



What innovations will interest the Air Force and can you get SBIR funding to develop them?

The Department of Defense offers a range of programs that include innovation goals and each of those programs has many different components. That means you have a wide range of potential customers for whatever solution your small business offers.

So how do you know where to start?

The DoD has the largest SBIR budget and part of that is available to the Air Force, which has developed innovative ways to work with small business. The first step in successfully getting SBIR funding through the Air Force is to understand what they need.

The Air Force produces an annual event that brings together industry, individual innovators, academia, investors, military, and government team members. The goal is to present innovative solutions for Air Force areas of interest and facilitate an environment of connection and collaboration.

What came from that three-day event was a list of possible important innovations that would help the Air Force successfully navigate a rapidly changing world landscape, including:

- Protection against threats (cyber or otherwise)
- Keeping bases safe if they were cut off from logistics and resupply from the U.S.
- Enhancing the health and wellbeing of airmen and their families
- Leveraging technology to improve support resources

Does “innovation” have to be something entirely new? Absolutely not. The DoD and the Air Force are very much open to existing solutions that could be redeployed for military purposes through additional research.

So, if you already have a solution for areas such as education or agriculture, now may be a perfect time to apply for SBIR funds to adapt it for Air Force needs. The Air Force, through its AFWERX program, has a goal to help small businesses find internal Air Force customers. They are making up to \$50,000 available in their SBIR Phase I program to support that effort.

To get a sense of what the Air Force is looking for, take a look at the [AFWERX Showcase](#) as well as the [upcoming topics pre-release scheduled for August 25](#).

If you need to learn more about how to create a compelling SBIR funding proposal, please contact Jerry Hollister at BBCetc at jerry@bbcetc.com.