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Federal Research and Development (R&D) Funding: FY2026

September 3, 2025

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Federal Research and Development (R&D) Funding: FY2026

SUMMARY

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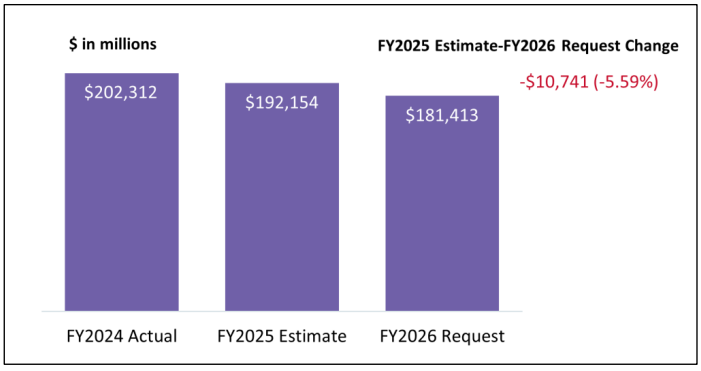
The U.S. government supports a broad range of scientific and engineering research and development (R&D). The purposes of this R&D include addressing national defense, public health, public safety, the environment, and energy security; advancing knowledge generally; developing the U.S. scientific and engineering workforce; strengthening the capacity of U.S. institutions and firms to conduct cutting-edge research and to develop innovative technologies; and enhancing the competitiveness of the United States in the global economy. Most of the R&D funded by the federal government is performed in support of the unique missions of individual funding agencies. Congress typically provides R&D appropriations through the annual appropriations process, including through 9 of the 12 regular appropriations bills, supplemental appropriations, or continuing resolutions.

Using information provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regarding funding for activities and assets characterized as R&D, CRS calculated that President Trump's budget proposal for FY2026 includes approximately $181.4 billion for R&D, $10.7 billion (-6%) below the FY2025 estimated level of $192.2 billion (see figure). The requested $181.4 billion, which includes advance and supplemental appropriations, would support federal investments in the conduct of R&D as well as R&D-related physical assets (such as the construction of R&D facilities or equipment).

The majority of R&D funding is concentrated in a subset of federal agencies. For example, approximately 92% of the total R&D funding requested in the President's FY2026 budget would go to five agencies—the Department of Defense (DOD), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF)—with DOD (62%) and NIH (15%), combined, accounting for 77% of all proposed federal R&D funding.

Federal Research and Development Funding, FY2024-FY2026 Request

(budget authority, in current dollars)



Source: CRS, calculated from Office of Management and Budget, email communication with author, July 2, 2025.

Under the President's FY2026 budget proposal, R&D funding would decrease, relative to FY2025 estimates, for four of the five agencies receiving the most R&D funding. The largest dollar decrease would be for NIH (down $19.0 billion, -41%, to $27.0 billion), and the largest percentage decrease would be for NSF (down $3.9 billion, -55%, to $3.1 billion). DOE R&D investments would decrease by $3.2 billion (-16%) to $16.7 billion, and NASA R&D investments would decrease by $3.8 billion (-34%) to $7.2 billion. Of the five agencies receiving the most R&D funding, DOD would see the only increase in R&D funding, relative to FY2025 estimates (up $21.0 billion, 23%, to $112.9 billion). According to OMB, DOD's budget request assumes $37.1 billion in supplemental R&D funding for FY2026, without which DOD R&D funding would decrease by $16.1 billion (-18%) compared to FY2025 amounts.

As it acts on the FY2026 appropriations process, Congress may consider a number of issues regarding the President's request. First, the President's FY2026 budget request appears to signal a shift in R&D funding away from civilian agencies to military components under DOD. Second, though Congress provided funding for R&D in FY2025 at FY2024 levels, the President's budget proposal estimates FY2025 R&D funding at 5% below the actual FY2024 amount, potentially signaling a shifting of resources away from R&D to non-R&D activities within agency accounts that support both, among other potential

explanations. Third, federal agencies that support R&D may enter FY2026 with reduced staffing compared to FY2025 levels. Should Congress decide to maintain or increase current R&D funding levels, factors such as staffing reductions (as well as any future reductions) may affect how federal agencies execute their budget authority for FY2026.

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Introduction

The federal government has played an important role in supporting research and development (R&D) efforts that have led to scientific breakthroughs and new technologies, from the internet and communications satellites to defenses against disease. Generally, rationales for past, current, and future federal R&D support have focused on the potential returns on such investments related to national defense, public health, public safety, the environment, and energy security; advancing knowledge generally; developing the U.S. scientific and engineering workforce; and strengthening the innovative capacity and global competitiveness of U.S. institutions and firms.

The 119th Congress is engaged in a range of legislative activities focused on the U.S. R&D enterprise, including authorizations, appropriations, and oversight of federal R&D programs and policies. Executive and legislative branch decisions about the prioritization of R&D have broadly included long-standing agency mission objectives and efforts to promote the competitiveness of the United States in the global economy. In recent years, federal budget caps have also informed such decisionmaking—both in the context of the entire federal budget and among competing needs within the federal R&D portfolio.[1]

There is no single, centralized source of federal R&D funds. Rather, the U.S. government supports a broad range of scientific and engineering R&D, the majority of which is performed in support of the unique missions of individual funding agencies. Each agency typically develops its R&D budget internally as part of its overall budget development process (and in coordination with other agencies for multiagency initiatives and programs). R&D funding may be included either in appropriations accounts that are entirely devoted to R&D or in accounts that also include funding for non-R&D activities. Agency R&D budgets may include funding for the conduct of R&D, facilities and equipment for R&D, or both. Agency budgets are reviewed, revised, and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and become part of the President's annual budget submission to Congress. The federal R&D budget is then calculated by aggregating the R&D activities of all federal agencies.

Congress plays a central role in defining the nation's R&D priorities as it makes decisions about the level and allocation of R&D funding—overall, within agencies, and for specific programs (the **text box** below provides definitions of selected terms associated with federal R&D funding). As Congress acts on the FY2026 appropriations process, it faces two overarching issues regarding support for R&D: the amount of the federal budget to be spent on federal R&D and the prioritization and allocation of the available funding.

This report begins with the status of FY2026 appropriations, including an overview of the regular appropriations bills that typically include R&D funding as well as additional legislation in the 119th Congress that may affect FY2026 appropriations. The report also provides a high-level discussion of the overall funding level of R&D in President Trump's FY2026 budget request, followed by analyses of requested R&D funding across the following five agencies and departments that account for approximately 92% of total federal R&D funding requested for FY2026: the Department of Defense (DOD; 62%), the National Institutes of Health (NIH; 15%), the Department of Energy (DOE; 9%), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA; 4%), and the National Science Foundation (NSF; 2%).

[1] For example, the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25) imposed caps on discretionary spending through FY2021, and the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (P.L. 118-5) set new caps on defense and nondefense discretionary spending for FY2024 and FY2025. For more information, see CRS Insight IN12340, *The FY2025 President's Budget in Historical Context*, by D. Andrew Austin.

Unless otherwise noted in this report, all current- and prior-year funding totals are expressed in current dollars. Likewise, all references to R&D funding amounts for FY2024, FY2025, and FY2026 follow the accounting methodology used by OMB in preparing the President's FY2026 budget proposal, which is outlined in the *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget*:

- FY2024 amounts include actual transactions and balances, as recorded in agency accounts;
- FY2025 amounts include enacted appropriations provided by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4, Division A), and "may also include indefinite appropriations on the basis of amounts likely to be required"; and
- FY2026 amounts include requested funding levels for all programs, including advance appropriations—notably, anticipated amounts provided by an FY2025 budget reconciliation measure (discussed further in "Reconciliation").[2]

[2] Office of Management and Budget (OMB), *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, May 30, 2025, p. 4, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf (hereinafter OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*).

Federal Research and Development (R&D)-Related Terms Used in the Federal Budget Process

Though boundaries separating one type of R&D activity from another may not always be clear or seem relevant in practice, where such lines are drawn and how various R&D activities are defined and categorized directly inform the federal budget process. The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provides definitions for R&D activities to be used in the identification and collection of federal R&D spending across federal agencies and departments in OMB Circular A-11: *Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget*.[3] OMB's definitions have also varied over time. For example, as of FY2017, OMB replaced the R&D category "development" with a subset referred to as "experimental development" to better align its data with those collected by the National Science Foundation and to be consistent with international standards. OMB thus omits "non-experimental development" funding (which the Department of Defense [DOD] categorizes under Budget Activities 6.7 and 6.8) from the calculation of DOD and total federal R&D funding levels. OMB Circular A-11 provides the following definitions for terms that are referenced throughout this report's analysis of federal R&D funding:

- *Conduct of R&D:* "Research and experimental development activities are defined as creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge—including knowledge of people, culture, and society—and to devise new applications using available knowledge."
- *Basic Research:* "Basic research is defined as experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts. Basic research may include activities with broad or general applications in mind, such as the study of how plant genomes change, but should exclude research directed towards a specific application or requirement, such as the optimization of the genome of a specific crop species."
- *Applied Research:* "Applied research is defined as original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. Applied research is, however, directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective."
- *Experimental Development:* "Experimental development is defined as creative and systematic work, drawing on knowledge gained from research and practical experience, which is directed at producing new products or processes or improving existing products or processes. Like research, experimental development will result in gaining additional knowledge."
- *R&D Equipment:* R&D equipment includes amounts for major equipment for R&D. It includes "acquisition, design, or production of major *movable* equipment, such as mass spectrometers, research vessels, DNA sequencers, and other major movable instruments for use in R&D activities." It includes "programs of $1 million or more that are devoted to the purchase or construction of R&D major equipment."
- *R&D Facilities:* R&D facilities includes amounts for the "construction of facilities that are necessary for the execution of an R&D program. This may include land, major fixed equipment, and supporting infrastructure such as a sewer line, or housing at a remote location."

R&D Appropriations Overview

This section provides an overview of the regular appropriations bills that typically contain federal R&D funding.[4] When addressing FY2026 appropriations legislation, this report refers only to those bills as passed by the Senate or House during the 119th Congress.

Congress makes decisions about R&D funding through the authorization and appropriations processes. In practice, such legislative action primarily occurs at the individual agency,

[3] OMB, *Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget*, Circular A-11, July 2024, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/a11.pdf.

[4] *Regular appropriations bills* generally provide funding for specified agencies, projects, and activities and must be enacted by October 1, the beginning of the fiscal year. They are one of three appropriations measures through which Congress appropriates discretionary R&D funding. The other two are *continuing resolutions*, which generally continue funding for a specified period of time if regular bills are not enacted by the beginning of the new fiscal year, and *supplemental appropriations*, which provide additional appropriations to become available during the current fiscal year. For a detailed discussion of these appropriations measures as well as the overall congressional appropriations process, see CRS Report R42388, *The Congressional Appropriations Process: An Introduction*, coordinated by James V. Saturno.

department, and program level, as Congress considers R&D funding levels as one element of an agency's overall budget. Funding for R&D, therefore, is often included in appropriations line items that also include non-R&D activities. This can complicate attempts to determine specific amounts allocated to R&D as a portion of agency, program, or account-level funding totals specified in appropriations law.

In addition to this report, CRS produces individual reports on each of the appropriations bills and for a number of federal agencies. These reports can be accessed via the CRS website at http://www.crs.gov/iap/appropriations.

Regular Appropriations

Of the 12 regular appropriations bills, 9 typically provide annual appropriations for the agencies and departments that would, together, receive the majority of R&D funding in the FY2026 budget proposal. **Table 1** shows the corresponding regular appropriations bills that provide primary funding for each department and agency, including its R&D activities.

As of the date of this report, in the 119th Congress, the House has passed two of these nine appropriations bills—the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 3944), and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 4016), and the Senate has passed an amended version of H.R. 3944 that consolidated two of the nine appropriations bills—Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (Division A) and Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (Division B). The status of each appropriations bill is available on the CRS web page "Appropriations Status Table," available at http://www.crs.gov/AppropriationsStatusTable/Index.

Table 1. Alignment of Agency Research and Development (R&D) Funding and Regular Appropriations Bills

Department/Agency	Regular Appropriations Bill
Department of Agriculture	Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act
Department of Commerce	Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act
Department of Defense	Department of Defense Appropriations Act
Department of Energy	Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act
Department of Homeland Security	Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act
Department of the Interior	Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act
Department of Transportation	Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act
Department of Veterans Affairs	Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act
Environmental Protection Agency	Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act

Department/Agency	Regular Appropriations Bill
National Institutes of Health	(1) Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (2) Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act
National Science Foundation	Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act

Source: CRS Report R40858, *Locate an Agency or Program Within Appropriations Bills*, by Justin Murray.

Reconciliation

Outside of regular FY2026 appropriations bills, additional legislative activity of the 119th Congress may impact federal R&D funding levels for FY2026. For example, the FY2025 reconciliation act signed into law on July 4, 2025 (P.L. 119-21), included provisions pertaining to R&D funding levels at DOD and DOE (see Titles II and V, respectively).

Additional provisions relating to tax incentives for certain business expenses related to R&D investments are also included in Section 70302 of P.L. 119-21. Though not directly tied to federal R&D funding levels, such provisions may impact R&D spending levels more broadly across the R&D ecosystem.

The President's FY2026 Budget Proposal

On May 2, 2025, President Trump sent his initial FY2026 appropriations request to Congress, which included broad budgetary outlines, reductions, additions, and initiatives.[5] On May 30, 2025, OMB released the *Technical Supplement to the FY2026 Budget*, which included the *Appendix* and *Crosscut Tables*, and provided additional details regarding amounts for R&D included in the President's request.[6]

The *Technical Supplement to the FY2026 Budget* did not include an analysis of proposed government-wide R&D funding levels, which, in prior years, has been included in the *Analytical Perspectives* supplement.[7] Rather, CRS calculated the requested federal-government-wide R&D funding totals described in this section using information provided directly to CRS by OMB.[8]

[5] OMB, *The President's FY 2026 Discretionary Budget Request*, May 2, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-resources/budget/the-presidents-fy-2026-discretionary-budget-request.

[6] OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*; and OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Crosscut Tables*, May 30, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/BUDGET-2026-CROSSCUT.pdf.

[7] See, for example, OMB, "Research and Development," in *Analytical Perspectives, Budget of the United States Government*, https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/budget, for fiscal years 2017 through 2025. Relative to data CRS received directly from OMB, more limited information regarding R&D funding levels included in the President's budget proposal is published in OMB's *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Crosscut Tables*. Specifically, Table 2-2 compiles budgetary data reported by agencies to OMB regarding federal investments classified as supporting the "conduct of research and development." These totals do not include proposed federal investments in the construction of R&D facilities and equipment, which agencies classify as "physical assets" for the purpose of reporting budgetary data to OMB. See, OMB, "Table 2-2. Federal Investment Budget Authority and Outlays: Grant and Direct Federal Programs," in *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Crosscut Tables*, May 30, 2025, p. 43, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/BUDGET-2026-CROSSCUT.pdf.

[8] OMB, email communication with author, July 7, 2025.

According to OMB, proposed R&D funding amounts included in the President's budget request include supplemental and advance appropriations.

Using information provided by OMB, CRS calculated that the President's proposed FY2026 budget includes approximately $181.4 billion for R&D, $10.7 billion (6%) below the FY2025 estimated level of $192.2 billion (see **Table 2**).[9] The requested $181.4 billion would support federal investments in the conduct of R&D as well as R&D-related physical assets (such as the construction of R&D facilities or equipment).

Table 2. Federal Research and Development (R&D) Funding, FY2024-FY2026 Request

(budget authority, in millions of current dollars)

			FY2025 Estimate-FY2026 Request	
FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Estimate	FY2026 Request	Dollar Change	Percentage Change
202,312	192,154	181,413	-10,741	-5.6%

Source: CRS calculated R&D funding totals using information provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); OMB, email communication with author, July 2, 2025.

Notes: FY2024 total includes actual transactions and balances, as recorded in agency accounts; FY2025 total includes enacted amounts provided by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4, Division A), and "may also include indefinite appropriations on the basis of amounts likely to be required"; and FY2026 total includes proposed appropriations for all programs, per the description in OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, May 30, 2025, p. 4, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf.

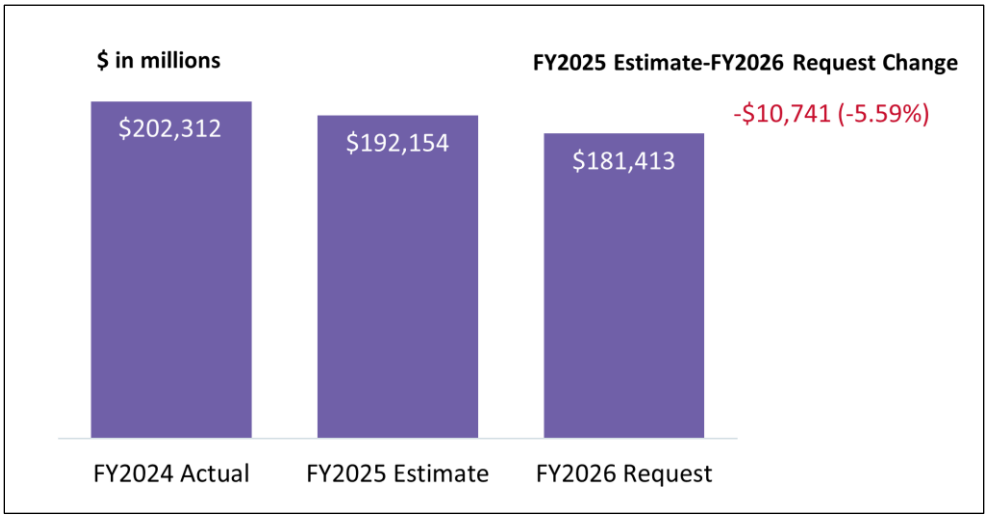
Using information provided by OMB, CRS also calculated that total estimated R&D funding for FY2025 ($192.2 billion) represents a 5% decrease from actual R&D funding reported for FY2024. CRS used information provided by OMB to calculate *actual* R&D funding totals for FY2024 (i.e., R&D-related transactions and balances recorded by agency accounts) and *estimated* R&D funding totals for FY2025 (see **Figure 1**). According to OMB, estimated R&D funding for FY2025 includes amounts provided by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4, Division A) and "may also include indefinite appropriations on the basis of amounts likely to be required."[10]

[9] The President's FY2026 proposal, presented in the *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, includes advance appropriations provided to agencies for FY2026, unless otherwise specified. See OMB, "Advance Appropriations," in *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, May 30, 2025, p. 1167, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2026-APP/pdf/BUDGET-2026-APP.pdf. Additionally, FY2025 amounts include enacted appropriations under Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4, Division A), and "may also include indefinite appropriations on the basis of amounts likely to be required." See OMB, "Detailed Budget Estimates," in *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, May 30, 2025, p. 4.

[10] OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, May 30, 2025, p. 4, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf.

Figure 1. Federal Research and Development (R&D) Funding, FY2024-FY2026 Request

(budget authority, in current dollars)



Source: CRS calculated R&D funding totals using information provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); OMB, email communication with author, July 2, 2025.

Notes: FY2024 total includes actual transactions and balances, as recorded in agency accounts; FY2025 total includes enacted amounts provided by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4, Division A), and "may also include indefinite appropriations on the basis of amounts likely to be required"; and FY2026 total includes proposed appropriations for all programs, per the description in OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, May 30, 2025, p. 4, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf.

Though P.L. 119-4 appropriated FY2025 funding for the executive branch at FY2024 levels, several scenarios, or a combination thereof, could account for the reported 5% decrease. Given available information, CRS is unable to determine the exact cause. One reason for the decrease could be that FY2024 actual levels include funds appropriated for prior fiscal years. For example, Congress has authorized DOD to obligate (i.e., commit funds to be spent for specific purposes) research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) appropriations over a two-year period. This means that FY2023 appropriations may be obligated and/or expended in FY2023 and FY2024. Though not included in FY2024 appropriations legislation, amounts obligated and/or expended during FY2024 would be reflected in actual FY2024 levels reported by DOD. Another reason could be that supplemental funding provided for R&D in FY2024 may be reported as actual FY2024 R&D spending, which would increase the total above the amount provided for FY2024 through regular appropriations. Additionally, for FY2025, the estimated R&D spending level reported by OMB could be lower than the enacted level because it includes rescissions of unobligated balances in R&D accounts funded by FY2025 appropriations or because it includes transfers of budget authority between R&D and non-R&D accounts (above or below the reporting threshold). OMB's estimated R&D spending level for FY2025 could also reflect the Administration's shifting of funds away from R&D to support other activities within accounts that are hybrid in nature (e.g., support both R&D- and non-R&D-related activities).

The following analysis of the President's FY2026 request examines proposed federal R&D investments from two perspectives—the federal-government-wide level and the individual agency or department level. Federal-government-wide analysis examines R&D funding comparisons across agencies and departments and potential shifts in the Administration's R&D priorities writ large. Individual agency and department analyses examine R&D funding and

priorities at program and account levels, and highlight selected R&D policy considerations to inform congressional appropriations and oversight activities.

Each perspective may provide unique insights and also involve certain limitations. For example, though government-wide analysis may reveal the Administration's overarching R&D-related priorities (e.g., defense vs. non-defense R&D investments), it may not capture certain program or account-level details (e.g., proposed program terminations) visible only when examining individual department or agency funding requests.

Analyzing federal-wide R&D funding levels in the President's FY2026 proposal involves a number of considerations, some of which may relate to technical details regarding budgetary data contained in the request, among other potential issues. Selected factors and considerations are detailed in the following **text box**.

Technical and Practical Considerations Associated with Analyzing the FY2026 Budget Request

Several factors complicate the analysis of changes in R&D funding for FY2026, both in aggregate and for selected agencies:

First, requested R&D funding levels in the President's proposal are in the form of *budget authority*, which refers to the authority provided by federal law for agencies to enter into contracts or other financial obligations. Agency execution of budget authority for the remainder of FY2025 and into FY2026 is currently in flux, as reported grant terminations, frozen funds, and staffing reductions could affect normal agency operations. Likewise, other actions such as the rescission of unobligated balances could distort analysis of the President's FY2026 budget request compared to current and prior fiscal years since rescinded funding might appear in historical reporting of funding but may not be captured in current reporting.

Second, the government-wide analysis in this report is based on data from OMB that include *advance appropriations* (i.e., appropriations provided in an act signed in one fiscal year for a future fiscal year) that become available in FY2026, *supplemental appropriations* (i.e., additional appropriations provided in an act that become available during a fiscal year), and new funding requested for FY2026.[11] In contrast, individual agency analyses in this report are based on agency budget justifications and generally do not include advance or supplemental appropriations. Thus, R&D funding totals included in tables and figures displaying agency- and program-level data may not include advance or supplemental appropriations amounts. When agencies received advance or supplemental appropriations for the fiscal years described in this report, amounts are stated in table footnotes and accompanying analysis.

Third, because the government-wide analysis in this report is based on OMB data, which includes advance and supplemental appropriations at requested FY2026 levels, agency or department R&D funding totals presented in the federal crosscut analysis may be greater than totals presented in subsequent sections of this report. For example, FY2026 amounts requested for Department of Defense R&D, as reported in OMB data, include an estimated $37.1 billion provided by the anticipated enactment of the FY2025 reconciliation act (P.L. 119-21).[12]

In addition, inconsistency among agencies in reporting R&D activities and the inclusion of R&D activities in accounts with non-R&D activities may result in different figures being reported by OMB and by individual agency budget justifications, such as those referenced in the agency-specific budget analyses that appear later in this report.

Government-Wide Federal R&D Funding

Under the President's FY2026 budget proposal, five agencies would account for approximately 92% of total federal R&D funding—DOD, NIH, DOE, NASA, and NSF—with DOD (62%) and NIH (15%), combined, accounting for 77% of all proposed federal R&D funding. R&D funding would decrease, relative to FY2025 estimates, for four of these five agencies (see **Figure 2** and **Table 3**). DOD would see the only increase in R&D funding. Funding-level changes for each of these five agencies are as follows:

- **NIH:** NIH would see the largest dollar decrease in R&D funding—down $19.0 billion (-41%) to $27.0 billion.

[11] An *advance appropriation* is "one made to become available one year or more beyond the year for which the appropriations act is passed." For example, "the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Appropriations Act (division J of Public Law 117-58; IIJA) was enacted in fiscal year 2022 and provided advance appropriations for several programs that become available in fiscal years 2023 through 2026." See OMB, "Advance Appropriations," in *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, p. 1167.

[12] According to OMB's *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Department of Defense Appendix*, "the administration assumes enactment of a reconciliation bill later this year that will include resources for defense. Of those resources, the Administration assumes $37 billion for research and development in FY 2026." See OMB, "Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation," in *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Department of Defense Appendix*, p. 65, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2026-DOD/pdf/BUDGET-2026-DOD.pdf.

- **NSF:** NSF would see the largest percentage decrease in R&D funding—down $3.9 billion (-55%) to $3.1 billion.
- **DOE:** DOE R&D investments would decrease by $3.2 billion (-16%) to $16.7 billion.
- **NASA:** NASA R&D investments would decrease by $3.8 billion (-34%) to $7.2 billion.
- **DOD:** DOD R&D investments would increase by $21 billion (23%) to $112.9 billion—largely as a result of supplemental appropriations that the request anticipates will be provided by P.L. 119-21 (for additional details, see "Reconciliation" and "Department of Defense").[13] Absent the anticipated $37.1 billion provided to DOD through reconciliation, the requested funding level for DOD R&D in FY2026 would decrease by $16.1 billion (-18%) compared to the FY2025 amount.

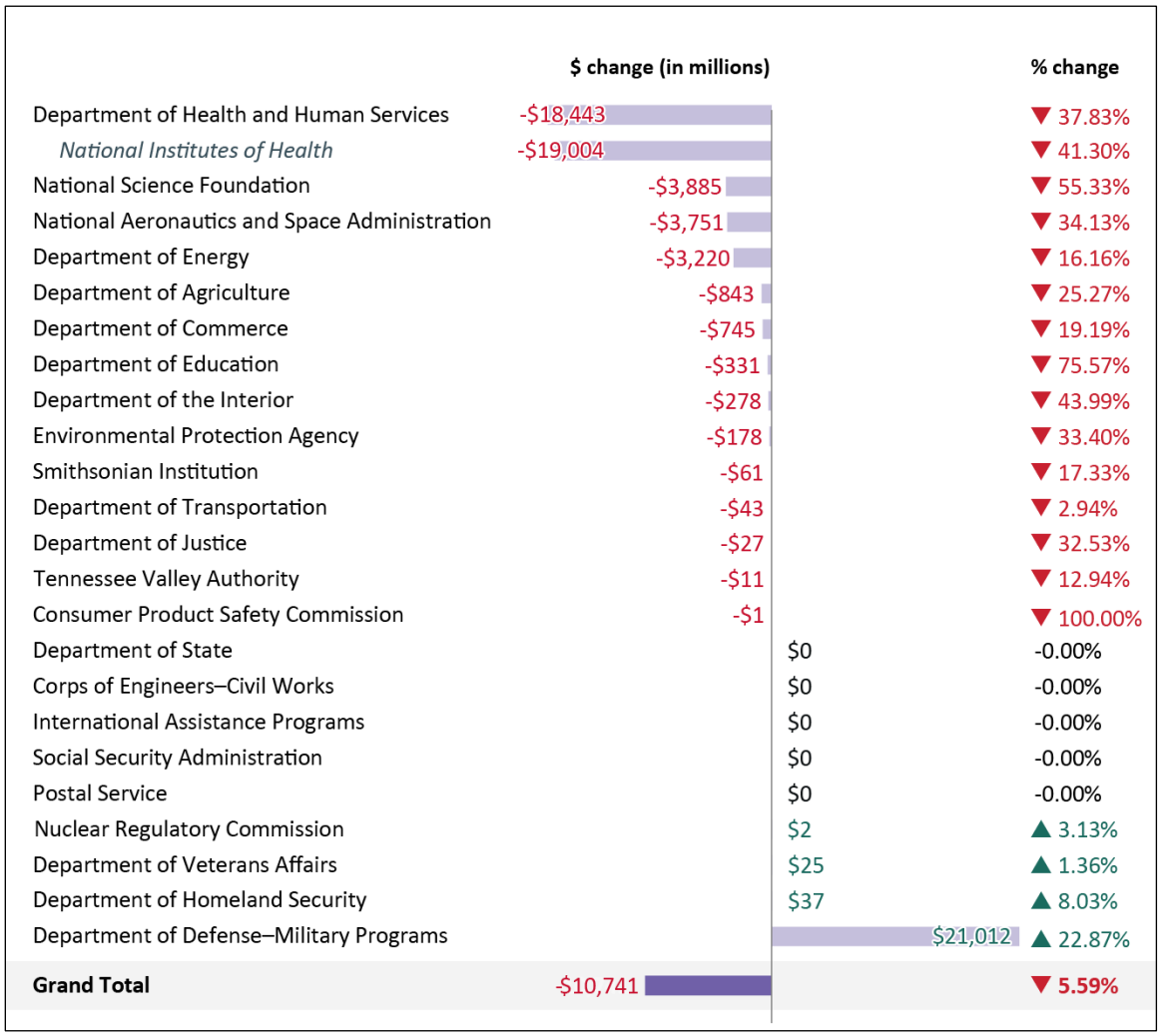
Absent the $37.1 billion in reconciliation funding that the President's FY2026 proposal anticipates, requested R&D investments in FY2026 would be $143.4 billion—a decrease of $48.7 billion (-25%) compared to estimated R&D investments in FY2025.

The President's proposed FY2026 budget also includes R&D funding for a number of other federal departments and agencies that, together, would comprise the remaining 8% of total R&D funding requested (see **Figure 2** and **Table 3**).

[13] See footnote 12.

Figure 2. Crosscut Budget Amounts for Federal Research and Development (R&D) Funding, President's FY2026 Request Compared to FY2025 Levels

(budget authority, in current dollars)



Source: CRS calculated R&D funding totals using information provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); OMB, email communication with author, July 2, 2025.

Notes: FY2025 totals include enacted amounts provided by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4, Division A), and "may also include indefinite appropriations on the basis of amounts likely to be required"; FY2026 totals include proposed appropriations for all programs, per the description in OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, May 30, 2025, p. 4, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. Program- or account-level totals shown in italics are considered *non-adds*, that is, components included for illustrative purposes and not counted as separate line items when generating figure totals. Departments and agencies are listed in descending order according to greatest dollar amount change from FY2025 to the FY2026 request.

Table 3. Crosscut Budget Amounts for Federal Research and Development (R&D) Funding, FY2024-FY2026 Request

(budget authority, in millions of current dollars)

				FY2025-FY2026 Request	
Department/Agency	**FY2024**	**FY2025**	**FY2026**	**Dollar Change**	**Percentage Change**
Department of Agriculture	3,278	3,336	2,493	-843	-25.3%
Department of Commerce	4,307	3,883	3,138	-745	-19.2%
Department of Defense-Military Programs	101,308	91,865	112,877	21,012	22.9%
Department of Education	479	438	107	-331	-75.6%
Department of Energy	20,678	19,927	16,707	-3,220	-16.2%
Department of Health and Human Services	47,975	48,755	30,312	-18,443	-37.8%
National Institutes of Health	*46,388*	*46,010*	*27,006*	*-19,004*	*-41.3%*
Department of Homeland Security	463	461	498	37	8.0%
Department of the Interior	704	632	354	-278	-43.9%
Department of Justice	77	83	56	-27	-32.5%
Department of State	92	92	92	0	0
Department of Transportation	1,424	1,461	1,418	-43	-2.9%
Department of Veterans Affairs	1,826	1,839	1,864	25	1.4%
Corps of Engineers-Civil Works	124	79	79	0	0
Environmental Protection Agency	537	533	355	-178	-33.4%
International Assistance Programs	160	160	160	0	0
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	10,979	10,989	7,238	-3,751	-34.1%
National Science Foundation	7,252	7,022	3,137	-3,885	-55.3%
Social Security Administration	91	91	91	0	0
Consumer Product Safety Commission	0	1	0	-1	-100.0%
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	96	64	66	2	3.1%
Postal Service	5	6	6	0	0
Smithsonian Institution	340	352	291	-61	-17.3%
Tennessee Valley Authority	117	85	74	-11	-12.9%
Total	**202,312**	**192,154**	**181,413**	**-10,741**	**-5.6%**

Source: CRS calculated R&D funding totals using information provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); OMB, email communication with author, July 2, 2025.

Notes: Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. Program- or account-level totals shown in italics are considered *non-adds*, this is, components included for illustrative purposes and not counted as separate line items when generating table totals. Departments and agencies are listed in the order presented in OMB data. Per the description in OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, FY2024 totals include actual transactions and balances, as recorded in agency accounts; FY2025 totals include enacted amounts provided by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4, Division A), and "may also include indefinite appropriations on the basis of amounts likely to be required"; and FY2026 totals include proposed appropriations for all programs. See OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, May 30, 2025, p. 4, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf.

R&D Funding by Agency and Department

Detailed analysis of R&D budgets requested for DOD, NIH, DOE, NASA, and NSF follows. Agencies are presented in order of the size of their FY2026 R&D budget requests, the largest presented first.

Because of the manner in which agencies report budget data to Congress, it can be difficult to identify the portion of program- or account-level funds that specifically support R&D-related activities. Consequently, the level of detail regarding R&D funding presented in the agency analyses that follow may vary according to available information and how R&D funding is provided through the various agencies' accounts. Further, variation exists across agencies in the types of activities considered as R&D related. For example, DOD reports R&D activities under the umbrella of RDT&E-related activities, whereas other agencies, like NASA, may include operational expenses in accounts generally described as supporting R&D. Such variations and inconsistencies at the individual agency level may lead to limitations when R&D-related data are compared across agencies.

R&D data presented in the agency analyses in this report may also differ from R&D data in the President's budget or otherwise provided by OMB (e.g., data presented in **Table 3**). These differences are, at least in part, due to OMB's inclusion of advance and supplemental appropriations in the FY2026 budget request, whereas funding totals reported by individual agencies may not include advance or supplemental appropriations amounts. When agencies received advance or supplemental appropriations for the fiscal years described in this report, amounts are stated in table footnotes and accompanying analysis.

Department of Defense[14]

DOD's mission is "to provide the military forces needed to deter war and ensure our nation's security."[15] To maintain technological superiority on the battlefield, DOD relies on scientific and technical knowledge developed in large measure through research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) funded by the department and performed by industry, universities, federal laboratories, and others. The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on all RDT&E activities and programs and has the mission of advancing technology and innovation for the military services and DOD.

Most of DOD's RDT&E funding is appropriated in Title IV (Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation) of the annual defense appropriations bill, which includes appropriations for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, a defense-wide RDT&E account, and the Director of Operational

[14] This section was written by Marcy E. Gallo, Analyst in Science and Technology Policy.

[15] Department of Defense (DOD), "About," https://www.defense.gov/About/.

Test and Evaluation. The defense-wide account includes the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Office of the Secretary of Defense, and 15 other DOD organizations, as well as classified funding.

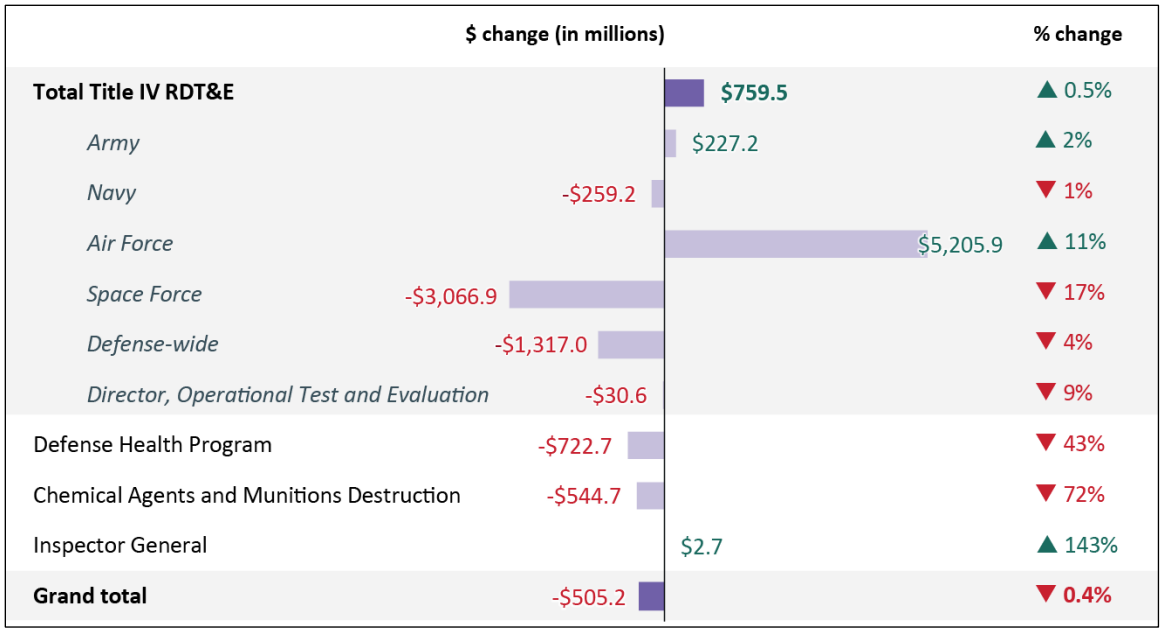
RDT&E funds are also appropriated for programs in other titles of the defense appropriations act. For example, RDT&E funds are appropriated in Title VI as part of the Chemical Agents and Munitions Destruction Program, the Defense Health Program, and the Office of the Inspector General.

For FY2026, President Trump's proposed budget includes $142.0 billion for DOD's Title IV RDT&E accounts, $780 million (1%) above the FY2025 enacted amount of $141.2 billion (**Table 4**). As shown in **Figure 3**, the Air Force's Title IV RDT&E account would receive the largest increase, $5.2 billion (11%), above the FY2025 enacted level, while the Space Force's account would receive the largest decrease, $3.1 billion (17%), below the FY2025 enacted level.

The overall amount requested for RDT&E in FY2026 ($143.2 billion) is slightly smaller (0.3% below) than the FY2025 enacted level ($143.7 billion). **Table 4** does not include funding provided by P.L. 119-21, and, therefore, the numbers differ from those provided by OMB and used in the previous section. Thus, the total amount requested for DOD RDT&E in FY2026 is $30.3 billion more than the OMB-reported R&D investment level requested for DOD in FY2026 ($112.9 billion; see **Table 3**). This difference could reflect the Administration's proposed prioritization of funding for testing and evaluation activities, which OMB does not include in its accounting of R&D activities within the context of the federal budget process (see the **text box** "Federal Research and Development (R&D)-Related Terms Used in the Federal Budget Process").

Figure 3. Department of Defense (DOD) Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) Funding by Account/Program, President's FY2026 Request Compared to FY2025 Levels

(budget authority, in current dollars)



Source: CRS calculated the dollar and percentage change by comparing RDT&E funding requested for FY2026 (see Office of Management and Budget [OMB], *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Department of Defense*

Appendix, June 2025, pp. 24, 33, and 64-73) and RDT&E funding enacted for FY2025 (see P.L. 119-4, §§1405 and 1407).

Notes: Comparison is based on DOD RDT&E amounts requested for FY2026 and enacted for FY2025, which do not include supplemental disaster funding or funding associated with reconciliation. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

On July 18, 2025, the House passed H.R. 4016, the Defense Appropriations Act, 2026. H.R. 4016 would provide $147.7 billion for DOD's Title IV RDT&E accounts, $6.5 billion (5%) above the FY2025 enacted amount and $5.7 billion (4%) above the FY2026 requested level (**Table 4**). The Air Force's Title IV RDT&E account would receive the largest increase, $4.3 billion (9%), above the FY2025 enacted level, while the Army's account would receive the largest decrease, $760.9 million (5%) below the FY2025 enacted level. H.R. 4016 would provide $149.7 billion for DOD RDT&E overall, $6.0 billion (4%) more than the FY2025 enacted level.

In addition, H.R. 4016 would provide $5.7 billion (4%) more for DOD's Title IV RDT&E accounts than the Trump Administration requested for FY2026. In comparison to the President's FY2026 budget request, the Space Force's Title IV RDT&E account would receive the largest increase, $3.6 billion (24%), above the FY2026 requested level, while the Army's account would receive the largest decrease, $988.1 million (7%) below the FY2026 request. H.R. 4016 would provide $6.5 billion (5%) more than the Trump Administration requested overall for DOD RDT&E in FY2026.

Table 4. Department of Defense (DOD) Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E)

(budget authority, in millions of current dollars)

Account/Program	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Request	FY2026 House	FY2026 Senate
Title IV, RDT&E	**149,502.5**	**141,241.6**	**142,001.1**	**147,693.6**	
Army	*17,119.5*	*14,322.0*	*14,549.2*	*13,561.1*	
Navy	*27,997.8*	*25,967.2*	*25,708.0*	*27,038.4*	
Air Force	*47,693.9*	*46,811.4*	*52,017.3*	*51,120.3*	
Space Force	*18,532.4*	*18,553.4*	*15,486.5*	*19,133.7*	
Defense-wide	*37,822.2*	*35,238.9*	*33,921.9*	*36,491.5*	
Director, Operational Test and Evaluation	*336.7*	*348.7*	*318.1*	*348.7*	
Title VI, RDT&E	**3,909.1**	**2,452.1**	**1,187.3**	**2,010.2**	
Defense Health Program	*2,902.9*	*1,695.4*	*972.7*	*1,795.6*	
Chemical Agents and Munitions Destruction	*1,002.6*	*754.8*	*210.0*	*210.0*	
Inspector General	*3.4*	*1.9*	*4.6*	*4.6*	
Total, DOD RDT&E	**153,411.6**	**143,693.7**	**143,188.5**	**149,703.9**	

Source: CRS analysis of Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year 2026: RDT&E Programs (R-1)*, June 2025, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2026/FY2026_r1.pdf, and H.R. 4016.

Notes: Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. Program- or account-level totals shown in italics are considered *non-adds*, that is, components included for illustrative purposes and not counted as separate line items when generating table totals. Totals for "FY2024 Actual" include supplemental funding for RDT&E provided by P.L. 118-50 for Israel (Division A), Ukraine (Division B), and the Indo-Pacific (Division C).

Totals for "FY2025 Enacted" and "FY2026 Request" do not include supplemental disaster funding or funding provided by P.L. 119-21 and, therefore, differ from amounts reported by the Office of Management and Budget, which are included in **Table 3**. Figures for the column currently blank may become available as action is completed.

DOD RDT&E Funding by Character of Work

Congress is often interested in examining DOD's RDT&E funding by budget activity code, which describes the character of work supported (e.g., basic research). In particular, the budget activity codes designated as 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 (basic research, applied research, and advanced technology development, respectively) constitute DOD's science and technology (S&T) funding and represent the more research-oriented part of DOD's RDT&E activities. Some members of the defense community see ensuring adequate support for S&T as imperative to maintaining U.S. military superiority into the future. For FY2026, the Trump Administration requests $19.2 billion in S&T funding, $2.1 billion (10%) below the enacted level of $21.3 billion. The largest decrease would be for applied research (Budget Activity 6.2); the requested amount of $7 billion is $1.7 billion (20%) below the FY2025 enacted level of $8.7 billion.[16]

Budget Activities 6.4 and 6.5 focus on the development of specific weapon systems or components for which an operational need has been determined and an acquisition program established. Budget Activity 6.6 provides management support, including support for test and evaluation facilities. Budget Activity 6.7 supports the development of improvements in existing operational systems. As part of DOD's FY2021 budget request, a new budget activity, 6.8, was added to support software and digital technology pilot programs. Under the President's request, funding for Budget Activity 6.4 ($30.8 billion), which supports advanced component development and prototypes, would decline by $5.2 billion (-14%) compared to the FY2025 level ($36.0 billion). System development and demonstration funding (Budget Activity 6.5; $27.5 billion) would increase by $3.0 billion (12%) compared to the FY2025 level ($24.5 billion).[17]

Supplemental Funding: Reconciliation and Disaster Relief

On July 4, 2025, H.R. 1 was enacted as P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 reconciliation act. Title II of P.L. 119-21 provided $156.2 billion in defense funding in FY2025, to remain available until September 30, 2029, for shipbuilding, air and missile defenses, munitions and supply chains, and other military capabilities. A portion of such funds is likely to support RDT&E. For example, P.L. 119-21 provided $2 billion "for the expansion of Defense Innovation Unit scaling of commercial technology for military use"; $250 million "for development and testing of directed energy capabilities by the Under Secretary for Research and Engineering"; $650 million "for the expansion of Mission Capabilities office joint prototyping and experimentation activities for military innovation"; $250 million "for the advancement of the artificial intelligence ecosystem"; and $250 million "for the acceleration of the Quantum Benchmarking Initiative." The President's budget request includes $37 billion in reconciliation funding for FY2026. Supplemental funding provided to DOD through reconciliation, however, is available to be expended until September 30, 2029, and it is unclear whether or not DOD will expend the $37 billion in FY2026 or over

[16] CRS analysis of Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year 2026, RDT&E Programs (R-1),* June 2025, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2026/FY2026_r1.pdf.

[17] CRS analysis of Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year 2026, RDT&E Programs (R-1),* June 2025, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2026/FY2026_r1.pdf.

multiple fiscal years. Accounting for reconciliation funds may be a challenge for oversight and the comparison of RDT&E funding over time.

Additionally, President Trump's FY2026 request includes $110.7 million in supplemental disaster relief funding for two RDT&E accounts. Specifically, the request proposes $41.4 million for the Army's Title IV RDT&E account to address "expenses related to the consequences of severe storms and wave overwash" and $69.3 million for the Air Force's account for "expenses related to the consequences of Typhoon Mawar."[18]

Office of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation

On May 27, 2025, the Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum that detailed plans to reorganize the Office of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (ODOT&E) based on a "comprehensive internal review [that] has identified redundant, nonessential, non-statutory functions within ODOT&E." According to the memorandum, "ODOT&E will deliver its core statutory function through a reduced staff of 30 civilian positions, with no more than one Senior Executive Service (SES) member and 15 assigned military personnel." It further asserts that "these actions will save more than $300 million per year."[19] The FY2026 budget request proposes $318.1 million for ODOT&E, which is a decrease of $30.6 million (-9%) from the FY2025 enacted level. Per the Trump Administration, the changes outlined in the memorandum related to ODOT&E may not be reflected in the budget request. Specifically, the President's budget states, "in the current year and the budget year, detailed budget estimates and estimates of full-time equivalent employment may not reflect all of the management and administrative actions underway or planned in Federal agencies."[20]

National Institutes of Health[21]

Within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), NIH's mission is "to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability."[22] NIH is the main research agency of HHS, and has been the largest single public funder of health and medical research in the world.[23] NIH comprises 27 separate institutes and centers (ICs) and the Office of the Director (OD). Of these, 24 ICs and the OD manage research programs, while 3 provide infrastructure support for R&D activities. Each research IC plans and manages its own research programs in coordination with OD.[24] As of FY2022, nearly 82% of the NIH budget supported extramural research performed by more than 300,000 researchers at more than 2,500 universities,

[18] OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Department of Defense Appendix*, pp. 65 and 68.

[19] Memorandum from Pete Hegseth, Secretary of Defense, to senior Pentagon leadership, "Reorganization of the Office of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation," May 27, 2025, https://media.defense.gov/2025/May/28/2003725153/-1/-1/1/MEMORANDUM-DIRECTING-REORGANIZATION-OF-THE-OFFICE-OF-THE-DIRECTOR-OF-OPERATIONAL-TEST-AND-EVALUATION.PDF.

[20] OMB, "General Notes," in *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Department of Defense Appendix*.

[21] This section was written by Kavya Sekar, Specialist in Health Policy, with support from Joe Angert, Research Assistant.

[22] National Institutes of Health (NIH), "Mission and Goals," January 10, 2025, https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/mission-goals.

[23] NIH, "Direct Economic Contributions," April 18, 2025, https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/impact-nih-research/serving-society/direct-economic-contributions.

[24] CRS Report R41705, *The National Institutes of Health (NIH): Background and Congressional Issues*, by Kavya Sekar.

medical schools, and other research institutions in every U.S. state and around the world.[25] Approximately 11% of the NIH budget supported intramural research performed by nearly 6,000 scientists in its own research facilities, mostly on the NIH campus in Bethesda, MD.[26] NIH also houses a separate independent agency, the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H).

Most regular appropriations for NIH are provided through the annual Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations Act. In the LHHS Act, NIH receives funding under headings that align with its 24 research ICs. The LHHS also provides NIH funding to accounts for the OD, Buildings and Facilities, the 21st Century Cures Act Innovation Account, and ARPA-H. NIH receives some funding under unique transfer authorities (the Public Health Service [PHS] Evaluation set-aside)[27] and budget enforcement rules (21st Century Cures Act Innovation Account).[28] Additionally, NIH has received certain smaller amounts of funds from the Interior/Environment Appropriations Act and a mandatory appropriation for Type 1 diabetes research.[29]

For FY2026, President Trump is requesting a total NIH program level (i.e., all funding sources) of $27.9 billion, a 40.6% reduction from the FY2025 estimated program level of $47.0 billion (see **Figure 4**), taking into account a proposed restructuring described below.

[25] CRS Report R41705, *The National Institutes of Health (NIH): Background and Congressional Issues*, by Kavya Sekar, and NIH, "Budget," June 13, 2025, https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/organization/budget.

[26] NIH, "Budget," June 13, 2025, https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/organization/budget.

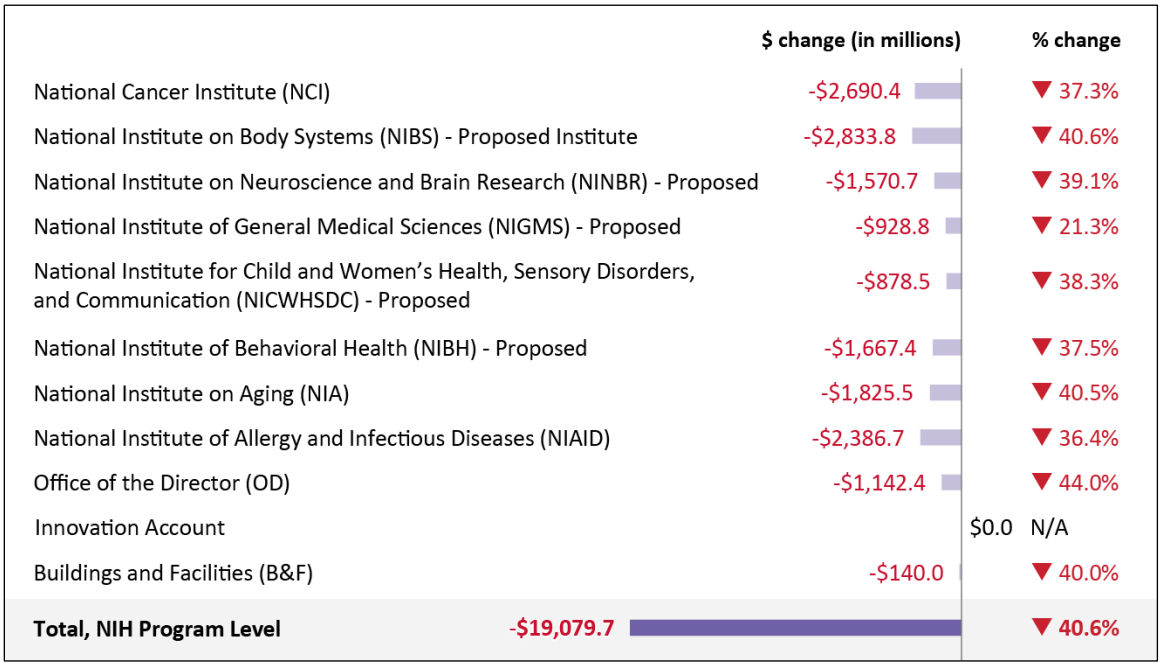
[27] The Public Health Service (PHS) Evaluation set-aside, also known as the PHS Evaluation Tap transfer authority, under Section 241 of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. §238j) allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), with the approval of appropriators, to redistribute a portion of eligible PHS agency appropriations across HHS for program evaluation purposes. Although the PHS Act limits the tap to no more than 1% of eligible appropriations, in recent years, annual Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations acts have specified a higher amount (2.5% in FY2024; P.L. 118-47, Division D). Those acts also have typically directed specific amounts of funding from the tap for transfer to a number of HHS programs, including at NIH, particularly for the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS). The same percentage and transfer amounts apply for FY2025 pursuant to P.L. 119-4, which provided full-year continuing appropriations for NIH. The FY2026 budget request maintains the transfer authority at 2.5%; see OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, p. 398. Funding amounts in this report show amounts "transferred in" to NIH under the PHS Evaluation set-aside but do not show amounts "transferred out" under the same authority.

[28] Appropriations to the NIH Innovation Account created by the 21st Century Cures Act (Cures Act; P.L. 114-255, as amended) fund programs authorized by that act. Appropriations of funds in this account are, in effect, not subject to discretionary spending limits. The NIH Director may transfer these amounts from the NIH Innovation Account to other NIH accounts but only for the purposes specified in the Cures Act. All amounts authorized by the Cures Act have been fully appropriated to the Innovation Account since FY2017, including $407 million for FY2024, $127 million for FY2025, and proposed $226 million for FY2026. See the section on the 21st Century Cures Act in CRS Report R43341, *National Institutes of Health (NIH) Funding: FY1996-FY2025*, by Kavya Sekar.

[29] Type 1 diabetes mandatory funding is authorized in Public Health Service Act (PHSA) §330B.

Figure 4. National Institutes of Health (NIH) Funding by Account/Program, President's FY2026 Request Compared to FY2025 Levels

(budget authority, in current dollars)



Source: CRS analysis of NIH, *Overview of FY2026 President's Budget*, pp. 65-67, https://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/pdfs/FY26/br/NIH%20FY%202026%20CJ%20Overview.pdf.

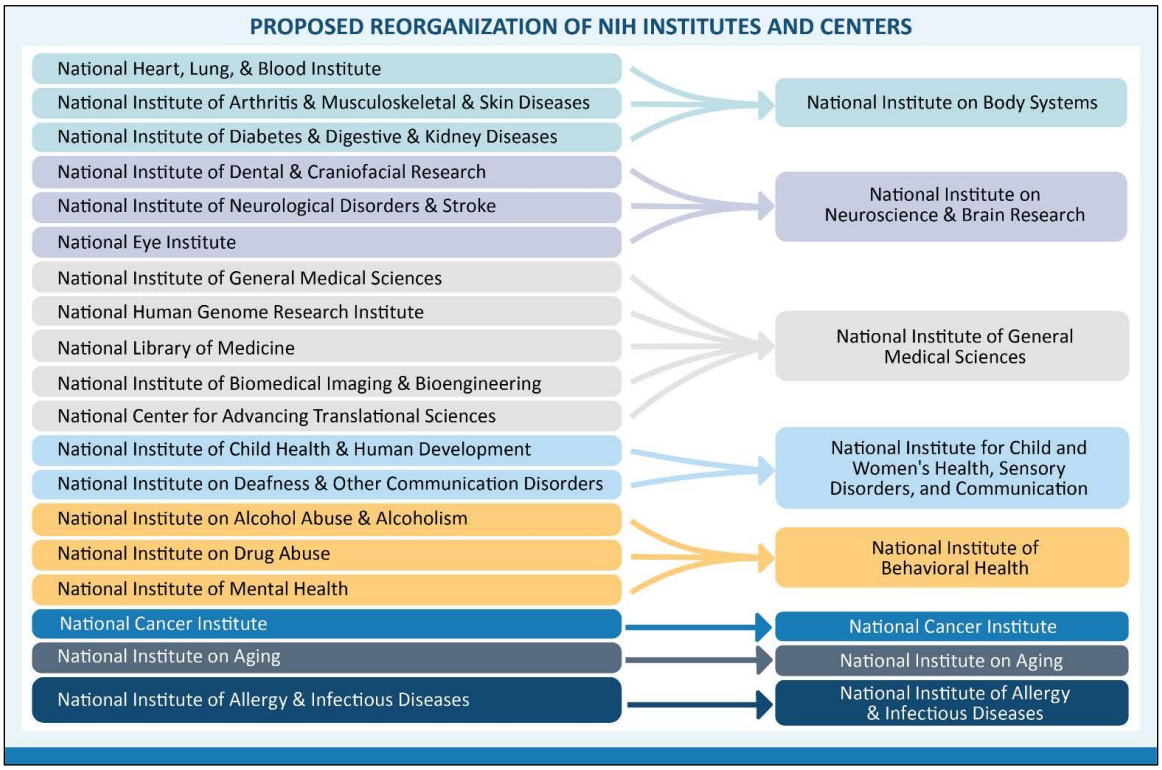
Notes: N/A = not applicable. Figure is organized by the proposed new institutes and centers (ICs) included in the President's FY2026 budget request. For each of the proposed new ICs, CRS analyzed FY2025 enacted funding levels and calculated comparable totals according to the proposed structure in the President's FY2026 request. Thus, FY2025 totals used to calculate the dollar and percentage change displayed in this figure do not reflect enacted law. The figure also does not show the ICs or other components that would be eliminated or moved out of NIH under the FY2026 proposal; therefore, the total change amounts at the bottom reflect eliminations and transfers that are not displayed here; components do not sum to the subtotal and totals shown. Final and estimated FY2025 and FY2026 funding levels reflect most transfers and other adjustments. By convention, the amount of transfers to the Public Health Service Evaluation set-aside are not subtracted from the agencies' appropriations in budget tables. In general, amounts provided to NIH for emergency requirements are excluded from these totals and, therefore, differ from amounts reported by the Office of Management and Budget, which are included in **Table 3**.

NIH Restructuring

The President's FY2026 budget proposes to reduce NIH's 24 current research ICs to eight research ICs. Four ICs would be eliminated, while 19 would be consolidated into 8 restructured ICs (see **Figure 5**). Two NIH components would be moved out of NIH to other parts of HHS: the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and ARPA-H (see next section). **Table 5** shows total funding amounts requested for NIH, given that R&D funding is generally provided across multiple appropriations accounts, and provides a comparison of the FY2026 proposed funding with FY2024 final and FY2025 estimated funding. It displays funding organized by the proposed new ICs for FY2024, FY2025, and FY2026, along with FY2024 and FY2025 funding as enacted based on the prior IC structure (shown in the table as *non-adds*, i.e., components included for illustrative purposes and not counted as separate line items when generating totals). The table also shows NIH funding data for certain transfers or other budget

authorities as summarized earlier. In FY2026, all eight proposed ICs would see decreases (ranging from -21% to -44%) from prior comparable FY2024 and FY2025 levels.

Figure 5. Proposed National Institutes of Health (NIH) Reorganization for FY2026



Source: Department of Health and Human Services, *Fiscal Year 2026 Budget in Brief*, p. 22, https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2026-budget-in-brief.pdf.

Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health

In FY2022, Congress established ARPA-H within NIH to support milestone-based research aimed at driving health innovation. ARPA-H is an independent agency and is not considered an NIH IC.[30] However, ARPA-H is placed within NIH by statute and has received appropriations in an NIH account for both FY2024 and FY2025, as shown in **Table 5**.[31] The FY2026 budget proposes moving ARPA-H out of NIH under a new Assistant Secretary for a Healthy Future (ASHF) with an FY2026 funding level of $945 million.[32] This compares with an estimated FY2025 funding level of $1.5 billion.

Potential Impact on Science

In terms of scientific impacts, NIH estimates that the FY2026 funding level would support 4,312 new competing research grants, a decrease of 29.3% from the number of new competing grants supported by the FY2025 funding level (6,095 grants) and a greater decrease from the FY2024

[30] CRS Report R47568, *Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H): Overview and Selected Issues*, by Kavya Sekar and Marcy E. Gallo.

[31] PHSA §499A(a); 42 U.S.C. §290c.

[32] HHS, *Fiscal Year 2026 Budget in Brief*, p. 49, https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2026-budget-in-brief.pdf.

level of 10,086 new competing grants. The FY2026 NIH budget request proposes to continue an FY2025 policy to reserve half of NIH's budget allocation for competing research project grants for awards that fully fund the grant across multiple years. The competing average cost for a research project grant was $969,000 for FY2025 compared to $598,000 for FY2024, accounting for the multiyear grant awards, and thus resulted in lower total grants estimated for FY2025.[33] In FY2026, all other categories of research would receive decreases in funding compared to FY2025 levels, ranging from 26% to 43%, including NIH's support of research centers, training, and intramural research.[34]

Table 5. National Institutes of Health (NIH) Funding

(budget authority, in millions of current dollars)

				FY2025-FY2026	
Account/Program	**FY2024 Final**	**FY2025 Estimate**	**FY2026 Request**	**Dollar Change**	**Percentage Change**
National Cancer Institute (NCI)	7,221.2	7,221.2	4,530.8	-2,690.4	-37.3%
National Institute on Body Systems (NIBS)[a] (proposed institute)	6,985.9*	6,985.9*	4,152.1	-2,833.8	-40.6%
National, Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)	*3,985.2*	*3,985.2*	—	—	—
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Disease (NIAMS)	*687.6*	*687.6*	—	—	—
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease (NIDDK)[b]	*2,313.1*	*2,313.1*	—	—	—
National Institute on Neuroscience and Brain Research (NINBR)[c] (proposed institute)	4,015.7*	4,015.7*	2,445.0	-1,570.7	-39.1%
National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)	*520.1*	*520.1*	—	—	—
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)[c]	*2,599.4*	*2,599.4*	—	—	—
National Eye Institute (NEI)	*896.1*	*896.1*	—		
National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)[d] (proposed institute)	4,356.1*	4,356.1*	3,427.3	-928.8	-21.3%
National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)[e]	*1,832.2*	*1,832.2*	—	—	—
National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI)	*659.7*	*659.7*	—	—	—
National Library of Medicine (NLM)	*495.3*	*495.3*	—	—	—
National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB)	*440.6*	*440.6*	—	—	—

[33] NIH, *Overview of FY2025 President's Budget*, pp. 4, 23, https://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/pdfs/FY26/br/NIH%20FY%202026%20CJ%20Overview.pdf.

[34] NIH, *Overview of FY2025 President's Budget*, p. 23, https://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/pdfs/FY26/br/NIH%20FY%202026%20CJ%20Overview.pdf.

Account/Program	FY2024 Final	FY2025 Estimate	FY2026 Request	FY2025-FY2026 Dollar Change	FY2025-FY2026 Percentage Change
National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS)	*928.3*	*928.3*	—	—	—
National Institute for Child and Women's Health, Sensory Disorders and Communications (NICWHSDC) (proposed institute)	2,292.1*	2,292.1*	1,413.6	-878.5	-38.3%
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)	*1,757.8*	*1,757.8*	—	—	—
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)	*534.3*	*534.3*	—	—	—
National Institute of Behavioral Health (NIBH) (proposed institute)	4,452.1*	4,452.2*	2,784.7	-1,667.5	-37.5%
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)	*597.1*	*597.1*	—	—	—
National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)	*1,663.4*	*1,663.4*	—	—	—
National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)	*2,191.7*	*2,191.7*	—	—	—
National Institute on Aging (NIA)	4,512.1	4,512.1	2,686.5	-1,825.5	-40.5%
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)	6,561.7	6,561.7	4,175.0	-2,386.7	-36.4%
Office of the Director (OD)[f]	2,597.4	2,597.4	1,455.1	-1,142.4	-44.0%
Innovation Accounts[g]	407.0	127.0	226.0	N/A	N/A
Buildings and Facilities (B&F)	350.0	350.0	210.0	-140.0	-40.0%
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)	913.8	913.8	N/A[h]	N/A	N/A
National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)	197.7	197.7	0.0	-197.7	-100.0%
National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH)	170.4	170.4	0.0	-170.4	-100.0%
National Institute on Minority and Health Disparities (NIMHD)	535.1	535.1	0.0	-535.1	-100.0%
Fogarty International Center (FIC)	95.1	95.1	0.0	-95.1	-100.0%
Subtotal, NIH (LHHS Discretionary Budget Authority)	45,663.5	45,383.5	27,506.1	-17,877.4	-39.4%
PHS Program Evaluation (provided to NIGMS)	1,412.5	1,412.5	250.0	-1,162.5	-82.3%
Superfund (Interior appropriation to NIEHS)[i]	79.7	79.7	N/A[j]	N/A	N/A
Mandatory Type 1 diabetes funds (to NIDDK)[k]	195.8	119.1	159.0[l]	39.9	33.5%
Total, NIH Program Level	47,351.5	46,994.8	27,915.1	-19,079.7	-40.6%

Account/Program	FY2024 Final	FY2025 Estimate	FY2026 Request	FY2025-FY2026 Dollar Change	FY2025-FY2026 Percentage Change
Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H)	1,500.0	1,500.0	N/A[m]	N/A	N/A
Grand total, NIH and ARPA-H Program Level	**48,851.5**	**48,494.8**	**27,915.1**	**-20,579.7**	**-42.4%**

Source: NIH, *Overview of FY2026 President's Budget*, pp. 65-67, https://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/pdfs/FY26/br/NIH%20FY%202026%20CJ%20Overview.pdf. Innovation Account numbers are from Office of Management and Budget (OMB), *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget*, p. 353, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf.

Notes: LHHS = Labor, HHS, and Education; N/A= not applicable, particularly for entities that are proposed to be moved outside of NIH in the FY2026 budget. Table displays funding organized by the proposed new institutes and centers (ICs) for FY2024, FY2025, and FY2026, along with FY2024 and FY2025 funding as enacted based on the prior IC structure (shown in the table as *non-adds*, i.e., components included for illustrative purposes and not counted as separate line items when generating totals). Thus, FY2024 funding levels and FY2025 totals used to calculate the dollar and percentage changes displayed in this table do not reflect enacted law and are thus denoted with an asterisk. Program- or account-level totals, shown in italics, are considered non-adds. An em dash (—) indicates an FY2026 funding amount for a preexisting NIH IC that is shown as a non-add. Amounts are shown as 0.0 when the request has proposed to reduce a certain line item to 0 in FY2026. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. Amounts shown may differ from actual values. Final and estimated FY2025 and FY2026 funding levels reflect most transfers and other adjustments. By convention, funding transfers to the Public Health Service (PHS) Evaluation set-aside are not subtracted from the agencies' appropriations in budget tables. In general, amounts provided to NIH for emergency requirements are excluded from these totals and, therefore, differ from amounts reported by OMB, which are included in **Table 3**.

a. Amounts for the proposed NIBS do not include mandatory Type 1 diabetes funding, shown later in the table.

b. Amounts for the NIDDK do not include mandatory funding for Type 1 diabetes research, shown later in the table.

c. FY2024 and FY2025 amounts do not reflect transfers from the Cures Act Innovation Account to NINDS for NIH's Brain Research Through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative.

d. Amounts for NIGMS do not include funds from the PHS Evaluation set-aside (PHS Act [PHSA], §241).

e. Amounts reflect NIGMS funding as enacted (excluding the PHS Evaluation tap transfer into this IC) for FY2024 and FY2025, not as proposed for FY2026, which would consolidate NHGRI, NLM, NIBIB, and NCATS into NIGMS.

f. Amounts for OD include transfer from the Pediatric Research Initiative Fund (PRIF) as authorized by the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act. FY2024 and FY2025 amounts account for a transfer of $5 million to the Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Inspector General.

g. Innovation Account amounts are to be transferred to other accounts. For FY2024, of the total $172 million for the BRAIN Initiative, $86 million was transferred to each of NINDS and NIMH, respectively. The total $235 million for the Precision Medicine Initiative was transferred to OD. For FY2025, of the total $91 million for the BRAIN Initiative, $45.5 million was transferred to each of NINDS and NIMH, respectively. The total $36 million for the Precision Medicine Initiative was transferred to OD. For the FY2026 request, NINBR and NIBH are expected to each receive a transfer of $97.5 million of the total $195 million for the BRAIN Initiative, based on past practice. The total $31 million for PMI would go to OD.

h. The FY2026 budget request proposes moving NIEHS to the new Administration for a Healthy America (AHA) with a requested funding level of $594 million within AHA.

i. This is a separate account in the Interior/Environment appropriations for NIEHS research activities related to Superfund research.

j. The FY2026 budget request proposes moving the NIEHS Superfund program to the new AHA with a requested funding level of $52 million within AHA.

k. Mandatory funds are available to NIDDK for Type 1 diabetes research under PHSA Section 330B, which was most recently extended through September 30, 2025.

l. The budget request proposes $159 million in new mandatory funding for FY2026 under PHSA Section 330B (42 U.S.C. §254c-2). See NIH, *Overview of FY2026 President's Budget Proposal*, p. 65.

m. The FY2026 budget request proposes moving ARPA-H under a new Assistant Secretary for a Healthy Future (ASHF) with an FY2026 funding level of $945 million.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration[35]

The National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 (P.L. 85-568) established NASA to conduct civilian space and aeronautics activities. NASA has research programs in planetary science, Earth science, astrophysics, heliophysics, the biological and physical sciences, aeronautics, and astronaut health and performance, as well as development programs for future human spacecraft and for multipurpose space technology, such as advanced propulsion systems. In addition, NASA operates the International Space Station (ISS) as a facility for R&D and other purposes.

Regular appropriations for NASA are provided through the annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations acts. NASA is funded through nine major accounts, and the amount of R&D funded through those accounts varies. Some accounts (such as Science and Space Technology) fund R&D almost exclusively, while others (such as Exploration and Space Operations) fund a mix of R&D and non-R&D activities (e.g., testing and demonstration).

For FY2026, President Trump is requesting $18.8 billion for NASA, a decrease of $6.0 billion (-24%; see **Figure 6** and **Table 6**) from the FY2025 enacted amount provided by P.L. 119-4 ($24.8 billion).[36] NASA received an additional $10 billion in FY2025 appropriations through P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 reconciliation act, for specific activities, although the law does not specify the corresponding appropriations accounts for this funding.

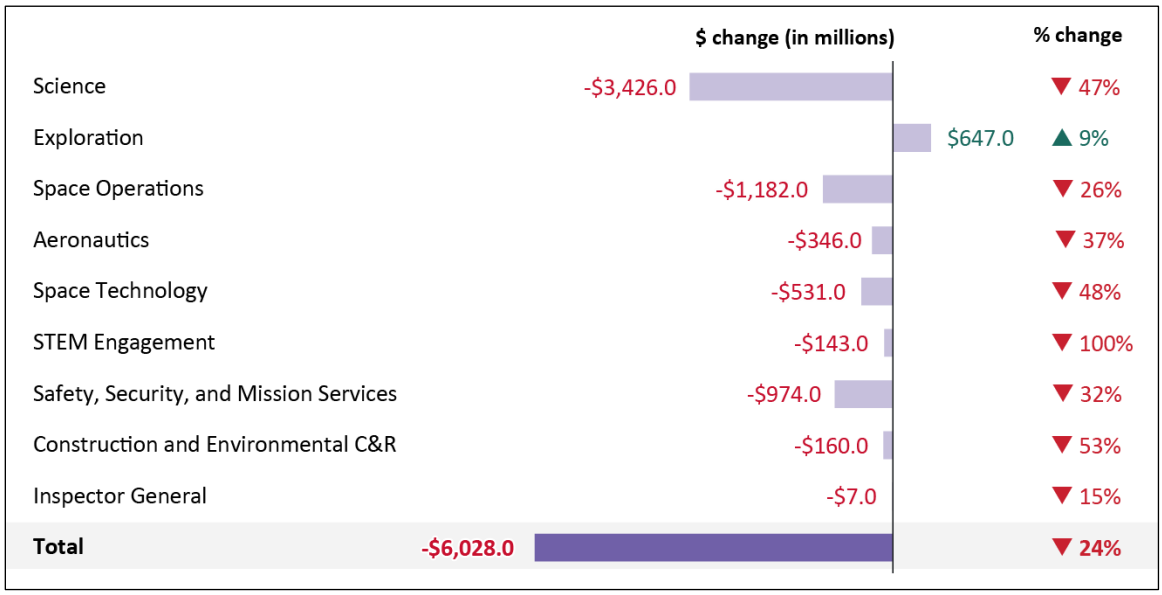
Under the President's FY2026 budget proposal for NASA, the Exploration account would receive the only increase: $647 million (9%) compared to FY2025 levels. The FY2026 request would reduce funding for all other accounts. Compared to FY2025 enacted levels provided by P.L. 119-4, the Science account would see the largest dollar decrease, down $3.4 billion (-47%), and the STEM Engagement account would see the largest percentage decrease, down $1.4 billion (-100%).

[35] This section was written by Rachel Lindbergh, Analyst in Science and Technology Policy.

[36] NASA received an additional $10 billion in FY2025 appropriations through P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 reconciliation act, for specific activities, although the law does not specify the corresponding appropriations accounts for this funding. Therefore, this section of the report uses FY2025 funding amounts from P.L. 119-4 when making comparisons to FY2026 requested amounts.

Figure 6. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Funding by Account/Program, President's FY2026 Request Compared to FY2025 Levels

(budget authority, in current dollars)



Source: CRS calculated the dollar and percentage changes by comparing NASA funding requested for FY2026 with enacted FY2025 funding levels specified by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A, P.L. 119-4). Requested FY2026 funding is from NASA, *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, p. SUM-5, https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2026-budget-request/.

Notes: STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; C&R = Compliance and Restoration. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. FY2024 totals include actual transactions and balances, as recorded in agency accounts. FY2025 totals reflect enacted amounts specified by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A, P.L. 119-4), and do not include the $10 billion in supplemental appropriations provided by P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 reconciliation act, which does not specify how the funding should be allocated across appropriations accounts. FY2026 totals include proposed appropriations for all programs, per the description provided in NASA, *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, p. SUM-5, https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2026-budget-request/.

Table 6 reflects total funding amounts requested for NASA, given that R&D funding is generally provided across multiple appropriations accounts. Selected themes from the FY2026 request are discussed below.

Table 6. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Funding

(budget authority, in millions of current dollars)

Account/Program	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Request	FY2025-FY2026 Request	
				Dollar Change	Percentage Change
Science	7,325	7,334	3,908	-3,426	-47%
Exploration	7,648	7,666	8,313	647	8
Space Operations	4,220	4,220	3,132	-1,088	-26%
Aeronautics	935	935	589	-346	-37%
Space Technology	1,100	1,100	569	-531	-48%
STEM Engagement	143	143	0	-143	-100%

Account/Program	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Request	FY2025-FY2026 Request	
				Dollar Change	Percentage Change
Safety, Security, and Mission Services	3,126	3,092	2,118	-974	-32%
Construction and Environmental C&R	326	300	140	-160	-53%
Inspector General	48	48	41	-7	-15%
Total, NASA	**24,871**	**24,838**	**18,810**	**-6,028**	**-24%**

Source: NASA, *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, p. SUM-5, https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2026-budget-request/.

Notes: STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; C&R = Compliance and Restoration. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. FY2024 totals include actual transactions and balances, as recorded in agency accounts. FY2025 totals reflect enacted amounts specified by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A, P.L. 119-4), and do not include the $10 billion in supplemental appropriations provided by P.L. 119-21, the FY2025 reconciliation act, which does not specify how the funding should be allocated across appropriations accounts. FY2026 totals include proposed appropriations for all programs, per the description provided in NASA, *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, p. SUM-5, https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2026-budget-request/.

Reductions in Force

NASA's civilian workforce, two-thirds of which is in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) occupations, averaged 17,600 employees over a recent five-year period.[37] The FY2026 request proposes reducing NASA's workforce by about 5,500 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions compared to the agency's recent five-year average workforce.[38] The proposed FTE reductions would affect all 10 NASA centers to varying degrees, as shown in **Table 7**.

Similarly, the proposed FTE reductions would affect all NASA accounts, although some would be more heavily impacted than others. For instance, the FY2026 request proposes reducing FTE positions in the Science account by about 1,400 (-49%) compared to the FY2025 estimated number (2,841 FTE positions), while the proposed reduction for Exploration would be 137 FTE positions (4% less than the FY2025 estimate of 3,331 FTE positions).[39]

In June 2025, NASA began efforts to reduce its workforce through voluntary separation incentives, including early retirement offers and the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP).[40] At least 64 Members of the House of Representatives have expressed concern that NASA has proceeded with such efforts before Congress has enacted appropriations. These Members, in a letter to NASA Acting Administrator Sean Duffy (who is also the Secretary of Transportation), asked NASA to take "no actions" to implement proposed funding cuts or "encourage or effectuate

[37] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *NASA at a Crossroads: Maintaining Workforce, Infrastructure, and Technology Preeminence in the Coming Decades*, 2024, p. 61, https://doi.org/10.17226/27519.

[38] National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, June 9, 2025, p. SD-7, https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2026-budget-request/ (hereinafter NASA, *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*).

[39] OMB, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix*, pp. 997-1005.

[40] Tariq Malik, "NASA Begins Push to Slash Workforce with More Staff Buyouts, Early Retirements as Budget Cuts Loom," *Space.com*, June 11, 2025, https://www.space.com/space-exploration/nasa-begins-push-to-slash-workforce-with-more-staff-buyouts-early-retirements-as-budget-cuts-loom.

actions to meet the proposed workforce reductions in the FY2026 budget request ... until Congress enacts full-year appropriations for FY2026 through September 30th, 2026."[41]

The window to opt in to the most recent round of voluntary separation incentives closed in July 2025. NASA reports that 2,904 employees requested use of these voluntary separation incentives as of July 31, 2025.[42] Reportedly, of the 2,904 employees, about 2,150 are "senior-ranking" officials.[43] The number of departures varies between NASA's accounts, as described in **Table 7**. This table also compares the number of departures to the FY2025 estimated number of FTE positions in that account and the FY2026 number proposed by the Trump Administration.

Table 7. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Positions

				FY2025-FY2026	
NASA Facility (State)	**FY2024 Actual**	**FY2025 Estimate**	**FY2026 Proposed**	**Change in FTE Positions**	**Percentage Change**
Headquarters (Washington, DC)	1,614	1,841	1,366	-475	-26%
Ames Research Center (CA)	1,258	1,225	755	-470	-38%
Armstrong Flight Research Center (CA)	499	500	309	-191	-38%
Glenn Research Center (OH)	1,446	1,391	837	-554	-40%
Goddard Space Flight Center (MD)	2,963	2,884	1,549	-1,335	-46%
Johnson Space Center (TX)	3,013	3,292	2,594	-698	-21%
Kennedy Space Center (FL)	2,010	2,016	1,506	-510	-25%
Langley Research Center (VA)	1,801	1,730	1,058	-672	-39%
Marshall Space Flight Center (AL)	2,261	2,240	1,714	-526	-23%
Stennis Space Center (MS)	257	274	166	-108	-39%
Total, NASA	**17,122**	**17,391**	**11,853**	**-5,538**	**-32%**

Source: CRS Analysis of data from NASA, *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, p. SD-7, https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2026-budget-request/.

Potential Impact on NASA's Science Account

NASA's Science account largely supports R&D activities in Earth science, planetary science, astrophysics, heliophysics, and biological and physical sciences. For FY2026, the Trump Administration proposed reducing this account's funding by $3.4 billion compared to FY2025 estimated levels and cancelling "over 40 lower-priority missions" that include missions currently

[41] Letter from Valerie P. Foushee, Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, et al., to Sean Duffy, acting administrator of NASA, July 18, 2025, https://foushee.house.gov/imo/media/doc/foushee_letter_nasa_fy26_pbr_cuts.pdf.

[42] NASA, email communication with CRS, August 15, 2025.

[43] Sam Skove, "Over 2,000 Senior Staff Set to Leave NASA Under Agency Push," *Politico*, July 9, 2025, https://www.politico.com/news/2025/07/09/nasa-staff-departures-00444674.

in early development stages and those currently in space.[44] Proposed cancellations include Chandra X-Ray Observatory, an X-ray telescope currently in orbit; Mars Sample Return, a planned mission to return samples from Mars; DAVINCI and VERITAS, both spacecraft in development with the goal of studying Venus; and HelioSwarm, a planned constellation of spacecraft and satellites intended to study the Sun.[45] Proposed reductions for Science subaccounts (compared to FY2024 levels) include the following:[46]

- **Earth Sciences:** For FY2026, the requested amount is $1.0 billion, a reduction of $1.1 billion (-52%) compared to FY2024 actual levels ($2.1 billion).
- **Planetary Sciences:** For FY2026, the requested amount is $1.9 billion, a reduction of $873 million (-32%) compared to FY2024 actual levels ($2.8 billion).
- **Astrophysics:** For FY2026, the requested amount is $523 million, a reduction of $1.0 billion (-66%) compared to FY2024 actual levels ($1.5 billion).
- **Heliophysics:** For FY2026, the requested amount is $433 million, a reduction of $373 million (-46%) compared to FY2024 actual levels ($805 million).
- **Biological and Physical Sciences:** For FY2026, the requested amount is $25 million, a reduction of $62 million (-71%) compared to FY2024 actual levels ($88 million).

Potential Impact on NASA's Applied Research Portfolio

The Aeronautics and Space Technology accounts include much of NASA's applied R&D portfolio. According to the NASA FY2025 budget estimate, the Aeronautics account supports efforts to "improve efficiency and reduce the noise and emissions of commercial aircraft; advance the safety, capacity, and efficiency of air transportation; and enhance aviation as an economic engine."[47] According to the NASA FY2025 budget estimate, the Space Technology account supports the development of cross-cutting technology for future space missions in partnership with small and large businesses and academia.[48] The FY2026 request proposes reducing funding for Aeronautics by about 37% (about $346 million) and for Space Technology by about 48% ($531 million) compared to FY2025 levels. As part of this proposed reduction for Aeronautics, the FY2026 request proposes shifting "attention and resources for climate-focused 'green-aviation' projects and underperforming space propulsion projects" to "development of air traffic control enhancements and technology projects that enable a transition to private sector research

[44] NASA *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, p. SUM-5.

[45] NASA *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, pp. SCMD-4, PS-30, and HELIO-23; NASA, "Chandra: Chandra X-Ray Observatory," September 7, 2023, https://science.nasa.gov/mission/chandra/; NASA, "Mars Sample Return," June 16, 2025, https://science.nasa.gov/mission/mars-sample-return/; NASA, "DAVINCI: Deep Atmosphere Venus Investigation of Noble Gases, Chemistry, and Imaging," February 10, 2025, https://science.nasa.gov/mission/davinci/; NASA, "VERITAS: Venus Emissivity, Radio Science, InSAR, Topography and Spectroscopy," April 15, 2025, https://science.nasa.gov/mission/veritas/; and NASA, "HelioSwarm," August 23, 2024, https://science.nasa.gov/mission/helioswarm/.

[46] The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4) does not specify appropriations for the subaccounts within NASA's Science account. Therefore, CRS compared the FY2026 requested amounts with the FY2024 operating plan, as provided by NASA's *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, p. BUD-1.

[47] NASA, *FY 2025 Budget Estimates*, April 15, 2024, p. AERO-2, https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2025-budget-request/.

[48] NASA, *FY 2025 Budget Estimates*, April 15, 2024, p. ST-2, https://www.nasa.gov/fy-2025-budget-request/.

and development."[49]The Trump Administration also proposes shifting to ground testing and modeling in place of more costly flight demonstrations for some of its aeronautics projects.[50]

Department of Energy[51]

DOE was established in 1977 by the Department of Energy Organization Act (P.L. 95-91), which combined energy-related programs from a variety of agencies, particularly defense-related nuclear programs that dated back to the Manhattan Project. Today, DOE conducts various activities, including basic scientific research in fields ranging from nuclear physics to the biological and environmental sciences; basic and applied R&D relating to energy production and use; and R&D on nuclear weapons, nuclear nonproliferation, and defense nuclear reactors. The department has a system of 17 national laboratories, mostly operated by contractors, located around the country.[52]

The Administration's FY2026 budget request for DOE includes $17.8 billion for R&D and related activities, including programs in three broad categories: science, national security, and energy. This request is 15.6% less than the comparable enacted FY2025 amount of $21.1 billion (see **Figure 7**).

[49] NASA *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, p. SUM-3.

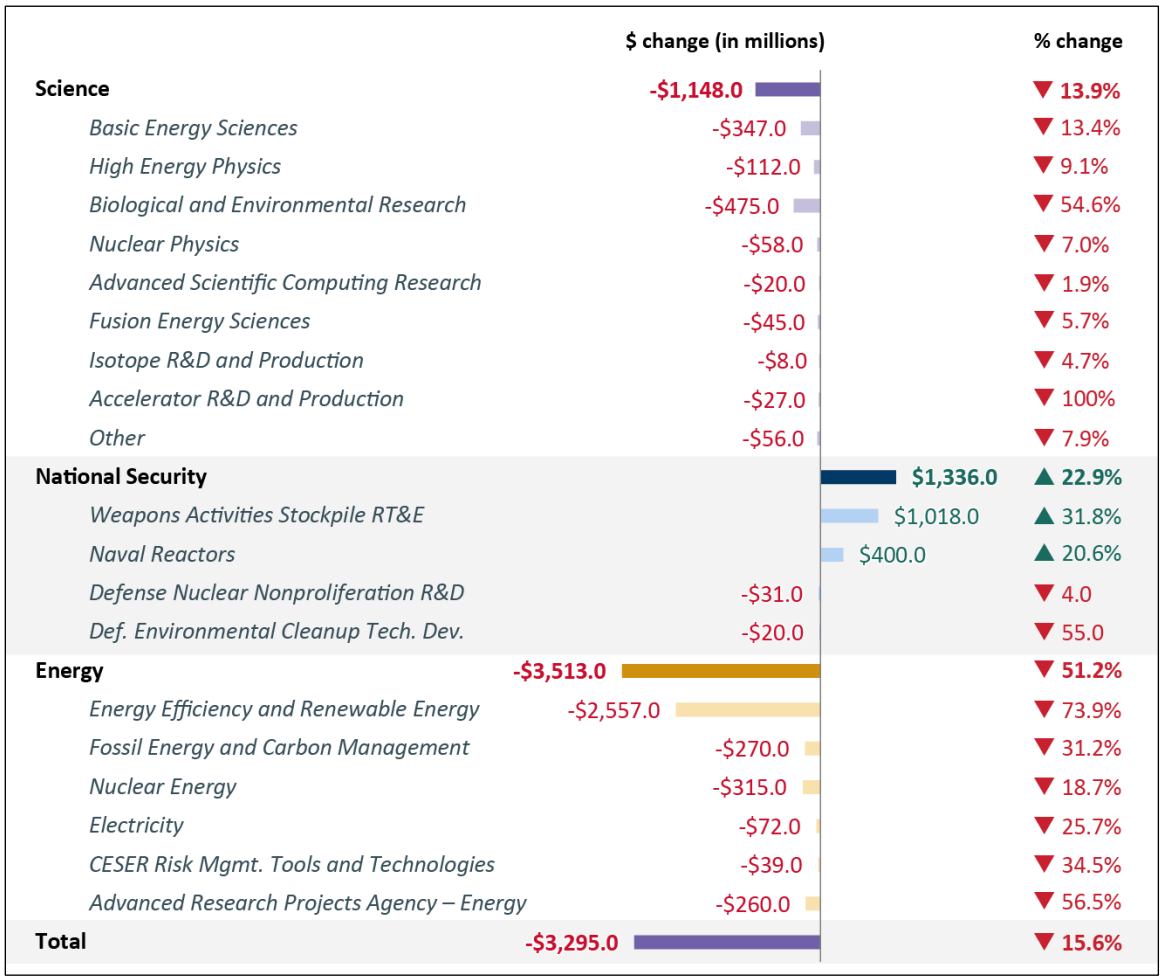
[50] NASA *FY 2026 Budget Technical Supplement*, pp. AERO-2 to AERO-4.

[51] This section was written by Todd Kuiken, Analyst in Science and Technology Policy.

[52] CRS In Focus IF12692, *Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science*, by Todd Kuiken.

Figure 7. Selected Department of Energy (DOE) R&D Funding by Account/Program, President's FY2026 Request Compared to FY2025 Levels

(budget authority, in current dollars)



Source: CRS calculated the dollar and percentage changes by comparing DOE research and development (R&D) funding requested for FY2026 with estimated FY2025 funding levels contained in DOE, *Summary Budget Documents FY 2026*, Statistical Tables, 2025, https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/doe-fy-2026-budget-approps-congressional-control-v5.pdf.

Notes: RT&E = Research, Technology, and Engineering; Def. Environmental Cleanup Tech. Dev. = Defense Environmental Cleanup Technology Development; CESER = Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response. Program- or account-level totals shown in italics are considered *non-adds*, that is, components included for illustrative purposes and not counted as separate line items when generating figure totals. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. DOE R&D funding totals may differ from amounts reported by the Office of Management and Budget, which are included in **Table 3**.

Table 8 provides R&D funding amounts for DOE accounts/programs that CRS identified as typically providing R&D funding. It does not reflect total funding amounts requested for DOE, of which R&D is a portion. For additional information related to DOE funding, see CRS Report R48599, *Energy and Water Development: FY2026 Appropriations*, by Mark Holt and Anna E. Normand.

Table 8. Selected Department of Energy (DOE) R&D and Related Activities

(budget authority, in millions of current dollars)

Account/Program	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Request	FY2025-FY2026 Request	
				Dollar Change	Percentage Change
Science	8,240	8,240	7,092	-1,148	-13.9%
Basic Energy Sciences	*2,626*	*2,588*	*2,241*	*-347*	*-13.4%*
High Energy Physics	*1,200*	*1,225*	*1,113*	*-112*	*-9.1%*
Biological and Environmental Research	*900*	*870*	*395*	*-475*	*-54.6%*
Nuclear Physics	*804*	*826*	*768*	*-58*	*-7.0%*
Advanced Scientific Computing Research	*1,016*	*1,036*	*1,016*	*-20*	*-1.9%*
Fusion Energy Sciences	*790*	*790*	*745*	*-45*	*-5.7%*
Isotope R&D and Production	*130*	*170*	*162*	*-8*	*-4.7%*
Accelerator R&D and Production	*29*	*27*	*0*	*-27*	*-100%*
Other[a]	*745*	*708*	*652*	*-56*	*-7.9%*
National Security	6,028	5,958	7,324	1,366	22.9%
Weapons Activities Stockpile RT&E	*3,280*	*3,198*	*4,215*	*1,018*	*31.8%*
Naval Reactors	*1,946*	*1,946*	*2,346*	*400*	*20.6%*
Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation R&D	*766*	*778*	*747*	*-31*	*-4.0%*
Defense Environmental Cleanup Technology Development	*36*	*36*	*16*	*-20*	*-55.0%*
Energy	6,863	6,863	3,350	-3,513	-51.2%
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy	*3,460*	*3,460*	*903*[b]	*-2,557*	*-73.9%*
Fossil Energy and Carbon Management	*865*	*865*	*595*	*-270*	*-31.2%*
Nuclear Energy	*1,685*	*1,685*	*1,370*	*-315*	*-18.7%*
Electricity	*280*	*280*	*208*	*-72*	*-25.7%*
CESER Risk Management Tools and Technologies	*113*	*113*	*74*	*-39*	*-34.5%*
Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy	*460*	*460*	*200*	*-260*	*-56.5%*
Total, DOE	**21,131**	**21,061**	**17,766**	**-3,295**	**-15.6%**

Sources: DOE, *Summary Budget Documents FY 2026*, Statistical Tables, 2025, https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/doe-fy-2026-budget-approps-congressional-control-v5.pdf.

Notes: RT&E = Research, Technology, and Engineering. CESER = Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response. Subtotals for FY2025 were constructed by the author, which may account for why, in some cases, the funding levels for specific accounts are different for FY2025 and FY2024 despite FY2025 funding

being continued at the same level as FY2024 funding. The table provides research and development (R&D) funding amounts for DOE accounts/programs that CRS identified as typically providing R&D funding. It does not reflect total funding amounts requested for DOE, of which R&D is a portion. For additional information related to DOE funding, see CRS Report R48599, *Energy and Water Development: FY2026 Appropriations*, by Mark Holt and Anna E. Normand. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. Program- or account-level totals shown in italics are considered *non-adds*, that is, components included for illustrative purposes and not counted as separate line items when generating table totals. DOE R&D funding totals may differ from amounts reported by the Office of Management and Budget, which are included in **Table 3**.

a. This includes other scientific programs and program direction.

b. This includes funding for manufacturing and energy supply chains.

Potential Impact on DOE's Science Account

The Administration is requesting $7.1 billion for the science account in FY2026, a reduction of $1.1 billion (-14%) from FY2025. The Biological and Environmental Research (BER) program, under the Science account, would see the largest reduction in funding, reduced from $900 million in FY2024 to $395 million (-56%) in FY2026. Specifically, BER research in environmental system sciences, atmospheric system research, earth system modeling, and data management, as well as the Atmospheric Radiation Measurement User Facility, would be eliminated. BER would instead focus on "transformative science and scientific user facilities to harness the genomic potential found in nature, achieve a predictive understanding of complex systems, and provide the fundamental research leading to solutions for the Nation's energy and national security challenges."[53]

Potential Impact on National-Security-Related R&D

The request for DOE's national-security-related R&D is $7.3 billion, requesting an increase of $1.3 billion (22.9%) from the FY2025 estimated levels. In the Weapons Activities account, the request for Stockpile Research, Technology, and Engineering would increase by $1.0 billion. Meanwhile, the budget for Defense Environmental Cleanup Technology Development would see a decrease of 55%, and Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation R&D would decrease by 4%, both compared to FY2025 levels.

Potential Impact on Energy-Related R&D

The Administration is requesting $3.4 billion for energy-related R&D in FY2026, a reduction of 51.2% compared to FY2025 estimated budgets. The largest reduction, $2.6 billion (-73.9%), would occur in the energy efficiency and renewable energy accounts. The Administration is requesting $200 million for Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), which supports research on high-risk but potentially transformative technology, a reduction of $260 million (-56.5%) from the FY2025 level of $460 million.[54] According to DOE, this level would reduce funding "to a fiscally responsible level for high risk, high reward research advancing reliable energy technologies and other critical and emerging technologies."[55]

[53] Department of Energy (DOE), *FY 2026 Congressional Justification: Budget in Brief*, May 2025, p. 20, https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2025-06/doe-fy-2026-bib-v6.pdf.

[54] DOE, *FY 2026 Congressional Justification*: *Budget in Brief*, p. 41.

[55] DOE, *FY 2026 Congressional Justification: Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy*, May 2025, https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2025-06/doe-fy-2026-vol-2-arpa-e.pdf.

Indirect Cost Rates

On April 11, 2025, DOE announced "updated policies, procedures, and general decision-making criteria for establishing indirect cost rates when awarding grants to IHEs [institutions of higher education]."[56] According to the policy, DOE will no longer use the negotiated indirect cost rate for grants awarded to IHEs; instead, DOE is setting a standardized 15% indirect cost rate for all grant awards to IHEs.[57] A federal lawsuit filed by several affected IHEs cited previously negotiated indirect cost rates ranging up to 62%.[58] Lower indirect cost rates may affect institutions' assessment of conducting research for DOE and may change their willingness to apply for grants in the future.[59] Separately, DOE issued policies on May 8, 2025, that also changed the indirect cost rates DOE would pay to state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit organizations.[60] Changes in indirect cost rates may affect the overall budget that IHEs, state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit organizations receive from DOE to conduct research. This could influence their assessment of whether it is financially prudent to apply for funding in the future, potentially impacting DOE's future research programs.[61]

National Science Foundation[62]

NSF supports basic research and education in the nonmedical sciences and engineering. Congress established NSF as an independent federal agency in 1950 to "promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes."[63] NSF is a major source of federal support for U.S. university research, especially in

[56] Indirect costs, also known as facilities and administrative or overhead costs, fund the infrastructure and support services for R&D but are not easily attributed to a specific project. For additional information on how federal agencies negotiate indirect cost rates, see CRS Report R48540, *Universities and Indirect Costs for Federally Funded Research*, by Marcy E. Gallo and Laurie Harris. DOE, "PF 2025-22 Adjusting Department of Energy Grant Policy for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)," April 11, 2025, https://www.energy.gov/management/pf-2025-22-adjusting-department-energy-grant-policy-institutions-higher-education-ihe.

[57] DOE, "PF 2025-22 Adjusting Department of Energy Grant Policy for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)."

[58] Association of American Universities v. Department of Energy, No. 1:25-cv-10912 (D. Mass. filed April 14, 2025), https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/Research-Administration-Regulation/legal-filing-DOE-4-14-25.pdf.

[59] For more background, see CRS Report R48540, *Universities and Indirect Costs for Federally Funded Research*, by Marcy E. Gallo and Laurie Harris.

[60] DOE, "PF 2025-25 Adjusting Department of Energy Financial Assistance Policy for State and Local Governments' Financial Assistance Awards," May 8, 2025, https://www.energy.gov/management/pf-2025-25-adjusting-department-energy-financial-assistance-policy-state-and-local; DOE, "PF 2025-26 Adjusting Department of Energy Financial Assistance Policy for Nonprofit Organizations' Financial Assistance Awards," May 8, 2025, https://www.energy.gov/management/pf-2025-26-adjusting-department-energy-financial-assistance-policy-nonprofit; and DOE, "PF 2025-27 Adjusting Department of Energy Financial Assistance Policy for For-Profit Organizations' Financial Assistance Awards," May 8, 2025, https://www.energy.gov/management/pf-2025-27-adjusting-department-energy-financial-assistance-policy-profit-organizations.

[61] The House Committee on Appropriations report accompanying the proposed Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 4553), would direct DOE to pause implementation of its previously announced policy regarding indirect cost rates. The report would direct DOE to work with stakeholders to develop new indirect cost rate policies that "better reflect the unique capabilities of entities that support the Department's research goals." See U.S. Congress, House Appropriations Committee, *Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, committee print, 119th Cong., 1st sess., July 21, 2026, H.Rept. 119-213, p. 89.

[62] This section was written by Laurie Harris, Analyst in Science and Technology Policy.

[63] The National Science Foundation Act of 1950 (P.L. 81-507), https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/2023-04/NSF_act_1950_legislation.pdf.

computer and information science and the geosciences and social sciences.[64] It is also responsible for significant shares of the federal STEM education program portfolio and federal STEM student aid and support.[65]

Regular appropriations for NSF are provided through the annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations acts. NSF discretionary funding is typically provided through the following six appropriations accounts, while program-specific direction is usually included in accompanying conference reports or explanatory statements:

- Research and Related Activities (RRA), the main research account;
- STEM Education (EDU), the main education account;[66]
- Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC), which supports the acquisition, construction, and commissioning of major facilities and larger mid-scale research infrastructure (RI);[67]
- Agency Operations and Award Management (AOAM);
- the National Science Board (NSB), the account supporting NSF's governing body; and
- the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

For FY2026, President Trump's budget request includes $3.9 billion for NSF, a decrease of $4.9 billion (-55.8%) from the FY2025 estimated amount ($8.8 billion); see **Figure 8** and **Table 9**. The FY2026 budget request proposes consolidating the EDU account as a subaccount within the RRA account. The combined resources for these activities in FY2026 would be $3.3 billion, down $5.1 billion (-60.8%) compared to the FY2025 estimated amount ($8.4 billion). Under the prior-year structure, the FY2026 budget request would decrease funding for RRA by $4.2 billion (-58.4%) and EDU by $883.6 million (-75.4%) compared to the FY2025 estimated amounts.

[64] In FY2023, NSF was the largest federal funder of university research in computer and information sciences and geosciences, and the second largest funder of university research in social sciences, physical sciences, and mathematics and statistics, according to CRS analysis of data from the National Science Foundation (NSF) National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES), "Table 48. Federal Obligations for Research Performed at Higher Education Institutions, by Agency and Field of R&D: FY 2023," in *Survey of Federal Funds for Research and Development*, March 2025, https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf25328/table/48. FY2023 is the most recent year for which data are available.

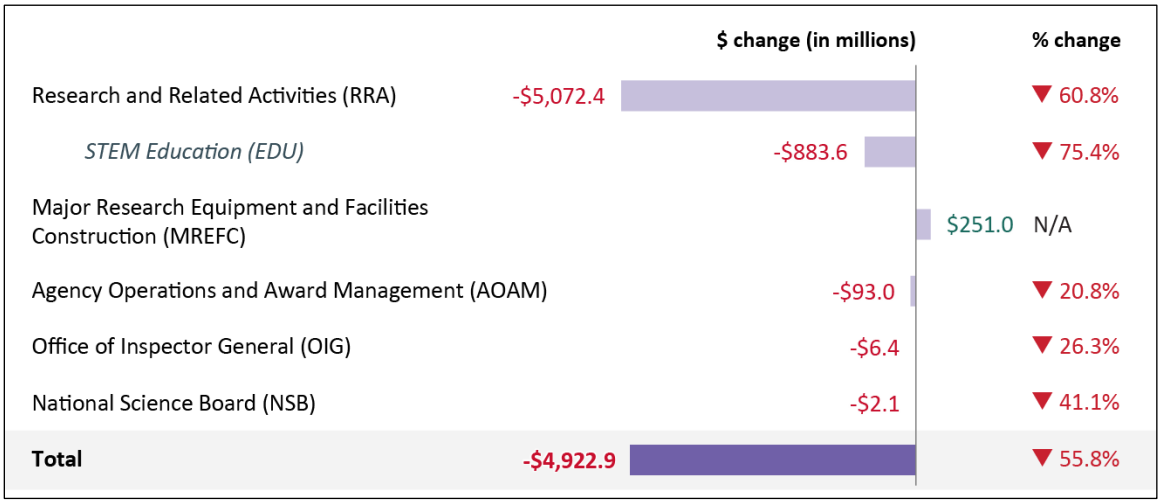
[65] For a summary of the federal science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) investments inventory, see Appendix 4 in Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), *2024 Report on the Committee on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (CoSTEM) and CoSTEM-Related Agency Actions*, January 2025, p. 73, https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-CoSTEM-Annual-Report.pdf.

[66] In the FY2023 budget request, NSF proposed changing the name of the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR) to the Directorate for STEM Education (EDU). In the FY2026 budget request, NSF proposed consolidating EDU within the Research and Related Activities (RRA) account, listing EDU as a subaccount in RRA. In response, the Senate and House of Representatives appropriations bills, as introduced, have taken opposite approaches. The Senate bill would provide funding for the RRA and EDU accounts separately, in line with prior-year appropriations account structures. The House bill would not provide separate funding for EDU, in line with the President's request.

[67] Initial development and design and post-construction operations and maintenance are funded through the RRA account.

Figure 8. National Science Foundation (NSF) Funding by Account/Program, President's FY2026 Request Compared to FY2025 Levels

(budget authority, in current dollars)



Source: CRS calculated the dollar and percentage changes by comparing NSF funding requested for FY2026 with estimated FY2025 funding levels contained in NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, May 30, 2025, p. Summary Tables-3, https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/00-NSF-FY26-CJ-Entire-Rollup.pdf.

Notes: STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The FY2026 NSF budget request proposes consolidating the EDU account as a subaccount within the RRA account. To conform with this proposal, CRS included EDU amounts, shown here in italics, as *non-adds* (i.e., components included for illustrative purposes and not counted as separate line items when generating figure totals) for reference only. CRS included EDU amounts in the RRA account totals when calculating the dollar and percentage change.

Funding for R&D is included in the RRA (including the proposed consolidation of EDU-supported activities) and MREFC accounts.[68] (The RRA account and amounts historically included in the EDU account have also included non-R&D funding.) Together, the RRA and MREFC accounts, including EDU-related activities, compose 95% of the total requested funding for NSF. Actual and estimated R&D obligations for each account are known after NSF allocates funding appropriations to specific activities and reports those figures.[69] The budget request specifies R&D funding for the conduct of research, including basic and applied research, and for physical assets, including R&D facilities and major equipment. Total agency funding amounts for FY2024 actual, FY2025 enacted, and FY2026 requested levels are reported by account in **Table 9**; amounts for R&D are reported by account in **Table 10**.[70] In both tables, EDU-related funding is included within RRA amounts and is also identified separately, where possible, to enable comparisons with prior-year funding and the Senate FY2026 appropriation bill (S. 2354), which would provide a specific appropriation for EDU as reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

[68] CRS is including the funding amounts for EDU because NSF's FY2026 budget request still includes funding breakouts for STEM education activities for FY2024 and FY2025 amounts in the "Quantitative Data Table, Research and Development Special Analysis" section, pp. QDT-1 to QDT-8.

[69] R&D actual (FY2024), estimated (FY2025), and requested (FY2026) amounts are reported in NSF, "Quantitative Data Tables" in *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, May 30, 2025, https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/00-NSF-FY26-CJ-Entire-Rollup.pdf.

[70] Account breakouts for R&D funding are included in the "Quantitative Data Table, Research and Development Special Analysis" section of the budget request, pp. QDT-1 to QDT-8.

Under the FY2026 request, R&D funding in the RRA account would decrease by $4.7 billion (-62.1%) compared to the FY2025 estimate of RRA and EDU combined. (A comparison of R&D funding for EDU separately is not possible, as R&D breakouts for FY2026 requested amounts for EDU are not provided in NSF's budget request.)[71]

The MREFC account appears to increase from $0 in FY2025 to a requested $251 million for FY2026 because President Trump canceled the designation of $234 million appropriated for FY2025 to NSF as emergency funding for that account through Division A of the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4).[72] According to the NSF FY2026 budget request, "MREFC appropriated funds were not included in the emergency designation transmitted to the Committee on Appropriations on March 24, 2025, and are thus not available for expenditure."[73]

Table 9. National Science Foundation (NSF) Funding

(budget authority, in millions of current dollars)

Account/Program	FY2024 Actual[a]	FY2025 Estimate	FY2026 Request	FY2025-FY2026 Dollar Change	FY2025-FY2026 Percentage Change
Research and Related Activities (RRA)	8,348.5	8,348.5	3,276.2	-5,072.4	-60.8%
STEM Education (EDU)[b]	*1,154.3*	*1,172.0*	*288.4*	*-883.6*	*-75.4%*
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC)	234.0	—[c]	251.0	251.0	N/A
Agency Operations and Award Management (AOAM)[d]	448.0	448.0	355.0	-93.0	-20.8%
Office of Inspector General (OIG)[d]	24.4	24.4	18.0	-6.4	-26.3%
National Science Board (NSB)[d]	5.1	5.1	3.0	-2.1	-41.1%
Total, NSF[e]	**9,060.0**	**8,826.0**	**3,903.2**	**-4,922.9**	**-55.8%**

Source: CRS calculated dollar and percentage changes using data from NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, May 30, 2025, p. Summary Tables-3, https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/00-NSF-FY26-CJ-Entire-Rollup.pdf.

Notes: STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; N/A = not available. Italicized amounts for the EDU account are for reference only; CRS has included EDU amounts in the RRA amount to reflect the proposed consolidation of EDU into RRA, as reported for FY2026 requested funding. Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

a. FY2024 actual amounts include $316 million from the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

b. The FY2026 NSF budget request proposes consolidating the EDU account as a subaccount within the RRA account. To conform with this proposal, CRS included EDU amounts here in italics for reference; the amounts have also been included in the RRA amounts in this table.

[71] See NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. QDT-3.

[72] P.L. 119-4 had provided funding for FY2025 at the level ($234 million) and under the authorities and conditions as provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42, Division C, Title III).

[73] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Summary Tables-4. Per a White House transmittal to Congress on March 24, 2025, the President determined that the $234 million in funds provided for the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) account for FY2025 were "improperly designated by the Congress as emergency in the [appropriations] Act," and he did "not concur that the added spending is truly for emergency needs." See U.S. President (Trump), "Un-Designating Funding as Emergency Funding," 119th Cong., 1st sess., March 25, 2025, H.Doc. 119-31, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CDOC-119hdoc31/pdf/CDOC-119hdoc31.pdf; and Clare Zhang, "NSF Construction Budget Defunded as Trump Challenges 'Emergency' Spending," *American Institute of Physics*, April 1, 2025, https://www.aip.org/fyi/nsf-construction-budget-defunded-as-trump-challenges-emergency-spending.

c. According to the NSF FY2026 budget request, p. Summary Tables-4, "MREFC appropriated funds were not included in the emergency designation transmitted to the Committee on Appropriations on March 24, 2025, and are thus not available for expenditure." These funds were provided through Division A of the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), which provided funding for FY2025 at the level and under the authorities and conditions as provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42, Division C, Title III). Per a White House transmittal to Congress on March 25, 2025, the President determined that the $234 million provided for the MREFC account for FY2025 was "improperly designated by the Congress as emergency in the Act," and he did "not concur that the added spending is truly for emergency needs." See U.S. President (Trump), "Un-Designating Funding as Emergency Funding," 119th Cong., 1st sess., March 25, 2025, H.Doc. 119-31, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CDOC-119hdoc31/pdf/CDOC-119hdoc31.pdf; and Clare Zhang, "NSF Construction Budget Defunded as Trump Challenges 'Emergency' Spending," *American Institute of Physics*, April 1, 2025, https://www.aip.org/fyi/nsf-construction-budget-defunded-as-trump-challenges-emergency-spending.

d. The AOAM, NSB, and OIG accounts have no reported research and development (R&D) funding.

e. In addition to discretionary funding, NSF reports mandatory funding in its R&D breakouts. Mandatory funding is not shown in this table but includes $50.0 million in each of FY2025 and FY2026 from the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) for America Workforce and Education Fund mandatory appropriations (per P.L. 117-167, Division A, §102(d)(2)(C)). See the "Quantitative Data Tables" section of the NSF FY2026 budget request, p. QDT-8.

Table 10. National Science Foundation (NSF) R&D Funding

(budget authority, in millions of current dollars)

Account/Program	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Estimate	FY2026 Request	FY2025-FY2026 Request: Dollar Change	FY2025-FY2026 Request: Percentage Change
Research and Related Activities (RRA)	7,202.7	7,012.5	2,876.2	-4,136.4	-59.0%
STEM Education (EDU)[a]	*537.6*	*584.0*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC)	253.5	—[b]	251.0	251.0	N/A
Agency Operations and Award Management (AOAM)[c]	—	—	—	—	—
Office of Inspector General (OIG)[c]	—	—	—	—	—
National Science Board (NSB)[c]	—	—	—	—	—
CHIPS for American Workforce and Education[d]	—	10.0	10.0	—	—
Total, NSF R&D[d]	**7,456.2**	**7,022.5**	**3,137.2**	**-3,885.4**	**-55.3%**
R&D Conduct	*6,948.5*	*6,777.5*	*2,776.2*	*-4,001.4*	*-59.0%*
R&D Facilities and Equipment	*507.7*	*245.0*	*361.0*	*116.0*	*47.3%*

Source: CRS calculated dollar and percentage changes using data from NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, May 30, 2025, pp. QDT-1 to QDT-8, https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/00-NSF-FY26-CJ-Entire-Rollup.pdf.

Notes: N/A = not available; STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Em dash (—) indicates that no research and development (R&D) information is reported, unless otherwise noted. Italicized R&D amounts are a subset of total NSF R&D amounts. Components of non-italicized amounts may not sum to totals because of rounding.

a. The FY2026 NSF budget request proposes consolidating the EDU account as a subaccount within the RRA account. To conform with this proposal, CRS included EDU here in italics for reference; the EDU amounts have also been included in the RRA amounts in this table.

b. According to the NSF FY2026 budget request, p. Summary Tables-4, "MREFC appropriated funds were not included in the emergency designation transmitted to the Committee on Appropriations on March 24, 2025, and are thus not available for expenditure."

c. The AOAM, NSB, and OIG accounts have no reported R&D funding.

d. In addition to discretionary funding, NSF reports mandatory funding from the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) for America Workforce and Education Fund appropriations (per P.L. 117-167, Division A, §102(d)(2)(C)) in its R&D totals. See the "Quantitative Data Tables" section of the NSF FY2026 budget request, p. QDT-8.

e. An unspecified amount of R&D for EDU is likely included in the requested FY2026 R&D amount for RRA.

Funding Rates for R&D

Under the FY2026 requested funding amounts, NSF estimates that the funding rate for competitive awards (including research grants, cooperative agreements, equipment grants, and fellowships) would decrease from 26% to 7% of proposals received.[74] In 2021, the former NSF director, Sethuraman Panchanathan, testified that NSF was funding "only 50% of what [it] could fund," in terms of proposals that were deemed worthy of support but rejected because of budget constraints at that time.[75] Some stakeholders have also raised concerns about potential long-term impacts to the economy and scientific workforce from rapid and large-scale cuts to basic research funded by NSF.[76] Additionally, through the CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167), Congress authorized and reauthorized NSF programs and activities and authorized appropriations for NSF of $17.8 billion in FY2026; the requested funding levels are $13.9 billion (-78.1%) below the authorized amount.

Investments in Research Infrastructure

The NSF FY2026 budget request notes that "RI is foundational to the scientific endeavor and necessary for enabling ground-breaking discoveries and global leadership."[77] NSF's RI portfolio includes two main types of funding through MREFC: a mid-scale RI (MRI) program covering projects with implementation costs between $20 million and $100 million (MRI Track 2, MRI-2 projects) and construction projects that require an investment of more than $100 million and tend to span multiple years. The request includes $251 million for MREFC, an increase of $17 million (7.3%) from the FY2024 reported amount. (As noted above, the FY2025 appropriation of $234 million for MREFC was not designated as emergency funding by President Trump in March 2025, and so no FY2025 appropriation was available for MREFC.)

The FY2026 MREFC requested funding would provide $25 million for the MRI-2 program, though this appears to be in support of previously funded proposals. The NSF budget request notes that, although NSF released a solicitation for MRI-2 proposals in March 2023 and has completed a review of those proposals, "NSF does not anticipate making new awards in FY 2026."[78] The FY2026 requested funding for MREFC would also support $225 million for

[74] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Summary Tables-5.

[75] See Jeffrey Mervis, "First Round of Hearings by Congress Back a More Muscular NSF," *Science*, April 15, 2021, https://www.science.org/content/article/first-round-hearings-congress-back-more-muscular-nsf.

[76] See for example, John Drake, "Trump's NIH and NSF Cuts Estimated to Cost the U.S. Economy $10 Billion Annually," *Forbes*, May 19, 2025, https://www.forbes.com/sites/johndrake/2025/05/19/trumps-nih-and-nsf-cuts-could-cost-the-us-economy-10-billion-annually/; and Rachel Nuwer and Lauren Young, "U.S. Budget Cuts Are Robbing Early-Career Scientists of Their Future," *Scientific American*, July 3, 2025, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-trumps-federal-funding-cuts-are-hurting-early-career-researchers-and/.

[77] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Overview-3.

[78] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. MREFC-22.

ongoing construction of two projects: the Antarctic Infrastructure Recapitalization (AIR; $24 million)[79] and the Leadership-Class Computing Facility (LCCF; $201 million).[80]

In addition to the MREFC account, NSF's RI investments from the RRA account—for operations and maintenance of major facilities and smaller MRI Track 1 projects—include $1.2 billion in FY2026 requested funding (down $718.6 million, -37.7%, from FY2024 funding).[81] According to the FY2026 budget request, NSF will emphasize operations and maintenance funding for its highest priority infrastructure, while a second tier will be supported at a "substantially reduced level," and a final group of facilities will be funded for limited FY2026 activity with an intent to close or divest from the infrastructure.[82] Oversight of the near- and long-term outcomes for NSF-supported infrastructure from the cancellation of FY2025 MREFC funding and reduced funding for certain NSF-supported facilities may be of ongoing interest to Congress.

Priority Research Areas

NSF provides summary information on prior and requested funding for "NSF administration priorities and crosscutting research topics" as part of the budget request.[83] Among the priority areas, two would see slight increases compared to the FY2024 current plan amount:[84] artificial intelligence ($655.2 million requested, up $19.6 million, 3%) and quantum information science ($231.2 million requested, up $1 million, 0.4%). The remaining priority areas would be decreased under the FY2026 funding amounts compared to the FY2024 current plan, all of which are on the list of *key technology focus areas* that guide numerous federal agency activities enacted under the CHIPS and Science Act:[85] advanced manufacturing ($110.1 million requested, down $200.5 million, -64.6%), advanced wireless ($59.5 million requested, down $83.9 million, -58.5%), biotechnology ($248.6 million requested, down $105.1 million, -29.7%), and microelectronics and semiconductors ($65.8 requested, down $76.8 million, -53.9%).

Additionally, certain statutorily required cross-agency programs of which NSF is a participant would see decreases under the FY2026 budget request compared to the FY2024 current plan, including the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development program ($821.3 million requested, down $944.5 million, -53.5%), the National Nanotechnology Initiative ($131.1 million requested, down $231.4 million, -63.8%), and the U.S. Global Change Research Program ($25.2 million requested, down $746.7 million, -96.7%).

Congress may consider whether to support the Administration's identified priorities through specified funding (and, if so, by how much). Congress may also consider what levels of funding are sufficient to support research priorities identified in statute as well as for the agency to carry out its participatory role in statutorily required programs and activities.

[79] "The AIR program is a portfolio of investments in facilities and infrastructure across U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) stations and gateways"; NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. MREFC-4.

[80] The LCCF project is "envisioned as a distributed facility that will provide unique computational and data analytics capabilities, as well as critical software and services, for the nation's [science and engineering] research community," with construction activities including a data center to house the primary LCCF computing system called *Horizon*; NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, pp. MREFC-14 to MREFC-15.

[81] CRS analysis of NSF's Research Infrastructure Summary table; NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Summary Tables-14.

[82] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Facilities-1.

[83] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, pp. Summary Tables-8 to Summary Tables-10.

[84] The budget request does not provide FY2025 estimates for these breakouts, only FY2024 current plan amounts.

[85] P.L. 117-167, §10387; 42 U.S.C. §19107.

Conclusion

Proposed federal R&D investments included in the President's FY2026 budget request serve as a first step in the process of defining the nation's R&D priorities through the annual budget process. As it acts on the FY2026 appropriations process, Congress may opt to concur with none, part, or all of the President's proposed R&D funding levels and allocations. This report's analysis of proposed R&D investments included in the President's FY2026 budget request supports several observations. Consideration of the following high-level points may inform the appropriations process as well as oversight of federal agency execution of R&D-related budget authority Congress provides for FY2026.

First, the President's FY2026 budget request appears to signal a shift in R&D funding away from civilian agencies to military components under DOD. Under the President's proposal, of the five agencies that would account for approximately 92% of total federal R&D funding in FY2026—DOD, NIH, DOE, NASA, and NSF—DOD would see the only funding increase (up $21 billion; 23%) compared to FY2025 estimated R&D funding levels. Further, DOD would account for 62% of total R&D funding in FY2026, which would represent an increase over the 46% share of R&D funding proposed by the Biden Administration for DOD in FY2025.

Second, though Congress provided funding for R&D in FY2025 at FY2024 levels through the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4, Division A), the President's budget proposal estimates FY2025 R&D funding as 5% below the actual FY2024 amount. As previously discussed, this decrease could be associated with a number of potential scenarios, including the Administration's shifting of resources away from R&D to non-R&D activities within funding accounts that support both. Another potential explanation—supplementary appropriations that may be included in FY2024 actual funding levels for R&D—highlights the increasingly central role supplementary funding measures may play in Congress's allocation of support for federal R&D activities. For example, absent the $37.1 billion in reconciliation funding that the President's FY2026 proposal anticipates, requested federal R&D investments in FY2026 would total $144.3 billion—a decrease of $47.8 billion (-24.9%) compared to estimated R&D investments in FY2025. By comparison, the President's request (with reconciliation amounts included) proposes a 6% decrease for federal R&D in FY2026 compared to FY2025. Congress's provision of R&D funding through continuing resolutions and/or supplementary appropriations measures may affect agency ability to execute R&D budgets, which among other things may result in delays or cancellations of planned R&D activities and acquisitions of R&D-related equipment.

Third, as proposed in the FY2026 budget and through the Administration's actions more generally, federal agencies that support R&D may enter FY2026 with reduced staffing levels compared to FY2025. Should Congress decide to maintain or increase current R&D funding levels, staffing reductions (as well as any future reductions) and other factors may affect how federal agencies execute budget authority for FY2026. Congress may continue oversight of agency execution of R&D budgets through a variety of mechanisms, including hearings and agency authorization processes.

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