a major barrier preventing innovative small businesses from accessing federal grant dollars. On top of this, the SBIR/STTR grants are highly competitive. Knowledgeable SBIR/STTR resources are critical to avoiding pitfalls, increasing the chance of success, and accelerating innovation in the Minnesota tech ecosystem.
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- 61B Small businesses face many headwinds in their efforts to take advantage of available resources for growth. Being able to reduce the learning curve and avoid unnecessary mistakes in pursuit of SBBR/STTR grant funding greatly increases the likelihood of those grant dollars coming home to MN businesses that can use the funding to sustain their grow trajectories and add value to the overall state economy.
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- 61B The process to navigate government financing is not easy. I was an experienced executive at places like Medtronic and Covidien. I struggled at first. MNSBIR, Inc. was instrumental in helping me understand the process to succeed in getting financing.
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- 61B The MNSBIR Inc is an extraordinary SBIR sherpa for all the tech startups in Minnesota. MNSBIR Inc is very well-versed in the federal SBIR grant/contract application process. MNSBIR Inc can guide the startups thoroughly in terms of the budget requirements and standard practices, subcontractor/consultant involvement, and the associated subawards. MNSBIR Inc staff are very experienced and passionate about helping tech startups navigate the SBIR journey. MNSBIR Inc will guide the startups to the lawyers, and accounting firms best matched to the SBIR reporting requirements. MNSBIR Inc is truly an incredible asset to tech startups in MN.
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- 63A Small businesses face a highly nuanced and potentially risky process when navigating the federal SBIR/STTR system. Unlike traditional research institutions with entire offices devoted to grant administration, small businesses lack in-house expertise, and hiring external support is often unfeasible due to high consultant rates. Despite spending over 10 years conducting research at the University of Minnesota and transitioning to my own startup in 2019, I only learned about the SBIR/STTR programs through specialized organizations like MNSBIR, Inc.. This suggests that such knowledge is not commonly understood within Minnesota's large research institutions and that without a robust, specialized SBIR/STTR program, Minnesota would be missing out on SBIR/STTR opportunities. However, thanks to organizations like MNSBIR, Inc., my company has received over \$400k in federal funding, enabling us to access additional funding opportunities from state and private programs that would not be available without SBIR/STTR funding, and improve our chances at commercializing a new, innovative medical device.
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- 63B Even for experienced grant writers (such as UMN faculty), navigating the process of registering for federal funding and applying for an SBIR grant is complicated and requires a lot of domain-specific knowledge. It is very useful to have a knowledgeable resource to help with this process.
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- 64A It is essential to have professional advice in Minnesota for small businesses to be competitive in the SBIR/STTR application process. A state resource is important to maintain for longterm growth and opportunity creation in the state of Minnesota.
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- 65B It is very difficult to navigate the funding process and submit a winning proposal. The choices are to get help from paid professionals or get help from MNSBIR - without that guidance, the chance of obtaining a grant is zero.
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- 65B I need MNSBIR Inc. to help me have the best chance to get federal funding to take my business to the next level. I need them specifically to help me maximize efficiency due to my limited time. As a first-time start-up business owner, I work part-time performing a job that can pay my bills and student loans, but this is inhibiting my company growth as my company is pre-revenue. That means I can only focus on my company, which aims to develop a novel, non-invasive way to manage chronic pain, at great personal expense via the time I take away from my income-generating job or from extra long hours after a "regular" work-day. Without a roadmap, this would be daunting and overwhelming, and I would be tempted to give up and take the easy-route by working a regular full-time job, instead of continuing to focus on developing something that can hopefully help people in pain and employ other people in the future.
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- 66A Without them, I could never have navigated the SBIR process. They provided fantastic guidance, mentorship, and review such that we could take advantage of a critical resource.
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- 66A Because it is critical for the success of the SBIR proposal to build on their experience, expert advice and review of the proposal prior to submission.
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- 66A There is no other resource in the State to provide support to small businesses to access non-dilutive federal funds. Most SBIR founders come from a technical background with little experience with business organization or market alignment. We need to lean on resources such as MNSBIR.
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- 66A Because MN companies can make a difference in our federal programs and SBIR/STTR can be a meaningful source of revenue and customers.
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- 66A SBIR / STTR grant application is a very complicated and time-consuming process. For a small business trying to innovate, applying for this grant can be a full-time job for a couple of months. It is key for Minnesota to be more competitive in applying for non-dilutive federal funding to have a knowledgeable resource for us to go to.
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Do you believe MNSBIR (the program) and/or MNSBIR Inc. added value to your business as a facilitator and catalyzer in the innovation and technology commercialization ecosystem? If so, how?

DISTRICT	RESPONSE
2A	We not only developed a grant package that won a Phase 1 grant, communicated other resources, helped us developed relationships and got us seriously thinking about commercialization early on.
3A	MNSBIR has provided a wealth of knowledge that has so far better enabled my small business to connect with opportunities and strategize how to work with the inherent complexities of a this great system that involves so many different agencies.
24A	MNSBIR program has been fantastic to our ecosystem and helped many companies get traction and initial phase funding to move the technology forward. There is a huge funding gap between medtech idea and minimum viable product. Venture capital wants to see a prototype but that prototype takes a lot of funding to create and an SBIR/STTR can help close that funding gap.
24A	Yes. I would not have otherwise spent the time to understand the SBIR/STTR process - and learning all the government acronyms. We are following the steps to prepare for future funding opportunities.
25B	Yes, MNSBIR, Inc. helps us with each of our grants, ensuring our grant pattern matches to the dozens (hundreds? thousands?) winning proposals she has seen.
25B	100%, I send every potential innovator with a small business in MN to MNSBIR Inc. to apply for support. Scale up is absolutely crucial.
33A	Yes. MNSBIR provided the necessary resources to navigate the complex SBIR/STTR program effectively.
33B	I absolutely believe that the MNSBIR program added value to our business. On February 14, 2023 we received our Notice of Award for \$1.9 million from the National Institutes of Health! We are using these funds to develop a new wound care innovation which will have a major impact on patient care.
35A	The MNSBIR resources were a huge value to us. I don't think we could have submitted our proposal without their help. Throughout the process, we had questions and confusion that MNSBIR was able to help us work through.
36A	Yes, I firmly believe we need guidance from MNSBIR to know where to start. This is evident from the guidance that Pat Dillon has been providing us for the past couple of months. SBIR funding applications are tedious and require many months of diligent effort. The competition is high and typically only 20% of the applications get funded. Without the guidance of MNSBIR, we won't stand a chance to complete the application process, let alone receive the funding award.
36B	MNSBIR, Inc. has been incredible in guiding our lead investigator and me through the SBIR submission process. She has exposed us to various resources, such as custom webinars with subject matter experts in multiple elements of the grant writing process, guiding us through the various agencies and funding opportunities, and providing copy-edit support for our AIMs page.
37A	Yes, very valuable support.
37A	Absolutely! I have worked with MNSBIR, Inc. in the last 18 months and she brings tremendous experience with how the SBIR process works, how the reviewers think, and where necessary, she brings external help.
37A	Yes. It is key ingredient in the program to launch startups out of the University of Minnesota.
40A	Yes, they were instrumental in helping with our grants (SBIR, CDMRP, and BARDA). We would not have been able to complete our grant application without MNSBIR.

40A	MNSBIR is the main resource Champaign has relied on for information and assistance in securing successful SBIR funding.
40B	Absolutely! Not even a question.
42A	I have co-founded a startup and been an executive in two other startups. I more recently moved to Minnesota from the San Francisco Bay Area (aka Silicon Valley), where I now advise and consult with startups. Startup funding is harder to come by in Minnesota than Silicon Valley, which increases the importance of a supportive community and alternative sources of funding at an early stage. I have met multiple small companies such as XanthosHealth and Telo Design that have leveraged or are planning to leverage SBIR funding to build an initial product that can then lead to commercial pilots and future funding. MNSBIR is known in the community for being a critical resource to help entrepreneurs succeed in filing and receiving grants.
43A	Absolutely! My NSF grant was the catalyst for our growth. The technology we developed under the SBIR grant is core to my business. The guidance from MNSBIR was very helpful for understanding which agencies would be the best fit, and for learning how to communicate my story and technical vision in a clear way.
44B	Yes, absolutely. Without the program, our company would not be succeeding. As mentioned above, without the MNSBIR programs and Pat Dillon, we would not have received any federal funding. The \$5M in funding we have received will keep our company going for at least 5 years.
45A	Without question. Without MNSBIR, Inc. help in seeking our 3 SBIR grants, we would have failed. Champaign is in the medical instrumentation field, working on innovative MRI technology. Pat and her contacts guided us through the grant process as well as competition to watch out for.
45A	Our founding company, Vikriti Management Consulting provides consulting services to the NIH and to SBIR and STTR grantees. However, when it came to applying for our own SBIR grant for Altheia, the assistance of MNSBIR was invaluable. They understand the end to end granting process better than anyone and most importantly, are focused on helping MN based companies be highly competitive for these federal dollars. Starting from the beginning, they help companies to understand the potential opportunity that may be available to them and then how to navigate they system for success. Minnesota's start up and emerging growth companies have a significant competitive advantage in competing for these non-dilutive funding dollars because of MNSBIR.
45B	I truly believe in SBIR/MNSBIR. I know the people supporting the program and see the funding should not be a defining factor.
46B	MNSBIR and MNSBIR Inc added at a minimum 312,000 in tangible value directly to CoraVie Medical. But so much more intangible benefit was also added- credibility, momentum, recognition to name a few. We hired our first fulltime engineer and are now preparing to apply for a \$1.5M SBIR grant. We are also hiring in Minnesota to grow the local economy.
47B	Yes.
48A	Absolutely! Our company has secured nearly \$3 million in federal funding support. We've had success with 3 different federal agencies.
49A	Yes, definitely the help and advice that we received from MNSBIR in the past were very important in securing SBIR/STTR funds in terms of finding solutions and avoiding mistakes when submitting proposals and negotiating SBIR/STTR contracts.
49A	MNSBIR provided guidance throughout our NIH application process as well as resources to help with the grant writing. Specifically, we received great feedback when we were working on our commercialization plan.

49A	Absolutely. MNSBIR is a trusted, expert, reliable resource, providing us with the essential competency to apply for this funding. They provided essential advice, they were the catalyst, link and motivation for us to invest our time and commitment to pursue these funding opportunities. In addition, MNSBIR provided networking, concrete resources and learning opportunities along with access to valuable experts / mentors.
49A	I believe that MNSBIR, Inc. have the knowledge, experience, and connections to help us be successful in our SBIR grant application.
49A	By keeping us in the loop on overall awareness of the program and in answering questions specifically while applying to the program.
49B	We have gone through the struggles of the very early stages to have completed preclinical requirements with FDA IDE approval to begin human clinicals. We can certainly use another grant to help with the clinical studies, and MNSBIR could possibly help with that.
50A	Yes, MNSBIR helped us navigate through the SBIR process and provided us additional insight into other funding opportunities for our small medical device business.
50A	Yes, it helps us in conducting pilot scale researches that paves the foundation for commercialization of our technology.
50B	Yes, the companies that I consult with (especially in med-tech) benefit greatly from this very early funding, typically pre-investors, to achieve that early success and traction, from which they can then advance their ideas and get early-stage angel and VC funding. Without that initial catalyst, given the long growth cycle of firms in high-tech industries, it is sometimes difficult for them to get beyond the idea stage, and become viable economic entities. I am currently working with MNSBIR on grant funding for a Minnesota med-device company that is on the cutting edge of developing a new technology supporting Fluorescence Guided Surgery (FGS), and the SBIR grant will make a significant difference for us in moving forward. I have been privileged to know Pat Dillon for many years, in her previous roles supporting SBIR funding, and I think she is a wonderful resource for Minnesota, and an absolute professional.
52B	Having knowledgeable resources has helped our company apply and secure NIH funding in a Phase I grant for \$293,000. Without the guidance we received from MNSBIR, Inc. we likely would not have applied due to the complex process and if we did apply our chances of receiving funding would have been less. We also would not have realized the full amounts of funding that are available as part of the grant so we would have received about \$43,000 less due to lack of knowledge of the process and the opportunities available. We are now getting ready to apply to a Phase II grant for significantly more funding, and MNSBIR will be critical to helping us secure our next grant.
52B	MNSBIR has provided guidance that allowed our company to successfully apply for and receive SBIR funding.
59A	Most definitely. They have helped not only with us being able to figure out how to submit or SBIR contract, in particular the business proposals (budgets etc), but also to identify excellent lawyers and accountants afterwards as we were executing on the Phase I award we received.
59B	I credit MNSBIR as essential to our company winning an NSF SBIR Phase I award. We would have failed without this essential support.
59B	Yes! Although we were not awarded the first time, we were encouraged to reapply. We also now have the confidence and experience to reapply.

60B	I don't believe MNSBIR added value, I know it did. Just the process of applying for SBIR grant funded made our company's product offering more expansive and facilitated how we think about commercialization by thinking through connecting what we thought we needed to develop with the priorities of the funding agency. MNSBIR is an invaluable coach for this process.
60B	Both had added value to us by helping us along through the process of submitting and helping to give us feedback on our application as well as the summary statements that we received back.
60B	MNSBIR is an important organization for research and development. Federal funding for high tech startups is oftentimes the only way to facilitate research. MN needs 100 times the amount of resources dedicated to securing federal funding for life sciences.
61A	MNSBIR, INC. has been critical to securing a successful SBIR Phase I grant which has helped us launch and sustain our business since 2020. Our technology wouldn't existing in the marketplace if it wasn't for SBIR funding.
61B	Absolutely. Not only did MNSBIR assist us in understanding the SBIR grant process but in reviewing our proposals it helped us clearly identify our commercialization path in an easy to understand format. Many businesses rely on SBIR funding to help bridge the gap between technology in a lab and a commercially viable business; MNSBIR is the accessible resource to catalyze this opportunity.
61B	Definitely. As a small business owner, you have to juggle a large number of competing priorities with limited resources. A program like MNSBIR and a team like MNSBIR Inc. really increased our odds of succeeding in a very competitive federal funding environment by bringing the experience and expertise that we just couldn't deliver on our own.
61B	Absolutely. I am certain we would not have received SBIR grants without the support of the program.
61B	In addition to the expected guidance on how to navigate the SBIR application and award performance journey, the MNSBIR Inc also directed our tech startup towards key funding resources within the US DoD Research and Engineering enterprise for dual use hardware startups. MNSBIR, Inc connected our startup to BBCetc, an excellent organization for SBIR awardee startups for SBIR compliant bookkeeping and related services.
63A	<p>Deep technology startups have the potential to make highly impactful changes in fields such as healthcare, agriculture, and defense, etc. but they often face the challenge of needing to prove the technological and economic feasibility of their innovations before obtaining funding from traditional sources, like private investors. SBIR/STTR funding is critical for such "moonshot" technologies to get off the ground.</p> <p>Thanks to MNSBIR/MNSBIR, Inc., my company was able to secure our first \$350k SBIR Phase I award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to develop our medical device for Opioid Use Disorder. Without this funding, we would not have been eligible for key commercialization programs at the National Institutes of Health, such as the "Innovation Corps," which offers an additional \$55k in funding. This SBIR award has also allowed us to take advantage of other Minnesota state (e.g., LaunchMN, SciTech) and college (e.g., MacNest, Medical Alley's Innovation Scholars) programs that help startups prove technology and commercialization feasibility, and offer unique paid internship / training opportunities to Minnesota's students.</p> <p>With a strong SBIR/STTR financial foundation, my company has been able to apply for more federal</p>
63B	Yes, the helpful SBIR information sessions provide a good overview of the SBIR application process. MNSBIR, Inc. has also been very responsive in helping us to address specific issues that have come up in the registration process, including reaching out to colleagues in similar positions across the country to get additional information.

64A	Yes, I initially learned the core principles of the application process through MNSBIR programming and have received valuable support throughout several applications that have resulted in successful grant awards.
65B	The most important value adds are proposal submission and help with research planning. The importance o developing a sound research plan can't be over emphasized. It is important not just for getting a grant, but making sure the innovation has a chance to develop.
65B	MNSBIR Inc. has definitely added value to my company via training I have been able to obtain at no-cost. As a pre-revenue company, my funding is either via grants used for very specific projects or is personally funded, and I do not have the means for much of that. Even though I, fortunately, have affiliation with UMN and could get some of these resources via the U, the extra focus and feedback that I have received for my company specifically has been extremely helpful since joining MNSBIR Inc's accelerator and gives me that extra competitive edge I need to have a chance in a system with low success rate (SBIR/STTR grant proposals).
66A	Yes, they taught us 1) the breadth of non dilutive funding that we have access too from the federal government and 2) they ensured we navigated it correctly
66A	MNSBIR (the program) and/or MNSBIR Inc. added huge value to our business by enabling us to successfully apply and receive federal funding through the NSF SBIR Phase I and Phase II awards.
66A	MNSBIR provided access to networks for auxiliary support such as accounting, financial forecasting, budgets, intellectual property, corporate structuring, etc. We would not have been successful without MNSBIR.
66A	We do believe that MNSBIR is essential to Minnesota's innovation ecosystem to compete for non-dilutive funding and create jobs supporting these efforts in the state of Minnesota. SBIR / STTR grant application process and managing the funds after being granted require different sets of expertise that we don't have and MNSBIR has been actively connecting us with these resources to build a strong and competitive application for our company

If you could share one thing with a legislator about MNSBIR, Inc., what would you say?

DISTRICT RESPONSE

- 3A MNSBIR, Inc is the best chance that we as small and rural businesses have to connect with large opportunities and succeed in a massive way. It should receive your support so that we can provide economic growth and opportunities within our communities to improve quality of life.
- 19A MNSBIR, Inc. is good for Minnesota
- 24A An investment of \$5 million today gives Minnesota small businesses support and knowledge to access the \$12 billion in federal government funding until 2025, and this investment is expected to return \$100M in 5 years with significant economic impact in government and commercial sector sales, investments, patents, STEM jobs, etc. Now that's a return on investment!
- 25B SBIR funding is important to the continued advancement of Minnesota as a high-tech ecosystem, and MNSBIR, Inc is a critical resource to help startups win more non-dilutive funding.
- 25B MNSBIR Inc. has been crucial in teaching the SBIR and STTR programs to Mayo Clinic innovators and graduate students. We could not have done this without them.
- 29B MNSBIR, Inc. helped us with financial budgeting support to potential grant recipients. I cannot tell you the number of times I have heard, "I wish I would have known this much sooner. It would have saved me so much time and money!".
- 32B Support services for the new businesses is important for success
- 33A MNSBIR, Inc. is a valuable resource to small businesses and start-ups in Minnesota. Without MNSBIR's support, companies would have difficulty navigating the complexities of the Federal SBIR/STTR program.
- 33B MNSBIR, Inc. has been a tremendous help to us and the return on any investment in her organization will pay back many times over. I believe the math is straightforward - there are billions in federal grant dollars available, and we need to be bringing our fair share of that spend here to Minnesota. My thinking is that we should think of MNSBIR, Inc. as a Venture Capital firm. We should be growing their organization with the intent of making MNSBIR, Inc. the largest "VC firm" in the state.
- 35A MNSBIR, Inc. cares deeply about helping small businesses navigate the SBIR/STTR system. It is also clear that MNSBIR is stretched thin and could help so many more business with additional personnel. I would love to see them funded so that they can not only react to incoming interest in the SBIR/STTR programs, but also do education and outreach to make more Minnesota businesses aware of the funds available to foster innovation.
- 36A MNSBIR is a boon to small businesses across Minnesota that want to apply for SBIR/STTR funding and is a lifeline for developing new technologies and job creation.
- 36B Innovation is the only long-term mechanism to enhance wealth and income per capita. State legislators that maximize innovation in their states by providing a fertile ecosystem for innovation throughout the entire commercialization process will have better average incomes and a more extensive tax base to create better living conditions for all.
- 37A Specific and critical support in preparing and filing the proposal.

37A	If we want our region to be known as the technology hub and maintain its place as one of the top innovation hub (especially in healthcare sector), it is imperative that we support the ecosystem and MNSBIR Inc is one of the most critical component of this ecosystem. Please support this program.
37A	This needs to be funded! It will deliver multiples in value to the state of Minnesota. MNSBIR provides a critical role in helping Minnesota startups get access to this valueable grant funding. As a state, we deserve our share, help us make that happen by funding this resource that will make this happen.
40A	MNSBIR is our state's secret ingredient for successful innovative companies which will drive stable employment, job growth, and attract talent. They help all companies throughout the state.
40A	Please support MNSBIR, it is a critical resource for MN start-ups!
40B	Providing companies with strategy and proposal preparation advice is an important economic development strategy that will help further develop Minnesotas technology industry. Our best hope is to grow organically, and SBIR assistance has proven to be an exceptionally efficient strategy with a strong ROI.
42A	This is a critical resource - a multiplier - in the startup community. The investment in MNSBIR pays back in the state with the federal funds it helps capture and the follow on investment that comes to the companies that are able to gain SBIR funds.
43A	Minnesota is under-represented in Federal grants. MNSBIR helps to level the playing field so that Minnesota companies can get the support required to build long-lasting companies built on technical advantage.
44B	Please fund this program! It absolutely brings dollars into the state, even in the short term, and provides companies' with the foundational funding needed to grow into strong employers in the state.
45A	Champaign employs 3 people. Those 3 pay taxes and vote. Champaign have the potential to be a 50-person company, manufacturing software-hardware here in Minnesota, paying more taxes.
45A	Academic Institutions and Healthcare, Life Sciences and other scientific companies in all 50 states are vying for this money. The states that spend a small amount of money supporting their efforts are the long term winners. This money costs the states nothing except support, yet the growth in supporting successful businesses in this sector is tremendous. MNSBIR is amazingly well positioned to support MN companies. MN has a robust and growing Life Sciences and Healthcare industry however it needs these startup companies to remain vibrant and competitive. MNSBIR has the knowledge and expertise to provide the support needed in this sector, they need the resources and funding to be successful.
46B	The ROI is well documented for MNSBIR, Inc. I don't know many other places where the state can make such a small investment that will drive long-term significant economic benefit, that will then in-turn drive jobs, economy, etc.
47B	Commitment and experience to accomplish mission.
48A	Please ensure Minnesota small. businesses continue to have access to a resource that has demonstrated its ability to help Minnesota capture a significant amount of available federal funding.

49A	In more than one occasion, MNSBIR helped us as an effective advocate to receive correct response from SBIR/STTR offices which were not providing timely responses to our information requests regarding the status of our proposal or award.
49A	As a small business owner, there are many competing demands to deal with on a daily basis to keep the company moving in the right direction. Time being a short commodity, having MNSBIR in our corner with information about market developing opportunities, grant opportunities as well as being a resource for networking has been a great asset for our company.
49A	If you support small business development in Minnesota, MNSBIR is a critical resource for growing this vital part of our state's economy.
49A	MN has tremendous innovators, working on very creative programs. Funding is the key factor leading to their startup business failures. I can attest to that from personal experience. If I'd had SBIR funding in a prior company I started, it would still be here today, creating jobs and continuing to innovate in Minnesota.
49B	MNSBIR, Inc. is experienced to help entrepreneurs getting grants from the SBIR/STTR programs.
50A	MNSBIR works diligently to help small businesses to competitively apply for federal funds.
50A	Please help support the small business innovation and increase the competitiveness of Minnesota by keep funding the program
50B	Our state economy will advance or decline based on our ability to stimulate new ideas and technologies, fund early-stage pre-investment companies, and thereby continue to have a vibrant dynamic economy of growth, and the creation of new jobs and tax revenues. MNSBIR is and will continue to be a critically significant part of that advance.
52B	MN small businesses need great resources like MNSBIR, Inc. to help them secure competitive federal R&D funding. Investments in MNSBIR, Inc. not only has a high ROI for MN but it is directly supporting the MN small businesses that are creating the innovations that will change the world.
52B	Without MNSBIR, our small business would not have applied for an SBIR award and would not have even been founded.
59A	A resource such as the MNSBIR is a must if our state MN is to move forward in the innovation landscape. Our small business' ability to receive non-dilute SBIR/STTR funding is what will put us ahead of the game when we later go for accelerator/incubator applications and VC funding competing with other small businesses NATIONALLY!
59B	Investing in MNSBIR, Inc. is a way to create a massive impact on the Minnesota small business ecosystem because of the leverage that the MNSBIR team brings to helping small businesses secure necessary funding to build their businesses.
59B	As someone relatively new to SBIR funding programs, we would not have a chance of success without coaching and council from MNSBIR. If we want more startup companies that provided high-value, high tech jobs in Minnesota, we citizens of the state of Minnesota need to fund MNSBIR.
59B	It is a critical resource to empower MN entrepreneurs and innovation.

60B	MNSBIR has not only developed a vast and deep network not only in Minnesota but across the Federal government but has amassed decades of experience coaching companies through not only the SBIR process (targeting a specific agency, application preparation, post-award support, developing a multi-agency strategy - all at NO COST to the business) but also as a trusted mentor who is always there. It makes NO SENSE to keep that knowledge and capability within one person or a small organization that despite a diminutive budget has helped bring hundreds of millions of NONDILUTIVE business development funding to Minnesota.
60B	This is a vital service to help expand the biotech industry in Minnesota and I feel like the ROI makes any investment worth it.
60B	MNSBIR needs help and cannot survive on their own. There are very few individuals that are knowledgeable about NIH, DOD, and NSF research grants. This is the highest level of research our nation produces and it needs to thrive.
61A	It is critical. It is not an option to minimize or remove this incredibly valuable resource for Minnesota business founders, especially in a very unfavorable external / VC environment and economic downturn.
61B	MNSBIR is a fundamental pillar to small business development, innovation, and the creation of jobs in Minnesota.
61B	Minnesota has been historically under-represented in receipt of federal grant funding, particularly in the clean energy startup space. If the state really wants to commit to its clean energy policies and promote the growth of Minnesota-based tech companies to help solve those problems, this is a tremendous opportunity to invest in something that will return the dollars spent many-fold in the years to come.
61B	This program is the envy of my entrepreneur colleagues in California and Massachusetts. It makes us decide to form companies in Minnesota over these other states.
61B	MNSBIR, Inc is absolutely essential in the state of Minnesota to build a successful and vibrant tech startup ecosystem. Deep tech startups need to have adequate support in order to apply and secure federal SBIR grants/contracts. An organization like MNSBIR, Inc is the major catalyst in creating and maintaining an MN tech startup ecosystem where the startups use the federal SBIR grants/contracts to derisk the technology/business risks and progress towards scalable technology commercialization.
63A	MNSBIR, Inc. embodies the entrepreneurial strategy and spirit that is required to help new startups translate state-of-the-art science into real-world, highly-impactful innovations.
63B	MNSBIR is an important resource for helping to enable early-stage innovation and commercialization of basic research in Minnesota.
64A	The SBIR/STTR federal programs are viable sources of small business support and MNSBIR plays a crucial role in helping Minnesota companies become competitive to win these awards and grow their business.
65B	This is the best way to parlay the value of a Minnesota education into creating jobs and economic development around skilled jobs in Minnesota.
65B	MNSBIR, Inc. is an invaluable program for those of us working in the start-up world. This is an incredibly competitive world. Having MNSBIR, Inc. in our corner helps give us, as Minnesota business owners, a competitive advantage for major federal funding to take our companies to the next level.

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- 66A MNSBIR had dedicated countless hours to ensure our company gets off the ground. They are doing a tremendous job, and we need their expertise.
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- 66A MNSBIR, Inc.'s guidance and advice, including reviewing all of our SBIR submission materials made a critical difference and significantly strengthened our application. Without her involvement it is difficult to see how we would be able to be successful with our application.
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- 66A MNSBIR has deep insight into federal funding and unique expertise of articulating market alignment with technology. This is a key skill that many founders lack.
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- 66A We experienced working with MNSBIR, Inc. when we need help with an SBIR grant application we had no idea how much work and effort is required just to register for SAM, etc. They have been and continue to be the first organization we talk to mentions when we discuss SBIR / STTR grant. Resourceful and helpful for us in a timely manner; and the best part is their passion about facilitating innovation in Minnesota and we're grateful to MNSBIR.
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