

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS for 2017-NIST-TIG-01

Applicants are strongly urged to use Grants.gov's Download Submitted Applications option for checking that their application's required attachments (see pages 2 through 8 of this document, and Section IV.2.a. of the Full Announcement/NOFO document) were contained in their submission.

After submitting the application, follow the directions found in the Grants.gov Online Users Guide: <http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh> . Click first on Applicants; then click on Applicant Actions; go then to the "Check My Application Status" option, and choose Download Submitted Applications.

If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found on pages 10 and 11 of this document and in Section IV.2.b. of the Full Announcement/NOFO document, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

This document consists of seven important sections:

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

1) Overview

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

When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) may take between three and five business days or as long as more than two weeks; and (3) electronic applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants using Grants.gov will receive a series of e-

mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application.

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

Applicants will find instructions on registering with SAM.gov as part of the Grants.gov process at:

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> .

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

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

2) Required Application Forms and Documents

The Application must contain the following:

- (1) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.** The SF-424 must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization.

SF-424, Item 12, should list the NOFO number as 2017-NIST-TIG-01.

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

The list of certifications and assurances referenced in Item 21 of the SF-424 is contained in the SF-424B.

- (2) SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs.** The budget should reflect anticipated expenses for the project, considering all potential cost increases, including cost of living adjustments.

The Grant Program Function or Activity on Line 1 under Column (a) should be entered as "Arrangements for Interdisciplinary Research Infrastructure". The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number on Line 1 under Column (b) should be entered as "11.619".

These sections of the SF-424A should reflect funds for the first year of the award: Section A; Section B; Section C; and Section D. The budget estimate for the

second year of the award should be entered in Section E, field 16, column (b), and the budget estimate for the third year of the award should be entered in Section E, field 16, column (c).

Further details about this form can be found at:

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html>.

- (3) **SF-424B, Assurances - Non-Construction Programs.**
- (4) **CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.** For the Award Number, enter “2017-NIST-TIG-01”. In the Project Name filed, use the “Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project” from field 15 of the SF-424, or an abbreviation thereof.
- (5) **SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** (if applicable)
- (6) **Technical Proposal.** The Technical Proposal is a document of no more than twenty-five (25) pages responsive to the program description (see Section I. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO) and the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO). The Technical Proposal should contain the following information:
 - (a) **Executive Summary.** An executive summary of the proposed project, including a list of the proposed project participants, the scope of the proposed work, and an overview of the planned metrics collection effort.
 - (b) **Project Approach.** A description of the proposed approach to assessing the pilot projects, sufficient to permit evaluation of the application in accordance with the evaluation criteria (see Section V.1.a. and V.1.b. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO). Assessment includes both quantification and qualification of the benefits of these pilots, and compiling “lessons learned” from each project. This section should include the following:
 - specific information about each organization that will be involved in the assessment and how these organizations will work together to complete the assessment;
 - the project leadership’s plans to manage the project;
 - the proposed methodological approach to the assessment;
 - what information (or types of information) will be needed to complete the assessment;
 - proposed timelines/schedules for the interaction with the pilots; and
 - an overall schedule of specific tasks, milestones and events necessary to complete the assessment.

This section should respond to the *Project Approach* and *Data Elements and Analysis* criteria (see Sections V.1.a. and V.1.b. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO).

- (c) **Data Elements and Analysis.** A description of the proposed metrics and data collection needed to support the selected methodological approach and generate the needed information. This includes the plans to select, define, and collect the data as well as the proposed infrastructure to support the data collection and analysis. This also includes plans to protect proprietary and sensitive information.

Applicants should explain clearly how all proprietary information collected as part of the project will be protected. Applicants also should articulate how their approach will capture baseline information, the impact of ongoing pilots and enable projection of benefits to longer term use.

This section should respond to the *Data Elements and Analysis* evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.b. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO).

- (d) **Communication Plan.** A description of how data and results from the project will be disseminated to target audiences including state and local government officials responsible for enterprise IT solutions. This section should specifically explain how the applicant plans to identify target audiences, formulate materials to address target audiences, distribute information, and make information about the effectiveness of various trusted identity choices available to audiences beyond the specified target audiences. This strategy is expected to include publications, presentations, and information on publically available websites.

This section should respond to the *Communication Plan* evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.c. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO).

- (e) **Qualifications.** A description of the qualifications, proposed roles, and level of planned effort of the participating organization(s) and key personnel involved. For organizations, this includes the proposed role, relevant past efforts with similar projects, and the organizational capabilities of the project lead and each subawardee, contractor, or other collaborator participating in the project. Include a discussion of the partners' past experience collaborating with each other, if applicable.

For key personnel, the following should be described, as applicable, and resumes should be included (resumes do not count towards the Technical Proposal page limit but are limited to two (2) pages each):

- any past experience with assessing the economic impact of technology;

- any past experience in the following disciplines: technology assessment, high-tech industry behavioral and structural analyses, microeconomic modeling of complex technology development and commercialization patterns, high-tech industry survey and data collection techniques, and quantitative and qualitative analyses of technology gaps that are inhibiting the advancement of technologies;
- any past experience assessing state and local government programs and experience collaborating with state and local governments, and
- any previously demonstrated ability to achieve positive outcomes in endeavors with program objectives that are similar to those of this NOFO, as described in Section I. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO.

This section should respond to the *Qualifications* evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.d. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO).

- (7) **Budget Narrative.** The Budget Narrative should provide a detailed breakdown of each of the object class categories as reflected on the SF-424A. The budget justification should address all of the budget categories (personnel, fringe benefits, equipment, travel, supplies, other direct costs and indirect costs). The written justification should include the necessity and the basis for the cost.

Proposed funding levels must be consistent with the project scope, and only allowable costs should be included in the budget. Information on cost allowability is available in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (<http://go.usa.gov/SBYh>), which apply to awards in this program. Information needed for each category is as follows:

- (a) **Personnel** – At a minimum, the budget justification for all personnel should include the following: name, job title, commitment of effort on the proposed project in terms of average number of hours per week or percentage of time, salary rate, total direct charges on the proposed project, description of the role of the individual on the proposed project and the work to be performed.
- (b) **Fringe Benefits** – Fringe benefits should be identified separately from salaries and wages and based on rates determined by organizational policy. The items included in the fringe benefit rate (e.g., health insurance, parking, etc.) should not be charged under another cost category.
- (c) **Equipment** – Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more (unless the organization has established

lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. Any items that do not meet the threshold for equipment can be included under the supplies line item. The budget justification should list each piece of equipment, the cost, and a description of how it will be used and why it is necessary to the successful completion of the proposed project. Please note that any general use equipment (computers, etc.) charged directly to the award should be allocated to the award according to expected usage on the project.

- (d) **Travel** – NIST expects that the award recipient will use teleconference, web conference and video conference capabilities as much as possible to meet with the pilot projects; however, travel to each pilot will likely be necessary. Applicants should include travel costs for these meetings. For all travel costs, the budget justification for travel should include the following: destination; names and number of people traveling; dates and/or duration; mode of transportation, lodging and subsistence rates; and description of how the travel is directly related to the proposed project. For travel that is yet to be determined, please provide best estimates based on prior experience. If a destination is not known, an approximate amount may be used with the assumptions given for the location of the meeting.
- (e) **Supplies** – Provide a list of each supply, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project.
- (f) **Contracts/Subawards** – Each contract or subaward should be treated as a separate item. Describe the services provided and the necessity of the subaward or contract to the successful performance of the proposed project. Contracts are for obtaining normal goods and services. Subawardees perform part of the project scope of work. For each subaward, applicants must provide budget detail justifying the cost of the work performed on the project.
- (g) **Other Direct Costs** – For costs that do not easily fit into the other cost categories, please list the cost, and the breakdown of the total costs by quantity or unit of cost. Include the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project. Only allowable costs can be charged to the award.
- (8) **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.** If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant Federal audit agency. If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, provide a statement to this effect. If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal audit agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and

Conditions available at: <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>. This does not count toward the page limit.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), applicants that have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge indirect costs to an 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 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget portion of the application.

(9) Letters of Commitment. Letters are not included in the page count. Letters of commitment should be provided from contractors or subawardees who will be participating in the project, indicating their level of participation. Letters from any of the 2016-NIST-NSTIC-01 recipients or any of the partners on these projects may not be included in the application.

(10) Resumes of Key Personnel. Resumes of all key personnel (maximum of two (2) pages per individual); note that the resumes are part of the material addressing the *Qualifications* evaluation criterion (see Section V.1.e. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO) and do not count towards the page limit of the Technical Proposal (see Section IV.2.a.(6). of the Full Announcement/ NOFO).

(11) Data Management Plan. In accordance with NIST Policy 5700.00¹, *Managing Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research*, and NIST Order 5701.00², *Managing Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research*, applicants should include a Data Management Plan (DMP).

The DMP is a supplementary document of not more than two pages that must include, at a minimum, a summary of proposed activities that are expected to generate data, a summary of the types of data expected to be generated by the identified activities, a plan for storage and maintenance of the data expected to be generated by the identified activities, and a plan describing whether and how data generated by the identified activities will be reviewed and made available to the public. As long as the DMP meets these NIST requirements, it may take the form specified by the applicant's institution or some other entity (e.g., the National Science Foundation³ or the National Institutes of Health⁴).

All applications for activities that will generate scientific data using NIST funding are required to adhere to a DMP or explain why data sharing and preservation are not within the scope of the project.

¹ <https://www.nist.gov/sites/default/files/documents/data/Final-P-5700.pdf>

² https://www.nist.gov/sites/default/files/documents/data/Final-O-5701_0.pdf

³ <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>

⁴ http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data_sharing/data_sharing_guidance.htm

For the purposes of the DMP, NIST adopted the definition of “research data” at 2 C.F.R. § 200.315(e)(3) (available at <http://go.usa.gov/3sZvQ>).

Reasonable costs for data preservation and access may be included in the application.

The sufficiency of the DMP will be considered as part of the administrative review (see Section V.3.a. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO); however, the DMP will not be evaluated against any evaluation criteria.

(12) Statement of Involvement with Participants in the 2016 State Pilots.

The applicant and each proposed subawardee, contractor, or other collaborator participating in the project must provide a detailed description of any commercial involvement or other financial ties with participants in the 2016 State Pilot projects within the last three years. These written statements will not be evaluated against any evaluation criteria but will be used to assess whether the applicant has any conflicts of interest that could lead to an impairment of objectivity, real or perceived, in carrying out the scope of work for this award. (See Selection Factor discussion in Section V.2. of the Full Announcement/ NOFO).

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

3) Application Format

- (1) Paper, E-mail and Facsimile (fax) submissions.** Will not be accepted.
- (2) Figures, Graphs, images, and pictures.** Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be landscape orientation.
- (3) Font.** Easy to read font (10-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.
- (4) Page Limit.** The Technical Proposal for Applications is limited to twenty-five (25) pages.
 - a) Page limit includes:** Table of contents (if included), Technical Proposal with all required information, including management information and qualifications, figures, graphs, tables, images, and pictures.
 - b) Page limit excludes:** SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance; SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs; SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs; SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying

Activities; CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying; Cover Page; Budget Narrative; Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; Letters of Commitment (letters from any members of a pilot project team may not be included); Resumes of Key Personnel, noting resumes are limited to two (2) pages per person; Data Management Plan, and Statement of Involvement with Participants in the 2016 State Pilots.

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

(6) **Application language.** English.

4) Application Submission Process

(1) Electronic applications must be submitted via Grants.gov at www.grants.gov, under announcement 2017-NIST-TIG-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 electronically for the 2017-NIST-TIG-01 announcement, contact Christopher Hunton by phone at 301-975-5718 or by e-mail at grants@nist.gov.
- b) Applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not wait until the approaching due date before logging on and reviewing the instructions for submitting an application through Grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process must be completed before a new registrant can apply electronically. If all goes well, the registration process takes three (3) to five (5) business days. If problems are encountered, the registration process can take up to two (2) weeks or more. Applicants must have a 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 the Full Announcement/NOFO document. After registering, it may take several days or longer from the initial log-on before a new Grants.gov system user can submit an application. Only individuals authorized as organization representatives will be able to submit the application, and the system may need time to process a submitted application. Applicants should save and print the proof of submission they receive from Grants.gov. If problems occur while using Grants.gov, the applicant is advised to (a) print any error message received and (b) call Grants.gov directly for immediate assistance. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call

800-518-4726. If calling from a place other than the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. Assistance from the Grants.gov Help Desk will be available around the clock every day, 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 on the deadline date.

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

Refer to important information in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times, of the Full Announcement/NOFO document to help ensure your application is received on time.

5) Attachment of Required Documents

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

Items (6) through (12) in section 2) of this document, Required Application Forms and Documents, must be completed and attached by clicking on “Add Attachments” found in item 15 of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This will create a zip file that allows for transmittal of the documents electronically via Grants.gov.

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

6) Verifying the Submission and Tracking the Application

The Grants.gov Online Users Guide available at the Grants.gov site (<http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh>) provides vital information on application process. See especially the “Check My Application Status” option, found by clicking first on Applicants, and then by clicking on Applicant Actions. Use this feature to verify that all required attachments were present in the submission.

After submitting the application, follow the directions found in the Grants.gov Online Users Guide (<http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh>). Click first on Applicants; then click on Applicant Actions; go then to the “Check My Application Status” option, and choose Download Submitted Applications. Follow the directions found there. Remember, in order for this to work, don’t just visit Grants.gov. Log in. And remember to click on the record found on the Check My Application Status screen in order to see the List of Forms and Files Received screen.

If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found in the Full Announcement/NOFO document, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

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

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

7) Submission Date and Time

2Applications must be received at Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, Tuesday, May 9, 2017. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. NIST expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by July 2017. NIST expects the earliest anticipated start date for awards under this NOFO to be September 1, 2017.

Applicants should be aware, and factor into their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system is expected to be closed for routine maintenance at these times from 12:01 Eastern Time, Saturday, March 18, 2017 until Monday, March 20, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time, and also from 12:01 Eastern Time, Saturday, April 15, 2017 until Monday, April 17, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time. Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.