U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC),
National Institute of Technology and Standards (NIST),
Manufacturing Extension Partnership Center State Competition, 2026-NIST-MEP-02

Funding Opportunity Description:	The NIST Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP) is seeking applications from eligible applicants to establish and operate a MEP Center in the States of Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah and Vermont, and in the U.S. Territory of Puerto Rico.
Announcement Type:	Initial.
Funding Instrument:	Cooperative Agreement.
Assistance Listing (CFDA Number):	11.611: Manufacturing Extension Partnership.
Award Project Period:	Initial 5-year award period, subject to annual performance reviews, annual funding availability and the continued relevance of the project to the program and to Department of Commerce priorities, with an additional non-competitive 5-year award period based on annual performance reviews, annual funding availability, and the continued relevance of the project to the program and to Department of Commerce priorities.
Goals & Objectives:	MEP Centers funded pursuant to this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFO) will provide support to small and mid-sized manufacturers (SMMs) to adopt and/or scale-up advanced manufacturing technologies that improve U.S. industrial competitiveness and SMM economic outcomes. Advanced manufacturing technologies are those that integrate innovations such as robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), automation, advanced materials, additive manufacturing, or biotechnology, into a manufacturing environment that optimize production, improve efficiency, or create new, highly customized products. Each MEP Center proposal is expected to meet the following objectives: 1. Identify manufacturing sectors that provide significant opportunities to augment or bolster the industrial competitiveness within

a region from the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies by SMMs;

2. Focus on strategies that target key bottlenecks, gaps, or barriers for SMMs to add or expand capacity and/or capability in the identified manufacturing sector through the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies;
3. Catalyze engagement and investment by manufacturers with leading-edge, flagship production facilities, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), SMMs, advanced manufacturing technology solutions providers (e.g. robotics platforms, agentic AI, automation developers, manufacturing scale-up facilities), and other stakeholders to advance identified manufacturing sectors;
4. Catalyze engagement and investment by entities that finance SMMs, including commercial banks and credit unions, private equity and venture capital, as well as government loan and grant programs to advance identified manufacturing sectors;
5. Catalyze engagement and investment by entities that develop the workforce needed to advance identified manufacturing sectors, including vocational/trade schools, technical community colleges and other academic institutions that provide opportunities to potential workers, such as upskilling, retraining, certifications; and
6. Become an active partner within a network of MEP centers for advanced manufacturing technologies adoption and implementation across the United States and Puerto Rico.

Eligible Applicants:

In accord with 15 U.S.C. § 278k(a)(5), eligibility for the program listed in this NOFO is open to a United States-based non-profit based institution, an institution of higher education, or a State, United States territory (specifically Puerto Rico), local, or tribal government, or a consortium thereof.

Funding Amounts:

NIST anticipates funding fourteen (14) awards for the amounts listed in the table below and with an initial period of performance of up to five (5) years, subject to annual performance reviews, annual funding availability, and the continued relevance of the project to the program and to Department of Commerce priorities, with an additional non-competitive 5-year award period based on annual performance reviews, annual funding availability and the continued relevance of the project to the program and to Department of Commerce priorities.
Funding is contingent upon the availability of annual appropriations with funding provided only for the first year of the program. NIST has no obligation to provide any additional funding for future fiscal years. Awards issued pursuant to this NOFO are subject to annual, minimum non-Federal cost share requirements.

MEP Center Location and Assigned Geographical Service Area (by State)	Anticipated Federal Funding for Year 1 of the Award	Total Anticipated Federal Funding for 5-Year Award Period
Alabama	$2,191,702	$10,958,510
Alaska	$706,300	$3,531,500
Arkansas	$1,291,618	$6,458,090
California	$15,641,800	$78,209,000
Georgia	$3,227,001	$16,135,005
Louisiana	$1,537,719	$7,688,595
Massachusetts	$2,959,870	$14,799,350
Missouri	$2,656,601	$13,283,005
Montana	$839,900	$4,199,500
Ohio	$6,076,983	$30,384,915
Pennsylvania	$6,110,684	$30,553,420
Puerto Rico	$939,133	$4,695,665
Utah	$1,492,598	$7,462,990
Vermont	$812,300	$4,061,500

Cost Share/Matching Requirements:

Non-Federal cost share is required. Annual cost sharing of at least 50 percent is required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO. See section III.2 of this NOFO.

Estimated Number (can give a range) and Type of Award(s):

Up to 14 award(s) issued as cooperative agreements.

Submission Dates and Times:	Application Due Date: August 21, 2026, 11:59 p.m. (ET)
How to Apply:	Applications must be submitted using Grants.gov. Paper applications will not be accepted.
Review and Selection Process:	Group competition, preliminary review and panel review.
Agency Contacts:	**Programmatic and Technical Questions:** Bryana Head Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership mepnofo@nist.gov **Grant Rules and Regulations:** Michael Teske NOFO@nist.gov
Pre-Application Webinar	NIST MEP will post a recorded webinar for applicants who are interested in learning about this funding opportunity. This webinar will provide general information regarding 2026-NIST-MEP-02 and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. Please reference https://www.nist.gov/mep for the most up to date information, including details about the webinar. Remaining questions should be sent to mepnofo@nist.gov. Proprietary technical questions about specific proposal ideas will not be permitted, and NIST will not critique or provide feedback on any proposal ideas at any time before the deadline for all applications. However, questions about the funding opportunity, eligibility requirements, evaluation and award criteria, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive application will be addressed by the webinar and by e-mail to mepnofo@nist.gov.

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FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Program Description

The statutory authority for the NIST Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership is 15 U.S.C. § 278k.

1. Background Information

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP) program is focused on transforming U.S. manufacturers' ability to compete globally by increasing adoption of advanced manufacturing technology to improve production capacity and capability, supporting supply chain integration, and developing a strong manufacturing workforce. Advanced manufacturing technologies are those that integrate innovations such as robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), automation, advanced materials, additive manufacturing, and biotechnology, into a manufacturing environment that optimize production, improve efficiency, or create new, highly customized products.

As opposed to previous funding opportunities and iterations of the program that focused on non-strategic day-to-day activities to improve company productivity and efficiency improvements, such as lean manufacturing, business growth services, and streamlining human resources and payroll, it is imperative that the NIST MEP program be focused and structured to support strategic critical science and technology priorities of interest to sustain America's economic and national security interests. The purpose of the NIST MEP Program is to provide support and facilitate cooperation between private sector industry partners, government agencies, academic institutions including community colleges and trade schools, economic development organizations, and other manufacturing ecosystem stakeholders for advanced manufacturing technologies demonstration, deployment, and adoption, with a focus on supporting small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs).

MEP Centers are expected to actively engage with the manufacturing ecosystem to gain a full understanding of regional characteristics, including its composition, strengths, challenges, and opportunities. They will need to identify specific manufacturing sectors to work with that provide significant opportunities to augment or bolster the industrial competitiveness within a region from the adoption of technologies by SMMs. MEP Centers should provide expertise and solutions to strengthen and create robust manufacturing ecosystems, addressing the manufacturing sector's most critical needs, including advanced manufacturing technologies adoption, implementation of process improvements and workforce development. Additionally, MEP Centers will connect manufacturers with institutions that finance SMMs, industry-led consortia, government and trade associations, technical and community colleges, universities, and research laboratories, and other resources to help manufacturers realize business and workforce development opportunities. This in-depth, real-time understanding of manufacturer needs and capabilities, along with the extensive integration with other regional manufacturing ecosystems across the country, provides NIST and US Department of Commerce with strategic insights and manufacturing intelligence that enhance its ability to disseminate effective solutions, identify and address national level challenges, and highlight investment opportunities.

MEP Centers are expected to deliver high-impact, proven solutions that strengthen the competitive position of the U.S. manufacturing base. The MEP National Network™ is a unique public-private partnership that delivers comprehensive, proven solutions to U.S. manufacturers, fueling growth and advancing U.S. manufacturing. The MEP National Network™, whose mission is to strengthen and empower U.S. manufacturers, is comprised of NIST MEP, the 51 MEP Centers located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, the MEP Advisory Board, and MEP Center Boards, as well as over 1,440 trusted advisors and experts at approximately 460 MEP service locations. This MEP National Network™ provides providing any U.S. manufacturer with access to resources they need to succeed and creates a dynamic intelligence resource that enables NIST and the Federal Government to more effectively support and improve industrial productivity and technology transfer initiatives. Through robust collaborations at all levels of the U.S. manufacturing ecosystem, MEP Centers can have impact beyond individual manufacturing interactions and foster the development of new product categories, the adoption of emerging technologies, and building resilient supply chains.

NIST encourages prospective applicants to review the resources available on the MEP Program at https://www.nist.gov/mep, particularly for connecting applicants with potential subrecipients, contractors, or other collaborators.

2. Program Principles

MEP Centers funded pursuant to this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFO) will provide support to small and mid-sized manufacturers (SMMs) to adopt and/or scale-up advanced manufacturing technologies that improve U.S. industrial competitiveness and SMM economic outcomes. Advanced manufacturing technologies are those that integrate innovations such as robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), automation, advanced materials, additive manufacturing, or biotechnology, into a manufacturing environment that optimize production, improve efficiency, or create new, highly customized products. Each MEP Center proposal is expected to meet the following six requirements:

1. Identify priority manufacturing sectors to focus on that provide significant opportunities to augment or bolster the industrial competitiveness within a region from the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies by SMMs;
2. Deploy strategies that add or expand the capacity and/or capability of SMMs in identified manufacturing sectors through the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies;
3. Catalyze engagement and investment by manufacturers with leading-edge, flagship production facilities, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), SMMs, advanced manufacturing technology solutions providers (e.g. robotics platforms, agentic AI, automation developers, manufacturing scale-up facilities), and other stakeholders to advance identified manufacturing sectors;
4. Catalyze engagement and investment by entities that finance SMMs, including commercial banks and credit unions, private equity and venture capital, government

loan and grant programs to advance identified manufacturing sectors,
5. Catalyze engagement and investment by entities that develop the workforce needed to advance identified manufacturing sectors including vocational/trade schools, technical community colleges and other academic institutions that provide opportunities to potential workers such as upskilling, retraining, certifications, and
6. Become an active partner within a network of MEP Centers for technology adoption and implementation across the United States and Puerto Rico.

3. Program Requirements

a. Boards: Oversight Boards and Advisory Boards

In accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 278k(k), MEP Centers must establish a board to oversee the operations of the Center. As provided in i. and ii. below, the recipient may establish the board as either an oversight board or an advisory board. Regardless of whether the board is an oversight board or an advisory board, it must meet the following requirements:

Standards. The board must be established consistent with the requirements set forth in the NIST MEP Oversight Board Standards (2025) (see Section 3.f. of this NOFO for access to these requirements), which, among other things, address membership, composition, term limits, and conflicts of interest.

Membership. The membership of each board must be broadly representative of the state service area and/or other service area as defined by the Program Office stakeholders with a majority of each board members drawn from small and medium-sized manufacturing firms. Members of the board may not concurrently serve on more than one MEP Center board or serve as a vendor or provide contractual services to the recipient or to a subrecipient.

Bylaws. Additionally, each board shall adopt bylaws or equivalent governance documents setting forth the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of the board, including a conflict-of-interest policy to ensure relevant relationships are disclosed and appropriate recusal procedures are in place, which must be provided to NIST. Additionally, upon request, the board shall provide the NIST Grants Officer with copies of its organizational documents, including articles of incorporation or charters, ratified bylaws, and conflict of interest policies.

The sufficiency of the proposed board will be evaluated against the applicable evaluation criteria. (Section V.1.b.ii of this NOFO).

i. Oversight Board

Except as provided in Section I.3.a.iii of this NOFO, recipients are required to establish and maintain an oversight board, which has fiduciary responsibility for the governance and operation of the recipient organization.

ii. Advisory Board

The following types of recipients may establish an advisory board rather than an oversight board:

- A recipient of an MEP Center cooperative agreement that is an institution of higher education, State, local, or Tribal governmental entity, where State, local, or Tribal law or policy prohibits the establishment of an oversight board; and
- A recipient that is a nonprofit organization with multiple programs, and MEP Center program activities that are not the applicant's primary activity;

In determining whether the MEP Center is a primary activity of a recipient, MEP will consider unique factors and circumstances including, but not limited to: (1) the proportion of MEP Center funding (both Federal dollars and non- Federal match) relative to the applicant's funding (or budget) for its other programs and activities, and (2) the duration of other funding sources over time.

An advisory board must provide regular strategic, policy, and programmatic input related to the needs of manufacturers and the regional community directly to the designated representative of the recipient.

Advisory board members may not serve as a vendor or provide contractual services to the recipient or to a subrecipient.

iii. New/Proposed Oversight or Advisory Board

If an oversight board or advisory board meeting the requirements of this section is not in place at the time an application is submitted, the applicant must submit a plan for establishing such structure, including oversight board or advisory board membership criteria. Upon request, an applicant shall provide the NIST Grants Officer copies of the organizational documents for its proposed oversight board or advisory committee including draft bylaws and conflict of interest policies. An awardee will have up to 90 calendar days from the award start date to establish its oversight board or advisory board, as the case may be. The sufficiency of the proposed oversight board or advisory board will be evaluated against the applicable evaluation criteria. (See Section V.1.b.ii) of this NOFO).

No Federal award funds will be released to an awardee until the NIST Grants Officer, in consultation with the MEP Program Office, determines that its oversight board or advisory board is in conformance with the requirements set forth in this section.

b. MEP Core Management and Oversight Functions

The operator of an MEP Center must possess, and maintain at all times during an award's period of performance, accountability to directly manage and execute all functions material and inherent to the successful operation of a NIST MEP Center, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

i. Budget execution, including the responsibility for determining and executing budget policy, guidance, and strategy, and the determination of program priorities and associated budget or funding requests;

ii. Policy implementation, including the responsibility for determining the content and implementation of financial and program policies and procedures impacting the recipient's MEP project;

iii. Human resources management, including the responsibility for selecting individuals for Center employment and for selecting contractors and the direction, control, and performance management of Center employees and oversight of contractors; and

iv. Strategic planning and project execution and management, including the responsibility for:

a. Strategic planning functions such as the following: determination of project requirements, approval of a project implementation strategy, and the development and monitoring of agreements and statements of work with subrecipients, vendors, third-party contributors, and other strategic partners; and

b. Project execution and management functions such as submission of required financial and technical reports, and maintenance of a functioning financial management system that satisfies the requirements found in 2 C.F.R. § 200.302, to ensure that costs charged against an MEP award are reasonable, allocable, and allowable under applicable Federal cost principles; and adherence to the terms and conditions of the MEP award.

The sufficiency of the proposed Core Management and Oversight Functions will be evaluated in accord with Section V.1.c.i of this NOFO.

c. MEP Resources

The following competition-related resources are currently available on the MEP website: https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-center-state-competition-fy2026

- Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Operating Outcome Plan Guidance
- Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership General Terms and Conditions (June 23, 2025), as may be periodically updated
- NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines
- Required NIST MEP Single Year Budget Workbook Template (2025)
- Most recent NIST MEP Annual Report
- NIST MEP Oversight Board Standards (2025)

II. Federal Award Information

1. **Funding Instrument.** The funding instrument that will be used is a cooperative agreement. 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, consistent with the definition of cooperative agreement in 2 CFR § 200.1. *See also Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership General Terms and Conditions* (June 23, 2025), as may be periodically updated, Section B.2., Award Instrument.

2. **Funding Availability.** NIST anticipates funding fourteen (14) awards for the amounts listed in the table below and with an initial period of performance of up to five (5) years, subject to annual performance reviews, annual funding availability and the continued relevance of the project to the program and to Department of Commerce priorities, with an additional non-competitive 5-year award period based on annual performance reviews, annual funding availability and the continued relevance of the project to the program and to Department of Commerce priorities. Funding is contingent upon the availability of annual appropriations with funding provided only for the first year of the program. NIST has no obligation to provide any additional funding for future fiscal years. Awards issued pursuant to this NOFO are subject to annual, minimum non-Federal cost share requirements.

MEP Center Location and Assigned Geographical Service Area (by State)	Anticipated Federal Funding for Year 1 of the Award	Total Anticipated Federal Funding for 5-Year Award Period
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Missouri	$2,656,601	$13,283,005
Montana	$839,900	$4,199,500
Ohio	$6,076,983	$30,384,915
Pennsylvania	$6,110,684	$30,553,420
Puerto Rico	$939,133	$4,695,665
Utah	$1,492,598	$7,462,990
Vermont	$812,300	$4,061,500

3. **Multi-Year Funding Policy.** When a proposal for a multi-year award is approved, funding will be provided for only the first year of the program. If a project is selected for funding, NIST has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award. Continuation of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the sole discretion of NIST. The Fiscal Year 2027 President's Budget eliminates federal funding for NIST MEP. Continued funding will be contingent upon

satisfactory performance, and continued relevance to the mission and priorities of NIST MEP. Non-satisfactory performance may result in immediate termination of the cooperative agreement, including instances of fraud or misappropriation of funds. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4), NIST may terminate a MEP Center cooperative agreement if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.

4. **Potential for Additional Years**. At the Agency's sole discretion, NIST may exercise an annual option to renew on a non-competitive basis for up to 9 additional years in accord with 15 U.S.C. § 278k(h), subject to annual funding availability, annual satisfactory 5performance reviews and the continued relevance of the project to the program and to the Department of Commerce. If NIST exercises an annual option to renew an MEP cooperative agreement, the Agency retains the discretion to adjust the funding amount and/or the period of performance for such renewal. Non-satisfactory performance, including instances of fraud or misappropriation or unauthorized use of federal award funds, may result in immediate termination of the cooperative agreement. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4), NIST may terminate a MEP Center cooperative agreement if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities. The Fiscal Year 2027 President's Budget eliminates federal funding for NIST MEP.

5. **Indirect (F&A) Costs.** NIST will reimburse applicants for proposed indirect (F&A) costs in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414. Applicants proposing indirect (F&A) costs must follow the application requirements set forth in Section V. of this NOFO.

6. **Kick-off Conference.** A recipient will be required to attend a kickoff conference, which will generally be held within 30 calendar days after the date of the award. The purpose of this kickoff conference is to help ensure that the MEP Center operator has a clear understanding of the program and its components.

   The kickoff conference may take place at either NIST MEP headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD or virtually. The kickoff conference will take approximately three (3) days and must be attended by the MEP Center Director and up to two (2) additional MEP Center employees. Applicants must include travel and related expenses for the attending the kickoff as part of the budget for year one (1). These costs should be reflected in the SF-424A form. These costs must also be reflected in the budget table and budget narrative for year one (1), which is submitted as part of the budget summary tables and budget narrative section of the Technical Proposal. Representatives from key subrecipients and other key strategic partners may attend the kickoff conference with the prior written approval of the Grants Officer. Applicants proposing to have key subrecipients and/or other key strategy partners attend the kickoff conference should clearly indicate that fact as part of the budget narrative for year one of the project.

7. **MEP Network Wide Meetings.** NIST MEP intends to organize network-wide meetings several times a year to share best practices, new and emerging trends, and additional topics of interest. These meetings are rotated throughout the United States and typically involve 3-4 days of resource time and associated travel costs for each meeting. Applicants must include travel and related costs for approximately two (2)

MEP network-wide meetings in each of the five (5) project years (2 meetings per year; 10 total meetings over 5-year award period). These costs must be reflected in the MEP Single Year Budget Workbook.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

In accord with 15 U.S.C. § 278k(a)(5), eligibility for the program listed in this NOFO is open to a United States-based non-profit based institution, an institution of higher education, or a State, United States territory, local, or tribal government, or a consortium thereof. Per 15 U.S.C.§ 278k(h)(2), operators of incumbent MEP Centers that have received financial assistance for ten (10) consecutive years and that the Secretary determines are in good standing are eligible to apply under this NOFO. The eligibility requirements set forth in this NOFO will be used in lieu of, and to the extent they are inconsistent with will supersede, those given in the MEP regulations found at 15 C.F.R. part 290, specifically 15 C.F.R. § 290.5(a)(1).

Please note that individuals and unincorporated sole proprietors are not considered "non-Federal entities" and are not eligible to apply under this NOFO. Although Federal entities are not eligible to receive funding under this NOFO, they may participate as unfunded collaborators.

As discussed in Section I.2. of this NOFO, NIST generally will not fund applications that propose an organizational or operational structure that, in whole or in part, delegates or transfers to another person, institution, or organization the applicant's responsibility for core MEP Center management and Oversight functions. In addition, the applicant must have or propose an Oversight Board or Advisory Committee structure or plan for establishing a board structure within 90 days from the award start date.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

The NIST MEP program requires non-Federal cost share of at least 50 percent of the total annual allowable project costs. The NIST MEP statute requires Centers to meet this minimum cost share requirement annually. See 15 U.S.C.278k(e)(2). There can be no carryover of excess cost share from one year to the next or to another year, should the awardee receive an additional year(s) of funding. Program income, as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.1, generated by an MEP Center may be used by the recipient to meet the annual cost share requirement.

Non-Federal cost sharing is that portion of the project costs not borne by the Federal government. The applicant's share of the MEP Center expenses may include cash, services, and third-party in-kind contributions as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.306. The source and detailed rationale of the cost share, including cash, full and part-time personnel, and in-kind donations, must be documented in the budget tables and budget narratives submitted with the application and will be considered as part of the review under the evaluation criterion found in Section V.1. of this NOFO.

As with the Federal share, any proposed costs included as non-Federal cost sharing must be allowable/eligible cost under this program and under the Federal cost principles set forth under 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E. Non-Federal cost sharing incorporated into the budget is subject to audit in the same manner as Federal award funds. See 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart F, for more information on audits.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

The application package is available at Grants.gov under Funding Opportunity Number 2026-NIST-MEP-02.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission. Set forth below are the required content and form of applications submitted pursuant to this NOFO.

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 2026-NIST-MEP-02.

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 Federal and non-Federal expenses for the entire project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments. Expenses must be reflected in whole dollars (no cents).

a) The applicant should reflect each year of the project, up to the first four (4) years, on the SF-424A form that appears as part of the mandatory forms in the Grants.gov application package. The second SF-424A form should be submitted to cover year five (5) of the project.

b) In Section A, the Grant Program Function or Activity on Line 1 under Column (a) should be entered as Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership, CFDA 11.611, 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 Federal budget amount for the term of the award should be listed in Section A, Line 1, Column (e). The total non-Federal budget amount for the term of the award should be listed in Section A, Line 1, Column (f).

c) Section B, Column (1) of the SF-424A should reflect the costs for each object class category, to include indirect charges, for the first year of the award. These costs should reflect the total Federal share plus non-Federal cost share for each category.

d) Section C must account for all non-Federal resources/match for the entire project. For Column (b) enter resources provided by the applicant. If not applicable, leave blank. For Column (c), enter resources provided by one or more states. If not applicable, leave blank. For Column (d) enter resources provided by other sources (e.g., in-kind contribution, program income). If not applicable, leave blank.

e) Section D requires a breakdown of the first year's Federal share and non-Federal share of the 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). And the budget estimate for the fourth year of the award should be entered in Section E, Line 16, Column (e).

(3) CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying. Enter "2026-NIST-MEP-02" 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) Project Narrative. The Project Narrative is a word-processed document of no more than twenty-five (25) pages (double-spaced between lines), which is responsive to the program description and the evaluation criteria. Any acronyms or abbreviations used in the Project Narrative must be defined.

The page limit includes Cover Page; Table of Contents (if included); Project Narrative with all required information, including figures, graphs, tables, images, and pictures).

The projective narrative should contain the following information:

a) Executive Summary. An executive summary of the proposed project, consistent with the objectives, requirements, and priorities of this program (*see* Section I. of this NOFO). The executive summary should include information indicating how each evaluation criterion (see Section V.1. of this NOFO) and its sub-factors are addressed. A table can be helpful in providing this information. The executive summary should not exceed two (2) pages.

Applicants should name the state in which they are seeking to operate an MEP Center in the first sentence of the Executive Summary. A project description, as described below, should follow.

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

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

Please note that 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 15 C.F.R. § 4.9(b) concerning the designation of business information by the applicant.

b) **Project Approach and Project Execution Plan.** A detailed description of the proposed approach to establish and operate an MEP Center. The project narrative must also identify tasks, measurable milestones, and outcomes in providing manufacturing solutions to primarily small and medium-sized manufacturers in the designated state, sufficient to permit evaluation of the application, in accordance with the Project Narrative evaluation sub-criteria (See Section V.1.a of this NOFO). If relevant, an applicant should provide information that helps the reviewers understand the applicant's experience in serving small and medium-sized manufacturers.

c) **Project Impacts and Evaluation:** A detailed discussion of the: (i) anticipated impacts of the proposed project, including the increased uptake of advanced manufacturing technologies by SMMs served; (ii) methodology for identifying and evaluating project outcomes, including the increased uptake of advanced manufacturing technologies by SMMs served; and (iii) dissemination of project learnings consistent with the objectives, requirements, and priorities of this program.

d) **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, and a description of program management plans, sufficient to permit evaluation of the application, in accordance with the Qualifications of the Applicant sub-criteria (See Section V.1.b of this NOFO). The applicant should include a description of its proposed organizational structure for executing the MEP Center Core Management and Oversight Functions. The applicant must provide enough information for NIST to determine whether the proposed structure meets the requirements of Section I.2, Program Requirements, of this NOFO.

The applicant should also provide a description of its established or proposed MEP Center Oversight Board or Advisory Committee, including a listing of the members and their organizational affiliation or intended members and a discussion of the governing documents (i.e., bylaws, policies or procedures, and conflict-of-interest policies) with enough information for NIST to determine whether the proposed Oversight Board or Advisory Committee meets the requirements of Section I.2 of this NOFO. If an applicant's Oversight Board or Advisory Committee does not currently meet the requirements set forth in Section I.2 of this NOFO or is not expected to meet these requirements at the time of the MEP award, the applicant must provide a feasible plan to bring its Oversight Board or Advisory Committee into compliance with Section I.2 of the NOFO within 90 days of award start date.

(6) Resume(s) of Key Personnel. Resumes for all key personnel assigned to the project must be provided. Resumes are limited to two (2) pages per individual.

(7) Budget Narrative and Justification. A standard format is required for the Budget Narrative and Justification. Applicants must complete and submit the MEP Single Year Budget Workbook, which provides the required structure and format for detailing cost categories and line items. The workbook must include sufficient detail to justify all proposed costs identified in the SF-424A and clearly demonstrate the necessity and reasonableness of each expense for NIST's consideration. The written justification should align with the project scope and proposed funding levels. All costs must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable in accordance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards).

The written justification should include the necessity and the basis for the cost, as described below. Proposed funding levels must be consistent with the project scope, and only allowable costs should be included in the budget, and all funds should be in whole dollars (no cents). 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, which apply to awards in this program.

When cost share is included in the budget, the written justification must also identify the Federal and non-Federal portion of each cost, to include indirect costs, as applicable. (see Cost Sharing section of this NOFO for match requirements).

The Budget Narrative does not count against the twenty-five (25) page limit of the Project Narrative.

This section will be evaluated in accordance with the Budget Narrative evaluation criteria (see Section V.1.c). 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 budget 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 proposed project, description of the role of the individual on the proposed project and the work to be performed.

b) **Limitations on Total Annual Compensation Paid to MEP Center Personnel -**Total annual compensation for personal services, including salaries, bonuses, fringe benefits and other forms of remuneration paid to MEP Center personnel, including personnel of subrecipients, must be allowable as determined by the criteria set forth in 2 C.F.R. §§200.403-405 and §§200.430-431. *See* Section B.4. of the *NIST MEP General Terms and Conditions (June 23, 2025)*.

   NIST restricts the total amount of annual compensation paid to personnel under a NIST MEP cooperative agreement or subaward to a rate no greater than Executive Level I of the current OPM Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule pay table found at https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/. This salary restriction applies to the Federal and non-Federal shares of an MEP Center cooperative agreement. The limitation on total compensation applies both to compensation being charged against the MEP Center award as a direct cost (e.g., compensation paid to MEP Center personnel working directly on the project), as well as to the total compensation paid to personnel as an indirect cost (e.g., executive salaries in various uncapped pools).

   For purposes of determining total annual compensation under an MEP cooperative agreement (both direct and indirect), the total compensation of the subject personnel, as reflected in the project budget or in an indirect cost rate proposal, will be annualized based on a 100 percent level of effort.

For example, if the total compensation charged to a MEP Center cooperative agreement for a MEP Center staff member is $130,000 at a 50% level of effort, the total compensation for purposes of determining compliance with this term and condition would be $260,000 (i.e., $130,000 divided by 50%).

NIST's review of the amount of MEP Center total annual compensation to be charged to an award will occur at the time of the initial award, annually as part of the renewal of funding, part of compliance reviews, during any budget revisions made by the Recipient during the life of the award, and as otherwise determined by NIST. Instructions on how to submit the required compensation information will be provided by NIST.

In addition, MEP Center Recipients are subject to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) (31 U.S.C. §6101 note) requiring the Federal reporting of certain subawards and executive compensation. See Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions at G.05.o.

MEP Center Director. For purposes of a NIST MEP Cooperative Agreement, the Center Director of an MEP Center must be a full-time employee of the Recipient organization and provide a Level of Effort (LOE) of 100 percent on the award. This requirement also applies to Subrecipients per 2 C.F.R. §200.332 where the Center Director of the Subrecipient is a full-time employee of the Subrecipient organization and provides a LOE of 100 percent on the subaward. *See* Section B.10. of the *NIST MEP Center General Terms and Conditions* (June 23, 2025).

c) **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.

d) **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 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) **Equipment -** Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of $10,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. 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.

f) **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.

g) **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 to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining goods and services for the Non-Federal Entity's own use and creates a procurement relationship with the contractor.

h) **Construction -** For this purpose, "construction" generally includes the construction of new buildings, completion of shell space in existing buildings, renovation or rehabilitation of existing buildings, and construction or development of real property infrastructure improvements (e.g., site preparation, utilities, streets, curbs, sidewalks, parking lots, streetscaping improvements). Construction is not an allowable cost under this NOFO.

i) **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.

Each subaward must complete and submit the MEP Single-Year Budget Workbook, which provides the required structure and format for detailing cost categories and line items. The workbook must include sufficient detail to justify all proposed costs and clearly demonstrate the necessity and reasonableness of each expense for NIST's consideration. NIST is not responsible for oversight of subawards; that responsibility lies solely with the Non-Federal entity making the subaward.

j) **Indirect Costs -** Commonly referred to as Facilities & Administrative Costs, Indirect Costs are defined as costs incurred by the applicant organization that cannot otherwise be directly assigned or attributed to a specific project. The justification should include a cost calculation that reflects the applicable indirect cost rate. For more details, *see* Section IV.2.a.(8) 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 Section B.06 of the DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate except for those non-Federal entities described in appendix VII, paragraph D.1.b. of 2 CFR 200 may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Applicants proposing a 15 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.

(9) SF-424A, Budget Information- Non-Construction Programs (for applications with five-year projects). The SF-424A form that appears as part of the mandatory forms in the Grants.gov application package covers the first four (4) years of the project. For projects covering five years, a second SF-424A form should be submitted to cover year five (5) of the project. A fillable SF-424A form can be found in the SF-424 Family section of the grants.gov Forms Repository (see "Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)"). Applicants should download the fillable SF-424A form, complete the information for year five (5) of the project and submit the completed form as an attachment, using the procedure described in Section IV.2.b., Attachment of Required Application Documents.

(10) Letters of Commitment. In obtaining letters of commitment, please note that it is inappropriate for Federal employees to critique or provide feedback on project ideas, etc., and it is also inappropriate for Federal employees to provide letters of endorsement or support. Letters of commitment do not count toward the twenty-five (25) page limit.

a. Non-profit applicants: A resolution from the fiduciary board authorizing submission of the MEP Center application to NIST supporting the activities described therein is required.

b. Applicant Non-Federal Cost Sharing: Except for a commitment letter from the applicant, letters of commitment for all other third-party sources of non-Federal cost sharing identified in a proposal are not required but are strongly encouraged. Applications without commitment letters for each item of third-party, non-Federal cost sharing may be considered less favorably during the application review process. Applicants may submit a summary listing of non-Federal cost share, which will not be counted toward the page limit. For Applicant Non-Federal Cost Sharing, a letter of commitment is required from an authorized representative of the applicant, stating the total amount of cost share to be contributed by the applicant towards the proposed MEP Center project. This stand-alone letter must cover the one-year period of the proposed MEP Center project and include a break-out of the applicant's contribution of non-Federal cost share, as well as a break-out of anticipated program income (if any).

c. Third Party Cost Sharing (Cash and In-kind): The applicant is strongly encouraged to include in its application a letter of commitment from an authorized representative of each third-party organization providing cash or in-kind contributions that are to be used as a cost share under the proposed MEP Center project. Any such letter(s) should clearly state whether the third-party contribution will consist of cash contributions, in-kind contributions, or a combination thereof; the total amount of the contribution, including a break-out of cash versus in-kind contributions (as applicable); the time period over which the third-party contribution will be made; and any interim performance requirements for phased contributions.

d. Subrecipients: Letters of commitment from subrecipients who are key to the technical plan's success are useful for verifying the availability of resources but are not required. Applications without commitment letters from all identified, proposed key subrecipients may be considered less favorably during the application review process. The applicant should include information regarding any planned cost-share contribution from a subrecipient in their letter of commitment. If an award is issued, the recipient is ultimately the entity that is committing to the cost share being obtained from the subrecipient. If a subrecipient fails to meet the cost share expectations, the award recipient is required to meet the shortfall. In addition, applicants planning to use subawards are responsible for evaluating the financial viability of subrecipients to meet proposed cost-share levels.

e. Prospective Key Employees: Letters of commitment to join the proposing organization's team are useful for verifying the availability of key employees who are not yet employed at the proposing organization to participate in the project if the project is funded. These letters are not required, but they can play an important role in conveying the qualifications of key employees, especially for projects involving small companies or startups. Applications without commitment letters from all prospective key employees may be considered less favorably during the application review process.

f. Contractors: Letters of commitment from contractors who are key to the technical plan's success are useful for verifying the availability of resources but are not required. Applications without commitment letters from all identified, proposed key contractors may be considered less favorably during the application review process. Contractors may not contribute cost share towards the project, except with prior written approval from the NIST Grants Officer.

(11) 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 project 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 including indirect costs, must be shown as well as the number of person-months 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 (Other) Support Common 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 NIST Current and Pending Support and reference the guidance provided as it contains information to assist with accurately completing the form.

(12) MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and Five-Year Budget Summary Table.
In addition to the SF-424A being submitted, applicants will be required to submit additional budget documentation to include, the MEP Single-Year Budget Workbook which must be provided for year one (1) of the award and the MEP Five-Year Budget Summary Table which must be provided for year one (1) of the award.

The MEP Single Year Budget Workbook and MEP Five-Year Budget Summary Table template (OMB Control Number 0693-0032) are available on the MEP website at: https://www.nist.gov/mep/nist-mep-center-state-competition-fy2026.

The MEP Single Year Budget Workbook includes templates for a detailed budget (revenue and expenses), budget narrative, budget justification, subrecipient agreement, and third-party contribution information.

The MEP Five-Year Budget Summary Table includes a template for a budget summary for year one (1), in accordance with applicable Federal cost principles.

Sample budget summary tables and a sample budget narrative are available on the MEP website under "MEP Resources." See Section I.2 of this NOFO.

The detailed budget should reflect anticipated expenses with corresponding narratives and justifications that support all costs identified in the Single Year Budget Workbook. For example, the personnel category includes position title, employee name, annual salary, and percentage of time dedicated to the project, travel includes but is not limited to airfare, lodging, per diem, number of travelers and days for each proposed trip, and any anticipated sub-recipients, contractors, or third-party contributor costs/contributions with a detailed description of the purpose and how it relates to the overall project.

The proposed costs must be consistent with the project scope and as outlined in the budget narrative. The budget must include the required minimum 50 percent non-Federal cost share described in Section III.2 of this NOFO.

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). If program income is anticipated under the proposal (including at the subrecipient level), the applicant must identify the anticipated amount of program income, disclose how program income will be expended in the Form SF-424A and in the Budget Narrative and Justification, and will be required to properly report all program income generated pursuant to the project in the Form SF-425.

This section of the application will be evaluated in accordance with the Budget Narrative and Justification evaluation criteria in Section V.1.c of this NOFO. It will also be reviewed to determine if all costs are reasonable, allocable, and allowable. Information on cost allowability is available in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, under 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles, which apply to awards in this program. If the applicant is successful, additional MEP Single Year Budget Workbooks must be submitted for future years.

The written justification should include the necessity and the basis for the cost, as described below. Proposed funding levels must be consistent with the project scope, and only allowable costs should be included in the budget.

When cost share is included in the budget, the written justification must also identify the Federal and non-Federal portion of each cost, including indirect costs, as applicable. (See Cost Sharing, Section III.2, this NOFO for match requirements). The applicant should include information regarding any planned cost-share contribution from a subrecipient in their letter of commitment. If an award is issued, the recipient is ultimately the entity that is committing to the cost share being obtained from the subrecipient. If a subrecipient fails to meet the cost share expectations, the award recipient is required to meet the shortfall. In addition, applicants planning to use subawards are responsible for evaluating the financial viability of subrecipients to meet proposed cost-share levels.

(13) Proposal for the Allocation of Intellectual Property Rights

Each applicant must include in the application a proposal for the allocation of the legal rights associated with any intellectual property (IP) which may result from the activities of the Center. *See* 15 U.S.C. 278k(f)(4). The allocation plan should provide for the identification, protection and commercialization of IP developed as a result of Center activities. The plan may address such matters as the identification and treatment of IP developed prior to project activities (Background IP); the identification and protection of IP resulting from activities undertaken under the award (Project IP); the licensing and commercialization of Project IP; and other information that the applicant deems relevant to addressing IP matters.

If an application stands a reasonable chance of being funded and the proposal for the allocation of IP rights is determined during the review process to be insufficient, the program office may contact the applicant to resolve such deficiencies.

b. Attachment of Required Documents

Items IV.2.a.(1) through IV.2.a.(4) above are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process.

Items IV.2.a.(5) through IV.2.a.(13) should be attached to field 15 of the SF-424 form by clicking on "Add Attachments**".**

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 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 "Download Submitted Forms and Applications" on grants.gov 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 on the Grants.gov Online Help page 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 Track My Application. 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, Email, and Facsimile (fax) Submissions. Will not be accepted.

(2) **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 Project Narrative.

(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 Project Narrative is limited to twenty-five (25) pages double-spaced, noting the limit of two (2) pages for the Executive Summary. Resumes are not included in the page count of the Project Narrative. However, if resumes are included, resumes must be a maximum of two (2) pages each.

(5) **Page Limit Exclusions:**

SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;
SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs;
SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs for fifth year budget (if applicable);
CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying;
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable);
Letters of Commitment
Resumes;
Single Year Budget Workbook (Narrative and Justification);
Five Year Budget Summary;
Single Year Budget Workbook (Subawards);
Five Year Budget Summary (Subawards);
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement;
Letters of Commitment;
Current and Pending Support Form; and
Intellectual Property Plan.

(6) **Page Layout.** The Proposal must be in portrait orientation.

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

(8) **Page numbering.** Number pages sequentially.

(9) **Application language.** 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.

(10) **Typed document.** All applications, including forms, must be typed; handwritten forms will not be accepted.

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.** Pre-applications will not be accepted under this NOFO.

3. **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.

4. **Submission Dates and Times**
Full Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, August 21, 2026. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered.

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 for information on any scheduled closures. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.

NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by September 15, 2026. NIST expects the earliest start date for awards under this NOFO to be October 1, 2026.

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 generally takes between three and five business days but can take more than three 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 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 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.

6. **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. Applications for product development and/or commercialization are not considered responsive to this NOFO.

7. **Other Submission Requirements**

   a. **Applications must be submitted at** Grants.gov. **Paper applications will not be accepted.** 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 2026-NIST-MEP-02 announcement, contact the Grants.gov Help Desk at 800-518-4726

   b. **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 Bryana Head at mepnofo@nist.gov.

V. Application Review Information

The evaluation criteria, selection factors, review and selection process provided in this section will be used for this competition in lieu of and to the extent they are inconsistent with will supersede those provided in the MEP regulations found at 15 C.F.R. Part 290, specifically 15 C.F.R. §§ 290.6 and 290.7.

1. **Evaluation Criteria**

   The evaluation criteria that will be used in evaluating applications and their assigned weights, with a maximum score of 100, are as follows:

   a. **Project Narrative**. Reviewers will evaluate the extent to which the applicant's Project Narrative demonstrates how the applicant will efficiently and effectively establish an MEP Center and successfully support small and mid-sized manufacturers (SMMs) to adopt and/or scale-up advanced manufacturing technologies that improve U.S. industrial competitiveness and SMM economic outcomes in the applicable State-wide geographical service area. **(Total of 40 points; with weighted subcriteria)**

   Reviewers will consider the following topics when evaluating the Project Narrative (with sub-criteria being weighed as indicated):

   i. Center Strategy (20 points)

Reviewers will assess the applicant's strategy to identify manufacturing sectors that provide significant opportunities to augment or bolster industrial competitiveness within a region from the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies such as robotics, AI, or automation by SMMs that provide increased productivity or greater capabilities than possible today. Reviewers will assess the quality with which the applicant:

- Incorporates market intelligence to inform strategies and solutions that address key bottlenecks, gaps, or barriers for SMMs to adopt advanced manufacturing technology such as robotics, AI, and automation, in industry sectors that are aligned to state, regional, and national interests;
- Incorporates technical approaches and methodologies to inform strategies and solutions that address key bottlenecks, gaps, or barriers for SMMs to adopt advanced manufacturing technologies such as robotics, AI, and automation;
- Coordinates and collaborates strategically with private sector catalytic capital (Venture, Private Equity, Financial Institutions, etc.) and government loans and grant programs to increase investments in SMMs;
- Defines the Center's existing and/or proposed roles and relationships with other entities in the State's manufacturing ecosystem, including State, regional, and local agencies, economic development organizations, and educational institutions such as universities and community or technical colleges, industry associations, and other appropriate entities;
- Makes effective use of resources or partnerships with third parties, such as industry, OEMs in identified manufacturing sectors, community/technical colleges and other academic institutions, nonprofit economic development organizations, and Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies;
- Plans to engage with other entities in Statewide and/or regional advanced manufacturing initiatives;
- Balances support for MEP, NIST, and Department of Commerce mission and objectives with the interests of other stakeholders, investors, and partners;
- Works with a manufacturer's leadership in strategic discussions related to the adoption of new technologies, new products, workforce strategies, adding value to supply chains, market and technology capabilities intelligence gathering and new markets; and
- Works with technical community colleges and other academic institutions to develop workforce development, upskilling and credentialing in support of small and medium-sized manufacturers.

ii. Industrial Landscape (10 points)

Reviewers will assess the strategy proposed for the Center to identify manufacturing sectors that provide significant opportunities to augment or bolster the industrial competitiveness within a region through the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies such as robotics, AI, or automation by SMMs, and address key bottlenecks, gaps, or barriers for SMMs to adopt advanced manufacturing technology.

The following subcriteria will be evaluated and given equal weight at 5 points each:

(a) Industrial Ecosystem

Reviewers will assess the quality and extent of the applicant's strategy for identifying high opportunity manufacturing sectors including:

- A mapping and analysis of selected manufacturing sectors, current industry sector clusters or supply chains, the composition and size of companies across the region, their readiness for advanced manufacturing technologies adoption opportunities, and/or regional business capability baselines and trends;
- Alignment with state and/or regional initiatives; and
- Other important factors identified by the applicant.

(b) Needs Identification and Solutions

Reviewers will assess the quality and extent of the applicant's proposed strategy and proposed solutions to address key bottlenecks, gaps, or barriers for SMMs to adopt advanced manufacturing technologies such as robotics, AI, and automation in response to the applicant's regional opportunities for advanced manufacturing technology adoption assessed by reviewers under the preceding Section V.1.a.ii.(a).

iii. Performance Measurement and Management (10 points)

Reviewers will assess the goals, milestones, and metrics the applicant will use to assess the performance and success of the proposed strategy including the:

- Quality and specificity (quantitative measures) of the applicant's stated goals, milestones, and outcomes described by operating year (year 1, year 2, etc.), especially those focused on technology adoption by SMMs;
- Depth of the proposed methodology for program management and internal evaluation to ensure effective operations and oversight for meeting program and solution delivery objectives.

b. Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management; and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee (Total of 30 points with weighted subcriteria)

Reviewers will assess the ability of the key personnel, the applicant's management structure and oversight board or advisory committee to deliver the program and services envisioned for the Center. Reviewers will consider the following topics when evaluating the qualifications of the applicant and of program management:

Subcriteria i. and ii. below will be weighted equally at 15 points each.

i. Key Personnel, Organizational Structure, and Management

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the:

- Proposed key personnel have the appropriate experience and education in manufacturing, advanced manufacturing technologies adoption at scale, understanding of critical and emerging technology, outreach, program management, workforce development/upskilling and partnership development to support the achievements of the MEP mission and objectives.
- Proposed management structure and organizational roles are aligned to plan, direct, monitor, organize, and control the monetary resources of the proposed Center to achieve its business objectives.
- Proposed organizational structure flows logically from the specified approach to the market, products, and solution offerings; and
- Proposed field staff structure sufficiently supports the geographic concentrations and industry targets for the region.

ii. Oversight Board or Advisory Committee
Reviewers will assess the extent to which the:

- Oversight board or advisory committee and its operations are complete, appropriate, and will meet the program's objectives at the time of award, or, if such an oversight board or advisory committee does not exist at the time of application or is not expected to meet these requirements at the time of award, the extent to which the proposed plan for developing and implementing such an oversight board or advisory committee within 90 days of award start date is feasible; and
- Oversight board or advisory committee is engaged with overseeing and guiding the Center and supports its own development through a schedule of regular meetings and processes ensuring oversight board or advisory committee involvement in strategic planning, recruitment, selection and retention of board members, board assessment practices and board development initiatives.

c. Budget Narrative, and Justification. (Total of 30 points with weighted subcriteria);
Reviewers will assess the suitability and focus of the applicant's budget. The application will be assessed in the below areas.

Subcriteria i. and ii. below will be weighted equally at 15 points each.

i. Budget
Reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- The proposed financial plan is aligned to support the execution of the proposed Center's strategy and business model over the one-year project plan; and
- The proposal's narrative for each of the budgeted items explains the rationale for each of the budgeted items, including the assumptions the applicant used in budgeting for the Center.

ii. Plan for Meeting the Award's Non-Federal Cost Share Requirements over 5-year Award Period.
Reviewers will assess the quality of and extent to which the applicant:

- Clearly describes the total level of cost share and detailed rationale of the cost share, including cash and third-party in- kind, as well as program income in their proposed budget;
- Provides funding commitments for cost share that are documented by letters of commitment from the applicant, proposed sub-recipients and any other partners identified and meet the basic matching requirements of the program;
- Includes cost share that meets basic requirements of allowability, allocability, and reasonableness under applicable Federal cost principles set forth in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E; and
- Includes a description of an underlying accounting system that is established or will be established to meet applicable Federal cost principles set forth in 2 CF.R. Part 200, Subpart E.

2. Selection Factors

(1) The availability of Federal funding;
(2) The type and percentage of Non-Federal cost share being pledged to the project, with cash contributions being preferred;
(3) Whether the application complements or supports other Administration priorities or projects supported by DOC or other Federal agencies such as, but not limited to, Manufacturing USA; and
(4) Past performance in managing Federal financial assistance awards.

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, 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 received by the deadline will be reviewed to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this NOFO and to the scope of the stated program objectives. 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.

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. At least three (3) independent, objective reviewers, who may be Federal employees or Non-Federal personnel, with appropriate professional and technical expertise relating to the topics covered in this NOFO, will evaluate, and score each eligible, complete, and responsive application based on the evaluation criteria. While every application will have at least three (3) reviewers, applications may have more than three (3) reviewers if specialized expertise is needed to evaluate an application. During the review process, the reviewers may discuss the applications with each other, but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not a consensus. Based on the numerical average of the reviewers' scores, a rank order will be prepared and provided to the Selecting Official for further consideration.

Applications that are numerically scored an average of 70.00 or higher on a scale of 0-100 points will be adjectivally categorized as "fundable" and identified as finalists. Applications that receive an average score of below 70.00 on a scale of 0-100 points will be adjectivally categorized as "unfundable" and will not be further considered for funding. Applicants identified as finalists may be invited to participate with reviewers in a telephone or virtual conference or invited to participate in a site visit that will be conducted by the same reviewers at the applicant's location. If there are two or more finalists, telephone or virtual conference calls, or site visits may be conducted for each finalist. Upon completion of either a telephone or virtual conference call or site visit, reviewers will be given the opportunity to revise their assigned numeric scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in Section V.1. of this NOFO as a result of information obtained during either conference call or site visit. Any scoring revisions will be made by reviewers on an individual basis.

(2) Selection. The Selecting Official, the Acting NIST MEP Director or designee, will make final award recommendations to the NIST Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall generally select and recommend the most meritorious application[s] for an award based upon the rank order of the applications. The Selecting Official retains the discretion to select and recommend an application out of rank order based on one or more of the Selection Factors.

NIST reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs and performance metrics with any applicant selected to receive an award, which may include requesting that the applicant removes certain costs. Additionally, NIST may request that successful applicants 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 application. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NIST Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NIST Grants Officer are final.

c. **Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants.** After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the NIST Financial Assistance

Agreements Management Office (FAAMO) 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 $350,000), NIST FAAMO will review and consider the publicly available information about that applicant in the Responsibility/Qualification records about that applicant in SAM.gov (formerly 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 SAM.gov by a Federal awarding agency. As part of its review of risk posed by applicants, NIST FAAMO will consider any comments made by the applicant in SAM.gov 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.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date

Review of applications, selection of successful applicants, and award processing is expected to be completed by September 15, 2026. The earliest start date for awards under this NOFO is expected to be October 1, 2026.

5. Additional Information

a. **Safety**. NIST is committed to maintaining a work environment that safeguards the public and the environment, as well as Government personnel and property. Employees, contractors, and other associates of award recipients who conduct project work at a NIST-owned or operated site will be required to comply with all applicable 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. **Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements.** Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the DOC 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.

   b. **DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions.** The DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions, as may be periodically amended, will be applied to each award in this program.

      NIST MEP General Terms and Conditions. The NIST MEP General Terms and Conditions, as may be periodically amended, will be applied to each award in this program.

   c. **Executive Order 14173: Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity**

      (1) This award term implements Executive Order 14173, 90 FR 8633 (Jan. 21, 2025). By accepting a U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) financial assistance Award or Award Amendment (as the case may be) and expending Federal funding thereunder, the recipient:
      - Agrees that compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of Title 31 United States Code;
      - Certifies to the Department that it does not operate any programs promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws; and
      - Further certifies to the Department that it does not participate in any illegal preferences, mandates, policies, programs, activities, guidance, regulations, enforcement actions, consent orders, and requirements, that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws.

      (2) Affirmative Duty to Monitor for and to Report Potential Inconsistencies: The recipient must actively monitor its administration of an award to ensure that its activities do not violate the requirements of this award, including this SAC. At any time during the period of performance of this award, if the recipient believes that any of the activities in its approved scope of work may be inconsistent with the policies as outlined above, the recipient has an affirmative duty to immediately stop work on those potentially inconsistent activities and immediately contact the Grants Officer named in the Notice of

Award (NoA) to determine whether the potentially inconsistent activities may proceed under this award. The performance of activities that violate or are otherwise inconsistent with requirements as outlined above will result in appropriate enforcement action pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.339, including the disallowance of costs and possible termination of a portion or all of this award.

d. **Pre-Award Notification Requirements.** The DOC will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements dated December 30, 2014 ([79 FR 78390)](). Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules, and Regulations, for more information.

e. **Funding Availability, Limitation of Liability, Unilateral Terminations.** Funding for the program listed in this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. NIST or the DOC 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 DOC to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Additionally, in accord with 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4), NIST may unilaterally terminate an award issued pursuant to this NOFO, pursuant to the terms and conditions of such Federal award, including, to the extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or Agency priorities. The Fiscal Year 2027 President's Budget eliminates federal funding for NIST MEP.

f. **Collaborations with NIST Employees.**
All applications should include a description of any work proposed to be performed by an entity other than the applicant, and the cost of such work should ordinarily be included in the budget. 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. NIST's costs should not be included in the application.

g. **Use of Federal Government-Owned Intellectual Property.** If the applicant anticipates using any Federal Government-owned intellectual property, in the custody of NIST or another Federal agency, to carry out the work proposed, the applicant should clearly identify such intellectual property in the proposal. 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 the Federal 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 DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and

Conditions. Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Chief Counsel for NIST, (301) 975-2803, nistcounsel@nist.gov.

Any use of Federal Government-owned intellectual property by a recipient of an award under this announcement is at the sole discretion of the Federal Government and will need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis by the recipient and the Federal agency having custody of the intellectual property 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 a license from the applicable Federal agency.

If any inventions made in whole or in part by a NIST 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 the Federal Government's rights in such inventions will be determined solely by the Federal Government, through NIST as custodian of such inventions, and include the possibility of the Federal Government putting the intellectual property into the public domain.

3. Reporting

a. Reporting Requirements. The following reporting requirements described in Sections A.01, Reporting Requirements, of the DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions, apply to awards in this program:

(1) Financial Reports. Each award recipient will be required to submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. A final financial report is due within 120 days after the end of the project period.

(2) Performance (Technical) Reports. Each award recipient will be required to submit a technical progress report on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending March 31 and September 30 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. Technical progress reports shall contain information as prescribed in 2 C.F.R. § 200.329 and DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions, Section A.01. A final technical progress report is due within 120 days after the end of the project period.

(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, for maintaining the currency of information reported to SAM that is made available in SAM.gov about certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings involving the recipient.

b. **Audit Requirements.** The DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions Section D.01, and 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F, adopted by the DOC 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 $1,000,000 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 $1,000,000 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 DOC 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 $30,000 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.

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 '2026-NIST-MEP-02' 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: NOFO@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 DOC in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed, and evaluated by DOC 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 DOC 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 DOC financial assistance award.

   In addition, DOC 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 DOC 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, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):**

   NIST MEP has a public website (https://www.nist.gov/mep) that provides a “Frequently Asked Questions” page and other 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 2026-NIST-MEP-02 in the subject line.

3. **Webinar Information Session:**

   NIST MEP will post a recorded webinar for applicants who are interested in learning about this funding opportunity. This webinar will provide general information regarding 2026-NIST-MEP-02 and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. Please reference https://www.nist.gov/mep for the most up to date information, including details about the webinar. Remaining questions should be sent to mepnofo@nist.gov. Proprietary technical questions about specific proposal ideas will not be permitted, and NIST will not critique or provide feedback on any proposal ideas at any time before the deadline for all applications. However, questions about the funding opportunity, eligibility requirements, evaluation and award criteria, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive application will be addressed by the webinar and by e-mail to mepnofo@nist.gov.