



June 5, 2025

Statement on Multi-Year Funding Proposal

The President's Budget for fiscal year 2026 includes a proposal to award up to half of all NIH research progress grants (RPGs) as multi-year awards. This seemingly innocuous proposal could devastate the chances of any NIH-supported lab competing for their research funding, resulting in an arbitrary and precipitous loss of knowledge and talent.

We urge Congress to appropriate the full cost of any shift in award outlays so that funding rates do not decline.

Most NIH RPG's are awarded for 3-5 years but the funds are allocated each fiscal year. Under this funding system, a 5-year \$250,000 award would obligate \$50,000 in FY 2026 dollars, \$50,000 in FY 2027 dollars, and so on. In contrast, multi-year awards obligate the entire cost of the 3-5 year award in the first year. This funding system would allocate all \$250,000 of our hypothetical 5-year award in FY2026 dollars, requiring a substantial increase in FY26 funding.

There is nothing inherently wrong with multiyear funding. Some programs in NIH already award funds this way, and many other scientific agencies do as well. However, the transition to multi-year awards requires an increase in total funding.

The President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 proposes a 40% cut in NIH funding. **If enacted, application success rates would plummet.**

Implementing a transition from annual to multi-year funding while cutting total dollars would reduce substantially the number of grants that NIH could award in FY 2026, possibly eliminating any chance for an NIH-funded lab to compete for research resources.

The impact of having a year or several years in which no new grants were awarded would have a devastating impact on the research supported by NIH, with a particularly negative impact on junior investigators trying to establish research programs.

History has shown that when success rates are low, scientists become more conservative to be more competitive. To encourage risk-taking science, a goal of the NIH Director Bhattacharya, we should be developing strategies to *increase*, not decrease, funding rates. For these reasons, **we consider the multi-year funding proposal to be harmful to investigators and to the quality of science conducted with NIH funds.**

Adrienne Hallett
Executive Director

Jo Handelsman, PhD
Board Chair