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Obama Administration Launches \$26 Million Multi-Agency Competition to Strengthen Advanced Manufacturing Clusters Across the Nation

Fourteen Federal Agencies Collaborate to Enhance Global Competitiveness of U.S. Manufacturers and Create Jobs

WASHINGTON – The Obama Administration today announced a \$26 million multi-agency Advanced Manufacturing Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge to foster innovation-fueled job creation through public-private partnerships. These coordinated investments will help catalyze and leverage private capital, build an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and promote cluster-based development in regions across the United States. This is the third round of the Jobs Accelerator competition, which is being funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST); the U.S. Department of Energy; the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration; the Small Business Administration; and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

“This \$26 million Accelerator Challenge is yet another example of the Obama Administration’s commitment to supporting American manufacturers in building things here and selling them everywhere,” said **U.S. Commerce Secretary John Bryson**. “We are so pleased to join with our federal agency partners to further strengthen the American manufacturing sector, which creates high quality, good paying jobs. Commerce’s Economic Development Administration has a strong record of investing in regional innovation clusters that foster the job creation and business development crucial to an economy that is built to last. This Challenge further bolsters our efforts and builds on the momentum we have seen in the manufacturing sector in recent months, including the 489,000 U.S. manufacturing jobs that have been added since January 2010.”

Advanced manufacturing is critical to the health of the national economy and provides essential goods and equipment directly to consumers as well as to a wide range of industries, including the energy production, agriculture, medical and computing industries, and the security and intelligence sectors.

“The Accelerator Challenge is one way the federal government is helping to support the manufacturing industry, a vital source of middle-class jobs,” said **Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis**. “The innovative products developed as a result of this federal grant program will help our economy maintain its global competitive advantage, while also creating jobs at home.”

Manufacturing accounts for 70 percent of private-sector R&D and 60 percent of U.S. exports—including a record \$1.2 trillion in goods exported in 2011. Over the past 25 months, manufacturers have created nearly half a million jobs—the best streak since 1995. The Jobs Accelerator Challenge is designed to assist the development and implementation of regionally-driven economic development strategies that will support advanced manufacturing and cluster development. The goal is to create jobs, grow the economy, and enhance the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers in the global marketplace.

“Made in America’ is making a comeback,” said **SBA Administrator Karen Mills**. “The Advanced Manufacturing Jobs Accelerator is an opportunity to build on the momentum we’re seeing in U.S. manufacturing and to support small businesses and local economies through regional innovation clusters. By working with other federal agencies, we can link, leverage, and align our resources to give small businesses the tools they need to work together, grow and create jobs in the manufacturing sector.”

Approximately 12 projects are expected to be chosen through a competitive inter-agency grant process. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that will help grow a region’s industry clusters by strengthening connections to regional economic development opportunities and advanced manufacturing assets; enhance a region’s capacity to create high-quality sustainable jobs; develop a skilled and diverse advanced manufacturing workforce; increase exports; encourage the development of small businesses; and accelerate technological innovation.

“Through this partnership, the National Science Foundation will connect innovations from NSF-supported advanced manufacturing research with stakeholders who can accelerate technology commercialization and economic growth,” said **Thomas Peterson, NSF Assistant Director for Engineering**. “NSF is making available up to \$1 million for existing NSF Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Phase II grantees that are part of winning projects.

The deadline for applications is July 9, 2012, and guidelines for submissions are accessible [here](#). In addition to the six funding partners, the initiative is supported by eight other Federal agencies: U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Education, Housing and Urban Development; Environmental Protection Agency; Denali Commission; and the U.S. Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration (ITA), Minority Business Development Administration (MBDA), and U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

“As President Obama made clear, an American economy built to last will depend on American manufacturing, American energy and skills for American workers,” said **U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu**. “This is why the Energy Department invests in innovative, public-private initiatives like the Advanced Manufacturing Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge that support American leadership and competitiveness in manufacturing.”

As part of President Obama’s commitment to putting more people back to work and creating an economy built to last, the Administration has invested over \$200 million promoting regional innovation clusters. The Administration also created an interagency task force, known as the Taskforce for the Advancement of Regional Innovation Clusters (TARIC), to develop and administer interagency grant competitions. More than a dozen federal agencies have participated in TARIC-led grant competitions by providing grant funding or other forms of support to the winners of the Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenges.

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