

## NEWS RELEASES

Tuesday, October 4, 2016

## NIH Common Fund announces 2016 High-Risk, High-Reward Research awards

*NIH to fund 88 awards on high-impact biomedical research.*

The [High-Risk, High-Reward Research \(HRHR\) program](#), supported by the [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) 's Common Fund](#), awarded 88 grants to highly creative and exceptional scientists with bold approaches to major challenges in biomedical research. The awards span the broad mission of the NIH and include groundbreaking research, such as engineering immune cells producing drugs at the site of diseased tissue; developing a sensor to rapidly detect antibiotic resistance of a bacterial infection; understanding how certain parasites evade host detection by continually changing their surface proteins; and developing implants that run off the electricity generated from the motion of a beating the heart.

“The program continues to support high-caliber investigators whose ideas stretch the boundaries of our scientific knowledge,” said NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D. “We welcome the newest cohort of outstanding scientists to the program and look forward to their valuable contributions.”

NIH traditionally supports research projects, not individual investigators. However, the HRHR program seeks to identify scientists with ideas that have the potential for high impact, but may be at a stage too early to fare well in the traditional peer review process. These awards encourage creative, outside-the-box thinkers to pursue exciting and innovative ideas in biomedical research.

The NIH Common Fund supports a series of exceptionally high-impact programs that cross NIH Institutes and Centers. Common Fund programs pursue major opportunities and gaps in biomedical research that require trans-NIH collaboration to succeed. The High-Risk, High-Reward Research program, part of the NIH Common Fund, manages the following four awards:

- The [Pioneer Award](#), established in 2004, challenges investigators at all career levels to pursue new research directions and develop groundbreaking, high-impact approaches to a broad area of biomedical or behavioral science.
- The [New Innovator Award](#), established in 2007, supports unusually innovative research from early career investigators who are within 10 years of their final degree or clinical residency and have not yet received a research project grant or equivalent NIH grant.
- The [Transformative Research Award](#), established in 2009, promotes cross-cutting, interdisciplinary approaches and is open to individuals and teams of investigators who propose research that could potentially create or challenge existing paradigms.

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—Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D, Director, NIH

- The [Early Independence Award](#), established in 2010, provides an opportunity for exceptional junior scientists who have recently received their doctoral degree or completed their medical residency to skip traditional post-doctoral training and move immediately into independent research positions.

In 2016, the NIH issued [12 Pioneer awards](#), [48 New Innovator awards](#), [12 Transformative Research awards](#), and [16 Early Independence awards](#). The awards total approximately \$127 million and represents contributions from the NIH Common Fund; the National Cancer Institute; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; National Institute of General Medical Sciences; National Institute of Mental Health; and the Big Data to Knowledge initiative.

The NIH Common Fund encourages collaboration and supports a series of exceptionally high-impact, trans-NIH programs. Common Fund programs are designed to pursue major opportunities and gaps in biomedical research that no single NIH Institute could tackle alone, but that the agency as a whole can address to make the biggest impact possible on the progress of medical research. Additional information about the NIH Common Fund can be found at <http://commonfund.nih.gov>.

**About the National Institutes of Health (NIH):** NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov).

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