



NIST MEP Center State Competition NOFO Informational Webinar

**National Institute of Standards
and Technology (NIST)**

**Hollings Manufacturing Extension
Partnership (MEP)**

**Notice of Funding Opportunity
(NOFO) Number:
2025-NIST-MEP-01**

Webinar Conducted: October 23, 2024



**MEP • MANUFACTURING
EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP®**

NIST
**National Institute of
Standards and Technology**
U.S. Department of Commerce



Welcome!

- Thank you for joining us.
- The purpose of this webinar is to provide an overview of the MEP Center State Competition NOFO, offer general guidance on preparing applications, and answer questions related to the NOFO.





Agenda

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Overview

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Eligibility, Estimated Funding, Cost Share, Period of Performance

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Point of Contact Information, Public Website, Questions





A unique public-private partnership that delivers comprehensive, proven solutions to U.S. manufacturers, fueling growth and advancing U.S. manufacturing.

Our mission is to strengthen and empower U.S. manufacturers.





Program Evolution



Deliver higher
value added
services
2000



Foster
innovation
develop & deploy
technology
2009



Next chapter:
enabling adv mfg tech /
Industry 4.0
2022

1988-1999

Optimize
performance &
accountability



2006

Develop leaders
to focus on
strategic
management



2016

Technology
based
economic
development





MEP National Network



Centers located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.



Public-private partnership with local flexibility.



Federal funds, state investments, and private sector fees cover services.



Market driven program that creates high value for manufacturers.



Leverage partners to maximize service offerings.



Transfer technology and expertise to manufacturers.





Our Partners



Economic
development
organizations



Federal agencies
& laboratories



Industry leaders
& think tanks



Manufacturing
USA Institutes



State & local
government

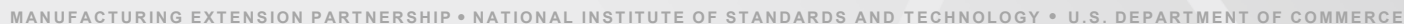


Universities,
community colleges
& technical schools



Trade associations
& other partners







Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for NIST MEP is 15 U.S.C. § 278k.

“The Secretary ... shall establish a program to provide assistance for the creation and support of manufacturing extension centers for the transfer of manufacturing technology and best business practices.”





NOFO Purpose

- When an MEP Center has operated for 10 years, a competition must be conducted to select an eligible entity to operate the Center.
- The MEP Centers in TX, TN, NH, OK, MI, VA, CT, NC, OR, CO and IN are nearing 10 consecutive years of operation.
- Through this NOFO, NIST is seeking applications from eligible entities to operate an MEP Center in the states that were mentioned.
- This new MEP Center will become part of the MEP National Network™ and will provide manufacturing extension services to small and medium-sized manufacturers.



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Eligibility

- Per 15 U.S.C. § 278k(a)(5), eligibility is limited to United States-based nonprofit institutions, institutions of higher education, State, United States territory, local, or tribal governments or a consortium thereof, Per 15 U.S.C. § 278k(h)(2), incumbent MEP Centers that have received financial assistance for ten (10) consecutive years and that the Secretary determines are in good standing are eligible to apply under this NOFO.
- Please note that individuals and unincorporated sole proprietors are not considered “non-Federal entities” and are not eligible to apply under this NOFO. Although Federal entities are not eligible to receive funding under this NOFO, they may participate as unfunded collaborators.
- NIST generally will not fund applications that propose an organizational or operational structure that, in whole or in part, delegates or transfers to another person, institution, or organization the applicant’s responsibility for core MEP Center management and Oversight functions.





Eligibility continued

In accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 278k(k), MEP Centers are required to establish either an Oversight Board or an Advisory Committee.

Oversight Board

- Recipients that are a nonprofit organization will be required to establish and maintain an Oversight Board, which has fiduciary responsibility for the governance and operation of the recipient organization.
- The Oversight Board must be broadly representative of the state service area and/or other service area as defined by the Program Office stakeholders with a majority of the Oversight Board members drawn from small and medium-sized manufacturing firms. **(Refer to Section I.2 for more detail)**

Advisory Committee

- A recipient of an MEP Center cooperative agreement that is an institution of higher education, state, local or Tribal governmental entity, where state or Tribal law or policy prohibits compliance with the Oversight Board requirement, may establish an Advisory Committee.
- The Advisory Committee must be broadly representative of state service area stakeholders with the majority of its members drawn from small- and medium-sized manufacturing firms and provide regular strategic, policy, and programmatic input directly to the designated representative of the recipient. **(Refer to Section I.2.c for more details)**





Eligibility continued

- If an Oversight Board or Advisory Committee meeting the requirements of this section is not in place at the time an application is submitted, the applicant must submit a plan for establishing such structure, including Oversight Board or Advisory Committee membership criteria.
- An awardee will have up to 90 calendar days from the award start date to establish its Oversight Board or Advisory Committee, as the case may be.





Anticipated Funding Amounts by State

MEP Center Location and Assigned Geographical Service Area (by State)	Anticipated Federal Funding for Each Year of the Award	Total Anticipated Federal Funding for 5-Year Award Period
Texas	\$ 8,071,600	\$40,358,000
Tennessee	\$ 2,410,019	\$12,050,095
New Hampshire	\$ 924,376	\$4,621,880
Oklahoma	\$ 1,669,756	\$8,348,780
Michigan	\$ 4,940,100	\$24,700,500
Virginia	\$ 2,140,321	\$10,701,605
Connecticut	\$ 1,855,552	\$9,277,760
North Carolina	\$ 3,613,118	\$18,065,590
Oregon	\$ 2,217,708	\$11,088,540
Colorado	\$ 2,080,092	\$10,400,460
Indiana	\$ 3,303,181	\$16,515,905





50% Cost-Share Requirement

- MEP Centers must provide non-Federal cost share of at least 50% of the total annual allowable project costs.
- MEP Centers must meet this minimum cost-share requirement annually. There can be no carryover in excess cost share from one year to the next.
- Program income generated by an MEP Center may be used to meet the cost-share requirement.
- The applicant's share of the MEP Center expenses may include cash, services, and third-party in-kind contributions as described in 2 CFR 200.306.
- The source and detailed rationale of the cost share, including cash, full- and part-time personnel, and in-kind donations, must be documented in the Budget Narrative and Justification submitted with the application.



Agenda



Overview



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Application Requirements

Standard Forms & Technical Documents

Standard Forms:

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

Technical Documents:

- Project Narrative
- Resume(s) of Key Personnel
- Budget Narrative and Justification
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and Five-Year Budget Summary Table
- Resolutions and Letters of Commitment
- Current and Pending Support Form





Standard Forms

SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance:

- Must be signed by an authorizing representative of the applicant
- Complete item 4 - State in which MEP Center is being proposed

SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs:

- Must reflect anticipated expenses for the entire project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living.
- Must reflect each year of funding.
- A second SF-424A is necessary to cover the 5th year of the proposed budget.

CD-511 – Certification Regarding Lobbying:

- Enter Funding Opportunity Number (2025-NIST-MEP-01) in the award number field
- Enter the title of the application, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field

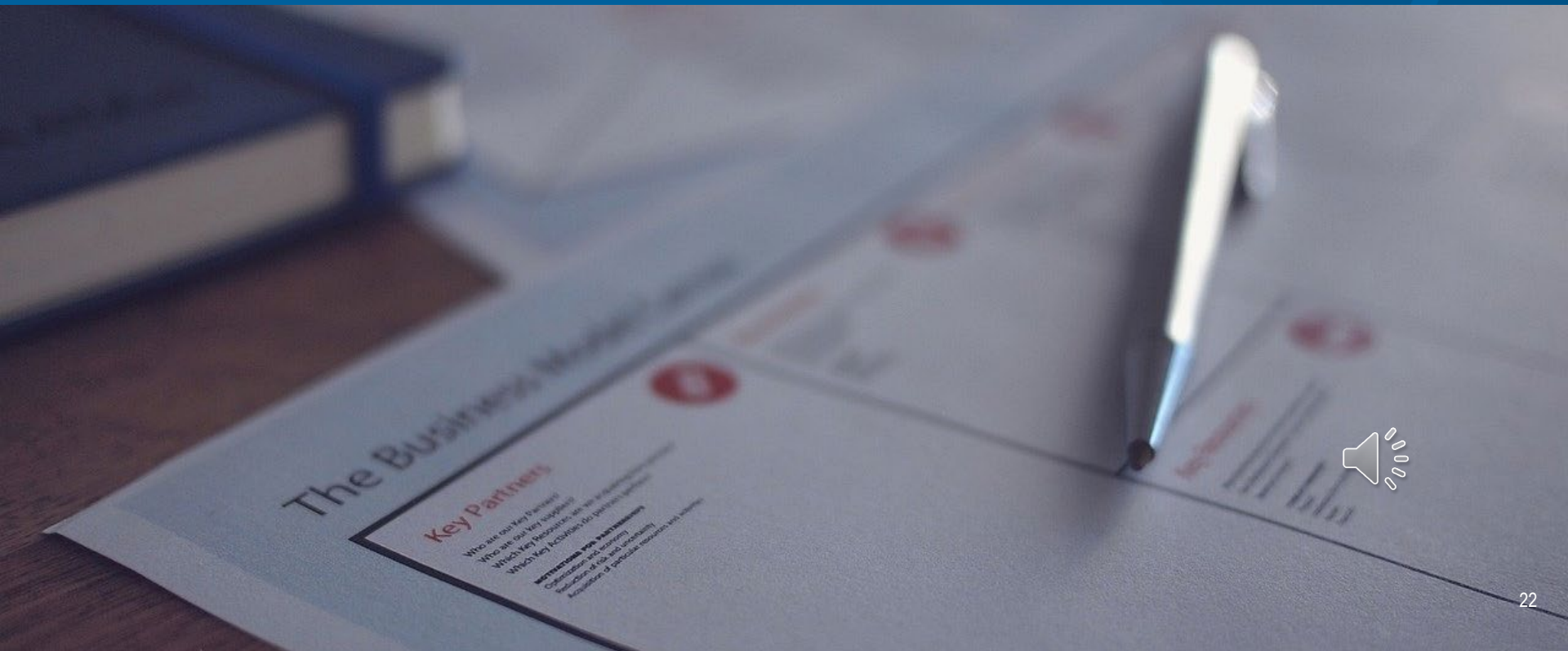
SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)



Refer to pages 12—13 of the NOFO



Program Requirements & Technical Documents





Program Requirements

- Oversight Board or Advisory Committee
- MEP Core Management & Oversight Functions
- MEP Resources





Project Narrative

The Project Narrative must be:

- A word-processed document of no more than 25 pages (double-spaced between lines)

The Project Narrative should contain the following information:

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents (if included)
- Executive Summary (Two-page limit)
- Project Approach and Project Execution Plan
- Qualifications
- Resume(s) of Key Personnel
- Budget Narrative and Justification

PAGE LIMIT EXCLUDES: SF424, SF424A (part 1 & 2), CD511, SF-LLL, Resumes, Budget Narrative & Justification, Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, Letters of Commitment and Current & Pending Support Forms.



Refer to pages 14-16 of the NOFO for details



Project Narrative continued

Executive Summary (Not to exceed two pages)

- The executive summary should include information indicating how each evaluation criterion (see Section IV.2(5). of this NOFO) and its sub-factors are addressed.
- Identify the State of the proposed MEP Center in the first sentence
- Executive Summary 1st Paragraph Format:
 - Purpose
 - Activities
 - Outcomes
 - Beneficiaries
 - Subrecipients





Project Narrative continued

Project Approach and Project Execution Plan:

- Describe the proposed approach to establish and operate an MEP Center
- Identify tasks, measurable milestones, and outcomes in providing manufacturing extension services to primarily small and medium-sized manufacturers separately for each of the 5 years in the designated state.





Project Narrative continued

Qualifications:

- Describe the qualifications and proposed Center operational or management activities of key personnel who will be assigned to work on the proposed project.
- Describe program management plans, including the proposed structure for executing the MEP Core Management and Oversight Functions.
- Description the established or proposed MEP Center Oversight Board or Advisory Committee, including a listing of the members and their organizational affiliation or intended members and a discussion of the governing documents.





Resume(s) of Key Personnel

Resume(s) of Key Personnel:

- Resumes for all key personnel assigned to the project must be provided.
- Limited to two (2) pages per individual.





Budget Narrative and Justification

- When cost share is included in the budget, the written justification must also identify the Federal and non-Federal portion of each cost, to include indirect costs, as applicable. (see Cost Sharing section of this NOFO for match requirements).
- The proposed budget will be evaluated in accordance with the Budget Narrative evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO
- The budget will also be reviewed to determine if all costs are reasonable, allocable, and allowable under 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles, which can be reviewed online.



See pages 16-20 of the NOFO for details.



Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

- If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant Federal audit agency.
- If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, provide a statement to this effect.
- If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal audit agency, then the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with Section B.06 of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions, dated October 2024.
- Alternatively, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in appendix VII, paragraph D.1.b. of 2 CFR 200, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Applicants proposing a 15 percent de minimis rate pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget portion of the application.



See page 18 of the NOFO for details.



MEP Single Year Budget Workbook

Five Year Budget Summary Table

Applicants will be required to submit additional budget documentation to include:

- MEP Single-Year Budget Workbook which must be provided for year one (1) of the award and;
- MEP Five-Year Budget Summary Table which must be provided for years one (1) through five (5) of the award.
- The MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and MEP Five-Year Budget Summary Table template (OMB Control Number 0693-0032) are available on the MEP website at: <https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-center-state-competition-fy2025>.
- If the applicant is successful, additional MEP Single Year Budget Workbooks must be submitted for future years.





Resolutions and Letters of Commitment

Applicant & Third-Party Non-Federal Cost Sharing:

- With the exception of a commitment letter from the applicant, letters of commitment for all other third-party sources of non-Federal cost sharing identified in a proposal are not required but are strongly encouraged.
- Applicant Non-Federal Cost Sharing (Cash and In-kind): A letter of commitment is required from an authorized representative of the applicant, stating the total amount of cost share to be contributed by the applicant towards the proposed MEP Center project. (THIS STAND-ALONE LETTER MUST COVER ALL FIVE (5) YEARS OF THE PROPOSED MEP CENTER PROJECT AND INCLUDE A PER YEAR BREAK-OUT OF THE APPLICANT'S CONTRIBUTION OF NON-FEDERAL COST SHARE AS WELL AS PER YEAR BREAKOUT OF CASH COST SHARE (INCLUDING PROGRAM INCOME AND IN-KIND (NON-CASH) CONTRIBUTIONS).

For non-profit applicants:

- A resolution from the fiduciary board authorizing submission of the MEP Center application to NIST
- This letter must support the activities described in the application.

Third Party Cost Sharing (Cash and In-Kind):

- Applicant is strongly encouraged to include in its application a letter of commitment from an authorized representative of each third-party organization providing cash or in-kind contributions





Resolutions and Letters of Commitment

Subrecipients:

- Letters of commitment from subrecipients who are key to the technical plan's success are useful for verifying the availability of resources but are not required.
- Applications without commitment letters from all identified, proposed key subrecipients may be considered less favorably during the application review process.

Prospective Key Employees:

- Letters of commitment to join the proposing organization's team are useful for verifying the availability of key employees, who are not yet employed at a proposing organization, to participate in the project if the project is funded.
- Letters are not required, but they can play an important role in conveying the qualifications of key employees, especially for projects involving small companies or startups.

Contractors:

- Letters of commitment from contractors who are key to the technical plan's success are useful for verifying the availability of resources but are not required.



See page 20 of the NOFO for details.



Current and Pending Support Form

- Any application that includes investigators, researchers, and key personnel must identify all sources of current and potential funding, including this proposal. Any current support (e.g., Federal, state, local, public or private foundations, etc.) must be listed on this form.
- The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, and key personnel must be included, even if no salary support is received.
- A separate form should be used for each identified individual.
- Applicants must download the Current and Pending Support Form from the NIST website at:

<https://www.nist.gov/oaam/grants-management-division/current-and-pending-support>

See page 21 of the NOFO for details.



Submission Guidelines

- Complete applications are due by January 9, 2025 at 11:59pm EST.
- Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered.
- All applications must be submitted electronically at www.grants.gov.
- Awards are subject to the availability of funds and subject to the publication of an amended or a superseding NOFO under this program.
- If the directions found on the Grants.gov Online Help page are not effective, please contact the Grants.gov Help. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place outside the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. E-mails should be addressed to support@grants.gov.





Evaluation Criteria





Evaluation Criteria

- The following evaluation criteria and weights will be used to review proposals:
 - a. Project Narrative (**40 total points**)
 - i. Center Strategy (20 points)
 - ii. Market Understanding (10 points)
 - iii. Performance Measurement & Management (10 points)
 - b. Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management; and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee (**30 total points**)
 - i. Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management (15 points)
 - ii. Oversight Board or Advisory Committee (15 points)
 - c. Budget Narrative, and Justification (**30 total points**)
 - i. Budget (15 points)
 - ii. Plan for Meeting the Award's Non-Federal Cost Share Requirements over 5 Years.(15 points)
- The maximum possible score is 100 points.



See pages 28-32 of the NOFO for details.



Merit Review and Selection





Merit Review

Initial Administrative Review of Applications:

- Reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to the NOFO and scop of program objectives.
- Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or nonresponsive may be eliminated from further review.
- However, NIST, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application that is missing non-substantive information, the absence of which may easily be rectified during the review process.





Merit Review continued

- Full Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications
- At least three (3) independent, objective reviewers, who may be Federal employees or non-Federal personnel, with appropriate professional and technical expertise relating to the topics covered in this NOFO, will evaluate, and score each eligible, complete, and responsive application based on the evaluation criteria.
- While every application will have at least three (3) reviewers, applications may have more than three (3) reviewers if specialized expertise is needed to evaluate an application.
- During the review process, the reviewers may discuss the applications with each other, but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not a consensus.



Refer to page 33 of the NOFO for details.



Merit Review continued

- Applications that are numerically scored an average of 70.00 or higher on a scale of 0-100 points will be adjectivally categorized as “fundable” and identified as finalists.
- Applications that are numerically scored an average below 70.00 on a scale of 0-100 points will be adjectivally categorized as “unfundable” and will not be further considered for funding.
- Applicants identified as finalists may be invited to participate with reviewers in a telephone or virtual conference or invited to participate in a site visit that will be conducted by the same reviewers at the applicant’s location.





Merit Review continued

- If there are two or more finalists, telephone or virtual conference calls, or site visits may be conducted for each finalist.
- Upon completion of either a telephone or virtual conference call or site visit, reviewers will be given the opportunity to revise their assigned numeric scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in Section V.1. of this NOFO as a result of information obtained during either conference call or site visit.
- Any scoring revisions will be made by reviewers on an individual basis.





Selection

- The Selecting Official, the NIST MEP Acting Director or designee, will make final award recommendations to the NIST Grants Officer.
- The Selecting Official shall generally select and recommend the most meritorious application(s) for an award based upon the recommendation resulting from the Evaluation Panel review.
- When making their selection, the Selecting Official may apply one or more of the selection factors on the next slide.





Selection Factors

The Selecting Official may consider the following factors in their recommendation for funding:

- (1) The availability of federal funds;
- (2) The type and percentage of nonfederal funding and in-kind commitments from other sources;
- (3) Relevance of the proposed project to MEP program goals and policy objectives;
- (4) The geographical diversity and extent of the service area; and
- (5) Whether the application complements or supports other Administration priorities or projects supported by Department of Commerce or other federal agencies such as, but not limited to, Manufacturing USA;
- (6) Past performance on all Federal awards.



See page 32 of the NOFO for details.



Federal Award Agency Review and Risk Assessment

The NIST Grants Management Division (GMD) will perform pre-award risk assessments on all applications recommended for funding by the Selecting Official.

During the risk assessment, GMD may consider:

- The financial stability of the applicant
- Quality of the applicant's management systems
- History of performance
- The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities
- Publicly available information about the applicant in the Responsibility/Qualification records about that applicant in SAM.gov

See page 35 of the NOFO for details.





Anticipated Announcement and Award Date

- Review of applications, selection of successful applicants, and award processing is expected to be completed by March 2025.
- The earliest start date for the award under this NOFO is expected to be July 2025.





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Things to Know

- **Resource Documents:**
 - Review all but make sure to review Budget templates, MEP General Terms & Conditions, etc.
- **Operating Outcome Plan, Budget and Supporting Documentation:**
 - Following the issuance of an MEP award, recipients will be required to submit an Operating Outcome Plan in accordance with the NIST MEP Operating Outcome Plan Guidance.
 - NIST may require recipients to provide copies of sub-tier agreements, including subawards and contracts, as well subrecipient performance monitoring plans.
 - A copy of the current NIST MEP Operating Outcome Plan Guidance (is available at:
 - <https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-center-state-competition-fy20245>
- **FAQs** – please submit all questions to mepnofo@nist.gov. The full FAQ document will be provided on the website link identified above.





Things to Know continued

Kick-off Conference:

- Conducted within 60 calendar days after start date of the award at NIST MEP headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD or Virtually
- Must be attended by the MEP Center Director and up to two (2) additional MEP Center employees.
- Intent - help ensure that the MEP Center operator has a clear understanding of the program and its components.
- Include costs in budget/narrative – up to 3 days.

Today's presentation and recording will be made available on the website identified above.





Federal Award Agency Contacts

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Programmatic and Technical Questions	Bryana Head, Competitions Administrator Phone: 202-875-0745 E-mail: mepnofo@nist.gov or Bryana.Head@nist.gov with '2025-NIST-MEP-01' in the subject line
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	grants.gov Phone: 800-518-4726 E-mail: support@grants.gov
Grant Rules and Regulations	Michael Teske, Grant Officer Phone: 301-961-0387 E-mail: Michael.Teske@nist.gov





Public Information

- NIST MEP has a public website that provides information pertaining to this Funding Opportunity: [NIST MEP Center State Competition FY2025 | NIST](#)
- Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through [Grants.gov](#).
- Questions pertaining to this NOFO can be submitted to mepnofo@nist.gov or Bryana.Head@nist.gov with **2025-NIST-MEP-01** in the subject line.

