

2020 TIBBETTS AWARD WINNER

# Abby Trotter



**Ms. Trotter has worked tirelessly throughout her career to ensure Tennessee entrepreneurs have an opportunity to be supported by and leverage SBIR funding to achieve commercialization. She advocates for entrepreneurs, ensuring their voices are heard at the Tennessee legislature.**

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#### LOCATION

**TN**  
Nashville

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#### ORGANIZATION

Life Science Tennessee

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#### SBIR/STTR AFFILIATION

Tennessee Advocate



U.S. Small Business  
Administration



SBIR • STTR  
America's Seed Fund  
POWERED BY SBA

## Impact & Achievement

Abby Trotter served as the central catalyst for creation of Tennessee's Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Matching Fund, which awards non-dilutive grant dollars to SBIR/STTR winners in the state of Tennessee. Thanks to Trotter's forward-thinking leadership, working in concert with the Tennessee Technology Development Corporation (dba Launch Tennessee [LaunchTN]), the fund has supported 52 SBIR/STTR companies, deployed \$6 million, and leveraged almost \$24 million in federal funding. The Fund offers additional funding for women and minority funders (\$0.60 on the dollar, vs. \$0.50). To date, 48% of companies receiving matching funds have had women or minorities represented in their leadership. These critical matching dollars have allowed companies to scale at a faster rate, increasing their chance for commercialization success. Since its inception in fiscal year 2018, Trotter has advocated vigorously for the expansion of the program, and in 2019 she helped secure \$3 million in dedicated state support for fiscal year 2020. Most recently she has advocated for the SBIR/STTR Matching Program to receive recurring funds allowing the funds to be received into the program annually unless expressly removed from the state budget. If approved, the funding will enable even more companies to achieve success with SBIR/STTR in the state of Tennessee. More than 43 new jobs have been created in Tennessee as a direct result of the SBIR/STTR Matching Fund.

Trotter was also a key figure in the creation of the Life Science Mentor Network, which supports the business growth of life science startups across Tennessee - many of whom are SBIR/STTR awardees. Through the work of the Life Science Mentor Network, eight participants to date have received SBIR/STTR funding. The Life Science Mentor Network has been a key component in supporting early-stage life science companies on their journey to commercialization. Following the success of the Life Science Mentor Network, LaunchTN has expanded this program to other innovation-focused industries across the state, including advanced energy, agriculture, and automotive. The program has supported 33 life science companies, enabling many to achieve critical scale and reach milestones in their businesses. In the areas of life science and advanced energy, more than \$19 million in capital has been raised and \$15.3 million in grants have been won by Mentor Network companies.

Trotter is also a key partner in Innovation & Entrepreneurship Week on the Hill (Tennessee), where she aids life science students, entrepreneurs, and established businesses in advocating for priorities to advance the industry. Dedicated to the advancement of technologies, Abby Trotter has worked tirelessly throughout her career to ensure Tennessee entrepreneurs have an opportunity to be supported by and leverage SBIR funding to achieve commercialization. She also advocates for entrepreneurs, ensuring their voices are heard at the Tennessee legislature.