

Answers for Applicants for NIH Funding: Navigating NIH

From the NIH Center for Scientific Review

In seeking NIH grant funding, it is helpful to understand the structure of NIH and how to navigate the grants process.

Where is the funding?

NIH is made up of [27 institutes and centers](#) (often referred to as ICs), 24 of which can make grant awards. Our ICs award more than 80% of the NIH budget each year to support investigators at more than 2,500 universities, medical schools, and other research organizations around the world. About 10% of NIH's budget supports scientists in NIH laboratories, most of which are on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland.

Each funding IC has a [separate appropriation](#) from Congress, and the director of each IC decides which grants the IC will fund, taking into consideration input from staff, the results of the scientific peer review of the grant application, scientific opportunity, and the need to balance its scientific portfolio.

Institute and Center Missions and Priorities

The mission and priorities of each IC are stated on their [individual websites](#). Prospective grantees should do their research to identify the ICs that might be interested in their research idea. Many research topics may be of interest to multiple ICs, so [make contact with different scientific program officials](#) around NIH. They can help you determine the best IC home for your idea.

Another way to determine which IC may be interested in your idea is to use the Matchmaker tool in [RePORTER](#). (See our [video demonstration of Matchmaker](#).) Your query result may also be useful for finding NIH program official contacts at NIH. Click on the details tab for individual grants in the search result to find the program official responsible for that area of research.

Why is it so important to identify an IC that may be interested in your work? As you start [looking for funding opportunities](#), ensure that the IC potentially interested in your area of science is listed as a participating organization on the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) that you use to submit your application. If the IC does not participate on the NOFO you use to submit your application, they will not be able to consider your application for funding.

To learn more about the grants process and how to get started, visit the NIH website: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/understanding-nih.htm>.

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Seeking Assistance from a Program Officer or Scientific Review Officer

Before you submit your application, program officers (POs) can identify the right type of grant program and/or funding opportunity for you and your research and verify that your idea fits within the mission and priorities of an NIH institute or center. POs also can refer you to appropriate scientific review officers (SROs) or study sections.

To find a PO or an NIH institute or center that might fund your research, go to the Matchmaker tool in NIH's [RePORTER](#) database and click on the find-program-officials tab.

If you wish to find a study section at CSR, you can use one of two search tools on CSR's home page: <https://public.csr.nih.gov/>. Use the "Find a Study Section" search box or the Assisted Referral Tool. Contact information for the SRO responsible for each study section can be found on the study section description pages. You are welcome to contact SROs to inquire about the fit of your proposal with the study section. You may use the [Assignment Request Form](#) to suggest a funding institute and/or study section. CSR considers the request but has the prerogative to assign the application as it thinks most appropriate.

After you submit your application, your assigned PO and SRO will be listed in your eRA Commons account.

Fairness Matters

For possible violations of peer review integrity, contact your Scientific Review Officer (SRO), the CSR Review Integrity Officer at csrio@mail.nih.gov or the NIH Review Policy Officer at reviewpolicyofficer@mail.nih.gov.

For issues related to respectful interactions, bias or anything else that could affect the fairness of the review process, contact your SRO or email reportbias@csr.nih.gov.