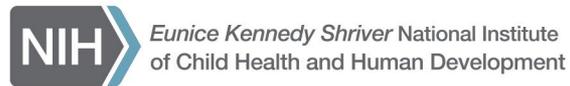


Special Council Review

Rebekah Rasooly

June 7, 2023





Special Council Review

- Started in 2012
- Applications from PD(s)/PI(s) who already receive large amounts must be considered by the Advisory Council
- The threshold was raised from \$1M direct costs to \$2M total costs this year
- Only includes Research Project Grants. Resource awards (such as Centers or Cores) and training awards (such as T32s) are excluded
- There is no review required for applications submitted to RFAs

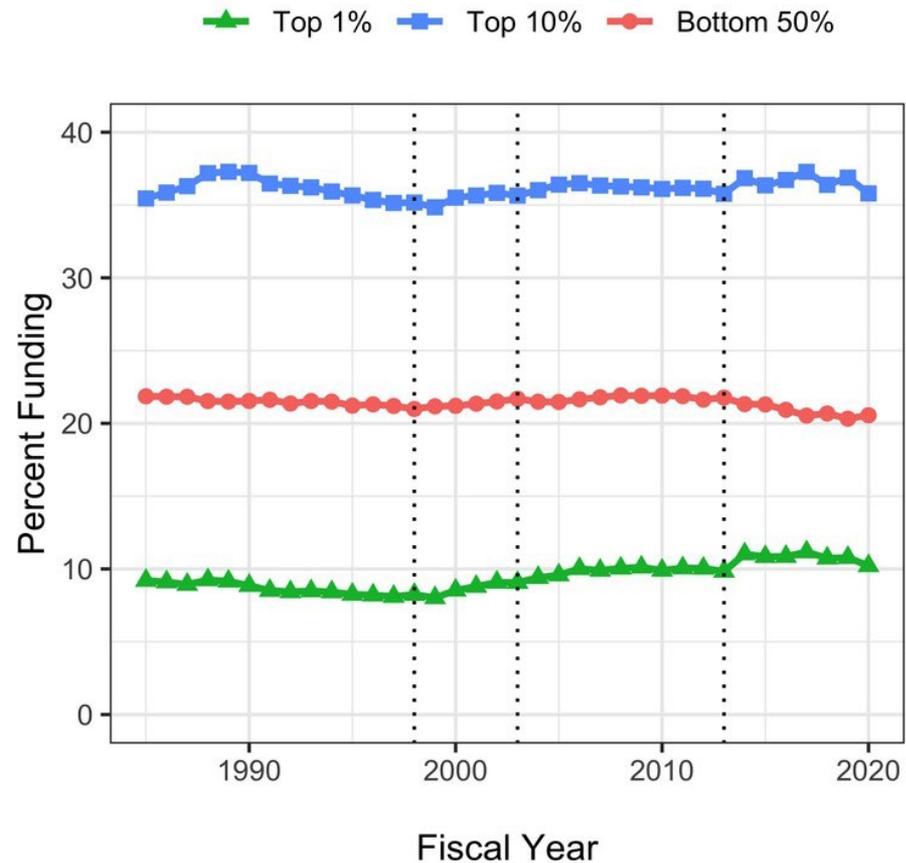


Why should we re-examine Special Council Review?

A

The top 10% of investigators in terms of funding are more male, more white and less Hispanic

And they receive ~40% of all NIH funding





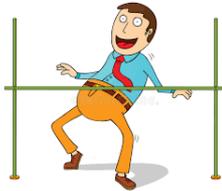
What did we propose to reduce this concentration of funding?

Flag more applications

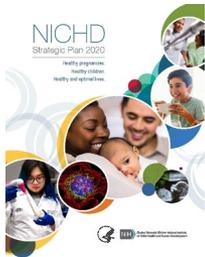


- Close eligibility loopholes – any PI versus all PIs on MPI grants

Tighten criteria for awarding – must meet one or more of these criteria



- Lower the payline to 6% or better



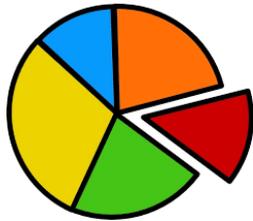
- Must represent an NICHD priority area



- Enhance workforce diversity



In addition, to reduce the number of well-funded Pis in the NICHD portfolio - Limit effort and duration of well-funded status



- Require minimum 20% effort on application



- Limit time with >\$2M support to 12 months from time of award



The Council asked a number of questions:

1. In the past, how many of the well-funded PI applications were actually brought to Council for SCR?
2. What would be the impact in terms of number of applications affected from these changes?
 - Policy change for MPIs
 - Lowering the payline
 - Limiting the duration of 'well-funded' status to 12 months after award
 - Requiring 20% PI effort
3. Workforce Diversity – Can we assess the potential impact on workforce diversity and has the SCR policy had any impact on workforce diversity?



How many of the well-funded PI applications were actually brought to Council for SCR?

	Fiscal Year					Total
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Applications scoring 15th percentile or better	10	7	9	8	5	39
brought to Council	6	7	9	6	3	31
approved by Council	6	7	9	6	3	31

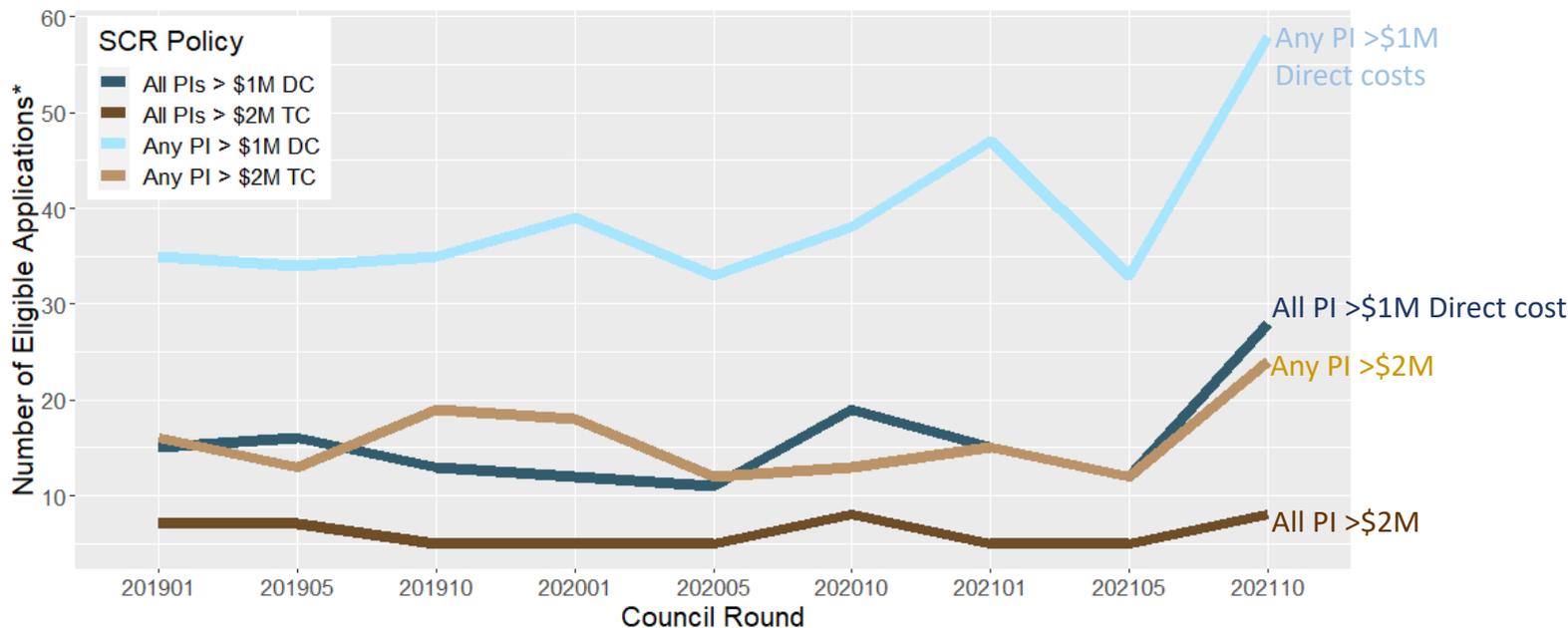


Modeling the Impact of proposed changes

Identifying more applications – seemed like a promising approach, initially



Any PI



*Non-RFA

But then NIH changed its policies, raising the threshold to \$2M total costs, erasing the impact of the change

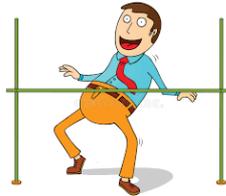


Modeling the Impact of proposed changes



Any PI

+



Lower payline

+



Limit well-funded time

=

0 -2 applications per cycle might be eliminated from consideration

Because of the threshold change, we found that fewer than 5 applications per Council cycle would be flagged as well-funded SCR potential applications. This made our proposed policies to tighten criteria irrelevant.



A revised proposal to reduce the concentration of funding

Flag more applications



Lower threshold

- Lower the \$ threshold for SCR
- \$1M total instead of \$2M total



Any PI

- Close eligibility loopholes – any PI versus all PIs on MPI grants

Tighten criteria for awarding



Lower payline

- Lower the payline to 6% or better



Limit well-funded
time

- Limiting the duration of well-funded status to 12 months was considered impractical, so this will not be recommended

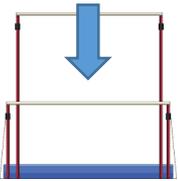


Modeling the Impact of proposed changes

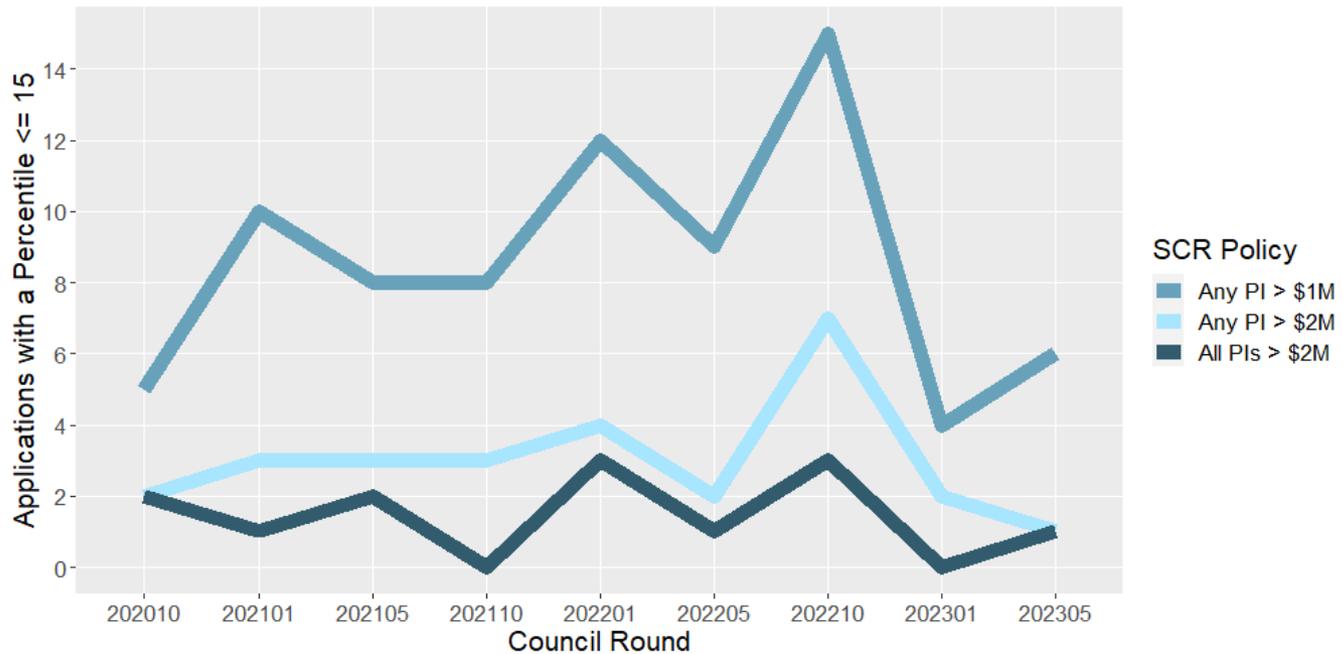
*Step 1 – Identify more applications in the funding range
(up to 15th percentile)*



Any PI



Lower threshold



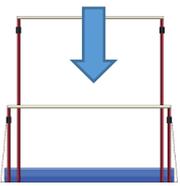


Modeling the Impact of proposed changes

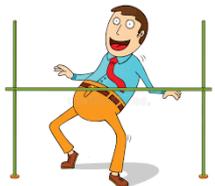
Step 2 - Identify more applications, then tighten criteria for funding



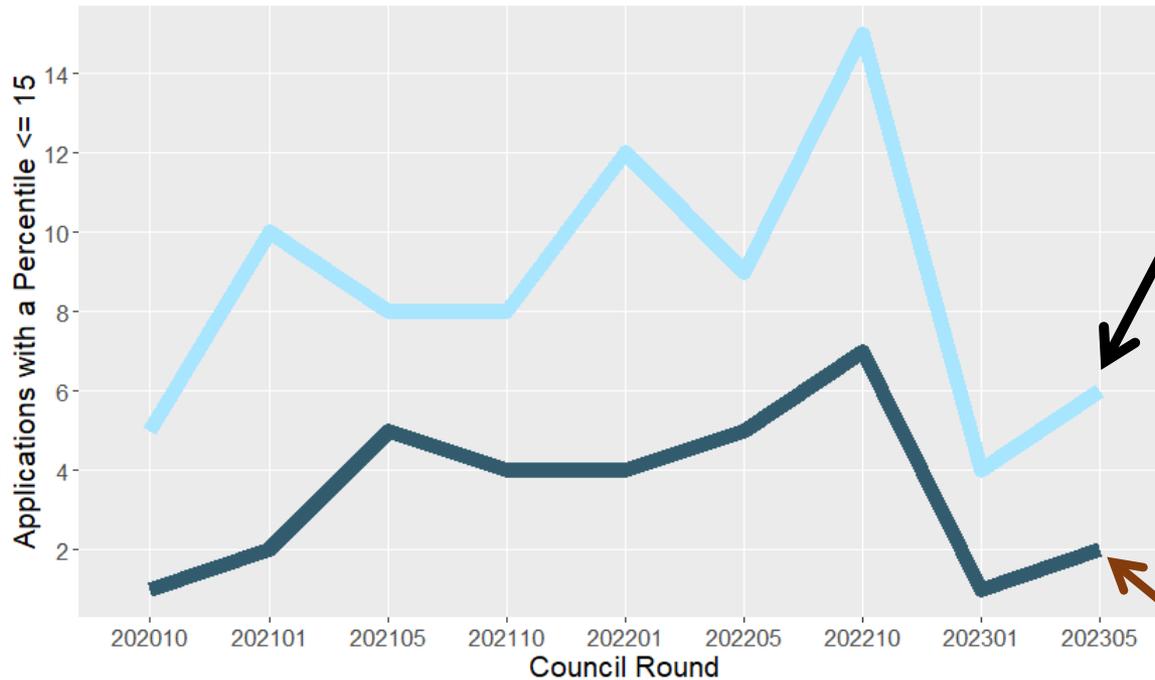
Any PI



Lower threshold



Lower payline



Identify more applications as being from 'well-funded' PIs

SCR Policy

- Any PI > \$1M
- Any PI > \$1M + %tile <= 6

Tighten eligibility criteria in flagged applications. Only this subset would go to Council for Review

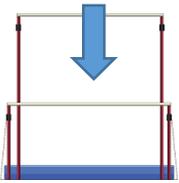


Modeling the Impact of proposed changes

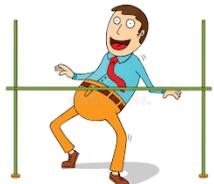
Will this make a difference? Look at proportion of \$ requested



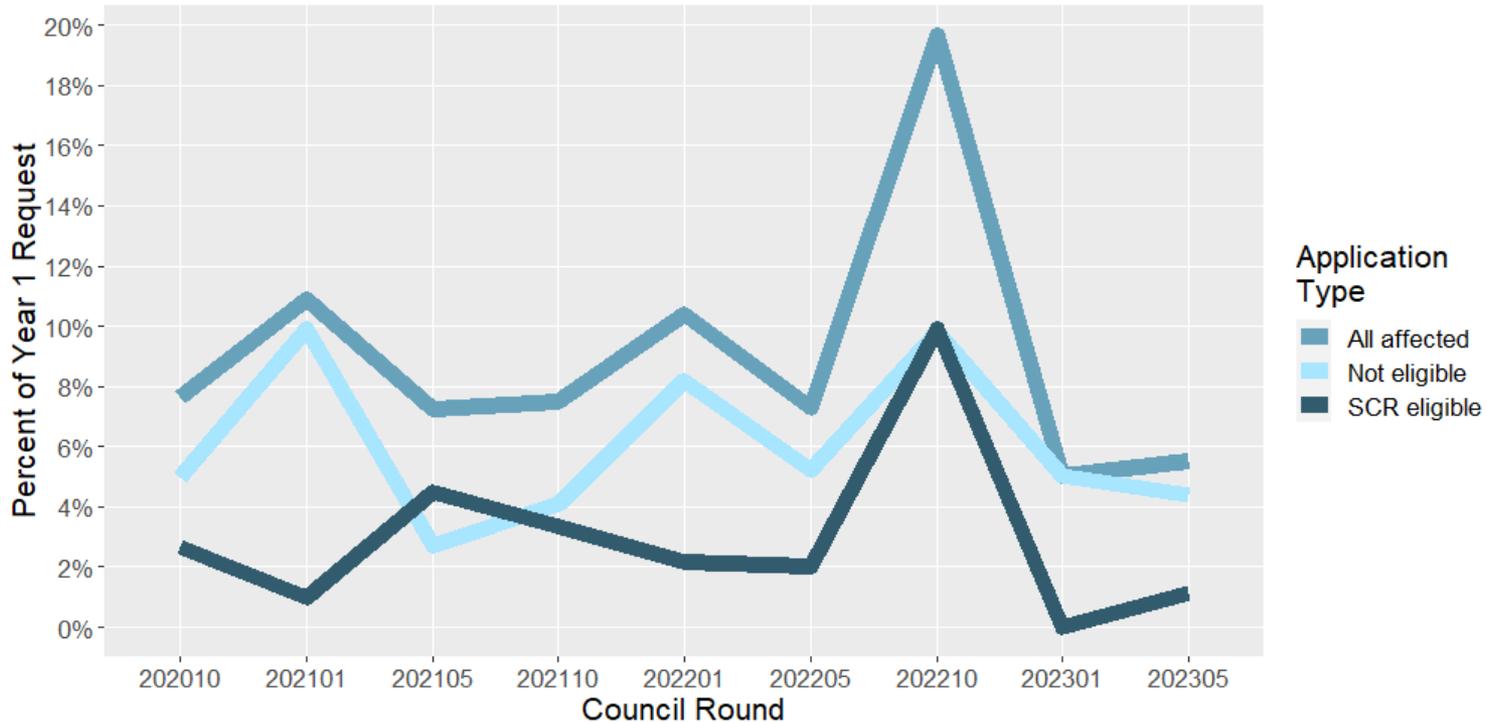
Any PI



Lower threshold



Lower payline



**The proposed policy will flag applications requesting 6 – 20% of all \$ in a Council round
And a significant proportion will not be eligible for funding consideration**



Summary: A revised proposal to reduce this concentration of funding

- As a result of increased flagging, applications representing 6-20% of all the requested funds (or approximately \$8M) for a Council round will be identified as well-funded PI applications.
- Tightening the eligibility criteria will make more than half of identified applications ineligible for funding consideration
- The combination of identifying more well-funded PI applications and tightening eligibility will exclude approximately 2-5x more grant applications from consideration for funding, compared with existing policy
- The proposed combination of policies will allow NICHD to reduce the proportion of funds going to well-funded investigators.
- NICHD award approximately \$350M in new awards each fiscal year. Based on this, there is the potential to reallocate approximately \$20M per fiscal year.



Discussion