



Coalition for National Science Funding

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) thanks Congress for its past support of the National Science Foundation (NSF). We recognize that Congress is facing difficult decisions with respect to our national fiscal health. As discussions on FY 2012 appropriations begin, we encourage Members of Congress to make continued federal funding for NSF a priority. Robust federal support for NSF, the cornerstone of America's research enterprise, is absolutely critical to the nation's economic health and global competitiveness.

CNSF recommends an FY 2012 NSF budget of \$7.767 billion. This budget level is consistent with the FY 2012 Budget Request and with the America COMPETES Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-358), signed into law on January 4 of this year. This level is also compatible with the funding schedule initiated by the previous administration's American Competitiveness Initiative and with the original America COMPETES Act (P.L. 110-69) passed in August 2007.

Many of our global competitors are increasing their financial support for scientific and engineering research while the rate of growth of funding for research in the U.S. is slowing. The U.S. must maintain its leadership position in high level scientific research and education and NSF is critical to this endeavor. Even under tight budget constraints, it is imperative to have robust annual budget levels for NSF. Dependable funding levels will enable the Foundation and the science and engineering communities to plan, develop infrastructure, maintain a steady pipeline of graduate and postdoctoral students, and facilitate a continuous stream of high level research and researchers that in turn will support the level of technological development needed for economic growth.

The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform noted that while it is necessary to make budget cuts, "at the same time we must invest in education, infrastructure, and high value research and development to help our economy grow, keep us globally competitive, and make it easier for businesses to create jobs." NSF is the only federal agency that supports research and education across all fields of science, engineering, and mathematics and at all educational levels. Research and education programs supported by NSF increase and develop the knowledge base needed for pushing the frontiers of science, mathematics, and engineering disciplines, contribute to the development of the future science and technology workforce, develop new fields of inquiry, and promote interdisciplinary research and education, all of which facilitate technological innovation.

In FY 2010, over 90 percent of NSF's budget went to support research, facilities, and education projects in colleges and universities in all 50 states. The Foundation evaluated over 55,600 proposals through its merit review process, funding 13,000 of these proposals. This is a success rate of 23 percent, indicating the competitiveness of NSF grants. The success rate will continue to fall if NSF budgets don't grow and potential substantial research and education results will not be realized. A healthy NSF is necessary for maintaining a prosperous innovation pipeline that ultimately leads to the development of new technologies, leading to new products and improvement of existing products.