



FASEB Comments in Response to Request for Information (RFI): Evolving the Network of the National Library of Medicine

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To Whom It May Concern,

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), a coalition of 22 scientific societies representing over 110,000 researchers in the biological and biomedical sciences, appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on how the National Library of Medicine (NLM) can enhance access to biomedical information and health information through the Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM). Since its founding in 1836, the NLM has served as the information hub for the biomedical community, evolving from a collection of books and journals to the home of digital resources that streamline access to biomedical research information for the scientific community and public. In a recent [presentation](#) to the Advisory Committee to the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Monica Bertagnoli, MD, NIH Director, highlighted the critical role of NLM in realizing a vision in which research and healthcare are accelerated through increased data sharing and reuse.

FASEB shares this vision, and in 2021 launched its DataWorks! initiative to further data sharing and reuse among biological and biomedical researchers. It is also through DataWorks! that FASEB began working more closely with NNLM. Therefore, our response is most relevant to questions 1 and 2, both of which pertain to how NNLM can inform strategic priorities within NLM and across NIH. In fact, many of FASEB's [comments](#) in response to the RFI seeking input on the NIH Strategic Plan for Data Science are applicable to this current request.

FASEB views NNLM as critical to advancing data literacy, both within the research community and the broader public. For the former, FASEB specifically appreciates the variety of online, on-demand, and in-person training opportunities to support professional development and continuing education for librarians, educators, and health professionals. These more detailed resources are complementary to FASEB's DataWorks! initiative, which supports researchers by providing an integrated multi-faceted program to develop and hone core competencies in data management, sharing and reuse among biological and biomedical researchers. Current offerings include (1) [DataWorks! Salons](#) – conversation spaces through which researchers can learn about existing resources and exchange best practices for data management at the individual, team and network level; (2) [DataWorks! Prize](#) – a mechanism to reward research teams for adopting novel strategies to integrate data sharing and reuse to advance scientific knowledge; and (3) [DataWorks! Help Desk](#) – a knowledgebase resource that provides researcher-to-researcher guidance for navigating and adopting data sharing and reuse policies and practices. FASEB has engaged with members of NNLM on all three components in various capacities and there is active cross-promotion of our respective activities.

As NIH and other federal research agencies move towards implementing the more robust vision to ensure free, immediate, and equitable access to federally funded research as described in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy [memorandum](#) issued in August 2022, NNLM could play a critical role in highlighting the importance of open and reusable methods to increase the utility of research data.

With data management and sharing plans now an established expectation for researchers, the next critical step is to ensure the utility of data collected by including plans for how related methods will be shared. A recent [report](#) issued by the European Commission highlights actions that stakeholders including researchers, research institutions and departments, publishers and editors, and funders can take to promote more open communication of research methods and protocols. Given its remit “to advance the progress of medicine and improve public health by providing U.S. health professionals with equal access to biomedical information and improving individuals’ access to information to enable them to make informed decisions about their health,” NNLM is well-positioned to support a dialogue on open methods through regional convenings, training courses, and proof-of-principle funding opportunities.

In closing, FASEB would like to reiterate feedback shared as part of its comments on the NIH Strategic Plan for Data Science 2023 regarding the need to improve community understanding and awareness of NIH-wide efforts related to data science, especially initiatives guided by NNLM. As science continues to move towards generating large datasets, data literacy integrated throughout scientific training and professional development to ensure researchers have the appropriate skills and resources to appropriately and interpret this information will become imperative. NNLM – with its regional structure and network that reaches thousands of research institutions across the country – is well positioned to engage the biomedical research and patient communities in fulfilling a vision in which health and research data can be maximally applied to improving human health and discovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth A. Garvy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beth A. Garvy, PhD
FASEB President