

2020 TIBBETTS AWARD WINNER

# Oklahoma Catalyst Programs



U.S. Small Business Administration



SBIR · STTR  
America's Seed Fund  
POWERED BY SBA

**OK Catalyst is focused on reversing Oklahoma's historically poor performance in the SBIR/STTR arena, relative to more successful states, through leveraging SBIR/STTR as an economic development tool to launch and grow a new generation of Oklahoma startups. Since 2018, OK Catalyst has helped 13 companies win \$8.5 million in SBIR/STTR awards – with 100% of participating companies being first time SBIR awardees, while 76% are women-, veteran-, and/or minority-owned.**

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#### LOCATION

**OK**  
Norman

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#### SBIR IMPACT

**\$8.9M**  
SBIR/STTR awards

## Impact & Achievement

The Oklahoma Catalyst Programs (OK Catalyst) has big plans for Oklahoma. OK Catalyst is focused on reversing Oklahoma's historically poor performance in the Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) arena through leveraging SBIR/STTR as an economic development tool to launch and grow a new generation of Oklahoma startups. The organization has led outreach and support for Oklahoma since 2018, and its program is built upon Executive Director Tom Wavering's 19 years of experience in leading the SBIR/STTR, technology transition, and related R&D activities for both Luna Innovations and Intelligent Automation, Inc – two of the most historically successful SBIR/STTR-funded companies in the U.S. In addition to Mr. Wavering and the full-time professional staff, OK Catalyst employs students from the University of Oklahoma who gain real-world experience in their fields of study as they support the mission of OK Catalyst. 100 percent of the OK catalyst student employees have been employed in their fields of study upon graduation.

In the time since its inception, the organization has helped 13 companies win \$8.9 million in SBIR/STTR awards – with 100 percent of participating companies being first time SBIR awardees, and 76 percent of participating companies being women-, veteran-, or minority-owned or socially/economically disadvantaged.

OK Catalyst's strategy is to utilize a strong network of partner organizations at the local, state, and international level to create and participate in high value events that are not SBIR/STTR centric. For example, the Oklahoma Women Impacting STEM & Entrepreneurship Conference (OK-WISE) has highlighted the impacts that Oklahoma women are having in STEM & entrepreneurship, and has been credited with serving as an inspiration for female entrepreneurs who are actively pursuing SBIR/STTR funding to launch their business. OK Catalyst's SBIR/STTR outreach efforts have reached more than 4,000 people, and its training resources have helped over 500 people learn about tech-based entrepreneurship and the path for starting a company using SBIR/STTR funding.

The organization's SBIRx initiative guides Phase I award winners on best practices to successfully execute their Phase I award, as well as maximize their probability of winning a follow-on Phase II award. The initiative provides project management, prototyping, and commercialization assistance. The organization has seen a 40 percent cumulative win rate for client SBIR/STTR proposals, and a 60 percent Phase II win rate for SBIRx companies. Further, 100 percent of SBIRx participant companies were first time Phase II SBIR/STTR awardees.

Headquartered at the University of Oklahoma's Research Campus in Norman, OK Catalyst has offices and employees on the University's campuses in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Additional partners in Oklahoma include the Department of Commerce, Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science & Technology (OCAST), Innovation to Enterprise (i2E), Oklahoma State University, the University of Tulsa, and various local co-working spaces, business incubators, and Chambers of Commerce throughout the state.

[www.okcatalyst.com](http://www.okcatalyst.com)