

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)
Expansion Awards Pilot Program (MEAPP)
MEP National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network

Federal Agency Name:

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC)

Request for Application Title:

Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Expansion Awards Pilot Program (MEAPP), MEP National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network

Announcement Type:

Initial

Funding Opportunity Number:

2023-NIST-RFA-MEAPP-01

Assistance Listing (CFDA Number):

11.611: Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Submission Dates:

Applications must be submitted electronically via grants.gov by 11:59 PM EST/EDT on March 28, 2023. Please note that the RFA will be open on grants.gov for 30 days.

Funding Opportunity Description:

The NIST Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is seeking noncompetitive applications from current MEP Centers to implement projects to expand existing MEP capabilities to provide National Supply Chain Optimization and to establish a supply chain Intelligence Network. Building upon the existing national infrastructure of the MEP National Network, the National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network will comprehensively support supplier scouting services, rigorously assess and analyze domestic manufacturing capabilities, expand knowledge of each MEP Center's local manufacturing ecosystems to stimulate the growth of the U.S. supply base which thereby strengthens the nation's manufacturer resilience.

Eligibility:

Per 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2(c), the only eligible applicants for funding pursuant to this RFA are MEP Centers¹ or a consortium of MEP Centers that have an active award with NIST MEP. Awards made pursuant to this RFA will be limited to one per MEP Center or consortium of MEP Centers.

Funding Amounts:

Total anticipated funding for this award is up to \$400,000 per MEP Center. NIST anticipates funding one (1) award to each MEP Center or one (1) award to a consortium of MEP Centers (with each MEP Center receiving up to \$400,000).

All awards are subject to the availability of funding. In addition, NIST may amend awards issued pursuant to this RFA to increase or decrease funding levels based upon the availability of program funding. NIST MEP anticipates that each MEP Center with an active award will apply for this opportunity. In the event that some MEP Centers do not apply for funding, or request less than \$400,000 under this RFA, NIST MEP reserves the right to adjust funding levels based on those MEP Centers that do not utilize this opportunity.

Project Duration:

Project(s) awarded under this RFA must have a proposed period of performance of 24 months from the award start date (anticipated June 1, 2023), which may, based on a request from a recipient, subsequently be extended in writing by the NIST Grants Officer during the term of an award. Per 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2(k), the performance period of an award issued pursuant to this RFA must be aligned and consistent with a recipient's base MEP Center cooperative agreement. Continuation of an award to extend the period of performance is at the sole discretion of the NIST Grants Officer.

Multi-Year Funding Policy:

When an application for a multi-year award is approved, funding in some cases will be provided only for the first year of the project. Continued funding for the remaining year(s) of the project will be awarded or released by NIST, and may be adjusted, contingent upon satisfactory performance, submission of detailed budgets and budget narratives for each year proposed, continued relevance to the mission and priorities of the program, and the availability of funds.

Project Type/Structure:

The project will be awarded as a cooperative agreement. Where cooperative agreements are used, the nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally include collaboration with the recipient organization in developing and implementing

¹ "Center" is defined in 15 U.S.C. § 278k(e). The term "Center" means a manufacturing extension center that is created under 15 U.S.C. § 278k(b) and is affiliated with an eligible entity that applies for and is awarded financial support under 15 U.S.C. § 278k(e).

the approved scope of work, consistent with the definition of cooperative agreement in 2 CFR § 200.1.

Cost Sharing Requirements:

Non-federal cost share is not required for awards issued pursuant to this RFA.

Program Objective:

Per 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2(e), and pursuant to this RFA, awards shall be made to provide services that will improve the resiliency for domestic supply chains and to build capabilities in the MEP National Network™ for domestic supply chain resiliency and optimization. MEP Centers and their subrecipients may not charge clients for services provided under MEAPP awards as the funding under this program is an investment in building national ecosystem to address supply chain resiliency and capacity. MEAPP awards are not allowed to generate program income to an MEP Center or to its subrecipients.

NIST MEP will pilot a National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network program to support nationwide coordination of comprehensive supplier scouting, optimize supply network service offerings, and capture marketplace supplier data for public use. Under this pilot program, NIST MEP expects to accomplish these goals by:

- Ensuring there is dedicated staff in each MEP Center focused on supplier scouting services;
- Establishing new service offerings to augment and optimize current national and local supplier network capabilities;
- Collecting and analyzing supplier capability and capacity data to map local supply network ecosystems;
- Identifying key Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and supply chain gaps and helping to fill those gaps by connecting Small and Medium-sized Manufactures (SMMs) to these opportunities; and
- Tracking SMM and the results of matches, introductions, and services by the MEP Center.

Successful applications will contribute to these national efforts by:

1. Dedicating at a minimum, a staff member or a combination of staff members or contractor(s) at a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) per year at each MEP Center, including at each MEP Center applying as a consortium to:
 - a) Provide support for national supplier scouting and optimization services and/or provide management oversight of an established formal partnership with complementary partner(s);
 - b) Represent the MEP Center as the lead point(s) of contact responsible for building and maintaining the Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network; and

- c) Ensure every MEP supplier scouting request receives a response, even if no suppliers are identified.

NIST MEP considers an FTE to be eight hours per day, five days a week over 52 weeks for a total of 2,080 hours per year. NIST MEP will evaluate the Current and Pending support form provided with the application to determine if the personnel identified has met the FTE requirement.

2. Establishing or verifying connection to systems to support MEP supplier scouting and optimization.
3. Reporting supply network intelligence-gathering results, including:
 - a) Expansion of Center's market understanding of the local supply chain landscape;
 - b) Supplier mapping of current marketplace ecosystems, identifying clusters of expertise; and identification of key Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and their strengths and gaps in the local market and opportunities that exist to build out supply chain capabilities and capacity; and
 - c) A detailed project report discussing the results of the project, including supply network lessons learned and SMMs best practices in optimizing the national supply network. Report on the results of the assessment of marketplace manufacturing capabilities, etc. as described in 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2(e)(5)(A).
 - i. The report and other information learned through the project should be in a format that lends itself to dissemination to other SMMs and the MEP National Network™, to help OEMs and SMMs recognize opportunities with future planning efforts.
 - ii. The report may be shared by NIST MEP with other programs that are charged with national supply chain optimization. See Reporting section of this RFA for more information on reporting requirements.
4. Applicants may also propose localized projects, which may (but are not required to) include pilot or innovative approaches, to address priorities identified in 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2(e)(2) and (5). These projects must contain measurable outcomes that can be easily reported to NIST MEP. Pilot or innovative projects, if successful, should be scalable across the MEP Center's state, region, and/or nationally, or by similar MEP Center type (e.g., university-based, nonprofit, etc.) and be clearly identified as such in the proposal.

Award recipients are required to participate in a virtual award kick-off meeting, MEP National Network meetings and should budget accordingly. As the location of these meetings is unknown, applicants should use historical data to justify estimates.

1. Award Kick-Off Participation. All recipients must participate in a virtual kick-off meeting that will be held within approximately 30 calendar days after the award start date. Participation must include the Center Director, the designated FTE, if designated, and up to two key project personnel. Representatives from key subrecipients may attend the kick-off meeting as deemed appropriate by the recipient.
2. MEP National Network™ Meetings and Working Group Participation. NIST MEP typically organizes MEP National Network™ meetings which all recipients should plan to attend.
 - a) Applicants must include travel and related costs for one (1) MEP National Network™ meeting in each of the funded years. These costs must be reflected in the SF-424A. These costs must also be reflected in the budget tables and budget narratives for each of the funded years, which are submitted as part of the Technical Proposal.
 - b) Personnel will be expected to actively participate in Supply Chain Optimization Working Group discussions and knowledge sharing to other MEP Centers for the benefit of small and medium size U.S. manufacturers. Recipients will be required to provide detailed analysis of the lessons learned through these projects for the 2025 MEP report to Congress.

The foundation for NIST MEP is to ensure that a private-public partnership is developed and sustained. For this RFA, NIST MEP encourages MEP Centers that plan to apply for this opportunity to contact their assigned NIST MEP Resource Manager and Federal Program Officer to address questions and obtain input on the Centers plans to address the RFA objectives.

Program Authority:

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), is publishing this Request for Applications (RFA) pursuant to the authorities provided by 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2, Expansion awards pilot program.

Federal Program Officer Contact:

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Resource Manager Contact:

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NIST Grants Officer Contact:

Michael Teske

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Required Forms/Information:

The following forms and documents are required to process your application:

- 1) **SF-424**, Application for Federal Assistance
- 2) **SF-424A**, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs. The applicant should reflect each year of the project on the SF-424A form that appears as part of the mandatory forms in the Grants.gov application package.
- 3) **MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and Award Budget Summary Table**
- 4) **CD-511**, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Responsibility Matters, Drug Free Workplace Requirements, and Lobbying.
- 5) **SF-LLL**, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities---form should only be submitted to the government if the applicant is actually reporting lobbying activities.
- 6) **Technical Proposal.**
Provide sufficient background information for NIST reviewers to understand the scope and purpose of the proposed project. Page limit for the technical proposal is twelve (12) pages.

Summarize the problems that will be addressed and the approaches to directly address the identified needs, in alignment with the Program Objectives. Provide sufficient information on the scope for reviewers to understand the merit and deem the proposal complete and responsive to the RFA project.

- a) **Project Approach and Execution Plan Narrative.** Applicants must provide an Executive Summary (see below for contents) and a detailed description of the proposed plan and approach to execute the project. The project narrative must identify tasks, measurable milestones, anticipated outcomes, plan for evaluation, and budget information separately for each year of the award, sufficient for application evaluation, in accordance with the Project Narrative evaluation criteria (See Award Administration Information section of this RFA).

The proposal narrative must clearly articulate the following:

1. A rationale for the proposed approach to address the Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network problem and alignment of the project with funding the RFA Program Objectives. Summarize the extent of how this plan will expand the MEP Center's current supply chain optimization efforts and support development of its intelligence network. The MEP Center should specify plans for efficient organization, staffing, and management for the proposed project.
2. Technical Merit / Value of Expected Project Outcomes and Impacts. Describe the execution strategy to support the projected outcomes and Impacts. At a minimum Include a detailed discussion of:
 - I. anticipated impacts;
 - II. methodology for identifying and evaluating project outcomes; and
 - III. establishment of support systems to disseminate actionable data to support supply chain optimization. Consider Supplier Scouting Opportunities, reportable projects, impacts for the manufacturer (cost, jobs, time from technology to market, etc.) and number of matches made.
3. Effectiveness of delivery and implementation mechanisms. Identify specific project tasking, measurable timelines and milestones, and resources to be allocated to ensure every MEP supplier scouting request receives a response, even if no suppliers are identified.
4. Plans for program evaluation. Describe the methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness of delivery and implementation mechanisms as well as for quantifying and analyzing program outcomes.
5. Budget Narrative and Justification / Rationale of Budget for the Proposed Work. Demonstrate the relevance and cost effectiveness of the proposed project budget to meet the proposed program objectives.

In the *Executive Summary* of the technical proposal, the applicant should identify the criteria and objectives the proposed project

meets. Please see the Section of this RFA titled Program Objective for more detailed information. Additionally, the first paragraph of the Executive Summary should include a project description in the following format:

1. **Purpose:** State the specific purpose and beneficiaries of the proposed project in one to two sentences.
2. **Activities:** Describe the major activities to be performed in one to three sentences.
3. **Outcomes and Impacts:** State the specific expected outcomes and impacts of the proposed project in one to three sentences.
4. **Subrecipients:** If applicable, identify subrecipients and describe the major activities to be performed by subrecipients in one to three sentences.
5. **Contractors:** If applicable, identify contractors and describe the services to be performed by contractors in one to three sentences.

Any acronyms or abbreviations used in the Technical Proposal should be defined.

7) Budget Narrative and Justification.

The Budget Narrative does not count against the twelve (12) page limit of the Technical Proposal.

In addition to the SF-424A form, MEP Centers applicants must provide a detailed budget table and budget narrative for each year of the proposed two-year period of performance, fully explaining and justifying all proposed funding expenses and revenues under applicable federal cost principles. MEP Centers are required to use the MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and Award Budget Summary Table when submitting a budget narrative justification. The budgets should reflect anticipated expenses for the entire project, considering all potential cost increases, including the cost-of-living adjustments. The MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and Award Budget Summary Table are available on the MEP website at: <https://meis.nist.gov>.

The recipient should provide adequate information to support costs identified in each category of the budget table. For example, providing

the annual salary and the percentage of time dedicated to the project by personnel to demonstrate the total cost of that individual; providing the airfare, lodging, per diem, number of days, and number of travelers for each proposed trip; and identifying anticipated subaward/contract amounts, the sub awardees/contractors, to the extent known at the time of application, and a detailed description of the purpose of each subaward/contract.

Applicants proposing fixed amount subawards must identify such subawards in the budget narrative and must provide, as part of the budget narrative, detailed information relative to the cost or pricing data being relied on by the applicant in establishing the value of the fixed amount subaward. See 2 C.F.R. 200.201 and 200.332.

The Budget Narrative should indicate that the funds provided under this award will not generate program income.

This budget will be evaluated in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles to determine if all costs are reasonable, allocable, and allowable under this award.

Proposed funding levels must be consistent with the project scope, and only allowable costs should be included in the budget. Information on cost allowability is available in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at (<http://go.usa.gov/SBYh>), which apply to awards in this program.

Information needed for each budget category is as follows:

- a) **Senior/Key Person** - At a minimum, the budget justification for all personnel dedicated to the Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network project should include the following: job title, effort commitment on the proposed project represented by time percentage, salary rate, total personnel charges for each identified position on the proposed project, description of the role of the individual on the proposed project and the work to be performed.
- b) **Fringe Benefits**– Fringe benefits for each position should be identified separately from salaries and wages and based on rates determined by organizational policy. The items included in the fringe benefit rate (e.g., health insurance, parking, etc.) should not be charged under another cost category.
- c) **Travel**- For all travel costs, the budget justification for travel should include the following: destination; names or number of people

traveling; dates and/or duration; mode of transportation, lodging and subsistence rates; and description of how the travel is directly related to the proposed project. For travel that is yet to be determined, please provide the best estimates based on prior experience. If a destination is not known, an approximate amount may be used with the assumptions given for the location of the meeting.

- d) **Equipment-** Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. The budget justification should list each piece of equipment, the cost, and a description of how it will be used and why it is necessary to the successful completion of the proposed project. Please note that any general-use equipment (computers, etc.) charged directly to the award should be allocated to the award according to expected usage on the project.
- e) **Supplies–** Supplies are defined as all tangible personal property other than that described as equipment. Provide a list of each supply, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project.
- f) **Contractual (i.e. Contracts)–** Each contract should be treated as a separate item. Identify the cost and describe the services to be provided and the necessity of the contract to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining goods and services for the Non-Federal Entity's use and creates a procurement relationship with the contractor.
- g) **Construction–** Not an allowable cost under this RFA.
- h) **Other Direct Costs–** For costs that do not easily fit into the other cost categories, please list the cost, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project. Only allowable costs can be charged to the award. Subawards must be included in the Other Direct Costs. A subaward is for the purpose of carrying out a portion of a federal award and creates a federal assistance relationship with the subrecipient. Each subaward should be treated as a separate item. Identify the cost and describe the services to be provided and the necessity of the subaward to the successful performance of the proposed project.

- i) **Indirect Costs-** Commonly referred to as Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Costs, indirect costs are defined as costs incurred by the applicant organization that cannot otherwise be directly assigned or attributed to a specific project. The justification should include a cost calculation that reflects the applicable indirect cost rate.

8) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement:

If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, then provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement, from the cognizant Federal audit agency. If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, then provide a statement to this effect.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that do not have a current indirect cost rate may elect to charge indirect costs to an award pursuant to a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), in which case a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is not required. Applicants proposing a 10 percent de minimis rate under 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget portion of the application.

9) 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 project 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. The total award amount for the entire award period covered, including indirect costs, must be shown as well as the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the project, regardless of the source of support. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or that are being submitted concurrently to other potential funders.

Applicants must complete the Current and Pending Support Form, using multiple forms as necessary to account for all activity for each individual identified in the proposal as the PI, co-PI, and key personnel roles. A separate form should be used for each identified individual.

Applicants must download the Current and Pending Support Form from the NIST website: <https://www.nist.gov/oaam/grants-management-division/current-and-pending-support> and reference the guidance provided as it contains information to assist with accurately completing the form.

A. Award Administration Information:

Application Review, Selection and Award Processing

The review and selection process, evaluation criteria, and selection factors for this program are as follows:

1. Review and Selection Process

Noncompetitive applications for nondiscretionary funding pursuant to this RFA will be reviewed and considered on a rolling basis as they are received.

- a) **Initial Administrative Review of Applications.** All noncompetitive applications received in response to this RFA will be reviewed as received to determine whether they are eligible, complete, and responsive to this RFA and aligned with the program objectives and requirements described in the Program Description of this RFA. NIST MEP staff may work directly with applicants to resolve deficiencies with application packages, including but not limited to identifying missing forms and working with applicants to strengthen proposed project activities. The intent of this interaction between NIST MEP and the applicant is to facilitate the development of an acceptable project and the timely submission of a complete funding package by the MEP Center applicant.
- b) **Merit Review of Eligible, Complete and Responsive Applications.** Applications that are deemed eligible, complete, and responsive to this RFA will be reviewed by at least one technically qualified federal or non-federal individual reviewer who will evaluate each application and provide comments as to the (i) technical soundness and (ii) merits of the application in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 8.G. of the Department of Commerce Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual (Dated 20 April 2021), available at: [Department of Commerce Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual](#).

Applicants may receive written follow-up questions during the review process relative to requested clarifications of items contained in the application and/or communications requesting that the applicant modify objective or work plans, or that the applicant removes certain costs. In addition, NIST may request that applicant provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award.

- c) **Selecting Official.** The Selecting Official is the MEP Director, or designee, and makes the final recommendation to the NIST Grants Officer regarding the funding of applications under this RFA. The Selecting Official will recommend applications for funding that the Selecting Official determines will satisfy one or more of the criteria in 15 U.S.C. 278k-2(h)(3). The Office of the General

Counsel (OGC) may review all nondiscretionary applications and supporting documents for proposed awards to advise the Grants Officer on all matters related to law and the legal form and effect of the proposed award actions, unless review has been waived by the Financial Assistance Law Division (FALD) Chief.

- d) **Pre-Award Risk Assessments.** After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the NIST Grants Management Division (GMD) performs pre-award risk assessments in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200.205, which may include a review of the financial stability of an applicant, the quality of the applicant's management systems, the history of performance, and/or the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Upon completion of the pre-award risk assessment, the grants officer will make a reasonable determination concerning whether the applicant is qualified to receive the subject award and, if so, whether appropriate specific conditions that correspond to the degree of risk posed by the applicant should be applied to an award.

Award Processing

A. Award Notices

The CD-450, signed by a NIST Grants Officer, is the official award notice. This notification will be issued electronically to the Authorized Representative of the MEP Center Applicant.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. No Double Charging Against Other NIST MEP Awards

Costs charged against MEAPP awards issued pursuant to this RFA may not also be charged as costs against any other NIST MEP awards (i.e., no double-billing of costs).

2. Pre-Award Notice

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXC7A>.

3. Uniform Administrative Requirements

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 2 C.F.R. 200, implemented by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXCJQ>.

4. Certifications Regarding Tax Liability and Felony Criminal Convictions Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns

In accordance with Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant(s) may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding federal felony and federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent federal tax returns.

5. Terms and Conditions

The Department of Commerce will apply to each award in this program, the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions in effect on the date of award made under this RFA. The current version, dated November 12, 2020, is accessible at: <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>.

6. Limitation of Liability

In no event will NIST or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NIST to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. NIST reserves the right to halt activity under the award through enforcement procedures under 2 C.F.R. 200.338-.342, Remedies for Non-compliance, if the recipient is not fulfilling the requirements of the project as outlined in the grant award. Non-compliance with a federally approved project may result in termination of the award as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.339.

7. Use of Government-Owned Intellectual Property

If the applicant anticipates using any Federal Government-owned intellectual property, in the custody of NIST or another Federal agency, to carry out the work proposed, the applicant should clearly identify such intellectual property in the application. This information will be used to ensure that no Federal employee involved in the development of the intellectual property will participate in the review process for that application. In addition, if the applicant intends to use the Federal Government-owned intellectual property, the applicant must comply with all statutes and regulations governing the licensing of Federal government patents and inventions, described in 35 U.S.C. §§ 200-212, 37 C.F.R. Part 401, 2 C.F.R. §200.315, and in Section C.03 of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions](#), dated November 12, 2020. Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Chief Counsel for NIST, (301) 975-2803, nistcounsel@nist.gov.

Any use of Federal Government-owned intellectual property by a recipient of an award under this announcement is at the sole discretion of the Federal Government and will need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis by the recipient and the Federal agency having custody of the intellectual property if a project is deemed meritorious. The applicant should indicate within the statement of work whether it already has a license to use such intellectual property or whether it intends to seek a license from the applicable Federal agency.

If any inventions made in whole or in part by a NIST employee arise in the course of an award made pursuant to this RFA, the United States Government may retain its ownership rights in any such invention. Licensing or other disposition of the Federal Government's rights in such inventions will be determined solely by the Federal Government, through NIST as custodian of such inventions, and include the possibility of the Federal Government putting the intellectual property into the public domain.

8. Supporting Documentation

Prior to award or following the issuance of an award, NIST may require recipients to provide draft copies of sub-tier agreements, including subawards and contracts, as well as subrecipient performance monitoring plans.

9. Audit requirements

The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section D.01, and 2 CFR part 200 subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 CFR § 1327.101, require any non-federal entity (i.e., including non-profit institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations) that expends federal awards of \$750,000 or more in the recipient's fiscal year to conduct a single or program specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the subpart. Additionally, unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the award, entities that are not subject to Subpart F of 2 CFR part 200 (e.g., for-profit commercial entities) that expend \$750,000 or more in DOC funds during their fiscal year must submit to the grants officer either: (i) a financial related audit of each DOC award or subaward in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards; or (ii) a project specific audit for each award or subaward in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 CFR § 200.507. Applicants are reminded that NIST, the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General, or another authorized federal agency may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

C. Reporting

1. Reporting Requirements. The following reporting requirements described in Sections A.01, Reporting Requirements, of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and dated November 12, 2020, apply to awards in this program:

- a) **Financial Reports.** The Recipient shall submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report, into MEP's Enterprise Information System (MEIS) on a semi-annual basis after each 6-month period of the agreement period of performance, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Specific

Award Condition. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of each quarterly reporting period. The recipient shall submit a final SF-425 within 120 days after the expiration date of the award.

- b) **Performance Progress Plan/Technical Reports.** The recipient shall submit a Technical Report (completing all required MEIS fields that apply) on a quarterly basis after each 3-month period of the agreement period of performance, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Special Award Condition. Reports are due in MEIS no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. Reporting requirements include:
- i. Progress to plan last 90 days, planned progress next 90 days, supplier scouting outcomes and results, detailed descriptions of the relevant activities of dedicated supply chain staff, intelligence-gathering efforts and results, systems and processes initiated and established and Lessons Learned. In addition to the narrative, recipients will provide Budget Actuals not less than quarterly to document expenses directly related to Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network activities.
 - ii. Interim and final performance reports should contain information on all “funded activities and their measurable outcomes” sufficient to all MEP to assess and report on the pilot program in accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2(l)(1), as well as additional reporting as deemed to prepare for the October 2025 report to Congress. Technical/Quarterly Report details are accessible on the [MEIS](#) website.
- c) **A final performance (technical) report** is due within 120 days after the end of the project period and should include a detailed discussion reporting on the expanded market understanding of supply chain information captured, research and industry data collected on the current supplier landscape, identification of key OEMs and their strengths and gaps in the local market and opportunities that exist to build out supply chain capabilities and capacity, lessons learned and suggested improvements. The final report and other data produced from the activities should be in a format that lends itself to dissemination to other SMMs and to the MEP National Network™.

The reports may be shared by NIST MEP with other NIST Programs that support domestic supply chain optimization and related research, and the information will be used in the 2025 report to Congress.

The recipient will be required to provide information in the quarterly reports in MEIS on Staffing and Supply Chain Activities Specific Contacts including:

- i. Any system to be used or in use to collect and store supply chain information, and report on any system changes.
 - ii. Case studies or success stories as part of the project reporting.
- 2. Patent and Property Reports.** From time to time, and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements and other terms and conditions governing the award, the recipient may need to submit property and patent reports.
- 3. Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.** In accordance with section 872 of Public Law 110-417 (as amended; see 41 U.S.C. 2313), if the total value of a recipient's currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of an award made under this RFA, then the recipient shall be subject to the requirements specified in Appendix XII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200, <http://go.usa.gov/cTBwC>, for maintaining the currency of information reported to SAM that is made available in FAPIIS about certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings involving the recipient.
- 4. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006.** In accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 170, all recipients of a Federal award made on or after October 1, 2010, are required to comply with reporting requirements under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Public Law No. 109-282). In general, all recipients are responsible for reporting sub-awards of \$25,000 or more. In addition, recipients that meet certain criteria are responsible for reporting executive compensation. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should they receive funding. Also see the Federal Register notice published September 14, 2010, at 75 FR 55663 available here <http://go.usa.gov/hKnQ>.

Other Information:

A. Allowable Costs

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, supplies, contractual, and other, as long as these are

"necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, codified by the Department of Commerce at 1327.101. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g., subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned. The recipient may request approval of pre-award costs; however, all costs incurred before the Federal awarding agency makes the Federal award are at the recipient's risk.

B. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

In the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist NIST in making disclosure determinations. DOC regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by you, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

C. Webinar Information Session

NIST MEP will host a webinar information session March 2nd, 2023, at 3:00pm ET for MEP Center applicants to learn more about the RFA. This webinar will provide general information regarding this RFA and offer general guidance on preparing the MEP National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network noncompetitive application.