APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS for 2018-NIST-MEP-AK-01

Applicants are strongly advised to use Grants.gov's "Download Submitted Forms and Applications" option to check that their application's required attachments were contained in their submission.

After submitting the application, follow the directions found at this link, https://go.usa.gov/xQgeh in the Grants.gov Online Users Guide.

If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found above, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

If the directions found at https://go.usa.gov/xQgeh 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 submissions in the Grants.gov system by following the procedures at the Grants.gov site (http://go.usa.gov/cjamz). It can take up to two business days for an application to fully move through the Grants.gov system to NIST; however, applicants can immediately check that they properly submitted the application in Grants.gov by following the Grants.gov procedures cited above.

This document consists of seven important sections:

1) Overview;
2) Required Application Forms and Documents;
3) Application Format;
4) Grants.gov Application Submission Process;
5) Attachment of Required Documents;
6) Verifying the Submission and Tracking the Application; and
7) Submission Date and Time.

1) Overview

We strongly recommend that applicants do not wait until the last minute to submit an application. Allowances will not make for any late submissions. To avoid any potential processing backlogs due to last minute Grants.gov registrations, applicants are highly encouraged to begin their Grants.gov registration process early.

When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) may take between three and five business days or as long as more than two weeks; and (3) electronic applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants using Grants.gov will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application.

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

Applicants will find instructions on registering with SAM.gov as part of the Grants.gov process at:
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html .

All applicants should be aware that adequate time must be factored into an applicant's schedule for delivery of the application.

Submitters are advised that volume on Grants.gov may be extremely heavy leading up to the deadline date.

2) Required Application Forms and Documents

The application must contain the following elements:

(1) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Applicants must indicate the state in which they are seeking to establish an MEP Center in field 4, Applicant Identifier, of the SF-424. The SF-424 must be certified through www.grants.gov by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.

SF-424, Item 12, should list the NOFO number as 2018-NIST-MEP-AK-01.

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

SF-424, Item 21, should list the certifications and assurances contained in the SF-424B.

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

The Grant Program Function or Activity on Line 1 under Column (a) should be entered as Manufacturing Extension Partnership.
The Assistance Listing (CFDA Number) on Line 1 under Column (b) should be 11.611.

In addition to the SF424A, applicants must submit detailed budget and financial plans as part of the Technical Proposal. See Section IV.2.a.(6).(e). below. Applicants must provide a detailed budget summary table and budget narrative for year one (1) of the project, fully explaining and justifying all proposed project funding (both revenue and expenses) in accordance with applicable Federal cost principles. Additionally, The multi-year budgets should reflect anticipated expenses for all five (5) years of the project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments. Recipients must meet the minimum cost share and matching requirements set forth in this NOFO. Please refer to Section III.2. of this NOFO for the Cost Share and Matching Requirement over the life of the award.

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

(4) CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying. Enter "2018-NIST-MEP-AK-01" in the Award Number field. Enter the title of the application used in field 15 of the SF-424, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field.

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

(6) Technical Proposal. The five (5) year Technical Proposal is a word-processed document not exceeding 40 pages that is responsive to the program description (see Section I. of this NOFO) and the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this NOFO). The following is a suggested format that applicants may use for the technical proposal.

a) Table of Contents. (Does not count toward the page limit).

b) Executive Summary. (Does not count towards page limit). The executive summary should briefly (usually no longer than two pages) describe the proposed project, consistent with the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of this NOFO). Applicants should name the state in which they are seeking to establish an MEP Center in the first sentence of the Executive Summary.

Please note, if an applicant's proposal is selected for funding, NIST may use all or a portion of the Executive Summary as part of a press

release issued by NIST, or for other public information and outreach purposes. Applicants are advised not to incorporate information that concerns business trade secrets or other confidential commercial or financial information as part of the Executive Summary. See also 15 CFR 4.9(c) concerning the designation of business information by the applicant.

c) Project Narrative. A description of the proposed approach to establish an MEP Center. The project narrative must also identify tasks, measurable milestones and outcomes in providing manufacturing extension services to primarily small and medium-sized manufacturers separately for each of the five years in the designated State (see Section II.2. of this NOFO), sufficient to permit evaluation of the application, in accordance with the Executive Summary and 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 past experience of the applicant in serving small and mid-sized manufacturers.

d) Qualifications of the Applicant; **Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee Governance.** 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 subcriteria (see Section V.1.b.i. and ii. of this NOFO). The applicant must include a description of its proposed structure for executing the MEP Core Management and Oversight Functions as described in Section I.4. of this NOFO. The applicant must provide enough information for NIST to determine whether the proposed structure meets the requirements of Section I.4.

The applicant must also provide a description of its established or proposed MEP Center Oversight Board or Advisory Committee, as the case may be, and Governance, including a listing of the members or intended members and a discussion of the governing documents (e.g., bylaws, policies or procedures and conflict of interest policies) with enough information for NIST to determine whether the proposed Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance meets the requirements of Section I.3. of this NOFO. If an applicant's Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance does not currently meet the requirements set forth in Section I.3. 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 and Governance into compliance with Section I.3. of the NOFO within 90 calendar days of award start date (expected to be January 1, 2019).

e) **Budget and Financial Plan.** (Does not count toward the page limit). Applicants must provide a detailed budget summary table and budget narrative for year one (1) of the project, fully explaining and justifying all proposed project funding (both revenue and expenses) in accordance with applicable Federal cost principles being committed to the project. In addition, applicants must also provide a budget summary table for years two (2) through five (5) of the project; however, a budget narrative for these years is not required as part of an application.

A suggested budget summary table and narrative tem plate for year 1 and budget summary table for Years 2-5 is available on the MEP website, https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska .

In the year one budget narrative, the recipient should provide a detailed description to support the costs identified in each category of the budget table. For example, providing the annual salary and the percentage of time dedicated to the project by personnel to demonstrate the total cost of that individual; providing the airfare, lodging, per diem, number of days and number of travelers for each proposed trip; and identifying anticipated subaward/contract amounts, the subawardees/contractors, if known at the time of application, and a detailed description of the purpose of each subaward/contract. Applicants must also include staff, travel and related expenses for the required NIST MEP kick-off conference and meetings described in Sections II.5. and II.6. of this NOFO in the budget tables and budget narratives.

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

(7) Letters of Commitment or Support. (Do not count toward the page limit). The letters of commitment or support identified below do not count toward the overall application page limit. 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 a letter of support.

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 and Third-Party Non-Federal Cost Sharing**: With the exception of 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.

(i) Applicant Non-Federal Cost Sharing (Cash and In-kind): 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 separate and apart from the submission of the proposal. This stand-alone letter must cover all five (5) years of the proposed MEP Center project and include a per year break-out of the applicant's contribution of non-Federal cost share, as well as a per year break-out of cash cost share (including anticipated program income) and in-kind (non-cash) contributions.

(ii) 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 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.

c) **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.

d) **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 a 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.

e) **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.

f) General Letters of Support: General letters of support are not required, but may be useful for illustrating broad-based support for the applicant's proposal.

(8) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. (Does not count toward page limit). If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant Federal audit agency. If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, provide a statement to this effect. If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal audit agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions available at: https://go.usa.gov/xXRxK. This does not count toward the page limit.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f), applicants that have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge indirect

costs to an MEP award pursuant to a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), in which case a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is not required. Applicants proposing a 10 percent de minimis rate pursuant to 2 CFR 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget portion of the application.

(9) Resumes. (Do not count toward page limit). One-page resumes of no more than five key personnel may be included. Any information beyond one page for each resume and any additional resumes submitted will not be considered.

(10) Intellectual Property (IP) Plan for the Allocation of Legal Rights. (Does not count toward the page limit). Applicants must include as part of the application a plan for the allocation of the legal rights associated with any intellectual property, which may result from activities of the Center. The proposed IP plan must be consistent with the IP provisions set forth in 2 C.F.R. § 200.315 and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions (see Section C.04 at https://go.usa.gov/xXRxK). There is no required format for the IP plan. Applicants not expecting to acquire or generate any IP pursuant to the proposed project must explain as part of its application why the allocation of legal rights associated with IP is not within the scope of the proposed project. The IP plan or explanation in lieu of an IP plan will not be evaluated against any evaluation criteria and will not count towards the overall page count of an application. Notwithstanding, the sufficiency of the IP plan or an explanation in lieu of an IP plan will be considered by NIST as part of the administrative review of the application (*see* Section V.2.a. of this NOFO) and applicants may be required to make certain revisions to its IP plan as part of pre-award negotiations or pursuant to a post-award Specific Award Condition (*see* Section V.2.b.(2) of this NOFO). Necessary, reasonable and allocable costs associated with implementation of the IP plan may be proposed as part of the overall budget for the proposed project.

(11) Oversight Board or Advisory Committee Governance. The applicant must include in their application a proposed board structure including the type of board, board member names, organization and roles of such board members. If such a board is not in place, or is not expected to meet these requirements at the time of the MEP award, the applicant must provide a plan for establishing such a board within 90 days of award start date (expected to be January 1, 2019). *See* Section I.3. of this NOFO for additional information concerning the Oversight Board or Advisory Board Governance requirements for this program.

Please pay close attention to the guidance in Section 5) of this document, "Attachment of Required Documents".

3) Application Format

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

(2) Facsimile submissions (fax). Will not be accepted.

(3) Figures, graphs, images, and pictures. Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be landscape orientation.

(4) Font. Easy to read font (11-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.

(5) Line spacing. Single.

(6) Margins. One (1) inch top, bottom, left, and right.

(7) Paper copies. Will not be accepted. All submissions must be made via www.grants.gov.

(8) Page layout. Portrait orientation only (except figures, graphs, and pictures (see Section IV.2.c.(3)).

(9) Page Limit. Forty (40) pages.

Page limit includes: Technical Proposal (with the exceptions specified below) figures, graphs, tables, images, pictures, and all other pages of an application, with the exception of the page limit exclusions listed below.

Page limit excludes: SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance; SF-424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs; SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs; CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying; SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities; Technical Proposal Table of Contents, Technical Proposal Executive Summary; all elements of the Technical Proposal Budget and Financial Plan, including Budget Tables and Budget Narratives; Letters of Commitment or Support; Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; IP Plan; Oversight Board/Advisory Committee Bylaws and Conflicts of Interest Policies; and Resumes.

(10) Page numbering. Number pages sequentially.

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

(12) Application language. English.

(13) Typed document. All applications, including forms, must be typed.

4) Grants.gov Application Submission Process

(1) Applications must be submitted via Grants.gov at www.grants.gov, under announcement 2018-NIST-MEP-AK-01.

(a) Applicants submitting applications through Grants.gov should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. A receipt from Grants.gov indicating an application is received does not provide information about whether attachments have been received. For further information or questions regarding applying electronically for the 2018-NIST-MEP-AK-01 announcement, contact Leon Sampson by phone at 301-975-3086 or by e-mail at grants@nist.gov.

(b) Applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not wait until the approaching due date before logging on and reviewing the instructions for submitting an application through Grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process must be completed before a new registrant can apply electronically. If all goes well, the registration process takes three (3) to five (5) business days. If problems are encountered, the registration process can take up to two (2) weeks or more. Applicants must have a unique entity identifier number and must maintain a current registration in the Federal government's primary registrant database, the System for Award Management (https://www.sam.gov/), as explained on the Grants.gov Web site. *See also* Section IV.3. of this NOFO. After registering, it may take several days or longer from the initial log-on before a new Grants.gov system user can submit an application. Only authorized individual(s) will be able to submit the application, and the system may need time to process a submitted application. Applicants should save and print the proof of submission they receive from Grants.gov. If problems occur while using Grants.gov, the applicant is advised to (a) print any error message received and (b) call Grants.gov directly for immediate assistance. If calling from within the United States or from a U. S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place other than the United States or a U. S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. Assistance from the Grants.gov Help Desk will be available around the clock every day, with the exception of Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays. For assistance using Grants.gov, you may also contact support@grants.gov.

(c) To find instructions on submitting an application on Grants.gov, Applicants should refer to the "Applicants" tab in the banner just below the top of the www.grants.gov home page. Clicking on the "Applicants" tab produces two exceptionally useful sources of information, Grant Applications and Applicant Resources, which applicants are advised to review.

Applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application. Closely following the detailed information in these subcategories will increase the likelihood of acceptance of the application by the Federal agency's electronic system.

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

The application must be both received and validated by Grants.gov. The application is "received" when Grants.gov provides the applicant a confirmation of receipt and an application tracking number. If an applicant does not see this confirmation and tracking number, the application has not been received. After the application has been received, it must still be validated. During this process, it may be "validated" or "rejected with errors." To know whether the application was rejected with errors and the reasons why, the applicant must log in to Grants.gov, select "Applicants" from the top navigation, and select "Track my application" from the drop-down list. If the status is "rejected with errors," the applicant may still seek to correct the errors and resubmit your application before the deadline. If the applicant does not correct the errors, the application will not be forwarded to NIST by Grants.gov.

All applicants, both electronic and paper submitters, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicants' schedules for delivery of their application. Applicants submitting applications through Grant.gov are advised that volume on Grants.gov may be extremely heavy on the deadline date.

5) Attachment of Required Documents

Items (1) through (5) in Section 2) above, **Required Application Forms and Documents,** are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process.

Items (6) through (11) in Section 2) above, **Required Application Forms and Documents,** must be completed and attached by clicking on "Add Attachments" found in item 15 of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This will create a zip file that allows for transmittal of the documents electronically via Grants.gov.

Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions at www.grants.gov to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. ***A receipt from Grants.gov indicates only that an application was transferred to a system. It does not provide details concerning whether all attachments (or how many attachments) transferred successfully.*** Applicants using Grants.gov will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two

business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application.

6) Verifying the Submission and Tracking the Application

The Grants.gov Online Users Guide available at the Grants.gov site (http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh) provides vital information on application process.

Applicants are strongly advised to use Grants.gov's "Download Submitted Forms and Applications" option to check that their application's required attachments were contained in their submission.

After submitting the application, follow the directions found at this link, https://go.usa.gov/xQqeh in the Grants.gov Online Users Guide.

If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found above, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

If the directions found at https://go.usa.gov/xQqeh are not effective, please contact the Grants.gov Help Desk immediately. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place outside the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. E-mails should be addressed to support@grants.gov. Assistance from the Grants.gov Help Desk will be available around the clock every day, with the exception of Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays.

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

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

7) Submission Date and Time

Applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, October 23, 2018. Paper applications will not be accepted. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered.

Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system is expected to be closed for routine maintenance at these

times: from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, September 17, 2018 until 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time Monday, September 17, 2018; and again from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, October 20, 2018 until 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time Monday, October 22, 2018. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.