

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) NIST Manufacturing USA National Emergency Assistance Program (NEAP)

ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible to apply for a grant or award?

The only eligible applicants are the currently recognized Manufacturing USA institutes (except for NIIMBL). A list of these institutes and their contact information can be found at <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/institutes>.

Organizations that are members of an institute must work through the institute to propose high-impact projects for the institute's application that support the nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations that are not currently members of an institute must contact the individual institutes for more information about proposing project ideas.

As stated in the NOFO, an institute may work individually or may include proposed subawards to other institutes and/or proposed contracts with other organizations as part of the applicant's proposal. Institutes may work with NIIMBL, but NIIMBL is not eligible to receive NEAP funds.

Can a small company, industry, trade association, university, college, individual, or start-up apply for the grant or award?

No. The applicant entity must be one of the currently recognized Manufacturing USA institutes. If you are a member of a Manufacturing USA institute, please share your ideas with your institute for their proposal.

If I am a member of a Manufacturing USA institute, can I apply?

No. The applicant entity must be one of the currently recognized Manufacturing USA institutes.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

When is the deadline to apply for this grant?

Applications for funding under this announcement will be reviewed and considered on a rolling basis as they are received. This NOFO will remain open until superseded or amended to include a closing date, which would be at least 90 days after the amendment date.

How can I apply? What forms do I need to use?

All of the instructions for applying to this funding opportunity can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=325811>

The specific forms and documents required for application are listed in Section IV.2.A. of the NOFO.

Can NIIMBL serve as a sub-awardee to another institute?

No. While NIIMBL may collaborate with the funded team, they may not receive funding under this award.

Are you looking for full applications with all the details filled in or are you looking for concept papers?

Applications must be a complete proposal with supporting budget information. Applications do not need to be lengthy, and there is a 20-page maximum limit on the proposal description. Concept papers will be deemed non-responsive and not reviewed.

Can a Manufacturing USA institute submit multiple proposals?

Yes.

The proposal requirements seem long and complex for proposals at the lower range of suggested funding, particularly at this time of many urgent needs addressing Covid-19 responses. Can they be simplified?

The proposal requirements include all of the information necessary for NIST to issue a financial assistance award, covering factors such as protocols if animal and human testing is proposed. Proposals do not need to include any non-relevant information. The technical description is limited to 20 pages maximum, but for smaller proposals the description can be much shorter.

Should we submit a single proposal with multiple projects/activities (e.g., workforce development, medical countermeasures, technology roadmaps for pandemic response, etc.)? If so, does NIST have the ability to fund specific projects and not others if those are priorities?

NIST cannot provide specific advice on the structuring of applications beyond what is included in the NOFO. See Section V.2.d. of the NOFO for more information.

Prior to making an award, NIST reserves the right to negotiate funding for some or all of the activities within a proposal.

If multiple projects or activities are specified, then the funding requested for each activity should be specified.

If we choose to submit a proposal with several technical projects included, do we need to define all subs in the proposal, or do we have latitude to add others during/after contracting? Do all sub-awardees have to be identified in the grant application?

Applicants should identify specific subrecipients to the greatest extent possible. If a specific subrecipient is not known at the time of application, the applicant should include as much information as possible about that role. If awarded, NIST may withhold the funds intended for the subrecipient's role until a specific subrecipient is identified and updated budget information is approved by NIST.

Note that award recipients will not be allowed to increase their budget post-award.

Is there a target **Technology Readiness Level (TRL)** or **Manufacturing Readiness Level (MRL)** level for the project outputs?

No TRL or MRL was specified in the NOFO. While Manufacturing USA Institutes by design focus on transitioning technologies from Manufacturing (MRL) and Technology (TRL) Readiness Levels 4 through 7, this emergency assistance program is intended to effect public good outcomes in the pandemic response and/or recovery.

Can a company become involved in a proposal for a pandemic-related product that they do not currently manufacture?

As a reminder, only the currently recognized Manufacturing USA institutes are eligible to apply to this NOFO. An institute may propose contracts with companies that support their efforts, and it is up to the institutes to decide what projects to include in their proposals.

Can MEP centers be included as part of a proposed project?

Yes, MEP Centers may be included as a sub-recipient or contractor. A Manufacturing USA institute may include proposed subawards to other institutes and/or proposed contracts with other organizations such as a MEP Center as part of its proposal.

Would tuition remission programs for formal online training or education programs be eligible?

Yes. Manufacturing USA institutes may propose projects that include tuition remission as long as the proposal makes the connection to the pandemic response.

Is there a dollar limit/range for the grant per project?

No. However, NIST anticipates funding individual projects at a level of approximately \$250,000 to \$10 million.

Does it help if the project is regional vs. state-wide vs. nationally beneficial?

The criteria used to evaluate proposals can be found in Section V.1. of the NOFO.

Is there any guidance on how the institute should prepare the proposal? Should it have Quickstart Projects that are within that proposal?

Preparation of the proposal is left up to the institutes. Quickstart Projects could be part of the proposal, the entirety of the proposal, or absent from the proposal.

Are there any new/different limitations on foreign entity involvement?

Institutes must follow their established policies regarding foreign entity involvement in funded projects. Note that the Manufacturing USA program does not generally fund projects with work occurring outside the United States.

Does NIST have a request in for additional supplemental funding to support this effort?

Budget questions must be directed to the White House Office of Management and Budget. If supplemental funding is made available, additional awards may be made from this competition.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Who will make up the evaluation team? Will there be representatives of other agencies that sponsor Manufacturing USA institutes and/or agencies directly involved in COVID-19 response, such as FEMA, FDA, HHS?

Proposals, reports, documents and other information related to applications submitted to NIST and/or relating to financial assistance awards issued by NIST will be reviewed and considered by federal employees, or non-federal personnel who have entered into conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements covering such information. The evaluation team is likely to be composed of representatives from NIST as well as other federal agencies such as Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and other relevant agencies.

Can we volunteer to help review the proposals based on expertise?

From time to time, NIST uses outside reviewers to evaluate proposals. Anyone interested in volunteering to review proposals should send an email to amnpo@nist.gov with your information.

What are the evaluation criteria for the awards?

1. Rationality and merit. The coherence of the applicant institute's approach and the extent to which the application effectively addresses advanced manufacturing issues that are relevant to the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic including, but not limited to, those described in Section I.B. of this NOFO.
2. Potential immediate impact of the project. The likelihood that the proposed project will make a substantial contribution to the immediate efforts related to the COVID-19 national emergency.
3. Resources. The extent to which the applicant institute has access to the necessary facilities and expertise to accomplish the project objectives.
4. Budget. An assessment of the budget against the proposed scope of work to ascertain the reasonableness of the request.

All criteria will be weighted equally.

AWARD INFORMATION

Are these awards contracts, grants, collaborative agreements, or others? How will the funds be disbursed?

Awards are made as grants or cooperative agreements, as appropriate.

Funds will be disbursed via the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP).

Can awarded funds be added onto existing manufacturing institute contracts or cooperative agreements, or will the awards be direct with NIST?

Any awards will be a new funding agreement between NIST and the Manufacturing USA institute.

How quickly do you expect to make decisions after a submission? If a project proposal is submitted and approved but needs to be fast tracked, how quickly could it be approved AND funded? If a fast track project proposal is submitted, how quickly could it be approved and funded?

Funding decisions will be made as expeditiously as possible. NIST intends to rapidly approve and fund awards, given available resources. Ordinarily, the NIST Grants Management Division requires 30 business days to process an award, but the Division has committed to prioritizing these awards. In some circumstances, the NIST Grants Officer may approve pre-award costs, but applicants should not expect to receive such approval. Unless/until they receive approval, they incur pre-award costs at their own risk

If funds are requested to underwrite training programs, what type of report will be required from the recipient to the institute?

Reporting requirements for award recipients can be found in Section VI.2.g of the NOFO. NIST cannot advise on requirements that Manufacturing USA institutes will impose on subrecipients.

IP ownership for funded projects. Will NIST require some IP ownership for funded projects?

IP ownership for inventions arising under federal government-funded research is governed by the Bayh–Dole Act (codified at 35 U.S.C. § 200 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations.

Do the individual institute policies on Community Developed Intellectual Property (CDIP) apply to materials generated via this funding stream?

United States law applies to awards in this program, including the Bayh-Dole Act (codified at 35 U.S.C. § 200 *et seq.*) regarding the ownership of inventions arising from federal government-funded research. Provided that individual institutes' policies conform to applicable federal law, those policies will apply to awards made in this program.

INFORMATION ON MANUFACTURING USA INSTITUTES

How many Manufacturing USA institutes are there?

As of April 2020, there are fourteen Manufacturing USA institutes. More information about the Manufacturing USA institutes (e.g., summary pages, weblinks, social media links) can be found at <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/institutes>.

How does my organization become a member of a Manufacturing USA institute?

Manufacturing USA institutes are public-private organization each with their own technical focus area. More information about the Manufacturing USA institutes can be found at <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/institutes>. Since each Manufacturing USA institute is run independently, membership rules and fees differ. We encourage you to visit the institute's home page and look for "membership" links.

WEBINAR

Where can I find a copy of the April 3rd webinar?

A recording of the webinar is available at: <https://www.nist.gov/video/covid-19-nofo-webinar-2020-04-03>

Will there be other webinars related to the NOFO NIST Manufacturing USA National Emergency Assistance Program? If so, when?

Yes; we will post upcoming webinars on the Events page of our website. <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/events>

Where can I find a copy of the slides used for the webinar?

The slides are available

here: <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/sites/manufacturingusa.com/files/2020-04/Manufacturing%20USA%20Emergency%20Assistance%20Program%20April%202020%20Webinar%20v3.pdf>

MISCELLANEOUS

How can we contact individual companies to offer additional manufacturing capabilities such as 3D printing and other manufacturing abilities?

Thank you for wanting to help. Manufacturing USA is working with partners across the country and leveraging advanced manufacturing expertise, resources and connections to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery efforts. The 14 national institutes and their federal sponsoring agencies are actively engaged in ways to support U.S. manufacturers and their respective advanced manufacturing industries through the current crisis. For more information, go to <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/covid-19-response>.

CONTACTS FOR INSTITUTES

The following Manufacturing USA institute representatives were on the April 3 webinar and offered their contact information:

- AFFOA – jason@affoa.org (Jason Cox)
- Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing (ARM) – cara.mazzarini@arminstitute.org (Cara Mazzarini)
- CESMII in the Northern Region -- craig.dory@cesmii.org (Craig Dory)
- IACMI - The Composites Institute – Jharmon@iacmi.org (Joannie Harmon Heath), or for general information about IACMI - info@iacmi.org
- MxD – www.mxdusa.org
- NextFlex – info@nextflex.us (Scott Miller)
- RAPID Manufacturing Institute Members – Ashley Smith-Schoettker, ashls@aiche.org

IMPORTANT LINKS

- Manufacturing USA institute websites can be found <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/institutes>