Administers, fosters, and supports research in the basic and general medical sciences and in related natural or behavioral sciences, which have significance for two or more other institutes, or are outside the general area of responsibility of any other institute. Programs are carried out through:

- Grants and contracts to and cooperative agreements with scientific institutions, commercial organizations, and individuals for the support of both basic biomedical research and applied research and development, including broad multidisciplinary research programs; and
- Individual and institutional research training awards.