Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to the DOE Comparative Review in HEP

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Note 1: *In FY 2025, High Energy Physics will continue to prioritize research funding through the process of comparative review. From 2012 to 2023, this process was conducted under a dedicated Funding Opportunity Announcement, but the FY 2025 HEP Comparative Review, like the FY 2024 HEP Comparative Review, will be managed through the Office of Science Open Call ["FY 2024 Continuation of Solicitation for the Office of Science Financial Assistance Program", DE-FOA-0003177]. The deadline for acceptance in the FY 2025 Comparative Review is September 5, 2024 by 11:59 pm Eastern Time. Applicants are strongly urged to confer with their university sponsored research or program offices to determine their availability to meet this deadline. Submissions earlier than this deadline are strongly recommended.*

Note 2: *Both the FY 2024 Office of Science Open Call [DE-FOA-0003177] and the questions and answers below use technical terms and acronyms specific to grant awards and the overall review process. Please refer to the 'Glossary' contained in Section VIII.C of the Funding Opportunity Announcement for complete definitions of these terms.*

Registrations and Eligibility

Q1: In order to submit Pre-applications (preproposals) and/or Final Applications in response to the HEP comparative review Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), what particular systems must applicants register in?

A1. The complete list of systems that applicants are required to register with is given in Section VII.A.16 of the FOA. These include:

- System for Award Management (SAM);
- Grants.gov;
- DOE's Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS);

- Obtaining a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
- FedConnect;
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System.

As indicated in the FOA, registering in certain systems may take several weeks to process and complete. Therefore, the DOE Office of Science (SC) encourages applicants to register in all systems as soon as possible and well before the relevant deadlines.

Q2: As indicated in DE-FOA-0003177, submitting a pre-application is not required. Therefore, I did not submit the pre-application, but do I still need to register in PAMS?

A2. Yes. Since several of our systems tend to be linked with one another for processing the full application and since final award decisions by DOE are conducted through PAMS, it is highly encouraged to register in ***all*** systems that are specified in the FOA regardless of whether or not a LOI was submitted.

Q3: Who is eligible to apply to the HEP comparative review program?

A3. The eligibility requirements are detailed in Section III and Section I.5 of DE-FOA-0003177.

Q4: I have accepted a position as a faculty member at a regionally accredited domestic institution of higher education, but I have not yet begun the job. Am I eligible to apply to the HEP Comparative Review?

A4. In order to be eligible to apply to the FY 2025 HEP Comparative Review, you must hold a PI-eligible appointment at your institution by the application due date, September 5, 2024. Further, in order to assist DOE during the processing of the submitted application, DOE requests the institution provide a brief letter verifying the position, title, and effective date of employment in Appendix 6 ("Other Attachment") of the application.

Q5: How do I know whether my institution is regionally-accredited?

A5. The U.S. Department of Education maintains a list of the current regional accrediting agencies at: https://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/agencies.aspx.

Proposal Types

Q6: What kinds of proposals are you looking for?

A6. The DOE Office of High Energy Physics (HEP) is soliciting proposals for research in HEP for its comparative review. All applications must address at least one of the six HEP research subprograms (a) through (f) described in Section I.5 of DE-FOA-0003177. Proposals that address HEP research subprograms (g) and (h), or that propose activities *in support of* HEP research (supplemental support, conferences, experimental operations, etc.) will be reviewed but will not be included in the process of comparative review. Proposals that are not consistent with the scope of the research described in Section I.5 may be administratively declined without review.

Q7: How will you handle proposals that are not for direct support of research, like conferences, project-specific R&D or fabrication, experiment operations, computing support, etc.?

A7. All such applications must be submitted to the general SC Open Call [DE-FOA-0003177]. Such applications will be reviewed as appropriate but will not be included in the HEP Comparative Review.

Q8: Can I submit a research proposal to the general SC Open Call instead of the HEP comparative review FOA?

A8. New or renewal research proposals submitted to the SC Open Call [DE-FOA-0003177] after the specified due date (September 5, 2024) for the FY 2025 HEP Comparative Review will be reviewed following standard merit review criteria (see Section V of the general SC solicitation); however, funding available to respond to research proposals submitted outside of the HEP comparative review process will be extremely limited.

Q9: I have an existing research grant funded through DOE and I will be submitting a proposal to FY 2025 HEP comparative review FOA. Should the proposal be submitted as a "new" or "renewal" application?

A9. The type of application to submit is fully described in Section IV.D.1 of DE-FOA-0003177. In determining whether to submit a "new" vs. "renewal" application, the proposal must satisfy the different criteria listed there and must correspondingly be marked as such on the SF-424 Research & Related (R&R) cover page accompanying the application. If you still have questions about the type of application to submit, please email sc.hepfoa@science.doe.gov.

Q10: I am planning to submit a "renewal" application to the FY 2025 HEP comparative review FOA. Am I required to complete and submit 'Renewal Proposal Products' through the Office of Science PAMS website?

A10. Yes. Please refer to Section VIII.A.8 of the FOA for further information as well as Section 9.2 of the PAMS User Guide, which is available at the URL: *https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/WebPAMSEPSExternal/CustomInterface/Common/ExternalUserGuide.pdf*

Applicants completing this section in PAMS must enter each product created during the previous project period of the award. Example products include publications, intellectual property, technologies or techniques, and other products such as database or software publicly available. Accessibility to this section in PAMS will be available to the applicant after the application has been submitted to DOE; all information is requested to be entered within 5-7 calendar days after submission of the application. The submitted product list in PAMS will be sent to reviewers to be considered as part of the merit review of the application. The application will not be considered complete and cannot be sent for review until the renewal proposal product list has been submitted.

Q11: I am a collaborator on a large HEP experiment, and therefore, an author with several other international collaborators on many publications by the experiment. For the Renewal Proposal Products section in PAMS on 'publications', should I list all the

publications that the experiment produced during my grant's previous project period or only the ones where I was the primary author?

A11. For the 'publication' section in the Renewal Proposal Products in PAMS, Principal Investigators collaborating on large HEP experiments should list the publications for which they were a primary author (*i.e.,* one of the main contributors to the paper).

Q12: I am planning to submit a "renewal" application to the FY 2025 HEP Comparative Review. Due to external circumstances, I am concerned about being able to submit Renewal Proposal Products in a timely fashion. What should I do.

A12. Please submit the Renewal Proposal Products (RPP) as quickly as possible. Your application will not be considered complete, and cannot be sent for review, until the RPP is received via PAMS. Submission by the end of the third full week of September 2024, will avoid any delay in the review process.

Q13: How do I submit my pre-application?

A13. The pre-application must be submitted electronically through the DOE Office of Science Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS) website (via URL: *https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/*). The Principal Investigator and/or anyone submitting on behalf of the Principal Investigator must register for an account in PAMS before it will be possible to submit a pre-proposal or a full proposal. Please carefully read Section IV.B.2 of the FOA for details, including instructions on how to register with PAMS and procedures on submitting your pre-application. It is highly recommended that you register with PAMS well in advance of submitting your pre-application to avoid any delays.

Q14: I have accepted a position as a faculty member at a regionally accredited domestic institution of higher education, but I will not begin the job until after the Pre-application submission deadline of August 1, 2024. Can I still submit a Pre-application in response to DE-FOA-0003177?

A14. Yes. However, in order for your final application to be eligible for the FY 2025 comparative review process, you must hold a PI-eligible appointment at your institution by the application due date, September 5, 2024. The application must also comply with all other requirements and guidelines described in the FOA. Further, assist DOE during the processing of the submitted application, DOE requests the institution provide a brief letter verifying the position, title, and effective date of employment in Appendix 6 ("Other Attachments") of the application. See also Q4: above.

Q15: Are pre-applications required?

A15. No, but they are strongly encouraged to assist HEP program managers in preparing the merit review.

Q16: What is the difference between a proposal submitted to the SC Open Call and a proposal submitted to the HEP comparative review FOA?

A16. In FY 2025, the HEP Comparative Review is being managed through the SC Open Call [DE-FOA-0003177]. Research proposals submitted to the SC Open Call will be considered for the HEP

Comparative Review if they are received by September 5, 2024.

Q17: What mailing address should I specify on my application?

A17. Please list your professional or institutional work mailing address (not your home address).

Q18: Are there limits on the length of the proposal?

A18. Yes. The total length of the research description(s) in the narrative section must not exceed 9 pages per Senior/Key Person. Typically, Senior/Key Persons are those listed in Section A of the SF Research and Related (R&R) Budget Forms that accompanies the proposal application. However, any Senior/Key Person who does not contribute significantly to the research narrative should not contribute to the page count. Other parts of the submission (Cover Page, Cover Page Supplemental for Proposals with Multiple Subprograms or Thrusts, Project Summary/Abstract and appendices) do not count against this limit; see full text in Sections IV and I.5 of the SC Open Call FOA [DE-FOA-0003177] for complete details. Additional supporting material (*i.e.,* Publication Lists, etc.) should be put in appendices according to the format and guidelines specified in Section IV of the FOA. Note: any proposal that exceeds the page limit may be declined without review, and therefore not considered for funding.

Q19: In an application with multiple Senior/Key Persons, does the page limit apply to the narrative of each investigator or to the aggregate of all the narratives?

A19. The page limit will be applied to the whole proposal based on the number of senior investigators. For example, if an application contains 4 Senior/Key Persons, the page limit for the application narrative would be 36. One of the Senior/Key Persons may exceed their allotted 9 pages as long as the total page count does not exceed 36. Senior/Key Persons who do not have a significant role in the project narrative should not be used to pad the page count. Proposals that unduly burden reviewers by padding the page count by naming Senior/Key Persons who do not play such a significant role in the project may be declined without review.

Q20: I am involved in two different experiments. Is the page limit really 9 pages per Senior/Key Person or 9 pages per Senior/Key Person per experiment?

A20. The page limit refers to the total number of pages per Senior/Key Person, irrespective of the number of activities being described.

Q21: I work on the CMS experiment and on the DUNE experiment. Do I have to split my 9 pages of research narrative into the Energy and Intensity Frontiers section of the proposal, or can I have a single section describing all of my work?

A21. Because each of the six HEP subprograms will be reviewed separately, Senior/Key Persons with efforts in more than one subprogram must split their narratives according to subprogram and place them in the appropriate section of the application. Please note that the 9-page limit per senior investigator still applies.

Q22: According to the instructions we are allowed six appendices. My institution is involved in several different efforts (*e.g.,* ATLAS, Theory, VRO/LSST). Do we get six appendices for each of these? Or do we break each appendix into sections for different efforts?

A22. The total number of appendices per proposal should not exceed six regardless of the number of efforts. Fewer than six are allowed but no more. Further, the material permitted in the appendices is listed in Section IV of the FOA, and applicants must follow the format and guidelines described there.

Q23: In the proposal, I'd like to attach explicit copies of previous publications or reports in order to provide reviewers with additional information that would help support my research. Can this be included in the Appendices?

A23. No. The format for material contained in each section of the Appendix is listed in Section IV of the FOA. You should not include any copies of previously published research papers, technical notes, and/or reports written for respective experiments or collaborations in the appendices. If you plan to add this material to the Project Narrative instead, this will count against the page limit that applies to the narrative of each Senior/Key Person. Instead, we encourage you to cite the appropriate references in the project narrative, and consequently, list these in Appendix 1 of the application.

Q24: The proposal needs to include a Project Summary/Abstract (Field 7 on the SF-424 R&R form) which contains a summary of the proposed activity suitable for dissemination to the public. My research group is involved in several different efforts (*e.g.,* CMS, Theory, VRO/LSST). Do we submit a Project Summary/Abstract for each?

A24. No, only one Project Summary/Abstract must be submitted per proposal. The Project Summary/Abstract should summarize all efforts.

Q25: In the proposal that I plan to submit to the FY 2025 HEP Comparative Review, request for support of Research Scientist(s) presently in the group will be made. Is there a mechanism to describe the Research Scientist's efforts in the application?

A25. Yes. Research Scientists are considered as Senior/Key Persons and their research efforts should be described in the project narrative. Like other Senior/Key Persons, Research Scientists are allotted up to 9 pages each in the research narrative.

Q26: Who qualifies as a Senior/Key Person?

A26. A Senior/Key person is required to fill out the Senior/Key Person Profile, see Section IV.D.3 ("Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)"), as personnel who are identified by name in Section A of the application's budget, as well as other personnel who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of the project, whether or not salaries are requested. Research Scientists and Consultants should be included as Senior/Key Personnel. However, postdoctoral researchers and students are not included as Senior/Key Personnel but instead are typically listed under Section B of the SF R&R Budget forms.

Q27: In the proposal, what items should or should not be included for the Biographical Sketch for Senior/Key persons described for Section IV.D.3 ("Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)")?

A27. The Office of Science requires the use of the format approved by the National Science Foundation (NSF), which may be generated by the Science Experts Network Curriculum Vita

(SciENcv), a cooperative venture maintained at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/, and is also available at https://nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/nsfapprovedformats/biosketch.pdf. The use of a format required by another agency is intended to reduce the administrative burden to researchers by promoting the use of common formats.

The full content of items for the Biographical Sketch that the project director/principal investigator (PD/PI) and each senior/key person (see Q26, above) is described in section VIII.A.9. The information should include the individual's education and training, research and professional experience, a list of up to 10 publications most closely related to the proposed projects, and up to 5 synergistic activities related to the proposed projects. If the current version of the SciENcv format does not include space for requested information, it should be put on a separate page and appended to the Biographical Sketch. Note that a list of any potential conflicts of interests that can arise with the proposed projects can no longer be part of the Biographical Sketch and must be attached to the application as indicated in the FOA (See also Q29 below). *No personally identifiable information (PII) such as social security number, date or place of birth, citizenship status, home address, and/or any other sensitive information that a merit reviewer will not use of should be given in any part of the application.*

Q28: Should the Biographical Sketch list potential reviewers who might have conflicts of interest or bias toward the proposal?

A28. No, the Office of Science provides an Excel template for submitting such information. Attach this information to Field 12 of the Research and Related Other Project Information Form. See Section VIII.A.10, and the Excel template itself, for instructions on what information should be included.

Q29: In the proposal, what items should or should not be included for the Biographical Sketch for Research Scientist(s) described for Appendix 1?

A29. Biographical sketches for Research Scientists should not be included in Appendix 1. Named Research Scientists whose research would have been described in Appendix 1 prior to FY 2023 should be counted among the Senior/Key Persons (see Q26, above) and their Biographical Sketches should be attached to the appropriate box of their "Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)" form. Biographical sketches for Research Scientists should follow the same format and page constraints as those for all other Senior/Key persons.

Q30: Are there limits on the length of the project period for the proposed research?

A30. DE-FOA-0003177 permits project periods between six months and five years. Consult with your program manager before requesting more than three years.

Q31: When are final applications (*i.e.,* proposals) due?

A31. Proposals to the FY 2025 HEP comparative review process should be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on September 5, 2024.

Q32: When are new awards issued under this FOA expected to start?

A32. Awards are anticipated to be made during the spring of 2025 with project period start dates

on or about April 1, May 1, or June 1, 2025.

Q33: I want to submit a collaborative research proposal with my colleagues at other institutions. Is this allowed? If so, how do I do this?

A33. Yes. Instructions for submitting proposals from multi-institutional teams can be found in Section I.5 of DE-FOA-0003177.

Q34: I submitted a grant application in a previous year that was only partially funded. Can I submit a proposal that will supplement that existing grant?

A34. Yes, but supplemental proposals will not be admitted to the HEP Comparative Review. To request additional funding for an existing grant, supplemental applications must be submitted to the SC Open Call [DE-FOA-0003177]. For best consideration you should submit your supplemental application on or before the HEP comparative review deadline. We note however that funding available to respond to supplemental requests is limited.

Q35: I am applying to the FY 2025 HEP comparative review process. Do I need to include a Data Management Plan (DMP) in the application?

A35. Yes. For complete details, see Section IV, the subsection on Appendix 4 of DE-FOA-0003177.

Q36: Are there any page limits to a DMP required in Appendix 5 of my application?

A36. Yes. The appendix should not exceed 2 pages per HEP research thrust (*e.g.,* ATLAS, CMS, LSST, DUNE, phenomenology, lattice gauge theory, etc.) where support is being requested in the application. Any particular HEP research thrust in an application, where support is being requested, that does not provide a DMP or does not comply with the guidelines given in Section IV, the subsection on Appendix 4 of the FOA, will be declined without review, and therefore, that research thrust cannot be considered for funding.

Q37: I forgot to include a DMP in my proposal and the deadline has passed. Will DOE accept it if I send it by email after the proposal deadline?

A37. No. Contact your program manager about submitting a replacement proposal. If caught early, it is possible that the replacement proposal could be accepted into the HEP Comparative Review.

Q38: How should I report "Current and Pending Support"?

A38. Current and Pending support is no longer provided in a dedicated appendix. Instead, a report of Current and Pending Support for each Senior/Key Person (see Q26, above) should be attached to the appropriate box of the "Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)" form.

All foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment programs must be identified in current and pending support. The Office of Science requires the use of the format approved by the National Science Foundation (NSF), which may be generated by the Science Experts Network Curriculum Vita (SciENcv), a cooperative venture maintained at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/, and is also available at https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/nsfapprovedformats/cps.pdf. The use of a format

required by another agency is intended to reduce the administrative burden to researchers by promoting the use of common formats. Note that the NSF format is not fully compatible with the information requested in the FOA. Please append extra pages with the requested information to the end of the NSF formatted Current and Pending statements.

Section VIII.A.11 of the SC Open Call FOA [DE-FOA-0003177] provides instructions on preparing items to be included for the Current and Pending Support.

Q39: Are letters of recommendation limited to a total or three for the entire proposal or three per research thrust?

A39. Each separate HEP research thrust (*e.g.,* ATLAS, CMS, LSST, DUNE, phenomenology, lattice gauge theory, etc.) may include up to three letters of **collaboration** in Appendix 6 ("Other Attachment"). Letters of **recommendation** are not permitted. Please note the page limit requirement for each letter, as specified in Section IV.D of the FOA.

Q40: Is it required that we include all six appendices?

A40. No. Appendix 6: Other Attachment is optional. All other appendices must be included and numbered as stated in the FOA. If the appendix contents are empty include the appendix with text "N/A".

Q41: For proposals involving AI/ML, the FOA states that "Additional supporting information (if needed) may be included in Appendix 6: Other Attachment." What kind of additional information is permitted?

A41. Appendix 6 is not to be used to extend the research narrative. Instead, for information related to AI/ML in the appendix, you may discuss such topics as the qualifications and training of personnel involved to enable and perform the AI/ML component(s) of the proposed research.

Budget

Q42: Are there minimum or maximum limits on the budget that can be requested?

A42. No.

Q43: What is the typical size of an HEP research award?

A43. There is a wide range of awards typically from $20,000 to over $1,000,000 per year. Usually the size of the award scales roughly with the number of senior investigators on a grant. However, any scaling also depends on the scientific merit review of the proposal and the senior investigator(s) in the application and/or Program Policy Factors specified in Section V of the HEP comparative review FOA.

Q44: What budget form(s) do I have to submit?

A44. You need to submit the standard Research and Related Budget sheets from Grants.gov for the *entire* proposal (for each budget year, plus a cumulative budget page, with justification attached) following the standard procedure described on the Grants.gov website. In addition,

multi-task applications (i.e., applications for support from multiple subprograms and/or support for separate tasks within a single subprogram) must submit R&R Subaward Budget sheets from Grants.gov for each separate task and/or subprogram of the application. See instructions in Sections IV and I.5 of the SC Open Call FOA [DE-FOA-0003177].

Q45: I am applying for support across two or more HEP research subprogram areas. Section IV indicates that I must include additional budget material for the individual subprogram areas. However, the application already contains the material earlier as part of the full submission process. Are these extra budget sheets required?

A45. Yes, we request that you submit R&R Subaward Budget sheets and justifications for each HEP subprogram at the same time that you enter the main application budget information.

Q46: Is cost-sharing required?

A46. No.

Q47: The SC Open Call FOA indicates support and infrastructure provided by the sponsoring institution should be described in the proposal. Do I need a separate budget form and justification for this?

A47. No. The support and infrastructure provided by the sponsoring institution (as appropriate) should be separately described in the research narrative but does NOT have a separate budget. Infrastructure and support activities should be reported on budget sheets as direct and/or indirect costs (whichever is customary at your institution) in each subprogram section of the proposal as noted above.

Q48: My research requires purchase of capital equipment for project R&D, fabrication, and/or operational related activities. Will such requests be supported in proposals to the HEP Comparative Review?

A48. No, requests to support equipment for project R&D, and/or fabrication and experiment operations efforts will not be supported in proposals to the HEP Comparative Review. Such requests may be submitted to the SC Open Call (*i.e.,* DE-FOA-0003177) with appropriate justifications, but will not accepted into the Comparative Review. Requests to support general-use equipment will be considered under the HEP comparative review process.

Q49: My research requires staffing research scientists or engineers for project R&D, fabrication, and/or experiment operational related activities. Will these be supported under the HEP comparative review FOA?

A49. Requests to support engineers and/or research scientists dedicated full-time to operational and/or project related activities for individual experiments will not be supported by the respective experimental frontier research areas in the HEP program. However, if such personnel are conducting physics research related activities, requests to support such efforts, appropriately scaled to the fraction of time on these activities, can be included. Specifically, support for engineering and other technical efforts required for particle detector R&D is included in the Detector R&D subprogram. Final support will be based on the comparative review process (see also the *Review Process* section of this FAQ below and Section V of the FOA).

Review Process

Q50: What are the criteria for acceptance of proposals?

A50. All proposals must be responsive to one or more of the scientific research subprograms detailed in Section I.5 of the FOA and to the provisions detailed in Section IV of the FOA. Proposals determined to be non-responsive will be declined.

Q51: Are there additional requirements?

A51. Provisions for any additional requirement in the proposal are given in the FOA. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the section titled 'Important Updates and Reminders' on pages i-iii of the FOA.

Q52: What are the review criteria for the HEP comparative review FOA?

A52. Both the Initial Review and the Merit Review Criteria are given in Section V of the FOA.

Q53: How will the merit reviews be conducted?

A53. All proposals determined to be responsive to the FOA will be submitted to external experts for merit (peer) review. For the HEP comparative review, the participating subprograms outlined in the FOA will each organize separate mail-in and panel reviews that will compare the relative strengths of the proposals in that subprogram. For each subprogram's review, reviewers will consider those proposals in that subprogram that passed the Initial Review Criteria, as specified in Section V of the FOA. Reviewers will typically evaluate multiple proposals and will be asked to provide a written evaluation for each of these. All proposals will be evaluated by at least three experts. Individual panel members will be requested to rank order these proposals in terms of their overall merit and impact.

Q54: How will the reviews be used by the DOE?

A54. DOE program managers will consider the written evaluations, panel deliberations, as well as the individual rankings of proposals or senior investigators as input to making final decisions on which proposal or investigator will be recommended for funding, and if so, at what level the support will be. Additional considerations such as programmatic priority, alignment with the 2023 Particle Physics Project Prioritization Panel (P5) strategic plan for HEP, overall program balance and continuity, and other program policy factors ma y also be considered into DOE decisions. Written reviewer evaluations will be returned to the applicant after redaction of information that could compromise reviewer confidentiality.

Q55: How can I improve my chances of receiving funding?

A55. Selections are made on the basis of scientific merit (peer) review, alignment with HEP programmatic priorities, program policy factors, the expertise and technical decision of program managers, and the availability of appropriated funds. If you have peer reviews from previously submitted proposals, you are strongly encouraged to read those reviews carefully and to address any deficiencies identified by the reviewers. A critical assessment of draft versions of your current proposal by colleagues or collaborators may also be helpful in improving your proposal.

Q56: Are there any major changes to the Merit Review Criteria?

A56. Since FY 2023, a new merit criterion asking reviewers to assess "Quality and Efficacy of the Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER)" Plan is included. See the FOA for further details. Appendix 5, "Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER) Plan", is provided for applicants to describe their PIER Plan. A PIER Plan is a required component of the proposal and omission will result in declination of the proposal without review.

Additional information about PIER Plans, including Frequently Asked Questions and a link to a recorded public Webinar are available at https://science.osti.gov/grants/Applicant-and-Awardee-Resources/PIER-Plans.

Moreover, a previous Merit Review Criterion, asking reviewers to assess "Alignment of the proposed research to the priorities established in the P5 strategic plan" has been incorporated into the existing criterion concerning "Appropriateness of the Proposed Method or Approach."

HEP Program or System Questions and Agency Contacts

Q57: I am planning to submit an application to the FY 2025 HEP Comparative Review, but I have a question specific to the research subprogram that I am applying within. Who should I contact regarding such inquiries?

A57. If you have further questions regarding specific research program areas, please direct inquiries to the respective DOE technical contact listed in Section I Subsection 5 for "High Energy Physics" of the FOA. For questions about program rules and/or the program review process, please email *sc.hepfoa@science.doe.gov* and reference that your proposal is planned to be submitted to the HEP comparative review process and FOA number [DE-FOA-0003177].

Q58: I am having difficulties accessing Grants.gov or need further assistance with the system. Who should I contact?

A58. For assistance with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov at 1-800-518-4726 or email *support@grants.gov*. DOE cannot answer such inquiries. In your correspondence with Grants.gov, please request them to open a service/help 'ticket' for tracking.

Q59: I am having difficulties accessing PAMS or need further assistance with the system. Who should I contact?

A59. For assistance with PAMS, you may consider any of these options:

- Refer to the "PAMS User Guide" on its website: https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/;
- Contact the PAMS Help Desk at 1-855-818-1846 (toll-free) or 1-301-903-9610; or email *sc.pams-helpdesk@science.doe.gov*. Please consult Section VII of the FOA for the PAMS Help Desk hours of operation. All inquiries should reference this FOA number [DE-FOA-0003177], and in your correspondence, please request the Help Desk to open a service/help 'ticket' for tracking.