



INSIDE NIMH

Funding News for Current and Future Grant Recipients

Welcome to the Autumn 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 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

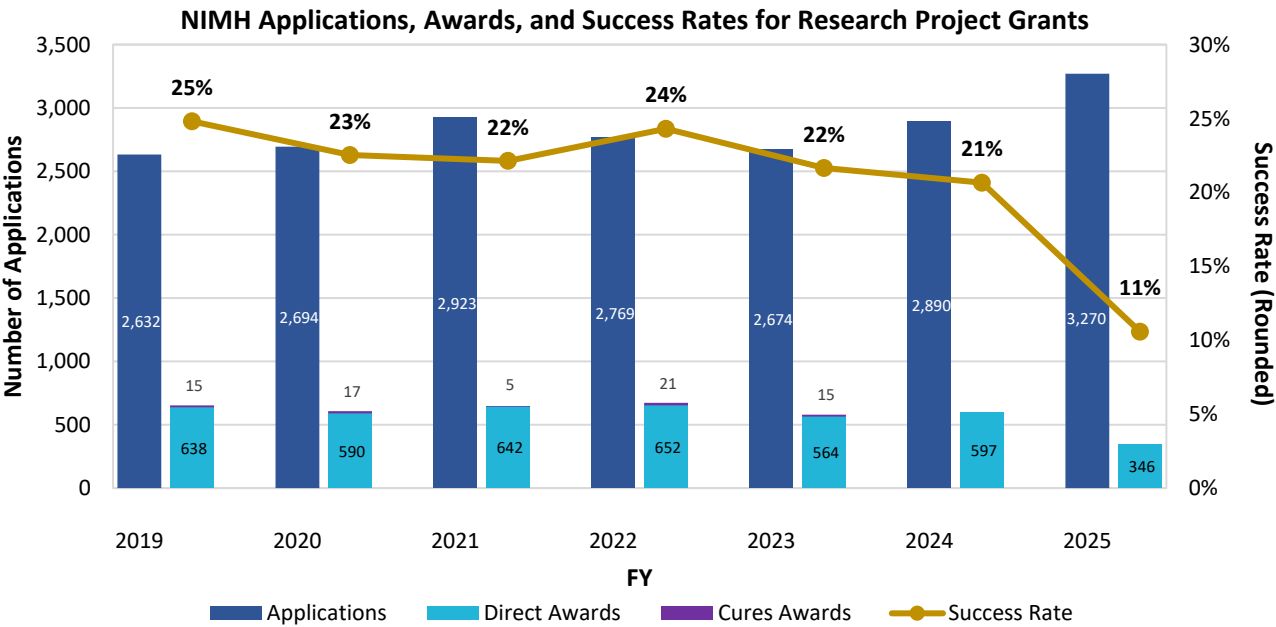
- **New HHS Leadership:** On August 21, 2026, [Mark Cruz, M.A.](#), was sworn in as Director of the Indian Health Service. He previously served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior. On August 5, 2026, [Erica Schwartz, M.D., J.D., M.P.H.](#), was sworn in as the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Schwartz previously served as the U.S. Deputy Surgeon General in the first Trump administration. She assumed the responsibilities of CDC Director from NIH Director Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, who served as the Acting CDC Director from February to August 2026.
- **IACC Updates:** On August 27, 2026, the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) held a [Full Committee Meeting](#). The committee discussed the draft IACC Strategic Plan for 2026–2028, including input from the public.
- **SAMHSA Awards for Behavioral Health Services:** The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently announced several sets of newly funded awards and cooperative agreements, totaling over \$600 million in funding. The awards support behavioral health services nationwide, including mental health and substance use treatment, children's mental health, peer support, and services for serious mental illness. Of note, \$252 million will support the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, suicide prevention, and mobile crisis services.
- **HHS and VA Partnership to Advance Rapid-Acting Mental Health Treatments for Veterans:** On July 13, 2026, HHS and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) to strengthen collaboration on the research, clinical development, and responsible deployment of potential future rapid-acting psychedelic drug therapies to veterans with serious mental illness. HHS and VA will coordinate workforce training,

develop evidence-based clinical protocols, support research and real-world evidence generation, and prepare the VA healthcare system to responsibly implement these psychedelic therapies as they become available.

- **HHS “Operation TrialBlazer”:** On June 22, 2026, HHS held a Clinical Trials Roundtable to [announce](#) a coordinated department-wide effort called “Operation TrialBlazer.” This effort seeks to strengthen America’s leadership in clinical research, accelerate the development of lifesaving treatments, and ensure that patients have access to the most innovative therapies in the world. As part of this effort, NIH is strengthening support for informative, well-powered clinical trials while advancing the responsible use of artificial intelligence, human cell-based models, real-world data, and practical clinical trial tools to deploy therapies.
- **Landmark Data Release of *All of Us* Research Program:** On June 30, 2026, NIH’s *All of Us* Research Program [made history](#), releasing the world’s largest integrated dataset that combines unparalleled genomic depth with real-world clinical and wearable data. This landmark data release gives researchers a comprehensive resource linking genomic, multiomics, clinical, and wearable data to uncover how biology, environment, and lifestyle interact, with the goal of advancing personalized health care. More than 747,000 participants across all 50 states and territories have shared data. This includes nearly 482,000 electronic health records linked to 535,000 whole genome sequences in addition to cognitive data associated with the NIMH-funded Exploring the Mind study.
- **2026 OSNAP Awardee Selection:** In July 2026, NIH selected 25 awardees for the 2026 [Outstanding Scholars in Neuroscience Award Program \(OSNAP\)](#) cohort. OSNAP recognizes graduate students or postdoctoral fellows conducting exceptional neuroscience research and demonstrating great academic potential in their scientific training. In January 2027, awardees will share their science at an award symposium and meet with NIH leadership, investigators, program staff, and research trainees to learn about the unique resources and research conducted in the NIH Intramural Research Program (IRP) and relevant NIH funding opportunities.

➤ **Budget Overview**

- **Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget:** This figure shows the NIMH applications, awards, and success rates for research project grants from FY19 to FY25. In FY25, NIMH funded nearly 350 new and competing research project grants with a 11% success rate, defined as the number of applications funded divided by the number of applications received. FY26 data will be reported once finalized.



- **Outlook for FY27:** On June 5, 2026, the House Appropriations Committee advanced the FY27 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations Bill. The Bill would provide \$47.4 billion for NIH, an increase of \$100 million over FY26 enacted levels. This amount includes \$2.2 billion for NIMH, a decrease of \$98 million now that funding from the 21st Century Cures Act has ended. On September 2, 2026, the President signed into law a Continuing Resolution which extends government funding through December 11, 2026.

➤ NIMH Staff News

- **Staff Awards:**
 - **2026 NIH Director's Challenge Innovation Award Program:** Ten NIMH IRP staff have received awards through the [2026 NIH Director's Challenge Innovation Award Program](#). This program will provide two-year awards to seven new NIH research studies, three of which are led by or include NIMH researchers.
 - **Danny Pine, M.D.**, Chief of the Section on Development and Affective Neuroscience in NIMH's IRP, received the Norbert and Charlotte Rieger Award for Scientific Achievement by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.
 - **Mario Penzo, Ph.D.**, Chief of the Section on the Neural Circuits of Emotion and Motivation in NIMH's IRP, received the 2026 Rising Star-Scientific Investigator Award by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine Alumni Association Board of Governors.

➤ Recent Events

- **2026 BRAIN Initiative® Conference:** On August 11 – 13, 2026, the *Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies®* (BRAIN) Initiative Conference was held at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center in Rockville, MD to explore the latest advances and priorities in technology-driven neuroscience research. Conference participants discussed the latest scientific developments and exciting research priorities for technology-driven innovation in neuroscience. This conference provided a forum for collaboration, discussion, and coordination across the BRAIN Initiative community. There were 847 conference attendees, 199 Early Career Networking Event attendees, 372 poster presentations, and 10 scholar spotlights presentations.

II. NIH Policy and Grant Updates

- **Notice of NIH Updates to Career Development (K) Award Programs:** On August 12, 2026, NIH published a notice on updates to its Career Development (K) Award programs ([NOT-OD-26-098](#)). These updates include consolidating individual K notices of funding opportunities (NOFOs); eliminating the requirement for data management and sharing plans on Ks; and clarifying allowable uses of K award funds for clinical trial research activities. The updates are intended to improve consistency, reduce administrative burden, and align policies across K award programs, beginning with due dates on or after October 12, 2027. Active NOFOs that use the current K Activity Codes, except for K00, K12, K43, and K76, will expire by July 13, 2027.
- **Implementation Update – NIH Data Management and Sharing Plan Requirements:** On July 29, 2026, NIH published a notice on form changes when NIH transitions to the updated Data Management and Sharing (DMS) Plan format ([NOT-OD-26-100](#)). Beginning in FY27, NIH will require all existing awards and applications subject to the NIH DMS Policy to transition to the updated DMS Plan format, regardless of when the competing application was submitted.

Consistent with NIH efforts to reduce burden and implement the updated DMS Plan format, grant recipients will no longer be required to obtain prior approval to modify an approved DMS Plan.

- **United States Government Policy for Stopping High-Risk Life Sciences Research:** On July 28, 2026, NIH published a notice on a new policy for stopping high-risk life sciences research ([NOT-OD-26-101](#)). The policy defines areas of life sciences research posing the greatest risk to national security, implements federal funding prohibitions, and establishes a robust framework for mitigating risk and ensuring compliance. The new policy explicitly prohibits any federal support for dangerous gain-of-function research, as well as research conducted in or involving countries or entities of concern. It also establishes a comprehensive, risk-based oversight framework for all other life sciences research, including new restrictions on international research conducted in countries lacking adequate oversight.
- **Replacing Letters of Support with Letters of Collaboration to Reduce Administrative Burden:** On July 27, 2026, NIH published a notice on its ongoing efforts to increase efficiency and minimize applicant burden by replacing letters of support with letters of collaboration ([NOT-OD-26-094](#)). Letters of collaboration will be required to document any collaborative relationships with individuals that are not identified in the application as senior/key personnel or other significant contributors. For training grant applications, applicants will use a separate form to upload the Institutional Commitment Letter.
- **Input Requested on Potential NIH Funding Approaches to Support the Development of Future Clinical Trial Investigators:** On August 12, 2026, NIH issued a Request for Information (RFI) to gather public input on potential NIH funding approaches to support the development of future clinical trial investigators ([NOT-OD-26-095](#)). Comments must be submitted to NIH using the [online portal](#) by September 30, 2026.
- **Proposed Changes to Reporting Outcomes from NIH Peer Review:** On August 14, 2026, NIH issued an RFI to gather public input on proposed changes to reporting outcomes from NIH Peer Review ([NOT-OD-26-088](#)). Comments must be submitted to NIH using the [online portal](#) by October 13, 2026.
- **Draft NIH Biosafety Policy for Research Involving Biohazards:** On August 19, 2026, NIH issued an RFI to gather public input on its draft biosafety policy for research involving biohazards ([NOT-OD-26-112](#)). Comments must be submitted to NIH using the [online portal](#) by October 19, 2026.
- **Draft NIH Policy on Sharing Summary Level Study Results with Clinical Research Participants:** On August 27, 2026, NIH issued an RFI to gather public input on its draft policy on sharing summary level study results with clinical research participants ([NOT-OD-26-113](#)). Comments must be submitted to NIH using the [online portal](#) by October 26, 2026.

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

➤ **Featured NIMH Funding Opportunities**

- **Addressing Methodological Challenges with Clinical Trials of Rapid-Acting Psychotropic Interventional Drugs** ([RFA-MH-27-135](#))
- **Advancing Research on Empirically-Supported Interventions for Older Adults Living with Serious Mental Illness** ([RFA-MH-27-180](#))
- **Optimizing Behavioral Sleep Interventions for Adolescents and Young Adults** ([RFA-MH-27-140](#))

➤ Resources to Find Additional NIH Funding Opportunities

- **Grants.gov:** In FY26, [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) became the single official source for grant and cooperative agreement funding opportunities.
 - **Explore NIH Grant Opportunities Tool:** NIH launched an [Explore NIH Grant Opportunities](#) search tool that preserves the ability to identify potential opportunities of interest using NIH-specific filters such as institute/center/office, funding category, and activity code.
 - **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. View [NIMH's profile page](#) to discover NIMH-led and NIMH-participating [Highlighted Topics](#).
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III. Science Highlights

Explore a selection of recent scientific advances from NIMH:

- [Meta-analytic evidence for distinct neural correlates of conditioned versus verbally induced placebo analgesia](#): A research team led by Tor Wager, Ph.D., at Dartmouth College conducted a systematic meta-analysis of data from more than 400 individuals from 16 neuroimaging studies that used a within-participant study design. The researchers sought to identify the shared and distinct mechanisms underlying placebo analgesia, the relief of pain from an inactive treatment, when induced by verbal instructions alone versus verbal instructions combined with conditioning. The study found that the two approaches to inducing placebo analgesia engage different processes in the brain, offering insights that could help inform behavioral therapies in psychopathology.
- [Indirect Effects of the Coping Power Intervention on Latent Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors: an Integrative Data Analysis](#): A team of investigators at Johns Hopkins University integrated data from 3,182 youth participants through 11 randomized controlled trials of the Coping Power (CP) intervention, a school-based preventive intervention that uses skills-based training for children with elevated levels of aggressive behavior. The researchers examined indirect effects of various formats of CP through different behaviors and cognitive domains and explored the pathways by which CP might contribute to later reductions in suicidal thoughts and behaviors (STBs). Compared to no intervention, all forms of the CP intervention reduced later STBs, even though suicide prevention was not its original target. In addition, reductions in externalizing behaviors, particularly aggression and conduct problems, were identified as key pathways to lowering suicide risk, with important sex-specific differences in intervention effects.