

Good evening, Chair Champion, and Committee Members. My name is Efraín Torres.

I grew up in a lower-income community on the South side of Chicago, and I am a first generation American and middle-school, high-school, college and soon to be a PhD graduate. My community imparted me with tremendous values: hard-work, discipline, and leadership. But most importantly, they imparted me with a mission to give back to my community. Growing up, there were few opportunities for us. Our schools are underfunded, and we lacked access to affordable and accessible medicine. I choose to focus on the latter problem: access to medical technology. I received my B.S. in bioelectrical engineering and engineering leadership and enrolled in graduate school focused on developing and delivering affordable MRI technology through a start-up.

My entire focus for the past 5 year has been to develop affordable MRI technology. I lead Adialante, a small startup, as its CEO, and delivering affordable and accessible MRI technology is our core mission. A key barrier to commercializing this technology is securing appropriate funding. As a hardware and software company, we face tremendous barriers and costs. If we are to be successful **while keeping the company mission-focused**, non-dilutive funding is critical.

Small business innovation research grants perfectly fit our funding needs, but they come with their own challenges. Minnesota SBIR has had a huge impact on us. They guided us in navigating the process and the numerous steps to apply for funding. Through their support, we have a realistic shot to secure crucial funds to make this project a reality. Without them, we could not have navigated the barriers. The barriers are tremendously confusing, and I certainly would have made a mistake along the way. Their support is crucial to startups like mine! I'm here to extend my support to Minnesota SBIR and to ensure this organization is funded at a level that will help more startups and small businesses in the SBIR/STTR arena.

Sincerely,

Efraín Torres

CEO & Co-founder of Adialante, efrain@adialante.com

PhD Candidate, NSF GRFP and CIC Fellow