



Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program

Program Years 2020-2021

Special Request for Proposal (RFP) Central Region

RFP Timeline:

- RFP Released – September 3, 2019
- Letters of Interest due by 1:00 p.m. on September 26, 2019
- Proposals due by 1:00 p.m. on October 10, 2019
- Preliminary award notifications by October 25, 2019
- Project start date November 1, 2019



Manufacturing Extension Partnership

RFP Administered by:

The Ohio Development Services Agency
Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship
77 South High Street, 28th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

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Program Years 2020-2021

Special Request for Proposals (RFP) Central Region

1 Statement of Solicitation

1.1 Overview

This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is intended to identify and select the organization or organizations that will serve as regional partners to deliver Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) services to manufacturing businesses in the Central Region of the state of Ohio, with a particular emphasis on serving small to mid-sized manufacturing enterprises. MEP in Ohio is jointly funded by the State of Ohio (“State”) and by the US Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

1.2 Background

Since 1988, the federal Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) has been committed to strengthening U.S. manufacturing, continually evolving to meet the changing needs of manufacturers.

MEP’s strategic objective is to create value for all manufacturers, with a particular focus on small and mid-sized manufacturing enterprises (SMMEs). SMMEs represent nearly 99% of manufacturing firms in the U.S. and form the essential fabric of the U.S. manufacturing infrastructure. MEP is able to provide this support to individual manufacturers through its nationwide network of local centers made up of teams of experts and business professionals.

Through its collaborations at the federal, state and local level, MEP puts manufacturers in a position to develop new products and customers, expand into global markets, adopt new technology, re-shore production and more. Because of its direct contact with manufacturers, MEP serves as a valuable bridge to other organizations that share a passion for enhancing the manufacturing community.

For more information about the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership, visit <http://www.nist.gov/mep/>.

The Ohio Development Services Agency (“Development”) currently operates MEP in Ohio under a multi-year agreement with NIST, with significant additional funding provided by the Ohio general assembly. To serve the diversity of Ohio’s industrial base, Ohio MEP manages a network of regional partner service organizations, which are designated as grant sub-recipients. These partners are aligned with a statewide strategy that connects Ohio MEP with other state and regional economic development organizations and the university system.

Ohio MEP's regional partners are strategically selected and coordinated to serve as a statewide resource that meets the needs of key industry sectors and small manufacturers. Each of the partners also offers technical capabilities that align with the predominant industry clusters in the primary region it serves. These resources are available to other regions of the state as Ohio MEP strives to operate as a cohesive statewide organization.

Development is conducting an open competitive bid and award process that seeks the most capable organization or organizations to serve as the regional partner(s) for the MEP program in Central Ohio for federal fiscal year 2020 and option for 2021.

1.3 Request for Proposals Issuance

This RFP is being issued for funds to be awarded under the Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program ("Program"). This RFP will be released by publication on the State of Ohio Procurement website at <http://procure.ohio.gov/proc/index.asp> and the Ohio Development Services Agency website at https://development.ohio.gov/bs/bs_mep.htm.

Development reserves the right to fund any proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to reject any or all proposals responding to this RFP, and to re-issue the RFP and accept new proposals if the Director of Development ("Director") determines that doing so is in the best interests of Ohio.

Issuing this RFP does not bind the State to make an award of funds. Availability of funding is contingent on continuation of the award to Development by the US Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology to operate the Program for the state, and the subsequent appropriation of federal funds. Any award of State funds in respect to this RFP is subject to the availability of funds as provided in Ohio Revised Code Section 126.07. This RFP is not a contract or commitment of any kind on the part of Development.

Development reserves the right to adjust the dates for this RFP for whatever reason it deems appropriate. Development's Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship will administer all funds awarded under this RFP.

1.4 RFP Process and Awards Process

The RFP process will consist of the following steps:

- Release of RFP
- Letters of Intent
- Questions and Answers (Q&A) and Communications
- Submittal of Proposals

Each of these steps is discussed in Appendix A – RFP Process, Awards and Mandatory Compliance.

In addition, Development anticipates scheduling an informational webinar for interested organizations; the date, time and access information for the webinar will be posted on the Development website shortly after the release of the RFP.

The Awards Process will consist of the following steps:

- Proposal Review and Evaluation Procedures
- Preliminary Award Decision
- Local Project Meetings
- Award and Agreement Preparation and Execution

Each of these steps is discussed in Appendix A – RFP Process, Awards and Mandatory Compliance.

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted via e-mail to MEPRFP@development.ohio.gov with a subject line of “2020 Special RFP Q&A”. Lead Applicants, Partners, Clients and/or others acting on their behalf are to be aware of all prohibited contact in Section IV of Appendix A – RFP Process, Awards Process and Mandatory Compliance. If a Lead Applicant, Partner, Client and/or others acting on their behalf makes prohibited contact, Development in its discretion may eliminate the associated proposal from consideration.

2 Program Description

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Program is to support the state’s manufacturing industry by providing products, services and assistance that drive the productivity, growth and global competitiveness of Ohio manufacturers.

In 2012, Development reorganized and expanded Ohio MEP into a coordinated matrix organization. The expansion enabled a service delivery model that offers assistance through regional partner organizations with capabilities from business to science and academia, representing the broad geographic, technical and market diversity that characterizes Ohio’s manufacturing economy.

2.2 Goals

The principal goals of the Program are to increase revenue, create jobs and generate cost savings for Ohio’s manufacturing businesses through technological innovation and improved management practices. The Program will accomplish these objectives by designing and delivering services that:

- Lower the barriers for small and mid-sized manufacturing enterprises (SMMEs) to:
 - Learn and implement cutting edge process innovation and continuous improvement techniques
 - Export by partnering with export promotion organizations and agencies
 - Adopt digital manufacturing technologies
 - Adopt technologies that rejuvenate existing products

- Improve the competitive position of Ohio’s SMMEs in domestic supply chains of major original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)
- Promote job opportunities by supporting internships and cooperative education, and serving as a voice for industry to the workforce system
- Support SMMEs located in disadvantaged regions, including both rural and inner-city Ohio
- Support minority-owned and woman-owned enterprises
- Collaborate with federal laboratories and other sources of technology-based innovation to encourage technology-enabled product development; and
- Build competitive, high value-added industry clusters through a network of partners that have specialized knowledge in those industries.

Development seeks to select a partner or combination of partners that will constitute the most effective resource for meeting these objectives and delivering high quality MEP services to the region.

2.3 Eligibility

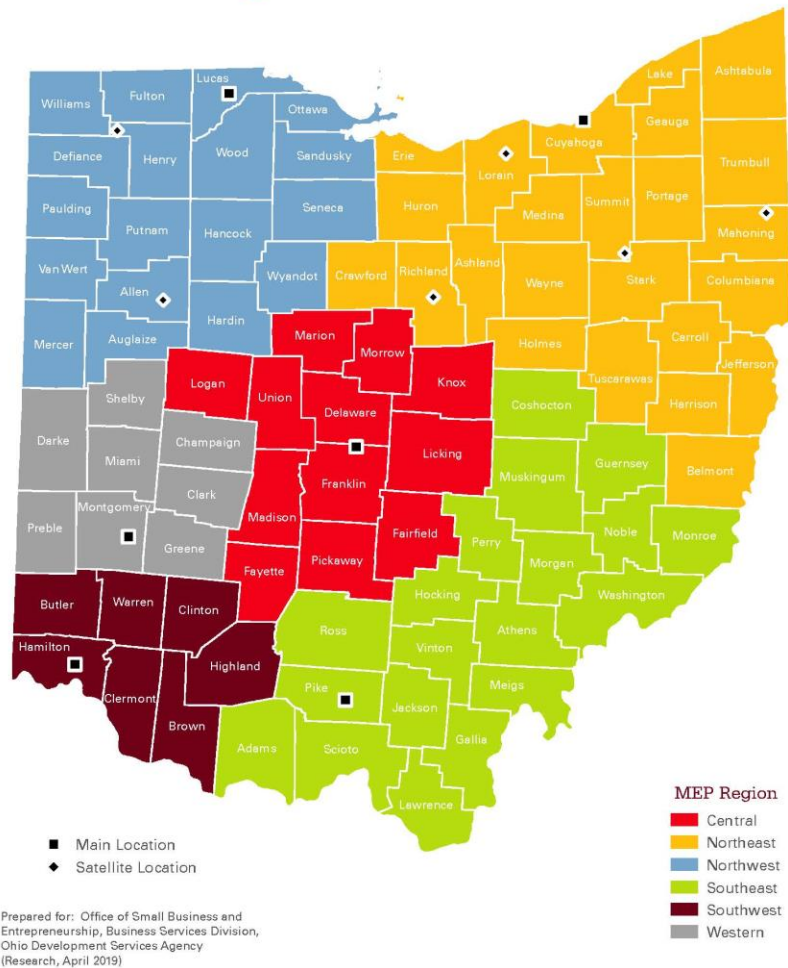
2.3.1 Lead Applicant

A Lead Applicant is the entity that submits a proposal and will be legally and financially responsible for the administration of any resulting award of federal or State funds (“Lead Applicant”). The Lead Applicant will be responsible for the performance of the contract should it be awarded.

To be eligible for the Program, the Lead Applicant must be a non-profit organization chartered in the State. For the purpose of this RFP, non-profit organizations include public or private non-profit corporations, non-profit or State colleges and universities, public or non-profit community and technical colleges, and local governments.

Proposals are sought from Lead Applicants and their partners to provide MEP services in the counties of Central Ohio (see figure below).

Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Centers and Regions



2.3.2 Partners

Development defines a Partner as an organization, institution, company or other legal entity that is not an partner of the Lead Applicant or an individual not employed by or related to the Lead Applicant that is anticipated to receive MEP funds and/or is contributing to cost share and is actively involved in the delivery of services on an ongoing basis (“Partner”).

To be eligible for the Program, a Partner must be a non-profit organization chartered in the State of Ohio. For the purpose of this RFP, non-profit organizations include public or private non-profit corporations, non-profit or State colleges and universities, public or non-profit community and technical colleges, and local governments.

All Partners and/or cost share providers must be listed on the Partner Information Form in Appendix B – Application Forms and provide Commitment Letters as described in section 3.4.7 of this RFP.

2.3.3 Clients

A Client must be a business with a manufacturing facility located in Ohio and managed by a senior representative who is authorized to make decisions and to obligate the company and its resources (“Client”).

To be considered a Client, the company must have signed a service agreement with the Lead Applicant and/or Partners and received a minimum of 10 documented hours of services from the Lead Applicant, Partners, or professional service firms contracted on behalf of the Client. A company does not become a Client upon the initiation of the sales or business development process, or attendance at a training or similar general education event.

At the time of becoming a Client, the company is expected to be in need of manufacturing-specific professional assistance that is aligned with the goals of the Program. Partners will be expected to refer potential Clients in need of generalized business services to alternative resources such as the Small Business Development Centers.

2.4 Funding and Cost Share

2.4.1 Overall Budget

Ohio MEP is funded through three sources: a grant from the US Department of Commerce (NIST), general revenue funds from the State of Ohio, and local cost share contributed by the partners from their clients and their sponsors. Development anticipates awarding up to \$500,000 in federal funds to the regional partner(s) for the Central Region for Program Year 2020 beginning on October 1, 2019 (refer to Section 2.5). Development reserves the right to award greater or lesser amounts and/or to shift the allocation of funds among grantees if it determines that this best serves the interests of the Program.

2.4.2 Federal Funds Allocation

NIST anticipates awarding approximately \$5.71 million each year to Ohio for the performance of the Program. Development has committed to flow this entire amount through to the regional partners. Yearly estimated federal funding will be allocated to the region. Funding allocation:

\$500,000	Federal Funds
\$400,000	State Funds
\$400,000	Local Cost Share/Program Income

2.4.3 State Funds Allocation and Cost Share

Per Ohio Revised Code 122.33, recipients of State funds under the Program must contribute matching funds that equal or exceed the amount of the State grant. MEP is unique among federally sponsored programs in its ability to generate matching funds by charging clients for services performed, creating Program Income as defined in 2 CFR 200.80.

The primary intent for the use of State and federal funds in the Program is to make high quality professional services affordable and accessible to small and mid-sized manufacturers. With a significant fraction of the costs of operating the Program subsidized in this manner, the regional partners and their partners are able to field a much higher level and quality of resources at lower billing rates than if the Program had to rely on fee-for-service income and local sponsorships alone for financial support.

Lead Applicants should recognize that the primary type of client engagement under the Program is fee-for-service, with Clients expected to pay at least a portion of the costs of the services provided. These payments become program income, which is the principal source of grantee cost share and basis for determining state/federal matching funds.

Local cost share must be in the form of cash, which may be generated from program income. In-kind or donated cost share is not eligible under the current Ohio MEP program guidelines.

Example of State Funds Allocation and Cost Share

The Lead Applicant may apply for \$100,000 federal funds for the Ohio MEP program. To fund the MEP center at a minimum, propose a budget of \$50,000 state funds and \$50,000 local cost share. To fund the MEP center at a maximum, propose a budget of \$150,000 state funds and \$150,000 local cost share.

2.4.4 Performance-Based Cost Match

For the current federal award, Development has implemented a performance-based methodology for development and management of budgets and reimbursements. This approach incentivizes a strong emphasis on the delivery of accessible, affordable, high-quality MEP services to small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses.

Development employs a matching formula for the budget process that recognizes the contribution of each line of business to the program as well as its ability to generate program income. Each consulting line of business reports its professional services hours, rates and fees-for-service by project – this information is already required by NIST for the MEP's Enterprise Information System (MEIS) report and also the Ohio MEP Salesforce platform.

Allowable costs are reimbursed for a given period at the budgeted cost share ratio. In no case, will the grantee's reimbursements in a program year exceed the budgeted total of federal and/or State allocated funds.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to design a business plan with a mix of business that generates program income and State/federal matching funds commensurate with the resources that are applied to each line of business.

2.5 Term of Project

The Project is the plan of activity or activities that make up the total scope of work for which an award of Program funds is requested and for which a proposal is approved. The Project Period during which the active work funded by the grant shall be from October 1, 2019, until September 30, 2020, with options for one additional year. Continued participation in the Program during each subsequent year of the Project Period will be subject to continuing acceptable performance, determined at the sole discretion of the Director, and the availability of funding.

NIST has indicated the possibility that federal awards under the Program may be extended without competition for an additional five years beyond the initial five years contemplated in the current contract. Should that extension be granted, the Director may elect to similarly extend the Project Period without competition for any or all awardees for up to five additional years.

3 General Proposal Requirements

3.1 General Instructions

Organizations intending to submit a proposal must first submit a Letter of Interest (LOI). LOIs will be no more than two pages in length and must be on the organization's letterhead and signed by an executive authorized to commit the organization. LOIs will be submitted as single, readable PDF files. LOIs will be submitted via email to MEPRFP@development.ohio.gov with the subject line "MEP Letter of Interest".

Eligible Lead Applicants who have submitted an LOI before the submission deadline will be permitted to submit full proposals. Full proposals must be submitted in the following manner:

- Proposals will be submitted electronically by email as prescribed in the RFP posting on procure.gov. Please use subject line "MEP Proposal Submission".
- Proposals will consist of a written narrative, submitted as a single readable PDF file, plus forms provided in Appendices B, C and D. The budget forms must remain in Excel format for submission.
- It is the Lead Applicant's responsibility to ensure submission of a complete proposal based on all requirements of this RFP.

- Proposals Narrative must to be submitted in 8½ x 11-inch format, portrait orientation with 1-inch margins. Budget forms must remain in landscape orientation.
- Font must be 11 pt. or larger with no more than 6 lines per inch. Figures, tables and other exhibits may use smaller fonts as long as they remain legible.
- The first page of the proposal must be the Application Information Page found in Appendix B – Application Forms.
- All pages must be numbered consecutively using the format “Page [#] of [total number of pages]” (e.g., Page 2 of 25).
- The proposal title and Lead Applicant name must appear at the bottom of each page.
- Proposals should not include color figures that cannot be understood when rendered in black and white.
- Do not include a cover or cover letter other than the Application Information Page as prescribed in Appendix B.

3.2 Page Limitations

Any pages beyond the page limits listed below will be eliminated from the proposal before it is accepted for review and evaluation. Except as otherwise noted, appendices or other methods to augment the information presented in the proposal are not allowed. References to web-based information to supplement the proposal are not permitted, and such references will not be considered in the evaluation.

- Table of Contents – 1 page
- Project Narrative – Up to 20 pages
- Qualifications of the Applicant – Up to 5 pages
- Budget Narrative – Up to 5 pages
- Budget – Use specified forms
- Lead Applicant and Partner Organization Case Histories – Up to 2 pages
- Resumes of Key Personnel – 1 page each, up to 5 total

3.3 Public Information

Lead Applicants are reminded that all information submitted in response to this RFP is public information unless a statutory exception exists that exempts it from public release under the Ohio Public Records Act in Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code.

3.4 Order and Content of Proposal Sections

Unless otherwise noted, the proposal must address all of the elements listed in this section, and in the order requested.

3.4.1 **Application Information Page**

The first page of the proposal must be the completed Appendix B – Application Forms. Please indicate by checking the appropriate box whether the proposal is for one subregion or the entire Southeast region.

3.4.2 **Table of Contents**

Prepare a Table of Contents with detail for all levels of headings requested in this RFP.

3.4.3 **Project Narrative**

3.4.3.1 **Strategy**

Describe the organization’s proposed strategy for delivering services that meet manufacturers’ needs, generate client impacts (e.g., cost savings, increased sales, etc. - see Appendix A for complete program definitions), and support a strong manufacturing ecosystem, including:

- Addressing the overall needs of manufacturers, with an emphasis on small and medium-sized manufacturers;
- Balancing market penetration with impact and revenue generation;
- Leveraging 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, other MEP partners with specialized technical or industry expertise and other appropriate entities;
- Engaging with other entities in statewide and/or regional advanced manufacturing initiatives; and
- Alignment with the MEP Strategic Plan while also satisfying the interests of other stakeholders, sponsors and partners. Include a copy of the regional strategic plan.

3.4.3.2 **Market Understanding**

Describe the key characteristics, opportunities and challenges of the manufacturers in the proposed service region. Provide a high-level analysis based on segmentation by company size, geographic distribution and industry focus, including consideration of rural, start-up (a manufacturing establishment that has been in operation for five years or less) and very small manufacturers as appropriate.

Discuss how this understanding drives the regional priorities for the service offerings that will be described in the next section.

Attach a regional marketing plan for service delivery. The plan will not be included in the page count.

3.4.3.3 Service Offerings

Describe the mix of that will be offered and how they relate to the operational improvement and growth of manufacturers (especially small and medium-sized enterprises) in the principal segments identified in the market analysis.

NIST requires each state program to address specific goals and activities for each of key initiatives listed below.

- Continuous Improvement, Operational Excellence, Quality
- Advanced Manufacturing including Additive (3D Printing), Automation, Robotics and Augmented and Virtual Reality
- Supply Chain Optimization and Sustainability
- Cyber Security Solutions
- Workforce Focus on Internships and Apprenticeships

As applicable to the regional strategy and business model, provide the following information (table form is suggested) for each of the above initiatives:

- Current services offered (if any)
- New services to be available within the first operating year
- Lead Applicant, Partners and third-party providers staff (FTE's) to support service delivery
- Expected number of clients and project activity for the first operating year.

3.4.3.4 Technology/Industry Specialization

To the extent that the Lead Applicant organization possesses targeted expertise in a specific industry or technology area, describe the relevant resources and the related service offerings that the organization is prepared to deliver on a statewide basis.

3.4.3.5 Outreach and Service Delivery to Market

Present a marketing plan for identifying and reaching all manufacturers in the proposed service region that might make effective use of MEP services. Pay particular attention to methodologies that will reach very small manufacturers or manufacturers in rural and under-served urban environments. Describe the mix of marketing, educational and other tools at the organization's disposal to effectively execute the outreach plan. Explain how relationships with Partners or third-party service providers will be leveraged to make the plan successful. Discuss the approach to collaborating with other entities to make a full range of

economic development services available to the manufacturing businesses in the region.

Ohio MEPs are expected to coordinate their services with other business assistance service providers, higher education programs, economic development, workforce, and community development-related programs. When in the best interest of the client, the MEP should leverage the expertise of partnered resources, avoid duplication of efforts and work to improve outcomes for business clients. Special consideration should be given to aligning programming with other Development supported programs including: Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and partnered specialty export programs, Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC), Minority Business Assistance Centers (MBAC), and Entrepreneurial Services Programs (ESP). Additionally, the applicant should demonstrate an understanding of the roles of Community Action Agencies (CAA), JobsOhio partners, Community Improvement Corporations, higher educational institutions, county and regional OhioMeansJobs centers, local county economic development organizations and others.

Technical proposals should demonstrate that the applicant has a high level of understanding of resources available to businesses in the region. The applicant should also identify if the applicant has any formal or informal agreements, memorandums of understanding (MOU), or other structured arrangements with regional economic development partners or business assistance providers.

3.4.3.6 Performance Measurement and Management

NIST requires that each state MEP Center keep and report on key metrics to gauge the health and effectiveness of the Program. This information is reported by the partners at two levels: 1) individual project delivery through NIST's MEP Enterprise Information System (MEIS) website, and 2) impact (scorecard) data reported to Ohio MEP (Development) and aggregated for delivery to NIST. The Ohio MEP network uses a Salesforce tool to capture information statewide. The applicant must track all client and project data through Salesforce. Impact data includes new and retained sales, new investment, cost savings, new and retained jobs and client satisfaction (e.g. "Net Promoter Score").

Performance metrics for Ohio are apportioned by region in rough proportion to the federal contracted grant funds received. NIST provides a specific calculation methodology for each performance measure. Development provides a similar calculation methodology for specific state-required metrics. Please see chart below.

EXHIBIT VI - 2019 Ohio MEP GOALS

Ohio MEP Performance Goals

Region	Central
Federal Funds	\$ 500,000
State Funds	\$ 400,000
Cost Share	\$ 400,000
Total Funds	\$ 1,300,000

MEP Performance Metric (MPM)	Definition	Performance Expectations	GOAL
<i>Impact data based on MEP Client Survey response:</i>			
New Sales (10)	Services provided directly lead to an increase in sales over the past 12 months	New sales: \$15 per Fed \$	\$ 7,500,000
Retained Sales (10)	Services provided directly lead to retained sales that would have otherwise been lost	Retained sales: \$35 per Fed \$	\$ 17,500,000
Jobs Created / Retained Jobs (10)	Services provided directly lead to <u>creation</u> of any Full Time Employee jobs over the past 12 months (FTE = Technical, Sales, Management, Other) / Services provided lead to <u>retained</u> FTE jobs over the past 12 months	New and Retained Jobs: 500 jobs per \$1 M Fed	250
New Investment (10)	Services provided to clients has increased investments over the past 12 months in: New products, materials or processes, Plant or Equipment, Information systems or software, Workforce practices or employee skills, Other areas of business	New investment: \$15 per Fed \$	\$ 7,500,000
Cost Saving (10)	Services provided directly resulted in cost savings over what would otherwise have been spent in the past 12 months in: labor, materials, energy, overhead, or other areas (including bad investment avoidance)	Cost Savings: \$7 per Fed \$	\$ 3,500,000
Improving Competitive (10)	Number of Companies responding "YES" to an impact question (divided) by the number of responders	80 percent (percent of clients responding who said "yes" to a quantitative question regardless of whether they quantified)	80.0%
Response Rate (10)	Number of clients who completed the survey (divided) by the number of clients included in the survey period	Survey response rate: 70 percent	75.0%
Net Promoter (10)	Management tool that can be used to gauge the loyalty of a firm's customer relationships. (Promoters are those who respond with a score of 9 or 10 and are considered loyal enthusiasts. Detractors are those who respond with a score of 0 to 6 - unhappy customers. Scores of 7 and 8 are passives, and they will only count towards the total number of respondents, but not directly affect the formula)	Net Promoter Score: 75	75

EXHIBIT VI - BUDGET AND GOALS

Impact data based on Client / Project submissions:			GOAL
Mfg Clients (10)	Number of unique companies surveyed	Total Clients: 73 clients per \$1 M Fed	37
New Mfg Clients (10)	Manufacturing establishment that received substantive aide for the first time ever or has had a gap in assistance of more than 3 years	New Clients: 29 clients per \$1 M Fed	15

Ohio MEP Special Metrics:			GOAL
Total Clients	Number of unique companies you spent 5 or more hours within the program year	Total clients: 150 clients per \$1M State \$	60
Total Projects	Number of unique projects completed with clients within the program year	Total projects: 75 projects per \$1M State \$	30
Total Events	Number of educational or outreach events held in the program year	Total events: 1 per month	12
Success stories	Number of qualified success stories submitted. Qualified means the story must be about a client who completed a project in the past 36 months that generated return on investment data.	Success Stories: 1 per quarter	4
Cash Cost Share	Amount of cash cost share generated for the program year.	Cash Cost Share: Minimum per budget	\$ 400,000

Lead applicants should prepare a strategy and operating plan that is capable of achieving these metrics in as short a time as possible.

Generating quality impact metrics requires a healthy pipeline of client engagements, delivered at a level of activity that is sufficient to generate required program income, which is the primary component of partner cost share. Please provide a table showing the organization’s projected results for the following metrics, quarterly for program year 2020 (October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020), and annually for up to one additional year:

- # of Client Engagements – Very small (<25 employees) manufacturers
- Average revenue per engagement
- # of Client Engagements – Small to medium-sized (25-800 employees) manufacturers
- Average revenue per engagement
- # of Client Engagements – Large (>800 employees) manufacturers
- Average revenue per engagement
- Total engagement revenue
- # of workforce/education/training events
- Total revenue from workforce/education/training events and memberships

Discuss the organization’s approach to establishing and maintaining long-term client relationships needed to collect meaningful impact data for the Program over a multi-year post-engagement tracking interval.

3.4.4 **Qualifications of the Applicant**

3.4.4.1 **Experience**

Provide a brief history of the Lead Applicant's organization, its mission and its relationship to the delivery of manufacturing-specific professional services to businesses. Provide similar information regarding any Partners. Using Appendix C, relate up to five case histories that illustrate the organization's experience in delivering these kinds of services to manufacturing businesses in Ohio, placing particular emphasis on projects for small and mid-sized manufacturing enterprises. Case histories should be 150 words or fewer, indicating the type of manufacturing firm, industry, project scope, year of performance and (quantifiable) results.

3.4.4.2 **Organizational Structure and Management**

Describe the proposed management structure and roles that will permit the organization to plan, organize, sell and deliver MEP services to manufacturers in the service region. Discuss the roles of Partners and third-party providers in delivering these services. Show how the proposed field staff structure and physical location of resources sufficiently supports the geographic concentrations of manufacturers and industry targets for the service region. Describe the project management system and ability to track schedules, milestones, costs and professional services hours on a project-by-project basis. Include details on individual performance goals to support the overall performance of the program delivery.

3.4.4.3 **Key Personnel**

Briefly describe the relevant qualifications of three to five key individuals at the Lead Applicant/Partner(s) who will execute the strategy laid out in the proposal to meaningfully advance the regional manufacturing base and serve the Client companies. One-page resumes for each individual cited may be provided in an appendix, which will not count against the page limit. Discuss their track records in working with manufacturing companies, especially small and mid-sized businesses, and delivering manufacturing-specific technology and management consulting services. Discuss their abilities to lead or meaningfully contribute to a program of this scope and complexity.

3.4.5 **Budget**

Please see Section 2.4 for additional information.

The budget must clearly describe all sources and uses of funds for the proposed Project Period. The Lead Applicant will provide a detailed budget and related explanations that are consistent with the level of resources being requested. In preparing the budget, the Lead Applicant must use the applicable budget forms contained in Appendix D – Budget Forms.

Please note that both NIST and Development require participation in events and activities that are important to the program, but which do not generate program income. These events include:

- Quarterly leadership meetings
- Representation on regional business assistance center advisory teams
- Annual Ohio MEP summit
- Occasional travel to DC for training and joint events
- “Overhead” projects, e.g. NIST mandates, working groups
- Monthly/Quarterly reports

3.4.5.1 Budget Narrative

Provide a detailed explanation of the sources and uses of funds for (i) the State and federal funds requested and (ii) cost share committed. The uses of funds and the scope of activities must be clearly and fully described for each line item. Provide a revenue budget for each line of business. Be very specific regarding “Other Direct Costs”. Describe the principal full-time and part-time positions to be supported with Program funds and the role of each in the Program.

3.4.5.2 Cost Share

Describe the sources and level of cost share. The cost share commitment must be at least one dollar for every dollar of State funds requested (i.e., a ratio of 1:1). All cost share must be identified in the proposal by amount, proposed use and source, and documented in the Budget Forms. Commitment letters are required from each organization contributing cost share and must be signed by a representative authorized to commit the organization to the proposed Project and the cost share described. In-kind or donated cost share is not eligible under the current Ohio MEP program guidelines.

The cost share must represent a specific new commitment, including the dollar amount or value, to the Program described in the proposal. Resources that have already been designated as expenses or cost share for another award, a different instance of this Program or another program under the federal Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership may not be used as cost share for this Program award.

A Lead Applicant may bid both current and future cost share commitments. The use of future cost share commitments is limited to those potential funders with unique budget process and cycles. A description of the relevant budget cycle and timing of the funding announcement must be included in the commitment letter.

Commitment letters that do not include the cost share amount and the use of funds or are not on the cost share provider’s official letterhead and signed by an authorized representative will not be considered. All cost share commitments for the first year of the Program must be current by the time a Grant Agreement with Development is executed.

Cost share must be used directly in support of the Program and not for coincidental or related/similar allocations. Cost share must be necessary and directly allocable to activities that support the Program objectives. Any activity or expense incurred that is not eligible for reimbursement under State of Ohio expense policy may also not be applied to cost share.

Other federal or State of Ohio funding may not be used as cost share for this Program, and funds awarded under this RFP may not be used as cost share against other activities funded by the State or federal governments. All expenses of cost share must take place during the Program accounting period for which matching funds are sought. Cost share must be for allowable costs that are verifiable and auditable and must be documented within the financial records of the Lead Applicant. All cost share is subject to audit.

3.4.5.3 Budget Forms

Budget Forms may be found in Appendix D. Please note that Budget Forms are to be submitted as attachments separate from the written proposal. Budget Forms must be submitted in the original Excel format.

Budget Form 1 – Lead Applicant Budget is to be used by the Lead Applicant. The total State and federal funds requested in the proposal must be represented on this form as the grant amounts that will be used by the Lead Applicant and Partners. The Sub-grantee line on this form refers to the combined operating costs of the identified partners.

In support of the Ohio MEP network, partners are encouraged to make use of the expertise resident in other regional partners when this expertise can lead to a better outcome for a Client. Therefore, Development will include a transfer pricing provision as part of allowable costs as follows: when a partner uses another Ohio MEP partner as a third-party service provider, the partner acting as the prime contractor may take the indirect cost that would normally be associated with the subcontract as cost share credit.

Indirect Costs are allowable. An Indirect Cost is a cost that is incurred for common or joint activities and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored project but nevertheless is necessary to the operation of the organization. These allocated costs are also known as “Facilities & Administrative (F&A) costs”.

For applicants with indirect rates approved by a “cognizant federal agency”, the State will accept the approved or provisional rates for use in calculating fully loaded costs. The Indirect Cost Negotiation Agreement letter or similar document from the cognizant agency documenting the approved or provisional rates for federal FY2020 must be included with the proposal. For Lead Applicants without federally approved indirect rates, the 10 percent de minimus rate shall be used, as prescribed by the U.S. Department of Commerce Statement of

Conditions. Complete financial records are expected to be kept and will be subject to audit.

Grant funds may not be expended, except as Indirect Costs, for facility maintenance or operations. Grant funds may not be expended for property acquisition or lease, physical infrastructure improvements or renovations, or the purchase or lease of capital equipment, except as expended through depreciation within the Indirect Cost pool.

Budget Form 2 – Partner Budget is to be completed for each Partner that is receiving a Sub-grant and/or is committing cost share to the proposed Project and is actively involved in the delivery of services on an ongoing basis.

Budget Form 3 – Source of Cost Share requires the Lead Applicant to report the sources and type of cost share by entity from itself and all Partners. Acceptable cash cost share for the program is the Program Income generated by fee-for-service activities.

The Lead Applicant is solely responsible to have adequate funds to cover all expenses not covered by the Ohio MEP funds awarded.

Budget Form 4 – Payroll & Fringe is to be completed for both the Lead Applicant and Partners. Identify each full-time and part-time position to be supported with Program funds, the percentage of staff time dedicated to MEP services to Clients, and the associated compensation.

General support letters are not allowed. Any such letters submitted will be removed from the proposal and not transmitted to the evaluation team.

4 Evaluation Criteria

Only the most meritorious proposals are sought for funding. Proposals will be evaluated based on responsiveness to all of the requirements of this RFP and on the Lead Applicant's response to any additional information that may be requested. Implicit in those requirements and evaluation criteria is the quality of the proposal and budget.

The criteria that will be used in evaluating proposals and their assigned weights are listed below.

- Strategy and Market Understanding (10 pts) – Degree to which the proposal exhibits a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the regional market, the needs of manufacturers (especially SMMEs), and the services they require. High-level approach for delivering these services, generating client impacts (e.g., cost savings, increased sales, etc.), marketing plan and supporting a strong manufacturing ecosystem.

- Service Offerings and Delivery (35 pts) – Quality and capacity of the applicant’s proposed products and services to foster sales growth and operational improvement in the applicant’s market, with emphasis on how the applicant would leverage new manufacturing technologies, techniques and processes usable by SMMEs. Extent to which the applicant is positioned to: identify, reach and provide proposed services to key market segments and individual manufacturers in all parts of the region; 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; and execute a systematic approach to measuring and managing performance including the individual staff goal plan.
- Qualifications (30 pts) – Depth and relevance of the Lead Applicant’s and the applicant’s team’s experience in delivering MEP or MEP-like services. Ability of the applicant’s organizational structure, management processes and governance model to deliver the program and services described in the Project Narrative. Extent to which the proposed key personnel have the appropriate experience and education in manufacturing, outreach, program management and partnership development to support achievement of the MEP mission.
- Budget and Finance (25 pts) – Extent to which the proposed financial plan is aligned with the state and national MEP strategy over the multi-year project; the proposed projections for income and expenditures are appropriate for the types and scale of services that are to be delivered; and the quality of financial controls is adequate to manage and measure the performance of the Program. Strength and credibility of the plan for generating program income and meeting cost-share obligations.

5 **APPENDICES**

A – RFP Process, Awards Process and Mandatory Compliance

B – Application Forms

C – Lead Applicant and Partner Organizations Case Histories

D – Budget Forms