



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

# NEWS RELEASE

## PRESS OFFICE

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### **SBA Launches 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Growth Accelerator Fund Competition, Debuts SBIR Catalyst to Award over \$5 Million in Prizes**

**WASHINGTON** – The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) announced its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Growth Accelerator Fund Competition (GAFC) with the addition of a new component aimed at spurring investment in underrepresented communities within the innovation economy at scale. The 2021 Growth Accelerator Fund Competition and Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Catalyst programs will recognize the nation's most innovative organizations with inclusive approaches towards supporting entrepreneurs in research and development (R&D). New to this year's competition, two tracks will run totaling over \$5 million in cash prizes.

“The Growth Accelerator and SBIR Catalyst programs are important parts of our efforts to support high-tech, deep-tech startups, by developing a network that targets the unique needs of pre-revenue, R&D-focused businesses,” said [SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman](#). “We are committed to equity and will award prizes to organizations that are finding ways to inclusively support underserved entrepreneurs -- including women, people of color, and individuals living in underrepresented geographic regions -- so that they can participate, contribute, and benefit from the U.S. innovation ecosystem.”

**Track 1-The Growth Accelerator Fund Competition (GAFC):** Prizes of \$50,000 will be awarded to accelerators, incubators, and related entrepreneur programs proposing impactful assistance to STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math)/R&D entrepreneurs. This year, the competition will award an estimated 84 prizes to successful applicants who focus their proposed efforts on assisting the following groups: women entrepreneurs, minority entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs building technologies to address key policy issues such as clean energy and supply chain resilience, or an underserved target group identified by the applicant (i.e., rural, veterans, individuals with disabilities, etc.).

**Track 2- SBIR Catalyst:** For the first time, seven additional prizes of \$150,000 will be awarded through SBIR Catalyst to scale collaborative partnerships and build regional collaborations in support of SBIR/STTR (Small Business Technology Transfer) applicants and awardees, fulfilling SBA's mission of addressing gaps in access to the innovation economy for communities of color, women entrepreneurs, and rural communities.

For both tracks, applicants must submit a brief 12-slide presentation addressing the relevant elements of their track and a video narrative of no more than 90 seconds. Panels of expert

judges from the private and public sector with experience in early stage investment, entrepreneurship, academia, startups and economic development will review proposals.

Competition rules, requirements and additional information can be found at [www.sbir.gov/accelerators](http://www.sbir.gov/accelerators).

**Submission period:** May 26, 2021 4:00 PM EDT to June 25, 2021 4:00 PM EDT

**Winners to Be Announced:** August 2021

### **About the SBIR and STTR Programs**

The SBIR/STTR programs represent the nation's largest source of early stage research and development funding for small businesses. SBA coordinates the programs, collaborating with 11 federal agencies, who collectively supported more than \$4 billion a year in federal research and development funding. [www.sbir.gov](http://www.sbir.gov).

### **About the U.S. Small Business Administration**

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start and grow their businesses. It delivers services to people through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).