

NIH Federal Advisory Committees

Federal Advisory Committees

Overview of Federal Advisory Committees at the NIH

The Federal Government recognized the important role played by advisory committees in developing effective policies and guidance on many issues. These committees soon became institutionalized as preferred tools of a democratic government. The influence and number of advisory committees grew quickly and concerns within the Federal Government regarding committee management, cost and accountability grew as well. Since 1962, there have been several Executive Orders and Congressional Acts establishing guidelines for using such groups. Today, the principle Congressional Act that all Federal advisory committees must follow is the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

NIH maintains over 145 chartered advisory committees, the largest number of Federal advisory committees of any Executive Branch agency. These committees are authorized by the Public Health Service Act. This Act authorizes appropriate scientific and technical peer review of biomedical and behavioral research grant and cooperative agreement applications, research and development contracts, and research conducted at NIH through advisory committees.

NIH utilizes four types of advisory committees:

Integrated/Initial Review Groups (IRGs) and Special Emphasis Panels (SEPs) provide scientific and technical merit review, which is the first level of peer review of research grant applications and contract proposals.

Boards of Scientific Counselors (BSCs) review and evaluate the research programs and investigators of the intramural laboratories.

Program Advisory Committees (PACs) provide advice on specific research programs, future research needs and opportunities, and identify and evaluate extramural initiatives.

National Advisory Councils and Boards (NACs) perform the second level of peer review for research grant applications and offer advice and recommendations on policy and program development, program implementation, evaluation, and other matters of significance to the mission and goals of the respective Institutes or Centers, as well as providing oversight on research conducted by each Institute's or Center's intramural program.

The President of the United States appoints members to two committees. The Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), appoints members to NIH national advisory councils and one program advisory committee. The Director and Deputy Director, NIH appoints members to most of the other advisory committees. In a few cases, Institute or Center Directors are authorized to appoint members.

Committee management at NIH resides at the NIH Office of the Director (OD) level in the Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy and the Institute or Center (IC) level with the Committee Management Office (CMO). OFACP is responsible for the oversight of all NIH Federal advisory committees under the auspices of the FACA. OFACP:

- Develops and implements NIH policies and procedures;
- Disseminates information to the public and NIH advisory committee members;
- Prepares reports and statistical data analysis; coordinates and evaluates NIH reports required by OMB, GSA, the Congress, and the President;
- Coordinates Department and Federal agency policies and activities;
- Establishes and ensures the appropriate utilization and management of all NIH advisory committees;
- Analyzes new, changed, existing and proposed legislation;
- Provides guidance and training to IC CMOs and NIH staff;
- Ensures appropriate management and internal controls are in place.

At the IC level, each IC has a CMO or uses the resources of a service center, to support the committee management function within the Institute or Center. The IC CMO:

- Coordinates all IC committee management activities and serves as liaison official between the IC and the Office of Federal Advisory Committee policy;
- Prepares nomination and appointment documentation for membership to committees;
- Furnishes staff guidance, assistance, and leadership to IC officials in the various facets of advisory committee activities;
- Establishes necessary controls and procedures within each IC to ensure compliance with FACA, applicable regulations, NIH and Department policy;
- Develops charters for new advisory committees, amends, recharter, or renews charters for existing committees;
- Maintains charter and membership records, as well as other required reports;
- Monitors committee meetings and ensures that all FACA meetings are published in the Federal Notice;
- Coordinates and/or prepares annual reports and prepares reports on IC committees to be included in NIH submissions;
- Provides initial review of conflict of interest disclosures;
- Provides technical assistance to committee members.

For additional information on Federal advisory committees at the NIH, we welcome you to browse our website, or related NIH webpages that contain minutes of committee meetings and other committee reports.

[NIH Federal Advisory Committee Information](#)

NIH Federal Advisory Committees: <http://www1.od.nih.gov/cmo/about/index.html>