



November 20, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger:

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) – a broad-based group of professional organizations, universities, scientific societies, and businesses – appreciates Congress’ continued support for the fundamental scientific research and educational programs supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF). As Congress seeks to finalize fiscal year 2021 (FY21) appropriations legislation, we urge Congress to negotiate and pass the FY21 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill and make a significant funding increase for NSF a high priority.

We greatly appreciate the good work of both chambers to increase the government’s investment in NSF. We request that Congress appropriate **at least \$8.548 billion for NSF in FY21, as reflected in the House mark**. We recognize the challenges faced this year by budget caps and the tight funding environment.

We respectfully suggest, however, that this level of funding is insufficient to address the effects of years of underinvestment in the fundamental scientific research and STEM education supported by NSF and falls short of the funding trajectory needed to continue U.S. leadership in science and technology.

CNSF supported a request of \$9 billion for NSF in FY21, seeking to address the effects of years of high-quality grant proposals that go unfunded due to limited funding. Those unmet needs continue. A 2019 National Science Board report stated that in FY 2018, “approximately \$3.4 billion was requested for declined proposals that were rated Very Good or higher in the merit review process.” The U.S. is leaving potentially transformative scientific research and efforts to enhance STEM education on the table, while other countries are making significant investments. One effective way to combat this concern is to ensure that NSF receives the highest funding level to support as many of its strong proposals as possible.

This will allow NSF to support burgeoning national priorities such as addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, artificial intelligence, and quantum information sciences, and ensure that long term curiosity-driven research lays the foundation for future national priorities that we can't envision today.

We are also at a critical time building and ensuring a stable STEM workforce of the future, a challenge exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is vitally important that the NSF is able to support graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and other early career scientists, who are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the most likely to have had their career goals deferred or derailed. At this challenging time, we cannot risk losing a generation of scientists who leave the field and never return. This is also an especially important time to enhance public understanding of science. NSF plays a critical role in supporting these STEM career pathways, as well as supporting research to adapt our STEM education system to meet the enormous challenges of education in the time of COVID-19, a rapidly evolving economy and preparing for a future with AI, and building diversity and growing our STEM capacity by engaging all of America's talent. To address these disruptions and ensure that cutting-edge research and talented young scientists are not adversely affected for years to come, Congress must also provide emergency funding to the agency now.

We are grateful for your continuing interest in the work of scientists and science educators and your support for the NSF. For the last 70 years, NSF has been an essential pillar of America's scientific enterprise and is the only federal agency with the mission of supporting all the scientific disciplines. Research supported by the agency is vital to the public interest and essential if our country is to stay at the forefront of scientific progress and the cutting edge of technology and innovation. Now is the time for the U.S. to make a significant and robust investment in NSF.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF)



American Anthropological Association  
American Association of Geographers  
American Association of Physicists in Medicine  
(AAPM)  
American Association of Physics Teachers  
American Astronomical Society  
American Chemical Society  
American Educational Research Association  
American Geophysical Union  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Institute for Medical and Biological  
Engineering (AIMBE)  
American Institute of Physics  
American Mathematical Society  
American Physical Society  
American Physiological Society  
American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Civil Engineers  
American Society for Engineering Education  
American Society of Mechanical Engineers  
American Society for Pharmacology and  
Experimental Therapeutics  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association  
Arizona State University  
Association for Psychological Science  
Association for Women in Mathematics  
Association for Women in Science  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Public and Land-grant  
Universities  
Association of Science and Technology Centers  
(ASTC)

Battelle  
Biophysical Society  
Boise State University  
Boston University  
Brandeis University  
Brown University  
California Institute of Technology  
Cavarocchi Ruscio Dennis Associates  
Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation  
Computing Research Association  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Cornell University  
Council of Graduate Schools  
Council on Undergraduate Research  
Crop Science Society of America  
Duke University  
Eastman  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Eversole Associates  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain  
Sciences  
Federation of American Societies for  
Experimental Biology  
Florida State University  
Forge Policy Solutions  
Geological Society of America  
George Mason University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Harvard University  
IEEE-USA  
Incorporated Research Institutions for  
Seismology (IRIS)  
Indiana University  
Lehigh University  
Lewis-Burke Associates LLC  
Linguistic Society of America  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Mathematical Association of America  
Michigan State University  
Michigan Technological University  
Mineralogical Society of America  
Museum of Science, Boston  
National Association of Marine Laboratories  
National Communication Association  
National Postdoctoral Association  
National Science Teachers Association  
New York University  
Northeastern University  
Northern Illinois University  
Northwestern University  
OSA-The Optical Society  
Penn State University  
Population Association of America/ Association  
of Population Centers  
Princeton University  
Psychonomic Society  
PsySiP: Psychology of Science in Policy  
Purdue University  
Research!America  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
SACNAS  
SAGE Publishing  
Seismological Society of America  
Society for American Archaeology  
Society for Industrial and Organizational  
Psychology  
Society for Neuroscience  
Society for Research in Child Development  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social  
Issues (SPSSI)  
Soil Science Society of America  
SPIE  
St. Louis University  
State University of New York System (SUNY)  
Stevens Institute of Technology  
Stony Brook University  
The Ohio State University  
The Optical Society  
Tufts University

UCLA  
UNAVCO  
University of California System  
University of Cincinnati  
University of Colorado Boulder  
University of the District of Columbia  
University of Florida  
University of Illinois System  
University of Iowa  
University of Maryland, College Park  
University of Michigan  
University of Nebraska  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Virginia  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
US Ignite  
Vanderbilt University  
Verizon  
Washington State University  
West Virginia University  
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution  
Yale University