

Social Security Administration

Plan for Increasing Public Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research



Securing today
and tomorrow



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Selected Abbreviations

ARDRAW	Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation and Work
DI	Disability Insurance
FTI	Federal Tax Information
ICAP	Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program
OASDI	Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance
OASI	Old Age and Survivors Insurance
OSTP	Office of Science and Technology Policy
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
RDRC	Retirement and Disability Research Consortium
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSI	Supplemental Security Income

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Public Access Requirements

The Social Security Administration's (SSA) *Plan for Increasing Public Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research* explains how we will provide the public with free access to our scientific research publications and scientific research data.

In compliance with memoranda from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), we are issuing this plan to support increased public access to federally funded research results.¹ Through this plan, we will ensure that our scientific research publications, including peer-reviewed scholarly publications and underlying scientific research data resulting from federally funded research, are made freely available and publicly accessible without any embargo or delay after publication.

Our Programs, Mission, and Public Access to Research

Under the Social Security Act, we administer the following programs:

- Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) that provides retirement and survivors benefits to qualified workers and their family members;
- Disability Insurance (DI) that provides benefits for workers who become disabled and for their families; and
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) that provides financial support to aged, blind, and disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources.

We also support national programs that other Federal and State agencies administer such as Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Our agency mission is to ensure equity and accessibility in delivering Social Security services by improving the customer experience and addressing systemic barriers to participation in our programs. Promoting free and equitable access to our federally funded scientific research supports our mission by encouraging the exchange of knowledge, which provides valuable insights about how we can improve our programs to better serve the public.

We expect that our plan will increase public access to our scientific research publications and scientific research data for Institutions Serving Students of Color, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

¹ In 2013, OSTP issued the [Memorandum on Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research issued in 2013](#). This memo stated that agencies with more than \$100 million in annual research and development (R&D) expenditures were required to develop plans to support increased public access to the results of federally funded research, specifically access to scholarly publications and digital data resulting from such research. In 2022, OSTP issued the [Memorandum to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research](#). This memo expanded the 2013 requirements to agencies with less than \$100 million in R&D expenditures.

Developing this Plan with Stakeholder Input

To develop our plan, we formed a Public Access Plan Working Group with representatives from the following SSA offices involved with planning and funding research. This group collaborated on key issues and decisions necessary to develop our plan.

- Office of Analytics, Review, and Oversight
- Office of Budget, Finance, and Management
- Office of Communications
- Office of the General Counsel
- Office of Retirement and Disability Policy

We will meet with our external research partners, who may include the [Retirement and Disability Research Consortium](#) (RDRC) center directors, the [Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work](#) (ARDRAW) grant program manager, and others to obtain their input about how to implement our plan and the most feasible approaches for all researchers to grant maximum public access to research. We will also explore how to minimize costs or other potential barriers for anyone who wants to participate in research for our agency.

We will share our plan with the [Social Security Advisory Board](#) (SSAB) and ask for their feedback. The SSAB is a bipartisan, independent Federal Government agency established in 1994 to advise the President, the Congress, and the Commissioner of Social Security on matters of policy and administration of the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and the SSI programs.

Finally, we will publish a request for information (RFI) in the *Federal Register* to obtain public input about how we should implement this plan. We will consider the public's input as we develop specific policies and requirements for public access to SSA-funded scientific research publications and scientific data. We will publicize the availability of the RFI with announcements on our website. We will also inform known stakeholders, including our current research partners, Institutions Serving Students of Color, and advocates, about the RFI by sending letters or emails inviting comments.

SOCIAL SECURITY RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Our Federally Funded Research Programs

Our research budget funds scientific research such as data development and dissemination, modeling efforts, administrative research, and retirement and disability policy research to better serve the public. In fiscal year (FY) 2023, we were appropriated \$86 million for our research programs.

Section 1110 of the Social Security Act authorizes us to conduct broad, cross-programmatic research on OASDI and SSI programs, including research waiving certain SSI program rules. Under Section 1110, we fund a range of extramural projects: disability and retirement policy research, demonstration projects to test ways to promote

greater labor force participation among people with disabilities (including early intervention rehabilitation strategies), evaluations of proposed or newly enacted legislative changes, and projects to maintain and improve basic data about our programs and beneficiaries. Many of our Section 1110 projects support our Fiscal Years 2022-2026 Learning Agenda and our annual evaluation plans that are required under the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018.^{2,3,4}

Public Access to Our Research

We have held a longstanding commitment to sharing information about our programs and policies, including our research activities, with the public. Our website www.ssa.gov provides immediate and free access to program explanations, publications, regulations, policies, operating instructions for employees, agency reports, actuarial data, and other information helpful for researchers. The public can also access much of our research results and data through our web resources listed below.

- [Disability Research](#) web page provides information about federally funded disability research, including demonstrations, projects and studies, research and data, and our work incentive policy.
- [Research, Statistics & Policy Analysis](#) web page provides information about our research projects, surveys, statistics, research opportunities, and our own publication – the *Social Security Bulletin*.
- [Social Security Data](#) web page, in response to the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, states our open data policy and lists our data assets available for download.

DEFINITIONS

Programs Administered by Social Security

Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI): The OASDI program makes monthly income available to insured workers and their families at retirement, death, or disability. The OASDI program consists of two parts. Retired workers, their families, and survivors of deceased workers receive monthly benefits under the Old-Age and

² Our budget also references Section 1115 of the Social Security Act that provides the Secretary of Health and Human Services with the funding and authority to waive compliance with Medicaid requirements to enable States to participate in our specific research and disability demonstration projects. There are currently no research projects funded under this section.

³ Section 1144 of the Social Security Act requires us to conduct outreach to individuals with Medicare who are potentially eligible for State-administered Medicaid programs or Medicare prescription drug subsidies under Medicare Part D. Although included under the heading of our research and development budget, these activities do not include research activities and are not covered under our public access plan.

⁴ Historically, Section 234 of the Social Security Act allowed us to test changes to the Disability Insurance program to promote the labor force participation of beneficiaries. The authority sunsetted at the end of 2022.

Survivors Insurance (OASI) program. Disabled workers and their families receive monthly benefits under the Disability Insurance (DI) program.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): SSI is a nationwide federal assistance program that guarantees a minimum level of income for aged, blind, or disabled individuals. SSI is a means-tested program for individuals who have limited income and resources to maintain a standard of living at the established federal minimum income level. States have the option to supplement federal payments.

General Terms

Contract: A contract is a legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the United States Government and a State, a local government, or other recipient when (1) the principal purpose of the instrument is to acquire (by purchase, lease, or barter) property or services for the direct benefit or use of the United States Government; or (2) the executive agency decides in a specific instance that the use of a procurement contract is appropriate. 31 U.S.C. § 6303

Cooperative Agreement: A cooperative agreement is a legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the United States Government and a State, a local government, or other recipient when (1) the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer a thing of value to the State, local government, or other recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by a law of the United States, instead of acquiring (by purchase, lease, or barter) property or services for the direct benefit or use of the United States Government; and (2) substantial involvement is expected between the executive agency and the State, local government, or other recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated in the agreement. 31 U.S.C. § 6305

Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI): CUI is non-classified information the Government creates or possesses, or that an entity creates or possesses for or on behalf of the Government, that a law, regulation, or Government-wide policy requires or permits an agency to handle using safeguarding or dissemination controls.

Demonstrations: Demonstration projects are tests of changes to our programs or the services available that allow us to evaluate the likely impacts of the change on program outcomes.

Extramural Research: Extramural research is scientific research undertaken as the result of the award of a grant, contract, cooperative agreement, or other funding agreement that is partially or fully funded by a federal agency. Our extramural research may include demonstration projects; awards for research papers through the RDRC, ARDRAW, or Interventional Cooperative Agreement Programs (ICAP); and other studies conducted by contractors or non-SSA staff.

Federally Funded Research: Federally funded research means research that was paid for by the Federal Government as part of our budget appropriated by Congress for research performed by SSA employees, contractors, grantees, or cooperative awardees, or in partnership with other federal agencies.

Federal Tax Information (FTI): FTI is information that we obtain from, or on behalf of, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), also referred to as tax return information. FTI is

governed by the Internal Revenue Code and includes “a taxpayer's identity, the nature, source, or amount of his income, payments, receipts, deductions, exemptions, credits, assets, liabilities, net worth, tax liability, tax withheld, deficiencies, over-assessments, or tax payments.” 26 U.S.C. § 6103(b). We cannot disclose FTI without IRS approval.

Grant: A grant is a legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the United States Government and a State, a local government, or other recipient when (1) the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer a thing of value to the State or local government or other recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by a law of the United States, instead of acquiring (by purchase, lease, or barter) property or services for the direct benefit or use of the United States Government; and (2) substantial involvement is not expected between the executive agency and the State, local government, or other recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated in the agreement. 31 U.S.C. § 6304.

Intramural Research: Intramural research is research led and performed by SSA employees. It may also include research performed by SSA employees partnering with external researchers.

Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Publications: Peer-reviewed scholarly publications refer to the final peer-reviewed manuscripts accepted for publication.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII): PII is information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual. The PII may range from common data elements such as names, addresses, dates of birth, and places of employment, to identity documents, Social Security numbers or other government-issued identifiers, precise location information, medical history, and biometric records.

Public Access: Public access refers to the availability of federally funded research materials, including scientific research publications and scientific research data to the public. Public access may be limited by the need to protect the privacy of an individual, PII, FTI, or other information protected from disclosure by Federal law and regulations.

Scientific Integrity: Scientific integrity is the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about research, policy analysis, science, and scientific activities. Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity.

Scientific Research: Scientific research refers to the systematic study of a subject directed toward a fuller scientific knowledge or understanding of the subject; it may include both basic and applied research studies.

Scientific Research Data: Scientific research data include recorded data used to conduct scientific research and necessary to validate research findings and to produce a final research report. Such data may include raw data, metadata, statistical analyses, and summary data. Scientific research data do not include physical objects; working documents; drafts; non-scientific data and information; PII about research participants; or information that otherwise cannot be publicly released per applicable Federal law, regulations, or directives. Non-scientific data and information include but are not limited

to preliminary analyses, draft documents, plans for future research, peer reviews, communications, trade secrets, commercial information, privileged information, proprietary information, and research methods.

SCOPE

In this section, we define the scope of what research will be accessible under this plan and we discuss limitations on accessibility.

What Research Will Be Accessible?

Our public access plan covers all scientific research publications and scientific research data funded by our appropriations, in whole or in part. Federally funded scientific research includes all extramural and intramural research intended for public use without regard to who conducted the research (i.e., contractors, grantees, and government employees). Our requirements will apply to all of our federally funded scientific research publications, including peer-reviewed scholarly publications and scientific research data for awards on or after the effective date of December 31, 2025.

For the purposes of our public access plan, we are not including actuarial or operational oversight activities which, while sharing many elements of scientific research, are primarily for internal deliberation or policy consideration.

We may make other data, metadata, or research available under other requirements; for example, the [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018](#) (Pub. L. No. 115-435, 132 Stat. 5529) requirements, or the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements (5 U.S.C. § 552).⁵

Limitations on Accessibility

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Federal Tax Information (FTI)

We will not publish any research results or scientific research data that would disclose legally protected information, such as PII or FTI. We will not provide access to data that could directly identify an individual or could identify an individual using a combination of data sets.

We may provide the public with access to aggregate scientific research data that cannot lead to the identification of, and is not specific or traceable to, an individual, an employer, or another applicable entity; or data that has been sufficiently deidentified according to our disclosure policies.

Human Subjects

We will not release scientific research data that could disclose legally protected information about human subjects participating in federally funded research.⁶

⁵ For rules that relate to the availability of information and records to the public, refer to [20 C.F.R. Part 402](#).

⁶ For rules that apply to research involving human subjects, refer to [20 C.F.R. Part 431](#).

Researchers who receive funding from us must be committed to protecting the rights and privacy of human subjects at all times. Scientific research data access must not compromise this commitment. We recognize that data sharing may be complicated or limited by institutional policies, local institutional review board determinations, as well as Federal law, regulations, and directives, including those that address issues of the rights and privacy of human subjects. Researchers will work to maximize access to scientific research data, while protecting privacy and confidentiality.

Other Limitations

Public access to scientific research data is subject to compliance with applicable Federal law (such as the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552a and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, Pub.L. 115-435), regulations, and directives. As defined above, scientific research data intended for public access under this plan includes data that are not legally restricted or otherwise nonpublic based on data sensitivities. We will review all data for such restrictions and sensitivities when we review data management plans, and prior to granting public access.

APPLICABILITY

Extramural Research

For extramural research programs, we will require that final scientific publications and scientific research data are publicly accessible for free. This plan will apply to our extramural research including the three cooperative agreement and grant programs described below; and may apply to surveys, social policy demonstrations, evaluations, and other research often conducted under contracts if that results in the production of scientific research publications intended for public use.

For extramural research awards, we will include appropriate language requiring public access to all scientific research publications and scientific research data, subject to the limitations mentioned in previous sections of this plan. Exceptions from this requirement, such as for proprietary data or data for which it is not possible to redact or deidentify PII, must be included in the data management plan submitted with the research application.

Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC)

The RDRC is an interdisciplinary extramural research program we fund through 5-year cooperative agreements. Each fiscal year, we identify focal areas and specific research projects for the RDRC centers to complete. The centers conduct research and evaluate topics related to our programs and federal policies; disseminate information to policymakers, researchers, stakeholders, and the public; and provide training and education to scholars and practitioners in relevant research areas.

We will require the RDRC centers to make final publications and scientific research data publicly available for free, and regularly report on the status of public access throughout the award period.

Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW)

The ARDRAW program supports young and emerging scholars pursuing careers in public policy research who have a special interest in our beneficiaries' quality of life and disability program issues, challenges, and outcomes. We recruit graduate students, faculty, and administrators of accredited programs with an academic emphasis in public health, social work, economics, occupational medicine, vocational and rehabilitation counseling, public policy and administration, sociology, psychology, education, medicine, and law.

We will require awardees to make final scientific research publications and scientific research data publicly available for free. The grant administrator will also regularly report on the status of public access throughout the award period.

Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP)

ICAP awards allow us to partner with States, private foundations, and other stakeholders who have an interest in and ability to identify, operate, and partially fund interventional research. ICAP is focused on interventional research (directly altering the services, supports, or policies available), in contrast with our other research grant programs RDRC and ARDRAW that focus on observational or quasi-experimental research (based on surveys, focus groups, administrative data). Each project has a 5-year project period that requires renewal after the first year based on completion of startup activities.

We will require awardees to make final scientific research publications and scientific research data publicly available for free, and regularly report on the status of public access throughout the award period.

Intramural Research

We employ statisticians, economists, sociologists, and other research staff who conduct intramural research projects that are published in scholarly outlets, such as scientific and professional journals. We will ensure that scientific research publications and the underlying scientific research data for the publications are publicly available for free, subject to limitations in previous sections of this plan.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Research Contractors and Awardees

Research contractors and awardees include institutions and businesses that receive contracts, grants, or other funds to perform research for us or on topics of interest to us. We will specify requirements in our contracts, grants, and agreements or request ideas for satisfying public access requirements as part of the solicitation and application process. Research contractors and awardees must comply with public access requirements in the terms of the contract, agreement, or award with SSA.

Social Security Research Authors

SSA employees and contractors who author research will comply with the requirements in our final published public access policies. External research authors must comply with the terms of the contract, agreement, or award with SSA.

Social Security Officials and Offices

Commissioner of Social Security: Our Commissioner is responsible for all agency policies and operations.

Scientific Integrity Official: OSTP requires that we designate a senior career employee as the agency's lead scientific integrity official to oversee implementation and iterative improvement of scientific integrity policies and processes, including promoting public access to federally funded scientific research.⁷

Office of Retirement and Disability Policy (ORDP): ORDP leads activities in the areas of strategic and program policy planning; policy research and evaluation; statistical programs; and overall policy development, analysis, and implementation. ORDP will be responsible for establishing and maintaining policies for public access to our scientific research publications and scientific research data. Within ORDP, the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support, and the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics, share the responsibility for administering the majority of projects funded under our research budget.⁸

Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support (ORDES): ORDES conducts research and analysis related to the disability insurance and SSI programs. The Associate Commissioner for ORDES is SSA's Evaluation Officer. ORDES implements demonstration projects to test changes to the disability programs, primarily aimed at improving program administration and supporting employment. ORDES also conducts research, analysis, evaluations, and statistical modeling that support our goals to strengthen our disability programs and improve program integrity. ORDES will be responsible for ensuring compliance with public access policies with the projects it administers.

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (ORES): ORES is a designated recognized Federal statistical unit under the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act. The Associate Commissioner for ORES is the agency's Statistical Official. ORES is responsible for the production and dissemination of research and data on our programs. ORES publishes official research and statistical publications. ORES produces findings on our retirement, disability, and SSI programs from research and microsimulation projects supported through intramural and extramural programs. ORES will be responsible for ensuring compliance with public access policies with the projects it administers.

⁷ For more information about the scientific integrity official requirement, refer to [Framework for Federal Scientific Integrity Policy and Practice](#).

⁸ The Office of Disability Policy, also in ORDP, conducts research related to medical policy.

Office of Acquisition and Grants (OAG): OAG, within the Office of Budget, Finance, and Management, is the procurement office of SSA and is responsible for awarding and administering contracts, orders, and grants, and for issuing SSA's acquisition policies and procedures. OAG works with our offices to implement acquisition policies, procedures, and directives, to include implementing public access requirements as part of our research-related acquisitions.

Office of the General Counsel (OGC): OGC provides legal advice and related services to our Commissioner and offices related to the operation and administration of our programs. We may consult with OGC about legal questions related to public access to federally funded research.

PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS

All scientific research publications and scientific research data resulting from our federally funded research will be our property with unlimited rights to reuse, reproduce, and make available at any physical, digital, or online location accessible to the public. We may require unlimited rights licenses to use, modify, reproduce, release, or disclose research data in whole or in part, in any manner, and for any purpose whatsoever, and may authorize others to do the same, depending on the facts and circumstances of the award. The requirements in this public access plan do not remove or change other requirements of Federal law, regulation, agency policy, or terms of existing contracts and agreements.

Scientific Research Publications

Scientific research publications resulting from federally funded research, including final scientific research reports due to us under a contract, grant, or other agreement, will be publicly accessible for free at the time of publication or as close to publication as feasible. Researchers must ensure that the final publication is permitted to be available in an SSA-designated repository.

Researchers who apply to conduct federally funded scientific research may include reasonable publication costs and costs associated with public access as allowable expenses in their proposed research budgets. We will retain the right to use additional means to provide for storage and public access to publications.

We will retain the right to provide the public with any information necessary to access the publication, including URL web addresses and persistent identifiers, and we may provide that information to the public on our agency web site, in publications, notices, or any other means of communication we choose.

Researchers' publications must adhere to requirements and limitations on access specified in this plan, and any specific requirements and limitations in the contract, grant, or other agreement related to federally funded research.

Scientific Research Data

Researchers must make the underlying scientific research data used for federally funded scientific research publications, available for free, publicly accessible at the time of publication, and deposited into a repository that meets SSA's requirements. SSA's requirements will align, to the extent practicable, with the National Science and Technology Council document – Desirable Characteristics of Data Repositories for Federally Funded Research.⁹

Any researcher who applies to conduct SSA-funded scientific research will be required, in their application, to provide a data management plan that includes the specific online digital repository or repositories where the researcher expects to deposit their relevant data, consistent with the applicable Federal law, regulations, and directives (including SSA guidance). The data management plan will describe the types of scientific research data that will be publicly accessible and provide a risk management strategy for preventing access to data that are not allowed for public access; for example, because of the limitations on accessibility described in this public access plan.

Scientific research data, including data tables in reports, must have machine readable access.

Researchers who apply to conduct federally funded scientific research may include reasonable publication costs and costs associated with submission, curation, management of scientific research data, and special handling instructions as allowable expenses in all research budgets.

Federal researchers must follow applicable Federal laws, regulations, and directives (including OMB and agency policies), as well as all other applicable legal limitations, that govern Federal agencies' information management practices and protect certain types of data.

Our Program Data Disclosure Review Board will provide guidance on the rules and review process we will use to determine if SSA data used in scientific research can be made public. Research contractors and other awardees are responsible for their own disclosure review process and approval of data dissemination for data that SSA does not maintain, own, or generate. We will specify these expectations in the terms and conditions of the awards.

Scientific research data that we maintain, own, or generate must comply with applicable Federal laws, regulations, policies, and directives. Our disclosure protection rules govern how scientific research data products, such as tables and charts, may be released to the public. Our Program Data Disclosure Review Board must review and approve public release of SSA scientific research data, including deidentified microdata. The disclosure review process includes a thorough review of the disclosure limitation methods and techniques used for adequate protection of the records to manage disclosure risks.

⁹ For more information, refer to [Desirable Characteristics of Data Repositories for Federally Funded Research](#).

For intramural research, SSA employees who conduct scientific research will be required to follow our privacy and disclosure regulations, applicable Federal law, directives, and other SSA guidance about research and data management.

We will require all SSA-funded researchers, internal and external to provide regular status reports on public access for each project for which they are responsible.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our plan defines general requirements for public access to our scientific research publications and scientific research data. By December 31, 2024, we will develop specific policies and requirements that will apply to all new research grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and other awards made on or after December 31, 2025. The requirements will also apply to scientific research our employees conduct that will be published on or after December 31, 2025. To the extent possible, we will (1) apply requirements to new scientific research awards sooner and (2) work with our current scientific research awardees to make research publications and scientific research data available to the public sooner unless costs, technical limitations, or other factors would create financial obligations not covered by an existing research agreement.

Public access to scientific research publications and scientific research data should be implemented with the following considerations.

- Ensure the public can read, download, and analyze final peer-reviewed manuscripts or final published documents that we conduct or sponsor.
- Facilitate easy public search of, analysis of, and access to peer-reviewed scholarly publications.
- Ensure full access to publications' metadata in a format that is interoperable with technology, subject to disclosure limitations. Metadata should provide a link to the location of full text and supplemental materials.
- Maintain attribution to authors, journals, and original publishers.
- Store scientific research publications and scientific research data archives that provide long-term preservation and access without charge, use widely available standards and formats, provide Section 508 accessibility, and are interoperable with other Federal public access solutions.

Scientific Research Publications

Research Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements

As we identify new research projects, we will develop unique contract or grant language pertaining to publication, release, and ownership of scientific research reports and scientific research data. The language will include instructions for how research reports must be published in an SSA-designated repository. Researchers will be able to include reasonable costs associated with publication into their proposal, thus removing

or limiting the financial burden on contractors and grantees associated with providing public access.

We will include expectations for public access in notices of funding opportunities, requests for proposals, and other solicitations. We may include such language in the terms and conditions of grants and cooperative agreements, and in the clauses of contracts, in addition to specific language identified in the responsibilities of the parties, statements of work, or other sections of requisitions.

Intramural Research and Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Publications

Intramural research must be publicly accessible for free at the time of publication, or as close to publication as is feasible, in an SSA-designated repository for publications. Researchers may consider publication in other scientific, scholarly, and professional journals that are free for the public to access; however, the final publication must be deposited in an SSA-designated repository. We will allow limited expenditures from our research budget for the purposes of public access.

Scientific Research Data

Federally funded scientific research data, to the extent publicly releasable under Federal law, regulations, and directives, must be publicly accessible for free at the time the data and any related research reports are published (or as close to publication as is reasonable), and must be published into a repository that meets SSA's requirements.

How Will the Public Access Scientific Research Publications and Scientific Research Data?

The public will find information about how to access scientific research publications and scientific research data on our agency web pages dedicated to research. We will consider creating a new web page to provide a central access point with information about our federally funded research.

Accessibility for People with Disabilities

We will ensure accessibility for people with blindness, visual impairments, or other disabilities who use assistive devices such as screen readers, in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. We will work with our Section 508 team to consider additional requirements for public access to scientific research publications and scientific research data.

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY, REPORTING, AND COMMUNICATION

Scientific and Research Integrity

Public access policies that deliver transparent, open, secure, and free communication of federally funded research and activities in an expeditious manner are important tools to uphold scientific and research integrity. We will ensure that our public access policies support scientific and research integrity by communicating to the public critical

information, including that which is related to the authorship, funding, affiliations, and development status of federally funded research. The public will be able to identify the investments in science we support, the scientists who conduct the research, and the extent to which peer-review was conducted. These actions support the value that maintaining and restoring public trust in science requires openness, security, freedom, and integrity.

To strengthen public trust in federally funded science, we will ensure that the following elements of scientific and research integrity are in place by December 31, 2026, with an effective date of December 31, 2027.

- Collect and make publicly available appropriate metadata associated with scholarly publications and scientific research data resulting from federally funded research to the extent possible.
- Instruct federally funded researchers to obtain a digital persistent identifier that meets the common core standards of a digital persistent identifier service defined in the National Security Presidential Memorandum NSPM-33 implementation guidance, include the identifier in published research outputs when available, and provide Federal agencies with the metadata associated with all published research outputs they produce, consistent with the applicable Federal law, regulations, and directives, including applicable privacy, and security considerations.¹⁰
- Assign unique digital persistent identifiers to all scientific research and development awards and intramural research protocols that have appropriate metadata linking the funding agency and their awardees through their digital persistent identifiers.

Reporting Progress

By December 31, 2024, we will complete and publish full policy development, including our policies and specific requirements for public access that will be effective no later than December 31, 2025.

We will inventory our currently available scientific research publications and scientific research data and report that information to OSTP by December 31, 2024. We will regularly report our progress with implementing our plan to OSTP beginning in FY 2025. We will report the number of scientific research publications and scientific research data materials that are publicly accessible.

Communication Plan

After we finalize our public access policies, we will inform our research partners about public access requirements and inform the public about how to access scientific research publications and research data resulting from our federally funded research.

¹⁰ For more information about requirements for digital persistent identifiers, refer to the [OSTP 2022 Memorandum](#), the January 2021 National Security Presidential Memorandum [NSPM-33](#) and the Office of Science and Technology's [Implementation Guidance](#) issued January 2022.

Communication with Research Partners

We will communicate directly with our current research partners to share information about public access requirements. We will include public access requirements in our solicitations for contracts, grant proposals, and other research opportunities.

Communication with the Public

We will consider options to help the public more easily find our research information, such as creating a new web page where the public can find hyperlinks to all research publications and scientific research data. We will also consider creating a searchable catalog with connections to the sources for research materials stored on our website or other online repositories.

We will post this public access plan to our [open government](#) and the [science.gov](#) websites. We will consider the most effective communication tools such as the ability to subscribe to web page updates, the Social Security Blog, social media, a press release, direct e-mail communication, or mailed letters to inform the public about our plan and the availability of research materials.



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