

MAKING AN IMPACT ON U.S. MANUFACTURING

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

NIST MEP Regional Information Forum – Washington, DC

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MEP

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions of Participants
- Competition Background
- Regional Forums
 - Private One-on-One Sessions
- MEP Program Overview
- Upcoming Federal Funding Opportunity
- Discussion / Q&A



Forum Protocols

- The forums will provide general information regarding MEP and offer general guidance on preparing proposals.
- NIST/MEP staff will be available during the forum to answer general questions.
- NIST/MEP staff will provide information about the MEP eligibility and cost-sharing requirements, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal during this webinar.
- NIST/MEP staff cannot provide feedback regarding specific project ideas.
- One-on-One sessions will provide an opportunity to ask questions related to the program and specifics of the federal funding opportunity.



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MEP State Competition

Rationale for Competition

- Allocate more funding to states with greater concentrations of manufacturers;
- Empower MEP centers to experiment more with new products and services (i.e., technology acceleration, supply chain and workforce, etc), serving harder to serve clients like very small, emerging, rural companies;
- Bring MEP practice closer to other federal programs that refresh awardees periodically.

Competition Benefits to States

- Increased funding to bring \$/SME up to national average
- Immediate readjustment of the cost share to 1:1 for the first three years of the award *
- A five year award reducing the annual renewal paperwork
- A reduction in the number of panel reviews from every two years to one at the third year
- Resetting of the funding levels to reflect the national recognition of the importance of manufacturing and the regional distribution of manufacturing activity**
- Reduction and simplification of reporting requirements
- Opportunity to re-align Center activities with State economic development strategies

*Congressional action needed to make the readjustment permanent

**Administration support for increased federal funding

Round 1 Competition

- Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia
- Timeline:
 - FFO released August 1, 2014
 - Awards announced February 2015
 - Start Date July 1, 2015

Round 1 Competition Awardees

Awardees:

- **Colorado:** Manufacturer's Edge (Boulder)
- **Connecticut:** CONNSTEP, Inc., (Rocky Hill)
- **Indiana:** Purdue University/Indiana MEP (Indianapolis)
- **Michigan:** Industrial Technology Institute/Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (Plymouth)
- **New Hampshire:** New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Concord)
- **North Carolina:** North Carolina State University/North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Raleigh)
- **Oregon:** Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Tigard)
- **Tennessee:** University of Tennessee, Center for Industrial Services/Tennessee Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Nashville)
- **Texas:** The University of Texas at Arlington/Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (Arlington)
- **Virginia:** A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership/GENEDGE Alliance (Martinsville)

Status of Round 2 Competition

- Alaska, Idaho, Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin
- Timeline:
 - FFO released March 9, 2015
 - Awards announced September & November 2015
 - Start Date January 1, 2016

Award Recipients for Round 2

The winners of the Round 2 MEP State Competition are:

- **Illinois** - Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (Peoria)
- **Minnesota** - Enterprise Minnesota, Inc. (Minneapolis)
- **West Virginia** - West Virginia University Research Corporation (Morgantown)
- **Alaska** - Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (Anchorage)
- **Idaho** - Boise State University (Idaho TechHelp –Boise)
- **Washington** - Washington Manufacturing Services DBA Impact Washington (Mukilteo)
- **New Jersey** - New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, Inc. (Cedar Knolls)
- **Oklahoma** - Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence, Inc. (Tulsa)
- **New York** - New York State Department of Economic Development (Albany)
- **Wisconsin** – Wisconsin Center for Manufacturing & Productivity (Madison)

**OH/UT - Did not result in an application being selected for funding

Status of Round 3 Competition

- Alabama, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Ohio*, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Utah* and Vermont
- Timeline:
 - FFO released - January 27, 2016
 - Review in Progress
 - Anticipated Award announcement - late Summer 2016
 - Anticipated Start Date October 2016

*Ohio/Utah were initially included in Round 2, but did not result in a funding award. They are now represented in Round 3

Status of Round 4 Competition

- Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, South Carolina and Wyoming
- Timeline:
 - Target FFO release – July 2016
 - Proposal due date – Approx. October 2016
 - Anticipated Award announcement - Early 2017
 - Start Date April 1, 2017

Round 4 States

MEP Center Location and Assigned Geographical Service Area (by State)	Annual Federal Funding*
Delaware	\$500,000
Hawaii	\$500,000
Iowa	\$1,859,206
Kansas	\$1,864,950
Maine	\$863,522
Mississippi	\$1,003,782
New Mexico	\$1,360,802
Nevada	\$756,001
North Dakota	\$500,000
South Carolina	\$2,268,003
Wyoming	\$500,000

*Funding levels are subject to change based on MEP's Appropriations

Aggressive Outreach Effort

- 15-20 organizations publicizing MEP Competition
- Examples include SSTI, IEDC, EDA, NADO, etc.
- Regional (State) Meetings
- Informational webinars for interested applicants
 - Approximately mid-late July 2016
 - Webinar recordings and presentations will be made available on the MEP website (under Federal Funding Opportunities).

Regional Forums

- Prior to the federal funding opportunity announcement, NIST MEP will hold three regional forums to provide interested entities more information about the MEP program, the federal funding opportunity, and answer questions regarding this funding announcement.
- Following each regional forum presentation, potential applicants will also have a chance to schedule 20 minute meetings with NIST MEP representatives to ask additional follow-on questions.

Regional Forums

- May 24th – Denver, CO
- June 7th – Chicago, IL
- Agenda:
 - 9:30am – 11:30am – Presentation (overview of program, federal funding opportunity, evaluation criteria and selection factors)
 - 11:30am – 1:00pm – Private One-on-one meetings with NIST MEP representatives



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MEP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A background image showing two hands in business attire holding two large, interlocking gears. The scene is set against a light blue background. A dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the top center, containing the word 'MISSION' in white capital letters. Below this, a white rectangular box with a blue border contains a quote in white text, flanked by blue quotation marks.

MISSION

“

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

”

ROLE

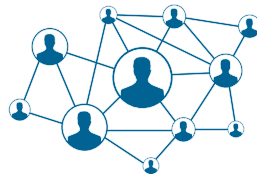
MEP's state and regional centers facilitate and accelerate the transfer of manufacturing technology in partnership with industry, universities and educational institutions, state governments, and NIST and other federal and research laboratories and agencies.



MEP Program in Short



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



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



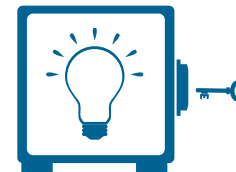
Partnership Model
Federal, State, University, and Industry



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



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



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

MEP Strategic Plan (2014-2017)

Strategic Goals

ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS

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

CHAMPION MANUFACTURING

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

SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS

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

DEVELOP CAPABILITIES

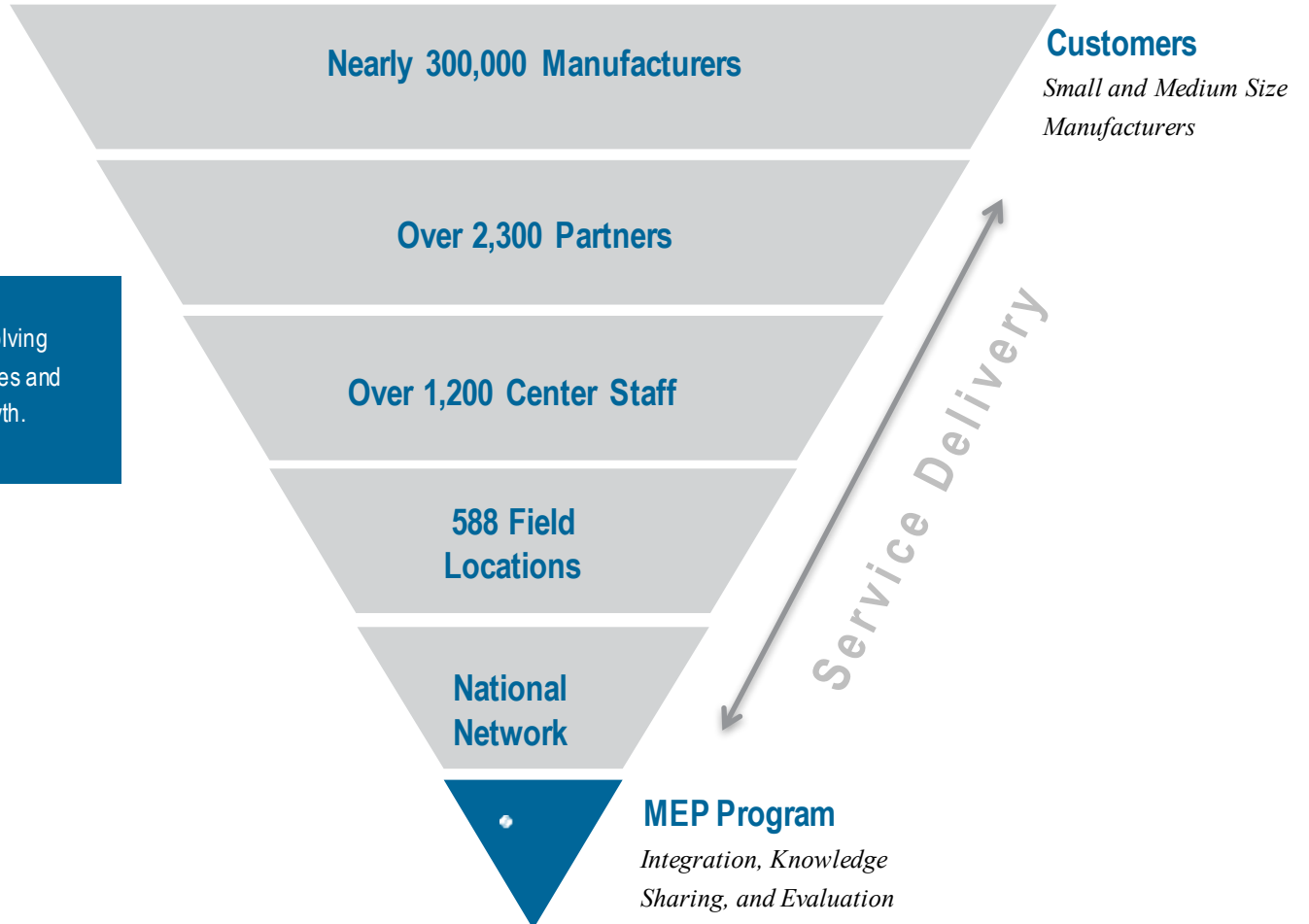
Develop MEP's capabilities as a learning organization and high performance system.



Partnering to Drive a National Program



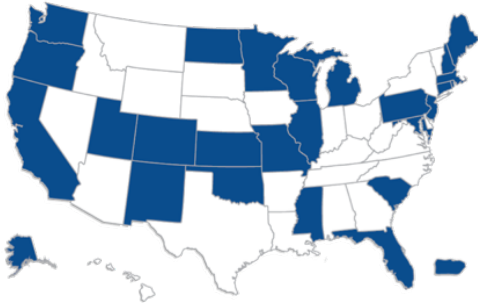
The MEP network focuses on solving manufacturers' biggest challenges and identifying opportunities for growth.



National Network

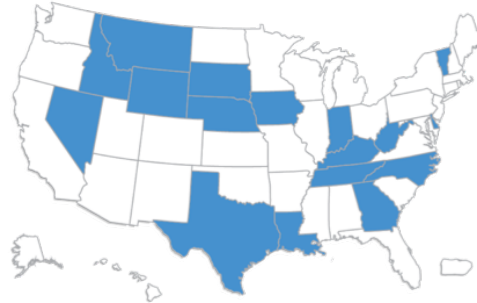


MEP Centers Organizational Structure



501 C3 (34)

- Alaska
- California (2)
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Massachusetts
- Maryland
- Maine
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Mississippi
- North Dakota
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania (7)
- Puerto Rico
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Utah
- Washington
- Wisconsin



University (17)

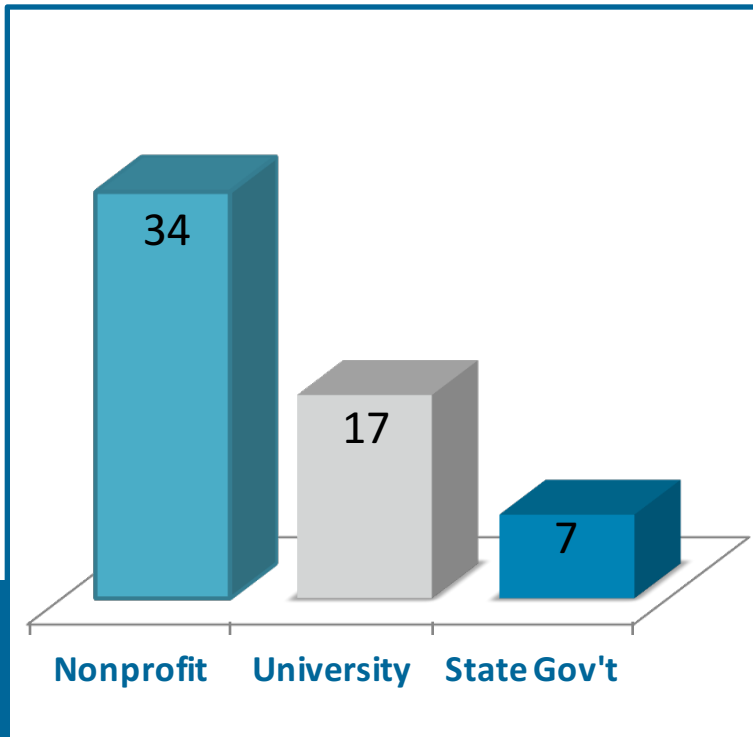
- Delaware MEP
- Georgia
- Iowa
- Idaho
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Montana
- North Carolina
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Vermont
- West Virginia
- Wyoming



State Entity (7)

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Arizona
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- New York
- Ohio MEP
- Virginia

Center Structure Diversity



Partnerships

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

Geography

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

Public & Private Sector

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

Organization Type

- Nonprofit
- University
- State Government

Organizational Structure

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

Environment of an MEP Center

- Running an MEP Center can be complicated!
- Overall Goal is to support U.S. MANUFACTURERS



How Centers work with Manufacturers



1

Initial Contact

Group sessions, referral



2

Assessment

Informal walk-through, detailed company analysis



3

Identify

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



4

Negotiate

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



5

Project Execution

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



6

Follow-Up

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



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

What MEP Does



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



Supply Chain Development



Technology Acceleration



Workforce Development



Lean Process



Innovation and Growth



Sustainability

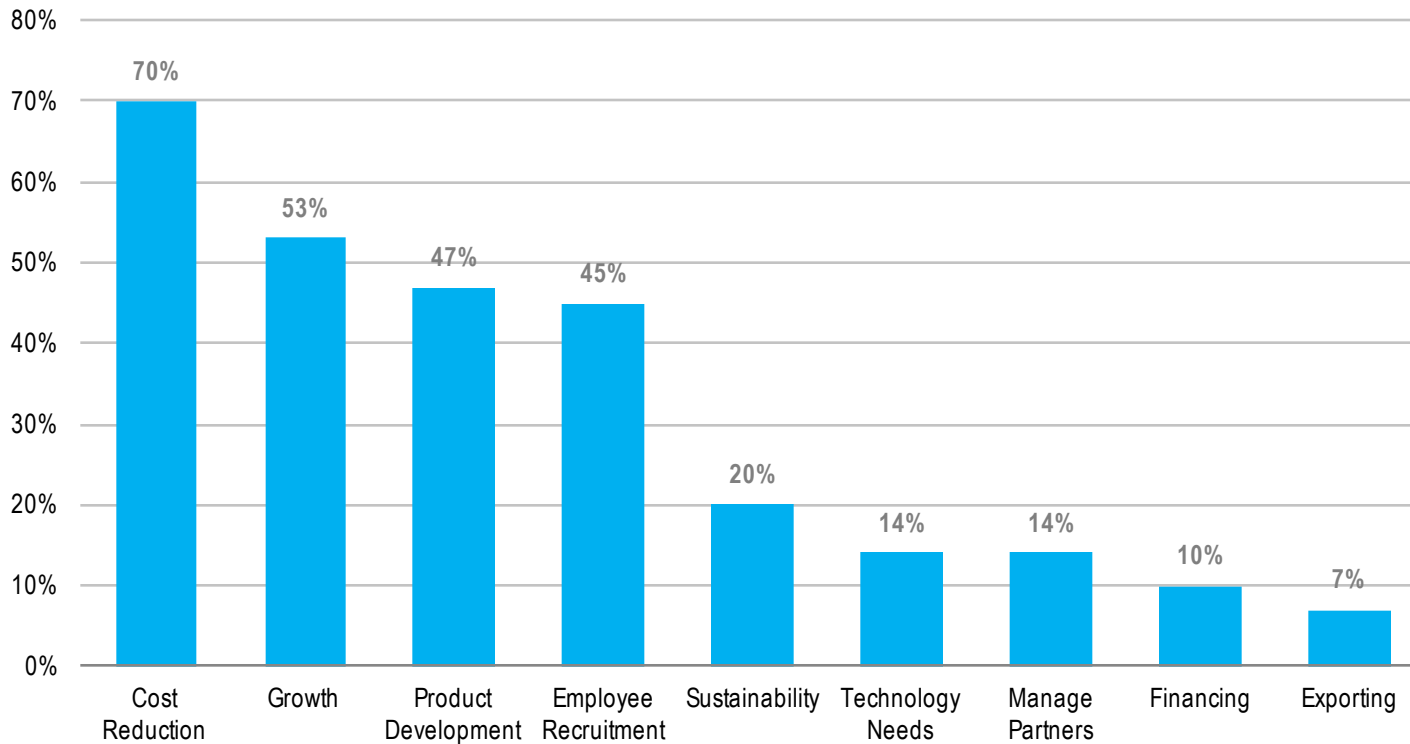


Export



Reshoring

Client Challenges



MEP Program Initiatives & Services



MEP's Program Initiatives & Services

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

Partnerships

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



Educating

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



Providing Outreach

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



Connecting the Gap

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



Supporting

workforce development programs.

NIST MEP Survey Process, Instrument, & Uses

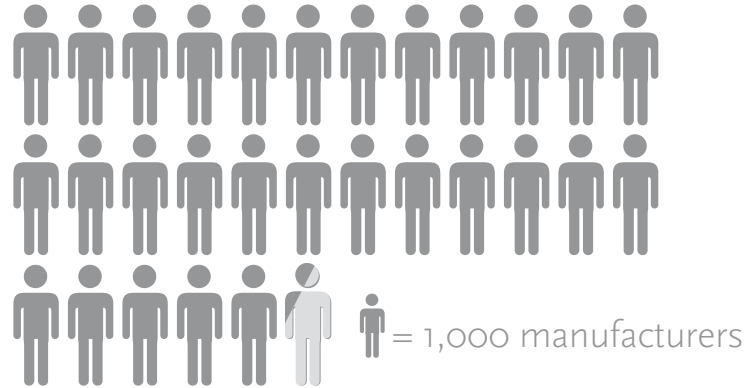
- *Surveys* are conducted quarterly. Approximately 7,500 to 8,000 surveys done annually. Response rates typically hover around 75-80 percent.
- Clients are surveyed only once a year. A census of all clients with completed projects.
- Survey is client-based rather than project based.
- Client-based survey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





NIST MEP Survey Process, Instrument, & Uses

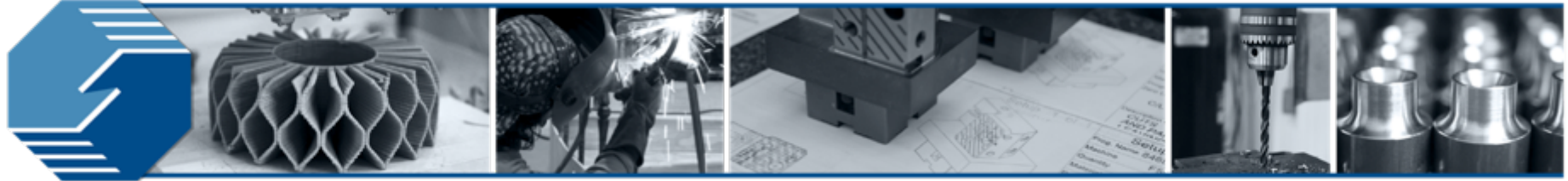
- Surveys are done typically six months after the first project is completed and questions are time bound. In some cases, clients can be surveyed over multiple years even if only one project is completed.
- Survey consists of 12 questions focusing on:
 - Bottom-line client outcomes such as sales, capital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

Client Impacts

29,101
Manufacturers
served in FY15



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



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MEP State Competition – Round 4 Federal Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Overview (1)

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

Funding Opportunity Description:

- *NIST invites applications from eligible organizations in connection with NIST's funding up to eleven (11) separate MEP cooperative agreements for the operation of an MEP Center in the designated States' service areas identified above. NIST anticipates awarding one (1) cooperative agreement for each of the identified States.*
- *Objective of the MEP Center Program is to provide manufacturing extension services to primarily small and medium-sized manufacturers within the whole State designated in the applications.*

Funding Instrument: Cooperative Agreement

- The nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally be collaboration between MEP and the recipient organization(s).
- NIST involvement under base MEP awards may include the types of substantial involvement activities 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).
- In addition, NIST involvement in this cooperative agreement may include the activities described in MEP General Term and Condition, Section 1.

Funding Opportunity Overview (2)

Funding Available:

Below are the eleven (11) States identified for funding as part of this FFO:

MEP Center Location and Assigned Geographical Service Area (by State)	Annual Federal Funding*
Delaware	\$500,000
Hawaii	\$500,000
Iowa	\$1,859,206
Kansas	\$1,864,950
Maine	\$863,522
Mississippi	\$1,003,782
New Mexico	\$1,360,802
Nevada	\$756,001
North Dakota	\$500,000
South Carolina	\$2,268,003
Wyoming	\$500,000

*Funding levels are subject to change based on MEP's Appropriations

Funding Opportunity Overview (3)

Multi-Year Funding Policy.

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

Potential for Additional 5 Years.

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

Funding Opportunity Overview (4)

- Cost Share or Matching Requirements:**

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

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

For example, if your annual federal \$ is 1,000,000 – you will need to match the federal with \$1,000,000 of non-federal cost share (YRS 1-3 @ 1:1 Cost Share Ratio)

Funding Opportunity Overview (5)

- Non-Federal cost sharing is that portion of the project costs not borne by the Federal Government. The applicant's share of the MEP Center expenses may include cash, services, and third party in-kind contributions, as described at 2 C.F.R. § 200.306, as applicable, and in the MEP program regulations at 15 CFR § 290.4(c). **No more than 50% of the applicant's total non-Federal cost share for any year of the award may be from third party in-kind contributions of part-time personnel, equipment, software, rental value of centrally located space, and related contributions, per 15 CFR § 290.4(c)(5).** The source and detailed rationale of the cost share, including cash, full- and part-time personnel, and in-kind donations, must be documented in the budget tables and budget narratives submitted with the application and will be considered as part of the review under the evaluation criterion found in Section V.1.c.ii. of this FFO.
- **Recipients must meet the minimum non-federal cost share requirements for each year of the award as identified in the chart above.** For purposes of the MEP Program, "program income" (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.80, as applicable) generated by an MEP Center may be used by a recipient towards the required non-federal cost share under an MEP award.

Funding Opportunity Overview (6)

Possible Revenue/Cost Share Sources:

- State Funding
- Client Revenues (Program Income also know as Project Service Fees)
- In-Kind

Funding Opportunity Overview (7)

- **Eligible Applicants.**

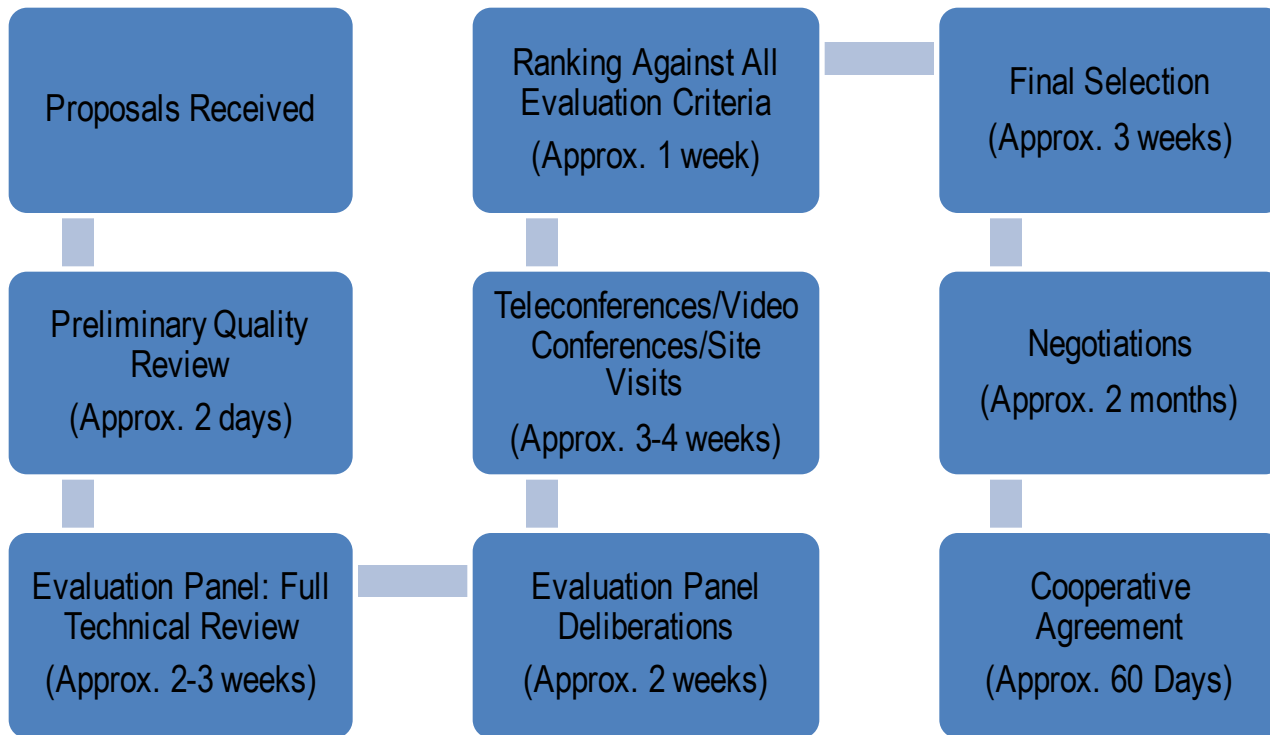
- Each applicant for and recipient of an MEP award must be a U.S.-based nonprofit institution or organization. For the purpose of this FFO, nonprofit institutions include public or private nonprofit organizations, nonprofit or State colleges and universities, public or nonprofit community and technical colleges, and State, local or Tribal governments. Existing MEP awardees and new applicants who meet the eligibility criteria set forth in this section may apply.
- An eligible organization may work individually or may include proposed subawards to eligible organizations or proposed contracts with any other organization as part of the applicant's proposal, effectively forming a team.
- NIST generally will not fund applications that propose an organizational or operational structure that, in whole or in part, delegates or transfers to another person, institution, or organization the applicant's responsibility for core MEP Center management and oversight functions. See *also* Section IV.6. of the FFO for funding restrictions under the MEP Program.
- For profit entities are not eligible.

Evaluation Review Criteria:

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

- a. Executive Summary and Project Narrative (40 – Sub-criteria I through iv will be weighted equally)**
 - i. Center Strategy (10pts)
 - ii. Market Understanding (10pts)
 - 1. Market Segmentation (5 pts)
 - 2. Needs Identification and Product/Service Offerings (5 pts)
 - iii. Business Model (10 pts)
 - 1. Outreach and Service Delivery to the Market (5 pts)
 - 2. Partnership Leverage and Linkages (5 pts)
 - iv. Performance Measurement and Management (10 pts)
- b. Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure & Management; and Oversight Board and Governance (30 – Sub-criteria i and ii will be weighted equally)**
 - i. Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management (15 pts)
 - ii. Oversight Board and Governance (15 pts)
- c. Budget and Financial Plan (30 – Sub-criteria will be weighted equally)**
 - i. Budget (15 pts)
 - ii. Quality of the Financial Plan for Meeting the Award's Non-Federal Cost Share Requirements over 5 years. (15 pts)

Review and Selection Process



Administrative Requirements of Application (1)

- Complete applications/proposals must, at a minimum, include the following forms and documents and meet the following requirements identified in the FFO which are:
- **Required Forms*:**
 - SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance
 - SF-424A Budget Information Non-Constructions
 - SF-424B Assurances Non-construction
 - CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying
 - SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)
 - Technical Proposal (please be sure to read Section of the FFO)

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

Administrative Requirements of Application (2)

Proposal Requirements:

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

Please note, if an applicant's proposal is selected for funding, NIST may use all or a portion of the Executive Summary as part of a press release issued by NIST, or for other public information and outreach purposes. Applicants are advised not to incorporate information that concerns business trade secrets or other confidential commercial or financial information as part of the Executive Summary. See also 15 C.F.R. § 4.9(c) concerning the designation of business information by the applicant. (Does not count towards page limit).
 - **Project Narrative**
 - **Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Program Management; and Oversight Board and Governance**
 - **Budget Tables and Budget Narratives**
 - A suggested format is provided on the MEP website - refer to Round 3 MEP State Competitions – <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-03.cfm>

Administrative Requirements of Application (3)

- **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement**

- If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant Federal audit agency.
- If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, provide a statement to this effect. If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal audit agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with the DoC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

- **Resumes**

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

Administrative Requirements of Application (4)

Letters of Commitment or Support

- For non-profit applicants with a fiduciary board of directors, a resolution from such board authorizing submission of the MEP Center application to NIST and supporting the activities described therein is required.
- **Applicant Non-Federal Cost Sharing (Cash and In-kind):** A letter of commitment is required from an authorized representative of the applicant, stating the total amount of cost share to be contributed by the applicant towards the proposed MEP Center project separate and apart from the submission of the proposal.
 - This stand-alone letter must cover all five (5) years of the proposed MEP Center project and include a per year break-out of the applicant's contribution of non-federal cost share, as well as a per year break-out of cash cost share (including anticipated program income) and in-kind (non-cash) contributions.
- Please make sure to review Section titled Letters of Commitment or Support

Administrative Requirements of Application (5)

- **Application Format (Section IV 2(b)):**
 - Page Limit. **The Technical Proposals are limited to forty (40) pages.** Information on pages beyond the page limit will not be considered.
 - Page limit **includes:** Cover page, Technical Proposal (with the exception of the Executive Summary), figures, graphs, tables, images, pictures, and all other pages of an application, with the exception of the page limit exclusions listed below.
 - Page limit **excludes:** Table of Contents, Executive Summary, SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance; both copies of the SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs form; SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs; SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities; CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying; Table of Contents, budget tables and budget narratives; Letters of Commitment and/or Support; Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, and Resumes.

Administrative Requirements of Application (6)

VERY IMPORTANT!

- **Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).**
 - Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. part 25, applicants and recipients (as the case may be) are required to:
 - (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
 - (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
 - (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency, unless otherwise excepted from these requirements pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 25.110.
 - *When developing your submission timeline, keep in mind that (1) a free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM) (see Section IV.3) may take between three and five business days or as long as more than two weeks, and (2) applicants using Grants.gov will receive a series of receipts over a period of up to two business days before learning via a validation or rejection whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application.*
 - *Please note that the person listed as the authorized representative in SAM must be the one who submits application into grants.gov!*

Reporting Requirements

- **Financial Reports.** The Recipient shall submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report on a semi-annual basis after the sixth and twelfth month of each operating year
- **Performance (Technical) Reports.** The Recipient shall submit a Technical Report (format provided by MEP Program) on a semi-annual basis after the sixth and twelfth month of each operating
- **Post Client Project Follow-Up.** The recipient will be required to provide client and project data on a quarterly basis.
- For further information regarding the NIST MEP Reporting Process, you may download a copy of the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines at <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-03.cfm> (From Round 3 FFO)

MEP Resources

Additional Resources are available at <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-regional-forum-state-competitions-04.cfm>

NIST MEP System Strategic Plan;

Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Operating Plan Guidelines (February 2016);

Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership General Terms and Conditions (February 2016);

2014 Annual Report;

Sample Budget Table (for all 5 years) and Budget Chart and Narrative (for Year 1); and
NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines

Reports on the MEP Program

Round 3 FFO - <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-state-competitions-03.cfm>

Tips from Prior Applicants

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

Key Take-Aways

- Make sure to read entire FFO (multiple times)
- Key Personnel cannot be employed both at the prime and sub-recipient organization.
- Ensuring you are meeting the minimum cost share requirement for all 5 years.
- Oversight Board and/or Advisory Committee Requirement (Eligibility)
- SAM.gov registration has been established and organization has received confirmation of validated account (Recommend completing well in advance of submitting application in grants.gov)
- Negotiations take place between NIST and the applicant organization not the subrecipients.
- Tell your story.

Agency Contacts

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Administrative, budget, cost-sharing, eligibility questions and other programmatic questions.	Diane Henderson Manufacturing Extension Partnership NIST Phone: 301-975-5105 Fax: 301-963-6556 E-mail: mepffo@nist.gov
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	Christopher Hunton Administrative Support & Document Control Office NIST Phone: 301-975-5718 Fax: 301-975-8884 E-mail: grants@nist.gov
Grant Rules and Regulations	Mike Teske Grants Management Division NIST Phone: 301-975-6358 Fax: 301-975-6368 E-mail: michael.teske@nist.gov

Have additional questions.....

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

Questions and Answers from Regional Forums will be posted on the NIST MEP Regional Forum website, <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-regional-forum-state-competitions-04.cfm>

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