

Fusion Energy Sciences Office Hours: How to Work with a Program Manager

July 2nd, 2024

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and

Fusion Energy Sciences Program Managers



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

FES Mission and Strategic Priorities

MISSION

The mission of the Fusion Energy Sciences (FES) program is to expand the fundamental understanding of matter at very high temperatures and densities and to build the scientific foundations needed to develop a fusion energy source. This is accomplished by the study of the plasma state and its interactions with its surroundings.

The Energy Act of 2020 **expanded the scientific mission of FES** to support **“the development of a competitive fusion power industry in the U.S.”**

FES PROGRAM PRIORITIES

1. Accelerate fusion development as a carbon-free energy source via public-private partnerships (“bold decadal vision”)
2. Support R&D Fusion Collaboratives (“FIRE” Collaboratives) to establish Scientific and Technical (S&T) basis of a Fusion Pilot Plant (FPP)
3. U.S. participation in ITER to leverage engineering and study burning plasma science technology at power plant scale while expanding Inertial Fusion Energy (IFE) program
4. Support discovery plasma science and technology
5. Broaden participation in fusion and DEIA activities to enable the program

First, what is a program manager?

- Program Managers (PMs) are responsible for managing specific pieces of the FES portfolio.
- PMs are federal employees who:
 - Remain current in their areas of responsibility by attending conferences, organizing workshops, PI meetings, etc.
 - Conduct strategic planning for our portfolios
 - Provide input to the budget process, but do not determine amounts of funding allocated to each area
 - Prepare new solicitations (Funding Opportunity Announcements or Lab Calls)
 - Coordinate Merit Review (including reviewer recruiting and assignments)
 - Recommend funding actions
 - Manage user or collaborative research facilities
 - Represent our portfolio/office/community via briefings, talks, or other activities

We each have distinct portfolios, but FES PMs often work as a team

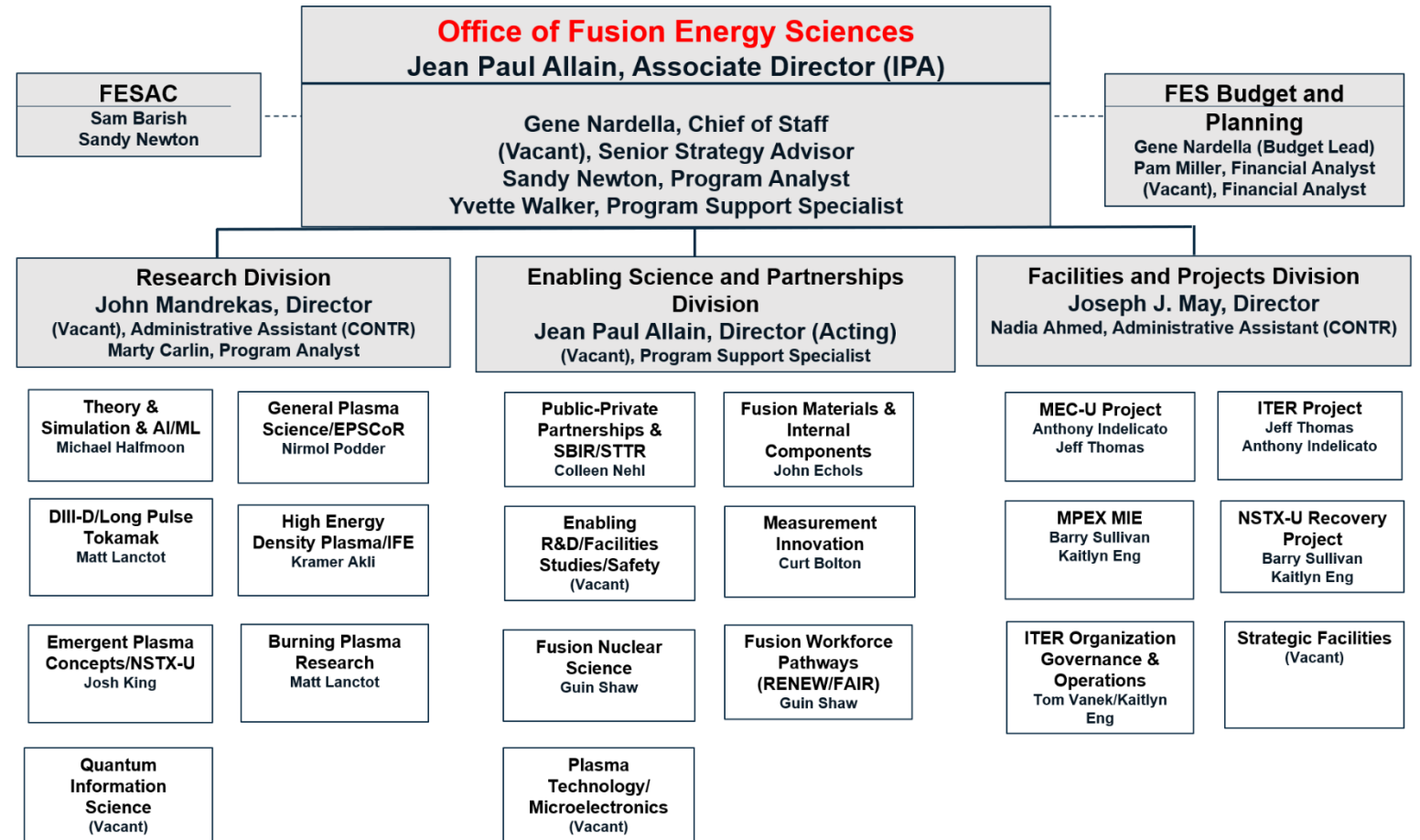
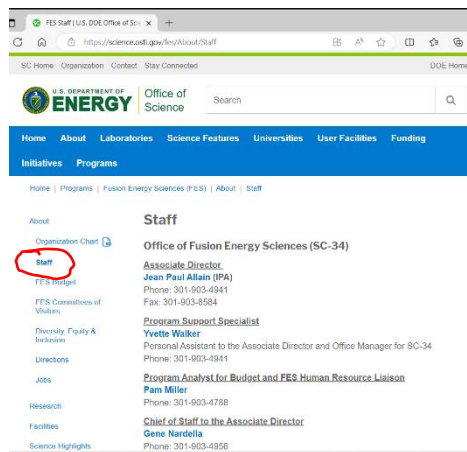


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How do I find a program manager?

- If you have an active award, our contact information is on your award documents
- The FES website
- Program managers are also listed in FOAs, RFIs, etc.



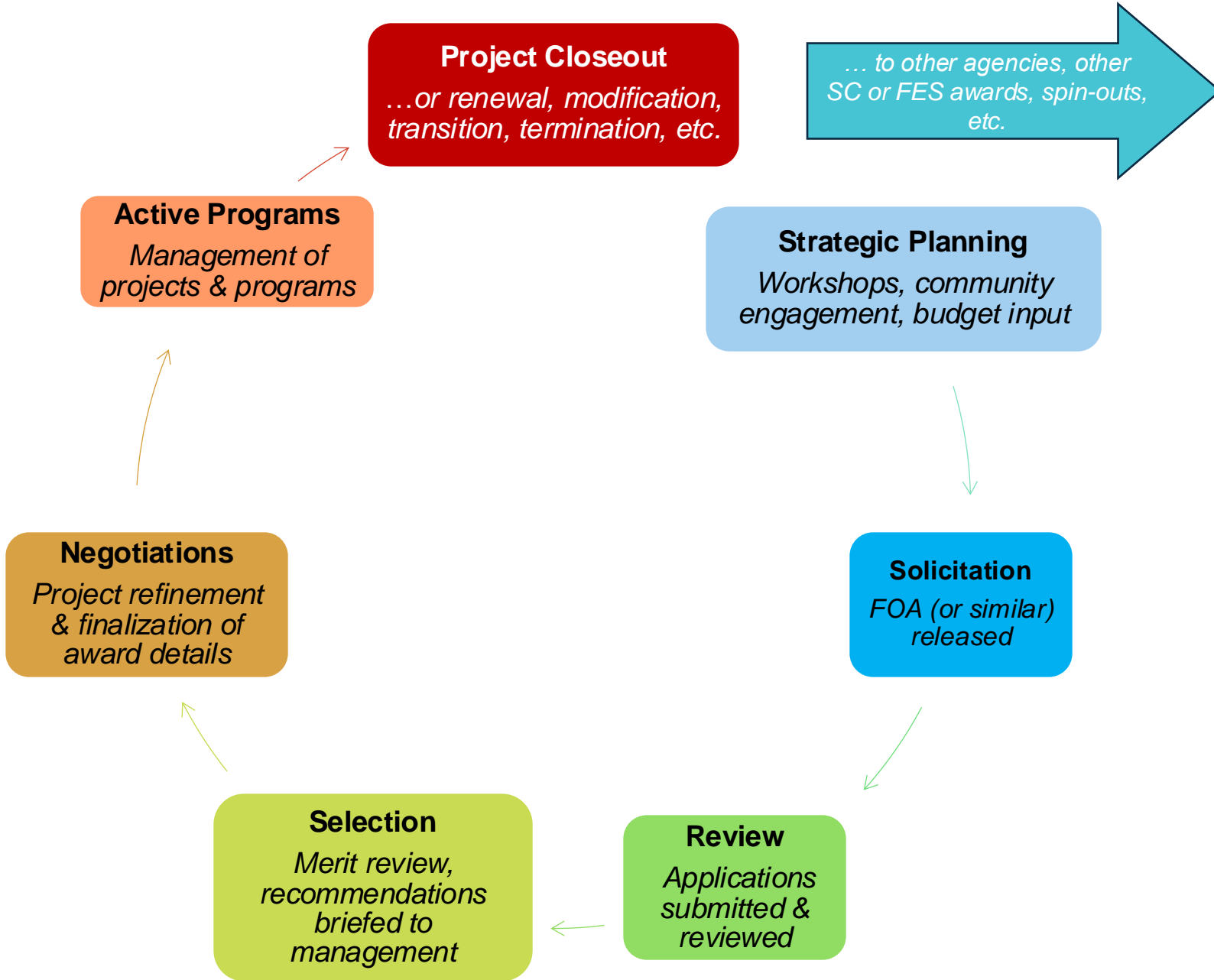
<https://science.osti.gov/fes/About/Staff>

<https://science.osti.gov/-/media/fes/pdf/about/FES-Org-Chart-June-2024.pdf>



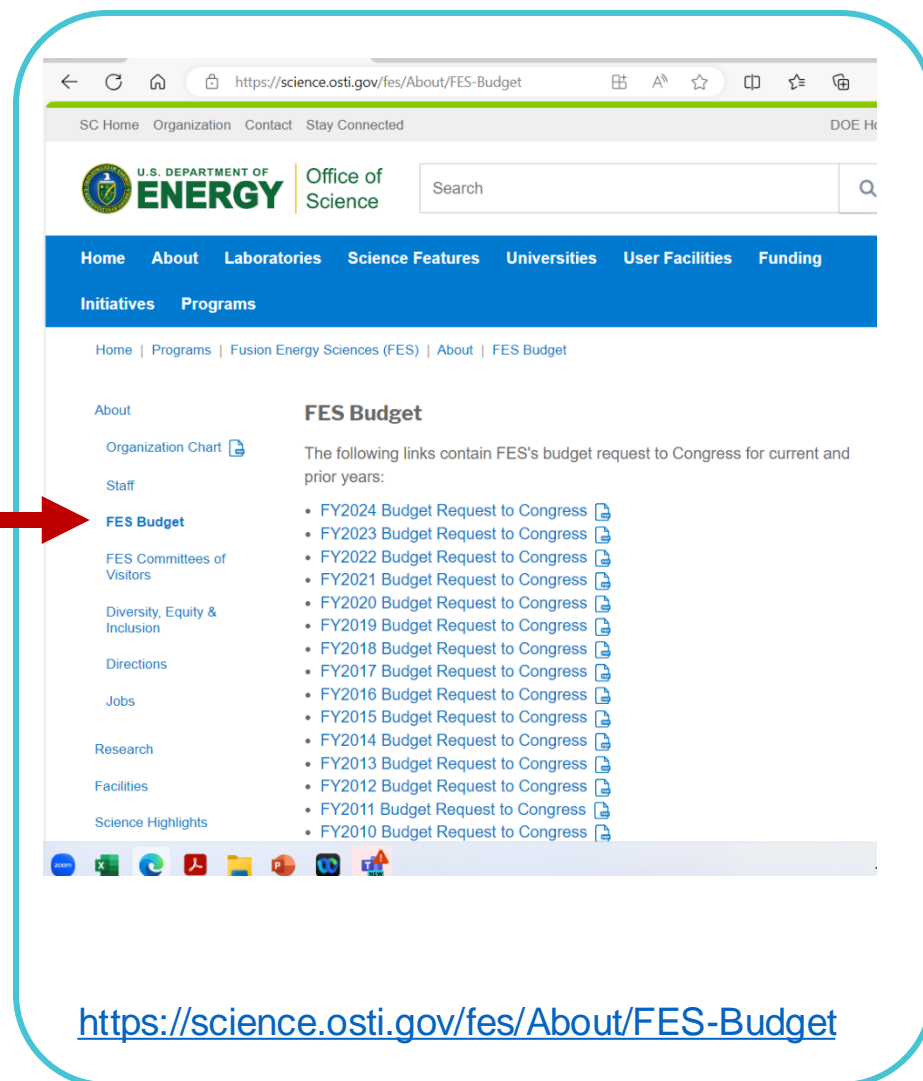
Program Lifecycle

There is a rhythm to programs and awards— this is generally called the program lifecycle.



Limitations

- Program managers **do** make funding recommendations, but we **do not** make decisions (leadership does that).
- Program managers, **cannot** obligate funds– only contracting officers **can** do that.
- Program managers **do not** determine the amount of funding available for a particular program area in a fiscal year or a particular funding opportunity. (We provide input to the budget process, but that's it).
 - You can find past FES budget requests on our website: <https://science.osti.gov/fes/About/FES-Budget>



The screenshot shows the website <https://science.osti.gov/fes/About/FES-Budget>. The page is titled "FES Budget" and contains the following text: "The following links contain FES's budget request to Congress for current and prior years:" followed by a list of links for each fiscal year from FY2010 to FY2024. A red arrow points from the text "You can find past FES budget requests on our website:" in the 'Limitations' section to the "FES Budget" link on the website.

<https://science.osti.gov/fes/About/FES-Budget>



When you connect with a program manager matters








- **Before a solicitation release** (e.g., Funding Opportunity Announcement):
 - We may convene or attend workshops/meetings to track developments and opportunities relevant to our technical areas
 - We welcome your ideas!
- **After a solicitation release:**
 - Once a Funding Opportunity Announcement is released, the responsible program managers are limited in how they can communicate with potential applicants.
 - It's *essential* to maintain fair access to information, so questions are periodically answered and posted to a FAQ page.
- **Review & Selection:**
 - We typically recruit & assign expert reviewers to provide input to the merit review process and coordinate merit review.
 - We appreciate timely reviews & responsive reviewers.
 - Program managers prepare briefings to our management on our recommendations
- **Negotiations** (prior to award):
 - Program Managers may work with the contracting team to contact selected teams or PIs to request revised budgets, public abstracts, or other information specific to the award or solicitation

Fusion Innovation Research Engine (FIRE) Collaboratives

Announcement Number: DE-FOA-0003361

Post Date: Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Close Date: Tuesday, August 27, 2024

- Submission for Pre-Applications : July 9, 2024 at 5:00 PM, Eastern Time
- A Pre-Application is required.
- Pre-Applications must be submitted by an authorized institutional representative.
- Pre-Applications Response Date: July 19, 2024 at 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
- Submission Date for Applications: August 27, 2024 at 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
- Webinar - May 23, 2024 (Slides  | Video )
- Webinar - June 7, 2024 (Slides  | Video )
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) 
- [Fusion Energy Ecosystem Capabilities Form](#) 
- [Fusion Energy Ecosystem Capabilities List](#) 

<https://science.osti.gov/fes/Funding-Opportunities>



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Strategic Planning Example: Basic Research Needs Workshop

- To collect targeted input on the critical research needed to assure a secure energy future, program managers may organize a community-led Basic Research Needs workshop.
- Workshops convene experts over 6-12 month period to target four primary goals:
 1. Identify and summarize the current state of science and technology R&D challenges
 2. Define a set of research directions that address the challenges (e.g., identify “showstoppers”)
 3. Isolate the challenges that might result in transformational changes in energy technology
 4. Document the information in a formal report to the Office of Science
- Audiences include scientists, program managers, DOE leadership, and policy makers
- Past workshop reports can be found here: <https://science.osti.gov/fes/Community-Resources/Workshop-Reports>

Example: IFE STAR



2022 IFE Basic Research Needs Workshop

all sessions held virtually over Zoom

Day 1: June 21, 2022		
Open Session		
Plenaries		
Welcome & Review Charge	Riccardo Betti	11:00 – 11:10 am (ET)
FES Welcome	Jim Van Dam	11:10 – 11:20 am
SC3 Deputy Director Remarks	Harriet Kung	11:20 – 11:30 am
Representative Zoe Lofgren Remarks	Zoe Lofgren (recorded)	11:30 – 11:40 am
Staff, Energy Subcommittee; Committee on Space, Science, and Technology, U.S. House of Representatives	Adam Rosenberg & Daniel Dzaidan	11:40 – 11:50 am
Accelerating fusion RD&D via public-private partnerships	Scott Hsu	11:50 am – noon
Overview of IFE history, challenges, and prospects for driver-target concepts	Mike Campbell	12:00 – 1:00 pm
Break: 1:00 – 2:00pm		
Leveraging ICF to propel IFE	John Edwards	2:00 – 2:30 pm
Privately funded fusion companies	Andrew Holland	2:30 – 2:45 pm
BRN marching orders, deliverables, schedules	Tammy Ma	2:45 – 3:00 pm
Open Session		
Committee Discussion	Committee	3:00 – 6:00 pm

Post BRN-workshop, the panels continued to meet in their small groups to develop content and write up their findings and PRO's.

2022 FES Basic Research Needs Workshop

Section 7: Appendices 213

Inertial Fusion Energy

Day 2: June 22, 2022		
Closed Session		
Committee Discussion	Committee	11:00 am – 6:00 pm

Day 3: June 23, 2022		
Closed Session		
Committee Discussion	Committee	11:00 am – 5:30 pm
Writing assignments, due dates, report structure	Tammy Ma & Riccardo Betti	5:30 – 5:45 pm
Final wrap-up	Tammy Ma & Riccardo Betti	5:45 – 6:00 pm

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Awards

During an Award:

- **Reporting:** Timely reporting is important (non-labs, please submit your progress reports on time!)
- **Modifications:**
 - If a NCE is requested, please include a justification (program managers may be asked, and having information from you can help your request proceed rapidly)
 - Other adjustments (change of institution, funding reallocation, scope adjustments, etc.) may be possible, as-needed. Please ask!
- **Other Communications:** Help us avoid surprises. Share big developments (publications, invited talks, patents, etc.). Keep us informed about project developments (both good and bad)

After an Award:

- **Close-out Reporting:** Please submit close-out reports on time. Your award documents describe the required timing.

Many of the above actions require requests be submitted through PAMS. It's helpful to email your PM, but actions may need to be initiated by awardees in PAMS.

Bottom Line: Communications matter.

- If your project succeeds, it's good news for your program manager too--we may be able to help amplify your success.
- We appreciate learning about your achievements from you before we read about it.



Thank You

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