

**National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)
Expansion Awards Pilot Program (MEAPP)
MEP National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence
Network**

Application Instruction Guide

Please reach out to your NIST Resource Manager (RM) and Federal Program Officer (FPO) with any questions

Applicants must follow the application requirements stated in the Request For Application (RFA) or they may not be considered. The Section titled, “Required Forms/Information” of the RFA describes the content requirements which includes several components including an Executive Summary and a Project Approach and Execution Plan Narrative.

The executive summary and project approach and execution plan narrative is limited to 12 pages and should give a clear presentation of the proposed work. Applicants must use 11- or 12-pt font on an 8.5” x 11” page size and have page margins no smaller than 1” on each edge. There is no required font type. Any acronyms or abbreviations used in the Technical Proposal should be defined.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY TEMPLATE (SECTION 6 – TECHNICAL PROPOSAL)

When completing the executive summary, applicants should identify the criteria and objectives the proposed project meets. Please see the Section of this RFA titled Program Objective for more detailed information. Additionally, the first paragraph of the Executive Summary should include a project description in the following format:

Include the Center Name, State and Base award number in the header.

1. **Purpose:** State the specific purpose and beneficiaries of the proposed project in one to two sentences.
2. **Activities:** Describe the major activities to be performed in one to three sentences.
3. **Outcomes and Impacts:** State the specific expected outcomes and impacts of the proposed project in one to three sentences. Also, name or describe the intended beneficiaries of the expected outcomes in one to two sentences.
4. **Subrecipients:** If applicable, identify subrecipients and describe the major activities to be performed by subrecipients in one to three sentences.

5. **Contractors:** If applicable, identify contractors and describe the services to be performed by contractors in one to three sentences.

Note: Centers should not define Supply Chain as part of their executive summary and reference PUBLIC LAW 117–167, Subtitle D, Sec. 10251, Sec 25B(e)(5).

PROJECT APPROACH AND EXECUTION PLAN NARRATIVE TEMPLATE **(SECTION 6 – TECHNICAL PROPOSAL)**

When writing the Project Approach and Execution Plan Narrative, applicants should understand the components required for this section. The narrative should include the information in RFA and can follow the template below. The suggested page limit is 10 pages and can include graphics, tables, and data to further expand on the information being requested in the RFA.

1. **A rationale for the proposed approach to address the Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network problem and alignment of the project with funding for the RFA Program Objectives.**
 - *Summarize the extent of how this plan will expand the MEP Center’s current supply chain optimization efforts and support development of its intelligence network.*
 - *The MEP Center should specify plans for efficient organization, staffing, and management for the proposed project.*
2. **Technical Merit / Value of Expected Project Outcomes and Impacts.**
 - Describe the execution strategy to support the projected outcomes and Impacts. At a minimum Include a detailed discussion of:
 - Anticipated impacts.
 - Methodology for identifying and evaluating project outcomes; and
 - Establishment of support systems to disseminate actionable data to support supply chain optimization.
 - Consider Supplier Scouting Opportunities, reportable projects, impacts for the manufacturer (cost, jobs, time from technology to market, etc.) and number of matches made.
 - Describe the application or platform you are currently using or propose to use for capturing and managing supplier scouting data and supply chain information.
3. **Effectiveness of delivery and implementation mechanisms.**
 - Identify specific project tasking, measurable timelines and milestones, and resources to be allocated to ensure every MEP supplier scouting request receives a response, even if no suppliers are identified.
4. **Plans for program evaluation.**

- Describe the methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness of delivery and implementation mechanisms as well as for quantifying and analyzing program outcomes.
- 5. Budget Narrative and Justification / Rationale of Budget for the Proposed Work.**
- Demonstrate the relevance and cost effectiveness of the proposed project budget to meet the proposed program objectives.
 - **Note:** when completing this section be sure to address the requirements under the budget 7. Budget Narrative and Justification.
 - The RFA indicates that Centers need to use the MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and Award Budget Summary Table are available on the MEP website at: <https://meis.nist.gov>.
 - Ensure the application not only provides a narrative, but also addresses the requirement found in this section.

BUDGET NARRATIVE AND JUSTIFICATION (SECTION 7)

When completing this section, applicants should follow the directions found in the RFA. This section does not count against the 12-page limit of the application.

- 1. When completing this section, applications should note the following items in the RFA:**
- a. In addition to the SF-424A form, MEP Centers applicants must provide a detailed budget table and budget narrative for each year of the proposed two-year period of performance, fully explaining and justifying all proposed funding expenses and revenues under applicable federal cost principles.
 - b. Applications need to include the MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and Award Budget Summary Table that are available on the MEP website at: <https://meis.nist.gov>.
 - c. **The Budget Narrative should indicate that the funds provided under this award will not generate program income.**
 - d. **Senior/Key Person**
 - Address each of the elements that are described in the RFA.
 - Ensure that the following requirement has been met as described in the program objectives- Dedicating at a minimum, a staff member or a combination of staff members or contractor(s) at a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) per year at each MEP Center, including at each MEP Center applying as a consortium to...
 - e. **Travel**

- Address each of the elements that are described in the RFA.
- Ensure that costs are proposed for a virtual kickoff meeting, MEP National meetings, and Workgroups.

CURRENT AND PENDING SUPPORT FORM (SECTION 9)

When completing this section, applicants should follow the directions found in the RFA. This section does not count against the 12-page limit of the application.

NIST MEP will be reviewing the current and pending support form to determine if the FTE requirement is being met as part of its prescreening process for acceptability of applications. If deemed not acceptable, the application will be returned to the Center for correction, possibly resulting in delays to...

The current and pending support form can be found here:

<https://www.nist.gov/oaam/grants-management-division/current-and-pending-support>.

RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION

There are several resources available to assist in writing the proposal:

- Annual Reviews
- Peer Reviews
- Secretarial Reviews
- Supplier Scouting Responses
- Prior Competitive Awards
- CARES Act projects and clients
- Other reports on your supplier ecosystem
- NIST MEP webinar
- NIST MEP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Please note that the focus of the application should be on how your center will expand supply chain data gathering, analysis and support for national network. There is no need to illustrate why supply chain work is important as that has been ascertained already.