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ORI Budget Grew to $15M; HHS Seeks Level Funding to Roll Out Contested Reg

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The HHS Office of Research Integrity (ORI) isn't technically seeking a funding boost in the upcoming fiscal year (FY)—it just wants appropriations equal to this FY in which it got a $3 million bump courtesy of NIH.

ORI, an agency within the HHS Office of Assistant Secretary for Health, is responsible for investigating incidents of fabrication, falsification and plagiarism within NIH and other Public Health Service agencies and imposing sanctions ranging from supervision to debarment. For two decades, it struggled with high-level dysfunction and vacancies, staff defections over leadership issues and falling numbers of cases that result in findings. Sheila Garrity, who just passed one year in the job, is its fourth director in 10 years.

Last month, President Joe Biden released his proposed FY 2025 budget, along with justifications to Congress that are worth reviewing because they recap prior year accomplishments and establish goals for the upcoming FY. In addition to ORI, *RRC* reviewed the FY 2025 budgets request for the National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Generally, Congress doesn't enact appropriations that exactly mirror the White House's requests; however, it may come close, particularly when essentially flat funding levels are requested (unless the agency has partisan opponents and is targeted for elimination).

As ORI's FY 2024 budget justification document explained, the request at that time was "$14,986,000, which is an increase of +$3,000,000 above FY 2023 Enacted [level]. The FY 2024 request is the amount agreed to by NIH to transfer to ORI for operational costs," the agency said last year.[1]

According to the new proposed budget, ORI received $14.986 million for this fiscal year. Looking to next year, ORI is again seeking this amount, but it doesn't mention any expected contribution from NIH.

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