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While the House was not in session, this week the Senate continued to work out the many conflicting priorities that have been complicating the federal landscape. Following the tragic school shooting in Uvalde this week, gun reform has become yet another pressing priority for Congress and is currently igniting conversations around what bipartisan gun reform legislation could look like. In the upcoming weeks, the House and Senate will also be focused on negotiations to confer their respective versions of competitiveness legislation aimed at improving U.S manufacturing and supply chains as they try to get a bill passed by July 4. Because of these competing priorities, the fiscal year (FY) 2023 appropriations process is more and more likely to require a continuing resolution (CR) for passage as the September 30 deadline continues to loom over.

The University of Minnesota Washington Update provides intelligence and analysis on recent federal activities. Faculty visiting Washington, D.C. are encouraged to contact Sarah Neimeyer, Director of Government Relations, at neimeyer@umn.edu. Contact Christina Laridaen, Lewis-Burke Associates LLC, at christina@lewis-burke.com with any questions or comments related to the Update’s content.

Funding Opportunities and Agency Updates

Funding Opportunity: SAMHSA Releases Center of Excellence on Social Media and Mental Wellbeing Solicitation

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released a new cooperative agreement solicitation for a Center of Excellence on Social Media and Mental Wellbeing to develop and disseminate information, guidance, and training on the impact of children and youth’s social media use, considering both risks and benefits. In particular, the Center of Excellence (COE) should address the potential risk social media platforms pose to children and youth’s mental health; and the clinical and societal interventions that could be used to address these risks.
Proposed aims of the COE include:

- “Increase awareness, education, and knowledge around the risks and benefits of social media use for children and youth to promote social-emotional wellbeing and prevent harm;
- ensure and expand the availability and delivery of publicly available, free of charge, training, technical assistance, and consultation for individuals who work with children and youth impacted by social media and negative mental health outcomes; and
- synthesize and disseminate to youth and adults best practices and research on appropriate social media use, communication, guidance, and other resources.”

In addition, COEs will focus on three priorities, education and resources around the risks and benefits of social media use of children and youth; culturally and linguistically appropriate technical assistance focusing on active learning, consultation, and support; and best practices and research updates.

**Deadline:** Applications are due by July 18, 2022.

**Award Information:** SAMHSA plans to make one award of up to $2,000,000 per year for a period of five years. Cost-sharing/match is not required in this program.

**Eligibility Information:** Eligible applicants include States, political subdivisions of States, health facilities, or programs operated by or in accordance with a contract or grant with the Indian Health Service, and other public or private non-profit entities such as institutions of higher education.

**Sources and Additional Information:**
- Additional information is available at [https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-22-013](https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-22-013)

**Funding Opportunity: USDA Releases FY 2022 Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative RFA**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) released a request for applications (RFA) for the fiscal year (FY) 2022 Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative (AG2PI). AG2PI aims to advance scientific understanding of genomes and phenomes of plants and animals of significance to American agriculture. This is the second RFA for this program after it was initially authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill and first competed in FY 2020. The FY 2022 solicitation includes $1.92 million in total funding, double the amount of available funding over the previous edition. Applications should seek to (1) develop datasets and tools to advance genome engineering to optimize animal reproduction and nutrition; (2) mitigate the environmental impacts of crop and animal production; and (3) support development of root stops to increase carbon capture. Projects proposing collaboration between crop and animal researchers are encouraged.

The RFA describes eleven goals, as directed in the 2018 Farm Bill, that AG2PI projects must support:

1. “Expand knowledge concerning genomes and phenomes of crops and animals of importance to the agriculture sector of the United States;
2. Understand how variable weather, environments, and production systems impact the growth and productivity of specific varieties of crops and species of animals in order to provide greater accuracy in predicting crop and animal performance under variable conditions;

3. Support research that leverages plant and animal genomic information with phenotypic and environmental data through an interdisciplinary framework, leading to a novel understanding of plant and animal processes that affect growth, productivity, and the ability to predict performance, which will result in the deployment of superior varieties and species to producers and improved crop and animal management recommendations for farmers and ranchers;

4. Catalyze and coordinate research that links genomics and predictive phenomics at different sites across the United States to achieve advances in crops and animals that generate societal benefits;

5. Combine fields such as genetics, genomics, plant physiology, agronomy, climatology, and crop modeling with computation and informatics, statistics, and engineering;

6. Combine fields such as genetics, genomics, animal physiology, meat science, animal nutrition, and veterinary science with computation and informatics, statistics, and engineering;

7. Focus on crops and animals that will yield scientifically important results that will enhance the usefulness of multiple crop and animal species;

8. Build on genomic research, such as the Plant Genome Research Project and the National Animal Genome Research Program, to understand gene function in production environments that is expected to have considerable returns for crops and animals of importance to the agriculture of the United States;

9. Develop improved data analytics to enhance understanding of the biological function of genes;

10. Allow resources developed under this section, including data, software, germplasm, and other biological materials, to be openly accessible to all persons, subject to any confidentiality requirements imposed by law; and

11. Encourage international partnerships with each partner country responsible for financing its own research.”

**Eligibility:** Colleges and universities; university research foundations; other research institutions; private organizations, foundations, or corporations; state agricultural experiment stations; national laboratories; federal agencies; and individuals are eligible to apply to this program, as well as groups of two or more of these entities.

**Deadline:** Applications must be submitted by July 21, 2022 at 5:00pm ET.

**Award Information and Matching:** The FY 2022 AG2PI has $1.92 million in total available funding. Applicants may request up to a total of $1.92 million, with a project period of no more than three years. USDA does not specify the number of awards they expect to provide under this program. There is a one-to-one matching requirement, but this may be waived under certain conditions specified in the RFA.

**Sources and additional information:**
Funding Opportunity: DOD Announces FY 2022 Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program

The Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) within the Department of Defense (DOD) released the funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for the fiscal year (FY) 2022 Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program (DMCSP). The DMCSP is designed to spearhead long-term investments in “critical skills, facilities, research and development, and small business support” to strengthen manufacturing capabilities and national security in designated defense manufacturing communities. The DMCSP allows organizations to obtain Defense Manufacturing Community (DMC) designation and funding and aims to recognize communities where local stakeholders are able to utilize long-term planning to attract and expand defense manufacturing through private and public investments.

This FOA from the OLDCC, formerly the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), details requirements for the program’s two-step process. The first step of the application process is a proposal for designation as a Defense Manufacturing Community. The second step, which is by invite only, is a separate grant application for funding.

Key factors in competitive proposals should include direct alignment with DOD priorities including the National Defense Strategy, the “State of Competition Within the Defense Industrial Base” report, the “Securing Defense-Critical Supply Chains—An Action Plan in Response to President Biden’s Executive Order 14017” report, and DOD Research and Engineering modernization priorities. The program also seeks to complement (and not duplicate) the DOD-sponsored Manufacturing Innovation Institutes program and industry- and association-initiated Industry 4.0 efforts. Information on the DOD’s nine Manufacturing Innovation Institutes can be found at https://www.manufacturingusa.com/institutes.

As part of the proposal for Defense Manufacturing Community designation, each lead organization should provide a designation concept briefing and white paper, which may include the following types of activities and investments:

- “equipment or facility upgrades;
- workforce training, retraining, or recruitment and retention, including that of women and underrepresented minorities;
- business incubators;
- advanced research and commercialization, including with Federal laboratories and depots;
- supply chain development; and
- small business assistance.”

Webinar: OLDCC will be hosting a pre-proposal webinar on June 1, 2022 and June 15, 2022 at 11:00 AM PDT to review the objectives of the program and answer questions.

Submission Information: OLDCC must receive full proposals no later than July 19, 2022 at 5:00 PM PDT. If designated, OLDCC will assign Project Managers to winning consortia on or about August 17, 2022 for the submission of a grant application.

Total Award Funding: The program has been allocated $30 million for FY 2022, with individual grants up to $5 million per award. DMC designations last for a period of five years with the option to renew designations for two additional two-year periods.
Eligibility: Consortia composed of members from “academia, defense industry, Federal laboratories, commercial industry, Department of Defense Manufacturing Innovation Institutes, and State and local government organizations” are eligible to apply for DMC designation. A Lead Organization must apply on behalf of a regional manufacturing consortium. Eligible Lead Organizations must be one of the following entities:

- “Institution of higher education or a consortium of higher education institutions
- Public or private non-profit consortium of defense industry, or
- State, local or tribal government organization”

Note: Consortia that received Defense Manufacturing Community designation and grant funding in FY 2020 or FY 2021 as a result of the first two rounds of this program are not eligible for additional designation or funding under this announcement.

Cost Share: Proposals must match at least 20 percent of the proposed program.

Sources and Additional Information:

- Full funding opportunity announcement can be found on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) under funding opportunity number “OLDCC-22-F-0001” or [here](http).
- More information on the DMCSP can be found [here](http)

**Funding Opportunity: OMH Releases Solicitation for Community-Driven Approaches to Address Factors Contributing to Structural Racism in Public Health**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) released a solicitation for Community-Driven Approaches to Address Factors Contributing to Structural Racism in Public Health. This program aims to support the formation and implementation of innovative policies and practices to mitigate health disparities and address structural racism, and ultimately improve health outcomes in disadvantaged communities. OMH encourages creating and utilizing community-focused, interdisciplinary teams to best examine and address the impacts of systemic policies and practices at the local level, with active engagement of the impacted populations.

Projects should accomplish each of the following objectives:

1. **Assess policies and practices**: Award recipients must use the findings of this assessment to create and implement a plan according to the second objective. This assessment must identify the impacts of existing policies on health outcomes in disadvantaged communities, examine the policymaking process to explore avenues to modify them, and determine the feasibility of implementing changes to the policy or practice.

2. **Develop, modify, and implement policy and practice**: Teams should use information gathered in the first stage to create action plans and implement changes to policies or practices.

3. **Build a multi-sector team**: Recipients should create or strengthen an existing multi-sector team, including members representing communities experiencing adverse health outcomes due to structural racism, and state or local decision-makers. The team should provide training and outreach to the
community on the impact of structural racism, potential changes to policy or practice, and ways to get involved in the project.

4. **Advise, assist, and train community stakeholders**: The team should advise and train community leaders and stakeholders to encourage entities to make evidence-based, equitable policy decisions which address health disparities.

5. **Develop and implement an evaluation plan**: The plan must assess the effectiveness of the project in (1) increasing the team’s capacity to assess the impacts of existing policies; (2) increasing the number of suggested policy changes to reduce structural racism in health services; (3) improving the ability of community stakeholders to access and utilize data; and (4) improving health outcomes for racial and ethnic minority populations.

6. **Disseminate findings**: Award recipients must distribute project findings to community members and organizations; policymakers; and federal, state, territorial, and tribal public agencies.

7. **Develop a sustainability plan**: This plan must identify individuals or groups whose support will sustain project activities after the award ends; describe a strategy to secure the necessary financial, personnel, and material resources; and outline existing partnerships which could provide continued operational or other support.

8. **Develop a disparity impact statement (DIS)**: Recipients must develop a DIS during the project period to identify populations at highest risk for health disparities, to serve as the baseline framework to continually assess the impacts of project activities.

**Deadline**: Applications are due **July 15, 2022 by 6:00pm ET**. A technical assistance webinar will take place on **June 9, 2022 at 3:00pm ET**.

**Award Information**: With $3 million in total program funding, OMH intends to issue six to ten awards of $300,000 - $500,000 per award to use over a performance period of no more than three years. There is no cost sharing or matching requirement.

**Eligibility Information**: Any public or private non-profit located in a U.S. state or territory is eligible to apply, including institutions of higher education; state, local, territorial, or federally recognized tribal governments; independent school districts; public or Indian housing authorities; and other community-based public or non-profit organizations.

**Sources and additional information**:
- Login details for the webinar will be posted at [https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/](https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/).

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**Funding Opportunity: AFRL Soliciting Pitches for University Day**

The Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) Munitions Directorate plans to host a University Day to solicit research proposals for short-term seedling projects from new academic collaborators. Though the purpose of this call is to find collaborators who do not already have a relationship with the laboratory, AFRL will consider all proposals. AFRL plans to support seedling awards lasting an academic year in four research areas:

- Electro-optical systems and materials;
Materials in extreme environments;
Alternative position, navigation, and timing methods; and
Multi-domain sensing

Proposers are expected to pitch their proposal directly to program managers following submission. AFRL expects to make 5 to 6 awards of $75,000 to $100,000 each, and cost sharing is not required. Only universities are eligible to submit proposals. Proposers must request to submit their proposal via email 5 days before the submission deadline of June 13, 2022, at 3:00 PM CT. Additional details about AFRL’s University Day can be found at sam.gov under Notice ID “FA8651-22-S-0001CALL01.”

Funding Opportunity: DOD Announces DEPSCoR FOAs and Webinar on June 22

The Department of Defense (DOD) will host a Defense Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (DEPSCoR) webinar on June 22, 2022 from 1:00pm-3:00pm EDT. DOD’s DEPSCoR is a capacity building program designed to strengthen the research infrastructure at institutions of higher education in underutilized states and territories. The webinar will provide an overview of the recently released fiscal year (FY) 2022 funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) listed below. Participants will also have an opportunity to ask questions about the FOAs during the webinar. Interested participants must register no later than June 21, 2022 at 5:00pm EDT.

- Research Collaboration – “This funding opportunity aims to create basic research collaborations between a pair of researchers, namely 1) Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI), henceforth referred to as Applicant, a full-time faculty member who has never served as a PI on a prior DoD directly funded research Prime award and 2) Collaborator/co-Principal Investigator (co-PI), henceforth referred to as Collaborator, an investigator who will provide mentorship to the Applicant and has served as a PI on a DoD directly funded research Prime award actively between 1 October 2015 and 30 September 2022. This structure is aimed at introducing potential applicants to the DoD’s unique research challenges and its supportive research ecosystem.”

- Capacity Building – This program seeks to “enhance the capabilities of institutions of higher education (IHE) in eligible States/Territories to develop, plan, and execute science and engineering research that is relevant to the mission of the DoD.”

Funding Opportunity: FY 2023 IES NCER and NCSER Grant Competitions Announced

The U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Institute of Education Sciences (IES) has announced its fiscal year (FY) 2023 competitions for education research and special education research. The funding notice explains that these awards will expand knowledge of “(1) developmental and school readiness outcomes for infants and toddlers with or at risk for a disability, (2) education outcomes for all learners from early childhood education through postsecondary and adult education, and (3) employment and wage outcomes when relevant (such as for those engaged in career and technical, postsecondary, or adult education).” The research programs will be administered through the Institute’s major grant-awarding centers, the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER).
IES plans to host four competitions in FY 2023. Of note, NCER will not compete the main Education Research grant program this coming fiscal year. In FY 2023, IES will also not be competing the Statistical and Research Methodology in Education or Systematic Replication in Education Research grant programs. Instead, IES will administer the following two competitions:

- **Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences** – Applications for this competition must address one of two topics: Early Career Mentoring Program for Faculty at Minority-Serving Institutions or Methods Training in Data Science for Education Researchers.

- **Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Recovery Policymaking** – Applications must address State agencies’ use of education longitudinal data systems to help identify achievement gaps for students from pre-K to adult education.

NCSER will administer two competitions in FY 2023:

- **Special Education Research Competition** – NCSER encourages a broad range of research, with applications concentrating on one or more research areas and focusing on a general range of students with disabilities or a specific disability. The range of research in this program includes, but is not limited to, projects on:
  - “child development and school readiness;
  - Academic and/or behavioral interventions;
  - Instructional practices and/or professional development programs for teachers and other school-based personnel;
  - strategies for improving the family support and engagement critical to the success of students with disabilities;
  - Policies and systems-level interventions and programs to address school finance, school-community collaborations, or school structures that affect educational progress for students with disabilities;
  - Transition from secondary school to postsecondary education, career, and/or independent living; as well as
  - Access to, persistence in, and completion of postsecondary education.”

- **Research Training Programs in Special Education Competition** – Applicants must address Early Career Development and Mentoring.

**Application Release Date and Proposal Deadline:** All applications for all four competitions will be made available on **June 30, 2022** and all proposals for the competitions must be submitted no later than **September 8, 2022**.

**Total Funding and Award Size:** The project period for Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences is up to four years, with award sizes ranging from $80,000 to $266,000. For the Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking program, the period of performance is up to three years and the awards range from $100,000 to $333,000. The period of performance for the Special Education Research program is up to five years and funding ranges from $200,000 to $760,000. The Research Training Programs in Special Education will have a performance period of up to four years with awards ranging from $100,000 to $200,000.

If further funding is available in FY 2023, “the Director intends to use the grant slate developed in FY 2022 for the Education Research and the Systematic Replication in Education Research grant programs to make new
awards to high-quality applications that remain unfunded on this slate.” IES may also announce these additional competitions later in 2022 depending on the enactment of FY 2023 appropriations by Congress.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, nonprofit and for-profit organizations, public and private agencies, institutions of higher education, and state education entities. For the Early Career Mentoring Program under the Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences, eligible entities are Department of Education designated Minority-Serving Institutions.

Sources and Additional Information:

- The Federal Register notice announcing the NCER and NCSER competitions is available at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/05/26/2022-11355/applications-for-new-awards-education-research-and-special-education-research-grant-programs.
- The official Request for Applications for each competition and additional topic details are expected to be linked at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/.
- On-demand and technical assistance webinars for the research programs are available at https://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/index.asp.

Funding Opportunity: DOT Announces 2022 University Transportation Centers Competition

On May 25, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the University Transportation Center (UTC) program, the primary extramural research program for institutions of higher education at DOT. UTC competitions are triggered by passage of surface transportation reauthorizing legislation, the most recent of which was included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) signed into law in November 2021. The IIJA provided funding for 35 university consortia across three categories with differing emphases and funding levels:

- National Centers: Five National UTCs funded at $4 million annually for five years.
- Regional Centers: 10 Regional UTCs located in each of the Standard Federal Regions funded at $3 million annually for five years.
- Tier 1 Centers: 20 Tier 1 UTCs funded at $2 million annually for five years.

The relatively small number of UTCs, award size and duration, and prestige associated with leading a Center have historically resulted in an oversubscribed program and extremely competitive competitions.

New and Modified Elements of the UTC Program

The NOFO includes revisions mandated by the IIJA and emphasizes priorities of the Biden Administration. The former provided increased funding for the program overall, added “reducing transportation cybersecurity risks” to the six previous research priority areas applicants must choose from, and expanded the scope of the automated vehicles (AV)-focused Regional UTC by including a cybersecurity component. The IIJA also restricted the number of awards to one per lead institution, but did not limit the number of consortia an institution can join. The NOFO does not translate that restriction an institutional proposal limit, and universities may submit multiple lead applications within and across the three UTC categories. DOT will make a final determination in the event two or more applications from a single institution are “Highly Recommended” by reviewers, and Letters of Intent from institutions may not indicate a preference or rank associated with multiple proposals.
New emphases and programmatic foci made by DOT are less explicit relative to their implications. These are largely in keeping with the Biden Administration’s posture towards leveraging the federal government to address pressing social challenges and promoting America’s technological competitiveness.

- Broadening Impact and Participation: A recurring theme throughout the NOFO is expanding the number of Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) involved in the program and UTC’s impact to underserved communities. This has been highlighted in recent UTC competitions albeit to a much lesser extent. Proposals will be evaluated on meaningful participation or leadership of a UTC by an MSI, and applicants must now include greater specificity on the roles and responsibilities of MSIs relative to the lead institution. Proposals will also need to include specifics on how a UTC – through workforce development and technology transfer activities – would result in positive impact to underserved and underrepresented populations, including those served by MSIs and rural and Tribal communities.

- Emerging Technologies: Relative to recent competitions, DOT is seeking an unprecedented emphasis on fostering revolutionary versus evolutionary transportation innovations. The NOFO states that DOT “is looking for, and encouraging applicants to propose, new breakthrough ideas, innovations, and transformative research topics that will make significant contributions toward transforming the transportation system into a seamless, connected, and adaptable system of systems...” Each of the seven research topics includes a list of “key challenges” identified by DOT – something past solicitations have included – but also a new list of “candidate technologies and tools” proposers should consider leveraging. This list contains familiar transportation technologies like modeling and autonomous systems, but also Quantum Information Sensing (QIS), blockchain, networked sensors and sensing, and other technologies not frequently associated with the transportation research sector.

- Workforce: DOT is seeking proposals that connect a UTC’s research activities with efforts to promote a skilled and diverse workforce. The NOFO highlights DOT’s interest in certification and/or credentialing programs from proposers addressing the “promoting safety” and “reducing transportation cybersecurity risks” topics. Like the focus on broadening participation, applicants will need to include greater specificity than previously required on a UTC’s STEM education outreach and engagement plans, as well as community education and collaboration activities.

Eligibility: Only non-profit institutions of higher education are eligible to apply, which includes qualifying two-year institutions. Proposals that include entities other than U.S. non-profit institutions of higher education will not be considered. State, tribal, and local Departments of Transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, and the private and philanthropic sectors are allowed collaborator with a UTC but would not be considered consortium members. Current UTC grant recipients are eligible to apply.

Deadlines: Mandatory Letters of Intent for each UTC proposal are due by 5:00 PM ET on Friday, July 1, 2022. Letters of Intent must be submitted to DOT as a pdf attachment in an email to UTCgrants@dot.gov. Full applications need to be submitted to grants.gov by 11:59 PM ET on Thursday, August 25, 2022.

Cost Sharing: National and Regional UTCs must obtain matching funds equal to the award amount from DOT. Tier 1 UTCs must match 50 percent of the award amount. Centers will have until November 30, 2028 to meet the total match requirement and to expend funding awarded by DOT.

Sources and Additional Information:
• The full Notice of Funding Opportunity is available at https://www.grants.gov/search-grants.html?cfda=20.701.
• Additional information on the UTC program is available at https://www.transportation.gov/content/university-transportation-centers.

Engagement Opportunity - The National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource Task Force Releases Interim Report and Request for Information

The National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource (NAIRR) Task Force has released its interim report, which envisions the structure, design, operations, and governance for a national artificial intelligence (AI) cyberinfrastructure to meet the needs of the U.S. research community. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and National Science Foundation (NSF) are accepting public comments on the recommendations within the interim report to inform the Task Force’s final report and implementation roadmap.

In coordination with OSTP, NSF established the NAIRR Task Force to create a plan to develop and sustain AI research resources across the nation. Since its creation in June 2021, in accordance with the National AI Initiative Act of 2020, the Task Force has worked to address the “growing resource divide” in the nation’s AI ecosystem by expanding access to AI research and development (R&D) across the nation. The main goal of the Task Force is to make AI resources easily accessible to researchers by influencing the domestic design, deployment, and operation practices of AI, as well as by providing a centralized collection of AI resources.

The Task Force released its interim report on May 25, 2022, which outlines approaches to building on existing and future investments in the NAIRR, designing AI with privacy and civil protections in mind, and promoting diversity and equitable access to AI. The interim report provides insight into how the federal government should support the “full spectrum of AI research from foundational to use-inspired to translational” by equipping U.S. students and researchers with opportunities and resources that they normally would have limited access to. The findings and recommendations of the report are the first step in achieving a more equitable future for national AI R&D. The preliminary findings of the Task Force lay out its vision to meet national AI R&D needs by connecting researchers to AI resources and tools through a shared cyberinfrastructure. This vision includes strategic objectives to “strengthen and democratize” the national AI innovation ecosystem while protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties; promoting collaboration between federal agencies that represent AI stakeholders; cultivating key resource elements including “curated data sets, computational power, testbeds, and educational tools and services” that are user friendly; cultivating an independent, non-governmental entity with highly knowledgeable staff to complete the NAIRR’s daily operations; creating resource allocation processes that provide accessible and inclusive on-ramps; securing the research, data, resources, and safety of its users; and setting standards for responsible AI through its design and implementation processes.

The final report, which will include a roadmap for achieving the vision for a NAIRR, is expected to be released by the end of this year. To inform the development process of the final report, the Task Force has released a request for information (RFI) on its findings and recommendations, especially on potential strategies for implementing such recommendations. The RFI seeks responses from various relevant stakeholders to address the following topic areas:

• “The Vision for the NAIRR which includes its strategic goals and objectives, composition, and user base;
• The establishment and sustainment of a NAIRR, which includes potential agency roles, resource ownership and administration, governance and oversight, resource allocation and sustainment, and performance indicators and metrics;
• NAIRR resource elements and capabilities which includes data, compute resources, testbeds, user interfaces, and educational tools and services;
• Systems security and user access controls;
• Requirements for privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties;
• Ideas for developing a roadmap to establish and build out the NAIRR in a phased approach, including data sets, use cases, and high priority capabilities; and
• Other areas relevant to the development of the NAIRR implementation plan.”

Responses and comments to the RFI must be received by 11:59 PM ET on June 30, 2022. Responses may be received via email at NAIRR-responses@nitrd.gov. Those interested in submitting responses are encouraged to attend a public listening session on June 23, 2022, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM ET.

Sources and Additional Information
• The White House announcement of the interim report is available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2022/05/25/bridging-the-resource-divide-for-artificial-intelligence-research/.
• The RFI on the interim report is available at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/05/25/2022-11223/request-for-information-rfi-on-implementing-initial-findings-and-recommendations-of-the-national.

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Agency Update: HHS Formally Establishes ARPA-H Structure and Priorities

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a notice modifying the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to establish the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). This notice follows the official establishment of ARPA-H through the fiscal year (FY) 2022 omnibus appropriations package, which provided $1 billion for ARPA-H and empowered HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra to develop an organizational structure for the agency. The organization of ARPA-H will include the following offices:

• Grants Management
• Acquisition and Contracting
• Controller
• Engagement and Communications
• Legislative and Governmental Affairs
• Strategic Resources
• Treatment Innovation
• Health Equity, Dissemination, and Implementation
• Health Data
• Health Promotion and Disease Detection
• Health Resources and Policies
In their establishment notice, HHS is providing a structure that is broader than initially conceived by members of Congress or even the President’s budget request. Some notable elements HHS is seeking to have ARPA-H focus on include bridging clinical care, biomedical research, the development of novel therapies, and health equity strategies that incorporate clinical practice in real-world settings.

ARPA-H will have its own external relations and legislative affairs teams, and will also control its own budget policies, planning and analysis, formulation, and presentation, in collaboration with the HHS Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources and NIH Office of Budget.

As envisioned by Congress and the White House as a core mission of ARPA-H, the Treatment Innovation and Health Promotion and Disease Detection Offices will coordinate efforts for the development of novel therapies and interventions while also seeking ways to enhance early disease detection.

The Health Data Office, as designed by HHS, will connect research and medicine with mathematical approaches that create datasets for use across programs. In addition, the Health Resources and Policies office will focus on applying scientific and engineering principles to remove barriers to the delivery of interventions for patients ARPA-H’s Systems Technology Office will cover a wide range of research areas, focusing on physiologic systems to the broader healthcare system and “everything in between.”

As a part of the Biden Administration’s directive for improving diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility across federal agencies, the Health Equity, Dissemination, and Implementation Office will support research that aims to address health disparities across the biomedical research enterprise and promote equitable access to health care. In particular, the office would advise the ARPA-H Director on issues pertaining to equity and inclusion in research recruitment, enrollment, and retention as well as in the ethical development of science and technology and its application in real-world settings and clinical care.

The focal point of ARPA-H’s commercialization activities, the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Office, will focus on stimulating the agency’s culture of innovation, ideation, and dynamic thinking, setting it apart from other agencies across HHS. The office will also serve as the management hub of all Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program Activities.

In addition to this directive establishing an organizational structure for ARPA-H, HHS also recently announced the first senior leader for this new agency. On May 25, HHS Secretary Becerra named Dr. Adam H. Russell as the acting deputy director for ARPA-H. Dr. Russell currently serves as the Chief Scientist at the University of Maryland’s Applied Research Laboratory for Intelligence and Security and previously served as a program manager for the Intelligence Advanced Research Project Activity (IARPA) and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).
Both the House and the Senate are still considering legislative packages that would provide official authorization for ARPA-H, which could also set directions for the agency. NIH leadership has indicated that additional staff for ARPA-H, including both program managers and operational staff, will be hired in the coming months, with the first awards made through ARPA-H planned for March 2023.

Sources and Additional Information:

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