

CASC | Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation

August 20, 2026

Janell Piechocinski
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Submitted via email to ai-capability-rfi@anl.gov

RE: Request for Information (RFI) on Opportunities and Business Models Regarding AI Supercomputing Capability at Argonne National Laboratory (Notice ID: AI-Capability-RFI)

Dear Ms. Piechocinski,

The onramp is the infrastructure. That is the central premise the Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation (CASC) brings to this RFI, and it is the lens through which we read Argonne's two requested areas of input as a single design problem rather than two separate questions. A center built to the highest technical specification will still underserve the national mission if the path onto it is slow, opaque, or reachable only by institutions with the staff and budget to navigate complex onboarding on their own.

CASC is a coalition of 112 research computing and cyberinfrastructure organizations at colleges, universities, and research institutions across the United States. Our membership includes major national NSF and DOE centers that operate significant portions of the nation's HPC and AI infrastructure directly, alongside the campus and regional Research Computing and Data (RCD) organizations that connect researchers, students, and instructors to that infrastructure. Between them, our members provide the identity systems, allocation processes, training, and support that determine whether a resource like the national Genesis Mission Supercomputing Center of Innovation truly becomes a working part of the national research enterprise. We ask Argonne to build the onramp as deliberately as it builds the machine room, and offer specifics below organized around the RFI's two areas of interest.

Focus Area A: Computing and Infrastructure Capabilities

Across our membership — from national centers to campus and regional RCD organizations — CASC institutions operate the identity federation, data transfer nodes, allocation and scheduling systems, security and compliance frameworks, and researcher-facing support staff that determine whether a resource is usable by a working researcher or student. We recommend this layer be treated as core infrastructure for the Center, planned alongside compute and storage rather than added after the fact:

- Federated identity and streamlined account provisioning that interoperate with existing campus and regional systems, so researchers are not lost to onboarding friction before their first job ever runs.
- Tiered onramp environments — including lightweight, well-documented entry paths for AI/ML workloads — that let a new user or a smaller institution reach a first result quickly, alongside the deeper allocations mission-scale work requires.
- Interconnection standards and data-transfer capacity that let regional and state cyberinfrastructure hubs serve as staging environments and onramps to the Center, so institutions can reach it through existing regional relationships rather than each building a direct connection from scratch.
- Documentation, training curricula, and reference implementations developed jointly with the research computing community, so capability build-out is matched step for step by capacity build-out among the people expected to use it.

This is not a theoretical ask. CASC members have operated shared HPC and AI resources under allocation models built for exactly this purpose, and CASC's own recent work convening state and regional hubs for AI-enabled research and education gives us a working template we would welcome the chance to share with Argonne's planning team.

Focus Area B: Utilization, Co-Funding, and Partnership Models

CASC's membership spans R1 research universities, regional comprehensive institutions, and every resourcing level between. Partnership and access models built around the largest, best-resourced institutions will reach only a fraction of the researchers this Center is meant to serve. We recommend that any use, co-funding, or sponsored-access framework:

- Preserve a meaningful, non-cost-prohibitive onramp tier for academic researchers and students — including at non-R1 and emerging-research institutions — so that private-sector-financed capacity expands who can do AI-enabled science, not only how much the largest players can do.
- Recognize regional and state cyberinfrastructure hubs as legitimate aggregation points for sponsored access and co-funding, so a consortium of smaller institutions can reserve and manage capacity collectively rather than each needing an individual agreement with the Center.
- Pair co-funded or sponsored-access capacity with education and workforce-development commitments — student training, curriculum development, internship and research-experience pipelines — consistent with the national interest in growing an AI-capable workforce alongside the infrastructure itself.
- Involve research computing and cyberinfrastructure professionals from the outset in defining partnership terms. This community operates the practical interface between the Center and the researchers it is meant to serve, and is best positioned to identify where access models will succeed or stall.

CASC and its member institutions are ready to serve as a partner and sounding board as Argonne develops these models, and we are glad to convene relevant member expertise as planning proceeds.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important national initiative. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Kind regards,



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