



National Center for Science and  
Engineering Statistics

## InfoBytes

# Federal Funding for Science and Engineering: Trends in Rankings Among Top Universities, FYs 2014–23

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In FY 2023, federal agencies obligated \$49.0 billion to 1,110 institutions of higher education in the United States for the support of science and engineering (S&E) activities.<sup>1</sup> Federal funding for S&E support is concentrated within a relatively small and consistent set of institutions. For example, the top 10 recipient institutions in FY 2023 accounted for \$9.9 billion, or 20.1% of all federal S&E support to all institutions of higher education. Similarly, the top 100 recipient institutions combined received \$38.4 billion in FY 2023, or 78.4% of all federal S&E support to higher education institutions. In FY 2014, the top 10 recipient institutions received \$7.2 billion, or 22.7% of all federal S&E support obligations to higher education institutions ([figure 1](#)).<sup>2</sup> This InfoBytes presents statistics on the changes in the population of the top 10 recipient institutions during the past decade. Data are presented in current dollars and have not been adjusted for inflation.

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**Figure 1. Top 10 higher education institution recipients of federal S&E obligations: FYs 2014–23**

(University name and millions of current dollars)

Rank	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
1	Johns Hopkins U. 1,677	Johns Hopkins U. 1,552	Johns Hopkins U. 1,854	Johns Hopkins U. 1,708	Johns Hopkins U. 1,822	Johns Hopkins U. 1,892	Johns Hopkins U. 1,953	Johns Hopkins U. 1,870	Johns Hopkins U. 1,801	Johns Hopkins U. 2,124
2	U. Michigan 913	U. Washington 660	U. Michigan 668	U. Michigan 700	U. Michigan 755	U. Washington 899	U. Michigan 804	New York U. 908	U. Washington 928	U. Michigan 966
3	U. Washington 718	U. Michigan 647	U. Washington 642	U. Washington 667	U. Washington 755	U. Michigan 787	U. Washington 789	U. California, San Diego 858	U. California, San Diego 880	U. Washington 904
4	U. California, San Diego 622	U. California, San Diego 584	U. California, San Francisco 603	U. California, San Diego 639	U. California, San Diego 684	U. California, San Francisco 718	U. California, Los Angeles 781	Duke U. 837	U. California, San Francisco 876	Columbia U. 882
5	U. Pennsylvania 596	U. California, San Francisco 571	U. California, San Diego 596	U. California, San Francisco 628	U. California, San Francisco 672	U. California, San Diego 709	Columbia U. 755	U. Washington 834	U. Michigan 865	U. California, San Diego 849
6	U. California, San Francisco 583	U. Pennsylvania 547	U. Pennsylvania 556	Stanford U. 581	Columbia U. 647	Columbia U. 687	Georgia Institute of Technology 693	U. Michigan 823	Columbia U. 836	U. California, San Francisco 839
7	Stanford U. 532	Stanford U. 540	Columbia U. 555	Columbia U. 574	Stanford U. 621	U. Pennsylvania 658	U. California, San Francisco 685	Columbia U. 822	U. Colorado, Boulder 798	Stanford U. 838
8	U. California, Los Angeles 523	Columbia U. 516	Stanford U. 552	U. Pennsylvania 552	U. Pittsburgh 600	Duke U. 644	U. California, San Diego 675	U. California, San Francisco 783	Stanford U. 796	U. Pennsylvania 832
9	U. Pittsburgh 509	U. California, Los Angeles 510	U. Pittsburgh 533	U. Pittsburgh 544	U. Pennsylvania 584	Stanford U. 633	Duke U. 656	U. Pittsburgh 746	U. Pittsburgh 772	U. Colorado, Boulder 814
10	Harvard U. 499	U. Pittsburgh 495	U. California, Los Angeles 517	Duke U. 523	Duke U. 578	Georgia Institute of Technology 630	Stanford U. 651	U. Pennsylvania 735	Duke U. 763	U. Pittsburgh 806

**Note(s):**

Institution order is based on total actual dollars received before amounts are rounded. For the FY 2020 survey, the Department of Defense (DOD) science and engineering support to higher education institutions and DOD R&D support to nonprofit organizations are known to be understated. However, the magnitude of the missing data is unknown. Data users should use caution when conducting any time series analysis that includes DOD obligations data for FY 2020.

**Source(s):**

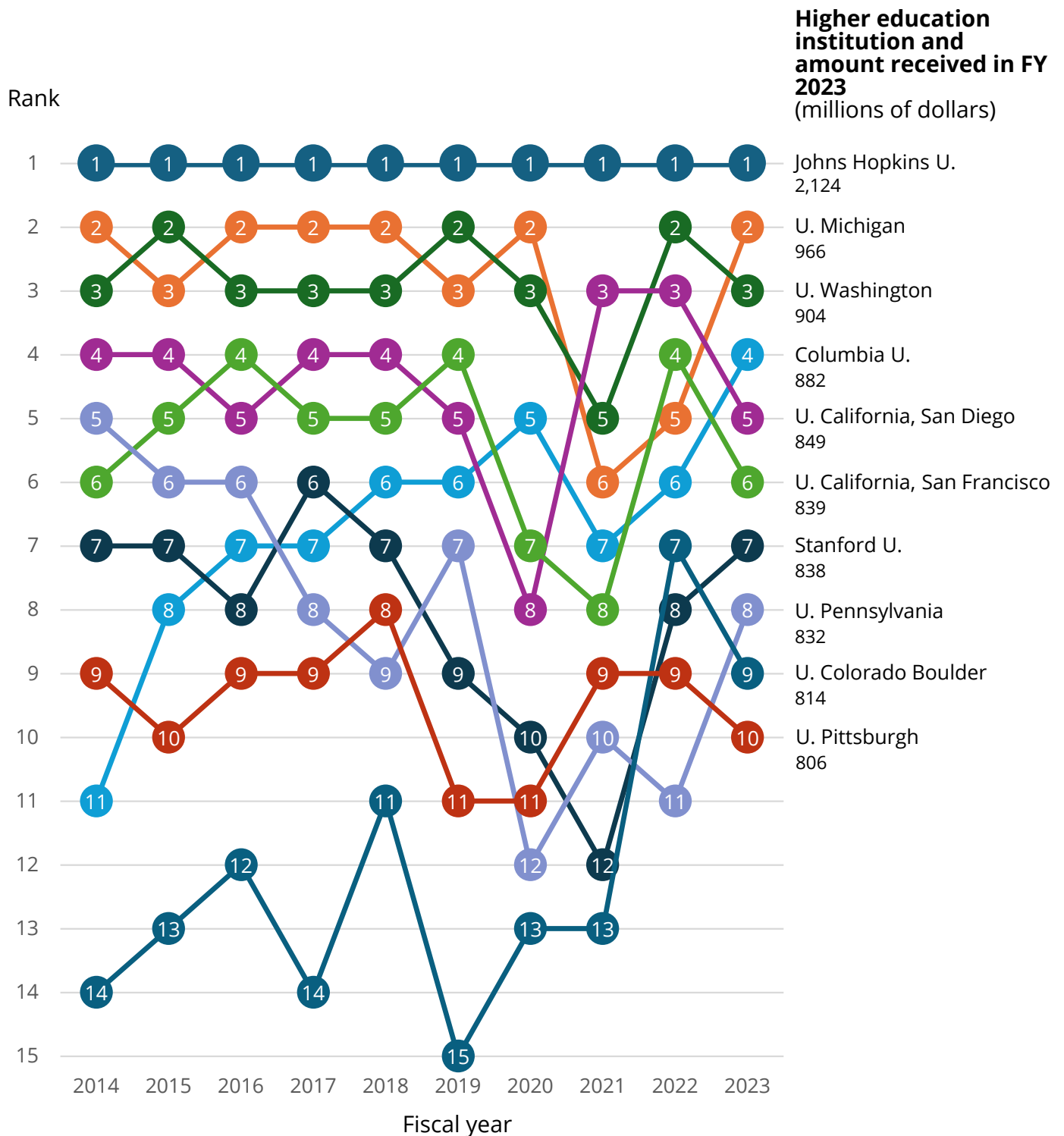
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges, and Nonprofit Institutions and the Federal Science and Engineering Support module of the Survey of Federal Funds for Research and Development.

In FY 2023, Johns Hopkins University continued as the primary recipient of federal funding for S&E support with \$2.1 billion in FY 2023—nearly \$1.2 billion more than the next institution, the University of Michigan, which received \$966 million. This difference widened considerably compared with FY 2014, when Johns Hopkins University received \$764 million more than the next institution. Federal obligations to Johns Hopkins University include funding for the Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), which is 1 of 15 University Affiliated Research Centers in the United States. In FY 2023, federal obligations to APL totaled more than \$963 million.<sup>3</sup> Although there was general stability among the top 10 recipient institutions of federal S&E support during the past decade, more dynamic changes were seen in rankings among the top 10 institutions around FY 2020 and FY

2021. For example, in FY 2021, New York University (NYU), which includes the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, rose to the second-largest recipient of federal funds for S&E with \$908 million in federal obligations. Of this amount, \$877 million was obligated from the Department of Health and Human Services.<sup>4</sup> In FY 2020, NYU ranked 25th with \$450 million in federal S&E support.

In FYs 2020 and 2021, Congress passed a series of supplemental bills starting in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-123); the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127); the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (P.L. 116-136); the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (P.L. 116-139); the added stimulus component of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260); and the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2). Many of these bills provided agencies with supplemental appropriations, some of which could be directed toward research and development. The effect of these supplemental appropriations contributed to changes in rankings among the top 10 recipient institutions ([figure 2](#)). For example, in FY 2020, these supplemental appropriations added \$1.4 billion to federal S&E support obligations to higher education.<sup>5</sup> Starting in FY 2022, the rankings of recipient institutions begin to return to the pre-pandemic state, but changes remained in the ecosystem of federal obligations for S&E support. For example, the University of Colorado, Boulder, which had ranked just below the top 10 from FY 2014–21, moved from 13th place in FY 2021 to 7th place in FY 2022 and continued to rank in the top 10 in FY 2023.

Figure 2. Higher education institutions receiving the largest amounts of federal obligations for science and engineering in FY 2023 and their positions in annual rankings: FYs 2014–23



**Note(s):**

Detail may not add to total because of rounding. Institution order is based on total actual dollars received before amounts are rounded. For the FY 2020 survey, the Department of Defense (DOD) science and engineering support to higher education institutions and DOD R&D support to nonprofit organizations are known to be understated. However, the magnitude of the missing data is unknown. Data users should use caution when conducting any time series analysis that includes DOD obligations data for FY 2020.

**Source(s):**

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges, and Nonprofit Institutions and the Federal Science and Engineering Support module of the Survey of Federal Funds for Research and Development.

NCSES has reviewed this product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and approved its release (NCSES-DRN25-054).

## Suggested Citation

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## Notes

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**1** Details for FY 2023 are available in the [full set of data tables](#). Obligations represent the amount for orders placed, contracts awarded, services received, and similar transactions during a given period, regardless of when funds were appropriated or when future payment of money is required.

**2** In FY 2014, total federal obligations to higher education institutions totaled \$31.2 billion. The sum of federal S&E obligations to the top 10 recipient institutions for FY 2024 totaled \$7.2 billion. Data for FY 2014 are from survey database extraction.

**3** For data on specific University Affiliated Research Centers, see the Survey of Federal Funds for Research and Development's [full set of data tables](#): tables 44–46.

**4** Details available in the FY 2021 [full set of data tables](#): table 18.

**5** National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES). 2022. *Federal Science and Engineering Support to Higher Education Increased 3% in FY 2020*. NSF 22-341. Alexandria, VA: U.S. National Science Foundation. Available at <https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf22341>.

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