

Respond IN YOUR OWN WORDS on **one or more** of these questions, using 12-point single spaced text. Email response to meprfi@nist.gov with the subject line "MEP Competitive Awards Program RFI Responses" and include the question to which you are responding. NIST will accept responses to this request for information until **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on January 13, 2017**. (I would appreciate if you could .cc me on the response please).

Questions

(2) What advanced manufacturing technologies are and/or will be needed by small U.S. manufacturers for the companies to be competitive and grow in the global marketplace in the near-term (1 to 2 years), mid-term (3 to 5 years) and/or long-term (more than 5 years)?

-Automation that fits our complex process that will allow us to reduce the need for manual labor which will allow us to increase our direct labor skillset to manage the automation. Intended to also address safety, quality, throughput, planning, etc.

-SIOP analytics software. We believe we could see significant improvement with an effective software and would be concerned with how would it integrate with our ERP?

(c) How is the information about advanced manufacturing technologies best delivered to small U.S. manufacturers and/or MEP Centers that support those small U.S. manufacturers?

-Offsite, formal training with key technical people and decision makers. Through local universities or technical institutes would be most effective.

(5) Are there any other critical issues that NIST MEP should consider in its strategic planning for future investments that are not covered by the first four questions?

-How do we educate small Manufacturers about the availability of university academic centers and the feasibility for small manufacturers to access them. Considerations should include cost of programs, geography, etc. The university academic SC centers should certainly be involved in the planning.