

## POLICY UPDATE: AGENCY RESPONSES TO RECENT EXECUTIVE ORDERS

*Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – February 27, 2025*

This tool tracks agency guidance and known changes to programs of note issued in response to President Donald Trump’s Executive Orders (EOs) that are of relevance to the higher education and academic research communities, including those focused on cessation of funding activities related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA); environmental justice; foreign assistance; antisemitism at institutions of higher education, and the pausing of disbursement of funds from the *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) and *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* (BIL), as well as actions taken to lay off federal workers, among other topics.

On January 31, Judge Jack McConnell of the District Court for the District of Rhode Island issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) against the freeze of federal funding related to the January 27 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memo that had subsequently been rescinded on January 29, stating “the alleged rescission of the OMB Directive was in name only and may have been issued simply to defeat the jurisdiction of the courts” and “federal agencies cannot pause, freeze, impede, block, cancel, or terminate any awards or obligations on the basis of the OMB Memo, or on the basis of the President’s recently issued Executive Orders.” A hearing to consider a preliminary injunction was held on Friday, February 21 and it is expected that Judge McConnell will decide on whether to issue a preliminary injunction by February 28. In addition, a second TRO was issued, and recently indefinitely extended, by Judge Loren AliKhan from the U.S. District of Columbia, who [ruled in favor](#) of the nonprofits suing to halt the funding freeze and indicated the groups are likely to be successful in their legal challenge. Under the TROs, agencies may not freeze or cancel funding, but reviews related to the EOs are ongoing.

Related to the reduction of the federal workforce, a February 26 [OMB memo](#) directed all federal agencies to “undertake preparations to initiate large-scale reductions in force” and develop Agency Reorganization plans by March 13, 2025.

We believe the federal agencies are prioritizing review of grants and decisions related to layoffs of federal employees related to the following EOs:

- [Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid](#)
- [Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements](#)
- [Unleashing American Energy](#)
- [Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing](#)
- [Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government](#)
- [Enforcing the Hyde Amendment](#)
- [Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy](#)
- [Ensuring Accountability for All Agencies](#)
- [Radical Transformation about Wasteful Spending](#)
- DOGE related EOs “[Implementing the DOGE Workforce](#),” “[Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the DOGE Deregulatory Initiative](#),” and “[Implementing the DOGE Cost Efficiency Initiative](#).”

Based on Lewis-Burke’s understanding of the federal focus on research and aid programs implicated by the EOs, we have compiled the following information on announced agency actions to date. This document will continue to be updated as necessary. Lewis-Burke’s tracker of Administration executive orders is available [here](#).

For readability, this chart outlines the agencies with updated or new information as of the last policy update on February 14, 2025. Further details and unchanged information remain included below. Additionally, all information related to removed websites across federal agencies has been moved to an appendix at the end of the document.

<b>Department of Health and Human Services</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	The new HHS Secretary, Robert F Kennedy Jr., was confirmed on Thursday, February 13. Since his confirmation, HHS has begun to issue guidance through the HHS Civil Rights Office to comply with the gender related executive orders.
<b>Department of Commerce</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	The new Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick was confirmed on Tuesday, February 18. DOC has fired hundreds of “probationary” employees across the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), a key office for implementing chips manufacturing and AI priorities.
<b>Department of Energy</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	With the recent confirmation of Secretary Chris Wright on February 3, the DOE has taken steps to remove DEIA, notably from the Office of Energy Justice and Equity.
<b>National Aeronautics and Space Administration</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	Likely in response to the White House’s <a href="#">Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency” Workforce Optimization Initiative</a> EO, NASA’s probationary employees were prepared to be fired. However, field center directors later received confirmation that these employees would not be terminated.
<b>National Science Foundation</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	NSF updated its <a href="#">website</a> on the impact of President Trump’s executive orders on grants, fellowships, and award managements. There was also a 10% staff layoff during the week of February 17.
<b>National Endowment for the Arts</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	NEA has cancelled the FY 2026 Challenge America grants program, which funded project aimed at extending the reach of the arts to underserved communities, and directed potential applicants to instead apply to the Grants for Arts program. The Grants for the Arts program has deadlines in March and July of this year.
<b>US Agency for International Development</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	On January 20, the White House released the <a href="#">“Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid”</a> EO which mandated a 90-day pause in all foreign development assistance. The Administration has continued to withhold over \$2 billion in aid despite court orders, and on Thursday, February 20, a court said the Administration must at least temporarily restore the funding to programs worldwide. On Wednesday, February 26 after shutting down USAID payment systems and firing thousands of USAID employees, SCOTUS Chief Justice Roberts granted the Trump Administration request to pause the lower courts payment order until noon on Friday, February 28.

<b>Environmental Protection Agency</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	The Trump administration has laid off hundreds of EPA workers, with only a small number offered reinstatement, while also reviewing advisory committees and rescinding environmental justice directives. New executive orders are aimed at reducing federal regulations, expedite environmental reviews for major investments, and shift regulatory power within the EPA, sparking potential legal challenges.
<b>U.S. Department of Agriculture</b> <a href="#">(go to section)</a>	Agriculture Secretary Brook Rollins released \$20 million in IRA funding for conservation programs, with more funds expected as reviews continue. In response to Maine Governor Janet Mills’ support for transgender student athletes, President Trump threatened to withhold all federal funding from Maine, backed by USDA’s review of the University of Maine’s policies.

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## **UPDATED: Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

**NEW:** Following the first tranche of Executive Orders, HHS agencies proceeded to remove mentions of diversity, equity, and inclusion from their websites. With the recent confirmation of the HHS Secretary, Robert F Kennedy Jr. on February 13, HHS has begun to issue guidance through the HHS Civil Rights Office to comply with the gender related executive orders including [Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government](#); [Protecting Children From Chemical and Surgical Mutilation](#); and [Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports](#). On February 19, a [press release](#) was issued with guidance on sex-based definitions outlined in the executive orders. In addition, the HHS Office of Women's Health launched a [new website](#) to promote definitions as well.

Although several EOs are undergoing litigation, agencies within HHS have been to review all existing grants and contracts that may violate the EOs related to DEI and gender. Specifically at the NIH a [memo](#) went to NIH Institute and Center leadership that states "NIH is in the process of reevaluating the agency's priorities based on the goals of the new administration." In the same memo NIH noted they would comply with the existing court orders. Moving forward institutions should continue to track any grants and/or contracts that they believe could be in jeopardy and anticipate future actions HHS.

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

On January 29, the CDC issued a [memorandum](#) to grantees indicating that no additional costs should be used to support any DEI programs, personnel, or activities. The memo goes on to state that any piece of DEI programs funded by the US Government should be permanently terminated.

### **Federal Drug Administration (FDA)**

At the time of this writing, while no public agency-wide guidance from FDA has been released, webpages related to DEIA have been removed (see appendix). Several guidance documents were removed, but a few are still active on the website, including the "[Diversity Action Plans to Improve Enrollment of Participants from Underrepresented Populations in Clinical Studies](#)" and "[Study of Sex Differences in the Clinical Evaluation of Medical Products](#)."

In June 2024, the FDA issued draft guidance on Diversity Action Plans, as required under the Food and Drug Omnibus Reform Act (FDORA). The Administration later removed this guidance without a formal announcement, raising uncertainty about FDA's compliance with FDORA as the June 26, 2025, deadline for final guidance approaches.

## **UPDATED: Department of Commerce (DOC)**

Pursuant to the DEIA EOs, the Department of Commerce (DOC) [released guidance](#) on February 5 to close all agency DEIA offices and end all DEIA-related contracts and that there will be additional guidance on the consideration of DEIA in performance plans. Very little additional direction has been made public beyond notices that are similar to those received by several other agencies.

DOC and various offices therein have also quietly taken down DEIA-specific websites and made subtle tweaks to some programming pages. For instance, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) has taken steps to update their "Investment Priorities" that guide all spending decisions. "Equity," which was the number one priority throughout the Biden Administration, has

been stripped from the updated [list](#). It should be noted that several major efforts at DOC in recent years have elements of DEIA principles, but were authorized through major bipartisan legislation, including [Regional Tech Hubs](#) and the [Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program](#). Any changes to these programs would be closely scrutinized.

**NEW:** With the recent confirmation of Secretary Howard Lutnick on February 19, DOC has expanded operations similar to those seen at other agencies with the firing of hundreds of “probationary” employees across the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) expected, a key office for implementing chips manufacturing and AI priorities.

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**

NOAA is likely to be most impacted by the EO titled [Unleashing American Energy](#), which revokes all Biden-era climate EOs and pauses all *Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)* and *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)* related disbursements. As of the time of writing, NOAA’s IRA website outlining all funding opportunities and awardees is up and can be found [here](#). Nearly all the \$3.3 billion that the agency received via the law has been awarded and disbursed via infrastructure projects, grants to communities and independent accelerators, but any remaining funds will be on hold.

While there have been discussions and speculation about NOAA’s future and the future of climate research under this Administration resulting from the pause on IRA and BIL funds, as well as public criticism of Environmental Justice, there has been no explicit EO directing stoppage of climate-related work comparable to the DEI-related EOs.

At this time of writing, while there was no official guidance on DEIA released by NOAA, certain DEIA webpages and DEI Strategic Plans on NOAA offices have been removed (see appendix).

There are a few webpages that are still active, including the [Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights](#) (OICR), although OICR’s Policy Statement on Diversity and Inclusion has been removed, along with NAO 202-112: “[NOAA Policy for The Establishment and Support of Employee Resource Groups](#).” Additionally, [documents on NOAA response](#) to the Science Advisory Board (SAB)’s report on DEIA “Promising Developments and Critical Needs” remains active.

### **UPDATED: Department of Energy (DOE)**

**NEW:** With the recent confirmation of Secretary Chris Wright on February 3, the DOE has taken additional steps to remove DEIA language. Notably, the DOE’s [Energy Accessibility site](#) has been modified from language of “Why Is Energy Equity and Environmental Justice Important?” and how is the office “Advancing Energy Equity and Environmental Justice?” to removing all mentions of environmental justice and focusing specifically on energy accessibility for all Americans. In a February 5 letter to Wright from Senate Democrats they urged him to not terminate DOE’s Office of Energy Justice and Equity. As of this writing, the Office’s weblink: “[energy.gov/justice/office-energy-justice-and-equity](#)” refers back to the DOE main page.

On January 20, then DOE Acting Secretary, Ingrid Kolb, released a departmental [memo](#) requiring additional reviews of DOE activities. The memo pauses all actions until expressly approved for:

- **Funding:** Grants, cost sharing agreements, funding opportunities, contracts, and loans will not be approved, announced, or modified unless reviewed and approved by the Acting Secretary or Program Head.
- **Procurements:** Procurements, including requests for proposals, requests for quotations, and contract negotiations, above \$100,000, are on hold unless expressly approved.
- **Reports, Studies, Congressional Correspondence and Public Announcements:** This includes requests for information, or public meetings related to reports or studies.
- **Federal Register Notices:** No publication to the federal register without written approval and all items not yet published are immediately withdrawn.
- **Actions under the National Environmental Policy Act:** NEPA work may continue.
- **Personnel actions:** any appointments, promotions or transfers are paused unless approved.

While additional reviews may delay or pause planned actions, the Acting Secretary and incoming leadership have the authority to weigh in on the release of funding calls and grant awards. The Office of Science also issued a [notice](#) on January 27 stating the Office would immediately end requirements for “Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Research (PIER) Plans in proposals submitted to the Office of Science.” Solicitations, including those for Isotope Programming and Facilities Research, have already been amended to remove PIER Plan requirements and criteria, and reviewers have been asked not to review submissions including PIER plans or factor them into consideration for selection decisions.

DOE has indicated that Advisory Committees and Project Peer Reviews are on pause and will not be rescheduled until the department-wide reviews referenced above are conducted and future program directions are clarified. Most recently, the Bioenergy Technologies Office (BETO) postponed peer reviews planned for April 2025 and updated their [website](#) to reflect the change. Conferences and workshops are also on pause.

Likely in response to the White House’s February 11 [Implementing the President’s ‘Department of Government Efficiency’ Workforce Optimization Initiative](#) Executive Order, DOE officials recently instructed the agency program leaders to inform probationary employees that they would be fired Thursday, February 13. DOE officials had previously been asked to justify the jobs of probationary employees, with limits to how many probationary employees they would be allowed to justify. [Public reporting](#) on February 13 indicates that up to 2,000 employees at DOE may be at risk of losing their jobs.

### **UPDATED: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**

On January 22, NASA’s Acting Administrator, Janet Petro, released an [agency-wide](#) update stating that the agency would begin closing all DEIA offices and related contracts. The update’s language was identical to a memo that was circulated by OPM to multiple agencies and departments. It also cautioned against efforts to “disguise these programs by using coded or imprecise language.” The Agency has begun the process of decommissioning the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) and related offices at NASA field centers.

According to a Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Science (ROSES) [notification](#), the Science Mission Directorate “is in the process of amending open Program Elements in ROSES-2024 to end the Inclusion Plan Pilot Study, remove requirements for Inclusion Plans and the evaluation

factors associated with them, and adjust the content of some other Program Elements to remove references to NASA's DEIA programs. Program elements that have already received proposals will not be amended, but if they required Inclusion Plans, those plans will not be reviewed and will not impact the selection of proposals."

On January 23, 2025, an additional [memo](#) for NASA contractors and grantees was released by the Assistant Administrator for Procurement, Karla Smith Jackson, that require immediate, "cease and desist all DEIA activities required of their contracts and grants."

In response to a memo from OPM titled "Initial Guidance Regarding President Trump's Executive Order Defending Women" NASA released [guidance](#) on January 31 to contracting officers and grant officers stating "the procurement, grant, cooperative agreement, and advertisement of gender ideological activities is prohibited."

Despite an initial pause to NASA's Minority University Research and Education Project (MUREP) Aeronautics Community & Environmental Impact Research (ACEIR) opportunity, the program seems to be moving forward with a [call for reviewers](#) being sent out on February 5. MUREP does aim to specifically support minorities; however, it is statutory in law and frequently supported on both sides of the aisle.

**NEW:** Likely in response to the White House's [Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative](#) Executive Order, NASA's probationary employees were prepared to be fired, however, the directive from OPM never came and field center directors later received confirmation that their probationary employees [would not be terminated](#).

### **UPDATED: National Science Foundation (NSF)**

**UPDATE:** NSF has published a [website](#) dedicated to informing the public on the implementation of President Trump's recent executive orders, which it is updating frequently. Most recently, during the week of February 24, the website was updated to include information on the impacts of the Executive Orders on decisions about eligibility for award for proposals that received favorable determinations in calendar year 2024, the impact of the EOs on review of SBIR proposals, whether or not GFRP proposals will continue to be awarded, if postdoctoral fellowships will re-open, anticipated changes to scheduled future year increments of grant awards, and how faculty can find additional information about award management. The website also newly clarifies that no-cost extensions may still be processed by NSF.

Additionally, [public reporting](#) from January 23 indicates that NSF Director Sethuraman Panchanathan internally announced the closure of the Office of the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and is working to end all contracts related to DEI. The agency is also reviewing individual awards for potential non-allowable activity. While NSF has not issued official guidance on how it is reviewing awards, [public reporting](#) indicates that around 10,000 research grants have been flagged for review for potential violations of the Executive Orders, with potential action for grants under review including "cancelling, archiving, or modifying them." Some [phrases](#) that have allegedly caused grants to be pulled for review include "cultural relevance," "diversity," "hate speech," "exclusion," and "implicit bias," among others.

**NEW:** Likely in response to the Implementing the President’s “[Department of Government Efficiency](#)” [Workforce Optimization Initiative](#) Executive Order, NSF laid off ten percent of its staff during the week of February 17.

Other actions taken to date include:

- As of February 7, NSF updated their EO implementation guidance to [clarify](#) that activities targeted in the rescinded OMB memo, which specifically targeted DEI, can continue due to the TRO. Thus, researchers are safe to continue any DEI activities or research as part of their grant. This is consistent with the website removing their original notice stating that awardees must immediately cease all DEI activities.
- NSF also [confirmed](#) that they started holding review panels as of February 27.
- NSF updated its [guidance](#) to state that due dates for open solicitations are “subject to change” and indicated that revised funding opportunities will be published as necessary as NSF implements the EOs.
  - In addition, the guidance clarifies, “NSF cannot take action to delay or stop payment for active awards based solely on actual or potential non-compliance with the Executive Orders.
- It should be noted that other NSF programs focused on broadening participation in STEM, including [INCLUDES](#), the [Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation](#), [Alliances for Graduate Education](#), the [Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate](#), [Hispanic Serving Institutions: Equitable Transformation in STEM Education](#), and [NSF Scholarships in Science, Technology Engineering, and Mathematics program \(S-STEM\)](#) have not been archived and still have proposal deadline dates in 2025 as of this writing.
- Outside of BIO and GEO directorate-specific programs such as [Broadening Participation in Engineering](#) and [Launching Early-Career Academic Pathways in the Mathematical and Physical Sciences](#) were still live as of this writing.

## **National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)**

On February 11, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) released “[NEH Implementation of Recent Executive Orders](#).” This webpage contains information regarding the impact that recent Executive Orders (EOs) have on the NEH and will be updated frequently. Currently, it states that to comply with recently issued EOs, specifically [Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing](#), [Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government](#), and [Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling](#), the agency has added several “new prohibited categories to the Funding Restrictions section” of its funding opportunity announcements.

“NEH awards may now not be used for the following purposes: promotion of gender ideology and discriminatory equity ideology, support for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEIA) or diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives or activities, and support of environmental justice initiatives and activities.”

NEH has created a [webform](#) through which an individual can submit questions regarding this new guide. The agency will not be able to respond to all questions but will compile the most asked and create a “frequently asked questions (FAQs)” section on the current webpage. Individuals should refer often to this webpage for answers and guidance.



## **NEW: National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**

On February 6, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) released an [update](#) on NEA FY 2026 grant activities. The update announced the cancellation of the FY 2026 Challenge America grants program, which funded project aimed at extending the reach of the arts to underserved communities, and directed potential applicants to instead apply to the Grants for Arts program. The update also announced the cancellation of the February deadline for the Grants for Arts program. The FY 2026 deadlines will now be March 11 and July 10 of this year.

## **Department of Defense (DOD)**

At the time of this writing, no public agency-wide guidance from the Department of Defense (DOD) has been released. However, Secretary Pete Hegseth, confirmed on January 24, has been open about his stance on DEI and his support in eliminating DEI programs from DOD. In a [post via social media platform X](#), Secretary Hegseth stated that the “Pentagon will comply, immediately” with the President's EO. Subsequently, the Department’s Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) has halted activities, and there is currently no website for the Office. It is Lewis-Burke's understanding that DOD is reviewing existing projects and may suspend programmatic activities related to DEI in response to the EO.

Secretary Hegseth directed contracting officers from DOD’s [Acquisition and Sustainment \(A&S\) Office](#) to “cancel and amend solicitations and terminate or partially terminate” any existing contracts or contracting instruments like Other Transaction Authority agreements (OTAs) containing and DEIA requirements. The memorandum was disseminated in late January and allows contracting officers to modify contracts and solicitations to remove DEIA requirements.

Of relevance to the academic research community, information on programs and solicitations that support minority serving institutions both defense-wide and across the services is still publicly available online. For instance, there are webpages for [opportunities](#) under the [DOD Historically Black Colleges and Universities/Minority-Serving Institutions \(HBCU/MI\)](#), including a separate webpage for its [annual summer research internship program](#).

Additionally, the environmental resilience arm of the Department has seen minimal changes. The Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program and the Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (SERDP/ESTCP) have sustained the goal to “enhance capabilities and sustain operations at Department of Defense (DoD) installations” through environmental resilience and restoration. While the webpage for SERDP/ESTCP was temporarily down, it is now available [here](#). The FY 2026 solicitation for ESTCP is currently open, focusing on innovative environmental energy technologies for installations; more information is available [here](#).

## **Department of Education (ED)**

On January 23, the Department of Education (ED) released a press [release](#) that stated that the agency “has taken action to eliminate harmful Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, including references to them in public-facing communication channels and its associated workforce.” The release notes actions taken by the agency including “Cancellation of ongoing DEI training and service contracts which total over \$2.6 million.” On January 28, the Federal Student Aid [released a memo](#) noting that the pause does not impact “Title IV, HEA funds, which are provided to individual students.”

On February 13, the Department of Education has [cancelled](#) \$350 million in contracts and grants to multiple Regional Educational Laboratories and Equity Assistance Centers, citing “wasteful and ideologically driven spending not in the interest of students and taxpayers” as the reason why. Additionally, on February 10, the Department of Government Efficiency [announced on X](#) the cancellation of \$101 million in DEI training grants and [\\$881million contracts](#) at the Department of Education.

In response to the [Additional Measures to Combat Antisemitism](#) EO, ED [announced](#) investigations on February 3, into five institutions of higher education “where widespread antisemitic harassment has been reported.” Separately, ED has [withdrawn](#) two Notices Inviting Applications for the State Entity Charter School Grant Program and the Charter Management Organization Grant Program, citing their “misalignment” with the Trump Administration’s recent EO [Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families](#).

In response to the [Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports EO](#), ED [announced](#) investigations on February 6, into two institutions of higher education and one middle and high school athletics conference and stated that the Office of Civil Rights is “actively reviewing athletic participation policies at a number of schools.”

### **Department of Labor (DOL)**

On January 22, DOL released [guidance](#) entitled “Immediate Implementation of Executive Orders “Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing” and “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity.” The guidance was sent to Employment and Training Administration (ETA) recipients about changes ETA is making to federal financial assistance awards. The guidance states “All awardees must immediately cease all award activities related to DEI or DEIA. All other award activities should continue.”

On January 24, DOL Acting Secretary of Labor, Vincent Micone, issued a [Secretary Order](#) that directed internal staff to “immediately cease and desist” enforcing government contractors’ adherence to anti-discrimination laws and affirmative action initiatives.

A January 22 updated DOL funding [opportunity](#) notes, “The U.S. Department of Labor is reviewing all Funding Opportunity Announcements for consistency with the Executive Orders titled, “[Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing](#),” issued on January 20, 2025, and “[Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity](#),” issued on January 21, 2025. The Department will take necessary action with the Funding Opportunity Announcement and issue additional guidance including adjusting the close date if appropriate.”

### **UPDATED: Department of State (DOS) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)**

**UPDATE:** USAID and DOS is currently navigating a complex landscape following a series of Executive Orders from the Trump Administration, most notably the “[Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid](#)” Executive Order on January 20, 2025, which mandates a 90-day pause in all foreign development assistance. According to the Administration, this pause was introduced to allow the USAID and DOS to review foreign aid programs, focusing on their efficiency, alignment with U.S. foreign policy, and overall goals. The funding freeze was also accompanied by numerous

personnel actions and the review process itself has caused significant disruption within USAID and its operations, including universities and local partners, who either implement USAID programs or utilize funds to support operations/staff. These impacts have resulted in numerous legal disputes, which are at different stages of consideration. More details are provided below:

1. **Suspension of Foreign Assistance Programs:** As per the [Executive Order](#), most foreign assistance programs have been halted or suspended. Program officers at USAID at the Department of State have issued stop work orders to implementers, and numerous proposals and project awards have been terminated due to a shift in agency priorities. In addition, solicitations for new projects have been withdrawn from USAID, State Department, and program implementer websites. In addition to traditional foreign assistance, this has also impacted traditional and long-standing educational and cultural exchange programs, including some implemented by the Department of State Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, such as some of the Fulbright Programs. While the freeze on foreign aid has been widely applied, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has repeatedly stated that there are exemptions, particularly for programs deemed life-saving or mission-critical. For example, humanitarian assistance, such as core medical supplies, food, and shelter, is exempt from the suspension, as is military assistance to Israel and Egypt. A January 28 [memo](#) from Secretary Marco Rubio further clarified that gender, diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and transgender-related programs are not considered life-saving and are therefore excluded from exemptions. However, at USAID in particular, many implementers indicate that funding has not flowed even for programs that either received or should have received waivers.

The indefinite pause of foreign assistance has been subject to lawsuit, with district courts [temporarily blocking](#) the freeze on foreign assistance. The Administration has continued to withhold aid, despite court orders, and the courts once again reiterated their direction to the agency that funding must at least temporarily restore programs to funding programs worldwide on Thursday, February 20. On Wednesday, February 26 after shutting down USAID payment systems and firing thousands of USAID employees, SCOTUS Chief Justice Roberts granted the Trump Administration request to pause the lower courts payment order until noon on Friday, February 28.

2. **Personnel and Leadership Changes:** On January 27, Acting Administrator Jason Gray placed about 50 senior career officials and foreign service personnel on administrative leave, including senior leadership in various bureaus, as part of an investigation into possible efforts to circumvent the Executive Orders and to deny DOGE access to classified materials. On February 3, the Department of State [announced](#) that Secretary of State Marco Rubio had been appointed as Acting Administrator of USAID by President Trump, “as an interim step towards gaining control and better understanding over the agency’s activity.” In the same press announcement, the Department of State indicated Secretary Rubio had notified Congress that a review of USAID’s activities is underway “with an eye toward a potential reorganization.”

[Public reporting](#) on February 3 indicates that, in Secretary Rubio’s letter to Congress, he proposes the possible absorption of some of USAID’s functions into the State Department, while

others would be abolished. Secretary Rubio delegated authority over the USAID to Peter Marocco in his role as the Director of Foreign Assistance, making him the Acting Deputy Administrator of USAID. As a part of this effort, thousands of USAID employees were put on administrative leave, a move which was challenged in the courts by labor unions. This began first with all but 290 individuals of USAID's 10,000 employees put on administrative leave on February 6, the firing of the USAID Inspector General on February 11, and the firing of hundreds of contractors working on humanitarian assistance and global health shortly thereafter. On February 21, ultimately, the courts denied unions' request to issue a preliminary injunction on these actions. Within 48 hours of the ruling, the Administration indicated on February 23 an intent to eliminate positions of ~2,000 USAID employees, with most other USAID employees being put on administrative leave. Staff members are also being recalled from overseas missions, though logistical challenges related to personnel with complicated situations have emerged.

3. **DEIA and Policy Focus:** In addition to the funding freeze EO, USAID and DOS are also implementing guidance from the two DEIA-focused Executive Orders ([Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity](#) and [Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing](#)) to cease support for programs focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. USAID and DOS have been instructed to cease support for DEI-focused programs, and career officials associated with these initiatives were among the first to be placed on administrative leave. Subsequent statements by Peter Marocco have indicated that foreign assistance under the Trump Administration will deprioritize climate change, regime change, civic society, or democracy promotion.

The situation remains fluid, with ongoing legal challenges, staff disruptions, and a review of priorities likely to shape the future of USAID's operations and the U.S. foreign assistance landscape.

### **UPDATED: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

At of this writing, there are no [active research solicitations](#) under competition. EPA has not publicly released formal guidance on actions for its grants and research programs, however the courts have taken steps to ensure that EPA facilitates the disbursement of funds, including Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) awards – which were put on pause by the Executive Order titled [Unleashing American Energy](#). EPA's environmental justice funds, which came largely from the IRA have been a key target and example for members of Congress and the Administration to demonstrate the need for the funding pause. EPA program managers have communicated the agency has resumed work on these activities, including the recently awarded [Community Change Grants](#) and the [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Program](#), however, administrative actions are to be approved by political appointees. Most of the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights employees have been [put on administrative leave](#) with the closing of the office on February 5, and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJEST) and EJScreen have been removed from the EPA website. The [Thriving Communities Grantmaker](#) opportunity is still live on the agency's website which includes links to the independent Grantmakers where applicants can still find funding solicitations, by region.

**NEW:** As of the writing of this document, roughly 388 EPA federal workers have been [fired](#), with 15 to 20 employees given offers to return to the agency. On February 26, President Trump indicated that up to 65% of EPA's workforce may be included in a future RIF, with a reorganizational plan to be presented in mid-March. Secretary Lee Zeldin, who was confirmed on January 29, announced that the Advisory Committees are currently under review and will be reappointed in accordance with the new administration. Similarly, Attorney General Pam Bondi, who was sworn in the same day, rescinded former attorney general directives on environmental justice in a [February 5 memo](#), directing the U.S. Attorney's Offices to revoke "memoranda, guidance, or similar directive that implement the prior administration's 'environmental justice' agenda."

**NEW:** On February 19, the Trump Administration released [Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's Department of Government Efficiency Deregulatory Initiative](#). This EO focuses on reducing federal regulations by targeting regulations the administration views as unnecessarily burdensome and hinderance to the economic landscape of America. Agencies are instructed to review and rescind harmful regulations and ensure new regulations align with the current Administration. The goal is to reduce federal overreach and restore a proper balance of power, particularly within the EPA, which the current administration views as a significant issue.

**NEW:** On February 21, the administration released [America First Investment Policy](#). In addition to restricting Chinese investment in U.S. sectors, this EO states that the Trump Administration will "expedite environmental reviews for any investment over \$1 billion in the United States" and directs the EPA Administrator, in consultation with other agencies, to carry out this objective. This was preceded by a White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) [memorandum](#) that removes CEQ's long-standing regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) with the expectation that EPA as the environmental regulatory agency will play an outsized role in this revised review process. Notably, aspects of this new guidance have already raised questions and are likely to be challenged.

### **UPDATED: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

USDA has not yet released formal guidance regarding research grants from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) nor from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). However, USDA has started to disperse some funds that were frozen during the administration's federal review, including funds under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program. The only posted information thus far is from NIFA stating "All NIFA Requests for Applications are currently under review. Check back for updates or subscribe to [NIFA Funding Opportunities](#) for email updates as they happen." This is understood to be a result of the widespread funding review for compliance with all Executive Orders.

USDA will also be impacted by the Executive order titled [Unleashing American Energy](#) which revokes all Biden-era climate Executive orders and pauses all *Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)* and *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)* related disbursements. The majority of funds received via these laws went to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for [conservation programs](#). In accordance with the EO, it is expected that these funds will be paused until further notice. The

Farmers.gov page where IRA information regarding participation in the loan and conservation programs has been [archived](#).

While there have been discussions and speculation about USDA's future and the future of climate research under this Administration resulting from the pause on IRA and BIL funds as well as criticism of Environmental Justice, there has been no explicit executive order directing stoppage of climate-related work comparable to the DEI related EOs.

USDA employees have [reportedly](#) been directed to remove mentions of climate change from agency websites. These changes are still being made, but as of now [the ARS Climate Hubs](#) are still live, but the Climate Smart Commodity program has been partially removed. While there is not a clear Executive Order that this directive stems from, the administration's stance on climate issues indicates that this is likely to spread across the federal agencies.

**UPDATE:** On February 20, Agriculture Secretary Brook Rollins [released \\$20 million](#) in Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and the Agricultural Conservation Stewardship Program. USDA has committed to releasing additional funding as programs are reviewed, specifically citing contracts that "were already made directly to farmers." USDA received nearly \$20 billion in total IRA funding and the EQIP program received.

**UPDATE:** In response to Maine Governor Janet Mills's statements in support of transgender student athletes despite President Trump's Executive Order banning transgender women from competing in women's sports, the [President announced](#) that Maine would not get "any federal funding whatsoever." Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins [backed the President's approach](#) with a [review](#) of the University of Maine's policies and the threat of withholding agriculture research funding. In a statement, the Secretary said, "USDA is committed to upholding the president's executive order, meaning any institution that chooses to disregard it can count on losing future funding."

## **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**

While the Department of Homeland Security has not publicly issued any written guidance directly related to science and technology funding or academic grants, there have been statements and directives that otherwise may impact the academic community and its stakeholders. Specifically, on January 20, 2025, then Acting Secretary Benjamine Huffman [issued a directive](#) stating that two of the Department's agencies tasked with enforcing U.S. immigration laws, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), would no longer be bound by the "protected" areas memorandum issued by the previous Administration. [The referenced October 2021 memorandum](#) directed ICE and CBP officers to refrain, to the fullest extent possible, from taking enforcement actions near designated sensitive areas such as schools, shelters, treatment facilities, parades, and places of worship. By rescinding this memorandum, the Acting Secretary emphasized the need to give law enforcement the tools they need to remove violent offenders wherever they may be, while also underscoring the need for officers and agents to exercise discretion when determining the threat to public safety.

On January 23, then Acting Secretary Huffman also issued a [statement](#) granting authority to agents and officers from the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the Federal Bureau of Prisons

(BOP) to enforce certain immigration laws. It is currently unknown whether the Department of Justice (DOJ), under which these agencies fall, has issued consistent guidance to its officers and agents with regard to enforcing immigration laws traditionally within the jurisdiction of DHS.

### **U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)**

During the week of January 27, the Office of Justice programs [removed](#) all currently open National Institute of Justice federal funding opportunities and cancelled all webinars related to the funding programs. Additionally, DOJ [announced](#) the creation of a Task Force to Combat Antisemitism in response to the *Additional Measures to Combat Antisemitism* EO. The Task Force will include representatives from the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services. It has indicated its first priority will be to “root out anti-Semitic harassment in schools and on college campuses.”

### **Appendix of Removed / Modified DEIA Websites**

While this list does not include all actions taken by agencies on DEIA websites and language, it provides an overview of major programs impacted.

#### **National Institutes of Health (NIH):**

##### **Removed:**

- NIH’s Interest in Diversity Notice
- NIH Chief Officer of Scientific Workforce Diversity Website
  - Note: Dr. Marie Bernard filled this role until she announced her retirement in December 2024. The position is likely not to be filled.
- NIH UNITE Program Website
  - This program focused on ending structural racism in biomedical research. Although the mention of UNITE has been removed it appears the funding opportunities that resulted from UNITE are still available for funding.
- Sexual and Gender Minority Office (SGMRO) and Sexual and Gender Minority Health Scientific Research Group.
  - SGMRO was in the process of developing a [NIH-Wide Strategic Plan](#) for sexual and gender research for FY 2026-2030.
- Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
  - EDI’s portfolio includes diversity and inclusion programs, and training aimed at cultivating a more diverse and equitable work culture.
- Training, Diversity and Health Equity Office (TiDHE) of NIH’s National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI).
- NIH Maximizing Opportunities for Scientific and Academic Independent Careers Program (MOSAIC) and the funding opportunity.
- NIH Climate and Health Initiative Website

#### **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**

##### **Removed:**

- Websites for the Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion and the Office of Health Equity
- Project Equity, a 2021 initiative launched by the FDA's Oncology Center for Excellence that mandated that oncology medical products and cancer drugs adequately reflected the demographic representation of its patients.
- In June 2024, under the former Biden Administration, FDA [shared draft guidance](#), called "Diversity Action Plans to Improve Enrollment of Participants from Underrepresented Populations in Clinical Studies" with the goal to support medical product sponsors in submitting diversity plans for specific clinical studies. It is likely that final guidance will not be prioritized.
- Several Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH)'s annual reports, including its 2024 report released on January 17, 2025. Other impacted CDRH programs include:
  - CDRH's Health of Women Programs.
  - CDRH's Office of Equity and Innovative Development

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**

#### **Removed:**

- NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory
- NOAA Physical Sciences Laboratory
- NOAA Technology Partnerships Office
- NOAA Climate Program Office DEIA Working Group

### **National Science Foundation (NSF)**

#### **Removed:**

- NSF Chief Diversity Officer and Directorate-specific DEI efforts.
- Archiving of funding opportunities related to DEI. It is not clear at this time how NSF is going to realign these programs moving forward or if further archiving of programs will occur.
  - Directorate for Biology and the Directorate for Geosciences.
  - Building Research Capacity of New Faculty in Biology program
  - Leading Culture Change Through Professional Societies of Biology program
  - Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology program
  - MPS Advance program
  - Focus on Recruiting Emerging Climate and adaptation Scientists and Transformers (FORECAST).
  - Organizational Change for Gender Equity in STEM Academic Professions (ADVANCE)

#### **Modified:**

- While still active, the [GRANTED program](#) has clarified its focus is economic development and no longer focused on equity and diversity.
- The webpages for the [Committee on Equal Opportunity in Science and Engineering](#) (CEOSE) and NSF's larger [broadening participation](#) efforts remain active as of this writing, though it should be noted that the CEOSE meeting, scheduled for February 13, has recently been [cancelled](#).
- As of February 2, 2025, access to NSF's Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$) was restored after briefly going down during the week of January 27. NSF has posted FAQs about the restoration of the ACM\$ system [here](#).



**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

**Removed:**

- The Office of the Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (CDIO) along with its “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Strategic Plan.”
- The USDA Equity Commission, a 15-member independence commission charged with evaluating USDA programs and services and recommending how to reduce barriers for accessing them.
- The Discrimination Financial Assistance Program, which was established by the Inflation Reduction Act to allocate \$2 billion for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experience discrimination in USDA farm lending programs.