



# PCORI and Peer Review

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center for  
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National Institutes of Health  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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# Major Features of NIH Funding

- Distribute most of the funds through merit (peer review) in open competition but not entitlements
- Fund for 2-5 years and re-compete with all other applicants
- Priorities determined by scientists, not government
- The Government (NIH) has full control of the process but not the assessment of the science
- Special considerations (new investigators, specific policies, etc.) are given at the level of funding, but not peer review
- Investigator/curiosity driven research

# NIH Mission



*To seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability.*

NIH achieves its mission largely through awarding research grants based upon review of applications from extramural scientists.

# CSR: The Portal for NIH Grant Applications

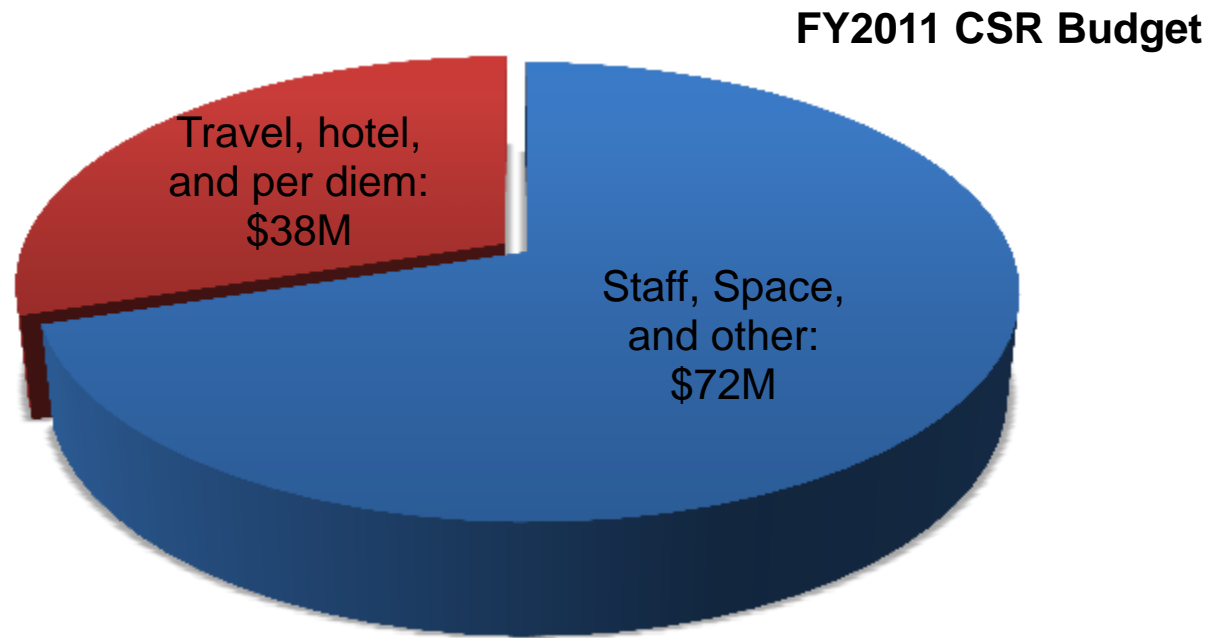
## CSR Mission

*To see that NIH grant applications receive **fair, independent, expert, and timely** reviews -- free from inappropriate influences -- so NIH can fund the most promising research.*

In 2011 CSR reviewed 70% of NIH grant applications

# NIH and CSR 2011

- NIH Budget ~\$31B
- NIH Budget has been relatively constant over the last 5 years
- CSR Budget ~ \$110M
- Number of Applications reviewed: 57,531



# CSR Workload

FY	Applications	Study Sections Meetings	Reviewers	SRO	
2008	48,000	1,427	14,000	240	
2009	71,000 (ARRA)	1,660	25,000	240	
2010	61,000	1,572	18,000	240	
2011	58,000	1,465	16,000	240	

- **Increasing workload with same number of staff**
  - **Prepared for heavy workloads in small timeframes**
- **Growing number of applications and reviewers**
- **Cost 2011: Approximately \$1900 per application**

# One Review Platform for 63 years

**The First NIH Study Section**

1946

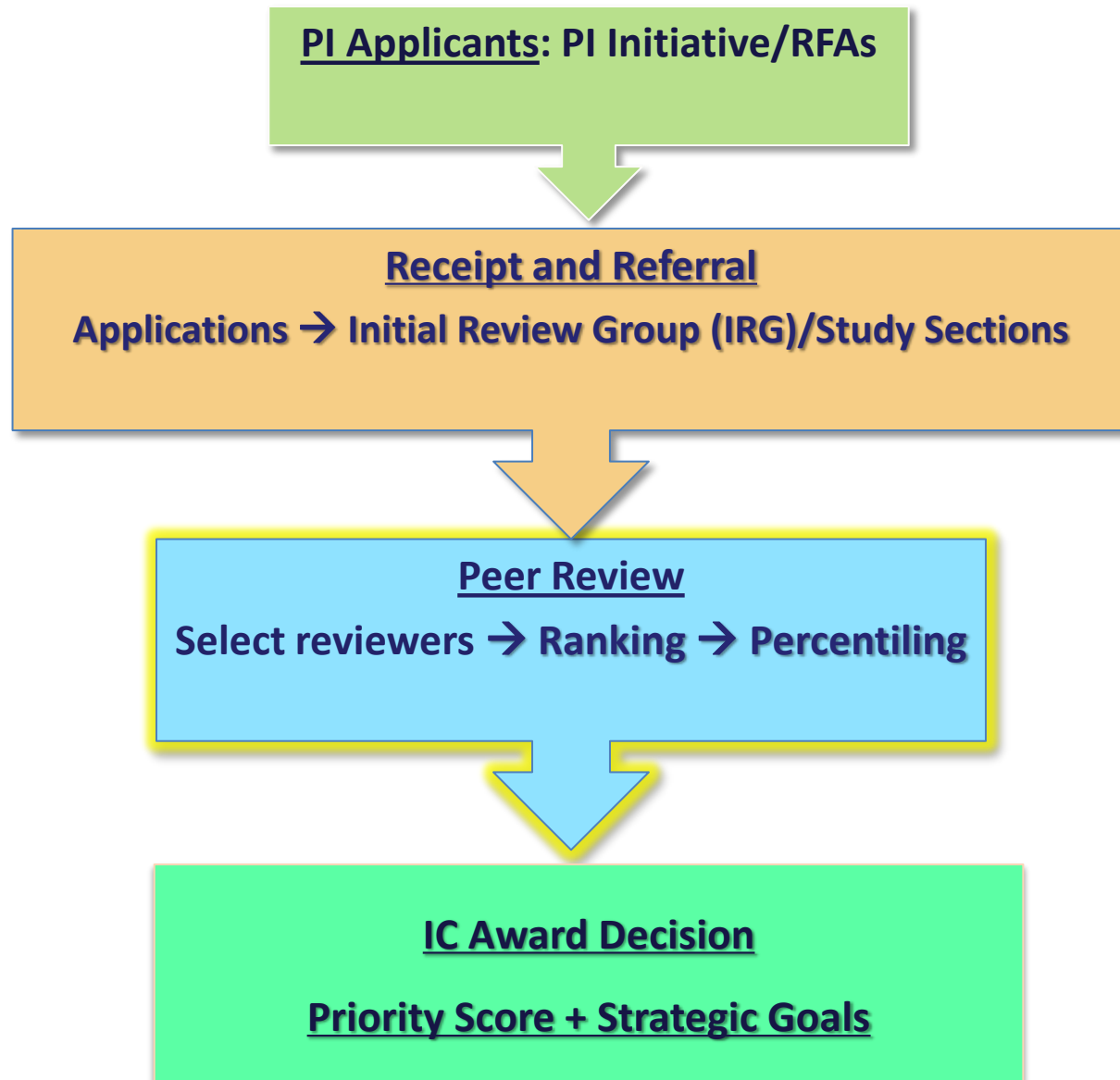


**A NIH Study Section Today**

2010



# The NIH Peer Review Process





## **Dual Review System for Grant Applications**

First Level of Review : **Peer Review**

Scientific Review Group (SRG)  
(Study Section)

Second Level of Review

NIH Institute/Center National  
Advisory Council

**\*2010:**

- *Nearly 88,000 applications*
- *Over 17,000 reviewers*



# The Operating Principles of NIH Peer Review

NIH has ownership of the process

- The Scientific Review Officer, a full-time federal employee, nominates the review panel, assigns applications and is responsible for the meeting

The study section (review panel) has ownership of the science.

- Is composed by experienced scientists in the field.
- Hundreds of study sections reviewing different biomedical behavioral science

# CSR Responsiveness to PCORI Goals

- No problem if PCORI decides to create own review structure – CSR would help.
- Open to the possibility of contracting review to CSR
- Need for general adherence to CSR policies around fair, independent, expert and timely reviews
- Hard to maintain full separation from NIH systems
- Can change review criteria and articulate goals
- Can allow for hybrid review

Questions, Comments, Discussion