NIH | National Institute of General Medical Sciences

Erica Brown, Ph.D.,

Acting Director

National Institute of General Medical Sciences

February 5, 2026

National Advisory General Medical Sciences Council

Director's Report

NIGMS Updates

National Institute of
General Medical Sciences

NIGMS Personnel Changes

Deputy Director and Acting Director

- Erica Brown, Ph.D. was selected as deputy director of NIGMS in November 2025 and has been serving as acting director of NIGMS since September 2025.

- Previously, she was director of the NIGMS Division of Extramural Activities; she also served as executive secretary of the National Advisory General Medical Sciences Council.

- Prior to joining NIGMS, she was director of the NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts in the NIH Office of Extramural Research.

NIGMS Personnel Changes (cont.)

Acting Deputy Director

- Darren Sledjeski, Ph.D. has served as acting deputy director of NIGMS and **acting director** of the Division of Pharmacology, Physiology, and Biological Chemistry since October 2025.

- He currently director of the Division of Extramural Activities at the National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases.

- From 2012 to 2023, he held a variety of positions at NIGMS, including deputy director of the Division of Extramural Activities and branch chief in the Division of Genetics and Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology.
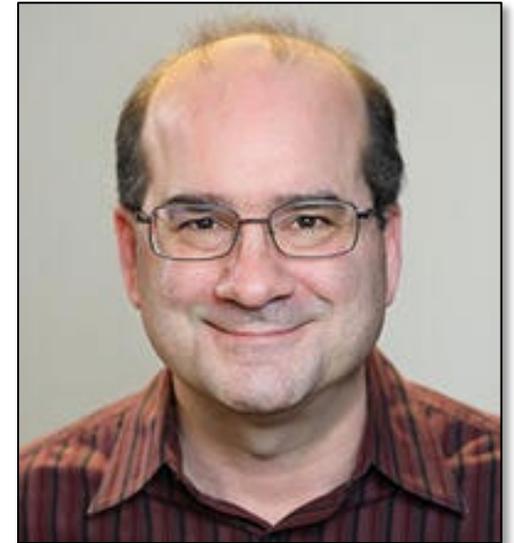
NIGMS Personnel Changes (cont.)

Division of Extramural Activities

- Ariel Zane, Ph.D., Acting Director

- Latarsha Carithers, Ph.D., Acting Deputy Director

- Justin Rosenzweig, Acting Chief, Grants Administration Branch

Division of Biophysics, Biomedical Technology, and Computational Biosciences

- Han Nguyen, Ph.D., Acting Chief, Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Branch

Division for Research Capacity Building

- Greg Bissonette, Ph.D., Chief, Health Research and Development Programs Branch

NIGMS Personnel Changes (cont.)

Division of Management

- Jennifer Day (Levithan), Acting Executive Officer; Acting Chief, Administrative Services Branch; Acting Chief, Business Policy and Operations Section

- Ayanna Vest, J.D., Acting Deputy Executive Officer

- Kathryn Zaletel, Acting Lead Budget Analyst, Financial Management Branch

FY 2026 Appropriations Bill: Funding Levels At-A-Glance

- **NIH at $48.993 billion**
  - +$493.3 million and 1% increase over FY25 CR

- **NIGMS at $3.270 billion**
  - +$25 million and 0.8% increase over FY25 CR
    - **IDeA:** +$20 million and 4.6% increase over FY25 CR

National Institute of General Medical Sciences

FY 2026 Appropriations Bill: NIGMS-Specific Provisions

- **Congressional Support for NIGMS Programs Continues to Remain Robust**
  - Congress continues to recognize and support NIGMS programs that expand research opportunities in foundational science and that strengthen the biomedical research workforce, including:
    - MIRA R35 funding model
    - Research training and workforce development programs
    - ARDS, Pneumonia, and Sepsis (APS) Consortium
    - Regional, state, and institutional capacity building through components of the IDeA program, including clinical and translational research (IDeA-CTR)

- **IDeA Level of Support**
  - Conference bill includes increase in IDeA program funding to $451M (+$20M above FY24 enacted or FY25 Continuing Resolution level).

FY 2026 Appropriations Bill: NIH-Wide Provisions

- **NIH Institute and Center Structure**
  - FY 2026 Appropriations reflect the structure of NIH with all Institutes and Centers (ICs) currently established by Congress.

- **Indirect Costs**
  - FY 2026 report language continues to include language prohibiting alterations (development or implementation) to the indirect cost negotiation process by NIH.

- **Multi-Year Funding**
  - FY 2026 multi-year funding limited by the total amount obligated for multi-year awards in FY 2025.

- **Broader Congressional Oversight**
  - Expanded Congressional oversight on IC Director appointments, advisory councils, and funding.

- **Professional Misconduct**
  - NIH granted greater authority to address concerns regarding harassment or other professional misconduct by grantees.

Biomedical Undergraduate Research Training (BURT) Program

- **Program Goal:** To strengthen research training environments and develop a pool of well-trained students who:

  - Complete their baccalaureate degrees in biomedically-related fields, and

  - Transition into and complete biomedical, research-focused higher degree programs (e.g., PhD or MD/PhD).

- **Programs are expected to provide trainees with**

Foundational Research Skills

Mentored Research Experiences

Scientific Collaboration and Communication

Career Development

BURT Eligibility

- **Eligible Organizations**

  - Must enroll undergraduate students and

  - Have received NIH Research Project Grant (RPG) funding averaging less than $50 million in total costs (direct and F&A/indirect) per year over the last three fiscal years

- **Program Tracks**

Single Site

Community College Partnerships

BURT Key Program Information

- First application due date **February 25, 2026** – applications accepted three times each year on [standard due dates](#) thereafter.

- For more information
  - BURT Program Webinar: **Monday, February 9** at 1 PM ET.
  - BURT Website: https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/Pages/burt
  - Email: NIGMSBURTT34@nih.gov

NIH-Wide Updates

National Institute of
General Medical Sciences

Unified NIH Funding Strategy

National Institute of
General Medical Sciences

Implementing the Unified NIH Funding Strategy

- Help guide clearer and consistent funding decisions across all Institutes, Centers, and Offices (ICOs)

- Strengthen accountability for research NIH supports

- Weigh the actual need, opportunity costs, and good stewardship of taxpayer investments

- Make NIH's research portfolio more robust

National Institute of
General Medical Sciences

Peer Review Remains Important in Unified Funding Strategy

- ICO Directors continue to have the delegated authority to decide what is funded by their ICOs.

- Funding decisions should not rely on funding paylines in developing pay plans.

- Funding decisions should include consideration of scores and reviewer comments in context of ICO and NIH priorities, strategic plans, and budgets.

National Institute of General Medical Sciences

Core Tenets of Unified Funding Strategy

- Align with NIH's and ICO's stated mission and strategic priorities
- Prioritize scientific merit, program relevance and program balance
- Incorporate the breadth of the ICO's research portfolio and approaches.
- Consider investigator career stage and sustainability of the biomedical research workforce
- Consider the total amount of NIH funding available to the investigator to promote distribution of funding
- Align with the availability of funds from the ICO

NIGMS Funding Strategy

- Priority of the research area for the Institute's mission;
- Scientific and technical merit
- Breadth of the Institute's research portfolio, approaches, and investigators;
- Early-stage investigator status;
- At-risk investigator status;
- Total amount of funding available to the investigator;
- Whether the PI would have **more than one NIGMS** funded R01 (including multi-PI R01s).

National Institute of General Medical Sciences

Updates to Finding NIH Funding Opportunities and Information

Goal: Reduce time and effort in finding NIH funding opportunities

- Identify a single authoritative source for NIH funding opportunities that aligns with other federal grant-making agencies

- Centralize information on areas of particular scientific interest across NIH

- Reduce highly specific funding opportunities and increase reliance on parent announcements and other broad funding opportunities

- Reduce redundant or overlapping grants and funding information across NIH websites

Grants.gov Is Now the Single Official Source for NIH Funding Opportunities

- NIH no longer posts NOFOs in the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts.

- NIH funding webpages will still help applicants find and explore opportunities, but they will link to Grants.gov for the official NOFO.

- The NIH Guide will continue to be used for policy updates, notices, and informational announcements.
  - NIH NOFOs will **no longer appear** in weekly NIH Guide Table of Contents emails

How to Find Funding Opportunities

- All active and expired NIH NOFOs are available and searchable on Grants.gov.

- Postings in Grants.gov begin as Forecast records and evolve into full NOFOs
  - Adjust search to look at forecasted records and/or NOFOs

- Use Grants.gov subscription services to receive alerts about new NIH funding opportunities.

- Check out the new tool to explore NIH funding opportunities – "Explore NIH Grant Opportunities"

Filters

☑ Active Opportunities   ☐ Expired Opportunities

Funding Category ⓘ

Select...   ⌄

[Learn more about Funding Categories](#)

Funding Organization(s) ⓘ

Select...   ⌄

☐ Issuing Organization Only

Keyword ⓘ

🔍 Quick Search

☐ Title Only

Active Opportunities

⚏ Advanced Search

[Clear Filters](#)

Displaying: 1-20 of 426

⊞ Table View   ▤ Detailed View

Title	Issuing Organization ⓘ	Participating Organization(s) ⓘ	Activity Codes ⓘ	Release ▼ Date ⓘ	Expiration Date ⓘ	Grants.gov Record ⓘ
Single Source Renewal for the Continuation of the Liver Cirrhosis Network: Scientific and Data Coordination Center (U24 Clinical Trial Optional)	NIDDK	N/A	U24	January 9, 2026	January 28, 2027	[RFA-DK-26-309](#)
NIGMS Institutional Biomedical	NIGMS	N/A	T34	December	September	[PAR-26-033](#)

Highlighted Topics

- Centralized NIH resource that signals **areas of scientific interest** for Institute(s) and Center(s)
  - Emerging or growing areas of science
  - Topics not traditionally associated with a specific Institute
- Not a funding opportunity; applicants apply through an appropriate NOFO
- Visit "Highlighted Topics" page to explore topics of interest across NIH instead of visiting various IC pages
- Use Highlighted Topics subscription service to receive alerts about new topics
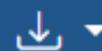
Title	Lead ICO	Participating ICOs	Posted Date	Expiration Date
	All	All		
Research on the Transition from Pediatric to Adult Health Care	NICHD	NICHD, NHLBI, NIAAA, NIDA, NIDCR, NIDDK, NIMH, NINR, OBSSR, ODP, ORWH	September 11, 2025	August 29, 2026
Advancing Prevention and Treatment of Bacterial Sexually Transmitted Infections in HIV-Affected Populations	NICHD	NICHD, NIAID, NINR, ORWH, ODP	September 11, 2025	September 11, 2026
Understanding the Impact of Immuno				

Reduction in Number of NIH NOFOs

- Expanding use of Parent Announcements
    - Majority of application are already investigator-initiated
- Limiting the number of highly specific NOFOs
- Leveraging Highlighted Topics to announce areas of interest

Consolidation of NIH Grants and Funding Information

- NIH Grants and Funding page serves as a central resource for research grants and funding information

- Expanding site to incorporate funding-related information currently distributed across Institutes and Center websites

- Goal is to consolidate both general and IC-specific information in one place

NIH Grants and Funding page: https://grants.nih.gov/funding/find-a-fit-for-your-research/nih-institutes-centers-offices/NIGMS

National Institute of
General Medical Sciences

Emergency Modifications to NIH Peer Review

National Institute of General Medical Sciences

What Is Happening with NIH Peer Review Now

- Lapse in appropriations from October 1 through November 12, 2025 created a large backlog in peer review
  - More than 370+ peer review meetings cancelled
- Impacts on both peer review and advisory council review
- CSR is committed to completing three full rounds of high-quality peer review in FY 2026
- To manage overlapping cycles (January 2026 and May 2026 Councils) and make recruitment of reviewers feasible, NIH has implemented **temporary, emergency modifications** to the peer review process

National Institute of General Medical Sciences

Key Modifications

- Modified discussion categories to reduce the percentage of applications discussed in most meetings
  - Top 30–35%: Discussed at the meeting and considered for funding.
  - Middle ~33%: Designated "competitive but not discussed" and still eligible for funding.
  - Bottom ~33%: Designated "not competitive and not discussed."
- Simplified but informative Summary Statements:
  - A sentence summarizing the degree of consensus in the committee vote.
  - Bulleted "score-driving" points.
  - Written critiques from the three assigned reviewers.
  - Overall impact score for discussed applications only.

What This Means for Applicants

- **Funding likelihood is not reduced**
    - Institutes and Centers can fund applications from both the discussed and "competitive but not discussed" categories.

- Reviewers' full critiques remain available

- We need your help! Subject matter experts in the extramural community are critical for a fair and rigorous evaluation of grant applications.

Other Notable Changes to NIH Grants Policies

- Implementing Common Forms for Biographical Sketch and Other Support for Due Dates on or after January 25, 2026 (NOT-OD-26-018)

- New Application and Award Structure for International Collaborations (NOT-OD-25-104 and NOT-OD-25-155)

- NIH to Prioritize Human-based Research Technologies

- Supporting Fairness and Originality in NIH Research Applications (NOT-OD-25-132)

National Institute of
General Medical Sciences

Other Notable Changes to NIH Grants Policies - continued

- Lapse in Legislative Authority for Small Business Programs (NOT-OD-26-006)

- NIH Requires Use of the eRA Prior Approval Module for the Submission of ALL Prior Approval Requests (NOT-OD-26-026)

National Institute of General Medical Sciences