



APS Advocacy Digest on NIH

September 1, 2026

Below is a roundup of important NIH-related information for members identified by the APS Advocacy Policy Committee. Several new RFIs have been released that members may want to consider commenting on, and news items specific to NIH-related topics are also included.

As you may be aware, APS' Advocacy Policy Committee developed a NIH Work Group that brings together leaders from several other related organizations to compare notes, share information, and determine next steps on important NIH-related topics. This effort is an outgrowth of that work group's most recent discussion in mid-August.

Recent RFIs/Announcements

Announcement: Notice of NIH Updates to Career Development (K) Award Programs

Information: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-26-098.html>

This notice from NIH includes three important program updates and details about them:

- *Program Update 1: Consolidating Individual K Funding Opportunities*
- *Program Update 2: Data Management and Sharing Plans No Longer Required for K Awards*
- *Program Update 3: Clarifying Allowable Uses of K Award Funds for Clinical Trial Research Activities. (includes an RFI with a comment period – see third RFI below)*

Request for Information (RFI) on Proposed Changes to Reporting Outcomes from NIH Peer Review

Information: <https://rfi.grants.nih.gov/?s=6a2b1c22c3fcfda46e0badd2>

Comment Period Deadline: October 13, 2026

APS SUMMARY OF RFI: *The NIH will no longer provide **percentile or overall impact scores** to applicants, or NIH institutes, instead providing these groups with general categories. This reduces the ability of applicants to assess the strength of the application within that study section and potentially reduces the ability of a study section to highlight the strongest grants within that group.*

According to the RFI, the proposed changes include (bold added by APS for emphasis):

The first-level peer review process is proposed to be modified to place an application in one of three overall impact categories:

- "Most competitive" (based on the top 25% of final overall impact scores),
- "Competitive" (based on the 26-50% of final overall impact scores), or
- "Not discussed" (scores >50%, or ND)

With the exception of the reporting of final overall impact scores and percentiles, all other initial review group procedures would be retained. As happens currently, all voting members of a peer review group would continue to enter individual overall impact scores for each application discussed. A final overall impact score would still be calculated for each discussed application for purposes of assigning the application to the appropriate category. **The category assigned would be communicated to the principal investigator(s), applicant institution, NIH program staff, ICO leadership, and the relevant NIH Advisory Council. However, the final overall impact score or percentile on which the categorization was based would not be released to any of these parties.**

Other reporting procedures would be unchanged. Discussed applications would still receive a resume of discussion and all applications would still receive written critiques from the assigned reviewers, to include individual criterion/factor scores.

Request for Information: NIH Common Fund is Soliciting Ideas for NIH-wide Challenges and Opportunities

Information: <https://rfi.grants.nih.gov/?s=6a22cf1d0957e14467009772>

Comment Period Deadline: September 19, 2026

APS SUMMARY OF RFI: *The NIH Common Fund is requesting research challenges that could have new programming or resources created to address them.*

The NIH requests ideas for biomedical and behavioral research challenges and opportunities that may be of interest to [the Common Fund](#). These ideas may inform activities to advance areas of science relevant to these challenges/opportunities, including, but not limited to, scientific workshops, pilot initiatives, and/or future Common Fund programs.

NIH encourages idea submissions that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A critical challenge or exciting emerging opportunity in biomedical/behavioral research
- Resources, tools, or knowledge that are needed to address the important challenge or opportunity
- Scientific advancements or other factors that make addressing the important challenge or opportunity particularly timely
- Critical challenges that small labs or research groups face with respect to funding, contracting, or navigating the regulatory landscape
- Priorities from "Advancing NIH's Mission Through a Unified Strategy" and "Make Our Children Healthy Again Strategy."

Request for Information (RFI): Input on Potential NIH Funding Approaches to Support the Development of Future Clinical Trial Investigators

Information: <https://rfi.grants.nih.gov/?s=6a57b31c69fc50193d0eb712>

Comment Period Deadline: September 30, 2026

APS SUMMARY OF RFI: *The NIH seeks comments on a new approach to K awards that will restrict funds from those awards from being used for clinical trials.*

To strengthen the future clinical trial workforce, NIH is revising its mentored career development award policies to better distinguish career development support from support for the conduct of clinical trials. Under the revised policy:

- NIH will no longer support "Independent Clinical Trial Required" K award Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs).
- K award funds may not be used to support or offset the costs of conducting a clinical trial, clinical feasibility study, or a separate ancillary study to an existing clinical trial.
- K award recipients who wish to lead a clinical trial as PI must secure separate funding (e.g., institutional, philanthropic, or other research grant support) to support those activities.

NIH seeks public input on the advantages, challenges, and implementation considerations associated with two new potential funding models related to the above that are identified in the RFI.

News of Interest

[NIH limits funding for research on the health effects of public policy](#)

[NIH plan to keep peer-review scores for grants secret draws concern](#)

If you have ideas on additional things to include in future efforts, please reach out to APS staff at Info@aps1888.org.