

Prospects for precise predictions of a_μ in the Standard Model

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Abstract

We discuss the prospects for improving the precision on the hadronic corrections to the anomalous magnetic moment of the muon, and the plans of the Muon $g - 2$ Theory Initiative to update the Standard Model prediction.

1 Introduction

The Run-1 result of the Fermilab $g - 2$ experiment [1–4] confirmed the earlier BNL measurement [5], resulting in a 4.2σ tension of the combined experimental value with respect to the recommendation by the White Paper [6] of the Muon $g - 2$ Theory Initiative [7] (reflecting discussions at a series of workshops [8–12]). In Table 1 we reproduce the status of the Standard-Model (SM) prediction as presented therein, as reference point for the prospects of future improvements. With results from subsequent runs of the Fermilab experiment expected soon, poised to reduce the experimental uncertainty by more than another factor of 2 [13], as well as future $g - 2$ experiments at J-PARC [14] and, potentially, PSI [15] and Fermilab [16], it is clear that theory needs to be improved concurrently.

This is particularly pressing given the tension between hadronic vacuum polarization (HVP) extracted from $e^+e^- \rightarrow$ hadrons cross section data, upon which the final value from Ref. [6] is based, and the recent lattice calculation by the BMW collaboration [135]. Here

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Contribution	Value $\times 10^{11}$	References
Experiment (E821 + E989)	116 592 061(41)	Refs. [1, 5]
HVP LO (e^+e^-)	6931(40)	Refs. [17–22]
HVP NLO (e^+e^-)	−98.3(7)	Ref. [22]
HVP NNLO (e^+e^-)	12.4(1)	Ref. [23]
HVP LO (lattice, $udsc$)	7116(184)	Refs. [24–32]
HLbL (phenomenology)	92(19)	Refs. [33–45]
HLbL NLO (phenomenology)	2(1)	Ref. [46]
HLbL (lattice, uds)	79(35)	Ref. [47]
HLbL (phenomenology + lattice)	90(17)	Refs. [33–45, 47]
QED	116 584 718.931(104)	Refs. [48, 49]
Electroweak	153.6(1.0)	Refs. [50, 51]
HVP (e^+e^- , LO + NLO + NNLO)	6845(40)	Refs. [17–23]
HLbL (phenomenology + lattice + NLO)	92(18)	Refs. [33–47]
Total SM Value	116 591 810(43)	Refs. [17–23, 33–39, 46–51]
Difference: $\Delta a_\mu := a_\mu^{\text{exp}} - a_\mu^{\text{SM}}$	251(59)	

Table 1: Summary of the contributions to a_μ^{SM} , as compiled in Ref. [6], except for the update of the experimental number to the average of E821 and the first Run of E989. The first block gives the main results for the hadronic contributions as well as the combined result for HLbL scattering from phenomenology and lattice QCD available at the time of Ref. [6]. The second block summarizes the quantities entering the final recommendation for the SM contribution, in particular, the total HVP contribution, evaluated from e^+e^- data, and the total HLbL number. The HVP evaluation is mainly based on the experimental Refs. [52–104]. In addition, the HLbL evaluation uses experimental input from Refs. [105–124]. The lattice QCD calculation of the HLbL contribution builds on crucial methodological advances from Refs. [125–131]. Finally, the QED value uses the fine-structure constant obtained from atom-interferometry measurements of the Cs atom [132], and is affected by the tension with the more recent Rb result [133] only at a level irrelevant for a_μ^{SM} . Mixed leptonic and hadronic corrections enter at the same order $\mathcal{O}(\alpha^4)$ as HVP NNLO and HLbL NLO, but have been estimated as $\lesssim 1 \times 10^{-11}$ [134].

the most urgent task is to scrutinize the result of Ref. [135] in detailed comparisons with lattice results of commensurate precision obtained in independent calculations by other lattice collaborations. As discussed in Sec. 3, such calculations are forthcoming. If the tensions persist, their phenomenological consequences must also be explored [136–140] (see Sec. 6). Moreover, also the hadronic light-by-light (HLbL) contribution needs to be further improved to meet the final precision $\Delta a_\mu^{\text{E989}} = 16 \times 10^{-11}$ projected for the Fermilab experiment [13].

A comparison of published results for HVP and HLbL, including those that were published after the March 2020 deadline, is shown in Fig. 1. In this contribution, we briefly review the current status from data-driven evaluations and from lattice QCD for both quantities and discuss future prospects as well as future plans of the Muon $g - 2$ Theory Initiative.

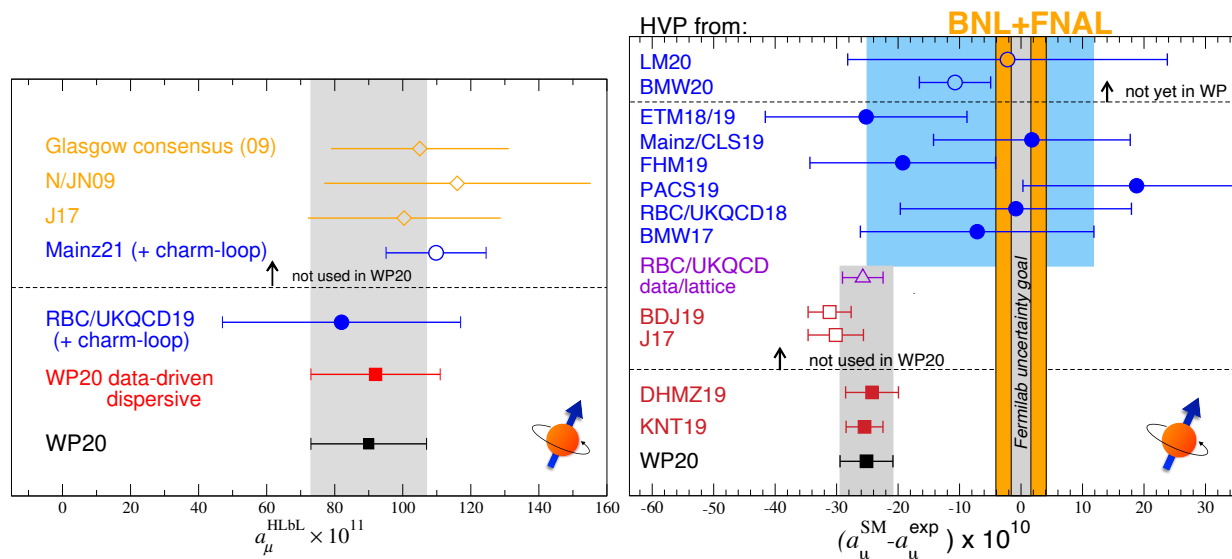


Figure 1: Left: Comparison of HLbL evaluations, as quoted in Ref. [6], to earlier estimates [42, 141–143] (orange) and a more recent lattice calculation [144] (open blue). Right: Comparison of theoretical predictions of a_μ with experiment [1, 5] (orange band), adapted from Ref. [6]. Each data point represents a different evaluation of leading-order HVP, to which the remaining SM contributions, as given in Ref. [6], have been added. Red squares show data-driven results [21, 22, 42, 145]; filled blue circles indicate lattice-QCD calculations that were taken into account in the WP20 lattice average [25–30, 32], while the open ones show results published after the deadline for inclusion in that average [135, 146]; the purple triangle gives a hybrid of the two [26]. The SM prediction of Ref. [6] is shown as the black square and gray band.

2 Data-driven evaluations of HVP

The data-driven evaluation of HVP relies on the master formula from Refs. [147, 148], a dispersion relation that relates the leading-order HVP contribution $a_\mu^{\text{HVP, LO}}$ to the total cross section for $e^+e^- \rightarrow \text{hadrons}$.¹ The main challenges in converting the available data [52–104] to the corresponding HVP integral include the combination of data sets in the presence of tensions in the data base and the propagation and assessment of the resulting uncertainties. For illustration, the contributions of the main exclusive channels and the inclusive region from the compilations of Refs. [21, 22] are shown in Table 2.

In Ref. [6] a conservative merging procedure was defined to obtain a realistic assessment of these underlying uncertainties. The procedure accounts for tensions among the data sets, for differences in methodologies in the combination of experimental inputs, for correlations between systematic errors, and includes constraints from unitarity and analyticity [19–21, 149]. Further, the next-to-leading-order calculation from Ref. [150] suggests that radiative corrections are under control at this level.

¹The cross section is defined photon-inclusively, see Ref. [6], i.e., while $a_\mu^{\text{HVP, LO}}$ is $\mathcal{O}(\alpha^2)$, it contains, by definition, one-photon-irreducible contributions of order $\mathcal{O}(\alpha^3)$. This convention matches the one used in lattice-QCD calculations.

	Ref. [21]	Ref. [22]	Difference
$\pi^+\pi^-$	507.85(0.83)(3.23)(0.55)	504.23(1.90)	3.62
$\pi^+\pi^-\pi^0$	46.21(0.40)(1.10)(0.86)	46.63(94)	-0.42
$\pi^+\pi^-\pi^+\pi^-$	13.68(0.03)(0.27)(0.14)	13.99(19)	-0.31
$\pi^+\pi^-\pi^0\pi^0$	18.03(0.06)(0.48)(0.26)	18.15(74)	-0.12
K^+K^-	23.08(0.20)(0.33)(0.21)	23.00(22)	0.08
$K_S K_L$	12.82(0.06)(0.18)(0.15)	13.04(19)	-0.22
$\pi^0\gamma$	4.41(0.06)(0.04)(0.07)	4.58(10)	-0.17
Sum of the above	626.08(0.95)(3.48)(1.47)	623.62(2.27)	2.46
[1.8, 3.7] GeV (without $c\bar{c}$)	33.45(71)	34.45(56)	-1.00
$J/\psi, \psi(2S)$	7.76(12)	7.84(19)	-0.08
[3.7, ∞) GeV	17.15(31)	16.95(19)	0.20
Total $a_\mu^{\text{HVP, LO}}$	694.0(1.0)(3.5)(1.6)(0.1) $_{\psi(0.7)_{\text{DV+QCD}}}$	692.8(2.4)	1.2

Table 2: Comparison of selected exclusive-mode contributions to $a_\mu^{\text{HVP, LO}}$ from Refs. [21, 22], for the energy range ≤ 1.8 GeV, in units of 10^{-10} , see Ref. [6] for details.

Recent developments in the data-driven HVP evaluation that are not yet reflected in the recommendation from Ref. [6] include the crucial 2π channel (new data from SND [151] and covariance matrix from BESIII [88]) as well as new data for $e^+e^- \rightarrow 3\pi$ [152, 153], the second-largest channel both in absolute value and error, see Table 2. Moreover, unitarity and analyticity constraints have been analyzed for the $\pi^0\gamma$ [154] and $\bar{K}K$ channels [155]. However, as of now, none of these developments indicate significant changes compared to the situation described in Ref. [6].

In going forward, new data in the critical 2π channel at the same level of precision as BaBar [75, 79] and KLOE [73, 76, 80, 97] are required. Such data are expected in the coming years from BaBar, CMD-3, BESIII, and Belle II, besides new data for other channels as well. To credibly resolve the existing tensions, especially for the 2π channel, blind analyses are paramount. Finally, for the success of this program the development of Monte Carlo generators at NNLO accuracy is necessary, see Refs. [156, 157].

The precision that can be obtained for data-driven evaluations of HVP strongly depends on whether or not the present tension between the BABAR and KLOE experiments, see Ref. [6], can be resolved with the upcoming advent of new 2π analyses. If the answer to that question is affirmative, a precision of 0.3% seems feasible by 2025.

3 Lattice QCD calculations of HVP

HVP can also be computed from first principles in QCD using a non-perturbative lattice regulator. Calculations are performed in Euclidean space, and the HVP contribution is computed by a weighted integration of the correlation functions over Euclidean time. In lattice QCD calculations, the total HVP is obtained from a sum over all quark-flavors and includes connected and disconnected contractions. Almost all gauge-field ensembles gen-

erated by the various lattice collaborations to date include light sea quarks in the isospin symmetric limit ($m_u = m_d$). Hence, strong isospin-breaking corrections must be computed alongside the $\mathcal{O}(\alpha^3)$ QED corrections that are included in $a_\mu^{\text{HVP,LO}}$ by definition. About 90% of the total HVP is comprised of the light-quark connected contribution, which therefore needs to be computed with subpercent precision.

In the 2020 White Paper [6] the results of several collaborations published before the March 2020 deadline [24–32] were combined into a lattice HVP average with a total uncertainty of approximately 2.6%, shown as the blue band in the right panel of Fig. 1. In 2021, a first lattice QCD result with sub-percent uncertainty was published by the BMW collaboration [135] (BMW20). Taken in isolation, the BMW20 result yields a reduced tension with the experimental average for a_μ of approximately 1.5σ , while being, at the same time, 2.1σ away from the reference result of Ref. [6] for the data-driven HVP calculation. However, the disagreement with the R -ratio approach becomes more pronounced in the intermediate Euclidean time window $a_\mu^{\text{HVP, LO, W}}$, introduced in RBC/UKQCD18 [26], where the integration over Euclidean time is restricted to an intermediate time region. For this quantity Ref. [135] finds a result which is 3.7σ above the corresponding data-driven evaluation. Since the error of BMW20 is dominated by the uncertainty associated with the extrapolation to the continuum limit, it is of crucial importance to obtain results with similar precision from independent calculations employing different discretizations of the QCD action.

The Euclidean time windows allow for contributions from different Euclidean times to be studied separately. In lattice QCD calculations of the windows one can disentangle statistical and systematic uncertainties, which affect the various Euclidean time regions differently. Statistical noise and finite-volume uncertainties are most relevant at large Euclidean times, while discretization errors are typically enhanced at short distances. The intermediate window, however, can be computed more easily at high precision in lattice QCD, which makes it a particularly attractive target for cross-checks between different lattice QCD calculations. Indeed, already now multiple results with sub-percent precision are published for the isospin-symmetric light-quark connected contribution to this quantity [26, 31, 135, 146], revealing that the BMW20 result is higher by 2.2σ compared to the one of RBC/UKQCD18 [26], while consistent with the lattice results of Aubin19 [31] and LM20 [146]. Furthermore, the Euclidean windows enable a powerful cross check by studying each window quantity (short-distance, intermediate, long-distance) separately in the continuum and infinite volume limits and comparing their sum to the direct evaluation of the total HVP contribution.

At this point, additional sub-percent calculations of the intermediate Euclidean time window as well as the total HVP are crucial. Several collaborations (including Aubin *et al.* [158], ETM [159], FNAL/HPQCD/MILC [160, 161], Mainz [162], and RBC/UKQCD) have on-going efforts for both quantities; however, due to the relative simplicity of $a_\mu^{\text{HVP, LO, W}}$, we may expect additional results for it first. The next generation of lattice QCD results will also build on recent methodological advances made in the last years. This includes the use of an exclusive state study for an improved long-distance computation (Mainz [163], RBC/UKQCD [164], and FNAL/MILC [160]). Most groups plan to include gauge-field ensembles at smaller lattice spacings to test the continuum extrapolations, which is computationally very demanding and requires adequate computational resources. Methods

are also being developed to control discretization effects specifically for the short-distance contribution [165]. In addition, new theoretical insights, for example on the quark mass dependence of the light-quark contribution to a_μ^{HVP} [166], may improve control over certain systematic effects. Finally, as lattice QCD calculations enter the sub-percent-precision era, several collaborations (FNAL/HPQCD/MILC and RBC/UKQCD) have started to implement blind analyses.

The Euclidean windows can also be evaluated straightforwardly in the data-driven approach. Once tensions between the results from different lattice collaborations are resolved, detailed comparisons of results for the windows, as well as other sub quantities (see, for example, Ref. [167]), from lattice QCD and the data-driven approach will yield refined tests of the two approaches to HVP. In addition, assuming that any tensions between the two approaches are understood and resolved, windowed quantities may provide a useful strategy for combining lattice and data-driven results to yield a better precision on the total $a_\mu^{\text{HVP, LO}}$ than each would by itself [26].

We expect that by the end of 2022, several new results for the intermediate window quantity and one or more additional sub-percent-precision results for the total HVP will be published. The workshops organized by the Theory Initiative will continue to provide an open platform to facilitate further cross-checks, to define quality criteria for inclusion in the next iteration of the White Paper, and to develop a method average for lattice HVP based on detailed comparisons of individual contributions and subquantities to take into account any tensions between them and obtain a conservative estimate of the lattice HVP uncertainty. The next Theory Initiative workshop [168] will build on first steps towards this goal started at KEK in June 2021 [169]. Based on preliminary reports by several lattice QCD collaborations and assuming that any tensions between different lattice results are resolved, a lattice HVP average with $\leq 0.5\%$ errors appears feasible by 2025.

4 Data-driven and dispersive approach to HLbL

The organization of the phenomenological estimate of the HLbL contribution from Ref. [6] follows the same guiding principles as the data-driven evaluation of HVP: one considers the lowest-lying singularities of the HLbL tensor in the timelike region and explicitly estimates their contribution in a dispersive approach [170–173]. That this approach is sensible is shown by the clear hierarchy among the contributions of different intermediate states based on their mass. This strategy needs to be supplemented by short-distance constraints (SDCs), which are relevant for large spacelike momenta and are imposed where applicable. While this procedure becomes significantly more complicated than the analog dispersion relation in the HVP case, it does allow for an, in principle, model-independent evaluation and thus provides a convenient framework for a data-driven approach. Moreover, results from lattice QCD can be used to further constrain the required input.

The status according to Ref. [6] is summarized in Table 3 in comparison to earlier compilations. The first panel shows the dominant contributions from pseudoscalar poles [34, 36, 37, 174], boxes, and rescattering corrections [35, 44, 175], yielding about 75% of the total with well quantified uncertainties of $\approx 6\%$. In particular, for the π^0 -pole contribution there is agreement among Canterbury approximants [34], dispersion relations [36, 174],

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Contribution	Ref. [141]	Refs. [142, 143]	Ref. [42]	Ref. [6]
π^0, η, η' -poles	114(13)	99(16)	95.45(12.40)	93.8(4.0)
π, K -loops/boxes	-19(19)	-19(13)	-20(5)	-16.4(2)
S -wave $\pi\pi$ rescattering	-7(7)	-7(2)	-5.98(1.20)	-8(1)
subtotal	88(24)	73(21)	69.5(13.4)	69.4(4.1)
scalars	-	-	-	} - 1(3)
tensors	-	-	1.1(1)	
axial vectors	15(10)	22(5)	7.55(2.71)	
u, d, s -loops / short-distance	-	21(3)	20(4)	15(10)
c -loop	2.3	-	2.3(2)	3(1)
total	105(26)	116(39)	100.4(28.2)	92(19)

Table 3: Comparison of the recommendation from Ref. [6] to two frequently used compilations for HLbL from 2009 (“Glasgow consensus” [141] and Jegerlehner/Nyffeler [142, 143]) and the recent update [42]; in units of 10^{-11} .

and lattice QCD [37]. In this part of the evaluation, ongoing work thus mainly concerns a consolidation of the η, η' poles, both using dispersion relations [176, 177] and lattice QCD [178, 179] (see Refs. [155, 180] for recent work on the box contributions).

The main uncertainty arises from the second panel in Table 3, which includes subleading contribution from higher intermediate states (approximated in terms of scalar, tensor, and axial-vector resonances [40–43, 45]) and the implementation of SDCs [33, 38, 39, 181]. A clear definition of individual narrow-resonance contributions and a distinction between these and the SDCs is at present affected by ambiguities [35, 182, 183], which yet need to be resolved or better understood. For this reason uncertainties in this panel were added linearly, as the errors in this category are potentially strongly correlated. Ongoing work is aimed at improving estimates of these subleading contributions, including SDCs at higher orders [184, 185], the implementation of these SDCs [183, 186–190], and the evaluation of narrow resonances [182, 191–193].

Crucial ingredients in this program now concern the two-photon couplings of hadronic states in the (1–2) GeV region, most prominently of axial-vector resonances: unfortunately only limited experimental information is currently available for their transition form factors [192, 194, 195]; see also the discussion in Ref. [6]. New experimental results are expected in the future, e.g., from the two-photon program at BESIII [196], and further constraints could be obtained from lattice QCD.

In view of these ongoing developments, and the current error estimate of $\approx 20\%$ (based on a linear addition of uncertainties), it seems feasible to obtain a dispersive, data-driven evaluation of the HLbL contribution with $\leq 10\%$ total uncertainty by 2025.

5 Lattice QCD calculations of HLbL

In Ref. [6] the data-driven evaluation of HLbL scattering was combined with the first complete direct lattice QCD calculation performed by RBC/UKQCD [47, 128] after cross-checks between the RBC/UKQCD and Mainz group for heavier pion mass were performed. These cross-checks were facilitated by discussions during the Theory Initiative workshops in the preceding years [8–12]. The RBC/UKQCD calculation uses a finite-volume regulator for the photon (the QED_L prescription [197]) and is based on gauge ensembles at the physical pion mass with chirally symmetric domain-wall fermions.

An alternative infinite-volume photon method (QED_∞) was proposed by the Mainz collaboration [129] and refined by both the Mainz [131, 198] and RBC/UKQCD [130] collaborations, culminating in the publication of the second complete direct lattice calculation by the Mainz group [144] in 2021. The Mainz calculation uses gauge ensembles with pion mass as low as 200 MeV with Wilson-clover fermions generated by the CLS effort. At this point both lattice results are compatible with each other and with the data-driven result.

The two groups continue to improve their calculations. RBC/UKQCD is focusing on a second result using QED_∞ as well as improvements targeting a reduction of the statistical noise. The Mainz group will continue towards adding data at physical pion mass. In both cases, individual calculations at or below 10% total uncertainty are feasible by 2025. It is also expected that over the next years additional lattice collaborations may provide direct calculations of the HLbL contribution as well.

6 Conclusions and Outlook

As outlined in Secs. 2–5, it is reasonable to expect that by 2025 results for HVP and HLbL from two independent approaches will be available, each at or near the precision required to match the plans of the $g - 2$ experiments. If for both HVP and HLbL data-driven and lattice determinations are found to be in good agreement, this will yield a SM prediction for a_μ with unprecedented precision, maximizing the discovery potential of the experimental efforts.

If, on the other hand, significant tensions between data-driven and lattice results are revealed, in particular for HVP, a continued effort will be needed in order to understand where these tensions arise and how sub quantities, such as Euclidean window quantities (see Sec. 3), can help clarify the situation. It will also be important to explore in detail the connections between HVP, e^+e^- cross sections and related low-energy parameters, as well as the hadronic corrections to the running of α and the global electroweak fit [136–140, 199]. Further insights into these connections will be provided by another complementary method for HVP, which is expected to become available over the next years at the MUnE experiment [200–203], via a space-like measurement of HVP in muon–electron scattering, with recent work addressing both the experimental realization [204–207] and theory corrections [208–221]. Hadronic τ -decay data can, in principle, also be used to evaluate HVP, which, however, requires a determination of the needed isospin correction [222]. While phenomenological estimates of this correction are not sufficiently quantified, it may be possible to compute it reliably in lattice QCD [223]. If precise lattice

results for the isospin correction became available, then τ -decay data could be used to provide interesting cross checks for HVP. We note that precise measurements of τ -decay spectral functions are expected from Belle II in the coming years.

To make optimal use of all these developments, the Muon $g - 2$ Theory Initiative continues its work, with two workshops [169, 224] held after the completion of Ref. [6] and the next plenary meeting to be held in September 2022 [168]. At this meeting, concrete plans for White Paper updates will be discussed, with a timeline depending on the availability of new results especially regarding lattice-QCD calculations of HVP. A main update is anticipated for 2023 and will include any new available results as well as a method average for lattice HVP and HLbL. Most crucially, the Muon $g - 2$ Theory Initiative will continue to facilitate interactions among the different groups and communities involved in the SM prediction of the anomalous magnetic moment of the muon, including experiment, phenomenology, and lattice QCD.

Beyond 2025, the experimental $g - 2$ program will continue at J-PARC [14], with a completely independent experimental technique, and potentially even further, with the High-Intensity Muon Beams (HIMB) project at PSI [15] and the Muon Campus at Fermilab [16]. To fully exploit the final E989 Fermilab result and keep up with these future experiments, it is evident that a sustained effort of further improving the SM prediction for a_μ is needed beyond 2025, even if all near-term goals laid out above can be achieved. For the data-driven evaluation of HVP, this requires a sustained program at e^+e^- machines (at Belle II, BES III, and Novosibirsk), together with the calculation of higher-order radiative corrections and the development of MC generators at NNLO accuracy. For HLbL scattering, both improved input data and further theory improvements will be needed. For the lattice HVP and HLbL calculations, systematic and statistical uncertainties can be improved significantly with large-scale access to future leadership-class computing facilities. Further methodological developments, for example, to more efficiently generate gauge field ensembles with small lattice spacings and large volumes (see, for example, Refs. [225–229]) as well as improved statistical noise reduction (see, for example, Refs. [230–232]) would further enhance the impact of these future computational resources on the precision of the lattice QCD results. The Muon $g - 2$ Theory Initiative will continue to coordinate efforts along these lines, to ensure maximal return on the investments made in the experimental $g - 2$ program.

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