



MAKING AN IMPACT ON U.S. MANUFACTURING

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

Information Webinar

Federal Funding Opportunity: 2016-NIST-MEP-ENNMI-01
(CLOSING FRIDAY, JUNE 17TH @ 11:59 p.m. EASTERN)

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WELCOME

**Informational Webinar – May 9, 2016
2:30 p.m. (Eastern)**

Federal Funding Opportunity: 2016-NIST-MEP-ENNMI-01

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

**Diane Henderson, Manager of Competitions, NIST MEP
Dave Stieren, Technical Manager, Partnerships and Program Development Office, NIST MEP**

Information Webinar and Communication Protocols

- Webinar serves as a communication vehicle to provide an overview of the funding opportunity.
- During the webinar, proprietary technical discussions about specific project ideas will not be permitted.
- NIST/MEP staff will not critique or provide feedback on any project ideas during the webinar or at any time before submission of a proposal to MEP.
 - We will consider questions of a clarifying nature that are not specific to an individual proposal.
 - If you want to submit questions following the webinar, please email them to MEP at mepffo@nist.gov.
 - Your question and response will become part of the FAQ document available on our competition page of our MEP website, <http://www.nist.gov/mep/ffo-embeddingmep.cfm>

Information Webinar Agenda

- Funding Opportunity Overview and Background
- Federal Award Information
- Eligibility Information
- Application and Submission Information
- Evaluation Criteria
- Review and Selection Process
- Selection Factors
- Anticipated Announcement, Award Date and Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants
- Reporting Requirements
- MEP Resources
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MEP: A National Resource to Help Connect Small Manufacturers with NNMI Institutes



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- **Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation (RAMI) Legislation – 2014 – The National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI)**

*“The Secretary shall ensure that the National Program Office incorporates the **Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership** into Program planning to ensure that the results of the Program reach small and medium-sized entities.”*

- **FY17 President’s Budget for MEP (+\$11.1M)**

- ✓ *Expand efforts to transfer federally funded technologies*
 - *better reach smaller manufacturers*
 - *connect manufacturers with business opportunities*

- **MEP National Advisory Board Committee on Technology Acceleration**

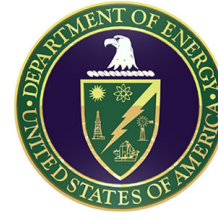
- ✓ *2015 Technology Acceleration Implementation Plan Recommendations*
 - *MEP should give priority to developing and implementing Technology Acceleration opportunities with NIST labs and **National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI) Institutes** over the next year, while also pursuing the emerging collaboration with DOE labs.*



MEP and The NNMI Institutes

- NNMI Institutes, MEP have mission-centric focus on U.S. manufacturers – especially small manufacturers
 - ✓ *Institutes need to connect with small manufacturers on large scale to maximize impact*
 - ✓ *National MEP network provides hands-on assistance to thousands of small U.S. manufacturers annually – and has a focus on accelerating technology to small U.S. manufacturers*

- MEP actively working w/several NNMI Institutes now; seeking to expand engagements with Institutes in near future
 - ✓ *Ongoing MEP Center partnerships with existing Institutes sponsored by the DOD and DOE*
 - ✓ *Anticipate new MEP partnerships with new Institutes coming on line in near future sponsored by DOC, DOD, DOE*
 - ✓ *Promoting new MEP partnerships with Institutes through this NIST MEP FFO*



MEP NNMI ROLE

- **Overarching framework for how MEP Centers and NNMI Institutes can work together provided in 2015 NIST MEP MOU WITH DOD**
 - ✓ Same framework included in NIST MEP MOU with DOE currently in process

MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIAL BASE POLICY
AND THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY
HOLLINGS MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

May 2015

MEP Role in NNMI Institutes:

- ✓ *Increase small manufacturer awareness of Institute focus areas, resources*
- ✓ *Facilitate small manufacturer informing Institute research*
- ✓ *Facilitate small manufacturer participation in Institute research*
- ✓ *Help deploy results of Institute research to small manufacturers*



NIST MEP FFO: Embedding MEP in NNMI Institutes



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This FFO provides NIST MEP funding resources to help facilitate expanded collaborations involving the NNMI Institutes and MEP Centers

- **Purpose**

- ✓ To enhance the scale of Institute impacts on small U.S. manufacturers by ***conducting new pilot projects*** that ***broaden and deepen engagements*** involving NNMI Institutes and MEP Centers

NIST MEP FFO: Embedding MEP in NNMI Institutes



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Objectives

- ✓ To create approaches to engaging small U.S. manufacturers in the work of NNMI Institutes through hands-on assistance mechanisms and services such as those that are currently, or could be, offered by MEP Centers
- ✓ To develop and test business models for serving needs of small U.S. manufacturers in technology areas of NNMI Institutes by leveraging the resources, assets, and assistance capacities of MEP Centers
- ✓ To facilitate knowledge and best practice sharing between NNMI Institutes and MEP Centers – as set within the framework of the NIST-DOD MOU
- ✓ To cultivate an enhanced nationwide network of partnerships among NNMI Institutes and MEP Centers for the benefit of small U.S. manufacturers.

Proposed approaches must include the embedding of MEP Center representatives in residence at participating NNMI Institute(s)

Funding Opportunity Overview

- **Funding Opportunity Title:** *Embedding MEP in NNMI Institutes Pilot Projects*
- **Funding Opportunity Description:**
 - *NIST invites proposals from current MEP Centers to pilot test approaches to provide needed technology acceleration assistance to small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers (hereinafter referred to as small U.S. manufacturers) through the establishment of meaningful and results oriented collaborations between the nationwide system of Centers operating as part of the NIST Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program (hereinafter referred to as NIST MEP), and the Institutes participating in the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI).*
 - *The emphasis of these Pilot Projects will be to demonstrate ways to more fully leverage the assets and resources of the national MEP Program to provide assistance to small U.S. manufacturers in technology areas that are the focus of the NNMI Institutes.*

Funding Opportunity Overview

Funding Available:

- NIST anticipates funding approximately (7) cooperative agreement awards, with up to two-year (2) periods of performance, in accordance with the multi-year funding policy described in Section II.3. of this FFO.
- It is expected that funding for these awards will be between \$300,000 and \$600,000 per year, with total federal funding for the two-year award period being between \$600,000 and \$1,200,000.
- NIST anticipates approximately \$7,000,000 in total federal funding, being to be available for awards issued pursuant to this FFO.

Funding Opportunity Overview

- **Authority:** The statutory authority for the MEP Program is 15 U.S.C. § 278k(f)
- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative Agreement
 - The nature of NIST’s “substantial involvement” will generally be collaboration between MEP and the recipient organization(s).
 - Additional forms of substantial involvement that may arise are described in Final Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidance Implementing the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act, 43 Fed. Reg. 36860-65 (Aug. 18, 1978) and in Chapter 5.C of the Department of Commerce Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual, as may be periodically amended, which is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNJd>.

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Federal Award Information (1)

- **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.

Federal Award Information (2)

Award Kick-Off Meeting

- **Recipients will be required to attend a kick-off meeting**, which will be held within the first 30 days of the start of the project period, to ensure that the recipient has a clear understanding of the program and project components.
 - The kick-off meeting will take place at a location determined by NIST MEP.
 - The kick-off meeting will last no longer than one day and must be attended by the project manager and appropriate key personnel who will play a significant role in managing and/or executing the award.
 - The kick-off meeting for each award should involve appropriate personnel from the lead MEP Center recipient, participating Institute(s), other MEP Center(s) participating in the project, and may as necessary include personnel from other third party collaborating entities.
- Applicants **must** include travel and related costs for the kick-off meeting as part of the budget for year one (1), and these costs should be reflected in the SF-424A. (See Section IV.2.a.(2). of the FFO.)
 - These costs must also be reflected in the budget table and budget narrative for year 1, which is submitted as part of the budget tables and budget narratives section of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.2.a.(6).(d). of the FFO.)

Federal Award Information (3)

MEP System-Wide Meetings

- NIST/MEP typically organizes system-wide meetings approximately four times a year in an effort to share best practices, new and emerging trends, and additional topics of interest.
 - These meetings are rotated throughout the United States and typically involve 2-3 days of resource time and associated travel costs for each meeting.
 - One key representative from the lead MEP Center and appropriate NNMI Institute(s) should attend these meetings
 - Pilot projects will be expected to actively participate during these meetings and freely share lessons learned regarding the mechanisms of the pilot approach, and attributes conducive to transferring knowledge from the NNMI Institutes to MEP Centers for the benefit of small U.S. manufacturers, as well as information about the Institutes' technology focus areas.
- Applicants **must** include travel and related costs for four quarterly MEP system-wide meetings in each of one (1) or two (2) project years (4 meetings per year; up to 8 total meetings over up to a two-year award period). These costs must be reflected in the SF-424A (see Section IV.2.a.(2). of the FFO). These costs must also be reflected in the budget tables and budget narratives for each of the project's years, which are submitted as part of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.2.a.(6).(d). of the FFO).

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Eligibility Information (1)

- **Eligible Applicants.**
 - Applicants for this program **must be an active MEP Center** that is operating pursuant to a current NIST MEP cooperative agreement.
 - An applicant MEP Center **must form a collaboration**, teaming arrangement or other appropriate relationship with one or more of the current established and operating NNMI Institutes.
 - NIST **encourages** project proposals involving participation from multiple MEP Centers and multiple NNMI Institutes, as well as from other collaborating entities, such as local economic development organizations, universities, community colleges, technology incubator programs, and other organizations.

Eligibility Information (2)

- Applications submitted in response to this FFO **are required** to clearly identify the lead MEP Center applicant, as well as the NNMI Institute (s), other MEP Centers, and other key organizations participating in the proposed project, including the specific teaming arrangements for each participating organization.
- An MEP Center **may** serve as the lead MEP Center/applicant on only one proposal.
- There are **no restrictions** on the number of applications in which MEP Centers or NNMI Institutes can be proposed as collaborators.
- Eligibility for this program **is contingent upon** an applicant being a NIST MEP Center at the time of application, at the time of award, and for the entire period of performance for awards issued pursuant to this FFO.
- NIST **reserves the right** to take appropriate action, which may include not making an award, or terminating an award or a portion thereof, should an MEP Center fail to maintain its eligibility at all required times.
- NIST further **reserves the right** to take appropriate action, including terminating an award or a portion thereof, if an Institute does not maintain its designation as such during any time during the period of performance for awards issued pursuant to this FFO.

Eligibility Information (3)

- **Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement.**
 - Non-federal cost share is not required for awards issued pursuant to this FFO. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals with budgets that maximize the application of award funding to the performance of project tasking and direct project costs.
- **No Double Charging Against other NIST/MEP or Institute Awards.**
 - Costs charged against awards issued pursuant to this FFO, whether paid by federal or non-federal funds, **may not also be charged** as costs against any other NIST/MEP or Institute award (i.e., no double-billing of costs).
 - In addition, NIST/MEP funding provided by an MEP Center to an Institute or to another MEP Center **may not be used** by such Institute or MEP Center as a non-federal cost share contribution for an Institute or MEP Center award (i.e., federal funds may not be used as cost share for other federal awards).

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Application and Submission Information (1)

- **Required Forms and Documents:**

- **Required Forms*:**

- SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance
 - Must be certified through www.grants.gov by an authorized representative of the applicant organization
 - Item 12 must list the FFO Number as 2016-NIST-MEP-ENNMI-01
 - Item 18, should list the total budget information for the full duration of the project
 - List of certifications and assurances referenced in Item 21 of the SF424 is contained in the SF424B
- SF-424A Budget Information Non-Constructions
 - Must reflect anticipated expenses for each year of the project (considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments).
 - Must include estimated costs associated with the NIST MEP Kick-Off Conference and System Wide Meetings (See Sections II.4 & II.5 of FFO)
 - Please carefully follow the directions found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html> when filling out this form.
 - The 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 on Line 1 under Column (b) should be 11.611.
- SF-424B Assurances Non-construction Programs
- CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying
 - For the Award Number, enter “2016-NIST-MEP-ENNMI-01”. In the Project Name filed, use the “Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project” from field 15 of the SF-424, or an abbreviation thereof.
- SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

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

Application and Submission Information (2)

Required Forms & Documents Continued....

- **Technical Proposal.** The Technical Proposal, **with a period of performance of up to two (2) years**, is a word- processed document **not exceeding 25 pages** that is responsive to the program description (see Section I. of the FFO) and the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of the FFO).
 - **Table of Contents** (Does not count towards page limit)
 - **Executive Summary**
 - **Project Narrative**
 - **Please read all of Section IV.2.a.6.c**
 - **A proposal that fails to meet these requirements will be deemed as unresponsive to this FFO.**

Application and Submission Information (3)

Required Forms & Documents Continued....

– Budget Tables and Budget Narratives

- **In addition** to the SF-424A form (see Section IV.2.a.(2). of this FFO), 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.
- 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 subawardees/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 the required Award Kick-Off and System-Wide meeting described in Sections II.4. and II.5. of the FFO in the budget tables and budget narratives.
- A suggested budget table and budget narrative template are available on the MEP website, <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-embeddingmep.cfm>.

Application and Submission Information (4)

Required Forms & Documents Continued....

– Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.

- If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant Federal audit agency.
- If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, provide a statement to this effect.
- If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal audit agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions available at: <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>.
- Alternatively, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge indirect costs to an MEP award pursuant to a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), in which case a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is not required.
 - Applicants proposing a 10 percent de minimis rate pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget portion of the application.

Application and Submission Information (5)

Required Forms & Documents Continued....

- **Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms.** (This does not contribute to the total number of pages.)
 - An alphabetical list of all abbreviations and acronyms, and their meaning, should be included.
- **Table of Funded Project Participants and Unfunded Informal Collaborators.** (This does not contribute to the total number of pages.)
 - Provide a table that identifies all organizations that will participate in and contribute to the project, if funded, known at the time of the application submission.
 - The table should 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.
- **Bibliographic List of References.** (This does not contribute to the total number of pages.)
 - A complete bibliographic listing of all references used within the application should be included.

Application and Submission Information (6)

- **Resumes of Key Personnel. (These do not contribute to the total number of pages).**
 - One-page resumes of no more than five key personnel from each participant organization may be included; these do not count toward the page limit.
 - Key personnel resumes should include resumes for any personnel from MEP Centers who will be embedded at the NNMI Institutes.
 - ***Any information beyond one page for each resume and any additional resumes submitted will not be considered.***
- **Required Letters of Commitment. (These do not contribute to the total number of pages).**
 - Letters that commit specific resources (not funding) to the project in the event that the application is funded are required from all of the following that apply:
 - Each application must include a Letter of Commitment from an authorized representative of: (i) the MEP Center applicant; (ii) each Institute that will be participating in the project; and from (iii) other MEP Centers that will be participating in the project. Each letter should describe the submitting organization's commitment to and activities in support of the proposed project.
 - If the application includes subawards, contracts or other payments to known third parties, including Institutes and other MEP Centers, a draft copy of each subaward, contract or other funding vehicle must be included.
 - Letters of Commitment should not be letters submitted by non-proposing entities wishing to vouch for the applicant's (or entities associated with the applicant) knowledge, skills, and abilities or entities to conduct the proposed work. These should be in the form of a Letter of Interest (see Section IV.3.a.(13) of this FFO).

Application and Submission Information (7)

- **Data Management Plan (This does not contribute to the total number of pages)**
 - The DMP is a supplementary document **of not more than two pages** that **must include**, at a minimum, a summary of proposed activities that are expected to generate data, a summary of the types of data expected to be generated by the identified activities, a plan for storage and maintenance of the data expected to be generated by the identified activities, and a plan describing whether and how data generated by the identified activities will be reviewed and made available to the public. (Refer to Section IV.2.a.14 for additional guidance)

Application and Submission Information (8)

- **Application Format (Section IV 2(b)):**
 - Page Limit. **The Technical Proposals are limited to Twenty-five (25) 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; 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; Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms; Table of Funded Project Participants and Unfunded Informal Collaborators; Bibliographic List of References Resumes of Key Personnel; Required Letters of Commitment; Letters of Interest; and the Data Management Plan.
 - **Application Replacement Pages.** Applicants **may not** submit replacement pages and/or missing documents once an application has been submitted. Any revisions must be made by submission of a new application that must be received by NIST by the submission deadline

Application and Submission Information (9)

- **Attachment of Required Application Documents**
 - Items IV.2.a.(6). through IV.2.a.(14). must be completed and attached by clicking on “Add Attachments” found in item 15 of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This will create a zip file that allows for transmittal of the documents electronically via Grants.gov.
- **Grants.gov**
 - Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions at www.grants.gov to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system.
 - A receipt from Grants.gov does not provide details concerning whether all attachments (or how many attachments) transferred successfully.
 - **Applicants using Grants.gov will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency’s electronic system has received its application.**
 - **Applicants are urged** to use Grants.gov’s Download Submitted Applications feature to check that all required attachments were contained in their submission. Go to the *Grants.gov Online Users Guide* available at the Grants.gov site (<http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh>), choose Applicants, then Applicant Actions, then select the “Check My Application Status” option, click on the Download Submitted Applications feature, and follow the directions.
 - Applicants can track their submission in the Grants.gov system by following the procedures at the Grants.gov site (<http://go.usa.gov/cjamz>). It can take up to two business days for an application to fully move through the Grants.gov system to NIST.

Application and Submission Information (10)

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) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) a free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM) (see Section IV.3 and Section IV.7.a.(1)(b)) may take between three and five business days or as long as more than two weeks, and (3) electronic applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages from Grants.gov over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application.*
- *NIST will not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements; if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time that NIST is ready to make a Federal award pursuant to this FFO, NIST may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.*
- **Applicants will find instructions on registering with SAM.gov as part of the Grants.gov process at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>**

Application and Submission Information (11)

- **Submission Dates and Times.**

- Applicants must submit applications electronically through www.grants.gov.
 - A receipt from Grants.gov indicating an application is received **does not** provide information about whether attachments have been received.
- **Electronic applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, June 17, 2016.**
 - *NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by email.*
 - *Applications received after the respective deadline will not be reviewed or considered.*
- Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the **Grants.gov system is expected to be closed for routine maintenance from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, May 21, 2016 until Monday, May 23, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time.** Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.
- **When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that:**
 - (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov);
 - (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) (see Section IV.3. and Section IV.7.a.(1).b. of this FFO) may take between three and five business days or as long as more than two weeks; and
 - (3) electronic applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and
 - (4) applicants using Grants.gov will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application.

Please review Section IV.4 regarding Submission Dates and Times

Application and Submission Information (12)

- **Submission Dates and Times.**

- NIST strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the last minute to submit an application. NIST will not make allowance for any late submissions.
- The responsibility for ensuring a complete application is received by NIST by the deadline is the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- To avoid any potential processing backlogs due to last minute Grants.gov registrations, applicants are strongly encouraged to start their Grants.gov registration process **at least four (4) weeks prior to the application due date.**
- To find instructions on submitting an application on Grants.gov, Applicants should refer to the “Applicants” tab in the banner just below the top of the www.grants.gov home page.

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Evaluation Review Criteria (1)

The applications will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria described below **(Total Points Available – 100)**.

- a. **Alignment with MOU Framework for MEP – NNMI Institute Collaboration (30 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)**
- b. **Development of a Sustainable NNMI Institute – MEP Collaboration to Benefit Small U.S. Manufacturers (10 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)**
- c. **NNMI and MEP Network Building (20 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)**
- d. **Key Personnel and Organizational Structure. (20 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)**
- e. **Budget. (20 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)**

Criterion 1: Alignment with MOU Framework for MEP – NNMI Institute Collaboration (30 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)

- i. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant's proposal aligns with the 4 elements of the NIST – DOD MOU (see Section I. of this FFO), which defines the framework for how NNMI Institutes and MEP Centers can work together to facilitate engagement of small U.S. manufacturers to:
- Increase small U.S. manufacturer awareness of NNMI Institute focus areas and resources;
 - Ensure the involvement of small U.S. manufacturers in the processes and activities associated with informing and developing the research agendas of the NNMI Institutes;
 - Increase small U.S. manufacturers' participation in NNMI Institute research; and
 - Ensure the transition of NNMI Institute research results to small U.S. manufacturers for implementation.

Reviewers will evaluate how effective and thorough the proposed approach will be in accomplishing these framework elements. The quality and technical merit of the proposed approach will be evaluated, as well as the number of framework elements that are addressed.

Criterion 1: Alignment with MOU Framework for MEP – NNMI Institute Collaboration (30 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight) CONTINUED....

- ii. Reviewers will evaluate the adequacy of the proposed business model and service delivery mechanisms, including the respective roles and responsibilities of the proposed team members and their proposed relationships to each other, the identified tasks and measurable milestones and assess the likelihood that and the extent to which those models and mechanisms will be developed, tested, deployed, and implemented so as to best leverage available , add capabilities to the MEP System, and enhance the impact of Institutes' efforts to benefit the technological needs of small manufacturers. The quality and technical merit of the applications will also be evaluated based upon the likelihood that and the extent to which the proposed approach will result in positive impacts for small U.S. manufacturers in terms of
- new and retained sales;
 - jobs created or saved; and
 - new small U.S. manufacturers' investments in their businesses and small U.S. manufacturers' cost savings.

Criterion 2: Development of a Sustainable NNMI Institute – MEP Collaboration to Benefit Small U.S. Manufacturers (10 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)

- i. Reviewers will assess the viability of the proposed business models being developed and tested. Specifically, reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the proposed approach will be based upon a revenue model that is aligned with, and can persist within, the operating parameters for participating MEP Center(s), NNMI Institute(s), and the small U.S. manufacturers to be served. Included here will be an assessment of the likelihood that and the extent to which the proposed model will be able to sustain the provision of cutting edge innovative manufacturing technological assistance to small U.S. manufacturers beyond the period of performance of this announcement's funding awards.
- ii. Reviewers will also assess the likelihood that the proposed approach will attract small U.S. manufacturers on a large scale – to potentially be on the order of hundreds or more, annually, per Institute.

Criterion 3: NNMI and MEP Network Building (20 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)

- i. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the approach in the applicant's proposal cultivates network building across the national network of MEP Centers, as well as the national network of NNMI Institutes and other organizations and entities involved with U.S. manufacturing. Reviewers will assess the quality, merit, depth, and breadth of the network building being proposed by each applicant.
- ii. Reviewers will also specifically assess the number of MEP Centers and NNMI Institutes involved in the proposed approach for each application, as well as the geographic attributes of the network building that occurs (whether it is local, state, regional, national, or a combination). Proposals that are assessed as contributing to national network building and national scale benefits for U.S. manufacturing will be evaluated higher than those whose impacts are assessed as fewer and more localized.

Criterion 4: Key Personnel and Organizational Structure. (20 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)

Reviewers will assess the ability of the key personnel and the applicant's proposed management structure to successfully conduct the project being proposed. It is the intent of NIST MEP and this program that project activities be true and significant collaborations between the participating MEP Centers and NNMI Institutes. Reviewers will assess the significance of the effort being proposed in terms of amount of staff time being allocated to the embedding of personnel from MEP Centers within NNMI Institutes, in relation to the overall proposed effort. Proposed approaches are required to fund the embedding of MEP Center personnel in residence at NNMI Institutes at a total level of effort and time commitment equal to or greater than 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff year.

Reviewers will assess the quality, merit, and extent to which the following is evident when evaluating the qualifications of the applicant and of program management:

- i. Proposed personnel identified from the MEP Center(s) to be embedded within the participating NNMI Institute(s) have the appropriate education, technical background, and experience assisting small U.S. manufacturers, especially in areas relating to technology acceleration and working with supply chains, to appropriately represent the involved MEP Center(s) to the involved NNMI Institute(s);
- ii. Key personnel are identified in the participating NNMI Institute(s), the participating MEP Center(s), and other participating organizations to appropriately support the activities of the proposed pilot project, including the embedding of personnel;
- iii. Proposed management structure and organizational roles are clearly defined and aligned to plan, direct, monitor, organize and oversee the implementation of the proposed approach to achieve project objectives, and the proposed organizational structure flows logically from the specified approach to the project deliverables; and
- iv. Proposed organizational structures and participating personnel from the MEP Center(s) and NNMI Institute(s) are ready to begin project operations upon receipt of funding award.

Criterion 4: Key Personnel and Organizational Structure. (20 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)

FTE REQUIREMENT:

- Proposed approaches are required to fund the embedding of MEP Center representatives in residence at NNMI Institutes at a total level of effort and time commitment equal to or greater than 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff each year.
- This 1.0 FTE requirement for embedded MEP Center personnel represents the minimum level of effort, and embedding of MEP Center personnel at levels of effort and time commitment totaling more than 1.0 FTE each year are encouraged.
- This 1.0 FTE requirement may be met via the embedding of multiple MEP staff members in NNMI Institutes, but any single MEP Center personnel must be embedded at a level of effort of 0.5 FTE staff year or greater to be counted toward the overall annual 1.0 FTE requirement.
- It is required that the embedded MEP Center personnel operate in residence at the participating Institutes.
- Applicants may also propose approaches that involve the participation of multiple NNMI Institutes, as well as multiple MEP Centers.
- A proposal that fails to meet these requirements will be deemed as unresponsive to this FFO.

Criterion 5: Budget. (20 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight)

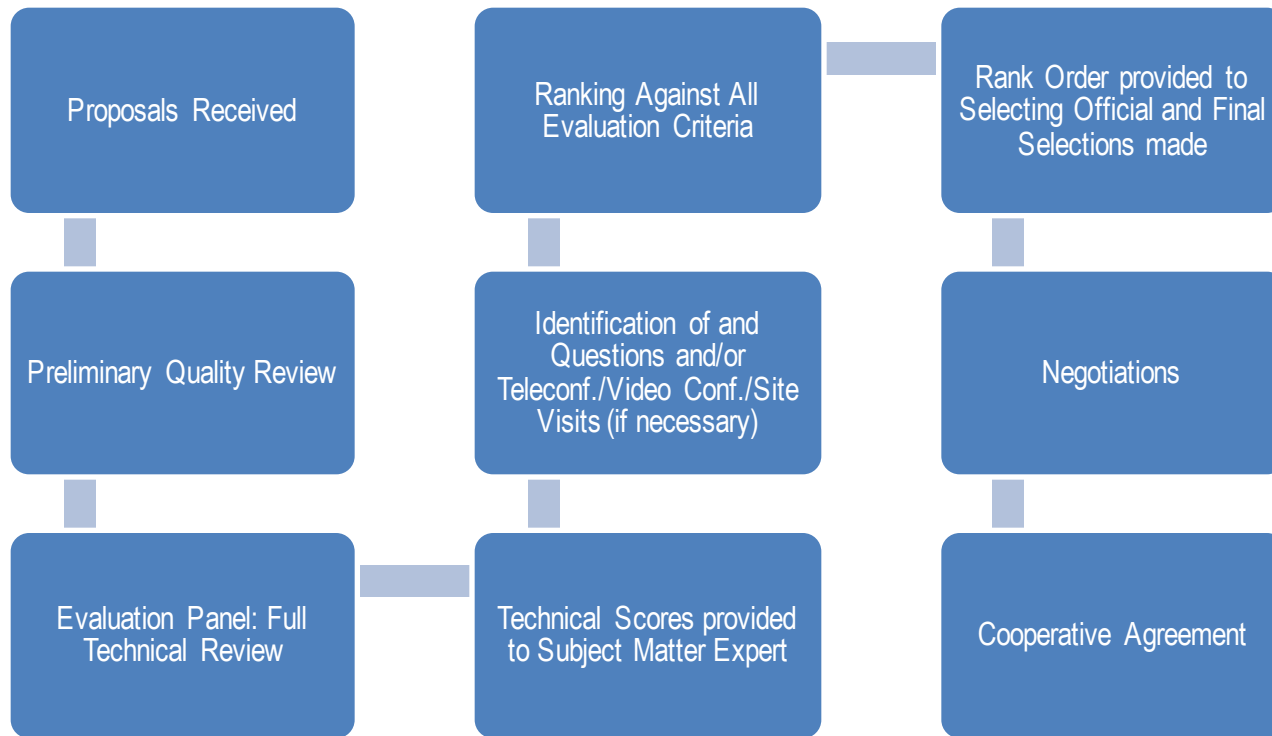
Reviewers will assess the suitability and focus of the applicant's budget for each year of the proposed Pilot, with a performance period of up to two (2) years. It is expected that the amount of project award funding that is applied to direct project activity costs, including salaries of embedded personnel, should be maximized. The reviewers will consider whether the:

- i. Proposed budget projections are reasonable and appropriate for the scale of effort to be undertaken by the applicant over each year of the proposed project plan; and
- ii. Proposal's narrative 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 objectives of the project, the objectives and expectations of this program, and to advance MEP system goals.

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- Evaluation Criteria
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Review and Selection Process (1)



Review and Selection Process (2)

- **Initial Administrative Review of Applications.**
- **Full Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications.**
 - Evaluation, Review and Ranking
 - A rank order will be prepared based on the average of the reviewers' scores and assigned adjectival ratings in accordance with the following scale:
 - Fundable, Outstanding (90-100);
 - Fundable, Very Good (80-89);
 - Fundable (70-79); or
 - Unfundable (0-69).
 - Selection

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Selection Factors

Selection Factors. The Selection Factors for this FFO are as follows:

- a. The availability of Federal funds;
- b. Relevance of the proposed project to the program goals and policy objectives;
- c. Reviewers' evaluations, including technical comments;
- d. Ensuring appropriate geographic diversity in the award of MEP funding, as well diversity in awarding MEP funding to multiple MEP Centers and NNMI Institutes;
- e. Ensuring appropriate diversity in targeted industry sectors and/or supply chains;
- f. The selection factors contained in 15 U.S.C. § 278(k)(f)(5); and
- g. Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by DoC or by other Federal agencies.

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Reporting Requirements

- In lieu of the reporting requirements described in Sections A.01 Performance (Technical) Reports and B.02 Financial Reports of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (December 26, 2014), the following reporting requirements shall apply:
 - **Financial Reports.** The Recipient shall submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report, into the MEP's Enterprise Information System (MEIS) on a semi-annual basis after the sixth and twelfth month of each operating year, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Special Award Condition. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of each semi-annual reporting period. The Recipient shall submit a final SF-425 within 90 days after the expiration date of the award.
 - **Performance (Technical) Reports.** The Recipient shall submit a Technical Report (completing all required MEIS fields) on a semi-annual basis after the sixth and twelfth month of each operating year, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Special Award Condition. Reports are due in MEIS no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. The Recipient shall submit a final Technical/Quarterly report within 90 days after the expiration date of the award. Technical/Quarterly Report details are accessible on the MEIS website (<https://meis.nist.gov/>). Technical progress reports shall contain information as prescribed in the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines (OMB Control Number 0693-0032). For further information regarding the NIST MEP Reporting Process, you may download a copy of the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines at <http://www.nist.gov/mep/ffo-embeddingmep.cfm>.
 - **Post Client Project Follow-Up.** The recipient will be required to provide client and project data on a quarterly basis (unless otherwise directed by the NIST Grants Officer) and in a specified format to the organization identified by NIST/MEP in order for post-project follow-up data to be obtained (OMB Control Number 0693-0021). **For further information regarding the NIST MEP Reporting Process, you may download a copy of the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines at <http://www.nist.gov/mep/ffo-embeddingmep.cfm>.**

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MEP Resources

- NNMI Institutes, <http://www.manufacturing.gov/nnmi-institutes/>
- Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of Defense Office of the Secretary of Defense Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manufacturing and Industrial Base Policy and the U.S. Department of Commerce National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership, May 2015: <http://www.nist.gov/mep/about/upload/MOU-NIST-OSD-Signed-Executed-2015.pdf>

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Key Take-Aways

- Make sure to read entire FFO (multiple times)
- Be fully aware of what is required vs suggested/encouraged
- Be fully aware of what counts towards the page limit of 25 pages vs what does not count towards it
- No Double Charging Against other NIST/MEP or Institute Awards
- Be fully aware of the steps for submitting via grants.gov – DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SUBMIT!
- Be fully responsive to the requirement set forth in the FFO
- 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.

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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	Michael Teske Grants Management Division NIST Phone: 301-975-6358 Fax: 301-975-6368 E-mail: michael.teske@nist.gov

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Have additional questions.....

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

Questions and Answers will be posted regularly on the NIST MEP Public Site, <http://www.nist.gov/mep/ffo-embeddingmep.cfm>

New questions added to the FAQ will be identified with the date in which they were added to the document for ease of reference

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