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## **INNOVATION FUNDING FOR DC BUSINESSES: EXPANDED SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES**

*The District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development's ConnecTech Program Expands Offerings.*

**(Washington, D.C.)** – As technology and innovation continue to be a driver in the District's economy, the DC Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is ensuring that entrepreneurial firms have access to Federal resources and funding that can help their business grow. The Federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program is a highly competitive program that encourages small businesses to engage in Research and Development (R&D) that has the potential for commercialization. SBIR provides funding that enables small businesses to explore their technological potential and provides the incentive to profit from its commercialization.

ConnecTech is a DSLBD program that provides technical assistance to firms interested in pursuing these funding opportunities. Established in 2013, the program has exceeded expectations, reaching over 120 District based, innovation focused small businesses in its initial year. The program is funded in part through a Federal/State cooperative agreement administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). DSLBD is pleased to announce that the cooperative agreement with SBA has been renewed for fiscal year 2015, ensuring District based businesses will continue to benefit from ConnecTech services, creating more opportunities that enable the District's technology sector to continue its growth.

As a part of the expended program, ConnecTech will offer a "Phase 0" pilot program that will provide funding to qualified companies to offset SBIR proposal development and review costs. Small businesses will be able to receive up to \$1,000 of support. Applications for the Phase 0 pilot program will be accepted on a rolling, first come, first served basis until funds are depleted or lapse.

"We are excited to offer such valuable services to District small businesses," said Robert Summers, Director of the Department of Small and Local Business Development. "Our Phase 0 program will place DC Tech firms on equal footing with small businesses nationwide that have had access to SBIR and other innovation resources for years. The ConnecTech program plays a valuable role in ensuring that the District is one of the nation's leading regions in supporting innovators and entrepreneurs."

In 2012 Mayor Vincent C. Gray released the District's Five-Year Economic Development Strategy which included growing the most competitive technology presence on the east coast. ConnecTech has been instrumental in realizing these initiatives by connecting small businesses with funding resources to drive growth in the District's innovation and technology sector.

For more information about ConnecTech services, visit <http://dslbd.dc.gov/service/connectech>.

#### **About the District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development**

The District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) fosters the economic growth, development, and retention of District of Columbia based businesses, and promotes economic development throughout the District's commercial districts. For more information, go to [dslbd.dc.gov](http://dslbd.dc.gov) or contact us at [dslbd@dc.gov](mailto:dslbd@dc.gov). Follow DSLBD on Twitter at @SmallBizDC, or like our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/smallbizdc](http://www.facebook.com/smallbizdc).