

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (FFO)  
Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) State Partnership Support  
Project**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- **Federal Agency Name:** National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Department of Commerce (DoC)
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) State Partnership Support Project
- **Announcement Type:** Initial
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** 2016-NIST-MEP-STATE-PARTNERSHIP-01
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.611, Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- **Dates:** Electronic applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, February 29, 2016. Paper applications will not be accepted. Applications received after the 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 at these times: from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, January 16, 2016 until Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and also from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, February 20, 2016 until Monday, February 22, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and that applications cannot be submitted during those time spans. The approximate start date for the award made under this FFO is expected to be June 1, 2016.

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 note that a federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated recipient's registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not current at the time of the award.

- **Application Submission:** Applications must be submitted electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by e-mail. See Sections IV.2.b.(1)., IV.2.b.(2)., and IV.2.b.(7). of this FFO.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** NIST invites proposals from eligible organizations to provide in-depth collaborative support in developing and advancing stakeholder relationships that are critical to the success of the MEP program, based on the recipient's expertise and knowledge of State manufacturing and technology agendas. NIST MEP is a federal-state-industry partnership program. The MEP system of Centers and field offices throughout the U.S. provides a mechanism to integrate federal and state public policy goals, respond to market forces and address the needs of manufacturing sectors and of individual manufacturers. To make the most of this partnership, NIST MEP strives to balance the priorities of U.S. national policy with those of state partners to create a robust and effective program providing U.S. manufacturers with the tools they need to grow and remain globally competitive.

Stakeholders include not only state-based partners but also sub-state partners that are based at the county, community, and city levels, as well as regional partners that extend beyond state boundary lines.

Given the unique nature of the MEP network, success depends on the mutual understanding and alignment of regional, state and local policy goals and objectives with national policy to create a partnership that leverages the strength of each entity. MEP increasingly is focused on helping manufacturers identify and adopt new technologies for improved products, processes, business practices and the development of new products. NIST is seeking proposals to develop and enhance effective collaborative relationships between and with the MEP Program, MEP Centers and State and other stakeholders. It is important for all components of the MEP network to understand overarching State priorities relative to manufacturing and the implementation of such priorities at the State, regional and local levels. This effort will help the MEP system develop the capacity to align these agendas with MEP priorities supporting continuous improvement, growth, sustainability, supply chains, innovation and technology acceleration in manufacturing.

- **Anticipated Funding Amounts:** NIST anticipates awarding one (1) multiyear cooperative agreement with a five-year (5) period of performance and at a total maximum federal funding amount not to exceed \$4.5 million over the entire five-year period of performance. If a proposal for a multiyear award is approved, NIST anticipates funding up to \$750,000 for the first year of the program, and thereafter annually to fund \$750,000 each year for continuing base level activities and also to fund an additional amount of up to \$750,000 for increased activities during a particular year to be determined by the recipient and NIST MEP. Continuation of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance is solely at the discretion of NIST and will be contingent upon satisfactory progress, continued

relevance to the mission and priorities of MEP, existing legislative authority, and the availability of funds. See Section II. of this FFO for detailed information concerning the availability of NIST funding and for annual funding caps for this program.

- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative Agreement. See Section II.1. of this FFO for additional information concerning the funding instrument for this award.
- **Who Is Eligible:** Applicants must be a U.S.-based for-profit or not-for-profit institution or organization. An eligible organization may work individually or may include proposed subawards to eligible organizations or proposed contracts with any other organization as part of the applicant's proposal, effectively forming a team.
- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Cost Share is not required for this project.
- **Webinar Information Session:** NIST/MEP will hold one webinar information session for organizations that are considering applying for 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 detailed or 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 MEP. However, NIST/MEP staff will provide information about eligibility, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, program priorities and objectives, and the general characteristics of a competitive proposal during this webinar. The webinar will be held approximately fifteen (15) to thirty (30) business days after posting of this FFO. The exact date and time of the webinar will be posted on the MEP website at <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-statepartnership.cfm>. The webinar will be recorded, and a link to the recording will be posted on the MEP website. In addition, the webinar presentation will be available after the webinar on the MEP website. Organizations wishing to participate in the webinar must register in advance by contacting MEP by email at [mepffo@nist.gov](mailto:mepffo@nist.gov). Participation in the webinar is not required in order for an organization to submit an application pursuant to this FFO.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).** Questions from applicants pertaining to MEP eligibility, cost-sharing requirements, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal will not be considered on an informal basis. Applicants must submit all such questions in writing to [mepffo@nist.gov](mailto:mepffo@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 <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-statepartnership.cfm>.

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## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### **I. Program Description**

The statutory authority for the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) State Partnership Support Project is 15 U.S.C. §§ 272(b)(1), (b)(4), and (c)(18).

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) invites proposals from eligible and qualified organizations to support efforts of the MEP Program, including MEP Centers and the entire MEP system of partners, to develop and enhance effective collaborative relationships with states and other stakeholders. These activities will advance the MEP’s network of relationships with state stakeholders and partners to help MEP achieve its mission of improving productivity and technological performance in United States manufacturing.

Partnerships are critical to the success of MEP. In particular, regional, state and local partners:

- demonstrate leadership to generate action to address regional, state and local challenges and opportunities;
- set priorities for economic development and complementary activities (e.g., workforce, technology, sustainability, etc.) in their jurisdictions;
- develop strategies and programs to advance those priorities; and
- provide significant financial co-investment (non-federal cost share) that supports the operation of MEP Centers.

NIST MEP has long recognized the value of these partnerships and sought to nurture and deepen the relationships with state leaders in both state executive branch agencies and state legislatures. This is a complex challenge, given the number of states, the differences in economies, markets, culture, political philosophies, and spending priorities, the rapidly-changing composition of elected and appointed officials, shifting

trends in public policy priorities, and related considerations. The purpose of the MEP State Partnership Support Program is to generate strategies, market intelligence, and analytical resources to support the efforts of MEP Centers, NIST MEP and of the Nation's manufacturers to undertake this challenge. There are certain base-level activities that underpin the success of this work:

- Collecting and analyzing available data to inform strategies, services, and performance;
- Conducting research about current practices and trends to inform MEP system program initiatives and policy decisions;
- Developing and expanding the network of State, regional and local leaders supporting manufacturers, MEP Centers and the MEP mission;
- Enabling MEP Centers to better align their work with State priorities; and
- Increasing State support of MEP work.

NIST MEP anticipates that these base-level activities will occur during all five years of the cooperative agreement.

In addition to the annual base-level activities under the cooperative agreement, NIST MEP plans to work with the recipient to conduct more intensive, targeted activities in one of the five years (to be determined jointly) to proactively engage State, regional and local leaders. While the specifics and timing of the targeted activities will be jointly determined after award, the applicant should propose approaches that would accomplish the following:

- Target a selected number of States and regions with concentrations of manufacturers;
- Directly engage teams of State, regional and local leaders from diverse backgrounds to explore and inform their thinking about strategies to support and grow manufacturing;
- Convene forums where State and local leaders can interact with MEP Center leaders around strategies to support manufacturing;
- Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning among selected participants; and
- Provide exposure to research and leading thinkers regarding strategies that work to support manufacturers in key areas such as accelerating companies' technology adoption, increasing access to new markets, fostering innovative approaches; and effective supply chain practices.

Activities during the year of heightened intensity may include a combination of convening meetings, conducting targeted research, consulting with individuals or groups of participants, and other such activities that help to accomplish intended outcomes. Up to \$750,000 of additional MEP funding will be provided for the year of more intensive activities. (See Section II.2. of this FFO.)

Note that the activities conducted under this cooperative agreement will occur in the context of advancing NIST MEP's Strategic Plan:

**ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS** - Enhance the competitiveness of the U.S. manufacturers, with particular focus on small and medium-sized companies.

**SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS** - Support national, state, and regional manufacturing, eco-systems and partnerships.

**CHAMPION MANUFACTURING** - Serve as a voice to and a voice for manufacturing and manufacturers in engaging policy makers, stakeholders, and clients.

**DEVELOP CAPABILITIES** - Develop MEP's capabilities as a learning organization and high performance system.

The NIST MEP Strategic Plan can be found at <http://www.nist.gov/mep/about/strategic-plan.cfm>.

Qualified organizations meeting eligibility requirements provided herein are invited to submit proposals **that meet the program goals and objectives set forth in this FFO and that are responsive to the evaluation criteria for this program (see Section V.1. of this FFO).**

Further information regarding the MEP Program is provided in the information packet that can be obtained at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) with additional background information provided at <http://www.nist.gov/mep>. Refer to Section VII. of this FFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you seek the information at this link and it is no longer working or you need more information.

## **II. Federal Award Information**

**1. Funding Instrument.** The funding instrument that will be used for the award issued pursuant to this FFO is a cooperative agreement. The nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally be collaboration between NIST/MEP and the recipient organization. This includes NIST/MEP collaborating with the recipient on evaluating its progress and making changes to the statement of work. 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>. Examples of NIST involvement in cooperative agreements awarded pursuant to this FFO may include activities such as, but not limited to:

- Guidelines and assistance in developing scope of work;
- Approval of key personnel;

- Assistance, where possible, in accessing solutions to technical and managerial issues; and
- Assistance to the Recipient organization to define, understand, and resolve issues pertaining to the successful implementation of the MEP project.

**2. Funding Availability.** NIST anticipates funding one (1) MEP cooperative award with a five-year (5) period of performance in accordance with the multi-year funding policy described in Section II.3. of this FFO. It is expected that funding for this award will be up to \$4,500,000 for the five-year period.

NIST MEP funding for base level activities under this award will be up to \$750,000 per year.

NIST MEP expects that the base-level activities will occur during all five years of the cooperative agreement. In addition, NIST MEP plans to work with the recipient to conduct more intensive, targeted activities in one of the five years (to be determined jointly) to proactively engage state and local leaders. While the specifics and timing of this year-long program will be jointly determined after award, the applicant should propose approaches that would accomplish the items specified in Section I.

In the year selected for heightened activity (assume Year 3 for budgeting purposes), MEP anticipates providing up to an additional \$750,000 funding to support the expected increased activity, not to exceed \$1,500,000 total in federal funding for that year.

Maximum Year 1 Federal Funding	Maximum Year 2 Federal Funding	Maximum Year 3 Federal Funding	Maximum Year 4 Federal Funding	Maximum Year 5 Federal Funding	Total Maximum Federal Funding for 5 Year Award Period
\$750,000	\$750,000	\$1,500,000  (which includes both base activities and targeted outreach activities)	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$4,500,000

**3. 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. The

recipient 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.

4. **Award Kick-Off Meeting.** Recipient 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 conference will take place at NIST/MEP headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD, during which time NIST will: (1) orient recipient personnel to the MEP program and plans for enhanced partnership relationships; (2) explain program and financial reporting requirements and procedures; and (3) identify available resources that can enhance the capabilities of the recipient.

The kick-off meeting will last no longer than one day and must be attended by the project manager and up to but not more than two additional key personnel who would play a significant role in managing the award. 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 this 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 this FFO.)

Representatives from key subrecipients and other key strategic partners may attend the kick-off meeting with the prior written approval of the Grants Officer. Applicants proposing to have key subrecipients and/or other key strategic partners attend the kick-off meeting should clearly so indicate in their budget narrative for year one of the project.

5. **MEP System-Wide Meetings.** NIST/MEP typically organizes MEP system-wide meetings approximately four times a year to share best practices, and 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. The Project Manager and two additional key personnel should attend these meetings.

Applicants must include travel and related costs for four quarterly MEP system-wide meetings in each of the five (5) project years (4 meetings per year; 20 total meetings over five-year award period). These costs must be reflected in the SF-424A (see Section IV.2.a.(2). of this FFO). These costs must also be reflected in the budget tables and budget narratives for each of the project's five (5) years, which are submitted as part of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.2.a.(6).(d). of this FFO).



6. **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.a.(7). of this FFO.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

1. **Eligible Applicants.** Applicants must be a U.S.-based for-profit or not-for-profit institution or organization. An applicant may propose to work individually or may include proposed subawards to eligible organizations or proposed contracts with other organizations in its application, effectively forming a team.
2. **Cost Sharing Requirement.** Cost share is not required under this project.

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

1. **Address to Request Application Package.** The standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Applicants may also request an application package by contacting the point of contact for administrative, budget, cost-sharing, eligibility questions and other programmatic questions listed in Section VII. of this FFO.
2. **Content and Form of Application/Submission.** The requirements given in this section of this FFO will be used in lieu of those given in the regulations found at 15 C.F.R. part 292, specifically 15 C.F.R. § 292.1.

#### **a. Required Forms and Documents**

- (1) **SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.** The SF-424 must be certified through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.

SF-424, Item 12, should list the FFO number 2016-NIST-MEP-STATE PARTNERSHIP-01.

SF-424, Item 18, should list the total budget information for full five (5) years of the project.

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 - Non-Construction Programs.** The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for all five (5) years of the

project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments. The budget should also include staff, travel and other costs associated with the Award Kick-off Meeting and the NIST/MEP System-Wide meetings as described in Sections II.4. and II.5., respectively, of this FFO. The budget also must reflect the increased level of effort during Year 3 to support more intensive, targeted activities to proactively engage state and local leaders in activities that would accomplish the items specified in Section I. (See Section II.2. of this FFO.)

The applicant should reflect all five (5) years of the project on the **SF-424A form**. 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 in on Line 1 under Column (b) should be entered as 11.611.

- (3) **SF-424B, Assurances - Non-Construction Programs.**
- (4) **CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.**
- (5) **SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** (if applicable)
- (6) **Technical Proposal.** The five (5) year Technical Proposal is a word-processed document not exceeding 25 pages responsive to the program description (see Section I. of this FFO) and the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this FFO). The following is a suggested format that applicants may use for the technical proposal.
  - (a) **Table of Contents.** (Does not count toward the page limit).
  - (b) **Executive Summary.** The executive summary should briefly (usually no longer than two pages) describe the proposed project, consistent with the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this FFO).

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).

**(c) Project Narrative.** A description of the proposed approach, sufficient to permit evaluation of the proposal, in accordance with the proposal Evaluation Criteria (see Section V.1.a. and Section V.1.b. of this FFO). The project narrative must identify tasks, measureable milestones and outcomes in providing on-going partnership development and enhancement support for each of the five years. The application should address the convening of an intensive, multi-State effort to advance the States' manufacturing strategies and better engage MEP in those efforts.

The applicant should provide information that helps the reviewers understand their past experience in delivering partnership development services, including experience with information gathering, data analysis, conducting research, risk assessment, opportunity identification, and initiative design and implementation to support partnership development. The applicant also should provide information that helps the reviewers understand their past experience in the technology development, innovation, and manufacturing context, working with state and other entities with which the program partners.

**(d) 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 year one (1) of the project, fully explaining and justifying all proposed project funding (both revenue and expenses) in accordance with applicable federal cost principles. Applicants must also provide a budget table for years two (2) through five (5) of the project; however, a budget narrative for these years is not required as part of an application. This budget must reflect the increased level of effort during Year 3 to support convening more intensive, targeted activities to proactively engage state and local leaders in activities that would accomplish the items specified in Section I.

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 this 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-statepartnership.cfm>.

This budget information submitted by an applicant will be evaluated in accordance with the Budget evaluation sub-criteria (see Section V.1.c.i. and Section V.1.c.ii. of this FFO).

- (7) **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>. This does not count toward the page limit.

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.

- (8) **Resumes.** One-page resumes of no more than five key personnel 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.
- (9) **Data Management Plan.** In accordance with the Office of Science and Technology Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies of February 22, 2013<sup>1</sup>, *Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research*, and as implemented through NIST Policy 5700.00<sup>2</sup>, *Managing Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research*, and NIST Order 5701.00<sup>3</sup>, *Managing Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research*, applicants should include a Data Management Plan (DMP).

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

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp\\_public\\_access\\_memo\\_2013.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nist.gov/data/upload/Final-P-5700.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nist.gov/data/upload/Final-O-5701\\_0.pdf](http://www.nist.gov/data/upload/Final-O-5701_0.pdf)

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. As long as the DMP meets these NIST requirements, it may take the form specified by the applicant's institution or some other entity (e.g., the National Science Foundation<sup>4</sup> or the National Institutes of Health<sup>5</sup>). Some organizations' templates are available on the Internet<sup>6</sup>.

All applications for activities that will generate scientific data using NIST funding are required to adhere to a DMP or explain why data sharing and/or preservation are not within the scope of the project.

For the purposes of the DMP, NIST adopted the definition of "research data" at 2 C.F.R. § 200.315(e)(3) (available at <http://go.usa.gov/3sZvQ>)

Reasonable costs for data preservation and access may be included in the application.

The sufficiency of the DMP will be considered as part of the administrative review (see Section V.2.a. of this FFO); however, the DMP will not be evaluated against any evaluation criteria.

When submitting the application electronically via Grants.gov, items IV.2.a.(1). through IV.2.a.(5). above are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process. **Items IV.2.a.(6). through IV.2.a.(9). 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 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.

## **b. Application Format**

**(1) E-mail submissions.** Will not be accepted.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>

<sup>5</sup> [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data\\_sharing/data\\_sharing\\_guidance.htm#inc](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data_sharing/data_sharing_guidance.htm#inc)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cic.net/projects/technology/shared-storage-services/data-management-plans>

- (2) **Facsimile submissions (fax).** Will not be accepted.
- (3) **Figures, graphs, images, and pictures.** Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be landscape orientation.
- (4) **Font.** Easy to read font (11-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.
- (5) **Line spacing.** Single.
- (6) **Margins.** One (1) inch top, bottom, left, and right.
- (7) **Paper copies.** Will not be accepted. All submissions must be made via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).
- (8) **Page layout.** Portrait orientation only (except figures, graphs, and pictures (see Section IV.2.b.(3))).
- (9) **Page Limit.** Twenty-five (25) pages.

**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; Resumes; and the Data Management Plan.

- (10) **Page numbering.** Number pages sequentially.
  - (11) **Paper size.** 21.6 centimeters by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ inches by 11 inches).
  - (12) **Application language.** English.
  - (13) **Typed document.** All applications, including forms, must be typed.
- c. Application Replacement Pages.** Applicants may not submit replacement pages and/or missing documents after 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.

- d. **Pre-Applications.** NIST is not accepting pre-applications or white papers under this FFO.
- e. **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 (as the case may be) are required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting their applications; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in their applications; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have 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 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.
4. **Submission Dates and Times.** Applicants must submit applications electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Electronic applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, February 29, 2016. Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system is expected to be closed for routine maintenance at these times: from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, January 16, 2016 until Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and also from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, February 20, 2016 until Monday, February 22, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and that applications cannot be submitted during those time spans. The approximate start date for the award made under this FFO is expected to be June 1, 2016.

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 note that a federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated**

recipient's registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not current at the time of the award.

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>

The date and time recorded by [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) will be considered the official time that the application was received by NIST. Applicants are cautioned that the validation process may take up to two full business days after the application is submitted to Grants.gov.

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.

NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by email.

5. **Intergovernmental Review.** Applications under this Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372.
6. **Funding Restrictions.** Construction activities are not an allowable cost under the MEP Program. In addition, a recipient or a subrecipient may not charge profits, fees or other increments above cost to an MEP award. Pre-award costs under this FFO are subject to the prior written approval of the NIST Grants Officer.
7. **Other Submission Requirements**
  - a. **Applications must be submitted electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).** NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by e-mail.
    - (1) Electronic applications must be submitted via Grants.gov at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), under announcement 2016-NIST-MEP-STATE-PARTNERSHIP-01.
      - a) Submitters of electronic applications should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions to ensure the 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 2016-NIST-MEP-STATE-PARTNERSHIP-01 announcement, contact Christopher Hunton by phone at 301-975-5718 or by e-mail at [grants@nist.gov](mailto:grants@nist.gov).



- 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. If all goes well, the registration process takes three (3) to five (5) business days. If problems are encountered, the registration process can take up to two (2) 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. See *also* Section IV.3. of this FFO. 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, with the exception of Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays. For assistance using Grants.gov, you may also contact [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).
- c) 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](http://www.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. Closely following the detailed information in these subcategories will increase the likelihood of acceptance of the application by the Federal agency's electronic system.

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

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 know whether the application was rejected with errors and the reasons why, 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 your 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 your application is received on time.

- b. Amendments.** Any amendments to this FFO will be announced through Grants.gov. Applicants may sign up on Grants.gov to receive amendments by email or may request copies from Jennifer Leon by telephone at (301) 975-4176 or by e-mail to [mepffo@nist.gov](mailto:mepffo@nist.gov).

## **V. Application/Proposal Review Information**

- 1. Evaluation Criteria.** The evaluation criteria, selection factors, and review and selection process provided in this section will be used for this competition in lieu of that provided in the regulations found at 15 C.F.R. part 292, specifically 15 C.F.R. §§ 292.3. NIST will use the following evaluation criteria in evaluating applications and assigning weights, with a maximum score of 100.
- a. Executive Summary and Project Narrative.** (50 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight) Reviewers will evaluate how well the applicant's proposed approach will achieve project goals and support the MEP mission as described in Section I of the FFO. Reviewers will consider the following topics when evaluating the Executive Summary and Project Narrative:
- i. Research/knowledge development and sharing** (25 points)  
Reviewers will assess the applicant's plans for collecting, analyzing, and sharing budget, policy, and trend information relevant to the MEP system. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant's proposal:
- Describes a reasonable plan for routinely tracking and analyzing information from a wide range of data sources on current state

budgets, economic development and technology policy initiatives and investments, program evaluation practices, and other actions or trends that could impact the MEP system;

- Defines a thoughtful approach to conducting original research on topics of interest related to manufacturing, partnerships, accelerating technology adoption, and similar issues, and the policies and practices employed in States and other organizations; and
- Defines a strategy for sharing information with and providing technical assistance to the MEP system, individual Centers, and partners to build system capacity, address challenges, and proactively take advantage of emerging opportunities.

ii. **Network building and expansion** (25 points)

The applicant is expected to have an in-depth understanding of data, current trends, and emerging issues as well as access to a professional network of practitioners and experts who can inform the MEP system and their manufacturing clients. Reviewers will assess how well the proposal describes strategies, techniques and activities for building and expanding partnerships across the MEP network. . Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant's proposal:

- Incorporates clear strategies for fostering collaboration and dialogue among NIST MEP, MEP Centers, MEP partners, industry, and the public to develop effective working partnerships and identify mutually beneficial opportunities for the MEP system;
- Defines a sound approach for prioritizing States and/or regions for attention, developing strategies to address opportunities and concerns, recommending effective communication strategies, and convening stakeholders as needed to facilitate partnership development;
- Describes a reasonable plan to provide nationwide access to State and stakeholder relations and support services;
- Provides innovative ideas and approaches to carry out the year of more intensive activities envisioned (in Year 3 for the purposes of this FFO).

**b. Key Personnel and Organizational Structure.** (30 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight) Reviewers will assess the ability of the key personnel and the applicant's proposed management structure to deliver the services proposed. Reviewers will consider the following when evaluating the qualifications of the applicant and of program management:

- i. Proposed key personnel have the appropriate education, experience in working with state government representatives and related organizations,

- and access to professional networks to carry out proposed activities and support achievement of the MEP system mission and project objectives;
- ii. 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
  - iii. Proposed organizational structure flows logically from the specified approach to the proposed services and project deliverables.
- c. Budget.** (20 points; sub-criteria will receive equal weight) Reviewers will assess the suitability and focus of the applicant's five (5) year budget. The reviewers will consider whether the:
- i. Proposed budget projections are reasonable and appropriate for the scale of services that are to be delivered by the applicant over the five (5) year 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 and to advance MEP system goals.

## **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, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of which enter into appropriate nondisclosure agreements covering such information.

- a. Initial Administrative Review of Applications.** An initial review of timely received applications will be conducted to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to the scope of the stated program objectives of this FFO. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or non-responsive will be eliminated from further review. However, NIST, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application that is missing only non-substantive information that can easily be rectified or cured.
- b. Full Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications.** Applications that are determined to be eligible, complete, and responsive will proceed for full reviews in accordance with the review and selection processes below:
- (1) Evaluation and Review.** Each application will be reviewed by at least three (3) technically qualified individual reviewers who will evaluate each application based on the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this FFO).

Reviews will be limited to technical and cost matters, based on the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1 of this FFO). A mix of Federal and non-Federal reviewers may be used. The reviewers' must discuss the applications with each other but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not as a consensus, and will be supported by written technical comments. The reviewers may ask questions of some or all applicants in writing. Reviewers will assign each application a score, based on the application's responsiveness to the FFO evaluation criteria, with a maximum score of 100.

Applicants whose applications receive an average score of 70 or higher out of 100 will be deemed finalists. If deemed necessary, all finalists will be invited to participate with reviewers in separate conference calls and/or all finalists will be invited to participate in individual site visits that will be conducted by the same reviewers at the applicant's location. Finalists will be reviewed and evaluated, and reviewers may revise their assigned numeric scores based on the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this FFO) as a result of the conference call and/or site visit.

**(2) Ranking and Selection.** 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 (91-100);  
Fundable, Very Good (81-90);  
Fundable (71-80); or  
Unfundable (0-70).

The Subject Matter Expert, who will be a NIST MEP federal employee, will review the evaluators' written technical comments and the ranking of the proposals and 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.3. of this FFO.

The Selecting Official is the MEP Director or designee. The Selecting Official makes the final recommendation to the NIST Grants Officer regarding the funding of applications under this FFO. NIST/MEP expects to recommend funding for the highest ranked applicant; however, the Selecting Official may decide to select an applicant out of rank order based upon one or more of the Selection Factors identified in Section V.3. of this FFO. The Selecting Official may also decide not to recommend funding any of the applicants.

NIST reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with any applicant selected to receive an award, which may include requesting that the applicant remove certain costs. Additionally, NIST may request that the successful applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the Agency prior to award. NIST also reserves the

right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the responsibility of the applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NIST Grants Officer are final.

**c. 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. § 200.205, which may include a review of the financial stability of an applicant, the quality of the applicant's management systems, the history of performance, reports and finding from financial assistance audits, 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 \$150,000), NIST GMD will review and consider the publicly available information about that applicant in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). An applicant may, at its option, review and comment on information about itself previously entered into FAPIIS 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 FAPIIS 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. Selection Factors.** The Selection Factors for this FFO are as follows:

- a. The availability of Federal funds;
- b. Relevance of the proposed project to MEP program goals and policy objectives;
- c. Reviewers' evaluations, including technical comments; and
- d. Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by DoC or by other Federal agencies.

**4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date.** Review, selection, and award processing is expected to be completed in early 2016. The anticipated start date for awards made under this FFO is expected to be June 1, 2016.

**5. Additional Information**

**a. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants.** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing.

- b. **Retention of Unsuccessful Applications.** An electronic copy of each non-selected application will be retained for three (3) years for record keeping purposes. After three (3) years, it will be destroyed.

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

- 1. **Federal Award Notices.** Successful applicants will receive an award package from the NIST Grants Officer. The award cover page, i.e., CD-450, Financial Assistance Award is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>.
- 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>.
  - b. **Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.** The Department of Commerce will apply the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions dated December 26, 2014, accessible at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>, to this award. Refer to Section VII. of this FFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you seek the information at this link and it is no longer working or 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 FFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you seek the information at this link and it is no longer working or you need more information.
  - d. **Funding Availability and Limitation of Liability.** Funding for the program listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations. NIST issues this notice subject to the appropriations made available under the current continuing resolution funding the Department of Commerce, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016, Public Law 114-53 (September 30, 2015). NIST anticipates making awards for the program listed in this notice provided that funding for the program is continued beyond December 11, 2015, the expiration of the current continuing resolution. In no event will NIST or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NIST or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

- e. **Supporting Documentation.** Following the issuance of an MEP award, NIST may require recipients to provide copies of sub-tier agreements, including subawards and contracts over \$150,000, as well subrecipient performance monitoring plans.

### 3. Reporting

- a. **Reporting Requirements.** The following 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), <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj> apply to awards in this program (see Section VI.2.b. of this FFO):

**(1) 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.

**(2) 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, and publication citation information as well as links to publicly available data shall be submitted as soon as they become available.

If a recipient's Data Management Plan has changed since their last submission of a technical report, the recipient must include their revised plan in the next technical report following the revision to the plan. The revised plan must include all of the requirements described in Section IV.2.a.(9). of this FFO.

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://nist.gov/mep/ffo-statepartnership.cfm>.

**(3) 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 FFO, 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.

- b. Audit Requirements.** 2 C.F.R. 200 Subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101 requires any non-Federal entity (including non-profit institutions of higher education and other 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. 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.
- c. 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 (Pub. L. 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 contact persons:

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Administrative, budget, cost-sharing, eligibility questions and other programmatic questions.	Diane Henderson Phone: (301) 975-5105 Fax: (301) 963-6556 E-mail: <a href="mailto:mepffo@nist.gov">mepffo@nist.gov</a>
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	Christopher Hunton Phone: (301) 975-5718 Fax: (301) 975-8884 E-mail: <a href="mailto:grants@nist.gov">grants@nist.gov</a>  or  Grants.gov

Subject Area	Point of Contact
	Phone: (800) 518-4726 E-mail: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a>
Grant Rules and Regulations	Michael Teske Phone: (301) 975-6358 Fax: (301) 975-6368 E-mail: <a href="mailto:michael.teske@nist.gov">michael.teske@nist.gov</a>

**VIII. Other Information**

- 1. Webinar Information Session:** NIST/MEP will hold one or more webinar information sessions for organizations that are considering applying for this funding opportunity. These webinars will provide general information regarding MEP and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. NIST/MEP staff will be available at the webinars to answer general questions. During the webinars, 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 webinars or at any time before submission of a proposal to MEP. However, NIST/MEP staff will provide information about the MEP eligibility, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal during this webinar. The webinars will be held approximately fifteen (15) to thirty (30) business days after posting of this FFO. The exact dates and times of the webinars will be posted on the MEP website at <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-statepartnership.cfm>. The webinars will be recorded, and a link to the recordings will be posted on the MEP website. In addition, the webinar presentations will be available after the webinars on the MEP website. Organizations wishing to participate in one or more of the webinars must register in advance by contacting MEP by email at [mepffo@nist.gov](mailto:mepffo@nist.gov). Participation in the webinars is not required in order for an organization to submit an application pursuant to this FFO.
- 2. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).** Questions from applicants pertaining to eligibility, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal will not be considered on an informal basis. Applicants must submit all such questions in writing to [mepffo@nist.gov](mailto:mepffo@nist.gov). Questions submitted to NIST/MEP may be posted as part of an FAQ document, which will be periodically updated on the MEP website at <http://nist.gov/mep/ffo-statepartnership.cfm>.