



**Division of
Science, Technology
& Innovation**

A Division of Empire State Development

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2020 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NYMEP Emergency Assistance 20-6142

**PROPOSALS DUE: May 22, 2020 by 4:00 P.M.
(Late proposals cannot be accepted)**

RFP Released: April 28, 2020

**Empire State Development
Division of Science Technology and Innovation
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I. Program Overview and Requirements

A. Program Introduction, Goals and Objectives

The National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) works with small and medium-sized U.S. manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits, and save time and money. The nationwide network provides a variety of services, from innovation strategies and process improvements, to sustainable manufacturing, supply chain and technology acceleration services. MEP centers also work with partners at the state and federal levels on programs that position manufacturers to develop new customers, expand into new markets and create new products.

As a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce, MEP offers a range of effective resources to help manufacturers identify opportunities that will accelerate and strengthen their growth and competitiveness in the global marketplace.

MEP is a nationwide network of more than 1,200 technical experts located in every state. They serve as trusted business advisors focused on transforming U.S. manufacturers to compete globally by supporting supply chain integration, and providing access to technology for improved productivity. MEP is built around manufacturing extension centers located throughout the 50 states and Puerto Rico. MEP Centers are a diverse network of state, university-based non-profit, and other non-profit organizations, offering products and services that address the critical needs of their local manufacturers.

Empire State Development's (ESD) Division of Science, Technology & Innovation (NYSTAR) is the designated MEP center for New York State. Eleven centers (ten regional and one statewide) competed for and were designated to provide services and assistance under this program

Through this initiative, ESD will provide funds to NYSTAR designated MEP centers to provide services/assistance (described in Sections I.F. of this RFP) primarily to small- and medium-sized manufacturers.

B. Designations, Contract Period and Award Amounts

1. Designation and Contract Periods

Organizations will be designated to offer direct and in-direct assistance to manufacturers to fulfill the mission and programmatic requirements as identified by NIST MEP and ESD.

The contract period for the three awardees under this RFP will begin June 1, 2020 and end September 30, 2021.

Contracts will be executed between ESD and Award Recipients. See timetable (Section II.A.) for dates the contract is expected to begin. Any awards that have not been contracted by the date specified may be rescinded.

If ESD finds the contractual performance of a NYS MEP designated center unsatisfactory, the center's contract and designation may be terminated before the end of the designation period. The center director and/or board chairman must be notified in writing thirty days prior to such termination. In such a case, ESD may administer a competitive process to designate another organization.

2. Available Funding

Through this competition, ESD expects to make approximately \$2.3 million available during the duration of this contract.

3. Award Amounts

Up to four awards will be made, one award per primary focus area. Funding levels will be:

Primary Focus	Funding Level
Re-shoring & Rebuilding Supply Chains	\$800,000
Personal Protection Equipment Assistance	\$650,000
Virtual Assessment & Assistance	\$500,000
Webinars & Online Workshops	\$350,000
Total	\$2,300,00

C. Grants Gateway

In 2013, New York State launched Grants Gateway, a web-based grants management system designed to improve the way grants are administered by the state. Grants Gateway allows not-for-profit organizations to browse, search and review anticipated grant opportunities and apply for available grant opportunities. **Before applying for an ESD grant, not-for-profits should have been prequalified in the Grants Gateway.** Prequalification is a system that allows organizations to complete many of the administrative tasks that are included in applying for grants prior to the actual grant application process. Prequalification allows for the early identification and correction of any deficiencies or gaps in materials before responding to an RFP. Once organizations are registered in the Grants Gateway, they can begin the prequalification process.

Once prequalified, not-for-profits can store all of their documents and information in a secure data vault. Only the not-for-profit and other state agencies will have access to the information. This will eliminate redundant submission of this data for each New York State (NYS) grant opportunity. All prequalification application information will be maintained in the vault for up to three years.

Registration and prequalification instructions are provided on the following pages. Additional registration and prequalification information, including a video tutorial, is available on the Grants Reform website at <http://grantsreform.ny.gov>.

GRANTS GATEWAY REGISTRATION AND PREQUALIFICATION

All NYS grant applicants must be registered in the NYS Grants Gateway to be eligible to:

- Apply for a NYS grant opportunity;
- Enter into a grant contract, an amendment to an existing contract or a letter of agreement; and,
- Apply for future grant payments.

In addition to registering, not-for-profit organizations must also complete the Vendor Prequalification process in the Grants Gateway to be considered eligible to apply for this grant opportunity. Government entities and public authorities are currently not required to complete the Vendor Prequalification process.

GRANTS GATEWAY REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Registration is NOT an online process. Register now to allow time for processing.

1. On the Grants Reform website at <http://grantsreform.ny.gov>, download a copy of the Registration Form for Administrator.
2. Complete the form according to the instructions provided. You must sign and notarize the completed form.
3. Mail the signed and notarized original form to:
NYS Grants Reform
99 Washington Avenue
Room 1530
Albany, NY 12210-2814
4. After the form is received and reviewed, you will be provided with a username and password allowing you to access the Grants Gateway.
5. Log in to the Grants Gateway at <https://grantsgateway.ny.gov>. You will be prompted to change your password at the bottom of your profile page. Enter a new password and click the SAVE button located on the top, right-hand side of the page. If you have previously registered and do not know your username, please email grantsgateway@its.ny.gov. If you do not know your password, please click the *forgot password* link from the main login page and follow the prompts.

CREATING ROLES IN THE GRANTS GATEWAY SYSTEM

Once your organization is registered and prequalified in the Grants Gateway, the user with the delegated administrator role must create additional roles to initiate, complete and submit the application in the Grants Gateway. Refer to Section 4.2 of the “Grantee User Guide” located on the Grants Reform website at <http://grantsreform.ny.gov> for instructions on creating user roles in the

Grants Gateway system. This step **MUST** be completed to submit an application in the Grants Gateway.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT PREQUALIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated June 7, 2013, New York State has instituted key reforms to the grant application and contract processes. These initiatives require not-for-profit organizations to complete the vendor prequalification process to be considered eligible to apply for a grant. Below is a summary of the steps to complete the prequalification requirements. The Vendor Prequalification Manual on the Grants Reform website at <https://grantsgateway.ny.gov> provides additional information and instruction.

1.) **Complete** your Prequalification Application.

- Log in to Grants Gateway at <https://grantsgateway.ny.gov>. If this is your first time logging in, you will be prompted to change your password at the bottom of your profile page. Enter a new password and click the **SAVE** button located on the top, right-hand side of the page.
- Click the *Organization(s)* link at the top of the page and complete the required fields including selecting the State agency you have the most grants with. This page should be completed in its entirety before you **SAVE**. A *Document Vault* link will become available near the top of the page. Click this link to access the main Document Vault page.
- Answer the questions in the *Required Forms* and upload the *Required Documents*. This constitutes your Prequalification Application. Optional Documents are not required unless specified in this Request for Proposals.
- Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your agency representative or to the Grants Reform team at grantsgateway@its.ny.gov.

2.) **Submit** your Prequalification Application.

- After completing your Prequalification Application, click the *Submit Document Vault* button located below the Required Documents section to submit your Prequalification Application for State agency review. Once submitted, the status of the Document Vault will change to *In Review*.
- If your Prequalification reviewer has questions or requests changes, you will receive an email notification from the Gateway system.

Once your Prequalification Application has been approved, you will receive a Gateway notification that you are now prequalified to do business with New York State.

D. Eligibility and Program Requirements

A currently designated NYMEP center.

1. General Requirements

- a. The Applicant must demonstrate the ability to provide the services listed in Section I.E.
- b. The Applicant must be in good financial standing. You must have the financial resources to pay expenses in advance of the receipt of reimbursement from the Department. The Department will accept your own certification that you have sufficient economic resources. However, the Department prefers a letter from a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), indicating that your company has sufficient working capital, positive net worth, and has or can obtain a line of credit. The Department will also accept a letter from a party other than a CPA (such as an attorney, or bank officer) familiar with your company, and attesting to your financial condition.

2. General Limitations

- a. ESD funds available through this RFP will be granted to support the activities and items described in Section I.E.
- b. ESD funds available through this RFP **cannot** be used for capital construction costs.

E. Matching Funds Requirements

There is no match required

F. Supported Activities

An awarded center will be expected to provide services throughout state, directly or through NYMEP designated centers or other partners. Each awardee must provide services to small- and medium-sized manufacturers either directly or through partnerships with other organizations and in coordination and collaboration with other awardees.

These services are to be available

1. **Re-shoring & Rebuilding Supply Chains** This Initiative will be focused on skills gaps, cutting production costs, and addressing other barriers to moving production from other countries to New York State. Additionally, this initiative will work to strengthen or rebuild local supply chains. This could include working with Centers for Advanced Technologies and/or Centers of Excellence to identify alternative materials that can be sourced for use in products in short supply or in an effort to reduce costs. Additionally, other NYSTAR funded centers or partners may be engaged to explore produce redesign or modifications to improve or simplify production.

2. **Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) Assistance** The awardee will develop an initiative to assist manufacturers in securing PPE to ensure they can operate safely during this current or future pandemics. The goal of this initiative is to ensure companies have access to the equipment that's needed without competing with hospitals, health care workers or first responders who are also seeking these supplies.
3. **Virtual Assessment & Assistance** Under this initiative, virtual assessments would be conducted to determine what assistance is needed by companies to ensure they are operating safely, effectively and efficiently. These assessments should look to identify ways to help companies improve safety, efficiency, Opportunities to introduce new technologies and/or processes should be part of this effort.
4. **Webinars & Online Workshops** The awardee will develop, deliver and distribute virtual webinars/workshops to reach as many manufacturers across the state as possible. Training or information sharing should include such things as emergency preparedness, supply chain utilization during crisis, cybersecurity and recovery efforts, as examples.

Awardees are required to track company outreach, engagements, utilization and other metrics. Centers working under the above primary focus areas, may use a portion of their funding to provide other critical services / assistance in coordination with other awardees and upon approval of NYSTAR staff.

When services are readily available, MEP centers should engage other appropriate entities to provide assistance to the companies and not offer these services in-house. This program is not meant to duplicate already existing services or initiatives but to ensure manufacturers have access to the assistance they need that otherwise might not be available.

Applicants may apply for more than one focus areas.

G. Use of ESD Funds

1. ESD NYS MEP program funds may be used for the following items in direct support of services described in the Supported Activities section:
 - a. Salaries and fringe benefits for MEP employees;
 - b. Necessary materials and supplies;
 - c. Travel related to activities supported within this RFP pursuant to Section I.E., or to ESD or NIST meetings. ESD reserves the right to require attendance of center representatives at various events throughout the year;
 - d. Services subcontracted to partner organizations or other third parties to assist the center in conducting the activities supported within this RFP pursuant to Section I.E.;
 - e. Reasonable expenditures associated with operating the center such as rent, utilities, insurance, staff training and marketing, etc.; and
 - f. Other purposes explicitly approved by ESD prior to being incurred.

2. ESD Funds Limitations

- a. The best available price for the type and quality of products or services required must be sought for any ESD-funded expenditure. The MEP must retain documentation to support the solicitation process and/or choice of vendor for ESD expenses.

H. Reporting and Monitoring Requirements

1. General Provisions

- a. Centers must submit quarterly progress and financial reports to ESD using specific reporting guidelines and forms.
- b. Centers must maintain an accounting system in conformance with generally accepted accounting principles that permits identification of all expenditures and revenues.
- c. Contract payments are contingent on ESD's receipt and review of required reports and may be impacted by the Center's compliance with other ESD contracts.

2. Economic Impacts

Impacts generated by the Center will be measured by a third party survey house contracted by NIST and by additional means deemed appropriate by ESD to measure and substantiate the success of the MEP program and each Center, and to satisfy ESD and/or NIST reporting requirements.

I. Sample Contract

A sample ESD contract can be found at: <http://www.esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/RFPs.html>. Terms and conditions of an executed contract may vary.

II. Submission Information

A. Timetable

2020 Competition Timetable	
Start date for 2020 Competition	April 28, 2020
Written questions on proposals accepted through	May 12, 2020, 4pm
Proposals received by ESD by	May 22, 2020, 4pm
Contract expected to begin on	June 1, 2020

B. Questions on the RFP

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted by e-mail to the address below.

E-mail: rpfag@esd.ny.gov

Once the deadline for submitting questions has passed, ESD will make questions and responses regarding this RFP publicly available on the ESD RFP Web page at <http://www.esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/RFPs.html>.

C. Submission Instructions

Applicants must submit their proposals to rpfinfo@esd.ny.gov by the deadline.

Forms included in Appendix B to this RFP which are located at <http://www.esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/RFPs.html>, should be attached to this submission email as well.

Failure to submit on time will result in the proposal being deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed.

ESD reserves the right to contact partners and other individuals identified in the proposal to validate or elaborate on the information presented.

D. Proprietary Information

Some information contained in a Proposal may be considered sensitive and the Applicant may wish it not to be disclosed if possible. If this is the case, the Applicant must identify the information it wishes to protect and request that it be protected.

ESD will take efforts to safeguard proprietary, confidential and sensitive information as allowed under the law, including the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) (see Article 6 of the Public Officer's Law). However, all information will be made available to those who are conducting the review of the proposals.

To request an exception to FOIL, an Applicant must submit a letter included as **Appendix 6** to the Proposal specifically identifying the sensitive information and reasons it should be protected. The Applicant must identify the information with a CONFIDENTIAL, PROPRIETARY or SENSITIVE notation at the beginning of each answer that contains sensitive information provided within the CFA system.

III. Proposal Contents and Review Criteria

Applicants must ensure that proposals have been thoroughly reviewed for clarity and professional presentation.

A. Glossary of Terms Used

Include an alphabetized glossary of acronyms and technical terms used in the proposal and a brief definition of each.

B. Executive Summary

Include an executive summary that sets forth a self-contained description of the activities and benefits that would result if the proposal were funded.

The Executive Summary must **not** contain any proprietary information and must be suitable for publication.

C. Scoring and Designations

Applicants may apply for more than one focus area under this RFP.

Centers are also expected to provide services and assistance available to manufacturers across the state either directly or indirectly through partnerships. Points are assigned by the following categories:

- I. Opportunity, Resources and Delivery Mechanisms (70 points)
 - i. Characterize the current core needs and opportunities (including gaps in services) of manufacturing and high technology companies, placing special emphasis on those that are critical during the next 18 months. (15 points)
 - ii. Describe services the center will offer to address these needs. (15 points)
 - iii. Detail plan to reach beyond the usual MEP client base and engage new manufacturers; (15 points)
 - iv. Explain the Applicant's plan to work with statewide/national partners to offer companies resources and services. (15 points)
 - v. Explain steps that will be taken to coordinate with other awardees under this RFP. (10 points)
- II. Center Management (10 points)
 - i. Highlight the quality and relevant experience of the Applicant's center management and key staff to carry out the proposed activities and achieve program goals. (10 points)
- III. Budget (20 points) Use the budget form provided in Appendix B to this RFP.
 - i. Degree to which the uses of ESD funds are reasonable and justified. (20 points).

D. Budget

The budget presented as part of an applicant's proposal is a best guess estimate. Awarded centers may make reasonable changes in the allocation across Budget Categories upon approval of ESD as contracts are being prepared.

Additionally, budgetary modifications may be made during the contract period. An amendment that would result in a transfer of funds among program activities or budget cost categories that does not affect the amount, consideration, scope or other terms of such contract may be subject to the approval of OSC where the amount of such modification is, as a portion of the total value of the contract, equal to or greater than ten percent for contracts of less than five million dollars, or five percent for contracts of more than five million dollars; and, in addition, such amendment may be subject to prior approval by the applicable State Agency as detailed in Attachment D (Payment and Reporting Schedule) of the Contract.

Complete all Budget forms and submit as **Appendix 4** to the proposal. List any staff to be paid in whole or in part from ESD funds. List each subcontractor and any other expenses on a separate line.

- a. Provide a justification for the requested funding. For each expenditure item listed below describe how both the requested ESD funds will support the services described in the Applicant's proposal:
 - Personnel Expenses:
 - salaries
 - fringe benefits
 - Non-Personnel Expenses:
 - travel
 - equipment
 - supplies
 - third party consultants for Center
 - third party consultants for Clients
 - other

E. Non-Discrimination and Contractor & Supplier Diversity

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, ESD recognizes its obligation under the law to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of certified minority- and women-owned business in the performance of ESD contracts. For purposes of this program, however, goals will not be established as this program involves Federal reimbursement and is primarily for salaries and operating expenses.

F. Appendices to the Proposal

Include the following required appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Organization Chart
- Appendix 2 – Center Director and Key Staff Resume or Descriptive Biography
- Appendix 3 – Center Board Members Information Form
- Appendix 4 – Budget Forms
- Appendix 5 – Proprietary Information Exception Request (if applicable)

No sections, appendices, and/or supporting information to the Proposal beyond those items required by ESD in this RFP will be accepted or reviewed.

IV. Review Criteria and Process

The Applicant must submit, via email, by the deadline a proposal that meets each requirement of this RFP. Failure to do so may result in the Proposal being rejected without review. Any questions regarding the MEP program or this RFP must be submitted according to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) process described in Section II.B. All Applicants are required to monitor the FAQ Web page for responses to questions as well as for any information ESD may post concerning this RFP.

For the review of eligible proposals, ESD has established the following criteria to be applied in accordance with the review process set forth below.

Review Process

Reviewers may include ESD staff, staff from federal or other state agencies, and individuals selected from the science, business, and academic communities. The reviewers will adhere to the process described in this section and will apply the review criteria detailed in this RFP. ESD may limit the number of proposals a reviewer is required to evaluate.

Scoring: Reviewers will independently evaluate and assign a preliminary score to proposals that have been accepted by ESD. The preliminary scores for a proposal will be combined to provide an initial average score for that proposal.

After the initial average scores are provided to the group, reviewers will convene as a group to review the preliminary scores and discuss the proposals in accordance with the review criteria. At the conclusion of the discussions, each reviewer will individually provide final scores for each proposal based upon the panel's discussions.

In the event of a scoring tie, the review team will be reconvened to re-score the proposals in question.

ESD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. ESD may recall this RFP at any time prior to award announcement and may also reject proposals for deficiencies; waive technicalities, irregularities, and omissions; or solicit new proposals. ESD reserves the right to act in accordance with the best interests of the people of New York in its interpretation of this RFP.

Applicants and/or their surrogates are prohibited from contacting any ESD staff to advocate on behalf of a Proposal submitted in response to this RFP. Violation of this restriction will disqualify an Applicant's Proposal from the competition.

V. Appendices to this RFP

Appendix A – Glossary of terms used

Appendix B – Required Forms (Budget Form, Vendor Responsibility Form, OCSD-2-Staffing Plan form)

APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms Used in the RFP

The following definitions apply to the terms as used in this RFP:

Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR: An individual authorized to enter into legal agreements on behalf of, and commit resources of, the Applicant.

Creditable Third Party: A survey house, an accountant, or another third party organization able to certify or verify that the stated economic impacts are accurate.

Key Staff: Staff other than the Center Director involved in decision-making or critical to the center's success.

Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program: A nationwide network of local centers offering technical and business assistance to small and medium-sized manufacturers. See NIST MEP

Medium-sized Manufacturer: A manufacturing firm employing between 100 and 499 employees.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST): A non-regulatory federal agency within the U.S. Commerce Department's Technology Administration. NIST's mission is to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve quality of life.

NIST MEP: The National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (<http://www.nist.gov/mep/>) works with small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits, and save time and money.

Partner Organization: An organization selected by the Applicant to provide specified basic or specialty services to the Applicant's clients in coordination with the Applicant.

Small-sized Manufacturer: A manufacturing firm employing fewer than 100 employees.