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

Information Webinar
Federal Funding Opportunity: 2017-NIST-MEP-CAP-01
(Proposals DUE Friday, June 15, 2017@ 11:59 p.m. EASTERN to ensure consideration for FY2017 funding)

Conference Call # Toll Free Dial In
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National Institute of Standards and Technology
U.S. Department of Commerce

WELCOME

Informational Webinar – April 27, 2017
1:00 p.m. (Eastern)

Federal Funding Opportunity: 2017-NIST-MEP-CAP-01

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

Dave Cranmer, Deputy Director, NIST MEP
Mike Simpson, Manager of Competitions, NIST MEP
Wiza Lequin, Program 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.

- Questions
  - We will consider questions of a clarifying nature that <u>are not</u> specific to an individual proposal.
  - If you want to submit questions following the webinar, please email them to MEP at mepnofo@nist.gov.
    - Your question and response will become part of the FAQ document available on our competition page of our MEP website www.nist.gov/mep/rolling-competitive-awards-program-round-one

AGENDA

- Performance-Based Competitive Awards Program Overview
  - Request for Information
- Funding Opportunity Description
- Federal Award Information
- Eligibility Information
- Application and Submission Information
  - Standards forms and documents
  - Grants.gov submission
- Application Selection process
  - Criteria
  - Selection Factors
- Reporting Requirements
- Key Take-aways

Performance-Based Competitive Awards Program

- **15 U.S.C. 278k-1**
  - The statutory authority for the NIST MEP Competitive Awards Program
- In developing the themes for this NOFO, the NIST Director consulted with the MEP Director, the MEP Advisory Board and with other Federal Agencies.
- The NIST Director also consulted with small and medium-sized manufacturers through the publication of a Request for Information

Performance-Based Competitive Awards Program

- *Federal Register Request for Information on Identification of New Capabilities Needed by the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program (81 FR 90326)*
  - *Published Dec 14, 2016*
  - *End date: Jan 13, 2017*
- *Received 54 separate responses*
  - *Representing 49 entities*

Performance-Based Competitive Awards Program

Program Priorities

- Improve the competitiveness of industries in the region in which the Center or Centers are located.

- Create jobs or train newly hired employees.

- Promote the transfer and commercialization of research and technology from institutions of higher education, national laboratories or other federally funded research programs, and nonprofit research institutes.

- Recruit a diverse manufacturing workforce, including through outreach to underrepresented populations, including individuals identified in section 33 or section 34 of the Science and Engineering Equal Opportunities Act (42 U.S.C.1885a, 1885b).

Performance-Based Competitive Awards Program

- **Themes for this NOFO**
  - include new manufacturing technologies of relevance to small and mid-size manufacturers, particularly those related to Industry/Manufacturing 4.0
  - supply chain management technologies and practices
  - workforce intermediary and business services

- Applicants must articulate how their proposal achieves one or more of the program priorities while adding new capabilities to the MEP Center program
- So long as an application addresses the program priorities listed (in Section I.2. of this NOFO) it need not focus upon any of the identified thematic areas to be considered for funding under this NOFO.

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Funding Opportunity Overview

- **Notice of Funding Opportunity Title:** NIST MEP Competitive Awards Program

- *Grants.gov Identifier:* 2017-NIST-MEP-CAP-01

- **Funding Opportunity Description:**

  - NIST invites applications from current MEP Centers to add capabilities to the MEP Program, including the development of projects to solve new or emerging manufacturing problems, that are not already provided for under an applicant's and its collaborating Center's base MEP award.

  - Themes for FY 17 include new manufacturing technologies of relevance to small and mid-size manufacturers, particularly those related to Industry/Manufacturing 4.0, supply chain management technologies and practices; and workforce intermediary and business services.

Funding Opportunity Overview

Funding Available:

- NIST anticipates funding individual projects at a level of approximately $50,000 to no more than $1,000,000 in total funding for each award.

- Projects awarded under this NOFO will have a budget and a performance period of up to three (3) years, consistent with the multi-year funding policy. *See Section II.3. of the NOFO.*

- Funding for awards is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds and NIST programmatic priorities.

Funding Opportunity Overview

- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative Agreement

  – The nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally be _collaboration between MEP and the recipient organization(s)_.

  – Additional forms of substantial involvement that may arise are described in Final Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidance Implementing the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act, 43 Fed. Reg. 36860-65 (Aug. 18, 1978)

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Federal Award Information (1)

- **Multi-Year Funding Policy.**
  - When an application for a multi-year award is approved, funding in some cases will be provided only for the first year of the project
  - 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.

Federal Award Information (2)

Award Kick-Off Meeting

- For awards exceeding $250,000 or involving subrecipients unfamiliar with NIST requirements, a recipient should anticipate attending a video or in-person kick-off conference at the NIST Gaithersburg, MD campus
  - The kick-off conference will typically take between 2 and 6 hours and must be attended by the MEP Center Director, along with up to two key project personnel.
  - 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.
- 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 form
  - These costs must also be reflected in the budget table and budget narrative for year 1, which is submitted as part of the budget summary tables and budget narratives section of the Technical Proposal

Federal Award Information (3)

MEP National Network Meetings

- NIST MEP typically organizes MEP National Network meetings approximately four times per year to share best practices, and to discuss new and emerging trends and additional topics of interest

- These meetings are rotated throughout the United States and typically involve 2-3 days of resource time and associated travel costs for each meeting.

- One key representative from the lead MEP Center and other appropriate partners/collaborators should attend these meetings.

- Applicants **<u>must</u>** include travel and related costs for four quarterly MEP National Network meetings in each of one (1) or two (2) project years (4 meetings per year; up to 8 total meetings over up to a two-year award period). These costs must be reflected in the SF-424A (see Section IV.2.a.(2). of the NOFO). These costs must also be reflected in the budget tables and budget narratives for each of the project's years, which are submitted as part of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.2.a.(6).(d). of the NOFO).

- In the event that travel and related costs for the MEP Center representative are already accounted for under another MEP award, the applicant should note this in the budget narrative and should not include travel and related costs in the budget.

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Eligibility Information (1)

Eligible Applicants.

- Applicants for this program must be an active MEP Center that is operating pursuant to a current NIST MEP cooperative agreement AND that, for the two (2) consecutive quarters immediately prior to application, meet or exceed a "Cooperative Agreement Recipient (CAR) Current Quarter Performance" score of 70 as found in the quarterly release of the "CAR Operations Performance Management CARD."

Eligibility Information (2)

- Eligibility for this program is contingent upon an applicant meeting the NIST MEP CAR Operations Performance Management CARDs prior to application, at the time of award, and for the entire period of performance for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO.

  – MEP CAR Operations Performance Management CARDs, are released to the MEP National Network Center's on October 1st, January 1st, April 1st, and July 1st, of each Fiscal Year

Eligibility Information (2)

- An MEP Center 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 or consortium.
- An MEP Center may serve as the lead recipient on no more than three (3) awards under the MEP Competitive Awards Program in a given fiscal year.
- There are no restrictions on the number of applications in which MEP Centers can be proposed as collaborators.

Eligibility Information (4)

- **Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement.**
  - Non-Federal cost sharing is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO.

- **No Double Charging Against other NIST/MEP**
  - Costs charged against awards issued pursuant to this NOFO, whether paid by federal or non-federal funds, may not also be charged as costs against any other NIST/MEP award (*i.e.*, no double-billing of costs).
  - In addition, NIST/MEP funding provided by an MEP Center to another MEP Center or other collaborator may not be used by such MEP Center or collaborator as a non-federal cost share contribution for an MEP Center or collaborator award (*i.e.*, federal funds may not be used as cost share for other federal awards).

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Application and Submission Information (1)

- **Required Forms and Documents:**
  - SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance
  - SF424A Budget Information Non-Construction Program
  - SF424B Assurances Non-Construction Program
  - CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying
  - SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

  - ❖Standard forms available at www.grants.gov

Application and Submission Information (2)

Content and Form of Applications:

- **Required Forms:**

  – **SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.**

    - Certified through www.grants.gov by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.

    - Item 12, should list the NOFO number as **2017-NIST-MEP-CAP-01.**

    - Item 18, should list the total budget information for the full duration of the project.

    - The list of certifications and assurances referenced in Item 21 of the SF-424 is contained in the SF-424B.

SF424

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 1. Type of Submission:	* 2. Type of Application:	* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):
Preapplication	New	
Application	Continuation	* Other (Specify):
Changed/Corrected Application	Revision	

* 3. Date Received:	4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:	5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:	7. State Application Identifier:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name:

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):	* c. Organizational DUNS:

d. Address:

View Attachment

18. Estimated Funding ($):

* a. Federal	
* b. Applicant	
* c. State	
* d. Local	
* e. Other	
* f. Program Income	
* g. TOTAL	

Application and Submission Information (3)

Content and Form of Applications :

- **Required Forms*:**

    SF-424A Budget Information Non-Constructions

    - The applicant should reflect each year of the project, up to three (3) years, on the **SF-424A form.** Please carefully follow the directions found at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html when filling out this form.

    - The budget should also include staff, travel and other costs associated with the Award Kick-off Meeting and the NIST/MEP National Network meetings

    - 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 in on Line 1 under Column (b) should be entered as **11.611**.

    - These sections of the SF-424A should reflect funds for only the first year of the award: Section A; Section B; Section C; and Section D. The budget estimate for the second year of the award should be entered in Section E, field 16, column (b). Section E, field 16, column (c) should reflect the third year's budget estimate.

SF424A

Application and Submission Information (4)

Required Forms & Documents Continued….

- **Technical Proposal**
  - **with a period of performance of up to two (2) years**,
  - is a word- processed document **not exceeding 20 pages** that is responsive to the program description (see Section I. of the NOFO) and the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of the NOFO).

    a. Table of Contents (Does not count towards page limit)

    b. Executive Summary (Does not count towards page limit)

      i.The executive summary should briefly (usually no longer than two pages) describe the proposed project, consistent with the evaluation criteria

      ii. 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.

Application and Submission Information (5)

Required Forms & Documents Continued….

c. **Project Narrative**

– The project narrative should clearly explain how the applicant's approaches will accomplish one or more of the program priorities as identified in Section I.2. of the NOFO

– The project narrative should clearly indicate how the proposed technologies, training, tool(s), technique(s), practice(s) or service(s) add capabilities to the MEP Program, and the narrative should detail how the approach solves new or emerging manufacturing problems of small U.S. manufacturers

– See Section IV.6 of the NOFO for a full description

Application and Submission Information (6)

Required Forms & Documents Continued....

– **Budget Tables and Budget Narratives**

- **In addition** to the SF-424A form (see Section IV.2.a.(2). of the NOFO), applicants must provide a detailed budget table and budget narrative for the proposed period of performance, fully explaining and justifying all proposed project funding

- In the budget narrative, the recipient should provide adequate information to support the costs identified in each category of the budget table.

- Applicants must also include staff, travel and related expenses for the required Award Kick-Off and National Network meeting described in Sections II.4. and II.5. of the NOFO in the budget tables and budget narratives.

A suggested budget table and budget narrative template are available on the MEP website, www.nist.gov/mep/rolling-competitive-awards-program-round-one.

Application and Submission Information (7)

Required Forms & Documents Continued….

- **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 available at: 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 MEP 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 portion of the application.

Application and Submission Information (8)

Required Forms & Documents Continued....

- **Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms.** (**Does not contribute to the total number of pages**.)

- **Table of Funded Project Participants and Unfunded Informal Collaborators.** (**Does not contribute to the total number of pages.**)
  - Provide a table that identifies all organizations that will participate in and contribute to the project, if funded, known at the time of the application submission.
  - The table should include the organization's name, address, administrative role, scope of work (funded participants only) and proposed funding amount (funded participants only).
    – Administrative roles are: applicant, subrecipient, or contractor for funded participants; or collaborator if they will not receive funding.

Application and Submission Information (9)

- **Bibliographic List of References. (Does not contribute to the total number of pages.**)

- **Resumes of Key Personnel. (Does not contribute to the total number of pages).**
  - One-page resumes of no more than five key personnel from each participating organization may be included;
  - *Any information beyond one page for each resume and any additional resumes submitted will not be considered.*

Application and Submission Information (10)

- **Required Letters of Commitment. (These do not contribute to the total number of pages).**
  - Each application must include a Letter of Commitment from an authorized representative of: (i) the MEP Center applicant and from (ii) other MEP Centers that will be participating in the project.
  - For non-profit applicants and other non-profit MEP Centers which are participating in the proposed project, a resolution from the fiduciary board authorizing submission of the MEP Center application to NIST and supporting the activities described therein is required.
  - If the application includes subawards, contracts or other payments to known third parties, including other MEP Centers, the letter of commitment shall discuss the scope of work, and its relevance to the proposed project.
- **Letters of Commitment** should not be letters submitted by non-proposing entities wishing to vouch for the applicant's (or entities associated with the applicant) knowledge, skills, and abilities or entities to conduct the proposed work. These should be in the form of a Letter of Interest (see Section IV.3.a.(13) of the NOFO).

Application and Submission Information (11)

- **Data Management Plan (This does not count towards total number of pages)**
  - The DMP is a supplementary document **of not more than two pages** that **must include**, at a minimum, 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. (Refer to Section IV.2.a.14 for additional guidance)

- **Intellectual Property (IP) Plan for the Allocation of Legal Rights (This does not count towards total number of pages)**
  - Applicants must include as part of its application a plan for the allocation of the legal rights associated with any intellectual property, which may result from activities of an applicant and/or team member in connection with the performance of the proposed award.

Application and Submission Information (12)

- **Application Format (Section IV 2(b)):**

  - Page Limit. **The Technical Proposals are limited to Twenty (20) 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
    - Other forms;
      - SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs;   - Bibliographic List of References
      - SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities;   - Resumes of Key Personnel;
      - CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying   - Required Letters of Commitment;
      - Table of Contents, Budget Tables and Budget Narratives   - Indirect Cost Rate Agreement;
          Letters of Interest;   - Data Management Plan.
      - Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms   - Intellectual Property Plan
      - Table of Funded Project Participants and Unfunded Informal Collaborators

Application and Submission Information (13)

- **Grants.gov**

    - Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions at www.grants.gov to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system.

    - A receipt from Grants.gov 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.**

    - **<u>Applicants are urged</u>** to use Grants.gov's Download Submitted Applications feature to check that all required attachments were contained in their submission. Go to the *Grants.gov Online Users Guide available at the Grants.gov site (http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh), choose Applicants, then Applicant Actions, then select the "Check My Application Status" option, click on the* Download Submitted Applications feature, and follow the directions.

    - *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.*

Application and Submission Information (14)

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; 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 (16)

- **Submission Dates and Times**.

    - ❖ *NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by email.*

    – **Electronic applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday June 15, 2017 for consideration in FY2017 funding**
        - Applications received after June 15, 2017, may be processed and considered for funding in the current fiscal year or in the next fiscal year, subject to the availability of funds and subject to the publication of a superseding NOFO under this program.

- **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 NOFO) 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 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 must submit applications electronically through www.grants.gov.
        - A receipt from Grants.gov indicating an application is received **does not** provide information about whether attachments have been received.

Application and Submission Information (17)

- **Attachment of Required Application Documents**

  Items IV.2.a.(6). through IV.2.a.(14). 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.

- **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 (18)

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Evaluation Review Criteria (1)

NIST will use the follow criteria in evaluating applications and assigning weights, with a maximum score of 100

i. **Demonstration that the proposed project will meet the needs of technical assistance providers and/or manufacturers in the target population. (20 points).**

ii. **Development/deployment methodology and use of appropriate technology and information sources. (20 points).**

iii. **Service Delivery and implementation mechanisms. (15 points).**

iv. **Coordination with other relevant organizations. (10 points).**

v. **Program evaluation. (10 points)**

vi. **Management and organizational experience and plans. (15 points)**

vii. **Financial Plan. (10 points)**

Criterion 1: Demonstration that the proposed project will meet the needs of technical assistance providers and/or manufacturers in the target population. (20 points).

- Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant's proposal clearly defines the target population(s) and

- how well the proposal demonstrates that the applicant understands that population's technology, training, tool, technique, service, and/or practice needs within the proposed project area.

- Reviewers will also assess the extent to which the proposal shows that the efforts being proposed meet the needs identified and is consistent with the anticipated impacts relative to proposed expenditures of federal and any optional non-federal cost share contributions.

Criterion 2: Development/deployment methodology and use of appropriate technology and information sources. (20 points).

- Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant's technical plan for the technologies, training(s), tool(s), technique(s), service(s), practice(s) and/or analyses included in the project will be used to successfully create and/or deploy the outcomes of the project.

- Reviewers will also evaluate the applicability of any identified sources of technologies, training(s), tool(s), technique(s), service(s), and practice(s) to solving new or emerging manufacturing problems of small U.S. manufacturers.

Criterion 3: Service Delivery and implementation mechanisms. (15 points).

- Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the mechanisms for delivery and/or implementation of proposed outcomes effectively serves the target population(s).

- Reviewers will also evaluate the extent to which the proposal clearly describes how the project's activities and work products will be integrated into and will be of service to the NIST MEP National Network and its Centers.

- Factors that may be considered include: ease of access to the outcomes of the project, especially for MEP Centers; methodology for disseminating or promoting involvement in and/or use of the outcomes especially within the MEP System; and demonstrated interest in the outcomes, especially by MEP Centers.

Criterion 4: Coordination with other relevant organizations. (10 points)

- Reviewers will assess the degree to which the proposed project is coordinated with and leverages other organizations which are developing or have expertise with similar projects and outcomes.

- Factors that may be considered include: demonstrated understanding of existing organizations and resources relevant to the proposed project; adequate linkages and partnerships with existing organizations and clear definition of those organizations' roles in the proposed activities; and that the proposed activity does not duplicate existing services or resources.

Criterion 5: Program evaluation. (10 points)

- Reviewers will assess the degree to which the applicant's plan for evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed activity and for ensuring continuous improvement of the technologies, training(s), tool(s), technique(s), service(s), practice(s) and/or analyses outcomes of the project.

- Factors that may be considered include: thoroughness of evaluation plans, including internal evaluation for management control, external evaluation for assessing outcomes of the activity, and "customer satisfaction" measures of performance.

    iv.   .

Criterion 6: Management and organizational experience and plans. (15 points).

- Reviewers will assess the degree to which the applicant's plans for proper organization, staffing, and management of the implementation process describe key personnel's experience and education relevant to the project(s) proposed;

- management structure and organizational roles are aligned to plan, direct, monitor, organize and control the monetary resources of the proposed project(s); and organizational structure that flows logically from the specified approach to the market and use of technologies, training(s), tool(s), technique(s), service(s), practice(s) and/or analyses outcomes of the project.
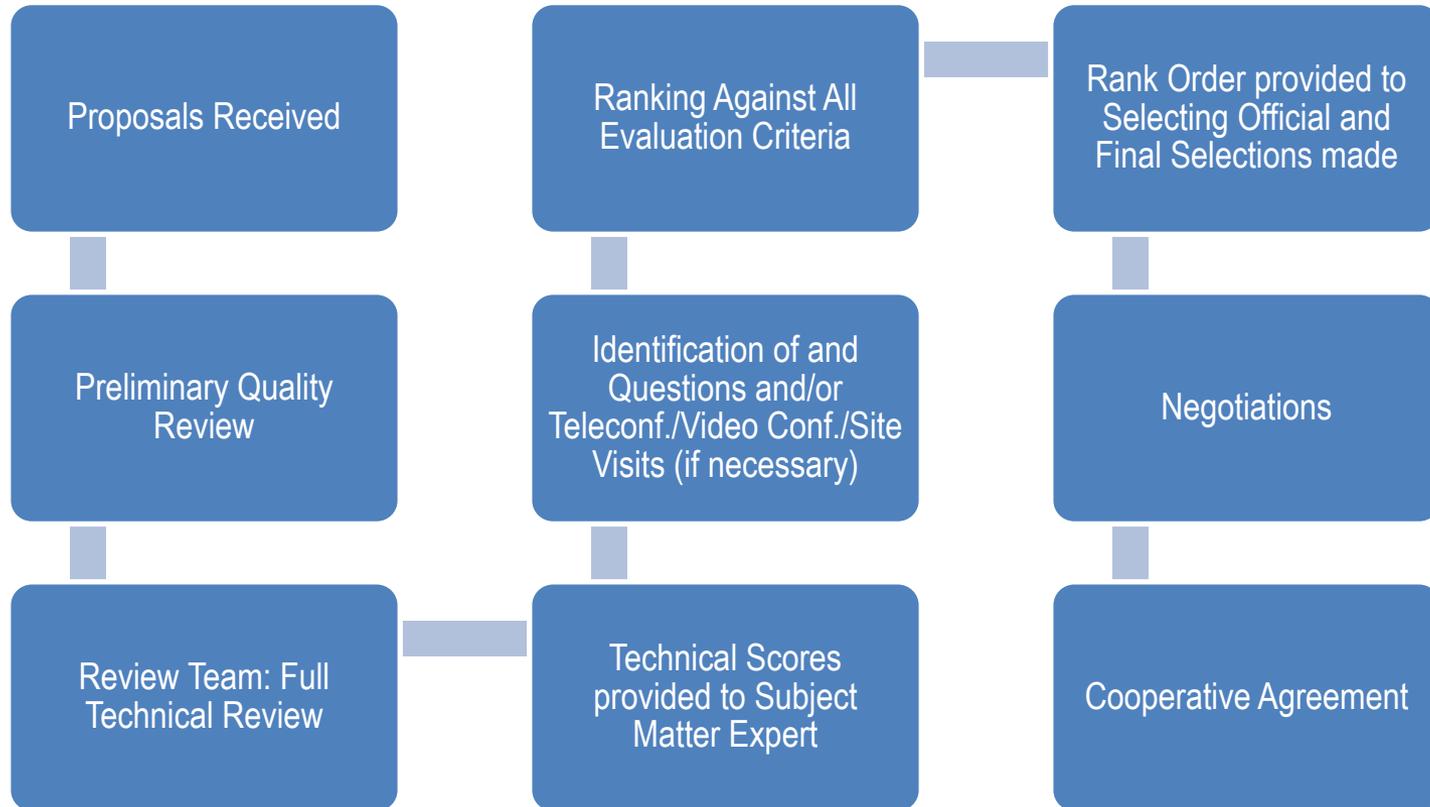
Criterion 7: Financial Plan. (10 points)

- Reviewers will assess the degree to which the applicant's budget and financial plan contribute to the applicant's ability to meet the objectives of the project; the firmness and level of the applicant's total financial support for the project; and maintaining the program after the cooperative agreement has expired.

- Factors that may be considered include: reasonableness of the budget, both in income and expenses; strength of commitment and amount of the proposer's non-Federal cost share, if any; any program income generated as a result of this project must be added to the funds committed to the project using the additive method of accounting to further the project or program objectives; effectiveness of management plans for control of budget; appropriateness of matching contributions, if any; and plan for maintaining the program after the cooperative agreement has expired.

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Review and Selection Process (1)

```
Proposals Received  →  Ranking Against All Evaluation Criteria  →  Rank Order provided to Selecting Official and Final Selections made
       ↓                         ↑                                              ↓
Preliminary Quality Review   Identification of and Questions and/or Teleconf./Video Conf./Site Visits (if necessary)   Negotiations
       ↓                         ↑                                              ↓
Review Team: Full Technical Review  →  Technical Scores provided to Subject Matter Expert   Cooperative Agreement
```

Review and Selection Process (2)

- **Initial Administrative Review of Applications.**
  - All applications received in response to this NOFO will be reviewed as received on a rolling basis to determine whether they are eligible, complete, and responsive to this NOFO and aligned with the program objectives as described in the Program Description
- **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

Review and Selection Process (3)

- Based on an average of the reviewers' final scores, applications will be assigned adjectival ratings in accordance with the following scale:
    - Fundable, Outstanding (90-100);
    - Fundable, Very Good (80-89);
    - Fundable (70-79); or
    - Unfundable (0-69).

- Applicants whose applications receive an average score of 70 or higher out of 100 will be deemed as potentially fundable.

Selection Factors

- Diversity of the proposed project relative to the overall portfolio of projects funded under this NOFO;

- Diversity of geography in the awarding of MEP funding, as well diversity in awarding MEP funding to multiple MEP Centers;

- Diversity of targeted industry sectors and/or supply chains;

- Relevance of the proposed project to the overall objectives and priorities of this program;

- Whether the proposed project duplicates other projects funded by the Department of Commerce or by other Federal agencies; and

- Availability of Federal funds.

AGENDA

- Performance-Based Competitive Awards Program Overview
  – Request for Information
- Funding Opportunity Description
- Federal Award Information
- Eligibility Information
- Application and Submission Information
  – Standards forms and documents
  – Grants.gov submission
- Application Selection process
  – Criteria
  – Selection Factors
- Reporting Requirements
- Key Take-aways

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 www.nist.gov/mep/embedding-mep-manufacturing-usa-institutes-pilot-projects-round-two

  - **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** www.nist.gov/mep/embedding-mep-manufacturing-usa-institutes-pilot-projects-round-two

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Key Take-Aways

- Highly suggested to read NOFO thoroughly (multiple times)

- Recognize what is required vs suggested/encouraged

- Attention to what counts towards page limit of **20 pages** vs what does not count

- Complete the mandatory standard Data sets/forms for funding applications

- No Double Charging Against other NIST/MEP or Institute Awards

- Be fully aware of the steps for submitting via grants.gov – DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SUBMIT!

- Ensure 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). Registration information is current.

- There is a suggested budget format and budget narrative for your use

- Negotiations take place between NIST and the applicant organization not the subrecipients.

MEP Resources

- American Innovation and Competitiveness Act 2017
  https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/3084

- Single year Budget https://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/NIST-MEP-Single-Year-Budget-Workbook_TEMPLATE-FINAL-5-2016.xlsx

- Multi Year Budget https://www.nist.gov/mep/upload/NIST-MEP-Multi-Year-Budget-Summary-Table_TEMPLATE-Portrait-format-5-2016.xlsx

- MEP Reporting Guidelines https://meis.nist.gov/Dashboard/Show

Agency Contacts

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Administrative, budget, cost-sharing, eligibility questions and other programmatic questions.	Michael Simpson Phone: (301) 975-6147 Fax: (301) 963-6556 E-mail: mepnofo@nist.gov
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	Christopher Hunton Phone: (301) 975-5718 Fax: (301) 975-8884 E-mail: grants@nist.gov Grants.gov Phone: (800) 518-4726 E-mail: support@grants.gov
Grant Rules and Regulations	Gilbert Castillo Phone: (301) 975-3726 E-mail: gilbert.castillo@nist.gov

Have additional questions…..

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

- Questions and Answers will be posted regularly on the NIST MEP Public Site, https://www.nist.gov/mep/rolling-competitive-awards-program-round-one

- 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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