

NIH Biosafety Modernization Initiative Engagement Summary
Biosafety Now
January 14, 2026

Background

NIH announced its Biosafety Modernization Initiative in Fall 2025 and began an expansive plan for engaging stakeholders. In addition to holding six regional listening sessions, NIH also participated in smaller engagements to gather individual input to help inform a new NIH biosafety policy.

Representatives from Biosafety Now, a non-governmental organization that advocates strengthening biosafety, biosecurity, and biorisk management for research on pathogens, met with representatives from NIH to discuss the Biosafety Modernization Initiative and to provide individual feedback on the framing of the draft policy.

Event Summary

Biosafety Now representatives provided individual feedback, including the comment that certain “core principles” could serve as the underpinning of NIH’s new biosafety policy, including:

- Ensuring the new policy has universal applicability.
- Making transparency and public involvement a cornerstone.
- Codifying the new policy into law.
- A dedication to transparency and public involvement.

Additional individual comments included:

- The importance of ensuring Institutional Biosafety Committees (IBCs) have similar resources as other institutional bodies such as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).
- The importance of full transparency on incidents/accidents that would be reported under the policy.
- NIH could play a greater role in the individual review and approval of projects that would be subject to the new policy.

NIH thanked individuals for their comments and encouraged the participants to continue providing feedback through the mechanisms described on the NIH Office of Science Policy Website.