



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Q4 2025

njcsit.gov

Established to nurture emerging fields and support startups, the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology (CSIT) bridges the gap between scientific research and marketable solutions. By providing grants, facilitating partnerships, and promoting collaboration among academia, industry, and government, the commission accelerates the commercialization of cutting-edge technologies. Through strategic investments and policy advocacy, CSIT ensures New Jersey remains at the forefront of scientific and technological innovation and contributes to a more sustainable and prosperous future for its residents.

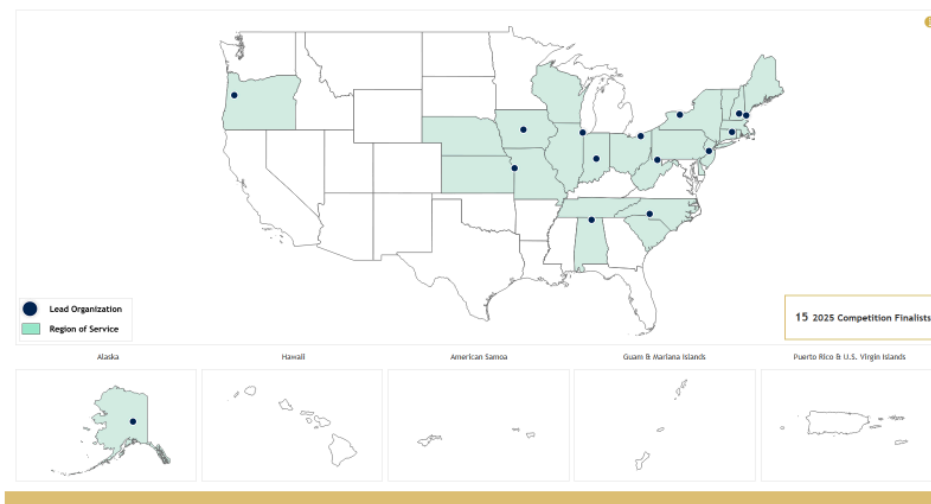
NEWS

RECENT PRESS RELEASES AND NEWS

CSIT Supports New Jersey Bid for NSF Regional Innovation Engine Opportunity - 15 Finalists Selected

ALEXANDRIA, V.A. (September 18, 2025) – The U.S. National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engines (NSF Engines) program announced the 15 finalists advancing to the next stage of the second competition – spanning critical technologies and applications ranging from energy grid security to maximizing the yield of critical minerals mining to advanced optical sensors. The finalist teams, many of whom have been building their regional coalitions for a year or longer, are led by universities, nonprofits, private industry and other organizations from across the United States.

A regional NJ/DEL/PA team led by Princeton and Rowan university is a finalist focusing on photonics technology. The Photonics Engine's plans for interdisciplinary technology development and commercialization, workforce training, entrepreneurial support and expansion of business and industry aligns with CSIT's mission of promoting New Jersey as a home for academic and technological research, development, and commercialization of early-stage innovations. CSIT is a partner in the proposal and has provided funding to support grant development and will provide Catalyst R&D vouchers (\$160,000) to photonics related companies. Additionally, CSIT will participate in the Engine's governance advisory group.



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Cleantech Open Northeast Celebrates 2025 Winning Startups

SOMERVILLE, M.A. (September 30, 2025) – Cleantech Open Northeast (CTONE), the world's oldest and largest cleantech accelerator, announced its 2025 cohort with strong representation from New Jersey, which tied with Massachusetts for the highest number of startups thanks to support from the **New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation, and Technology (NJ CSIT)** and the **New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA)**. Eleven (11) New Jersey companies are advancing innovations in areas such as advanced materials, energy storage and distribution, efficiency, generation, green buildings, transportation, and water technologies.

At the Regional Finals held during New York Climate Week, 39 climatetech startups competed for \$72,500 in prizes and the chance to move on to the National Semi-Finals. Among the New Jersey participants, PolyGone Systems won the People's Choice Award, the Water Prize, and advanced as a National Semi-Finalist, while Tensor Planet was named both a Northeast Regional Finalist and National Semi-Finalist. During the accelerator program, CSIT provided information to the CTONE cohort on NJ state incentives available from CSIT and NJEDA and conducted an in depth webinar on potential federal SBIR/STTR funding opportunities. CSIT provided financial assistance to cover the tuition cost of participating in the program and of the NJ participating in the cohort, five companies have also received CSIT Clean Tech R&D Seed grants and Clean Tech R&D Vouchers.



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Krell Technologies Recognized as Innovator of the Year at "Made in NJ" Manufacturing Day 2025

FREEHOLD, N.J. – On October 3, 2025, more than 1,000 manufacturing leaders, educators, students, and policymakers convened at iPlay America in Freehold, New Jersey for the 13th annual 'MADE in NJ' Manufacturing Day, the largest in the event's history. One of the most anticipated moments of this event is the Awards Ceremony, where Krell Technologies Inc (KrellTech), a CSIT Clean Tech R&D Voucher Grant Round 3 Recipient, was recognized as "Innovator of the Year." The award honors KrellTech's commitment to advancing photonics manufacturing, with its facility located in Neptune City, NJ. Through CSIT'S Clean Tech R&D Voucher program, which provides up to \$40,000 for access to equipment at NJ-based core facilities, KrellTech partnered with Rowan University's Photonics Lab to analyze optically polished components. This project shows how manufacturers can leverage NJ academic core facilities to accelerate innovation while defraying costs.



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Cecilia Energy Inc Featured on CBS' The Visioneers with Zay Harding

NEWARK, N.J. – On October 11, 2025, Cecilia Energy was featured on Episode 2, Season 2, of CBS' *The Visioneers with Zay Harding*. Filmed at Cecilia's Newark, NJ pilot facility, the episode spotlights the company's novel solutions for plastic-waste recycling and its broader work in circular carbon materials and NASA partnerships. *The Visioneers* showcases organizations developing inspiring, sustainable innovations around the world. With over four CSIT Clean Tech grants to its name, Cecilia Energy was also selected as a winner of the 2025 Ocean Exchange Neptune Award, an international recognition for solutions that advance understanding of the ocean and minimize human impact on marine resources through sustainable innovation.

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Orka Bar Featured on Shark Tank

ASBURY PARK, N.J. (October 22, 2025) – Orka Bar, a CSIT Catalyst R&D Voucher Recipient, appeared on ABC's Shark Tank Season 17, Episode 4, and secured a deal with Lori Greiner for \$100,000. Orka Bar, a high-protein frozen chocolate bar, was created by Stephen Longo, a certified nutrition coach and lifelong athlete to reimagine a nostalgic childhood treat with nourishment in mind. With support from the Catalyst R&D Voucher Program, Orka Bar partnered with the Rutgers Food Innovation Center to refine prototypes, test shelf life, and prepare production-ready formulas. The brand's journey from local gyms to national televisions highlights how startups can leverage CSIT programs to scale innovation.

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PolyGone Systems Inc Named U.S. National Winner of Cleantech Open 2025

SAN JOSE, C.A. (October 30, 2025) – PolyGone Systems Inc, a startup focused on addressing microplastic pollution, was announced as the U.S. National Winner of the national Cleantech Open 2025. PolyGone was selected among the 96 startups from around the world that completed the accelerator program this year. Cleantech Open is the world's largest and longest running cleantech accelerator, supporting more 4,000 entrepreneurs in the United States over the past two decades.

Co-founders Nathaniel Banks and Yidian Liu were also recognized with the Emerging Tech Award for their groundbreaking microplastic filtration technology on November 20, 2025, at the 46th Annual Edison Patent Awards. Their system, supported by more than \$390,000 in CSIT funding through Seed Grants, Clean Tech R&D Vouchers, and a Pilot Clean Tech Demonstration, was launched in partnership with the Atlantic County Utilities Authority in 2024. To date, the technology has removed over 540 million microplastics from New Jersey's waterways.



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CSIT awards \$1.3M in grants to 17 New Jersey startups through Round 4 of the Clean Tech R&D Pilot Seed Grant Program.

TRENTON, N.J. (October 31, 2025) – **The New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology (CSIT)** has awarded \$1.3 million in grants to 17 startups as part of Round 4 of the Clean Tech R&D Pilot Seed Grant Program. The awards will help these young companies accelerate development of their technologies and transform their discoveries into commercially viable products and services.

Funded by the **New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPUI)** and jointly developed with **the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology (CSIT)** and the **New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA)**, the Clean Tech R&D Pilot Seed Grant Program supports startups advancing technologies to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. The latest round of awards backs innovations in:

- Energy efficiency.
- Energy distribution and storage.
- Energy generation.
- Chemicals and advanced materials.
- Water treatment.
- Transportation.

Notably, 72% of the recipient companies employ five or fewer people and are based across Bergen, Burlington, Essex, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, and Somerset counties.

Congratulations to the awardees!



ResearchwithNJ Portal Gives Entrepreneurs and Investors Free Access to Research at New Jersey's World-Class Universities

TRENTON, N.J. (November 15, 2025) – **The New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology (CSIT)** today announced the expansion of the website for **ResearchwithNJ** to include Princeton Plasma Physics Lab. The site includes NJ leading research institutions, resulting in more than 405,000 pieces of research output and close to 7,450 researcher profiles. The robust platform, used globally, connects companies, faculty, and entrepreneurs with the goal of growing more academic research and business collaborations. The site reached 3.7M visitors in 2025, a 400% increase from 2024.

Research with NJ

The R&D Council of New Jersey celebrated its 2025 Patent Awards, highlighting groundbreaking innovations with strong ties to startups supported by CSIT.

HOLMDEL, N.J. (November 20, 2025) - The R&D Council of New Jersey recognized several standout inventions at its annual Patent Awards, highlighting CSIT-funded winners across consumer innovation, medical diagnostics, industrial processes, and emerging technology.



- **PumpKin Baby Inc / Princeton University** - *Consumer Innovation: Methods, Devices and Compositions for Preserving Human Milk* (U.S. Patent 12,239,142 B2) by Justin E. Silpe and Bonnie L. Bassler
- **MRI Math / Rowan University** - *Medical Diagnostics: Method for Detecting Radiological Progression in Cancer Surveillance* (U.S. Patent 12,198,334 B2) by Hassan Fathallah-Shaykh and Nidhal Buoaynaya.
- **Queens Carbon, Inc / Rutgers University** - *Industrial Processes: Methods for Low Energy Inorganic Material Synthesis* (U.S. Patent 11,332,847 B2) by Richard E. Riman and Daniel Kopp



Special Honors

Emerging Tech Award - PolyGone Systems Inc, co-founded by Nathaniel Banks and Yidian Liu, was recognized by its breakthrough microplastic filtration technology. Launched in partnership with the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA), the system has removed over 540 million microplastics from New Jersey's waterways to date. The company has been supported by CSIT grants and the New Jersey Innovation Evergreen Fund.



Congratulations to Craig Arnold!

Craig Arnold, Vice Dean for Innovation at Princeton University, received recognition for his leadership in advancing New Jersey's innovation ecosystem. Craig has collaborated extensively with CSIT and NJEDA on federal proposals including the NSF Regional Engines Program, CSIT's R&D Voucher Program, and the NJEDA's Strategic Innovation Centers.

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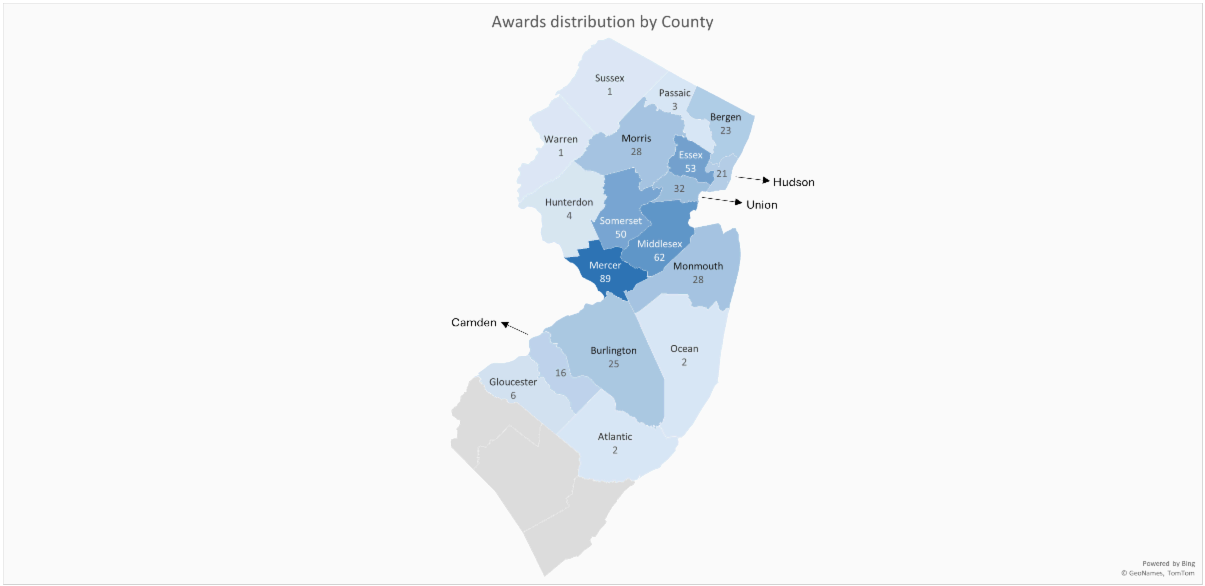
CSIT AT A GLANCE

CSIT's Impact in New Jersey

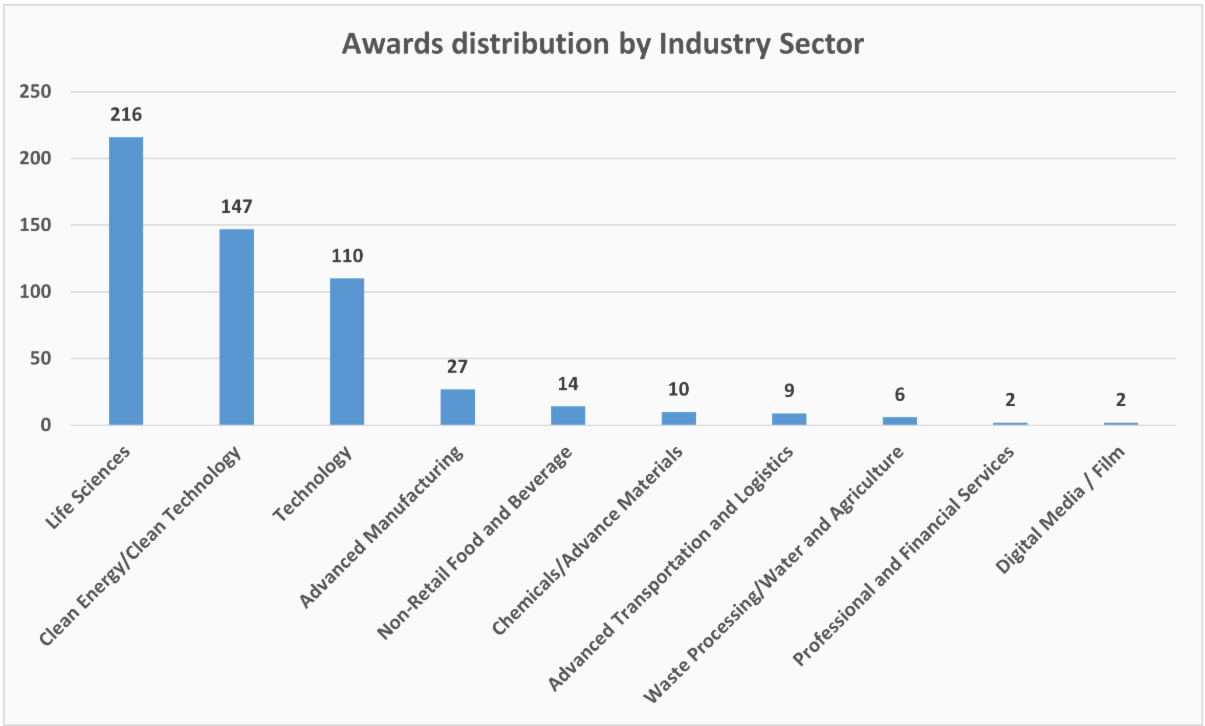
Since its re-establishment in 2018, CSIT has made 540 awards of approximately \$32M for early-stage New Jersey companies working on R&D, enabling them to demonstrate technology capabilities and proof of concept. Awards have supported R&D across sectors such as life sciences, clean technology, advanced manufacturing, non-retail food and beverage, transportation, logistics, and other technology fields.

The charts below highlight the reach of CSIT awards, showing their distribution by industry and geography from 2020–2025*

Total number of CSIT awards per NJ County



Breakdown of CSIT awards per industry sector



*Full report to come soon.

CSIT-SUPPORTED COMPANIES

Curio Digital Therapeutics based in Princeton has eight employees and is a women-owned startup providing AI-driven digital therapeutics for women's mental health. It offers digital-first behavioral health solutions supported by health coaches and therapists.



These solutions are evidence-based and clinically trial-tested, providing accessible care anytime, anywhere. The platform includes personalized programs addressing various life stages, from fertility to menopause. The company has received FDA approval for its postpartum depression digital therapeutic, MamaLift Plus marking a significant milestone as MamaLift Plus becomes the first prescription digital therapeutic authorized for the treatment of postpartum depression (PPD).

Curio Digital Therapeutics has received \$150,000 in funding from CSIT through two rounds of the Maternal and Infant Research & Development Pilot Seed Grant program. Additionally, they received an investment from Golden Seeds.



NeurotechR3 is woman owned startup based in Warren with seven employees. NeuroTechR3 develops evidence-based exergame technologies that help clinicians optimize rehabilitation outcomes for individuals with neurological diseases. They provide affordable and engaging solutions for people of all ages, empowering them to enhance their overall wellness and quality of life.

The technology that led to NeuroTechR3 was developed by a team of researchers from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). The company has received approximately \$2M in federal funding from the SBIR/STTR program and is involved in a research collaboration with the Kessler Foundation. NeurotechR3 has received \$155,000 in funding from CSIT as part of the SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance Program and the Catalyst R&D Voucher Program.



Pure NanoTech is a woman-owned startup based in Parsippany with four employees. The company is developing a Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) irrigation systems with patented nanobubble technology. The systems optimize nutrient delivery to promote faster, healthier plant growth ultimately enhancing yield per acre and boosting economic returns.

They have demonstrated the technology at Edible Gardens in Belvidere, NJ and found a 55% increase in yield compared to traditional irrigation methods, a 30% reduction in harvest cycle time, allowing for faster production and enhanced plant health, including reduced

biofilm in irrigation systems and stronger root development.

The company has received \$250,000 from CSIT through the Clean Tech Demonstration Pilot Grant program and is working with New Jersey Institute of Technology.



Ricovr Healthcare is based in Princeton and has 10 employees. The company is redefining point-of-care diagnostics through innovative technology that deliver fast, accurate testing to elevate workplace safety and advance the healthcare industry.

Their rapid diagnostics platform provides high-quality, rapid diagnostic results using only a small amount of saliva. The company's product pipeline includes rapid point-of-care tests for THC, drugs-of-abuse, reproductive health, and infectious diseases.

The company has received CSIT funding of \$265K for SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance Grants, Catalyst R&D Vouchers and two rounds of Maternal & Infant R&D Seed Grants. The company has collaborated with Rutgers University on technology development. Additionally, the company has received funding from NJEDA including through the New Jersey Innovation Evergreen Fund.

TESTIMONIAL

Rutgers University Partners with CSIT To Advance Innovation in New Jersey

"Over the past several years, CSIT has been instrumental in harnessing the power of innovation from New Jersey's universities and emerging businesses," said Rutgers senior vice president for research Michael E. Zwick, PhD. "By translating scientific and technological advancements into high-growth ventures, CSIT has helped drive economic development and job creation across the state."

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Institute of Life Sciences Entrepreneurship on CSIT's initiatives

"Through its targeted initiatives, CSIT has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to supporting innovation and driving economic growth in New Jersey. We at ILSE (Institute of Life Sciences Entrepreneurship) are proud to collaborate with CSIT and have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact these programs have on the companies we work with. CSIT support is not only fostering innovation but also reinforcing New Jersey's position as a premier hub for life sciences and technology."

Keith Bostian - CEO (ILSE)



FEATURED GRANTS



SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance Program Round 5

CSIT's SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance Program Round 5 supports small businesses participating in the federal SBIR/STTR program. Round 5 applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

The program provides two types of grants:

- 1) Direct Funding of \$25,000 for SBIR/STTR Phase I, Fast Track, or Direct to Phase II award/contract winners, and
- 2) \$50,000 Bridge Funding for SBIR/STTR Phase II applicants. These grants aim to reduce financial burdens, increase research intensity, strengthen commercialization plans, and improve chances of winning Phase II awards for New Jersey small businesses engaged in innovative research and development.

Clean Tech Research and Development (R&D) and Catalyst Research and Development Voucher Program

Clean Tech Research & Development and Catalyst Research & Development Voucher Programs are designed to support early-stage companies. These programs aim to enhance innovation and technology commercialization and are particularly focused on fostering collaboration between industry and academia. Both voucher programs allow companies to utilize core facilities for testing and development purposes, as well as training for independent use of these resources. To date, the voucher programs have 21 core facility participants.

CSIT's voucher programs play a crucial role in supporting New Jersey's innovation ecosystem by providing essential resources that help New Jersey companies advance their research and development efforts. Through these initiatives, CSIT aims to

As of November 1, 2025, CSIT has approved 33 Direct Funding applications and 22 Bridge Funding applications. There is approximately \$750,000 available for future grant awards.

[Learn about SBIR/STTR grants](#)

stimulate economic growth and technological advancement within the state.

As of November 1, 2025, CSIT has approved 95 Catalyst R&D voucher applications and 39 Clean Tech R&D voucher applications. There is \$1,867,500 available to fund 45 Catalyst R&D vouchers and \$660,000 for approximately 15 new Clean Tech R&D projects.

[Learn about voucher grants](#)

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

January 14, 2026 – CSIT SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance Program Informational Webinar

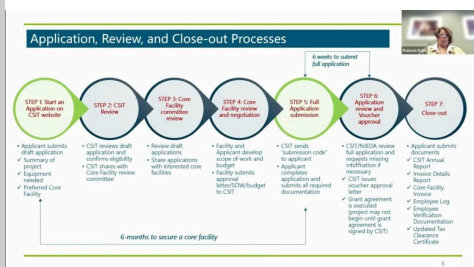
CSIT will host an informational webinar on January 14, 2026, to review program compliance requirements and administrative updates on the SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance Program. More details will be forthcoming.

Please email csitsbir@njcist.gov if you are interested in attending the informational webinar in January.

CSIT anticipates an increase in SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance applications now that the federal shutdown has ended. We expect that pending federal approvals will restore continuity in federal SBIR/STTR and as a result, CSIT expects a higher volume of applications to its SBIR/STTR Direct Financial Assistance Program, Round 5 (“Program”). Currently, there is approximately \$1,250,000 available for future grant awards.

[Learn about SBIR/STTR grants](#)

RESOURCES



CSIT Clean Tech and Catalyst Voucher Program Webinar

The Commission hosted an informational webinar outlining the programs' eligibility requirements, application processes, and compliance requirements. With over 70 registered attendees, the session provided valuable insights into CSIT's Catalyst and Clean Tech R&D Voucher Programs, which offer

non-dilutive grants of up to \$40,000 for New Jersey-based startups and businesses engaged in research and development across clean technology and other innovation sections.

[View the Recorded Webinar](#)



Research with New Jersey

ResearchwithNJ.com helps businesses and entrepreneurs identify and collaborate with our top universities and experts. This free database will help you discover thousands of experts in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as well as their professional backgrounds, publications, and achievements.

[Learn More](#)



New Jersey Small Business Development Center

The New Jersey Small Business Development Center (NJSBDC) is the leading statewide organization in delivering business advisory services and training to established and new small to mid-sized businesses, and high-impact, growth-oriented businesses.

[Learn More](#)



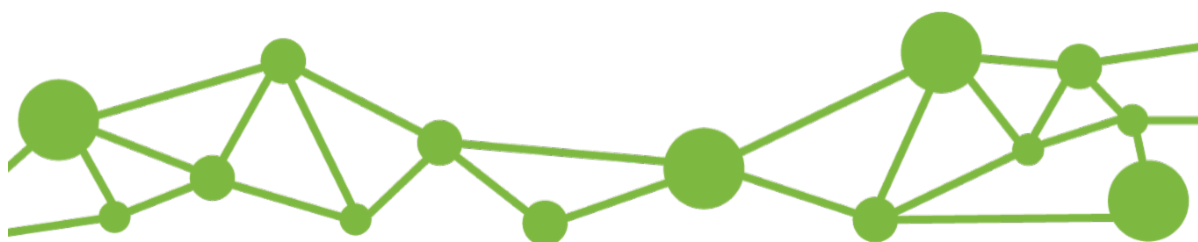
Small Business (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Programs

Through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, America's Seed Fund awards non-dilutive funding to develop your technology and chart a path toward commercialization

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