

**NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)  
NIST MEP DISASTER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- **Federal Agency Name:** National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC)
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** NIST MEP Disaster Assessment Program
- **Announcement Type:** -Amendment
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** 2020-NIST-MEP-MDAP-01
- **Assistance Listing (CFDA Number):** 11.611

**Dates:** Applications for funding pursuant to this NOFO must be received by NIST no later than 60 calendar days following the date that a Major or an Emergency Disaster Declaration is declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA Disaster Declaration) for all or a portion of an impacted State or of Puerto Rico. NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing within 90 calendar days of application receipt. This program is open, and applications will be accepted by NIST on a rolling basis based on the date of the subject FEMA Disaster Declaration and subject to the publication of a superseding NOFO. See Section IV.4. in the Full Announcement Text of this NOFO.

When developing the submission timeline, please keep in mind that: (1) all applicants are required to have current registrations in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and Grants.gov; (2) the free annual registration process in SAM.gov (see Section IV.3. of this NOFO) generally takes between three and five business days but can take more than two weeks; and (3) applicants will receive e-mail 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 [Grants.gov](https://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 SAM.gov is not current at the time of the award.

- **Application Submission Address:** Applications must be submitted using Grants.gov. NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by e-mail. See Section IV.6. in the Full Announcement Text of this NOFO.

- **Funding Opportunity Description:** NIST invites applications from current recipients of Manufacturing Extension Partnership Center cooperative agreements (MEP Centers) to perform assessments of small- and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) in areas subject to a FEMA Disaster Declaration. These assessments should be designed to identify the impact, if any, to the operations of the SMMs as result of the subject disaster. MEP Centers receiving funding pursuant to this program must also assist impacted SMMs in identifying and accessing Federal, State and local resources to aid in business recovery efforts and, as appropriate, in the development of a risk mitigation plan for future disasters. Award recipients will further be required to share the results of their project, including disaster preparedness lessons learned and SMMs best practices, with other SMMs, NIST and the MEP National Network™ in order to help the SMM community with future disaster resilience planning efforts. See Section I. in the Full Announcement Text of this NOFO.
- **Anticipated Amounts:** 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. The amount of each award will depend on the nature and severity of each individual FEMA Disaster Declaration. Projects awarded under this NOFO will have a budget and a performance period of no more than 18 months. See Section II.2. in the Full Announcement Text of this NOFO.
- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative Agreement. See Section II. in the Full Announcement Text of this NOFO.
- **Eligibility:** Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are recipients of current MEP Center cooperative agreements. A MEP Center recipient may work individually or may include proposed subawards to other recipients of MEP Center cooperative agreements and/or proposed contracts with other organizations as part of the applicant's proposal, effectively forming a team or consortium.

A MEP Center may only submit one funding application for each FEMA Disaster Declaration and, where an application is submitted with respect to a particular FEMA Disaster Declaration, such MEP Center may not be included as a subawardee or as a project participant in any other applications pertaining to the same FEMA Disaster Declaration. Moreover, a MEP Center that does not submit a funding application for a particular FEMA Disaster Declaration may only be included as a subawardee or as a project participant in one funding application for each FEMA Disaster Declaration.

Priority in selecting applications for funding will be given to applications that include the meaningful participation, as either the recipient or as a subrecipient, of the MEP Center for the State in which the FEMA Disaster Declaration pertains.

Where the same FEMA Disaster Declaration covers multiple States, priority in selecting applications for funding will be given to applications where MEP Centers propose working as a consortium to cover all of the impacted States pursuant to a single project. See Section I.3. in the Full Announcement Text of this NOFO.

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Non-federal cost share is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO.
- **Public Website and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).** Questions from applicants pertaining to NOFO eligibility, cost sharing requirements, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive proposal will not be considered on an informal basis. Applicants must submit all such questions in writing to [mepnofo@nist.gov](mailto:mepnofo@nist.gov). Answers to such written questions submitted to NIST MEP may be made available to the public as part of an FAQ document, which will be periodically updated on the MEP website at [www.nist.gov/mep/mep-disaster-assessment-program](http://www.nist.gov/mep/mep-disaster-assessment-program).
- **Webinar Information Session:** NIST MEP will host a webinar information session for MEP Centers that are interested in learning about this funding opportunity. This webinar will provide general information regarding MEP and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. NIST MEP staff will be available at the webinar to answer general questions. During the webinar, proprietary technical discussions about specific project ideas will not be permitted. Also, NIST MEP staff will not critique or provide feedback on any specific project ideas during the webinar or at any time before submission of a proposal to Grants.gov. However, NIST MEP staff will provide information about the MEP eligibility and cost sharing requirements, the evaluation criteria, the selection factors and process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal during this webinar. The webinar will be held approximately fifteen (15) to thirty (30) business days after posting of this NOFO. The exact date and time of the webinar will be posted on the MEP website at [www.nist.gov/mep/mep-disaster-assessment-program](http://www.nist.gov/mep/mep-disaster-assessment-program). The webinar will be recorded, and a link to the recording will be posted on the NIST MEP website. In addition, the webinar presentations will be available on the MEP website. Organizations wishing to participate in the webinar must register in advance by contacting NIST MEP by e-mail at [mepnofo@nist.gov](mailto:mepnofo@nist.gov). Participation in the webinar is not required in order for a MEP Center to submit an application pursuant to this NOFO.

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## **FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT**

### **I. Program Description**

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is publishing this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) pursuant to the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Program (MEP) Competitive Awards Program, which is authorized by 15 U.S.C. § 278k-1. This program is not a Federal research and development program, and it is not the intent of this program that MEP Center awardees will perform systematic research.

#### **1. Program Overview**

In general, NIST conducts and supports disaster resilience research in several areas, including: Structural Performance under the Multi-Hazard Program; the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP); Disaster and Failure Studies Program (DFS); the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Program (WUI); and National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP).

The MEP Competitive Awards Program authorizes NIST to provide cooperative agreement funding to current MEP Centers to support projects that will add capabilities to the overall MEP National Network™, including projects to solve new or emerging manufacturing problems. In this respect, small- and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) often experience major business interruptions and longer-term continuity of business operation challenges following a natural or other major disaster, including:

- Supply chain disruptions: difficulty sourcing goods and materials for business operations due to material shortages, disrupted information technology systems, transportation network disruptions and other internal and external factors;
- Lost Business: loss of customers results in reduced revenues;
- Financial constraints: loss of sales, rising prices in materials and energy;

- Workforce constraints: short-term and longer-term labor shortages resulted in decreased production;
- Manufacturing facility infrastructure and/or equipment damage;
- Utilities disruption (i.e., electricity, water); and
- Other internal and external business operation problems.

SMMs are also less likely to be prepared with a disaster resilience plan and/or a continuity of business operations plan, which in many cases exacerbates the adverse impacts to the SMM of a natural or other disaster.

NIST MEP Centers are in a unique position to identify and to assess the impacts to SMMs in areas affected by natural or other disasters and to help such SMMs in identifying and accessing Federal, State and local resources to aid in business recovery efforts. MEP Centers are further positioned to share disaster preparedness and disaster resilience information, including lessons learned and best practices, with other SMMs, NIST and with the MEP National Network™.

Pursuant to the MEP Disaster Assessment Program (MDAP) and the requirements contained in this NOFO, NIST MEP invites applications from current recipients of MEP Center cooperative agreements to perform assessments of SMMs in areas where a Major or an Emergency Disaster Declaration is declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA Disaster Declaration). Projects funded by NIST MEP pursuant to this NOFO are intended to add capabilities and knowledge to the MEP National Network™ in order to help the SMM community with future disaster preparedness and resilience efforts.

## **2. Program Requirements**

MEP Centers selected for funding pursuant to this NOFO will be expected to, at a minimum, conduct the following activities:

- a. Identify the universe of SMMs located within the geographical area covered by the FEMA Disaster Declaration. Develop a comprehensive understanding of those SMMs whose business operations were adversely impacted by the subject disaster and the reasons for such adverse impacts, as well as those SMMs that were not or that were only marginally impacted by the subject disaster and the reasons that such SMMs were not significantly impacted.
- b. Assess the condition of adversely impacted SMMs. The assessment must, at a minimum, include a description of the disaster-related issue(s) which caused the company to remain at a reduced functional level.
- c. Assist adversely impacted SMMs in identifying and accessing Federal, State and local resources to aid in business recovery efforts. As appropriate,

provide technical assistance to SMMs in the development of disaster preparedness and risk mitigation plans to help minimize the impact of future disasters. **MEP Centers must not provide technical assistance or other services pertaining to business recovery efforts of the SMM with funding under this program; rather, to the extent that business recovery services are provided by a MEP Center to an SMM, such services should be performed pursuant to the MEP Center's base MEP Center cooperative agreement.**

d. Prepare a detailed project report discussing the results of the project, including disaster preparedness lessons learned and SMMs best practices in mitigating the adverse impacts of a disaster. The report and other information learned through the project should be in a format that lends itself to dissemination to other SMMs and to the MEP National Network™ in order to help SMM community with future disaster resilience planning efforts. In addition, the report may be shared by NIST MEP with various NIST Laboratory Programs charged with disaster resilience and related research. See Section VI.2.g.1.b.

### **3. Program Priorities**

In cases where the FEMA Disaster Declaration covers a single State, it is a priority of the NIST MDAP that funded projects involve the meaningful participation, as either a recipient or as a subrecipient, of the MEP Center for the State in which the FEMA Disaster declaration pertains. Where the same FEMA Disaster Declaration covers multiple States, it is a program priority that multiple MEP Centers work as a consortium to cover all of the impacted States pursuant to a single project. See also Section IV.2.e. of this NOFO for information on the Selection Factors for this program.

## **II. Federal Award Information**

### **1. Funding Instrument**

The funding instrument used in this program will be a cooperative agreement. In accordance with the definition of "cooperative agreement" in 2 C.F.R. § 200.1, it is anticipated that there will be "substantial involvement" between NIST MEP and MEP Centers receiving funding pursuant to this program in carrying out the activities contemplated by each federal award issued by NIST pursuant to this NOFO. The nature of NIST's substantial involvement will generally include collaboration between NIST MEP and the recipient MEP Center organization in more fully developing and executing the approved scope of work, including assistance to the recipient organization in understanding and resolving issues pertaining to the

successful implementation of the Project and in defining the content and format of program reports and other information dissemination activities.

## **2. Funding Availability**

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. The amount of each award will depend on the nature and severity of each individual FEMA Disaster Declaration. Projects awarded under this NOFO will have a budget and a performance period of no more than 18 months, unless a no-cost award extension is approved by the Grants Officer during the pendency of the subject award.

## **3. Award Kick-off.**

Recipients should anticipate attending a video kick-off conference which will be held within 15 calendar days after the award start date. The kick-off conference will typically take between 3 and 4 hours and must be attended by key project personnel. Representatives from key subrecipients and other key strategic partners may also attend the kick-off conference.

## **4. MEP National Network Meetings.**

NIST MEP typically organizes MEP National Network meetings up to two times per year to share best practices, and to discuss new and emerging trends and additional topics of interest. These meetings are planned 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 must include travel and related costs for at least 1 MEP National Network meeting in during the life of project. These costs must also be reflected in the budget tables and budget narratives which are submitted as part of the Budget Narrative and Justification. (See Section IV.2.a.(7).e). of this 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.

Project personnel will be expected to actively participate during these meetings and freely share lessons learned regarding the details of the project and attributes conducive to transferring knowledge to other MEP Centers for the benefit of small U.S. manufacturers.

Recipients will be required to provide detailed analysis of the lessons learned through these projects under Section VI.2.g.1.b. Performance (Technical) Reports. These analyses will include, but are not limited to: attributes, participant roles, planning of the intended approach, root cause(s) for success/failures, recommendations for how the outcomes of the project might inform expansion of the intended goals.

#### **5. Indirect (F&A) Costs.**

NIST will reimburse applicants for proposed indirect (F&A) costs in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414. Applicants proposing indirect (F&A) costs must follow the application requirements set forth in Section IV.2.b.(8) of this NOFO.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **1. Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity are recipients of current MEP Center cooperative agreements. A MEP Center recipient may work individually or may include proposed subawards to other recipients of MEP Center cooperative agreements and/or proposed contracts with other organizations as part of the applicant's proposal, effectively forming a team or consortium.

A MEP Center may only submit one funding application for each FEMA Disaster Declaration and, where an application is submitted with respect to a particular FEMA Disaster Declaration, such MEP Center may not be included as a subawardee or as a project participant in any other applications pertaining to the same FEMA Disaster Declaration. Moreover, a MEP Center that does not submit a funding application for a particular FEMA Disaster Declaration may only be included as a subawardee or as a project participant in one funding application for such FEMA Disaster Declaration.

Priority in selecting applications for funding will be given to applications that include the meaningful participation, as either the recipient or as a subrecipient, of the MEP Center for the State in which the FEMA Disaster Declaration pertains. Where the same FEMA Disaster Declaration covers multiple States, priority in selecting applications for funding may be given to applications where MEP Centers propose working as a consortium to cover all of the impacted States pursuant to a single project.

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



- 3. Program Income.** For the purposes of this program, applicants should not budget program income as non-federal cost share. Rather the recipient MEP Center and any subrecipients of this award must expend all program income (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.307) generated pursuant to this project by using the "additive method" under 2 C.F.R. § 200.307(e)(2), with any excess program income to be disposed of pursuant to the "deductive method" under 2 C.F.R. § 200.307(e)(1). In addition, the recipient must properly account for and report on the Form SF-425 all program income generated pursuant to the project, including program income generated by subrecipients.
- 4. Prohibition on Profit and Fees.** A profit, fee, or other incremental charge above actual cost is not an allowable cost under this program.
- 5. No Double Charging Against other NIST/MEP Awards.** 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 a 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 a MEP Center or collaborator award (*i.e.*, federal funds may not be used as cost share for other federal awards).

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

##### **1. Address to Request Application Package**

The application package is available at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under Funding Opportunity Number 2020-NIST-MEP-MDAP-01

##### **2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

**a. Required Forms and Documents.** The Application must contain the following:

###### **(1) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.**

- a. The SF-424 must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.
- b. SF-424, Item 8.d. Zip/Postal Code field, should reflect the Zip code + 4 (#####-####) format.
- c. SF-424, Item 12, should list the NOFO number 2020-NIST-MEP-MDAP-01.
- d. SF-424, Item 18, should list the total budget information for the duration of the project.
- e. The list of certifications and assurances referenced in Item 21 of the SF-424 is contained in the SF-424B.

**(2) SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.**

The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for the entire project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments. The budget should also include the MEP National Network meetings for the MEP Center as described in Sections II.3. and II.4., respectively, of this NOFO.

- a) The applicant should reflect each year of the project, up to three (3) years, on the **SF-424A form**.
- b) In Section A, 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”. The total budget amount for the term of the award should be listed in Section A, Line 1, Column (e).
- c) Section B, Column (1) of the SF-424A should reflect funds for the first year of the award. Section B, Column (2) of the SF-424A should reflect funds for the second year of the award. Section B, Column (3) of the SF-424A should reflect funds for the third year of the award.
- d) Section D requires a breakdown of the first year’s budget by quarter. The budget estimate for the second year of the award should be entered in Section E, Line 16, Column (b). The budget estimate for the third year of the award should be entered in Section E, Line 17, Column (b).

**(3) SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs.** (if applicable)

The SF-424B is required for all applicants that have not updated their System for Award Management (SAM.gov) entity registration since February 2, 2019 to include the Federal financial assistance certifications and representations (certs and reps). If an applicant has updated their SAM.gov entity registration since February 2, 2019 to include the certifications and representations, then the SF-424B is not required.

**(4) CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.**

Enter “2020-NIST-MEP-MDAP-01” in the Award Number field. Enter the title of the application, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field.

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

**(6) Project Narrative.**

The Project Narrative is a word-processed document of no more than twenty (20) pages (double-spaced between lines), which is responsive to the Program Description (see Section I. of this NOFO) and to the Evaluation Criteria (see Section V.1. of this NOFO). The projective narrative should contain the following information:

- **Table of Contents.** (Does not count toward the page limit)
- **Executive Summary.** An executive summary of the proposed project consistent with the objectives, requirements and priorities of this program (see Section I. of this NOFO). The executive summary should include information indicating how each evaluation criterion (see Section V.1. of this NOFO) and its sub-factors are addressed. A table can be helpful in providing this information. The executive summary should not exceed two (2) pages.

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 Approach and Project Execution Plan.** A detailed discussion of the applicant's approach in planning for and in executing the proposed project consistent with the objectives, requirements and priorities of this program (see Section I. of this NOFO). This section should provide a description of the proposed project plan and execution strategy sufficient to permit evaluation of the proposal, in accordance with details included in the proposal Evaluation Criteria (see Section V.1. of this NOFO).
- **Project Impacts, Project Evaluation and Project Information Dissemination.** A detailed discussion of the: (i) anticipated impacts of the proposed project; (ii) methodology for identifying and evaluating project outcomes; and (iii) dissemination of project learnings consistent with the objectives, requirements and priorities of this program (see Section I. of this NOFO). This section should provide a discussion of the proposed project impacts, proposed project evaluation and proposed information dissemination activities sufficient to permit evaluation of the proposal in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria for this program (see Section V.1. of this NOFO).

Applicants should identify in this section specific project taskings, measurable milestones and outcomes resulting from the proposed project, as well as a methodology for identifying and analyzing project outcomes. Applicants must also provide details about approaches for sharing lessons learned and best practices resulting from the project,

including information dissemination sharing to and with SMMs and the MEP National Network.

- **Project Management and Project Budget.** The applicant should specify plans for the proper and efficient organization, staffing, and management (including but not limited to the key personnel) see Section IV.2.a.(7) a) of the proposed project). Applicants should also demonstrate the relevance and cost effectiveness of the proposed project budget to meeting the program objectives, requirements and priorities of this program (see Section I. of this NOFO). This section should provide a description of the proposed project sufficient to permit evaluation of the proposed project management structure and proposed project budget in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria for this program (see Section V.1. of this NOFO).

### **(7) Budget Narrative and Justification.**

(Does not count toward the page limit). In addition to the SF-424A form (see section IV.2.a.(2) of this 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 (both revenue and expenses) in accordance with applicable federal cost principles.

All applicants are required to use the MEP budget templates when submitting a Budget workbook and a budget summary table. The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for the entire project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments. In the budget narrative, the recipient should provide adequate information to support the costs identified in each category of the budget table. For example, providing the annual salary and the percentage of time dedicated to the project by personnel to demonstrate the total cost of that individual; providing the airfare, lodging, per diem, number of days and number of travelers for each proposed trip; and identifying anticipated subaward/contract amounts, the sub awardees/contractors, to the extent known at the time of application, and a detailed description of the purpose of each subaward/contract. Applicants must also include staff, travel and related expenses for any anticipated System-Wide meetings described in Sections II.3. and II.4. of this 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/mep-disaster-assessment-program](http://www.nist.gov/mep/mep-disaster-assessment-program).

The Budget Narrative and Justification must clearly identify whether the applicant or any of its subrecipients anticipate generating program income pursuant to the proposed project (e.g., client service fees, etc.). If program income is anticipated under the project, the applicant must identify the anticipated amount of program

income as part of the overall project budget (including subrecipient budgets) and must budget for the expenditure of such program income using the "additive method," with any excess program income to be disposed of pursuant to the "deductive method." For purposes of this program, applicants should not budget program income as non-federal cost share.

This section will be evaluated in accordance with the Budget Narrative evaluation criteria (see Section V.1.g. of this NOFO). It will also be reviewed to determine if all costs are reasonable, allocable, and allowable under 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles.

Information needed for each category is as follows:

- a) **Key Personnel** – At a minimum, the budget justification 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.

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.

- b) **Other Personnel** - Data is requested at the project role level, and not at the individual level for Other Personnel. The budget justification should include the following: 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 position on the proposed project and the work to be performed.
- c) **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.
- d) **Equipment Description** – 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. 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. Applicants should provide at least two (2) quotes, if available, for equipment costing \$25,000 or more. If two (2) quotes are not available, please provide a statement as to why two (2) quotes are not available. Any items that do not meet the threshold for equipment can be included under the Materials and Supplies line item in Section F, Other Direct Costs.

- e) **Travel** - For all travel costs, required by the recipient to complete the project, including attendance at any relevant conferences, the budget justification for travel should include the following: destination; names or 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. As described in Section II.4. of this NOFO, Applicants must include travel and related costs for at least 1 MEP National Network meeting in during the life of project. 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.
- f) **Other Direct Costs** – 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.

Each subaward or contractual cost should be treated as a separate item in the Other Direct Costs category. Describe the services to be provided and the necessity of the subaward or contract to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining goods and services for the primary benefit of the contracting party and are for services incidental to the project. Subawardees perform part of the project scope of work. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.331.

Applicants must use the MEP SRA-TPC table template included as part of the Budget and Narrative template. For each subaward, applicants must also provide budget detail justifying the cost of the work performed on the project.

- g) **Indirect Costs** – Commonly referred to as Facilities & Administrative

Costs, Indirect Costs are defined as costs incurred by the applicant organization that cannot otherwise be directly assigned or attributed to a specific project. For more details, see Section IV.2.b.(8) of this NOFO.

**(8) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.**

(Does not count towards page limit.) 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 Section B.06 of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, dated April 30, 2019.

**(9) Current and Pending Support Form.**

(Does not count towards page limit.) Any application that includes investigators, researchers, and key personnel must identify all sources of current and potential funding, including this proposal. Any current project support (e.g., Federal, state, local, public or private foundations, etc.) must be listed on this form. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, and key personnel must be included, even if no salary support is received. The total award amount for the entire award period covered, including indirect costs, must be shown as well as the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the project, regardless of the source of support. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or that are being submitted concurrently to other potential funders.

Applicants must complete the Current and Pending Support Form, using multiple forms as necessary to account for all activity for each individual identified in the PI, co-PI and key personnel roles. A separate form should be used for each identified individual.

Applicants must download the Current and Pending Support Form from the NIST website at <https://www.nist.gov/oaam/grants-management-division/current-and-pending-support> and reference the guidance provided as it contains information to assist with accurately completing the form.

**(10) Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms.**

(Does not count toward the page limit). An alphabetical list of all abbreviations and acronyms, and their meaning, should be included.

**(11) Table of Funded Project Participants and Unfunded Informal Collaborators.**

(Does not count toward the page limit). 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 consist of an alphabetically ordered list, by organization, of all Funded Project Participants and all Unfunded Informal Collaborators. 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.

**(12) Bibliographic List of References.**

(Does not count toward the page limit). A complete bibliographic listing of all references used within the application should be included.

**(13) Resumes of Key Personnel.**

(Do not count toward the page limit but are limited to one-page each). One-page resumes of no more than five key personnel from each participating organization 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.

**(14) Required Letters of Commitment.**

(Do not count toward the page limit). 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. The letter of commitment should discuss the scope of work of the subject MEP Center and its relevance to the proposed project.

**B. Attachment of Required Documents**

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

**Items in Section IV.2.a.(6) through 2.a.(14) above 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 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 Forms and Applications" option to check that their application's required attachments were contained in their submission.

After submitting the application, check the status of your application here: [CHECK APPLICATION STATUS](#). 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.

If the directions found at:

<https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/index.htm#t=GetStarted%2FGetStarted.htm> are not effective, please contact the Grants.gov Help Desk immediately. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place outside the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. E-mails should be addressed to [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). 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.

*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, Email, 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 displayed in landscape orientation. Any figures, graphs, images, or pictures will count toward the page limits for the Project Narrative.

**(3) Font.** Easy to read font (11-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.

**(4) Page Limit.** The Project Narrative is limited to twenty (20) pages double spaced, noting the limit of two (2) pages for the Executive Summary. Resumes are not included in the page count of the Project Narrative. However, if resumes are included, resumes must be a maximum of two (2) pages each.

**(5) Page Limit Exclusions:**

SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;  
SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs;  
SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs;  
CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying;  
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities;  
Budget Narrative and Justification;  
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; and  
Current and Pending Support Form.

**(6) Page Layout.** The Proposal must be in portrait orientation.

**(7) Page size.** 21.6 centimeters by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ inches by 11 inches).

**(8) Page numbering.** Number pages sequentially.

**(9) Application language.** English. All documents must be in English, including but not limited to the initial application, any additional documents submitted in response to a NIST request, all reports, and any correspondence with NIST.

**(10) Typed document.** All applications, including forms, must be typed; handwritten forms will not be accepted.

**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.** Pre-applications will not be accepted under this NOFO.

**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 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 NOFO, 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 for funding pursuant to this NOFO must be received by NIST no later than 60 calendar days following the date that a Major or an Emergency Disaster Declaration is declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA Disaster Declaration) for all or a portion of an impacted State or of Puerto Rico. This program is open, and applications will be accepted by NIST on a rolling basis based on the date of the subject FEMA Disaster Declaration and subject to the publication of a superseding NOFO.

When developing the submission timeline, please keep in mind that: (1) all applicants are required to have current registrations in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and Grants.gov; (2) the free annual registration process in SAM.gov (see Section IV.3. of this NOFO) generally takes between three and five business days but can take more than two weeks; and (3) applicants will receive e-mail 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 [Grants.gov](https://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 SAM.gov is not current at the time of the award.

NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing within 90 days of application receipt.

### **5. Intergovernmental Review.**

Applications under this Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372.

### **6. How to Submit an Application.**

#### **A. Applications must be submitted electronically.**

**(1) Applications must be submitted via [Grants.gov](https://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 2020-NIST-MEP-MDAP-01 announcement, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk at 800-518-4726.
- (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. The typical registration process takes three to five business days. If problems are encountered, the registration process can take 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 (also see Section IV.3. of this NOFO). 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, except for Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays. For assistance using Grants.gov, the applicant may also contact [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).
- (c) To find instructions for submitting an application on Grants.gov, applicants should refer to the "Applicants" tab in the banner just below the top of the 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.

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

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 ascertain whether the application was rejected with errors and the reasons for the rejection, 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 the 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 the application is received on time.

7. **Amendments.** Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through Grants.gov.

## **V. Application Review Information**

1. **Evaluation Criteria.** The Evaluation Criteria, the Review and Selection Process, and the Section Factors for this program are set forth below. Reviewers will evaluate how well the applicant's proposed approach will achieve the program objectives, requirements and priorities for this program as described in Section I. of the NOFO. NIST will use the following criteria in evaluating applications and assigning weights, with a maximum score of 100.

- a. **Demonstration that the proposed project will meet the needs of**

**manufacturers in the target population (20 points).** Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant's proposal clearly defines the SMM target population(s) and how well the proposal demonstrates that the applicant understands the impact of the disaster to that population. Reviewers will also assess the extent to which the proposal shows that the efforts being proposed meet the needs identified and are consistent with the anticipated impacts of the project.

- b. Development/deployment methodology and use of appropriate technology and information sources (20 points).** Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant's proposed plan for conducting the assessments and analyzing the data 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 solve the problems of affected manufacturers.
- c. Assessment 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 SMMs and to the NIST MEP National Network. 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 Network; and demonstrated interest in the outcomes, especially by MEP Centers.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.

**f. 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.

**g. Financial Plan (10 points).** Reviewers will assess the suitability and focus of the applicant’s budget. It is expected that the amount of award funding that is applied to direct project activity costs should be maximized and allocated among participating MEP Centers to appropriately support the achievement of project tasking, goals, and objectives. The reviewers will consider the extent to which the proposed budget projections are reasonable and appropriate for the scale of effort to be undertaken by the applicant. The reviewers will also consider the extent to which the proposal explains the rationale for each of the budgeted items, including assumptions the applicant used in budgeting for the overall project, and the proposed budget is aligned to support the execution of the proposed project consistent with the goals, objectives and priorities of this program.

## **2. Review and Selection Process**

Proposals, reports, documents and other information related to applications submitted to NIST and/or relating to financial assistance awards issued by NIST will be reviewed and considered by Federal employees, or non-Federal personnel who have entered into conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering such information.

**a. Initial Administrative Review of Applications.** All applications received in response to this NOFO will be reviewed as received to determine whether they are eligible, complete, and responsive to this NOFO and aligned with the program objectives, requirements and priorities as described in the Program Description (see Section I. of this NOFO). Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or non-responsive will not be reviewed by MEP. However, NIST, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application that is missing non-substantive information which may easily be rectified or cured.

**b. Full Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications.**

Applications that are determined to be eligible, complete, and responsive to this NOFO will proceed for full reviews in accordance with the review and selection process described below. For FEMA Disaster Declarations covering only one State or Puerto Rico, NIST MEP will evaluate all applications as a single group. For FEMA Disaster Declarations covering multiple States, NIST MEP will first evaluate for funding suitability those applications where MEP Centers propose working as a consortium to cover all of the impacted States pursuant to a single project and will only evaluate applications covering a single State if none of the single project applications merit NIST MEP funding.

- c. Merit Review.** Each application will be reviewed by at least three technically qualified individual reviewers who will evaluate each application based on the Evaluation Criteria for this program (see Section V.1. of this NOFO). Applicants may receive written follow-up questions during the review process relative to requested clarifications of items contained in the applicant's proposal. Each reviewer will provide a written technical assessment against the evaluation criteria and based on that assessment will assign each application a numeric score, with a maximum score of 100. The reviewers may discuss the applications with each other, but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not as a consensus.

Based on an average of the reviewers' final scores, applications will be assigned adjectival ratings in accordance with the following scale:

Fundable (70-100); or  
Unfundable (0-69).

For decision-making purposes, applications receiving the same adjectival rating will maintain a rank order based on the average of the reviewers' scores – both within the particular adjectival ranking, as well as overall.

The Subject Matter Expert, who will be a NIST MEP federal employee, will review the reviewers' final scores, written technical comments and the final ranking of the proposals, and will provide a written recommendation to the Selecting Official concerning the funding of awards under this NOFO. The Subject Matter Expert may recommend to the Selecting Official that awards be made out of rank order based upon one or more of the selection factors described in Section V.2.e. of this NOFO or that no applications be recommended for funding.

- d. Selection.** The Selecting Official is the Director of NIST MEP or designee. The Selecting Official makes the final recommendation to the NIST Grants



Officer regarding the funding of applications under this NOFO. The Selecting Official shall be provided all applications, all scores and all technical assessments by the reviewers, a written funding recommendation from the SME, and all information obtained from the applicants during the review, evaluation, and negotiation processes.

The Selecting Official shall generally select and recommend the most meritorious application(s) for award(s) based upon the rank order of the applications. The Selecting Official retains the discretion to select and recommend an application out of order based on the Selection Factors (see Section V.2.e. of this NOFO) or not to recommend any applications for funding.

The Selecting Official will make final award recommendations to the NIST Grants Officer. The Selecting Official will be provided all applications, all the scores and technical assessments of the reviewers, and all information obtained from the applicants during the evaluation, review and negotiation processes. The Selecting Official shall generally select and recommend the most meritorious application for an award based upon the final rank order of the applications and the recommendation of the Subject Matter Expert. The Selecting Official retains the discretion to select and recommend an application out of order based on the Selection Factors for this program (see Section V.2.e. of this NOFO) or to select and recommend no applications for funding. The Selecting Official's recommendation to the Grants Officer shall set forth the bases for the selection decisions.

**e. Selection Factors.**

The Selection Factors for this program are:

- i. Relevance of the proposed project to the overall objectives and priorities of this program (see Section I of this NOFO);
- ii. Diversity of geography in the awarding of MEP funding, as well diversity in awarding MEP funding to multiple MEP Centers;
- iii. Reviewers' evaluations, including technical comments, and the Subject Matter Expert recommendation;
- iv. Whether the proposed project duplicates other projects funded by the Department of Commerce or by other Federal agencies; and
- v. Availability of Federal funds.

**f. Pre-Award Negotiations.** NIST reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with any applicant selected to receive an award, which may include

requesting that the applicant removes certain costs. In addition, NIST may request that successful applicants modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. NIST may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any application. In some cases, NIST may ask applicants to consider combining projects. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards is the responsibility of the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NIST Grants Officer are final.

**g. 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. § 200.206, 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 \$250,000), NIST GMD will review and consider the publicly available information about that applicant in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIS). An applicant may, at its discretion, review and comment on information about itself previously entered into FAPIS 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 FAPIS 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.

**3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date**

Review of applications, selection of successful applicants, and award processing is expected to be completed within 90 calendar days of receipt of a complete application.

**4. Additional Information**

- a. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants.** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail and will have the opportunity to receive a debriefing after the opportunity is officially closed. Applicants interested in a debrief

must make such request in writing within 10 business days of the email notification. The program office will then work with the unsuccessful applicant in arranging a date and time of the debrief.

- b. **Retention of Unsuccessful Applications.** Unsuccessful applications will be retained in accordance with the [General Record Schedule 1.2/021](#).

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

1. **Federal Award Notices.** Successful applicants will receive an award package from the NIST Grants Officer.

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/SBg4>.

On April 22, 2024, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published updates to the OMB Guidance for Grants and Agreements located in part 200 of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR part 200), now called the OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance. This updated OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance (2 CFR) is effective for all awards issued by DOC/NIST on or after October 1, 2024. Applicants can find these recent revisions to 2 CFR here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/22/2024-07496/guidance-for-federal-financial-assistance>.

- b. **Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.** The Department of Commerce will apply to each award in this program, the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions in effect on the date of award. The current version, dated April 30, 2019, is accessible [here](#). Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if 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 NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, for more information.

- d. Funding Availability and Limitation of Liability.** Funding for the program listed in this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. NIST or the Department of Commerce will not be responsible for application preparation costs, including but not limited to the program's failure to receive funding or cancellation due to agency priorities. Publication of this NOFO does not oblige NIST or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

- e. Use of Government-Owned Intellectual Property.** If the applicant anticipates using any Government-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 Federal 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 Government-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 C.03 of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Terms and Conditions](#) dated April 30, 2019.

Any use of government-owned intellectual property by a recipient of an award under this announcement is at the sole discretion of the Federal Government 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.

If any inventions made in whole or in part by a Federal employee arise in the course of an award made pursuant to this NOFO, the United States Government may retain its ownership rights in any such invention. Licensing or other disposition of Federal Government's rights in such inventions will be determined solely by the Federal Government and include the possibility of the Federal Government putting the intellectual property into the public domain.

- f. Supporting Documentation.** Prior to award or following the issuance of an award, NIST may require recipients to provide draft copies of sub-tier agreements, including subawards and contracts, as well as subrecipient performance monitoring plans.

**g. Reporting**

- 1. Reporting Requirements.** The following reporting requirements described in Sections A.01, Reporting Requirements, of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions](#), dated April 30, 2019, apply to awards in this program:

- a. Financial Reports.** The Recipient shall submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report, into the MEP's Enterprise Information System (MEIS) on a quarterly basis, beginning the third month after the award start date. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of each quarterly reporting period. The Recipient shall submit a final SF-425 within 90 days after the expiration date of the award.
- b. Performance.** (The Recipient shall submit a Technical Report (completing all required MEIS fields) on a quarterly basis beginning the third month after the award start date, 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, and publication citation information as well as links to publicly available data shall be submitted as soon as they become available. The final Technical Report should include a detailed discussion relative to the learning from and results of the project, including disaster preparedness lessons learned and SMMs best practices in mitigating the adverse impacts of a disaster, as described in Section I. of this NOFO. The report and other information learned through the project should be in a format that lends itself to dissemination to other SMMs and to the MEP National Network™. In addition, the report may be shared by NIST MEP with various NIST Laboratory Programs charged with disaster resilience and related research.

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/mep-disaster-assessment-program](http://www.nist.gov/mep/mep-disaster-assessment-program).

- c. 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).

**d. Patent and Property Reports.** From time to time, and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements set forth in 2 C.F.R. part 200 and in accordance with other terms and conditions governing the award, the recipient may be required to submit property and patent reports.

**e. 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 NOFO, 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.

**2. Audit Requirements.** The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section D.01, and 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, require any non-Federal entity (i.e., including non-profit institutions of higher education and 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. Additionally, unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the award, entities that are not subject to Subpart F of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (e.g., for-profit commercial entities) that expend \$750,000 or more in DOC funds during their fiscal year must submit to the Grants Officer either: (i) a financial related audit of each DOC award or subaward in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards; or (ii) a project specific audit for each award or subaward in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 C.F.R. § 200.507. Applicants are reminded that NIST, the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General, or another authorized Federal agency may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

**3. 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 (Public Law 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>.

## VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Questions should be directed to the following:

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Programmatic and Technical Questions	Bryana Head Phone: 301-975-4885 E-mail: <a href="mailto:mepnofo@nist.gov">mepnofo@nist.gov</a> with '2020-NIST-MEP-MDAP-01' in subject line
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	<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	Michael Teske E-mail: <a href="mailto:Michael.teske@nist.gov">Michael.teske@nist.gov</a>



## **VIII. Other Information**

**1. Public Website and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).** Questions from applicants pertaining to NOFO eligibility, cost sharing requirements, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive proposal will not be considered on an informal basis. Applicants must submit all such questions in writing to [mepnofo@nist.gov](mailto:mepnofo@nist.gov). Answers to such written questions submitted to NIST MEP may be made available to the public as part of an FAQ document, which will be periodically updated on the MEP website at [www.nist.gov/mep/mep-disaster-assessment-program](http://www.nist.gov/mep/mep-disaster-assessment-program).

**2. Webinar Information Session:** NIST MEP will host a webinar information session for MEP Centers that are interested in learning about this funding opportunity. This webinar will provide general information regarding MEP and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. NIST MEP staff will be available at the webinar to answer general questions. During the webinar, proprietary technical discussions about specific project ideas will not be permitted. Also, NIST MEP staff will not critique or provide feedback on any specific project ideas during the webinar or at any time before submission of a proposal to Grants.gov. However, NIST MEP staff will provide information about the MEP eligibility and cost sharing requirements, the evaluation criteria, the selection factors and process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal during this webinar. The webinar will be held approximately fifteen (15) to thirty (30) business days after posting of this NOFO. The exact date and time of the webinar will be posted on the MEP website at [MEP to insert link]. The webinar will be recorded, and a link to the recording will be posted on the NIST MEP website. In addition, the webinar presentations will be available on the MEP website. Organizations wishing to participate in the webinar must register in advance by contacting NIST MEP by e-mail at [mepnofo@nist.gov](mailto:mepnofo@nist.gov). Participation in the webinar is not required in order for a MEP Center to submit an application pursuant to this NOFO.

### **3. Personal and Business Information**

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program

evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. If an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.