

A Great America Requires Americans in Great Health

The current administration's recent attempts to drastically cut research funding at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will have a profoundly negative impact on American citizens, their families, their communities, and our nation's economy.

The NIH is America's premier healthcare research agency. When Americans experience devastating medical problems such as heart disease, cancer, or diabetes, the treatments that they receive are supported by research funded by the NIH. When Americans develop serious behavioral health problems like depression, suicidal thoughts, or substance/alcohol abuse, the treatments that they receive are supported by research funded by the NIH. Beyond saving lives and reducing human suffering, NIH-funded initiatives also promote a stronger American economy. Indeed, when Americans are healthy, they are better able to complete education, enter the nation's workforce, be more productive in their jobs, and accrue income to spend on goods and services.

For the reasons noted above, it is not surprising that the NIH has received decades of support from just about all political leaders in America regardless of their party affiliation. And yet, currently the NIH has been directly targeted in efforts to reduce federal spending. At present, almost all new NIH-supported research has been placed on hold, with no indication on when, or even if, that research will be resumed.

Such pausing of NIH funding seriously negatively impacts healthcare advances in our country and places the lives of Americans at risk. In addition, it places institutions that rely on NIH dollars in very serious jeopardy. Our institutions, the Oregon Social Learning Center and its sister organization, OSLC Developments, Inc., are notable examples. The Oregon Social Learning Center was founded in 1974 as an independent research institution with the mission of leveraging science to advance the health of children, adolescents, and their families. OSLC Developments, Inc. was founded in 2011 to ensure that the programs produced at Oregon Social Learning Center would be accessible to the public. These institutions are entirely funded through competitive grants. They do not have endowments that can be used to replace federal funding. For over 50 years, Oregon Social Learning Center has leveraged funding from NIH and other federal departments (e.g., Department of Education, Department of Justice) to develop and evaluate dozens of programs aimed at fostering positive child development; reducing adolescent depression, suicide, and substance use; and preventing youth from becoming involved in juvenile justice and child welfare systems. With the support of NIH funding, these programs have amassed considerable evidence. Oregon Social Learning Center's programs are now being implemented throughout Oregon and in just about every other state in our nation, benefiting thousands of American youths annually. These programs save lives, strengthen families, and seek to address the devastating mental health and substance use crises currently impacting our nation's youth. Oregon Social Learning Center's programs also help ensure that vulnerable youth remain engaged in school so they can reach their full potential and ultimately enter the nation's workforce.

With the recent efforts to cut NIH funding, work at Oregon Social Learning Center has been seriously compromised. If the currently proposed cuts to NIH are made, the reach of Oregon Social Learning Center's programs will need to shrink considerably, and some of those programs might need to shut down completely. Further, depending on the extent of the NIH cuts, Oregon Social Learning Center's very existence as an institution might be at serious risk.

At Oregon Social Learning Center, we stand in solidarity with all research institutions that work tirelessly to advance the health of Americans. We also stand vehemently opposed to the proposed cuts at NIH. If those cuts are made, Americans will suffer, communities will suffer, and the economy will be adversely impacted for generations.

In 2024:

- Oregon Social Learning Center and OSLC Developments, Inc. had a combined annual budget of \$8,000,000.
- We had 86 employees (73 with full benefits), with 90% of our workforce in Lane County, Oregon.
- Over 2,000 Oregon children, adolescents, and families in the child welfare, juvenile justice, school, and mental health systems were served via Oregon Social Learning Center's programs that were developed and evaluated by NIH-funded research grants.

- Over 500 children, adolescents, and families were served in states outside of Oregon (e.g., California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New York) via our programs.

Since the Oregon Social Learning Center was established in 1974:

- Oregon Social Learning Center and OSLC Developments, Inc. have been awarded over \$300,000,000 in federal grants and contracts.
- The employee census at Oregon Social Learning Center and OSLC Developments, Inc. has varied from 150 to 80 depending on the number and size of grants and contracts funded.
- Oregon Social Learning Center and OSLC Developments, Inc. have reduced the research to practice timeline from 20+ years to 5 or fewer years meaning that NIH-funded programs get to people in need more efficiently and quickly than typical.