

# NIH Director's Report

*Council of Councils  
January 19, 2023*



**Lawrence A. Tabak, DDS, PhD**  
Performing the Duties of the NIH Director  
Department of Health and Human Services



# Topics for Today

- Changes in NIH Leadership
- Awards
- NIH Budget Update
- Proposed Changes to Peer Review Criteria
- Update on UNITE



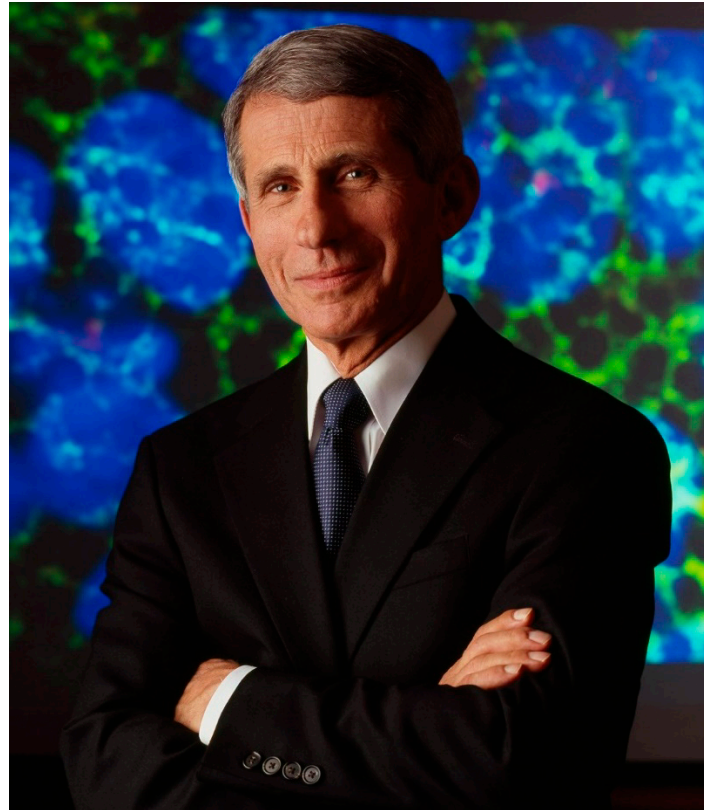


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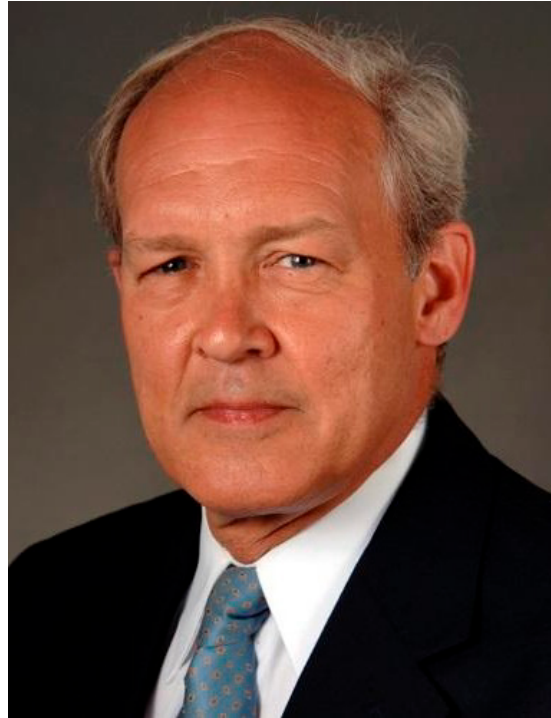


**Departure:**  
**Director, National Institute of Allergy and  
Infectious Diseases**



**Anthony S. Fauci, MD**

## **Acting Director of NIAID**



**Hugh Auchincloss, MD**

**Departure:**  
**Director, Center for Information Technology,  
and NIH Chief Information Officer**



**Andrea Norris, MBA**

## **Acting Director, Center for Information Technology**



**Ivor D'Souza**



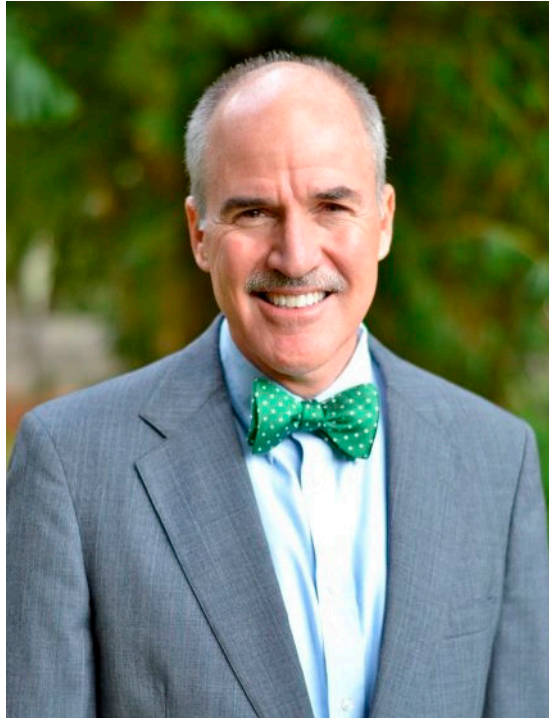
**Departure:**  
**Director, Fogarty International Center**



**Roger Glass, MD, PhD**



## **Acting Director, Fogarty International Center**



**Peter Kilmarx, MD**

**Chief Scientific Officer, Scientific Director of the NIH Clinical Center,  
Associate Director for Clinical Research in the Office of Clinical Research, OD**



**John Gallin, MD**

**Departure:**  
**Director, NIH Office of Strategic Coordination**



**Elizabeth (Betsy) Wilder, PhD**



## **Acting Director, Office of Strategic Coordination**



**Douglas Sheeley, ScD**

**Appointment:  
Director, National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences**



**Joni L. Rutter, PhD**

**Appointment:  
Inaugural Director,  
Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H)**



**Renee Wegrzyn, PhD**



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# Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2022



**Carolyn R. Bertozzi, PhD**

Prize share: 1/3



**K. Barry Sharpless, PhD**

Prize share: 1/3



# Lasker Awards

## 2022 Basic Medical Research Award



**Richard O.  
Hynes, PhD**



**Erkki Ruoslahti,  
MD, PhD**



**Timothy A.  
Springer, PhD**



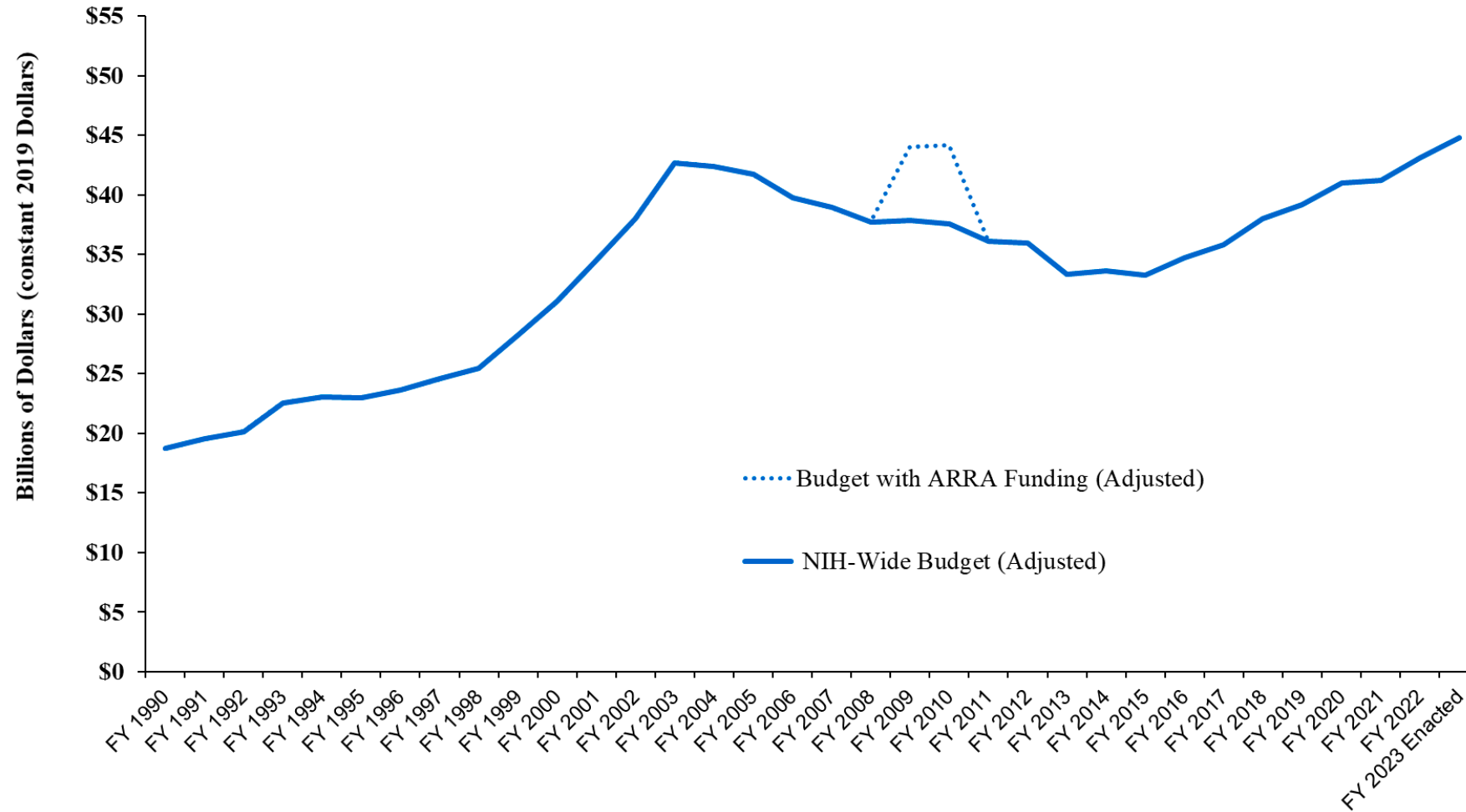
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# National Institutes of Health Funding

## 1990-2023



Notes: Dollar values are adjusted to 2019 dollars using the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI), <http://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/gbiPriceIndexes.html>.

Includes funding for ARPA-H, \$1 billion in FY22 and \$1.5 billion in FY23.

Sources: the NIH's Office of Extramural Research and the Office of Budget (March 2022).

# FY 2023 Appropriations Results

	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 PB*	FY 2023 Enacted
Program Level	\$46.2B	\$50.5B	\$49.2B
<i>ARPA-H (non-add)</i>	<i>\$1.0B</i>	<i>\$5.0B</i>	<i>\$1.5B</i>
+/- FY 2022		+4.3	+3.0
<i>*less Pandemic Preparedness mandatory proposal</i>			

- Total program level of \$49.2 billion, an increase of \$3.0 billion.
- Includes \$1.5 billion for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), now permanently located at NIH.
- General increase to the NIH Institutes/Centers of 3.8 percent.
- Common Fund increase of \$65 million, or 9.9 percent.



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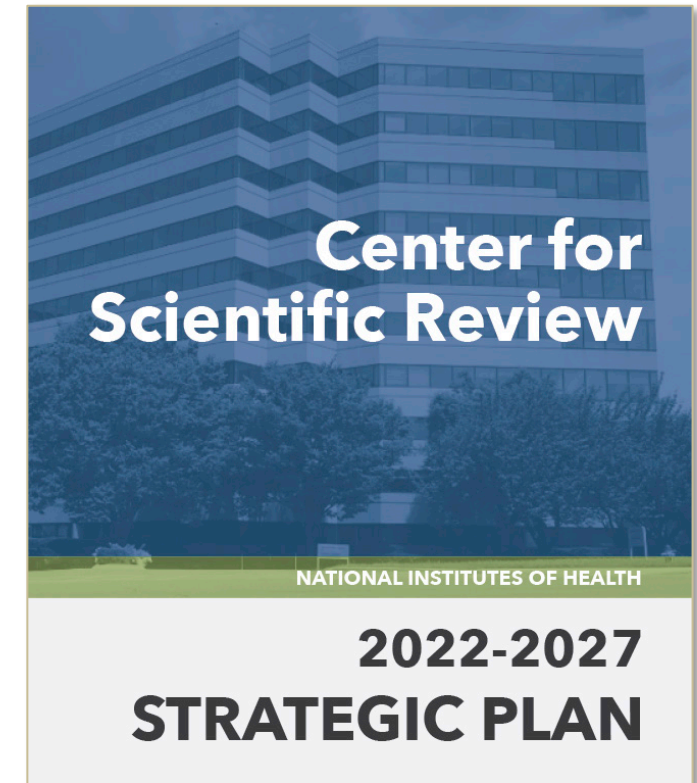




# Proposed Changes to Research Project Grant Review

Goal: Facilitate identification of the strongest, potentially highest-impact research

- Refocus peer review on assessing scientific/technical merit of grant applications
  - Focus on the big questions, reduce the burden of administrative items
- Mitigate reputational bias in the peer review process
  - Require evaluation of Investigator and Environment in the context of the proposed research



# Proposed New Framework for RPG Review

- From five scored review criteria to three factors:

Should it be done?	Factor 1: <b>Importance of the Research</b> (Significance and Innovation) – scored 1-9
Can it be done well?	Factor 2: <b>Feasibility &amp; Rigor</b> (Approach) – scored 1-9
Will it be done?	Factor 3: <b>Expertise &amp; Resources</b> (Investigator, Environment) each to be rated “appropriate” or “additional resources needed”

- Every application will continue to receive an Overall Impact Score (1-9) to be based on Factors 1-3 and “Additional Review Criteria”—e.g. Human Subjects

# Community Input Sought

- NIH seeks additional input via an **RFI through March 10, 2023**  
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-23-034.html>
- **More information:** <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/peer/Proposed-Framework/index.htm>

# Main Review Criteria

(affect Overall Impact Score)

## Current

- **Significance** [scored]  
strengths/weaknesses
- **Investigator(s)** [scored]  
strengths/weaknesses
- **Innovation** [scored]  
strengths/weaknesses
- **Approach** [scored]  
strengths/weaknesses
- **Environment** [scored]  
strengths/weaknesses

## Proposed

- **Importance of the Research** [scored]  
strengths/weaknesses  
*Significance, Innovation*
- **Rigor and Feasibility** [scored]  
strengths/weaknesses  
*Approach*
- **Expertise and Resources** [not scored - drop down-appropriate, or identify gaps]  
*Investigators, Environment*



# Additional Review Criteria

(can affect Overall Impact Score)

## Current

- Human Subject Protections
- Inclusion of Women, Minorities, and Children
- Vertebrate Animal Protections
- Biohazards
- Resubmission/Renewal/Revisions

## Proposed

- Human Subject Protections
- Inclusion of Women, Minorities, and Across the Lifespan
- Vertebrate Animal Protections
- Biohazards
- Resubmission/Renewal/Revisions

# Additional Review Considerations

(no effect on Overall Impact Score)

## Current

- Applications from Foreign Organizations
- Select Agent Research
- Resource Sharing Plans
- Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources
- Budget and Period of Support

## Proposed

- Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources
- Budget and Period of Support

# Proposed Changes to NRSA Fellowship Peer Review

## The Challenge

- Fellowship applications are concentrated in a small number of institutions
- Applications from those (highly resourced) schools do better
- Applications with senior scientists as sponsors do better than those with sponsors in earlier career stages

## Recommendations

- Modify the review criteria -- Focus on three core criteria
  - Potential of applicant
  - Strength of science
  - Quality of training plan
- Change information reviewers receive

# Change Information Reviewers Receive when Reviewing NRSA Fellowships

- **Eliminate grades**
  - Instead, include list of courses taken
- **Revise the Fellowship Applicant section**
  - Allow applicants to present their scientific thinking, their needs, qualifications, and goals
  - 5 structured, character-limited statements (professional/fellowship goals, fellowship qualifications, self-assessment, scientific perspective, and a detailed account of activities planned under the award)
- **No changes to the current Research Training Plan**
  - Specific Aims, Research strategy, respective contributions, Responsible Conduct of Research plan, etc.



# Change Information Reviewers Receive when Reviewing NRSA Fellowships

- **Revise the Sponsors, Collaborators and Consultants section**
  - Greater emphasis on sponsor's training/mentorship approach and plan for particular student
  - Remove structured, character-limited sections (training plan, research facilities, the number of fellows/trainees to be supervised, applicant's qualifications and potential for a research career)
- **Revise letters of support**
  - To address targeted, trainee-specific questions in structured fields, discouraging boilerplate language, and making it easier for reviewers to differentiate and evaluate
- **Allow an *optional* statement of special circumstances**
  - To address situations that might have hindered the trainee's progress such as harassment, the COVID-19 pandemic, or other personal or professional circumstances

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# UNITE Progress Report



- Describes NIH's actions to **identify and address structural racism** that may exist within NIH and in the biomedical and behavioral research enterprise
- Developed in collaboration with UNITE co-chairs, committees, and stakeholders
- Focuses on **health disparities** and **minority health research**, the internal **NIH workforce**, and the **external research workforce**—topics that intersect and enable greater transparency, accountability, and communication across NIH and the biomedical and behavioral community

# Focus Area 1: Elevating Health Disparities and Minority Health Research Across Institutes and Centers

GOAL	ACTIVITIES
Increase funding of HD/MH research projects and expand research capacity at MSIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Launch Transformative Research to Address Health Disparities and Advance Health Equity initiative</li><li>• Release relevant FOAs</li></ul>
Improve NIH-wide transparency, accountability, and sustainability regarding HD/MH research funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developed automated method to more precisely characterize, analyze, and track HD/MH portfolio</li><li>• Expand MeSH terms related to social determinants of health</li></ul>
Enhance community-driven health disparities research and structural interventions through 10-year investment (~\$400M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aided design of FY23 Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society initiative</li></ul>



# Focus Area 2: Promoting Equity in the NIH-Supported Biomedical Research Ecosystem

GOAL	ACTIVITIES
Support, develop, and retain diverse scientific talent in all career stages and across all groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Launched Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (FIRST) program</li><li>• Expanded Science Education Partnership Awards (SEPA)</li></ul>
Incentivize institutions to create research environments that promote and value DEIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planned and solicited public comment for DEIA Institutional Prize</li></ul>
Break down systemic and structural barriers that lead to certain group remaining underrepresented in the scientific workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creation of new initiatives to support extramural DEIA efforts (3 at NIGMS) and enhance MSI capacity (NIMHD)</li><li>• Will support institutions to conduct organization climate assessments and conduct needs assessments</li></ul>

# Focus Area 3: Promoting Equity in the Internal NIH Workforce

GOAL	ACTIVITIES
Create coordinated anti-racism advisory body with representation from all ICs to guide NIH-wide efforts to address organizational issues to promote equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Established NIH-wide Anti-Racism Steering Committee</li><li>• Generated new initiative to enhance outreach regarding NIH job opportunities to ensure broad range and diversity of applicants</li></ul>
Identify areas that lead to apparent inequities and provide interventions or policy changes to mitigate identified issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guided development of NIH IC and OD Racial &amp; Ethnic Equity Plans</li></ul>

# Focus Area 3: Promoting Equity in the Internal NIH Workforce

GOAL	ACTIVITIES
Enhance transparency and accountability of NIH-internal workforce metrics to assess progress toward equity goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Published data on demographic composition and profiles of NIH workforce</li></ul>
Recognize and celebrate staff of all levels and across all workforces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish task force to recommend changes to NIH Director's Awards</li><li>• Spearheaded The Power of an Inclusive Workplace Recognition Project</li></ul>
Provide skill development opportunities with a focus on equity throughout the workforce	Developed career development opportunity for staff at GS-11 and lower levels

# Focus Area 4: Improving Accuracy and Transparency of Racial and Ethnic Equity Data

GOALS	ACTIVITIES
Gather robust, recent baseline data on scientists' needs and experience pertaining to racial and ethnic equity to affirm UNITE directions and guide future developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UNITE RFI (&gt;1,100 responses)</li><li>• Conducted 14 listening sessions with extramural community to understand needs and priorities (&gt;1,300 attendees)</li></ul>
Improve transparency and accountability in communicating UNITE progress to partners, stakeholders, and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developed, launched, and maintained public-facing Data Dashboard</li><li>• Launched UNITE Co-Chairs' Corner with monthly updates</li><li>• Communicate UNITE news and updates via GovDelivery</li><li>• UNITE LinkedIn Page</li><li>• Promote events, news, published articles, and DEI content on the Ending Structural Racism (ESR) website and intranet</li></ul>

**NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for Diversity,  
Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**  
*Update*



# DEIA Strategic Plan Framework



**Objective 1: Grow and Sustain DEIA through Structural and Cultural Change**

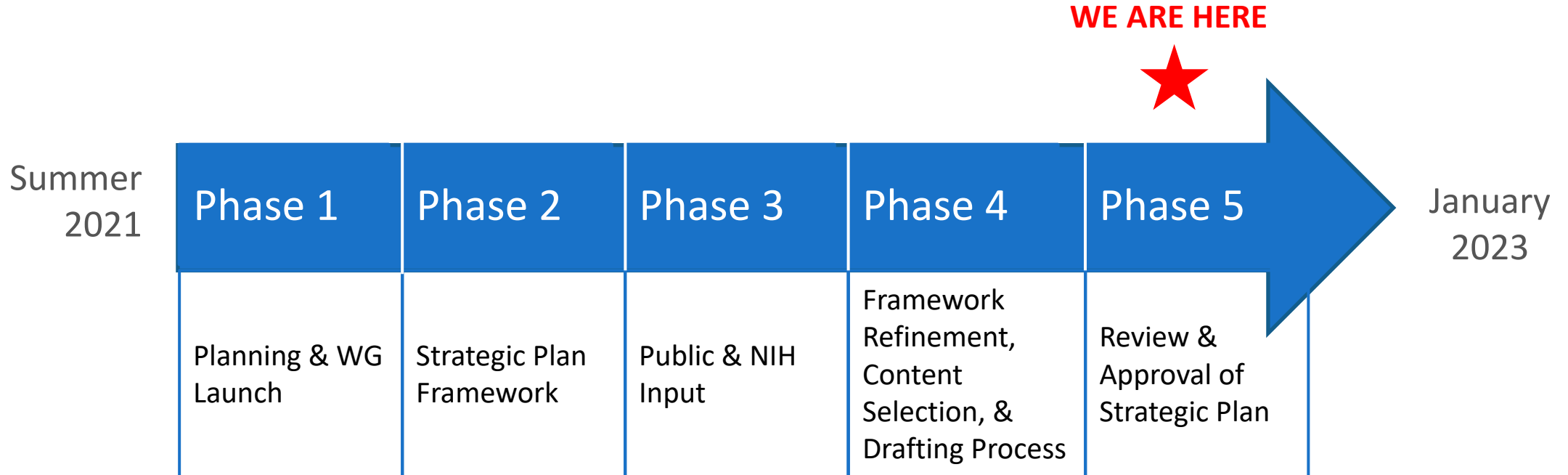


**Objective 2: Implement Organizational Practices to Center and Prioritize DEIA in the Workforce**



**Objective 3: Advance DEIA through Research**

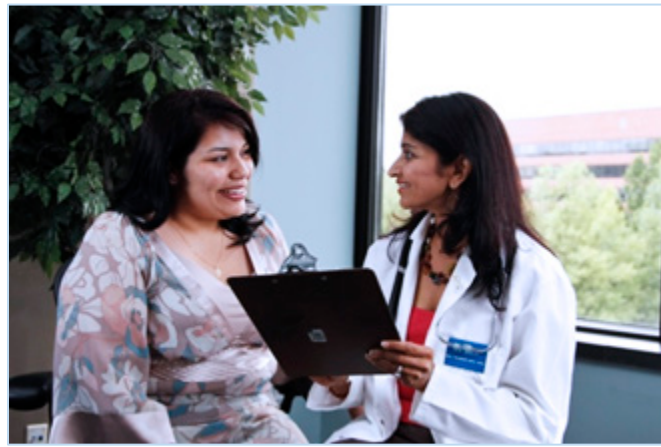
# Process & Timeline



# ACD WGD Subgroup on Individuals with Disabilities Report

- Recommendations from group of subject matter experts endorsed by ACD on 12/9/22
- NIH is now evaluating those recommendations to determine what is actionable in the short, medium, and long-term.

Questions?



# NIH...

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@NIHDirector/Twitter

## Turning Discovery Into Health

