



# **Strengthening American Manufacturing: The Role of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership : Summary of a Symposium**

*Charles W. Wessner, Committee on 21st Century Manufacturing: The Role of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Technology, and Economic Policy Board on Science, Policy and Global Affairs, National Research Council*

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The Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)-- a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)-- has sought for more than two decades to strengthen American manufacturing. It is a national network of affiliated manufacturing extension centers and field offices located throughout all fifty states and Puerto Rico. Qualified MEP Centers work directly with small and medium manufacturing firms in their state or sub-state region, providing expertise, services and assistance directed to foster growth, improve supply chain positioning, leverage emerging technologies, upgrade manufacturing processes, develop work force training, and apply and implement new information.

*Strengthening American Manufacturing: The Role of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership* is the summary of a symposium convened to review current operations and some of the recent MEP initiatives in the broader context of global manufacturing trends and the opportunities for high-value manufacturing companies. Business leaders, academic experts, and state and federal officials addressed the metrics and impacts of MEP and identified potential areas of improvement. The meeting drew attention to the scale and focuses of MEP, and highlighted the role it plays in supporting and enabling U.S. manufacturers to compete more effectively in the global marketplace. This report includes an overview of key issues raised at this workshop and a detailed summary of the conference presentations.

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