

**AMENDED NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR
NIST MEP COMPETITIVE AWARDS PROGRAM
AMENDMENT 1**

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is announcing an amendment to its December 28, 2020 Announcement of Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number 2021-NIST-MEP-CAP-01, posted on Grants.gov, that solicits proposals for the NIST MEP Competitive Awards Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC)
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** NIST MEP Competitive Awards Program
- **Announcement Type:** Amendment (see FY2022 Amendment Revisions document under Related Documents tab for a list of changes from the original announcement)
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** 2021-NIST-MEP-CAP-01
- **Assistance Listing (CFDA Number):** 11.611, Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- **Dates:** Electronic applications will be accepted, processed, and considered for funding, subject to the availability of funds and subject to the publication of an amended or a superseding NOFO under this program.
The approximate start date for successful applications is 90-180 days following the submission of an application.

Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system closes periodically for routine maintenance. Applicants should visit [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for any scheduled closures.

Applicants should closely review Section IV.ii.b., Attachment of Required Application Documents, to ensure the submission of complete applications. Applicants should carefully follow the instructions and recommendations regarding attachments and use the Download Submitted Forms and Applications feature on www.grants.gov 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.2.a. of this NOFO, which may result in the application not being considered for funding. See Section IX. of this NOFO for an application checklist.

- **Application Submission Address:** Applications must be submitted using [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** NIST MEP invites applications from current MEP Centers for projects that will add capabilities to the MEP Program by achieving one or more of the criteria set forth in 15 U.S.C. 278k-1(e)(3) and may give priority during the selection process to proposals that will also address one or more of the Program Themes described in Section I. of this NOFO: Industry/Manufacturing 4.0; manufacturing workforce services to include employee recruitment, retention, and employee development; supply chain management and resiliency; and Artificial Intelligence (AI) application. Projects funded pursuant to this NOFO must provide for activities or services beyond those provided for pursuant to an applicant's and its partnering MEP Centers' base MEP Center cooperative agreements. See Section I of this NOFO for the full program description.
- **Anticipated Amounts:** NIST anticipates funding awards up to \$1 million in total funding for single MEP Center awards and up to \$5 million in total funding for awards involving multiple MEP Centers. Proposals awarded under this NOFO will have a budget and a performance period of up to three (3) years, consistent with the NIST multi-year funding policy. See Section II.3 of this NOFO.
- **Funding Instrument:** Cooperative Agreement. See Section II.1 of this NOFO for additional information concerning the funding instrument for these awards.
- **Eligibility:** Applicants for this program must be an active MEP Center that is operating pursuant to a current NIST MEP cooperative agreement. A MEP Center may work individually or may include proposed subawards to other organizations, including but not limited to other MEP Centers, to carry out the activities described in the proposal.
- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Non-federal cost share is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO.
- **Public Website, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Webinar:** Questions from applicants pertaining to NOFO eligibility, cost sharing requirements, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive proposal will not be considered on an informal basis. Applicants must submit all such questions in writing to mepnofo@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 <https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-competitive-awards-program-cap>

Table of Contents

Page 2 of 32

NIST MEP Competitive Awards Program
Amended Notice of Funding Opportunity
March 9, 2022

I.	Program Description.....	3
II.	Federal Award Information.....	5
III.	Eligibility Information.....	7
IV.	Application and Submission Information	7
V.	Application Review Information.....	22
VI.	Federal Award Administration Information	26
VII.	Federal Awarding Agency Contacts	30
VIII.	Other Information.....	31
IX.	Application Checklist	32

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Program Description

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is publishing this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) pursuant to the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Program (MEP) Competitive Awards Program, which is authorized by 15 U.S.C. § 278k-1. This program is not a Federal research and development program, and it is not the intent of this program that MEP Center awardees will perform systematic research. Please contact the Federal Awarding Agency Contacts listed in Section VII. of this NOFO if you require additional information regarding this NOFO or if any of the weblinks in this NOFO are not working.

1) Background Information

The MEP Program is a nationwide network of Centers (referred to hereinafter as the MEP National Network) located in all 50 States and Puerto Rico that serve as trusted business advisors focused on transforming U.S. manufacturers to compete globally, supporting supply chain integration, and providing access to technology for improved productivity. MEP Centers are a diverse network of State, non-profit organizations and public colleges and universities, comprising more than 1,400 manufacturing experts offering hands on technical expertise and assistance services that address the critical needs of their local manufacturers.

MEP Centers work directly with area manufacturers in each State to provide expertise and services tailored to manufacturers' most critical needs, ranging from process improvement and workforce development to business practices and technology transfer and implementation. Additionally, MEP Centers connect manufacturers with government and trade associations, universities and research laboratories, and a host of other public and private resources to help manufacturers realize individual business goals. To learn more about the MEP Center program, please go to <http://www.nist.gov/mep/>.

NIST MEP's Competitive Award Program (CAP) provides MEP Centers with an opportunity to compete for additional resources to help fund the costs of innovative

projects that will add capabilities to the MEP Program by achieving one or more of the criteria set forth in 15 U.S.C. 278k-1(e)(3). During FY 2017 through FY 2020, NIST MEP competitively awarded 31 CAP cooperative agreements in the following practice areas: (i) Medical device accreditation; (ii) Industry 4.0; (iii) Food manufacturing; (iv) Digital manufacturing; (v) Workforce planning; (vi) Toyota Kata; (vii) Apprenticeship; (viii) Cybersecurity; and (ix) Integration of small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) into local and regional innovation ecosystems.

2) Program Criteria

Applications for funding pursuant to this NOFO must propose projects that will add capabilities to the MEP Program by achieving one or more of the criteria contained in 15 U.S.C. 278k-1(e)(3). The following criteria requires direct engagement with clients, with the exception of criterion e.

- a. Improve the competitiveness of industries in the region in which the Center or Centers are located;
- b. Create jobs or train newly hired employees;
- c. Promote the transfer and commercialization of research and technology from institutions of higher education, national laboratories or other federally funded research programs, and nonprofit research institutes;
- d. Recruit a diverse manufacturing workforce, including through outreach to underrepresented populations, including individuals identified in section 33 or section 34 of the Science and Engineering Equal Opportunities Act (42 U.S.C. 1885a, 1885b); and/or
- e. Other activities that will achieve one or more of the objectives set forth in 15 U.S.C. 278k(c) or 15 U.S.C. 278l

Applicants are required to provide a detailed explanation as to how the proposed project will achieve one or more of the statutory criteria listed immediately above as part of the applicant's project narrative (see Section IV. of this NOFO), which will be used by NIST MEP in evaluating applications and in awarding program funding (see Section V. of this NOFO). In addition, projects funded pursuant to this NOFO must provide for activities and services beyond those provided for pursuant to an applicant's and its partnering MEP Centers' base MEP Center cooperative agreements.

3) Program Themes

NIST consulted with the MEP Advisory Board, SMMs and other Federal agencies. These consultations included direct solicitation during a public MEP Advisory Board meeting, a review of data obtained through MEP Center Client Surveys, surveys conducted by individual MEP Centers, NIST MEP Executive Manufacturer Roundtables, and outreach to other Federal agencies. Based on the results of these consultations and in accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 278k-1(c)(2), the NIST Director

has identified the following Program Themes for this NOFO:

- Technology and Innovation; Industry/Manufacturing 4.0;
- Manufacturing Workforce Services to include Employee Recruitment, Retention, and Employee Development; and
- Supply Chain Management and Resiliency.

For more information on these Program Themes, see the NIST MEP Funding Opportunity Website at <https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-competitive-awards-program-cap>.

II. Federal Award Information

1. Funding Instrument

The funding instruments that will be used are grants or cooperative agreements, as appropriate. Where cooperative agreements are used, the nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally include collaboration with the recipient organization in developing and implementing the approved scope of work, in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.24.

- 2. Multi-Year Funding Policy.** When an application for a multi-year award is approved, funding in some cases will be provided only for the first year of the project. The recipient will be required to submit detailed budgets and budget narratives prior to the award or release of any continued funding. Continued funding for the remaining year(s) of the project will be awarded or released by NIST on a non-competitive basis, and may be adjusted, 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; however, the period of performance must not exceed three (3) years in duration, including any no-cost award extension authorized by NIST.

- 3. Funding Availability.** In FY 2021, NIST anticipates funding awards up to \$1 million in total funding for single MEP Center awards and up to \$5 million in total funding for projects involving multiple MEP Centers. Proposals awarded under this NOFO will have a budget and a performance period of up to three (3) years, consistent with the multi-year funding policy described in Section II.2. above. Funding for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds and NIST programmatic priorities.

- 4. Award Kick Off.** For awards exceeding \$250,000 or involving subrecipients unfamiliar with NIST requirements, a recipient should anticipate participating in a virtual kick-off conference, which will be held

within 15-30 calendar days post start date of award. The kick-off conference will typically take between 2 and 6 hours and must be attended by the MEP Center Director, along with up to two key project personnel. Representatives from key subrecipients and other key strategic partners may attend the kick-off conference as deemed appropriate by the recipient.

- 5. MEP National Network Meetings.** NIST MEP typically organizes MEP National Network meetings at least one time per year to share best practices, and to 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. One key representative from the lead MEP Center and other appropriate partners/collaborators should attend these meetings.

Applicants must include travel and related costs for one (1) MEP National Network meetings in each of the funded years (1 meeting per year; up to 3 total meetings over a three-year award period). These costs must be reflected in the SF-424A (see Section IV.ii.a.(2). of this NOFO). These costs must also be reflected in the budget tables and budget narratives for each of the funded years, which are submitted as part of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.ii.a.(6).(e). of this NOFO). In the event that travel and related costs for the MEP Center representative are already accounted for under another MEP award, the applicant should note this in the budget narrative and should not include travel and related costs in the budget.

Personnel will be expected to actively participate during these meetings and freely share lessons learned regarding the details of the project and attributes conducive to transferring knowledge to other MEP Centers for the benefit of small U.S. manufacturers.

Recipients will be required to provide detailed analysis of the lessons learned through these projects under Section VI.iii.a.(2). Performance (Technical) Reports. These analyses will include, but are not limited to: attributes, participant roles, planning of the intended approach, root cause(s) for success/failures, recommendations for how the outcomes of the project might inform expansion of the intended goals, and any plans for sustainment of the effort beyond the period of performance.

- 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 NOFO.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants. Applicants for this program must be an active MEP Center that is operating pursuant to a current NIST MEP cooperative agreement. An MEP Center may work individually or may include proposed subawards to other organizations, including but not limited to other MEP Centers, to carry out the activities described in the proposal.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement. Non-Federal cost sharing is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO.

a) Prohibition on Profit and Fees.

A profit, fee, or other incremental charge above actual cost is not an allowable cost under this program.

b) No Double Charging Against other NIST MEP Awards.

Costs charged against awards issued pursuant to this NOFO, whether paid by federal or non-federal funds, may not also be charged as costs against any other NIST MEP award (i.e., no double-billing of costs). In addition, NIST MEP funding provided by a MEP Center to another MEP Center or other collaborator may not be used by such MEP Center or collaborator as a non-federal cost share contribution for an MEP Center or collaborator award (i.e., federal funds may not be used as cost share for other federal awards).

c) Program Income.

For purposes of this program, applicants should not budget program income to be used as non-federal cost share. Rather, the recipient and any subrecipients of an award issued pursuant to this NOFO must expend all program income (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.307) generated by the project using the "additive method" under 2 C.F.R. § 200.307(e)(2), with any excess program income to be disposed of pursuant to the "deductive method" under 2 C.F.R. § 200.307(e)(1).

The applicant must clearly identify in its proposal whether the applicant or any of its subrecipients anticipate generating program income pursuant to the proposed activities (e.g., registration fees, client service fees, etc.). If program income is anticipated under the proposal, the applicant must identify the anticipated amount of program income in the Form SF-424A and in the Budget Narrative and Justification and properly report all program income generated pursuant to the project in the Form SF-425.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

The application package is available at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under Funding Opportunity Number 2021-NIST-MEP-CAP-01.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission. Set forth below are the required content and form of applications submitted pursuant to this NOFO. Also, see Section IX. of this NOFO for application checklist.

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.

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

For SF-424, Item 12, should list the NOFO number 2021-NIST-MEP-CAP-01.

SF-424, Item 18, should list the total budget information for the duration of the project.

The list of certifications and assurances referenced in Item 21 of the SF-424 is contained in the Federal Financial Assistance Certifications and Representations (Certs and Reps) as part of the SAM.gov entity registration.

(2) SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs.

The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for the entire project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments. The budget should also include staff, travel and other costs associated with the NIST/MEP National Network meetings as described in Section II.5 of this NOFO.

- a) The applicant should reflect each year of the project, up to three (3) years, on the **SF-424A form** that appears as part of the mandatory forms in the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) application package.
- b) In Section A, the Grant Program Function or Activity on Line 1 under Column (a) should be entered as Manufacturing Extension Partnership, or an abbreviation thereof. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number on Line 1 under Column (b) should be entered as "11.611". The total budget amount for the term of the award should be listed in Section A, Line 1, Column (e).

- c) Section B, Column (1) of the SF-424A should reflect the costs for the first year of the award. Section B, Column (2) of the SF-424A should reflect the costs for the second year of the award. Section B, Column (3) of the SF-424A should reflect the costs for the third year of the award. Section B, line 7 of the SF-424A, should account for any program income that is expected to be generated and expended using the additive method for each year of the project.
- d) Section C should be blank. Non-Federal cost sharing is not required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO.
- e) Section D requires a breakdown of the first year's budget by quarter.
- f) Section E requires the budget estimate of federal funds needed for each year of the project. The budget estimate for the first year of the award should be entered in Section E, Line 16, Column (b). The budget estimate for the second year of the award should be entered in Section E, Line 16, Column (c). The budget estimate for the third year of the award should be entered in Section E, Line 16, Column (d).

(3) CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying. Enter "2021-NIST-MEP-CAP-01" in the Award Number field. Enter the title of the application, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field.

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

(5) Technical Proposal. The Technical Proposal is a word-processed document of no more than twenty (20) pages, which is 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. 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 proposal, consistent with the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this NOFO).

The first paragraph of the Executive Summary should be a project description in the following format:

- 1) **Purpose:** State the specific purpose of the proposed project in one to two sentences.
- 2) **Activities:** Describe the major activities to be performed in one to three sentences.
- 3) **Outcomes:** State the specific expected outcomes of the proposed project in one to three sentences.
- 4) **Beneficiaries:** Name or describe the intended beneficiaries of the expected outcomes in one to two sentences.
- 5) **Subrecipients:** If applicable, describe the major activities to be performed by subrecipients in one to three sentences.

Any acronyms or abbreviations used in the Executive Summary must be defined in the Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms. (See Section IV.8. of this NOFO)

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 *a/so* 15 C.F.R. § 4.9(c) concerning the designation of business information by the applicant. (Does not count towards page limit.)

b.) Explanation of How the Proposal Will Achieve the Program Requirements.

Applicants are required to provide a detailed explanation as to how the proposed activities and or product(s) developed, including proposed technologies, trainings, tools, techniques, practices and services, will add capabilities to the MEP program by achieving one or more of the statutory criteria listed in Section I.2 of this NOFO. Additionally, the proposal narrative should also clearly explain how the proposed activities and or product(s) developed will advance one or more of the program themes identified in Section I.3 of this NOFO. The applicant must also discuss how the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed would provide for activities and services beyond those provided for pursuant to the applicant's and its partnering MEP Centers base MEP Center cooperative agreements. This section of the application will be evaluated by NIST MEP in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria listed in Section V.1. of this NOFO.

c.) Proposal Narrative. The narrative must clearly identify specific tasks, measurable milestones, and performance outcomes resulting from the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed. Additionally, the identified activities must clearly show connection to one or more of the statutory criteria listed in Section I.2 of this NOFO

and if applicable one or more of the program themes identified in Section I.3 of this NOFO. The narrative will be evaluated by technical reviewers in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria listed in Section V.1. of this NOFO. The proposal narrative must clearly articulate the following:

d.) Technical Needs and Benefits

- a. The problem and need.
- b. The proposed activities and/or product(s) delivered adequately meet the needs and is appropriate for the targeted population size and area of service.
- c. The benefits resulting from the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed.
- d. The technologies and tools are appropriate to address the defined need.

e.) Overall Benefit to the MEP National Network

- e. The extent to which the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed will add capabilities to the MEP National Network by achieving one or more of the statutory criteria listed in Section I.2 of this NOFO.
- f. The extent to which the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed can be integrated into and be of service to the NIST MEP National Network.

f.) Management and Financial Plans

- a. The appropriateness and effectiveness of the planned staffing and management structure to include an assessment of the experience and education of key personnel relevant to the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed.
- b. The reasonableness, appropriateness, and rationale of the proposed budget items relative to the scale of effort and proposed performance accomplishments identified in the application.

g.) Program Evaluation and Sustainability Plans

- a. A plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed.
- b. A sustainability plan to carry out the proposed activities and/or product(s) delivered once the award has ended, including: identification of potential resources (federal and/or non-federal) to support the continuation of proposed activities; partner(s) commitment for supporting the activities at the end of the award; and specific actions that will ensure the continuation of activities once the award has ended.

(6) Budget Narrative and Justification. (Does not count toward the page limit). In addition to the SF-424 form (see Section IV.ii.a.(1). of this

NOFO), applicants must provide a detailed budget table and budget narrative for each year of operation, fully explaining and justifying all proposed funding (both revenue and expenses) in accordance with applicable federal cost principles.

All applicants are required to use the MEP budget templates when submitting a Budget workbook and a budget summary table. The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for the entire project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments. 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 sub awardees/contractors, to the extent known at the time of application, and a detailed description of the purpose of each subaward/contract. The MEP budget table and budget narrative template are available on the MEP website at:
<https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-competitive-awards-program-cap> .

Applicants proposing fixed amount subawards must clearly identify such subawards in the budget narrative and must provide, as part of the budget narrative, detailed information relative to the cost or pricing data being relied on by the applicant in establishing the value of the fixed amount subaward. See 2 C.F.R. 200.201 and 200.332.

The Budget Narrative and Justification must clearly identify whether the applicant or any of its subrecipients anticipate generating program income pursuant to the proposed activities (e.g., client service fees, etc.). If program income is anticipated under the proposal, the applicant must identify the anticipated amount of program income as part of the overall budget (including subrecipient budgets) and must budget for the expenditure of such program income using the "additive method," with any excess program income to be disposed of pursuant to the "deductive method."

For purposes of this program, program income will not be considered non-federal cost share; however, anticipated amounts of program income should be entered in the Gross Program Income (Projected) row and budgeted for expenditure in the expenses section of column D.

This section of the application will be evaluated in accordance with the Budget Narrative evaluation criteria in Section V.1. of the NOFO. It will also be reviewed to determine if all costs are reasonable, allocable, and

allowable under 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles.

Information needed for each category is as follows:

- a. Personnel** - At a minimum, the budget justification for all personnel should include the following: 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 personnel charges for each identified position on the project, description of the role of the individual on the project and the work to be performed.
- b. Fringe Benefits** - Fringe benefits for each position 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. Travel** - For all travel costs, the budget justification for travel should include the following: destination; names or number of people traveling; dates and/or duration; mode of transportation, lodging and subsistence rates; and description of how the travel is directly related to the proposed activities. 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. Applicants must also include travel expenses related to anticipated MEP National Network meetings described in Section II.5 of this NOFO in the budget tables and budget narratives.
- d. Equipment** - 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. Applicants should provide at least two (2) quotes, if available, for equipment costing \$25,000 or more. If two (2) quotes are not available, please provide a statement as to why two (2) quotes are not available.
- e. Supplies** - Supplies are defined as all tangible personal property other than that described as equipment. 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. Contractual (i.e. Contracts) - Each contract should be treated as a separate item. Identify the cost and describe the services to be provided and the necessity of the contract to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining normal goods and services.

g. Construction – Not an allowable cost under this NOFO.

h. 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. Applicants should identify any subawards costs in this category and provide the necessity of the subaward to the successful performance of the proposed project.

(7) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. (Does not count toward the page limit).

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 Section B.06 of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions Dated November 12, 2020](#).

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 portion of the application.

(8) Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms. (Does not count toward the page limit). An alphabetical list of all abbreviations and acronyms, and their meaning, should be included.

(9) Table of Funded Project Participants and Unfunded Informal Collaborators. (Does not count toward the page limit). Provide a table that identifies all organizations that will participate in and contribute to the proposed activities, if funded, known at the time of the application submission. The table should consist of an alphabetically ordered list, by organization, of all Funded Project Participants and all Unfunded Informal

Collaborators. The table should include the organization's name, address, administrative role, scope of work (funded participants only) and proposed funding amount (funded participants only). Administrative roles are: applicant, subrecipient, or contractor for funded participants; or collaborator if they will not receive funding.

(10) Bibliographic List of References. (Does not count toward the page limit). A complete bibliographic listing of all references used within the application should be included.

(11) Resumes of Key Personnel. (Does not count toward page limit but are limited to one-page each). One-page resumes of no more than five key personnel from applicant (not subrecipients) may be included. Any information beyond one page for each resume and any additional resumes submitted will not be considered.

(12) Current and Pending Support Form. Any application that includes investigators, researchers, and key personnel must identify all sources of current and potential funding, including this proposal. Any current support (e.g., Federal, state, local, public or private foundations, etc.) must be listed on this form. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the Principal Investigator (PI), co- PI, and key personnel must be included, even if no salary support is received. The total award amount for the entire award period covered, including indirect costs, must be shown as well as the number of person- months per year to be devoted to the project, regardless of the source of support. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or that are being submitted concurrently to other potential funders.

Applicants must complete the Current and Pending Support Form, using multiple forms as necessary to account for all activity for each individual identified in the PI, co-PI and key personnel roles. A separate form should be used for each identified individual.

Applicants must download the Current and Pending Support Form from the NIST website at <https://www.nist.gov/oaam/grants-management-division/current-and-pending-support> and reference the guidance provided as it contains information to assist with accurately completing the form.

(13) Letters of Commitment

- a) Each application must include a Letter of Commitment from an authorized representative of: (i) the MEP Center applicant; and from (ii) other MEP Centers and from other organizations that will serve as subawardees on the project. The letter of commitment shall discuss the scope of work, and its relevance to the project. The reviewers will

consider the letters of commitment in evaluating the proposal in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria in Section V.1. of this NOFO.

1) **Attachment of Required Documents**

Items IV.ii.a.(1) through IV.ii.a.(5) above are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process.

Items IV.ii.a.(6) through IV.ii.a.(12) should be attached to field 15 of the SF-424 form by clicking on “Add Attachment”.

Following these directions will create zip files which permit 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 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. Applicants are strongly advised to use Grants.gov’s “Download Submitted Forms and Applications” option, found at <https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/Applicants/CheckApplicationStatus/DownloadSubmittedFormsAndApplications.htm> to check that their application’s required attachments were contained in their submission.

After submitting the application, check the status of your application here: [CHECK APPLICATION STATUS](#) . If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found above, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

If the directions found at <https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/index.htm#t=GetStarted%2FGetStar>ted.htm are not effective, please contact the Grants.gov Help Desk immediately. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place outside the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. E-mails should be addressed to support@grants.gov. 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.

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.

2) Application Format

- **Paper, Email, and Facsimile (fax) Submissions.** Will not be accepted.
- **Figures, Graphs, Images, and Pictures.** Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be displayed in landscape orientation. Any figures, graphs, images, or pictures will count toward the page limits for the Proposal Narrative.
- **Font.** Easy to read font (11-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.
- **Page Limit.** The Proposal Narrative is limited to twenty (20) pages single spaced, noting the limit of two (2) pages for the Executive Summary. Resumes are not included in the page count of the Proposal Narrative. However, if resumes are included, resumes must be a maximum of one (1) page each.

- **Page Limit Exclusions:**

SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;
SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs;
CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying;
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities;
Table of Contents;
Executive Summary;
Budget Tables and Narratives;
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement;
Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms;
Table of /Funded Project Participants and Unfunded Informal Collaborators;
Bibliographic List of References;
Resumes of Key Personnel (limited to one page each for no more than five key personnel);

Letters of Commitment; and
Current and Pending Support Form

- **Page Layout.** The Proposal must be in portrait orientation.
 - **Page size.** 21.6 centimeters by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ inches by 11 inches).
 - **Page numbering.** Number pages sequentially.
 - **Application language.** English. All documents must be in English, including but not limited to the initial application, any additional documents submitted in response to a NIST request, all reports, and any correspondence with NIST.
 - **Typed document.** All applications, including forms, must be typed; handwritten forms will not be accepted.
- 3) **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.
- 4) **Pre-Applications.** NIST is not accepting pre-applications under this NOFO.

b. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. part 25, applicants and recipients 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 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.

c. Submission Dates and Times.

Electronic applications will be accepted and considered for funding by NIST on a rolling basis, subject to the availability of funds and subject to the publication of an amended or a superseding NOFO under this program. The approximate start date for successful applications is 90-180 days following the application submission.

When developing the submission timeline, please keep in mind that: (1) all applicants are required to have current registrations in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and Grants.gov; (2) the free annual registration process in the [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) generally takes between three and five business days but can take more than two weeks; and applicants will receive e-mail 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 [Grants.gov](https://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.

NOTE: Starting Monday, April 4, 2022, the federal government will stop using the DUNS number to uniquely identify entities. All entities doing business with the federal government will use a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) generated in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). Applicants must request and be assigned a UEI number prior to completing the grant application forms and submitting their application via [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov). For more information, please see [Planned UEI Updates | GRANTS.GOV](#).

The Standard Forms (i.e., SF424, SF424 R&R) will be updated on April 4, 2022 to allow entities to enter the UEI number. Applicants must ensure to use the most up to date Standard Forms after April 4, 2022 prior to submitting the application in Grants.gov.

d. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted by State and local governments are subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," pursuant to which each State designates an entity to coordinate, and review proposed federal financial assistance and direct federal development. All other applicants should consult the Intergovernmental Review State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to determine whether the application is subject to State review pursuant to E.O. 12372. The current SPOC List may be found here:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>.

e. Funding Restrictions

Construction activities are not an allowable cost under this program. In addition, a recipient or a subrecipient may not charge profits, fees or other increments above cost to an award issued pursuant to this NOFO. Pre-award costs under this NOFO are subject to the prior written approval of the NIST Grants Officer.

f. Other Submission Requirements

1) Applications must be submitted electronically.

- **Applications must be submitted at [Grants.gov](https://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 does not provide information about whether attachments have been received. For further information or questions regarding applying electronically for the 2021-NIST-MEP-CAP-01 announcement, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk at 800-518-4726.

(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. The typical registration process takes three to five business days. If problems are encountered, the registration process can take 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. 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, except for Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays. For assistance using Grants.gov, the applicant may also contact support@grants.gov.

- (c) To find instructions for submitting an application on Grants.gov, applicants should refer to the “Applicants” tab in the banner just below the top of the 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.

Applicants should pay close attention to the guidance under Grants.gov’s [“Applicant FAQs”](#), as it contains information important to successful submission, including essential details on the naming conventions for attachments to 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.

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 ascertain whether the application was rejected with errors and the reasons for the rejection, 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 the 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 the application is received on time.

- 2) **Amendments.** Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through Grants.gov. Applicants may sign up on Grants.gov to receive amendments by e-mail or may request copies by e-mail from mepnofo@nist.gov.

V. Application Review Information

1. Evaluation Criteria. The evaluation criteria, selection factors, and review and selection process for this program are set forth below.

a) Technical Needs and Benefits (40 points; subcriteria will receive equal weight): Technical reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- i. The application clearly defines the problem and needs;
- ii. The proposed activities and/or product(s) to be developed adequately meet the needs and is appropriate for the targeted population size and area of service;
- iii. The application clearly identifies the benefits resulting from the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed; and
- iv. The technologies and tools are appropriate to address the defined need.

b) Overall Benefit to the MEP National Network (30 points; subcriteria will receive equal weight): Technical reviewers will assess the application based on the following:

- i. The extent to which the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed will add capabilities to the MEP National Network by achieving one or more of the statutory criteria listed in Section I.2 of this NOFO; and
- ii. The extent to which the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed can be integrated into the services provided by the NIST MEP National Network to small and medium manufacturers;

c) Management and Financial Plans (15 points; subcriteria will receive equal weight): Technical reviewers will assess the application based on the following:

- i. The appropriateness and effectiveness of the planned staffing and management structure to include an assessment of the experience and education of key personnel relevant to the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed; and
- ii. The reasonableness, appropriateness, and rationale of the proposed budget items relative to the scale of effort and proposed performance accomplishments identified in the application.

d) Program Evaluation and Sustainability Plan (15 points; subcriteria will receive equal weight): Technical reviewers will assess the application based on the following:

- i. The thoroughness of the applicant's plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed activities and/or product(s) developed; and
- ii. The extent to which the applicant will continue to carry out the proposed

activities and/or product(s) developed once the award has ended.

- 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, or non-Federal personnel who have entered into conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering such information, when applicable.

- a) Initial Administrative Review of Applications.** Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, as received, to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this NOFO and to the scope of the stated program objectives and alignment with the program objectives as described in the Program Description (see Section I. of this NOFO). Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or nonresponsive 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, the absence of which may easily be rectified during the review process.

Additional Information: On April 22, 2024, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published updates to the OMB Guidance for Grants and Agreements located in part 200 of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR part 200), now called the OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance. This updated OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance (2 CFR) is effective for all awards issued by DOC/NIST on or after October 1, 2024. Applicants can find these recent revisions to 2 CFR here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/22/2024-07496/guidance-for-federal-financial-assistance>.

- 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 process below:

(1) Merit Review. Each application will be reviewed by at least three technically qualified individuals with appropriate professional and technical expertise relating to the topics covered in this NOFO. Merit reviewers will evaluate each application based on the evaluation criteria in Section V.1. of this NOFO. The reviewers, through the NIST MEP Competition Manager, may ask questions of some or all applicants in writing. Each reviewer will complete a scoring matrix for each application based on the evaluation criteria and will assign each application a numeric score, with a maximum score of 100. Reviewers will determine scores on an individual basis and not as a consensus, but may discuss the application with each other.

At NIST's discretion, applicants submitting potentially fundable applications may be invited to participate in an applicant conference with the same reviewers conducting the technical review described above. An applicant conference may be conducted using one of the following methods: a conference call, a video conference, and/or an in-person visit either at NIST or at the applicant's location. As a result of an applicant conference, a technical reviewer may revise their assigned numeric scores based on the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this NOFO) by submitting an updated score sheet, including an explanation for any change in scores.

Based on an average of the reviewers' final scores, applications will be assigned adjectival ratings in accordance with the following scale:

Fundable (70-100)

Unfundable (0-69)

The Subject Matter Expert, who will be a NIST MEP federal employee, will review all application and evaluation materials for each application and will provide a written recommendation to the Selecting Official concerning the funding of awards under this NOFO. In conducting his/her evaluation, the Subject Matter Expert may ask clarifying questions of an applicant through the MEP Competition Manager. For any application designated as fundable by the merit reviewers, the Subject Matter Expert, in consultation with the NIST Grants Officer, may initiate pre-award negotiations with the applicant.

(2) Pre-Award Negotiations. NIST reserves the right to negotiate the proposed scope and/or budget costs associated with an application prior to award. In this connection, NIST may request applicants modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. In some cases, NIST may ask applicants to consider combining projects with proposals submitted by other applicants.

(3) Selection. The Selecting Official, who is the MEP Director or designee, will make final award recommendations to the NIST Grants Officer. The Selecting Official will take into consideration the results of the reviewers' scores and technical assessments, the written recommendation from the NIST MEP Subject Matter Expert, the relevance of the application to the criteria set forth in 15 U.S.C. 278k-1(e)(3), the program themes described in Section I. of this NOFO, and all information obtained from the applicants during the application evaluation, and pre-award negotiation processes.

The Selecting Official will generally select and recommend the most meritorious applications for awards based on the technical comments,

recommendation from the NIST MEP Subject Matter Expert, and/or one or more of the selection factors described in Section V.4. of this NOFO. The Selecting Official's recommendation to the Grants Officer shall set forth the basis for the selection decision.

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, which may also include the review of publicly available information including but not limited to websites and social media channels. NIST may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any application. The final approval of a selected application and issuance of an award will be completed by the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NIST Grants Officer are final.

(4) Selection Factors. The Selection Factors for this NOFO are:

- a. Whether the proposed project will address one or more of the program themes identified in Section I.3) of this NOFO;
- b. Diversity of the proposed project topics relative to the overall portfolio of activities funded under this NOFO;
- c. Diversity of geography in the awarding of MEP funding, as well as diversity in awarding MEP funding to multiple MEP Centers;
- d. Diversity of targeted industry sectors and/or supply chains;
- e. Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by the Department of Commerce or by other Federal agencies;
- f. Availability of Federal funds; and
- g. Past Performance on all NIST MEP awards.

- 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. § 200.206, 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 \$250,000), 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 discretion, 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 specific award conditions that correspond to the degree of risk posed by the applicant should be applied to an award.

3. Additional Information

- a) **Safety.** Safety is a top priority at NIST. Employees and affiliates of award recipients who conduct project work at NIST will be expected to be safety-conscious, to attend NIST safety training, and to comply with all NIST safety policies and procedures, and with all applicable terms of their guest research agreement.
- b) **Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants.** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail and will have the opportunity to receive a debriefing after the opportunity is officially closed. Applicants must request within 10 business days of the email notification to receive a debrief from the program office. The program office will then work with the unsuccessful applicant in arranging a date and time of the debrief.
- c) **Retention of Unsuccessful Applications.** Unsuccessful applications will be retained in accordance with the [General Record Schedule 1.2/021](#).

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. On April 22, 2024, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published updates to the OMB Guidance for Grants and Agreements located in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), now called the OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance. This updated OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance (2 CFR) is effective for all awards issued by DOC/NIST on or after October 1, 2024. Applicants can find these recent revisions to 2 CFR here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/22/2024-07496/guidance-for-federal-financial-assistance>.
- 3. **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>.

- 4. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.** The Department of Commerce will apply to each award in this program, the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions in effect on the date of award. The current version, dated November 12, 2020, is accessible at [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions](#). Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you need more information.
- 5. 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, for more information.
- 6. Funding Availability and Limitation of Liability.** Funding for the program listed in this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. NIST or the Department of Commerce will not be responsible for application preparation costs, including but not limited to 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.

NIST issues this notice subject to the appropriations made available under the current continuing resolution funding the Department of Commerce: Division A of the Further Additional Extending Government Funding Act, Public Law 117-86, February 18, 2022. NIST anticipates making awards for the program listed in this notice provided that funding for Fiscal Year 2022 is continued beyond March 11, 2022, the expiration of the current continuing resolution. This information is being provided to inform potential applicants that NIST's annual appropriation for FY22 has not yet been enacted by Congress as of the date this NOFO is published. If an applicant is uncertain as to the availability of NIST funding during FY22 or future fiscal years, the applicant may contact the Programmatic and Technical Point of Contact listed in Section VII. of this NOFO.

- 7. Collaborations with NIST Employees.** If an applicant proposes collaboration with NIST, the statement of work should include a statement of this intention, a description of the collaboration, and prominently identify the NIST employee(s) involved, if known. Any collaboration by a NIST employee must be approved by appropriate NIST management and is at the sole discretion of NIST. Prior to beginning the merit review process, NIST will verify the approval of the proposed collaboration. Any unapproved collaboration will be stricken from the application prior to the merit review. Any collaboration with an identified NIST employee that is approved by appropriate NIST management will not make an application more or less favorable in the competitive process.

- 8. Supporting Documentation.** Following the issuance of a MEP award, NIST may require recipients to provide copies of executed sub-tier agreements, including subawards and contracts over \$250,000, as well as subrecipient performance reporting monitoring plans.
- 9. Use of Government-Owned Intellectual Property.** If the applicant anticipates using any Government-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 Federal 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 Government-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 C.03 of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Terms and Conditions](#) dated November 12, 2020. Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Chief Counsel for NIST, (301) 975-2803, nistcounsel@nist.gov.

Any use of government-owned intellectual property by a recipient of an award under this announcement is at the sole discretion of the Federal Government and will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis if a project is deemed meritorious. The applicant should indicate within the statement of work whether it already has a license to use such intellectual property or whether it intends to seek one.

If any inventions made in whole or in part by a Federal employee arise in the course of an award made pursuant to this NOFO, the United States Government may retain its ownership rights in any such invention. Licensing or other disposition of Federal Government's rights in such inventions will be determined solely by the Federal Government, and include the possibility of the Federal Government putting the intellectual property into the public domain.

10. 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 November 12, 2020, apply to awards in this program:

- (1) Financial Reports.** Each award recipient will be required to submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report into the MEP's Enterprise Information System (MEIS) on a semi-annual basis for the periods

ending March 31 and September 30 of each operating year, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Specific Award Condition. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of each reporting period. A final financial report is due within 120 days after the end of the project period.

- (2) Performance (Technical) Reports.** The recipient shall submit a Technical Report (completing all required MEIS fields) on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each operating year, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Specific Award Condition. Reports are due in MEIS no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. Additional progress reports and outcome updates may be requested by the NIST MEP Project Manager. The recipient shall submit a final Technical/Quarterly report within 120 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.

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>.

c) Post Client Project Follow-Up. The recipient will be required to provide client and project data on a quarterly basis (unless otherwise directed by the NIST Grants Officer) and in a specified format to the organization identified by NIST MEP in order for post-project follow-up data to be obtained (OMB Control Number 0693-0021). For further information regarding the NIST MEP Reporting process, you may download a copy of the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines: (add link to NOFO site)

- (3) Patent and Property Reports.** From time to time, and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements 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.** The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section D.01, and 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, require any non-Federal entity (i.e., including non-profit institutions of higher education and 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. Additionally, unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the award, entities that are not subject to Subpart F of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (e.g., for-profit commercial entities) that expend \$750,000 or more in DOC funds during their fiscal year must submit to the Grants Officer either: (i) a financial related audit of each DOC award or subaward in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards; or (ii) a project specific audit for each award or subaward in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 C.F.R. § 200.507. 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 (Public Law 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:

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Programmatic and Technical Questions	Bryana Head E-mail: mepnofo@nist.gov with '2021-

	NIST-MEP-01' in subject line
Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	grants.gov Phone: 800-518-4726 E-mail: support@grants.gov
Grant Rules and Regulations	Michael Teske E-mail: michael.teske@nist.gov

VIII. Other Information

1. 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, and also by Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate conflict of interest and confidentiality 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 Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. If 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 information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

2. Public Website

NIST MEP has a public website <https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-competitive-awards-program-cap>, that provides information pertaining to this Funding Opportunity. Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through Grants.gov.

Applicants must submit all questions pertaining to this funding opportunity in writing to mepnofo@nist.gov with '2021-NIST-MEP-01' in the subject line. Questions submitted may be posted on the MEP website.

3. Webinar Information Session

NIST MEP will host a webinar information session for applicants that are interested in learning about this funding opportunity. This webinar will provide general information regarding this NOFO and offer general guidance on preparing proposals.

IX. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF 424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying
- SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying activities (if applicable)
- Technical Proposal
 - Table of Contents
 - Executive Summary
 - Explanation Statement
 - Proposal Narrative
- Budget Narrative and Justification
- Indirect Cost Agreement
- Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms
- Table of Funded Project Participants and Unfunded Informal Collaborators
- Bibliographic List of References
- Resumes of Key Personnel
- Current and Pending Support Forms
- Letters of Commitment