

iJOBS Policy Exercise: Negotiating Research Funding Levels

Overview: This hour-long exercise will mimic Congressional negotiations that take place to establish funding levels at various institutes and centers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The group will split into 10 teams, and each team will be assigned to act as one of the members of Congress described below. These members serve on our “Senate Appropriations NIH Subcommittee.”

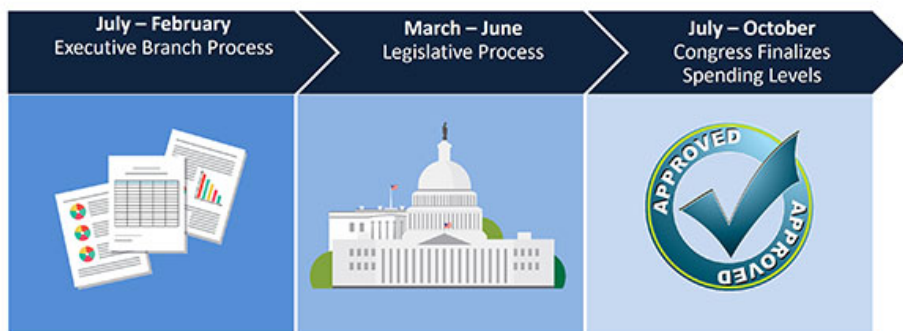
The job of our Senate NIH Subcommittee is to take a topline dollar amount assigned to them and decide how much funding should go to each of the NIH institutes listed below.

You will have 15 minutes to discuss the information you have been provided and your approach with your team members. The remaining time will be devoted to an NIH Subcommittee meeting to discuss and finalize the NIH Institutes funding amounts.

Goals:

- Enhance understanding of the appropriations process
- Practice engaging with others to come to funding decisions
- Discuss how various priorities are balanced in policymaking

Background:



Decisions about funding for the federal government’s discretionary programs are made by Congress annually. The process starts well before each fiscal year in the Administration beginning with the Office of Management and Budget giving guidance to federal agencies about levels of funding and priorities. Each agency works to create a budget proposal which is submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for consideration before it is included in the President’s Budget. The President’s Budget Request is supposed to be submitted to Congress on or about the 1st Monday in February. This budget is not enforceable by law.

Next, the Senate and House report their own individual budget resolutions. The resulting budget resolution, which is a concurrent resolution and therefore not signed by the President, includes what is known as a 302(a) allocation that sets a total amount of money for the Appropriations Committees to spend.

Once they receive 302(a) allocations, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees set 302(b) allocations to divide total appropriations among the 12 subcommittees dealing with different parts of the budget. Those subcommittees must then decide how to distribute funds within their 302(b) allocations. The Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies have jurisdiction over the Department of Health and Human Services and thus, NIH. The Subcommittees are also tasked with assigning funding levels to each institute and center within the NIH as well. As a comparison, appropriations committees do not assign funding levels to the directorates within the National Science Foundation.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees, through their 12 subcommittees, hold hearings to examine the budget requests and needs of federal spending programs. The House and Senate then produce appropriations bills to fund the federal government. These bills are "marked-up," amended as needed, and approved by the Appropriations Committees.

Once approved by the Senate and House Appropriations Committees, the bills head to the House and Senate floors where they may be further amended and eventually passed. Most times, the bills passed by House and Senate differ in some significant ways and must be reconciled.

Once a final bill has been negotiated between the two chambers, it must then pass the House and Senate and be signed by the President by October 1st, the beginning of the fiscal year.

The Exercise

Timing:

- Overview of exercise and relevant background materials – 10 minutes
- Team discussions – 15 minutes
- NIH Subcommittee discussion – 35 minutes

Thoughts and Questions for Consideration:

- Are the institutes funded at the levels that you would expect?
- Should any principles be applied to research funding decisions?
- Should certain scientific/health areas be prioritized over others?
- Should the Senate support the Administration's priorities?

302(b) Allocation to NIH: \$29 billion

The Senate is supporting the Administration's desire to cut funding but not to the same extent. The less drastic cut also resulted in funding allocations that are more similar to the allocations set by the Democratic controlled House, which was \$32 billion.

Priorities and Facts That Must Be Taken Into Consideration:

- NIH submitted a budget proposal that cuts each institute and center by 5%.
- The President requested that an extra \$500 million be spent on pain and substance use disorder research at NIH in FY 2020.
- The 21st Century Cures Act requires that following funds be spent on these programs in FY2020 (these funds need to be assigned to an institute):
 - Precision Medicine Initiative - \$149 million
 - BRAIN Initiative - \$140 million
 - Cancer Moonshot Initiative - \$195 million
 - Regenerative Medicine - \$8 million
- The President is Republican. The Senate is controlled by the Republican Party. The House is controlled by the Democratic Party.
- You may make special requests. As an example, you may:
 - Request a certain amount of funding goes toward your state for a project.
 - Request certain instructions be included along with the funding allocation.

List of Mini-NIH Institutes:

1. National Cancer Institute (NCI)

FY2019 Funding: \$6.14 billion (included \$400 million for Cancer Moonshot)

NCI leads a national effort to eliminate the suffering and death due to cancer. Through basic and clinical biomedical research and training, NCI conducts and supports research that will lead to a future in which we can prevent cancer before it starts, identify cancers that do develop at the earliest stage, eliminate cancers through innovative treatment interventions, and biologically control those cancers that we cannot eliminate so they become manageable, chronic diseases.

2. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

FY2019 Funding: \$3.49 billion

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) provides global leadership for a research, training, and education program to promote the prevention and treatment of heart, lung, and blood diseases and enhance the health of all individuals so that they can live longer and more fulfilling lives. The NHLBI stimulates basic discoveries about the causes of disease, enables the translation of basic discoveries into clinical practice, fosters training and mentoring of emerging scientists and physicians, and communicates research advances to the public.

3. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)

FY2019 Funding: \$2.02 billion

The mission of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) is to conduct and support medical research and research training and to disseminate science-based information on diabetes and other endocrine and metabolic diseases; digestive diseases, nutritional disorders, and obesity; and kidney, urologic, and hematologic diseases, to improve people's health and quality of life.

4. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

FY2019 Funding: \$2.27 billion (included \$58 million for BRAIN)

The mission of NINDS is to seek fundamental knowledge about the brain and nervous system and to use that knowledge to reduce the burden of neurological disease. To accomplish this goal the NINDS supports and conducts basic, translational, and clinical research on the normal and diseased nervous system. The Institute also fosters the training of investigators in the basic and clinical neurosciences, and seeks better understanding, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of neurological disorders.

5. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)

FY2019 Funding: \$5.52 billion

NIAID research strives to understand, treat, and ultimately prevent the myriad infectious, immunologic, and allergic diseases that threaten millions of human lives.

6. National Institute on Aging (NIA)

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Comment [1]: Focusing on the top funded Institutes only.

FY2019 Funding: \$3.08 billion

NIA leads a national program of research on the biomedical, social, and behavioral aspects of the aging process; the prevention of age-related diseases and disabilities; and the promotion of a better quality of life for all older Americans..

7. National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)

FY2019 Funding: \$1.73 billion

The National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) supports basic research that increases understanding of biological processes and lays the foundation for advances in disease diagnosis, treatment and prevention. NIGMS-funded scientists investigate how living systems work at a range of levels, from molecules and cells to tissues, whole organisms and populations. The Institute also supports research in certain clinical areas, primarily those that affect multiple organ systems. To assure the vitality and continued productivity of the research enterprise, NIGMS provides leadership in training the next generation of scientists, in enhancing the diversity of the scientific workforce, and in developing research capacities throughout the country.

8. National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH)

FY2019 Funding: \$1.81 billion (included \$58 million for BRAIN)

NIMH provides national leadership dedicated to understanding, treating, and preventing mental illnesses through basic research on the brain and behavior, and through clinical, epidemiological, and services research.

9. National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA)

FY2019 Funding: \$1.42 billion

The mission of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is to advance science on the causes and consequences of drug use and addiction and to apply that knowledge to improve individual and public health. In this regard, NIDA addresses the most fundamental and essential questions about drug abuse — from detecting and responding to emerging drug abuse trends and understanding how drugs work in the brain and body, to developing and testing new approaches to treatment and prevention.

10. Office of the Director

FY2019 Funding: \$2.11 billion (included \$200 million for the PMI)

The Office of the Director is the central office at NIH for its 27 Institutes and Centers. The OD is responsible for setting policy for NIH and for planning, managing, and coordinating the programs and activities of all the NIH components. OD program offices include the Office of AIDS Research and the Office of Research on Women's Health, among others.

Member of Congress Profiles:

All of these members serve on the Senate NIH Subcommittee.

Chairman Roy Trunt (R-MO)

- He has led the push for recent increases to the NIH budget and has promised to keep increasing funding for NIH.
- He is interested in the use of cutting edge technologies in research.

Ranking Member Patty Hurray (D-WA)

- Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, which generally oversees the activities of NIH.
- Several prominent neuroscience institutions are located in the state of Washington.
- She thinks a greater proportion of federal funding should go towards basic research.

Senator Richard Felby (R-AL)

- He is Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- His wife suffers from Parkinson's disease. She sits on the board of a prominent non-profit organization that advocates in support of Parkinson's disease funding.
- He has been a strong proponent of NIH funding for years.

Senator Lamar Hamilton (R-TN)

- Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, which generally oversees the activities of NIH.
- He was responsible for the inclusion of the funding for the various scientific programs listed in the 21st Century Cures Act.
- He is known for reaching across the aisle on healthcare issues to move policy forward.

Senator Shelly Grason Pacito (R-WV)

- She has been a leader raising awareness about the opioid epidemic because of its impact on West Virginia.
- She has been a proponent of increased funding for Alzheimer's research.
- She recently became a participant of the Precision Medicine Initiative's All of Us Program.

Senator James Bankford (R-OK)

- He is opposed to the use of federal funding for research using embryonic stem cells.
- He is up for re-election in 2020.
- He is interested in increasing NIH efficiency and reducing administrative burdens.

Senator Cindy Walton-Smith (R-MS)

- She has a child with Down syndrome.
- She is interested in how the NIH can improve care for patients in rural areas.

- During her recent campaign, she stated that she is going to push for drastic cuts to government spending.

Senator Richard Babin (D-IL)

- Co-chair of the bipartisan Senate NIH Caucus.
- He recently announced that he is devoting more attention to health disparities in heart disease.
- He would like more funding to be put toward disease prevention.

Senator Jack Brass (D-RI)

- He is trying to increase funding to RI because he wants it to be considered a tech hub.
- He is up for re-election in 2020.

Senator Tammy Sheldon (D-WI)

- She is a breast cancer survivor.
- She is Chair for the Alzheimer's Disease Caucus.

Materials Needed:

- Signs so everyone knows which member is being represented.
- Rutgers fact sheet on funding.
- New Jersey fact sheet on funding.
- Approps 101 document