

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the Research Opportunities in Accelerator Stewardship and Accelerator Development Notice Of Funding Opportunity

What's New in FY 2026?

In FY 2026, five major changes apply:

1. **The “FOA” format has changed to the new “NOFO” format.** To comply with new OMB requirements, information has moved to different sections of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), compared to previous Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs). The information content is essentially the same.
2. **Four Topics and Tracks have been discontinued or superceded.**
 - a. **Track 1a: Particle Therapy Beam Improvements** is only accepting renewal proposals.
 - b. **Track 1d: Design principles for expert accelerator control systems.** The DOE-wide initiatives in the Genesis Mission supersede this topic.
 - c. **Track 3: Accelerator Stewardship Test Facility Program** has been replaced by the BeamNetUS program.
 - d. **Track 4a: Accelerator Technology Sector Business Plans** has concluded.
3. **Track 2 is transitioning from single-PI/single-institution awards to a collaborative team model.** Team size requirements will apply starting in FY 2027. PIs with awards ending in FY 2026 may apply for one-year terminal renewal awards. Interested investigators should submit an LOI this year.
4. **The list of Track 4b focus areas has been updated,** based on input from SC Programs.
5. **Multi-year awards will have progress reports come due on December 1st.** Awards will still begin September 1st and end on August 31st, but multi-year awards will have unequal budget period lengths such that progress reports come due on December 1st.

How does the SC reorganization, moving the Office of Accelerator R&D and Production into the Office of High Energy Physics, impact the Accelerator Stewardship and Accelerator Development call for proposals?

From the Applicant's perspective, there is little impact in FY 2026. The activities authorized under Section 10109 of Public Law 117-167 (the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022) and supported by appropriation, remain in effect.

What is happening with Track 2?

Track 2 is dedicated to PI-driven, long-term generic R&D, led by universities, with a focus on transformative advances in accelerator technology and workforce training. These aspects will not change. What will change is single-PI/single-institution awards will no longer be made. Instead, multi-university teams with multiple investigators (called "Collaborative Accelerator Research Teams" or "CARTs") will be funded for longer awards and higher funding amounts to address more complex research questions.

The FY 2027 NOFO will call for CART proposals in Track 2, and will no longer call for single-investigator/single-institution applications. Interested investigators are advised to spend 2026 self-organizing into teams, identify a potential CART mission, work scope, and implementation. A good first step is to declare your interest in teaming by filing a Letter of Intent (LOI) through the FY 2026 NOFO.

What happened to Track 3?

Track 3 provided funding for using Office of Science accelerator test capabilities. This support is now provided through the BeamNetUS program (<https://www.beamnetus.org/>).

What is "BeamNetUS"? How do I apply?

BeamNetUS is a network of facilities united in a common mission to advance accelerator research and applications of accelerator technology through improving awareness and access to these unique facilities.

For its pilot campaign beginning in 2025, the network includes facilities at Argonne National Laboratory, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, and Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility. These facilities provide complementary capabilities enabling research in plasma physics, beam physics, material science, radiofrequency sources and structures, nuclear physics and electron beam irradiation. Details on the facilities (beam parameters and capabilities) can be found at <https://www.beamnetus.org/>.

A program of awards evaluated through a competitive review process with a remit towards creating new, productive engagements will allow access to the facilities without cost for non-proprietary use in 2025. To apply for a BeamNetUS award, please see the website: <https://www.beamnetus.org/access>

What portion of laser R&D falls within the Accelerator Stewardship program?

Accelerator Stewardship supports R&D on ultrafast high power laser technologies, with the aim of producing next-generation tools for scientific research. Principal aims include increasing repetition rate, power efficiency, and improving precision control of wavelength and phase. Developing new materials, new technologies, and

new subsystem architectures are prioritized. Funding is provided for early-stage R&D with the aim of developing a foundation of knowledge and industrial capability to build future generations of scientific laser systems.

What is the “Accelerator Development program”?

The Accelerator Development program addresses supply-chain vulnerabilities that lead to high risks in constructing future Office of Science accelerator facilities by strengthening the domestic industrial production capability for critical accelerator technology components. The Accelerator Development approach is to fund public-private partnerships between national laboratories and domestic industry (with university participation as appropriate), matching technologies and capabilities developed in the national laboratories with needs of the domestic accelerator technology industry. The direct and indirect (i.e., non-accelerator) market may be large and consistent enough for the domestic industrial capability to become sustainable at the end of the Accelerator Development funding period, but, for some accelerator technologies, the capability may require continued long-term federal funding. Other areas might require several funding cycle renewals to become sustainable without additional federal support.

What does the language under ‘Award Budget Periods’ mean for renewals?

To move award continuations out of the busy summer grant season, the budget periods of all new and renewing awards are being changed. The first and last budget period of multi-year awards are changing to 16-months and 8-months, respectively.

As examples:

	1-Year Awards	2-Year Awards	3-Year Awards
Budget Period 1 Length	12 months	16 months	16 months
Budget Period 2 Length	n/a	8 months	12 months
Budget Period 3 Length	n/a	n/a	8 months

The lengthening of the first budget period for multi-year awards has the added advantage that the first Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) comes due 15 months after the award begins, allowing more time to initiate the project. Note there is no change for awards one year in duration (e.g., design studies).

What is a “Stewardship Customer”, what is a “stakeholder”, and what is considered satisfactory “evidence” of the stakeholder’s interest?

“Stakeholder” is used throughout the NOFO as a generalization of the term “Stewardship Customer”. For the Accelerator Production program, the mission needs of the SC programs are the primary focus. For the Accelerator Stewardship program, the needs of other federal agencies and industry carry similar weight to SC programmatic needs. This difference in programmatic priority should be taken into account when preparing a proposal.

As defined in VI.B.6, the term “stakeholder” is used broadly to refer to organizations with a history of financial, intellectual, or physical support for research in the proposed subject matter. Stakeholders may be SC programs

(e.g., BES, FES, HEP, NP, or IP), other DOE program offices (e.g., NNSA, EERE, ARPA-E, EM), other federal agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF, DoD, DHS), or industries that use accelerator technology. Accelerator development stakeholders include SC programs developing future accelerator-based discovery science facilities.

Evidence of the stakeholder's interest may be found in advisory committee reports, workshop reports, white papers, NASEM studies, or R&D roadmaps issued by the Stewardship Customer that identify the issue as important. More significant evidence is provided by substantial and material participation of the stakeholder in the effort (e.g., by co-funding, cost-sharing, in-kind donations of equipment or effort).

How can teams apply?

Teams of collaborating institutions are always strongly encouraged to apply, and for some Tracks, are required.

A single proposal must be submitted by the lead institution, with subawards provided to collaborators. A single award will be issued to the lead institution, which must then write subcontracts to the subawardees to disburse the funds. The sole exception is if a DOE National Laboratory is a subawardee, in which case DOE will provide funds directly to the Lab by field work authorization, per section IX.B.2 "How federally affiliated organizations may participate and be funded".

As always, the participation of highly qualified institutions and businesses new to the SC portfolio is strongly encouraged, as either the lead institution of a team or as a collaborating member.

What are you looking for in a "team"?

Teaming is strongly encouraged for all proposals and is an explicit merit review criterion, please see section VI.B.3.

"Teaming" in the context of this solicitation means the substantial collaboration of at least two institutions to achieve the proposal's goals. It is a central aim of Accelerator Stewardship that technologies developed for basic research find use in a wealth of other applications, and often an excellent way to achieve this is through teams composed of people with expertise in (1) the accelerator technology, (2) the requirements of the new application, and (3) what's required to make a viable commercial product.

Track 1 proposals (applied R&D) are expected to be from multi-institutional teams.

In the case of **Track 4b proposals**, teaming between domestic industrial companies and National Laboratories is necessary, with university participation as appropriate to insert enabling research developed in that sector into the production effort. Inclusion of a business school or private consulting firm is encouraged for building the business plan. To emphasize the commercial nature of accelerator technology supply chain vulnerabilities, the Track 4b effort will be led by a domestic company.

What are you looking for in Track 4 "Partnerships"?

A successful project in this Track will lead to an enhanced and durable U.S. production capability of one or multiple key accelerator technologies. With this in mind, different forms of partnerships may be needed depending on the technology. The form of these partnerships should be justified by the project goals and could range from a model in which domestic industrial entities receive specific technology/knowledge transfer or

facility use from National Laboratories, to a consortium model. Targeted infrastructure investments well aligned with the partnership model may be appropriate.

What if a DOE National Lab is a collaborator on my proposal? What should the budget include? Who receives the funding, and what does section IX.B.2 mean?

Collaborating with a DOE National Laboratory is much like collaborating with any other institution. However, because DOE already has contracts with the Labs, there are some subtle differences:

What should the budget and budget narrative include?

For all proposals, the budget and budget narrative should include (and explain) funding requests from **all** participants, **including** any participating DOE National Laboratories.

Who receives the funding, and what does section IX.B.2 mean?

In all cases, funds that are destined for a DOE National Laboratory will be provided directly to the lab through the DOE Field Work Authorization System. This applies even if the Lab is a subawardee. We will provide further instructions during award negotiations. Please get in touch with questions concerning this.

What can we include as “Demonstrations of institutional or third-party commitment”, sometimes known as “informal cost sharing”?

The intent of asking for “institutional commitment” is to demonstrate that a non-federal entity has a financial stake in the outcome of the R&D. Consequently, demonstrating “institutional commitment” involves making something valuable available to the project that was paid for by a non-federal source.

If you are employed at a DOE National Laboratory, or any other Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC), your time, facilities, equipment, and materials are *very likely* to have been funded by the federal government and do not qualify as a demonstration of institutional commitment.

If you are at other institution types (e.g., university, non-profit, for-profit company) you may be able to include items such as:

- The provision of space, facilities, equipment, or resources at no or reduced charge;
- The provision of release time for faculty;
- The provision of a consultant’s time at no charge;
- The provision of scholarship support for students;
- The waiver of facilities and administrative costs, in whole or in part; or
- Third party contributions (e.g., state, private entities, etc.),

where the contribution was (or is) paid for by a non-federal source.

Is a Letter of Intent (LOI) required?

No, but a Pre-Application is required. See the Funding Opportunity Announcement sections IV.A.2 and V.C for further details.

Should I submit my proposal to a specific Office of Science accelerator R&D call or to the Accelerator Stewardship and Accelerator Development solicitation?

If the work you propose predominantly impacts one SC Program (e.g., BES, FES, HEP, NP, or IP), submit the proposal to the respective Office's accelerator R&D call. If the work you propose is cross-cutting (i.e., it impacts several SC Programs, or several federal agencies' missions, and there is a clear stewardship customer), submit the proposal to the Accelerator Stewardship call. See the NOFO section VI.B.6 "Merit Review Criteria" for further details.

What if I've submitted a substantially similar proposal to another solicitation at another agency? Am I forbidden from submitting my proposal?

No, but you must list the duplicative proposal in your Current and Pending Support. Concurrent submission of an application to other organizations for simultaneous consideration will not prejudice its review. We will, however, contact the other agency prior to making an award to establish the disposition of the duplicate request.

How many proposals may one PI (or one institution) submit?

Two per PI, no limit per institution. This limitation applies to pre-applications as well as full applications. However, PIs are strongly encouraged to focus their effort on one proposal where their interests and capabilities align well with the objectives of the solicitation, and they can write a strong proposal.

Are letters of endorsement from collaborators helpful?

Beginning in FY 2023, attached letters may only be Letters of Commitment (i.e., letters from subawardees, collaborators, and consultants acknowledging their potential involvement, agreeing to provide access to the people, facilities, or resources concerned, and the terms under which these will be made available). Letters whose sole purpose is to provide endorsement for the proposed work, but which do not convey an intent to materially participate, are no longer allowed.

Can DOE labs apply to Track 2?

No. See the Funding Opportunity Announcement, section II.A, Eligibility.

Who can lead a Track 4 proposal?

For Track 4a business plans, the lead institution can be any recognized entity (domestic industrial entity, National Laboratory, other FFRDC, or university). Teaming requirements apply.

For Track 4b partnerships, the lead institution must be a domestic industrial entity. Teaming requirements apply.

Can labs apply to the Notice Of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)?

Yes, as this is a "unified NOFO" and there is no corresponding National Laboratory Program Announcement. Labs may apply to the NOFO in Tracks 1 and 4a. Teaming requirements apply.

Can labs submit a “Renewal” proposal?

A proposal for additional funding to continue an active DOE National Lab project can be submitted under the NOFO. However, the proposal must be marked “New” on the 424 R&R form in Grants.gov, the proposal narrative should make clear this is a continuation of a prior project, and the products of the current project should be listed in Appendix 8. The use of the available template (which can be requested from the Technical/Scientific Program Contacts found in Section I of the NOFO) is recommended for reporting the products of the current project.

Can non-DOE Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) apply to this NOFO?

Yes, to Tracks 1 and 4a only. Teaming requirements apply.

What is the typical award size?

The award size depends on the Track, the topic, the work scope, the available funding, and other factors. Track 1 awards generally average approximately \$2M total and 3 years in length (except design studies, which are limited to \$200k and one year), Track 2 awards generally average \$500k total and 3 years, Track 4a awards are limited to no more than \$200k total and 1 year, and Track 4b awards are limited to \$2M total and 2 years. That said, the requested budget should always be driven by the research goals and proposed work scope, not the other way around.

What is the typical award duration?

The typical award duration is 3 years for Track 1 proposals, 1 year for terminal renewals in Track 2, and 2 years for Track 4b. Exceptions include design studies, for which the award duration is typically limited to 1 year. The duration should be chosen considering the research goals, proposed work scope, and NOFO requirements.

What is the “Full Forward Funding” requirement?

Since 2014, DOE has been required by statute to fully forward fund awards above a certain total value. For FY 2023 and prior years, the threshold was \$1,000,000. In FY 2024, it became \$1,250,000, in FY 2026 it is \$1,750,000, and is expected to continue to rise over the next few years. This means, for example, that an award of \$500,000 per year over 3 years must have the total value of \$1,500,000 set aside in the year the award is made. The PI will receive \$500,000 in the first year, and the balance will be held at headquarters for release in subsequent years.

Can the submitting institution be a foreign organization?

No. See the Funding Opportunity Announcement, section II.A, Eligibility.

Can a subawardee be a foreign organization?

Yes. Per 48 CFR 970.5227-3(f) preference should be given in such a manner as to enhance the accrual of economic and technological benefits to the U.S. domestic economy. For all proposals, a rationale needs to be included in the proposal describing why no domestic institution could meet the need and how the foreign subaward preferentially enhances the domestic technical vendor capability relative to foreign competitors.

Can a fee be charged?

Yes, per 2 CFR 605.15, a fee may be requested *only* by small business applicants. DOE's regulation at 2 CFR 910.358 prohibits fees in other programs. Determination as to whether a subawardee may charge a fee is up to the prime – though the regulations inform how DOE would assess the question.