

May 11, 2016

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (FFO)  
Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships to Stimulate (RAMPS)  
Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- **Federal Agency Name:** National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC)
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships to Stimulate (RAMPS) Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development
- **Announcement Type:** Initial
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** 2016-NIST-NICE-01
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.620, Science, Technology, Business and/or Education Outreach
- **Dates:** Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, Tuesday, July 12, 2016. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. **Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system is expected to be closed for routine maintenance from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, June 18, 2016 until Monday, June 20, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.** NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by September 2016. NIST expects the earliest anticipated start date for awards under this FFO to be October 1, 2016.

**Applicants are strongly urged to read Section IV.2.b., Attachment of Required Application Documents, found on page 12 of this FFO, with great attention. Applicants should carefully follow the instructions and recommendations regarding attachments and using Grants.gov's Download Submitted Applications feature to check that all required attachments were contained in their submission. Applications submitted without the required documents will not pass the Initial Administrative Review, described in Section V.3.a. of this FFO.**

When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) (see Section IV.3. and Section IV.7.a.(1).b. of this FFO) often takes between three and five business days and may

take as long as two weeks; (3) electronic applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants using Grants.gov will receive email notifications over a period of up to two business days as the application moves through intermediate systems before the applicant learns via a validation or rejection notification whether NIST has received the application. (See <http://www.grants.gov> for full information on application and notification through Grants.gov). Please note that a federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated recipient's registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not current at the time of the award.

- **Application Submission Address:** Applications must be submitted using Grants.gov.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE), led by NIST, is soliciting applications from eligible applicants for the establishment of state or regional consortia to identify cybersecurity workforce development pathways that address local workforce needs.
- **Anticipated Amounts:** NIST anticipates funding five to eight awards in the range of \$150,000 to \$200,000 each for fifteen month projects.
- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative agreement.
- **Who Is Eligible:** Applicants must meet all of the following requirements:
  - Applicants must be non-profit organizations including institutions of higher education located in the U.S. or its territories. The applicant will be the lead organization for the project.
  - Applicants must demonstrate through commitment letters that at least one of each of the following types of organizations is committed to being part of the proposed multistakeholder workforce partnership:
    - a K-12 school or Local Education Agency (LEA),
    - an institution of higher education or college/university system, and
    - a local employer.
- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Matching funds are not required for this FFO.
- **Public Meetings (Applicants' Conference):** NIST will hold a webinar (Applicants' Conference) to provide general information regarding this FFO, offer general guidance on preparing applications, and answer questions. NIST staff will not critique or provide feedback on specific project ideas while they are being developed by an applicant. However, questions about the NICE, eligibility requirements, evaluation and award criteria, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive application can be addressed at the Applicants' Conference and by email to [nice.nist@nist.gov](mailto:nice.nist@nist.gov). Attendance at the Applicants' Conference is not

required, and will not be considered in the application review and selection process. Information on the Applicants' Conference and any related events is available at <http://nist.gov/nice>.

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## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### **I. Program Description**

The statutory authority for the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) and the Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships to Stimulate (RAMPS) Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development is 15 U.S.C. §§ 272(b)(4) and Title IV of the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2014.<sup>1</sup>

In our connected society almost every organization in the United States uses the Internet for commerce, communication, or service provision. Cybersecurity has therefore emerged as one of our nation's top priorities for both national and economic security. Increasing our cyber defenses necessarily requires a skilled workforce to protect businesses, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and governments at all levels.

NICE, led by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), is a partnership between Federal agencies, industry, educational institutions, National Laboratories, the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development program, and other organizations to coordinate a national cybersecurity awareness and education program. The mission of NICE is to energize and promote a robust network and an ecosystem of cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development. NICE fulfills this mission by coordinating with government, academic, and industry partners to build on existing successful programs, facilitate change and innovation, and bring leadership and vision to increase the number of skilled cybersecurity professionals

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<sup>1</sup> Public Law 113-274, 128 Stat. 2971 (2014).

helping to keep our Nation secure.

NICE's Strategic Plan (available at <http://nist.gov/nice/about/strategicplan.html>) has the following goals:

- Accelerate learning and skills development - Inspire a sense of urgency in both the public and private sectors to address the shortage of skilled cybersecurity workers.
- Nurture a diverse learning community - Strengthen education and training across the ecosystem to emphasize learning, measure outcomes, and diversify the cybersecurity workforce.
- Guide Career Development and Workforce Planning - Support employers to address market demands and enhance recruitment, hiring, development, and retention of cybersecurity talent.

NICE developed the National Cybersecurity Workforce Framework (NICE Framework) (available at <http://nist.gov/nice/framework/>) to define the cybersecurity workforce and provide a common taxonomy and lexicon by which to classify and categorize workers. The NICE Framework lists and defines 32 specialty areas of cybersecurity work and provides a description of each. The NICE Framework also identifies common tasks and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) associated with each specialty area. The NICE Framework will be used as guidance within the federal government and be made available to the private, public, and academic sectors for describing cybersecurity work and aligning related education, training, and professional development content.

NICE was established to meet the cybersecurity training, education, and awareness priorities expressed in Section II of the 2009 Cyberspace Policy Review, *Building Capacity for a Digital Nation*.<sup>2</sup> It expands upon the 2008 Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative (CNCI) number 8: Expand Cyber Education, which acknowledges that “[i]n order to effectively ensure our continued technical advantage and future cybersecurity, we must develop a technologically-skilled and cyber-savvy workforce and an effective pipeline of future employees.”<sup>3</sup> The Cybersecurity National Action Plan<sup>4</sup>, the Administration’s capstone effort to improve cybersecurity across the nation, identifies several actions for enhancing cybersecurity education and training across the nation. NICE will help coordinate several of these activities and increase awareness of cybersecurity education programs that will develop the knowledgeable and skilled workforce necessary to protect our systems, networks and data.

### **Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships to Stimulate (RAMPS) Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development**

Through this FFO, NIST intends to advance NICE’s goals by providing assistance to establish Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships to Stimulate (RAMPS)

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Cyberspace\\_Policy\\_Review\\_final.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Cyberspace_Policy_Review_final.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy/cybersecurity/national-initiative>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/02/09/fact-sheet-cybersecurity-national-action-plan>

Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development. Effective multistakeholder workforce partnerships focus on organizing multiple employers with skill shortages in specific occupations to focus on developing the skilled workforce to meet industry needs within the local or regional economy. The specific goals are to align the workforce needs of local business and non-profit organizations with the learning objectives of education and training providers conforming to the NICE Framework, increase the pipeline of students pursuing cybersecurity careers, upskill more Americans to move them into middle class jobs in cybersecurity, and support local economic development to stimulate job growth. Education and training providers will discover the skills needed for business as they actively seek to develop academic pathways to increase the pipeline of students who pursue cybersecurity careers. Employers will benefit from an increased supply of skilled cybersecurity workers and an educational system aligned to their needs. State and local economic development organizations, working with area businesses and non-profit organizations, will also benefit by attracting new industries to their area to create more jobs for Americans.

Specifically, the applicant's project must:

1. Establish (or identify if it already exists) a multistakeholder workforce partnership to include at least a K-12 school, an institution of higher education and a local employer. Participation from more than one organization of each of these types as well as from training and certification providers, economic development organizations, and other community organizations is encouraged.
2. Identify how it would collaborate with Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (<http://www.caecommunity.org>) or Advanced Technological Education programs (<http://www.nsf.gov/ate>) located in the state or region.
3. Describe a process for establishing leadership or governance of the multistakeholder organization.
4. Describe planned initiatives that can help support or implement the goals and objectives of the NICE Strategic Plan.
5. Demonstrate how the stakeholders intend to use the NICE Framework.
6. Include ideas for how the multistakeholder organization would leverage the Cybersecurity Jobs Heat Map (see <http://nist.gov/nice/map>).
7. Recruit employers in the community to support internships, apprenticeships, or coop programs in conjunction with education and training providers.
8. Define metrics that will be used to measure the success of their efforts. Metrics should include but not be limited to the number of CAE and ATE programs that participate in the program, outcomes of workforce demand and supply assessment, outcomes of recruitment activities, timeliness of milestones

reached, etc.

A successful project will create the infrastructure for education providers, employers, and others to develop the cybersecurity education capabilities to fill a critical skills gap for the economy.

## **II. Federal Award Information**

- 1. Funding Instrument.** The funding instrument that will be used is a cooperative agreement. The nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" is described in Chapter 5.C of the Department of Commerce (DoC) Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual, which is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNJd>. Please note the Department of Commerce Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual is expected to be updated after publication of this funding announcement and before awards are made under this FFO. Refer to Section VII. of this FFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you seek the information at this link and it is no longer working or you need more information.
- 2. Funding Availability.** NIST anticipates funding five to eight awards in the range of \$150,000 to \$200,000 each for fifteen months.

## **III. Eligibility Information**

**1. Who Is Eligible** Applicants must meet all of the following requirements:

- Applicants must be non-profit organizations including institutions of higher education located in the U.S. or its territories. The applicant will be the lead organization for the project.
- Applicants must demonstrate through commitment letters that at least one of each of the following types of organizations is committed to being part of the proposed multistakeholder workforce partnership:
  - a K-12 school or Local Education Agency (LEA),
  - an institution of higher education or college/university system, and
  - a local employer.

**2. Cost Sharing or Matching.** Matching funds are not required for this FFO.

## **IV. Application and Submission Information**

- 1. Address to Request Application Package.** The application package is available at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) under Funding Opportunity Number 2016-NIST-NICE-01.

## 2. Content and Format of Application Submission

### a. Required Forms and Document

The Application must contain the following:

**(1) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.** The SF-424 must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.

- SF-424, Item 12, should list the FFO number 2016-NIST-NICE-01.
- SF-424, Item 18, should list the total Federal budget amount requested for the entire project.
- For SF-424, Item 21, the list of certifications and assurances is contained in the SF-424B.

**(2) SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs.** The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for the project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments.

The Grant Program Function or Activity on Line 1 under Column (a) should be entered as “Science, Technology, Business, and/or Education Outreach”. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number on Line 1 under Column (b) should be entered as “11.620”.

These sections of the SF-424A should reflect funds for the whole 15-month term of the award: Section A; Section B; Section C; and Section D.

**(3) SF-424B, Assurances - Non-Construction Programs**

**(4) CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.** Enter “2016-NIST-NICE-01” in the Award Number field. Enter the title of the application used in field 15 of the SF-424, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field.

**(5) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** (if applicable)

**(6) Technical Proposal.** The Technical Proposal is a document of no more than 15 pages responsive to the program description (see Section I. of this FFO) and the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this FFO). The Technical Proposal should contain the following information:

- (a) Executive Summary. **An executive summary of the proposed project, including listing the stakeholders planning to participate in the multistakeholder workforce partnership, the organizational structure for that partnership, and an outline of the planned cybersecurity education**

**and workforce development related activities of that partnership.**

Evidence that the applicant already has a strong multistakeholder workforce partnership with demonstrated outcomes is helpful. If you are building on an existing partnership, provide a detailed explanation of the current scope of that partnership, information about outcomes, and supporting evidence of proven effectiveness.

**(b) Collaboration with Centers of Academic Excellence (CAE) in Cybersecurity and Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Programs.**

Identify any CAE or ATE programs located in the state and region that could participate in the multistakeholder workforce partnership. In order to avoid duplication of effort and leverage existing investments, applicants are expected to collaborate with local CAE and ATE programs to the extent possible.

**(c) Identification of Workforce Demand and Available Supply of Skilled Workers.**

Explanation of what organizational data related to workforce demand and available supply of skilled workers will be collected, how such data will be collected or analyzed about cybersecurity workforce needs, and the available supply of a skilled cybersecurity workforce from the state or local area. This state or local cybersecurity workforce assessment will identify gaps and support development of the Cybersecurity Jobs Heat Map.

This section should also include a description of how well education programs are doing today at meeting employer needs, including data on placement rate and time to place and a thorough and convincing description of how the proposed strategies are appropriate for the targeted population(s) and how they will address the current cybersecurity workforce needs.

**(d) Relevance to NICE Framework and NICE Strategic Plan.** Explanation of how the planned activities support the NICE Framework and NICE Strategic Plan. Explain any planned new initiatives or recruitment of new multistakeholder workforce partnership members to fill gaps needed in the relevant region.

**(e) Statement of Work and Implementation Plan.** A thorough and convincing statement of work including all project participants' activities related to this project which includes the following:

- Specific proposed tasks to establish or expand the multistakeholder workforce partnership, including necessary organizational development activities such as establishing a governance structure.
- Planned recruitment activities for representation across the cybersecurity workforce ecosystem.



- Details of the multistakeholder workforce partnership’s activities and individual participant’s related activities in support of cybersecurity workforce development.
  - Schedule of measurable events and realistic, measurable milestones for the overall project.
  - Metrics for measuring the success of the proposed efforts and timeline for metrics collection
- (f) **Sustainment Plan.** An explanation of the process(es) for updating the education and training strategies and curricula over time (that could be used during and after the award period) based on ongoing feedback from employers. This plan should discuss how partners will proceed to institutionalize the results of the project.
- (g) **Resources.** A description of the qualifications, proposed roles, and level of planned effort of the project participants, including the project lead and each subawardee, contractor, or other collaborator participating in the project. Describe any other resources, including resources from employers and government that can be leveraged to support these activities in the long term. Include in the qualifications section, related efforts in this area.
- (7) **Budget Narrative.** The Budget Narrative should provide a detailed breakdown of each of the object class categories as reflected on the SF-424A. The budget justification should address all of the budget categories (personnel, fringe benefits, equipment, travel, supplies, other direct costs and indirect costs). The written justification should include the necessity and the basis for the cost. 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 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (<http://go.usa.gov/SBYh>), which apply to awards in this program. Information needed for each category is as follows:
- (a) **Personnel** – At a minimum, the budget justification for all personnel should include the following: name, job title, commitment of effort on the proposed project in terms of average number of hours per week or percentage of time, salary rate, total direct charges on the proposed project, description of the role of the individual on the proposed project and the work to be performed. The cost of the time required to prepare presentations to report on the progress of the project to the NICE Conferences should also be included in this category.
- (b) **Fringe Benefits** – Fringe benefits 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) **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. Any items that do not meet the threshold for equipment can be included under the supplies line item. 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.
- (d) **Travel** – NIST will require that award recipients report on their projects at the NICE Conference (see <https://www.fbcinc.com/e/nice/default.aspx> ) at the start and conclusion of their projects (i.e., in Nov. 2016 and Nov. 2017) and participate in half-day workshops following the NICE Conference for sharing information. Therefore, applicants should include travel costs to these meetings. For travel costs associated with travel to these meetings, and additional travel required by the recipient to complete the project, the budget justification for travel should include the following: destination; names and 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 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.
- (e) **Supplies** – 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) **Contracts/Subawards** – Each contract or subaward should be treated as a separate item. Describe the services provided and the necessity of the subaward or contract to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining normal goods and services. Subawardees perform part of the project scope of work. For each subaward, applicants must provide budget detail justifying the cost of the work performed on the project.
- (g) **Other Direct Costs** – Registration costs associated with the NICE Conferences may be included in the budget. 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.

**(8) 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 Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (<http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>).

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that have never received a negotiated 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 pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget and budget narrative portion of the application.

**(9) Letters of Commitment or Interest.** Letters are not included in the page count.

(a) **Letters of Commitment to participate.** Applications must include commitment letters from at least one of each of the following types of organizations as specified below:

- a K-12 school or Local Education Agency (LEA),
- an institution of higher education or college/university system, and
- a local employer.

Inclusion of letters of commitment from additional organizations of the above types as well as training and certification providers, economic development organizations and other community organizations would further strengthen the application. Applicants with strong existing regional partnerships should indicate this in the letters.

The letters of commitment from each organization participating in the project must contain the following:

- The signature of an authorized representative, such as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), or other authorized representative with sufficient authority to make an organizational commitment to a multistakeholder workforce partnership.
- A description of the organization's participation and its level of commitment to the project. Identify what specific knowledge, expertise and other related resources, or other contributions, are being provided by the participating organization to support the proposed project, if any.

- For specific types of organizations:
  - Educational: Include commitments of the leaders (e.g., community college Presidents) to update curricula and training approaches over time as employer needs change.
  - Employers: Include commitments to interview and hire qualified candidates for open positions.

(b) **Letters of Interest**, optional. Letters of interest may be provided from other parties who might become involved in the multistakeholder workforce partnership.

**(10) Resumes of Key Personnel.** A resume for the project leader is required. This individual is considered key personnel to the project. Resumes of additional key personnel may be supplied. Resumes are limited to two pages per individual.

**(11) Data Management Plan.** In accordance with the Office of Science and Technology Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies of February 22, 2013<sup>5</sup>, *Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research*, and as implemented through NIST Policy 5700.00<sup>6</sup>, *Managing Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research*, and NIST Order 5701.00<sup>7</sup>, *Managing Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research*<sup>8</sup>, applicants should include a Data Management Plan (DMP).

The DMP is a supplementary document of not more than two pages that must include, at a minimum, a summary of proposed activities that are expected to generate data, a summary of the types of data expected to be generated by the identified activities, a plan for storage and maintenance of the data expected to be generated by the identified activities, and a plan describing whether and how data generated by the identified activities will be reviewed and made available to the public. As long as the DMP meets these NIST requirements, it may take the form specified by the applicant's institution or some other entity (e.g., the National Science Foundation<sup>8</sup> or the National Institutes of Health<sup>9</sup>). Some organizations' templates are available on the Internet.<sup>10</sup>

All applications for activities that will generate scientific data using NIST funding are required to adhere to a DMP or explain why data sharing and preservation are not within the scope of the project.

For the purposes of the DMP, NIST adopted the definition of "research data" at 2 C.F.R. § 200.315(e)(3) (available at <http://go.usa.gov/3sZvQ>).

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp\\_public\\_access\\_memo\\_2013.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nist.gov/open/upload/Final-P-5700.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.nist.gov/open/upload/Final-O-5701\\_0.pdf](http://www.nist.gov/open/upload/Final-O-5701_0.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>

<sup>9</sup> [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data\\_sharing/data\\_sharing\\_guidance.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data_sharing/data_sharing_guidance.htm)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cic.net/projects/technology/shared-storage-services/data-management-plans>

Reasonable costs for data preservation and access may be included in the application.

The sufficiency of the DMP will be considered as part of the administrative review (see Section V.3.a. of this FFO); however, the DMP will not be evaluated against any evaluation criteria.

#### **b. Attachment of Required Documents**

Items IV.2.a.(1) through IV.2.a.(5) above are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process.

**Items IV.2.a.(6) through IV.2.a.(11) must be completed and attached by clicking on “Add Attachments” found in item 15 of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This will create a zip file that allows for transmittal of the documents electronically via Grants.gov.**

Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. ***A receipt from Grants.gov indicates only that an application was transferred to a system. It does not provide details concerning whether all attachments (or how many attachments) transferred successfully.*** Applicants using Grants.gov will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency’s electronic system has received its application.

**Applicants are strongly advised to use Grants.gov’s Download Submitted Applications option to check that their application’s required attachments were contained in their submission.**

**After submitting the application, follow the directions found in the Grants.gov Online Users Guide (<http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh>). Click first on Applicants; then click on Applicant Actions; go then to the “Check My Application Status” option, and choose Download Submitted Applications.**

**If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found above, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.**

***The Grants.gov Online Users Guide available at the Grants.gov site (<http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh>) provides vital information on checking the status of applications. See especially the “Check My Application Status” option, found by clicking first on Applicants, and then by clicking on Applicant Actions.***

***Applicants can track their submission in the Grants.gov system by following the procedures at the Grants.gov site (<http://go.usa.gov/cjamz>). It can take up to two business days for an application to fully move through the Grants.gov system to NIST.***

***NIST uses the Tracking Numbers assigned by Grants.gov, and does not issue Agency Tracking Numbers.***

**c. Application Format**

- (1) Paper, E-mail and Facsimile (fax) Submissions.** Will not be accepted.
- (2) Figures, Graphs, Images, and Pictures.** Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be landscape orientation.
- (3) Font.** Easy to read font (10-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.
- (4) Page Limit.** The Technical Proposal for Applications is limited to fifteen (15) pages. Letters are excluded from the page count. Resumes are also excluded from the page count. Resumes are limited to two pages. The Data Management Plan is also excluded from the page count.
- (5) Page size.** 21.6 centimeters by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ inches by 11 inches).
- (6) Application language.** English.

**d. 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.

**e. Pre-Applications.** There are no pre-applications with this FFO.

**f. Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax 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.

**3. 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. NIST will not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, 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.

- 4. Submission Dates and Times.** Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, Tuesday, July 12, 2016. **Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system is expected to be closed for routine maintenance from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, June 18, 2016 until Monday, June 20, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.** Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by September 2016. NIST expects the earliest anticipated start date for awards under this FFO to be October 1, 2016.

When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) (see Sections IV.3. and IV.7.a.(1).b. of this FFO) often takes between three and five business days and may take as long as two weeks; (3) applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants using Grants.gov will receive email notifications over a period of up to two business days as the application moves through intermediate systems before the applicant learns via a validation or rejection notification whether NIST has received the application. (See <http://www.grants.gov> for full information on application and notification through Grants.gov.). Please note that a federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated recipient's registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not current at the time of the award.

- 5. Intergovernmental Review.** Applications under this Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372.
- 6. Funding Restrictions.** Profit or fee is not an allowable cost.
- 7. Other Submission Requirements**
  - a. Applications must be submitted electronically.**
    - (1) Applications must be submitted via Grants.gov at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

- (a) Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions to ensure that all attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. A receipt from Grants.gov indicating an application is received does not provide information about whether attachments have been received. For further information or questions regarding applying electronically for the 2016-NIST-NICE-01 announcement, contact Christopher Hunton by phone at 301-975-5718 or by e-mail at [grants@nist.gov](mailto:grants@nist.gov).
- (b) Applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not wait until the approaching due date before logging on and reviewing the instructions for submitting an application through Grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process must be completed before a new registrant can apply electronically. If all goes well, the registration process takes three to five business days. If problems are encountered, the registration process can take up to two weeks or more. Applicants must have a valid unique entity identifier number and must maintain a current registration in the Federal government's primary registrant database, the System for Award Management (<https://www.sam.gov/>), as explained on the Grants.gov Web site. See also Section IV.3. of this FFO. After registering, it may take several days or longer from the initial log-on before a new Grants.gov system user can submit an application. Only individuals authorized as organization representatives will be able to submit the application, and the system may need time to process a submitted application. Applicants should save and print the proof of submission they receive from Grants.gov. If problems occur while using Grants.gov, the applicant is advised to (a) print any error message received and (b) call Grants.gov directly for immediate assistance. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place other than the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. Assistance from the Grants.gov Help Desk will be available around the clock every day, with the exception of Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays. For assistance using Grants.gov, you may also contact [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).
- (c) To find instructions on submitting an application on Grants.gov, Applicants should refer to the "Applicants" tab in the banner just below the top of the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) home page. Clicking on the "Applicants" tab produces two exceptionally useful sources of information, Applicant Actions and Applicant Resources, which applicants are advised to review.

Applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application. Closely following the detailed information in these subcategories will increase the likelihood of acceptance of the application by the Federal agency's electronic system.



Applicants should pay close attention to the guidance under “Applicant FAQs,” as it contains information important to successful submission on Grants.gov, including essential details on the naming conventions for attachments to Grants.gov applications.

*All applicants should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicants’ schedules for delivery of their application. Applicants are advised that volume on Grants.gov may be extremely heavy leading up to the deadline date.*

The application must be both received and validated by Grants.gov. The application is “received” when Grants.gov provides the applicant a confirmation of receipt and an application tracking number. If an applicant does not see this confirmation and tracking number, the application has not been received. After the application has been received, it must still be validated. During this process, it may be “validated” or “rejected with errors.” To know whether the application was rejected with errors and the reasons why, the applicant must log in to Grants.gov, select “Applicants” from the top navigation, and select “Track my application” from the drop-down list. If the status is “rejected with errors,” the applicant may still seek to correct the errors and resubmit your application before the deadline. If the applicant does not correct the errors, the application will not be forwarded to NIST by Grants.gov.

Refer to important information in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times, to help ensure your application is received on time.

- b. Amendments.** Any amendments to this FFO will be announced through Grants.gov. Applicants may sign up on Grants.gov to receive amendments by e-mail or may request copies from Danielle Santos by telephone at (301) 975-5048 or by e-mail to [nice.nist@nist.gov](mailto:nice.nist@nist.gov).

## **V. Application Review Information**

- 1. Evaluation Criteria.** The evaluation criteria that will be used in evaluating applications and assigned weights are as follows:
  - a. Organizational Composition and Effectiveness (0 to 15 points):** Reviewers will evaluate the effectiveness of the applicant’s proposed multistakeholder workforce partnership in addressing cybersecurity workforce needs. Specifically, the reviewers will be evaluating:
    - The extent to which the committed multistakeholder workforce partnership covers the full range of organizations needed to build an effective partnership (i.e., K-12 schools or Local Education Agencies, institutions of higher education or college/university systems universities, training and certification providers, local employers, economic development organizations, and any other local organizations).

- The size and diversity of the organizations involved in the multistakeholder workforce partnership.
- The extent of the collaboration with ATEs and CAEs.
- How the proposed organizational structure, governance structure, and leadership arrangements effectively and efficiently support the long term sustainability of the partnership.

**b. Effectiveness of existing Multistakeholder Workforce Partnerships (0 to 5 points):** Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the letters of commitment and project narrative demonstrate that existing multistakeholder workforce partnerships have proven effective at meeting employer needs.

**c. Alignment to the NICE Strategic Plan (0 to 10 points):** Reviewers will evaluate how well the applicant's proposed plans and activities align to the NICE Strategic Plan.

**d. Alignment to the NICE Framework (0 to 10 points):** Reviewers will evaluate how well the applicant's proposed plans and activities align to the NICE Framework.

**e. Data Collection (0 to 10 points):** Reviewers will evaluate the completeness and effectiveness of the proposed efforts to collect regional data on workforce needs from organizations for the Cybersecurity Jobs Heat Map.

**f. Project Impact (0 to 10 points).**

Reviewers will evaluate:

- The size and diversity of the organizations and populations involved in the multistakeholder workforce partnerships;
- The extent that the proposed activities would support cybersecurity workforce development;
- The extent of the potential impact to regional workforce needs in cybersecurity;
- The extent of commitments from employers to interview and hire qualified candidates from these initiatives; and
- The extent that the project establishes new initiatives or activities in support of cybersecurity workforce development.

**g. Project Sustainability (0 to 10 points);**

Reviewers will evaluate the quality, comprehensiveness, and likelihood of success of the plan to sustain and institutionalize the planned initiatives or activities beyond the award period.

**h. Quality of Implementation Plan (0 to 20 points).**

Reviewers will evaluate the appropriateness, quality, completeness, and effectiveness of the applicant's implementation plan, including the following:

- Major task descriptions;
- Schedule;
- Quantified Objectives;
- Milestones with measurable metrics;
- Method of evaluating the metrics;
- Risks;
- Plans for stakeholder outreach; and
- Management and leadership plan, including managing the work of all project participants, sub-recipients, contractors, etc., to ensure realization of project goals and objectives.

**i. Resource Availability (0 to 10 points).**

Reviewers will evaluate:

- The appropriateness of the qualifications of the participants;
- The quality of the existing resources available to the project, including existing programs, forums for communicating information on this topic, etc.;
- Related collaboration efforts that this project can build on; and
- The cost-effectiveness of the project.

**2. Selection Factors.** The Selecting Official, who is the director of NICE, shall generally select and recommend applications for award based upon the rank order of the applications. The Selecting Official may select and recommend an application for award out of rank order based on one or more of the following selection factors:

- a. The availability of Federal funds;
- b. Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by NIST, DoC, or by other Federal agencies;
- c. Regional diversity;
- d. Diversity within the workforce development ecosystem;
- e. Diversity of the portfolio of NICE projects; and
- f. Alignment with NICE priorities.

**3. Review and Selection Process**

**a. Initial Administrative Review.** An initial review of timely received applications will be conducted to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this FFO. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or non-responsive may be eliminated from further review. This includes meeting the requirement to have letters of commitment from three organizations meeting the following

requirements: a K-12 school, an institution of higher education, and a local employer.

NIST, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application that is missing non-substantive information which may be easily rectified or cured at a later point in the evaluation process.

- b. Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications.** Applications determined to be eligible, complete, and responsive will proceed for full reviews in accordance with the review and selection process below:
- (1) Evaluation and Review.** At least three independent, objective reviewers, who are Federal employees, knowledgeable in the subject matter of this FFO and its objectives, will evaluate each application based on the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this FFO). While every application will have at least three reviews, applications may have differing numbers of reviews if specialized expertise is needed to evaluate the application. The applications will be ranked by average review score. If deemed necessary, each competitive applicant may be asked written questions and may be invited to participate in a web conference with selected reviewers or personnel from NICE.
- (2) Ranking and Selection.** The Selection Official will determine, using the ranked list and the selection factors, which applications will be selected for recommendation for award to the Grants Officer. NIST reserves the right to negotiate budget costs with the selected applicants. Negotiations may include requesting that the applicant remove certain costs. Additionally, NIST may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and 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. NIST may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any particular application. NIST may request that fundable applicants consider working together in a combined project if this approach might effectively advance the program mission. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the Grants Officer are final.
- c. Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants.** 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.

In addition, prior to making an award where the total Federal share is expected to

exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$150,000), NIST GMD will review and consider the publicly available information about that applicant in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). An applicant may, at its option, review and comment on information about itself previously entered into FAPIIS by a Federal awarding agency. As part of its review of risk posed by applicants, NIST GMD will consider any comments made by the applicant in FAPIIS in making its determination about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards. Upon completion of the pre-award risk assessment, the Grants Officer will make a responsibility determination concerning whether the applicant is qualified to receive the subject award and, if so, whether appropriate special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk posed by the applicant should be applied to an award.

4. **Anticipated Announcement and Award Date.** Review of Applications, selection of successful applicants, and award processing is expected to be completed by September 2016. The earliest anticipated start date for awards under this FFO is expected to be October 1, 2016.

## 5. **Additional Information**

- a. **Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants.** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email.
- b. **Retention of Unsuccessful Applications.** An electronic copy of each non-selected application will be retained for three years for record keeping purposes. After three years, it will be destroyed.
- c. **Protection of Proprietary Information.** When an application includes trade secrets or information that is commercial or financial, or information that is confidential or privileged, it is furnished to the Government in confidence with the understanding that the information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation of the application. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act. Appropriate labeling in the application, by the applicant, aids NIST in the identification of what information may be specifically exempt from disclosure. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, NIST will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the application or as otherwise authorized by law. This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use the information if it is obtained from another source.

## VI. **Federal Award Administration Information**

1. **Federal Award Notices.** Successful applicants will receive an award package from the NIST Grants Officer. The award cover page, i.e., CD-450, Financial Assistance Award is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>.

## 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

- a. **Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements.** Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBq4>.
- b. **Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.** The Department of Commerce will apply the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions dated December 26, 2014, accessible at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>, to this award. Refer to Section VII. of this FFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you seek the information at this link and it is no longer working or you need more information.
- c. **Pre-Award Notification Requirements.** The Department of Commerce will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements dated December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), accessible at <http://go.usa.gov/hKkR>. Refer to Section VII. of this FFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you seek the information at this link and it is no longer working or you need more information.
- d. **Collaborations with NIST Employees.** No NIST employees may be named as collaborators on projects for this FFO.
- e. **Use of NIST Intellectual Property.** If the applicant anticipates using any NIST-owned intellectual property to carry out the work proposed, the applicant should identify such intellectual property. This information will be used to ensure that no NIST employee involved in the development of the intellectual property will participate in the review process for that competition. In addition, if the applicant intends to use NIST-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 D.03 of the DoC Financial Assistance Terms and Conditions dated December 26, 2014, found at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>.

Any use of NIST-owned intellectual property by an applicant is at the sole discretion of NIST and will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis 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 one.

- f. **Research Activities Involving Human Subjects, Human Tissue, Data or Recordings Involving Human Subjects Including Software Testing.** No research activities involving human subjects may be conducted on this project.

### 3. Reporting

a. **Reporting Requirements.** The following reporting requirements described in Sections A.01 Performance (Technical) Reports and B.02 Financial Reports of the DoC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions dated December 26, 2014, <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>, apply to awards in this program:

(1) **Financial Reports.** Each award recipient will be required to submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report on a quarterly basis for the periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period to the NIST Grants Officer and Grants Specialist named in the award documents. A final financial report is due within 90 days after the end of the project period.

(2) **Performance (Technical) Reports.** Each award recipient will be required to submit a technical progress report to the NIST Grants Officer and the NICE Federal Program Officer on a quarterly basis for the periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. A final technical progress report shall be submitted within 90 days after the expiration date of the award. Technical progress reports shall contain information as prescribed in 2 C.F.R. § 200.328 and include key metrics indicating project status such as number of actual users, number of transactions, etc.

(3) **Patent and Property Reports.** From time to time, and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements (see Section VI.2. of this FFO) and other terms and conditions governing the award, the recipient may need to submit property and patent reports.

(4) **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 FFO, 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.

b. **Audit Requirements.** 2 C.F.R. Subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101 requires any non-Federal entity (*i.e.*, including non-profit institutions of higher education and other 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. Applicants are reminded that NIST, the DoC

Office of Inspector General, or another authorized Federal agency may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

- c. **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 (Pub. L. 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>.

**4. Award Management and Public Engagement**

- a. **NICE Conference.** Each award recipient is expected to present at the NICE Conferences in 2016 and in 2017 and attend half day workshops for sharing information and lessons learned among the recipients on the day following each conference. Only non-proprietary, publicly releasable information should be provided at these presentations and workshops.
- b. **NICE Program Management.** Each award recipient is expected to participate in a kickoff meeting within the first thirty days of award and a closeout meeting at the end of the award.
- c. **Program Communication.** All projects awarded under this program are expected to author one article for the quarterly NICE eNewsletter and present during one of the monthly NICE Webinars.

**VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts**

Questions should be directed to the following contact persons:

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Programmatic and Technical Questions	Danielle Santos Phone: 301-975-5048 E-mail: <a href="mailto:nice.nist@nist.gov">nice.nist@nist.gov</a>
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	Christopher Hunton Phone: 301-975-5718 Fax: (301) 975-8884 E-mail: <a href="mailto:grants@nist.gov">grants@nist.gov</a>  <a href="#">Or</a>



Subject Area	Point of Contact
	<a href="http://Grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> Phone: (800) 518-4726 E-mail: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a>
Grant Rules and Regulations	Dean Iwasaki Phone: 301-975-8449 Fax: (301) 975-8884 E-mail: <a href="mailto:dean.iwasaki@nist.gov">dean.iwasaki@nist.gov</a>

**VIII. Other Information**

- NIST will hold a webinar (Applicants' Conference) to provide general information regarding this FFO, offer general guidance on preparing applications, and answer questions. NIST staff will not critique or provide feedback on specific project ideas while they are being developed by an applicant. However, questions about the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education, eligibility requirements, evaluation and award criteria, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive application can be addressed at the Applicants' Conference and by email to [nice.nist@nist.gov](mailto:nice.nist@nist.gov). Attendance at the Applicants' Conference is not required, and will not be considered in the application review selection process. Information on the Applicants' Conference and any related events is available at <http://nist.gov/nice>.