

## Activity 7.2: Senior Leader Role-Plays—Role C

### Scenario 1 - Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC)

#### Role: Source Selection Authority

This is not your first experience as the Source Selection Authority (SSA) on a solicitation. You have been in this position several times in the past few years, but this is a new organization for you and you have not worked with the other members of this SSAC previously. You were concerned with the information provided by the Contracting Officer regarding the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) survey results and the recommendation not to award to Dell due to non-responsibility, but when counsel indicated that a non-responsibility determination would be inappropriate you removed that from consideration. The Small Business Senior Leader asserted that because Dell Helicopter is a small business, the non-responsibility determination would need to be referred to the Small Business Administration (SBA), but you felt that counsel's recommendations were more supportable. You are also concerned that Dell has included no profit until after the helicopters are sold, and, if so, this may result in degraded performance during the life of the contract should their financial situation deteriorate further. In addition, the cognizant training authority has been exerting a lot of pressure to get the contract awarded as soon as possible. It is behind schedule as it is, and there is a new class due to be on board in the next couple of months. As far as you are concerned, the evidence supports not awarding to Dell Helicopter due to high management risk.

### Scenario 2 - Emerging Legislative Changes

#### Role: Small Business Senior Leader

You have been in this position for several years and have worked for the two previous directors. One was very experienced with the small business programs and the other less so. You have met with the new director on a few occasions and recognize that he is still learning about the organization and its programs, as well as becoming familiar with his staff. You perceive that his view of the Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) programs is favorable, but you are also aware that the Chief of Staff does not necessarily share the view that arbitrarily increasing funding to these programs is beneficial to weapon systems acquisitions. The Chief of Staff will be attending the briefing with you. You know that to gain the director's buy-in for the SBIR/STTR programs you must prepare him well for the comments and questions he is likely to receive regarding the proposed change, so that he will have a successful meeting outcome. Anything less may dampen his support for the SBIR/STTR programs and make your job that much more challenging.

You have outlined the following potential questions and answers in preparation for the meeting:

#### General Questions:

- *What is the basis of the new SBIR/STTR legislation?*

The SBIR program is a highly competitive program that encourages domestic small businesses to engage in Federal Research/Research and Development (R/R&D) that has the potential for commercialization. Through a competitive awards-based program, SBIR enables small businesses to explore their technological potential and provides the incentive to profit from its commercialization. By including qualified small businesses in the nation's R&D arena, high-tech innovation is stimulated and the United States gains entrepreneurial spirit as it meets its specific research and development needs.

The STTR is another program that expands funding opportunities in the Federal innovation R&D arena. Central to the program is expansion of the public- and private-sector partnership to include the joint venture opportunities for small businesses and nonprofit research institutions. The unique feature of the STTR program is the requirement for the small business to formally collaborate with a research institution in Phase I and Phase II. STTR's most important role is to bridge the gap between performance of basic science and commercialization of resulting innovations.

The SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act of 2016 will increase the allocation of funding from 2.5 percent to 5 percent for the Department of Defense (DoD) SBIR program. It will also increase the allocation of funding for the STTR program from .45 percent to 1 percent.

- *What is the benefit of the legislation?*

Increasing the amount allocated to these two programs will help to stimulate American innovation and to relieve underrepresentation of small businesses in R&D efforts.

- *Who will oversee the program?*

The SBA will continue to oversee the program.

#### Questions from large businesses:

- *We have concerns that growing the SBIR program will come at the expense of funding for fundamental science, and that a mandatory increase in SBIR/STTR allocation will result in fewer research opportunities for investigators.*

Basic research shouldn't exist in a vacuum and SBIR is meant to ensure it has a real-world payoff by encouraging commercialization. The U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has repeatedly found that the SBIR/STTR program is accomplishing its mission and creating jobs for thousands of scientists and engineers who otherwise can't find academic positions after they graduate.

- *The proposed increases will be implemented when future funding levels for DoD are very uncertain.*

The proposed changes represent only a sliver of the R&D budget and will be implemented over 10 years from 2018 to 2028.

### Scenario 3 - Increasing Awards to HUBZones

#### Role: Contracting Officer

You are under pressure to award contracts quickly as the end of the fiscal year approaches, so that funds are obligated before they expire. You've traditionally used task orders on existing multiple award contracts to quickly obligate dollars at the end of the fiscal year. At this time, there are no HUBZone multiple-award contracts for you to use. Another method you prefer to use at this time of the year are 8(a) sole source contracts because they can quickly be put into place to ensure that the funds are obligated in a timely manner. In fact, traditionally one-half of all 8(a) contracts are awarded in the fourth quarter because of the ease of putting these contracts in place. Unfortunately, HUBZone contracts take longer. You recognize the need to find solutions to this issue and want to participate, but you are under increasing pressure due to the coming end of the fiscal year and your time is becoming more limited.