



# NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) FUNDING FACT SHEET

## What does the NIH fund?

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) primarily funds biomedical and behavioral research to improve health and discover new treatments and therapies. This includes funding research grants, research development, infrastructure, small business, training and career development, and intramural research.

The NIH supports research in:

- The causes, diagnosis, prevention, and cure of human diseases;
- The processes of human growth and development;
- The biological effects of environmental contaminants;
- The understanding of mental, addictive and physical disorders; and
- Directing programs for the collection, dissemination, and exchange of information in medicine and health, including the development and support of medical libraries and the training of medical librarians and other health information specialists.

## Mission of the NIH

NIH is the steward of medical and behavioral research for the Nation. Its mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

## More about the NIH

**NIH Homepage:** <https://www.nih.gov>

**NIH Electronic Submission:** <https://www.era.nih.gov/services-for-applicants/apply/esubmission.htm>

**NIH ICs:** <https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/list-institutes-centers>

**NIH Grant Policies:** <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/nihgps>

**2025 Updates:** In 2025, the NIH implemented several changes to its grants and funding processes, including updates to application forms, review criteria, and salary caps.

- The Simplified Framework for NIH Peer Review Criteria retains the five regulatory criteria (Significance, Investigators, Innovation, Approach, Environment).  
<https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/simplifying-review/framework>
- The NIH updated the Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending Other Support forms, requiring the use of the new Common Form for applications due on or after May 25, 2025.
- Though there was a suspension of grant review panels earlier this year, NIH grant review committees have resumed meeting.

## Organization of the NIH

The NIH is organized by institutes and centers, rather than by directorates (like the NSF). Each has their own research focus and goals. Below is a list of each institute:

- National Cancer Institute (NCI)
- National Eye Institute (NEI)
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
- National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI)
- National Institute on Aging (NIA)
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS)
- National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB)
- Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)
- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)
- National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD)
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)
- National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)
- National Library of Medicine (NLM)

The NIH also supports centers. While institutes typically focus on a broad area of research, a center focuses on a specific aspect of research or provides support functions to NIH. Centers include the NIH Clinical Center (CC), Center for Information and Technology (CIT), Center for Scientific Review (CSR), Fogarty International Center (FIC), National Center for Advancing Translation Sciences (NCATS), and the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).

<https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/list-institutes-centers>

## Grants process

To apply for a grant from the NIH:

- Begin by developing your research idea and concept. Think about necessary resources, and the feasibility of the project given appropriate funding.
- Identify an appropriate grant mechanism from the NIH. There are many different mechanisms, and each are housed under a specific institute or center. You can begin by reviewing the most appropriate IC with the list above.
- Once you've identified an appropriate grant mechanism from a specific IC, contact a program officer to discuss the fit of your project. Develop a 1-pager to bring to the session that gives a comprehensive overview of your project, what you hope to achieve, and how it aligns with the FOA's goals.
- Write the full proposal. You can review the [application guide](#), as well as [general grant writing tips](#), [advice on application sections](#), and [sample applications and documents](#).
- Submit the grant
  - You can submit your grant using one of three options: ASSIST, Institutional Systems-to-System (S2S) Solutions, or Grants.gov workspace. [You can find out about differences here](#).
- The grant will then be reviewed for completeness. The criteria for completeness can be [found here](#).

Once you submit an application, there are two levels of review:

- **First level: [Peer Review](#)**
  - The peer review will assess three factors of criteria:
    - Importance of research: significance and innovation of proposed research
    - Rigor and feasibility: Approach (includes Inclusion and Clinical Trial Study Timeline)
    - Expertise and resources (investigators and environment): Evaluated as appropriate or gaps identified; gaps require explanation
- **Second level: [Advisory Council Review](#)**
  - Applications that score well go through a second level of review by the IC's Advisory Council or Board. This review considers the scores, summary statement, program priorities, and input from NIH staff.

If your application is likely to be funded, you may be asked to submit additional information (other support, human subjects training). If the application is successful, you'll receive a Notice of Award (NOA).

## Language considerations

Rather than objectives, the NIH has applicants list specific aims for their research projects. Aims are more general, giving an overarching purpose of the study. Aims are achieved by listing objectives, which are actionable steps to achieve the aims.

## **Where to find previously funded NIH grants.**

To find information on previously funded NIH grants, use the NIH RePORTER (<https://reporter.nih.gov/>) system. RePORTER is a searchable database that includes details about NIH-funded research projects, investigators, publications, and patents. You can use RePORTER to search by PI name, organization, project number, or fiscal year. You can also browse by funding agency or IC (Institute/Center).