The ACADEMY for Radiology & Biomedical Imaging Research

Advancing Innovation in Imaging Science

ACADEMY UPDATE

Policy and Legislative Briefing

October 23, 2026

Dear Academy friends,

THINGS TO KNOW

- **Opportunities for Early-Career Investigators:** Information about the Scientific Network for Advancing Policy (SNAP) and microgrant opportunities from Research!America.
- **OMB Federal Grantmaking Rule: Opportunities for advocacy!** National Day of Action on Nov. 10, Fall 2026 Advocacy Guide from Research!America, and more.
- **More than three-in-four voters oppose OMB's proposed changes to the federal grants process.** View the United for Cures survey memo here.
- **NIH & Related Updates:** NIH is reviewing comments on its peer review RFI. Scientists were frustrated that the comment period closed hours before stated deadline. Read more here.
- **NIH announced record number of grants for early-career investigators,** but new awards are down overall. Read more here.
- **NIH RFI on reducing administrative burden.** Read more and submit a comment here by Dec. 8th.

Key Dates

Nov. 10	**National Day of Action!** Contact your Members of Congress to urge them to permanently block the proposed OMB rule.
Dec. 1	**The Academy's Gold Medal & Distinguished Investigator Ceremony at RSNA 2026.** *You do not have to be registered for RSNA to attend.*
Dec. 8	**Comments due on NIH RFI on Opportunities to Reduce Administrative Burden in NIH Extramural Research**

Opportunities for Early-Career Investigators

SNAP: Scientific Network for Advancing Policy

SNAP is a coalition of science-policy-minded early-career researchers across the United States, dedicated to mobilizing large-scale initiatives and bridging gaps among scientists, their communities, and the general public. Their mission is to inspire and engage fellow scientists by

establishing a peer network, developing and sharing resources, and instigating meaningful change. ***The Academy is in the early stages of planning a virtual opportunity to hear from SNAP. Stay tuned!***

SNAP put together an open-access science policy curriculum to educate and empower scientists to engage in science policy and advocacy. View the curriculum here.

To get involved, click here.
To view upcoming SNAP events, click here.

Research!America Microgrant Opportunities
The Research!America Civic Science Microgrants and Awards Program aims to empower early-career researchers to learn how to engage their communities in two-way dialogue about timely science and research issues. The program has two complementary components: Civic Engagement Microgrants and Public Engagement Content Awards. The 2026-27 application process for both components is open.

Learn more about this opportunity and register for an information session here.

OMB Federal Grantmaking Rule

Upcoming National Day of Action!
On November 10, join advocates nationwide by contacting your members of Congress and urging them to block the proposed OMB rule on federal grantmaking permanently. The proposed OMB rule is currently blocked only until Dec. 11th.

How to take action:

- **Sign a National Letter** to urge Congress to permanently block the proposed changes to federal grants, joining nearly 2,000 organizations nationwide.
- **Call or Email your Members of Congress** – both Republicans and Democrats – and urge them to block the proposed changes and protect our communities.
- **Mark your calendar for the Day of Action on November 10.** Use this day to contact your Members of Congress and share on social media.

For more information on the November 10 Day of Action, click here.

Advocacy Ahead of Midterm Elections
As midterm elections approach, members of Congress are spending time in their states and districts. Many will host town halls, visit local organizations, and attend community events. This is a great time to speak with your members of Congress and their staff in person or virtually. Research!America has created a comprehensive Fall 2026 Advocacy Guide that focuses on the proposed OMB federal grantmaking rule. The guide provides talking points, answers to common questions, and tips for advocates. View the guide here.

Engage Locally
Another way to advocate this fall is to write to your hometown newspaper about the proposed OMB rule and how it will affect you. This is a great opportunity to share your research, illustrate the proposed rule's consequences, and make an impact. As always, the Academy is available to help you craft your newspaper submission.

United for Cures Medical Research Survey
1,200 registered voters in Iowa, Kansas, and Ohio were surveyed, and the results show that medical research remains a bipartisan priority for American voters. Notably, more than three-in-four voters oppose the OMB's proposed changes to the federal grants process. Read the full memo here.

Check out this tool that displays the makeup of the **released** (*not all the submitted*) comments on the OMB proposed rule. It details the top concerns, form letters, and rule sections in an easy-to-understand dashboard. Keep in mind that over 500k comments were submitted, but only a portion of them have been released and are therefore available for analysis.

> **Academy Action:** If you submitted comments on the proposed rule, share them with your Members of Congress via email. They need to know more about the impact. Here's a template you can use when sharing your comments. Need contact information or have questions? Please contact Olivia Nelson.

NIH & Related Updates

Related Updates

- **NIH considers hiding peer review scores.**
  - The NIH is reviewing comments on its proposal to replace peer review scores with impact categories. A revised or finalized rule may be published in the coming months. Read more here.
  - The comment period was supposed to remain open until midnight on October 13th but reportedly shut down hours before the deadline, leaving scientists frustrated.

- **NIH announced record number of grants for early-career investigators, but new awards are down overall.**
  - The NIH announced that 1,648 early-career investigators are receiving NIH support through R01-equivalent extramural research grant awards in FY26, the most ever recorded.
  - However, there have been fewer awards issued overall. This can be attributed to multi-year funding. For the second year in a row, the overall number of awards fell below the 2024 total, dropping by 13% when compared with the 4 years prior to the implementation of increased multi-year funding. Read more here.

- **Senate acts to protect NIH grants from political interference.**
    - Senators Collins (R-ME) and Murray (D-WA) are leading the effort to add protective language to the Labor-HHS spending bill before Dec. 11. Similar protections are already temporarily in place through the current CR; this effort could make them more permanent. Sen. Kennedy (R-LA) said he will fight against these protections.

- **NIH awarded all its grant funding, despite a slow start to the year.**
    - The AAMC is tracking developments in NIH extramural funding here. This was most recently updated on October 12 and will continue to be updated.
    - The AAMC released an analysis last week that shows the NIH awarded nearly 12% fewer grants in FY26 compared to the year before President Trump took office. Read more here.

Requests for Information

RFI on Opportunities to Reduce Administrative Burden in NIH Extramural Research
The NIH is seeking input from the biomedical research community and other interested parties on opportunities to further reduce administrative burden associated with obtaining, maintaining, and reporting on NIH extramural research funding.

To read more and leave a comment, click here.
Comments are due by December 8th at 11:59 pm ET.

NIH Resources

- Track NIH extramural funding (updated October 12), here.
- Number of NIH Extramural Awards by Awarded Month
- Value of NIH Extramural Awards by Awarded Month
- Additional details on Active Funding by State and Active Projects by IC
- Fact sheet about the potential economic impact of the President's FY2027 budget request

Academy Updates

Congratulations to the 2026 Council of Distinguished Investigators!

We are pleased to announce that 55 investigators have been selected to receive the Academy's 2026 Distinguished Investigator (DI) Award. This prestigious honor recognizes outstanding contributions to medical imaging. Nine of this year's DIs are alum members of the Academy's Council of Early Career Investigators in Imaging (CECI^2), underscoring the importance of recognizing, encouraging, and supporting the accomplishments of early-career investigators. Read the announcement here.

The Academy's 2026 Gold Medal Recipient: Mitchell D. Schnall, MD, PhD

Established in 2014, the Academy Gold Medal recognizes extraordinary contributions to advancing imaging and radiology research, honoring those who have raised the profile of imaging research and encouraged future efforts toward medical advances. Dr. Schnall has been a long-committed advocate and voice for imaging research since the early days of the Academy, championing the imaging science field and driving cutting-edge advancements. Read the full announcement here.

Join us at RSNA 2026 to honor Dr. Schnall and the 2026 Academy Council of Distinguished Investigators!

The Academy will host a special ceremony and reception at the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago, IL. It will be held from 3:00-5:00 pm CT on Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2026, in room S105BC. You do not have to be registered for RSNA to attend.

MEDIA

"Trump orders creation of NIH division, task force on women's health"

"Replication is necessary even if scientists do everything right (Opinion)"

"An Uncertain Landscape for Science Funding (Opinion)"

"How tech billionaires are disrupting biomedical science"

"N.I.H. Hospital Board Rebukes Kennedy Over New Vaccine Injury Clinic"

Why is advocacy important?

The Academy advocacy video features imaging researchers discussing the importance of their research and the critical role of sustained federal investment in NIH research.

Please feel free to share this video!

Academy "Funding, Facts, and Follow Up" Emails. Monthly updates and funding opportunities: Click here to access an archive of the emails we send out, including our most recent.

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