

How to Talk with Your Coworkers About the NIH Indirect Cost Caps

Derived from Work Product of Rutgers-AAUP

To Do

- Figure out what the agreed upon indirect rate is for federal grants at your school and how many millions in funds the school gets from the NIH to calculate the total loss. University specific NIH grants can be searched here: <https://reporter.nih.gov>

Talking Points

- The Trump administration is trying to implement an illegal slash of the NIH indirect cost rate to 15 percent, making this rate apply to all current and future NIH grants. **This will devastate colleges and universities, research, learning, and local economies.**
 - Congress has authority over the NIH and the power to stop this clearly illegal move. We need to mobilize quickly to stop this.
 - The US Senate HELP committee has jurisdiction here. Contact these senators to tell them to stop this cut that threatens lifesaving research, education and training opportunities for the next generation of scientists, and jobs in our communities.
<https://www.help.senate.gov/>
- Across the country, medical researchers are sounding the alarm that these cuts will paralyze basic biomedical research in the US and have devastating impacts on members of the public who benefit from the lifesaving research funded by NIH grants and trials as well as all American universities (and biomedical research—see points further below) through cuts to funding that shutter labs and have the potential to result in layoffs to staff.
 - Here is a very useful breakdown of the national consequences:
<https://bsky.app/profile/carlbergstrom.com/post/3lhmtolcc6s2c>
 - NYT estimate puts the total **national impact at \$4 billion** annually of lost revenue for universities: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/07/us/politics/medical-research-funding-cuts-university-budgets.html>
- Indirect costs from grants cover operations and support the whole institution. This will have **huge and devastating impacts for budgets of all departments, libraries, centers, and offices**—not just those with NIH funding:
 - Centers will likely close;
 - Many staff and postdoctoral fellows will likely have to be laid off;
 - Staff who support these programs—directly or indirectly—could face layoffs;

- Many research projects would likely have to be terminated if they cannot access sufficient operating funds, at a great loss of investment in equipment and facilities; and
- There will be a devastating impact on careers and scientific output and ability to train graduate students and future scientists.

- Grants (all in) are likely the largest single largest source of revenue for your university after tuition. **Some institutions could make up this shortfall through program closures, layoffs of staff and faculty, and/or increases in tuition.**

- **Local and regional economies that depend on your college or university will take a hit.**

- This will **shatter medical research in both the short- and long-term and result in very real harm to our national public health.**

- Assaults on basic research infrastructure **threaten the international credibility of US higher ed institutions as premier research sites and undermine the role of the United States as a leader in the development of lifesaving scientific breakthroughs.**



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