

Congressional and Federal Agency Responses and Opportunities Regarding the COVID-19 Outbreak

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC
 March 30, 2020

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Congressional Update.....	2
Federal Guidance Related to Research and Higher Education	2
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)	2
Department of Education (ED)	3
National Institutes of Health (NIH)	4
<i>Update: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)</i>	5
Food and Drug Administration (FDA)	5
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	6
Administration for Children and Families	7
<i>Update: National Science Foundation (NSF)</i>	7
Department of Energy (DOE)	7
<i>Update: Department of Homeland Security (DHS)</i>	8
Department of Defense (DOD).....	9
Department of Labor (DOL)	11
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	12
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).....	12
<i>Update: National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)</i>	13
National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)	13
Department of State (DOS)	13
<i>Update: Department of Justice (DOJ)</i>	14
Small Business Administration (SBA).....	14
US Census Bureau.....	15
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).....	15
Research and Funding Opportunities	16
<i>Update: National Institutes of Health (NIH)</i>	16

Centers for Disease Control (CDC).....	18
National Science Foundation (NSF)	19
Update: Department of Defense (DOD)	20
Department of Energy (DOE)	23
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	23
The White House	23
Other Sources.....	24
International News.....	24
International Fundraising.....	24
Update: World Health Organization (WHO)	25

Introduction

Today’s edition of Lewis-Burke’s COVID-19 update includes new federal guidance and opportunities related to the outbreak. As new information related to the pandemic decreases in volume, Lewis-Burke will transition to disseminating this update a few times each week, rather than daily. Also, if you--or your organization--are interested in helping the effort to combat the spread of COVID-19, FEMA has established a website (<https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus/how-to-help>) with more information.

Congressional Update

NEW: Congress on Recess until April 20 after passing Third Coronavirus Relief Package

The House and Senate are both on recess until at least April 20 after passing the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act on Friday, enacting the largest emergency relief package in U.S. history. Read Lewis-Burke’s [analysis](#) of the bill.

Federal Guidance Related to Research and Higher Education

Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

- On March 19, OMB released guidance to Executive branch agencies to extend flexibilities in federally sponsored research to all grantees impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These flexibilities include extension of deadlines, no cost-extensions, allowability of salaries, covering costs caused by cancellations, etc. The full memo can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-20-17.pdf>.
- On March 9, OMB issued guidance to all Executive branch agencies to grant new flexibilities for research related to emergency COVID-19 response for such things as notices of funding opportunities, no cost-extensions, expenditure of award funds, etc. The use of new flexibilities will be determined by the awarding agencies. The OMB memo is at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-20-11.pdf>.

Department of Education (ED)

- ED's Student Privacy Policy Office will host a webinar on March 30 from 1-2 pm EDT for a discussion of FERPA's implications for distance learning. Materials from the webinar will be available at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov>.
- ED has announced that the garnishment of wages, tax refunds, and Social Security benefits of people who are in default on their federal student loans will be paused. A memo has been sent to federal student loan servicers calling for a pause in collections until further notice and makes the policy retroactive to March 13. This retroactive application will likely result in approximately \$1.8 billion being refunded to borrowers. More information is available at <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-directs-fsa-stop-wage-garnishment-collections-actions-student-loan-borrowers-will-refund-more-18-billion-students-families>
- On March 20, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced that all federal student loan borrowers with federally held student loans will automatically have their interest rates set to 0% for a period of at least 60 days. In addition, each of these borrowers will have the option to suspend their payments for at least two months to allow greater flexibility during the national emergency. Student loan servicers have also been directed to grant an administrative forbearance to any borrower with a federally held loan who requests one. The forbearance will be in effect for a period of at least 60 days, beginning on March 13, 2020. For borrowers continuing to make payments, the full amount of their payment will be applied to the principal amount of their loan once all interest accrued prior to March 13 is paid. A press release with the announcement is available at <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/delivering-president-trumps-promise-secretary-devos-suspends-federal-student-loan-payments-waives-interest-during-national-emergency>.
- On March 20, ED issued a "COVID-19 FAQs" document to accompany the March 5 guidance offering Title IV flexibility. The FAQ document is downloadable at <http://ifap.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/2020-03/COVID-19FAQs.docx>.
- On March 16, Federal Student Aid (FSA) released guidance on how an institution can request a waiver of the community service expenditure requirements under the FWS Program for the 2020–21 Award Year. <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/031620FWSProgCommWaiverRequest202021>.
- On March 17, ED released additional information for accreditors offering regulatory flexibilities during COVID-19 outbreak, including allowing virtual site visits and extensions on accreditation. The guidance document is at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/20-007covid19accreditorsfromomb317s.pdf>.
- On March 17, the ED released a webinar and a fact sheet for protecting students' civil rights during COVID-19 response. They are both available at <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-webinar-fact-sheet-protecting-students-civil-rights-during-covid-19-response>.
- The Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has released a video on ensuring web accessibility for students with disabilities for schools using online learning. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCMLk4cES6A&feature=youtu.be>.
- On March 12, ED released a FAQ document to assist schools navigating Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and student data privacy requirements as it relates to COVID-19 and possible disclosure of information. Details are available at https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/FERPA%20and%20Coronavirus%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions_0.pdf.

- On March 5, ED posted guidance for institutions of higher education related to interruptions of study, outlining increased flexibility for Title IV aid programs. This includes offering broad approval to move students into distance learning without regular approval and waiving accreditor review requirements. There are some limitations on clock-hour required licensure programs. Guidance is viewable at <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/030520Guidance4interruptionsrelated2CoronavirusCOVID19>.
- The White House Office of Science and Technology launched an online learning resource, [TechforLearners.org](https://www.techforlearners.org), which will serve as a searchable online database of education technology tools that facilitate online classrooms and teaching.
- ED has a COVID-19 website of resources at <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>.
- ED's Office of Federal Student Aid's website with information for students, borrowers, and parents is available at <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- NIH released a Notice on March 26 that all grant applications due between March 9, 2020 and May 1, 2020 will be accepted through May 1, 2020. This announcement applies to all relevant funding opportunity announcements, including those that indicate no late applications will be accepted. Institutions no longer need to request advance permission to submit late applications and a cover letter justifying the late submission is not required due to this declared emergency. For funding opportunity announcements that expire prior to May 1, 2020, NIH will extend the expiration date for 90 days to accommodate the submission of late applications. Under this new guidance, NIH anticipates, but cannot guarantee, that all late applications submitted by May 1, 2020 will be reviewed in the council round to which they were submitted. The full details are provided in the Notice at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-091.html>.
- NIH announced on March 20 that all non-mission-critical operations in its intramural research laboratories would be shifted to a maintenance phase. Mission-critical functions that will continue to be supported include “care of research participants in NIH clinical protocols that are non-elective, research directly on COVID-19, urgent public health research recommended by NIH scientific leadership, work involving significant research investments that could be lost if not continued, and protection of life, property and resources, including the care of research animals.” The agency has not yet issued guidance for extramural grantees working on mission-critical research, or for grantees who collaborate with intramural researchers on non-mission-critical operations. The announcement from NIH is available at <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-shifts-non-mission-critical-laboratory-operations-minimal-maintenance-phase>.
- For researchers interested in managing animal care during the COVID-19 crisis, the NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare held a webinar on March 19 on “Pandemic Contingency Planning and Its Impact on Animal Care.” The archived webcast and additional resources are available at <https://olaw.nih.gov/education/educational-resources/webinar-2020-03-19.htm>.
- NIH has released a General FAQ on Proposal Submission and Award Management Related to COVID-19 which is available at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-083.html>.
 - This is a resource for anyone concerned about COVID-19 impacts on research, travel, field work, and more. It provides answers to any questions a grant recipient may have regarding travel, conferences, and continuity of research.

- NIH has created a central site for its current guidance – including newly updated guidance on late applications, flexibilities for applicants and recipients, and clinical trials - which can be found at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural_disasters/corona-virus.htm. NIH leadership is emphasizing flexibility at this point and has indicated they will be sending regular updates to the research community through the NIH Extramural Nexus newsletter.

Update: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

- **NEW:** CMS sent a letter on behalf of Vice President Mike Pence to the nation’s hospitals to request that “hospitals report COVID-19 testing data to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in addition to daily reporting regarding bed capacity and supplies to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) COVID-19 Patient Impact and Hospital Capacity Module.” The letter is available here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/32920-hospital-letter-vice-president-pence.pdf>.
- CMS has released a series of FAQs on flexibilities, exemptions, waivers, and other changes regarding availability and use of [telehealth services](#), coverage of [prescription drugs](#), the [Federal Medical Assistance Percentage \(FMAP\) increase](#), Medicare [Provider Enrollment](#), and enforcing [Open Payments deadlines](#).
- CMS announced it will grant exceptions from reporting requirements and extensions for providers participating in the Medicare Quality Payment Program who are impacted by COVID-19. Additional details are available at <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-announces-relief-clinicians-providers-hospitals-and-facilities-participating-quality-reporting>.
- CMS has released a recommendation that all adult elective surgeries, non-essential surgeries, and non-essential medical and dental procedures be delayed, in order to free up medical equipment, supplies, and personnel: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-releases-recommendations-adult-elective-surgeries-non-essential-medical-surgical-and-dental>.
- CMS released more information on the expansion of telehealth benefits during the COVID-19 outbreak. CMS is expanding this on a temporary and emergency basis under the 1135 waiver. A list of FAQs can be viewed here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-telehealth-frequently-asked-questions-faqs-31720.pdf> and a list of covered services is linked here: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/Telehealth/Telehealth-Codes>.
- CMS also released a fact sheet on these new telemedicine changes for providers here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/medicare-telemedicine-health-care-provider-fact-sheet>. Clinicians can bill for dates of service beginning on March 6, 2020.
- CMS released guidance regarding blanket waivers for hospitals and healthcare facilities and COVID-19. This includes that “CMS will temporarily waive or modify certain Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP requirements. CMS will also issue several blanket waivers, listed on the website below, and the CMS Regional Offices will review other provider-specific requests.” More information on the CMS waivers is available at <http://www.cms.gov/emergency>.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

- The FDA issued guidance clarifying its position that FDA device marketing authorization is not required and FDA regulations do not apply to face masks and N95 respirators not intended for a medical purpose, such as construction masks. The guidance further states that medical face masks not intended to provide liquid barrier protection and surgical masks intended to provide can be used during the emergency without prior submission of a premarket notification, and

identifies several other areas of acceptable noncompliance. Finally, the guidance requests engagement from mask manufacturers interested in receiving Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to reprocess filtering facepiece respirators for N95 masks or manufacture surgical face masks and N95 respirators. Additional information available at <https://www.fda.gov/media/136449/download>.

- The FDA issued guidance offering flexibilities to grantees on salaries, travel, conference registration fees, FDA-supported meetings, post-award financial reporting, and closeout that may have been impacted by COVID-19. Specific details on the flexibilities offered are available at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-FD-20-019.html>.
- The FDA issued guidance aimed at expanding the availability of ventilators, anesthesia gas machines, and other respiratory devices by increasing flexibility for manufacturers to source parts and materials from alternate suppliers or otherwise make changes to increase the manufacturing and supply of devices. The guidance also allows healthcare facilities to modify the FDA-cleared indications, claims, or functionality of respiratory devices and use these devices beyond indicated shelf life and duration of use. Additional information, including examples where this guidance would apply, is available at <https://www.fda.gov/media/136318/download>.
- The FDA released a guidance which calls for clinical trials to move to alternative methods of participant contact wherever possible including virtual visits, and alternative locations for assessment. If novel coronavirus (COVID-19) testing is required for participants by local health authorities, it does not need to be reported as an amendment to the protocol unless it is being incorporated as part of a new research objective. Generally, FDA recommends that all sponsors and investigators reach out to their Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and or Independent Ethics Committees (IECs) to determine if there are any necessary changes to clinical trial protocols. The guidance is available at <https://www.fda.gov/media/136238/download>.
- The FDA released guidance for industry, investigators, and institutional review boards on the conduct of clinical trials of medical products during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/fda-guidance-conduct-clinical-trials-medical-products-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- CDC has posted interim guidance for administrators of US Institutions of Higher Education at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html>.
- CDC has posted resources for institutions of higher education at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html>.
- CDC has posted interim guidance for mass gatherings and large community events at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>.
 - The CDC recommends organizers cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more for the next 8 weeks.
- CDC has posted guidance related to international travel and study abroad at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/student-foreign-travel.html>.
- CDC has posted Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease in Healthcare Settings at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>.
- CDC has posted guidance on mental health and coping during COVID-19 at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>.

- CDC has posted interim guidance for community-and faith-based organizations at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>.

Administration for Children and Families

- The Office of Head Start (OHS) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released guidance: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/im/acf-im-hs-19-01> on additional flexibilities that can be applied to Head Start programs impacted by COVID-19. The guidance encourages grantees near “impacted areas” to assess how services and resources can be shared to assist others affected by an emergency or disaster. The guidance also states that OHS will “rely on the judgement of governing bodies and program administrators at the community level to determine the most expeditious steps necessary to resume services.” Grantees are encouraged to reach out to their Regional Office, especially if program operations are being impacted by COVID-19. More information on programmatic changes can also be found on OHS’ new Coronavirus Prevention and Response website: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/physical-health/article/coronavirus-prevention-response>.

Update: National Science Foundation (NSF)

- **NEW:** On March 27, NSF released an updated list of programs with extended deadlines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The list can be found at https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/covid19/covid19_deadlines.pdf.
- On March 25, the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) announced a series of virtual office hours to discuss “how BIO and NSF can mitigate the longer-term harm of COVID-19 on U.S. research and training.” The office hours will enable the BIO community the opportunity to share concerns, ask questions, or suggest additional things NSF can do to address the coronavirus emergency. Details on the BIO-wide office hours are available at https://www.nsf.gov/events/event_summ.jsp?cntn_id=300246&WT.mc_id=USNSF_13&WT.mc_ev=click.
- On March 23, NSF Director France Córdova released a letter to the NSF community regarding COVID-19 stating that NSF is “committed to providing the greatest available flexibilities to support your health and safety as well as your work.” The letter is available at https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/issuances/in146.jsp?WT.mc_id=USNSF_80.
- On March 23, NSF announced additional guidance responding to the March 19 OMB memo for researchers, available at https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/covid19/covid19_nsfombimplementation.pdf.
- NSF is regularly updating their coronavirus website with FAQs. It is available at https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/coronavirus/.

Department of Energy (DOE)

- DOE plans to release new guidance for grantees the week of March 30 that directly addresses guidance in OMB Memo M-20-11, "Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)." The updated guidance should address all issues related to DOE’s financial assistance awards, including allowable costs for supporting graduate students and postdocs.

- DOE's guidance for grantees and grant applicants is available at <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/03/f72/doe-sc-accommodating-interruptions-to-applicants-awardees-due-to-covid-19.pdf>.
- DOE's COVID-19 website is at <https://www.energy.gov/coronavirus-hub>.
- Regarding DOE grants and deadlines for funding opportunity announcements, DOE has started to extend deadlines for funding opportunities open to research universities. Extensions are still on a case by case basis, and we recommend that researchers contact the lead program manager assigned to the funding opportunity for up to date information on due dates.
 - The DOE Early Career Research Program call, which was due on March 16, has been extended to March 30.
 - The High-Energy-Density Laboratory Plasma Science funding call, which was due on March 16, was extended until April 6.
- A podcast interview with Office of Science Director Chris Fall on the national lab's response to COVID-19 is available at <https://www.energy.gov/podcasts/direct-current-energygov-podcast/national-labs-respond-covid-19#podcast-item-transcript>.
- Information on DOE's resources supporting coronavirus research is available at <https://science.osti.gov/DOE-Resources-Supporting-Coronavirus-Research>.

Update: Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

- **NEW:** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has announced measures to assist applicants and petitioners who are responding to certain Requests for Evidence (RFE), Notices of Intent to Deny (NOID), Notices of Intent to Revoke (NOIR), and Notices of Intent to Terminate (NOIT). For an RFE, NOID, NOIR, or NOIT with an issuance date listed on the request, notice or decision between March 1, 2020 and May 1, 2020, USCIS will consider any response received within 60 calendar days of the response due date before any action is taken. Please visit uscis.gov/coronavirus for latest facts and other USCIS updates.
- The DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) recently announced efforts to develop a COVID-19 Master Question List (MQL) with information on the status of current news and relevant research related to the COVID-19 outbreak, including critical gaps in knowledge of importance to first responders. These efforts are being led by S&T's new Probabilistic Analysis of National Threats, Hazards and Risks (PANTHR) Program and Hazard Awareness & Characterization Technology Center. In addition to identifying gaps in knowledge, these teams will also look to develop research solutions in some cases. Although a majority of this research will likely be conducted internally at DHS and through existing partners, there is a good chance MQL topics could be included in future DHS S&T funding opportunities. More information can be found at: <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/blog/2020/03/18/st-mobilizes-key-data-inform-covid-19-response>
- Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has an updated FAQ on the impact of COVID-19 on SEVP-certified schools and F and M students. That FAQ is available at <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2020/COVID-19FAQ.pdf>. Regularly updated guidance is available at <https://www.ice.gov/covid19>.
- International students on F or M visas technically have restrictions on the number of courses they can take remotely/via distance education. DHS, through Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), issued flexibility guidance on March 9 for how to handle procedural adaptations for F and M nonimmigrant students. Schools must provide SEVP notice of the

operational and procedural changes within 10 business days of the date of the decision. The guidance note is at <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/bcm2003-01.pdf>.

- Also, in the international arena, on March 11, the President announced a proclamation of suspension of immigration that broadens this policy to the European Schengen Area, comprised of 26 European states. The proclamation is viewable at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-suspension-entry-immigrants-nonimmigrants-certain-additional-persons-pose-risk-transmitting-2019-novel-coronavirus/>.
- Previously, the White House announced travel restrictions for those traveling from China at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/02/05/2020-02424/suspension-of-entry-as-immigrants-and-nonimmigrants-of-persons-who-pose-a-risk-of-transmitting-2019> and from Iran at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/03/04/2020-04595/suspension-of-entry-as-immigrants-and-nonimmigrants-of-certain-additional-persons-who-pose-a-risk-of->

Department of Defense (DOD)

- The Assistant Secretary of the Army Acquisition Logistics and Technology (ASA(ALT)) Bruce Jette released a memo on March 24 to the defense industrial base stating that the Army will continue to work with DOD and other stakeholders to ensure clear guidance and that contractors have been encouraged to assess and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the defense industrial base. The full memo can be found at https://beta.sam.gov/opp/d4b8fa584e65444cb9b6d43c6e65c09e/view?keywords=covid&sort=-modifiedDate&index=opp&is_active=true&page=1&organization_id=100000000.
- The Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition (ASN RDA) James (Hondo) Geurts released a memo on March 24 on engaging the research and development industrial base during COVID-19, urging Navy commands to leverage academia, small innovative research companies, large and small businesses, public-private venture companies, and startup companies engaged in research and development (R&D) and science and technology (S&T) to provide “immediate support” for COVID-19. The memo also includes additional actions for the Navy to consider to sustain national R&D during COVID-19 response, including:
 - Seeking approval for advance payments for Navy projects to ensure sufficient funding to continue research activities
 - Initiating a Special Notice under the existing long-range Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) seeking submission of proof of concept and proof of prototype proposals up to \$294,000
 - Considering a Special Funding Opportunity Announcement for development of On Line K-12 STEM products aimed at small/medium and for/non-profit entities
 - Issuing an out-of-cycle solicitation for the SBIR/STTR programs for critical Navy needs including COVID-19 response activities
 - Issuing flexibilities for University Affiliated Research Centers (UARC) and Federally-Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC)
 - Funding of Navy basic research grants in 12 month increments
 - Approving and expanding advance payments on research grants for salaries and benefits

The full memo can be found on Lewis-Burke's website at https://www.lewis-burke.com/sites/default/files/asn-rda_rd_engagement_24mar20.pdf.

- DOD Office of Basic Research released a FAQ resource for DOD research proposers and awardees in response to OMB's March 19 memo M-20-17. The FAQ states that DOD will allow

grantees to “delay submission of financial, performance and other reports on currently-active award accounts up to three months beyond the normal due date.” Questions regarding other deliverables should be directed to the grants manager or program officer for an award. Additional information on travel expenses, salaries and benefits, no-cost extensions, and upcoming deadlines can be found in the FAQ at <https://basicresearch.defense.gov/COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions/>.

- DOD’s Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) released a FAQ resource for grant applicants and recipients. The FAQ states that there are currently no plans to modify existing application deadlines but encourages grant applicants to monitor grants.gov for any changes in due dates. The FAQ can be found at <https://cdmrp.army.mil/about/covid-19/default>.
- Shortly following the announcement of the death of a DOD contractor in northern Virginia Saturday of complications from COVID-19, Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced March 23 the Pentagon was raising its status to Health Protection Condition C, which limits the number of access points to the Pentagon and increases the amount of personnel who will telework, and that the Department would evaluate ways to make additional medical facilities and resources available for COVID-19 treatment. Secretary Esper’s press briefing can be viewed at <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2122022/esper-briefs-reporters-on-dods-covid-19-response/>.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Director of Contracting released a memo to prospective contractors on March 20 providing guidance on doing business with USACE in COVID-19 response, including small business and subcontracting opportunities. The memo can be found at https://beta.sam.gov/opp/ff5f7b4834a546a3b18717882caed068/view?keywords=covid&sort=-modifiedDate&index=opp&is_active=true&page=1&organization_id=100000000.
- The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) released on March 19 a FAQ resource for DARPA performers about COVID-19. The FAQ document confirms that DARPA will continue to evaluate proposals (whether already submitted or not yet submitted) at this time. The DARPA FAQ page can be found at <https://www.darpa.mil/news-events/2020-03-19>.
 - DARPA’s FAQs encourages performers with research project ideas related to COVID-19 to respond to the Office-wide broad agency announcements (BAAs) for both the Defense Sciences Office (DSO) and Biological Technology Office (BTO), which both have open BAAs that can receive submissions at any time. The DSO and BTO Office-wide BAAs can be found at <https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/office-wide-broad-agency-announcements>.
- The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (OUSD(A&S)) released a memo that encourages contracting officers to engage with government program managers to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the welfare and safety of the defense workforce and on contract performance. The memo also includes a link to DOD’s Emergency Preparedness Guidance that can be found at <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/OD/EmergencyPreparedness>. The memo can be found at [here](#) or on beta.sam.gov under Notice ID “COVID-19-LRE.”
- Ellen Lord, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)), announced on March 17 that the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA), Aerospace Industries Association, Professional Services Council, the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders will form a daily panel to discuss COVID-19 issues with DOD. The goal of the daily panel is "to ensure the security, reliability and resilience of our defense industrial base and our collective effort to execute the National Defense

Strategy.” The press release on the newly formed panel can be found at <https://www.ndia.org/about/media/press-releases/2020/3/17/panel>.

- The Office of Naval Research (ONR) has clarified its policy for administrative relief on ONR awards as a result of university or non-profit actions taken in response to COVID-19. At this time, ONR is utilizing OMB M-20-11 guidance for assistance awards (i.e. grants) directly supporting continued research or services necessary to carry out the emergency response related to COVID-19. Additionally, ONR is using a “limited statement” from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, Basic Research Office for grantees whose work does not fit the parameters of M-20-11, which is only applicable to awards that support the continued research and services necessary to carry out the emergency response related to COVID-19 during the period formally declared public health emergency. For grants outside those parameters, ONR will continue following current protocols for modifying awards as requested and warranted and will apply the following guidance:
 - “Expenditure of award funds for salaries: DoD may only allow grantees to charge salaries and benefits to currently active awards for any work that is performed to meet the project activities, regardless of location where those duties are performed (i.e. telework eligible). Some approved activities may include data analysis, preparation of articles and papers based on the analysis of the research findings, monitoring sub-recipients, direct charged administrative costs. Applicable indirect costs may be charged to all allowed costs.
 - Travel - Grantees will follow their organization's travel policy regarding any restrictions for approved travel. Further, DOD offices are encouraged to use alternative ways, such as VTC, to allow participation in any mandatory meetings sponsored by the DoD. “
- The DOD coronavirus response website is available at <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>.

Department of Labor (DOL)

- The DOL Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released guidance and resources for employers related to workplace safety and COVID-19 prevention at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>.
- The DOL Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has announced additional guidance for employers on the implementation of the new COVID-19 paid leave requirements at <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/whd/whd20200326>.
- The WHD of DOL has published guidance, fact sheets, and a Q&A document for employers and employees on implementation of the new COVID-19 paid leave requirements at <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/whd/whd20200324>.
- DOL, along with Department of Treasury, posted an initial notice on the implementation of the payroll tax credit related to new COVID-19 paid leave, as included in the recently passed, *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*. Details at <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osec/osec20200320>.
- On March 12, DOL announced flexibility for states to allow unemployment insurance (UI) benefits to be used in cases “where: (1) An employer temporarily ceases operations due to COVID-19, preventing employees from coming to work; (2) An individual is quarantined with the expectation of returning to work after the quarantine is over; and (3) An individual leaves employment due to a risk of exposure or infection or to care for a family member. In addition, federal law does not require an employee to quit in order to receive benefits due to the impact

of COVID-19.” Details are available at

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20200312-0>.

- DOL’s Wage and Hour division has released Q&A documents for employers related to COVID-19 and Fair Labor Standards Act and job-protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

- The VA made publicly available its COVID-19 Response Plan, which had previously been designated as “For Official Use Only,” meaning it had only been available to personnel within the VA system. In a press release, the VA notes that it has “shifted some outpatient care to telehealth and some elective and non-emergent procedures have been postponed. It also notes that “VA will begin to implement two zones within all inpatient units: one for dedicated staff and space to care for COVID-19 patients; the second will be a zone for all other care. These overall changes are aimed at minimizing the risk of infection as VA’s medical professionals make decisions based on what’s appropriate for the given environment and situation.” The full plan is available here: https://www.va.gov/opa/docs/VHA_COVID_19_03232020_vF_1.pdf
- With the Senate and House passage of [S. 3503](#), legislation to ensure the continuation of GI Bill benefits use as institutions convert veterans to fully online programming, the VA has announced to School Certifying Officials the agency will continue to make benefit payments with online conversions and students will continue to receive the same monthly housing allowance payments through January 2021 or until the school resumes normal in-person operations. The VA will be hosting upcoming webinars and posting additional information at <https://www.va.gov/school-administrators/>

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

- On March 20, NASA’s Associate Administrator for the Science Mission Directorate Thomas Zurbuchen held a virtual town hall for SMD’s stakeholders in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Points of interest have been summarized below and a recording of the event with slides can be found at <https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/virtual-townhall-2020>.
- Dr. Zurbuchen noted that NASA field centers and headquarter’s operating status are operating either completely via telework or have very limited in-person staffing.
- Work on missions currently in development (Phases A, B, and C) can largely be executed remotely. Missions undergoing testing and integration are likely to experience greater repercussions. In the latter group, NASA will continue work to the extent practicable using smaller teams. Dr. Zurbuchen noted this will impact the James Webb Space Telescope, but that NASA remains committed to launching the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover this summer as scheduled.
- Funding for individual investigator awards will be impacted. NASA is making modifications to ROSES 2020 program elements and will announce future modifications on NSPRIES. At this point, SMD has determined the following opportunities will be affected:
 - Step-1 due dates for the “Emerging Worlds”, “Solar System Observations”, and “Yearly Opportunities for Research in Planetary Defense” program elements will be postponed.
 - Step-2 due dates for the “Applied Information Systems Research” and “Interdisciplinary Consortia for Astrobiology Research” program elements have been sifted to April 17, 2020.

- NASA is taking steps to provide clarity for future opportunities and current awardees. Dr. Zurbuchen stated that SMD:
 - May change all Step-1 deadlines in the next 30 days to mandatory Notices of Intent.
 - Will no-cost extend or re-phase existing awards on a case-by-case basis.
 - Will exercise leniency in enforcing solicitation deadlines with accommodations made on a case-by-case basis.
- Lastly, Dr. Zurbuchen emphasized that SMD and NASA leadership are committed to alleviating burdens on NASA's external community. Faculty are encouraged to continue support for graduate students, post-docs, and laboratory staff through existing awards.

Update: National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

- **NEW:** NEH has provided an FAQ "Funding for NEH Applicants and Grantees Impacted by the Coronavirus," which addresses questions related to the CARES Act. The FAQ notes, "NEH plans to announce funding opportunities for eligible organizations seeking support for at-risk humanities positions and projects at cultural nonprofits that have been impacted by the coronavirus. More information will be announced on our website and through social media by April 30, 2020." The FAQ is available at https://www.neh.gov/COVID19_FAQs.
- NEH's guidance in response to COVID-19 is at <https://www.neh.gov/news/information-neh-and-covid-19>.

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

- NEA's FAQ's in response to COVID-19, which has been updated with additional information for grantees, is at <https://www.arts.gov/COVID-19-FAQs>.

Department of State (DOS)

- The level 4 travel advisory, issued by DOS on March 19th, remains in effect. The guidance advises all U.S. citizens to avoid international travel and instructs all Americans abroad to either return to the United States or prepare to shelter in place since many countries have closed borders and/or cancelled or restricted international travel with little advanced notice. More information is available <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/travel-advisory-alert-global-level-4-health-advisory-issue.html>.
 - Travel restrictions due to COVID-19 have resulted in some students on study abroad programs being stranded (along with thousands of other Americans). Some of these stories were recently reported: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/21/world/virus-students-abroad.html>.
- DOS announced that, beginning March 20, U.S. consulates will suspend most routine visa services until further notice. The latest information, by country, is available at <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.
 - Restrictions on consular services are already impacting academic institutions. A recent article focuses on how the temporary hold on J-1 class visas could impact care at U.S. teaching hospitals by delaying the arrival of over 4,200 foreign doctors chosen to do medical residencies in the United States. Additional information can be found at https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/23/as-coronavirus-spreads-thousands-of-foreign-doctors-could-be-blocked-from-u-s-entry-group-warns/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=fd314cc27e-

[MR COPY 01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-fd314cc27e-152057261](https://www.lbw.com/copy-01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-fd314cc27e-152057261).

- The DOS has issued updated guidance for international travelers. American overseas with COVID-19 related emergencies may call DOS personnel for assistance. In addition, the DOS has compiled country-specific information regarding travel restrictions and evacuation plans. For details visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>.
- The DOS has re-issued its guidance for international travelers to register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to get up-to-date safety and security information and assist U.S. State Department personnel to contact citizens during emergencies at <https://step.state.gov/>.
- The State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announced it will temporarily pause all ECA-funded programs. Details at <https://www.state.gov/temporary-pause-of-international-exchange-programs-due-to-covid-19/>.

Update: Department of Justice (DOJ)

- **NEW:** The DOJ Office of Justice Programs (OJP), which includes several extramural funding offices, including the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has announced a two-week extension on submission deadlines scheduled before April 1. OJP also offered guidance for solicitations that require "executed agreements," or signed notices from decision-making authorities with research entities that certify their support for data collection as part of a research activity. These agreements are especially important to NIJ grants. Under the new guidance, OJP strongly encourages signed agreements where they can be obtained but note that they will not be required in forthcoming applications. Applicants selected for awards will have to obtain signed agreements by January 1, 2021 and funds will be withheld until such agreements can be submitted. Additional information is available at <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/funding/current>.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

- SBA is providing low-interest disaster recovery loans for businesses and organizations directly impacted by COVID-19. SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance for a small business with long-term repayment plans. States are required to request assistance from SBA for businesses to be eligible for these loans. On March 17, SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza released revised guidance that greatly streamlines this process and allows loan designation for entire states instead of targeted areas. This information is important to universities that provide consultation to local startups and other small businesses. Some non-profits and private universities are also eligible for some disaster loan programs. The press release on new SBA guidance for Economic Injury Disaster Loans is at <https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-updates-criteria-states-requesting-disaster-assistance-loans-small-businesses-impacted>. Additional information on the loan programs impacted by COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance/coronavirus-covid-19>.

US Census Bureau

- US Census Bureau guidance on counting college students is available at <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/modifying-2020-operations-for-counting-college-students.html>.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- USDA has released the following updates on its ongoing operations:
 - “Agricultural Research Service (ARS) continues its mission critical work without interruption. We are continuing to support our stakeholders, including action and regulatory agencies. We will begin planning for new research on the impact of CoVID-19 on food safety and animals.
 - National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is making every effort to produce and deliver official federal agriculture statistics on schedule. We will evaluate data collection and agency operations for the production of each NASS report as COVID-19 conditions change. If we are able to collect enough data and conditions are such that estimates can be established and released, we will publish reports. If there are changes in the publication schedule, notification will be made by a notice distributed to the news media and posted at nass.usda.gov. We ask farmers and ranchers who have received a survey to please respond online. It’s now more important than ever to respond promptly online so that we can deliver the statistics that agriculture counts on, without having to follow up. The URL is on every questionnaire, agcounts.usda.gov. To start, use the survey code on the questionnaire.
 - The Economic Research Service (ERS) is fully prepared to deliver on our regular mission activities and to support Departmental needs for analysis. Nearly 100 percent of staff are telework ready and ERS is operating in a 100 percent cloud computing environment, which facilitates full functionality with remote access.”
- USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced that is extending deadlines for its Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) program (<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/agriculture-and-food-research-initiative-afri>). AFRI issued additional guidance that while other deadlines have not been extended, proposers whose applications would be delayed due to “valid extenuating circumstances” should contact the point of contact listed in the Request for Applications. Deadlines are extended as follows and a full list of deadlines can be found at <https://nifa.usda.gov/afri-deadlines>:
 - Proposals due March 19 will be due April 2
 - Proposals due March 26 will be due April 9
 - Proposals due April 2 will be due April 9
 - Proposals due April 9 will be due April 16
- NIFA released guidance for individuals who may experience delays in the distribution of funds. The guidance is available at <https://nifa.usda.gov/grants>.

The White House

- The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has released a fact sheet and FAQs about current HR flexibilities available to federal agencies to assist federal employees on issues related to the pandemic. That fact sheet is available here <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data->

[oversight/covid-19/fact-sheet-additional-guidance-in-connection-with-the-covid-19-emergency/](https://www.fda.gov/oc/oversight/covid-19/fact-sheet-additional-guidance-in-connection-with-the-covid-19-emergency/).

Research and Funding Opportunities

Update: National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- **NEW:** The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) issued a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) to solicit research proposals on “the 2019 novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and the disease it causes, i.e., “coronavirus disease 2019” (COVID-19)”. With this NOSI, NCATS is specifically interested in supporting research that repurposes existing drugs or biologics that have already begun or completed a Phase I clinical trial. Additional information, including more details on specific types of studies NCATS seeks to support and the different award mechanisms it will use to fund these projects, is available at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-TR-20-012.html>.
- The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) released a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) for administrative supplements to “provide support to conduct worker-based training to prevent and reduce exposure of hospital employees, emergency first responders, and other workers who are at risk of exposure to Coronavirus through their work duties” through the NIEHS Superfund Worker Training Program (WTP). The funding for these supplements was provided in the *Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020*, passed earlier this month. Awardees in this new NIEHS WTP Coronavirus Bio-Safety Training Initiative should develop health and safety training programs for workers at high risk for accepting or being closely exposed to COVID-19 patients, as well as hazardous waste and bodily fluid, through air transport, medical treatment, environmental services, waste handling, and/or clean up. Applicants for these supplements must be active grantees of existing NIEHS WTPs (specific programs are listed in the NOSI), and applications are due on April 24, 2020. Additional details about this initiative can be found at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-ES-20-014.html>.
- The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) issued a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) regarding the Availability of Emergency Competitive Revisions for Research on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This Notice (*along with the Notice released on March 25 by NIGMS – see below*) replaces the original NOSI released February 6 by NIAID and NIGMS that will expire on April 8. The NOSI details NIAID’s research priorities and the urgent need for projects focused on viral natural history, pathogenicity, transmission, and projects developing medical countermeasures and suitable animal models for pre-clinical testing of vaccines and therapeutics against SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19. NIAID is calling for applications for Administrative Supplements and through the Emergency Competitive Revision mechanisms.
 - Full details, including more information on research objectives and application submission is available in the NOSI: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-AI-20-034.html>
 - Full details of the notice of early expiration for the previous NOSI is available through this notice. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-AI-20-040.html>
- The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) issued a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) to highlight the urgent need for research related to the novel coronavirus COVID-

19. The NOSI details NCATS research priorities for COVID-19, including “use of informatics solutions to diagnose cases and the use of CTSA-supported core resources to facilitate research on COVID-19 and advance the translation of research findings into diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines.” NCATS is calling for applications for Administrative Supplements, Collaborative Innovation Awards, and Competitive Revisions under this NOSI. Full details, including more information on research topics and award mechanisms, is available in the NOSI:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-TR-20-011.html>.

- The National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) issued a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) to address the urgent need for research on the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19). NIGMS is soliciting competitive revisions that address three specific research priorities: “incorporation of data related to SARS-CoV-2 into ongoing research efforts to develop predictive models for the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and other related infectious agents; repurposing or modification of diagnostic tools currently under development to enable rapid detection of SARS-CoV-2 infection (SBIR/STTR grants only); rapid development of potential therapeutic agents for COVID-19 (SBIR/STTR only).” Investigators interested in submitting proposals in response to this NOSI are strongly encouraged to contact relevant NIGMS staff prior to submission. Full details are available in the NOSI: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-GM-20-025.html> and on the NIGMS blog: <https://loop.nigms.nih.gov/2020/03/urgent-competitive-revisions-to-nigms-grants-to-address-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>.
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) issued a Notice of Special interest (NOSI) “to highlight the urgent need for research on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV, also known as COVID-19) specifically related to collecting and examining data on the risks and outcomes for COVID-19 infection in individuals suffering from substance use disorders.” Due to COVID-19’s attack on the lungs this virus could be a serious threat to those with a history of smoking, vaping, and other substance use like opioids or methamphetamines. Topics of specific interest to NIDA include but are not limited to respiratory effects of SARS-CoV2 infection among individuals with SUD, research to determine whether substance abuse is a risk factor for the onset and progression of COVID-19, and research to evaluate drug-drug interaction of medication to treat SARS-CoV-2 and substances of abuse or medications to treat SUDs. Investigators can apply for both Administrative Supplements and Urgent Competitive Revisions through this NOSI. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-DA-20-047.html>
- The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) issued a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) “to highlight the urgent need for research on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and on biological effects of its causative agent, the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Topics of specific interest to NHLBI include host response, associations with heart, lung, and blood (HLB) diseases, potential impacts on transfusion safety, and clinical outcomes of infected individuals.” Investigators can apply for both Administrative Supplements and Urgent Competitive Revisions through this NOSI. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-HL-20-757.html>
- The emergency funding package signed into law on March 6 included \$826 million for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), intended to be used primarily for vaccine research and development. NIAID is currently using two mechanisms to award funding to investigators for work within this scope: non-competitive administrative supplements and, for the first time, competitive Urgent Awards. More information about these two opportunities, as well as a list of NIAID’s research priorities related to COVID-19, can be found at <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/response-covid-2019->

[outbreak?utm_campaign=+41725024&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=](https://www.fda.gov/oc/outbreak?utm_campaign=+41725024&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=).

- Elsewhere at NIH, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) received \$10 million in funding in the emergency supplemental package, but no details are available yet on how this funding will be awarded. We also anticipate that, in the coming weeks and months, additional Institutes and Centers will be issuing opportunities for administrative supplements for research on COVID-19 that is related to their underlying programmatic priorities. We will share such information as we get it.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

- AHRQ has released two Notices of Intent for upcoming funding opportunities designed to support studies evaluating health system and healthcare professional responsiveness to COVID-19. The agency plans to publish notices calling for both urgent revision supplements to existing AHRQ grants, and for novel high-impact studies to be funded through the R01 mechanism.
 - Competitive revision supplements for existing AHRQ projects should “capitalize on the expertise of grant personnel and the institutional environment to expand the specific aims of the on-going research to develop high-impact new knowledge concerning COVID-19.” AHRQ expects to make at least \$2.5 million available for these supplements and will announce the full details of award size and eligibility available with the Funding Opportunity Announcement is released in April 2020. The Notice of Intent for these supplements can be found at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-HS-20-007.html>.
 - For new studies related to COVID-19, AHRQ is interested in “critical research focused on evaluating topics such as innovations and challenges encountered in the rapid expansion of telemedicine in response to COVID-19, effects on quality, safety, and value of health system response to COVID-19, and the role of primary care practices and professionals during the COVID-19 epidemic. AHRQ is particularly interested in understanding how digital health innovations contributed to health system and healthcare professional innovation and challenges and solutions to meeting the needs of vulnerable populations including older adults, people living with multiple chronic conditions, rural communities, and uninsured and underinsured populations.” AHRQ expects to dedicate \$5 million to this program. The agency plans to release the Funding Opportunity Announcement for these grants in early May 2020, with an expected deadline in June 2020. The Notice of Intent for this initiative can be found at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-HS-20-008.html>.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

- CDC will award approximately \$560 million to states, localities, territories, and tribes using “existing networks to reach out to state and local jurisdictions to access this initial funding.” A breakdown of funds funneled to states and jurisdictions can be viewed here: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/03/11/cdc-funding-information.html>.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Infectious Diseases Rapid Response Fund received \$300 million in the COVID-19 emergency supplemental package. This fund was created in FY 2019 and had roughly \$100 million in reserve funding prior to the emergency supplemental. This funding can be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to an infectious

disease emergency, domestic or international. Money from this fund has previously been used to respond to an Ebola outbreak in the Congo.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

- On March 25, NSF released a Dear Colleague Letter: Request for SBIR/STTR Phase I Proposals Addressing COVID-19. NSF invites U.S.-based businesses to submit Phase I SBIR/STTR proposals focused on “the development and deployment of new technologies, products, processes, and services” that have the potential to help respond to COVID-19. The DCL highlights the following areas of research: artificial intelligence, digital health, diagnostics, distributed ledger, environmental technologies, medical devices, pharmaceutical technologies, disinfection and sterilization, and filtration and separations. The DCL is available at https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20065/nsf20065.jsp?WT.mc_id=USNSF_25&WT.mc_ev=click.
- NSF’s Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure (OAC) released a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) on March 5 inviting supplemental funding requests and RAPID proposals for research utilizing data or software approaches to research on COVID-19 related challenges. NSF is also accepting proposals for use of NSF advanced cyberinfrastructure to conduct COVID-19 related research. More information is available <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20055/nsf20055.jsp>.
- NSF released a Dear Colleague Letter on March 4 for proposals “to conduct non-medical, non-clinical-care research that can be used immediately to explore how to model and understand the spread of COVID-19, to inform and educate about the science of virus transmission and prevention, and to encourage the development of processes and actions to address this global challenge.” The solicitation invites researchers to submit proposals through the Rapid Response Research (RAPID) funding mechanism. The Dear Colleague Letter is available at <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20052/nsf20052.pdf>.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)/Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA)

- Federal agency partners in the Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasure Enterprise (PHEMCE) are leveraging the existing Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) TechWatch program to engage with industry, academia, and other stakeholders to accelerate technologies related to the novel coronavirus. Traditionally, TechWatch is a virtual meeting with BARDA scientific, technical, and contracting staff, as well as representatives from other interested federal agencies. For CoronaWatch, representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Agriculture, among others, will be contacted to participate as relevant and needed. There are specific submission options for therapeutics, vaccines, diagnostics, and other products through CoronaWatch. Additional information on CoronaWatch, as well as submission instructions, are available at: <https://www.medicalcountermeasures.gov/request-barda-techwatch-meeting/>.
- The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released an Easy Broad Agency Announcement (EZ-BAA) on February 5 seeking proposals for the development of novel COVID-19 diagnostics. The solicitation notes that “the diagnostics must utilize platforms already cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, with a viable plan to meet requirements for the FDA to consider

Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) within 12 weeks of an award.” The solicitation is available at <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/02/05/hhs-seeks-abstract-submissions-for-2019-ncov-diagnostics-development.html> and the most recent version of the BAA, updated on March 9, is available at <https://beta.sam.gov/opp/1b46a4169fcb4902b9c4fcb5bf981f7/view>.

Update: Department of Defense (DOD)

- **NEW:** The Army Futures Command’s (AFC) Army Applications Laboratory (AAL) has expressed significant interest in new technologies to support the Army’s COVID-19 response including innovative medical equipment, therapeutics, diagnostics, and vaccines. AAL has set up a webpage at <https://calendly.com/cv-aal> for organizations to schedule a brief phone call to discuss their ideas for technologies that support diagnosis, care, and the protection of healthcare providers, active duty service members, their families, and communities from COVID-19. AAL is a new organization, stood up under Army Futures Command headquarters in Austin, that seeks to work with industry and outside partners to find technology solutions to further the Army’s modernization priorities. More information can be found at <https://aal.army/>.
- **NEW:** The U.S. Army’s Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC) released a pre-announcement March 30 for a forthcoming Request for Project Proposals (RPP) to rapidly develop and deploy the National Emergency Telecritical Care Network (NETCCN), a cloud-based, low-resource, stand-alone health information management system for the creation and coordination of flexible and extendable “virtual critical care wards.” The program is focused on preparation for COVID-19-related critical care capability shortages. The RPP will focus on enhanced development of integrated technologies and clinical workflows to establish and rapidly scale virtual wards and extend intensive care to traditional and non-traditional and temporary healthcare facilities, specifically leveraging existing technologies that can be adapted from other use cases to establish NETCCN. DOD anticipates total funding of \$30 million to \$37 million in FY 2020 and anticipates up to six awards under the program. The pre-announcement can be found at https://beta.sam.gov/opp/245ccb8f39a4423ab26468225e5e788c/view?keywords=covid&sort=-modifiedDate&index=opp&is_active=true&page=1&organization_id=100000000. MTEC membership is not required for the submission, but membership will be required for applicants recommended for awards. More information on joining MTEC can be found at <http://mtec-sc.org/how-to-join/>.
- The U.S. Army’s Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC) released a Request for Project Proposals (RPP) focused on developing prototypes for therapeutics that can treat COVID-19. Specifically, MTEC is seeking “treatments with potential application to the prevention of COVID-19 infection” and “therapeutics that can be administered in a non-hospital environment.” MTEC anticipates eight-month projects starting at the proof-of-concept or laboratory validation stage (Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 3 or 4) and ending with prototype demonstration (TRL 6). DOD anticipates a total of \$20 million for 5 awards, with potential for follow-on funding for the manufacturing and clinical testing of therapeutics. White papers are due by **April 8, 2020 at 12:00 pm ET**. The therapeutics RPP can be found at https://beta.sam.gov/opp/b21210aa68fe488f920f4ef3871b4826/view?keywords=covid&sort=-modifiedDate&index=opp&is_active=true&page=1&organization_id=100000000. MTEC membership is not required for the submission, but membership will be required for applicants recommended for awards. More information on joining MTEC can be found at <http://mtec-sc.org/how-to-join/>.

Lewis-Burke anticipates additional RPPs to be released related to topics described in MTEC's pre-announcement, including:

- **“Point-of-care diagnostic** that provides rapid and accurate determination on exposure to COVID-19.
- **Prophylactic(s)/Therapeutic(s) that can prevent and/or treat in a rapid manner (few hours to 2 days) potentially in a non-hospital environment.** Repurposing FDA-approved drugs/biologics for prevention/treatment of COVID-19 or testing of drugs/biologics that have already demonstrated safety in humans for the prevention/treatment of COVID-19 are preferred.
- **Disease predictive modeling** that provides early warning through data capture from several different streams of data to include **social media and artificial intelligence (AI)** parameter decision tools that would provide actionable information to medical service providers and command structures.
- **Patient monitoring, tracking, and management system** for in-home or non-hospital environment patient tele-health services to include interface into the Cerner electronic health record.”

MTEC's preannouncement can be found at

<https://beta.sam.gov/opp/53badf9fb02349e78839a541495efc6a/view#general>.

- The Air Force released a Request for Industry Information for COVID-19. The Request for Industry Information page “acts as the entry point for anyone wishing to provide information on ways to help.” COVID-19 solution focus areas include but are not limited to combating the spread, welfare of citizens, readiness, logistics, industrial base impacts, and medical. This page can be accessed at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SM8W-QiqOgZgWdCg036hgom7M9PhKll0R1FGgwCG-aY/viewform?edit_requested=true. Additionally, the Air Force will be hosting multiple webinars to provide more information. Webinars can be accessed at <https://zoom.us/s/462017807> or US: +1 669 900 6833 Webinar ID: 462 017 807 and will be held at the following times:
 - Tuesday March 31, 1PM ET
 - Thursday April 2, 1PM ET
 - Tuesday April 7, 1PM ET
 - Thursday April 9, 1PM ET
- The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Troop Support Clothing and Textiles Directorate released a request for information (RFI) on March 20 to “determine industry capabilities for providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) against viral contamination, specifically COVID-19.” DLA's RFI aims to identify potential sources and/or products that can be ready in the near term and protect against viral contamination, including but not limited to protective coveralls, aprons/gowns, hoods, masks, booties, gloves, boots. Responses were due March 24, 2020 by 5:00pm ET; however, **“DLA will accept any and all responses received after this date and time for any ongoing requirements.”** The RFI can be found [here](#) or on beta.sam.gov under Notice ID “SPE1C1-20-R-COVID19.”
- Lewis-Burke has learned that In-Q-Tel is interested in innovative technology ideas for COVID-19. In-Q-Tel is a not-for-profit investment entity that supports the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies across the defense and intelligence communities in accelerating the development of cutting edge “ready-soon” technologies. Specific technologies sought in support of COVID-19 include:
 - Point of care diagnostics

- Swabs for sample collection
- Serological diagnostics
- Digital self-triage capabilities for telehealth

Lewis-Burke can help facilitate connections with In-Q-Tel to discuss COVID-19 related technology innovations. More information on In-Q-Tel is available <https://www.igt.org/>.

- The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA(ALT)) announced the fifth cohort of the Army Expeditionary Technology Search (xTechSearch 5) competition. Executed under the America Competes Act, xTechSearch is a nationwide competition for small businesses and startups, including university-based spin-offs, to develop new technologies to “uncover novel dual-use science and technology solutions.” The Army’s comprehensive list of focus areas can be found at <https://www.arl.army.mil/xtechsearch/xTechSearch-Focus-Areas.pdf>. According to recent reporting, a number of the xTechSearch 4 Semifinalists have presented pitches for emerging biotechnologies and medical innovations to address the coronavirus (COVID-19). Additional details are available at https://breakingdefense.com/2020/03/covid-19-biotech-innovators-pitch-army-rapid-test-kits-more/?utm_campaign=Breaking%20News&utm_medium=email&_hsmt=84958319&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-90AwbifruJYyZuZ6QnEfTkM91a9ntGkyKftnxE4hLeStd06L_xi7uul_nb_x9bOOntdMK&utm_content=84958319&utm_source=hs_email. Examples include diagnostic capability amplification and revolutionary wound treatments for the warfighter. These pitches and their success in the competition reflect the Army’s strong interest in medical technologies addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and indicate that these technologies will be of interest in the xTechSearch5 competition.
 - The xTechSearch competition has four phases, with Application Part I (Concept White Paper) submissions due **March 31, 2020**. White papers that are selected will receive a \$5,000 prize and additional monetary prizes will be awarded to select companies as they advance in the competition. Subsequent competition phases include Application Part II (Technology Pitches), the Semifinals, and the Finals.
 - Finalists will present their technology solutions and transition plans at the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Global Force Symposium and Exposition March 2021, in Huntsville AL. It is expected that the grand prize winner will be selected in March 2021 and will be awarded a \$250,000 prize. All other finalists will receive a \$10,000 prize. More information on xTechSearch, including competition timelines and rules, can be found at <https://www.arl.army.mil/xtechsearch/about.html>.
- As mentioned above, DARPA’s FAQs encourages performers with research project ideas related to COVID-19 to respond to the Office-wide broad agency announcements (BAAs) for both the Defense Sciences Office (DSO) and Biological Technology Office (BTO), which both have open BAAs that can receive submissions at any time. The DSO and BTO Office-wide BAAs can be found at <https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/office-wide-broad-agency-announcements>.
- The North Carolina Military Business Center (NCMBC) recently announced that Project Vulcan released a **COVID-19 Innovation Challenge** call for “innovative capabilities that addresses the challenges presented by COVID-19, as well as its resulting impacts on public safety and national security processes, systems, and resources.” Project Vulcan is a collaboration between Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (SOF AT&L), the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, the DOD Information Analysis Centers, and the National Defense University” and “incorporates online and offline engagement

opportunities to broadly connect SOF operators and acquisition professionals with their counterparts in the high tech community.”

Proposed innovations and solutions for COVID-19 will be shared with a “wide network of government personnel” involved with combatting COVID-19. Responses are due as soon as possible and no later than March 31, 2020. NCMBC’s announcement and more information on applying can be found at <http://www.ncmbc.us/announcements/new-vulcan-call-covid-19-innovation-challenge-responses-due-31-march/>.

Note: Applicants must fill out a “scout card” summary describing solutions/capabilities. New members of the Vulcan network can request access at <https://vulcan-sof.com/login/ng2/auth/login?requestedUrl=%2Fhome>.

Department of Energy (DOE)

- DOE is taking steps to address COVID-19 and is soliciting ideas about how the Department and the National Laboratories might contribute resources for science and technology efforts and collaborations. The Department is encouraging the scientific community and others to consider research questions that underpin COVID-19 response and is requesting input on strategic, priority research directions that may be undertaken using DOE user facilities, computational resources, and enabling infrastructure. More information is available in a Dear Colleague Letter on the DOE website at <https://science.osti.gov/-/media/sc-1/pdf/COVID-19-letter.pdf?la=en&hash=2A142317F56F185FC3E2CEFOAEAD6CACB3E70C7F>.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- USAID Administrator Mark Green announced that the U.S. Government will commit \$62 million from the Emergency Reserve Fund for Contagious Infectious-Disease Outbreaks (ERF) to address the COVID-19 pandemic. This is additional to the \$37 million announced in February to help developing countries affected by, or at high-risk for, the pandemic. Activities supported by this funding will include heightened risk-communications and engagement with local communities; the prevention and control of infection in health facilities, including through the provision of personal protective equipment and other critical commodities; increasing laboratory, disease-surveillance, and rapid-response capacity; the management of COVID-19 cases; screening at points of entry; and global and regional coordination. As these funds are from the ERF, we do not anticipate any direct extramural funding opportunities. The statement is available at <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/mar-18-2020-statement-administrator-green-second-funding-tranche-62>.

The White House

- **COVID-19 HPC Consortium** - On Sunday, March 22, President Trump announced the creation of the COVID-19 HPC Consortium, a new partnership between universities, national labs, and companies. The consortium will enable researchers access to the most powerful and advanced computers in the world to accelerate understanding of the COVID-19 virus and the development of treatments and vaccines. Access to computing resources in the COVID-19 HPC Consortium will be managed by the Extreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment (XSEDE). XSEDE is led by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Details on how to submit a request are available at

https://www.xsede.org/covid19-hpc-consortium?mod=article_inline. The formal White House announcement is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/white-house-announces-new-partnership-unleash-u-s-supercomputing-resources-fight-covid-19/>.

- White House Calls on Tech Community to create new Machine Readable COVID-19 Dataset: On March 16, the Allen Institute for AI, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI), Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology (CSET), Microsoft, and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) at the National Institutes of Health released the *COVID-19 Open Research Dataset (CORD-19)* of scholarly literature about COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, and the Coronavirus group. Requested by The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the dataset represents the most extensive machine-readable Coronavirus literature collection available for data and text mining to date. The COVID-19 resources is available on the Allen Institute's website: <https://pages.semanticscholar.org/coronavirus-research>. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy also issued a call to action to artificial intelligence experts to develop new text and data mining techniques that can help the science community answer high-priority scientific questions related to COVID-19. Researchers should submit the text and data mining tools and insights they develop in response to this call to action via the [Kaggle platform](#). Through Kaggle, a machine learning and data science community owned by Google Cloud, these tools will be openly available for researchers. The OSTP call to action is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/call-action-tech-community-new-machine-readable-covid-19-dataset/>.

Other Sources

- On March 26, a new public-private research consortium, the C3.ai Digital Transformation Institute (C3.ai DTI) was announced. Managed by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and the University of California, Berkeley, the consortium also involves C3.ai, Microsoft Corporation, Princeton University, the University of Chicago, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Carnegie Mellon University, and the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at UIUC. C3.ai DTI aims to use artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced computing to research solutions for COVID-19. The Institute has announced an initial call for proposals titled, "AI Techniques to Mitigate Pandemic," which brings together Health and AI research: "Up to \$5.8 million in awards will be funded from this first call, ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000 each." Proposals are due May 1, 2020 and more information is available at <https://c3dti.ai/>

International News

International Fundraising

Several international and non-profit organizations have launched appeals to support international efforts to address COVID-19 – or to provide financial relief to enable already strained economies.

- The United Nations launched a coordinated \$2 billion appeal, to run from April-December 2020, in support of its interagency [Global Interagency Response Plan](#). The funds raised through this effort will be overseen by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, implemented by UN agencies and private aid organizations including the WHO and UNICEF in 53 nations in Africa, the Middle East, and in South America. This appeal is additional to the [WHO's Solidarity Response Fund](#), which has already raised \$195 million from governments and an additional \$69 million in pledges from both public non-public sources.

- The World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) urged all official bilateral creditors to suspend debt payments of the world's poorest countries in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic in joint statement issued before the G20 virtual summit on COVID-19. This request was made to assist countries utilize existing liquidity to address the COVID-19 crisis – and further efforts to provide financial relief will be considered by finance ministries at the World Bank Fund meetings in April. The joint statement is available at <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/03/25/pr20103-joint-statement-world-bank-group-and-imf-call-to-action-on-debt-of-ida-countries>.
- Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People Everywhere), an international health care organization and humanitarian NGO, has been providing international support and capacity assistance to health care workers internationally through their Global Health Emergency Fund since January. Project HOPE has partnered with several American universities, private companies, and technical experts to deliver aid and supplies internationally. More information is available at https://secure.projecthope.org/site/Donation2?df_id=7429&7429.donation=form1&mfc_pref=T&autologin=true?subsrc=wb1 and at <https://www.projecthope.org/>.
- Save the Children is [raising funds](#) to provide assistance to children impacted by COVID-19 both internationally and domestically. They are currently leading a global consortium to strengthen capacity for response to major infectious disease outbreaks or pandemics, called READY. Through this effort, they are building potential response scenarios, and bringing together an interdisciplinary team. More information is available at <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/media-and-news/2018-press-releases/save-the-children-receives-global-award>.

Update: World Health Organization (WHO)

- **NEW:** To enable international COVID-19 clinical, epidemiological, and virological research and to facilitate systematic data collection, tabulation, aggregation, and analysis, WHO experts developed standard protocols and forms for early COVID-19 investigations that can be used across different global settings. Further, the WHO is encouraging countries and interested research centers to share data collected using these protocols to enable a global effort to further refine clinical recommendations and inform outbreak-related guidance. More information is available <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/early-investigations>.
- The WHO has initiated a multi-country randomized clinical trial, as part of an aggressive effort to identify therapeutic drugs to treat COVID-19. The study will test four drugs or drug combinations already licensed and used for other illnesses, relative to standard of care. The innovation in the study will be in its online enrollment process, which was designed to enable doctors and medical centers to enroll patients with minimal burden under an already over-stretched medical system during a pandemic. Countries that have joined the study include: Argentina, Canada, France, Iran, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand. There is also a European clinical trial, Discovery, that will work in partnership with this effort with patients from France, Spain, UK, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. More information on the WHO SOLIDARITY trial can be found at <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/03/who-launches-global-megatrial-four-most-promising-coronavirus-treatments>.
- The WHO has resources available, several of which may be useful to the research community:

LEWIS–BURKE

ASSOCIATES LLC

- COVID-19 Daily Reports. See: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>;
- Databases of COVID-19 research findings and peer reviewed publications. See: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>;
- Technical Guidelines, many of which were developed in consultation with U.S. technical experts. See: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>.