

Update on the DOE SBIR/STTR Programs

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of SBIR/STTR
Programs

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Improving Diversity

- 2020 National Academies of the DOE SBIR/STTR programs study highlighted need to improve participation by under-represented groups—one of the important goals of the SBIR/STTR programs
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group within the Office of Science is examining opportunities to implement changes to our processes
- We are continuing to conduct and explore new approaches to outreach to under-represented communities, including collaboration with the Small Business Administration and other federal agencies

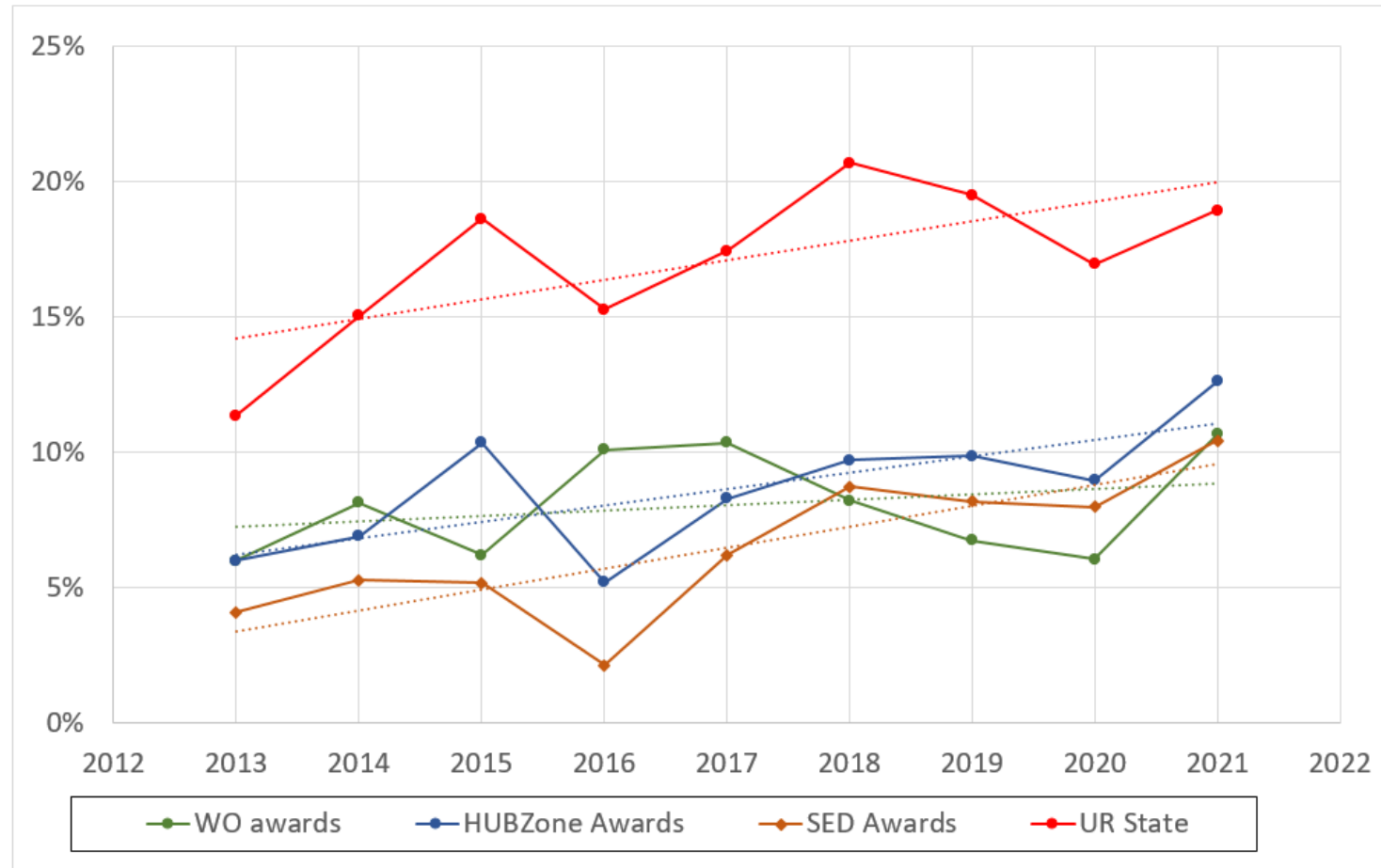


Diversity: Program Policy Factors

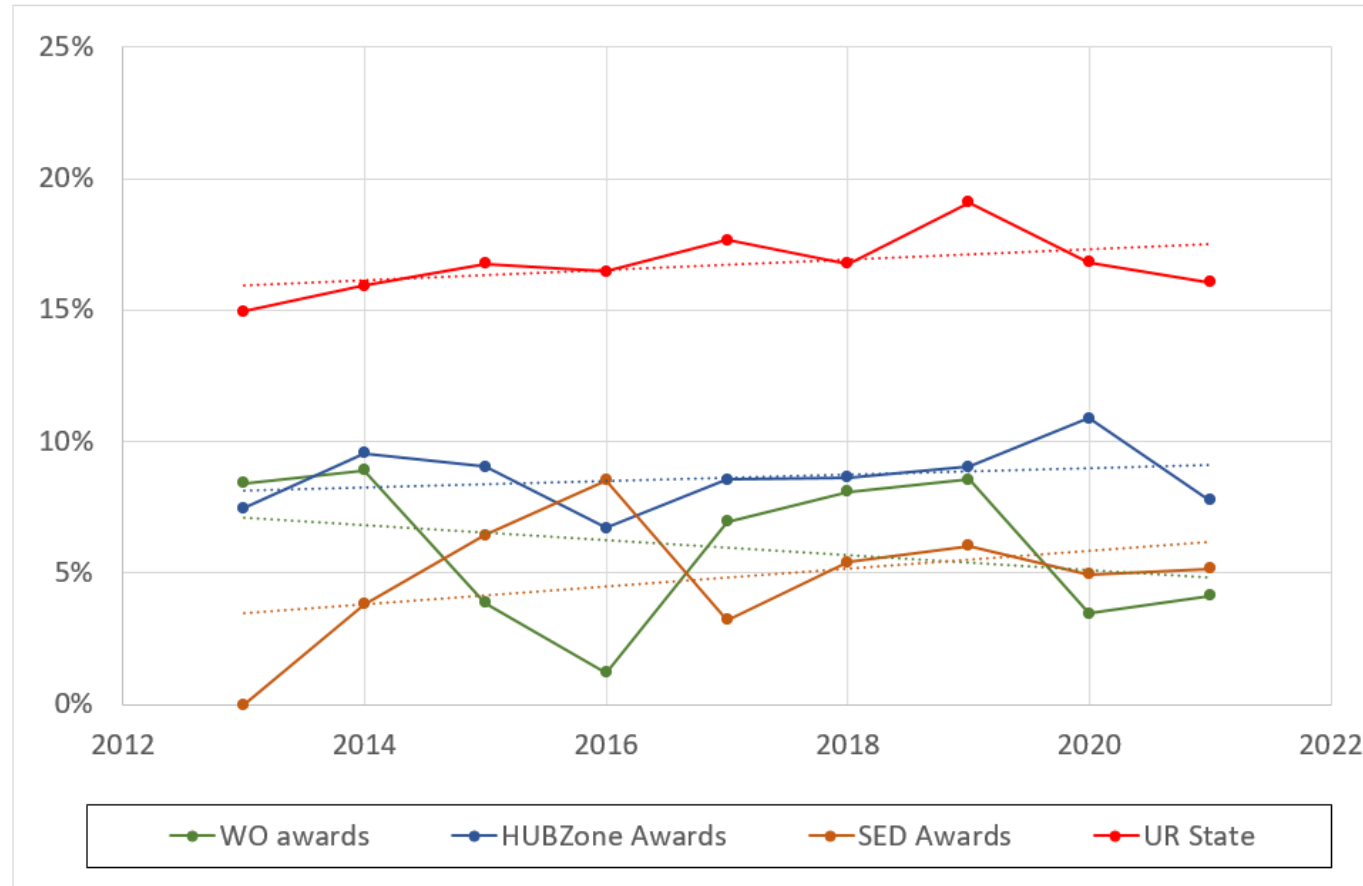
- In our first SBIR/STTR Funding Opportunity Announcement for FY 2022, we have added diversity criteria in the program policy factors for award selection. Award selections must meet the merit review criteria to be candidates for funding.
 - *The Selection Official may consider any of the following program policy factors in making the selection, listed in no order of significance:*
 - Ensuring an appropriate balance of activities
 - Funds distribution
 - Needs of the technical programs
 - The applicant's performance under prior DOE SBIR/STTR awards including timely submittal of all reports
 - Availability of funds
 - Promoting the diversity of institutions receiving awards
 - Promoting institutions not previously funded by a DOE SBIR/STTR award



DOE SBIR/STTR Phase I Awards: Percent received by under-represented groups



DOE SBIR/STTR Phase II Awards: Percent received by under-represented groups



Improving Outcomes: Partnering

- The National Academies study recommended that DOE improve partnering opportunities for SBIR/STTR applicants
- We have recently hired a new Tech to Market Advisor for the SBIR/STTR Programs, Carol Rabke, carol.rabke@science.doe.gov
 - *Examining current levels of partnering (R&D, prototyping, manufacturing, business services, investment, customer)*
 - *Examining opportunities to implement a teaming/partnering site*



Improving Outcomes: Energy I-Corps

- Conducted two initial training cohorts (25-30 participants each) among Phase I awardees
 - *Overwhelmingly positive response from participants*
 - “The Customer Discovery process provided insights and guidance we would otherwise have not uncovered, allowing us to better focus our business model and better identify which of our potential customers offer real value. MBAs may understand all of this, but until the I-Corp training our company’s scientists/engineers did not.”
 - “I'd highly encourage SBIR teams to apply if they can commit to the I-Corp schedule and deliverables. Going through the customer discovery process proved invaluable to accelerate our understanding of the potential non-DOE market.”
 - *Training has been conducted virtually because of COVID-19*
- Planning to expand capacity going forward



U.S. Competitiveness Requirement

- Beginning in FY 2022, we have added a U.S. Competitiveness Requirement to SBIR/STTR FOAs
 - *Motivation: A primary objective of DOE's multi-billion-dollar research, development and demonstration investments is to cultivate new research and development ecosystems, manufacturing capabilities, and supply chains for and by U.S. industry and labor*
 - *Provision: "The Contractor agrees that any products embodying any subject invention or produced through the use of any subject invention will be manufactured substantially in the United States unless the Contractor can show to the satisfaction of DOE that it is not commercially feasible."*



COVID-19 Impacts

- Phase I Principal Investigator Meetings
 - *Will remain virtual until safety concerns can be adequately addressed*
- Funding Opportunity Announcements
 - *Phase I: unchanged*
 - *Phase II: we plan to continue to provide the opportunity to request a delayed submission until the following fiscal year when companies have experienced COVID-19 related delays*



Questions?



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