

## Congressional and Federal Agency Responses and Opportunities Regarding the COVID-19 Outbreak

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**Introduction**

Today’s edition of Lewis-Burke’s update on federal guidance and opportunities related to the COVID-19 outbreak notes the progress being made on a third stimulus package as well as updates on federal agency guidance and funding opportunities. Lewis-Burke will continue to update this document regularly as new guidance and opportunities are released.

**Congressional Update**

**NEW: Congress Nears Vote on Massive Third Aid Package**

It is likely that the Senate will vote today, and the House take up, the Congressional deal for a third emergency supplemental, H. R. 748, the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security*, or the “CARES Act,” which would support \$2.3 trillion in federal spending to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Negotiators agreed on this deal between Senate, House, and White House leadership after considering various proposals from Senate Republicans and House Democrats. Much of the bill is focused on supporting unemployment insurance, increased aid for hospitals, grants for small businesses, emergency education funding, disaster relief funds, and loan funds for corporations, among many other provisions. Democrats have highlighted the bill’s efforts to support investments in personal protective equipment for health care workers, construction of facilities for patients, medical research into COVID-19, and Medicare payment increases for hospitals. Republicans have highlighted the emergency supplemental funding for state and local governments. Both sides agree that this third supplement package, is likely not the last word Congress will have on addressing this public health crisis.

While the majority of the spending will go to support unemployment insurance and support for industry, an estimated \$340 billion is expected to go to support federal funding agencies. This funding for research, education, and health care delivery is accompanied by significant tax relief, employee benefits, higher education regulatory relief, and health care policy provisions. Lewis-Burke will provide a forthcoming analysis of the CARES Act in addition to providing updates as opportunities and guidance supported by the bill are issued by federal agencies.

## **Federal Guidance Related to Research and Higher Education**

### **Office of Management and Budget (OMB)**

- On March 19, OMB released guidance to Executive branch agencies to extend flexibilities in federally sponsored research to all grantees impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These flexibilities include extension of deadlines, no cost-extensions, allowability of salaries, covering costs caused by cancellations, etc. The full memo can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-20-17.pdf>.
- On March 9, OMB issued guidance to all Executive branch agencies to grant new flexibilities for research related to emergency COVID-19 response for such things as notices of funding opportunities, no cost-extensions, expenditure of award funds, etc. The use of new flexibilities will be determined by the awarding agencies. The OMB memo is at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-20-11.pdf>.

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

- **NEW:** ED has announced that the garnishment of wages, tax refunds, and Social Security benefits of people who are in default on their federal student loans will be paused. A memo has been sent to federal student loan servicers calling for a pause in collections until further notice and makes the policy retroactive to March 13. This retroactive application will likely result in approximately \$1.8 billion being refunded to borrowers. More information is available at <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-directs-fsa-stop-wage-garnishment-collections-actions-student-loan-borrowers-will-refund-more-18-billion-students-families>
- On March 20, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced that all federal student loan borrowers with federally held student loans will automatically have their interest rates set to 0% for a period of at least 60 days. In addition, each of these borrowers will have the option to suspend their payments for at least two months to allow greater flexibility during the national emergency. Student loan servicers have also been directed to grant an administrative forbearance to any borrower with a federally held loan who requests one. The forbearance will be in effect for a period of at least 60 days, beginning on March 13, 2020. For borrowers continuing to make payments, the full amount of their payment will be applied to the principal amount of their loan once all interest accrued prior to March 13 is paid. A press release with the announcement is available at <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/delivering-president-trumps-promise-secretary-devos-suspends-federal-student-loan-payments-waives-interest-during-national-emergency>.
- On March 20, ED issued a “COVID-19 FAQs” document to accompany the March 5 guidance offering Title IV flexibility. The FAQ document is downloadable at <http://ifap.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/2020-03/COVID-19FAQs.docx>.
- On March 16, Federal Student Aid (FSA) released guidance on how an institution can request a waiver of the community service expenditure requirements under the FWS Program for the 2020–21 Award Year. <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/031620FWSProgCommWaiverRequest202021>.
- On March 17, ED released additional information for accreditors offering regulatory flexibilities during COVID-19 outbreak, including allowing virtual site visits and extensions on accreditation. The guidance document is at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/20-007covid19accreditorsfromomb317s.pdf>.

- On March 17, the ED released a webinar and a fact sheet for protecting students' civil rights during COVID-19 response. They are both available at <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-webinar-fact-sheet-protecting-students-civil-rights-during-covid-19-response>.
- The Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has released a video on ensuring web accessibility for students with disabilities for schools using online learning. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCMLk4cES6A&feature=youtu.be>.
- On March 12, ED released a FAQ document to assist schools navigating Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and student data privacy requirements as it relates to COVID-19 and possible disclosure of information. Details are available at [https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource\\_document/file/FERPA%20and%20Coronavirus%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions\\_0.pdf](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/FERPA%20and%20Coronavirus%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions_0.pdf).
- On March 5, ED posted guidance for institutions of higher education related to interruptions of study, outlining increased flexibility for Title IV aid programs. This includes offering broad approval to move students into distance learning without regular approval and waiving accreditor review requirements. There are some limitations on clock-hour required licensure programs. Guidance is viewable at <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/030520Guidance4interruptionsrelated2CoronavirusCOVID19>.
- The White House Office of Science and Technology launched an online learning resource, [TechforLearners.org](http://TechforLearners.org), which will serve as a searchable online database of education technology tools that facilitate online classrooms and teaching.
- ED has a COVID-19 website of resources at <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>.
- ED's Office of Federal Student Aid's website with information for students, borrowers, and parents is available at <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>.

### National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- NIH announced on March 20 that all non-mission-critical operations in its intramural research laboratories would be shifted to a maintenance phase. Mission-critical functions that will continue to be supported include "care of research participants in NIH clinical protocols that are non-elective, research directly on COVID-19, urgent public health research recommended by NIH scientific leadership, work involving significant research investments that could be lost if not continued, and protection of life, property and resources, including the care of research animals." The agency has not yet issued guidance for extramural grantees working on mission-critical research, or for grantees who collaborate with intramural researchers on non-mission-critical operations. The announcement from NIH is available at <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-shifts-non-mission-critical-laboratory-operations-minimal-maintenance-phase>.
- For researchers interested in managing animal care during the COVID-19 crisis, the NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare held a webinar on March 19 on "Pandemic Contingency Planning and Its Impact on Animal Care." The archived webcast and additional resources are available at <https://olaw.nih.gov/education/educational-resources/webinar-2020-03-19.htm>.
- NIH has released a General FAQ on Proposal Submission and Award Management Related to COVID-19 which is available at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-083.html>.

- This is a resource for anyone concerned about COVID-19 impacts on research, travel, field work, and more. It provides answers to any questions a grant recipient may have regarding travel, conferences, and continuity of research.
- NIH has created a central site for its current guidance – including newly updated guidance on late applications, flexibilities for applicants and recipients, and clinical trials - which can be found at [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural\\_disasters/corona-virus.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural_disasters/corona-virus.htm). NIH leadership is emphasizing flexibility at this point and has indicated they will be sending regular updates to the research community through the NIH Extramural Nexus newsletter.

### Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

- CMS has released a recommendation that all adult elective surgeries, non-essential surgeries, and non-essential medical and dental procedures be delayed, in order to free up medical equipment, supplies, and personnel: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-releases-recommendations-adult-elective-surgeries-non-essential-medical-surgical-and-dental>.
- CMS released more information on the expansion of telehealth benefits during the COVID-19 outbreak. CMS is expanding this on a temporary and emergency basis under the 1135 waiver. A list of FAQs can be viewed here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-telehealth-frequently-asked-questions-faqs-31720.pdf> and a list of covered services is linked here: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/Telehealth/Telehealth-Codes>.
- CMS also released a fact sheet on these new telemedicine changes for providers here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/medicare-telemedicine-health-care-provider-fact-sheet>. Clinicians can bill for dates of service beginning on March 6, 2020.
- CMS released guidance regarding blanket waivers for hospitals and healthcare facilities and COVID-19. This includes that “CMS will temporarily waive or modify certain Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP requirements. CMS will also issue several blanket waivers, listed on the website below, and the CMS Regional Offices will review other provider-specific requests.” More information on the CMS waivers is available at <http://www.cms.gov/emergency>.

### Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

- The FDA issued guidance aimed at expanding the availability of ventilators, anesthesia gas machines, and other respiratory devices by increasing flexibility for manufacturers to source parts and materials from alternate suppliers or otherwise make changes to increase the manufacturing and supply of devices. The guidance also allows healthcare facilities to modify the FDA-cleared indications, claims, or functionality of respiratory devices and use these devices beyond indicated shelf life and duration of use. Additional information, including examples where this guidance would apply, is available at <https://www.fda.gov/media/136318/download>.
- The FDA released a guidance which calls for clinical trials to move to alternative methods of participant contact wherever possible including virtual visits, and alternative locations for assessment. If novel coronavirus (COVID-19) testing is required for participants by local health authorities, it does not need to be reported as an amendment to the protocol unless it is being incorporated as part of a new research objective. Generally, FDA recommends that all sponsors and investigators reach out to their Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and or Independent Ethics Committees (IECs) to determine if there are any necessary changes to clinical trial protocols. The guidance is available at <https://www.fda.gov/media/136238/download>.
- The FDA released guidance for industry, investigators, and institutional review boards on the conduct of clinical trials of medical products during the COVID-19 pandemic:

<https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/fda-guidance-conduct-clinical-trials-medical-products-during-covid-19-pandemic>

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

- CDC has posted interim guidance for administrators of US Institutions of Higher Education at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html>.
- CDC has posted resources for institutions of higher education at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html>.
- CDC has posted interim guidance for mass gatherings and large community events at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>.
  - The CDC recommends organizers cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more for the next 8 weeks.
- CDC has posted guidance related to international travel and study abroad at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/student-foreign-travel.html>.
- CDC has posted Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease in Healthcare Settings at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>.
- CDC has posted guidance on mental health and coping during COVID-19 at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>.
- CDC has posted interim guidance for community-and faith-based organizations at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>.

### National Science Foundation (NSF)

- On March 23, NSF Director France Córdova released a letter to the NSF community regarding COVID-19 stating that NSF is “committed to providing the greatest available flexibilities to support your health and safety as well as your work.” The letter is available at [https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/issuances/in146.jsp?WT.mc\\_id=USNSF\\_80](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/issuances/in146.jsp?WT.mc_id=USNSF_80).
- On March 23, NSF announced additional guidance responding to the March 19 OMB memo for researchers, available at [https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/covid19/covid19\\_nsfombimplementation.pdf](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/covid19/covid19_nsfombimplementation.pdf).
- NSF is regularly updating their coronavirus website with FAQs. It is available at [https://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/coronavirus/](https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/coronavirus/).
- NSF’s interim guidance on travel, panel reviews, meetings related to COVID-19 is available at [https://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/coronavirus/External\\_info\\_w.pdf](https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/coronavirus/External_info_w.pdf).

### Department of Energy (DOE)

- DOE’s guidance for grantees and grant applicants is available at <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/03/f72/doe-sc-accommodating-interruptions-to-applicants-awardees-due-to-covid-19.pdf>.
- DOE’s COVID-19 website is at <https://www.energy.gov/coronavirus-hub>.
- Regarding DOE grants and deadlines for funding opportunity announcements, DOE has started to extend deadlines for funding opportunities open to research universities. Extensions are still

on a case by case basis, and we recommend that researchers contact the lead program manager assigned to the funding opportunity for up to date information on due dates.

- The DOE Early Career Research Program call, which was due on March 16, has been extended to March 30.
- The High-Energy-Density Laboratory Plasma Science funding call, which was due on March 16, was extended until April 6.
- A podcast interview with Office of Science Director Chris Fall on the national lab's response to COVID-19 is available at <https://www.energy.gov/podcasts/direct-current-energygov-podcast/national-labs-respond-covid-19#podcast-item-transcript>.
- Information on DOE's resources supporting coronavirus research is available at <https://science.osti.gov/DOE-Resources-Supporting-Coronavirus-Research>.

### Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

- Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has an updated FAQ on the impact of COVID-19 on SEVP-certified schools and F and M students. That FAQ is available at <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2020/COVID-19FAQ.pdf>. Regularly updated guidance is available at <https://www.ice.gov/covid19>.
- International students on F or M visas technically have restrictions on the number of courses they can take remotely/via distance education. DHS, through Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), issued flexibility guidance on March 9 for how to handle procedural adaptations for F and M nonimmigrant students. Schools must provide SEVP notice of the operational and procedural changes within 10 business days of the date of the decision. The guidance note is at <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/bcm2003-01.pdf>.
- Also, in the international arena, on March 11, the President announced a proclamation of suspension of immigration that broadens this policy to the European Schengen Area, comprised of 26 European states. The proclamation is viewable at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-suspension-entry-immigrants-nonimmigrants-certain-additional-persons-pose-risk-transmitting-2019-novel-coronavirus/>.
- Previously, the White House announced travel restrictions for those traveling from China at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/02/05/2020-02424/suspension-of-entry-as-immigrants-and-nonimmigrants-of-persons-who-pose-a-risk-of-transmitting-2019> and from Iran at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/03/04/2020-04595/suspension-of-entry-as-immigrants-and-nonimmigrants-of-certain-additional-persons-who-pose-a-risk-of->

### Department of Defense (DOD)

- DOD Office of Basic Research released a FAQ resource for DOD research proposers and awardees in response to OMB's March 19 memo M-20-17. The FAQ states that DOD will allow grantees to "delay submission of financial, performance and other reports on currently-active award accounts up to three months beyond the normal due date." Questions regarding other deliverables should be directed to the grants manager or program officer for an award. Additional information on travel expenses, salaries and benefits, no-cost extensions, and upcoming deadlines can be found in the FAQ at <https://basicresearch.defense.gov/COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions/>.
- DOD's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) released a FAQ resource for grant applicants and recipients. The FAQ states that there are currently no plans to modify

existing application deadlines but encourages grant applicants to monitor grants.gov for any changes in due dates. The FAQ can be found at <https://cdmrp.army.mil/about/covid-19/default>.

- Shortly following the announcement of the death of a DOD contractor in northern Virginia Saturday of complications from COVID-19, Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced March 23 the Pentagon was raising its status to Health Protection Condition C, which limits the number of access points to the Pentagon and increases the amount of personnel who will telework, and that the Department would evaluate ways to make additional medical facilities and resources available for COVID-19 treatment. Secretary Esper's press briefing can be viewed at <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2122022/esper-briefs-reporters-on-dods-covid-19-response/>.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Director of Contracting released a memo to prospective contractors on March 20 providing guidance on doing business with USACE in COVID-19 response, including small business and subcontracting opportunities. The memo can be found at [https://beta.sam.gov/opp/ff5f7b4834a546a3b18717882caed068/view?keywords=covid&sort=modifiedDate&index=opp&is\\_active=true&page=1&organization\\_id=100000000](https://beta.sam.gov/opp/ff5f7b4834a546a3b18717882caed068/view?keywords=covid&sort=modifiedDate&index=opp&is_active=true&page=1&organization_id=100000000).
- The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) released on March 19 a FAQ resource for DARPA performers about COVID-19. The FAQ document confirms that DARPA will continue to evaluate proposals (whether already submitted or not yet submitted) at this time. The DARPA FAQ page can be found at <https://www.darpa.mil/news-events/2020-03-19>.
  - DARPA's FAQs encourages performers with research project ideas related to COVID-19 to respond to the Office-wide broad agency announcements (BAAs) for both the Defense Sciences Office (DSO) and Biological Technology Office (BTO), which both have open BAAs that can receive submissions at any time. The DSO and BTO Office-wide BAAs can be found at <https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/office-wide-broad-agency-announcements>.
- The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (OUSD(A&S)) released a memo that encourages contracting officers to engage with government program managers to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the welfare and safety of the defense workforce and on contract performance. The memo also includes a link to DOD's Emergency Preparedness Guidance that can be found at <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/OD/EmergencyPreparedness>. The memo can be found at [here](#) or on beta.sam.gov under Notice ID "COVID-19-LRE."
- Ellen Lord, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)), announced on March 17 that the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA), Aerospace Industries Association, Professional Services Council, the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders will form a daily panel to discuss COVID-19 issues with DOD. The goal of the daily panel is "to ensure the security, reliability and resilience of our defense industrial base and our collective effort to execute the National Defense Strategy." The press release on the newly formed panel can be found at <https://www.ndia.org/about/media/press-releases/2020/3/17/panel>.
- The Office of Naval Research (ONR) has clarified its policy for administrative relief on ONR awards as a result of university or non-profit actions taken in response to COVID-19. At this time, ONR is utilizing OMB M-20-11 guidance for assistance awards (i.e. grants) directly supporting continued research or services necessary to carry out the emergency response related to COVID-19. Additionally, ONR is using a "limited statement" from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, Basic Research Office for grantees whose work does not fit the parameters of M-20-11, which is only applicable to awards that

support the continued research and services necessary to carry out the emergency response related to COVID-19 during the period formally declared public health emergency. For grants outside those parameters, ONR will continue following current protocols for modifying awards as requested and warranted and will apply the following guidance:

- “Expenditure of award funds for salaries: DoD may only allow grantees to charge salaries and benefits to currently active awards for any work that is performed to meet the project activities, regardless of location where those duties are performed (i.e. telework eligible). Some approved activities may include data analysis, preparation of articles and papers based on the analysis of the research findings, monitoring sub-recipients, direct charged administrative costs. Applicable indirect costs may be charged to all allowed costs.
- Travel - Grantees will follow their organization's travel policy regarding any restrictions for approved travel. Further, DOD offices are encouraged to use alternative ways, such as VTC, to allow participation in any mandatory meetings sponsored by the DoD. “
- The DOD coronavirus response website is available at <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>.

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

- **NEW:** The Wage and Hour Division of DOL has published guidance, fact sheets, and a Q&A document for employers and employees on implementation of the new COVID-19 paid leave requirements at <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/whd/whd20200324>.
- DOL, along with Department of Treasury, posted an initial notice on the implementation of the payroll tax credit related to new COVID-19 paid leave, as included in the recently passed, *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*. Details at <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osec/osec20200320>.
- On March 12, DOL announced flexibility for states to allow unemployment insurance (UI) benefits to be used in cases “where: (1) An employer temporarily ceases operations due to COVID-19, preventing employees from coming to work; (2) An individual is quarantined with the expectation of returning to work after the quarantine is over; and (3) An individual leaves employment due to a risk of exposure or infection or to care for a family member. In addition, federal law does not require an employee to quit in order to receive benefits due to the impact of COVID-19.” Details are available at <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20200312-0>.
- DOL’s Wage and Hour division has released Q&A documents for employers related to COVID-19 and Fair Labor Standards Act and job-protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>.

### **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**

- With the Senate and House passage of [S. 3503](#), legislation to ensure the continuation of GI Bill benefits use as institutions convert veterans to fully online programming, the VA has announced to School Certifying Officials the agency will continue to make benefit payments with online conversions and students will continue to receive the same monthly housing allowance payments through January 2021 or until the school resumes normal in-person operations. The VA will be hosting upcoming webinars and posting additional information at <https://www.va.gov/school-administrators/>

## National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

- On March 20, NASA's Associate Administrator for the Science Mission Directorate Thomas Zurbuchen held a virtual town hall for SMD's stakeholders in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Points of interest have been summarized below and a recording of the event with slides can be found at <https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/virtual-townhall-2020>.
- Dr. Zurbuchen noted that NASA field centers and headquarter's operating status are operating either completely via telework or have very limited in-person staffing.
- Work on missions currently in development (Phases A, B, and C) can largely be executed remotely. Missions undergoing testing and integration are likely to experience greater repercussions. In the latter group, NASA will continue work to the extent practicable using smaller teams. Dr. Zurbuchen noted this will impact the James Webb Space Telescope, but that NASA remains committed to launching the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover this summer as scheduled.
- Funding for individual investigator awards will be impacted. NASA is making modifications to ROSES 2020 program elements and will announce future modifications on NSPRIES. At this point, SMD has determined the following opportunities will be affected:
  - Step-1 due dates for the "Emerging Worlds", "Solar System Observations", and "Yearly Opportunities for Research in Planetary Defense" program elements will be postponed.
  - Step-2 due dates for the "Applied Information Systems Research" and "Interdisciplinary Consortia for Astrobiology Research" program elements have been sifted to April 17, 2020.
- NASA is taking steps to provide clarity for future opportunities and current awardees. Dr. Zurbuchen stated that SMD:
  - May change all Step-1 deadlines in the next 30 days to mandatory Notices of Intent.
  - Will no-cost extend or re-phase existing awards on a case-by-case basis.
  - Will exercise leniency in enforcing solicitation deadlines with accommodations made on a case-by-case basis.
- Lastly, Dr. Zurbuchen emphasized that SMD and NASA leadership are committed to alleviating burdens on NASA's external community. Faculty are encouraged to continue support for graduate students, post-docs, and laboratory staff through existing awards.

## National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

- NEH's guidance in response to COVID-19 is at <https://www.neh.gov/news/information-neh-and-covid-19>.

## National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

- NEA's FAQ's in response to COVID-19, which has been updated with additional information for grantees, is at <https://www.arts.gov/COVID-19-FAQs>.

## Department of State (DOS)

- The level 4 travel advisory, issued by DOS on March 19<sup>th</sup>, remains in effect. The guidance advises all U.S. citizens to avoid international travel and instructs all Americans abroad to either return to the United States or prepare to shelter in place since many countries have closed borders and/or cancelled or restricted international travel with little advanced notice. More

information is available <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/travel-advisory-alert-global-level-4-health-advisory-issue.html>.

- Travel restrictions due to COVID-19 have resulted in some students on study abroad programs being stranded (along with thousands of other Americans). Some of these stories were recently reported: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/21/world/virus-students-abroad.html>.
- DOS announced that, beginning March 20, U.S. consulates will suspend most routine visa services until further notice. The latest information, by country, is available at <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.
  - Restrictions on consular services are already impacting academic institutions. A recent article focuses on how the temporary hold on J-1 class visas could impact care at U.S. teaching hospitals by delaying the arrival of over 4,200 foreign doctors chosen to do medical residencies in the United States. Additional information can be found at [https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/23/as-coronavirus-spreads-thousands-of-foreign-doctors-could-be-blocked-from-u-s-entry-group-warns/?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=fd314cc27e-MR\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-fd314cc27e-152057261](https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/23/as-coronavirus-spreads-thousands-of-foreign-doctors-could-be-blocked-from-u-s-entry-group-warns/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=fd314cc27e-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-fd314cc27e-152057261).
- The DOS has issued updated guidance for international travelers. American overseas with COVID-19 related emergencies may call DOS personnel for assistance. In addition, the DOS has compiled country-specific information regarding travel restrictions and evacuation plans. For details visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>.
- The DOS has re-issued its guidance for international travelers to register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to get up-to-date safety and security information and assist U.S. State Department personnel to contact citizens during emergencies at <https://step.state.gov/>.
- The State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announced it will temporarily pause all ECA-funded programs. Details at <https://www.state.gov/temporary-pause-of-international-exchange-programs-due-to-covid-19/>.

### Department of Justice (DOJ)

- The Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has announced a 2-week closing date extension on solicitation applications originally scheduled to close between March 16 and March 31, 2020. The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is actively assessing the potential impacts that COVID-19 may have on the FY 2020 grant application process. OJP will continue to monitor the situation to determine if additional adjustments to closing dates are needed. Additional information is available at <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/funding/current> and the OJP Twitter page <https://twitter.com/ojpgov?lang=en>

### Small Business Administration (SBA)

- SBA is providing low-interest disaster recovery loans for businesses and organizations directly impacted by COVID-19. SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance for a small business with long-term repayment plans. States are required to request assistance from SBA for businesses to be eligible for these loans. On March 17, SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza released revised guidance that greatly streamlines this process and allows loan designation for entire states instead of targeted areas. This information is important to

universities that provide consultation to local startups and other small businesses. Some non-profits and private universities are also eligible for some disaster loan programs. The press release on new SBA guidance for Economic Injury Disaster Loans is at <https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-updates-criteria-states-requesting-disaster-assistance-loans-small-businesses-impacted>. Additional information on the loan programs impacted by COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance/coronavirus-covid-19>.

## US Census Bureau

- US Census Bureau guidance on counting college students is available at <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/modifying-2020-operations-for-counting-college-students.html>.

## United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- USDA has released the following updates on its ongoing operations:
  - “Agricultural Research Service (ARS) continues its mission critical work without interruption. We are continuing to support our stakeholders, including action and regulatory agencies. We will begin planning for new research on the impact of COVID-19 on food safety and animals.
  - National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is making every effort to produce and deliver official federal agriculture statistics on schedule. We will evaluate data collection and agency operations for the production of each NASS report as COVID-19 conditions change. If we are able to collect enough data and conditions are such that estimates can be established and released, we will publish reports. If there are changes in the publication schedule, notification will be made by a notice distributed to the news media and posted at [nass.usda.gov](http://nass.usda.gov). We ask farmers and ranchers who have received a survey to please respond online. It’s now more important than ever to respond promptly online so that we can deliver the statistics that agriculture counts on, without having to follow up. The URL is on every questionnaire, [agcounts.usda.gov](http://agcounts.usda.gov). To start, use the survey code on the questionnaire.
  - The Economic Research Service (ERS) is fully prepared to deliver on our regular mission activities and to support Departmental needs for analysis. Nearly 100 percent of staff are telework ready and ERS is operating in a 100 percent cloud computing environment, which facilitates full functionality with remote access.”
- USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced that is extending deadlines for its Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) program (<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/agriculture-and-food-research-initiative-afri>). AFRI issued additional guidance that while other deadlines have not been extended, proposers whose applications would be delayed due to “valid extenuating circumstances” should contact the point of contact listed in the Request for Applications. Deadlines are extended as follows and a full list of deadlines can be found at <https://nifa.usda.gov/afri-deadlines>:
  - Proposals due March 19 will be due April 2
  - Proposals due March 26 will be due April 9
  - Proposals due April 2 will be due April 9
  - Proposals due April 9 will be due April 16

- NIFA released guidance for individuals who may experience delays in the distribution of funds. The guidance is available at <https://nifa.usda.gov/grants>.

## The White House

- The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has released a fact sheet and FAQs about current HR flexibilities available to federal agencies to assist federal employees on issues related to the pandemic. That fact sheet is available here <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/covid-19/fact-sheet-additional-guidance-in-connection-with-the-covid-19-emergency/>.

## Research and Funding Opportunities

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

- **NEW:** The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) issued a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) to highlight the urgent need for research related to the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The NOSI details NCATS research priorities for COVID-19, including “use of informatics solutions to diagnose cases and the use of CTSA-supported core resources to facilitate research on COVID-19 and advance the translation of research findings into diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines.” NCATS is calling for applications for Administrative Supplements, Collaborative Innovation Awards, and Competitive Revisions under this NOSI. Full details, including more information on research topics and award mechanisms, is available in the NOSI: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-TR-20-011.html>.
- **NEW:** The National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) issued a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) to address the urgent need for research on the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19). NIGMS is soliciting competitive revisions that address three specific research priorities: “incorporation of data related to SARS-CoV-2 into ongoing research efforts to develop predictive models for the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and other related infectious agents; repurposing or modification of diagnostic tools currently under development to enable rapid detection of SARS-CoV-2 infection (SBIR/STTR grants only); rapid development of potential therapeutic agents for COVID-19 (SBIR/STTR only).” Investigators interested in submitting proposals in response to this NOSI are strongly encouraged to contact relevant NIGMS staff prior to submission. Full details are available in the NOSI: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-GM-20-025.html> and on the NIGMS blog: <https://loop.nigms.nih.gov/2020/03/urgent-competitive-revisions-to-nigms-grants-to-address-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>.
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) issued a Notice of Special interest (NOSI) “to highlight the urgent need for research on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV, also known as COVID-19) specifically related to collecting and examining data on the risks and outcomes for COVID-19 infection in individuals suffering from substance use disorders.” Due to COVID-19’s attack on the lungs this virus could be a serious threat to those with a history of smoking, vaping, and other substance use like opioids or methamphetamines. Topics of specific interest to NIDA include but are not limited to respiratory effects of SARS-CoV2 infection among individuals with SUD, research to determine whether substance abuse is a risk factor for the onset and progression of COVID-19, and research to evaluate drug-drug interaction of medication to treat SARS-CoV-2 and substances of abuse or medications to treat SUDs.

Investigators can apply for both Administrative Supplements and Urgent Competitive Revisions through this NOSI. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-DA-20-047.html>

- The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) issued a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) “to highlight the urgent need for research on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and on biological effects of its causative agent, the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Topics of specific interest to NHLBI include host response, associations with heart, lung, and blood (HLB) diseases, potential impacts on transfusion safety, and clinical outcomes of infected individuals.” Investigators can apply for both Administrative Supplements and Urgent Competitive Revisions through this NOSI. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-HL-20-757.html>
- The emergency funding package signed into law on March 6 included \$826 million for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), intended to be used primarily for vaccine research and development. NIAID is currently using two mechanisms to award funding to investigators for work within this scope: non-competitive administrative supplements and, for the first time, competitive Urgent Awards. More information about these two opportunities, as well as a list of NIAID’s research priorities related to COVID-19, can be found at [https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/response-covid-2019-outbreak?utm\\_campaign=+41725024&utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/response-covid-2019-outbreak?utm_campaign=+41725024&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=).
- Elsewhere at NIH, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) received \$10 million in funding in the emergency supplemental package, but no details are available yet on how this funding will be awarded. We also anticipate that, in the coming weeks and months, additional Institutes and Centers will be issuing opportunities for administrative supplements for research on COVID-19 that is related to their underlying programmatic priorities. We will share such information as we get it.

### Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

- CDC will award approximately \$560 million to states, localities, territories, and tribes using “existing networks to reach out to state and local jurisdictions to access this initial funding.” A breakdown of funds funneled to states and jurisdictions can be viewed here: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/03/11/cdc-funding-information.html>.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Infectious Diseases Rapid Response Fund received \$300 million in the COVID-19 emergency supplemental package. This fund was created in FY 2019 and had roughly \$100 million in reserve funding prior to the emergency supplemental. This funding can be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to an infectious disease emergency, domestic or international. Money from this fund has previously been used to respond to an Ebola outbreak in the Congo.

### National Science Foundation (NSF)

- NSF’s Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure (OAC) released a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) on March 5 inviting supplemental funding requests and RAPID proposals for research utilizing data or software approaches to research on COVID-19 related challenges. NSF is also accepting proposals for use of NSF advanced cyberinfrastructure to conduct COVID-19 related research. More information is available <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20055/nsf20055.jsp>.

- NSF released a Dear Colleague Letter on March 4 for proposals “to conduct non-medical, non-clinical-care research that can be used immediately to explore how to model and understand the spread of COVID-19, to inform and educate about the science of virus transmission and prevention, and to encourage the development of processes and actions to address this global challenge.” The solicitation invites researchers to submit proposals through the Rapid Response Research (RAPID) funding mechanism. The Dear Colleague Letter is available at <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20052/nsf20052.pdf>.

### Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)/Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA)

- Federal agency partners in the Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasure Enterprise (PHEMCE) are leveraging the existing Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) TechWatch program to engage with industry, academia, and other stakeholders to accelerate technologies related to the novel coronavirus. Traditionally, TechWatch is a virtual meeting with BARDA scientific, technical, and contracting staff, as well as representatives from other interested federal agencies. For CoronaWatch, representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Agriculture, among others, will be contacted to participate as relevant and needed. There are specific submission options for therapeutics, vaccines, diagnostics, and other products through CoronaWatch. Additional information on CoronaWatch, as well as submission instructions, are available at: <https://www.medicalcountermeasures.gov/Request-BARDA-TechWatch-Meeting/>.
- The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released an Easy Broad Agency Announcement (EZ-BAA) on February 5 seeking proposals for the development of novel COVID-19 diagnostics. The solicitation notes that “the diagnostics must utilize platforms already cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, with a viable plan to meet requirements for the FDA to consider Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) within 12 weeks of an award.” The solicitation is available at <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/02/05/hhs-seeks-abstract-submissions-for-2019-ncov-diagnostics-development.html> and the most recent version of the BAA, updated on March 9, is available at <https://beta.sam.gov/opp/1b46a4169fcb4902b9c4fcb5bf981f7/view>.

### Update: Department of Defense (DOD)

- **NEW:** The Air Force released a Request for Industry Information for COVID-19. The Request for Industry Information page “acts as the entry point for anyone wishing to provide information on ways to help.” COVID-19 solution focus areas include but are not limited to combating the spread, welfare of citizens, readiness, logistics, industrial base impacts, and medical. This page can be accessed at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SM8W-QiqOgZgWdCg036hgom7M9PhKlI0R1FGgwCG-aY/viewform?edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SM8W-QiqOgZgWdCg036hgom7M9PhKlI0R1FGgwCG-aY/viewform?edit_requested=true). Additionally, the Air Force will be hosting multiple webinars to provide more information. Webinars can be accessed at <https://zoom.us/j/462017807> or US: +1 669 900 6833 Webinar ID: 462 017 807 and will be held at the following times:
  - Thursday, March 26, 1 PM ET
  - Tuesday March 31, 1PM ET
  - Thursday April 2, 1PM ET

Tuesday April 7, 1PM ET

Thursday April 9, 1PM ET

- The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Troop Support Clothing and Textiles Directorate released a request for information (RFI) on March 20 to “determine industry capabilities for providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) against viral contamination, specifically COVID-19.” DLA’s RFI aims to identify potential sources and/or products that can be ready in the near term and protect against viral contamination, including but not limited to protective coveralls, aprons/gowns, hoods, masks, booties, gloves, boots. Responses are due **March 24, 2020 by 5:00pm ET (Note: “DLA will accept any and all responses received after this date and time for any ongoing requirements.”)** The RFI can be found [here](#) or on beta.sam.gov under Notice ID “SPE1C1-20-R-COVID19.”
- Lewis-Burke has learned that In-Q-Tel is interested in innovative technology ideas for COVID-19. In-Q-Tel is a not-for-profit investment entity that supports the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies across the defense and intelligence communities in accelerating the development of cutting edge “ready-soon” technologies. Specific technologies sought in support of COVID-19 include:
  - Point of care diagnostics
  - Swabs for sample collection
  - Serological diagnostics
  - Digital self-triage capabilities for telehealth

Lewis-Burke can help facilitate connections with In-Q-Tel to discuss COVID-19 related technology innovations. More information on In-Q-Tel is available <https://www.iqt.org/>.

- The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA(ALT)) announced the fifth cohort of the Army Expeditionary Technology Search (xTechSearch 5) competition. Executed under the America Competes Act, xTechSearch is a nationwide competition for small businesses and startups, including university-based spin-offs, to develop new technologies to “uncover novel dual-use science and technology solutions.” The Army’s comprehensive list of focus areas can be found at <https://www.arl.army.mil/xtechsearch/xTechSearch-Focus-Areas.pdf>. According to recent reporting, a number of the xTechSearch 4 Semifinalists have presented pitches for emerging biotechnologies and medical innovations to address the coronavirus (COVID-19). Additional details are available at [https://breakingdefense.com/2020/03/covid-19-biotech-innovators-pitch-army-rapid-test-kits-more/?utm\\_campaign=Breaking%20News&utm\\_medium=email&hsmi=84958319&hsenc=p2ANqtz-90AwbifruJYyZuZ6QnEfTkM91a9ntGkyKftnxE4hLeStd06L\\_xi7uul\\_nb\\_x9bOOntdMK&utm\\_content=84958319&utm\\_source=hs\\_email](https://breakingdefense.com/2020/03/covid-19-biotech-innovators-pitch-army-rapid-test-kits-more/?utm_campaign=Breaking%20News&utm_medium=email&hsmi=84958319&hsenc=p2ANqtz-90AwbifruJYyZuZ6QnEfTkM91a9ntGkyKftnxE4hLeStd06L_xi7uul_nb_x9bOOntdMK&utm_content=84958319&utm_source=hs_email). Examples include diagnostic capability amplification and revolutionary wound treatments for the warfighter. These pitches and their success in the competition reflect the Army’s strong interest in medical technologies addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and indicate that these technologies will be of interest in the xTechSearch5 competition.
  - The xTechSearch competition has four phases, with Application Part I (Concept White Paper) submissions due **March 31, 2020**. White papers that are selected will receive a \$5,000 prize and additional monetary prizes will be awarded to select companies as they advance in the competition. Subsequent competition phases include Application Part II (Technology Pitches), the Semifinals, and the Finals.

- Finalists will present their technology solutions and transition plans at the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Global Force Symposium and Exposition March 2021, in Huntsville AL. It is expected that the grand prize winner will be selected in March 2021 and will be awarded a \$250,000 prize. All other finalists will receive a \$10,000 prize. More information on xTechSearch, including competition timelines and rules, can be found at <https://www.arl.army.mil/xtechsearch/about.html>.
- As mentioned above, DARPA's FAQs encourages performers with research project ideas related to COVID-19 to respond to the Office-wide broad agency announcements (BAAs) for both the Defense Sciences Office (DSO) and Biological Technology Office (BTO), which both have open BAAs that can receive submissions at any time. The DSO and BTO Office-wide BAAs can be found at <https://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/office-wide-broad-agency-announcements>.
- DOD's Project Vulcan released a "DIY Hack-a-Vent Innovation Challenge" to design and build a prototype ventilator in two weeks to support medical response to COVID-19. The challenge seeks ventilators that are low-cost, non-FDA approved, and have the ability to be "rapidly produced at local *levels* with widely available resources." Project Vulcan will select three submissions that will be invited to produce a functioning prototype. Innovation proposals are due by **March 25, 2020**. For more information on the Hack-a-Vent Innovation Challenge, visit <https://vulcan-sof.com/login/ng2/auth/login?requestedUrl=%2Fsubmission%3FcollectionUuid%3D24028d51-267f-4f10-a455-230a13055c12> to log in or request access to be part of the Vulcan network.
- The U.S. Army's Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC) released a pre-announcement for a potential Request for Project Proposals (RPP) focused on the "development of prototypes aimed to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19)." MTEC seeks technologies that are deployable as soon as possible and no later than December 31, 2020. MTEC's potential areas of interests for the upcoming RPPs include:
  - **"Point-of-care diagnostic** that provides rapid and accurate determination on exposure to COVID-19.
  - **Prophylactic(s)/Therapeutic(s) that can prevent and/or treat in a rapid manner (few hours to 2 days) potentially in a non-hospital environment.** Repurposing FDA-approved drugs/biologics for prevention/treatment of COVID-19 or testing of drugs/biologics that have already demonstrated safety in humans for the prevention/treatment of COVID-19 are preferred.
  - **Disease predictive modeling** that provides early warning through data capture from several different streams of data to include **social media and artificial intelligence (AI)** parameter decision tools that would provide actionable information to medical service providers and command structures.
  - **Patient monitoring, tracking, and management system** for in-home or non-hospital environment patient tele-health services to include interface into the Cerner electronic health record."

There is currently no funding commitment at this time, but "MTEC believes that there may be tens of millions of dollars available for combating COVID-19 programs with a likelihood of follow-on funding." Responses are required no later than **15 days after the official RPP release date**. MTEC's preannouncement can be found at <https://beta.sam.gov/opp/53badf9fb02349e78839a541495efc6a/view#general>, and Lewis-Burke will continue to monitor for the formal RPP release.

Note: MTEC membership is not required for the submission, but membership will be required for applicants recommended for awards. More information on joining MTEC can be found at <http://mtec-sc.org/how-to-join/>.

- The North Carolina Military Business Center (NCMBC) recently announced that Project Vulcan released a **COVID-19 Innovation Challenge** call for “innovative capabilities that addresses the challenges presented by COVID-19, as well as its resulting impacts on public safety and national security processes, systems, and resources.” Project Vulcan is a collaboration between Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (SOF AT&L), the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, the DOD Information Analysis Centers, and the National Defense University” and “incorporates online and offline engagement opportunities to broadly connect SOF operators and acquisition professionals with their counterparts in the high tech community.”

Proposed innovations and solutions for COVID-19 will be shared with a “wide network of government personnel” involved with combatting COVID-19. Responses are due as soon as possible and no later than March 31, 2020. NCMBC’s announcement and more information on applying can be found at <http://www.ncmbc.us/announcements/new-vulcan-call-covid-19-innovation-challenge-responses-due-31-march/>.

Note: Applicants must fill out a “scout card” summary describing solutions/capabilities. New members of the Vulcan network can request access at <https://vulcan-sof.com/login/ng2/auth/login?requestedUrl=%2Fhome>.

## Department of Energy (DOE)

- DOE is taking steps to address COVID-19 and is soliciting ideas about how the Department and the National Laboratories might contribute resources for science and technology efforts and collaborations. The Department is encouraging the scientific community and others to consider research questions that underpin COVID-19 response and is requesting input on strategic, priority research directions that may be undertaken using DOE user facilities, computational resources, and enabling infrastructure. More information is available in a Dear Colleague Letter on the DOE website at <https://science.osti.gov/-/media/sc-1/pdf/COVID-19-letter.pdf?la=en&hash=2A142317F56F185FC3E2CEF0AEAD6CACB3E70C7F>.

## United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- USAID Administrator Mark Green announced that the U.S. Government will commit \$62 million from the Emergency Reserve Fund for Contagious Infectious-Disease Outbreaks (ERF) to address the COVID-19 pandemic. This is additional to the \$37 million announced in February to help developing countries affected by, or at high-risk for, the pandemic. Activities supported by this funding will include heightened risk-communications and engagement with local communities; the prevention and control of infection in health facilities, including through the provision of personal protective equipment and other critical commodities; increasing laboratory, disease-surveillance, and rapid-response capacity; the management of COVID-19 cases; screening at points of entry; and global and regional coordination. As these funds are from the ERF, we do not anticipate any direct extramural funding opportunities. The statement is available at <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/mar-18-2020-statement-administrator-green-second-funding-tranche-62>.

## The White House

- **COVID-19 HPC Consortium** - On Sunday, March 22, President Trump announced the creation of the COVID-19 HPC Consortium, a new partnership between universities, national labs, and companies. The consortium will enable researchers access to the most powerful and advanced computers in the world to accelerate understanding of the COVID-19 virus and the development of treatments and vaccines. Access to computing resources in the COVID-19 HPC Consortium will be managed by the Extreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment (XSEDE). XSEDE is led by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is funded by the National Science foundation (NSF). Details on how to submit a request are available at [https://www.xsede.org/covid19-hpc-consortium?mod=article\\_inline](https://www.xsede.org/covid19-hpc-consortium?mod=article_inline). The formal White House announcement is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/white-house-announces-new-partnership-unleash-u-s-supercomputing-resources-fight-covid-19/>.
- **White House Calls on Tech Community to create new Machine Readable COVID-19 Dataset:** On March 16, the Allen Institute for AI, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI), Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology (CSET), Microsoft, and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) at the National Institutes of Health released the *COVID-19 Open Research Dataset (CORD-19)* of scholarly literature about COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, and the Coronavirus group. Requested by The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the dataset represents the most extensive machine-readable Coronavirus literature collection available for data and text mining to date. The COVID-19 resources is available on the Allen Institute's website: <https://pages.semanticscholar.org/coronavirus-research>. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy also issued a call to action to artificial intelligence experts to develop new text and data mining techniques that can help the science community answer high-priority scientific questions related to COVID-19. Researchers should submit the text and data mining tools and insights they develop in response to this call to action via the [Kaggle platform](#). Through Kaggle, a machine learning and data science community owned by Google Cloud, these tools will be openly available for researchers. The OSTP call to action is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/call-action-tech-community-new-machine-readable-covid-19-dataset/>.

## International News

### World Health Organization (WHO)

- The WHO has initiated a multi-country randomized clinical trial, as part of an aggressive effort to identify therapeutic drugs to treat COVID-19. The study will test four drugs or drug combinations already licensed and used for other illnesses, relative to standard of care. The innovation in the study will be in its online enrollment process, which was designed to enable doctors and medical centers to enroll patients with minimal burden under an already over-stretched medical system during a pandemic. Countries that have joined the study include: Argentina, Canada, France, Iran, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand. There is also a European clinical trial, Discovery, that will work in partnership with this effort with patients from France, Spain, UK, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. More information on the WHO SOLIDARITY trial can be found at

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/03/who-launches-global-megatrial-four-most-promising-coronavirus-treatments>.

- The WHO has resources available, several of which may be useful to the research community:
  - COVID-19 Daily Reports. See: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>;
  - Databases of COVID-19 research findings and peer reviewed publications, both of which are being updated and maintained by the WHO. See: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>;
  - Technical Guidelines, many of which were developed in consultation with U.S. technical experts. See: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>.