



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Institute of Standards and Technology

[Docket Number: NIST-2026-0067]

#### MEP Pilot Program

**AGENCY:** National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent (NOI).

**SUMMARY:** The Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is initiating a competitive pilot program for existing MEP center(s) to accelerate the adoption and commercialization of advanced manufacturing technologies that enhance the competitiveness of the domestic industrial base. This program will target key sectors where MEP center(s) will lead the development and validation of shared technology frameworks to substantially accelerate the acceptance of advanced manufacturing methods or transform fragmented supply chains into a robust ecosystem. These frameworks will provide a foundation for small- and medium-sized manufacturers to establish capabilities for future production needs or reduce barriers to entry into new markets. Two manufacturing technology topics have been identified for this pilot program: (1) additive manufacturing for aerospace components; and (2) a domestic critical minerals supply chain. This NOI is provided to allow potential applicants time to begin developing proposal strategies and establishing collaborations among industry, academic, Federal laboratory, and state/local government partners.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** All inquiries may be directed to Jyoti Malhotra or Jessie Zhang (301-975-5020) via email to [mfg@nist.gov](mailto:mfg@nist.gov), with the subject line: “MEP Technology Accelerator Pilot Program.” All answers, which will be provided at the sole discretion of NIST, will be posted on the NIST competition website at

<https://www.nist.gov/mep/about-nist-mep/notice-funding-opportunities/open-notice-funding-opportunities>.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **Purpose**

MEP intends to announce a pilot program to accelerate the adoption and commercialization of advanced manufacturing technologies that enhance the competitiveness of the domestic industrial base. This competition will focus on two goals: (1) accelerating the use of additive manufacturing for aerospace components; and (2) accelerating the establishment of a domestic critical minerals supply chain.

The pilot program will be established and will operate in accordance with 15 U.S.C. 278k-1. For general planning purposes, the expected NIST commitment will be approximately \$20 million per pilot project over a 2-year period using available funds appropriated in 2025 and 2026. The competition will be open only to current MEP Center primary awardees and to consortiums of current MEP Center primary awardees.

This NOI is provided to allow potential applicants time to begin developing proposal strategies and establishing collaborations among industry, academic, Federal laboratory, and state/local government partners. Details in this NOI should also inform discussions at two planned events: (1) a virtual public meeting to fulfill the requirements of 15 U.S.C. 278k-1(c)(1); and (2) a planned MEP Pilot Industry Day where NIST will share information about the opportunity and landscape, convey timeline and next steps, and promote teaming. NIST expects to announce the competition via a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on *Grants.gov* at:

<https://www.grants.gov> in the second quarter of calendar year 2026. NIST reserves the right to refine eligibility, program structure, cost, and other program details in the eventual NOFO. In the event of any inconsistency between the NOI and the NOFO, the NOFO shall take precedence.

The proposed pilot program will not reduce the number of active MEP centers.

### **Background**

## *Program Background*

The MEP National Network™ is a public-private partnership that aims to deliver comprehensive solutions to U.S. manufacturers. Through collaborations at the Federal, state, and local levels, MEP centers work with manufacturers to improve production efficiency, develop new products and customers, expand and diversify markets, adopt new technologies, strengthen workforce strategies, and enhance value within supply chains. MEP centers are connected to the MEP National Network™ to learn and share distinctive practices.

Transformative technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation, and additive manufacturing are driving leaps in productivity that improve America's standing in both global economic competitiveness and national security. This pilot program aims to leverage the MEP National Network™, NIST's measurement science programs, the NIST-coordinated Manufacturing USA network, and partnerships with other Federal agencies to accelerate the adoption and commercialization of advanced manufacturing technologies that enhance the competitiveness of the domestic industrial base. To succeed, advanced technologies must be deployed throughout the full manufacturing ecosystem, from large manufacturing plants to component makers at all levels of the supply chain, especially small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs).

Applicants for this pilot program are expected to lead the development and validation of shared technology frameworks that can substantially accelerate the acceptance of advanced manufacturing methods or transform fragmented supply chains into a robust ecosystem. These frameworks can help small and medium-sized manufacturers establish capabilities for future production needs and enter new markets. This competition will focus on two goals in furtherance of the interlinked national priorities: (1) accelerating the use of additive manufacturing for aerospace components; and (2) accelerating the establishment of a domestic critical minerals supply chain. The goal of this pilot program is to identify pathways for technology demonstration and transition to market to revolutionize industrial supply chains in the

United States. This will reduce our dependency on foreign industrial capabilities, spur domestic competitiveness, and enable U.S. leadership in these critical areas of interest, thus meeting economic and national security priorities set forth by the Administration.

This pilot program will form hubs where government agencies, industry leaders, and academic researchers collaborate to deliver technical platforms that accelerate the adoption of manufacturing technologies, securing our nation's leadership position into the future.

#### *Competition Information*

Once the competition has been announced, further information may be found at

<https://www.nist.gov/mep/about-nist-mep/notice-funding-opportunities/open-notice-funding-opportunities>.

#### *Disclaimer*

This NOI does not constitute a solicitation. No applications may be submitted in response to this NOI. In the future, NIST will post a NOFO on *Grants.gov* that will provide the full requirements for applying for an assistance award. When published, information within the NOFO will supersede in its entirety any information provided by this NOI. Any inconsistency between information within this NOI and the expected NOFO announcing the MEP Technology Accelerator Pilot Program shall be resolved in favor of the NOFO.

#### *Authority*

The statutory authority for the MEP Technology Accelerator Pilot Program is found at 15 U.S.C. 278k-1.

**Alicia Chambers,**

*NIST Executive Secretariat.*