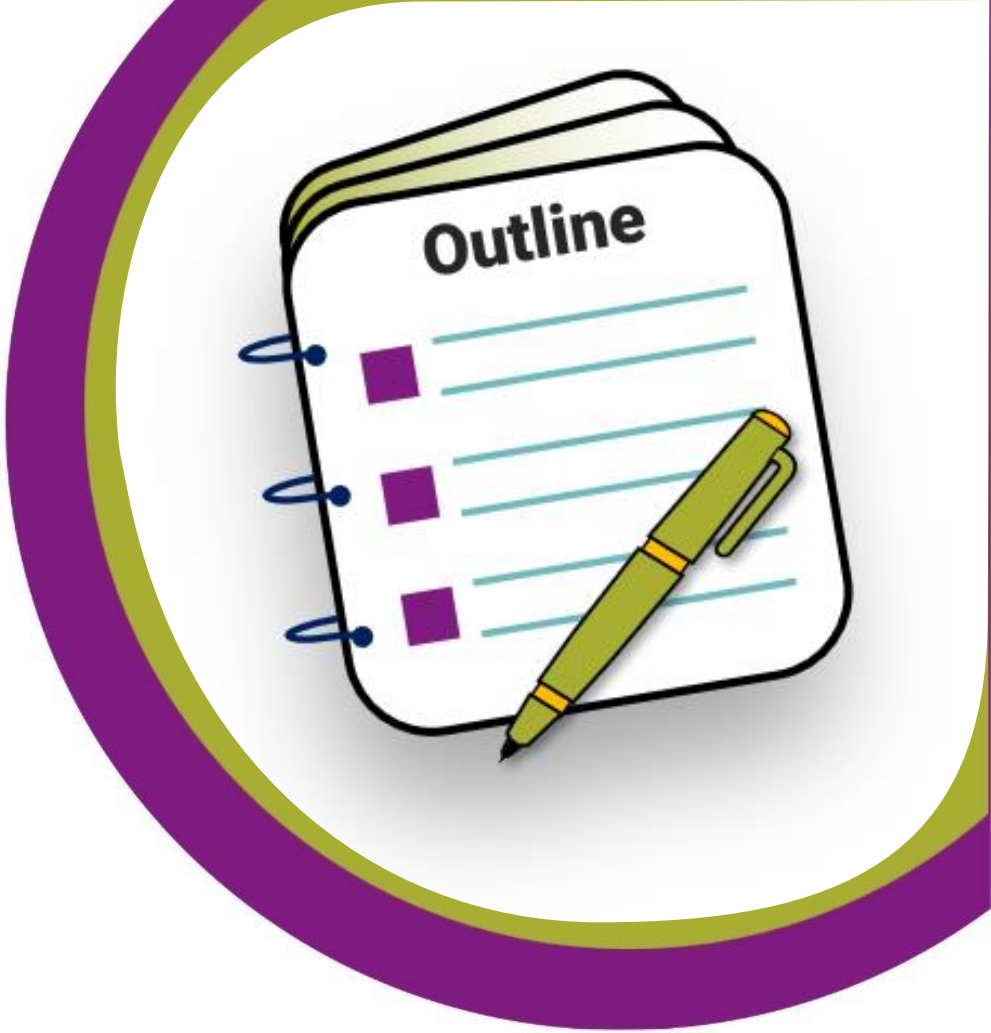
# Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) Program Office *2026-2030 Strategic Plan*

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NIH Council of Councils
January 29, 2026

# Outline

- What is ECHO?
- ECHO Program Office Strategic Plan
- Discussion



# The Nationwide ECHO Program

## Mission

***To enhance the health of children for generations to come***



ECHO is dedicated to both

learning what factors affect child health
—**observational research**—

and

finding ways to enhance it
—**intervention research**—

## 5 Key Areas with High Public Health Impact

- **Pre, Peri, & Postnatal**
  *Preterm birth, maternal depression*
- **Upper & Lower Airway**
  *Asthma, allergies*
- **Obesity**
  *And its consequences*
- **Neurodevelopment**
  *Autism, ADHD, mental health*
- **Positive Health**
  *Well-being*

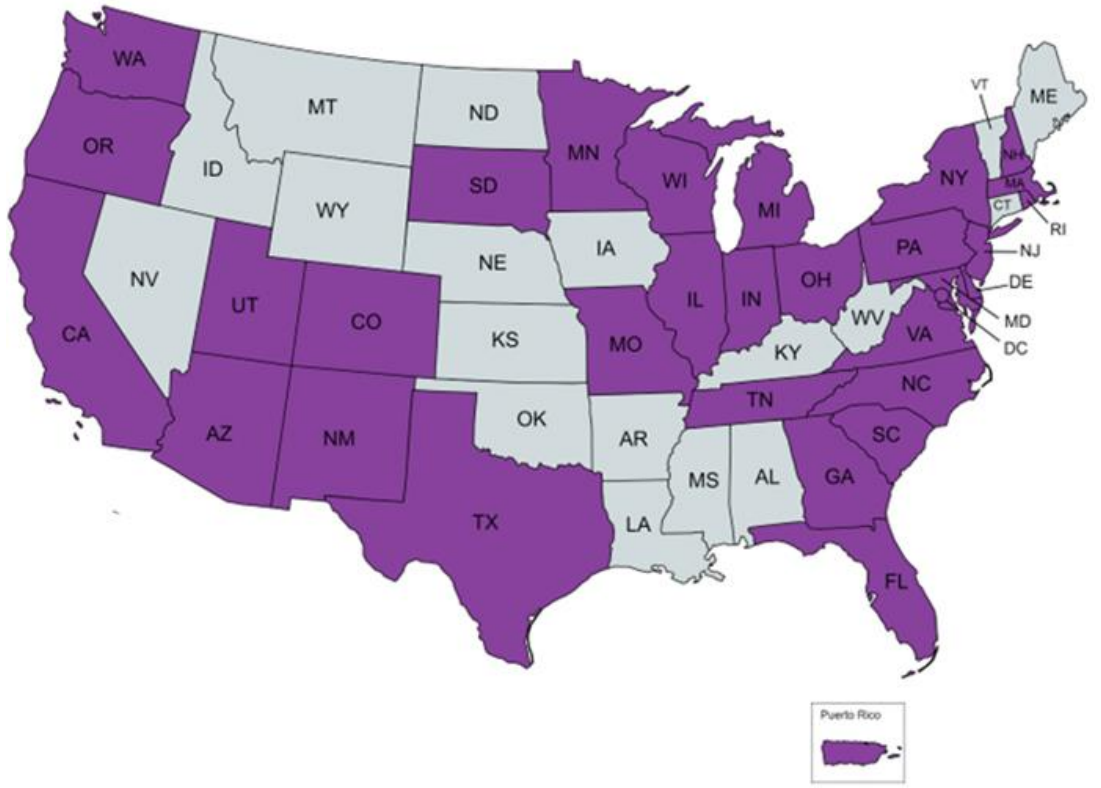
# ECHO Cohort

**Observational Research**

**Overall Scientific Goal**

Answer **solution-oriented questions** about effects of broad range of **early environmental exposures** on **child health and development**

- **Following up** ~30,000 kids
- **Recruiting** ~30,000 new pregnancies
  - Postpartum = **preconception**
    - Including partners when possible
- Rapidly expanding **data platform** & **biorepository**
  - **Harmonized data from** 170,000+ participants
    - from ~70 pre-existing, **ongoing longitudinal maternal-child studies**




**Largest longitudinal study of children in United States**

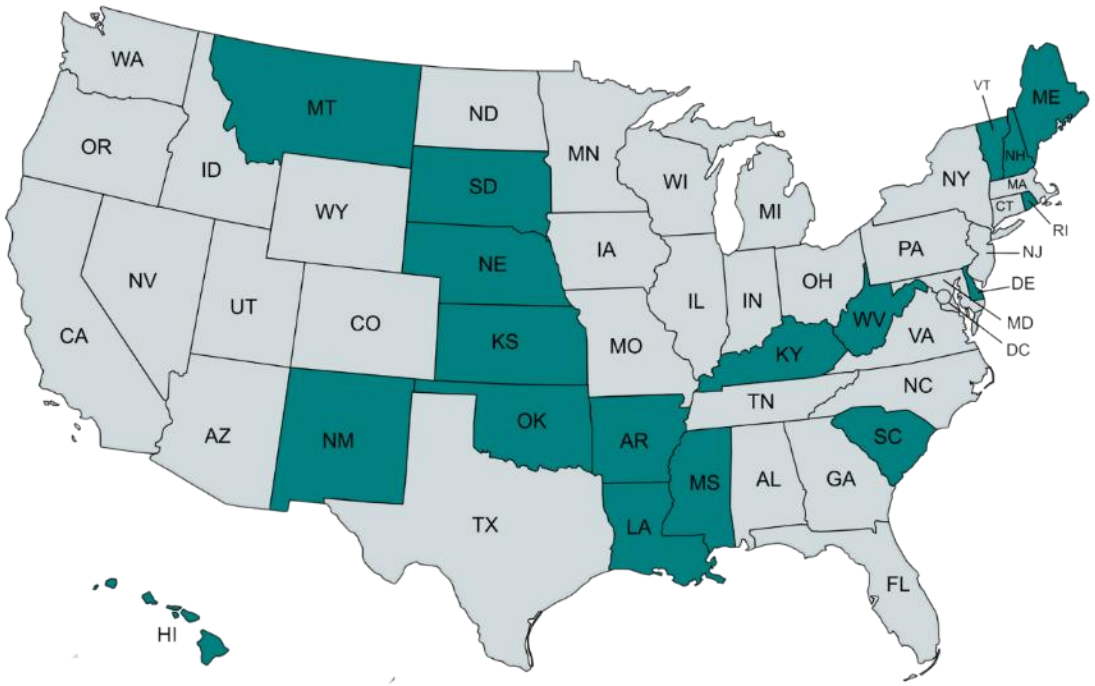
**Follows ~60,000 kids nationwide from before conception to 21 y**

# IDeA States Pediatric Clinical Trials Network (ISPCTN)

Intervention Research

## Program Goals

- Provide **access to state-of-the-art clinical trials** children in Institutional Development Award (IDeA) states
- Build **pediatric research capacity** in IDeA states




## ECHO ISPCTN Clinical Trials

- **28% of participants from rural areas**
- Trials address issues that disproportionately affect **rural communities**

Treatment of obesity

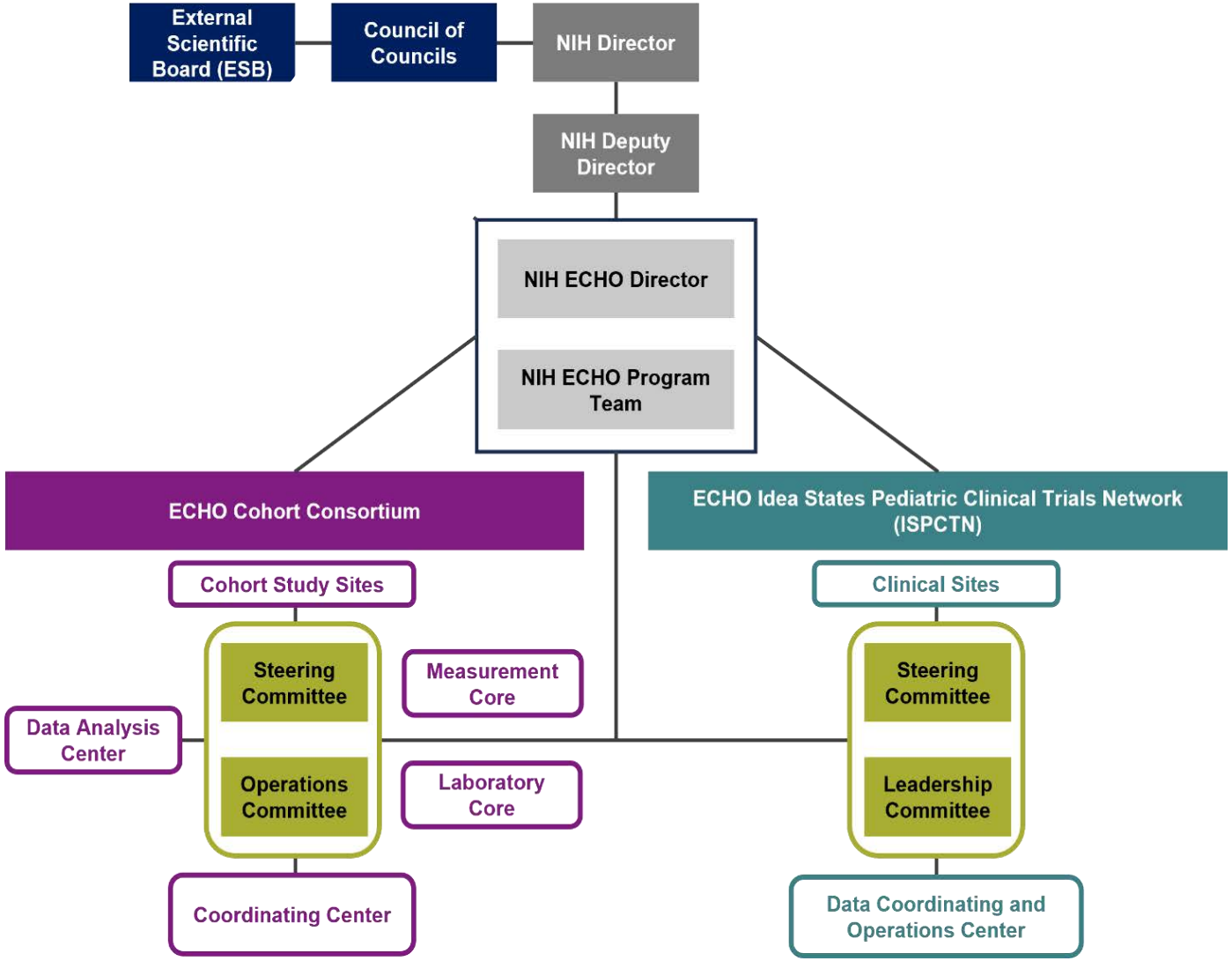
Indoor air quality

Opioid crisis

**State-of-the art clinical trials for rural or underserved kids**

**18 states with low NIH funding**

# ECHO Program Organization



# ECHO Program Office Strategic Plan

- **Purpose**
  - Guide ECHO Program Office efforts from 2026 through 2030
- **Deliverables**
  - Full Strategic Plan
    - Follows NIH standardized format
  - Strategic Plan At-a-Glance
    - 1-page infographic summarizing key elements
  - Strategic Plan Overview
    - 3-page document providing context for each of three strategic goals



# ECHO Program Office Strategic Planning Process

**Preparing**

- ✓ Clarified personnel roles
- ✓ Defined critical elements
- ✓ Identified scope
- ✓ Evaluated efforts

Draft Framework

**Engaging**

- ✓ Collected and analyzed Input:
  - Public RFI
  - Program Face-to-Face Meetings
  - External Scientific Board
  - Program Office Retreat
  - Retreat Follow-up
  - Internal ECHO Team
- ✓ Program Office Working Sessions
- ✓ Feedback on draft plan from several interested parties

Approve Framework

**Drafting**

- ✓ Incorporate feedback
- ✓ Draft deliverables
- ✓ Editorial review

Finalize Deliverables

**Publish Plan**

**Target:**
**Deliverables**
**OEPR – Dec '25**
**Council of Councils – Jan '26**

# What's New for ECHO's Next 5 Years?

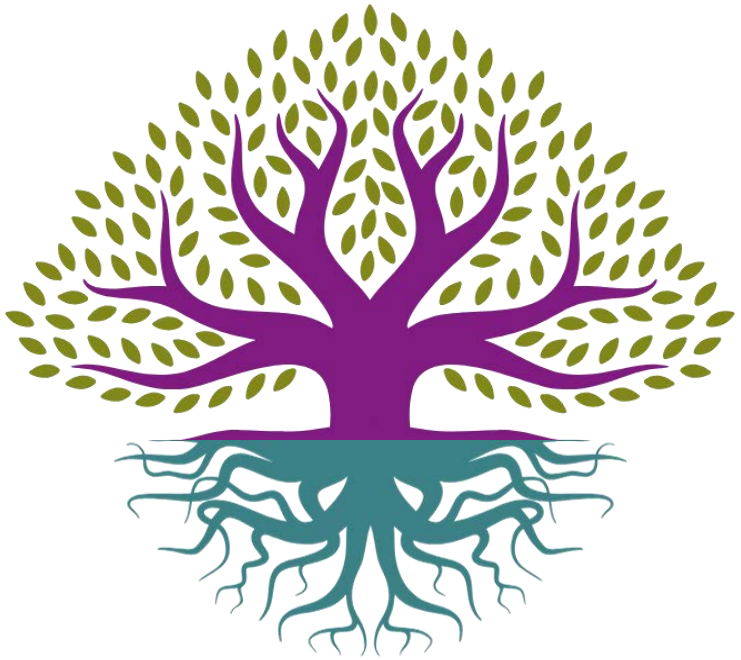
- Mature research program
  - 10th year
  - Infrastructure working well
  - Collaboration via team science
  - Productivity and early impact
  - Established national resource
- 2026-2030
  - Reinforce
    - Organizational Effectiveness
    - High-impact Research
  - *Expand* reach as national resource

| 2020-2024 Goals | 2026-2030 Goals |
|---|---|
| Enhance Organizational Effectiveness | Enhance Organizational Effectiveness |
| Enable High-Impact Research | Enable High-Impact Research |
| Establish ECHO as a National Resource | Expand ECHO's Reach |

# Goals and Objectives

## Goal 1: Enhance Organizational Effectiveness

A. **Promote a mission-driven organization**
B. **Refine operational resources**
C. **Strengthen interpersonal cohesion**



# Goal 1: Enhance Organizational Effectiveness
## Key Components

### Program Office Mission

**Promote** scientific vision and

**Mobilize** nationwide capacity

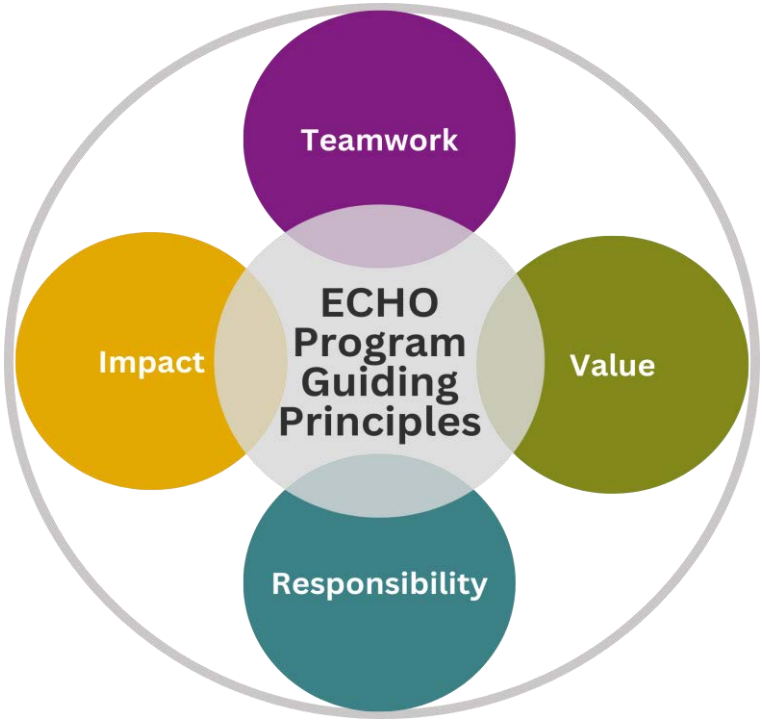
to

**Catalyze** observational & intervention research that will…

**Enhance the health of children for generations to come**

*Program Mission*

### Guiding Principles




### Cross-cutting Themes




**Continuous Quality Improvement**



**Solution-oriented Research**

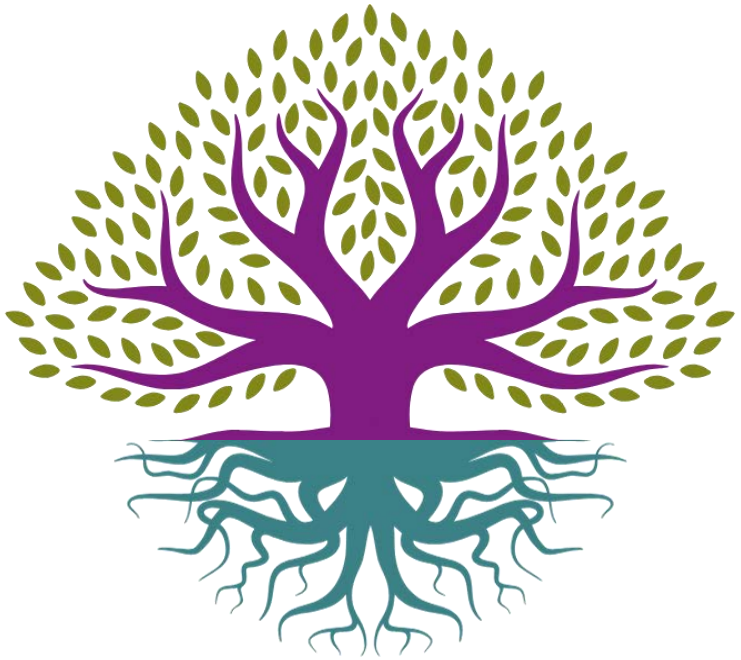


**Team Science**



**Cross-NIH Collaboration**

# Goals and Objectives



## Goal 1: Enhance Organizational Effectiveness

A. Promote a mission-driven organization
B. Refine operational resources
C. Strengthen interpersonal cohesion

## Goal 2: Enable High-Impact Research

A. **Empower investigators with research awards**
B. **Implement practices for innovative research**
C. **Support ECHO research dissemination**

# Goal 2: Enable High-Impact Research
## ECHO Research Priorities

### Cohort


Detect **modifiable early developmental exposures**


Explore **pathways** to ECHO health outcomes


Examine **resilience or susceptibility factors**


Identify **periods of development most sensitive** to exposures


Measure effects of **natural experiments** or new innovations

### ISPCTN


Address **prevention** and **treatment** of common pediatric conditions


Conduct **efficacy** and **effectiveness** trials where kids eat, sleep, learn, play


Implement **shovel-ready** interventions in **rural** or **underserved communities**


**Expand reach** through scalable interventions

# Goals and Objectives



## Goal 1: Enhance Organizational Effectiveness

A. Promote a mission-driven organization
B. Refine operational resources
C. Strengthen interpersonal cohesion

## Goal 2: Enable High-Impact Research

A. Empower investigators with research awards
B. Implement practices for innovative research
C. Support ECHO research dissemination

## Goal 3: Expand ECHO's Reach

**A. Promote ECHO as a national research resource**
**B. Cultivate broad awareness of ECHO**
**C. Translate ECHO science to action**

# Goal 3: Expand ECHO's Reach

| Objective | Activity | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **National Resource** ↓ **Awareness** ↓ **Translation** | **Provide resources to broader scientific community** | Provide access to ECHO data and biospecimens through<br>1. Ancillary studies supported by non-ECHO funding<br>2. NICHD Data and Specimen Hub (DASH) |
| | **ICO Collaborations** | Advance health research from preconception through adolescence across many areas of NIH interest |
| | **Champions Program** | Equip ECHO investigators to engage local and state leaders with ECHO findings |
| | **Interested Party Engagement** | Provide regular briefings to Congress and other interested parties on high-impact ECHO research |
| | **Annual "Translating Science to Action" Symposium** | Bridge gap between cutting-edge research and solutions to enhance children's growth and development |

# Summary

- ECHO Program Office finalizing Strategic Plan for 2026-2030
  - Reinforcing
    - Organizational effectiveness
    - High-impact research
  - *Expanding* reach as national resource
    - Data & biospecimens, infrastructure
    - Broad awareness
    - Translating science to action
- Questions/Discussion?

