



Funding for the National Institutes of Health



The **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** is vital to improving health, strengthening the economy, and investigating scientific frontiers. The value of NIH-supported research can be expressed in lives saved, health protected, quality of life improved, economic activity, and jobs. The research supported by NIH uncovers knowledge and translates this into therapies and cures improving the lives of all Americans.

Health and Discovery

NIH-supported research drives discovery that transforms medicine, improves treatments, and will one day lead to cures.

- NIH-funded basic (also called fundamental) science is unlocking mysteries with brain-related disorders. Today's discoveries in the lab will pave the way for tomorrow's treatments.
- More than **1,000** neurological and neurodegenerative diseases,¹ such as schizophrenia, TBI, autism, and Parkinson's disease, affect the lives of the nearly **100 million Americans**.^{2,3}
- In the last five years of life, total healthcare spending for people with dementia was **57% percent greater** than costs associated with death from other diseases, including cancer and heart disease.

Economic Growth and Prosperity

NIH funding is an investment in our country's future and will reduce healthcare costs, support quality jobs, and increase economic activity.

- Neurological illnesses and mental disorders cost the U.S. more than **\$760 billion** a year.^{5,6} The only way to decrease these costs is to improve prevention strategies and treatments.
- Every dollar of research money from the NIH generates approximately **\$2.57 in economic output**.⁷
- Eighty-two percent of NIH's budget funds research located in every state, and it fuels **390,863 jobs** and **\$94.15 billion** in economic output nationwide.⁷

The Future of the Scientific Enterprise

Many of today's discoveries were unimaginable less than a decade ago and any budget cuts would threaten sustained progress. Without a continued commitment to research, who knows what medical advances will go undiscovered.

- The **substantial lag time between discovery and profitability** impacts business. Businesses need NIH research to explore fundamental science before they can translate these critical discoveries into applicable treatments.
- Without a strong workforce, we are jeopardizing the future of U.S. competitiveness. Young scientists are moving from research to other careers due to stagnant funding.
- According to the 2025 AAAS Global R&D Update, the U.S. is first in total R&D expenditures and second in scientific publication.¹³

NIH BY THE NUMBERS

\$47.2 billion

NIH FY2026 budget

95 percent

of the NIH budget goes directly to research awards, programs, centers, and contracts¹⁴

59,447

FY2025 awards supported by NIH⁸

300,000

researchers supported by NIH¹¹

2,719

organizations are supported by NIH⁸

68 percent

of Americans are in favor of increasing federal funding for science and technology¹²



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Sources

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- ⁵ *Brain Facts: A Primer on the Brain and Nervous System*. Society for Neuroscience. 2012.
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- ⁷ United for Medical Research. (2026, March). NIH's role in sustaining the U.S. economy.
- ⁸ *NIH Awards by Location & Organization*. The National Institutes of Health.
- ⁹ Rockey, S. Age Distribution of NIH Principal Investigators and Medical School Faculty. February 2012.
- ¹⁰ Chakma, J., Sun, G., Steinberg, J.D., Sammut, S.M., Jagasi, R. *Asia's Ascent — Global Trends in Biomedical R&D Expenditures*. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. 370:1. January 2014.
- ¹¹ Sekar, K. (2025, Jan. 13). The National Institutes of Health (NIH): Background and congressional issues (CRS Report No. R41705).
- ¹² Research!America. (2026, February 26). 2026 January national survey.
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- ¹⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2021, April 7). Our Knowledge. National Institutes of Health.

The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) is a nonprofit membership organization of around 30,000 scientists and physicians who study the brain and nervous system. Visit SfN.org or email advocacy@sfn.org to learn more.