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The National Science Foundation (NSF): FY2026 Appropriations and Funding History

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SUMMARY

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The National Science Foundation (NSF): FY2026 Appropriations and Funding History

The National Science Foundation (NSF) supports basic research and education in the nonmedical sciences and engineering. NSF is a major source of federal support for U.S. university research. It is also responsible for significant shares of the federal science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education portfolio of programs that support STEM learning and STEM-education-related research.

For FY2025, after a series of short-term resolutions to provide appropriations to NSF, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), signed by the President on March 15, 2025, provided appropriations at the FY2024 level ($9.1 billion).

The Trump Administration is seeking $3.9 billion in discretionary funding for NSF in FY2026, a $5.2 billion (-56.9%) decrease from the FY2025 enacted level. NSF has six appropriations accounts: Research and Related Activities (RRA; the main research account), STEM Education (EDU; the main education account), Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC), Agency Operations and Award Management (AOAM), the National Science Board (NSB), and the Office of Inspector General (OIG). In its FY2026 budget request, NSF proposes consolidating the EDU account as a subaccount within RRA, which would be the first appropriations account change since FY2003. The FY2026 request would decrease funding in five of six accounts relative to the FY2025 enacted amount: RRA by $4.2 billion (-58.4%), EDU by $883.6 million (-75.4%), AOAM by $93.0 million (-20.8%), OIG by $6.4 million (-26.3%), and NSB by $2.1 million (-41.0%). The request would provide an increase to MREFC ($17.0 million, 7.3%) over the FY2025 enacted funding level. (Congress designated the $234.0 million appropriation for MREFC in FY2025 as emergency funding, which President Trump canceled after making a determination that the funds were not for emergency needs.) The request also requests funding for three prioritized "critical activities": artificial intelligence, quantum information science, and the Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships.

As reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations on July 17, 2025, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (S. 2354), would provide a total of $9.0 billion to NSF for FY2026. This would be a slight decrease of $60.0 million (-0.7%) from the FY2025 enacted amount and an increase of $5.1 billion (130.6%) over the FY2026 request. As reported by the House Committee on Appropriations on September 12, 2025, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 5342), would provide a total of $7.0 billion to NSF for FY2026. This would be a decrease of $2.1 billion (-22.7%) from the FY2025 enacted amount and an increase of $3.1 billion (79.3%) over the FY2026 request. The Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37), signed by the President on November 12, 2025, provides funding for NSF through January 30, 2026, at the FY2025 level.

Since the early 2000s, Congress has authorized increasing appropriations for NSF through four laws, most recently in the CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167). Since FY2023, enacted appropriation amounts have been largely lower than authorized levels. The 117th Congress authorized the appropriation of $17.8 billion to NSF for FY2026, which is $13.9 billion (357%) more than the FY2026 request.

Federal funding for basic research and STEM education has long garnered broad interest and support, particularly in light of concerns about U.S. technological leadership and international competitiveness. However, in a time of constrained federal budgets, agencies such as NSF must compete with many other national priorities. As Congress debates FY2026 appropriations legislation, policymakers may consider numerous issues, including (1) the appropriate level of federal support for basic research and infrastructure and whether to prioritize certain scientific areas or societal goals; (2) how congressional funding direction to NSF regarding its STEM education and broadening participation programs aligns with statutory mandates and the Administration's priorities; (3) the long-term sustainability of U.S. research and technological leadership under authorized versus appropriated funding levels; and (4) the institutional capacity of NSF to carry out statutory responsibilities given the current and proposed reductions in staff and funding.

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Introduction

The National Science Foundation (NSF) supports basic research and education in the nonmedical sciences and engineering. Congress established the foundation through the National Science Foundation Act of 1950 (P.L. 81-507) to "promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes." NSF is a major source of federal support for U.S. university research, especially in the social sciences, mathematics, and computer science. It is also responsible for significant shares of the federal science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education portfolio of programs that support STEM learning and STEM-education-related research.

This report describes the Trump Administration's FY2026 budget request for NSF and tracks legislative action on FY2026 appropriations to the agency.[1] It also presents information on historical funding for the agency and compares NSF budget authorizations of appropriations with previous enacted appropriations and the FY2026 budget request.

NSF has six appropriations accounts: Research and Related Activities (RRA; the main research account), STEM Education (EDU; the main education account), Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC), Agency Operations and Award Management (AOAM), the National Science Board (NSB), and the Office of Inspector General (OIG). The majority of NSF's primary mission activities are funded through RRA, EDU, and MREFC; collectively, these three accounts compose over 90% of NSF's requested funding for FY2026.

Appropriations are generally provided at the account level; program-specific direction may be included in appropriations acts or in accompanying conference reports or explanatory statements. For RRA, Congress has sometimes specified authorizations and appropriations at the subaccount level, and NSF's budget justifications include activities and obligations at that level.[2] In the FY2026 budget request, NSF proposes consolidating the EDU account as a subaccount within RRA.[3] This would be the first appropriations account change since FY2003, when the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (P.L. 108-7, in Division K, Title III) provided for a separate appropriations line item for NSB.[4] This report provides information for RRA and EDU separately to facilitate comparison across fiscal years, as well as combined RRA and EDU amounts to illustrate the proposed consolidation in the FY2026 NSF budget request.

For FY2025, after a series of short-term resolutions to provide appropriations to NSF, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), signed by the President on March 15, 2025, provided appropriations at the FY2024 level.[5] Congress typically directs

[1] Appropriations to the National Science Foundation (NSF) are typically included in annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Acts. CRS tracks these acts on CRS.gov; see CRS, "Appropriation Status Table," https://www.crs.gov/AppropriationsStatusTable/Index.

[2] NSF's budget justifications are published on the agency's website; see NSF, "Budget, Performance and Financial Reporting," http://www.nsf.gov/about/budget/.

[3] 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.

[4] There have been other name changes and program shifts among accounts since FY2003, but none that would change the total number of appropriations accounts. For example, 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 FY2022, NSF consolidated funding for the Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) within EDU; previously, funding was split between EDU and Research and Related Activities (RRA). In FY2008, NSF shifted the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) from the EHR (now EDU) account to the RRA account.

[5] FY2025 appropriations were provided at the amounts, and under the authority and conditions, provided in the (continued...)

funding for a subset of programs and activities within the RRA, EDU, and MREFC accounts in accompanying explanatory statements.[6] In this report, at the account level, FY2026 requested amounts are compared with FY2025 enacted amounts. At the RRA subaccount level, FY2026 requested amounts are compared with the FY2024 current plan amounts because FY2025 subaccount funding information was not available.[7]

FY2026 Budget and Appropriations Actions

The Administration is seeking $3.9 billion in discretionary funding for NSF in FY2026, a $5.2 billion (-56.9%) decrease from the FY2025 enacted level and FY2024 current plan amount (see **Table 1**). The request would decrease budget authority in five of six accounts relative to the FY2025 enacted levels: RRA by $4.2 billion (-58.4%), EDU by $883.6 million (-75.4%), AOAM by $93.0 million (-20.8%), OIG by $6.4 million (-26.3%), and NSB by $2.1 million (-41.0%). The request would provide $251.0 million for MREFC, an increase of $17.0 million (7.3%) over the FY2025 enacted amount.

The NSF FY2026 budget request does not list funding for MREFC in FY2025. Congress designated the $234.0 million appropriation for MREFC in FY2025 as emergency funding.[8] However, the President canceled that funding after determining that the funds were "improperly designated by the Congress as emergency," and he did "not concur that the added spending is truly for emergency needs."[9] 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."[10]

Broadly, the FY2026 NSF budget justification "reflects a strategic alignment of resources in a constrained fiscal environment," prioritizing investments in public-private partnerships and those that "offer strong potential to drive economic growth and strengthen U.S. technological leadership."[11] The budget justification prioritizes three "critical activities" ongoing at NSF:

- artificial intelligence (AI)—$655.2 million requested for FY2026, $19.6 million (3.1%) more than the FY2024 current plan;

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024 (Division C of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, P.L. 118-42).

[6] For example, for FY2024, Explanatory Statement, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Division C (Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024), *Congressional Record*, vol. 170, no. 39 (March 5, 2024), pp. S1413-S1414, https://www.congress.gov/118/crec/2024/03/05/170/39/CREC-2024-03-05.pdf.

[7] Current plan amounts represent total, actual budgetary resources, including annual appropriations, unobligated balances, transfers, and other adjustments. For a comparison of FY2024 appropriations and FY2024 current plan amounts, see NSF, "Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations: NSF Budget Requests to Congress and Annual Appropriations," https://www.nsf.gov/about/budget/fy2024/appropriations.

[8] FY2025 Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) appropriations were provided by Division A of P.L. 119-4, which provided funding for FY2025 at the level provided by the FY2024 appropriations act (P.L. 118-42, Division C, Title III).

[9] The White House transmittal to Congress on March 24, 2025, is available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Presidential-Designation-of-Funding-as-an-Emergency-Requirement-Multiple-Accounts-in-the-Full-Year-Continuing-Appropriations-and-Extensions-Act.pdf.

[10] Table note 12 in NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Summary Tables-4. See also 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.

[11] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Overview-1.

- quantum information science (QIS)—$231.2 million requested, $1.0 million (0.4%) more than the FY2024 current plan; and
- Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (TIP) programs—$350.0 million requested, $267.9 million (-43.4%) less than the FY2024 current plan.[12]

The FY2026 budget request also highlights "continued investments in key areas," including

- biotechnology—$248.6 million requested, $105.1 million (-29.7%) less than the FY2024 current plan;
- advanced manufacturing—$110.1 million requested, $200.5 million (-64.6%) less than the FY2024 current plan;
- microelectronics and semiconductors—$65.8 million requested, $76.8 million (-53.9%) less than the FY2024 current plan;
- advanced wireless—$59.5 million requested, $83.9 million (-58.5%) less than the FY2024 current plan;
- the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)—$107.7 million requested, $142.3 million (-56.9%) less than the FY2024 current plan;[13]
- the CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service program—$21.7 million requested, $41.3 million (-65.5%) less than the FY2024 current plan;
- the Historically Black Colleges and Universities-Undergraduate Program (HBCU-UP) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities-Excellence in Research Program (HBCU-EiR)—$56.5 million in total requested, $5.0 million (-9.7%) less than the FY2024 current plan; and
- the Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP)—$7.1 million requested, $9.4 million (-56.9%) less than the FY2024 current plan.[14]

Table 1. NSF Funding by Account, FY2024-FY2026

(budget authority in millions of current dollars)

Account	FY2024 Current Plan[a]	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Request	Change, FY2026 Request vs. FY2025 Enacted: Dollars	Change, FY2026 Request vs. FY2025 Enacted: Percent
Research and Related Activities (RRA)	7,194.2	7,176.5	2,987.7[b]	-4,188.8	-58.4%
STEM Education (EDU)	1,154.3	1,172.0	288.4	-883.6	-75.4%
RRA + EDU (under the proposed consolidation)[c]	*8,348.5*	*8,348.5*	*3,276.2*	*-5,072.4*	*-60.8%*

[12] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Overview-2.

[13] Congress also directed $250 million for EPSCoR per the joint explanatory statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42); see *Congressional Record*, vol. 170, no. 39 (March 5, 2024), p. S1413, https://www.congress.gov/118/crec/2024/03/05/170/39/CREC-2024-03-05.pdf.

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

Account	FY2024 Current Plan[a]	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Request	Change, FY2026 Request vs. FY2025 Enacted: Dollars	Change, FY2026 Request vs. FY2025 Enacted: Percent
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC)	234.0	234.0	251.0	17.0[d]	7.3%[d]
Agency Operations and Award Management (AOAM)	448.0	448.0	355.0	-93.0	-20.8%
Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	24.4	24.4	18.0	-6.4	-26.3%
National Science Board (NSB)	5.1	5.1	3.0	-2.1	-41.1%
NSF, Total[e]	**9,060.0**	**9,060.0**	**3,903.2**	**-5,156.9**	**-56.9%**

Sources: National Science Foundation (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; the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), which provided appropriations 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).

Notes: STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Columns may not sum to totals because of rounding.

a. FY2024 current plan amounts represent total, actual budgetary resources, including annual appropriations, unobligated balances, transfers, and other adjustments.

b. CRS determined the FY2026 request amount for RRA by subtracting the EDU amount (as a proposed subaccount in RRA) from the RRA amount in the request.

c. Italicized amounts are for reference only, to show the combined RRA and EDU amounts in line with the account consolidation proposed in the FY2026 budget request.

d. Congress appropriated $234.0 million for MREFC in FY2025 designated as emergency funding (through Division A of P.L. 119-4, which provided funding for FY2025 at the level provided by the FY2024 appropriations act [P.L. 118-42, Division C, Title III]). However, the President canceled that funding after determining that the funds were "improperly designated by the Congress as emergency," and he did "not concur that the added spending is truly for emergency needs." This table includes the enacted amount for MREFC, but the NSF FY2026 budget request does not list any funding for MREFC in FY2025. For more information, see the White House transmittal to Congress on March 24, 2025, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Presidential-Designation-of-Funding-as-an-Emergency-Requirement-Multiple-Accounts-in-the-Full-Year-Continuing-Appropriations-and-Extensions-Act.pdf.

e. NSF total funding amounts do not include the italicized amounts for the "RRA + EDU" row. In addition to discretionary funding, NSF reports mandatory funding from H-1B visa and donation sources, as well as funding for microelectronics workforce development activities appropriated under Section 102(d)(2)(C), Division A, of the CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167), which are not included in this total. Mandatory funding amounts are $204 million under the FY2024 current plan, $229 million under the FY2025 estimates, and $240 million under the FY2026 request levels.

As of the publication date of this report, congressional actions on full-year FY2026 appropriations for NSF have proposed much smaller reductions in RRA funding compared with the FY2025 enacted amounts (**Table 2**). Enacted, rather than agency estimated, FY2025 funding amounts are used because **Table 2** reflects congressional appropriations and priority setting, rather than implementation by Administrations.

As reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations on July 17, 2025, S. 2354 (the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026) would provide a

total of $9.0 billion to NSF for FY2026. This would be a decrease of $60.0 million (-0.7%) from the FY2025 enacted amount[15] and an increase of $5.1 billion (130.6%) over the FY2026 request. The Senate committee-reported bill would provide funding for the RRA and EDU accounts separately, in line with prior-year appropriations account structures.

As reported by the House Committee on Appropriations on September 12, 2025, H.R. 5342 (the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026) would provide a total of $7.0 billion to NSF for FY2026. This would be a decrease of $2.1 billion (-22.7%) from the FY2025 enacted amount and an increase of $3.1 billion (79.3%) over the FY2026 request. The House committee-reported bill proposes funding levels for each of NSF's accounts except EDU, in line with the agency's budget request.

The Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37), signed by the President on November 12, 2025, provides funding for NSF through January 30, 2026, at the FY2025 level.

Table 2. NSF Funding and Appropriations Actions, FY2025-FY2026

(budget authority in millions of current dollars)

Account	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Request	FY2026 Senate Committee-Reported	FY2026 House Committee-Reported
Research and Related Activities (RRA)	7,176.5	2,987.7	7,176.5	6,373.0[a]
STEM Education (EDU)	1,172.0	288.4	1,000.0	n/a[b]
RRA + EDU (under the proposed consolidation)[c]	*8,348.5*	*3,276.2*	*8,176.5*	*6,373.0*
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC)	234.0[d]	251.0	350.0	251.0
Agency Operations and Award Management (AOAM)	448.0	355.0	444.0	355.0
Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	24.4	18.0	24.4	18.0
National Science Board (NSB)	5.1	3.0	5.1	3.0
NSF, Total[e]	**9,060.0**	**3,903.2**	**9,000.0**	**7,000.0**

Sources: Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), which provided appropriations for FY2025 at the level provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42, Division C, Title III); National Science Foundation (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; Senate Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (S. 2354), as reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations on July 17, 2025; House Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 5342)—as reported by the House Committee on Appropriations on September 12, 2025.

Notes: n/a = not available. Columns may not sum to totals because of rounding.

a. This includes an unspecified amount for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education (EDU)-related activities. The report language accompanying the House CJS appropriations bill states that "the Committee accepts [the Office of Management and Budget's] request to consolidate the

[15] FY2025 enacted amounts include $234.0 million appropriated by Congress, though that amount was subsequently canceled by the President on March 24, 2025.

STEM (EDU) account within the [RRA] account." See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, report to accompany H.R. 5342, 119th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 119-272, September 12, 2025, p. 105.

b. The bill text for H.R. 5342—as approved by the House Committee on Appropriations on September 12, 2025—did not include a separate appropriation for the EDU account.

c. Italicized amounts are for reference only, to show the combined RRA and EDU amounts in line with the account consolidation proposed in the FY2026 budget request. These amounts are not included in the NSF totals.

d. For FY2025, Congress appropriated $234 million, designated as emergency funding, which was terminated by the President per a White House transmittal to Congress on March 24, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Presidential-Designation-of-Funding-as-an-Emergency-Requirement-Multiple-Accounts-in-the-Full-Year-Continuing-Appropriations-and-Extensions-Act.pdf.

e. NSF total funding amounts do not include the italicized amounts for the "RRA + EDU" row. In addition to discretionary funding, NSF reports mandatory funding from H-1B visa and donation sources, as well as funding for microelectronics workforce development activities appropriated under Section 102(d)(2)(C), Division A, of the CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167), which are not included in this total. Mandatory funding amounts are $229 million under the FY2025 estimates and $240 million under the FY2026 request levels.

Research and Related Activities (RRA)

The Trump Administration is seeking $3.3 billion for RRA in FY2026 (including EDU under the proposed account consolidation), a $5.1 billion decrease (-60.8%) compared with the FY2024 current plan. Excluding EDU funding, the FY2026 request includes $3.0 billion for RRA, a $4.2 billion (-58.5%) decrease from the FY2024 current plan.

The FY2026 request includes decreases for all except one of the RRA subaccounts—Mission Support Services would increase by $70.9 million (56.3%) compared with the FY2024 current plan amount (see **Table 3**). The largest decrease in dollars would be for Mathematical and Physical Sciences ($1.0 billion, -66.8%), and the largest percentage decrease would be for the Office of International Science and Engineering ($51.0 million, -80.0%). The other subaccounts would receive decreases between 25.9% (for the Office of the Chief of Research Security, Strategy, and Policy) and 75.0% (for Engineering).

As reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations, S. 2354 would provide $7.2 billion for RRA (excluding EDU), equal to the FY2025 enacted amount. Leaving aside EDU, the Senate committee-reported bill does not specify appropriations for RRA subaccounts.

As reported by the House Committee on Appropriations, H.R. 5342 would provide $6.4 billion for RRA (including an unspecified amount for EDU-related activities),[16] $2.0 billion (-23.7%) less than the FY2025 enacted amount (including EDU) and $3.1 billion (94.5%) more than the FY2026 request (including EDU). The House committee-reported bill does not specify appropriations for RRA subaccounts.

[16] The report language accompanying the House Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee appropriations bill states that "the Committee accepts [the Office of Management and Budget's] request to consolidate the STEM (EDU) account within the [RRA] account." See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, report to accompany H.R. 5342, 119th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 119-272, September 12, 2025.

Table 3. NSF Funding by Research and Related Activities (RRA) Subaccount, FY2024-FY2026

(budget authority in millions of dollars)

Account	FY2024 Current Plan	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026			
			Request	Change, FY2024 vs. FY2026 Request	Senate Committee-Reported	House Committee-Reported
Biological Sciences (BIO)	789.6	n/s	224.9	-546.7 (-71.5%)	n/s	n/s
Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE)	989.4	n/s	346.3	-643.1 (-65.0%)	n/s	n/s
STEM Education (EDU)	1,154.3	1,172.0	288.4	-865.9 (-75.0%)	1,000.0	n/s
Engineering (ENG)	740.8	n/s	185.2	-555.6 (-75.0%)	n/s	n/s
Geosciences (GEO)	1,577.1	n/s	873.6	-703.5 (-44.6%)	n/s	n/s
Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS)	1,554.2	n/s	515.3	-1,038.9 (-66.8%)	n/s	n/s
Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE)	290.3	n/s	94.0	-196.3 (-67.6%)	n/s	n/s
Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (TIP)	617.9	n/s	350.0	-267.9 (-43.4%)	n/s	n/s
Office of the Chief of Research Security, Strategy, and Policy (CRSP)[a]	13.5	n/s	10.0	-3.5 (-25.9%)	n/s	n/s
Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE)	63.7	n/s	12.7	-51.0 (-80.0%)	n/s	n/s
International and Integrative Activities (IA)	430.0	n/s	177.7	-252.3 (-58.7%)	n/s	n/s
U.S. Arctic Research Commission (USARC)	1.8	n/s	1.2	-0.6 (-34.3%)	n/s	n/s
Mission Support Services[a]	126.0	n/s	196.9	70.9 (56.3%)	n/s	n/s
RRA Total	**8,348.5**	**8,348.5**[b]	**3,276.2**	**-5,072.4**	**8,176.5**[c]	**6,373.0**
RRA Total (excluding EDU)	***7,194.2***	***7,176.5***	***2,987.7***	***-4,206.5***	***7,176.5***	***n/s***

Sources: National Science Foundation (NSF), *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, May 30, 2025, p. Summary Tables-3; Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), which provided appropriations for FY2025 at the level provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42, Division C, Title III); Senate Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (S. 2354), as reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations on July 17, 2025; House Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 5342), as reported on September 12, 2025, by the House Committee on Appropriations.

Notes: n/s = not specified; STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Columns may not sum to totals because of rounding. Italicized amounts are nonadditive subsets of the row above.

a. NSF's FY2025 budget request proposed creating CRSP and Mission Support Services as new subaccount activities within RRA. CRSP was created in response to statutory direction in the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-167). Mission Support Services consolidates funding for information technology (IT) investments and other program-related activity investments that were previously funded under individual programmatic directorates and offices. See NSF, *FY 2025 Budget Request to Congress*, March 11, 2024, p. RRA-1, https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/00_NSF_FY25_CJ_Entire%20Rollup_web.pdf.

b. For FY2025, Congress appropriated $7,176.5 million for RRA and $1,772.0 million for EDU (per P.L. 119-4). The FY2025 RRA total enacted amount has been restated here to include funds appropriated for EDU, for comparability with the FY2026 budget request and House subcommittee-approved language.

c. The RRA total amount reported in this table includes the amount for both RRA and EDU in S. 2354, as reported from the Senate Committee on Appropriations. This total is presented for comparability with the FY2026 budget request account structure.

Though the Senate and House committee-reported bills do not specify appropriations for RRA subaccounts (aside from EDU in the Senate committee-reported bill, discussed below), the appropriations reports accompanying the bills provide programmatic and funding direction to NSF on a range of topics, as is typical for the agency.[17] RRA programs or research areas that include specific funding direction in Senate or House appropriations report language are described in **Table 4**. Areas of broad agreement on funding direction between the Senate and House reports include the Regional Innovation Engines program, EPSCoR, the National AI Research Resource (NAIRR) pilot program continuation, and the HBCU-EiR program.

Table 4. FY2026 Senate and House Appropriations Report Language Directing Funding for Research and Related Activities (RRA) Programs and Activities

	Funding Direction	
Program or Activity	**Senate Report (S.Rept. 119-44)[a]**	**House Report (H.Rept. 119-272)[b]**
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Not less than FY2024 enacted levels	n/s (though general support is noted)
Regional Innovation Engines (NSF Engines)	Up to $200 million	$205 million
Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope (DKIST)	Not less than FY2024 funding level for DKIST operations	n/s
Astronomy Facilities	$50 million to support the development of next-generation astronomy facilities recommended in Astro2020[c]	$30 million to support continued design efforts for ground-based instruments and observatories, and no less than $6 million for the Next Generation Very Large Array (ngVLA) telescope
Sub-Seafloor Sampling Program (S3P)	n/s (though general support is noted)	Up to $60 million
Green Bank Observatory (GBO)	Not less than FY2024 enacted level	n/s

[17] U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, report to accompany S. 2354, 119th Cong., 1st sess., S.Rept. 119-44, July 17, 2025; and U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, report to accompany H.R. 5342, 119th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 119-272, September 12, 2025.

Program or Activity	Funding Direction	
	Senate Report (S.Rept. 119-44)[a]	**House Report (H.Rept. 119-272)[b]**
Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO)	Not less than $49 million to operate both LIGO facilities (the committee rejects the proposal in the FY2026 request to close one LIGO detector)	n/s
Neutrino Research – IceCube Observatory (South Pole)	Not less than FY2024 enacted level	n/s (though general support is noted)
Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)	Not less than $255 million[d]	$250 million
Quantum Information Science (QIS)	Not less than FY2024 enacted level and, within that, $185 million for QIS activities and $50 million for National QIS Research Centers, as authorized under §§301-302 of the National Quantum Initiative Act (P.L. 115-368)	n/s
National AI Research Resource (NAIRR)	$30 million for the NAIRR pilot program	$25 million for the NAIRR pilot program
Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure	$50 million	n/s
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Excellence in Research Program (HBCU-EiR)	$25 million	$20 million
Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate	Not less than FY2024 enacted level	n/s
Office of Research Security Strategy and Policy	n/s	$15.52 million
Accessible Microelectronics Lab Facilities	n/s	Up to $5 million
Supporting STEM in Rural Communities	n/s	$5.5 million for "the development of STEM talent within counties designated as high impacted coal counties"

Sources: U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, report to accompany S. 2354, 119th Cong., 1st sess., S.Rept. 119-44, July 17, 2025; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, report to accompany H.R. 5342, 119th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 119-272, September 12, 2025.

Notes: n/s = not specified.

a. The Senate report also expresses support for programs and activities for which no funding level is identified, including earth-systems science; clean energy; Arctic research (including enhancing support for "Arctic-related student programs aimed at broadening participation"); permafrost research; technical assistance and outreach to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and minority-serving institutions (MSIs); research in genomics and biodiversity; Verification of the Origins of Rotation in Tornadoes Experiment-Southeast (VORTEX-SE) program (to study tornadoes in the southeastern United States); "transparency, interpretability, and explainability of AI"; research security; the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES); combatting sexual harassment in science; entrepreneurial fellowships; uncrewed aircraft system technologies; wildland fire research; the Mathematical Sciences Research Institutes program; the Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program; and the Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) program.

b. The House report also expresses support for programs and research areas for which no funding level is identified, including AI; "intense, ultrafast lasers"; wildfire research; harmful algal blooms (HABs); research on food allergies, dyslexia, and physics; the Center for High-Energy X Ray Sciences (CHEXS); the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico; combatting sexual harassment in science; high-performance computing; entrepreneurial fellowships; and "maintaining Antarctic maritime dominance."

c. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Pathways to Discovery in Astronomy and Astrophysics for the 2020s* [*Astro2020*], decadal survey report, November 2023, https://doi.org/10.17226/26141.

d. The Senate report further directs NSF "to support the existing jurisdiction EPSCoR offices, providing up to $750,000 annually per State office" and "encourages NSF to consider raising the maximum funding available for an E–Core [EPSCoR Collaborations for Optimizing Research Ecosystems] to $3,500,000 annually" (p. 162).

STEM Education (EDU)

The FY2026 budget request includes $288.4 million for EDU, an $883.6 million decrease (-75.4%) from the FY2025 enacted amount. As reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations, S. 2354 would provide $1.0 billion for EDU, $172.0 million (-14.7%) less than the FY2025 enacted amount and $711.6 million (246.7%) more than the FY2026 request. As reported by the House Committee on Appropriations, H.R. 5342 does not specify an amount for EDU.

The FY2026 budget request includes few details on funding for programs within EDU, as restated within RRA. Regarding broadening participation (BP) programs, the FY2026 "skinny budget," released in advance of the full agency budget, states,

> NSF "Broadening Participation" programs have funded projects such as: "Reimagining Educator Learning Pathways Through Storywork for Racial Equity in STEM".... These efforts would no longer receive Federal dollars and all [diversity, equity, and inclusion]-related programs at NSF are eliminated.[18]

The FY2026 budget proposal requests no funding for nearly all (27) of the focused BP programs.[19] The three exceptions are the HBCU-EiR, HBCU-UP, and TCUP.

The Senate report provides funding direction for 14 programs and activities under its EDU recommendations, 9 of which are considered focused BP programs (see **Table 5**). The Senate report further states, "The Committee continues to support the Broadening Participation in STEM programs."[20] In contrast, the House report does not break out recommendations within EDU, instead stating that "the Committee accepts [the Office of Management and Budget's] request to consolidate the STEM (EDU) account within the [RRA] account ... [and] supports the Administration's efforts to increase American competitiveness by refocusing STEM investments into programs that serve all Americans."[21] As **Table 5** shows, the House report does provide some programmatic and funding direction for programs and activities listed under EDU in the Senate report.

[18] Office of Management and Budget (OMB), *Major Discretionary Funding Changes*, May 2, 2025, p. 38, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf.

[19] Focused broadening participation (BP) programs are those where BP is an explicit goal and 100% of the program funding applies. See NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Summary Tables-11.

[20] S.Rept. 119-44, p. 169.

[21] H.Rept. 119-272, p. 105.

Table 5. FY2026 Senate and House Appropriations Report Funding Directions for STEM Education (EDU) Programs and Activities

(in millions of current dollars)

Program or Activity	FY2026 Request	Funding Direction	
		Senate Report (S.Rept. 119-44)[a]	House Report (H.Rept. 119-272)[b]
ADVANCE	0	18.0	n/s
Advanced Technological Education (ATE)	n/s	75.0	n/s
Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL)	0	60.0	n/s
Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP)	0	8.0	n/s
Centers for Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST)	0	24.0	n/s
CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service	21.7	63.0	n/s (though general support is noted)
Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)	127.3	285.0	n/s
HBCU-Undergraduate Program (HBCU-UP)	36.5	36.5	n/s
Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE)	0	90.0	n/s
IUSE: Hispanic-Serving Institutions (IUSE: HSI)	0	46.5	n/s
Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP)	0	49.5	n/s
National STEM Teacher Corps Pilot[c]	n/s	25.0	n/s
Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program	18.2	67.0	n/s
Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP)	7.1	16.5	26.0

Sources: U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, report to accompany S. 2354, 119th Cong., 1st sess., S.Rept. 119-44, July 17, 2025; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026*, report to accompany H.R. 5342, 119th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 119-272, September 12, 2025.

Notes: n/s = not specified; HBCU = historically Black colleges and universities.

a. The Senate report also expresses support for programs and activities for which no funding level is identified, including hands-on and experiential learning opportunities; establishment of a program for Centers for Transformative Education Research and Translation as authorized under Section 10395 of P.L. 117-167; and enhancing graduate education and training, including measures to improve graduate student advising and mentorship.

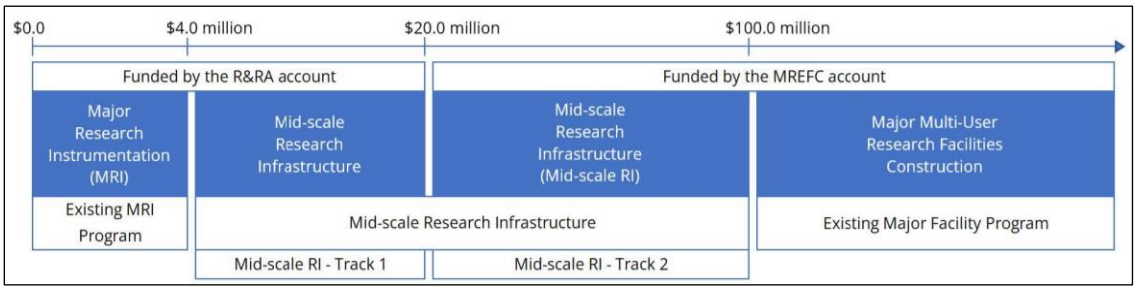
b. The House report also expresses support for programs and activities for which no funding level is identified, including authorities for scaling and sustaining innovations in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education as authorized under Section 10395 of P.L. 117-167; artificial intelligence (AI) and microelectronics workforce development; curricula development for AI-related fields; enhancing graduate education and training, including measures to improve graduate student advising and mentorship; and STEM programs to "improve undergraduate STEM education at HSIs, programs that support STEM undergraduate majors and professionals to become effective STEM teachers, and programs that provide all U.S. students with the opportunity to participate in computer science and computational thinking education levels."

c. This pilot program is authorized under Section 10311 of P.L. 117-167.

Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC)

The MREFC account supports large construction projects and scientific instruments. The RRA account provides funding before and after construction (i.e., for the initial planning and design, as well as post-construction operations and maintenance), while MREFC funding supports the acquisition, construction, and commissioning phases of major research infrastructure. As shown in **Figure 1**, MREFC funds construction of major research facilities with cost estimates over $100 million and mid-scale research infrastructure (Mid-scale RI - Track 2) with cost estimates of $20 million to $100 million. RRA funds smaller infrastructure projects (Mid-scale RI - Track 1) with cost estimates of $4 million to $20 million and the acquisition of Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) with cost estimates of less than $4 million.

Figure 1. NSF Portfolio of Instrumentation and Infrastructure Programs by Account



Source: National Science Foundation (NSF), *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, May 30, 2025, p. MREFC-2.

Notes: R&RA = Research and Related Activities; MREFC = Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction.

The Trump Administration is seeking $251.0 million for MREFC in FY2026, an increase of $17.0 million (7.3%) from the FY2025 enacted amount (prior to the Administration canceling the designation of $234.0 million appropriated to NSF for MREFC as emergency funding in FY2025, as described previously in this report).

Requested MREFC funding would support three main activities: Mid-scale RI - Track 2 ($25.0 million requested) and continued construction on two ongoing major research facility projects (projects with costs over $100 million):

- the Antarctic Infrastructure Recapitalization (AIR; $24.0 million requested) program, which is a portfolio of investments to improve U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) infrastructure, including facilities, utilities, equipment, and the vehicle fleet, and
- the Leadership-Class Computing Facility (LCCF; $201.0 million requested), led by the Texas Advanced Computing Center at the University of Texas at Austin, which the budget request describes as "a distributed facility that will provide unique computational and data analytics capabilities, as well as critical software and services."[22]

As reported by the Senate Committee on Appropriations, S. 2354 would provide a total of $350.0 million for MREFC in FY2026, $116 million (49.6%) above the FY2025 enacted level and $99.0 million (39.4%) above the FY2026 request. The Senate report directs $90.0 million for the Mid-

[22] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. MREFC-14. Additionally, the FY2026 budget request includes $1.0 million for "dedicated construction oversight," including periodic cost, schedule, and risk reviews for all major facility projects.

scale RI - Track 2 program, $70.0 million above the requested amount. Regarding Antarctic research infrastructure, the Senate report describes concerns about pausing Antarctic field research and delaying the Fourth Generation Ground Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB-S4) and IceCube-Gen2 projects because of infrastructure challenges, Antarctic infrastructure modernization efforts being years behind schedule, and a lack of community and stakeholder consultation in related decisionmaking. In response, the Senate report would direct NSF "to request sufficient resources to support concurrent infrastructure upgrades, ongoing research, and major facility planning, and to submit a comprehensive plan within 180 days" on specified topics.[23]

As reported by the House Committee on Appropriations, H.R. 5342 would provide $251.0 million for MREFC in FY2026, $17.0 million (7.3%) above the FY2025 enacted amount and equal to the FY2026 request. The House report supports the Mid-scale RI - Track 2, AIR, and LCCF projects. The House report also echoes the concerns noted in the Senate report regarding pauses in Antarctic field research and delays in the CMB-S4 and IceCube-Gen2 projects, noting that such delays "threaten loss of U.S. leadership as competitors set up new Antarctic research efforts" and also calling for an update on Antarctic research infrastructure.[24]

Other Accounts

The Trump Administration seeks $355.0 million for the AOAM account, a $93.0 million (-20.8%) decrease from the FY2025 enacted amount. The FY2026 budget request notes that the requested AOAM funding "reduction is commensurate to the needs of NSF at the total FY 2026 request level."[25] The Senate committee-reported bill would provide $444.0 million for AOAM in FY2026, $4.0 million (-0.9%) below the FY2025 enacted amount and $89.0 million (25.1%) above the FY2026 request. Further, the Senate committee-reported bill would direct NSF to update its Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) to "more thoroughly address issues relating to the scope of Native-owned lands" and tribal authorities.[26] The House committee-reported bill would provide the requested amount for AOAM.

The budget request includes $18.0 million for OIG, which would be a decrease of $6.4 million (-26.3%) from the FY2025 enacted level, and $3.0 million for NSB (NSF's governing body), $2.1 million (-41.1%) below the FY2025 enacted amount. The Senate committee-reported bill would provide funding equal to the FY2025 enacted amounts for OIG ($24.4 million) and NSB ($5.1 million). The House committee-reported bill would provide funding at the level requested by the FY2026 budget proposal for both accounts.

Authorizations of Appropriations and Recent Funding Trends (FY2003-FY2027)

In the early 2000s, some Members of Congress, alongside many leaders in industry and academia, expressed concerns about U.S. technological leadership and international competitiveness. These concerns centered, in part, on the adequacy of federal funding for basic

[23] S.Rept. 119-44, p. 167.

[24] H.Rept. 119-272, p. 108.

[25] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Overview-6.

[26] S.Rept. 119-44, p. 171.

research and support for the U.S. STEM workforce. In response, Congress enacted three laws that authorized increases in appropriations for NSF over an 11-year period (FY2003-FY2013).

First, the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-368) authorized year-over-year increases in appropriations for NSF, from $5.5 billion for FY2003 to $9.8 billion for FY2007. In constant (i.e., inflation-adjusted) 2023 dollars, authorizations of appropriations increased from $8.8 billion in FY2003 to $13.9 billion in FY2007. According to the act's findings (Section 2),

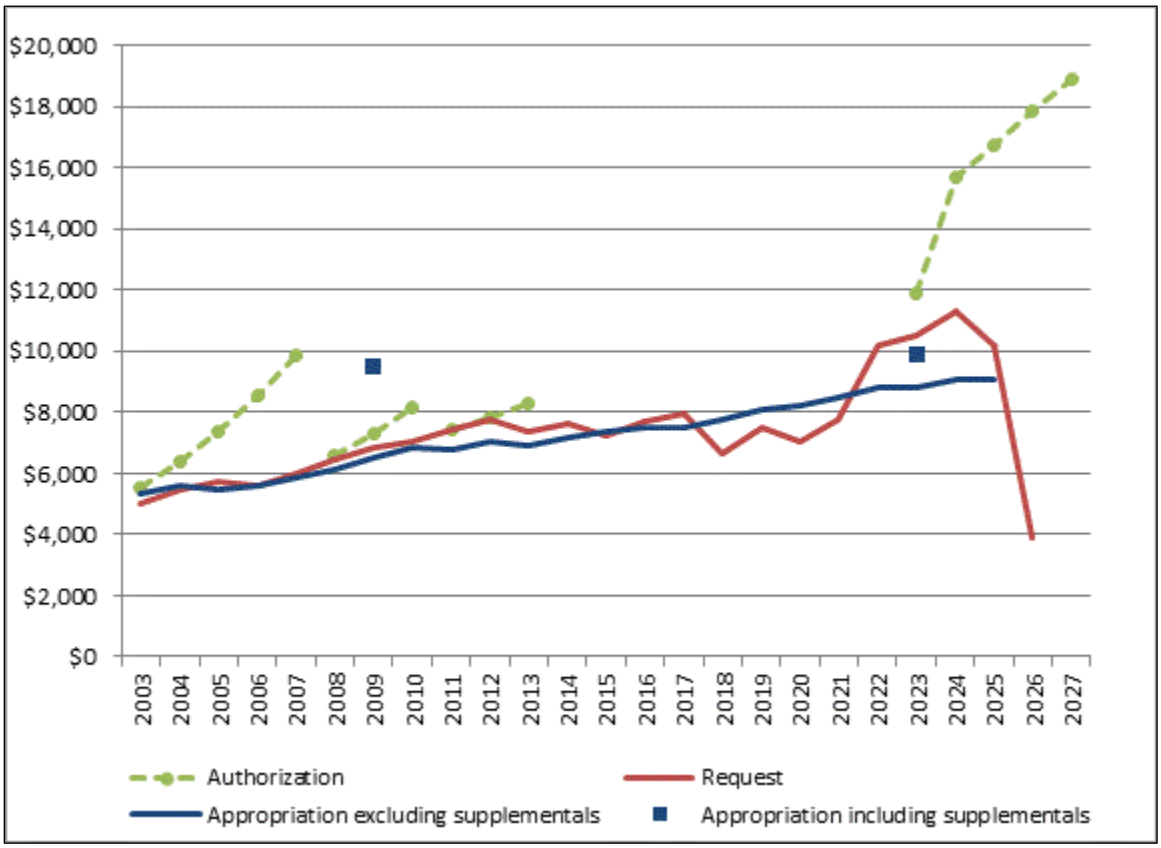
> the emerging global economic, scientific, and technical environment challenges long-standing assumptions about domestic and international policy, requiring the National Science Foundation to play a more proactive role in sustaining the competitive advantage of the United States through superior research capabilities.

Enacted appropriations did not meet the ambitious authorized funding levels in P.L. 107-368 (over the FY2003-FY2007 period), and concerns about federal support for basic research to support American competitiveness continued. Subsequently, Congress enacted the America COMPETES Act (P.L. 110-69) in 2007 and the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-358), which included authorized increases in annual appropriations for NSF over a six-year period (FY2008-FY2013), among other provisions to bolster U.S. competitiveness. Together, the 2007 and 2010 COMPETES acts authorized appropriations for NSF to increase from $6.6 billion in FY2008 to $8.3 billion in FY2013. In 2023 constant dollars, authorizations of appropriations increased from $9.2 billion in FY2008 to $10.7 billion in FY2013. Again, enacted appropriations fell below the authorized levels over that time period (FY2008-FY2013).[27] **Figure 2** show the trends in NSF authorizations, budget requests, and appropriations since FY2003 in current dollars. **Figure 3** show the trends in NSF authorizations, budget requests, and appropriations since FY2003 in 2023 constant dollars. Both figures are based on data in **Table A-1**.

[27] This analysis focuses on baseline appropriations, excluding one-time supplemental appropriations to NSF in FY2009 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA; P.L. 111-5), which provided an additional $3.002 billion to the agency. With ARRA included, total FY2009 appropriations to NSF were $9.496 billion in current dollars and $13.037 billion in constant (FY2023) dollars.

Figure 2. Current Dollar NSF Authorizations, Budget Requests, and Appropriations, FY2003 to FY2027

(in millions of current dollars)

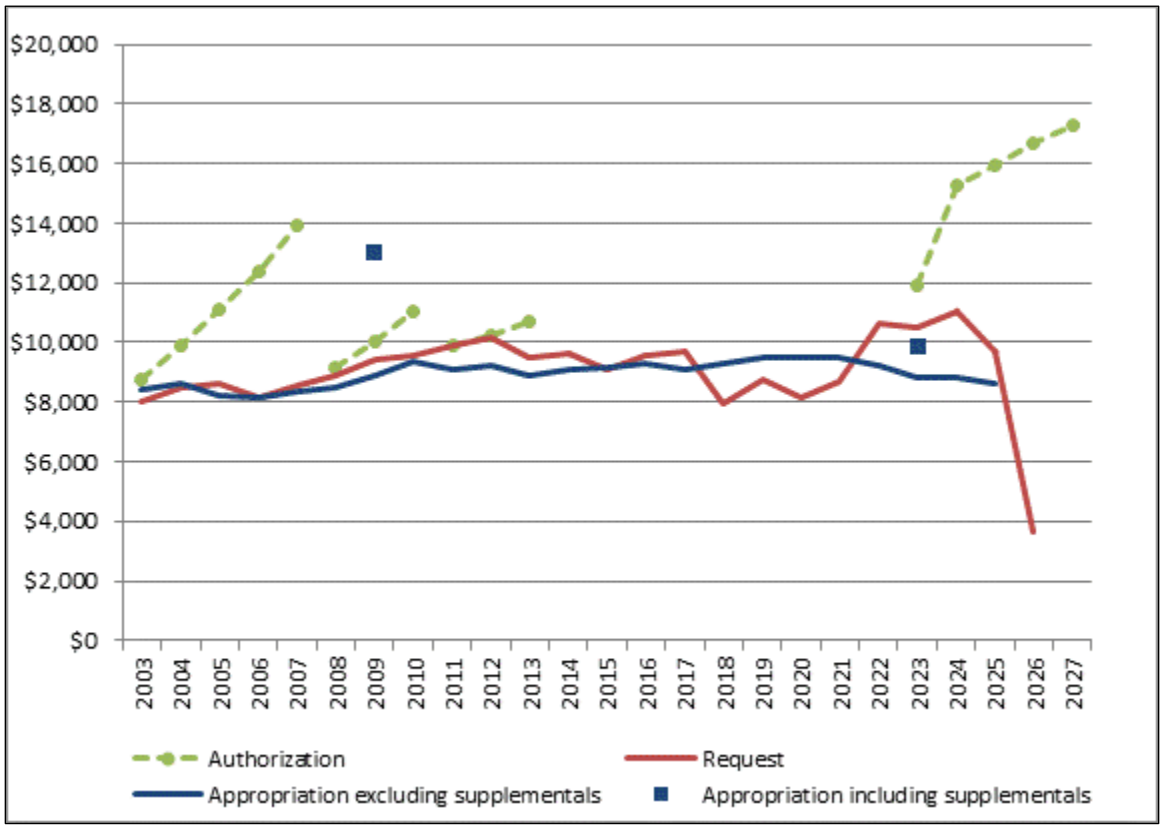


Sources: See **Table A-1**.

Notes: NSF = National Science Foundation.

Figure 3. Constant Dollar NSF Authorizations, Budget Requests, and Appropriations, FY2003 to FY2027

(in millions of constant 2023 dollars)



Sources: See **Table A-1**.

Notes: NSF = National Science Foundation. To calculate constant FY2023 dollars, CRS used the gross domestic product (GDP) chained price index found in White House, Table 10.1, "Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940–2029," in *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2025*, https://web.archive.org/web/20250116091701/https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/hist10z1_fy2025.xlsx.

Authorizations of appropriations for NSF were last enacted in the CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167), which authorized appropriations at the account level for each of FY2023-FY2027, in addition to specifying authorizations of appropriations for a subset of programs and activities (**Table 6**). While the act highlighted concerns about national security and support for technology transfer in addition to basic research, it also echoed long-standing concerns about ensuring U.S. leadership in technological innovation, noting a need for "authorization and funding for investments in research, education, technology transfer, intellectual property, manufacturing, and other core strengths of the United States innovation ecosystem."[28]

Under the act, authorizations of appropriations for NSF were to increase from $11.9 billion in FY2023 to $18.9 billion in FY2027 (in current dollars). For FY2026, NSF is authorized to be appropriated at $17.8 billion, which is $13.9 billion (357%) more than the FY2026 request and $8.8 billion (98%) more than the Senate committee-reported appropriations bill (S. 2354).

[28] P.L. 117-167, §10301(5).

In constant dollars, baseline appropriations for NSF peaked at $9.5 billion in FY2020 and have decreased slightly each year since when adjusted for inflation. In constant dollars, enacted funding for NSF in FY2025 is $195 million more than in FY2003 (**Figure 3**).

Table 6. NSF Appropriation Authorizations, FY2023-FY2027

(budget authority in millions of current dollars)

Account and Program/Activity	Authorized Appropriation Amount				
	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027
Research and Related Activities (RRA)	**9,050**	**12,050**	**12,850**	**13,800**	**14,700**
Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure (Track-1) Program	55	60	70	75	80
Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (TIP) Directorate	1,500	3,350	3,550	3,800	4,100
STEM Education (EDU)	**1,950**	**2,500**	**2,700**	**2,850**	**3,000**
Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program	74	80	87	94	100
NSF Research Traineeship Program (NRT)	69	65	70	76	81
Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)	416	454	492	530	568
CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service Program	70	72	78	84	90
Fellowships, traineeships, and scholarships[a]	350	800	900	950	1,000
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC)	**249**	**355**	**370**	**372**	**375**
Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure (Track-2)	76	80	85	90	100
Agency Operations and Award Management (AOAM)	**620**	**710**	**750**	**770**	**800**
Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	**23**	**27**	**31**	**35**	***38***
National Science Board (NSB)	**5**	**5**	**6**	**6**	**6**
NSF, Total	**11,897**	**15,647**	**16,707**	**17,832**	**18,919**

Source: CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167), Section 10303.

Notes: NSF = National Science Foundation. Accounts are given in bold; programs are indented under the relevant account and are non-additive, as only a subset of programs had specified authorization amounts. Columns may not sum to totals because of rounding

a. These amounts are specifically for fellowships, traineeships, and scholarships described in Section 10393 of P.L. 117-167. The law specifies making such awards, as noted, in "key technology focus areas," the initial list of which is described in Section 10387 of the act and includes such areas as artificial intelligence (AI), quantum information science (QIS), biotechnology, and advanced energy technologies.

Policy Considerations

Federal funding for basic research and STEM education has long garnered broad interest and support, particularly in light of concerns about U.S. technological leadership and international competitiveness. However, in a time of constrained federal budgets, agencies such as NSF that

support those activities must compete with many other national priorities. As Congress debates FY2026 appropriations legislation, policymakers may consider numerous issues, including those pertaining broadly to support for basic research and infrastructure, STEM education and BP programs, long-term research sustainability, and institutional capacity of NSF to carry out statutory responsibilities.

Support for Basic Research and Infrastructure

NSF is the primary federal agency supporting basic research across all of the nonmedical sciences and engineering. Policy justifications for public investments in basic research tend to center on the societal benefits (i.e., benefits to society at large) even in the absence of a direct or short-term private return (i.e., benefits accruing to the investor, such as increased revenues or stock values). The private sector may not prioritize investment in basic research because of uncertain returns on investments and long time horizons for resulting commercial applications, instead favoring more use-inspired research and development where there is a clearer return on investment.

Further, NSF's support for research infrastructure funds multiuser facilities, which are required to be available to the broader scientific community, not solely for one institution. The Senate report describes NSF's RRA appropriation as one that "funds scientific discovery, trains a dynamic workforce, and supports broadly accessible state-of-the-art tools and facilities" through, for example, "expansion of the knowledge base; ... stimulation of knowledge transfer among academia and the public and private sectors, and international activities, and bring[ing] the perspectives of many scientific disciplines to bear on complex problems important to the Nation."[29]

Some stakeholders assert that federal funding for basic research and multiuser research infrastructure provides critical support for foundational science and tools that lead to future innovations.[30] Other stakeholders have questioned the value of federal funding for certain scientific areas or societal goals, asserting that reduced funding for NSF and other science agencies will help balance the federal budget and lead to better federal stewardship of taxpayer dollars or that federal funding should be targeted toward particular scientific fields with "high-impact ... over others with less direct relevance to national competitiveness."[31] The FY2026 budget request proposes modest increases in funding for activities related to AI and quantum science. Congress may consider whether federal funding for basic research and multiuser research infrastructure is of value to the academic community and important for U.S. competitiveness, as well as what level of funding is appropriate to support such activities when balanced with concerns over the size of the broader federal budget. Congress may also consider whether and in what ways to focus investments to support advancing American leadership and innovation in specific science and technology areas.

[29] S.Rept. 119-44, p. 158.

[30] See, for example, Julie Heng, "Innovation Lightbulb: Basic Research for Breakthrough Innovations," Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 7, 2025, https://www.csis.org/analysis/innovation-lightbulb-basic-research-breakthrough-innovations; and Rebecca Mandt et al., "Federal R&D Funding: The Bedrock of National Innovation," *MIT Science Policy Review*, vol. 1, no. 7 (August 20, 2020), pp. 44-54, https://sciencepolicyreview.org/downloads/2020/08/Vol1no7_Mandt.pdf.

[31] See, for example, Jeffrey Miron and Jacob Winter, "Governments Should Not Fund Research," Cato Institute, July 31, 2023, https://www.cato.org/blog/governments-should-not-fund-research; and Robert Atkinson, "U.S. Science Policy at a Crossroads," Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, June 23, 2025, https://itif.org/publications/2025/06/23/us-science-policy-at-a-crossroads/.

STEM Education and Broadening Participation

Historically, NSF has been one of the largest providers of federal funding for STEM education, including for research on STEM learning; support for undergraduate, graduate, and technological workforce training; and support for teacher development. The FY2026 budget request would implement two major changes to the organization and support for STEM education through the proposed (1) consolidation of the EDU account within RRA and (2) reduction in funding for EDU by 75%. NSF typically receives appropriations at the account level, with recommended funding for programs and research areas described in associated report language. Congress may consider whether to support the Administration's proposed consolidation of EDU within RRA through appropriations language or whether such a consolidation might reduce Congress's ability to direct appropriations for STEM education activities.

Relatedly, the FY2026 budget request includes no funding for numerous focused BP programs, including many that are statutorily established, such as the Eddie Bernice Johnson INCLUDES Initiative. INCLUDES began as a pilot program in 2016 to "scale up effective practices in broadening participation in STEM studies and careers of groups historically underrepresented in such studies and careers" and was subsequently expanded and codified in August 2022.[32] More broadly, Congress has directed NSF to apply the "broader impacts" review criterion as part of what is often called a gold-standard review process for funding proposals. The broader impacts criterion "encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes."[33] NSF is statutorily required to apply this criterion to identify and demonstrate project support goals, including "expanding participation of women and individuals from underrepresented groups in STEM."[34]

As reported by committees, the Senate and House appropriations bills and accompanying reports differ on recommendations for EDU funding and support for BP efforts and focused programs (Senate report language specifies funding for EDU and numerous BP efforts and focused programs, while the House report language does not). Congress may consider how direction in enacted appropriations law and related report language may impact NSF's ability to carry out its statutorily mandated STEM education programs and BP criteria. Congress may also consider whether its priorities for NSF-supported education and BP programs have changed. If so, policymakers may consider amending or removing existing statutory direction or conveying such changes in priorities through appropriations report language.

Long-Term Research Sustainability and U.S. Competitiveness

Several factors may influence the long-term sustainability of the U.S. research enterprise through supporting foundational research and educating and training the future STEM workforce. Two factors may have particular salience for appropriations discussions, given their potential to increase programmatic uncertainty and reduce purchasing power. First, since FY2003, Congress has generally enacted appropriations at lower amounts than authorized levels (**Figure 2**). Second, Congress has increasingly funded NSF through continuing resolutions (CRs) rather than full-year appropriations acts enacted prior to the start of a fiscal year.

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[32] 42 U.S.C. §19012; P.L. 117-167, §10323. See also the section on "NSF INCLUDES" in "NSF's 10 Big Ideas," https://www.nsf.gov/about/history/big-ideas#nsf-includes-218.

[33] NSF, "Merit Review Criteria," Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG), p. III-2, https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/nsf24_1.pdf. See also NSF, "Broader Impacts," https://www.nsf.gov/funding/learn/broader-impacts.

[34] 42 U.S.C. §1862p-14(a)(7).

Regarding authorizations of appropriations, as described above, common concerns over the past 25 years have been the adequacy of federal support for foundational and cutting-edge research, the adequacy of the STEM workforce, and U.S. leadership in critical technologies, including for economic strength and national security. Policymakers supporting increasing appropriations for federal R&D funding have asserted that such increases would strengthen education, grow the economy, and generate scientific and technological discoveries in support of U.S. competitiveness.[35] Others have asserted that more federal funding has not translated into greater scientific discovery or impact, calling for more "creativity and precision" in federal R&D spending with a focus on national priorities.[36]

Congress may consider whether the reduced NSF funding levels proposed in budget requests and appropriations bills and reports are adequate to support fundamental and translational research in critical technologies—including through many statutorily directed programs and topics, such as the list of "key technology focus areas" to be updated annually by the NSF Director.[37] Relatedly, some analysts have asserted that STEM workers "sustain the U.S. research enterprise and drive innovation in critical and emerging technologies, supporting the nation's competitiveness in the global economy,"[38] yet demand for talent in critical areas such as AI appears to be growing at rates faster than the supply of AI talent trained in the United States.[39] Congress may consider the appropriate level of funding to train the next generation of U.S. STEM researchers and technical experts to support U.S. leadership and global competitiveness, and whether there is a greater role for private-sector investments in training and education to grow the U.S. STEM workforce. For example, Congress may consider whether appropriations approaching currently authorized levels are necessary or whether reductions in appropriations for NSF could be mitigated by leveraging increased funding from private-sector partners.

In recent years, a substantial portion of NSF funding has come through continuing appropriations. Continuing appropriations acts—often known as CRs—provide short-term funding until appropriations decisions are finalized and thus can lead to uncertainty for agencies. On the one hand, CRs allow for ongoing appropriations discussions without a funding gap. On the other hand, they may lead to reductions or delays in agency operations, such as hiring staff, granting awards and contracts, and beginning new projects, as CRs typically prohibit new activities not funded in the previous fiscal year.

Further, when funding for an agency and its programs remains at prior-year levels, the overall purchasing power of appropriated monies is effectively reduced because of the impacts of annual inflation, which has been targeted at 2% by the Federal Reserve in recent years.[40] The House

[35] For example, in 2006, President George W. Bush proposed an American Competitiveness Initiative that included a proposal to double funding for targeted accounts over a 10-year period; the "doubling" framework was carried over into discussions about the COMPETES Acts of 2007 (P.L. 110-69) and 2010 (P.L. 111-358). See President Bush's letter in Domestic Policy Council, Office of Science and Technology Policy, *American Competitiveness Initiative: Leading the World in Innovation*, February 2006, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/stateoftheunion/2006/aci/aci06-booklet.pdf.

[36] Remarks by Michael Kratsios, President's Science and Technology Advisor, at the National Academy of Sciences, "Reinvigorating America's Scientific Enterprise," May 19, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/05/remarks-by-director-kratsios-at-the-national-academy-of-sciences/.

[37] P.L. 117-167, §10387(c).

[38] National Science Board, "Talent: U.S. and Global STEM Education and Labor Force," in *Science & Engineering Indicators: The State of U.S. Science and Engineering 2024*, March 2024, https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20243/talent-u-s-and-global-stem-education-and-labor-force.

[39] Executive Office of the President, Council of Economic Advisors, *AI Talent Report*, January 14, 2025, https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/cea/written-materials/2025/01/14/ai-talent-report/.

[40] See CRS In Focus IF10477, *Introduction to U.S. Economy: Inflation*, by Lida R. Weinstock.

committee report (H.Rept. 119-272) directs "not less than the fiscal year 2025 enacted level," and the Senate committee report (S.Rept. 119-44) directs "not less than the fiscal year 2024 enacted level," for multiple programs. As shown in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**, though current dollar appropriations for NSF have generally increased since FY2003, inflation-adjusted appropriations have remained flat on average.

Some analysts have argued that even small sustained losses in federal science funding may lead to long-term negative impacts to scientific research and innovation.[41] This may be particularly true for basic research, which often has more uncertainty and longer timelines for generating returns on investment than applied research. Others have argued that funding from other public and private sources should be sought to support scientific research broadly in lieu of more federal funding, though questions remain about whether and how private investments might bridge the gaps from large reductions in public funding.[42] Some analysts have asserted that federally funded R&D appears to complement, rather than substitute for, private investment.[43] Further, there may be more opportunities to leverage private-sector funding to support federal research funding programs through public-private partnerships. For example, NSF has previously administered programs to support AI R&D in collaboration with Amazon, Capitol One, and Intel.[44]

Institutional Capacity to Carry Out Statutory Responsibilities

Amid the Administration's efforts to reduce the size of the federal workforce, between January and July 2025, NSF staffing levels were reportedly reduced by one-third, though some of those in senior executive staff roles may have remained with the agency in lower positions.[45] The FY2026 budget request proposes a change in total NSF full-time equivalent (FTE) staff from 1,848 FTEs in FY2024 to 1,378 FTEs in FY2026, a reduction of 470 FTEs (-25.4%). That reduction includes a decrease of 230 FTEs (76.7%) referred to as *rotators*—temporary staff from the research community hired for two to four years through authority provided by the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (IPA; P.L. 91-648). According to the FY2026 budget request,

> the expertise provided by these IPAs is essential to help shape the NSF research portfolio and support transformational advances across the frontiers of all fields of science, engineering, and education. In FY 2026, NSF plans to reduce the number of IPAs to better

[41] See, for example, Robert D. Atkinson, "Myth 4: Federal R&D Levels Are What Matters, R&D Share of GDP," in "Five Free-Market Myths About Increasing Federal Research Funding," Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, January 25, 2021, https://itif.org/publications/2021/01/25/five-free-market-myths-about-increasing-federal-research-funding/.

[42] See, for example, Alessandra Zimmerman, "Research on R&D Funding: The Different Functions of Public and Private R&D," American Association for the Advancement of Science, September 8, 2025, https://www.aaas.org/news/research-rd-funding-different-functions-public-and-private-rd.

[43] Theresa Gullo et al., "Estimating the Economic and Budgetary Effects of Research Investments," Working Paper 33402, National Bureau of Economic Research, January 2025, p. 17, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w33402/w33402.pdf.

[44] NSF, "NSF Program on Fairness in Artificial Intelligence in Collaboration with Amazon (FAI)," May 7, 2021, https://www.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/nsf-program-fairness-artificial-intelligence-collaboration/505651/nsf21-585/solicitation; and NSF, "NSF Announces $100 Million Investment in National Artificial Intelligence Research Institutes Awards to Secure American Leadership in AI," July 29, 2025, https://www.nsf.gov/news/nsf-announces-100-million-investment-national-artificial.

[45] According to Jesus Soriano, a program officer at NSF and president of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) union, speaking at a press conference on July 22, 2025. See American Institute of Physics, "FYI: Science Policy News," July 28, 2025, https://www.aip.org/fyi/the-week-of-july-28-2025. See also Eric Katz and David Dimolfetta, "NSF Slashes Most Career Executive Roles After Shedding One-Third of Staff," July 29, 2025, https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/07/nsf-slashes-most-career-executive-roles-after-shedding-one-third-staff/407066/.

> support the Administration's priorities in artificial [i]ntelligence, biotechnology, nuclear energy, quantum science, and translational science.[46]

Should Congress provide RRA, EDU, and MREFC appropriations at higher levels than in the FY2026 budget request, Members may consider the appropriate level of appropriations for AOAM to support programs and activities funded through those accounts, as well as the adequacy of the number of NSF staff (FTEs) needed to continue to implement and monitor its programs and funding awards, and to maintain what NSF describes as the essential functions of IPA FTEs.

[46] NSF, *FY 2026 Budget Request to Congress*, p. Organizational Excellence-9.

Appendix. National Science Foundation (NSF) Funding History

Table A-1 shows NSF authorizations, budget requests, and appropriations since the agency was first authorized in FY1951.

Table A-1. NSF Authorizations, Budget Requests, and Appropriations: FY1951-FY2026

	Current ($ millions)			Constant (FY2023 $ millions)		
Fiscal Year	Authorization	Request	Appropriation	Authorization	Request	Appropriation
1951	such sums	n/a	0	such sums	n/a	2
1952	such sums	14	4	such sums	129	32
1953	such sums	15	5	such sums	136	43
1954	such sums	15	8	such sums	135	72
1955	such sums	14	14	such sums	125	127
1956	such sums	31	53	such sums	269	460
1957	such sums	41	40	such sums	346	335
1958	such sums	65	52	such sums	528	421
1959	such sums	140	138	such sums	1,121	1,101
1960	such sums	160	153	such sums	1,266	1,207
1961	such sums	190	176	such sums	1,480	1,369
1962	such sums	210	263	such sums	1,619	2,030
1963	such sums	358	323	such sums	2,728	2,457
1964	such sums	589	353	such sums	4,435	2,658
1965	such sums	488	420	such sums	3,610	3,111
1966	such sums	530	480	such sums	3,840	3,476
1967	such sums	525	481	such sums	3,692	3,382
1968	such sums	526	495	such sums	3,573	3,363
1969	525	500	400	3,411	3,248	2,599
1970	478	500	440	2,946	3,084	2,714
1971	538	513	513	3,156	3,011	3,011
1972	653	622	622	3,655	3,485	3,485
1973	697	653	649	3,742	3,507	3,485
1974	633	583	579	3,171	2,921	2,904
1975	808	672	764	3,668	3,053	3,471
1976	787	755	715	3,343	3,208	3,038
1977	811	802	776	3,211	3,177	3,073
1978	879	944	863	3,264	3,504	3,204

	Current ($ millions)			Constant (FY2023 $ millions)		
Fiscal Year	Authorization	Request	Appropriation	Authorization	Request	Appropriation
1979	930	934	911	3,193	3,207	3,128
1980	1,002	1,006	992	3,164	3,177	3,132
1981	1,115	1,148	1,025	3,206	3,302	2,948
1982	n/a	1,354	1,039	n/a	3,640	2,794
1983	n/a	1,073	1,094	n/a	2,764	2,818
1984	n/a	1,292	1,341	n/a	3,215	3,335
1985	n/a	1,502	1,502	n/a	3,615	3,615
1986	1,517	1,569	1,524	3,572	3,695	3,588
1987	1,685	1,686	1,623	3,880	3,882	3,737
1988	n/a	1,893	1,717	n/a	4,222	3,830
1989	2,050	2,050	1,923	4,395	4,395	4,122
1990	2,388	2,149	2,082	4,939	4,445	4,306
1991	2,782	2,485	2,316	5,555	4,962	4,625
1992	3,245	2,742	2,571	6,322	5,343	5,008
1993	3,505	3,037	2,734	6,672	5,781	5,203
1994	n/a	2,753	2,983	n/a	5,128	5,556
1995	n/a	3,200	3,264	n/a	5,837	5,953
1996	n/a	3,360	3,220	n/a	6,016	5,765
1997	n/a	3,325	3,270	n/a	5,849	5,753
1998	3,506	3,367	3,431	6,091	5,850	5,960
1999	3,773	3,773	3,676	6,475	6,475	6,309
2000	3,886	3,921	3,912	6,533	6,593	6,577
2001	n/a	4,572	4,431	n/a	7,505	7,272
2002	n/a	4,473	4,823	n/a	7,227	7,794
2003	5,536	5,036	5,323	8,778	7,984	8,440
2004	6,391	5,481	5,589	9,891	8,483	8,650
2005	7,378	5,745	5,482	11,082	8,629	8,235
2006	8,520	5,605	5,589	12,394	8,154	8,131
2007	9,839	6,020	5,890	13,930	8,523	8,339
2008	6,600	6,429	6,125	9,154	8,917	8,496
2009	7,326	6,854	6,494[a]	10,058	9,410	8,915
2010	8,132	7,045	6,873	11,069	9,589	9,355
2011	7,424	7,424	6,806	9,907	9,907	9,082
2012	7,800	7,767	7,033	10,223	10,179	9,218
2013	8,300	7,373	6,884	10,684	9,491	8,862

	Current ($ millions)			Constant (FY2023 $ millions)		
Fiscal Year	Authorization	Request	Appropriation	Authorization	Request	Appropriation
2014	n/a	7,626	7,172	n/a	9,640	9,067
2015	n/a	7,255	7,344	n/a	9,078	9,189
2016	n/a	7,724	7,463	n/a	9,587	9,264
2017	n/a	7,964	7,472	n/a	9,722	9,121
2018	n/a	6,653	7,767	n/a	7,945	9,276
2019	n/a	7,472	8,075	n/a	8,761	9,468
2020	n/a	7,066	8,210	n/a	8,178	9,502
2021	n/a	7,741	8,487	n/a	8,661	9,496
2022	n/a	10,169	8,838	n/a	10,635	9,242
2023	11,897	10,492	8,837[b]	11,897	10,492	8,837
2024	15,647	11,315	9,060	15,240	11,020	8,824
2025	16,707	10,183	9,060	15,923	9,705	8,635
2026	17,832	3,903	n/a	16,649	3,644	n/a
2027	18,919	n/a	n/a	17,302	n/a	n/a

Sources: Funding data in the "Authorization" columns are from selected National Science Foundation (NSF) authorization acts. Funding data in the "Request" and "Appropriation" columns are from NSF, Budget Internet Information System, "NSF Requests and Appropriations History," August 6, 2025; and the CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167). To calculate constant FY2023 dollars, CRS used the gross domestic product (GDP) chained price index found in White House, Table 10.1, "Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940–2029," in *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2025*, https://web.archive.org/web/20250116091701/https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/hist10z1_fy2025.xlsx.

Notes: n/a = not available. The "Appropriation" column shows funding provided in annual appropriations acts plus adjustments required in those acts, other laws, committee reports, etc. Adjustments include rescissions, sequestration, funding transfers across NSF accounts, supplemental appropriations (not including American Recovery and Reinvestment Act [ARRA], P.L. 111-5, funding in FY2009), and other changes. Resulting amounts most closely align with NSF's approved Current Plans. "Such sums" means "such sums as may be necessary" to carry out agency powers and duties.

a. FY2009 appropriation amounts do not include ARRA (P.L. 111-5) supplemental funding, which provided an additional $3.002 billion to NSF. With ARRA included, total FY2009 appropriations to NSF were $9.496 billion in current dollars and $13.037 billion in constant (FY2023) dollars.

b. FY2023 appropriation amounts do not include supplemental appropriations from Division N in P.L. 117-328, which provided an additional $1.038 billion to NSF. With the supplemental funding included, total FY2023 appropriations to NSF were $9.877 billion.

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