



U.S. National
Science Foundation

NSF AT A GLANCE

FAST FACTS

1950

Year Congress
created NSF

\$9.06B

NSF's Fiscal
Year 2024
Enacted Budget

93%

Percent of budget
committed to
research, education
and related activities

11K

Average number
of awards NSF
funds each year

1.9K

NSF-funded
institutions

353K

People supported
through NSF funding

262

Total number of
Nobel Prize winners
who have received
NSF funding

The U.S. National Science Foundation is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 to **promote the progress of science; advance the national health, prosperity and welfare; and secure the national defense.**

NSF is the only federal agency whose mission supports all fields of fundamental science and engineering, from mathematics and geosciences to biological, behavioral and computer sciences.

For almost 75 years, NSF has advanced the frontiers of the full spectrum of science and engineering research and innovation. Tasked with keeping the U.S. at the leading edge of scientific and engineering discovery to the benefit of all, NSF invests in research that generates new knowledge that provides a greater understanding of the world. NSF's long-term support for solutions-oriented research has fueled industries of the future, produced advancements for the American people and created world-leading technologies.

WHO WE ARE

The NSF director, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, leads a workforce driven to improve the world through research, discovery and innovation. The workforce consists of approximately 200 rotating scientists and engineers, 1,500 career employees and 450 contract employees.

In addition, the 24-member National Science Board, also presidentially appointed, establishes the overall policies of NSF. Board members and the NSF director serve six-year terms.

NSF 75
YEARS OF
DISCOVERY & INNOVATION

2025 marks the 75th anniversary of NSF. Throughout the year, the agency will host in-person and virtual activities to commemorate this significant milestone. For more information, visit: [new.nsf.gov/75years](https://www.nsf.gov/75years)

NSF Research Areas



Biological Sciences



Computer & Information
Science & Engineering



Engineering



Geosciences



Mathematical &
Physical Sciences



Social, Behavioral &
Economic Sciences

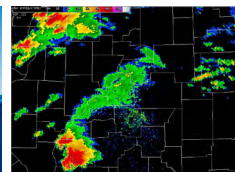
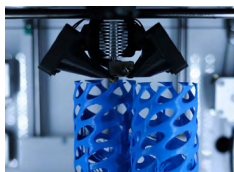


STEM Education



Technology, Innovation
& Partnerships

Our Impacts



NSF has invested in discoveries, inventions, and innovations that have shaped the modern world, including the internet, 3D printing, American Sign Language, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), deep sea exploration, Doppler radar and more. For more information on NSF impacts, please visit: [new.nsf.gov/impacts](https://www.nsf.gov/impacts).

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WHAT WE DO



Expand the frontiers of discovery

NSF supports research that explores the unknown, seeks to demystify nature and advances the frontiers of science and engineering. The agency invests in researchers who generate new knowledge and discoveries that provide a greater understanding of the world. Situated at the intersection of all science and engineering disciplines, NSF is uniquely positioned to identify and guide investments toward cutting-edge research areas like artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, semiconductor technologies and quantum information science.



Create opportunities everywhere

Now more than ever, the nation needs a robust STEM enterprise that includes a geographically diverse, highly-skilled U.S. STEM workforce. By improving access to quality STEM teaching and learning and expanding opportunities for a more geographically diverse population to pursue STEM, NSF is building a workforce for the needs of today as well as the industries of the future.



Enhance U.S. national and economic security

As the U.S. faces growing international competition in emerging technology areas, NSF investment bolsters national and economic security by catalyzing and sustaining U.S. leadership in research and innovation. In many cases, NSF investments in fundamental research have led to [critical outcomes](#), sometimes decades later, which were unforeseen yet have afforded the U.S. substantial competitive advantage. Furthermore, by democratizing access to education and infrastructure, NSF works to ensure that the U.S. is able to unlock these innovations as new products and technologies.



Support research infrastructure

NSF funds [supercomputers](#), [ground-based telescopes and observatories](#), [U.S. research stations in the Arctic and Antarctic](#), the world's largest and highest-power [magnet lab](#), long-term [ecological research sites](#), [engineering centers](#), ships and other infrastructure and state-of-the-art tools to sustain the nation's scientific enterprise. Many of the [research facilities](#) NSF supports drive discoveries and serve as training grounds for the next generation of scientists and engineers.



Sustain global leadership

NSF's support for cutting-edge research has positioned the U.S. as a global leader in science and technology. The agency advances the frontiers of knowledge across the smallest and grandest of scales, from atoms and [black holes](#) to [tissue engineering](#), [AI](#) and [quantum information science](#). NSF's long-term support for research conducted at U.S. colleges and universities has helped transform these institutions into global centers of discovery and innovation, fueling the industries of the future and creating world-leading technologies.



Catalyze regional innovation

NSF is dedicated to expanding the nation's innovation capacity by enabling every region of the country through initiatives like the [NSF Regional Innovation Engines \(NSF Engines\)](#) program. The program invests in multi-sector and multidisciplinary coalitions that link academia, industry, government, philanthropy, investors and civil society. These partnerships surface practical applications and challenges, accelerate use-inspired and translational research and power breakthrough technologies and solutions. NSF Engines give rise to innovation ecosystems in communities across the country, putting regions on the map as national and global leaders in specific technologies and national, societal and geostrategic challenges. NSF is empowering all Americans to participate in the U.S. research and innovation enterprise, spurring job growth, advancing global competitiveness and improving everyday lives.



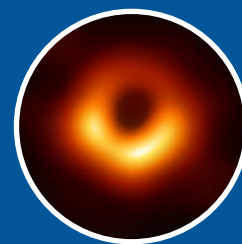
Translate technologies to the marketplace

NSF investment in high-risk, high-reward research has expanded human knowledge and unlocked entirely new technologies and industries. NSF's investments through programs like the [NSF Innovation Corps \(NSF I-Corps™\)](#), [NSF SBIR/STTR America's Seed Fund](#) and [NSF Pathways to Enable Open-Source Ecosystems](#) bring these cutting-edge technologies from the laboratory to the marketplace and society, creating new consumer products, catalyzing new businesses and creating high-wage, good-quality jobs across the nation.



Safeguard the research enterprise

NSF is committed to protecting the integrity and security of the research enterprise. The [Office of the Chief of Research Security Strategy and Policy](#) leads NSF's efforts by developing policies and procedures that safeguard federally funded research while maintaining an open and collaborative international research environment. Initiatives like the Trusted Research Using Safeguards and Transparency framework and the Safeguarding the Entire Community of the U.S. Research Ecosystem Center empower the agency and the research community to identify and mitigate potential risks posed by foreign interference.



DID YOU KNOW?

Thanks to NSF support, international researchers have now captured images of two black holes, including the one at the center of the Milky Way galaxy.