



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

Getting Approved DOE funds to PIs or “Dude, Where’s My Grant?”

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Sidebar: Grants Housekeeping Items

- **Open Skies**

- DOE grantees can now travel on non-US flag carriers for research-related travel to EU & Switzerland (see May 14 email to PIs)
- Working on a similar ruling for lab employees

- **Research Highlights**

- Sent request for 1-2 highlights per grant May 19, due Jun 30

- **Early Career 2010**

- Look for announcement this summer
- Expect roughly the same criteria and size and number of awards as last year
 - However there are likely to be differences in detail with respect to 2009. See http://www.science.doe.gov/SC-2/early_career.htm

Questions We Get Asked

- **Where is my grant?**
- **When is it going to be issued?**
- **Why can't you DO anything about this?** (usually only implied)

- **Facts on the ground:**
 - Most grants are several months late
 - Many universities have been good about “bridging” funds but not all can manage this
 - In some cases, this has become an urgent problem



The Official Response

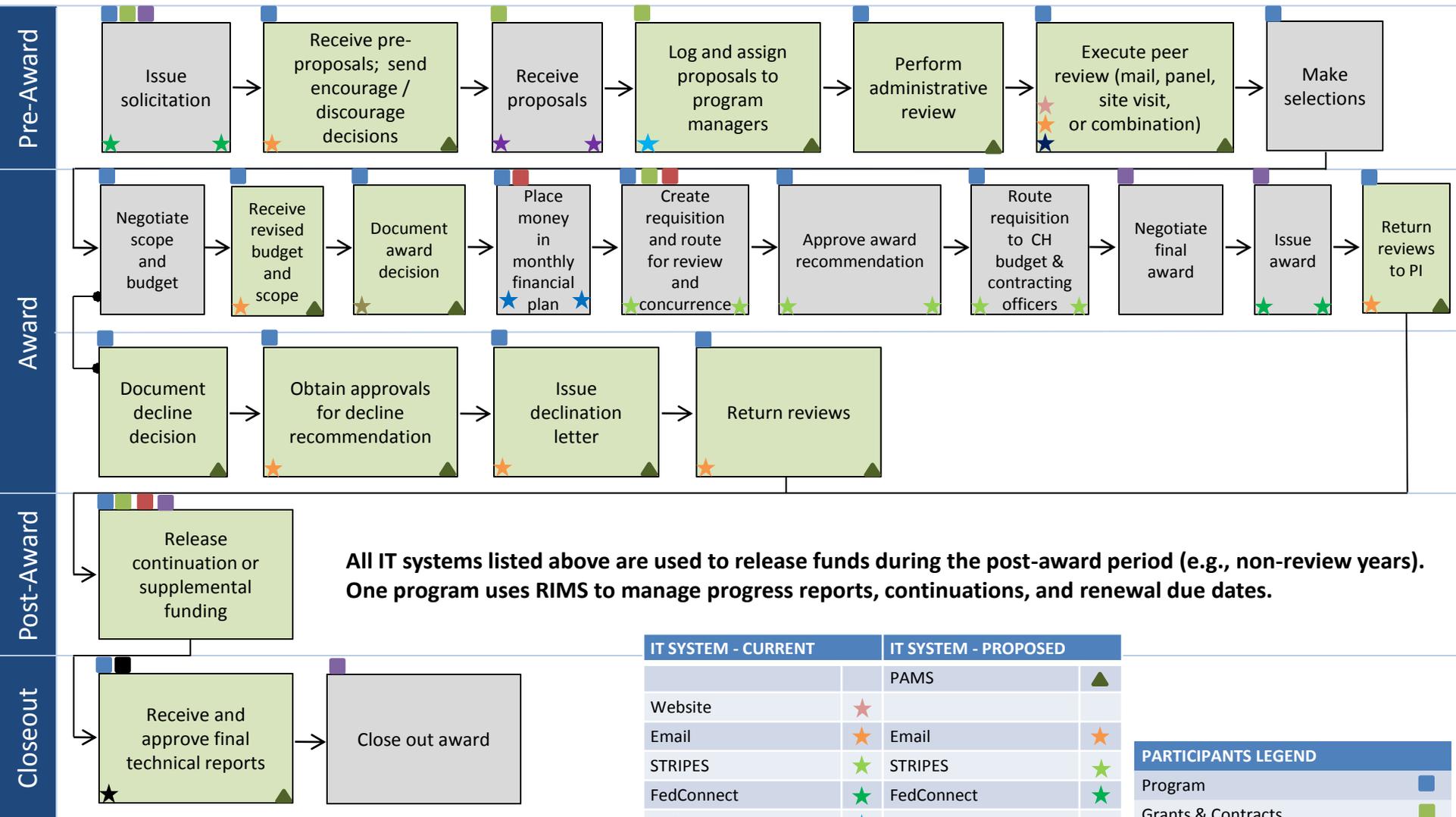
“The Office of Science has been experiencing delays in processing Fiscal Year 2010 financial assistance funding actions. The delays in the issuance of funding are caused by a number of factors, including the rollout of new DOE software and the priority placed on a series of special initiatives this year. Financial assistance actions are being processed by our Chicago Office contract specialists and contracting officers in order of receipt of the paperwork requesting the funding from the program managers. Please know that we are working diligently to get the funding in the hands of our awardees as quickly as possible. We appreciate your patience as we work through the backlog.”

How we do grants

- **For DOE as a whole, only about ten percent of the total funding goes to grants as compared to contracts**
 - Financial infrastructure reflects this and is not optimized for grants
 - However grants are a large fraction of the total number of actions
- **Grant awards are a multistep process (see following diagram), multiple people and software products involved**
- **Therefore, we build in considerable lead time for grants review, action, processing:**
 - 6 months for renewals
 - 3 months for continuations, supplements
 - This is barely enough time in a normal year
 - Timely and complete grant submissions are very important

Universities (Financial Assistance)

Future PAMS Contributions



All IT systems listed above are used to release funds during the post-award period (e.g., non-review years). One program uses RIMS to manage progress reports, continuations, and renewal due dates.

IT SYSTEM - CURRENT		IT SYSTEM - PROPOSED	
		PAMS	▲
Website	★		
Email	★	Email	★
STRIPES	★	STRIPES	★
FedConnect	★	FedConnect	★
IMSC	★		
FMIS/FDS	★	FMIS/FDS	★
PeerNet	★		
Grants.gov	★	Grants.gov	★
Selection Statement Software	★		
E-Link	★		

PARTICIPANTS LEGEND

- Program
- Grants & Contracts
- Budget
- Chicago
- OSTI

Crosscutting Activities During Above:

- Document decisions manually in IMSC
- Send correspondence by paper or email or RIMS

What happened?

FY2009-10 was anything but normal.

Long FY2009 continuing resolution required a number of additional funding actions to deal with budget uncertainties

In addition, three main sources of difficulty for DOE/HEP:

1. ARRA funding actions
2. New procurement software rollout
3. Loss of key personnel

These have also been the main issues for DOE/CH procurement.

I will discuss each in turn.

ARRA funding actions

- **Additional actions in 2009-10:**
 - Early Career (~150 applications, 14 awards)
 - Infrastructure supplements + incremental funding (“PIFs”) (~120 applications, 97 + 12 awards)
- **Good news: this provided an additional \$18M of funding for universities. Moved PIFs off the books.**
- **Not-so-good news: this has been a lot of additional work**
 - High profile/high priority actions. Implementing supplements has been complex.

# actions	FY08	FY09	FY10 (est.)
HEP	336	332	450
DOE/CH	4272	4212	4755



ARRA grants status

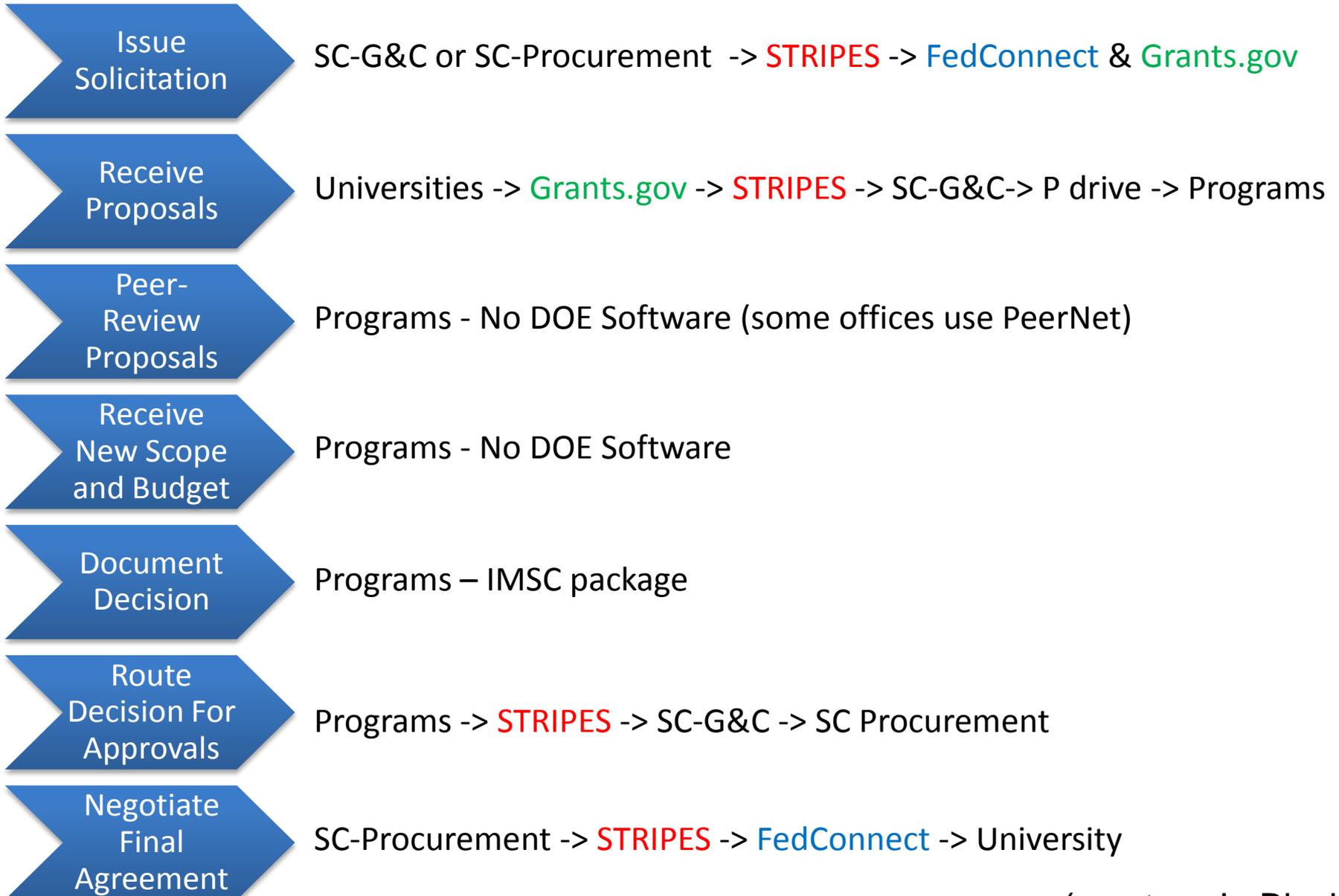
- **Additional ARRA actions plus software rollout issues (following slides) caused CH backlog beginning late FY09**
 - Delays propagated into FY2010 (see summary later in talk)
- **All HEP ARRA grants (early career, supplements, PIFs) have been completed by HEP**
 - Formal declinations for supplements will go out next month
- **These are now moving through DOE/CH**
 - These actions have priority
 - Must be funded by Sep 30, 2010
- **Only Early Career actions will recur in FY2010 (with regular FY10 funds)**

New Software

- **Office of Science was required to move to new procurement software (used in the rest of DOE, and other agencies) for grant actions effective with FY2009 actions.**
 - This software is known as STRIPES. It touches many aspects of the grants process (see following slide).
 - FY09 STRIPES rollout froze processing for an extended period.
- **It has not been a great success. There are many technical issues that are being worked**
 - Fundamentally it is enterprise procurement software that has to be adapted for grants
- **Difficulty in performing validation of financial data at the FY changeover (FY09 →10) caused a ~1 month lockout in STRIPES at beginning of FY10, adding to processing delays.**
 - Working to avoid this problem recurring in FY11.



A Sample Work Process



(courtesy L. Blevins)

STRIPES Status

- **This is not just an HEP problem. There are impacts across SC programs and we are implementing SC-wide solutions**
- **The STRIPES problems have the attention of DOE and SC management at the highest levels**
- **Reviews were held at Germantown and Chicago in April to identify/prioritize issues and suggest improvements**
 - HEP staff are on the working group that is addressing this
 - However, any significant STRIPES changes are likely to take some time
- **Report on progress in SC program management software at next HEPAP**



Personnel

- **HEP lost its key grant procurement manager in 2009.**
 - HEP internal grant tracking was down for the 1st half of FY10
 - Hired temporary staff to cover ARRA workload and additional STRIPES burden
 - Combination of these issues (incl. STRIPES) → **69 days** delay in HEP actions getting to CH (on average)
- **Hired an experienced federal employee to fill this position in Feb. 2010**
 - Getting back to “normal” and plan to streamline the internal process once FY10 actions are complete
- **Chicago has also had issues with workload and personnel turnover**
 - They have brought on additional staff to deal with the backlog

Overall Grants Status (as of 5/28)

- **AVERAGE FY10 grant delay is ~70 days (so far)**
 - Much longer in some cases
 - Delays have dominantly been due to HEP
- **FY10 actions received Q1/10 [HEP: 20 actions, 18 awarded]**
 - Targeting early June completion
- **FY10 actions received Q2/10 [HEP: 109 actions, 40 awarded]**
 - Targeting early July completion
- **Weekly SC/CH teleconferences to report status and coordinate work**
 - University sponsored program office can work with CH contract specialists to resolve issues
 - Frequently “pinging” HEP/CH for status is **not** encouraged
 - HEP can identify and elevate urgent actions

Summary

- **DOE/HEP grants are late (typically 2 months but can be much longer)**
 - Not just an HEP problem, many issues have SC-wide implications
 - Actively working through remaining FY10 actions
 - **Will meet** remaining FY10 deadlines
- **Working to address the root causes**
 - ARRA complete
 - DOE/SC/CH working to improve STRIPES but this is probably a long-term issue
 - Have hired key personnel and will re-evaluate FTE needs
 - More IPAs/detailees to help with workload would be most welcome
 - Will need to look seriously at streamlining the process for FY11
 - Both operational efficiency and large number of actions per grant