



INSIDE NIMH

Funding News for Current and Future Grant Recipients

Welcome to the Winter 2026 edition of *Inside NIMH: In Brief!* This edition is a shortened version of our traditional *Inside NIMH* newsletter, which we publish in conjunction with the National Advisory Mental Health Council (NAMHC). NAMHC advises the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) on all policies and activities relating to the conduct and support of mental health research, research training, and other programs of the institute.

Sincerely,

Andrea Beckel-Mitchener, Ph.D.

Acting Director, National Institute of Mental Health

I. Director's Updates

➤ Updates and Announcements

- **New Acting Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** On February 18, 2026, Jayanta Bhattacharya, M.D., Ph.D., was named the Acting Director of the CDC, in addition to his NIH Director position. He will assume the role of the Acting CDC Director until the President selects and the Senate confirms a permanent CDC Director.
- **NIH Outstanding Scholars in Neuroscience Award Program (OSNAP):** OSNAP is seeking nominations of exceptional graduate students and postdoctoral fellows engaged in neuroscience research. Eligible graduate students include those that are within two years of completing their Ph.D. or Ph.D. equivalent program. Eligible postdoctoral fellows or recent graduates include those who are no more than two years into their research. [Nominations](#) are due to NIH by March 23, 2026.
- **HHS Publishes Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy:** In December 2025, HHS released its [AI Strategy](#) which outlines ways to make AI available to the federal workforce, integrating it across internal operations, research, and public health. The AI Strategy fulfills HHS' commitment to utilize leading technologies to enhance efficiency, foster American innovation, and improve patient outcomes.
- **Autism Data Science Initiative Awards 13 Projects:** The [Autism Data Science Initiative](#) (ADSI) announced its [13 awards](#) that draw on genomic, epigenomic, metabolomic, proteomic, clinical, behavioral and autism

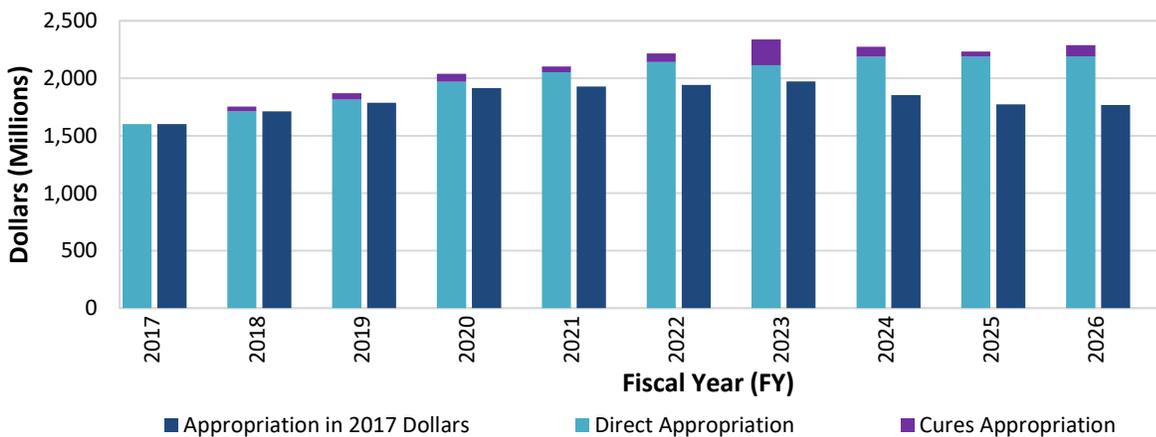
services data. These projects aim to integrate, aggregate and analyze existing data resources, generate targeted new data, and validate findings through independent replication hubs. Each ADSI research team will work in partnership with the autism community to help shape the direction of the research and ensure the perspectives of autistic individuals, caregivers, and service providers inform the initiative.

- **Roadmap for Engaging the Public as Partners in Clinical Research:** The [Novel and Exceptional Technology and Research Advisory Committee \(NExTRAC\)](#) recently undertook a multi-year effort to provide the NIH with a [roadmap](#) for incorporating public voices in clinical research. NIH is endorsing these recommendations and plans to begin implementing this roadmap this year. NIH will work with the research community to make the return of participant research results standard practice. NIH is also working towards harnessing the widespread adoption of electronic health records and other large scale electronic clinical information systems to accelerate biomedical research in ways not previously possible.
- **Highlighted Topics Dashboard:** The [Highlighted Topics Dashboard](#) is a centralized resource aimed at easily and quickly informing the research community about particular areas of science that are of interest to NIH. Currently, NIMH is either leading or participating in [11 highlighted topics](#), and new topics continue to be added.

➤ **Budget Overview**

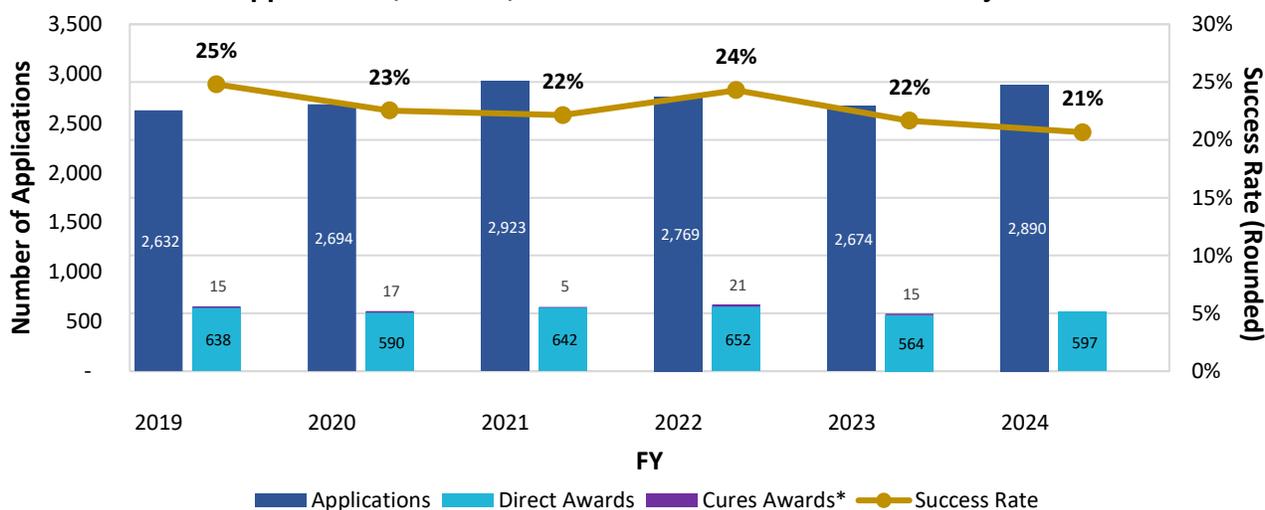
- **Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Budget:** On February 3, 2026, President Trump signed the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026](#), providing funds through September 30, 2026. The law provides \$47.3 billion for NIH, including \$2.3 billion for NIMH (amount includes [21st Century Cures funding](#)), an increase of 2.4% over the FY25 Continuing Resolution level.
- The figure below shows the NIMH budget in appropriated (current) versus constant (FY16) dollars (excludes 21st Century Cures funding). Constant dollars are “inflation adjusted” for variations in the purchasing power of the dollar over time. Dollar amounts are adjusted based on the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI). The annual change in BRDPI indicates how much the NIH budget must change to maintain purchasing power similar to FY10. NIMH’s FY26 budget is nearly identical to NIMH’s FY25 enacted budget except for the planned increase from the 21st Century Cures.

NIMH Budget in Appropriated and Constant 2017 Dollars



- In FY24, NIMH funded nearly 600 new and competing research project grants (RPGs) with a 21% success rate, which is defined as the number of applications funded divided by the number of applications received. The administration is in the process of closing out FY25 as a part of releasing the FY27 President’s Budget.

NIMH Applications, Awards, and Success Rates for Research Project Grants



II. NIH Policy and Grant Updates

- NIH's Unified Funding Strategy:** NIH has implemented steps towards a [unified strategy](#) that will help guide clearer and consistent funding decisions across all of NIH. This framework (effective starting this council round) will help ensure NIH continues to support the most scientifically meritorious research ideas possible, address health priorities, and support a robust biomedical workforce. For additional information about how NIMH is implementing the unified strategy, please refer to the recent NIH Extramural Nexus [blog post](#) which is co-authored by 12 Directors of NIH Institutes and Centers.
- Request for Information on Draft Proposal Harmonizing Research Participant Data Policies:** NIH serves as the steward of a wide range of research data and continuously works to optimize open sharing with appropriate protections throughout the entire data lifecycle. NIH is requesting public input on its proposal to establish harmonized and transparent policy requirements for protecting human participant research data ([NOT-OD-26-023](#)). Specifically, NIH is asking for feedback on its proposed (1) new policy requirements for which data should be controlled-access under NIH data sharing policies, and (2) revisions to the NIH Genomic Data Sharing Policy to simplify and harmonize requirements. Responses will be accepted through March 18, 2026. Please refer to the related Notices on NIH's implementation of safety protocols for NIH controlled-access data ([NOT-OD-25-159](#)) and human biospecimens ([NOT-OD-25-160](#)).
- Request for Information on Reducing Reliance on Human Embryonic Stem Cells in NIH-Supported Research:** NIH is [seeking](#) public input on the robustness of emerging biotechnologies to reduce or potentially replace reliance on human embryonic stem cells ([NOT-OD-26-031](#)). The goal of this request is to identify emerging biotechnologies that may be able to reduce or potentially replace reliance on human embryonic stem cells for research and identify research areas in which currently approved human embryonic stem cells lines are the gold standard approach. During this review, NIH is pausing review and approval of applications for new cell lines to be added to the NIH Human Embryonic Stem Cell Registry. Responses will be accepted through April 24, 2026. Please refer to NIH's updated policy on the use of human fetal tissue in biomedical research ([NOT-OD-26-028](#)), which states that NIH funds are no longer permitted to be used for research using human fetal tissue from elective abortions.
- New Application Structure for NIH-Funded International Collaborations:** NIH no longer accepts applications that request funds for foreign components using the traditional grant subaward/consortium structure ([NOT-OD-25-155](#)).

Instead, NIH will make domestic prime awards with independent foreign awards that are linked to the prime award. New competing applications must use this structure ([PA-26-002](#)). NIH remains committed to supporting international scientific collaboration when it is in the U.S. interest and is conducted in a secure, justifiable, and responsible way.

- **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program Update:** Legislative authority for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs expired on October 1, 2025. NIH released a Notice ([NOT-OD-26-006](#)) to provide guidance to the research community. During a lapse in SBIR/STTR authorization, SBIR and STTR funding announcements are no longer active and are not accepting applications or proposals. No new or noncompeting continuation SBIR or STTR projects can be awarded. Active SBIR and STTR grants and contracts can continue.
- **Updated Award Terms/Conditions:** Effective October 1, 2025, all new NIH Notices of Award will include terms ([NOT-OD-26-009](#)) related to the possible termination of the award. These new terms note that continued funding for the award is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds, recipient satisfactory performance, compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the award, and may also otherwise be terminated, to the extent authorized by law, if the agency determines that the award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.
- **Short-Term Eligibility Extension of Early-Stage Investigator (ESI) and K99/R00 Program Designations:** In response to disruptions caused by the recent lapse in federal appropriations, NIH announced a short-term eligibility extension for the designation of Early-Stage Investigator (ESI; [NOT-OD-26-020](#)) and for prospective applicants to the NIH Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00) program ([NOT-OD-26-021](#)). The extension is intended to lessen the impact of these disruptions on application submission, peer review, and award processing.
- **Basic Experimental Studies in Humans (BESH) Will No Longer Be Considered Clinical Trials by the NIH:** For researchers that are submitting applications related to BESH, NIH will no longer subject these studies to the requirements of a clinical trial, including registration and reporting in ClinicalTrials.gov, starting for applications submitted to due dates on or after May 25, 2026 ([NOT-OD-26-032](#)). However, BESH must continue to follow all other applicable clinical research laws, regulations, and policies, including, but not limited to, human subjects protections and the NIH Data Management and Sharing Policy.

For more information on all of these updates, please see the [Notices of NIH Policy Changes page](#).