



# PRESERVE NIOSH

Talking Points for Members Grassroots Advocacy

**Revised: February 2026**

## Summary Statement

On April 1, 2025, AIHA saw the dismantling of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), with reduction-in-force (RIF) notices being sent to close to 90% of the workforce (impacting close to 1000 workers). AIHA swiftly responded by deploying a Restore NIOSH grassroots advocacy campaign that generated nearly 10,000 member letters to their elected officials, in-person meetings between members and district offices, and lobbying here in Washington by senior AIHA leadership.

AIHA worked diligently to ensure that policymakers understood the indispensable role NIOSH plays in the federal government, not only as a leading research institute but also as a foundation for evidence-based practices in occupational health and safety.

In January 2026, we were pleased to see the full reinstatement of those workers who had not left the agency (i.e., had not taken the federal government's buyout package, retired, or sought employment elsewhere). While this is promising news, the events of the past year have taught us an important lesson—we must continue to ensure ALL congressional leaders and their staffers understand the unique value of NIOSH's mission, emphasizing that its research and programs are not duplicated elsewhere in the federal government and are critical to the protection of worker health and safety not only here in the US but around the world.

## **What is happening with 2026 funding for NIOSH and other federal agencies focused on worker health and safety?**

- After months of deliberation, interrupted by a government shutdown that spanned multiple months in the fall of 2025, Congress finally approved and President Trump signed into law FY26 funding for all occupational health and safety agencies impacting our profession – NIOSH (under Health & Human Services), OSHA, OSH Review Commission, and MSHA (under Dept of Labor), and the Chemical Safety Board. The good news is that the approved budgets maintain FULL funding for all agencies, which reflects the hard work of AIHA's advocacy efforts.
- It is important to note that NIOSH experienced at least a 20% attrition in staff head count, due to the RIF notices. Many departments and programs are short-staffed, and an agency-wide assessment is now underway to determine capacity.



# **PRESERVE NIOSH**

Talking Points for Members Grassroots Advocacy

**Revised: February 2026**

## **Closing Statement**

AIHA continues to emphasize that cutting or underfunding NIOSH not only jeopardizes current worker protections and recommendations but also undermines the ability to face emerging challenges in occupational health and safety, such as new and emerging technologies [i.e., AI, robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), bio-manufacturing, and shifting workforce demographics]. Therefore, NIOSH and its core programs are essential for ensuring every worker, in every sector in the United States, has a safe and healthy workplace.