



NIH Biosafety Modernization Initiative Engagement Summary
University of Maryland, Baltimore Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)
February 27, 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.

NIH met with the University of Maryland, Baltimore IBC, which oversees a large research portfolio, including high-containment research and clinical trials involving human gene transfer.

Event Summary

Attendees provided individual feedback on several topics, including some of the following comments and input:

- Incidents can be mostly managed at the local level and a threshold for what should be submitted to NIH would be helpful.
- Some human gene transfer experiments pose little biosafety risk, but other trials have biosafety risks that need to be mitigated.
- Risk groups and biosafety levels are often synonymous, and if the policy only used one term consistently, it would not create confusion from a biosafety perspective.
- Scope expansion burden could be greatly mitigated by allowing for a delegated or expedited review where a biosafety officer or subset of IBC members could approve research on behalf of the full IBC.

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