

2025 Current Fiscal Year Report: National Cancer Institute Special Emphasis Panel

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1. Department or Agency

Department of Health and Human Services

2. Fiscal Year

2025

3. Committee or Subcommittee

National Cancer Institute Special Emphasis Panel

3b. GSA

Committee No.

85

4. Is this New During Fiscal Year?

No

5. Current Charter

12/05/1967

6. Expected Renewal Date

7. Expected Term Date

8a. Was Terminated During Fiscal Year?

No

8b. Specific Termination Authority

8c. Actual Term Date

9. Agency

Recommendation for Next Fiscal Year

Continue

10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?

Not Applicable

10b.

Legislation Pending?

Not Applicable

11. Establishment Authority Authorized by Law

12. Specific Establishment Authority

42 U.S.C. 284(c)(3)

13. Effective Date

11/04/1988

14. Committee Type

Continuing

14c. Presidential?

No

15. Description of Committee Special Emphasis Panel

16a. Total

Number of Reports

No Reports for this Fiscal Year

17a.

Open

0

17b. Closed

0

17c. Partially Closed

0

Other Activities

0

Meetings and Dates

No Meetings

Current Next
FY FY

18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18c. Administrative Costs (FRNs, contractor support, In-person/hybrid/virtual meetings)	\$0.00	\$0.00
18d. Other (all other funds not captured by any other cost category)	\$0.00	\$0.00
18e. Total Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00
19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)	0.00	0.00

20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?

Special Emphasis Panels (SEPs) are composed of recognized biomedical-related and/or behavioral research authorities who represent the forefront of research and technical knowledge and who provide first-level merit review of highly scientific and technical research grant applications and/or contract proposals in the fields relating to basic and clinical sciences, and applied research and development of programs of special relevance

to the NCI. The members and chairs are selected as needed for review of specific applications and contract proposals. The preclinical and clinical discovery and development program Panels, managed by the Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis (DCTD), also evaluates proposals for support to make available to the research community, on a competitive basis, contract resources for the preclinical development of drugs, biologics, clinical assays, and other developmental programs that would ultimately benefit the advancement of clinical studies. Furthermore, the Panel will provide input to NCI on scientific prioritization of National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) concepts across diseases guided by a set of criteria when there are insufficient resources to support trials for all NCTN Scientific Steering Committee approved concepts. Members selected are experts in the various fields of biomedical research. The SEP evaluates applications for their scientific and technical merit and inform the Institute to make funding decisions. The approaches taken during the review process go beyond the traditional review paradigm-special effort is taken to orient SEP members on the intent of the Institute in issuing the call for applications/proposals and about the approach to be used while reviewing the applications/proposals. Additional attention has been given to the use of information technology and the digitization of information, which reduced costs and enabled the procedures for reviewers to be more effective and efficient throughout the entire peer review process. The Special Emphasis Panels will continue to provide quality peer review for the special initiatives of the Institute. In FY 2025, the SEPs reviewed 3,235 grant applications requesting \$1,459,921,963 in direct costs for the first year and a total of 226 contract proposals

were also reviewed.

20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?

These committees have a fluid membership, with members designated to serve for individual meetings rather than formally appointed for fixed terms of service. The reviewers for each meeting are selected to evaluate grant applications and/or contract proposals for a specific, perhaps narrow, expertise area. Participants for each meeting are assembled to most efficiently cover the number and breadth of applications and contracts requiring review. Additionally, staff pays close attention to ensure a diverse and balanced committee membership with the appropriate expertise.

20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?

The National Cancer Institute Special Emphasis Panel held 108 advisory committee meetings during this period. Other work group dates include: 10/9-11/2024; 3/12-14/2025; 3/30/2025 (6 meetings held in one day). In FY 2025, from May 2025 to September 2025, all the special emphasis panels will be reviewed under the umbrella of Center for Scientific Review (CSR) by NCI DFOs who will be on Detail at CSR.

20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?

This committee is composed of recognized biomedical-related and behavioral research authorities who represent the forefront of research and technical knowledge and who provide first-level merit review of highly scientific and technical research grant applications and contract proposals. These evaluations and

recommendations cannot be obtained from other sources because the specialized complex nature of the proposals requires a unique balance and breadth of expertise not available from other established sources.

20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?

The meetings of the National Cancer Institute Special Emphasis Panel were closed to the public for the review of contract proposals and grant applications. Sections 552b(c)(4) and 552b(c)(6) of the Government in the Sunshine Act permit the closing of meetings where discussions could reveal confidential trade secrets or commercial property such as patentable material and personal information, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

21. Remarks

The DFO and Committee Decision Maker positions are held by the same individual because of the assignment of responsibilities within the Institute. Members: The members of this Special Emphasis Panel (SEP) do not have standing appointments and serve on an as needed basis for meetings throughout the fiscal year. Therefore, the Members list reflects meeting dates, not appointment start and end dates. While only one meeting date is listed as an appointment start and end date, a member may have attended several meetings, either as a chairperson, co-chair, or as a member, throughout the fiscal year. As a result, the Members list, including the number of chairs, may not align or directly match to specific meeting dates. Meeting rosters, including members' affiliations and zip codes are available online at <https://public.era.nih.gov/pubroster/>. Reports: This

committee did not produce any public reports.

Designated Federal Officer

Shamala K. Srinivas Associate Director, Office of
Referral, Review and Program Coordination

Narrative Description

NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. NIH works toward that mission by supporting the research of non-Federal scientists in universities, medical schools, hospitals, and research institutions throughout the country and abroad. Section 492 of the PHS Act states that The Secretary...shall by regulation require appropriate technical and scientific peer review of -- (A) applications...; and (B) biomedical and behavioral research and development contracts... The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), one of eight agencies that compose the Public Health Service (PHS) in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The National Cancer Institute coordinates the National Cancer Program, which conducts and supports research, training, health information dissemination, and other programs with respect to the cause, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of cancer, rehabilitation from cancer, and the continuing care of cancer patients and the families of cancer patients. Each Special Emphasis Panel (SEP) advises the Director, National Cancer Institute and the Director, Division of Extramural Activities, NCI, on the scientific merit of research grant and cooperative agreement applications, contract proposals in basic and clinical sciences, and applied research and development programs especially relevant to the National Cancer Institute. The preclinical and clinical discovery and development program panels, managed by the Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis (DCTD), also evaluates proposals for support to make available to the research community, on a competitive basis, contract resources for the preclinical development of drugs, biologics, clinical assays, and other

developmental programs that would ultimately benefit the advancement of clinical studies. Furthermore, the panel will provide input to NCI on scientific prioritization of National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) concepts across diseases guided by a set of criteria when there are insufficient resources to support trials for all NCTN Scientific Steering Committee approved concepts. The members and chairs of a SEP are selected as needed for peer review of applications, proposals, or proposed solicitations. Members selected are authorities in the various fields of biomedical research. SEPs primarily serve to review grant applications or contract proposals for their scientific and technical merit and inform the National Cancer Advisory Board for a second level review for the Institute to make funding decisions. The system works well and allows the Institute to develop novel and innovative approaches to stimulate scientific inquiry pertaining to cancer research. The approaches taken during the peer review process go beyond the traditional review paradigm; special effort is taken to orient the SEP members on the intent of the Institute in issuing the call for applications and about the approach to be used while reviewing the applications or proposals. This method produces an efficient review process for the Institute. The SEP will continue to provide quality peer review for the special initiatives of the Institute. Additionally, use of information technology and the digitization of information to reduce costs is used to make the entire process effective and efficient. Further evidence that the SEPs are meeting their mission is evident by the overwhelmingly positive response from the program directors who attend the review sessions. Management remains vigilant during peer review activities—from the selection of peer reviewers to the preparation of the final reports. Review staff are vigilant to conflicts of interest among reviewers and other issues that could compromise the quality of the review process. Frequent interactions of the Chiefs of the four review branches: Research Programs Review Branch (RPRB), Resources and Training Review Branch (RTRB), Research Technology and Contracts Review Branch (RTCRB), and Special Review Branch (SRB) keep the peer review process uniform across various SEPs. The reviewers are highly satisfied with how the review process functions in a SEP setting as demonstrated by positive feedback from peer reviewers at the conclusion of meetings, both in written

evaluations and in verbal comments to scientific review officers and staff assistants. Additionally, staff assistants and scientific review officers meet regularly to evaluate the outcome of each meeting and to suggest improvements. Various steps have been taken to improve the efficiency of the peer review process. Review staff uses digital images of grant applications from IMPAC II and reviewers use the Internet Assisted Review application within the NIH Commons site to access grant applications and other review related materials, on the web. Not only does such an approach save tax dollars, it also helps address regulatory compliance more efficiently and effectively. Orientation teleconferences are regularly used so that the review staff can explain the review process and program staff can explain the intent of the initiative whose applications are to be reviewed. In addition, the orientation teleconferences are digitally recorded so that the discussions are available for those reviewers who may not have been able to participate in the orientation. Use of this approach defines and focuses the review process. In FY25, the National Cancer Institute Special Emphasis Panel held 108 meetings, reviewing a total of 3,235 grant applications requesting \$1,459,921,963 in direct costs for the first year and a total of 226 contract proposals were also reviewed.

What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?

Checked if
Applies

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Improvements to health or safety | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trust in government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Major policy changes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Advance in scientific research | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Effective grant making | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Improved service delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Increased customer satisfaction | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Outcome Comments

N/A

What are the cost savings associated with this committee?

Checked if Applies

None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Unable to Determine	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$100,000 - \$500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost Savings Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cost Savings Comments

NIH supported basic and clinical research accomplishments often take years to unfold into new diagnostic tests and new ways to treat and prevent diseases.

What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?

69,249

Number of Recommendations Comments

Grant Review

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?

0%

% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments

Information on the research funded by NIH is available through the RePORT (Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tool) website. RePORT provides access to reports, data, and analyses of NIH research activities that advance the mission of the NIH, including information on NIH expenditures, strategic plans, reports on NIH funding, and reports on the organization and people involved in NIH research and research training. The RePORT website is located at <http://report.nih.gov>.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?

0%

% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments

Information on the research funded by NIH is available through the RePORT (Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tool) website. RePORT provides access to reports, data, and analyses of NIH research activities that advance the mission of the NIH, including information on NIH expenditures, strategic plans, reports on NIH funding, and reports on the organization and people involved in NIH research and research training. The RePORT website is located at <http://report.nih.gov>.

Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

Agency Feedback Comments

Information resulting from closed initial peer review meetings is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The public can view information on research projects funded by NIH on the RePORT (Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tool) website located at <http://report.nih.gov>.

What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

Checked if Applies

Reorganized Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reallocated resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Issued new regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved grants or other payments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Comments

An action of approved or recommended for grants receiving initial peer review by this committee does not infer that the grant will be or has been funded. Research grant applications submitted to NIH must go through a two-step review process that includes the initial peer review for scientific and technical merit and a second step of review and approval by a National Advisory Council for program relevance. In addition, prior to an award or funding being made, NIH staff must conduct an administrative review for a number of other considerations. These include alignment with NIH's funding principles, review of the project budget, assessment of the applicant's management systems,

determination of applicant eligibility, and compliance with public policy requirements. After all these steps have been completed, NIH officials make funding decisions on individual grant applications.

Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

Yes

What is the estimated **Number** of grants reviewed for approval

What is the estimated **Number** of grants recommended for approval 3,235
3,235

What is the estimated **Dollar Value** of grants recommended for approval
\$1,459,921,963

Grant Review Comments

Grant Review

How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

Checked if Applies

Contact DFO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Agency Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Committee Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online GSA FACA Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Publications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Access Comments

Information on the SEP can be found at the NCI Division of Extramural Activities: Advisory Boards, Committees and Review Groups website at <http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/sep/sep.htm>. Each NCI FACA committee's information is listed on this site. Information listed includes the committee's charter and rosters.