MAKING AN IMPACT ON U.S. MANUFACTURING

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

Information Webinar
Federal Funding Opportunity: 2016-NIST-MEP-02

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MAKING AN IMPACT ON U.S. MANUFACTURING

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

WELCOME

Informational Webinar – July 21, 2016
2:00 p.m. (Eastern)

Federal Funding Opportunity: 2016-NIST-MEP-02

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)

Diane Henderson, Manager of Competitions, NIST MEP
Margy Phillips, Director, Center Operations, NIST MEP
Phillip Wadsworth, Regional Manager, NIST MEP

Information Webinar and Communication Protocols

- Webinar serves as a communication vehicle to provide an overview of the funding opportunity.
- During the webinar, proprietary technical discussions about specific project ideas will not be permitted.
- NIST/MEP staff will not critique or provide feedback on any project ideas during the webinar or at any time before submission of a proposal to MEP.
  - We will consider questions of a clarifying nature that are not specific to an individual proposal.
  - If you want to submit questions following the webinar, please email them to MEP at mepffo@nist.gov.
    - Your question and response will become part of the FAQ document available on our competition page of our MEP website, http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-04.cfm

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- Funding Opportunity Overview
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- Application and Submission Information
- Evaluation Criteria
- Review and Selection Process
- Selection Factors
- Anticipated Announcement, Award Date and Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants
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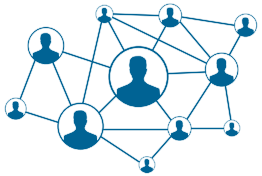
MEP Program in Short

Program Started in 1988
At least one center in all 50 states by 1996

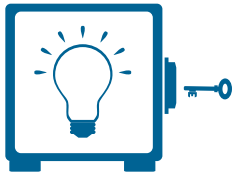


National Network
58 Centers with over 550 Field Locations. System wide, Non-Federal Staff is over 1,200. Contracting over 2,300 third party service providers.

Partnership Model
Federal, State and Industry

MEP System Budget
$130 Million Federal Budget with Cost Share Requirements for Centers

Global Competitiveness
Program was created by the 1988 Omnibus Trade And Competitive Act



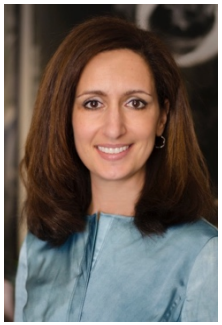
Evolving Role
Program continues to evolve in order to support manufacturers during changing economic situations.

The MEP Organization

Carroll A. Thomas
Director, MEP

David Cranmer
Deputy Director, MEP

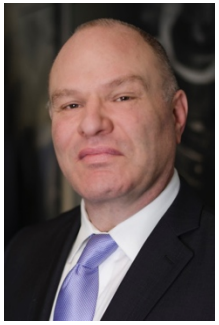
Communications



Zara Brunner, Acting Manager

Manages public outreach and internal and external communications.

Administration & Finance



Chancy Lyford, Chief of Staff and CFO

Develops and maintains information technology tools for NIST and the MEP center system. Manages financial and budgetary processes.

Center Operations

Margy Phillips, Chief

Oversees the use of federal funds awarded through MEP centers cooperative agreements

The MEP Organization

System Operations Office

Mike Simpson, Chief

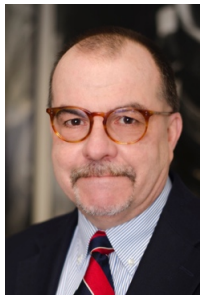
Helps MEP Centers identify opportunities for serving manufacturers. Regional managers serve as primary points of contact with MEP Centers

Partnerships and Program Development

Mark Troppe, Chief

Identifies new service offerings for implementation by MEP Center system. And works with MEP Centers to foster partnerships with federal, state, and local partners.

Manufacturing Policy & Research



Ken Voytek, Acting Manager

Conducts performance evaluations for the MEP Center system and facilitates reporting of MEP performance data.

MEP Strategic Plan

MISSION

To enhance the productivity and technological performance of U.S. manufacturing

ROLE

MEP 's state and regional centers facilitate and accelerate the transfer of manufacturing technology in partnership with industry, universities and educational institutions, state governments, and NIST and other federal research laboratories and agencies.

PROGRAMMATIC STRENGTHS:

- National program with at least one center in every state and Puerto Rico.
- Federal/state, public-private partnership with local flexibility.
- Cost share policy that matches federal investment with state and private sector investment.
- Market driven program that responds to the needs of private sector manufacturers.
- Leverage partnering expertise as a strategic advantage.
- Local knowledge of, focus on, and access to manufacturers.

MEP Strategic Plan (2014-2017)

Strategic Goals

ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS

Enhance the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers, with particular focus on small and medium-sized companies.

CHAMPION MANUFACTURING

Serve as a voice to and a voice for manufacturing and manufacturers in engaging policy makers, stakeholders, and clients.

SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS

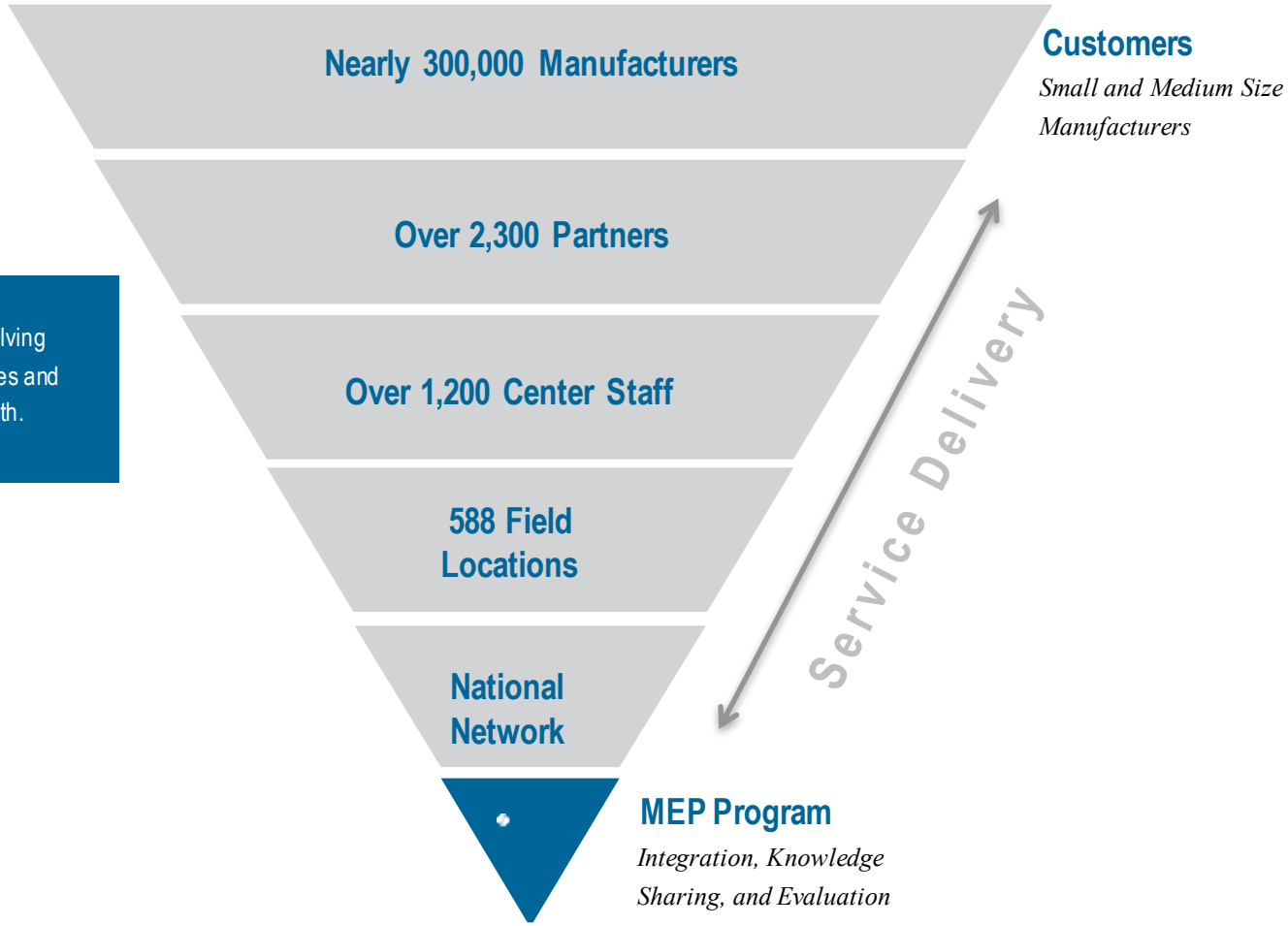
Support national, state, and regional manufacturing eco-systems and partnerships.

DEVELOP CAPABILITIES

Develop MEP's capabilities as a learning organization and high performance system.

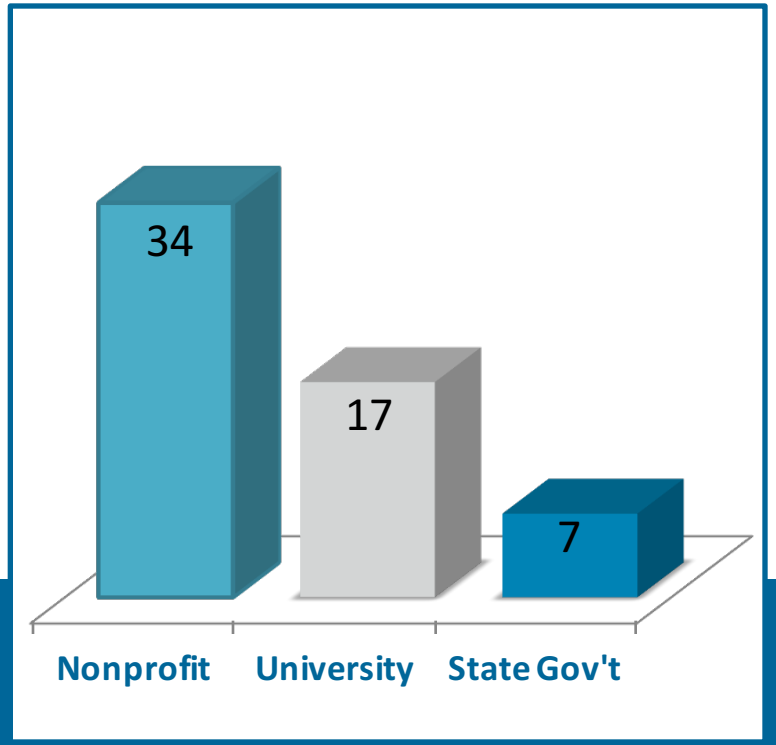
Partnering to Drive a National Program

The MEP network focuses on solving manufacturers' biggest challenges and identifying opportunities for growth.



National Network

Center Structure Diversity



Partnerships

Utilizes existing local resources to provide manufacturing extension services ***relies heavily on partnerships***

Public & Private Sector

Staff are employees of the Center and its partners – ***not*** the Federal Government

Geography

Urban and Rural Areas.
Centers are never more than 2 hours away of a manufacturer.

Organization Type

Nonprofit
University
State Government

Organizational Structure

- Single location
- Principal organization with independent partner organizations
- Central office with regional offices
- Headquarters operation with multiple field offices

Partnerships

Centers serve as an invaluable partner to the manufacturing community by:

Educating

local and regional partners on small and medium sized manufacturer needs and drivers of behavior.

Providing Outreach

to manufacturers by connecting them to other programs and services offered by partner organizations.

Connecting the Gap

between technology developers / R&D organizations and manufacturers: finding firms that are interested in a particular technology, as well as informing tech developers of manufacturer's technology needs

Supporting

workforce development programs.

How Centers work with Manufacturers

Initial Contact

Group sessions, referral

Assessment

Informal walk-through, detailed company analysis

Identify

Find potential issues, define proposed project and approach for solving it

Negotiate

Consult with company and sign project contract with fee paid to center

Project Execution

Center staff, partner organization, and/or third party consultants

Follow-Up

After completion, project follow-up by center to assure customer satisfaction and explore further project opportunities

Project impact data collected by contractor for NIST approximately 6 months after project completion

What MEP Does

- Work with small and medium size manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits and save time and money
- Focus on meeting manufacturer's short term needs, but in context of overall company strategy.
- Reach over **29,000 manufacturing firms** and complete over **12,000 projects** per year.
- Provides companies with a consistent set of services including:

Supply Chain Development

Technology Acceleration

Workforce Development

Lean Process

Innovation and Growth

Sustainability

Export

Reshoring

NIST MEP Survey Process, Instrument, & Uses

- *Surveys* are conducted quarterly. Approximately 7,500 to 8,000 surveys done annually. Response rates typically hover around 75-80 percent.
- Clients are surveyed only once a year. A census of all clients with completed projects.
- Survey is client-based rather than project based.
- Client-based survey done since 2000. (@ 104,000 surveys attempted)
- Survey is done using a third party. Fors Marsh conducts the survey. Surveys are done typically on-line.

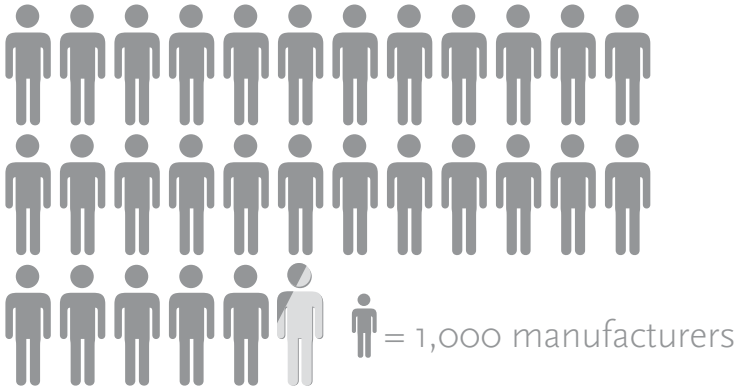
NIST MEP Survey Process, Instrument, & Uses

- Surveys are done typically six months after the first project is completed and questions are time bound. In some cases, clients can be surveyed over multiple years even if only one project is completed.
- Survey consists of 12 questions focusing on:
  - Bottom-line client outcomes such as sales, capital investment, cost savings, and employment
  - Questions about challenges, reasons for using the MEP, use of other external resources, and customer satisfaction (Net Promoter)
- Survey results used for GPRA, budget and program decisions, and also to develop a series of metrics to determine relative center performance and targets for improvement.

Client Impacts

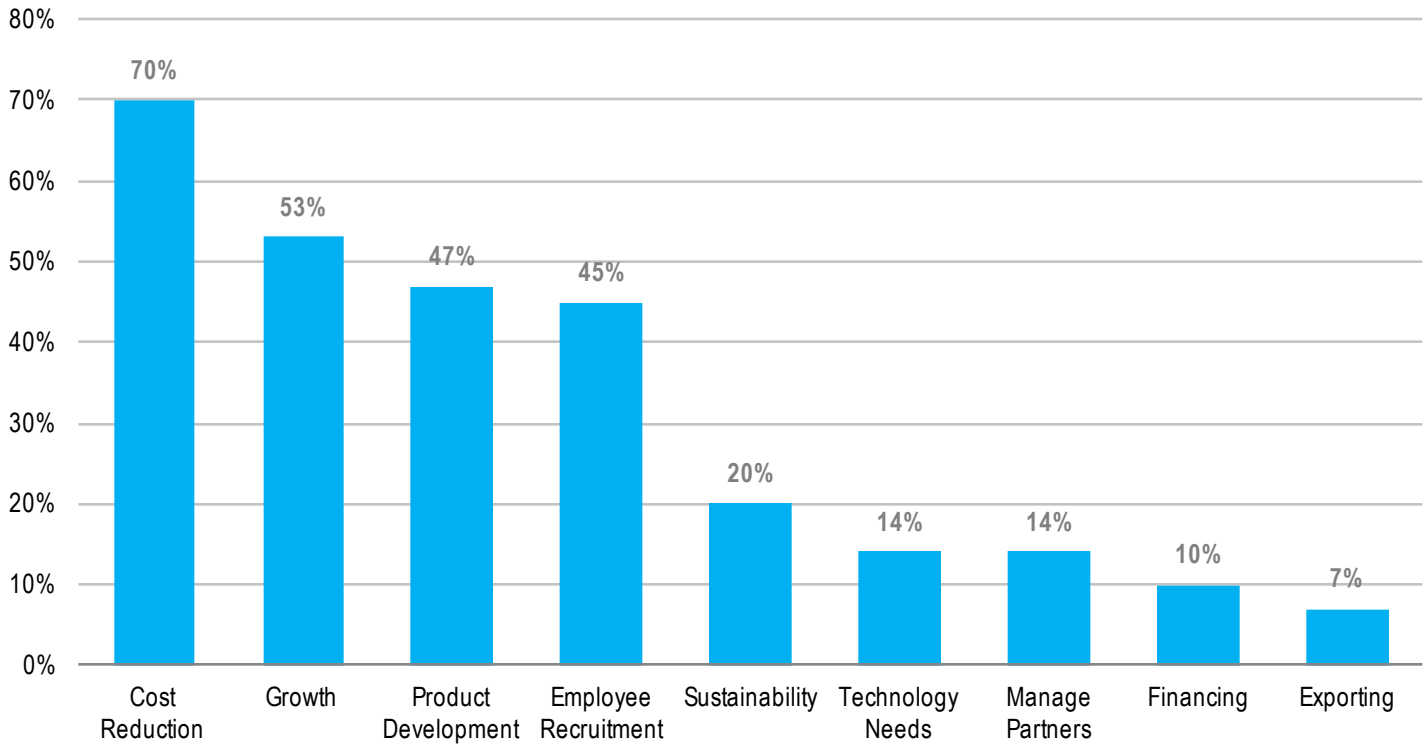
29,101

Manufacturers served in FY15



JOBS RETAINED	JOBS CREATED	NEW CLIENT INVESTMENTS	COST SAVINGS	RETAINED SALES	NEW SALES
49,011	19,466	$3.2 Billion	$1.2 Billion	$5.7 Billion	$2.3 Billion

Client Challenges



MEP Program Initiatives & Services

MEP's Program Initiatives & Services

are aimed to help manufacturers identify opportunities that will accelerate and strengthen their growth and competitiveness in the global marketplace

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MEP State Competition – Rounds 1 & 2

- Press Releases available:
  - http://nist.gov/mep/awards-support-manufacturing.cfm
  - http://www.nist.gov/mep/new-funding-brings-new-opportunities-for-manufacturers-in-nine-states.cfm
  - http://www.nist.gov/mep/new-funding-awarded-to-support-wisconsin-manufacturers.cfm

- To locate contact information for the MEP Centers listed below, please go to:
  - http://ws680.nist.gov/mepmeis/FindYourLocalCenter.aspx

Funding Opportunity Overview (1)

- **Funding Opportunity Title:** *Award Competitions for Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Centers in the States of Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, South Carolina and Wyoming*

- **Funding Opportunity Description:**

  – *NIST invites applications from eligible organizations in connection with NIST's funding up to eleven (11) separate cooperative agreements for the operation of MEP Centers in the designated States' identified above.*

  – *Objective of the MEP Center Program is to provide manufacturing extension services to primarily small and medium-sized manufacturers within the States' designated in the FFO.*

  – ***Applicants must submit applications electronically through www.grants.gov. Electronic applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, September 27, 2016. The approximate start date for the award made under this FFO is expected to be April 1, 2017.***

Funding Opportunity Overview (2)

Funding Available: NIST anticipates funding eleven (11) Center awards with an initial five-year period of performance in accordance with the multi-year funding policy described in Section II.3. of this FFO. Funding for the awards listed below is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds.

MEP Center Location and Assigned Geographical Service Area (by State)	Anticipated Annual Federal Funding for Each Year of the Award	Total Federal Funding for 5 Year Award Period
Delaware	$500,000	$2,500,000
Hawaii	$500,000	$2,500,000
Iowa	$1,859,206	$9,296,030
Kansas	$1,864,950	$9,324,750
Maine	$863,522	$4,317,610
Mississippi	$1,003,782	$5,018,910
New Mexico	$1,360,802	$6,804,010
Nevada	$756,001	$3,780,005
North Dakota	$500,000	$2,500,000
South Carolina	$2,268,003	$11,340,015
Wyoming	$500,000	$2,500,000

Funding Opportunity Overview (3)

- **Authority:** The statutory authority for the MEP Program is 15 U.S.C. 278k, as implemented in 15 CFR part 290.

- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative Agreement
  - The nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally be *collaboration between MEP and the recipient organization(s)*.

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Federal Award Information (1)

- **Multi-Year Funding Policy.**
  - When an application for a multi-year award is approved, funding will usually be provided for only the first year of the project.
  - Recipients will be required to submit detailed budgets and budget narratives prior to the award of any continued funding.
  - Continued funding for the remaining years of the project will be awarded by NIST on a non-competitive basis, and may be adjusted higher or lower from year-to-year of the award, contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to the mission and priorities of the program, and the availability of funds.
  - Continuation of an award to extend the period of performance and/or to increase or decrease funding is at the sole discretion of NIST.

- **Potential for Additional 5 Years.**
  - Initial awards issued pursuant to this FFO are expected to be for up to five (5) years with the possibility for NIST to renew the award, on a non-competitive basis, for an additional 5 years at the end of the initial award period.
  - The review processes in 15 C.F.R. § 290.8 will be used as part of the overall assessment of the recipient, consistent with the potential long-term nature and purpose of the program.
  - In considering renewal for a second five-year, multi-year award term, NIST will evaluate the results of the annual reviews and the results of the 3rd Year peer-based Panel Review findings and recommendations as set forth in 15 C.F.R. § 290.8, as well as the Center's progress in addressing findings and recommendations made during the various reviews.
  - The full process is expected to include programmatic, policy, financial, administrative, and responsibility assessments, and the availability of funds, consistent with Department of Commerce and NIST policies and procedures in effect at that time.

Federal Award Information (2)

Kick-Off Conferences

- **Each recipient will be required to attend a kick-off conference**, which will be held within 30 days post start date of award, to help ensure that the MEP Center operator has a clear understanding of the program and its components.
- The kick-off conference will take place at NIST/MEP headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD, during which time NIST will:
  - (1) orient MEP Center key personnel to the MEP program;
  - (2) explain program and financial reporting requirements and procedures;
  - (3) identify available resources that can enhance the capabilities of the MEP Center; and
  - (4) negotiate and develop a detailed three-year operating plan with the recipient. NIST/MEP anticipates an additional set of site visits at the MEP Center and/or telephonic meetings with the recipient to finalize the three-year operating plan.

- The kick-off conference will take up to approximately 3 days and must be attended by the MEP Center Director, along with up to two additional MEP Center employees.
- Applicants **must** include travel and related costs for the kick-off conference as part of the budget for year one (1), and these costs should be reflected in the SF-424A. (See Section IV.2.a.(2). of the FFO.)
- These costs must also be reflected in the budget table and budget narrative for year 1, which is submitted as part of the budget tables and budget narratives section of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.2.a.(6).(e). of the FFO.)
- Representatives from key subrecipients and other key strategic partners may attend the kick-off conference with the prior written approval of the Grants Officer. Applicants proposing to have key subrecipients and/or other key strategic partners attend the kick-off conference should clearly indicate so as part of the budget narrative for year one of the project.

Federal Award Information (3)

MEP System-Wide Meetings

- NIST/MEP typically organizes system-wide meetings approximately four times a year in an effort to share best practices, new and emerging trends, and additional topics of interest.
- These meetings are rotated throughout the United States and typically involve 3-4 days of resource time and associated travel costs for each meeting.
- The MEP Center Director must attend these meetings, along with up to two additional MEP Center employees.
- Applicants **must** include travel and related costs for four quarterly MEP system-wide meetings in each of the five (5) project years (4 meetings per year; 20 total meetings over five-year award period).
- These costs must be reflected in the SF-424A (see Section IV.2.a.(2). of the FFO).
- These costs must also be reflected in the budget tables and budget narratives for each of the project's five (5) years, which are submitted in the budget tables and budget narratives section of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.2.a.(6).(e). of the FFO).

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Eligibility Information (1)

- **Eligible Applicants.**
  - The eligibility requirements set forth below will be used in lieu of and to the extent they are inconsistent with will supersede those given in the MEP regulations found at 15 CFR part 290, specifically 15 CFR 290.5(a)(1).
  - Each applicant for and recipient of an MEP award **must be a U.S.-based nonprofit institution or organization**. For the purpose of this FFO, ***nonprofit institutions include public or private nonprofit organizations, nonprofit or State colleges and universities, public or nonprofit community and technical colleges, and State, local or Tribal governments***.
  - Existing MEP awardees and new applicants who meet the eligibility criteria set forth in this section may apply.
  - An eligible organization may work individually or may include proposed subawards to eligible organizations or proposed contracts with any other organization as part of the applicant's proposal, effectively forming a team.
  - However, as discussed in Section I.4. of this FFO, 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 MEP Center Core Management and Oversight functions.
  - In addition, the applicant **must have or propose an Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance structure or plan** for establishing a board structure within 90 days from the award start date (Refer to Section I.3. of the FFO). See also Section IV.6. of the FFO for funding restrictions under the MEP program.

Eligibility Information (2)

- **Cost Share or Matching Requirements:**

  Non-Federal cost sharing of at least 50 percent of the total project costs is required for each of the first through the third year of the award, with an increasing minimum non-federal cost share contribution beginning in year 4 of the award as follows:

Year of Center Operation	Maximum NIST Share	Minimum Non-Federal Share
1-3	1/2	1/2
4	2/5	3/5
5 and beyond	1/3	2/3

- Non-Federal cost sharing is that portion of the project costs not borne by the Federal Government. The applicant's share of the MEP Center expenses may include cash, services, and third party in-kind contributions, as described at 2 C.F.R. § 200.306, as applicable, and in the MEP program regulations at 15 CFR § 290.4(c). ***No more than 50% of the applicant's total non-Federal cost share for any year of the award may be from third party in-kind contributions of part-time personnel, equipment, software, rental value of centrally located space, and related contributions, per 15 CFR § 290.4(c)(5).*** 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 tables and budget narratives submitted with the application and will be considered as part of the review under the evaluation criterion found in Section V.1.c.ii. of this FFO.

- ***Recipients must meet the minimum non-federal cost share requirements for each year of the award as identified in the chart above.*** For purposes of the MEP Program, "program income" (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.80, as applicable) generated by an MEP Center may be used by a recipient towards the required non-federal cost share under an MEP award.

Eligibility Information (3)

Possible Revenue/Cost Share Sources:

- State Funding
- Client Revenues (Program Income also know as Project Service Fees ***(as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.80, as applicable)***
- In-Kind (full/part-time personnel, equipment, space) ***(Refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.306 and 15 CFR § 290.4(c))***

Eligibility Information (4)

- **Additional Eligibility Requirement**
  - **Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance (See Section III.3 of the FFO)**
    - The applicant **must** include in their application a proposed board structure including the type of board, board member names, organization and roles of such board members. If such a board is not in place, or is not expected to meet these requirements at the time of the MEP award, the applicant must provide a plan for establishing such a board within 90 days of award start date (expected to be April 1, 2017).

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Application and Submission Information (1)

- **Required Forms and Documents:**
  - **Required Forms*:**
    - SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance
      - Must indicate State in which Applicant is seeking to establish an MEP Center in Field 4 (Applicant Identifier)
      - Must be certified through www.grants.gov by an authorized representative of the applicant organization
      - Item 12 must list the FFO Number as 2016-NIST-MEP-02
      - Item 18 must list the total budget information for full five (5) years of the project
      - List of certifications and assurances referenced in Item 21 of the SF424 is contained in the SF424B
    - SF-424A Budget Information Non-Constructions
      - Must reflect anticipated expenses **for all five (5) years** of the project
      - Must meet minimum cost share required throughout the five (5) years of the project
      - Must include estimated costs associated with the NIST MEP Kick-Off Conference and System Wide Meetings (See Sections II.5 & II.6 of FFO)
      - The Grant Program Function or Activity on Line 1 under Column (a) should be entered as Manufacturing Extension Partnership. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number on Line 1 under Column (b) should be 11.611.
    - SF-424B Assurances Non-construction
    - CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying
    - SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

***Forms are available as part of the Grants.gov application kit**

Application and Submission Information (2)

- In accordance with Section IV 2.a of the FFO, the SF-424A budget should reflect anticipated expenses for all five (5) years of the project not just FY17 expenses.
  - Section A (page 1) of the form to include expenses for all five years in the first row of the form (line 1). The federal amount should be in column (e) and the non-federal amount should be in column (f) of the first row.
- In accordance with the SF-424A instructions, Section B (page 2) of the form should include all non-federal and federal expenses. Column 1 should also capture expenses for all five years.
- Section C (page 3) of the form should include non-federal resources for all 5 years not just FY17.
- Section D should reflect the federal and non-federal funding needed over the 4 quarters of Year 1.
- Section E should reflect the requested federal funding for Years 2-5 on the first row. The grant program in the first field should reflect Manufacturing Extension Partnership.
- Section F (Direct & Indirect Charges) – should reflect the amounts for ALL 5 YEARS

Application and Submission Information (3)

Required Forms & Documents Continued….

- **Technical Proposal**. The five (5) year Technical Proposal is a word-processed document **not exceeding 40 pages** responsive to the program description (*see* Section I. of the FFO) and the evaluation criteria (*see* Section V.1. of the FFO). The following is a suggested format that applicants may use for the technical proposal.
  - **Table of Contents** (Does not count towards page limit)
  - **Executive Summary** - The executive summary should briefly (usually no longer than two pages) describe the proposed project, consistent with the evaluation sub-criteria (see Section V.1.a. of the FFO). ***Applicants should name the State in which they are seeking to establish an MEP Center in the first sentence of the Executive Summary.***

    Please note, if an applicant's proposal is selected for funding, NIST may use all or a portion of the Executive Summary as part of a press release issued by NIST, or for other public information and outreach purposes. Applicants are advised not to incorporate information that concerns business trade secrets or other confidential commercial or financial information as part of the Executive Summary. See also 15 C.F.R. § 4.9(c) concerning the designation of business information by the applicant. (Does not count towards page limit).
  - **Project Narrative**
  - **Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee Governance**
  - **Budget Tables and Budget Narratives (Year 1)**
    - A suggested format is provided on the MEP website - http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-04.cfm
  - **Budget Table for Years 2-5 (Narrative not required)**
    - A suggested format is provided on the MEP website - http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-04.cfm
- **Letters of Commitment or Support – DOES NOT COUNT TOWARDS PAGE LIMIT**

Application and Submission Information (4)

- **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, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with the DoC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

- **Resumes**
  - One-page resumes of no more than five key personnel may be included; these do not count toward the page limit.
  - Any information beyond one page for each resume and any additional resumes submitted will not be considered.

- **Please refer to the following link for restrictions on file name conventions when uploading attachments to grants.gov, http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html**

- ***NOTE: If your application shows a majority of the funding passing through to subrecipients – you may want to provide individual narratives describing the scope and provide budgets for those sub-recipients so the panel has a clear representation and understanding of your business model and most important the resource structure (financially/staffing)***

Application and Submission Information (5)

Letters of Commitment or Support

- **For non-profit applicants with a fiduciary board of directors, a resolution from such board authorizing submission of the MEP Center application to NIST and supporting the activities described therein is required.**

- **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 separate and apart from the submission of the proposal.

  – 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 a per year break-out of cash cost share (including anticipated program income) and in-kind (non-cash) contributions.

- **Please make sure to review Section IV.2.a.7, Letters of Commitment or Support**

Application and Submission Information (6)

- **Application Format (Section IV 2(b)):**
  - Page Limit. **The Technical Proposals are limited to forty (40) pages.** Information on pages beyond the page limit will not be considered.
  - Page limit **includes:** Cover page, Technical Proposal (with the exception of the Executive Summary), figures, graphs, tables, images, pictures, and all other pages of an application, with the exception of the page limit exclusions listed below.
  - Page limit **excludes:** Table of Contents, Executive Summary, SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance; SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs form; SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs; SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities; CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying; Table of Contents, budget tables and budget narratives; Letters of Commitment and/or Support; Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, and Resumes.
  - **Application Replacement Pages.** Applicants may not submit replacement pages and/or missing documents once an application has been submitted. Any revisions must be made by submission of a new application that must be received by NIST by the submission deadline

Application and Submission Information (7)

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).

- Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. part 25, applicants and recipients (as the case may be) are required to:
  - (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
  - (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
  - (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency, unless otherwise excepted from these requirements pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 25.110.
- *When developing your submission timeline, keep in mind that **(1)** all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); **(2)** a free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM) (see Section IV.3 and Section IV.7.a.(1)(b) may take between three and five business days or as long as more than two weeks, and **(3)** electronic applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and **(4)** applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages from Grants.gov over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application.*
- *NIST will not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements; if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time that NIST is ready to make a Federal award pursuant to this FFO, NIST may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.*
- **Applicants will find instructions on registering with SAM.gov as part of the Grants.gov process at: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html**

Application and Submission Information (8)

- **Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system is expected to be closed for routine maintenance at these times: from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, July 16, 2016 until Monday, July 18, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and also from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, August 20, 2016 until Monday, August 22, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and again from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, September 17, 2016 until Monday, September 19, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.**

- The date and time recorded by www.grants.gov will be considered the official time that the application was received by NIST. Applicants are cautioned that the validation process may take up to two full business days after the application is submitted to Grants.gov.

Application and Submission Information (9)

- NIST strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the last minute to submit an application. NIST will not make allowance for any late submissions. The responsibility for ensuring a complete application is received by NIST by the deadline is the sole responsibility of the applicant. To avoid any potential processing backlogs due to last minute Grants.gov registrations, applicants are strongly encouraged to start their Grants.gov registration process at least four (4) weeks prior to the application due date.

- NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by e-mail.

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Evaluation Review Criteria:

The applications will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria described below.

a. Executive Summary and Project Narrative (40 – Sub-criteria i through iv will be weighted equally)

- i. Center Strategy
- ii. Market Understanding
  1. Market Segmentation
  2. Needs Identification and Product/Service Offerings
- iii. Business Model
  1. Outreach and Service Delivery to the Market
  2. Partnership Leverage and Linkages
- iv. Performance Measurement and Management

b. Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management; and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance (30 – Sub-criteria i and ii will be weighted equally)

- i. Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management
- ii. Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance

c. Budget and Financial Plan (30 – Sub-criteria i and ii will be weighted equally))

- i. Budget
- ii. Quality of the Financial Plan for Meeting the Award's Non-Federal Cost Share Requirements over 5 years.

Review Criterion #1- Executive Summary and Project Narrative (Center Strategy, Market Understanding, Business Model and Performance Measurement and Management)

a. **Executive Summary and Project Narrative.** (40 points; Sub-criteria i through iv will be weighted equally) NIST/MEP will evaluate the extent to which the applicant's Executive Summary and Project Narrative demonstrates how the applicant's methodology will efficiently and effectively establish an MEP Center and provide manufacturing extension services to primarily small and medium-sized manufacturers in the applicable State-wide geographical service area identified in Section II.2. of this FFO. Applicants should name the state to be covered in the first sentence of the Executive Summary and Project Narrative. Reviewers will consider the following topics when evaluating the Executive Summary and Project Narrative:

i. **Center Strategy. Reviewers will assess the applicant's strategy proposed for the Center to deliver services that meet manufacturers' needs, generate client impacts (e.g., cost savings, increased sales, etc.), and support a strong manufacturing ecosystem. Reviewers will assess the quality with which the applicant:**

- incorporates the market analysis described in the criterion set forth in Section V.1.a.ii.(1). below to inform strategies, products and services;
- defines a strategy for delivering services that balances market penetration with impact and revenue generation, addressing the needs of manufacturers, with an emphasis on the small and medium-sized manufacturers;
- defines the Center's existing and/or proposed roles and relationships with other entities in the State's manufacturing ecosystem, including State, regional, and local agencies, economic development organizations and educational institutions such as universities and community or technical colleges, industry associations, and other appropriate entities;
- plans to engage with other entities in Statewide and/or regional advanced manufacturing initiatives; and
- supports achievements of the MEP mission and objectives while also satisfying the interests of other stakeholders, investors, and partners.

Review Criterion #1 – continued

ii. **Market Understanding.** Reviewers will assess the strategy proposed for the Center to define the target market, understand the needs of manufacturers (especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)), and to define appropriate services to meet identified needs. Reviewers will evaluate the proposed approach for regularly updating this understanding through the five years. The following sub-topics will be evaluated and given equal weight:

1) **Market Segmentation.** Reviewers will assess the quality and extent of the applicant's market segmentation strategy including:
   - Segmentation of company size, geography, and industry priorities including some consideration of rural, start-up (a manufacturing establishment that has been in operation for five years or less) and/or very small manufacturers as appropriate to the state;
   - alignment with state and/or regional initiatives; and
   - other important factors identified by the applicant.

2) **Needs Identification and Product/Service Offerings.** Reviewers will assess the quality and extent of the applicant's proposed needs identification and proposed products and services for both sales growth and operational improvement in response to the applicant's market segmentation and understanding assessed by reviewers under the preceding Section V.1.a.ii.(1). Of particular interest is how the applicant would leverage new manufacturing technologies, techniques and processes usable by small and medium-sized manufacturers. Reviewers will also consider how an applicant's proposed approach will support a job-driven training agenda with manufacturing clients. (To learn more about the White House job-driven training agenda, please go to: (https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/ready_to_work_factsheet.pdf).

Review Criterion #1 – continued

iii. **Business Model.** Reviewers will assess the quality, feasibility and potential efficacy and efficiency of the applicant's proposed business model for the Center as provided in the Project Narrative, Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management, and the Budget Tables and Budget Narratives sections of its Technical Proposal, submitted under section IV.2.a.(6) of this FFO, and the likelihood that the proposed business model will result in the Center's ability to successfully execute the strategy evaluated under criterion set forth in paragraph a.1. above and Section V.1.a.i., based on the market understanding evaluated under criterion set forth in paragraph a.ii above and Section V.1.a.ii.. The following sub-topics will be evaluated and given equal weight:

1) **Outreach and Service Delivery to the Market**. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed Center is organized to:
   - identify, reach and provide proposed services to key market segments and individual manufacturers described above;
   - work with a manufacturer's leadership in strategic discussions related to new technologies, new products and new markets; and
   - leverage the applicant's past experience in working with small and medium-sized manufacturers as a basis for future programmatic success.

2) **Partnership Leverage and Linkages**. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed Center will make effective use of resources or partnerships with third parties such as industry, universities, community/technical colleges, nonprofit economic development organizations, and Federal, State and Local Government Agencies in the Center's business model.

Review Criterion #1 continued:

iv. **Performance Measurement and Management.** Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant will use a systematic approach to measuring and managing performance including the:

- quality and extent of the applicant's stated goals, milestones and outcomes described by operating year (year 1, year 2, etc.);
- applicant's utilization of client-based business results important to stakeholders in understanding program impact; and
- depth of the proposed methodology for program management and internal evaluation likely to ensure effective operations and oversight for meeting program and service delivery objectives.

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Review Criterion #2 Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management; and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance

b. **Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management; and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance (30 points; Sub-criteria i and ii will be weighted equally).** Reviewers will assess the ability of the key personnel, the applicant's management structure and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance to deliver the program and services envisioned for the Center. Reviewers will consider the following topics when evaluating the qualifications of the applicant and of program management:

   i. **Key Personnel.** Reviewers will assess the extent to which the:

      – proposed key personnel have the appropriate experience and education in manufacturing, outreach, program management and partnership development to support achievements of the MEP mission and objectives;

      – proposed management structure and organizational roles are aligned to plan, direct, monitor, organize and control the monetary resources of the proposed center to achieve its business objectives (Refer to Section I.4. of this FFO);

Review Criterion #2 Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management; and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance

- proposed organizational structure flows logically from the specified approach to the market and products and service offerings; and
- proposed field staff structure sufficiently supports the geographic concentrations and industry targets for the region.

ii. **Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance.** Reviewers will assess the extent to which the:

- proposed Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and its operations are complete, appropriate and will meet the program's objectives at the time of award, or, if such an Oversight Board or Advisory Committee does not exist at the time of application or is not expected to meet these requirements at the time of award, the extent to which the proposed plan for developing and implementing such an Oversight Board or Advisory Committee within 90 days of award start date (expected to be October 1, 2016) is feasible. (Refer to Section I.3. of this FFO).
- Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance is engaged with overseeing and guiding the Center and supports its own development through a schedule of regular meetings, and processes ensuring Oversight Board or Advisory Committee involvement in strategic planning, recruitment, selection and retention of board members, board assessment practices and board development initiatives (Refer to Section I.3. of this FFO).

Review Criterion #3 – Budget and Financial Plan

c. **Budget and Financial Plan. (30 points; Sub-criteria i and ii will be weighted equally)** Reviewers will assess the suitability and focus of the applicant's five (5) year budget. The application will be assessed in the following areas:

i. **Budget.** Reviewers will assess the extent to which:
- the proposed financial plan is aligned to support the execution of the proposed Center's strategy and business model over the five (5) year project plan;
- the proposed projections for income and expenditures are appropriate for the scale of services that are to be delivered by the proposed Center and the service delivery model envisioned within the context of the overall financial model over the five (5) year project plan;
- a reasonable ramp-up or scale-up scope and budget has the Center fully operational by the 4th year of the project; and
- the proposal's narrative for each of the budgeted items explains the rationale for each of the budgeted items, including assumptions the applicant used in budgeting for the Center.

ii. **Quality of the Financial Plan for Meeting the Award's Non-Federal Cost Share Requirements over 5 Years.** Reviewers will assess the quality of and extent to which the:
- applicant clearly describes the total level of cost share and detailed rationale of the cost share, including cash and in-kind, in their proposed budget.
- applicant's funding commitments for cost share are documented by letters of support from the applicant, proposed sub-recipients and any other partners identified and meet the basic matching requirements of the program;
- applicant's cost share meets basic requirements of allowability, allocability and reasonableness under applicable federal costs principles set for in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E;
- applicant's underlying accounting system is established or will be established to meet applicable federal costs principles set forth in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E; and
- the overall proposed financial plan is sufficiently robust and diversified so as to support the long term sustainability of the Center throughout the five (5) years of the project plan.

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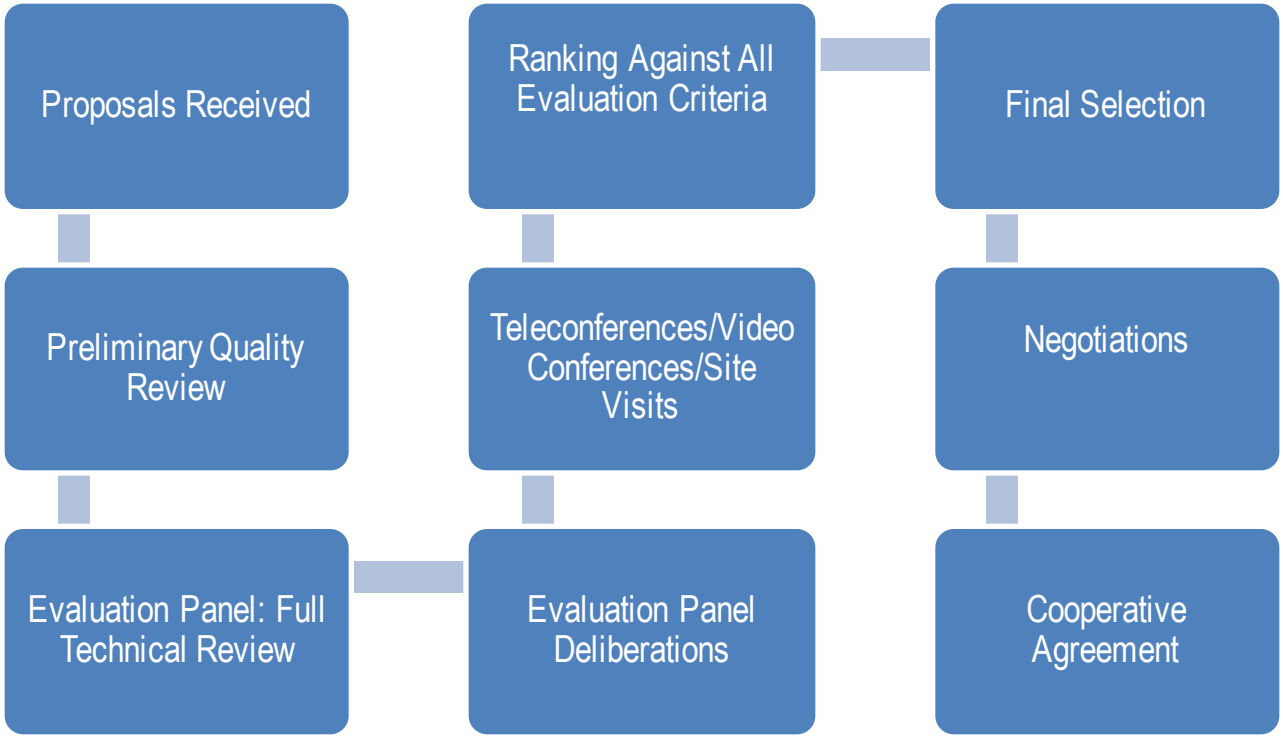
Review and Selection Process (1)



Review and Selection Process (2)

- **Initial Administrative Review of Applications.** An initial review of timely received applications will be conducted to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this FFO and the scope of the stated program objectives. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or non-responsive 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 that can easily be rectified or cured.

- **Full Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications.** Applications that are determined to be eligible, complete, and responsive will proceed for full reviews in accordance with the review and selection processes below. Eligible, complete and responsive applications will be grouped by the State in which the proposed MEP Center is to be established. The applications in each group will be reviewed by the same reviewers and will be evaluated, reviewed, and selected as described below in separate groups.

  - **Evaluation and Review.** Each application will be reviewed by at least three technically qualified individual reviewers who will evaluate each application based on the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this FFO). Applicants may receive written follow-up questions in order for the reviewers to gain a better understanding of the applicant's proposal. Each reviewer will provide a written technical assessment against the evaluation criteria and based on that assessment will assign each application a numeric score, with a maximum score of 100. If a non-Federal reviewer is used, the reviewers may discuss the applications with each other, but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not as a consensus.

- Applicants whose applications receive an average score of 70 or higher out of 100 will be deemed finalists. If deemed necessary, finalists will be invited to participate with reviewers in a conference call, and/or a video conference and/or finalists will be invited to participate in a site visit that will be conducted by the same reviewers at the applicant's location. In any event, if there are two (2) or more finalists within a state, conference calls, video conferences or site visits will be conducted with each finalist. Finalists will be reviewed and evaluated, and reviewers may revise their assigned numeric scores based on the evaluation criteria (*see* Section V.1. of this FFO) as a result of the conference call, video conference and/or site visit.

Review and Selection Process (3)

- **Ranking and Selection.** Based upon an average of the technical reviewers' final scores, an adjectival rating will be assigned to each application in accordance with the following scale:
  - Fundable, Outstanding (91-100 points);
  - Fundable, Very Good (81-90 points);
  - Fundable (70-80 points); or
  - Unfundable (0-69 points).

- For decision-making purposes, applications receiving the same adjectival rating will be considered to have an equivalent ranking, although their technical review scores, while comparable, may not necessarily be the same.

- The Selecting Official is the NIST Associate Director for Innovation and Industry Services or designee. The Selecting Official makes the final recommendation to the NIST Grants Officer regarding the funding of applications under this FFO. The Selecting Official shall be provided all applications, all the scores and technical assessments of the reviewers, and all information obtained from the applicants during the evaluation, review and negotiation processes.

- The Selecting Official will generally select and recommend the most meritorious application for an award based on the adjectival rankings and/or one or more of the six (6) selection factors described in Section V.3. of this FFO. The Selecting Official retains the discretion to select and recommend an application out of rank order (i.e., from a lower adjectival category) based on one or more of the selection factors, or to select and recommend no applications for funding. The Selecting Official's recommendation to the Grants Officer shall set forth the bases for the selection decision.

Review and Selection Process (4)

– **Ranking and Selection.**

- As part of the overall review and selection process, NIST reserves the right to request that applicants provide pre-award clarifications and/or to enter into pre-award negotiations relative to programmatic, financial or other aspects of an application, such as but not limited to the revision or removal of proposed budget costs, or the modification of proposed MEP Center activities, work plans or program goals and objectives.
- In this regard, NIST may request that applicants provide supplemental information required by the Agency prior to award. NIST also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the responsibility of the applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NIST Grants Officer are final.

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Selection Factors

Selection Factors. The Selection Factors for this FFO are as follows:

a. The availability of Federal funds;

b. Relevance of the proposed project to MEP program goals and policy objectives;

c. Reviewers' evaluations, including technical comments;

d. The need to assure appropriate distribution of MEP services within the designated State;

e. Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by DoC or by other Federal agencies; and

f. Whether the application complements or supports other Administration priorities, or projects supported by DoC or other Federal agencies, such as but not limited to the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation and the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership.

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Anticipated Announcement, Award Date, Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants

- Review, selection, and award processing is expected to be completed in late 2016/early 2017.
- The anticipated start date for awards made under this FFO is expected to be April 1, 2017.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing.

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Reporting Requirements

- In lieu of the reporting requirements described in Sections A.01 Performance (Technical) Reports and B.02 Financial Reports of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (December 26, 2014), the following reporting requirements shall apply:

  - **Financial Reports.** The Recipient shall submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report, into the MEP's Enterprise Information System (MEIS) **on a semi-annual basis after the sixth and twelfth month of each operating year**, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Special Award Condition. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of each semi-annual reporting period. The Recipient shall submit a final SF-425 within 90 days after the expiration date of the award.

  - **Performance (Technical) Reports.** The Recipient shall submit a Technical Report (completing all required MEIS fields) **on a semi-annual basis after the sixth and twelfth month of each operating** year, 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. The Recipient shall submit a final Technical/Quarterly report within 90 days after the expiration date of the award. Technical/Quarterly Report details are accessible on the MEIS website (https://meis.nist.gov/).Technical progress reports shall contain information as prescribed in the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines (OMB Control Number 0693-0032). For further information regarding the NIST MEP Reporting Process, you may download a copy of the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines at http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-04.cfm.

  - **Post Client Project Follow-Up.** The **recipient will be required** to provide client and project data on a quarterly basis (unless otherwise directed by the NIST Grants Officer) and in a specified format to the organization identified by NIST/MEP in order for post-project follow-up data to be obtained (OMB Control Number 0693-0021**). For further information regarding the NIST MEP Reporting Process, you may download a copy of the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines at** http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-04.cfm**.**

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MEP Resources (1)

The following resources outlined in the FFO are currently available on the MEP website at: http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-04.cfm:

NIST MEP System Strategic Plan;
Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Operating Plan Guidelines (February 2015);
Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership General Terms and Conditions (February 2015);
2014 Annual Report;
Sample Financial Summary Table (for all 5 years) and Budget Summary and Narrative (for Year 1); and
NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines

MEP Resources (2)

- **Manufacturing Technology Acceleration Center (M-TAC) Pilot Projects – Report on Initial Progress and Learning (February 2015)**
  http://www.nist.gov/mep/services/supplychain/upload/MTAC_Report-print.pdf

- **Promising Practices in Overall Performance – Featuring MEP Centers of Indiana, Ohio, and Oklahoma (January 2013) This document appears to be available on MEIS only!**
  https://meis.nist.gov/_layouts/MEIS/GetMeisDocument.ashx?AttachmentID=7165&MeisDocType=SubmissionAttachment

- **National Governors Association – "Making" Our Future – What States Are Doing to Encourage Growth in Manufacturing through Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Investment (January 2013)**
  http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-ehsw-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/making-our-future.html

- **Re-examining the MEP Business Model: Alternatives for Increasing the Program's Impact on US Manufacturing Sector Performance (October 2010)**
  http://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/MEP_Bus_Model_Report_Summary_July2010.pdf
  http://stone-assoc.com/uploads/MEP_Bus_Model_Rpt_.pdf

- **Hollings MEP Advisory Board Innovation and Product Development in the 21st Century (February 2010)**
  http://nist.gov/mep/upload/MEP_advisory_report_4_24l.pdf

- **National Academy of Public Administration – The NIST MEP Program – Report 2: Alternative Business Models (May 2004)**
  http://www.napawash.org/2004/1541-manufacturing-extension-partnership-program-report-2-alternative-business-models.html

- **National Academy of Public Administration – The NIST MEP Program – Report 1: Re-examining the Core Premise of the MEP Program (September 2003)**
  http://patapsco.nist.gov/mep/documents/pdf/about-mep/reports-studies/napa_1.pdf

MEP Resources (3)

- **National Academies. 21st Century Manufacturing: The role of the Manufacturing-Extension-Partnership**

  http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18448/21st-century-manufacturing-the-role-of-the-manufacturing-extension-partnership

- **Manufacturing Extension Partnership: Most Federal Spending Directly Supports Work with Manufacturers, but Distribution Could Be Improved**

  http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-14-317

- **Factors for Evaluating the Cost Share of Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program to Assist Small and Medium-Sized Manufacturers**

  http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-437R

- **MPI and ASMC. 2013. Next Generation Manufacturing Study**

  http://www.wmep.org/sites/default/files/NGM-StudySummaryReport.pdf

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Tips from Prior Applicants

- Form an internal team, breaking down the application into sections that you can assign a champion to. i.e. finance, market, products and services. Meet frequently to start building the story.
- Invest in a good writer to edit and help with the flow of the application. It is extremely helpful since you will have a lot of information that needs to fit into the 40 pages.
- The application would be hard to achieve without a strategic plan for your organization in its present state. Make sure your strategic plan is up to date and has clear goals and metrics.
- Make sure you have done a good analysis of the market needs especially the needs of the small, rural, emerging manufacturers.
- Share your strategic goals - should align with state, federal, others' goals. If you don't have a strategic plan, develop one for the next 5 years.
- Get input from the stakeholders.

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Key Take-Aways

- Make sure to read entire FFO (multiple times)
- Key Personnel cannot be employed **both** at the prime and sub-recipient organization.
- Ensuring you are meeting the minimum cost share requirement for all 5 years.
- Board Governance and/or Advisory Committee:
  - If a structure is not currently in place, a plan MUST be proposed stating how you will come into compliance within 90 days from award start date (expected to be April 1, 2017) – part of the eligibility
- SAM.gov registration has been established and organization has received confirmation of validated account (Recommend completing well in advance of submitting application in grants.gov)
- Negotiations take place between NIST and the applicant organization not the subrecipients.
- Tell your story – Don't assume we know everything about your organization.

Information Webinar Agenda

- NIST MEP Program Overview
- Funding Opportunity Overview
- Federal Award Information
- Eligibility Information
- Application and Submission Information
- Evaluation Criteria
- Review and Selection Process
- Selection Factors
- Anticipated Announcement, Award Date and Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants
- Reporting Requirements
- MEP Resources
- Tips from Prior Applicants
- Key Take-Aways
- Agency Contacts
- FAQs
- Staying in touch

Agency Contacts

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Administrative, budget, cost sharing, eligibility questions and other programmatic questions.	Diane Henderson Phone: (301) 975-5105 Fax: (301) 963-6556 E-mail: mepffo@nist.gov
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	Christopher Hunton Phone: (301) 975-5718 Fax: (301) 975-8884 E-mail: grants@nist.gov
Grant Rules and Regulations	Matthew Jones Phone: (301) 975-3698 Fax: (301) 975-8884 E-mail: matthew.jones@nist.gov

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Have additional questions…..

Please submit all questions in writing to NIST MEP, mepffo@nist.gov

Questions and Answers will be posted regularly on the NIST MEP Public Site, http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-04.cfm

New questions added to the FAQ will be identified with the date in which they were added to the document for ease of reference

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NEXT INFORMATION WEBINAR – July 26th @ 2:30 p.m. Eastern
Please email name and organization to mepffo@nist.gov to rsvp