



CTN Listening Session with **NIDA Director Nora Volkow**

April 26, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. EDT



Photo by Mary Noble Ours

The CTN Listening Session will be held as part of the **Annual Steering Committee Meeting**. [Registration](#) is required to attend. This will be a unique opportunity for CTN members to meet NIDA Director, Dr. Nora Volkow as well as share their insights and experiences on a full range of issues and challenges related to diversity, equity, inclusivity and accessibility. Topics for discussion include but are not limited to: changing culture to promote equity, inclusivity, and justice; improving policies, transparency, and oversight; strengthening career pathways, training, mentoring, and the professoriate; ensuring fairness in review and funding deliberations; enhancing funding and research support for individuals from diverse backgrounds and historically under-resourced institutions; and addressing structural racism in the biomedical research enterprise.

Background: In July 2020, NIDA Director Nora Volkow established [NIDA's Racial Equity Initiative \(REI\)](#) to organize the Institute's efforts with the goal of addressing the impact of structural racism on addiction science and to take action to promote racial equity in NIDA's workplace, workforce, and research portfolio. Workgroups of committed volunteers from across NIDA Headquarters (HQ) and the Intramural Research Program (IRP) were

established to take action in each of these three areas. A Town Hall was convened to launch the effort, which was followed by an extensive series of listening sessions held by each workgroup, a NIDA workplace climate survey, and a scientific meeting focused on enhancing health disparities research related to substance use and addiction. These opportunities to listen to community input have shaped ongoing activities and have informed this Action Plan toward the goal of racial equity. NIDA strongly supports the NIH-wide [UNITE Initiative](#) to end structural racism, and the complementary activities of NIDA's Racial Equity Initiative are intended to facilitate impactful change in NIDA's specific mission space.

The NIDA Racial Equity Initiative Scientific Workforce Diversity Workgroup: This workgroup seeks to increase racial and ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusivity within the addiction research community by identifying disparities and systemic barriers, engaging the community at all education and career levels, and implementing programs and funding opportunities to enhance, promote, and retain historically underrepresented groups (URG) in addiction science within the US. To that end, the REI initiative has been hosting listening sessions with external stakeholders who work and serve in diverse settings. The insights shared from these listening sessions will provide valuable information on the full range of issues and challenges facing diverse talent and will help develop the REI action plan and initiative priorities.

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