

Maryland sues Trump administration to restore university NIH funding

The dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine Mark Gladwin believes Trump's cuts could be devastating to American research.



By Matt Hooke/Baltimore Business Journal
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Story Highlights

- Maryland Attorney General Brown joins lawsuit against Trump administration over NIH funding cuts.
- University of Maryland, Baltimore has already seen \$15 million in grants cut.
- Funding cuts lead to layoffs and fewer doctoral students at medical schools.

Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown has joined a coalition of 16 attorneys general in an attempt to restore grant funding from the [National Institutes of Health](#) to universities.

[Brown joined a lawsuit in the U.S District Court of Massachusetts](#) against President Donald Trump's administration on Friday, along with Wisconsin, California, New York and a dozen other states. The complaint focuses on President Donald Trump's delays in reviewing NIH grant applications and its termination of already-awarded grants to research universities. If successful, the legal action could restore a substantial amount of funding to local institutions. The federal government has canceled 15 grants worth \$15 million to the [University of Maryland](#), Baltimore, according to Brown.

The lawsuit claims that the Trump administration does not have the authority to unilaterally cancel spending already approved by the U.S. Congress. The coalition is seeking relief for both delayed grants as well as the restoration of grants that had already been approved but were canceled by the administration.

"The coalition argues that by postponing meetings, delaying the review of pending applications, failing to issue final recommendations, and terminating issued grants, NIH is failing to meet its statutory obligations," a press release from the attorney general's office says.

The grant cancellations are part of a wider effort to shrink the size of the federal government. The Trump administration is targeting grants funding research around gender, or what the administration considers "diversity, equity and inclusion." Canceled grants include research related

to HIV, Alzheimer's disease and pregnancy health disparities. Outside of direct cuts to research grants, the federal government is planning to slash the amount of indirect funds the NIH awards to universities.

The NIH is already not reviewing grant applications and not choosing to award money at the same level as prior years, Dr. Mark Gladwin, dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, [said in a press conference on Thursday](#). Awards from the NIH have dropped by \$2.8 billion compared to the same time last year, with the agency [renewing only 30% of all grants, he added](#).

The loss of funding is leading to layoffs across the medical school and a decline in the number of doctoral students. The School of Medicine has cut its doctoral student cohort this year from 50 people to 30, according to reporting from the Baltimore Banner.

“We're going to just see a rapid shock wave to our ability to continue research, which has distinguished America and driven our economy,” Gladwin said.

The slash to grant funding is separate from a Trump initiative to reduce [NIH's indirect funding for medical research](#). The NIH wants to cut the indirect cost rate, money used to cover the ancillary costs of research like equipment or laboratory space, to 15%. UMB believes the change will cost \$49.5 million in annual research funding. Brown is also participating in a separate lawsuit to restore indirect funding to universities.