

**Concept Clearance of Common Fund High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program NOFOs:
Pioneer, New Innovator, Transformative Research, and Early Independence Awards**

Program Description: The [High-Risk, High-Reward Research \(HRHR\) program](#) seeks to foster scientific leaps by supporting proposals with exceptional innovation and potential for unusually broad impact. The HRHR program is an “investigator-initiated” grant program and welcomes any topic within the broad mission of NIH. It consists of four award initiatives listed in the table below.

| Initiative | Activity Code | Applicants | Focus | FY25 Annual Budget (5-year project period) |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Pioneer Award | DP1 | Any career stage | Person based; new research direction with transformative potential; requires 51% effort | \$700K/year direct costs |
| New Innovator Award | DP2 | Early-Stage Investigators (ESI) | Person and project based; innovative research with transformative potential | \$300K/year direct costs in multi-year disbursements |
| Transformative Research Award | R01 | Any career stage; single or multi-PI | Project based; must be paradigm shifting, transformative; budget is flexible | Flexible |
| Early Independence Award | DP5 | ESI, senior graduate students | Person and project based; “skip the postdoc” | \$250K/year direct costs |

The Common Fund budget for competing awards in FY 2026 is ~\$60M. We anticipate supporting 8 Pioneer Awards, 26 New Innovator Awards, 7 Transformative Research Awards, 13 Early Independence Awards. Additional awards may be made with support from other NIH Institutes/Centers. The HRHR program is not subject to the Common Fund ten-year limit.

Proposed NOFO Modifications:

- Major NOFO changes are not anticipated.
- The Transformative Research Award applications and review process will no longer be anonymized due to implementation of the [Simplified Review Framework](#), which emphasizes the importance/significance of the research and the rigor and feasibility of the approach while de-emphasizing the investigator and institution.
- Robust outreach efforts continue to ensure applications are received from the full spectrum of eligible institutions in all geographic locations. Colleagues across the NIH assist in efforts to solicit applications from all topic areas relevant to the broad mission of NIH.