



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

New SC Requirements for FY 2023 Proposals: Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER) Plans and Conference Proposals

DOE Office of Science Informational Webinar

October 17, 2022



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

SC Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

As a steward of public funding, the Office of Science has a responsibility to ensure that we are serving the public.

SC is deeply committed to:

- Supporting diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible work, research, and funding environments that value mutual respect and personal integrity;
- Promoting people of all backgrounds, including individuals from groups and communities historically underrepresented in STEM fields;
- Advancing scientific discovery by harnessing a diverse range of views, expertise, and experiences to drive scientific and technological innovation.

The FY 2023 new proposal requirements are a reflection of this responsibility and of this commitment. “Everyone has a Role to Play in Making Science More Equitable and Inclusive”



Informational Resources

- DOE Office of Science website on PIER Plan information:

<https://science.osti.gov/grants/Applicant-and-Awardee-Resources/PIER-Plans>

- DOE Office of Science website on conference proposal requirements:

<https://science.osti.gov/grants/Applicant-and-Awardee-Resources/Conference-Proposals>

Includes lists of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that will be updated regularly.

- Community DEI Informational Resources (compendium of public reports):

<https://science.osti.gov/SW-DEI/Community-Resources>



Overview of New FY 2023 SC Requirements for Proposals

Beginning in FY 2023:

- **PIER Plans:** All SC Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) and DOE National Lab Announcements and other funding solicitations will require applicants to submit a **Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER) Plan** as an appendix to their proposal narrative.
- **Conference Proposals:** For any applications to the DOE Office of Science requesting funds to support a conference, the host organization of the conference must have an established code of conduct or equivalent policy in place that addresses discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment and other forms of harassment; and the proposal must include a recruitment and accessibility plan for speakers and attendees that includes discussion of recruitment of individuals from groups historically underrepresented in the research community.



Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER) Plans

Requirement at-a-glance:

- PIER Plans are required for all proposals submitted to the DOE Office of Science beginning in FY 2023*.
- This includes proposals submitted in response to Funding Opportunity Announcements, DOE National Laboratory Announcements, and invitational proposals from requested from DOE Labs.
- This is an Office of Science requirement, not a DOE-wide requirement. Please see guidelines for other DOE offices posted with their solicitations.
- PIER Plans not required for existing awardees unless they are submitting a renewal proposal starting in FY 2023.
- PIER Plans not required for applications for supplemental funding on existing awards.
- PIER Plans are currently not required for applications submitted to the DOE SBIR/STTR Programs that are administered by the Office of Science, but a similar requirement will be phased in later this year.
- PIER Plans not required for applications requesting funding to support conferences, *but there are separate new conference proposal requirements for FY 2023.*

Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER) Plans

Requirement at-a-glance, cont'd. PIER Plans:

- Should describe the activities and strategies proposed by the Principal Investigator (PI)/project team to promote equity and inclusion as an intrinsic part of the research project within the context of the proposing institution(s) and associated research group(s).
- Are included *as an appendix* to the research proposal narrative (part of the proposal narrative PDF file, not a separate attachment).
- Should be no more than 3 pages in length and follow the format instructions for font size/margins in the solicitation.
- Are expected to increase in complexity and detail with the increase in the size of the research team and the number of personnel to be supported.
- Will be evaluated as part of the merit review process used to inform funding decisions.
- Should not be a restatement of standard institutional policies or broad principles.



PIER Plans: General Guidance Language (Example)

SC solicitations will provide the specific guidance for the content of the PIER Plans in the “APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION” section.

Example general language can be found on the SC website: <https://science.osti.gov/grants/Applicant-and-Awardee-Resources/PIER-Plans/Information-about-PIER-Plans>

APPENDIX [#]: Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research Plan

“All applications must provide a Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER) Plan as an appendix to the research proposal narrative. The PIER plan should describe the activities and strategies of the applicant to promote equity and inclusion as an intrinsic element to advancing scientific excellence in the research project within the context of the proposing institution and any associated research group(s). Plans may include, but are not limited to: strategies of your institution (and collaborating institutions, if applicable) for enhanced recruitment of [undergraduate students, graduate students, and early-stage investigators (postdoctoral researchers, and others)], including individuals from diverse backgrounds and groups historically underrepresented in the research community; strategies for creating and sustaining a positive, inclusive, safe, and professional research and training environment that fosters a sense of belonging among all research personnel; and/or training, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. Plans may incorporate or build upon existing diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion efforts of the project key personnel or applicant institution(s), but should not be a re-statement of standard institutional policies or broad principles. The complexity and detail of a PIER Plan is expected to increase with the size of the research team and the number of personnel to be supported.

PIER Plans: Suggested Scope Areas

Excerpt from guidance language on the scope of the PIER Plan:

Plans may include, *but are not limited to*:

- strategies of your institution (and collaborating institutions, if applicable) for enhanced recruitment of [*undergraduate students, graduate students, and early-stage investigators (postdoctoral researchers, and others)*], including individuals from diverse backgrounds and groups historically underrepresented in the research community;
- strategies for creating and sustaining a positive, inclusive, safe, and professional research and training environment that fosters a sense of belonging among all research personnel; and/or
- training, mentoring, and professional development opportunities for project personnel.

Plans may incorporate or build upon existing diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion efforts of the project key personnel or applicant institution(s) but should not be a re-statement of standard institutional policies or broad principles.

Merit Review of the PIER Plan

A new merit review criterion for the PIER Plan will be used in the peer review of applications:

- Scientific and/or Technical Merit of the Project;
- Appropriateness of the Proposed Method or Approach;
- Competency of Applicant's Personnel and Adequacy of Proposed Resources;
- Reasonableness and Appropriateness of the Proposed Budget; and
- **Quality and Efficacy of the Plan for Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research.**

DOE SC's standard merit review criteria are set forth by 10 CFR Part 605.10 and may include additional criteria relevant to the scope and objectives of the solicitation. ***Unless otherwise tailored in the solicitation,*** the merit review criteria for the evaluation of applications are in descending order of importance as listed above.

The sponsoring SC Program Office may elect to modify this order at the time the solicitation is developed, as appropriate for the scope and objectives of the solicitation.

Guiding Reviewer Questions for PIER Plan Criterion

QUALITY AND EFFICACY OF THE PLAN FOR PROMOTING INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE RESEARCH

- Is the proposed Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER) Plan suitable for the size and complexity of the proposed project and an integral component of the proposed project?
- To what extent is the PIER Plan likely to lead to participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including individuals historically underrepresented in the research community?
- What aspects of the PIER Plan are likely to contribute to the goal of creating and maintaining an equitable, inclusive, encouraging, and professional training and research environment and supporting a sense of belonging among project personnel?
- How does the proposed Plan include intentional mentorship and are the associated mentoring resources reasonable and appropriate?

General guiding reviewer questions. Not all questions may be applicable to all PIER Plans. Additional reviewer questions may be included in the solicitation if applicable to the scope of the solicitation and history of the research efforts.



PIER Plans: Additional Considerations

- PIER Plans “...may include, but are not limited to:...” the listed scope areas.
- The complexity and detail of a PIER Plan is expected to increase with the size of the research team and the number of personnel to be supported.
- There is no single “model” or “template” example that will be posted at this time.
- Guidance language; order of importance of the PIER Plan review criterion, and merit reviewer guiding questions may be tailored to a specific solicitation to reflect the scope of the solicitation and history of research program efforts and SC program-specific DEIA efforts. (Read the solicitation language carefully.)
- Awardees will be expected to report on the progress of their PIER Plans as part of annual progress reports with the same level of rigor as reporting research progress.
- SC will be providing additional guidance to SC program managers and reviewers, and SC will be documenting implementation of the new requirement for lessons learned and to inform future adjustments to the requirement.

New Conference Proposals Policy in FY 2023

New requirement at-a-glance:

- Applies to all applications to the DOE Office of Science requesting funding to support conferences or conference activities. (*Non-SC hosted conferences, meetings, or workshops*)
- Conference proposals requirements are listed in the *FY 2023 Continuation of Solicitation for the Office of Science Financial Assistance Program*. And on the [SC website](#) for proposals submitted by DOE National Laboratories.
- Requires that host organization of the conference have a code of conduct (or equivalent policy) that addresses:
 - Discrimination and harassment of all kinds,
 - Defines how issues can be reported and how complaints will be addressed,
 - Describes how all attendees will be informed of the policies and procedures.
- Requires a recruitment and accessibility plan that describes plan for speakers and attendees.

FY 2023 SC Conference Proposal Requirement Language

“Consistent with SC’s Statement of Commitment (<https://science.osti.gov/SW-DEI/SC-Statement-of-Commitment>), SC does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind, including sexual or non-sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation, violence, threats of violence, retaliation, or other disruptive behavior at institutions receiving SC funding or other locations where activities funded by SC are carried out. Further, SC is committed to advancing belonging, accessibility, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion across the portfolio of activities it sponsors. For applications requesting SC funds for the purpose of supporting (hosting) a conference, symposium, or workshop, the meeting must have a policy or code of conduct in place that addresses discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault, and that includes processes for reporting complaints and addressing complaints. The policy or code-of-conduct must be shared with all participants prior to the conference, symposium, or workshop (hereinafter the ‘meeting’) and made easily available...”



FY 2023 SC Conference Proposal Requirement Language (cont'd)

“ ...

Applications must include:

- An online link to the current code of conduct of the host organization for the meeting, or the link to where the code of conduct will be posted. If a code of conduct has not yet been established by the meeting organizers, the application must describe the process and timeline by which a code of conduct will be written, approved, and endorsed.
- A recruitment and accessibility plan for speakers and attendees that includes discussion of recruitment of individuals from groups underrepresented in the research/professional community associated with the technical focus of the meeting, and discussion on plans to address possible barriers for attendees, including but not limited to physical barriers.”

Proposals requesting funding for conferences/meetings submitted to SC from DOE National Laboratories are subject to the same above requirements.



FY 2023 SC Conference Proposal Requirement

What is meant by “host organization”?

- The lead institution that is responsible for the overall purpose and logistics of the meeting, including establishing the scope, scale, venue (including virtual), and meeting protocols and policies. (e.g., scientific professional society annual meetings, institutional workshops) Even if aspects of the meeting implementation are subcontracted to third parties.

What is the scope of recruitment and accessibility plan?

- The scope of the recruitment and accessibility plan should focus on the scope of the conference proposal that funds are being requested for.

Do these requirements apply to supplemental proposals to support travel to a conference?

- Yes. However, in general, travel to conferences should be part of the travel budget in the original funded research award. Supplemental funding requests for meeting travel are generally considered only under unusual circumstances.

Informational Resources

- DOE Office of Science website on PIER Plan information:

<https://science.osti.gov/grants/Applicant-and-Awardee-Resources/PIER-Plans>

FAQs: <https://science.osti.gov/grants/Applicant-and-Awardee-Resources/PIER-Plans/Q-and-As>

- DOE Office of Science website on conference proposal requirements:

<https://science.osti.gov/grants/Applicant-and-Awardee-Resources/Conference-Proposals>

FAQs: <https://science.osti.gov/grants/Applicant-and-Awardee-Resources/Applicant-FAQs#conference>

Frequently Asked Questions will be updated on a regular basis

- Community DEI Informational Resources (compendium of public reports):

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Questions

Please use the Q&A Function in Zoom to ask your question.

This recorded webinar will be posted no later than October 27th on both the SC PIER Plan and Conference Proposals websites.

Any questions not addressed today can be sent to sc.swdei@science.doe.gov.