

# U.S. Taxpayers are Entitled to Access the Results of the Research They Fund

U.S. taxpayers spend more than \$80 billion annually to fund basic and applied research. Yet, all too often, paywalls prevent taxpayers from accessing the results of the research they fund. In fact, the American public typically pays twice: once to fund the research and again to access the results. These artificial barriers are maintained by legacy publishers that restrict access to those with the means to pay exorbitant subscription fees, locking out the majority of the public, including researchers, scientists, and other experts that rely on the newest research results to turn breakthroughs into better lives—for all of us. **Research provides a critical foundation for our 21st century economy, but many of us don't have access to build on this foundation.**

Public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate just how important it is for scientists to access the results of research without delay or cost to the public. Open Science—policies and practices that empower scientists to make research immediately available and fully reusable—accelerates discovery and enables us to build entire industries and solutions around what were once just ideas. Without Open Science, taxpayer-funded research is needlessly limited in delivering on its promise to leverage investments in science and research for public benefit.

## A National Open Access Policy to Meet Pressing Challenges

The centuries-old approach to research publishing impedes our ability as a nation to address a wide array of current and future national challenges that impact our economic competitiveness and the health and safety of the American people. Congress should take action now to ensure Open Science practices are applied to all taxpayer-funded research by passing a national open access policy.

**The COVID-19 crisis has taught us that we cannot go back to science as usual, where research articles are locked behind paywalls and data is stuck in silos.** Congress can end the needless delays by making all taxpayer-funded research articles immediately open to all. **American lives depend on it.**

Such a policy should require that all articles, data, and code resulting from taxpayer-funded research be made immediately and freely available online to the public in open and machine readable formats and under a license that allows them to be freely shared and fully used.

**With a national open access policy, we can end the needless delays that researchers, doctors, patients, students, entrepreneurs, and innovators currently face, and accelerate the return on the taxpayers' investment.**

Congressional action on this issue is also important to ensure American leadership in science by bringing the U.S. to equal footing with governments around the world that have already established strong open access policies and principles to promote their national innovation agendas.

## Lessons from COVID-19

The pandemic brought together researchers from across the country—and around the world—to build open systems for research collaboration that have been key to our pandemic response, including the fastest development of a vaccine in human history.

As part of the pandemic response in March 2020, the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP) called on for-profit publishers to lift their normal 12-month embargo on journal articles for COVID-related research. Waiting an entire year to make COVID-related research public would have cost many more lives, and the continuation of any embargo period on taxpayer-funded research is a dangerous move we cannot afford or accept.

COVID-19 exposed the severe limitations of a “closed” research publishing system that prevents real-time collaboration—and enriches a small number of legacy publishing companies at the expense of the American public.