



AUTM Joins NACUBO, COGR, and 15 Other Organizations in Filing Amicus Brief Supporting Community Appeal of Indirect Cost Reimbursement Rate Cap

The amicus brief supports lawsuits against the new National Institutes of Health policy

June 16, 2025 (Washington, DC)—Today, AUTM joined the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), COGR, and 15 other organizations in filing an amicus brief in support of lawsuits against a National Institutes of Health (NIH) indirect cost rate cap. The [lawsuits](#) were filed by the Association of American Universities, American Council on Education, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Association of American Medical Colleges, and other organizations, higher education institutions, and states to challenge a February policy from NIH that capped indirect cost rate reimbursements at 15% for institutions of higher education. This is an unprecedented federal pullback that would shift even more of the costs of conducting federal research to the colleges and universities performing this vital work on behalf of American taxpayers.

The reimbursements are an essential part of the federally funded research that higher education institutions perform for NIH and other government agencies. This research has real and unavoidable direct and indirect costs, many of which colleges and universities absorb so that campus faculty, staff, and students can deliver on the objectives of federal research grants and contracts. In FY23, institutions estimate they spent [more than \\$28 billion](#) of their own funds to support research, including over \$6.8 billion in unreimbursed indirect costs.

For decades, colleges and universities have negotiated with the federal government for their reimbursement rates for indirect costs—from facilities maintenance and security to staffing to research equipment. The new 15% cap is a stark reduction from current rates, which are carefully reviewed and are already capped by the government.

“AUTM's participation in this amicus brief underscores our unwavering commitment to supporting research institutions and ensuring the sustainability of the vital research enterprise,” said AUTM CEO Steve Susalka. “The proposed NIH indirect cost cap represents an unprecedented shift that would unfairly burden universities, forcing them to absorb even more of the unavoidable costs associated with federally funded research. This isn't just about overhead; it's about the infrastructure, the people, and the essential support systems that enable groundbreaking discoveries to be brought to society. We stand in strong solidarity with our partners in higher education to challenge this policy, which threatens to undermine the very foundation of the public research that drives American innovation and delivers immense value to taxpayers.”

The amicus brief outlines the history of indirect cost rates and urges the court to rule that the NIH policy to cap the rates at 15% is unprecedented. The brief states that “the rate change will cause immediate and irreparable harm to universities and the nation as a whole.”



The brief continues—

“Universities employ tens of thousands of people and collaborate with state and local partners to help solve regional challenges through joint research and innovation. University research fuels spending in the regional economy, driving discoveries that launch new ventures, attract private investment, and make positive social impact. A massive reduction in universities’ research budgets would immediately and seriously jeopardize these contributions to local regions, creating ripple effects throughout entire state economies.”

Endorsers

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
- APPA: Leadership in Educational Facilities
- Association of American Law Schools
- Association of Independent Research Institutions
- Association of Research Libraries
- Association of University Technology Managers, Inc. (AUTM)
- Campus Safety Health and Environmental Management Association (CSHEMA)
- COGR
- Council on Social Work Education
- EDUCAUSE
- NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
- National Association of College and University Business Officers
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU)
- National Council of University Research Administrators
- Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)
- Society of Research Administrators International
- URMIA - University Risk Management & Insurance Association

About AUTM

AUTM is the non-profit leader in efforts to educate, promote and inspire professionals to support the development of academic research that changes the world and drives innovation forward. Our community is comprised of more than 3,000 Members who work in more than 800 universities, research centers, hospitals, businesses, and government organizations around the globe.