

Boston BU Lab

What's going on?

Boston University (BU) intends to build a bioterrorism research laboratory in the South End/Roxbury ([overhead view](#)) where research would be performed on organisms such as anthrax, plague, botulism, tularemia, and viral hemorrhagic fevers (e.g., Ebola) that cause deadly diseases for which there is no known cure, that can be transmitted through the air, and that can be used in biowarfare. This would include construction of a BioSafety Level 4 (BSL4) laboratory, the level required for research on the most dangerous and exotic categories of disease causing agents ([What the BSL numbers mean](#)). The federal government will provide \$127 million toward construction of the laboratory under its Biodefense Research Agenda with matching funds of about \$42.3 million to be paid by BU and BU Medical Center.

There are three BSL4 laboratories in the United States: Centers for Disease Control on the outskirts of Atlanta, GA; the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research on the outskirts of San Antonio, TX; and the US Army Research Institute on Infectious Diseases at Ft. Detrick on the outskirts of Frederick, MD. In addition to funding the BU lab, the federal government is also funding the construction of a BSL4 lab by the University of Texas Medical Center on an island in Galveston, TX, and is building its own BSL4 lab at Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Hamilton, MT. Traditionally, these labs have been placed away from population centers. The lab in Boston would be the only US BSL4 laboratory in a densely populated urban neighborhood. Download, [Which One Does Not Belong?](#)