

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS for 2012-NIST-MEP-AZ-MD-RI-01

Content and Format of Application/Proposal Submission – The requirements given in this section of the FFO will be used in lieu of those given in the MEP regulations found at 15 C.F.R. part 290, specifically 15 C.F.R. § 290.5(a).

The NIST MEP Operating Plan Guidelines are a resource framework for proposers to consider in developing their proposal. These guidelines are available at <http://nist.gov/mep/>. Complete proposals must, at a minimum, include the following forms and documents:

Required Forms and Documents

- (1) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. The SF-424 must be signed by an authorized representative of the proposer organization. The FFO number 2012-NIST-MEP-AZ-MD-RI-01 must be identified in item 12 of the SF-424. 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 no more than five (5) years, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments.)
- (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 Technical Proposal is a word-processed document not exceeding 25 pages responsive to the program description (see Section I. of the FFO) and the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of the FFO). It should contain the following sections:
 - (a) **Executive Summary.** The executive summary should briefly describe the proposed project, consistent with the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of the FFO).
 - (b) **Project Narrative.** A description of the proposed project, sufficient to permit evaluation of the proposal, in accordance with the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of the FFO).
 - (c) **Qualifications.** A description of the qualifications and proposed center operational or management activities of key personnel who will be assigned to work on the proposed project.

- (d) **Statement of Work.** The statement of work should discuss the specific tasks to be carried out, including a schedule of measurable events and milestones.
- (e) **Integration Plans.** Include plans for integration into the MEP national system and linkages to appropriate national resources.
- (f) **Past Performance** (*for existing or previous MEP center proposers only*). Proposals from existing or previous MEP centers or partners must provide specific information that addresses whether the proposer's past performance with the program is indicative of expected performance under a possible new award and describing how and why performance is expected to be the same or different.
- (g) **Additional Information.** In addition, the proposal must contain the following requirements, which are being included in lieu of those identified in 15 C.F.R. 290.5(a)(3), which are:
 - i. A plan for the allocation of intellectual property rights associated with any invention or copyright which may result from the involvement in the Center's technology transfer or research activities consistent with the conditions of 15 C.F.R. 290.9;
 - ii. A statement that provides adequate assurances that the host organization will contribute the required cost share. (*Although the MEP regulation, 15 C.F.R. 290.5 (a)(3)(ii), states that applicants should provide evidence that the proposed Center will be self-supporting after six years, this requirement is no longer in effect.*)
 - iii. A statement describing linkages to industry, government, and educational organizations within its service region.
 - iv. A statement defining the initial service region including a statement of the constituency to be served and the level of service to be provided, as well as out-year plans.
 - v. A statement agreeing to focus the mission of the Center on technology transfer activities within the region but not to exclude companies based on state boundaries.
 - vi. A proposed plan for the annual evaluation of the success of the Center by NIST, including appropriate criteria for consideration and weighting those criteria.
 - vii. A plan to focus the Center's technology emphasis on areas consistent with NIST technology research programs and organizational expertise.
 - viii. A description of the planned Center sufficient to permit NIST to evaluate the proposal in accordance with 15 C.F.R. 290.6.

(7) Budget Narrative. There is no set format for the Budget Narrative; however, it should provide a detailed breakdown of each of the object class categories as reflected on the SF-424A. It should include:

- (a) All expenses for year one (1) of operation and identify all sources of funds to pay these expenses.
 - (b) A budget outline for annual costs and sources of funds for potential years two (2) through five (5) at no more than \$1,000,000 per year in NIST support for an MEP center in Arizona, at no more than \$1,000,000 per year in NIST support for an MEP center in Maryland, and at no more than \$1,000,000 per year in NIST support for an MEP center in Rhode Island.
- (8) Letters of Commitment for Non-Federal Cost Sharing. Letters of commitment from all sources of the non-Federal cost sharing are required. Letters of commitment do not count toward the page limit. General “letters of support” are not required and will be counted toward the page limit for the Technical Proposal if included in the proposal. A summary listing of this support is allowed, but will count toward the page limit. It is inappropriate for any Federal employee to provide critique or feedback on project ideas, etc., and it is also inappropriate to ask Federal employees for a letter of support.
- (9) 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. Successful proposers will be required to obtain such a rate.

If submitting the proposal electronically via Grants.gov, items (1) through (5) above are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process. Items (6) through (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. Proposers 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 indicating a proposal is received does not provide information about whether attachments have been received.

Submission Dates and Times

All proposals must be received by NIST no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on August 20, 2012. This deadline applies to all modes of proposal submission, including courier services, express mailing, and electronic.

Proposals not received by the specified due date and time will not be considered and will be returned without review. For electronic submissions, NIST will consider the date and time stamped on the validation generated by www.grants.gov as the official submission time.

NIST strongly recommends that proposers do not wait until the last minute to submit a proposal. NIST will not make any allowances for late submissions, including but not limited to incomplete Grants.gov registration, delays in mail delivery caused by Federal Government security screening for U.S. Postal Service mail, or for delays by guaranteed express mailing and/or couriers. To avoid any potential processing backlogs due to last minute Grants.gov registrations, proposers are highly encouraged to start their Grants.gov registration process at least four (4) weeks prior to the proposal due date.

Important: All proposers, both electronic and paper submitters, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into proposers' schedules for delivery of their proposal. Submitters of electronic proposals are advised that volume on Grants.gov may be extremely heavy on the deadline date, and if Grants.gov is unable to accept proposals electronically in a timely fashion, proposers are encouraged to exercise their option to submit proposals in paper format. Submitters of paper proposals should allow adequate time to ensure a paper proposal will be received on time, taking into account that Federal Government security screening for U.S. Postal Service mail may delay receipt of mail for up to two (2) weeks and that guaranteed express mailings and/or couriers are not always able to fulfill their guarantees.

In the event of a natural disaster that interferes with timely proposal submissions, NIST may issue an amendment to this FFO to change the proposal submission due date.