The effectiveness of SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) in the growth and success of startups has been a longstanding topic of interest. This study uses event history data for 533 University of California startups from 2000-2013 that were established to commercialize university-licensed technology. We explore the extent to which how SBIR affects three critical outcomes: receiving venture capital funding, successful exit (IPO or merger), or bankruptcy. We show that SBIR awards and venture capital fundings are substitutes rather than complements. Startups receiving SBIR awards and venture capital funding are rarely overlapped. To analyze the underlying mechanisms, we decompose the characteristics of university-based startups. Further, we examine the growth trajectories of two types of startups. Policy implications are discussed.