Informational Webinar: Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (DOE-EPSCoR) –Building EPSCoR-State/National Laboratory Partnerships

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): DE-FOA-0003615

NOFO Issue Date	February 18, 2026
Submission Deadline for Pre-Applications	March 18, 2026 at 5:00PM Eastern Time A Pre-Application is required
Preapplication Response Date	April 8th, 2026 at 5:00PM Eastern Time
Submission Deadline for Applications	May 21st, 2026 at 11:59PM Eastern Time

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Office of Basic Energy Sciences

February 26, 2026

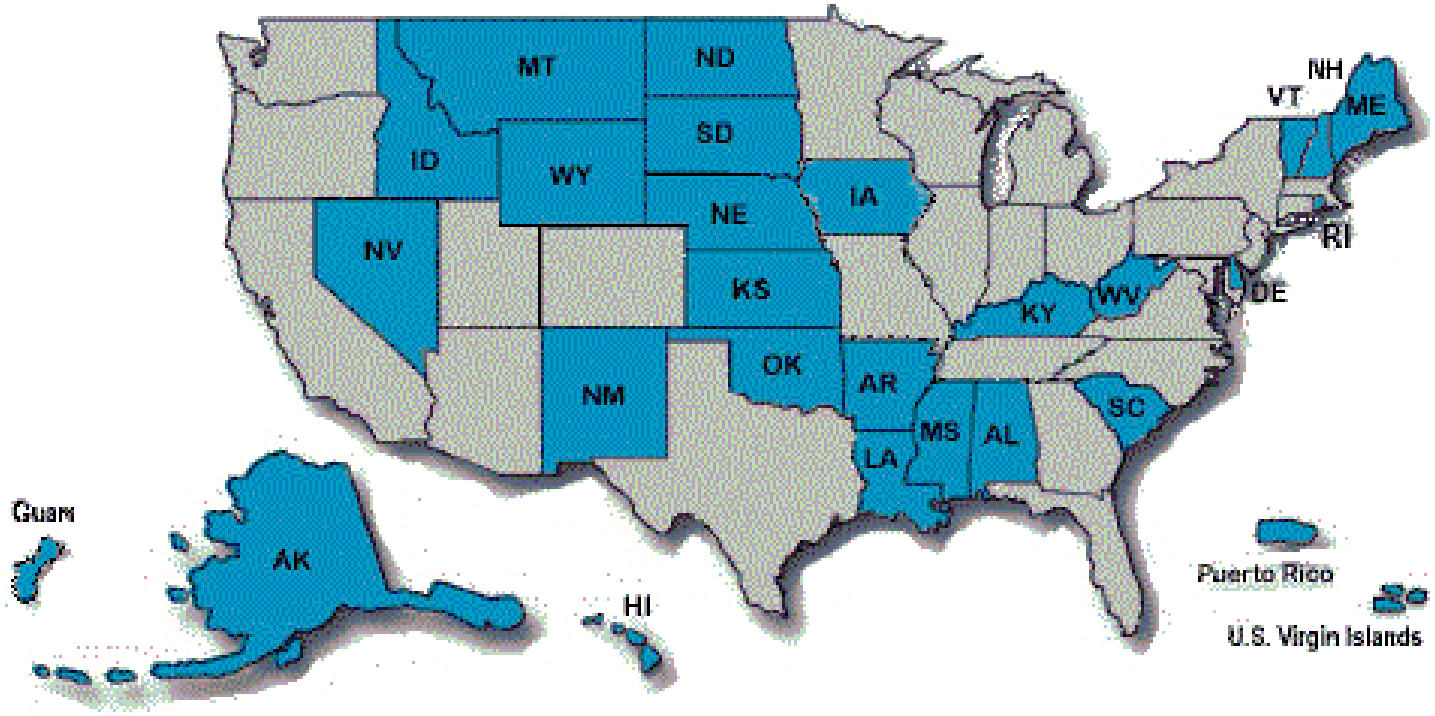
Disclaimer: This presentation summarizes the contents of the NOFO. Nothing in this webinar is intended to add to, take away from, or contradict any of the requirements of the NOFO. If there are any inconsistencies between the NOFO and this presentation or statements from DOE personnel, the NOFO is the controlling document.

DOE EPSCoR – Goals

- DOE EPSCoR emphasizes early-stage research that supports DOE's science and energy mission programs that will:
  - Improve the capability of designated states and territories to conduct sustainable and nationally competitive scientific and energy-related research
  - Jumpstart research capabilities in designated states and territories through training of scientists and engineers in energy-related areas
  - Build beneficial relationships between scientists and engineers in the designated jurisdictions with world-class laboratories managed by the DOE, leveraging DOE national user facilities and taking advantage of opportunities for intellectual collaboration across the DOE system
- DOE EPSCoR seeks to augment the network of energy-related research performers across the nation

DOE EPSCoR – Eligibility

- DOE follows NSF eligibility criteria.
- Chips and Science Act of 2022 language effectively freezes jurisdiction eligibility through 2027.
- Current total DOE/NSF eligible entities: 25 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.



- Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, for-profit and non-profit entities **from EPSCoR jurisdictions**

Building EPSCoR-State/National Laboratory Partnerships

- Biennial Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) for EPSCoR
  - Lab Partnership solicitations alternate with Implementation Awards
- Awards are for up to $1M for four years ($250k/yr)
  - Non-renewable, but can be continued by the specific program area
- Requires collaboration with DOE National Lab
  - No funds can be directed to the national lab
  - Funds can only be directed to collaborators within EPSCoR jurisdictions
- Requires participation of undergraduates, graduate students, or post-docs.

Application Process & FAQs

- BES coordinates NOFO, primary decisions made by program areas
- Application will be directed to a particular program in DOE
- Research goals should match priorities of EPSCoR and the program area
  - Visit program area websites and/or use the contact information in NOFO
- Pre-Applications are required.
  - Three pages of information. Read guidelines carefully.
  - Evaluated according to guidelines in NOFO
- Encouraged pre-applications may submit a full proposal
  - Collaboration with DOE National Laboratory is required
    - Funds cannot be used to support National Lab or any partner outside of EPSCoR jurisdiction
  - Project must include support for students and/or post-docs
  - Project team must include an academic institution
- All dates and information are provided in the NOFO

The Office of Science Research Portfolio

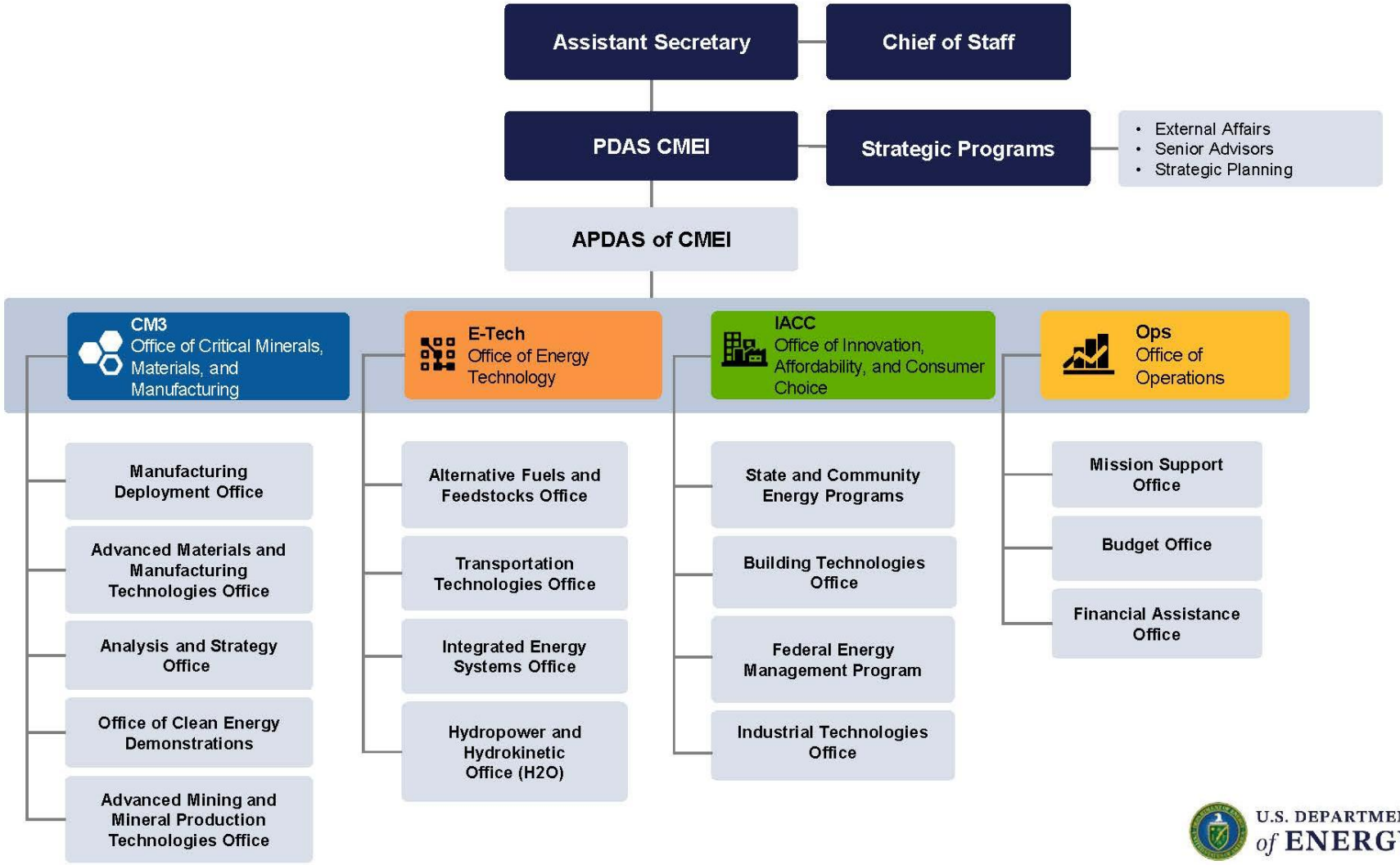
Advanced Scientific Computing Research	• Delivering world leading computational and networking capabilities to extend the frontiers of science and technology
Basic Energy Sciences	• Understanding, predicting, and ultimately controlling matter and energy flow at the electronic, atomic, and molecular levels
Biological and Environmental Research	• Understanding complex biological, earth, and environmental systems
Fusion Energy Sciences	• Driving the scientific and technological foundation for a fusion energy source
High Energy Physics	• Understanding how the universe works at its most fundamental level
Nuclear Physics	• Discovering, exploring, and understanding all forms of nuclear matter
Isotope R&D and Production	• Supporting isotope research, development, production, processing and distribution to meet the needs of the Nation

For more details in each area, see individual program websites at: https://science.osti.gov/
Details on program priorities can also be found in the FY26 SC NOFO here: https://science.osti.gov/grants/FOAs/Open

The DOE Technology Office Research Portfolio

Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI)	https://www.energy.gov/cmei/office-critical-minerals-and-energy-innovation
Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office (HGEO)	https://www.energy.gov/hgeo/hydrocarbons-and-geothermal-energy-office
Office of Nuclear Energy (NE)	https://www.energy.gov/ne/office-nuclear-energy
Office of Electricity (OE)	https://www.energy.gov/oe/office-electricity
Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security and Emergency Response (CESER)	https://www.energy.gov/ceser/office-cybersecurity-energy-security-and-emergency-response
Office of Environmental Management (EM)	https://www.energy.gov/em/office-environmental-management

Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI)



U.S. DEPARTMENT of ENERGY | Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation

Office of Coal (HGEO)

Mining and Processing

- Improve coal processing via recovering fines, plasma, or biomimicry
- Boost production via enhanced coalbed methane production or underground gasification

Conversion and Products

- Economical conversion of coal or waste gas to useful products
- Recovery and use of electrons from stranded electricity
- Improved efficiency of coal gasification to produce syngas

Power and Capture

- Develop materials that enable CO_2 capture toward $30 per ton
- Management of co-products and wastewater streams

Office of Oil & Natural Gas (HGEO)

Production

- Conversion of Produced Water from a waste to a resource
- Boost oil and gas production via CO_2 injection for enhanced oil/gas recovery and increased drilling and completion efficiency

Transportation and Storage

- Advance digital technologies for optimization and real-time monitoring of infrastructure from well to end-user
- Conversion of stranded waste streams to value-added products

Power, Fuels, and Chemicals

- Increase efficiency and reliability of advanced gas turbines
- Enable materials and advanced manufacturing processes for next generation power plants

Office of Geothermal (HGEO)

Exploration and Characterization

- Reduce costs and increase success rates of exploration through
  - advanced geophysical tools and inversion methods,
  - integrated characterization workflows,
  - AI-driven sensing tools or analysis methods

Subsurface Accessibility & Enhancement

- Reduce time & cost to drill and build wells in harsh environments
- Geomechanics and fracture initiation (e.g., fluid-rock geochemistry)
- Materials for hot, harsh environments

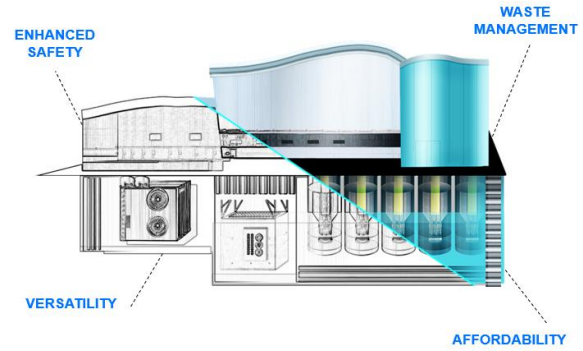
Post-Power

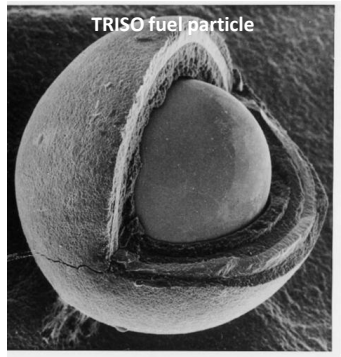
- Extraction and recovery of rare earth elements and critical materials from geothermal brines

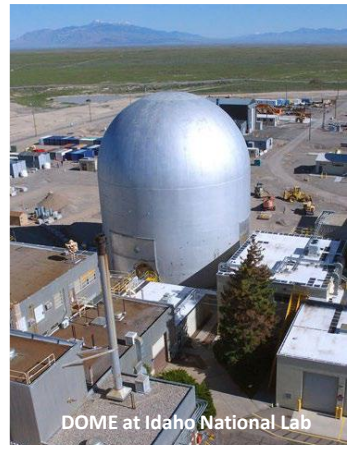
Office of Nuclear Energy

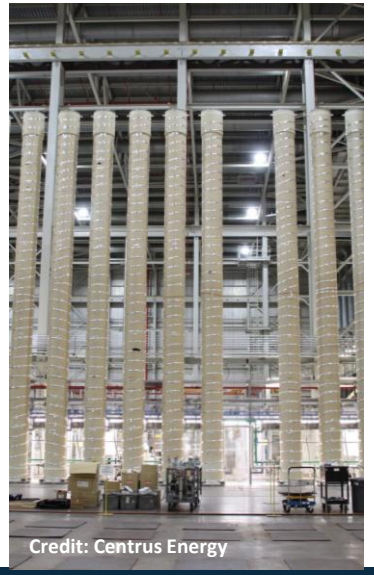
Mission, Priorities, Research Areas

Mission	To advance nuclear energy science and technology to meet U.S. **energy**, **environmental**, and **economic** needs
NE Priorities	Build New Reactors Secure and Sustain the Nuclear Fuel Cycle Keep Existing Plants Open
Executive Order Directives	Reform Nuclear Reactor Testing Deploy Advanced Nuclear Technologies for National Security Reinvigorate the Nuclear Industrial Base
Research	Advanced reactor development Existing and advanced reactor plant optimization Fuels and processing technologies Fuel disposal Modeling and simulation Sensors and sensor systems Advanced materials and manufacturing AI to accelerate deployment
University Solicitations	Nuclear Energy University Program https://neup.inl.gov/




TRISO fuel particle


DOME at Idaho National Lab


Credit: Centrus Energy

Office of Electricity (OE)

- Leads national efforts to develop next-generation tools for the electricity delivery system ensuring a **reliable**, **resilient**, and **secure electric grid** in the U.S. and providing global technology leadership.
- Focused on **software**, **hardware**, and **modeling** that addresses systems integration, security, policy and other cross-cutting issues.
- Drives electric grid modernization and improving grid operations through **research**, **demonstrations**, **analytics**, **facilitation**, and **partnerships**.

Grid Systems & Components

- Advanced, Modular, Flexible Transformers
- Cables and Conductors
- Solid State Power Substations
- High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC)/Medium-Voltage Direct Current (MVDC) Systems
- Power Floor Controllers (PFC)
- Solid-State Components
- Advanced Materials
- Robotics/Autonomous Vehicles
- Microgrids
- Applied Grid Transformation Solutions (AGTS)

Grid Controls & Communications

- Advanced Grid Modeling
- Sensors and Data Analytics
- Transmission Reliability – Planning/Operations
- Observability/Controllability
- Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS)
- Transactive Energy
- Buildings/Electric Vehicle (EV) Grid Integration
- Transmission-Distribution (T-D) integration
- North American Energy Resilience Model (NAERM)
- SecureNet

Energy Storage

- Energy Storage Technology and Materials
- Energy Storage Safety and Reliability
- Energy Storage Policy, Valuation,
- Environmental Justice

Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security and Emergency Response (CESER) - Core Capabilities

STRATEGIC GOAL

Risk Analysis

Develop and distribute actionable risk information to energy stakeholders.

Energy Infrastructure Hardening

Mitigate risk to the Energy Sector and its supply chains through planning, deployment of tools, training, and exercises.

Cutting Edge Innovation

Build resilience within the energy sector through research and development and capacity building activities.

Response, Restoration, and Recovery

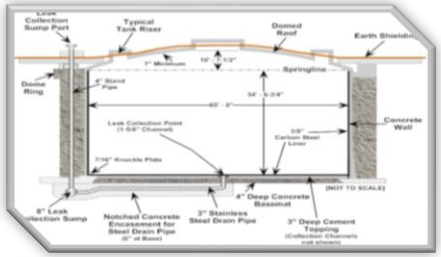
Enable the Energy Sector to quickly respond, restore, and recover from disruptions.

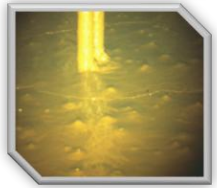
Office of Environmental Management: Addressing the Nuclear Weapons Legacy

Nuclear Facility Decommissioning

Soil and Water Cleanup

Liquid Radioactive Waste Processing & Disposition





Solid Radioactive Waste Treatment, Storage & Disposal

Nuclear Materials & Spent Nuclear Fuel Management

F.A.Q.

How do I get a lab to collaborate if they can't be funded?

This is a challenge for new partnerships. The project goals need to align with current research priorities of the lab. The PI can offer labor (i.e. students and/or post-docs) on-site or remote. User fees at a national laboratory may be an acceptable expense, including those incurred using internal cost-recovery mechanisms.

Am I eligible as a PI?

This is a question best answered by the lead institution. The lead institution can be a non-profit, for-profit, of institution of higher education located in an EPSCoR jurisdiction. Each institution is limited to being a lead on no more than 2 pre-applications per topic area defined in the NOFO. An individual can be the lead PI on only one pre-application but can be co-PI on multiple pre-applications.

Can my application address more than one program area?

Yes – but the PI should select a primary program area and a secondary one. The primary area will count against the two pre-apps/institution/program area limit. The selection should be justifiable and not an attempt to bypass the institutional limits.

F.A.Q. continued

Which program area should I apply to?

For each program area, the NOFO provides a point of contact and links to relevant websites for program information. If, after reading about program areas, uncertainty remains about which program to apply to, feel free to reach out to the point of contact associated with the most relevant program area(s).

Do I need an academic collaborator?

If the lead institution is not an institution of higher education, the team must include an institution of higher education as a funded collaborator (subaward). There must be support for students and/or post-docs in the budget. See NOFO for more details.

Can I have subawards or submit a collaborative proposal?

Subawards are allowed to eligible institutions in EPSCoR jurisdictions. The lead institution must perform a greater portion of the work, as measured by the budget. “Collaborative” proposals are not allowed.

Can I collaborate with non-EPSCoR institutions?

Yes, but no funds can be directed to those institutions.

Questions?

Submit questions by email at
EPSCoR.NOFO@science.doe.gov

Advanced Scientific Computing Research (ASCR)

- ASCR research lays the groundwork for scientific discoveries
  - **Applied Mathematics and Computer Science foundations** to advance the understanding of natural and engineered systems and to reveal scientific insight from high end simulations, models, and data.
  - Deepen understanding of **AI and physical models** to advance and enable knowledge in core mathematical methods and algorithms that underlie all **AI, modelling, and simulation**.
  - **Advanced Computing** to prepare for the future of science based on emerging advanced computing technologies, including quantum computing and microelectronics.
  - **Hardware innovation** to increase the robustness of computing, including underlying communication and energy needs, redefine the art of the possible in conventional computing, and lead the development of new emerging technologies.
  - **Breakthrough tools and technologies** to enhance **software, data processes, and AI** for increasingly complex or resource intense modeling and simulation, including enabling the **convergence of AI with QIS**
- ASCR facilities drive American global leadership in computing, data and networking
  - As we deploy **exascale supercomputers** and the Nation's most **advanced scientific network**, we continue to build a more integrated and open national research infrastructure for all.
- ASCR invests in people
  - **Computational Science Graduate Fellowship** – producing computational leaders since 1991.

Genesis Mission

AmSC
AMERICAN SCIENCE CLOUD

The American Science Cloud (AmSC)

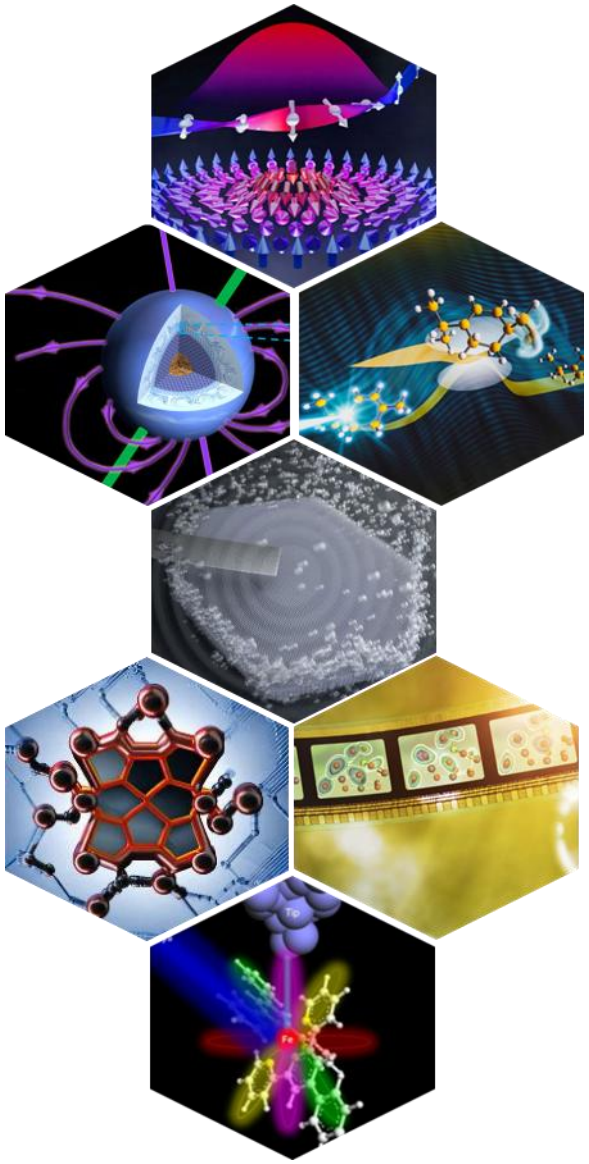
Leadership Computing

Quantum Testbeds

Basic Energy Sciences: Understanding Matter and Energy at Electronic, Atomic, and Molecular Levels

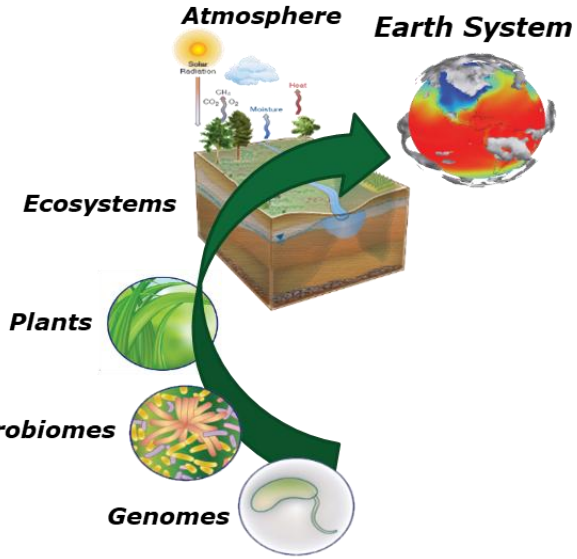
BES fulfills its mission through:

- Supporting **basic research in Materials Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Geosciences, and Biosciences**
  - "Grand Challenge" science
  - Discovery and design of materials and chemical processes that underpin a broad range of energy technologies
- Operating **world-class scientific user facilities** in X-ray, neutron, and nanoscale science
- Managing **construction and upgrade projects** to maintain **world-leading** scientific user facilities
- Ensuring **broad participation** in the research portfolio and user communities



Biological and Environmental Research (BER)

- BER supports transformative science to achieve a predictive understanding of complex biological, Earth, and environmental systems for clean energy and climate innovation.
  - The Biology portfolio supports basic science to underpin a **globally competitive U.S. bioeconomy** based on production of sustainable biofuels and bioproducts.
  - The Earth and environment portfolios are leveraging AI, machine learning, and exascale-class computing to enhance predictability from local urban scales that include disadvantaged communities, to global scales, for a variety of **energy and environmental issues** of national importance.



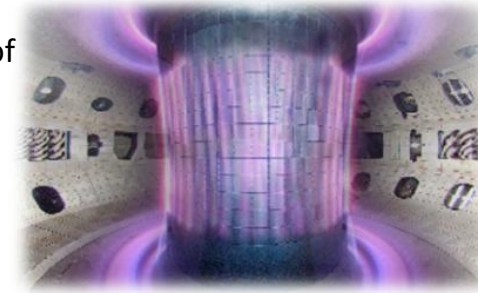
- BER supported research is driving the U.S. towards a more biobased economy and providing insights to complex interactions among Earth and environmental systems under a changing climate.
  - Through insights gained from genome-enabled research of plants and microbes, BER is advancing the **understanding and design** of new biological systems for sustainable bioenergy and bioproduct production.
  - BER Earth and environmental research explores the science of Earth's environmental and human systems, particularly through atmospheric, terrestrial, regional integrated field research, and interdependent human components, and develops **predictive system models** that run on DOE's fastest computers.

- These efforts are supported by three DOE Office of Science user facilities with unique **world-class scientific instruments and capabilities**.
  - DOE Joint Genome Institute (JGI), Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) user facility, Environmental Molecular Science Laboratory (EMSL)

Fusion Energy Sciences (FES)

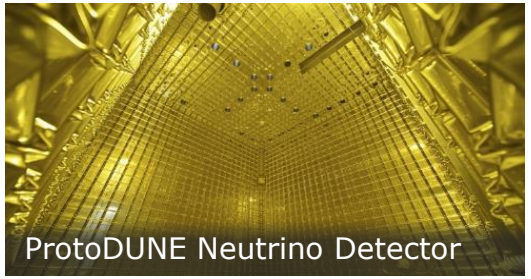
- The FES program's mission is to drive the **scientific and technological foundation for a fusion energy source** and support the development of a **competitive U.S. fusion energy industry**.
- This requires a shift in the balance of research toward the Long-Range Plan (LRP) Fusion Materials and Technology (FM&T) gaps, which connects the three science drivers: **Sustain a Burning Plasma, Engineer for Extreme Conditions, and Harness Fusion Energy.**
- FES Program Priorities
  - Accelerate fusion development as a carbon-free energy source via **public-private partnerships.**
  - Support R&D Fusion Centers ("FIRE" Centers) to establish S&T basis of a **Fusion Pilot Plant**, aligned with the recent FESAC Long Range Plan recommendation.
  - Support U.S. participation in ITER to provide U.S. scientists access to a **burning plasma experimental facility** aligned with the goals of the LRP.
  - Develop Inertial Fusion Energy (IFE) through dedicated collaboration hubs to strategically advance inertial confinement approaches, recognizing its distinct and vital role in the **broader pursuit of fusion energy**.
- FES invests in the world-leading Office of Science (SC) user facilities such as DIII-D National Fusion Facility and National Spherical Torus Experiment-Upgrade (NSTX-U) facility for experimental research, used by scientists from national laboratories, universities, and industry research groups, to **optimize magnetic confinement regimes**.
- FES also invests in other flexible U.S. fusion experimental facilities, **international partnerships in fusion research** leveraging U.S. expertise, large-scale numerical simulation for fusion, development of advanced fusion-relevant materials, LaserNetUS, midscale plasma science collaborative research facilities, and transformational technologies such as AI/ML, microelectronics, advanced manufacturing, and quantum information science.
- FES supports research in the following areas*
  - **Fusion Science and Technology**
    - Foundations — Theory & Simulation, AI/ML for Fusion and Plasma Science, Fusion Materials and Internal Components, etc.
    - Toroidal Long Pulse – DIII-D Research, Long Pulse Tokamak, ITER Research, Superconducting Stellarator Research, etc.
    - Compact Toroidal Concepts, Inertial Fusion Energy, Measurement Innovation, etc.
    - Fusion Nuclear Science — Blanket Systems, Fuel Cycle Systems, Fusion Subsystems, Auxiliary Heating and Current Drive, etc.
  - **Plasma Science and Technology**
    - General Plasma Science, High Energy Density Physics, Microelectronics Research, and Quantum Information Science.

*as listed in the FY 2026 Office of Science Open call.



High Energy Physics (HEP)

- Particle physics explores what the world is made of and how it works at the smallest and largest scales.
  - It seeks new discoveries from the **tiniest particles** to the **outer reaches of space**: What is the Universe made of? What forces govern it? How did it become the way it is today?
  - Finding these answers requires the combined efforts some of the largest international **scientific collaborations** in the world, using some of the most sensitive detectors in the world, at some of the largest scientific machines in the world.
- The quest to understand our world inspires young minds, trains an expert workforce, and drives innovation that improves the nation's health, wealth, and security.
  - Particle physicists develop **new tools and technology** that in turn improve medical diagnosis, medicine development, national security, big data computing, and industrial manufacturing.
  - Advancing **microelectronics, accelerators, and detectors** together with **Quantum Information Science and Artificial Intelligence** provides opportunities for new insights and approaches.
- Five compelling, intertwined lines of inquiry show great promise for discovery over the next decade.
  - The **Higgs boson**, discovered in 2012, is a new tool for discovery.
  - The puzzling physics of ghostly, very low-mass **neutrinos** is being probed.
  - Experiments seek to identify the physics of **dark matter**.
  - Observations of the Universe aim to reveal the causes of **cosmic acceleration**, such as dark energy and inflation.
  - Experiments also **explore the unknown** for new particles, interactions, and physical principles.


ProtoDUNE Neutrino Detector


CMS Experiment at the Large Hadron Collider


DESI Experiment at Kitt Peak


New Technology for Research

Isotope R&D and Production (IRP)

- **Isotopes**, elements having the same number of protons, electrons, and same chemical properties but **differing in the number of neutrons**, have unique properties that make them useful in medicine, nuclear batteries, clean energy, basic research, and national security.
  - Stable and very long-lived unstable isotopes exist in nature and can be **enriched or** extracted and purified based on their mass. **Unstable (or radioactive) isotopes are created** in nuclear reactors and particle accelerators.
- DOE IP **researches**, **develops** and **optimizes isotope production and processing techniques** for radioactive and stable isotopes critical to the nation.
  - Radioactive and stable isotopes are required for **advancement in basic research** (including quantum information science or QIS and artificial intelligence – AI and machine learning - ML), **medical applications** (diagnostic imaging, cancer therapies, infectious diseases), **commercial applications** (energy exploration), **national security** (threat detection, nuclear forensics), **space exploration** (long lived power sources), and other applications.
  - Active areas where DOE IP makes research investments are: 1) **targetry and isotope production**; 2) **nuclear and radiochemical separation, purification and radiochemical synthesis**; 3) **biological tracers, imaging and therapeutics**; and 4) **isotope enrichment technologies**.
- Part of DOE IP's mission is to ensure robust domestic isotope supply chains to reduce U.S. dependency on foreign supply to maintain national preparedness.

(Clockwise from upper-left) medical imaging, isotope separation/enrichment, radiochemical processing, irradiation/isotope production.

Development of remotely operated hot cell equipment with the goal of autonomy.

Nuclear Physics (NP)

- **NP mission: discover, explore, and understand all forms of nuclear matter.**
  - The aim is to understand why matter takes on the specific forms observed in nature: How did **visible matter come into being** and how does it evolve? How does **subatomic matter organize** itself and what phenomena emerge? Are the fundamental interactions basic to the **structure of matter** fully understood?
  - NP **supports** nuclear science, accelerator physics, real-time signal processing, high-performance computing, cryogenics, quantum simulators, quantum sensors, AI/ML, lasers, atomic traps, nuclear technology, and particle detection technologies.
- NP stewards multiple national **accelerator user facilities** in Heavy Ions, Medium Energy, Nuclear Structure and Nuclear Astrophysics, Fundamental Symmetries, Theoretical Nuclear Physics, Computational Nuclear Physics, Nuclear Data, and Accelerator Physics.

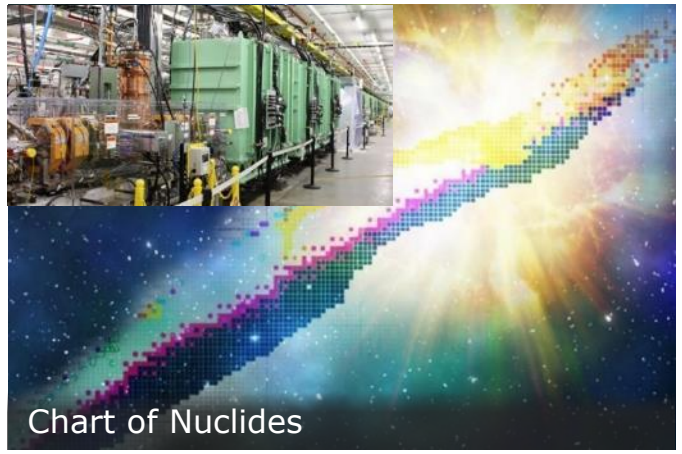
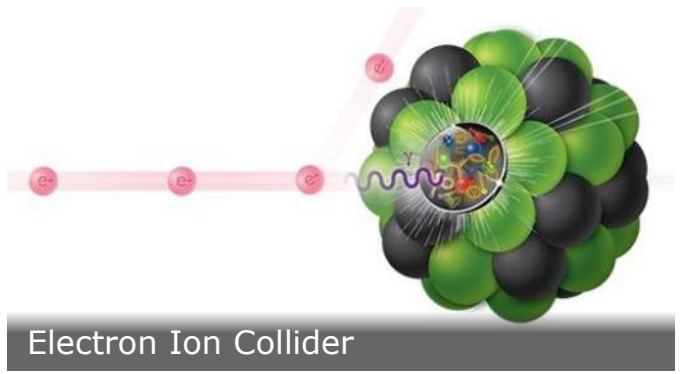


Chart of Nuclides


Electron Ion Collider