Departments Of Commerce and Justice, Science, And Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Bill Summary, Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

Total Senate CJS Appropriations

- **Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation:** $79,711,000,000

Fighting Waste, Fraud, And Abuse

- Agencies must "reduce operating expenses by placing greater scrutiny on overhead costs," especially in areas such as "non-essential travel, office supply, rent, and utility costs."
- The Committee maintains "longstanding restrictions on first class travel" and expresses concern about "cost overruns and schedule slippages on major projects."
- It requires notification of the Committee for any "program cost overruns greater than 10 percent."

Reductions-In-Force

- "The Committee directs departments or agencies funded in the accompanying bill that are planning to conduct a reduction-in-force to notify the Committee in writing 90 days in advance."

Indirect Cost Rate

- Indirect cost recovery is "essential for supporting federally-funded research at university and private laboratories."
- The Committee introduces a new Title V General Provision – Section 542 – to address this issue and acknowledges efforts to refine the balance of these costs.
- “Optimizing indirect cost rates can further enhance the efficiency of funding allocation… benefiting early-career researchers, smaller institutions, and community-based organizations.”

NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: $6,141,291,000 (a $41,210,000 decrease from FY 2025)

Workforce Concerns

- NOAA must submit a staffing plan within 90 days to address "core missions, including—but not limited to—weather forecasting, space traffic management… and fisheries management."

National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS)

- $34 million, an increase of $700,000, recognizing “mixed-use areas that are protected for long-term research, monitoring, education, and coastal stewardship.”

Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)

- $657,053,000; maintained under current structure despite proposed elimination. And the committee supports “its federal research laboratories, universities, and joint institutes and partnership programs.”

Sea Grant Programs

- **National Sea Grant College Program:** $80 million
- **Sea Grant Aquaculture Research:** $14 million
- “The Committee further encourages Sea Grant Aquaculture to partner with Historically Black Colleges and Universities that conduct aquaculture research.”

Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: $7,965,000 (level with FY 2025)

- “The Committee expects OSTP to be at the forefront of promoting American competitiveness through scientific research and technology development.”
- OSTP must ensure researchers "have the right to choose how and where they publish or communicate their research… not be forced to disseminate their research in ways or under licenses that could harm its integrity or lead to its modification without their express consent."
- OSTP is encouraged to clarify its August 2022 memo titled *"Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research,”* as the committee has concerns that agencies may be violating the rights of researchers.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: $9 billion (a $60 million decrease from FY 2025)

Research and Related Activities (R&RA)

- The Committee provides $7,176,500,000 for R&RA (level funding).
- “The Committee’s fiscal year 2026 recommendation supports Federal long-term basic and translational research that has the potential to transform our economy and way of life. Private industry, foundations, and non-profits bring additional expertise, resources, and capacity to NSF-funded research.”
- “The Committee strongly encourages NSF to leverage the Nation’s research communities through partnerships and collaboration to make available infrastructure, expertise, and financial resources to the U.S. scientific and engineering research and education enterprise.

Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP) Directorate

- " NSF is reminded that the success of TIP will be enhanced through investing in the necessary foundational basic research provided by scientific disciplines across the research spectrum
- Committee provides up to $200 million for the Regional Innovation Engines (NSF Engines) and at least 20 percent of NSF Engines must go to institutions in EPSCoR States.

EPSCoR Program

- The Committee provides not less than $255 million; up to $750,000 per State office.
- "To the maximum extent practicable, 17 percent of NSF research funding and 20 percent of scholarship funding" should go to EPSCoR States.
- “NSF is also directed to more directly engage with the EPSCoR community as the agency continues to implement the ‘‘Envisioning the Future of NSF EPSCoR’’ report, including regarding how to achieve the NSF-wide funding targets included in Public Law 117–167 (CHIPS and Science Act).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource (NAIRR)

- The Committee provides $30 million for the NAIRR pilot and “looks forward to seeing its continued evolution.”
- Not later than 90 days after enactment of this act, NSF shall provide the Committee with a briefing regarding the progress of the pilot, planning and needs for full realization of the NAIRR

as outlined in ‘‘Strengthening and Democratizing the U.S. Artificial Intelligence Innovation Ecosystem’’ report.

HBCUs Excellence in Research

- The Committee provides $25 million for the program and specifies that NSF should support R2 HBCUs.
- “The Committee directs NSF to submit a report on agency efforts to increase outreach and support for HBCUs and MSIs not later than 120 days after enactment of this act.

Research Security

- The Committee notes the importance placed on research security in subtitle D of Public Law 117–167 and supports the continued implementation of the various provisions.
- NSF is further encouraged to explore ways to assist less-resourced institutions on disclosure requirements and international talent retention

Combating Sexual Harassment in Science

- NSF should “work in partnership with stakeholders from across the science ecosystem with experience in field safety and the prevention of sexual harassment in science as they support this important work.”

STEM Education Directorate

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: $1 billion (a $172 million decrease from FY 2025)

Graduate Research Fellowship Program

- The Committee supports the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program, which provides a stipend and cost-of-living allowance to graduate students who are pursuing full-time, research-based masters and doctoral degrees in STEM education. The Committee provides sufficient funding to support 2,000 new fellowships in fiscal year 2026.

Broadening Participation

- The Committee recognizes that the “future of U.S. economic competitiveness and our Nation’s ability to address national, economic, and health security threats depends on sustaining a robust STEM workforce.”

- The Committee is deeply concerned that "entrenched financial barriers are increasingly deterring students, particularly those from underrepresented communities, from pursuing STEM careers."
- The Committee encourages NSF to evaluate the adequacy of compensation for trainees and early career researchers supported through fellowships, training grants, and research awards. NSF is also encouraged to continue supporting the recruitment, retention, and advancement of underrepresented faculty through relevant existing programs.

Enhancing Graduate Education and Training

- The Committee supports measures that improve graduate student advising and mentorship and funding mechanisms. The Committee recognizes the importance of these matters to increase talent retention and international competitiveness, including through the Innovations for Graduate Education Program.
- NSF is encouraged to "set clear mentorship standards in federally funded projects" and study the "impact of funding models on graduate student productivity."

NSF Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC)

Total FY 2026 Funding Recommendation: $350 million (a $116 million increase from FY 2025)

- The Committee encourages NSF and the National Science Board to continue planning and budgeting for the next generation of major facilities needed to ensure the United States maintains its scientific leadership.
- $90 million for designated for Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure, with encouragement to "award at least one mid-scale project led by an institution in an EPSCoR State."
- Within 30 days, NSF must update its research infrastructure plan and "contract with the National Academies to report on NSF's plans to strengthen research infrastructure."