

**National Institutes of Health (NIH) Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (BSSR)
Integration Working Group**

Background: The report language of the House of Representatives for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2021 ([H. Rpt. 116-450](#)) includes the following:

Behavioral Research.—The Committee believes that a more robust and focused NIH commitment to behavioral science research and training would yield significant improvements to the nation’s health due to the important connections between behavior and health. Most of the leading public health issues facing our nation— including cancer, addiction, heart disease, mental illness, diabetes, violence, and AIDS—are rooted in individual and social behavior, yet behavioral science is decentralized across NIH’s Institutes and Centers, and the NIH commitment to manage and directly fund this important research is limited. The Committee directs the Director to convene a special advisory panel of behavioral scientists and other community experts to complete an assessment providing recommendations on how to better integrate and realize the benefits to overall health from behavioral research at NIH. The Committee requests that this assessment be finalized before the end of fiscal year 2021 and that a report be submitted to the Committee at that time.

A Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (BSSR) Working Group of the NIH Council of Councils is being established to fulfill this Congressional directive.

The charge of the NIH BSSR Integration working group is to:

- Assess the current status of BSSR in NIH supported research and training and identify existing processes that should continue or be enhanced as well as new opportunities for enhancing processes, coordination and integration of BSSR into research conducted across the Institutes, Centers, and Offices.
- To fulfill this charge, the Working Group will seek input from experts in behavioral and social sciences research and in the function and structure of the NIH research enterprise.
- Prepare a report including recommendations on ways to encourage greater BSSR integration and relevance to the research supported across the NIH, including but not limited to the functions of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research.
- The report and recommendations of the BSSR WG will be submitted to the Council of Councils for further consideration.