

Departments of Labor, HHS, and Education, and Related Agencies

Senate Appropriations Bill Summary, Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

Total Senate Labor, HHS, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill

- **Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation:** \$46,218,000,000
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National Institutes of Health

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: \$47.2 billion (\$400 million increase from FY 2025)

National Institute of General Medical Sciences

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: \$3.3 billion (no change from FY 2025)

Biomedical Research Workforce Training

- Training programs at NIH provide a “quality standard of training for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in biomedical research.”
- The Committee stated that “despite the success of training programs, the number of students and postdoctoral scholars supported on training grants has remained constant over the years.”
- The Committee applauds NIH efforts to increase funding for IDeA States and urges NIH to also emphasize the importance of supporting training grants in IDeA States.
- NIH is directed to provide an update on specific actions NIH will take to identify and remove barriers for applying for training grants in IDeA States.

Bridge Programs

- The Committee strongly supports opportunities for students with limited access to STEMM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine] education and research. The Committee recognizes the effectiveness and importance 128 of NIGMS bridging programs that support historically underserved students and researchers to pursue STEMM studies and become the nation’s next generation of researchers, including programs such as the Bridges to the Doctorate Research Training Program, Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program [PREP], and Maximizing Opportunities for Scientific and Academic Independent Careers [MOSAIC] program.
- The Committee is extremely concerned that NIH terminated many of these programs in 2025, and directs NIH to reestablish them. The Committee urges NIH to expand the size of existing training programs that bridge different educational or career stages and establish these programs at institutions that have historically received low levels of funding support from NIH,

including Minority Serving Institutions and institutions that are eligible under the Department of Education’s Strengthening Institutions Program.

- The Committee urges NIH to set clear mentorship and support standards for students participating in these programs.
 - The Committee urges NIH to encourage and provide more guidance to participating institutions to account for sufficient staff and outreach, budget and other training-related expenses in grant applications.
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Increasing Diversity in Biomedical Research

Maximizing Access to Research Careers [MARC] program	\$13,100,000
Post-Baccalaureate Research Education Program	\$18,800,000
Bridges to Doctorate program	\$6,400,000

- The Committee is concerned that NIH terminated a number of longstanding research training and career development programs that play a vital role in building the next generation of the biomedical research workforce. These programs provide critical funding for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, and the termination of these programs has caused an immediate and harmful impact on the ability of academic medicine to attract and retain the best and brightest scientists.
 - Within 90 days of enactment, the Committee directs NIH to provide a report and briefing to the Committees on Appropriations on the training and career development programs that have been terminated since December 2024, and a justification for the termination of each program. Such report shall include the amount NIH spent on each program in fiscal year 2024, and a comprehensive list of awards associated with each program, including the grant number, institution and the total cost of each award.
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Office Of the Director

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: \$2.61 billion (\$145 million decrease from FY 2025)

Article Processing Charges for NIH–Funded Research

- The Committee directs NIH to work with the scientific community to inform development of an Article Processing Charges [APCs] allowable charge limit and, as part of that process, to: account for different publishing models, particularly U.S. based publishers focused on rigorous peer review and quality checks; support a robust American scientific research and publishing enterprise amid unprecedented global competition; and support the aims of gold standard

science by establishing parameters to guard against potential abuses, including payment of APCs to journals that don't prioritize research quality and integrity.

- Within 90 days of enactment, NIH is directed to brief the Committee on these efforts and its work to engage scientific journals on reasonable, sustainable APCs moving forward.

Compensation for Trainees and Early Career Researchers

- The Committee is deeply concerned that entrenched financial barriers are increasingly deterring graduate and postdoctoral students, particularly those from underrepresented communities, from pursuing STEM careers.
- The lack of Cost-of-Living Adjustments [COLAs] can make it financially unrealistic for postdoctoral scholars to accept positions, particularly in high-cost areas; areas in which academic medical centers are located.
- The Committee commends NIH for proposing meaningful increases in stipends for postdoctoral scholars. These increases take a significant step towards returning National Research Service Awards [NRSA] to their inflation-adjusted pre-pandemic levels and brings the agency closer to offering real dollar increases in the stipend of early career researchers that are needed to ensure a strong STEM workforce.

Harassment Policies

- The Committee remains frustrated by statutory loopholes that fail to protect victims of harassment and prevent perpetrators from transferring grants between organizations.
- To address this issue, the Committee has included a new general provision to require institutions that receive NIH funding to complete any investigation undertaken due to concerns about harassment, bullying, retaliation, or hostile working conditions, even if during the course of the investigation the individual under investigation leaves their current position and is no longer employed by the institution.

Restructuring NIH

- The Committee commends NIH for reconvening the Scientific Management Review Board [SMRB], as directed in the fiscal year 2024 appropriations Act, to review the overall research portfolio of the agency and advise on the use of organizational authorities, including eliminating ICs, creating new ones, and reorganizing existing structures. NIH is directed to provide a report to the Committee no later than 30 days after enactment on SMRB activities, and an annual report on SMRB plans and activities thereafter.

Graduate Medical Education [GME]

- The Committee notes that Congress has authorized additional GME Medicare positions in recent years for four categories of hospitals: hospitals located in rural areas; hospitals currently training over their caps; hospitals located in States with new medical schools; and hospitals serving Health Professional Shortage Areas [HPSAs].

- Within the HPSA category, the Committee encourages CMS to examine priority consideration of future slot distribution to teaching hospitals associated with Historically Black Medical Schools or facilities physically located in rural areas
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Department of Education

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: \$19,157,790,000 (million decrease from FY 2025)

Campus Antisemitism

- The Committee is deeply concerned with continued reports of increased discrimination and harassment on college campuses, including incidences of antisemitic discrimination and harassment.
- The Committee encourages the Department to continue to offer guidance to institutions of higher education for the development of campus policies to combat religiously-based discrimination, harassment, and other incidents.
- The Committee also encourages the Department to offer guidance to institutions of higher education to encourage the prompt reporting of instances in which a member of the University community violates the institution's policies regarding discrimination and harassment, any disciplinary actions taken by the institution in response to such violations, and how the reporting of such violations and disciplinary actions is conducted in a manner that complies with all applicable privacy laws and policies.

College Costs

- The Committee is concerned by the increase in college costs over the past 20 years and how those increases have contributed to the growth of student loan debt.
- The Committee encourages the Department to use recently reported data from institutions of higher education to develop detailed estimates of net prices by program for students of different income levels, and to incorporate those measures on the College Affordability and Transparency List and the College Scorecard.

Foreign Influence

- Under section 117 of the HEA, institutions of higher education receiving Federal financial assistance are required to disclose gifts from, or contracts with, foreign sources if the value is \$250,000 or more. The Committee strongly urges the Department to work with IHEs to ensure they are fully complying with this statutory requirement. The Department shall report to the Committee on any steps that it has taken to address undue foreign influence within IHEs.

Staffing Report

- Not later than 30 days after enactment, the Department is directed to provide the Committee with a staffing report identifying the total FTE and non-personnel allocations supported by the student aid administration, office for civil rights, and office inspector general appropriations, and the FTE and non-personnel allocations for each program office supported by the program administration appropriation provided by this act.
 - The Department shall also provide the Committee on a biannual basis an excel file which includes the names, titles, grades, program office, and date of hire of all the political appointees that were employed by the Department during the previous 180 days.
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Student Aid Administration

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: \$2.1 billion (no change from FY25)

Higher Education Data Reporting

- The Committee directs the Department to fully implement and enforce all statutory data reporting and collection requirements under the HEA, including the requirement to update and improve the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [IPEDS], the requirement that institutions of higher education participate in Federal data collections, including IPEDS, and maintaining the expanded IPEDS data elements required by the HEA.

Maintaining Higher Education Transparency and Research

- The Committee is concerned by reports that existing higher education research and data collection organizations are being limited contrary to Congressional intent under the FAFSA Simplification Act.
- The Committee urges the Department to maintain secure data collection, reporting that does not publicly release personally identifiable information, privacy-protected research, and interagency data-sharing for students' educational purposes only, including tax information such as income and family size, as part of the administration of the Federal student aid programs under the HEA.
- The Committee directs the Department to issue guidance to reaffirm such data uses to further transparency, research, evaluation, and accountability in higher education while still ensuring student privacy.

PSLF Processing

- The Committee is interested in receiving information regarding PSLF processing. The Committee directs the Secretary to continue including information in the monthly loan repayment briefings for the Committees.

- The Committee directs the Department to provide updated data on the FSA Student Aid Data Center on the number of PSLF applications processed, approved, or denied on a quarterly basis.
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Higher Education

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: \$3.3 billion (\$187 million decrease from FY 2025)

Total FY 2026 Aid for Institutional Development: \$1 billion

Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans

Total FY 2026 Funding: \$27,451,000 for competitive, 5-year grants

- The Committee continues to encourage the Department to prioritize awards for projects that support consortiums of HSIs that award PhDs to develop and test new models of cross-institutional partnerships that facilitate mutually reinforcing activities, such as resource-sharing learning communities, mentorship programs for PhD students, graduate research experiences, faculty mentor capacity-building, and other uses associated with the pursuit and completion of PhDs by Hispanic students.

Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities [HBCUs]

Total FY 2026 Funding: \$400,966,000

- The program makes formula grants to HBCUs that may be used to purchase equipment; construct and renovate facilities; develop faculty; support academic programs; strengthen institutional management; enhance fundraising activities; provide tutoring and counseling services to students; and conduct outreach to elementary and secondary school students.

Strengthening Historically Black Graduate Institutions [HBGIs]

Total FY 2026 Funding: \$101,286,000

- This program provides 5-year grants to provide scholarships for low-income students and academic and counseling services to improve student success. Funds may also be used for construction, maintenance, and renovation activities; the purchase or lease of scientific and laboratory equipment; and the establishment of an endowment.

Strengthening Predominantly Black Institutions [PBIs]

Total FY 2026 Funding: \$22,412,000

- This program provides 5-year grants to PBIs to plan and implement programs to enhance their capacity to serve more low- and middle-income students.

Strengthening Master's Degree Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Total FY 2026 Funding: \$20,037,000

- This program provides grants to specified colleges and universities making a substantial contribution to graduate education opportunities at the master's level in mathematics, engineering, the physical or natural sciences, computer science, information technology, nursing, allied health, or other scientific disciplines.
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International Education and Foreign Language Studies

Domestic Programs

Total FY 2026 Funding: \$70,353,000

- The Committee urges the Secretary to preserve the program's longstanding focus on activities and institutions that address the Nation's need for a strong training and research capacity in foreign languages and international studies, including increasing the pool of international experts in areas that are essential to national security and economic competitiveness.

Overseas Programs - Fulbright-Hays

Total FY 2026 Funding: \$10,311,000

- The Committee provides for overseas programs authorized under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (Public Law 87–256), popularly known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. Funding is provided for group, faculty, or doctoral dissertation research abroad, as well as special bilateral projects. Grants focus on training American instructors and students to improve foreign language and area studies education in the United States.
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Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools

Total FY 2026 Funding: \$75 million

- The Committee directs the Department to prioritize grants to eligible entities serving a significant percentage of Pell-eligible or other low-income students.
 - The Committee urges the Department to prioritize grants to eligible entities that propose flexible child care arrangements (such as evening, weekend, and drop-in child care) in any future competition.
 - The Committee also urges the Department to require new grantees to collect data on the total number of parenting students enrolled at the institution and the number of parenting students served by CCAMPIS grant funds.
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Office For Civil Rights

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: \$140 million (no decrease from FY 2025)

- The Committee requests that OCR provide the Committee with quarterly reports on the average case processing timelines for each category of directed investigations and compliance reviews and the number and type of complaints dismissed, opened for investigation, closed, or resolved.

Combatting Antisemitism

- The Committee is concerned by reports of increased discrimination, including antisemitic harassment, in our Nation's education system. The Committee directs OCR to ensure timely processing of all current and incoming shared ancestry complaints and directed investigations, including those relating to antisemitism.