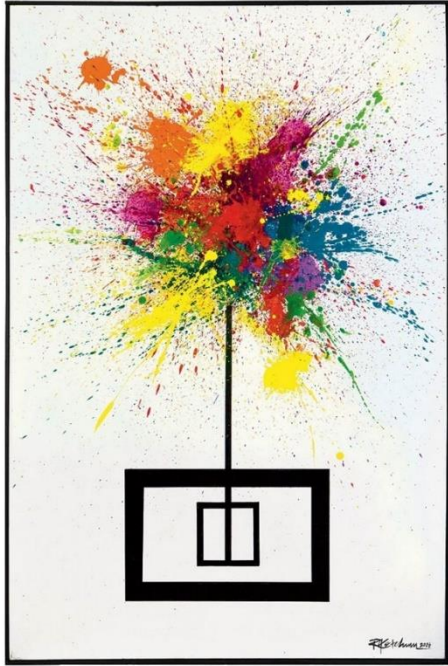


NIH DIRECTOR'S



TRANSFORMATIVE
RESEARCH
AWARD

NIH Director's Transformative Research Award

Webinar for RFA-RM-27-003

Patricia Labosky, Ph.D.
Becky Miller, Ph.D.

Office of the Director, NIH



National Institutes of Health

Office of Strategic Coordination–The Common Fund

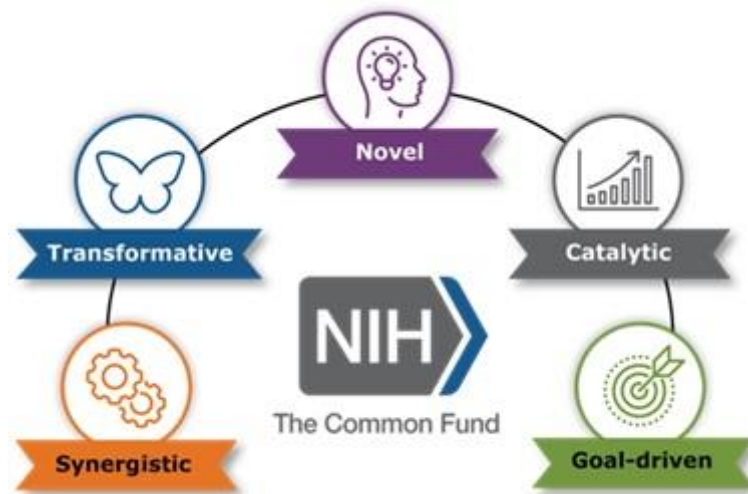
commonfund.nih.gov/tra

Transformative_Awards@mail.nih.gov

The NIH Common Fund

Mission:

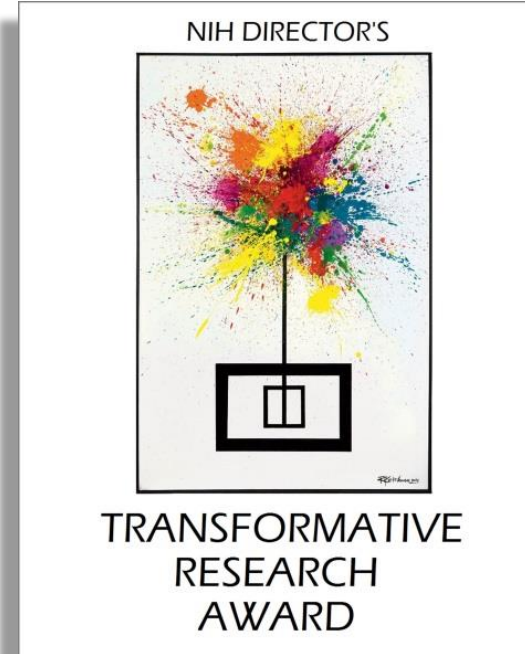
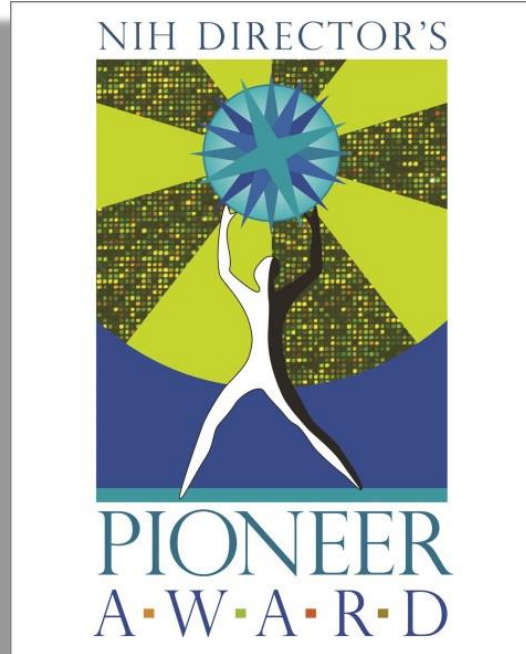
To support **bold scientific programs that catalyze discovery** across all biomedical and behavioral research. Investigators and **multiple NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices** collaborate on **innovative research** expected to address high priority challenges for the NIH as a whole and make a **broader impact in the scientific community**.



commonfund.nih.gov

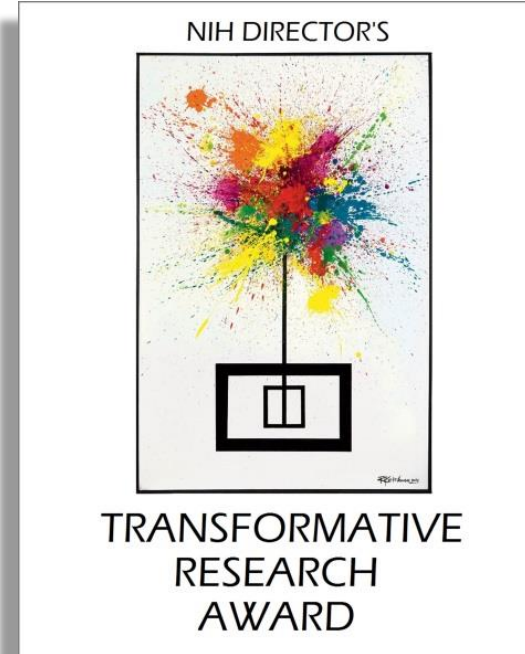
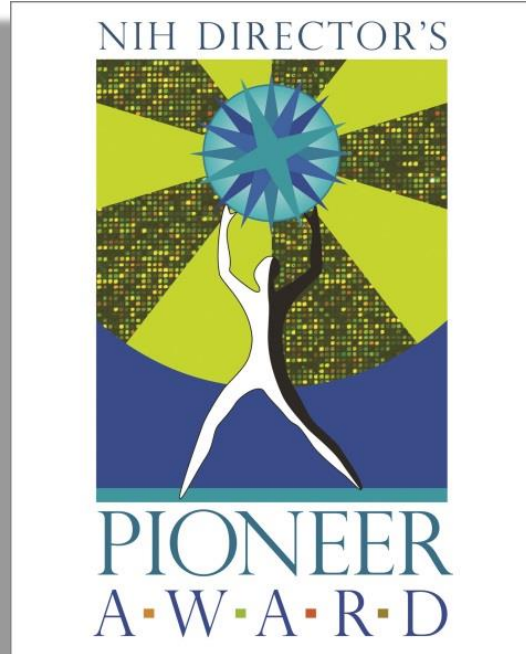


High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



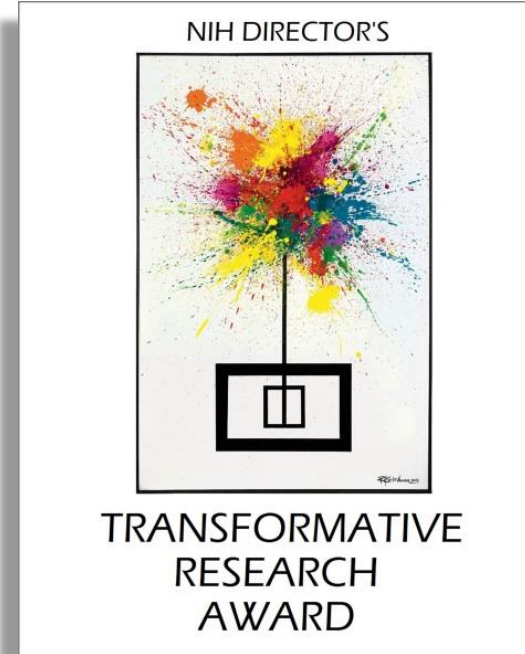
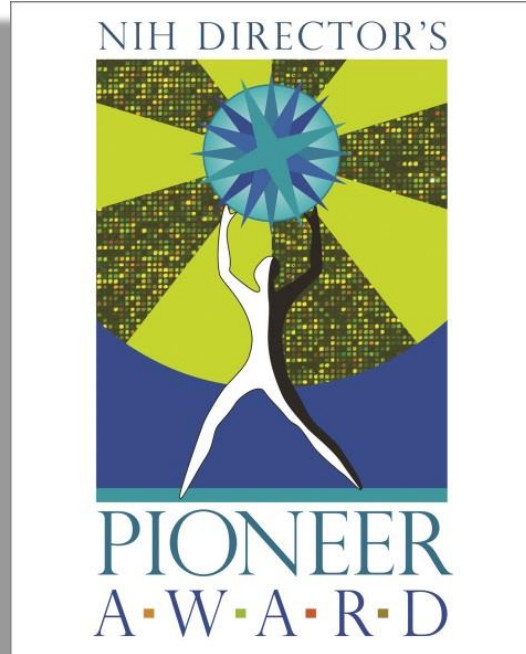
Supporting scientists at all career stages proposing outstanding high-risk, high-impact research

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



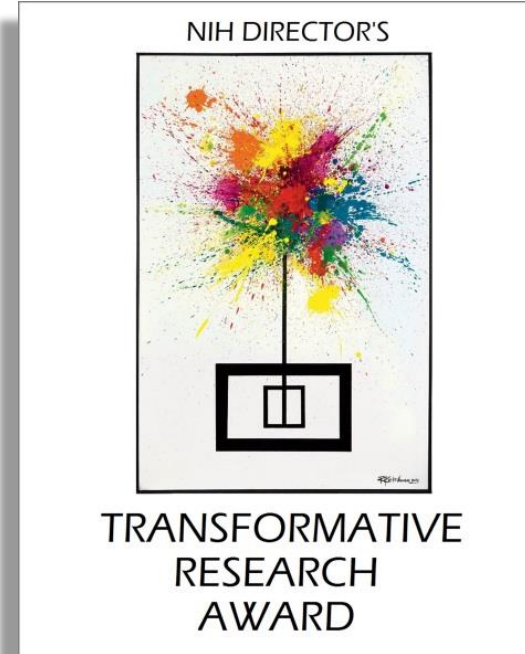
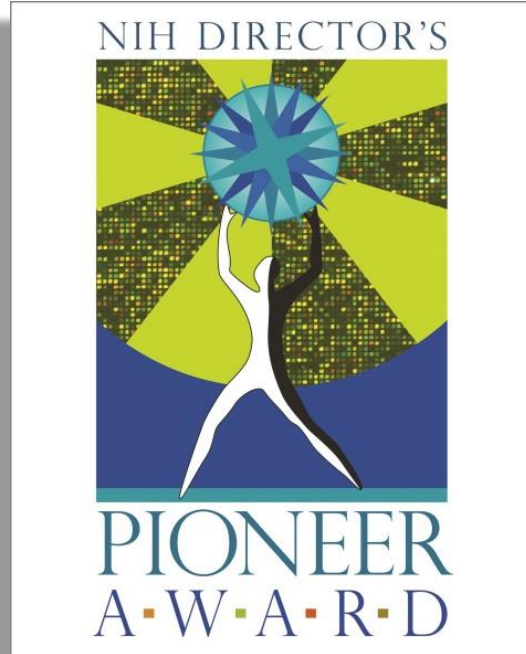
Annual funding opportunities

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



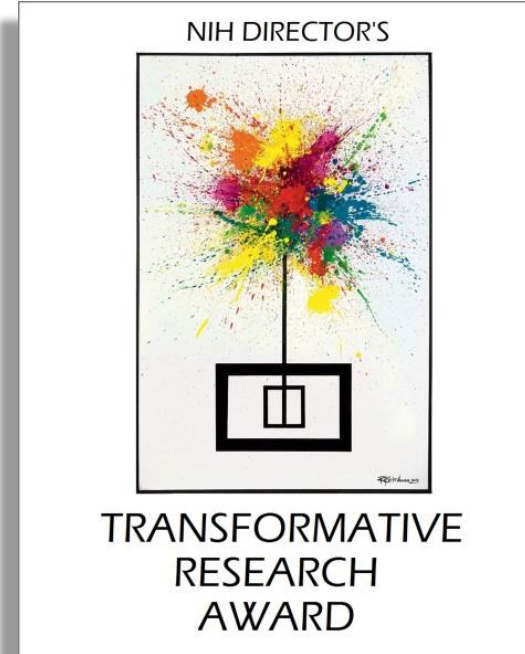
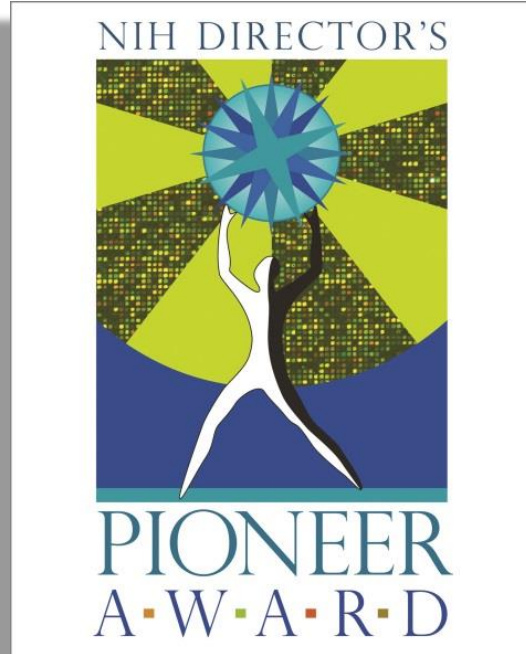
High-risk, high-impact ideas

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



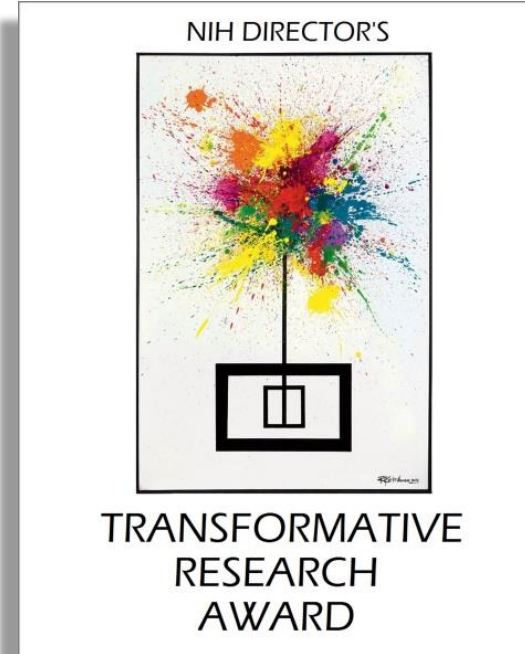
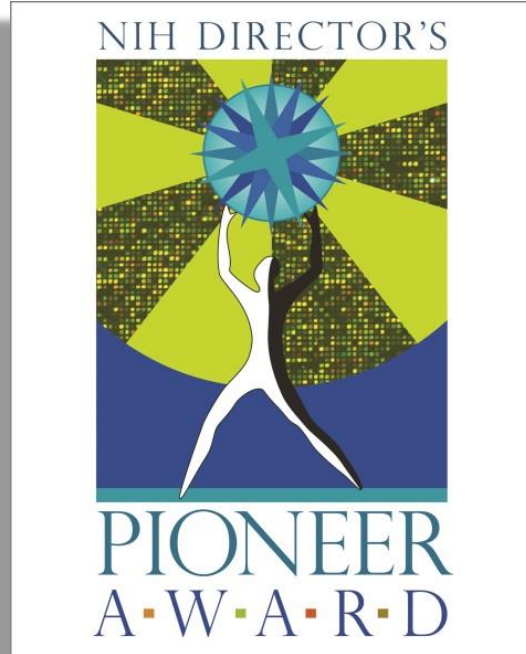
No preliminary data or detailed experimental plan required

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



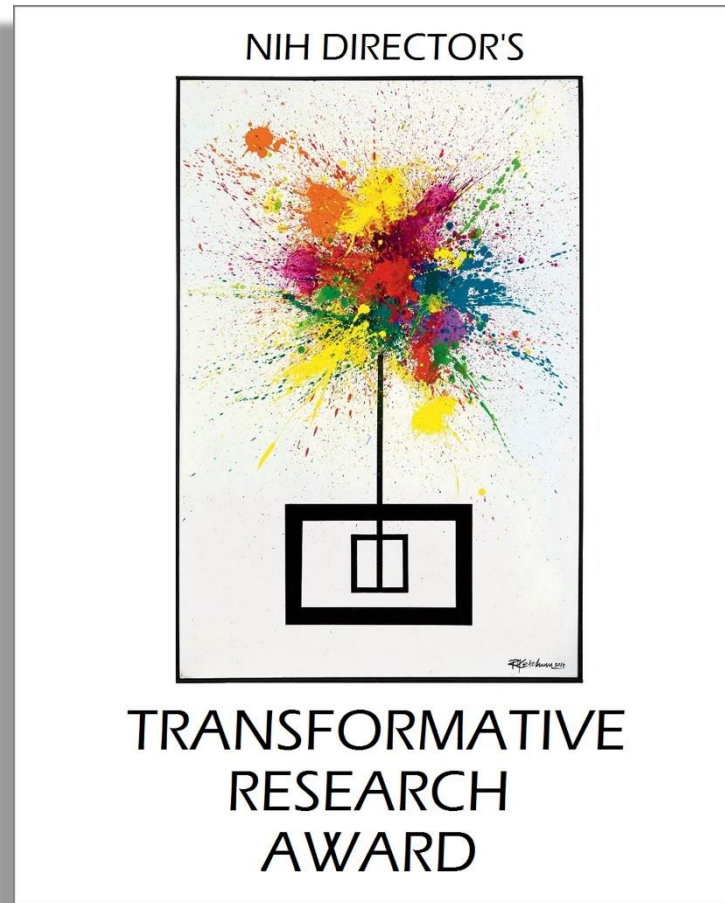
Any topic relevant to NIH mission welcome
Behavioral, social, biomedical, applied, and formal sciences,
and basic, translational, or clinical research

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



Encourage applications from full spectrum of eligible institutions

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



Supports exceptionally innovative or unconventional research projects with the potential to create or overturn fundamental paradigms

- Started in 2009
- Open to individuals or teams at all career stages
- No preliminary data required
- Flexible budgets
- Cannot be renewed

R01 Application (but used in unconventional way)

Specific Aims page

- Not used to list specific objectives of project as in standard R01 application
- Instead, used as a one-page distillation of project and why it is well-aligned with the spirit of the TRA initiative
- Two sections:
 - Significance, Innovation, Impact
 - Insight and rationale

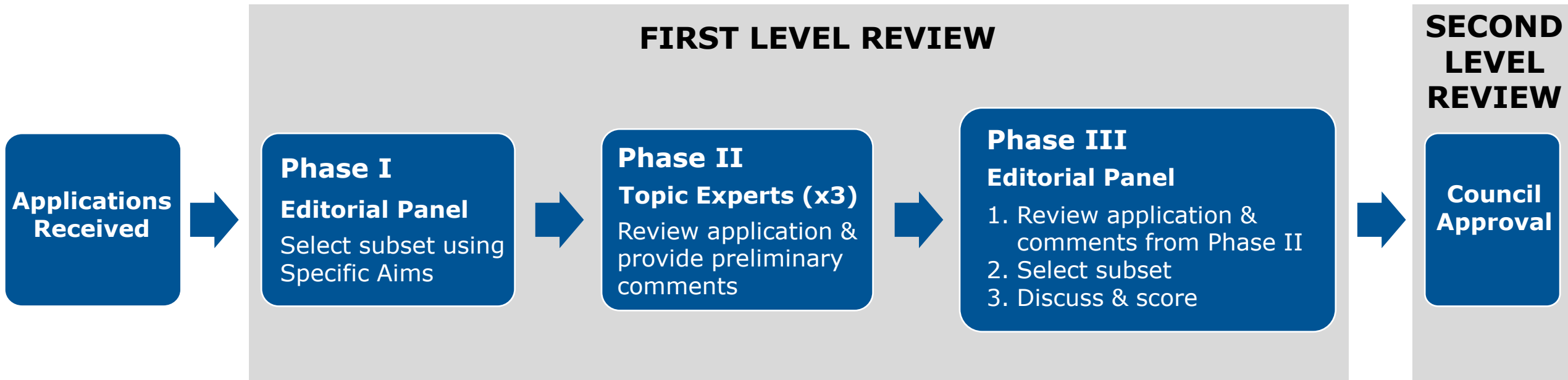
Research Strategy section

- Not used as in standard R01 application with substantial preliminary data and experimental details
- Instead, used to address items of programmatic importance to TRA
- Five sections:
 - Overview of research project (set context for project)
 - Approach (describe underlying logic and will ensure robustness and rigor)
 - Innovation (explain why exceptionally innovative)
 - Appropriateness for TRA (explain why HRHR and not traditional R01)
 - Timeline (including critical decision points)

Research Strategy Considerations

- Given that not all reviewers will be topic experts, be sure that what you write can be easily appreciated by people well outside the field for exceptional innovation and potential for unusually broad impact
- Begin with a description of the landscape of the field and current state-of-the-art or boundaries; provide proper context for proposal and why it is so innovative and potentially impactful
- Ease the reader into the jargon of the field
- Though no detailed experimental plan is required, make clear what it is that you want to do
- Convince the reviewers you have thought deeply about the project – identify risky aspects, how they will be mitigated, alternate approaches
- Also, convince the reviewers that the research will be performed in a robust and rigorous manner – validate new approaches, provide estimates of numbers of human or animal subjects (if used) and why, include that sex will be considered as a biological variable (if appropriate)

Transformative Research Review Process



Phase I: Editorial Panel Review

Phase I

Editorial Panel

Select subset using
Specific Aims

- **Applications Due: Sept 3, 2026**
- **Phase I Review: Sept to Nov 2026**

- The editorial board review panel is composed of 16-20 senior scientists with collective expertise spanning from diverse scientific areas that broadly cover the NIH research portfolio
- Each application is reviewed by 4 editors
- Each editor reviews the Specific Aims page of 40-50 applications and bins them based on potential transformative impact
- Top scoring subset of applications plus “rescues” are advanced to Phase II

Phase II: Topic Expert Review

Phase II

Topic Experts (x3)

Review application & provide preliminary comments

- **Dec 2026-Feb 2027**
- **70-80 applications**
- The top (70-80) applications selected from Phase I are reviewed by “mail” reviewers who are topic experts in the area of science of application
- Each application is reviewed by 3 topic experts
- The “mail” reviewers provide written comments addressing significance and transformative impact, the level of innovation, and the logic of approach

Phase III: Editorial Panel Review

Phase III

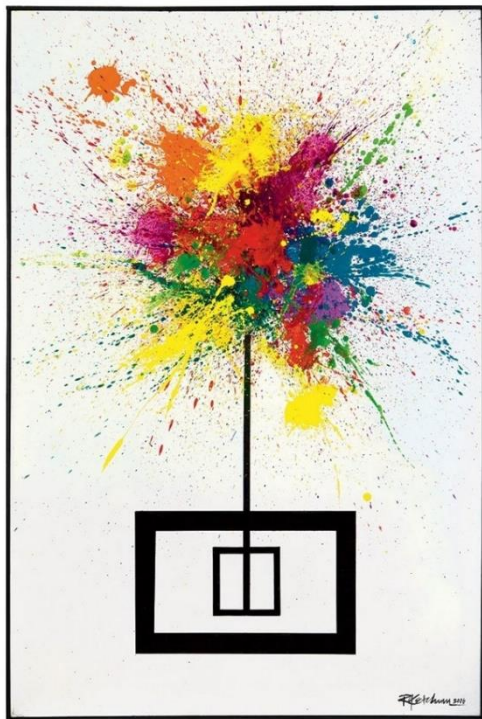
Editorial Panel

1. Review application & comments from Phase II
2. Select subset
3. Discuss & score

- **Application Selection: Feb to Mar 2027**
- **Review Meeting: Mar 2027**

- Each panel member assigned 15-20 applications to review with access to Phase II (topic expert) preliminary scores and comments
- Panel selects ~50% of Phase II applications to discuss
- Panel discusses subset and scores

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National Institutes of Health
Office of Strategic Coordination–The Common Fund

Webinar recording & slides
will be posted on website