

FAQs for SBRT Technical Service Vendors

Can you explain a little bit more about your goal(s)?

We want to provide growth-oriented businesses with advice and technical assistance to overcome obstacles to progress. We know the business owners are busy and have many distractions. The SBRT program provides a concentrated time of 12 weeks to focus on a specific action plan for moving forward.

What types of technical assistance do you need from us?

On the application form, you'll see a list of services potentially needed by the SBRT Businesses.

eCommerce - building/updating Websites or setting up eCommerce on Websites.

Marketing - setting up a marketing calendar, providing assistance on social media or marketing platforms, or creating a branding strategy.

Finance - setting up a system for recordkeeping, setting up QuickBooks, organizing/updating financial records, creating cash flow strategies/forecasts, assisting with budgeting, or helping to prepare financial documents (balance sheet, P&L, cash flow).

Operational Efficiencies – consulting about lean systems, assisting with supply chains or logistics, establishing or refining processes and procedures, setting up project management or workflow systems.

You may suggest additional services based on your expertise, or we may identify needs and seek out the best provider.

How are Vendors involved?

Vendors who can provide professional services to the businesses are instrumental in meeting our goal. We identify the business' needs and then seek a provider who has identified themselves as being able to meet that need with their expertise. Together with the business and the vendor, we'll determine the best scope of services, a timeline, and the cost.

Speaking of costs, am I going to be compensated for my services?

Yes. Built into the SBRT grant is \$1,800 per business to pay for technical assistance. As the business' needs are identified and an Action Plan developed, you will be contacted to determine if you are the best fit.

We will also discuss the best use of the funds, which means we will ask you to consider providing a discount on hourly rates, service packages to save money, or other considerations to stretch the allocated funds. In the past, because of the generosity of Vendors, not all funds were used by all businesses, so we were able to assist quite a few more businesses than originally planned.

Am I going to be splitting the potential funding with another vendor?

Because the Business selects only one area to work in, it would be unusual, but not impossible, for more than one vendor to be involved.

How many businesses will I be expected to help?

You can determine the scope of your work with the SBRT program, taking on just one business client or multiples. The program runs through spring 2023, and new participants will be added as we go, so taking on more than one business does not necessarily mean all at the same time. The decision of how involved you want to be is up to you.

Can I help an SBRT business obtain and set up new computers, point-of-sales systems, or other needed business equipment?

Unfortunately, the SBRT grant does not allow for its funds to be used for tangible assets. The only approved use is for professional services. So, you can help a business owner learn how to use a POS, modify their QuickBooks records, or establish a project management plan, but we cannot use the funds to purchase QuickBooks or project management software, computers or related peripherals, or any other tangible item. The business will have to purchase those items themselves.

OK, I can see how the businesses will benefit, but what's in it for me?

As a technical service provider (vendor), you

- **will be in front of potential new customers.** Many of the SBRT businesses continue their relationship with the vendor after the program ends. Then you can provide your services as you normally would, at your normal rates.
- **will be recognized in our reports of SBRT activity.** That report will be shared with Economic Development Offices, Chamber of Commerce, visitors to SBDCs' Websites, and readers of SBDC Newsletters.
- **will be helping a fellow small business** add jobs or new products, become more efficient, or expand their services.

OK – bottom line, how do I get paid?

As you provide the services or when the work is complete, you can submit an invoice and W-9 to the appropriate SBDC. The Business does not pay you. We will pass the invoice to the grant's fiscal agent (the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission) who will send you a check for payment. All invoices must be submitted within 7 days of the completion of the services or June 30, 2023, whichever is soonest.

If you have additional questions, don't hesitate to contact the SBDC. We're happy to talk with you!