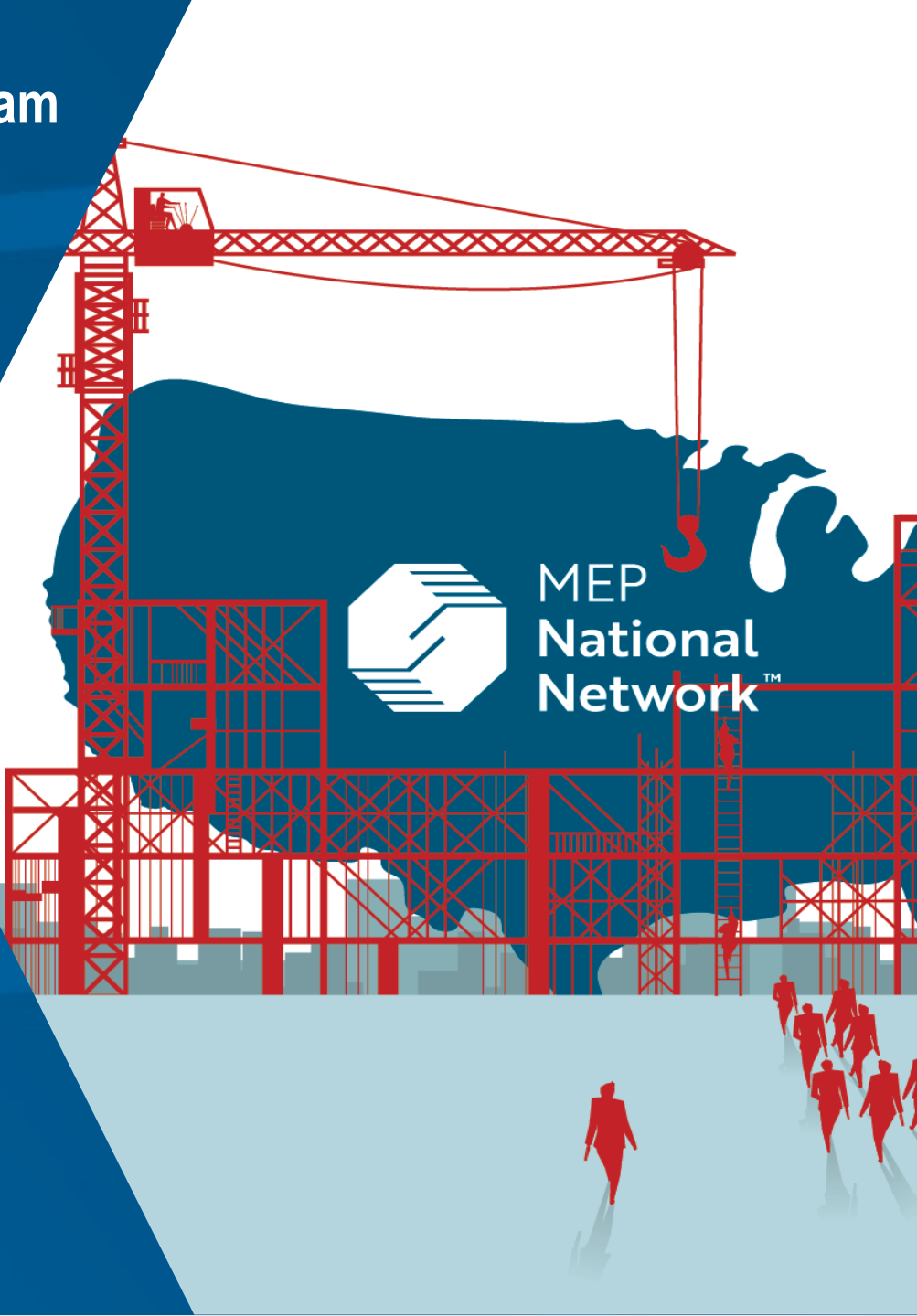


# MEP Expansion Awards Pilot Program National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network Request for Applications (RFA)



## MEP Center Informational Webinar

March 2, 2023





# Welcome

## Presenters

**Pravina Raghavan**

NIST MEP Director

**Kevin McIntyre**

MEP Division Chief, Network Agreements Management

**Scott Dockum**

MEP Federal Program Officer



# 'Housekeeping' Items

- The NIST MEP website has been updated. Find information on the RFA at <https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-expansion-awards-pilot-program-meapp>
  - We will be recording this webinar and will post the recording to the website.
  - Utilize the FAQ document and the Application Guide. Both can be found on the NIST MEP home page at the link above.
- Please enter questions in the chat.



## Purpose of this Webinar

- Provide all MEP Centers with a consistent overview of the new funding program and the new funding opportunity
- Provide MEP Centers with information about the application process and how to get assistance
- Provide MEP Centers with supplemental information and resources

**Note:** The RFA will supersede the guidance provided in this webinar



# AGENDA

- Program Overview
- Funding Opportunity Overview
- Applications
- Questions



# Key Definitions



- Funding Authorities
- Non-discretionary funds
- RFA vs NOFO
- Cooperative Agreement vs Grant



# Background on Expansion Awards Pilot Program

- Why is MEP creating this program?
  - CHIPS Act
  - New funding authority (15 U.S.C. 278k-2)
  - FY 2023 appropriation
- Why is MEP doing this right now?
  - New funding authority requires the Director to establish a pilot program
  - New funding authority requires the Director to submit a report to Congress by October 2025
- Why is this different from the other MEP funding programs?
  - Pilot program
  - Non-competitive due to non-discretionary funding (thus the RFA)



# Why? E.O. 14005 and CHIPS ACT

## **Executive Order 14005 requests Federal Agencies to utilize MEP Supplier Scouting:**

Sec. 7. Supplier Scouting. To the extent appropriate and consistent with applicable law, agencies shall partner with the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), ... to conduct supplier scouting in order to identify American companies, including small- and medium-sized companies, that are able to produce goods, products, and materials in the United States that meet Federal procurement needs.

- FY23 appropriations provided NIST MEP supplemental disaster funding of \$13 million to support work outlined in the CHIPS Act.

- **To invest in building capacity across the MEP National Network, NIST MEP is focusing on supply chain optimization and intelligence network as the first Expansion Award Pilot Program Funding with \$20.4 million investment in MEP Centers.**

## **CHIPS ACT establishes a pilot program of expansion awards to provide services for:**

- Workforce development (which may include training advanced manufacturing personnel),
- Expanded support for adopting advanced technology upgrades at small and medium manufacturers.
- **Resiliency of domestic supply chains**, and
- To build capabilities across the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership **for domestic supply chain resiliency and optimization.**





# Timeline



Event	Date
Funding opportunity opens	February 27, 2023
Informational Webinar for Applicants	March 2, 2023
Funding opportunity closes – APPLICATIONS DUE	<b>March 28, 2023</b>
Period of performance	June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2025



# **MEP Expansion Awards Pilot Program: MEP National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network**

Request for Applications



# Accessing the RFA

**Funding Opportunity Title:** MEP Expansion Awards Pilot Program:  
MEP National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network

**Funding Opportunity Number:** 2023-NIST-RFA-MEAPP-01

**Published on grants.gov on February 27, 2023, at the following link:**

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=346404>



# Funding Opportunity General Information



- Only current MEP Centers are eligible
  - MEP Center sub-recipients cannot apply
  - Each Centers base award serves as the requirement for eligibility to apply and receive an award under this RFA.
    - Note: Each expansion award may have a SAC to indicate a base award cooperative agreement must be active to be eligible.
- Non-competitive process with the expectation that all 51 MEP Centers apply
- Applications will be due on or by **March 28, 2023**
- Period of Performance: **June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2025**
- Anticipated award amount: up to \$400,000



# Purpose and Goals of the RFA



- The objectives for this pilot program are:
  1. The MEP National Network can support critical industries in the U.S. economy, including semiconductors, broadband, energy, and others.
  2. Ensures the MEP National Network is actively assisting manufacturers to pivot to new demands being created by OEMs in support these industries.
- This RFA is investment in the MEP National Network to build a truly National Supplier Network and ensure SMMs are key players.
- Meeting the goals of this program is a critical step in ensuring we have a National Supplier Network.



# Key Definitions



## Supply Chain Optimization

PUBLIC LAW 117–167, Subtitle D, Sec. 10251, Sec 25B(e)(5), a purpose of the awards under the Expansion Awards Pilot Program is:

“(5) To build capabilities across the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership for domestic supply chain resiliency and optimization, including— **“(A) assessment of domestic manufacturing capabilities, expanded capacity for researching and deploying information on supply chain risk, hidden costs of reliance on offshore suppliers, redesigning products and processes to encourage reshoring, and other relevant topics;** and “(B) expanded services to provide industrywide support that assists United States manufacturers with reshoring manufacturing to strengthen the resiliency of domestic supply chains, including in critical technology areas and foundational manufacturing capabilities that are key to domestic manufacturing competitiveness and resiliency, including forming, casting, machining, joining, surface treatment, tooling, and metal or chemical refining.

The current Expansion Award Pilot Program is focused on the activities described in (A) above as a strategy for improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and resilience of domestic U.S. supply chains.



# Key Definitions

## Supply Chain Intelligence Network

The data from each Center represents information that can be utilized to identify gaps and weakness and develop strategies and programs to build larger domestic manufacturing supply chain for critical industry sectors. The intelligence or data from the centers develops a national plan that can be used to develop policies and investment for the U.S. Government and private entities.

MEP's Supply Chain Intelligence Network will consist of designated staff at each Center who responds to supplier scouting/matching inquiries, maintains knowledge as well as data on their local supply chain ecosystem, partners with key OEM in their region and coordinates frequently and effectively within the MEP National Network, including NIST MEP.



# RFA – Program Objectives



1. Dedicating a minimum of one FTE to:
  - a) Provide support for national supplier scouting and optimization services and/or provide management oversight of an established formal partnership with complementary partner(s);
  - b) Represent the MEP Center as the lead point(s) of contact responsible for building and maintaining the Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network; and
  - c) Ensure every MEP supplier scouting request receives a response, even if no suppliers are identified.

## **Key Take away**

Indicate in the application the plans to hire and/or dedicate staff to provide supply chain optimization services in each State and coordinate across the MEP National Network as indicated in the RFA.

2. Establishing or verifying connection to systems to support MEP supplier scouting and optimization.

## **Key Take Aways**

Below are examples of how a MEP Center could meet this requirement in the RFA.

- a) Create and connect to an integrated national system to support MEP supplier scouting to:
  - i. Provide services to directly optimize suppliers in their marketplace to increase their ability to respond to current and future critical supply chain needs.
- b) Map current industry-specific supplier ecosystems
- c) Identify manufacturing capability expertise clusters
- d) Identifying key Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) in each State
- e) Respond to all supplier scouting requests
- f) Participate in programmatic quarterly reporting

*Note: Data from this work needs to be provided to NIST. Any vendor data needs to be non-proprietary and transferable to NIST systems.*





# RFA Program Objectives – Performance Metrics

## 3. Reporting supply network intelligence-gathering results

- a) The RFA provides specifics on reporting and the application should cover these in detail
- b) NIST MEP must provide a report to Congress on the success of this pilot program. The application should indicate how the Center would address the RFA metrics in their reporting at both a National Level and a State Level.
- c) NIST MEP understands that many MEP Centers may request to use the funds for a subscription-based service to access a supplier database. MEP Centers will need to describe how this service will allow the Center to report on the specified metrics identified in the RFA and below. In addition, the MEP Center should indicate in the proposal how the service will be paid for and remain sustainable after the period of performance of this award.

### **Key Take aways**

In addition, NIST MEP may ask for additional metric data to support the report to Congress. MEP Centers may consider the following in their application:

- **Supplier Scouting (SS)**
  - Number of requests submitted and number of responses/matches
  - New business to business contracts/purchase orders as the result of SS requests
  - Number of Clients participating in pilot/demo projects as a result of SS
  - Number of supplier networks developed including clients
- **Supply Chain Gaps**
  - Identification of supply chain gaps at the National and State Level
  - Number of clients recruited to a National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network project
  - Supply Chain Maps
- **Tracking of funding**
  - Both Federal and State
  - Identifying critical industries
- **OEM**
  - New OEMs, Existing OEMs,
  - Mapping of their supply chain
  - Establishment of alliances and partnerships
  - Identifying critical industries and current suppliers
- **Webinars/Events/Roundtables/New Projects**
  - New connections made and their possible impact . Supply Chain projects tracked to determine new deals or projects with manufacturer(s) or agency or other stakeholders
  - Number of educational events held
  - Number of awareness sessions conducted (e.g. supplier-customer matchmaking event)
  - Number of companies that attended each outreach event
  - Provide a copy of informational materials developed
  - Number of NIST prescribed meetings attended
  - Number of assessments done
  - Description of new services developed from the outreach activity
- **Case Studies/Success Stories**
  - Highlight things that worked and did not work
  - Lessons Learned



# RFA – Program Objectives Continued

## 4. Propose localized projects

- a) Applications can include additional pilot or innovative approaches to address priorities identified in 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2(e)(2) and (5).
- b) The RFA provides specifics on reporting and the application should cover these in detail.

### **Key Take aways**

This section provides an opportunity for the MEP Center to think creatively on how to address 15 U.S.C. § 278k-2(e)(2) and (5).

- Ensure that these projects are within the scope of the RFA for Supply Chain Optimization and Supply Chain Intelligence Network
  - (2) Provide services to improve the resiliency of domestic supply chains.
  - (5) To build capabilities across the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership for domestic supply chain resiliency and optimization



# **MEP Expansion Awards Pilot Program: MEP National Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network**

## Application Process



# Contacting MEP RMs and FPOs



MEP Centers may contact their assigned RM and FPO to have questions answered and to obtain feedback.

- MEP Centers are encouraged to do this and to use the RM and FPO as resources to discuss ideas.
- However, RMs, FPOs, and other MEP staff cannot help write the application.



# Application Structure



## Executive Summary

- The executive summary description is found under the section titled:
  - Required Forms/Information: Section 5) Technical proposal
  - The Summary is a synopsis of the narrative section and should cover the following
    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.
    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.

**Suggested page limit: 2 pages**



# Application Structure

## Project Approach and Execution Plan Narrative

- The narrative description is found under the section titled:
  - Required Forms/Information: Section 5) Technical proposal
- Provide the details of how you plan to address the items listed in the RFA
- Centers should follow the same structure that is provided in the RFA.
  - Address each of the 5 areas in order.
  - Please describe the application or platform you are currently using or propose to use for capturing and managing supplier scouting data and supply chain information.
  - Please note that the focus of the application should be on how your center will expand supply chain data gathering, analysis and support for the national network. There is no need to illustrate why supply chain work is important as that has been ascertained already.

**Suggested page limit: 10 pages**



# Application Structure

## Budget Narrative and Justification

- The RFA provides instructions to complete the budget narrative and justification under the section titled:
  - Required Forms/Information: Section 6) Budget Narrative and Justification
- Centers should follow the directions provided in the RFA.
- Note:
  - Provide a detailed budget for each year, 2 years/24 months
  - Ensure you use the MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and Award Budget Summary Table
  - This information does not count towards the page limit
  - The MEP Single Year Budget Workbook can be accessed at: <https://meis.nist.gov>



# Application - Funding & Budget



- **Anticipated award amount:** up to \$400,000 for 24 months
- **Cost-share:** Non-federal cost share is not required
- **Program income:** Generating program income is not allowed
- Costs for this award cannot be charged against any other NIST MEP award
- Ensure the budget includes anticipated costs for:
  - Award virtual kickoff participation
  - MEP National Network meetings
  - Working Group participation
- MEP Centers must complete projects funded through this RFA on or before May 31, 2025, unless otherwise extended in writing by the NIST Grants Officer during the term of the award





# Application Structure

## Senior/Key Person

- The RFA provides directions to indicate the personnel that are dedicated to the to the Supply Chain Optimization and Intelligence Network project.
- This information is provided under the Budget Narrative and Justification of the application.
- Note
  - Under the Program Objectives of the RFA, NIST MEP expects Centers to at a minimum dedicate, 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 meet the program objectives.
    - NIST MEP considers an FTE to be eight hours per day, five days a week over 52 weeks for a total of 2,080 hours per year.
    - Consortium of Centers cannot have one FTE for the consortium, each center must have dedicated personnel to conduct the proposed work.
    - NIST MEP will evaluate the Current and Pending support form provided with the application to determine if the personnel identified has met the FTE requirement.<sup>25</sup>



# Overview - Application Review Process



- **Screening** for eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness
- **Merit review** to assess the technical merits of the proposal and the reasonableness of budget
- **Selection** for funding
- **Risk Assessment & Review** by NIST Grants Management Division and Department of Commerce Federal Assistance Law Division
- **Possible negotiations** on proposed scope of work and/or budget
- **Award**



# Merit Review

- Each eligible application will be reviewed by **two qualified reviewers**
- Merit reviewers will use the same evaluation criteria to assess each proposal
- Merit reviews are completed in MEIS
- Results of each merit review will be forwarded to the MEP Director, who is the Selecting Official



# Reporting

- **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.
- **Performance Progress Plan/Technical Report (PPR).** The Recipient shall submit a Technical Report (completing all required MEIS fields) on a quarterly basis after each 3-month period of the agreement period of performance. Reporting requirements will include:
  - Progress to plan last 90 days,
  - Planned progress next 90 days,
  - Outcomes and results,
  - Clients reported,
  - Lessons learned.



# Contacts and Resources

In addition to the assigned RM and FPO, Centers may consult:

## **Federal Program Officer**

Scott Dockum  
240-961-0770

[Scott.Dockum@nist.gov](mailto:Scott.Dockum@nist.gov)

## **Resource Manager**

Craig Reid  
202-945-7479

[Craig.Reid@nist.gov](mailto:Craig.Reid@nist.gov)

## **NIST Grants Officer**

Michael Teske  
240-961-0387

[Michael.Teske@nist.gov](mailto:Michael.Teske@nist.gov)

## **Supplemental Resources**

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)

**Submit questions to:**

[meprfa@nist.gov](mailto:meprfa@nist.gov)

**Technical assistance with grants.gov**

Phone: 800-518-4726

E-mail: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)



# WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?