



IMPACT REPORT 2021



Health
Research
Alliance

A collaborative member organization of nonprofit research funders, committed to maximizing the impact of biomedical research to improve human health.



WWW.HEALTHRA.ORG

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear HRA Members,

2021 was another very successful year for HRA, despite the challenges caused by the pandemic – or maybe because of them. As many of you have told us, HRA is where members have always turned for advice and answers. The opportunity to learn from *(and with)* HRA colleagues is even more valuable during uncertain times. Whether it's the data from our COVID impact survey, networking during a CEO Roundtable, or enhancing knowledge via our DEI resources and trainings, HRA is THE place to go to discuss challenges and learn about potential solutions. If the solutions aren't yet out there — we work together to create them.

Acknowledging this critical function, the 2021 Strategic Plan was developed with one predominant objective — to enhance HRA's value to HRA member organizations. I hope that we succeeded in providing value to your organizations in 2021, and look forward to increasing that value in 2022.



Maryrose Franko, PhD
Executive Director



Annette Huetter
Director of Operations

INCREASING MEMBERS' CAPACITY

In 2021 we enhanced HRA's traditional activities which are designed to increase the impact of research funding (such as Members Meetings, the listserv, working groups, etc.) with a wide range of new activities, including the examples below.

2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

The [2021 Strategic Plan](#) was very much informed by members' input. Details of the plan and the process can be found [here](#). The plan outlines the four goals listed below and recommends a variety of strategies to achieve those goals.

Goal 1: Empower HRA Through a Solid HRA Base

Goal 2: Foster HRA Community


Goal 3: Drive Institutional Learning to Increase Member Organizations' Effectiveness

Goal 4: Improve the Scientific Research Process

Implementation Framework:

This [framework](#) details a flexible plan to help staff, leadership, and membership, prioritize activities designed to achieve the goals set forth in the plan.


CEO ROUNDTABLES

 *"It was incredibly helpful to hear how my fellow CEOs are strategizing for 2022. Can you host these quarterly in 2022?"*

HRA hosted two CEO Roundtables, providing opportunities to network and learn from peers. Discussions included strategic planning and human resource issues such as remote and hybrid work and compensation, among many other topics.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

We created a [Professional Development Program](#) to provide resources to HRA members' staff. The program kicked off with "Understanding your Leadership Style," a workshop to increase individual skills, and to facilitate long-term peer mentoring.

 *"HRA is THE professional society for anyone involved in funding research. This workshop increased my leadership abilities AND broadened my network!"*

COVID RESPONSE

HRA gathered data, provided resources, and offered opportunities for HRA members and the broader community to help inform responses to this and future disruptions, and also to address systemic challenges in the biomedical research ecosystem. Details for the activities below and other COVID responses can be found [here](#).

REIMAGINE BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH



HRA partnered with PLOS to launch the [Reimagine Biomedical Research for a Healthier Future Essay Challenge](#). Authors proposed ideas for changes that re-commit to serving society and achieving an equitable, diverse, and creative research ecosystem. Winning essays were featured in PLOS and presented to the community via an HRA-hosted symposium.

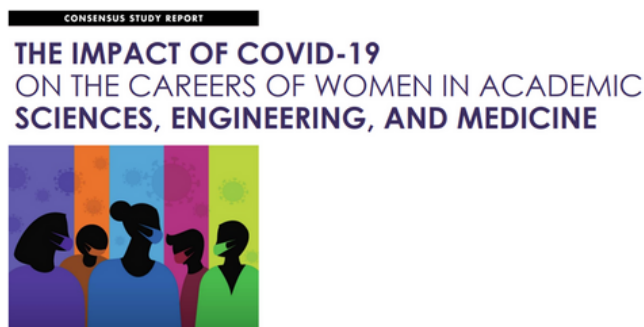
COVID IMPACT SURVEY

Among other [responses to COVID](#), HRA surveyed the membership to understand the pandemic’s organizational impacts on revenue, research grants, and programming. The data confirmed many trends we suspected, but some results were surprising. The resulting [report](#) has informed many organizations’ strategic directions via HRA’s CEO Roundtables, conversations among program staff, and action across HRA’s collaborative working groups.



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE CAREERS OF WOMEN

HRA members discussed the NASEM report "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Careers of Women" and strategies HRA members can employ to mitigate these impacts. [The session](#) was led by Dr. Reshma Jagsi, one of the report's authors.



FUTURE WORKPLACE

[The Future Workplace: Post-pandemic Workforce and the Disruption in the Workplace; Remote, In-person, and Hybrid Models](#). Attendees of this Spring 2021 Members Meeting session learned creative ideas for what it means to be “present” at work and how to create a sense of team even when you are virtual. Check out the many valuable resources posted to this page shared by the speakers, including fellow HRA members, and the links to the platforms below.



HOSTING VIRTUAL EVENTS

This Spring 2021 Members Meeting [session](#) presented best practices for organizing and facilitating online events, including encouraging meaningful participation, and selecting the most appropriate event platform for large meetings, virtual board meetings, site visits, connecting with grantees, advisors, etc. (See links above.)

ADVANCING DEI

HRA has long focused on increasing diversity in members’ portfolios and across the biomedical workforce. However, the 2021 Strategic Plan placed a much stronger focus on [advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) in grant programs and processes, as well as health equity.

DEI WORKING GROUP EFFORTS

In 2021 the [DEI working Group](#) created subgroups to make significant progress in three areas, and surveyed the HRA membership to create [tools and resources](#) to help HRA members advance their own efforts.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group		
Goal: To provide learning opportunities, develop resources, and identify tools to amplify member’s individual efforts to measurably advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in their grant programs and processes.		
Subgroup 1	Subgroup 2	Subgroup 3
Collecting and Using Demographic Data	Increasing Diversity in Applicant and Awardee Pools	Reducing Bias in Peer Review

BME



HRA hosted three workshops led by the BMe Community. [Read](#) how to use “Asset Framing” across all parts of the grantmaking lifecycle. Asset framing focuses on a person’s strengths and assets and as opposed to creating programs to “fix what is broken.”

HRA/AAMC HOLISTIC REVIEW SESSION

HRA hosted a [webinar](#) by Amy Addams of the AAMC, entitled “Holistic Considerations for the Review and Selection of Grant Applications.” Holistic review is a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant’s capabilities which considers experiences, attributes, competencies, in addition to how an individual might contribute value to the institute's mission.

CORE PRINCIPLE 1

In a holistic recruitment and selection process, selection criteria are:

-  Broad-based
-  Linked to institutional mission and goals
-  Promote diversity and inclusion as essential to excellence

2021 AT A GLANCE

- 100 Member Organizations
- \$5.5B in Grant Funding
- 2 members Meetings
- 10 Working Groups
- 30+ Webinars
- 700+ Listserv Posts

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022

SAVE THE DATES

Spring 2022 HRA Members Meeting

April 20 & 21, 2022

The spring HRA Members Meeting will be held in Irvine, California thanks to the generous support of our host the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation.
(as of 1/13/2022)

Fall 2022 HRA Members Meeting

September 29 & 30, 2022

The fall Members Meeting is currently scheduled to be held in Toronto, generously sponsored by the PSI Foundation.

2022 Initiatives

1. Creation of HRA's Grants Administration Handbook
2. HRA Analyzer's power highlighted via infographics
3. HRA Open Platform transitions from gmail to ORCID
4. CEO Roundtables hosted quarterly
5. Partnership with ORFG to launch the Open And Equitable Model Funding Program