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UNDERSTANDING & PREPARING GRANT APPLICATION WEBINAR  
EFFECTIVE GRANT WRITING AND APPLICATION TIPS  
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(Recording in progress)

>> RUTH CHAVEZ: Welcome, everyone, to the Understanding & Preparing Grant Application Webinar. Thank you for joining us. We will begin momentarily. We are going to give about 30 seconds for everyone to join us. We will get started shortly.

Welcome, everyone, to Understanding & Preparing Grant Application Webinar - Effective Grant Writing and Application Tips Master. To join today's Webinar, the audio for today's meeting can be accessed using computer audio or by calling in by phone.

If you select computer audio, please make sure your speakers are turned on and your headphones are plugged in. To call in for audio, dial (301)715-8592. Today's meeting code is 883 6778 5634.

And the ASL Interpreter will be Spotlighted throughout the presentation. For the best viewing experience, please navigate to Speaker View using the options on the top right corner of your screen.

Realtime Captioning is being provided. Captions can be found clicking on the CC button in the Zoom controls at the bottom of the screen. If you do not see the captions after clicking the CC button, please alert the host via Chat.

Send any questions or concerns to the NDI host via the Chat Box. We will address questions as time allows, and there will be a dedicated Q&A Session at the end.

If you prefer to ask questions through ASL, raise your hand and wait to be called on. If your questions are not answered or you are unable to use the Chat, you can email us at [info@disabilitysmallbusiness.org](mailto:info@disabilitysmallbusiness.org). Please note that this Webinar is being recorded and will be available on our website at [disabilitysmallbusiness.org](http://disabilitysmallbusiness.org) within one to two weeks.

And before we get into the Webinar for today, we would like to start with assessing your knowledge of Grant-Writing Applications. There are ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The poll will remain open for two minutes. It looks like Lexi has launched the poll.

I will give it a couple more seconds. If you are just joining us, the poll has launched. Feel free to answer the questions that popped up on the screen. Okay, great. It has been two minutes. Thank you, Lexi. Please note that today's Webinar and the contents of the Webinar was developed under a Grant Number from the Department of Education.

I forgot to mention that we will be relaunching the poll at the very end with the same questions, so, please keep in mind that that will be requested at the very end.

And now I am excited to introduce you to Sarah Soltz, the Founder and CEO Labyrinth Consulting and a specialist in helping businesses secure funding. Sarah, thank you for being with us today.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: Thank you, Ruth. This is Sarah, welcome, everyone, and thank you to the National Disability Institute for inviting me to give this presentation. I am really excited to be here today. I am Sarah Soltz, and I have a background this Social Sciences and Business, and for the last few years and work for and led a Biomedical Start-up here in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

We created Artificial Intelligence, or AI-based reading tools, especially focused on small business innovation business.

After leaving the Biomedical Start-up, I decided to use my experience as a start-up leader and Grant-writing for my own company, Labyrinth Consulting, to help other companies develop non-diluted, early strategy, and that is what we will be talking about today, Grant-writing and the SBIR Program.

While I will be talking about small business, and technology development, and the SBIR Grant Program, specifically, the principles I cover will apply to many different kinds of Grant-Writing Application.

My goal is to give you more of a workshop than lecture so by the time we are done you will have an overview of Best Practices, the SBIR Program and will have started your own Grant Applications.

We will be covering a lot of information in a short amount of time. Don't feel like you have to memorize any of it, but keep in mind with planning and strategizing, you can apply for your own grants.

The work you do to submit a Grant Application will help you in other areas of your organization.

If you would like to share, feel free to share a few words in the Chat about where you are, what you are working on, and where you are in the Grant-writing process.

Here is our agenda. We will start with an overview of the Grant and Proposal-writing process. To let you know, I will use those words, Grant and Proposal, interchangeably, as we talk about the material you create to apply for a Grant. Next, we will focus on the SBIR Program, starting with a short overview, we will take a short break and come back to talk about SBIR Standard and Budgets. We will have a lot of breaks for questions and you can also put those in the chat at any point, as well.

Let's get started with the "why" and "how" of Grant-writing. Why apply for a Grant? When starting a small business or non-profit, you know your resources, including time and money, are limited and precious. In the scale of small business or start-up, another one of those resources is ownership of the company. The longer you can keep the ownership intact, the better, because you and investors will own larger shares of the company. Funding pays for Research and Development, without giving up equity and ownership of your company.

Depending on what kind of business you are in, or what kind of technology you are developing, you may have to exchange equity for funding later on. A Biomedical Start-up, for example, may be many years and millions of dollars to turn its research into a product to sell.

This is because the industry is highly regulated, so the companies need to invest in regulatory approvals that entail extensive testing, validation, Clinical Trials, complex applications and so-on.

If you have a company that will need this kind of

investment at a later stage of development, you can set yourself up to be in a stronger position for pitches to investors, by winning Grants in the early stages.

Not only for the funding itself, be you to know Venture Capitalists and others that your business and technology have been vetted by peers and funding agencies. Next slide, please.

Let's talk about Best Practices. Here are some general Grant-writing Best Practices that apply to any kind of application, and to which we will return when we focus in on SBIRs.

Number one, give yourself plenty of time. I can tell you from experience, there is nothing worse than trying to cram six months to a year's worth of work into the space of a few weeks. If you can, start researching and planning your Proposal well ahead of time.

If you are applying for a small grant, a month or two may be enough, for something like a Federal Grant, you should be preparing six to 12-months ahead depending on how much work you have done already. You will need that time to --

So when you have to start asking others to buy in and demonstrate their support for your work.

Second, as I mentioned, you have plenty of research to do to just prepare for the Grant Application. That means on the web, in the lab, and in-person. You may already know what you are applying for, or you may need to research what grants are available to you, and what the application site looks like. You almost certainly need to understand the organization you are applying to, and what they funded in the past.

Looking at databases of past awards can also help you identify other potential funders. In addition to technology research that produces the preliminary results that you can use to argue for your scientific approach, you will need to be doing market research to establish that you are fulfilling a customer need.

Who is this customer? How will you find them? What problem do they have that you can solve? Is it significant enough to motivate them to buy your product?

How much is the solution worth? These are the kinds of questions you need to be asking of actual people in addition to the internet before you start writing.

And all of this is applicable to any kind of Grant, whether you are talking about customers, clients or other kinds of stakeholders.

Researching and understanding the complex surrounding your particular problem and solution will help you to find the right

funder, and build a strong argument about why your work deserves their support.

Third, follow whatever directions you have been given in your Notice for Funding Opportunity, Request for Proposals, or solicitation, and those are all synonyms. This is why I can't give you one template or Style Guide for a Proposal, every funder wants something different and has specific instructions about how to present your application.

Some organizations or agencies will do an Administrative Review of your Proposal before they allow it to the next phase of the review process. If you find they haven't followed the directions about formatting or page limits, for example, they may throw your Proposal out before it even gets reviewed for content. You absolutely do not want to do all that work of putting together a Proposal for nothing.

So, following the directions in Funding Opportunity not only ensures you get to the next stage, but it also ensures that your Proposal is easily readable. This is really important. Don't make your reader work any harder than they have to.

You want to keep them focused on your argument at all times, and follow formatting directions helps to keep them focused, rather than distracting them with type that is too small to read, or whatever the case may be.

So, while following the directions may not seem like the most important part of the Proposal, it can be what keeps you in the game, rather than being eliminated right off the bat.

Fourth, and this may be the hardest, define your scope. You need to strike a balance between trying to do too much, versus not doing enough, based on what your funder is looking for, the fund these are offering, and the time available.

It is important to be responsive to the funding opportunity, but obviously, you will be limited by time and money. So, developing that scope and being really specific about what you are going to do is a balancing act. Meaning that you are continuing to move back-and-forth between your goals and what you can do with the funds and time allotted, until you reach the right balance.

I know that was kind of broad, but we will come back to this point later on when we talk about SBIRs.

Fifth, find a friend or colleague who is not directly involved in the proposed project, and ask them to review your application. One more reason to start early so you have plenty of time for reviews and revisions.

This reviewer can point out weaknesses in your argument, gaps in your research, and other things that you might have

missed because of your immersion in the work. While you still have time to make revisions.

Grant-writing timeline. Let's delve a little more deeply into the Best Practices we just talked about. First is the timeline. Here is an example of a 12-month timeline. I know the type is kind of small, but what is important here is the concept rather than the details because those will differ from project to project.

As I said before, if you are working on a large, complex Proposal, you may need to start planning a year or more ahead of time, as I showed here.

Or for a smaller project, you can break this up into some other incremental weeks and months, but the point is to plan out your time well in advance so you are not rushing at the end.

In this example, focus on a larger Grant. I show starting with that research process, possible Grants, that is at the top-left of the slide. Possible Grants, funders, previous awards, a year or more in advance.

Next comes registering your company on any websites or application Portals that can take some time. You don't want to get to the end of all this work and find you can't even submit your Proposal. That is important. 10 to 11 months out you are conducting preliminary research in the lab and market. At nine months you are continuing with market research and starting to analyze your data.

At 8 months you are thoroughly reading your solicitation for Request for Proposals and creating a detailed plan for who will do what and when. 7 months out you are reaching out to potential collaborators, and at six months you are drafting objectives and specific aims required by collaborators. This is another point in the process that can take a significant amount of time, especially if you are dealing with a large bureaucracy like a university, so don't wait until the last minute.

5 months out use your objectives to start drafting your research plan and any supporting figures. 6 months out you draft objectives. And 3 months out draft and identify an outside review are. 2 months out you should start working with your independent reviewer, and if possible, with teams within your company, to review and revise your Proposal. With 1 month to go, you should have collected all the supporting Documentation, like those collaborator letters, and be finalizing your Proposal imagine related to your funding agency.

Plan to submit at least a couple days, if not a week ahead of time before the due date because if the funder's website crashes or you have other technical difficulties, you may miss

the deadline and all that hard work will have been for nothing. Next slide, please.

Grant-writing research on Grants.gov. With this slide I want to show you other grant research, including Federal Grants like SBIRs, as well as others.

As you can see on the left, you can search for a keyword, then narrow by status. I have chosen forecasted and posted. And for funding type, I have chosen Grant. If you look at the result on the right, you can see they are organized by opportunity, number, title, agency, status, posted date and closed date, or due date.

You can see the first couple come from the Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, and after that we see some from Department of Health and Human Services. Next, please.

So, scrolling down on the same web page, you can see on the left you can filter by eligibility. I chose small businesses, category and agency. On the right you can see more results. If you click on the opportunity numbers, you will go to a page with more information about that particular Grant, including the actual Funding Opportunity.

Next, please.

So, now we have Grant-writing research on SBIR.gov/topics. Similarly, you can use the site to search specifically for SBIRs. In this example I used the keyword pain to start my search in the left.

As you scroll down you can refine the search starting with opening and closing dates, and you can see the results on the right. Next, please.

You can also refine results by status. I chose open and agency. On the right at this point you can see results from the Department of Health and Human Services. Next, please.

Scrolling down further, you can refine by phase, Phase 1 or 2, program, SBIR, or STTR, we will talk about that later, and funding year.

So, if you are looking for Federal Grants or SBIR specifically, Grants.gov and SBIR.gov are good places to search.

If you are looking for non-profit Grants, there is a database called Candid that you can access through your public University, and there are Notifiers for Funding Opportunities and so forth. If you have other sources for grants that you have found or like, feel free to share those in the Chat, also. Next, please.

So, just briefly on Grant-writing, solicitations and instructions.

Again, we are going back to the list of Best Practices. I

want to show you a couple of examples related to the Funding Opportunities themselves, and the directions for completing an application for this kind of Grant.

On the left is an SBIR Notice for Funding Opportunity for the National Institutes of Health, which is 19 pages long. I would say that is maybe average, but I have seen some that are much larger.

On the right are the instructions for creating the Proposal, which include 179 pages of instructions. What I want to highlight here is that this kind of Proposal is a significant commitment of resources.

Receiving the Grant will be a significant infusion of resources, but it is not the work of a few weeks. You need to prepare and make a plan. So, with that, let's jump into our first Grant-writing activity. Next, please.

Start your plan. Here are activities that you will rely on throughout the presentation. If you haven't received it already, you will get a handout along with slides that you can use to outline the Proposal and which follows the activities we are doing today.

Otherwise, if you have a piece of paper and something to write with, or your computer, let's take a couple minutes to address these five items.

Have you found a Funding Opportunity? What is it? Do you have a timeline for your application? Sketch it out. Have you thoroughly read the Request for Proposals? What stood out to you? Have you started to outline your scope? What questions has this raised? And who might be willing to review a draft? Start by installing a few names. We will take a couple minutes so you can take notes.

All right. Next slide, please. How do you craft a compelling argument? Now that you are thinking about your own Proposal-writing effort, let's talk about directing an argument. The model was divided into three categories, logos, or the part of communication having to do with research and facts.

Pathos, the part that elicits an emotional response, and ethos, the speaker's credibility. To construct a compelling argument we need to include all three of these elements but I decided to illustrate this model as a pie chart with the piece on the right separated from the rest because I want to draw your attention to a component particularly important to Proposal-writing to be completely honest, I didn't find this model that interesting or useful when I first learned about it, but when I thought about applying it to Grant-writing. It seemed a lot more relevant.



So, let's look at the next slide. How do you craft a compelling Proposal?

So, here we see the same diagram as on the previous slide, but I replaced the overall language with words you will see as you are writing Grant Applications. Innovation, significance, and team. All of which are important for the SBIR, and I would argue, any other Grant-writing process.

In this diagram innovation is like logos, the part of the Proposal that describes your research. In SBIR, this is the technical heart of the Proposal, in which you explain your invention, your innovation and solution.

You answer the question, what is new here? What am I doing differently that no one has ever done before? The significance of pathos, the part of your Proposal in which you make the reader care.

Here you are providing background on the importance of the problem, and the potential impact of the solution. You are answering the question, who cares about this work, and why?

Finally, on the right side of the diagram, team corresponds to ethos, and expertise of you and your collaborators. Although innovation, significance and team, are all necessary components of your argument, I wanted to highlight the team, because I think it is sometimes easy to gloss over.

It is obvious that you need to describe your new idea and why it is important, but it is just as important to talk about who will execute your vision, and why they are qualified to do so.

Otherwise, there is no point in you talking about the vision. We will come back to the concepts when we talk more about the SBIR or Proposal but remember you need all three, facts, emotion and authority, or innovation, significance and team, to build the argument that will persuade your reviewers.

Next slide, please.

Let's take a couple more minutes to start building the argument you will develop in your Proposal. Answer these three questions for yourself. Describe your innovation, or what is new. Describe your significance, or who cares, and describe your team, what is your expertise.

Okay. Let's go on. Next slide, please.

So, that is the end of our section about grant writing in general. Does anyone have any questions so far?

>> CHIQUITA: I have a question.

>> ALEXIS JONES: Please go ahead and ask your question.

>> CHIQUITA: Thank you. On the Grants in Grants.gov, you have post date, then closing date. On some of them, they were a

period of three months. On others I saw a period of two years. I was wondering, is there -- the ones with two years, does that mean it is like a revolving review? If not, is it posted or open in 2025, they don't review it until 2027? I am trying to understand why that date was so drastic.

Then I saw some for DHHS that were also posted start date January, but closing date May -- excuse me, April, of the same year.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: Right. I think what you said is correct, that those longer ones, for the most part, are going to be the situation where the agency is expecting applications on a revolving basis, like you said.

You need to check the solicitation to be sure. I mean, I can't say for certain, because every one of them will be slightly different, but yeah, so many of them do operate that way.

>> CHIQUITA: Thank you. The second question is like the other one that was only three months. They don't give you that year or even six months to prepare. Is that because we know that it comes around every year and we still should plan for it? Or how do you describe those that open in January but close in April.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: Right. Again, every agency works differently. Let me add a caveat, as you know. Things are in flux, so this could be changing as I speak. But in the past, some agencies like the National Institutes of Health, have a regular schedule throughout the year, so in that case you know well ahead of time.

Others release topics once or twice a year. In those cases, you know, when they release the topics, you have to go and check them and see what comes up and how that fit into area work.

So, yes, you will have time, but if you have an agency that you think would fit with the Department of Energy, for example, and they release their topics twice a year, you could still be getting ready, maybe pursuing other opportunities in the meantime, but to some extent that will shorten the time given, but ideally you will be doing the work so you are not squishing it into the three-months or six-month periods.

>> CHIQUITA: Thank you.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: So, earlier in the registration, someone asked a question about AI. Which I think also is kind of a, you know, depends on the Grant, depends on the agency answer. I think AI, using Artificial Intelligence, Generative AI, to help write an application, I think is a tool like anything else.

It is one of many tools. It may be a good place to get

started. I don't know if there is anything out there right now that can write you an entire Proposal and, you know, as we all know, these programs make mistakes.

You don't always know what it is telling you, where that came from, you know, so I think you have to be cautious. Especially if you are working on technology. I wouldn't go feeding any of your Intellectual Property into one of those models, because we know as they work, they work by mining all kinds of data so don't put anything sensitive in there, because you don't know where it could go.

In terms of agencies, some want to know if you have used AI, how much you have used it, if they think you have used it throughout your Proposal, they will trash your application. So, again, I think it depends.

I think it is a useful tool, but I don't think it will do all the work for you.

Any other questions at the moment? If not, we will go to the next slide and talk about SBIR Program. So, now that we are talking about Best Practices, we will start focusing in on the SBIR research, or the Small Business Innovation Research Program. We can, and people do spend days drilling down into the details and logistics of this program, but I will present a pretty broad overview before going into more detail on the SBIR Proposal-writing strategies that I think will be useful no matter which agency you are targeting.

So, the SBIR Program is a public-private partnership in which the Federal Government provides competitive Grants or contracts to small businesses to support innovative Research and Development, as well as eventual commercialization of that R&D. Next, please.

Eligibility. To be eligible for an SBIR Grant or contract, you must have a for-profit business in the United States that is majority-owned by a US citizen or permanent resident, and has fewer than 500 employees. Next.

Agencies. 11 Federal Agencies administer SBIRs and the third largest include the Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Energy. As you can see on the slide, some agencies award contracts, and some award Grants. This is one example of the fact that each agency works differently from the other, and each has its own SBIR process.

From the release of Funding Opportunities to the review process, each defines the needs and innovation differently, because each has its own mission. So, even within the SBIR Program, there is no one Proposal template, because each agency

has its own requirements.

This is also one reason it is important to start early, because the agency most relevant to your work might only release topics or accept Proposals once a year, so you need to prepare differently depending on which agency you are targeting.

I listed this website at the end in the resources section, but one way to better understand the agencies, and which ones align with your work is to visit [SBIR.gov/awards](http://SBIR.gov/awards) to see what kind of projects each agency supports.

You also need to be aware that some agencies have their own Submission Portals. Once you have a better idea of where you will be applying, you need to check and see which company registrations you need to complete.

I think we will talk about this a little later, but everyone needs to be registers on the website but you want to have plenty of time to also register on other agency websites.

So, SBIRs versus STTRs. People talk about this as the same but different. The STTR is for non-profit institutions but the SBIR is from a Sub-award institution. Maybe they have an expertise or special equipment you need, you may want to pursue the STTR, but either way, it is always the small business that receives and manages the Grant, never the research institution. Next, please.

So, phases. The SBIR process as a whole has four main phases. Phase 0 refers to the writing of your Proposal and is not specifically funded by the SBIR Program. Phase 1 is for Proof of Concept or feasible. And the goal to show you have a workable idea.

In Phase 2 you develop the idea into a prototype or minimum viable product. You work not only on technical development, but also commercial development. Testing your Value Propositions, building your business model, and identifying your first customers and how you will reach them.

Phase 3 is what you are working toward throughout phases 1 and 2, and that is commercialization. The SBIR Program doesn't fund Phase 3 directly, but it can set you up for contracting opportunities at this point.

So, again, the SBIR Program funds phases 1 and 2 on the list. In general, the program itself will fund phases 1 and 2.

And next, please.

So, first steps. I know this is a lot of information all at once, but here are a few steps you can take toward SBIR funding. First, register with [SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov) and [SBA.gov](http://SBA.gov). This process can take a few weeks, so get started right away. For this you will need basic information about your company.

I have also added this to the resources slide, but if you have trouble with this step, you can contact your local Apex Accelerator, that is A-P-E-X, for free assistance. Every state as one, so look up the one for where you are. They offer all kinds of assistance, all free, if you are interested in contracting, Federal Contracting, they are also a great resource for that.

The second step you can take, you can look for Funding Opportunities on [Sib ir.gov](http://Sib.ir.gov) and [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). This can take time as you look for current Funding Opportunities and Grants awarded to help you identify which agencies to target.

And, third, consider your timeline. I included this graphic on the right. Not because you need to remember anything on it, but because it shows how much the agencies vary in their timing. As I mentioned, the topics accept applications once or twice a year.

And some more often. Once you know where to apply, you can start using their deadlines to plan your submission.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: If you can hold one moment, we are having a technical issue. We should be returning with the slides shortly. And the slides should now be available so you can continue. Thank you, everyone, for your patience.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: Thank you. We can go to the next slide and activity, which is the SBIR checklist. Let's take a moment to go through this, and answer these questions. Are you eligible? Have you identified an agency? Are you applying for an SBIR or STTR? Are you registered with [SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov) and [SBA.gov](http://SBA.gov)? And does your agency require additional registrations?

If you want to go to the next slide, we can break for questions about the SBIR Program generally, if anyone has any questions.

>> CHIQUITA: I have a question. I was wondering, you said are we eligible on the checklist. When you say are we eligible, do you mean are we non-profit or are we for-profit, or did you mean something else by are we eligible?

>> SARAH SOLTZ: That is correct. You have to be for-profit, majority-owned by a US citizen or permanent resident, and have fewer than 500 employees.

>> CHIQUITA: Thank you. I wanted to clear one thing. You said that Apex, A-P-E-X would help us with register for [SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov)?

>> SARAH SOLTZ: That is correct. It is a Federal Program funded by the Department of Defense. Depending on your State, you can look up your Apex accelerator and the people will work with you if you have a small business for free to complete some of these registrations, which can be a little frustrating

sometimes. It is not super hard, but you are touching on the huge bureaucracies, so they can help you navigate that process. They are very knowledgeable.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: I have a question around specific businesses and around Intellectual Property and anything we can do around that. I think you will get into it later on the slides but maybe we can look at that?

>> SARAH SOLTZ: I don't have slides specifically on Intellectual Property. But yes, you should look into protecting your Intellectual Property. There is plenty of advice out there. Ultimately, I think you need to talk to a lawyer who specializes in IP Protection.

As far as the Grant, and again, this is explained in more detail in the instructions for the SBIR Proposal, they will tell you which section of the Proposal will be posted publicly so that you can decide which kinds of information you want to put in which parts of your Grant.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Then another general question, there are obviously other reasons, but there are other benefits in terms of what we are talking about today in terms of incorporating in any particular state?

>> SARAH SOLTZ: That question is outside of my area of expertise.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: I was just wondering if the Grants have any particular applications in which area you chose to set yourself up.

Then a question about internationally. You have to be a US citizen or a permanent resident? Do these Grants allow somebody to partner with a company in a different country, or are there any restrictions on working outside of the US?

>> SARAH SOLTZ: In my experience you can partner with people outside the US but I am sure it depends on the agency and the Grant. In my experience working with the National Institutes of Health, I have had colleagues that have been here, and the company was here, and the project did relate to work they did in other countries. So, I think all my answers will start with it depends, because every agency is different.

Is it possible at least sometimes? I would say yes.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Perfect, we have questions that I am sure NDI will explore further, but there is a question, are there Grant opportunities specifically available for Deaf-owned businesses or Deaf-specialists specified in reviewing Grant Applications. That is definitely something that NDI can explore as we move through the field. I am not expecting you necessarily, Sarah, to have any information on that.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: Yes. That is a great question. I have not come across -- to answer the second part -- I have not come across anyone, but yeah, I would be interested to know.

As for the first part, you know, I don't think I have seen anything specifically. I think that is a possibility, but I have not researched that particular question.

I can't answer for sure, but there are many different kinds of Grants available and focused on all different kinds of communities, so if I had to guess, I would say yes, but I haven't looked into it specifically. I am sorry.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Yes. This is something we will be exploring as we move forward.

And one more last quick question before we move on, is, someone asked what is the Apex Accelerator.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: So, the Apex Accelerator is a Federal Program funded by the Department of Defense. It is nationwide. There is an office in every State. You can look up your office accelerator and they will work for you for free. All their resources are free.

I would say they are more focused on how to become, or how to enter the world of contracting. Which is, you know, not totally (Fading audio quality) But the point is they can help you navigate SAM.gov and some of those other government registrations.

For example, if you wanted to become a woman-owned small business, or something like that, they can help you with that. They have a lot of expertise in guiding you through the big Federal, you know, business registration Portals, which can be complicated, so kind of that first step of getting started, they can help you with that.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thank you. And thank you for putting links in the Chat. We will collect all of these and send them out in a follow-up email.

Carry-on turning in your requests and we will certainly get to more but we will continue with Sarah to the next part.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: Yes. If you go to the next slide, we have come to our break. Let's take a 5-minute break, and then we will come back to talk about SBIR strategy specifically. I will see you in a few minutes.

(Break)

All right, welcome back. Now we will talk about the SBIR strategy and the Grant-writing strategy, much of which will be relevant to other types of Grants you apply for.

I will begin with talking about technology, as I have been, but if you are working on a program or system, are some other

kinds of innovation, substitute that for technology.

Either way, the process of developing your Proposal Strategy will include many of the same elements. I also want to note I will approach strategy from two completely different perspectives. The first is Scope, and the second is Evaluation.

You can think of them as two sides of the same coin, or you can think about the evaluation category as a means of building out your scope. Use whichever framework is most helpful to you.

Now we will talk about Scope. Defining your Scope means figuring out what you will do and how you will do it.

Break down defining your problem, focusing on feasibility, choosing objectives, identifying and recruiting your team, and determining cost. When I said you have to go back-and-forth until you determine the right balance, this is what I was talking about.

The goal for an SBIR is to demonstrate feasibility. In other words, showing your new technology will work in a research environment, which will then some day work for a customer in the real-world. But what problem will your technology solve?

You need to think about the relationship between the two. How will you define and frame your problem such that your technology presents a workable solution. You then need to choose a few objectives that will allow you to reach your goal of demonstrating feasibility.

You need to figure out who will do this work and how much it will cost. If you define your problem too broadly, such that it requires five or six objectives to demonstrate feasibility, you may need extra key members and the cost will exceed the budget. If you define the problem too narrowly, you may not be taking full advantage of the resource your grant offers.

Each time you put a puzzle piece in place, you need to check the fit of the pieces around it. Go back, find the problem, objectives, fixes, budget, and so on, until you can align the objectives and costs to be achievable within the amount of funding and time you have.

The specifics will vary by agency. You may have \$300,000 in a year, or you may have less, depending on where you are applying.

Because you are limited by budget and time, you need to watch out for Scope creep, or promising too much. I know it can be tempting to want to do everything or trying to solve a bigger problem, but in the end, you will look better if you can achieve your objectives rather than promising more than you can deliver. Next slide, please.

Program Officer meetings. What you can do in addition to



thoroughly planning out the scope of your project is to meet with a Program Officer to better understand their need and ask specific questions about the program in relation to your technology. You can find contact information for Program Officers within the Funding Opportunities, usually at the end, and you can reach out to set up an appointment. They can go through the Proposal to help you understand why you weren't funded and how to improve your future submissions.

So, this Quad Chart is part of the meeting with the Program Officer, which you need to be prepared for because they will probably not have a long time. The Quad Chart can help you describe your work, company, and work and potential in a precise way to ask the questions to how the work fit into your agency's mission and needs.

So, our next Grant-writing activity is focused on Scope. What problem are you solving? What is your solution? What are your specific objectives? Who on your team will address each objective? And what is the cost of the team member's time?

The more you can refine your answers, the more focused and specific you can be, the stronger your Proposal. All right. Next slide, please. Evaluation. So, we talked a little about developing Scope, which you could think of as building from the bottom-up.

Now, let's turn around and look at your Proposal from the other direction, which is how it will be evaluated by reviewers. So, maybe more of a top-down approach. This Slideshows one example of an SBIR evaluation rubric, although the words are different from those on the previous slide where we talked about Scope.

The ideas here are complimentary. Significance, innovation, approach, investigator or team, and environment. We will turn to the budget at the end of the evaluation but in the meantime, let's go through each of these topics. Next slide, please.

Significance. One way to think about the significance of your project is to ask yourself the "who cares" question. As you are writing your Proposal, are you showing reviewers that someone besides you does or should care about your work? How many people care? How much is your solution worth to them? What is the potential impact? For an SBIR Proposal, there are components to your significance, technology and commercial. In Phase 1 you will focus on technology, the significance of the technology solution to a problem. But that doesn't mean the commercial doesn't matter.

Even though you are focusing on Research and Development, you still need to start figuring out the market for your

product, which includes at least four elements. First, your Value Proposition. What value do you provide your customer? What need do you fulfill? What about your product convinces someone to buy or use it? Especially if they are already addressing their need in a different way.

So, to explain the concept of Value Proposition, people make analogies that go something like this. Let's say the ideal customer is shopping for a new kitchen knife because they want to start eating salads for lunch. What is the most important of that sentence? If you want, you can put your answer in the Chat.

Your-year-old customer is shopping for a new kitchen knife because they want to start eating salads for lunch. So, if you said that the most important part of that was that my customer wants to eat salad, you are right. The knife isn't the most important thing in that sentence. It is the customer's desire to eat salad. They don't need a knife, per se, but they need chopped up vegetables, and they may have a variety of options for fulfilling that need. How will your solution better address their need and help them reach their goal.

It is important to keep this idea in mind as you are developing your technology. You don't want to get to the end of that process and find you invested all of your resources into something your customer doesn't want, or can't use, because it doesn't solve the real problem.

The best way to thoroughly understand what your customer does need is to go out and talk to them. I know that can be daunting, but I guarantee you will learn so much more about how to get your technology from the lab to the market if you get out of your office and talk to people.

So, second, your Business Model. This is the second important component of commercialization. How will your company generate revenue from your product? Are you selling to other businesses or directly to consumers? Will you sell a product or a prescription? These are the kind of questions your Business Model will answer.

The third component -- and they are all interrelated -- is customer discovery, which we mentioned a minute ago. Who will buy your product? And how much will they pay for it? How many customers do you have? And who do you need to talk to get this investigation?

And finally, path to market. How will you reach your customers?

How will your product reach them? Are you selling directly, through a distributor or intermediary? Beginning to answer these questions in a Phase 1 Proposal shows the reviewer you

understand the independence of technology and commercial significance and you need both to succeed.

Also, understand you need tools to help you start answering these questions and organize your data.

One is the business model canvas, which you can search on the web to find examples, if you want more guidance in using it, the start-up owner's manual or Business Model generation can provide more guidance, as well as, you know, numerous business development programs that focus on the canvas. Next slide, please.

Let's think of the significance of your work as you answer these questions. What is your technical significance? What is your commercial significance? And what do you know so far about your Value Proposition? Your Business Model? Your customer, and your path to market? All right. Next slide, please.

Innovation. So, this innovation section will be the easiest for a technology founder to write, because you already know the intricacies about your field and Nan what is new and exciting about your technical, but don't get too comfortable.

You usually don't know who your reviewers will be, or how much they know about your topic, so you need to find a balance between teaching and selling your idea. If you dive too deeply into the technology minutia of your work, or use too much jargon, you may alienate your reviewers.

This point is really important for any kind of Grant-writing. You never want to do anything that will take the reviewer out the story you are telling. Your goal is to immerse them in your argument. And every single element of your Proposal should work together to contribute to this argument. Every piece of punctuation, word, figure and concept, don't waste any of it, so this section is a good place to think about your language and how you are communicating your ideas.

You may also want to communicate visually. Graphs, Flowcharts and models can also help you make your point. Make sure the texts in the figures are complimentary. They should share the same information in different ways.

Don't rely on color to make your point, since a lot of reviewers will print out their Proposals in black and white to read, so they may not have the extra information the color provides. So, even if you use color in your PDF or whatever you submit, make sure it also works in black and white. Next slide, please.

So, let's take a moment to think of how you would explain your innovation to a non-specialist. Could you explain it to somebody in high school or college? How about a specialist in a

different field or industry. Think of figures you might create that would increase the impact of your argument. Where in the Proposal would they go? And what would they illustrate?

Okay. Next slide, please. When we talk about Scope we talk about specific objectives and the need to balance the objectives with available time and funding.

Here we are using the word approach, but we are still talking about planning out the discreet objectives that will allow you to complete your project. These objectives are called specific aims and you want to choose three to four to focus your Proposal on.

Remember, you want to be ambitious but realistic. Don't over-promise. As much as you can, make your objectives or specific aims somewhat independent, so even if you don't complete one, you can still complete the others.

Or think of a back-up plan. If one of your objectives doesn't work out the way you think it will, what will you do instead to keep the work progressing. As you begin to plan out exactly what you are going to accomplish, think of how to make your objectives quote unquote SMART -- specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. You can use these parameters to help you create a gap chart or some other kind of figure in which you build out the sub-task to support your objectives, the metrics by which you evaluate your progress, and the schedule for your completion of the project. Make this one of your figures.

I want to emphasize here you need to be as specific and realistic as possible. This is not to say your plans won't change, because they almost certainly will, but remember you are crafting an argument about your technology expertise and commercial value. Create a plan that convinces your reviewers you know what needs to be done, and you know exactly how to do it. Next slide, please.

Here I created an example to illustrate the development of SMART objectives or aims.

So, I wrote out an example-specific aim. First step, we are creating a diabetic retinopathy screening software with a development of an algorithm to distinguish between stage 1 and Stage 2 disease, with 89% sensitivity and specificity. We have a retrospective database of 10,000 subjects with which to train the algorithm. We will spend four months training, and two months validating our result.

So, is this specific? Yes. We are going to develop an algorithm to distinguish stages of disease. Is it measurable? Yes. We will know we are done when we achieve 80% sensitivity,

and 80% specificity.

Is it achievable? Yes. We have enough data and time to train and test that algorithm.

Is it relevant? Yes. These are the steps toward our larger goal of creating diabetic retinopathy screening software.

And is it time-bound? Yes. We specified the amount of time we will need to accomplish the work.

So, this is a simplified example, but it is the kind of objective or aim you would see on the first page of your research plan, sometimes called the specific aim's page, whereas you will go into much more detail in the Proposal.

Your expertise, and more importantly, your ability to convey that expertise to the reviewer, the better you can construct your objectives and the better your argument will stand out against the reviewer's scrutiny.

Remember, these are one of the first things the interviewer will see. It may be cliché, but first impressions matter, so make a good one. Next, please.

So, again, this Slideshows kind of a simplified example of how you can put those four objectives and aim into a chart that will give more detail on the specific task that you will need to complete to achieve your objective, in what order, and how long they will take to complete.

So, your specific aim, one, is develop an algorithm. Task 1, organize the Dataset. Maybe that is what you will do in the first month of the project.

Task 2, label the Dataset. That is what you will do in the second month. Also separate the training and validation of the Dataset. In the fourth month, train the algorithm. And in the fourth and fifth month you will start analyzing the results. Finally in the sixth month you will validate your results.

So, this is simple, be you get the idea. You take your specific aim, which you carefully constructed to be as specific as possible, you break it down into tasks, and then create a schedule for how and when you will complete those tasks.

Next slide, please.

Investigator and team. As we touched on when we talked about crafting your argument, and just now with the approach, your expertise and that of your team makes up a crucial part of your Proposal. During my own start-up experience, I heard numerous investors say that the strength of a team is one of the most influential factors on their decision to invest, and Proposal-writing is no different.

If I were you, I would talk about your team's expertise in both the Proposal itself, as well as the supporting

Documentation, which might include individual bios, as well as letters of support from various stakeholders.

You need to be truthful in all aspects of Grant-writing, of course, but this is not the place to be shy. Emphasize your own and your team's experience and accomplishments, and how these will contribute to your future success.

As with the objectives, be specific about what you and your team have achieved, but also help your reviewers to envision what you will be able to accomplish together on this new project.

Because that is what this process is really about. Introducing your reviewers to your vision of a better future, while you are showing them step-by-step how you are going to get there. Don't worry about whether or not you have all the expertise you need in your company or on your staff. You can always bring in extra support in the form of contractors and consultants, showing that you have and understand the game plan, is what is important. Next slide, please.

Your team. Let's take a minute to think about your team and to identify what kind of expertise we might be missing -- technology expertise, business expertise, and also what roles you might still need. Team members, leadership, consultants, partners, and Sub-awardees.

Next slide, please.

So, the next slide is your environment for your access, technology and commercial success. If you are working with a research institution like a University or National Lab, you can talk about how this partnership, and access to their resources will further your work.

Again, think of how your research environment reflects on your team and your expertise and how it enables you directly to complete your objectives. Next slide, please.

Let's take a minute to think about what other resources you might need to accomplish your objectives. Technical, experimental? Computing, laboratory, commercial, legal or regulatory, or anything else you might think of.

Just to review for a moment, we talked about scope. We have been talking about evaluation, and these categories of evaluation, significance, innovation, an approach investigator or team, and environment. These are the kind of categories you will actually be scored on. The reviewers will read your Proposal, and they will give you numbers depending on how well they think you addressed these categories.

So, I just want to reiterate how important it is to think about these as you are writing, and to follow the instructions

on the one hand, but also to think about how what you submit will be evaluated on the other hand, and to try to bring those things together to create the most complete Proposal that you can. So, next slide, please.

So, parallel development. We have been talking about how SBIR focuses on feasibility, or demonstrating your innovation works on a basic level, which mostly means focusing on Technical Research and Development. I would also encourage to you keep in mind the big picture and that means in addition to technical work, you need to keep working on market research and strategy. IP protection, regulatory strategy, if that is applicable to you, and as you continue to progress, things like usability, partnerships, pilot studies and so-on.

What you see on the slide is just one example. But it is not enough just to focus on your innovation. That is where you start. As you complete your R&D, the scale needs to shift from a technical to commercial focus. Next slide, please.

Here is another way of looking at what I just said about technology and commercial work for seeding and parallel. It is super simplified but you can see the task like market research, Intellectual Property protection, regulatory strategy, and Product Development, all progress together, along with your technical development. So, in this example I showed again, it is very simple, but as you are starting your technical objective, which is the develop your algorithm, you are also starting to research your market, to figure out how big it is, how much it is worth, who your competitors are, you might be talking to an attorney about patenting your technology, and you go on to talk to consultants about the regulatory strategy, if that applies to you, and eventually you may need to talk to a developer if you are developing software, so, any number of things you need to do alongside your basic technical R&D to get ready for the market, to get ready for commercialization. Next slide, please.

So, let's take a moment here to think about, in addition to technology, what requirements do you know of, or plans do you have, to address product, IP, regulatory, and/or commercial development? What else does your industry require? Next slide, please.

Letters of support. So, for our final slide in the SBIR strategy section, I just wanted to address the importance of letters of support for your Proposal package. These demonstrate to reviewers the support of important stakeholders, such as leaders in your field, research partners or potential customers.

Going back to the importance of your team, this is another place to make the case that you are working with the best, and

the letters provide evidence of those people's willingness to contribute to your success.

So, at this point we can go to the next slide, and does anyone have any questions on the SBIR strategy before we talk a little about the budget.

>> CHIQUITA: Yes, question. Letters of support. Could you tell me what that would look like? I thought that having the partners, you were saying that a partner is an institution when it comes to a TTR, is that right? And then, but it doesn't -- it is Sub-awardees for SBIR. So, it is a two-part question. What is the difference between a Sub-awardee, SBIR, versus the institution for the TTR, and then that number two question, why would we still need letters of support? Can it come from their institutions?

The difference between the STTR and SBIR is a matter of proportion. With the SBIR, your Sub-awardee can only receive about a third, like up to a third of your Grant's funding. Whereas that proportion is different, larger, for an STTR, because it is more of a partnership versus a Sub-award.

So, if you -- say you are applying for an SBIR and you have a Sub-award through your University, I believe that University will be required to give you a letter of support, but it is important to think about the other stakeholders, like I mentioned, so, you know, maybe your company has an advisor, say, who is a leader in whatever field you are in, and they can give you a letter of support, talking about technology, and it is the great new thing, and so forth.

They are actually going to -- they don't just think it is great, but they are actually going to provide you with some resource. Maybe their time, their expertise, to help you complete your project. Or maybe you are to the point where you started talking to potential customers and you have talked to somebody who is interested in -- or maybe buying, maybe even just testing. In some way working with you to further your objectives, so it is important and sometimes required to have a letter of support from your partners who are written into the Grant, who are in the budget.

But in terms of your argument, like I said, the argument about your team, your expertise, your team's expertise, and the market potential of your product, it is important to think about who else around you, whether they have a relationship with the company, or maybe they will in the future, who else supports you in many numbers of ways. Like I said, time, expertise, partnership, research, resources, you know, whatever applies to you.



It is important to make the case to your reviewers. It is not just you, it is not just your direct partners or Sub-awardees that care about this, but there are other people out there who care and who are willing to support you in material ways.

>> LYDIA: I have a question. Being part of the review of some Grant-writing things and my point here is the assumption that really makes me concerned, we create a plan, specific, put them there, and we talk about our investigation and team and what is really important to us and what is really a contribution, provided with this project, that show where is we are repeating and repeating ourselves.

And can we present it in such a way that, really, don't we have to keep it like that? Or as you said in the beginning, or we really need to point it at each time?

>> SARAH SOLTZ: I don't think I can quite understand your question. Can you rephrase it for me.

>> LYDIA: We create a plan, write the specifics and allegation explain the contributions that we make, get or give through this project, and all of the things that we will do with the money, with this Grant. It is really -- when we are reading in the papers, we are repeating ourselves in every -- because the specifics have to be there, as you said, what we will take, who will do it, the support we have, and what is what we want to do or take our time, things like that.

So, how can we do it in a way that they don't get bored reading the same thing over and over?

>> SARAH SOLTZ: That is a good question. Do you mean within one Grant, or across a selection of grants.

>> LYDIA: A selection of grants. And really, you say, hmm. But I think the very point you have to put the same thing, but it comes to a moment of, you know, you need to be a little bit more creative.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: Right. That is a really good question. I agree. I think, like I said earlier, you have to follow their directions, I would say, to try and set yourself apart, I would figure out how to marry those details that we keep talking about, like the objectives and specific aims with your vision. Because I feel like the Proposal is a kind of story, right? It is an argument about why you should be funded. I feel like what you are selling is your vision. It is in some way a vision of a better world, right? Or a better technology.

But there are very specific steps that you have to take to achieve that vision, and a Phase 1 Proposal is, like, maybe not Step 1, but it is pretty early. You haven't got very far yet. I

think you are right. That is a challenge, but I would say think about, you know -- don't just sort of fill in the blanks. You are not filling in a form. Think about what excites you about your work, and then try to convey that to your reviewers.

I don't know. I think that, again, comes back to the story you are telling and the vision you want to sell them on. There is a reason you are doing that, that relates to the "why," the "significance" question, the "who cares" question.

There is an argument to be made using research about, like I said, why is this a big problem? How much is this problem worth? There is a lot of research and numbers you can bring into answering that. But I think there will also be a really personal answer to that, too.

Maybe you can't get into that whole story in your Proposal, but I think to the extent that you can convey some of that excitement but I don't know, that is one way to differentiate yourself. But you bring up a good point, it is hard to do that when you have boundaries you have to stay within.

>> LYDIA: I appreciate that. It helps. Keeping the show, the excitement of why I am inspired, it helps so we don't sound repetitive. Thank you very much.

>> SARAH SOLTZ: All right. Let's keep going. We should have time for more questions at the end, but for now let's go to the next slide and start talking about the budget. So, please go ahead. Next slide, please.

So, budget overview. Just like with the SBIR strategy, I will really only be able to give a brief overview of the budget, which will also differ from agency to agency. But basically, your budget will have three categories he is.

First, unallowable expenses. Second, allowable expenses, and third, the profit, which is usually called the fee. So, first, unallowable expenses. These include anything that you cannot use Grant Funding to pay for, such as patenting or marketing.

Second, allowable expenses include two components. First, direct expenses, which for a Phase 1 SBIR mostly covers Research and Development in the form of labor. And, second, indirect expenses, for G&A, general and administrative, some people say, which are some of the expenses of running a business, like your rent, for example.

In your budget, these indirect are often by a rate, and third we have the fee or profit, 7% of the grant total usually, and yours to spend as you see fit.

This means you can spend a fee on unallowable expenses, like applying for a patent. Don't ever leave the fee out of your

Grant Application, even if you don't know what you will spend it on. Unforeseen expenses will pop up, and you want to have that resource available to you.

Know also that SBIR Proposals are not competitive on price. You are competing based on your innovation, and the other factors that we discussed, so take advantage of the budget ceiling available to you for the completion of your subjectives. Next slide, please.

Components. Here is another way of looking at what I just said.

For an SBIR, you have a funding ceiling, within which you need to complete your objectives or specific aims, and which differs by agency.

This total amount includes a fee for profit, usually around 7%, that you should request, and will receive in addition to your total for R&D.

The total also includes your indirect and direct costs. So, the diagram on the right shows another way to think about it.

The funding ceiling, minus the fee, minus the indirect costs, equals the direct costs, which is what you have for your R&D.

And then a time note, some agencies offer what is called Technical and Business Assistance, or the TABA, funding, that can be spent on otherwise unallowable expenses like market research. Next slide, please.

This slide summarizes everything we talked about in the SBIR Strategy section that should be addressed by your Proposal, from both a technical and commercial perspective. You are writing a Proposal because you identified a problem that needs to be addressed, your innovation is a technical solution with significant potential and your team, approach and environment, make up the resources that will help you implement your solution, which starts with this Proposal. Next slide, please.

Let's keep going and then we will have time for questions. We are almost done.

I heard estimates from writing your SBIR range from 120 to 150 or more hours, which is, of course, a significant amount of work, but it is absolutely something you can do with the right plan. Next slide, please.

Remember the Best Practices, which I adapted slightly for the SBIR Proposal-writing process. First, give yourself plenty of time to plan and execute.

Second, read the solicitation thoroughly to understand exactly what your funder wants.

Third, follow the directions so you don't get disqualified for administrative errors.

Fourth, remember to both teach and spell your vision, which we were just talking about. Make every single element of your Proposal count. Don't waste a single word, and don't let anything, whether it is grammatical errors or gaps in logic, take your reader out of your argument.

And, fifth, finally, use your resources, including the people and organizations that are set up to help you succeed. Next slide, please.

Again, first steps. If you are feeling overwhelmed, here are three things you can start with. Register your company with SAM.gov and SBA.gov.

Number 2, research your Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, and SBIR.gov.

And, third, start thinking about your timeline and making a plan to execute. Next, please.

Here are a few resources, many of which we already mentioned. Under registration, I just talked about those, plus the Apex Accelerator, which we talked about earlier, to research Funding Opportunities, SBIR.gov award, actual Funding Opportunities at Grants.gov and SBIR.gov/topics.

Then, finally, kind of like the Apex Accelerator, every state has a SAS Program, and that is another resource that you can use for your research, and opportunities. They teach webinars and all kinds of things to help people apply for these Grants, and they do some reviewing and evaluation of the Proposals. Every state has one, and you can look up your local office. Next slide, please.

Then, finally, feel free to contact me if you want to talk about anything we discussed today. You will get a copy of my slides and notes, and a handout that goes through all the Grant-writing activities.

I just want to say it has really been a pleasure to talk to you today. I appreciate your time and attention, and I am happy to answer any final questions in the time we have left, so, thank you.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thank you so much, Sarah. Before we see if there are any times for questions, we would love to launch our poll again. This is the same poll as you took at the beginning. Like we said, this is no judgment. It is helping us see some different Learning Objectives, or are there other things we need to cover in future webinars. So, we will just give you a couple minutes to complete the poll.

I do apology. It looks like we might not have the right

poll up. If you are looking confused, I apologize. We will send them out when we send out the rest of the materials, we would love for you to complete it then. But we will close it there. Thank you, everybody. Next slide, please.

In the few minutes left, we want to share investigation about some other support

You may be thinking, where can I go for help. So, this is basically the full 21<sup>st</sup> century strategies for entrepreneurs with disabilities. This is a 5-year Grant-funded program that began October 1, 2024. It really helps to help build more inclusive environments and support entrepreneurs with disabilities to grow and achieve the things that Sarah has been talking about.

So, it includes working with both the State and Rehab Agency, to help them update policies and support business start-ups and development. We also know some of you might have great experience with your local VRs.

If you need support and training to really understand how to best support Self-Employment Plans. We definitely also want to support those who are trying to help entrepreneurs with disabilities seek to expand their support, and you may work with places like schools or SBDCs, for general resources to try to be more inclusive and support you.

And we really want to support entrepreneurs with disabilities at any phase of their business lifecycle, so, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us and we can provide more information. Next slide, please.

So, hopefully you have already seen our website. We have a lot of great resources including information about how to apply for Grants and where to get funding from. You can visit us at [disabilitysmallbusiness.org](http://disabilitysmallbusiness.org). If you are here in the Maryland area, we have a specific program that is the Growth Accelerator Fund Competition, or GAFC, that are for individuals in a technical industry. It really looks to help support you to get some of these funds and Grants that Sarah has been talking about.

We have a TV streaming channel at [disability-owned.com](http://disability-owned.com) where you can find great content.

If you are not already signed up for the Verizon Small Business Digital Ready Program, we recommend you sign up now. Every few month these have a Grant Opportunity up to \$10,000. It is a simple application. I know in the Chat there are a lot of thoughts about how to get grant money. Verizon can be one opportunity. You have to sign up. It has self-paced training, mentoring, and a lot of in-person events and business coaching

and live events.

If you do just two of those you become eligible the next time they have a Grant Opportunity, happening in the April or May time, so it is just the right time to sign up now to be ready when the opportunity becomes available.

And if you want to become a part of the mailing list, every month we send out a newsletter where we put in as many Grant Opportunities as we can find. That can be another great resource to make sure you are hearing about some of these Grants may be one-off and have a much shorter turn around than some of the ones that Sarah was talking about.

You can also do, you know, talk to, like I said earlier, your Local Government, to your Local Chamber of Commerce, to find out more Grant Opportunities in your area. But definitely, we share as much as we can about those. Next slide, please.

We have upcoming events. Empowering Your Business with ABLE, taking place April 9 from 2:00 to 3:00 PM, really sharing if you are a business owner with a disability, how an ABLE Account may help you maximize your financial security, and keep your SSI and other benefits.

So, if you haven't thought about ABLE yet, and you think you might be eligible or want to learn more, please sign up for that Webinar on April 9. Next slide.

And here we are. I am Caroline Bolas. You also heard from Lexi and Ruth and Nikki with our team. We would love to hear from you if you have questions. I know we didn't get to them all in the Chat.

What we will do, is make sure we share them to Sarah, but I see Sarah has been typing away but I will also definitely check. You will be sent an email with these links, information how to access the recording and slides, because we know Sarah gave such great information.

I know you will want to go back to it. Lastly, when we close out in just a moment you will get a pop-up to take another survey.

We really, really value your feedback. Also, this is Grant-funded, so allow us to continue to provide free webinars, we need to really have that Grant money, and getting feedback, good or bad, we like both, because we always want to improve, really helps us to sustain the program.

If you aren't able to complete it straightaway, the link to the survey will be in the follow-up email, but we would really, really love your feedback. It makes a big difference to us, and I know Sarah would appreciate it, too, because she has done a wonderful job this afternoon.

So, with that, we are absolutely at time. Sarah, again, thank you so much. This has been amazing. I am hoping we can have Sarah back for future events, because really, I think it is a clear understanding of what are very complicated programs.

So, thank you, everybody. Have a great rest of your day, and hopefully we will see you back at future webinars. Thank you.

(Session was concluded at 3:30 PM ET)

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