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More small businesses eligible for “Phase 0” grant proposal aid

Enterprise Florida and partners will help more technology companies better their chance to receive Small Business Innovation Research or Small Business Technology Transfer funds

ORLANDO, FL (May 23, 2007) – Enterprise Florida (EFI) is expanding its program that helps small businesses develop strong proposals for federal small business grants.

Launched in November 2005, the SBIR/STTR “Phase 0” Pilot Program has assisted companies in developing proposals for federal SBIR and STTR (Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer) Phase 1 grants of about \$100,000.

SBIR is a highly competitive program that encourages small business to explore their technological potential and provides the incentive to profit from its commercialization. STTR expands funding opportunities in the federal innovation research and development arena. A key aspect of STTR is the expansion of the public-private sector partnership to include the joint venture opportunities for small business and the nation's premier nonprofit research institutions.

Enterprise Florida undertook “Phase 0” because overall SBIR/STTR success rates for proposals submitted by Florida companies were low when compared to other states. (Florida, for instance, ranked 38th in 2005.) “The goal was to help them to submit higher quality proposals and have a higher award rate,” explained John Adams Jr., EFI president & CEO. “Now, our pilot program is paving the way for more of Florida's small technology businesses to access \$2 billion in Federal SBIR and STTR seed/early state capital.”

Through “Phase 0,” EFI awards qualified companies grants in amounts up to \$3,000, which can be applied toward preparation efforts (e.g., market research, proposal/grant writing, legal aid for patent filing, site visits to labs, etc.) for an SBIR or STTR proposal submittal. The program provides assistance on a first-come/first-served basis, and a company must not have received a Phase I award in the past five years.

Until recently, eligible businesses included only clients of EFI’s “Phase 0” partners: 23 university Technology Transfer offices, technology incubators, economic development organizations and small business development centers. However, the program has been expanded to allow participation by any company screened and recommended by a partner organization. There’s a point of contact designated in each Florida county.

“The Phase 0 program is a phenomenal opportunity for resource strapped companies to capitalize on external sources of assistance,” said Sanjay Patel, president of Datanautix, an Orlando firm that helps its clients achieve better results from their back office and call centers operations. “Beyond the obvious benefits of providing funds to assist with the development of an

SBIR proposal, the review and feedback provided by the Phase 0 process gave us a firm foundation for writing a Phase 1 SBIR proposal.”

“Another benefit of winning a Phase 1 grant is that it can pave the way to higher level SBIR and STTR grants,” said Carol Ann Dykes, chief operating officer for the University of Central Florida Technology Incubator. “It can be a stepping stone to Phase 2 and open the door to more opportunity for small businesses.”

For information on SBIR/STTR “Phase 0” Pilot Program participation, visit <http://www.eflorida.com/phase0/> or contact Bill Kean, senior director of Quality for Enterprise Florida, at (407) 956-5606 or bkean@eflorida.com.

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Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) is a partnership between Florida's business and government leaders and is the principal economic development organization for the state of Florida. Headquartered in Orlando, EFI's mission is to diversify Florida's economy and create better-paying jobs for its citizens by supporting, attracting and helping to create businesses in innovative, high-growth industries. In pursuit of its mission, EFI works closely with a statewide network of economic development partners and is funded both by the State of Florida and by private-sector businesses.

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