

## Research Relief Talking Points – to accompany AAU/APLU/ACE/AAMC [letter dated 5/27/20](#)

### What is the request?

- Our May 27th letter reiterates the request that Congress provide **at least \$26 billion in emergency research relief funding to federal research agencies** to support and maintain the research workforce, mitigate the disruptions to federally-supported research and core research facilities, and restart research that has been halted or slowed due to COVID-19.

### Why is the funding necessary?

- The nation's federal research agencies are at the forefront of our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and are partnering with research universities, medical schools, and teaching hospitals to test and treat patients, seek new treatments, diagnostics, and cures; using advanced computing to understand the virus' transmissibility and spread, and to design and produce personal protective equipment and ventilators.
- Universities and the federal government have a long-standing and successful partnership that grew out of World War II. The federal government relies on universities to conduct research in the national interest. This includes research aimed at meeting specific national goals such as health and welfare, economic growth, and national defense. Performing research on behalf of federal agencies incurs a variety of costs that are shared between the federal government and universities.
- Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, there are countless non-COVID research projects that are on hold. With federal agency funding, higher educational institutions have continued to keep the research workforce employed despite the inability of a majority of researchers to continue planned grant activities. However, these funds will run out before work can be completed.
- For example, without emergency supplemental funding, innovations from pre-COVID-19 research on Alzheimer's, cancer, advanced manufacturing, and artificial intelligence could be delayed or lost entirely.
- Developing and sustaining the U.S. talent pipeline is critical to maintaining the innovation-rich sectors of our economy. We are deeply concerned that the gap in agency funding will put the research workforce, and U.S. competitiveness, at risk – especially the early-career workforce made up of graduate students and postdocs whose training and education in areas of national need will be cut short or limited. We are therefore requesting supplemental funding and regulatory relief for the research agencies.
- We are grateful that more than 200 members of Congress have signed letters to Congressional leadership supporting emergency research relief funding to the federal agencies -- but we are deeply disappointed that no stimulus bills to date, including the most recent House-passed HEROES Act, included ample emergency relief to meet the challenges we are facing.

### Didn't Congress already provide funding for research?

- While the House-passed HEROES Act proposed some funding to the NIH to address COVID-related disruptions and a small amount to supplement COVID-related work at NSF, it fell far short of recognizing the reality that many research activities are slowed or stopped, and that federally funded research projects will not be completed without supplemental funding. The \$26 billion in requested funds are not intended to expand the nation's investment in research but are desperately needed to preserve the current investment already made by taxpayers.
- Furthermore, **previous funding packages developed by Congress to provide relief to students and universities do not address this problem.** The CARES Act's Higher Education Emergency Relief funding for universities can only be used to support students and expenses incurred due to changes in delivery of instructional activities.
- This request is NOT direct relief to universities; rather, it is to supplement research budgets at the federal science agencies to help ensure their **extramural work negatively impacted by COVID-19 can be completed and that federally supported researchers across the country continue to be supported.**

### Background on agency-specific funding numbers

- These estimates of agency funding needs are based on currently available information, which includes an estimated duration of laboratory closures that began in March, continued into May, and will persist at varying degrees as institutions begin to restart research activities.
- How agency-specific numbers were estimated:
  - Available information included agency statements, official guidance, and research community conversations. In addition, an estimate of total extramural (non-industry) research dollars at each agency helped determine rough proportions across the research agencies and a recognition that impacts are likely to be most severely experienced between March and early summer. For example, DOE funds approximately 17 percent of all federal non-industry extramural work, and the \$5 billion portion out of \$26 billion for DOE reflects that in this request.
  - In the case of NIH, Director Dr. Francis Collins [testified](#) on May 7 that, "The estimates are something like \$10 billion of NIH funded-research that is going to disappear because of the way in which this virus has affected everybody requiring this kind of distancing and sending people home."
  - Please note: these are imprecise calculations. The numbers requested for each agency are those that we believe are **conservative estimates for COVID-19 impacts on research** based on what we know today. It is likely that as the crisis continues and longer-term impacts are realized and evaluated, additional supplemental funds will be needed for research.