

UNH Receives SBA Grant to Help New Hampshire Small Businesses

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UNH has received a \$125,000 grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration, one of 24 organizations awarded grants aimed at aiding small businesses, particularly those that are women-owned, rural-based and socially-economically disadvantaged. The funding comes from the SBA's Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership

program, which seeks to improve outcomes in the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs.

SBIR and STTR awards represent an attractive source of funding for technology development and commercialization for New Hampshire companies with less than 500 employees. UNH will leverage its FAST grant to launch a program called FOSTER (FOcused SBIR/STTR Teaching, Equity and Results) to provide education, training and grant proposal support to New Hampshire small businesses.

“Enhancing economic development in New Hampshire by increasing the number of SBIR and STTR awards is an important factor in growing the small business community and the state’s economy,” said Marc Eichenberger, FOSTER project director and director of corporate engagement at UNHInnovation. “A key objective of FOSTER is to increase both geographic equity and the inclusion of underserved populations, specifically for technology start-ups and small businesses. In the long-term, we hope that these entities will innovate and thrive and provide good, high paying STEM jobs throughout the state.”

FOSTER is a highly collaborative approach, leveraging existing relationships with other organizations including UNH Extension, the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center and the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs, among other partners, to build a network of “ambassadors” to identify and support potential program participants. It will be run by UNHInnovation, which focuses on innovation, entrepreneurship and technology commercialization at the university.

For almost a decade, UNHInnovation has provided training and assisted early-stage technology companies to better compete in the SBIR and STTR programs in partnership with the state-funded New Hampshire Innovation Research Center (NHIRC), which focuses on spurring innovation in New Hampshire companies for economic development. NHIRC has provided valuable assistance as the only New Hampshire program dedicated to SBIR and STTR training and the FOSTER program will build off of this foundation. UNHInnovation has also operated an NSF I-Corps Site to promote entrepreneurship on campus and support the maturation of up to thirty innovations annually since 2016.

Mark Your Calendar: FOSTER will be offering its first full-day virtual training on Dec. 9, 2020. For more information, please contact foster.unhi@unh.edu.

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