



For immediate release: Jan. 17, 2019

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## **Wisconsin ranks third in winning health and life science business grants**

MADISON – Wisconsin’s early-stage health and life science firms and the Center for Technology Commercialization (CTC) received national attention for the state’s success over the past decade in landing competitive federal grants.

Wisconsin ranked third after Oregon and Vermont in securing Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from 2008-2017. The 23 percent win rate for applications (248 awards from 1,056 submissions) resulted in \$87 million invested in the state’s entrepreneurial efforts.

The State Science & Technology Institute (SSTI), a national nonprofit organization, reported the newly available data and cited CTC’s support in boosting clients through its training programs.

“We are fortunate to work with talented inventors and innovators from all over the state who are making a difference in their fields, from biotech to manufacturing to agriculture,” said CTC Associate Director Dave Linz. “The high success rate is evidence that CTC’s portfolio of programming helps clients access the business skills and resources important for funding across all 11 agencies with SBIR/STTR funding.”

“The success rate for NIH awards demonstrates not just the level of innovation in Wisconsin, but also the grasp our entrepreneurs have on the important nuances that differentiate successful opportunities from the average,” said Aaron Hagar, vice president of entrepreneurship and innovation at Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). “SBIR awards are incredibly competitive, much like the business world, and this is a strong indication that Wisconsin is on the path to more successful tech companies that have what it takes to thrive.”

SBIR Ready, a monthlong introductory immersion course, was cited as an example of CTC’s offerings. Applications for 2019’s SBIR Ready cohort are due in May. To learn more, go to [www.wisconsinctc.org/sbir-ready](http://www.wisconsinctc.org/sbir-ready).

Another important program is SBIR Advance, one of the few matching grant programs for SBIR/STTR recipients in the nation. Developed with support from WEDC, the matching grant program fills critical funding gaps for market research, customer validation, patent validation and business model development.

[SciArt Software, which offers design analysis and optimization software for aerospace and automotive engineers, used SBIR Advance](#) to bring in a CEO with startup and industry experience, Karen Caswelch.

“We needed some business direction and a team member with business expertise who would be willing to take the type of risk I was asking them to take,” said Praveen Yadav, chief technology officer at SciArt Software, which announced in October that it raised \$530,000 through the Idea Fund of La Crosse.

Thirteen rounds of SBIR Advance funding since 2014 have funded 78 awards totaling nearly \$6 million. Those businesses across the state reported hiring more than 175 employees and obtaining over \$24 million in additional capital since receiving the grants.

The next round of SBIR Advance funding will open in August 2019. To learn more, go to [www.wisconsinctc.org/sbir-advance](http://www.wisconsinctc.org/sbir-advance).

Wisconsin companies that apply for the \$2.5 billion in SBIR/STTR grants available each year fare well and are at least twice as likely to secure funding when they take advantage of CTC services, which include free consulting and microgrants to advance nascent firms in the biotech, manufacturing, food/agriculture, IT and other industries.

In fiscal years 2014-17, NIH SBIR/STTR applicants working with CTC had a 42 percent success rate with \$31.4 million in awards versus 19 percent for all NIH applications from Wisconsin during that time.

NIH is one of 11 federal agencies that distribute SBIR/STTR funding. CTC’s success rate for all agency applications in fiscal years 2014-17 was 63 percent, bringing \$56.3 million into the state. Nationally, the success rate for applications was 22 percent in 2015, the latest year for which data is available on SBIR.gov.

### **About the Center for Technology Commercialization**

The Center for Technology Commercialization is part of the University of Wisconsin System Administration’s Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship. CTC provides one-on-one expert consulting to early-stage emerging technology businesses throughout Wisconsin. CTC has collaborated in acquiring more than \$100 million in federal and other funding for clients. Learn more at [www.wisconsinbir.org](http://www.wisconsinbir.org); follow @WisconsinCTC on Twitter.

### **About the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation**

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly

responsive and coordinated economic development network. Learn more at <http://inwisconsin.com>; follow @InWisconsin on Twitter.

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