August 24, 2018

NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
Award Competition for a Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Center in the State of Alaska.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Award Competition for a Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Center in the State of Alaska.

- **Announcement Type**: Initial

- **Funding Opportunity Number:** 2018-NIST-MEP-AK-01

- **Assistance Listing (CFDA Number):** 11.611, Manufacturing Extension Partnership

- **Dates:** 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.

  The approximate start date for the award made under this NOFO is expected to be January 1, 2019.

  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.

  Applicants are strongly urged to read Section IV.2.b., Attachment of Required Application Documents, found on page 19 of this NOFO, with great attention. Applicants should carefully follow the instructions and recommendations regarding attachments and use the "Download Submitted Forms and Applications" feature to check that all required attachments are contained in their submission. Applications submitted without the required documents will

not pass the Initial Administrative Review, described in Section V.2.a. of this NOFO.

When developing the submission timeline, please keep in mind that (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) (see Section IV.3. and Section IV.7.a.(1).(b) of this NOFO) often takes between three and five business days, and may take as long as two weeks; (3) applicants submitting applications are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages from Grants.gov 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 SAM.gov is not current at the time of the award.

- **Application Submission**: Applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov . NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by e-mail. See Sections IV.2.c.(1)., IV.2.c.(2)., and IV.2.c.(7). in the full announcement text of this NOFO.

- **Funding Opportunity Description**: NIST invites applications from eligible applicants for NIST cooperative agreement funding for one (1) MEP Center to provide manufacturing extension services to primarily small and medium-sized manufacturers in the State of Alaska. The MEP center will become part of the MEP National Network™ of extension service providers, currently comprised of more than 51 Centers and approximately 425 field offices located throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

- **Anticipated Amounts**: NIST anticipates funding one (1) award at a funding level of up to $500,000 per year of operation for an MEP Center in the State of Alaska. The project awarded under this NOFO will have a budget and performance period of up to five (5) years. As discussed in the multi-year funding policy described in Section II.3. of this NOFO, obligated funding amounts may be adjusted higher or lower from year-to-year of the award. In addition, as set forth in Section II.4. of this NOFO, awards issued pursuant to this NOFO may be renewed by NIST on a non-competitive basis for an additional period of two (2) years at the end of the initial award period. The final time frame will be based upon maintaining the Alaska MEP Center on the same cycle with an existing group of MEP Centers, which will require a full competition in 2025, based upon the recipient's satisfactory performance, continued relevance of the project to the mission, priorities of the MEP Program, and the availability of appropriated funds.

- **Funding Instrument**: Cooperative Agreement. See Section II.1. of this NOFO for additional information concerning the funding instrument for this award.

- **Who Is Eligible**: The eligibility requirements set forth in 15 U.S.C. § 278k(a)(5) and in Section III.1. of this NOFO will be used in lieu of and to the extent they are inconsistent with will supersede the eligibility requirements provided in the MEP regulations found at 15 CFR part 290, specifically 15 CFR § 290.5(a)(1). Each applicant for and recipient of an MEP award must be a United States-based nonprofit institution, or consortium thereof, an institution of higher education, or a State, United States territory, local, or tribal government. Existing MEP awardees and new applicants that meet the eligibility criteria set forth in Section III.1. of this NOFO may apply. An eligible organization may work individually or may include proposed subawards to eligible organizations or proposed contracts with any other organization as part of the applicant's proposal, effectively forming a team. However, as discussed in Section I.4. 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 and Governance structure or plan for establishing a board structure within 90 calendar days from the award start date (Refer to Section I.3. of this NOFO).

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** In accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 278k(e)(2), the minimum non-Federal cost share for MEP Center cooperative agreements is 50 percent of the total approved project budget, which is determined on an annual basis. The MEP statute requires that minimum cost share requirements must be met annually; there can be no carryover of excess cost share from one year to the next. *See* Section III.2. of this NOFO for more information on the non-Federal cost sharing requirements under MEP awards.

- **Alaska Information Forum:** The National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP) held an information session, June 7th, 2018 in Anchorage, Alaska for organizations that are considering applying for the funding opportunity. NIST MEP staff provided general information regarding MEP and offered general guidance on preparing proposals. NIST MEP staff provided information about the MEP eligibility and cost sharing requirements, the evaluation criteria, the selection factors and process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal during the Regional Forum. Details of the Regional Forum are posted on the MEP website: https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska.

- **Webinar Information Session:** NIST MEP will host a webinar information session for organizations that are considering applying for this funding opportunity. This webinar will provide general information regarding MEP and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. NIST MEP staff will be available at the webinar to answer general questions. During the webinar, proprietary technical discussions about specific project ideas will not be permitted. Also, NIST MEP staff will not critique or provide feedback on any specific project ideas during the webinar or at any time before submission of a proposal to Grants.gov. However, NIST MEP staff will provide information about the MEP eligibility and cost sharing requirements, the evaluation criteria, the selection factors and process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal during this webinar. The webinar will be held approximately fifteen (15) to thirty (30) business days after posting of this NOFO. The exact date and time of the webinar will be posted on the MEP website at https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska. The webinar will be recorded, and a link to the recording will be posted on the NIST MEP website. In addition, the webinar presentations will be available on the MEP website. Organizations wishing to participate in the webinar must register in advance by contacting NIST MEP by e-mail at mepnofo@nist.gov. Participation in the webinar is not required in order for an organization to submit an application pursuant to this NOFO.

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).** Questions from applicants pertaining to MEP eligibility, cost sharing requirements, evaluation criteria and selection factors, the selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal will not be considered on an informal basis. Applicants must submit all such questions in writing to mepnofo@nist.gov. Questions submitted to NIST/MEP may be made available to the public as part of an FAQ document, which will be periodically updated on the MEP website at https://www.nist.gov/mep/regional-forum-competition-select-operator-alaska-mep-center.

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FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Program Description

The statutory authority for the MEP program is 15 U.S.C. § 278k, as implemented in 15 C.F.R. part 290. In the event of any inconsistency between this NOFO and the notice published in the Federal Register, the notice published in the Federal Register controls.

1. About the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership

The Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is based at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The National Program Office (aka NIST MEP) which provides the federal government funding for the MEP National Network™ is located in Gaithersburg, MD.

2. The MEP National Network

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.

Focused on helping small and medium-sized manufacturers generate business results and thrive in today's technology-driven economy, the MEP National Network comprises NIST MEP, the 51 MEP Centers located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, and over 1,300 trusted advisors and experts at more than 400 MEP service locations, providing any U.S. manufacturer with access to resources they need to succeed.

The MEP National Network's strength is in its partnerships. Through its collaborations at the federal, state and local level, MEP Centers work with manufacturers to develop new products and customers, expand and diversify markets, adopt new technology, and enhance value within supply chains. The MEP Program serves as a bridge to other organizations and federal research labs that share a passion for enhancing the manufacturing community.

In 2017, the MEP National Network connected with 26,313 manufacturers, leading to $12.6 billion in sales, $1.7 billion in cost savings, $3.5 billion in new client investments, and helping to create and retain more than 100,000 U.S. manufacturing jobs.

3. Oversight Board and/or Advisory Committee Governance

a. Oversight Board

15 U.S.C. § 278(k) requires MEP Centers to establish boards to oversee the operations of the Center (Oversight Board) as a condition of receiving a federal financial assistance award. The Oversight Board shall be representative of State service area stakeholders with a majority of the Oversight Board members drawn

from small and medium-sized manufacturing firms. Members of the Oversight Board may not concurrently serve on more than one MEP Center Oversight Board or serve as a vendor or provide contractual services to the Recipient or to a Subrecipient. Additionally, recipients shall adopt bylaws or equivalent governance documents setting forth the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of their Oversight Boards, including a conflict of interest policy to ensure relevant relationships are disclosed and appropriate recusal procedures are in place. As a condition of receiving an MEP Center cooperative agreement, an applicant may be required to provide the NIST Grants Officer with copies of the ratified bylaws and conflict of interest policies for its Oversight Board.

b. Advisory Committee

A recipient of an MEP Center cooperative agreement that is an institution of higher education, State, local or Tribal governmental entity, where state law or policy prohibits compliance with the Oversight Board requirement, may establish an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall be broadly representative of State service area stakeholders with a majority of its members drawn from small- and medium-sized manufacturing firms and provide regular strategic, policy, and programmatic input directly to the designated representative of the applicant. A recipient that is a nonprofit organization with multiple programs and MEP Center program activities are not a primary activity of the applicant may establish an Advisory Committee, instead of an Oversight Board, that conforms to membership requirements as set forth above.

In determining whether the MEP Center is a primary activity of a recipient, MEP will consider unique factors and circumstances such as, 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, or (2) the duration of other funding sources over time.

Advisory Committee members may not concurrently serve on more than one MEP Center Advisory Committee or serve as a vendor or provide contractual services to the applicant or to a Subrecipient. Recipients shall have bylaws or equivalent governance documents setting forth the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of its Advisory Committee, including a conflict of interest policy to ensure relevant relationships are disclosed and appropriate recusal procedures are in place. As a condition to receiving an MEP Center cooperative agreement, an applicant may be required to provide the NIST Grants Officer with copies of its ratified by-laws and conflict of interest policies for its Advisory Committee.

c. New/Proposed Oversight Board and/or Advisory Committee

If an Oversight Board or Advisory Committee 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 Committee membership criteria. As a condition to receiving an MEP Center cooperative agreement, an applicant may be required to provide the NIST Grants Officer with copies of the organizational documents for its proposed Oversight or Advisory Committee and Governance, including draft bylaws and conflict of interest policies. An awardee will have up to 90 calendar days from award start date (expected to be January 1, 2019) to establish its Oversight Board or the Advisory Committee. The sufficiency of the proposed Oversight or Advisory Committee Board and Governance will be evaluated against the applicable evaluation criterion (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 Committee and Governance is in conformance with the requirements set forth in this section.

4. MEP Core Management and Oversight Functions

An MEP Center, as a direct recipient of Federal financial assistance funds under an MEP cooperative agreement, must possess and maintain, at all times during an MEP award period, accountability to directly manage and execute all functions material and inherent to the successful operation of a Center, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. 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;

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

c. 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

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

i. 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

ii. **Project execution** and management functions such as submission of required financial and technical reports, maintenance of a functioning financial management system that satisfies the requirements found in 2 CFR Section 200.302, in order 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.

In extraordinary situations, the NIST Grants Officer may allow a recipient to temporarily outsource certain or all its management and oversight responsibilities under an MEP award. If an applicant is proposing such a structure, the applicant must include with its application a detailed explanation and accompanying documentation (e.g., copies of draft contracts or other agreements) supporting its outsourcing request.

The sufficiency of the proposed Core Management and Oversight Functions will be evaluated against an evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.b.i. and ii. of this NOFO).

5. Resources

The following competition-related resources are currently available on the MEP website at:https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska:

- MEP National Network Strategic Plan;
- Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Operating Outcome Plan Guidelines located within the NIST MEP Renewal Guidelines, August 2017
- Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership General Terms and Conditions, August 2017 (see also Section VI.2.e. of this NOFO);
- Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Reporting Guidelines;
- Budget Summary Table and Narrative Template;
- 5 Year Summary Table Template;
- Alaska State Technology Extension Planning Study Final Report from September 2014; and
- 2017 Annual Report.

The MEP program is not a Federal research and development program. It is not the intent of this program that awardees will perform systematic research.

To learn more about the MEP program, please go to http://www.nist.gov/mep/.

Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you seek the information at this link and it is no longer working, or if you seek information at any link in this NOFO and it is no longer working, or if you need more information.

II. Federal Award Information

1. **Funding Instrument.** The funding instrument that will be used for the awards issued pursuant to this NOFO is a cooperative agreement. The nature of NIST's "substantial involvement" will generally be collaboration between NIST MEP and the recipient organizations. This includes NIST MEP collaboration with a recipient in developing and delivering program services to small and medium sized manufacturers. Additional forms of substantial involvement that may arise are described in Final Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidance Implementing the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act, 43 Fed. Reg. 36860-65 (Aug. 18, 1978) and in Chapter 5.C of the Department of Commerce Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual, as may be periodically amended, which is available at https://go.usa.gov/x5grC.

   Examples of NIST involvement in cooperative agreements awarded pursuant to this NOFO may include activities such as, but not limited to:

   - Guidelines and assistance in developing required plans;
   - Guidance for evaluation of performance and collection of data and information from the Recipient organization;
   - Approval of key personnel;
   - Assistance, where possible, in accessing solutions to technical and managerial problems; and
   - Assistance to the Recipient organization to define, understand, and resolve issues pertaining to the successful implementation of the MEP project.
   - Such other substantial involvement by NIST as determined by the NIST Grants Officer, in consultation with the NIST MEP Program Office.

   For further information related to NIST's substantial involvement in this award, please refer to the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership General Terms and Conditions to which a link is located in Section VI.2.e. of this NOFO.

2. **Funding Availability.** NIST anticipates funding one (1) Center award for the State of Alaska with an initial five-year period of performance in accordance with the multi-year funding policy described in Section II.3. of this NOFO. Funding for the award listed below is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. The table below lists the state identified for funding as part of this NOFO and the estimated amount of funding available:

MEP Center Location and Assigned Geographical Service Area (by State)	Anticipated Annual Federal Funding for Each Year of the Award	Total Federal Funding for 5 Year Award Period
Alaska	$500,000	$2,500,000

Applicants may propose annual Federal funding amounts that are different from the anticipated annual Federal funding amount set forth in the above table, provided that the total amount of Federal funding being requested by an applicant does not exceed the total amount of Federal funding for the five-year award period as set forth in the above table. For example, if the anticipated annual Federal funding amount for an MEP Center is $500,000 and the total Federal funding amount for the five-year award period is $2,500,000, an applicant may propose Federal funding amounts greater, less than, or equal to $500,000 for any year or years of the award, so long as the total amount of Federal funding being requested by the applicant for the entire five-year award period does not exceed $2,500,000.

3. **Multi-Year Funding Policy.** When an application for a multi-year award is approved, funding will usually be provided for only the first year of the project. Recipients will be required to submit detailed budgets and budget narratives prior to the award of any continued funding. Continued funding for the remaining years of the project will be awarded by NIST on a non-competitive basis, and may be adjusted higher or lower from year-to-year of the award, contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to the mission and priorities of the program, and the availability of Federal funds. Continuation of an award to extend the period of performance and/or to increase or decrease funding is at the sole discretion of NIST.

4. **Potential for Additional Years.** Initial awards issued pursuant to this NOFO are expected to be for up to five (5) years with the possibility for NIST to renew the award, on a non-competitive basis, for an additional two (2) year period at the end of the initial award period (*i.e.*, up to a total of seven (7) years). As discussed in Section VI.3.d. of this NOFO, renewal funding for MEP Centers is contingent, in part, upon successful annual and panel reviews, and Secretarial evaluations in accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 278k(g) and 15 CFR Section 290.8.

5. **Kick-Off Conference**. A recipient will be required to attend a kick-off conference, which will be held within 30 days post start date of award, to help ensure that the MEP Center operator has a clear understanding of the program and its components. The kick-off conference will take place at NIST MEP headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD, during which time NIST will: (1) orient MEP Center key personnel to the MEP program; (2) explain program and financial reporting requirements and procedures; (3) identify available resources that can enhance the capabilities of the MEP Center; and

(4) negotiate and develop a detailed three-year operating plan with the recipient. NIST MEP anticipates an additional set of site visits at the MEP Center and/or telephonic meetings with the recipient to finalize the three-year operating plan.

The kick-off conference will take up to approximately three days and must be attended by the MEP Center Director, along with up to two additional MEP Center employees. Applicants must include travel and related costs for the kick-off conference as part of the budget for year one (1), and these costs should be reflected in the SF-424A form. (See Section IV.2.a.(2). of this NOFO). These costs must also be reflected in the budget table and budget narrative for Year 1, which is submitted as part of the budget summary tables and budget narratives section of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.2.a.(6).(e). of this NOFO) Representatives from key subrecipients and other key strategic partners may attend the kick-off conference with the prior written approval of the Grants Officer. Applicants proposing to have key subrecipients and/or other key strategic partners attend the kick-off conference should clearly indicate that fact as part of the budget narrative for year one of the project.

6. **MEP Network-Wide Meetings.** NIST MEP typically organizes 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 five-year award period). These costs must be reflected in the MEP Budget Summary form (see Section IV.2.a.(2). of this NOFO. These costs must be reflected in the budget summary tables and budget narratives for each of the project's five (5) years, which are submitted in the budget summary tables and budget narratives section of the Technical Proposal. (See Section IV.2.a.(6).(e). of this NOFO). A budget summary table and narrative template 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.

7. **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 IV.2.a.(8). of this NOFO.

III. Eligibility Information

1. **Eligible Applicants.** The eligibility requirements set forth in 15 U.S.C. § 278k(a)(5) and 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 CFR part 290, specifically

15 CFR 290.5(a)(1). Each applicant for and recipient of an MEP award must be a United States-based nonprofit institution, or consortium thereof, an institution of higher education, or a State, United States territory, local, or tribal government. Existing MEP awardees and new applicants who meet the eligibility criteria set forth in this section may apply. An eligible organization may work individually or may include proposed subawards to eligible organizations or proposed contracts with any other organization as part of the applicant's proposal, effectively forming a team. However, as discussed in Section I.4. 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 MEP Center Core Management and Oversight functions. In addition, the applicant must have or propose an Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance structure or plan for establishing a board structure within 90 days from the award start date (Refer to Section I.3. of this NOFO). See also Section IV.6. of this NOFO for funding restrictions under the MEP program.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement**. In accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 278k(e)(2), the minimum non-Federal cost share for MEP Center cooperative agreements is 50 percent of the total approved project budget, which is determined on an annual basis. The MEP statute requires that minimum cost share requirements must be met annually; there can be no carryover of excess cost share from one year to the next.

   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 at 2 CFR 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.c.ii. of this NOFO.

   Recipients must meet the minimum non-Federal cost share requirements for each year of the award, with each such year being distinct and unique for cost-share purposes. Cost-share cannot be "carried" forward from one year to the next under this program. For purposes of the MEP program, "program income" (as defined in 2 CFR 200.80, as applicable) generated by an MEP Center may be used by a recipient towards the required non-Federal cost share under an MEP award.

   As with the Federal share, any proposed costs included as non-Federal cost sharing must be an allowable/eligible cost under this program and under the Federal cost principles set forth in 2 CFR part 200, Subpart E. Non-Federal cost sharing incorporated into the budget of an approved MEP cooperative agreement is subject to

audit in the same general manner as Federal award funds. See 2 CFR part 200, Subpart F.

As set forth in Section IV.2.a.(7) of this NOFO, 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. 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.

3. **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.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. **Address to Request Application Package**. The standard application package, consisting of the standard forms, i.e., SF-424, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and the CD-511, is available at www.grants.gov under 2018-NIST-MEP-AK-01. MEP Budget Summary templates for single and multi-years are available at https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska.

   Applicants may also request an application package by contacting the point of contact for administrative, budget, cost sharing, eligibility questions and other programmatic questions listed in Section VII. of this NOFO.

2. **Content and Form of Application/Submission**. The requirements given in this section of the 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 CFR part 290, specifically 15 CFR 290.5.

a. Required Forms and Documents

(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 template 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.

b. Attachment of Required Documents

Items IV.2.a.(1). through IV.2.a.(5). above are part of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process.

Items IV.2.a.(6). through IV.2.a.(11). 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.

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, except for Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays.

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

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

c. 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.

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. NIST is not accepting pre-applications or white papers under this NOFO.

f. Certifications Regarding Federal Felony and Federal Criminal Tax Convictions, Unpaid Federal Tax Assessments and Delinquent Federal Tax Returns.

In accordance with Federal appropriations law, an authorized representative of the selected applicant may be required to provide certain pre-award certifications regarding Federal felony and Federal criminal tax convictions, unpaid federal tax assessments, and delinquent Federal tax returns.

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM). Pursuant to 2 CFR part 25, applicants and recipients (as the case may be) are required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM 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 CFR 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; 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. Applicants must submit applications electronically through www.grants.gov. Applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, October 23, 2018. The approximate start date for the award made under this NOFO is expected to be January 1, 2019.

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 15, 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.

When developing the submission timeline, please keep in mind that: (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) (see Section IV.3 and Section IV.7.a.(1).(b). of this NOFO) often takes between three and five business days or as long as two weeks or more; (3) applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages from Grants.gov 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**.**

The date and time recorded by www.grants.gov will be considered the official time that the application was received by NIST. Applicants are cautioned that the validation process may take up to two full business days after the application is submitted to Grants.gov.

NIST strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the last minute to submit an application. NIST will not make allowance for any late submissions. The responsibility for ensuring a complete application is received by NIST by the deadline is the sole responsibility of the applicant. To avoid any potential processing backlogs due to last minute Grants.gov registrations, applicants are strongly encouraged to start their Grants.gov registration process at least four (4) weeks prior to the application due date.

NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by e-mail.

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

6. **Funding Restrictions**. Construction activities are not an allowable cost under the MEP Program. In addition, a recipient or a subrecipient may not charge profits, fees

or other increments above cost to an MEP award. Pre-award costs under this NOFO are subject to the prior written approval of the NIST Grants Officer.

7. Other Submission Requirements

a. Applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov**.** NIST will not accept applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or by e-mail.

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

(a) Submitters of electronic applications 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 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. 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 valid unique entity identifier number and must maintain a current registration in the Federal government's primary registrant database, the System for Award Management (https://www.sam.gov/), as explained on the Grants.gov web site. See also Section IV.3. of this NOFO. After registering, it may take several days or longer from the initial log-on before a new Grants.gov system user can submit an application. Only 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, Applicant Actions and Applicant Resources, which applicants are advised to review.

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

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

All applicants should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicants' schedules for delivery of their application. Applicants are advised that volume on Grants.gov may be extremely heavy as the deadline date approaches.

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 their application before the deadline. If the applicant does not correct the errors, the application will not be forwarded to NIST by Grants.gov.

Refer to important information in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times, to help ensure your application is received on time.

b. Amendments. Any amendments to this NOFO will be announced through Grants.gov. Applicants may sign up on Grants.gov to receive amendments or may request a copy of the amendment by email at mepnofo@nist.gov.

V. Application Review Information

1. Evaluation Criteria. The evaluation criteria, selection factors, and the review and selection process provided in this section will be used for this competition and are

consistent with the evaluation requirements set forth in 15 U.S.C. § 278k(f)(5)(B). To the extent that the evaluation criteria, selection factors or the review and selection process contained in this NOFO are inconsistent with the MEP regulations found at 15 CFR part 290, specifically 15 CFR 290.6 and 290.7, the evaluation criteria, selection factors and the review and selection process contained in this NOFO will control. The evaluation criteria that will be used in evaluating applications and assigned weights, with a maximum score of 100, are listed below.

a. Project Narrative. (40 points; Sub-criteria i. through iv. will be weighted equally) NIST MEP will evaluate the extent to which the applicant's Project Narrative demonstrates how the applicant's methodology will efficiently and effectively establish an MEP Center and provide manufacturing extension services to primarily small and medium-sized manufacturers in the applicable State-wide geographical service area identified in Section II.2. of this NOFO. Reviewers will consider the following topics when evaluating the Project Narrative:

i. Center Strategy. Reviewers will assess the applicant's strategy proposed for the Center to deliver services that meet manufacturers' needs, generate client impacts (e.g., cost savings, increased sales, etc.), and support a strong manufacturing ecosystem. Reviewers will assess the quality with which the applicant:

- incorporates the market analysis described in the criterion set forth in Section V.1.a.ii.(1). below to inform strategies, products and services;
- defines a strategy for delivering services that balances market penetration with impact and revenue generation, addressing the needs of manufacturers, with an emphasis on the small and medium-sized manufacturers;
- 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;
- plans to engage with other entities in statewide and/or regional advanced manufacturing initiatives; and
- supports achievements of the MEP mission and objectives while also satisfying the interests of other stakeholders, investors, and partners.

ii. Market Understanding. Reviewers will assess the strategy proposed for the Center to define the target market, understand the needs of manufacturers (especially Small and Medium Enterprises [SMEs]), and to define appropriate services to meet identified needs. Reviewers will evaluate the proposed

approach for regularly updating this understanding through the five years. The following sub-topics will be evaluated and given equal weight:

(1) Market Segmentation. Reviewers will assess the quality and extent of the applicant's market segmentation strategy including:

- Segmentation of company size, geography, and industry priorities including some consideration of rural, start-up *(a manufacturing establishment that has been in operation for five years or less)* and/or very small manufacturers as appropriate to the state;
- alignment with state and/or regional initiatives; and
- other important factors identified by the applicant.

(2) Needs Identification and Product/Service Offerings. Reviewers will assess the quality and extent of the applicant's proposed needs identification and proposed products and services for both sales growth and operational improvement in response to the applicant's market segmentation and understanding assessed by reviewers under the preceding Section V.1.a.ii.(1). Of particular interest is the applicant's ability to:

- leverage new manufacturing technologies, techniques and processes usable by small and medium-sized manufacturers through technology diffusion and transfer; and,
- support a stronger training and education ecosystem in support of manufacturing workforce needs in the state.

iii. Business Model. Reviewers will assess the quality, feasibility and potential efficacy and efficiency of the applicant's proposed business model for the Center as provided in the Project Narrative, Qualifications of the Applicant, Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management, and the Budget Tables and Budget Narratives sections of its Technical Proposal, submitted under section IV.2.a.(6) of this NOFO, and the likelihood that the proposed business model will result in the Center's ability to successfully execute the strategy evaluated under criterion set forth in Section V.1.a.i., based on the market understanding evaluated under criterion set forth in Section V.1.a.ii.. The following sub-topics will be evaluated and given equal weight:

(1) Outreach and Service Delivery to the Market. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed Center is organized to:

- identify, reach and provide proposed services to key market segments and individual manufacturers described above;

- work with a manufacturer's leadership in strategic discussions related to new technologies, new products and new markets; and
- leverage the applicant's past experience in working with small and medium-sized manufacturers as a basis for future programmatic success.

(2) Partnership Leverage and Linkages. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed Center will make effective use of resources or partnerships with third parties such as industry, universities, community/technical colleges, nonprofit economic development organizations, and Federal, state and local government agencies in the Center's business model.

iv. Performance Measurement and Management. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant will use a systematic approach for measuring and managing performance including the:

- quality and extent of the applicant's stated goals, milestones and outcomes described by operating year (Year 1, Year 2, etc.);
- applicant's utilization of client-based business results important to stakeholders in understanding program impact; and
- depth of the proposed methodology for program management and internal evaluation likely to ensure effective operations and oversight for meeting program and service delivery objectives.

b. Qualifications of the Applicant; Key Personnel, Organizational Structure and Management; and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance (30 points; Sub-criteria i. and ii. will be weighted equally). Reviewers will assess the ability of the key personnel, the applicant's management structure and Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance 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:

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, outreach, program management and partnership development to support 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 (Refer to Section I.4. of this NOFO);

- proposed organizational structure flows logically from the specified approach to the market and products and service offerings; and
- proposed field staff structure sufficiently supports the geographic concentrations and industry targets for the region.

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

- Proposed 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 (expected to be January 1, 2019) is feasible. (Refer to Section I.3. of this NOFO).
- Oversight Board or Advisory Committee and Governance 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 (Refer to Section I.3. of this NOFO).

c. Budget and Financial Plan. (30 points; Sub-criteria i. and ii. will be weighted equally). Reviewers will assess the suitability and focus of the applicant's five (5) year budget. The application will be assessed in the following areas:

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 five (5) year project plan;
- the proposed projections for income and expenditures are appropriate for the scale of services that are to be delivered by the proposed Center and the service delivery model envisioned within the context of the overall financial model over the five (5) year project plan;
- a reasonable ramp-up or scale-up scope and budget has the Center fully operational by the 4th year of the project; and

- the proposal's narrative for each of the budgeted items explains the rationale for each of the budgeted items, including assumptions the applicant used in budgeting for the Center.

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

- applicant clearly describes the total level of cost share (reference III. 2.) and detailed rationale of the cost share, including cash and in-kind, in their proposed budget;
- applicant's funding commitments for cost share are documented by letters of support from the applicant, proposed sub-recipients and any other partners identified and meet the basic matching requirements of the program;
- applicant's cost share meets basic requirements of allowability, allocability and reasonableness under applicable Federal costs principles set for in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E; and
- the overall proposed financial plan is sufficiently robust and diversified to support the long-term sustainability of the Center throughout the five (5) years of the project plan.

2. Review and Selection Process

Proposals, reports, documents and other information related to applications submitted to NIST and/or relating to financial assistance awards issued by NIST will be reviewed and considered by Federal employees, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel who enter into or are subject to appropriate confidentiality and nondisclosure agreements covering such information.

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

b. Full Review of Eligible, Complete, and Responsive Applications. An application that is determined to be eligible, complete, and responsive will proceed for full review in accordance with the review and selection processes below.

(1) Evaluation and Review. Each application will be reviewed by at least three technically qualified individual reviewers who will evaluate each application

based on the evaluation criteria (*see* Section V.1. of this NOFO). Applicants may receive written follow-up questions during the review process relative to requested clarifications of items contained in the applicant's proposal. Each reviewer will provide a written technical assessment against the evaluation criteria and based on that assessment will assign each application a numeric score, with a maximum score of 100. If a non-Federal reviewer is used, the reviewers may discuss the applications with each other, but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not as a consensus.

Applicants whose applications receive an average score of 70 or higher out of 100 will be deemed finalists. If deemed necessary, finalists will be invited to participate with reviewers in a conference call, and/or a video conference, and/or finalists will be invited to participate in a site visit that will be conducted by the same reviewers at the applicant's location. If there are two (2) or more finalists, conference calls, video conferences or site visits will be conducted with each finalist. Finalists will be reviewed and evaluated, and reviewers may revise their assigned numeric scores based on the evaluation criteria (*see* Section V.1. of this NOFO) as a result of the conference call, and/or video conference and/or site visit.

(2) Ranking and Selection. Based upon an average of the technical reviewers' final scores, an adjectival rating will be assigned to each application in accordance with the following scale:

Fundable, Outstanding (91-100 points);
Fundable, Very Good (81-90 points);
Fundable (70-80 points); or
Unfundable (0-69 points).

For decision-making purposes, applications receiving the same adjectival rating will be considered to have an equivalent ranking, although their technical review scores, while comparable, may not necessarily be the same.

The Selecting Official is the Director of NIST MEP or her designee. The Selecting Official makes the final recommendation to the NIST Grants Officer regarding the funding of applications under this NOFO. The Selecting Official shall be provided all applications, all the scores and technical assessments of the reviewers, and all information obtained from the applicants during the evaluation, review and negotiation processes.

The Selecting Official will generally select and recommend the most meritorious application for an award based on the adjectival rankings and/or one or more of the seven (7) selection factors described in Section V.3. of this NOFO. The Selecting Official retains the discretion to select and recommend

an application out of rank order (*i.e.*, from a lower adjectival category) based on one or more of the selection factors, or to select and recommend no applications for funding. The Selecting Official's recommendation to the Grants Officer shall set forth the bases for the selection decision.

As part of the overall review and selection process, NIST reserves the right to request that applicants provide pre-award clarifications and/or enter into pre-award negotiations relative to programmatic, financial or other aspects of an application, such as but not limited to the revision or removal of proposed budget costs, the modification of proposed MEP Center activities, work plans or program goals and objectives. In this regard, NIST may request that applicants 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. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of award 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 Grants Management Division (GMD) performs pre-award risk assessments in accordance with 2 CFR 200.205, which may include a review of the financial stability of an applicant, the quality of the applicant's management systems, the history of performance, and/or the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities.

In addition, prior to making an award where the total Federal share is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $150,000), NIST GMD will review and consider the publicly available information about that applicant in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). An applicant may, at its discretion, review and comment on information about itself previously entered into FAPIIS by a Federal awarding agency. As part of its review of risk posed by applicants, NIST GMD will consider any comments made by the applicant in FAPIIS in making its determination about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards. Upon completion of the pre-award risk assessment, the Grants Officer will make a responsibility determination concerning whether the applicant is qualified to receive the subject award and, if so, whether appropriate Specific Award Conditions that correspond to the degree of risk posed by the applicant should be applied to an award.

3. Selection Factors. The Selection Factors for this NOFO are as follows:

a. The availability of Federal funds;

b. The type and percentage of funding and in-kind commitment from other sources, such as 3rd party In-Kind.

c. Relevance of the proposed project to MEP program goals and policy objectives;

d. Reviewers' evaluations, including technical comments;

e. The geographical diversity and extent of the service area;

f. Whether the project duplicates other projects funded by DoC or by other Federal agencies; and

g. Whether the application complements or supports other Administration priorities, or projects supported by DoC or other Federal agencies, such as but not limited to the Manufacturing USA.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date. Review, selection, and award processing is expected to be completed in late calendar year 2018. The anticipated start date for award made under this NOFO is expected to be January 1, 2019.

5. Additional Information

a. Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing.

b. Retention of Unsuccessful Applications. Unsuccessful applications will be retained in accordance with the General Record Schedule 1.2/021, found at https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/grs/grs01-2.pdf.

c. Protection of Proprietary Information. When an application includes trade secrets or information that is commercial or financial, or information that is confidential or privileged, it is furnished to the Government in confidence with the understanding that the information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation of the application. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552) and 15 U.S.C. 278k(j). Applicants should clearly mark as “proprietary” any information contained in their applications that they believe is a trade secret or otherwise protected proprietary business information. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, NIST will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the application or as otherwise authorized by law. This restriction does not limit the Government’s right to use the information if it is obtained from another source.

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 CFR 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR Part 200, which apply to awards made pursuant to this NOFO Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4 .

b. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. The Department of Commerce will apply the Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions dated March 31, 2017, accessible at http://go.usa.gov/xXRxK, to this award. If the Department of Commerce publishes revised Standard Terms and Conditions prior to issuance of awards under this NOFO, the revised Standard Terms and Conditions will apply. Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you need more information.

c. Pre-Award Notification Requirements. The Department of Commerce will apply the Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements dated December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), accessible at http://go.usa.gov/hKkR. Refer to Section VII. of this NOFO, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts, Grant Rules and Regulations, if you need more information.

d. Funding Availability and Limitation of Liability. Funding Availability and Limitation of Liability. Funding for the program listed in this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. In no event will NIST or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NIST or the Department of Commerce to issue any specific award or to obligate any available funds.

e. Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership General Terms and Conditions. As a recipient of an MEP award, the recipient shall comply with the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership General Terms and Conditions (MEP Terms and Conditions), as may be periodically amended. The MEP General Terms and Conditions in effect at the time the awards are made will be incorporated into the awards. A copy of the current MEP General Terms and Conditions is available at: https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-

partnership-center-alaska. Award recipients will also be required to comply with any Specific Award Conditions imposed by the NIST Grants Officer.

f. **Operating Plan, Budget and Supporting Documentation.** Following the issuance of an MEP award, recipients will be required to submit an Operating Plan in accordance with the NIST MEP Operating Outcome Plan Guidelines in effect at the time the award is made. In this connection, NIST may require recipients to provide copies of sub-tier agreements, including subawards and contracts over $150,000, as well subrecipient performance monitoring plans. A copy of the current NIST MEP Operating Plan Guidelines is available at: https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska.

3. Reporting and Performance Assessments

a. **Reporting Requirements.** The following reporting requirements described in Sections A.01 Performance (Technical) Reports and B.02 Financial Reports of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions dated March 31, 2017, accessible at http://go.usa.gov/xXRxK, apply to awards in this program:

(1) Financial Reports. The Recipient shall submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report, into the MEP's Enterprise Information System (MEIS) on a semi-annual basis after the sixth and twelfth month of each operating year, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Specific Award Condition. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of each semi-annual reporting period. The Recipient shall submit a final SF-425 within 90 days after the expiration date of the award.

(2) Performance (Technical) Reports. The Recipient shall submit a Technical Report (completing all required MEIS fields) on a semi-annual basis after the sixth and twelfth month of each operating year, unless other reporting intervals and/or due dates are identified by the NIST Grants Officer pursuant to a Specific Award Condition. Reports are due in MEIS no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. The Recipient shall submit a final Technical/Quarterly report within 90 days after the expiration date of the award.

Technical/Quarterly Report details are accessible on the MEIS website (https://meis.nist.gov/). Technical progress reports shall contain information as prescribed in the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines (OMB Control Number 0693-0032). For further information regarding the NIST MEP Reporting Process, you may download a copy of the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines at https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska .

(3) Post Client Project Follow-Up. The recipient will be required to provide client and project data on a quarterly basis (unless otherwise directed by the NIST Grants Officer) and in a specified format to the organization identified by NIST MEP in order for post-project follow-up data to be obtained (OMB Control Number 0693-0021). For further information regarding the NIST MEP Reporting process, you may download a copy of the NIST MEP Reporting Guidelines: https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska.

(4) Patent and Property Reports. From time to time, and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements set forth in 2 C.F.R. part 200 and in accordance with other terms and conditions governing the award, the recipient may be required to submit property and patent reports.

(5) 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 CFR Part 200 (http://go.usa.gov/cTBwC), for maintaining the currency of information reported to SAM that is made available in FAPIIS about certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings involving the recipient.

b. Audit Requirements. The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, Section D.01.b.1., and 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, require any non-Federal entity (e.g., including non-profit institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations) that expends Federal awards of $750,000 or more in the recipient's fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the Subpart. Additionally, unless otherwise specified in the terms and conditions of the award, entities that are not subject to Subpart F of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (e.g., for-profit commercial entities) that expend $750,000 or more in DOC funds during their fiscal year must have an audit conducted for that year in accordance with program guidance. Applicants are reminded that NIST, the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General, or another authorized Federal agency may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

c. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006. In accordance with 2 CFR Part 170, all recipients of a Federal award made on or after October 1, 2010, are required to comply with reporting requirements under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Public Law No. 109-282). In

general, all recipients are responsible for reporting sub-awards of $25,000 or more. In addition, recipients that meet certain criteria are responsible for reporting executive compensation. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements should they receive funding. Also see the *Federal Register* notice published September 14, 2010, at 75 FR 55663 available here http://go.usa.gov/hKnQ.

d. MEP Center Performance Assessments. Renewal funding for MEP Centers is contingent, in part, upon successful annual reviews, and Panel and Secretarial evaluations in accordance with 15 U.S.C. 278k(g) and 15 C.F.R. Section 290.8. Below is a summary of each of these reviews:

(1) Annual Reviews. Within the 12-month operating year and in operating years where a Panel or Secretarial Evaluation is not conducted, NIST MEP will conduct an annual review. This review will focus on the Center's strategic alignment to NIST MEP's overall program objectives, the Center's activities, progress and performance in implementing the NIST MEP award, lessons learned, monitoring of subrecipients, resource expenditures, activities planned for the next year, and any proposed changes to the project plan or budget. The Non-Federal Entity will be provided guidelines on the format for the review approximately 30 days prior to the Program Review. The results of the annual review will be communicated to the Non-Federal Entity which will have 30 days to provide comments on the draft report. Following receipt and consideration of the comments from the Non-Federal Entity, NIST will notify the Non-Federal Entity in writing of the final recommendations stemming from the annual review.

(2) Panel Evaluations. NIST MEP will conduct a panel evaluation during the third year of each Center's operation, in accordance with 15 U.S.C. 278k(g)(1)(A). The evaluation will be conducted by a panel of private experts, none of whom are connected with the Center being evaluated by the panel, and Federal officials. An official of NIST shall be appointed as the panel's chairperson. The Center will be evaluated in accordance with the performance measures described in 15 U.S.C. 278k(g)(3). Following each evaluation, a draft report will be provided to the Center, noting the panel's observations, deficiencies (if any), recommendations for improvement and commendations on the Center's performance. Centers will have 30 days to provide comments on the draft report. Following receipt and consideration of the comments from the Non-Federal Entity, NIST will notify the Non-Federal Entity in writing of the final recommendations stemming from the panel evaluation. Upon receipt of the final recommendations from NIST, Centers shall, as appropriate, incorporate such recommendations into the Required Plans and submit revised documents to NIST for prior approval.

(3) Secretarial Evaluations. In the fifth year of a Center's operation, the Secretary shall conduct a review of the Center. The Center will be evaluated in accordance with the performance measures described in 15 U.S.C. 278k(g)(3). The Secretarial Evaluations will be conducted by the MEP Director and Deputy Director. Following each evaluation, a draft report will be provided to the Center, noting the Secretary's observations, deficiencies (if any), recommendations for improvement and commendations on the Center's performance. Centers will have 30 days to provide comments on the draft report. Following receipt and consideration of the comments from the Non-Federal Entity, NIST will notify the Non-Federal Entity in writing of the final recommendations stemming from the Secretarial Evaluation. Upon receipt of the final recommendations from NIST, Centers shall, as appropriate, incorporate such recommendations into the Required Plans and submit revised documents to NIST for approval.

(4) Evaluation Outcomes. If a Center receives a positive performance evaluation from the Panel or Secretarial Evaluations, the Secretary may continue to provide financial assistance in accordance with 15 U.S.C. 278k(g)(4). If a Center receives other than a positive performance evaluation, the Center shall be placed on probation and NIST will follow the provisions set forth in 15 U.S.C. 278k(g)(5). This includes but is not limited to development and implementation of a performance improvement plan and quarterly reviews of progress against the plan. A reevaluation of the Center shall take place not later than 12 months after the Center has been notified that it is on probation. In the event a Center is unable to remedy any deficiencies or demonstrate significant improvement in performance before the end of the probation period, a competition for a new operator for that Center shall be initiated.

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Questions should be directed to the following contact persons:

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Administrative, budget, cost sharing, eligibility questions and other programmatic questions.	Mike Simpson Phone: (301) 975-6147 or Wiza Lequin Phone: (301) 975-4395 Fax: (301) 963-6556 E-mail: mepnofo@nist.gov

Technical Assistance with Grants.gov Submissions	Leon Sampson Phone: (301) 975-3086 Fax: (301) 975-6368 E-mail: grants@nist.gov or Grants.gov Phone: 800-518-4726 E-mail: support@grants.gov
Grant Rules and Regulations	Gilbert Castillo Phone: (301) 975-3726 Fax: (301) 975-6368 E-mail: gilbert.castillo@nist.gov

VIII. Other Information

1. **Webinar Information Session:** NIST MEP will hold a webinar information session for organizations that are considering applying to this opportunity. The webinar will provide general information regarding NIST MEP and offer general guidance on preparing proposals. NIST MEP staff will be available on the webinar to answer general questions. During the webinar, proprietary technical discussions about specific project ideas will not be permitted. Also, NIST MEP staff will not critique or provide feedback on any specific project ideas during the webinar or at any time before submission of a proposal to NIST MEP. However, NIST MEP staff will provide information about the MEP eligibility and cost sharing requirements, evaluation criteria and selection factors, selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive NIST MEP proposal during this webinar, and by phone and e-mail. The webinar will be held approximately fifteen (15) to thirty (30) business days after posting of this NOFO. The exact date and time of the webinar will be posted on the NIST MEP website at https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska. The webinar will be recorded and a link to the recording will be posted on the MEP website. In addition, the webinar presentations will be available on the NIST MEP website. Organizations wishing to participate in the webinar must sign up by e-mailing mepnofo@nist.gov. Participation in the webinar is not required in order for an organization to submit an application pursuant to this NOFO.

2. **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).** Questions from applicants pertaining to MEP eligibility, cost sharing requirements, evaluation criteria and selection factors,

selection process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal will not be considered on an informal basis. Applicants must submit all such questions in writing to mepnofo@nist.gov.

Questions submitted to NIST MEP may be posted as part of an FAQ document, which will be periodically updated on the NIST MEP website at https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska.

3. **Alaska Information Forum:** NIST MEP held an information session, June 7th, 2018 in Anchorage, Alaska for organizations that are considering applying for the funding opportunity. NIST MEP staff provided general information regarding MEP and offered general guidance on preparing proposals. NIST MEP staff provided information about the MEP eligibility and cost sharing requirements, the evaluation criteria, the selection factors and process, and the general characteristics of a competitive MEP proposal during the Regional Forum. Details of the Regional Forum are posted on the MEP website: https://www.nist.gov/mep/manufacturing-extension-partnership-center-alaska.