

**Financial Assistance  
Notice of Funding Opportunity  
Part 1**



**U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* ENERGY**

**Department of Energy (DOE)  
Idaho Operations Office  
Fiscal Year 2026 Consolidated Innovative Nuclear Research  
Phase II Continuation  
Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: DE-FOA-0003539**

**Letter of Intent due: January 21, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. ET**

**Full Application due: May 20, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. ET**

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# Before You Begin

## Navigating the Notice of Funding Opportunity

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To reduce the burden on applicants in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) process and limit the length of the NOFO information requests DOE has separated the NOFO into two parts.

The NOFO Part 1 describes the specific DOE programmatic goals and evaluation criteria, eligibility, and other components that are specific to each funding opportunity. The NOFO Part 2 includes the fixed DOE requirements that generally do not change from NOFO to NOFO, including standard information for the application phase, expectations for award negotiations, and post-award requirements. Applicants must review both the NOFO Part 1 and the NOFO Part 2 prior to applying. To facilitate navigation, you will find links throughout this document to additional information found in Part 2.

There are several required one-time actions applicants must take before applying to this NOFO. Some of these actions may take several weeks, so it is vital applicants build in enough time to complete them. Failure to complete these actions could interfere with application or negotiation deadlines or the ability to receive an award if selected. If you have previously completed the necessary registrations, make sure your registration is active and up to date. All registrations are free. Please refer to [NOFO Part 2, Get Registered](#), for additional information.

This announcement is published in conjunction with NOFO Part 2 NOFO Part 2 Version 2.0.

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# I. Basic Information

## A. Key Facts

<b>Issuing Agency</b>	Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office
<b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>	Fiscal Year 2026 Consolidated Innovative Nuclear Research Phase II Continuation
<b>Announcement Type</b>	Initial
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	DOE-FOA-0003539
<b>Funding Instrument</b>	Grant
<b>Assistance Listing Number</b>	81.121
<b>Funding Opportunity Description</b>	This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is for <b>2026 Consolidated Innovative Nuclear Research (CINR) Phase II Continuation</b> . It is referred to in this document as the “CINR II” NOFO.
<b>Program Goals &amp; Objective(s)</b>	This CINR II NOFO will provide opportunity for university-led teams that have performed high quality work through the Nuclear Energy University Program (NEUP) to propose new projects that complement and enhance ongoing CINR research through a competitive application and review process.
<b>Eligible Applicants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In accordance with 2 CFR 910.126(b), prime applicant award eligibility is restricted to: U.S. universities and colleges.</li> <li>Other domestic entities including U.S. universities and colleges; for-profit entities; non-profit entities; state and local government entities and Indian Tribes; DOE federally funded research and development centers (FFRDC’s) and non-DOE FFRDCs and Federal Research Agencies are eligible as subrecipients.</li> </ul>
<b>Application Site and Helpdesk</b>	Application Site: <a href="https://proposals.inl.gov/">https://proposals.inl.gov/</a> Helpdesk: <a href="mailto:NEUP@inl.gov">NEUP@inl.gov</a>

### KEY DATES

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Issue Date:**  
December 15, 2025

**Letter of Intent Deadline:**  
January 21, 2026

**Full Application Deadline:**  
May 20, 2026

**Anticipated Selection Notification Date:**  
September 30, 2026

**Anticipated Award Date:**  
February 1, 2027

**Estimated Period of Performance:**  
2 years



## 1. Funding Details

The Department of Energy (DOE) reserves the right to make more or fewer (or even no awards) depending on funding availability and/or the quality of the applications. DOE is under no obligation to pay for any costs associated with preparation or submission of application. DOE reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to the NOFO.

DOE will accept only new applications directly tied to a currently active CINR project.

### Single Topic Area

- Approximate total available funding: \$3,000,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026
- Approximate number of awards: 0 - 4
- Approximate dollar amount of individual awards: \$300,000-\$1,000,000
- Approximate Research Experience for Undergraduate (REU) total available funds: \$200,000
- Minimum cost share required: Cost Sharing is not required, but is encouraged
- Approximate award project period: 24 months (2 years)
- Anticipated length of budget periods: 24 months (2 years)

## 2. Period of Performance

DOE - Office of Nuclear Energy (NE) anticipates making awards for up to two (2) years for each CINR II Project.

Assuming NE announces awards under this CINR II NOFO on September 30, 2026, funded projects should begin February 1, 2027. Proposing different start dates for the project and budget periods may make the application ineligible for an award. If a different project start date is necessary for the successful performance of the project, it must be fully documented and justified in the application for consideration by NE.

## B. Executive Summary

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The CINR II NOFO provides opportunities for university led teams that have performed high quality work through the Nuclear Energy University Program (NEUP) CINR Research & Development (R&D) to propose new projects that complement and enhance ongoing NEUP research through a competitive application and review process. This CINR II process is executed through NEUP. NEUP supports University-based infrastructure and R&D (including Integrated Research Projects-IRP) and new this year -- an optional Research Experience for Undergraduate (REU) supplement in areas relevant to the NE mission.

NE's mission is to advance nuclear energy science and technology to meet U.S. energy, environmental, and economic needs. NE has identified the following goals to address challenges in the nuclear energy sector, help realize the potential of advanced technology, and leverage the unique role of the government in spurring innovation:

- Enable continued operation of existing U.S. nuclear reactors
- Enable deployment of advanced nuclear reactors
- Develop advanced nuclear fuel cycles
- Maintain U.S. leadership in nuclear energy technology

All applications submitted under the CINR II NOFO must demonstrate a strong tie to at least one of these four mission priorities and highlight how it supports DOE priorities. Applications



focused specifically in areas not of interest to the NE mission, such as fusion energy, medical physics, nuclear forensics, or environmental management, will not be reviewed or considered.

NE conducts crosscutting nuclear energy R&D and associated infrastructure support activities to develop innovative technologies that offer the promise of dramatically improved performance for its mission needs as stated above, while maximizing the impact of NE resources.

## C. Agency Contact Information

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U.S. Department of Energy  
Idaho Operations Office  
1955 Fremont Avenue  
Idaho Falls, ID 83415

For questions relating to this specific NOFO, please send emails to [NEUP@inl.gov](mailto:NEUP@inl.gov).

**DISCLAIMER:** Applicants are discouraged from submitting information considered proprietary unless it is deemed essential for proper evaluation of the application. If the application contains information that the applicant organization considers to be trade secrets, information that is commercial or financial, or information that is privileged or confidential, the pages containing that information must be identified as specified in the application instructions. When such information is included in the application, it will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act, with the understanding that the information will be used or disclosed only for evaluation of the application. The information contained in the application will be protected by DOE from unauthorized disclosure, consistent with the need for merit review of applications of financial assistance awards to assure the integrity of the competitive process and the accuracy and completeness of the information. If a federal financial assistance award is made as a result of or in connection with an application, the federal government has the right to use or disclose the information to the extent authorized by law. This restriction does not limit the federal government's right to use the information if it is obtained without restriction from another source.

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## II. Eligibility

To be considered for substantive evaluation, an applicant's submission must meet the criteria set forth below. If the application does not meet these eligibility requirements, it will be considered ineligible and removed from further evaluation and ineligible for any award. DOE will not make eligibility determinations for potential applicants prior to the date on which applications to this NOFO must be submitted. The decision whether to apply in response to this NOFO lies solely with the applicant. The information included here is specific to eligibility requirements for this NOFO. For eligibility requirements applicable to all NOFOs, please consult the [NOFO Part 2, Eligibility](#).

### A. Eligible Applicants

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#### 1. Restricted Eligibility

In accordance with 2 CFR § 910.126(b), Competition, DOE is restricting prime applicant eligibility for this CINR II NOFO to U.S. universities and colleges. National laboratory and industry entities can participate as sub-recipients. Restricting eligibility ensures that NEUP supports university research, collaborations with industry and national laboratories, and training and educating the next generation nuclear workforce.

CINR II applications have the following specific restrictions:

The application must originate from the current CINR lead university/institution. Research consortiums may be composed of various institutions including academia, national laboratories, non-profit research institutes, industry/utilities, and international partners. Research teams should strive to achieve the synergies that arise when individuals with forefront expertise in different methodologies, technologies, disciplines, and areas of content knowledge approach a problem together, overcoming impasses by considering the issue from fresh angles and discovering novel solutions.

While international partners are encouraged to participate, no U.S. Government funding will be provided to entities incorporated outside of the U.S. or to a foreign government or any entity owned or controlled by a foreign government. Foreign government ownership means direct ownership of the applicant entity, its parent organization (e.g., trust, holding company, corporation, etc.), and any and all other entities in the corporate structure regardless of the applicant entity's place of incorporation and operation. NE will evaluate the benefit and contribution of any such proposed partnerships as part of its evaluation of the relevancy to the NE mission.

This CINR II NOFO provides sub-recipient award opportunities to U.S.-owned entities as defined in 2 CFR 910.124.

#### 2. Domestic Entities

The proposed prime recipient and subrecipient(s) must be domestic entities. To qualify as a domestic entity, the entity must be organized, chartered, or incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of a particular state or territory of the U.S. or under the laws of the U.S.; have majority domestic ownership and control; and have a physical place of business in the U.S.



The following types of domestic entities are eligible to participate as a **prime recipient** of this NOFO:

- U.S. universities and colleges.<sup>1</sup>

The following types of domestic entities are eligible to participate as a **subrecipient** of this NOFO:

- U.S. universities and colleges;
- For-profit organizations;
- Nonprofit organizations<sup>2</sup>;
- State and local governmental entities; and
- Indian Tribes, as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, 25 U.S.C. § 5304.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Foreign Entity Participation

In general, foreign entities are not eligible to apply as a recipient or subrecipient. In limited circumstances, DOE may approve a waiver to allow a foreign entity to participate as a subrecipient.

If the applicant seeks to include a foreign entity as a subrecipient, the applicant must submit a separate explicit written waiver request in the application for each proposed foreign subrecipient. Please see [NOFO Part 2, Application Content Requirements](#) for the requirements for submission of a foreign entity waiver request. The applicant does not have the right to appeal DOE's decision concerning a waiver request.

No U.S. Government funding will be provided to entities incorporated outside of the U.S. or to a foreign government or any entity owned or controlled by a foreign government. Foreign government ownership means direct ownership of the applicant entity, its parent organization (e.g., trust, holding company, corporation, etc.), and all other entities in the corporate structure regardless of the applicant entity's place of incorporation and operation. NE will evaluate the benefit and contribution of any such proposed partnerships as part of its evaluation of the relevancy to the NE mission. See [NOFO Part I, Section II A.1 Restricted Eligibility](#).

#### 3.1 Incorporated Consortia

Incorporated consortia, which may include domestic and foreign entities, are eligible to apply for funding as a subrecipient. For consortia incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of a State or territory of the United States, please refer to [NOFO Part I, Section II A.2 Domestic Entities](#) above.

#### 3.2 Unincorporated Consortia

Unincorporated consortia, which may include domestic and foreign entities, must designate one member of the consortium to serve as the prime recipient/consortium representative (U.S. university).

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<sup>1</sup> "U.S. Universities and Colleges" is defined consistent with the meaning of "institution of higher education" as set forth in 20 U.S.C. 1001(a).

<sup>2</sup> Nonprofit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 2005, are not eligible to apply for funding.

<sup>3</sup> "Indian Tribe," for the purposes of this NOFO and as defined in in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act ([25 U.S.C. § 5304](#)), means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act ([85 Stat. 688](#)) [[43 U.S.C. § 1601, et seq.](#)], which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the U.S. to Indians because of their status as Indians.



## 4. Participant Limitations

Participation of the following entities are limited as follows:

- DOE FFRDCs<sup>4</sup> are eligible to apply for funding as a subrecipient but are not eligible to apply as a recipient.
- Non-DOE FFRDCs are eligible to participate as a subrecipient but are not eligible to apply as a recipient.
- Federal agencies and instrumentalities (other than DOE) are eligible to participate as a subrecipient but are not eligible to apply as a recipient.
- Entities banned from doing business with the U.S. government such as entities debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in federal programs are not eligible to apply.

## 5. Performance of Work in the United States

All work for the awards under this NOFO must be performed in the United States.

## 6. Ineligible Participants

The following entities are ineligible for participation in this NOFO as a recipient, subrecipient, or subcontractor.

- In accordance with 2 CFR 200.214, entities banned from doing business with the U.S. government such as entities debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in federal programs.
- Entities identified on Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control Treasury's Sanctions Program Specially Designated Nationals list are prohibited from doing business with the United States government and are not eligible. See [OFAC - Sanctions List Service \(treas.gov\)](https://www.treas.gov/sanctions).
- Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995, are not eligible to apply for funding.

## 7. Entity of Concern Prohibition

Entities of Concern are prohibited from participating in projects selected under this NOFO (see [NOFO Part 2, Eligibility, Other Eligibility Information, Entity of Concern Prohibition](#) section for details and definitions).

## B. Research Experience for Undergraduates Supplement Eligibility

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All R&D and IRP applications can request a REU supplement as part of their application with the following restrictions:

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<sup>4</sup> FFRDCs are public-private partnerships that conduct research for the U.S. government. A listing of FFRDCs can be found at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/ffrdclist/>.



- REU activities should not exceed \$50,000.
- The term of the REU supplement cannot exceed that of the associated award.
- Student stipends should be comparable to other REU programs per student per week.
  - Amounts for academic-year projects should be comparable to this number on a pro rata basis. Typically, students working during the academic year are paid on a per hour basis.
- Total costs for a summer REU program, including all allowable direct (student) costs (e.g., stipend, travel, housing, etc.) should be comparable to other REU programs. However, exceptional circumstances may exceed comparable programs and need to be approved by DOE.

Students can participate in a funded REU supplement under the following circumstances:

- Student eligibility is restricted to U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or permanent residents of the United States.
- An undergraduate student is a student who is enrolled in a degree program (part-time or full-time) leading to a baccalaureate or associate degree.
- Students transferring from one college to another and are enrolled in neither institution during the intervening summer are eligible to participate.
- High school graduates who have been accepted at an undergraduate institution who have not yet started their studies are eligible.
- Students who have received their bachelor's degree and are no longer enrolled as an undergraduate are not eligible.

## C. Limitation on Number of Applications Eligible for Review

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CINR II applications have the following restrictions:

- Only one CINR II application is allowed per active CINR project.
- Applications should be made by the lead institution of a currently active CINR award that concludes between January 1, 2026, and September 30, 2026.
- The lead PI on the active CINR award and the CINR II award should be the same. Extenuating circumstances where a new PI at the lead institution needs to be identified and must be pre-approved by DOE.
- Extenuating circumstances where a PI has changed or will be changing institutions, may be considered and must be pre-approved by DOE.

**NOTE:** Applications submitted to this NOFO will be awarded to the U.S. universities and colleges listed and will typically not be transferred to another institution if the PI changes institutions. However, DOE may consider PI requests for transferring or subawarding an award from the original institution to the PI's new institution.



## D. Cost Sharing

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Applicants are expected to follow through on the estimated cost share commitments proposed in their applications if selected for award negotiations. Please refer to the [NOFO Part 2, Eligibility](#) for more information on Cost Sharing.

### 1. Cost Share Requirements

Cost sharing is encouraged but not required under this NOFO. Any cost sharing proposal must be included in the application. Applicants are bound by the cost share proposed in their application if selected for award negotiations.

If cost share is proposed, the cost share must come from non-federal sources unless otherwise allowed by law. The cost share percentage is calculated by dividing the cost share by the total allowable project costs for the award where the total allowable project costs include government share (including FFRDC costs if applicable) and cost share. To help applicants calculate proper cost share amounts, DOE has included a cost share information sheet and sample cost share calculation in the [NOFO Part 2, Eligibility—Cost Sharing, Cost Share Calculation Examples](#).

### 2. Unallowable Cost Share Sources, NOFO Specific

The unallowable cost share sources identified here are specific to this announcement. Refer to [NOFO Part 2, Eligibility--Cost Sharing, Unallowable Cost Share Sources](#) for unallowable cost share sources applicable to all NOFOs.

## E. FFRDC Eligibility Criteria

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### 1. DOE and Non-DOE FFRDCs as a Subrecipient

As long as they have no conflict, DOE and non-DOE FFRDCs may be proposed as a subrecipient on another entity's application subject to the following guidelines:

#### 1.1. Authorization for non-DOE FFRDCs

The federal agency sponsoring the FFRDC must authorize in writing the use of the FFRDC on the proposed project and this authorization must be submitted with the application. The use of a FFRDC must be consistent with its authority under its award.

#### 1.2 Authorization for DOE FFRDCs

The cognizant Contracting Officer for the FFRDC must authorize in writing the use of the FFRDC on the proposed project and this authorization must be submitted with the application. The following wording is acceptable for this authorization:

*“Authorization is granted for the Fill-in 1: [Name] Laboratory to participate in the proposed project. The work proposed for the laboratory is consistent with or complimentary to the missions of the laboratory, will not adversely impact execution of the DOE/NNSA assigned programs at the laboratory, and will not place the laboratory in direct competition with the domestic private sector.”*

**NOTE:** Letter of Authorization for DOE/NNSA FFRDCs is required for all National Laboratory participants listed on the application regardless of funding level or tier.

**NOTE:** FFRDC individuals acting in an advisory role only to the project should not be named in the application or listed as a collaborator.



**NOTE:** The FFRDC's participation in the proposed project is subject to the terms and conditions of its management and operating (M&O) contract with DOE. Participants requiring access to the FFRDC facilities are subject to the FFRDC's policy and DOE regulations.

**NOTE:** If all FFRDC/non-FFRDC management has been notified of all submissions and acknowledgment of all participants are identified, individual Letters of Authorization may be submitted or submitted as blanket permission. Identification of participants by name is to be included in the body or as a separate list.

### ***1.3 Funding, Cost Share, and Subaward with FFRDCs***

The value of and funding for the FFRDC portion of the work will not normally be included in the award. DOE FFRDCs participating as a subrecipient on a project will be funded directly through the DOE Work Authorization process in accordance with DOE O 412.1A. Non-DOE FFRDCs participating as a subrecipient will be funded through an interagency agreement with the sponsoring agency. For example, if an award is made for \$800,000 and \$50,000 is budgeted for a FFRDC subrecipient, the prime applicant would receive \$750,000 and the FFRDC would receive \$50,000 directly from the budget office.

Although the FFRDC portion of the work is excluded from the award, the applicant's cost share requirement will be based on the total cost of the project, including the applicant's, the subrecipient's, and the FFRDC's portions of the project.

All DOE FFRDCs are required to enter into a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement<sup>5</sup> (CRADA) or, if the role of the DOE FFRDC is limited to technical assistance and intellectual property is not anticipated to be generated from the DOE FFRDC's work, a Technical Assistance Agreement (TAA), with at least the recipient. A fully executed CRADA or TAA must be in place or be compliant with a Master Scope of Work process prior to the FFRDC starting work directly allocable to the FA award.

A CRADA is used to ensure accountability for project work and provide the appropriate management of IP, e.g., data protection and background IP. A Data Management and Sharing Plan is not suited for this purpose.

The recipient will be the responsible authority regarding the settlement and satisfaction of all contractual and administrative issues, including but not limited to disputes and claims arising out of any agreement between the recipient and the FFRDC.

### ***1.4 Limit on FFRDC Effort***

The scope of work to be performed by the FFRDC contractor may not be more significant than the scope of work to be performed by the prime applicant.

The effort by non-universities and colleges, in aggregate, shall not exceed 20% of the total project cost.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A cooperative research and development agreement is a contractual agreement between a national laboratory contractor and a private company or university to work together on research and development. For more information, see <https://www.energy.gov/gc/downloads/doe-cooperative-research-and-development-agreements>

<sup>6</sup> Total project cost is the sum of the government share, including FFRDC costs if applicable, and the recipient share of project costs.



## III. Program Description

### A. Program Purpose

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NE's mission is to advance nuclear energy science and technology to meet U.S. energy, environmental, and economic needs. NE has identified the following priorities to address challenges in the nuclear energy sector, help realize the potential of advanced technology, and leverage the unique role of the government in spurring innovation:

- Enable continued operation of existing U.S. nuclear reactors
- Enable deployment of advanced nuclear reactors
- Develop advanced nuclear fuel cycles
- Maintain U.S. leadership in nuclear energy technology

NE conducts crosscutting nuclear energy research and development (R&D) and associated infrastructure support activities to develop innovative technologies that offer the promise of dramatically improved performance for its mission needs as stated above, while maximizing the impact of NE resources.

NE strives to promote integrated and collaborative research conducted by national laboratories, universities, industry, and international partners under the direction of NE's programs; deploy innovative nuclear energy technologies to the market; and optimize the benefits of nuclear energy.

The NOFO is focused on continuing promising research pathways by soliciting applications that directly complement and extend research that has previously been awarded research through NEUP. CINR awarded projects, including R&D and IRPs, that conclude between January 1, 2026, and September 30, 2026, are eligible to apply. Nuclear Science User Facilities (NSUF) Access Only projects are **NOT** eligible to apply to this CINR II funding opportunity. Instead, they should apply to the NSUF Access Only process under the separate FY 2026 CINR NOFO for additional access to NSUF capabilities.

### B. Program Goals and Objective

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NE is seeking applications from U.S. universities and colleges as the prime applicant and national laboratories and industry as a subrecipient to conduct nuclear energy-related research to help meet the objectives of the major NE funded research areas.

All research must be non-proprietary and awarded projects must publish their results at the DOE, Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI) website for public access (<https://www.osti.gov>).

Specifically, this CINR II NOFO contains the following three areas:

- 1) U.S. University-led R&D Projects  
Optional Research Experience for Undergraduates Supplement available (as described below)
- 2) U.S. University-led Mission Supporting/Strategic Needs R&D Projects



Optional Research Experience for Undergraduates Supplement available (as described below)

3) U.S. University-led Integrated Research Projects (IRPs)

Optional Research Experience for Undergraduates Supplement available (as described below)

## 1. Research Experience for Undergraduates Supplement

CINR II is introducing a new addition to this NOFO this year. The objective of the Research Experience for Undergraduates Program (REU) is to promote undergraduate university-based research opportunities in nuclear energy research and development. This initiative aims to incentivize CINR II projects to incorporate both on-campus and off-campus students in research activities.

This program is intended to promote nuclear energy as a viable undergraduate option, providing them with valuable knowledge, research experience, and connections with faculty interested in nuclear-energy related research. The REU Supplement is not intended to be used for internships at a national laboratory. The REU Supplement is capped at \$50,000 for each project and is an optional request.

Based on the competitive nature of CINR II projects, REU components of CINR II projects will be proposed as part of the research proposal. Applicants should provide as many details as possible about their plan, including how they would structure the opportunity, how they would recruit and evaluate students, and how undergraduates would be incorporated into the research. Additional details about how the REU program will be conducted will be left for the project execution phase to allow for adjustments to the plan during project execution

Applicants will indicate their intention for supplementing their application with an REU by selecting that they are ‘participating in an REU supplement’ during the Letter of Intent (LOI) and Full-application phases. If REU funds are requested, an REU plan will be required as part of the full application. If an applicant selects that they are “participating in an REU supplement” during the LOI, they are not required to make that same selection during the full application. Applicants may split the REU portion between the prime applicant and any proposed subrecipients.

The REU supplement portion of the award is expected to fall under participant support costs as defined by 2 CFR 200:

Participant support costs mean direct costs that support participants (see definition for *Participant* in 2 CFR 200.1) and their involvement in a Federal award, such as stipends, subsistence allowances, travel allowances, registration fees, temporary dependent care, and per diem paid directly to or on behalf of participants.

This program will be split into two different focus areas:

1. REU funds may be provided to support on-campus undergraduate students. The experience would need to be structured, for a specific duration (e.g., a semester) and be focused on an active NEUP project. The undergraduate would be paid on an “on-effort basis” (pro-rata).
2. REU summer programs to support an undergraduate summer research program for students from other universities.



The REU is research training experience paid via a stipend, not employment (work) paid with a salary or wage. In the REU program, the student's training consists of closely mentored independent research. The funds received by students may be taxable income under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and may also be subject to state or local taxes.

**NOTE:** REU supplements will be considered as part of the overall technical approach and will receive consideration based on how well students are integrated into the project in Criterion 3 of the full application review.

## C. Expected Performance Goals

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CINR II projects, by their nature as extensions of current research direction, are shorter in duration and smaller in scope than original CINR projects. CINR II projects should provide a logical path between the current research scope of the active CINR project and the new scope in a way that creates a seamless transition between the two projects.

The original CINR project and the CINR II project are **separate** competitive DOE awards and CINR application limitations do not apply to CINR II applications. Although the research scope should transition seamlessly, the original CINR award will conclude between January 1, 2026, and September 30, 2026, and the CINR II project will begin in Winter 2027. Remaining funds from the original CINR project cannot be transferred to the CINR II project award. CINR projects that are concluding on a no-cost time extension (NCE) can apply for a CINR II award. The active CINR project and a CINR II award can have minimal overlap, typically no more than two months.

NE anticipates that CINR II projects will be awarded so that there is no gap in funding between the original CINR project and the newly awarded CINR II project. If there is a gap in funding due to the project ending before CINR II project start date, the PI must provide a clear mitigation and justification plan for how the project will restart after a short lapse in funding.

NE reserves the right to respond to potential shifts in priorities during FY 2026 that may be driven by events, policy developments, or Congressional/budget direction. DOE-NE will factor such considerations into decisions related to the timing and scale of award announcements associated with this NOFO.

## D. Applications Specifically Not of Interest

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The following types of applications will be deemed non-responsive and will not be reviewed or considered (Please also refer to the Responsiveness Review section below):

- Applications that fall outside the technical parameters specified in Program Goals and Objectives above.
- Applications focused specifically in areas not of interest to the NE mission, such as fusion energy, medical physics, nuclear forensics, or environmental management.

## E. Major Funded Research Program Areas

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For more information on current NE programs, please visit the following links:

- **Fuel Cycle Technologies:** [Fuel Cycle Technologies | Department of Energy](#)
- **Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN):** <https://gain.inl.gov/>



- **NEET Crosscutting Technologies:** <https://www.energy.gov/ne/nuclear-energy-enabling-technologies-neet>
- **Nuclear Energy University Program (NEUP):** <https://neup.inl.gov>
- **Reactor Technologies:** <https://www.energy.gov/ne/nuclear-reactor-technologies>
- **Spent Fuel and Waste Disposition:** <https://www.energy.gov/ne/spent-fuel-and-waste-disposition>

## F. Statutory Authority

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The programmatic authorizing statute is Section 951(a) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, as codified at 42 U.S.C. § 16271(a). Additionally, 42 U.S.C. § 16274 and 31 U.S.C. § 6304 apply to this NOFO.

Awards made under this announcement will fall under the purview of 2 CFR Part 200 as adopted and supplemented by 2 CFR Part 910.

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## IV. Application Content and Form

This section includes application information specific to this NOFO Part 1. Refer to the **NOFO Part 2, Application Content and Form** for standard information that applies to all DOE NOFOs such as formatting and content requirements, and funding restrictions.

### A. Summary

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The application process includes two submission phases: Letter of Intent (LOI) and invited Full Application.

All non-budget documentation (use templates where provided) is to be prepared using standard 8.5" x 11" paper with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left, right) and a font size no smaller 11 point. This is a requirement for **all** pages included in the document (i.e., table of contents, references, etc.). The preferred file format is Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) for all documents except for spreadsheets. All spreadsheets are to be uploaded in Excel file format to the online application. Do **NOT** lock any cells in the spreadsheet.

Applicants must comply with all pertinent page limitations. Any text (including references and data tables) in a document that does not adhere to the requirements listed above (except graphics, graphs, charts, and equations) will be removed from the document and will not be reviewed. DOE reserves the right to dismiss applications that violate formatting requirements. Signature blocks must be signed by the designated official.

Documents should be saved using the document naming suggestion at the bottom of each document description. The tracking ID will automatically be generated by the application system and can be found at the top of the application form under "Tracking ID."

DOE reserves the right to dismiss applications which it deems, after initial review, lacking enough detail for reviewers to adequately judge technical merit. Applications submitted with corrupt, incomplete, or incorrect files may be dismissed without further review.

Application Submission Phase	Eligibility for Submission
Letter of Intent	Required to be submitted by the specified due date and time to be eligible to submit an application for comprehensive merit review.
Full Application	Invited applications must be submitted by the specified due date and time to be eligible for comprehensive merit review.

### B. Letter of Intent

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Applicants must submit a letter of intent (LOI) by the specified due date and time to be eligible to submit an application. Applicants who do not submit a letter of intent cannot submit an application. Letters of intent will be used by DOE to plan for the merit review process. The submission should not contain any proprietary or sensitive business information. Letters of intent will be used for down-selection purposes and commit an applicant to apply. Applicants are not bound to the statements made in the letter of intent; it is reasonable for project partners, locations, or other factors to change during the application development process.



Each applicant must provide the following information as part of the letter of intent:

Letter of Intent Content Requirements	
<b>Project Title</b>	The project title should be consistently used across other application documents.
<b>Related CINR award information</b>	Tracking ID number, DOE Contract number, title, and year awarded
<b>Technical Area</b>	Applicable technical area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R&amp;D</li> <li>• IRP</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Complete legal name of the lead organization.
<b>Applicant Organization Type</b>	Academic
<b>Recipient Technical Point of Contact (POC)</b>	Name and title for the Principal Investigator (PI)

The letter of intent includes a brief project description, which should provide an explanation of the proposed project. Applicants must include the following information:

Letter of Intent Requirements	
<b>Project Description</b>	A Letter of Intent template is available under <a href="#">Documents</a> section on NEUP website or via this link: <a href="#">Letter of Intent Template</a>
<b>Page Limit</b>	5-page limit; 11-point font
<b>Senior/Key Team Members (Subrecipients)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List individuals who contribute in a substantive, measurable way to the execution of the proposed project and their proposed roles.</li> <li>• List all subrecipients locations (addresses).</li> </ul>
<b>Other Collaborator (including Proposed Vendors or subcontractors)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List all vendors or subcontractors planned for the award.</li> <li>• List all other collaborator locations (addresses).</li> </ul>



<b>Project Description</b>	<p>Description of the proposed project covering following items within limitation of 5 page and minimum font size 11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description of current progress on the current CINR award and expected deliverables in the final 12 months of the project.</li> <li>• Summary of milestone completion, schedule, and performance of the current award.</li> <li>• A description of the new scope proposed as the CINR II portion of the project.</li> <li>• A description of how the two projects would be integrated together and the importance of direct follow-on to the current research objectives.</li> <li>• Identification of existing/new key/senior personnel that will make research contributions to the new scope of work.</li> <li>• The importance of the work to the NE mission.</li> <li>• Budget estimates and anticipated project duration for CINR II.</li> </ul>
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## C. Full Application Content Requirements

Applicants must provide all the information requested. Forms and optional templates may be used to provide the information in accordance with the instructions below. Files that are attached must be in PDF format, unless otherwise specified in this announcement. Optional document templates can be found on the NEUP.gov website by clicking the '[Documents](#)'.

You must save the Full Application before a tracking ID number will be generated.

### 1. Summary of Application Requirements

Full Application Requirements			
Component	File Format	Page Limit	File Name
Conflict-of-Interest	Check box	n/a	Certified by Lead Applicant for all Participants
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII SF424 [Tracking ID#].pdf
Research & Related Other Project Information	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII R&R Other [Tracking ID#].pdf
Project Summary/Abstract File	PDF	2 pages	FY26 PhaseII Project Abstract [Tracking ID#].pdf



<b>Technical Volume (previously Project Narrative)</b>	PDF	10 pages	FY26 PhaseII Technical Volume [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Transition Plan</b>	PDF	5 pages	FY26 PhaseII Transition Plan [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) plan</b>	PDF	2 pages	FY26 PhaseII REU Plan [Tracking ID#]
<b>Resumes (Lead Applicant and Senior/Key Personnel)</b>	PDF	3 pages each	FY26 PhaseII CV [Last Name] [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Current and Pending Support (for each covered individual)</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII CPS [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Benefit of Collaboration</b>	PDF	4 pages	FY26 PhaseII BOC [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Capabilities</b>	PDF	2 pages	FY26 PhaseII Capabilities [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Letters of Commitment and Support</b>	PDF	1 page each	FY26 PhaseII Letters [Organization] [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Impacted Indian Tribes Documentation</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII Impacted Indian Tribes [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Research and Related (R&amp;R) Lead Budget Form</b>	MS Excel	n/a	FY26 PhaseII RR Budget [Tracking ID#].xlsx
<b>Lead Budget Justification</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII Budget Justification [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Subrecipient Budget Form</b>	MS Excel	n/a	FY26 PhaseII Subrecipient Budget [Tracking ID#].xlsx
<b>Subrecipient Budget Justification</b>	MS Excel	n/a	FY26 PhaseII Subrecipient Budget Justification [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Work Proposal for DOE FFRDC</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII FFRDC [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Authorization for Non-DOE or DOE FFRDCs</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII CO Authorization [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Coordination and Management Plan</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII CMP [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Lobbying Activities</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII SF-LLL [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Transparency of Foreign Connections (for all individuals)</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII TFC [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Potentially Duplicative Funding Notice (if applicable)</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII PDFN [Tracking ID#].pdf
<b>Project/Performance Site Location(s)</b>	PDF	n/a	FY26 PhaseII Site Location [Tracking ID#].pdf

For complete details on the content and documents required, please refer to [NOFO Part 2, Application Content and Form](#).



## 2. Covered Individual Definition, Designation, and Responsibility

Several of the Application Content Requirements listed below and in the **NOFO Part 2** are required of covered individuals.

For the purposes of this NOFO, a Covered Individual means an individual who (a) contributes in a substantive, meaningful way to the development or execution of the scope of work of a project proposed for funding by DOE, and (b) is designated as a covered individual by DOE.

DOE designates as covered individuals any principal investigator (PI); project director (PD); co-principal investigator (Co-PI); co-project director (Co-PD); project manager; and any individual regardless of title that is functionally performing as a PI, PD, Co-PI, Co-PD, or project manager. Status as a consultant, graduate (master's or PhD) student, or postdoctoral associate does not automatically disqualify a person from being designated as a "covered individual" if they meet the definition in (a) above.

The applicant is responsible for assessing the applicability of (a) above, against each person listed on the application. Further, the applicant is responsible for identifying any such individual to DOE for designation as a covered individual, if not already designated by DOE as described above.

The applicant's submission of a current and pending support disclosure and/or biosketch/resume for a particular person serves as an acknowledgement that DOE designates that person as a covered individual.

DOE may further designate covered individuals during award negotiations or the award period of performance.

A collaborator is an individual that makes a defined, material contribution that is critical to the success of the project and/or contributing to joint publications. Any individual appearing in the project summary, technical narrative, benefit of collaboration, coordination and management plan, or budget documents should be listed directly as collaborators on the application form. All collaborators must be added to the application form with complete information. Any individuals that do not meet these criteria should not be listed as collaborators on the application.

NE has two designations for collaborators and personnel: 1) key/senior personnel (covered individual) and 2) "other personnel/collaborator". Document requirements may vary depending on whether an individual is designated as "key/senior personnel" or as a "other collaborator". Key/senior personnel should be listed in the first "collaborators" section on the application form. Other collaborators or personnel should be listed on the second "collaborators" section of the application form.

Refer to the application requirements to provide the necessary information for all key/senior personnel.

Applicants must have the full consent of each collaborator prior to listing them on an application form. Non-university collaborators and personnel, in composite, can have no more than 20% of the total funds provided by the Government. An employee with a joint appointment between a university and a DOE national laboratory can apply through the U.S. universities and colleges if the institution pays his or her salary and provides his or her benefits.

## 3. Technical Volume (previously-Project Narrative)

The Technical Volume must conform to the following content and form requirements. This volume must address the technical review criteria as discussed in [Technical Review Criteria](#).



Applicants must provide sufficient citations and references to the primary research literature to justify the claims and approaches made in the Technical Volume. However, DOE and reviewers are under no obligation to review cited sources.

The Technical Volume to the application may not be more than 10 pages, including the cover page, table of contents, and all citations, charts, graphs, maps, photos, or other graphics, and must include all information below. The applicant should consider the weighting of each of the technical review criteria (see [Technical Review Criteria](#)) when preparing the Technical Volume.

The Technical Volume should clearly describe and expand upon information provided in the LOI.

Applicant shall provide a written narrative addressing the strategy to execute R&D. The documentation provided shall include the items specified below:

- Application title.
- Identification of associated CINR award by tracking ID #, DOE Contract Number, title, and year awarded.
- Project Objectives: Provide a clear, concise statement of specific objectives/aims of the proposed project in support of the NE mission.
- Proposed scope description.
- Logical path to accomplishing scope, including descriptions of tasks. This section will provide a clear, concise statement of the specific objectives/aims of the proposed project.
- This section should be formatted to address each of the merit review criterion and sub-criterion. Provide sufficient information so that reviewers will be able to evaluate the application in accordance with these merit review criteria. DOE has the right to evaluate and consider only those applications that separately address each of the merit review criteria.
- Relevance and Outcomes/Impacts: This section will provide a clear explanation of its importance and relevance to the NE mission as described in the objectives in Part I Section A.
- Schedule: Define timelines for executing the specified work, including all important activities or phases of the project. Successful applicants must use this schedule when reporting project progress.
- Milestones and deliverables.
- Type/Description of facilities that will be used to execute the scope (if applicable).
- The roles and responsibilities of each partnering organization in the execution of the work. Describe the role and work to be performed by each participant/investigator, the business arrangements between the applicant and participants, and how the various efforts will be integrated and managed.
- Unique challenges to accomplishing the work and planned mitigations.
- Information, data, plans, or drawings necessary to explain the details of the application.
- Page limits include cover page, table of contents, charts, graphs, maps, photographs, tables, references and other pictorial presentations while complying with the document format instructions.



## D. Funding Restrictions

Program-specific funding restrictions applicable to awards funded under this NOFO are identified below. Standard funding restrictions are described in the [NOFO Part 2, Funding Restrictions](#) section.

Applicable Funding Restrictions		
Title	Location	Additional Information
<b>Non-University or College Sub-Recipients</b>	NOFO Part 1,	Non-University or College collaborators, in aggregate, are restricted to 20% of total project funding.
<b>Allowable Costs</b>	NOFO Part 2	Applicable to awards made under this NOFO.
<b>Pre-Award Costs</b>	NOFO Part 2	Applicable to awards made under this NOFO.
<b>Foreign Travel</b>	NOFO Part 2	Foreign Travel is allowed for awards made under this NOFO. Foreign travel must be included in the budget justification. Any foreign travel not listed in the budget justification will not be approved upon issuance of the grant.
<b>Lobbying</b>	NOFO Part 2	Applicable to awards made under this NOFO.
<b>Equipment and Supplies</b>	NOFO Part 2	Purchasing American-made equipment and supplies is applicable to this award.
<b>Davis-Bacon Act Requirements</b>	NOFO Part 2	If applicable to awards made under this NOFO.
<b>Build America Buy America Requirements for Infrastructure Projects</b>	NOFO Part 1	If applicable to awards made under this NOFO.

### 1. Build America Requirement for Infrastructure Projects

Awards funded through this NOFO that are for, or contain, construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of public infrastructure in the United States undertaken by applicable recipient types, require that:

- All iron, steel, and manufactured products used in the infrastructure project are produced in the United States; and
- All construction materials used in the infrastructure project are manufactured in the United States.

Please refer to the [NOFO Part 2, Buy America Requirements for Infrastructure Projects; Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials](#) and [2 CFR Part 184](#) to determine whether the Buy America Requirement applies and if they should consider the application of the Buy America Requirement in the proposed project's budget



and/or schedule. (Note that the Buy America Requirement does not apply to prime recipients that are For-Profit Entities.)

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## V. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

There are several one-time actions applicants must take before applying to this NOFO. Some of these may take several weeks, so it is vital applicants build in enough time to complete them. Failure to complete these actions could interfere with application or negotiation deadlines or the ability to receive an award if selected. These requirements are outlined in detail in the [NOFO Part 2, Get Registered](#).

### A. Required Registrations

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#### 1. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

You must have an active account with [SAM.gov](#). This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. To register, go to SAM.gov Entity Registration and click Get Started. From the same page, you can also click on the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register.

Each applicant must:

1. Be registered in SAM.gov before submitting an application;
2. Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier in the application; and
3. Continue to maintain an active registration in SAM.gov with current information at all times during which you have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal agency.

DOE may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time DOE is ready to make a federal award, the DOE will determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

#### 2. NEUP.gov

Register and create an account at [www.NEUP.gov](#). Electronic applications and instructions are available at the NEUP.gov website. To access these materials: (1) go to [www.NEUP.gov](#); (2) select “Sign In” from the top right-hand corner of the screen; (3) enter your user credentials; (4) select “Applications” from the menu; and (5) click on “Create New Application” for the type of application you are creating.

If you have any questions about NEUP.gov site registration, application processes, eligibility, or application document requirements contact the Nuclear Energy External Innovation Integration Office at 208-526-4854 or at [neup@inl.gov](mailto:neup@inl.gov).

Each organization or business unit, whether acting as a team or a single entity, should use only one account as the contact point for each submission. Applicants must also designate backup points of contact. **This step is required to apply to this NOFO.**

### B. Application Package

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The application package requirements are outlined in the [Application Content and Form](#) section above. Several templates for application requirements are included at [NEUP.gov](#). To access these materials, select the appropriate call under “My Applications” once logged into NEUP.gov.



## Electronic Authorization of Applications and Award Documents

Submission of an application and supplemental information under this NOFO through electronic systems used by the DOE, including [NEUP.gov](https://neup.gov), constitutes the authorized representative's approval and electronic signature.

## C. Submission Date and Times

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All required submissions must be submitted via the [NEUP.gov](https://neup.gov) application site no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on the dates provided on [Key Facts](#) section.

**Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit all required application documents at least 48 hours in advance of the submission deadline.** Under normal conditions (i.e., at least 48 hours before the submission deadline), applicants should allow at least one hour to submit application documents. Once the application documents are submitted in the [NEUP.gov](https://neup.gov) site identified in the NOFO Part 1, applicants may revise or update that submission until the expiration of the applicable deadline. If changes are made to any of these documents, the applicant must resubmit them before the applicable deadline. DOE will not extend the submission deadline for applicants that fail to submit required information by the applicable deadline due to server/connection congestion.

## D. Intergovernmental Review

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This NOFO is not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

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## VI. Application Review Information

### A. Standards for Application Evaluation

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Applications that are determined to be eligible will be evaluated in accordance with this NOFO and the guidance provided in the “DOE Merit Review Guide for Financial Assistance,” effective October 1, 2020, which is available at: <https://energy.gov/management/downloads/merit-review-guide-financial-assistance-and-unsolicited-proposals-current>.

### B. Responsiveness Review

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The following applications will be deemed nonresponsive and will not be reviewed or considered:

- Project concepts or approaches not based on established scientific principles.
- Project concepts or approaches identified specifically as NOT of interest (see the [Applications Specifically Not of Interest](#)).

### C. Review Criteria

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#### 1. Compliance Criteria

All applicant submissions for applications must:

- Comply with the applicable content and form requirements listed in Application Content Requirements and Submission Requirements and Deadlines of the **NOFO Part 1 and 2**;
- Include all required documents;
- Be uploaded successfully in [NEUP.gov](#) site indicated in the [Key Facts](#) section above including clicking the “Submit” button; and
- Comply with the submission deadline stated in [Key Facts](#)

DOE will not review or consider submissions submitted through means other than the NEUP.gov site indicated in [Key Facts](#), submissions submitted after the applicable deadline, or incomplete submissions.

#### 2. Technical Review Criteria

##### 2.1 Letter of Intent (LOI)

At the LOI review stage, DOE will invite selected applicants to provide Full Applications, based on relevance to NE mission, technical merit, and past project performance, provided below.

All LOIs submitted under this CINR II NOFO will be reviewed and scored, as described below.

##### 2.1.1. Initial Review Criteria

Prior to a comprehensive merit evaluation, DOE will perform an initial review to determine that the:

- a) Applicant is eligible for an award; and
- b) Information and documents required by the NOFO, have been submitted.
- c) All mandatory requirements are satisfied.



Applications that fail to pass the initial review may not be forwarded for merit review and may be eliminated from further consideration.

**2.1.2. Relevancy Criteria**

Following the LOI initial review, programmatic experts will assess relevance to the NE mission. All applications that meet the objectives of this NOFO will move forward to the technical review phase.

**2.1.3. Technical Review Merit Criteria**

The following evaluation criteria will be utilized by the Technical Evaluation Committee and Federal Merit Review Panel members in conducting their evaluations of applications subjected to comprehensive merit review.

Letter of Intent Review Criterion Overview	
Criterion	Weight
Advances the State of Knowledge and Understanding and Addresses Gaps in Nuclear Science and Engineering Research	35%
Past Project Performance	35%
Applicant Team Capabilities, Risks, and Experience	30%
Relevancy to the NE mission	Yes/No
Peer Review score	Sum of rating x weights

**Criterion 1: Advances the State of Knowledge and Understanding and Addresses Gaps in Nuclear Science and Engineering Research (35%)**

DOE will evaluate the technical merit of the proposed R&D project, including the extent to which the project advances the state of knowledge and understanding and addresses gaps in nuclear science and engineering research. Evaluation will consider how important the proposed project is to advancing knowledge and understanding within the area selected and how well the proposed project advances, discovers, or explores creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts.

**Criterion 2: Past Project Performance (35%)**

DOE will evaluate the overall quality/acceptability of work on the current, ongoing CINR project and the proposed plan for completion provided in the application. In evaluating this criterion, DOE may consider the following: (1) timeliness of deliverables, milestones, and reporting; (2) research progress; (3) student development and support; and (4) research productivity (conference proceedings, journal articles, etc.).

**Criterion 3: Applicant Team Capabilities, Risks, and Experience (30%)**

DOE will evaluate the extent to which the applicant team provides objective evidence that it has the resources and abilities to successfully complete the R&D project in a technically defensible manner. Current activities, relevance and depth of the organization’s experience and capabilities, past performance, together with that of the PI, and the adequacy of the requested resources and their supporting justification will all be evaluated as they relate to the likely successful completion of the R&D objectives.



DOE will evaluate LOIs against the technical criteria and relevance to the NE mission described in this CINR II NOFO. This evaluation process will produce a list of recommended projects. DOE will consider the overall evaluation results and program policy factors to select a final set of invited projects to provide a Full Application.

## 2.2 Full Applications

### 2.2.1 Initial Review Criteria

Prior to a comprehensive merit evaluation, DOE will perform an initial review of the Full Application to determine that the:

- a) Applicant is eligible for an award;
- b) The named applicant, (PI(s) and collaborators have not changed from the Pre-Application to the Full application or, if they have, DOE’s Contracting Officer has provided signed approval;
- c) Information and documents, required by the NOFO, have been submitted; and
- d) all mandatory requirements are satisfied.

Applications that fail to pass the initial review will not be forwarded for merit review and will be eliminated from further consideration.

### 2.2.2 Relevancy Criteria

Following the initial review, programmatic experts will assess relevance to the NE mission. All applications that meet the objectives of this NOFO will move forward to the technical review phase.

### 2.2.3 Technical Review Merit Criteria

The following evaluation criteria will be utilized by the Technical Evaluation Committee and Federal Merit Review Panel members in conducting their evaluations of applications subjected to comprehensive merit review.

Full Application Review Criterion Overview	
Criterion	Weight
Advances the State of Knowledge and Understanding and Addresses Gaps in Nuclear Science and Engineering Research	35%
Technical Quality of the Proposed R&D Project	35%
Applicant Team Capabilities, Risks, and Experience	30%
Relevancy to the NE mission	Yes/No
Peer Review score	Sum of rating x weights

#### Criterion 1: Advances the State of Knowledge and Understanding and Addresses Gaps in Nuclear Science and Engineering Research (35%)

DOE will evaluate the technical merit of the proposed R&D project, including the extent to which the project advances the state of knowledge and understanding and addresses gaps in nuclear science and engineering research. Evaluation will consider how important the proposed project is to advancing knowledge and understanding within the area selected and how well the proposed project advances, discovers, or explores creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts.



### **Criterion 2: Technical Quality of the Proposed R&D Project (35%)**

DOE will evaluate the overall quality/acceptability of the proposed R&D project. In evaluating this criterion, DOE may consider the following: (1) integration of the past CINR award with the new scope of work, (2) merit, feasibility, and realism of the proposed methodology and approach to the project; (3) schedule, including sequence of project tasks, principal milestones, and times for each task; (4) planned assignment of responsibilities; (5) proposed project efficiencies; and (6) technical expertise available to the applicant in carrying out the project.

### **Criterion 3: Applicant Team Capabilities, Risks, and Experience (30%)**

DOE will evaluate the extent to which the applicant team provides objective evidence that it has the resources and abilities to successfully complete the R&D project in a technically defensible manner. Current activities, relevance and depth of the organization's experience and capabilities, past performance, together with that of the PI, and the adequacy of the requested resources and their supporting justification will all be evaluated as they relate to the likely successful completion of the R&D objectives.

In evaluating criterion 3, DOE will consider the extent to which the application demonstrates the following:

- That the capabilities and qualifications of engineering and scientific personnel, PI, and other key contributors are such that they can successfully accomplish the technical scope of the proposed project.
- That the applicant or respective team members have demonstrated successful experience/past performance, knowledge, and understanding of the business and regulatory requirements for projects of similar size, scope, and complexity in achieving project technical success on time with no significant, unresolved safety and quality issues.
- The applicant team's identification of, and work with nuclear energy stakeholders, to gain perspective and technical knowledge important to project decisions, and how the applicant will work with stakeholders to best achieve the objectives of this NOFO and the project.

Multiple peer reviewers will independently evaluate the applications in accordance with the technical review evaluation criteria described in this CINR II NOFO. Also, DOE will complete a Relevancy Criteria Review in accordance with the criteria described above. DOE will consider the overall evaluation results and subjective programmatic factors to ultimately recommend a final set of applications for approval by the Selection Official (SO).

## **D. Other Selection Factors**

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In addition to the above criteria, the SO may consider the following program policy factors in determining which applications to select for award negotiations:

- Degree to which proposed project optimizes/balances/maximizes use of available DOE funding to achieve DOE program goals and objectives, including how projects support DOE research. It may also include a diverse research portfolio, geographic distribution and/or how the projects support other complementary efforts that, when taken together, will best achieve program research goals and objectives.
- Application selection may optimize an appropriate mix of projects to best achieve



DOE research goals objectives.

- Cost/Budget considerations, including availability of funding.
- Extent that the applicant has awards in progress, or not completed, from DOE, from a previous year's FOA, or has existing NCE.
- Applicability across multiple reactor technologies, including future design types.
- Proposed cost share that exceeds minimum required amounts on the part of the applicant may be given preferential consideration.

The SO may consider any of the above factors independently in determining the optimum mix of applications that will be selected for support. These factors, while not indicators of the application's merit, may be essential to the process of selecting the application(s) that, individually or collectively, will best achieve the program objectives. Such factors are often beyond the control of the applicant.

*Applicants should recognize that some very good applications might not receive an award because of program policy factors and available funding. Therefore, the SO may use program policy factors to assist in determining which applications shall receive DOE funding support.*

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## VII. Selection and Award Notices

Please see the [NOFO Part 2, Selection and Award Notices](#) for information on notifications for Concept Papers (if applicable), Applications, Award Negotiations, and Post-Selection Information Requests.

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## VIII. Award Administration Information

### A. Type of Award Instrument

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DOE anticipates awarding Grants under the CINR II NOFO.

### B. Estimated Funding

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The estimated amounts identified for each of the CINR II CINR NOFO areas are specified in subsection C. NE currently estimates \$3 million in awards for this NOFO. Funding for all awards is contingent upon the availability of funds appropriated by Congress for the purpose of this program.

DOE is under no obligation to pay for any costs associated with preparation or submission of applications. DOE reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to this NOFO.

### C. Maximum and Minimum Award Size

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The ceiling (i.e., the maximum amount for an individual award made under each area) and floor (i.e., the minimum amount for an individual award made under each area) are identified below:

	<b>Ceiling</b>	<b>Federal Floor</b>
<b>U.S. University-led R&amp;D Projects</b> (Original project funding levels between \$800,000-\$1,000,000)	Up to 2/3s of original CINR project award (2-year project)	None
<b>U.S. University-led Mission Supporting/Strategic Needs R&amp;D Projects</b> (Original project funding levels between \$400,000-\$500,000)	Up to 2/3s of original CINR project award (2-year project)	None
<b>U.S. University-led IRPs</b> (Original project funding level between \$1,500,000-\$5,000,000)	Up to 2/3s of original CINR project award (2-year project)	None
<b>New - Optional Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Supplement</b> (up to \$200,000)	Up to \$50,000	None

### D. Expected Number of Awards

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The number of awards is dependent on the size of the awards. DOE reserves the right to make more or fewer (or even no awards) depending on funding availability and/or the quality of the applications.

NE anticipates making approximately 4 awards under this NOFO.



## E. Anticipated Award Size

NE anticipates making several smaller awards. Anticipated award size is no more than two thirds of the original project award and will typically fall in the \$300,000-\$1,000,000 range.

## F. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

DOE requires all award recipients to follow and accept requirements governed by laws and policies – both federal government-wide and DOE or program specific. These post-award requirements include all National and Administrative Policy Requirements; financial assistance general Certifications and Representations; Build America, Buy America requirements; Davis-Bacon Act requirements; Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act-Specific Requirements; Fraud, Waste and Abuse requirements; Safety, Security, and Regulatory requirements; and Environmental Review in Accordance with National Environmental Policy Act requirements.

Post-Award requirements and administration applicable to awards funded under this NOFO are identified below. Detailed descriptions of standard funding restrictions are provided in the [NOFO Part 2, Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#) section. Detailed descriptions of program specific funding restrictions are provided below the table.

Applicable Post-Award Requirements and Administration	
Title	Location
Award Administrative Requirements	NOFO Part 2
Subaward and Executive Reporting	NOFO Part 2
National Policy Requirements	NOFO Part 2
Applicant Representations and Certifications	NOFO Part 2
Statement of Federal Stewardship	NOFO Part 2
Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) Financing Statements	NOFO Part 2
Interim Conflict of Interest Policy for Financial Assistance	NOFO Part 2
Whistleblower Protections	NOFO Part 2
Fraud, Waste, and Abuse	NOFO Part 2
Participants and Collaborating Organizations	NOFO Part 2
Current and Pending Support	NOFO Part 2
Prohibition Related to Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs	NOFO Part 2
Foreign Collaboration Considerations	NOFO Part 2
U.S. Manufacturing Commitments	NOFO Part 2
Subject Invention Utilization Reporting	NOFO Part 2
Intellectual Property Provisions	NOFO Part 2
Technology Protection Plan	NOFO Part 2
Data Management Plan	NOFO Part 2
Cost-Share Payment	NOFO Part 2
Implementation of Executive Order 13798, Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty	NOFO Part 2
Pay Transparency Requirements	NOFO Part 2



Human Subjects Research	NOFO Part 2
Real Property and Equipment	NOFO Part 1
Rights in Technical Data	NOFO Part 1

## 1. Real Property and Equipment

Real property and equipment purchased with project funds (federal share and recipient cost share) are subject to the requirements at 2 CFR 200.310, 200.311, 200.313, and 200.316 (non-federal entities, except for-profit entities) and 2 CFR 910.360 (for-profit entities).

For resulting awards under this NOFO, the recipients may (1) take disposition action on the real property and equipment; or (2) continue to use the real property and equipment after the conclusion of the award period of performance with Grants Officer approval. The recipient’s written request for Continued Use must identify the property and include: a summary of how the property will be used (must align with the authorized project purposes); a proposed use period, (e.g., perpetuity, until fully depreciated, or a calendar date when the recipient expects to submit disposition instructions); acknowledgement that the recipient shall not sell or encumber the property or permit any encumbrance without prior written DOE approval; current fair market value of the property; and an estimated useful life or depreciation schedule for equipment.

When the property is no longer needed for authorized project purposes, the recipient must request disposition instructions from DOE. For-profit entity disposition requirements are set forth in 2 CFR 910.360. Property disposition requirements for other non-federal entities are set forth in 2 CFR 200.310 – 200.316. In addition, pursuant to the FY23 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Pub. L. No. 117-328), Division D, Title III, Section 309, at the end of the award period the Secretary or a designee of the Secretary, at their discretion, may vest unconditional title or other property interests acquired under this project regardless of the fair market value of the property.

## 2. Rights in Technical Data

Data rights differ based on whether data is first produced under an award or instead was developed at private expense outside the award.

**“Limited Rights Data”:** The U.S. government will not normally require delivery of confidential or trade-secret-type technical data developed solely at private expense prior to issuance of an award, except as necessary to monitor technical progress and evaluate the potential of proposed technologies to reach specific technical and cost metrics.

**Government Rights in Technical Data Produced Under Awards:** The U.S. government normally retains unlimited rights in technical data produced under government financial assistance awards, including the right to distribute to the public. However, pursuant to special statutory authority, certain categories of data generated under DOE awards under this NOFO may be protected from public disclosure for up to five years after the data is generated (“Protected Data”). For awards permitting Protected Data, the protected data must be marked as set forth in the award’s intellectual property terms and conditions and a listing of unlimited rights data (i.e., non-protected data) must be inserted into the data clause in the award. In addition, invention disclosures may be protected from public disclosure for a reasonable time in order to allow for filing a patent application.



### 3. Cost Share Payment

DOE requires recipients to contribute the cost share amount incrementally over the life of the award. Specifically, the recipient's cost share for each **billing period** must always reflect the overall cost share ratio negotiated by the parties (i.e., the total amount of cost sharing on each invoice when considered cumulatively with previous invoices must reflect, at a minimum, the cost sharing percentage negotiated).

## G. Questions and Support

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### 1. Questions

Upon the issuance of a NOFO, DOE personnel are prohibited from communicating (in writing or otherwise) with applicants regarding the NOFO except through the established question and answer process described below. Questions regarding this NOFO must be submitted to [NEUP@inl.gov](mailto:NEUP@inl.gov) no later than three (3) business days prior to the application due date and time. Please note, feedback on individual concepts will not be provided through Q&A.

All questions and answers related to this NOFO will be posted on the NEUP.gov site listed in the [Key Facts](#) section above. DOE will attempt to respond to a question within three (3) business days unless a similar question and answer has already been posted on the website.

Questions related to the registration process and use of the NEUP.gov site listed in the [Key Facts](#) should be submitted to [NEUP@inl.gov](mailto:NEUP@inl.gov).

### 2. Support

#### 2.1 Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. You can call 1-800-518-4726 or email [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). Retain your ticket number.

#### 2.2 SAM.gov

If you need help, you can call 866-606-8220 or live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

#### 2.3 NEUP.gov

If you have any questions about NEUP.gov site registration, application processes, eligibility, or application document requirements contact the Nuclear Energy External Innovation Integration Office at 208-526-4854 or at [neup@inl.gov](mailto:neup@inl.gov).

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## IX. Other Information

Please see the [NOFO Part 2, Other Information](#) for additional information and requirements that apply to all DOE NOFOs.

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