



**Office of the Vice Provost for Research**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Biomedical Research Community  
**From:** Dawn Bonnell  
**Date:** April 4, 2023  
**Subject:** Update on the Development of ARPA-H in the Department of Health and Human Services

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The establishment of ARPA-H in the Department of Health and Human Services is an exciting development that will facilitate progress on important societal health issues. This is also an opportunity to contribute to the national narrative that is creating a vision and setting goals for forthcoming programs.

In addition to keeping up with public ARPA-H announcements we have been in discussions with local and federal stakeholders on what this could mean for healthcare across the country, for Penn and for the region. Meetings in Philadelphia included Secretary Xavier Becerra on the vision for ARPA-H, the ARPA-H operational team on next steps, and virtual attendance at the ARPA-H Launch at Howard University. The Director of ARPA-H, Renee Wegrzyn is scheduled to visit the Penn campus in the coming weeks.

We will schedule a discussion session in the coming weeks to facilitate planning around this opportunity.

ARPA-H has an aggressive timeline to stand up its offices. <https://arpa-h.gov/engage/rfp/>. The original constraint that the ARPA-H office must be over 60 miles from the capital has been rescinded and a plan to open 3 primary offices was announced. The National Capital Region Hub will focus on stakeholder engagement and operations; a Customer Experience Hub will drive user testing, adoption, access; and an Investor Catalyst will support translation. We are participating with the University Science Center, the Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholder institutions on a proposal for the Customer Experience Hub to locate in Philadelphia.

A Broad Agency Announcement was posted on March 15, 2023. <https://arpa-h.gov/engage/baa/>

*The announcement solicits abstracts of potential proposals with goals to 'accelerate better health outcomes for everyone by supporting the development of high-impact solutions to society's most challenging health problems and develop groundbreaking new ways to tackle health-related challenges through high potential, high-impact biomedical and health research. With a scope spanning the molecular to the societal, ARPA-H seeks proposals that aim to rapidly achieve better health outcomes across patient populations, communities, diseases, and health conditions.'*

The abstract deadline is March 14, 2024 but proposals are being accepted now. Abstracts submitted at this point can influence the directions of the initial programs. Aligned with the DARPA model, the programs will be driven by Program Managers (PMs) who will define a project that targets a specific

problem with an innovative solution. PMs will develop teams by bringing multiple groups together and actively managing the project. Projects will be supported at a level of ~\$100M over 5 years.

The PM positions are open now and the expectation is that 5 will be hired and onboarded in the next few months. The mid-term goal is to have 10-20 in the next year or so.

Below are three options to contribute to the development of the ARPA-H programs at this point.

- Develop a program vision and apply to be a Program Manager. <https://arpa-h.gov/careers/program-managers/>
- Advocate for colleagues that you think would be visionary Program Managers.
- Submit an abstract under the BAA that can inform discussions as the agency develops its plans and potentially lead to support of your research. <https://arpa-h.gov/engage/baa/>

Initial focus areas identified for investment are: (1) Health Science Futures; (2) Scalable Solutions; (3) Proactive Health; (4) Resilient Systems. Information on the scope of these themes are detailed in the BAA.

We will continue to provide updates as new information is released.