

Message from the NEI Director: First Funding Opportunities under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009

The recent ARRA legislation provides an additional \$8.2 billion in grant funding for the NIH to help stimulate the United States economy through the support of biomedical research. On March 4, 2009, the first ARRA Funding Opportunity Announcements were released (summarized at <http://grants.nih.gov/recovery/>). I am pleased to inform you that the NEI is a full participant in the NIH Challenge Grants Program, <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-OD-09-003.html>. Applications for the Challenge awards are due April 27, 2009. These grants can provide up to \$1M total costs over a two year period.

In addition to the Challenge Grants, the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) offers three programs to assist vision researchers in obtaining support for construction, renovation and repairs, and high-end instrumentation. <http://grants.nih.gov/recovery/>

Many details of the ARRA distribution continue to be unknown at this time, including the date at which funds will be made available to the individual NIH Institutes and Centers. I continue to anticipate that NEI will receive \$175 million to support vision research for FY2009 and FY2010. In addition to these NEI funds, the NIH will have other broad stimulus programs in addition to those described above. Vision researchers are encouraged to review all new possibilities as they are released. To assist our community in identifying appropriate funding opportunities, NEI staff has prepared an ARRA site that will be updated frequently, <http://www.nei.nih.gov/recovery/>. Staff will continue to use the ARVO alert system to highlight significant information.

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