



## Biomedical Research Funds Restored to the National Institutes of Health

After an arduous budget process, a fiscal year (FY) 2014 omnibus appropriations bill is complete. The United States House of Representatives passed the spending bill by a vote of 359-67 on January 15 and the Senate passed it the next day by a vote of 72-26. Debate in both chambers was brief and uneventful. To ensure that there would be no lapse in government operations, a short term extension of the current continuing resolution was passed. This report is drawn from information provided by FASEB.

Funding levels are as follows:

- ✓ National Institutes of Health (NIH) – \$29.9 billion (approximately \$1 billion above the current level).
- ✓ National Science Foundation (NSF) – \$7.1 billion (approximately \$200 million above the current level).
- ✓ Department of Energy Office of Science (DOE SC) – \$5.1 billion (approximately \$440 million above the current level).
- ✓ Veterans Medical and Prosthetic Research Program – \$585.6 million (approximately \$3 million above the current level).
- ✓ Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – \$316.4 million (approximately \$41 million above the current level).

For NIH in particular, this is a good conclusion to a contentious debate. NIH received a 3% increase, slightly higher than the overall 2.6% increase in discretionary spending. Dr. Mark Sobel, Executive Officer of the American Society for Investigative Pathology (ASIP), said: “Members of ASIP and other FASEB societies who communicated with their elected representatives are to be congratulated for effectively improving biomedical research funding for the fiscal year.”

FASEB has identified the key components relating to NIH. Highlights are below.

- Instructs NIH to distribute the funding increase proportionally among Institutes and Centers.
- Notes that several Institutes received funding in anticipation of research in



connection with the Brain Research Through Application of Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative.

- Notes that \$273.3 million is provided for the Institutional Development Awards (IDeA).
- Notes that increases were provided for the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) to reflect the transfer of programs from the Common Fund to NCATS and to consolidate all support for the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) program in NCATS rather than continuing to have CTSA funding provided through other Institutes and Centers.
- Directs NIH to adopt a “reasonable NIH-wide policy for non-competing and competing inflation rates that is consistent with the overall funding increase.”
- Notes that NIH is “expected to support as many scientifically meritorious new and competing research projects as possible, at a reasonable award level.”
- Instructs NIH to continue to support the Pathways to Independence Program, the New Innovator Awards, the Director’s Pioneer Awards, and the Transformative R01 Program through the Common Fund.
- Directs NIH to provide inflationary increases to research training stipends that are not below the federal pay policy (1% increase).
- Instructs the NIH Director to provide timely quarterly reports to the Appropriations Committees on all obligations made with the Director’s Discretionary Fund.
- Instructs NIH to ensure “that the proportion of resources shifted out of the extramural program to intramural, outside of the recognized fixed costs, are based on specific scientific criteria and include advanced consultation with the extramural community.
- Instructs NIH to establish an Administrative Burden Reduction Workgroup “that includes coordination and participation of universities, not-for-profits, and institutes receiving support from NIH to develop a method to track and measure the administrative burden on entities participating in NIH supported activities with the goal of developing a plan to reduce such administrative burden as practicable.”
- Notes that NIH is expected to maintain support for basic biomedical research and that basic research is an important investment in the health and international competitiveness of the nation. Adds that “basic biomedical research must remain a key component of both the intramural and extramural research portfolio at NIH.”
- Instructs the NIH Director to provide a report to the Appropriations



Committees within 180 days of enactment of the omnibus bill “describing the policies, procedures, and processes in place to safeguard all of the biomedical data, tools, analysis, and other similar forms of data that are or will be accessible by or through the Big Data initiative,” as well as details about how NIH will ensure that all of the data accessible through the initiative are only used for biomedical research. Directs the report to specifically state how the policies will ensure that the data remain anonymized and explain how they will address the ethical, legal, and societal issues surrounding the use of such data.

- Instructs NIH to submit a report within 120 days of enactment of the omnibus “identifying the overall program manager for the BRAIN Initiative, a detailed timeline, annual goals and objectives, a detailed five-year budget estimate, milestones, decision points to continue projects, and the analysis used to determine if this is the best use of research funds given other scientific opportunities.”
- Provides up to \$7 million for NIH buildings and facilities.
- Notes that the Institutes and Centers are expected to continue to provide support to the CTSA infrastructure for clinical trials and other appropriate activities and instructs NCATS to move forward with implementing the Institute of Medicine recommendations on the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for the CTSA’s. Requests an update in the fiscal year 2015 budget request of all planned and expected changes in the CTSA program and how the changes will be communicated to the CTSA community.
- Instructs the NIH Director to develop an NIH-wide process to consolidate communications activities to “reduce duplication of effort, consolidate, improve efficiencies and coordination of messages, and generally reduce costs in this area.”
- Requests that NIH provide additional details (funding details, performance measures, partnerships, and criteria to select projects) regarding the Cures Acceleration Network in the fiscal year 2015 budget and future budget requests.
- Directs the NIH Director and Institute and Center Directors to work with other divisions within the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a “more systematic means of disseminating research results.”
- Instructs NIH to provide in the fiscal year 2015 and future budget requests, a table that shows the total funding provided to the Office of the Director and each Institute/Center and the NIH Director breaking out the cost of travel, personnel, and performance bonuses by each Institute/Center.
- Instructs NIH to maintain the current level of support for the Centers of



Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) and the IDeA program. Notes that NIH is expected to split the increase for IDeA between a new COBRE competition, additional awards for the IDeA Clinical Trial and Translation Program, and the IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) program.

- Notes that in 2012, NIH was urged to give the IDeA Director the flexibility to include all states that qualify for the EPSCoR program into IDeA and instructs NIH to review whether changes to the eligibility criteria of the EPSCoR program are warranted and submit a report on its recommendations to the Appropriations Committees no later than 120 days after the omnibus bill is enacted.
- Directs the NIH Director to conduct an NIH-wide review to examine the post peer review priority setting process, resource allocation process, and portfolio evaluation data and information to ensure that the NIH priority setting process provides decision makers with information about how the proposed activities significantly advance biomedical science, could contribute to expanding knowledge to improve human health, and how they could impact the overall research portfolio of the NIH. Instructs the NIH Director to submit a report to the Appropriations Committees within 180 days following the enactment of the omnibus bill including an executive summary of the reviews findings, recommendations, planned actions with a timeline, and actions related to developing and implementing improved NIH-wide portfolio analysis procedures, policies, and tools.
- Directs the NIH Director to provide a report on the actions taken or planned to ensure that the requirement for scientifically based NIH-wide strategic planning is fully implemented in accordance with the language in the NIH Reform Act of 2006. The report is due to the Appropriations Committees within 180 days following the enactment of the omnibus bill.
- Directs NIH to continue funding in FY 2014 for STEM programs in the Office of Science Education and notes that the omnibus bill provides sufficient funding to do so. Instructs NIH to continue the STEM programs “based on the same policies that existed at the start of fiscal year 2013. Notes that the omnibus bill “does not support NIH’s proposed new educational programs.”
- Includes a “new general provision to promote public access to research supported by federal funding.”

In addition, FASEB has summarized the key components National Science Foundation (NSF).



- NSF must submit a detailed spending plan to the Appropriations Committee 30 days after enactment of the Bill.
- Cross-Foundation initiatives – Limits on the implementation of OneNSF initiatives as proposed in the Senate report are not included. However, future growth in interdisciplinary research should not come at the expense of adequate support for infrastructure and core research programs in each of NSF's individual scientific disciplines. NSF is urged to assess and refine the balance among these activities in its budget request for fiscal year 2015 and future years.
- Section 526 prohibits the use of funds to pay for the attendance of more than 50 department or agency employees at any single conference outside the United States, unless the conference is a law enforcement training or operational event where the majority of Federal attendees are law enforcement personnel stationed outside the United States.

This article can be seen in ASIP Pathways February 2014  
[http://www.asip.org/publications/newsletter/documents/  
ASIPPathways\\_February2014.pdf](http://www.asip.org/publications/newsletter/documents/ASIPPathways_February2014.pdf)