

**NIH Biosafety Modernization Initiative Engagement Summary
Campus Safety Health & Environmental Management Association
(CSHEMA)
February 17, 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.

The Campus Safety Health & Environmental Management Association (CSHEMA) represents the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) community within higher education. CSHEMA convened and moderated the discussion with four breakout groups composed of biosafety professionals from both small and large research institutions.

Event Summary

As part of the event, NIH provided suggested discussion topics to each focus group.

Breakout Group 1: Campus Leadership and Program Support

NIH received the following individual feedback and comments from participants:

- Support for Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Institutional Review Board (IRB), and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) existing within the same institutional supervisory office.
- Anonymous incident reporting would encourage incident reporting in a non-punitive way.
- Incident reporting would be strengthened through an online portal.
- Including a biosafety section on the NIH grant application that certifies the institution has a capable biosafety program.

Breakout Group 2: Research and Laboratory Operations

NIH received the following individual feedback and comments from participants:

- Biosafety programs at the institution would benefit from a percentage of grant dollars.
- The need for incident reporting should be informed by the risk posed by the incident.
- Smaller research institutions will have a more difficult time adjusting to an expanded scope due to lack of resources compared with larger institutions.

Breakout Group 3: EHS and biosafety professionals from schools with small research programs

NIH received the following individual feedback and comments from participants:

- It is often a challenge for small institutions to appropriately staff IBCs.
- Forms, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and document templates would reduce IBC burden.

Breakout Group 4: EHS and biosafety professionals from schools with large research programs

NIH received the following individual feedback and comments from participants:

- IBCs can be empowered to determine what incidents are important enough to be reported to NIH.
- Delegated or expedited review in which a biosafety officer or a subset of the IBC can review and approve research on behalf of the whole IBC would be helpful.
- Lowering of containment should be done on a case-by-case basis, and in certain circumstances it may be appropriate for the IBC alone to make the determination.

NIH thanked individuals for their comments and encouraged CSHEMA members to continue providing feedback through the mechanisms listed on the NIH Office of Science Policy website.