Report TItle: White House FY 2026 NIH Budget Cuts Will Cause Widespread Economic Loss
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Interactive visualization: https://scienceimpacts.org
Static map image link: Economic loss due to NIH budget cuts by Congressional district
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Summary: The White House FY 2026 budget proposal cuts NIH research funding by a reported $18 billion compared to FY 2024 levels. Budget cuts are projected to lead to more than $46B in lost economic activity in the upcoming year, in light of findings that $1 invested in NIH research supports $2.56 in economic activity. Losses will be widespread, negatively impact local economies, reduce investment in areas of significant medical need, and lead to >200,000 lost jobs in addition to the NIH jobs that have already been terminated. SCIMaP estimates that thirteen states face over $1 billion in economic losses, and almost every House district will experience more than $10M in economic losses. Furthermore, a third of House districts, spread all over the country in blue, purple, and red states alike, will see economic losses of hundreds of millions of dollars in a single year. The map below estimates the economic losses in millions of dollars by congressional district. An interactive visualization is available via scienceimpacts.org.
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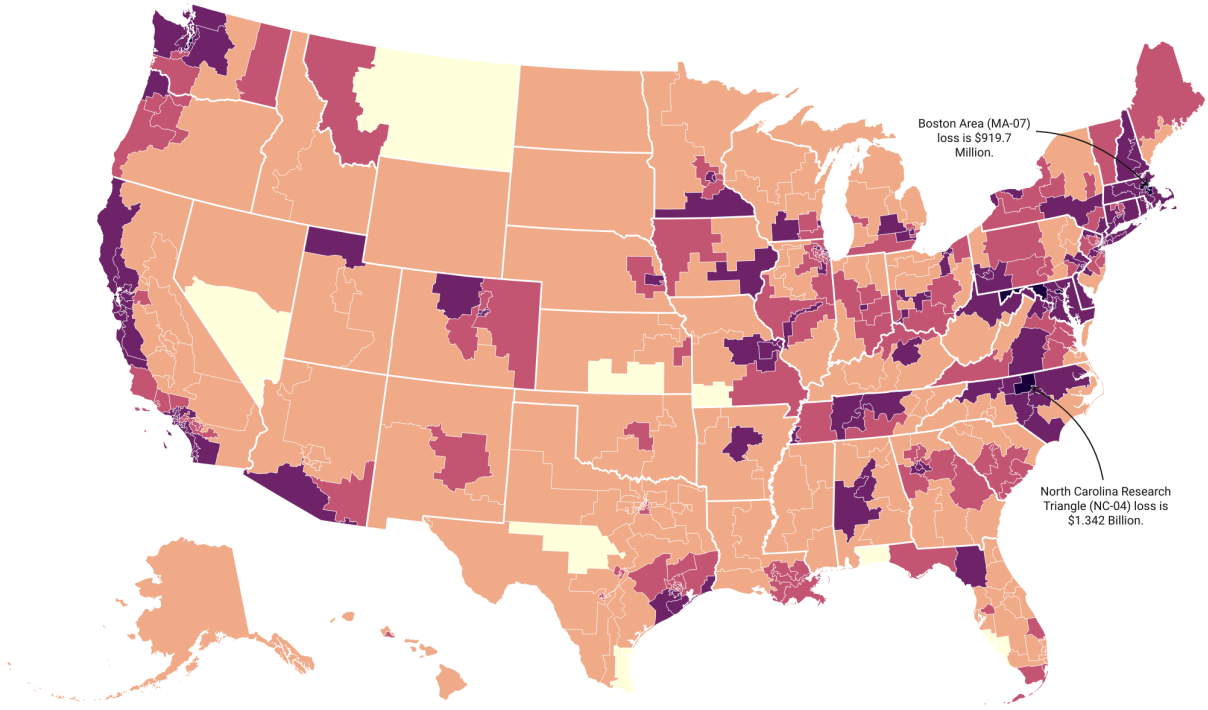
Economic Loss due to NIH Budget Cuts by Congressional District

Source: Science and Community Impacts Mapping Project (SCIMaP), scienceimpacts.org



Districts are mapped to the Districts used in the 118th Congress. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).
Map: Mallory Harris, Clio Andris, Allie Sinclair, Joshua Weitz. • Source: SCIMaP: http://scienceimpacts.org • Created with Datawrapper

Expected Widespread Impacts: The $18B reduction in the NIH FY2026 budget is estimated to lead to more than $46B in lost economic activity in the upcoming year alone, given findings that $1 invested in NIH research supports $2.56 in economic activity. Economic losses will be widespread – SCIMaP estimates that thirteen states face over $1 billion in economic losses (California, New York, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Florida, and New Jersey), including $353 million from cuts to cancer research in Texas, $214 million from cuts to infectious disease research in Georgia, and $186 million in cuts to research into aging (including Alzheimer's and dementia) in Florida.

Cuts will Impact Local Economies: Reduced investment in medical research ripples outward from universities, hospitals, and research institutes into local communities. When we account for these commuter flows using U.S. census data, we estimate that every congressional district will experience some economic loss under the proposed budget, and almost every district stands to lose at least $10M in FY 2026. We estimate that a third of congressional districts, spread all over the country in blue, purple, and red states, will lose hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

Reduce Investment in Areas of Significant Medical Need: The White House budget plan targets research that fuels the development of life-saving diagnostics, therapeutics, and cures. New and existing research grants will be cut. The proposed FY 2026 cuts would significantly reduce funding compared to inflation-adjusted FY 2024 levels. Reductions include a 39% cut to the National Cancer Institute, a 38% cut to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and a 42% cut to the National Institute on Aging. Institutes focused on minority health, nursing research, and global health would be eliminated altogether. These cuts undermine the translational pathway of NIH research, which contributed to more than 99% of the 300+ drugs approved by the FDA from 2010-2019, including drugs to treat metastatic breast cancer, reduce birth defects caused by viruses, and novel antibiotics to treat multidrug resistant 'superbugs'.

NIH Cuts Will Lead to Significant Job Losses: The administration's detailed budget analysis shows that proposed cuts would substantially reduce the scientific workforce. We estimate that budget cuts would lead to more than 200,000 lost jobs nationwide. In addition, the White House anticipates that hundreds more staff at the NIH will be fired, leading to the permanent shuttering of federal labs. More than 6,500 individual and institutional training grant awards would be eliminated, slashing opportunities by ~35% for students and postdoctoral scientists across the country. These cuts will not substantially reduce the federal deficit — currently, less than 1% of the total federal budget is dedicated to the NIH. Job losses due to the proposed budget are in addition to those from ongoing policy changes currently under judicial review, including widespread terminations of NIH grants and reduced funding for research infrastructure.

Methods Summary: We compare the proposed NIH FY 2026 budget to the FY2024 budget to estimate the proportion of funding lost. We calculate the inflation-adjusted five-year average of funding across active grants within a given Congressional District from FY2020-2024. We exclude FY2025 from the analysis because grant terminations and freezes have reduced fund distribution compared to historic levels. We exclude grant funding received from agencies outside of the NIH (e.g., FDA and CDC). We similarly calculate reductions in funding for three NIH institutes that would be maintained under the proposed reorganization: the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), the National Cancer Institute, and the National Institute on Aging (NIA). We assume that cuts will be distributed evenly across regions and research topics. We redistribute losses across regions based on commuter flows provided by the US Census data set (version LODES8). We use data for all job types for the year 2016, as more recent data are not available for several states. The economic impact of cuts is estimated by multiplying each $1 in cuts by a factor of 2.56 based on a report by United for Medical Research on economic activity associated with NIH research funding. Data is distributed publicly through the Open Science Framework and available via scienceimpacts.org.