May 24, 2017

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Stakeholder Engagement Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC)

- **Funding Opportunity Title:** National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Stakeholder Engagement Program

- **Announcement Type:** Initial

- **Funding Opportunity Number:** 2017-NIST-NICE-01

- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.620, Science, Technology, Business and/or Education Outreach

- **Dates:** Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, Tuesday, August 1, 2017. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by early in FY 2018. NIST expects the earliest anticipated start date for awards under this NOFO to be November 1, 2017.

  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 Eastern Time, Saturday, June 17, 2017 until Monday, June 19, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and again from 12:01 Eastern Time, Saturday, July 15, 2017 until Monday, July 17, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.

  Applicants are strongly urged to read Section IV.2.b., Attachment of Required Application Documents, with great attention. Applicants should carefully follow the instructions and recommendations regarding attachments and using Grants.gov's Download Submitted Applications feature to check that all required attachments were contained in their submission. Applications submitted without the required documents will not pass the Initial Administrative Review, described in Section V.3.a. of this NOFO.

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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 NOFO) often takes between three and five business days and may take as long as two weeks; (3) electronic applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants using Grants.gov will receive email notifications over a period of up to two business days as the application moves through intermediate systems before the applicant learns via a validation or rejection notification whether NIST has received the application. (See http://www.grants.gov for full information on application and notification through Grants.gov). 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 Address:** Applications must be submitted using Grants.gov**.**

- **Funding Opportunity Description:** NIST is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to partner with the NICE program in its outreach efforts to the cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development community; this program will include planning and managing the NICE Annual Conference in the continental United States for up to the next five years.

- **Anticipated Amounts:** NIST anticipates funding one award for approximately $250,000 per year for up to five years. Any award is contingent on the availability of funds.

- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative agreement.

- **Who Is Eligible: Applicants may be any U.S.-located non-Federal entity.** Please note that, for the purposes of this NOFO, individuals and unincorporated sole proprietors are not considered "non-Federal entities" and are not eligible apply.

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** This program does not require cost sharing.

- **Public Meetings (Applicants' Conference):** NIST will hold a webinar (Applicants' Conference) to provide general information regarding NICE, offer general guidance on preparing applications, and answer questions. Proprietary technical discussions about specific project ideas with NIST staff are not permitted at any time before submitting an application to NIST. Therefore, applicants should not raise

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proprietary issues at the Applicants' Conference or any additional seminars related to this competition. Also, NIST staff will not critique or provide feedback on specific project ideas while they are being developed by an applicant. However, questions about NICE, evaluation and award criteria, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive application at the Applicants' Conference and by email to nice.nist@nist.gov. Attendance at the Applicants' Conference is not required and will not be considered in the review and selection process. Information on the Applicants' Conference is available at https://nist.gov/nice.

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FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Program Description

The statutory authority for the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Stakeholder Engagement Program is 15 U.S.C. §§ 272(b)(4) and 7451.

In our connected society, almost every organization in the United States uses the Internet for commerce, communication, or service provision. Cybersecurity has therefore emerged as one of our nation's top priorities for both national and economic security. Increasing our cyber defenses necessarily requires a skilled workforce to protect businesses, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and governments at all levels.

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NICE, led by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in the U.S. Department of Commerce, is a partnership between government, academia, and the private sector focused on cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development. The mission of NICE is to energize and promote a robust network and an ecosystem of cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development. NICE fulfills this mission by coordinating with government, academic, and industry partners to build on existing successful programs, facilitate change and innovation, and bring leadership and vision to increase the number of skilled cybersecurity professionals helping to keep our Nation secure.

NICE's Strategic Plan (available at https://www.nist.gov/itl/applied-cybersecurity/nice/about/strategic-plan) has the following goals:

1. Accelerate learning and skills development - Inspire a sense of urgency in both the public and private sectors to address the shortage of skilled cybersecurity workers.
2. Nurture a diverse learning community - Strengthen education and training across the ecosystem to emphasize learning, measure outcomes, and diversify the cybersecurity workforce.
3. Guide Career Development and Workforce Planning - Support employers to address market demands and enhance recruitment, hiring, development, and retention of cybersecurity talent.

The NICE Annual Conference and Expo brings together thought leaders from academia, industry, government, and non-profits to help address the nation's cybersecurity education, training, and workforce needs. The NICE Conference includes face-to-face convening of public-private partners, an opportunity to signal NICE strategic directions and priorities, and a forum to showcase best practices. (*See* https://www.nist.gov/itl/applied-cybersecurity/nice/nice-annual-conference-and-expo for more information about the 2017 and past conferences.)

NICE Stakeholder Engagement Program

Every aspect of the NICE Strategic Plan requires outreach and coordination with multiple stakeholders. NICE seeks to provide assistance to an organization engaged in building national (and exploring international) relationships to further advance cybersecurity education and training, building the cybersecurity workforce development community with a year-round communication strategy and capping that engagement by planning and holding the NICE Annual Conference and Expo.

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For the NICE Annual Conference and Expo, NICE seeks an organization to lead the conference planning and execution efforts. This includes the full range of pre-conference activities from determining tracks, content, and speakers and arranging the venue to managing the conference logistics to post conference wrap up activities. NICE expects the conference to be kept affordable to a wide range of participants.

The stakeholder engagement strategy must reflect the need to reach out to and build consensus among diverse stakeholders including but not limited to:

- Employers,
- Educators and trainers,
- Certification providers,
- Workforce development managers,
- Economic development administrators, and
- Policymakers.

Note that this is a list of high-level examples and not meant to be comprehensive. NICE encourages applicants to provide details on how they will reach stakeholders with different interests within these broad categories.

As a national initiative, it is critical that the outreach strategy and conference participation demonstrate a commitment to diversity, including regional diversity. Conferences must move about the country from year to year within the continental United States. Applicants should plan for annual conferences of at least 750 to 1000 attendees with venues that keep costs affordable to the community and have good transportation options for attendees.

NICE anticipates that this will be up to a five-year award for long-term community building with the possibility of converting this award to an institutional award at the conclusion of the award period.

II. **Federal Award Information**

1. **Funding Instrument.** The funding instrument that will be used is a cooperative agreement. The nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally be NIST collaboration and involvement in the direction of the scope of work.

2. **Funding Availability.** NIST anticipates funding one award for approximately $250,000 per year for up to five years. Any award is contingent on the availability of funds.

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III. Eligibility Information

1. **Who Is Eligible:** Applicants may be any U.S.-located non-Federal entity. Please note that, for the purposes of this NOFO, individuals and unincorporated sole proprietors are not considered "non-Federal entities" and are not eligible apply.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching. This program does not require cost sharing.**

IV. Application Submission Information

1. **Address to Request Application Package.** The application package is available at www.grants.gov under Funding Opportunity Number 2017-NIST-NICE-01.

2. **Content and Format of Application Submission**

a. **Required Forms and Documents**

   The Application must contain the following:

   (1) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. The SF-424 must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.

   - "SF-424, Item 8.d. Zip/Postal Code field, should reflect the Zip code + 4 (#####-####) format."

   - SF-424, Item 12, should list the NOFO number 2017-NIST-NICE-01.

   - SF-424, Item 18, should list the total Federal budget amount requested for the entire project.

   - For SF-424, Item 21, the list of certifications and assurances is contained in the SF-424B.

   (2) SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs. The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for each year of the project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments. The applicant should reflect all expenses for the full term of the project on the SF-424A form. The SF-424A form accommodates up to five (5) years of budget information.

   These sections of the SF-424A should reflect funds for the first year of the award: Section A; Section B; Section C; and Section D. The budget estimate for

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the second year through fifth year of the award should be entered in Section E, field 16, column (b) through column (e), respectively. 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 "Science, Technology, Business and/or Education Outreach". The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number on Line 1 under Column (b) should be entered as "11.620".

These sections of the SF-424A should reflect funds for the whole five years of the award: Section A; Section B; Section C; and Section D.

(3) SF-424B, Assurances - Non-Construction Programs

(4) CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying. Enter "2017-NIST-NICE-01" in the Award Number field. Enter the title of the application used in field 15 of the SF-424, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field.

(5) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

(6) Proposal Narrative. The Proposal Narrative is a document of no more than 12 pages responsive to the program description (*see* Section I. of this NOFO) and the evaluation criteria (*see* Section V.1. of this NOFO). The Proposal Narrative should contain the following information:

   (a) **Executive Summary.** An executive summary of the proposed project, including listing the proposed project participants, the scope of the proposed work, and an overview of the proposed approach to engaging with the cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development community.

   (b) **Outreach Strategy.** Approach for reaching diverse stakeholders in the cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development community. Applicants should emphasize how they will reach a range of different stakeholders including the specifics of the stakeholder communities to contact. In addition, applicants should discuss how the outreach strategy will work across regions and to attract underrepresented populations. Applicants should also include information on how they will reach out to the international cybersecurity education and workforce development community.

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This section should address the *Outreach Strategy* evaluation criterion (*see* Section V.1.a. of this NOFO).

(c) **Process for Building a Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development Community.** Process for bringing diverse stakeholders within regional and local communities together in a national cybersecurity education and workforce development community. This includes recruiting key leading organizations to host and sponsor conferences that are geographically diverse and strategically aligned with NICE.

This section should address the *Process for Building Community Engagement* evaluation criterion (*see* Section V.1.b. of this NOFO).

(d) **Conference Planning.** Approach for planning and managing the annual conference including the full range of activities involved:

- Identifying conference location,
- Controlling the budget,
- Working with stakeholders to determine content and agenda,
- Managing conference logistics,
- Developing an outreach strategy for the conference,
- Conducting the conference, and
- Evaluating the conference for improvements from year to year.

Applicants should emphasize how their proposed planning efforts keep the conference accessible, affordable, and nationally representative of the intended audience.

This section should address the *Conference Planning* evaluation criterion (*see* Section V.1.c. of this NOFO).

(e) **Resources.** For organizations, a description of the existing infrastructure (e.g., websites, conference registration systems, channels for promotion), qualifications, and proposed roles, of the participating organization(s) including proposed subawardees and contractors. For key personnel, a description of their qualifications, proposed roles, and level of planned effort. Note that all qualification information must be in this section. For both organizations and key personnel, include information on relevant past efforts with similar projects and experiences collaborating, if appropriate.

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This section should address the *Resources* evaluation criterion (*see* Section V.1.d. of this NOFO).

(7) Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative should provide a detailed breakdown of each of the object class categories as reflected on the SF-424A. The budget justification should address all of the budget categories (personnel, fringe benefits, equipment, travel, supplies, other direct costs and indirect costs). The written justification should include the necessity and the basis for the cost. Proposed funding levels must be consistent with the project scope, and only allowable costs should be included in the budget. Information on cost allowability is available in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (http://go.usa.gov/SBYh), which apply to awards in this program. Information needed for each category is as follows:

(a) **Personnel** – At a minimum, the budget justification for all personnel should include the following: name, job title, commitment of effort on the proposed project in terms of average number of hours per week or percentage of time, salary rate, total direct charges on the proposed project, description of the role of the individual on the proposed project and the work to be performed.

(b) **Fringe Benefits** – Fringe benefits should be identified separately from salaries and wages and based on rates determined by organizational policy. The items included in the fringe benefit rate (e.g., health insurance, parking, etc.) should not be charged under another cost category.

(c) **Equipment** – Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. Any items that do not meet the threshold for equipment can be included under the supplies line item. The budget justification should list each piece of equipment, the cost, and a description of how it will be used and why it is necessary to the successful completion of the proposed project. Please note that any general use equipment (computers, etc.) charged directly to the award should be allocated to the award according to expected usage on the project.

(d) **Travel** – NIST expects that the award recipient will use teleconference, web conference and video conference capabilities as much as possible but travel is likely to be necessary for conference venue site visits and the conference itself. For all travel costs, the budget justification for travel should include the following: destination; names and number of people traveling; dates and/or duration; mode of transportation, lodging and subsistence rates; and

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description of how the travel is directly related to the proposed project. For travel that is yet to be determined, please provide best estimates based on prior experience. If a destination is not known, an approximate amount may be used with the assumptions given for the location of the meeting.

(e) **Supplies** – Provide a list of each supply, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project.

(f) **Contracts/Subawards** – Each contract or subaward should be treated as a separate item. Describe the services provided and the necessity of the subaward or contract to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining normal goods and services. Subawardees perform part of the project scope of work. For each subaward, applicants must provide budget detail justifying the cost of the work performed on the project.

(g) **Other Direct Costs** – For costs that do not easily fit into the other cost categories, please list the cost, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project. Only allowable costs can be charged to the award.

This Budget Narrative should address the *Reasonableness of the Proposed Budget* evaluation criterion (*see* Section V.1.e. of this NOFO).

(8) 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 dated March 31, 2017, accessible at https://go.usa.gov/xXRxK.

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 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 and budget narrative portion of the application.

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(9) Letters of Commitment. Letters are not included in the page count. Letters of commitment should be provided from contractors or subawardees who will be participating in the project indicating their level of participation and any resources or infrastructure brought to the project.

b. **Attachment of Required Documents**

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 to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. *A receipt from Grants.gov indicates only that an application was transferred to a system. It 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.

The Grants.gov Online Users Guide available at the Grants.gov site (http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh) provides vital information on checking the status of applications. See especially the "Check My Application Status" option, found by clicking first on Applicants, and then by clicking on Applicant Actions.

Applicants can track their submission in the Grants.gov system by following the procedures at the Grants.gov site (http://go.usa.gov/cjamz). It can take up to two business days for an application to fully move through the Grants.gov system to NIST.

NIST uses the Tracking Numbers assigned by Grants.gov, and does not issue Agency Tracking Numbers.

c. **Application Format**

(1) **Paper, E-mail and Facsimile (fax) Submissions.** Will not be accepted.

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(2)   Figures, Graphs, Images, and Pictures. Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be landscape orientation.

(3)   Font. Easy to read font (10-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.

(4)   Page Limit. The Proposal Narrative for Applications is limited to twelve (12) pages.

   Page limit includes: Table of contents (if included), Proposal Narrative with all required information, including management information and qualifications, figures, graphs, tables, images, pictures and qualifications of individuals.

   Page limit excludes: SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance; SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs; SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs; CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying; SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities; Cover Page; Gantt Chart, WBS, or other planning document (if included); Budget Narrative; Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; and Letters of Commitment.

(5)   Page size. 21.6 centimeters by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ inches by 11 inches).

(6)   Application language. English.

d. Application Replacement Pages. Applicants may not submit replacement pages and/or missing documents once an application has been submitted. Any revisions must be made by submission of a new application that must be received by NIST by the submission deadline.

e. Pre-Applications. There are no pre-applications.

f. 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 its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM

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registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency, unless otherwise excepted from these requirements pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 25.110. 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 NOFO, 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.** Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, Tuesday, August 1, 2017. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by early FY 2018. NIST expects the earliest anticipated start date for awards under this NOFO to be November 1, 2017.

   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 Eastern Time, Saturday, June 17, 2017 until Monday, June 19, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and again from 12:01 Eastern Time, Saturday, July 15, 2017 until Monday, July 17, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.

   When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) (*see* Sections IV.3. and IV.7.a.(1).(b). of this NOFO) often takes between three and five business days and may take as long as two weeks; (3) applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants using Grants.gov will receive email notifications over a period of up to two business days as the application moves through intermediate systems before the applicant learns via a validation or rejection notification whether NIST has received the application. (*See* http://www.grants.gov for full information on application and notification through Grants.gov.). 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.

5. **Intergovernmental Review.** Applications under this Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372.

6. **Funding Restrictions.** Profit or fee is not an allowable cost.

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7. Other Submission Requirements

a. Applications must be submitted electronically.

(1) Applications must be submitted via Grants.gov at www.grants.gov.

    (a) Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions to ensure that all attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. A receipt from Grants.gov indicating an application is received <u>does not provide information about whether attachments have been received</u>. For further information or questions regarding applying electronically for the 2017-NIST-NICE-01 announcement, contact Christopher Hunton by phone at 301-975-5718 or by e-mail at 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 to five business days. If problems are encountered, the registration process can take up to two 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 NOFO. 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.

    (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 home page. Clicking on the "Applicants" tab produces two

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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 leading up to 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 will be announced through Grants.gov. Applicants may sign up on Grants.gov to receive amendments by e-mail or may request copies from Danielle Santos at (301) 975-5048 or by e-mail to nice.nist@nist.gov.

V. <u>Application Review Information</u>

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1. **Evaluation Criteria.** The evaluation criteria that will be used in evaluating applications and assigned weights are as follows:

   a. **Outreach Strategy (0 – 20 points).** Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant's proposed approach clearly addresses the program goals (*see* Section I. of this NOFO) and the extent to which the approach is likely to reach the full range of diverse stakeholders in the cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development community. Diversity will be considered demographically and regionally and in the range of participants within the cybersecurity education and workforce development community.

   b. **Process for Building Community Engagement (0 to 20 points).** Reviewers will evaluate the likelihood that the applicant's proposed process for bringing diverse stakeholders within the community together will be effective. This includes evaluating the comprehensiveness and potential effectiveness of the plan to recruit key leading organizations to host and sponsor conferences.

   c. **Conference Planning (0 to 30 points).** Reviewers will evaluate the comprehensiveness and likelihood of success of the applicant's proposed plan for managing and conducting the full range of activities needed for the annual conference. Reviewers will consider how the proposed plan keeps the conference affordable, nationally representative, and accessible.

   d. **Resources (0 - 20 points).** Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant organization, any proposed partner organizations, and key personnel, have the qualifications, resources and past experience needed to conduct the proposed project effectively. The extent to which the applicant organization and any proposed partner organizations have experience reaching geographically diverse groups and past experience in similar collaborations will also be considered.

   e. **Reasonableness of the Proposed Budget (0 – 10 points).** Reviewers will assess the budget compared to the proposed work to ascertain the reasonableness and cost-effectiveness of the request.

2. **Selection Factors.** The Selecting Official, who is the director of NICE, shall generally select and recommend applications for award based upon the rank order of the applications. The Selecting Official may select and recommend an application for award out of rank order based on one or more of the following selection factors:

   a. The results of the reviewers' evaluations.

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b. The availability of Federal funds.

c. Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by NIST, DoC, or by other Federal agencies.

d. Alignment with NICE priorities (*see* Section I. of this NOFO).

3. 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 who have entered into nondisclosure agreements covering such information, when applicable.

a. Initial Administrative Review. An initial review of timely received applications will be conducted to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this NOFO. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or non-responsive may be eliminated from further review. However, NIST, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application that is missing non-substantive information which may easily be rectified or cured at a later point in the evaluation process.

b. Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications. Applications determined to be eligible, complete, and responsive will proceed for full reviews in accordance with the review and selection process below:

(1) Evaluation, Review, and Ranking. At least three independent, objective reviewers, who are Federal employees knowledgeable in the subject matter of this NOFO and its objectives, will evaluate and score each application based on the evaluation criteria (*see* Section V.1. of this NOFO). While every application will have at least three reviewers, applications may have differing numbers of reviewers if specialized expertise is needed to evaluate the application. The reviewers' numeric scores and narrative comments will be forwarded to an Evaluation Board, a committee comprised of Federal employees knowledgeable in the subject matter of this NOFO and its objectives.

The Evaluation Board will produce a ranked list of the applications using the average of the reviewers' numeric scores (*see* Section V.2. of this NOFO). After conducting a review of the applications, the Evaluation Board will determine a numeric score threshold and applications with an average numeric score above the threshold will be deemed finalists while applications with an

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average numeric score below the threshold will not receive further review or consideration in the competition.

Finalists may receive written follow-up questions from the Evaluation Board in order to clarify information in the applicant's proposal. If deemed necessary, all finalists may be invited to participate in web conferences with the Evaluation Board to provide additional clarifications about their proposal. As a result of any clarifying information received during this process, the Evaluation Board members may decide by consensus to revise the rank order of the finalists.

(2) Recommendation and Selection. The list of finalists and their rank order will be provided to the Selecting Official for further consideration. The Selecting Official will then recommend applications for funding based upon the rank order of the finalists' applications and the selection factors (*see* Section V.2. of this NOFO).

NIST reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with the selected applicant. Negotiations may include requesting that the applicant remove certain costs. Additionally, NIST may request that the 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. NIST may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any particular application. NIST may request that fundable applicants consider working together in a combined project if this approach might effectively advance the program mission. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the 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, 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

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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.

4. **Anticipated Announcement and Award Date.** Review of Applications, selection of successful applicants, and award processing is expected to be completed by early FY 2018. The earliest anticipated start date for awards under this NOFO is expected to be November 1, 2017.

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 years for record keeping purposes. After three 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.

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 March 31, 2017, accessible at http://go.usa.gov/xXRxK, to this award. Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, 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.

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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 NOFO, 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 NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. In no event will NIST or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs if this program fails to receive funding or is cancelled because of agency priorities. Publication of this NOFO does not oblige NIST or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

e. **Collaborations with NIST Employees.** No NIST employees may be named as collaborators on projects for this NOFO.

f. **Use of NIST Intellectual Property.** If the applicant anticipates using any NIST-owned intellectual property to carry out the work proposed, the applicant should identify such intellectual property. This information will be used to ensure that no NIST employee involved in the development of the intellectual property will participate in the review process for that competition. In addition, if the applicant intends to use NIST-owned intellectual property, the applicant must comply with all statutes and regulations governing the licensing of Federal government patents and inventions, described in 35 U.S.C. §§ 200-212, 37 C.F.R. Part 401, 2 C.F.R. §200.315, and in Section D.03 of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Terms and Conditions dated March 31, 2017 found at http://go.usa.gov/xXRxK.

Any use of NIST-owned intellectual property by an applicant is at the sole discretion of NIST and will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis if a project is deemed meritorious. The applicant should indicate within the project narrative whether it already has a license to use such intellectual property or whether it intends to seek one.

3. **Reporting**

a. **Reporting Requirements.** The following reporting requirements described in Sections A.01, Reporting Requirements, of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions dated March 31, 2017, http://go.usa.gov/xXRxK, apply to awards in this program:

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(1) Financial Reports. Each award recipient will be required to submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report on a quarterly basis for the periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period to the NIST Grants Officer and Grants Specialist named in the award documents. A final financial report is due within 90 days after the end of the project period.

(2) Performance (Technical) Reports. Each award recipient will be required to submit a technical progress report to the NIST Grants Officer and the Federal Program Officer on a quarterly basis for the periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. A final technical progress report shall be submitted within 90 days after the expiration date of the award. Technical progress reports shall contain information as prescribed in 2 C.F.R. § 200.328 (http://go.usa.gov/xkVgP) and Department of Commerce Financial Standard Terms and Conditions, Section A.01 (http://go.usa.gov/xXRxK).

(3) Patent and Property Reports. From time to time, and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements (*see* Section VI.2. of this NOFO) and other terms and conditions governing the award, the recipient may need to submit property and patent reports.

(4) 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 NOFO, 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. Subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101 requires any non-Federal entity (*i.e.*, 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

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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. <u>Federal Awarding Agency Contacts</u>

Questions should be directed to the following contact persons:

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Programmatic and Technical Questions	Danielle Santos Phone: 301-975-5048 E-mail: nice.nist@nist.gov
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	Christopher Hunton Phone: 301-975-5718 Fax: (301) 975-8884 E-mail: grants@nist.gov Or Grants.gov Phone: (800) 518-4726 E-mail: support@grants.gov
Grant Rules and Regulations	Husai Rahman Phone: 301-975-4355 Fax: (301) 975-8884 E-mail: husai.rahman@nist.gov

VIII. <u>Other Information</u>

1. **Public Meetings (Applicants' Conference):** NIST will hold a webinar (Applicants' Conference) to provide general information regarding NICE, offer general guidance on preparing applications, and answer questions. Proprietary technical discussions

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about specific project ideas with NIST staff are not permitted at any time before submitting an application to NIST. Therefore, applicants should not raise proprietary issues at the Applicants' Conference or any additional seminars related to this competition. Also, NIST staff will not critique or provide feedback on specific project ideas while they are being developed by an applicant. However, questions about NICE, evaluation and award criteria, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive application at the Applicants' Conference and by email to nice.nist@nist.gov. Attendance at the Applicants' Conference is not required and will not be considered in the review and selection process. Information on the Applicants' Conference is available at https://www.nist.gov/itl/applied-cybersecurity/nice.

2. **Personal and Business Information.** The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflicts of interest and nondisclosure agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business

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information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

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