



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

SPECIAL CALL FOR EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT EXPERTISE AND SUPPORT

Final Proposal with Final Budget, Due: March 6, 2023

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND DURATION

INTRODUCTION

A widening skills gap in advanced manufacturing cannot be closed without expanding the demographic base of the workforce needed to operate next-generation factory systems. Accounting firm Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institutes estimate that 2.1 million manufacturing jobs could be left unfilled at a cost of \$1 trillion by 2030 unless the U.S. steps up to this pivotal supply-side challenge.

Expanding and diversifying the advanced manufacturing workforce go hand in hand. Women account for 47% of the total U.S. workforce but only 30% of employment in manufacturing industries, while 42.2% of the US population identifies as “non-white,” but accounts for only 34.4% of the skilled technical workforce.

Adjustment to these demographic realities is a national imperative that will not only build capacity, but also enhance innovation, resilience, and performance. This Special Call will support the efforts of the Manufacturing Innovation Institutes (MIIs) to lead the way in engaging women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities across the full continuum of advanced manufacturing education and workforce development in meeting the needs of advanced U.S. manufacturing.

PROJECT DURATION

The maximum duration of proposed projects is **11 months**. Proposers should plan to begin work by **April 1, 2023**.

SECTION 2: SPECIAL CALL OBJECTIVES

1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Expertise and Support
 - a. Support of the NextFlex EWD DEIA Special Call
 - i. Evaluation of Special Call Proposals
 1. Creation of an evaluation rubric for scoring purposes;
 2. Recommendation of proposals, based on rubric scores, for funding;
 3. Provision of written feedback on all proposals.
 - ii. Feedback for Awardees:
 1. Provide Special Call awardees with guidance and feedback on their performance and impact via quarterly feedback sessions during their period of performance (4 total sessions lasting a minimum of 50 minutes);
 2. Document and track awardee performance throughout the period of performance.
 - b. Prepare and implement a comprehensive DEIA Awareness & Partnership Plan detailing the timeline, milestones and deliverables. Specific elements must include:
 - i. Work Team: Launch and management of an MII Education and Workforce Development DEIA Work Team designed to foster change within the MII community. The Work Team should provide expertise and resources to government and MII stakeholders including effective DEIA strategies and case studies focused on expanding participation in the manufacturing talent pool.
 1. The Work Team should include participation of all nine DoD Institutes with all Mfg-USA institutes invited as well as representation from federal agencies. Additional representation from DEIA aligned non-profit organizations (NPO), education, and training organizations and/or subject-matter expertise would be valued but not required; Contractor is responsible for identifying and engaging required stakeholders
 2. The Work Team should meet at least of one time per quarter throughout the PoP for a minimum of 60 minutes per meeting.

- ii. Contractor is responsible for identifying and inviting stakeholders.
 - iii. Technical Assistance Session: Coordinate and host one technical assistance sessions focused on DEIA lasting a minimum of 60 minutes;
- 2. Evaluation of DoD Manufacturing Innovation Institutes Network Impact
 - a. Review and Update Existing Evaluation Plan
 - i. Verify original project goals, outputs and outcomes;
 - ii. Review Base Evaluation Questions
 - 1. Ensure completeness and appropriateness for stated objectives;
 - 2. Develop/add additional questions as needed;
 - 3. Review question performance during the execution to ensure questions are resulting the useful data and adjust as needed.
 - iii. Ensure plan completeness;
 - iv. Engage appropriate stakeholders to include at a minimum OSD ManTech EWD team;
 - v. Identify opportunities for improvement, if any, and document possible base assumptions and/or data gaps.
 - b. Conduct Evaluation
 - i. Implement Evaluation Plan
 - ii. Write Final Report
 - 1. Write a comprehensive report on evaluation findings, highlighting areas of concern and areas of opportunity;
 - 2. Include data analysis formulas, tools, and templates.
- 3. Project Support for MII EWD activities
 - a. Develop Micro-Credentialing Project Plan
 - i. Create project plan with activities descriptions, timeline, communication, reporting, definition of appropriate terminology and deliverables;
 - ii. Coordinate and host meetings that last a minimum of 60 minutes each with MII EWD leads to define best practices in industry-validated credentialing and micro-credentialing;
 - iii. Summarize findings in report.
 - b. Establish a Collaborative Network of Stakeholders
 - i. Create comprehensive long-term (five-year) plan and one-year implementation plan to establish/expand a Collaborative Network;
 - ii. Identify and engage a minimum of 25 stakeholders for participation including the DoD MIIs, OSD ManTech, MSIs, and industry;
 - iii. Engage with the federal department of Labor, Economic Development Agency, and other national federal agencies and national organizations engaging in regional economic development to foster collaboration with MIIs.
 - c. Digital Learning Content Plan:
 - i. Develop plan for the creation of a digital information sharing prototype platform for information sharing with and between M-USA institutes and collaborators.
 - ii. Develop plan for a digital information sharing prototype with initial content based on the ManTech MII EWD Playbook creation of a wiki-type knowledge component for the that includes up to 100 pages of advanced manufacturing technologies and careers content and/or documentation.
 - d. Congressional Interest Item (CII) Program Execution
 - i. Provide overarching project management support to the government for one CII program identified by the OSD ManTech;
 - ii. Create project plan with activities descriptions, timeline, communication, reporting, definition of appropriate terminology and deliverables;

- iii. Provide project execution to include, but not limited to implementing project plan, maintaining and reporting on memorandums for record, notes, emails, and briefings related to the CII program.

SECTION 3: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

3.1 Deadline

Proposers should submit a Final Proposal and Cost Proposal (using the [NextFlex Cost Proposal template](#)) no later than March 6, 2023.

3.2 Proposal Format Guidelines

To accelerate contracting, it is anticipated that the Proposal will be incorporated as an attachment into the final agreement. It is imperative that proposals define tasks and deliverables that are tangible, measurable, and demonstrable. The specifications of each task and deliverable must be clearly defined. The project should detail tasks, deliverables, and the project schedule, and should include quarterly and final reports, and the Cost Proposal should be created using the provided template. Ensure all instructional design service costs, travel, and other direct costs are included in the Cost Proposal.

Submission: The proposer shall submit one (1) electronic copy of its [Detailed Research Plan \(DRP\)](#) with Cost Proposal to proposal@nextflex.us.

SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATIVE TOPICS

4.1 Confidential Information

Proposals are not considered confidential and will be provided to the OSD ManTech EWD team for review. If confidential/proprietary information needs to be included, proposer shall contact NextFlex before the Project Abstract due date.

NextFlex will only share proposal content with OSD ManTech and will not share proposal content with other proposing institutes or any other outside organizations or individuals.

Additionally, proposers should refrain from including export-controlled information in their submissions. If a proposer believes that inclusion of export controlled information is required to fully convey the merits of its proposal, the proposer should contact NextFlex by email to proposal@nextflex.us to discuss this issue no later than March 2, 2023.

4.2 Financial Requirements

Subaward agreements generally will be awarded as cost reimbursement, not-to-exceed subawards subject to Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200). If the proposer's organization has a U.S. government-approved rate structure, please use it. All subrecipients of the Special Call subawards are expected to have a government approved or industry standard accounting system by which actual project costs are tracked and reported. Must have a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number.

4.3 Eligibility Requirements

Open to public. Organizations familiar with OSD ManTech's DEIA Strategy are encouraged to respond and expound upon their alignment.

4.4 Funding Amount

Granting of subawards to proposals submitted in response to this Special Call is contingent upon the continued availability of U.S. government funding.

SECTION 5: PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Once a subawardee has been selected by OSD ManTech, NextFlex will notify the organization of their selection and provide an overview of the contracting process. (Issuance of subawards to proposals submitted in response to this Special Call is contingent upon the continued availability of U.S. government funding.)

SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Once project performers have been selected, NextFlex will create an agreement that incorporates the proposer's Final Proposal and Budget. The subrecipient will be responsible for implementing its Scope of Work. NextFlex will provide oversight and monitoring.

SECTION 7: REPORTING

The subrecipient will be required to deliver quarterly financial and technical reports to NextFlex, as well as a final technical and financial report. NextFlex will compile reports and will submit quarterly and final reports to OSD ManTech.

SECTION 8: CONTACT INFORMATION

Communication and questions during the proposal period and submission of proposals should be directed by email to proposal@nextflex.us, addressed to Taylor McLeod.

SECTION 9: SPECIAL CALL DOCUMENT LIST

The following documents are relevant to the submission process:

1. Detailed Research Plan (DRP)
2. Cost Proposal