

# NIST Response to VCAT 2023 Annual Report Recommendations

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# NIST's role in CETs



Recommendation	NIST's Response
<p><b>Future CET Priorities:</b> Relating NIST's mission and research strengths to develop new priority areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST plans to expand core CET strengths into new priority areas, including CET convergence, and leveraging our core mission in standards, measurement services, and metrology. For example, the U.S. AI Safety Institute is exploring the convergence of AI and biotechnology as well as AI and cybersecurity as case studies.</li></ul>
<p><b>Intersection of CETs:</b> Consideration of the intersection of CETs as a growth area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST is addressing the intersection, or convergence of CETs, as part of planning and budget justification.</li></ul>
<p><b>Increased visibility of CET efforts:</b> Building a storytelling infrastructure and reorganization of websites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST improved the design of our News landing page to allow for easy story filtering by topic and research area. NIST is redesigning website topic pages to allow for better storytelling by research area. NIST has recently hired a senior advisor focusing on CET communications and a new comms strategist for AI and CHIPS.</li></ul>

# Strengthening U.S manufacturing leadership



Recommendation	NIST's Response
<p><b>Visibility:</b> CHIPS website should provide regular updates, be accessible, and information should be shared widely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The chips.gov website has several easily accessible links to regular updates, including for funding announcements, project investments, and incentives agreements. A link to chips.gov is prominent on the NIST website and NIST recently onboarded an IT specialist who is 50% dedicated to supporting the CHIPS website.</li></ul>
<p><b>Interagency Collaboration:</b> Avoid duplication of CHIPS/NIST efforts through interagency collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST is committed to avoiding duplication of efforts and continues to establish strong interagency communication channels and collaboration. Also, the NSTC Steering Committee was established to help coordinate activities with representation from DOC, DoD, DOE and NSF. The committee is chaired by the NIST Director.</li></ul>

# Ensuring U.S. leadership in international standards

Recommendation	NIST's Response
<p><b>Visibility:</b> Increase communication about ways to engage on USG NSSCET strategy implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Over the last few months, NIST has been purposeful in working across the interagency and in close coordination with ANSI as we develop the implementation roadmap. When the implementation kicks off in tandem with the White House, NIST intends to leverage standards.gov as a valuable resource for enhanced information and coordination.</li></ul>
<p><b>Establishing pre-standardization materials:</b> Include pre-standardization contributions as an additional objective outcome from foundational sciences and public-private partnerships in CETs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>USG NSSCET Objective 1 specifically cites pre-standardization research as a key focus area for increased government investment. In preparation of the USG NSSCET implementation roadmap, NIST is currently working with the White House and NSC Sub-IPC to understand interagency resource needs to facilitate USG NSSCET implementation.</li></ul>

Recommendation	NIST's Response
<p><b>Construction of NIST facilities funding:</b> Continual push for increased funding to support the construction of NIST research facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST has a multifaceted strategy to express the criticality of research facilities investments, including maintenance and new construction priority lists, multiple Congressional visits, and facilities tours for sharing the needs with DOC, WH, and Congressional stakeholders, along with the annual budget request process. Additionally, we have shovel-ready plans for construction in case of allocations outside of the normal budget process.</li></ul>
<p><b>Sufficient funding for Congressional demands:</b> Ensure sufficient funding to both support the completion of Congressional demand deliverables and to sustain lasting priorities and focus areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST will continue to develop comprehensive budget requests to ensure both near-term deliverables and sustained progress in priority areas within DOC and OMB guidance, including authorized but unappropriated areas.</li></ul>

Recommendation	NIST's Response
<p><b>Special hiring authorities:</b> Benefit from additional flexible hiring authorities, including special pay authorities, to better compete with the private sector for top talent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST has received flexible hiring authorities and is beginning to implement them for attracting and retaining top talent in CETs and major initiatives. NIST has also relayed the need for additional expanded pay authorities to Congress when asked.</li></ul>

# Expanding and strengthening NIST's safety culture



Recommendation	NIST's Response
<p><b>Increase in-person safety training:</b> Increase effectiveness of safety training and instruction by increasing the number of in-person trainings available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST onboarding safety training is transitioning back to in-person starting next month, and OSHE has begun to offer in-person, scenario-based training for lab staff to help them practice responding to off-normal conditions, e.g., chemical spills, oxygen deficiency alarms, and cryogen blocks. OSHE plans to expand use of in-person and video-based training.</li></ul>
<p><b>Increase onsite responders across all campuses:</b> Increase number of trained responders onsite for quick response and intervention before local responders arrive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST will be evaluating the feasibility of increasing the number of trained responders onsite for faster intervention.</li></ul>
<p><b>Address maintenance backlog:</b> Necessity of being fully resourced to address failing infrastructure, be competitive when recruiting and retaining talent, and execute mission projects fully and safely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST will continue to address the prioritized maintenance backlog pending appropriate level of capabilities provided; and NIST will continue to communicate the facilities needs through DOC, the WH, and Congress.</li></ul>

# Recruiting and retaining a diverse and talented workforce (I)

Recommendation	NIST's Response
<p><b>Ensure accessibility principles are applied to NIST-required software:</b> Software should follow accessibility principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NIST has integrated a “508 Standards Checklist” into Service Portal/Acquisitions which must be completed for all acquisitions and NIST has recently hired staff that will focus on ensuring NIST-required software follows accessibility principles beyond compliance.</li></ul>
<p><b>Increased communication of metrics in first phase of the DEIA Strategic Plan:</b> Increased visibility of progress to allow staff to see results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication about the successful implementation of the DEIA Strategic Plan has been shared with NIST's various working groups and with the addition of our new staff members, we will share enterprise-wide communications, including dashboards to visualize where there may be disproportionate representation and/or a detection of exclusive workplace practices.</li></ul>



# Recruiting and retaining a diverse and talented workforce (II)

Recommendation	NIST's Response
<p><b>Increase outside awareness of NIST DEIA efforts, including through CHIPS efforts:</b> Relay efforts of DEIA both internally and externally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The CHIPS Program Office is committed to increasing participation of and outreach to economically disadvantaged individuals, minority-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, and women-owned business. The CHIPS team has accordingly briefed approximately 200 organizations about the CHIPS Act and continues to seek out stakeholder organizations such as civil rights organizations, economic development organizations, professional associations, academic institutions, community-based institutions, and state and local workforce development agencies for additional briefings.</li></ul>