



InfoBrief

R&D Spending at Federally Funded R&D Centers Holds Steady in FY 2025

NSF 26-322 | August 20, 2026

Federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs) in the United States enable federal agencies to meet their research and development (R&D) needs through government-owned, contractor-operated research centers. These centers provide capabilities that cannot be met as effectively through other resources.¹ The nation's 41 FFRDCs spent \$31.8 billion on R&D in FY 2025, an increase of 0.34% over FY 2024 in current dollars ([table 1](#)). (All amounts and calculations are reported in current dollars unless otherwise noted. All growth rates are compound annual growth rates.) The federal government funded \$31.3 billion of the R&D total, an increase of 0.27% over FY 2024. This is the smallest nominal growth in FFRDC R&D expenditures since 2014.² In constant dollars, total FFRDC R&D expenditures rose an average of 2.7% annually from FY 2015 to FY 2025, although the annual rate of increase measured just 1.5% from FY 2023 to FY 2025 ([figure 1](#)). These and the other statistics in this report come from the FY 2025 FFRDC Research and Development Survey, conducted by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the U.S. National Science Foundation.

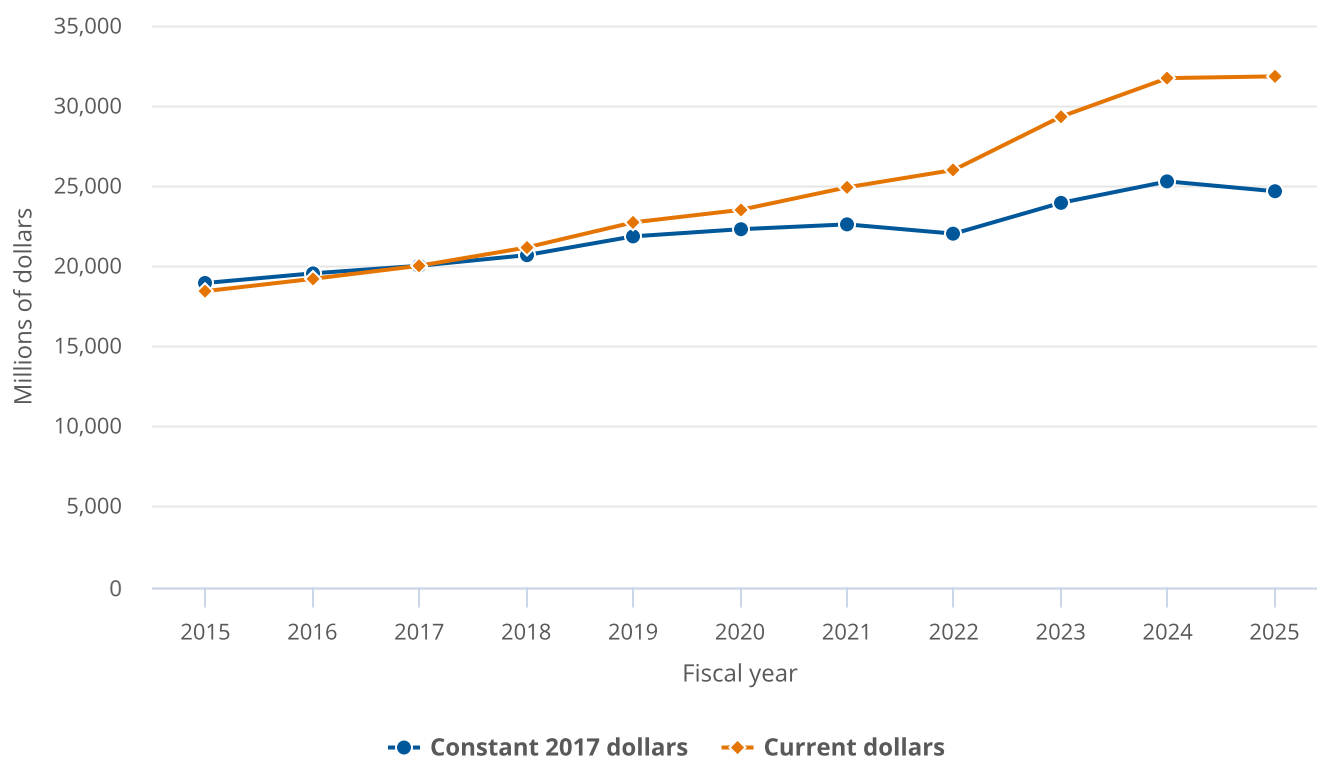
Table 1. R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers, by source of funds: FYs 2015–25

(Thousands of current dollars)

Fiscal year	All R&D expenditures	Federal government	State and local governments	Businesses	Nonprofit organizations	All other sources
2015	18,458,257	18,097,189	18,427	208,780	27,984	105,877
2016	19,219,702	18,855,593	21,556	192,239	40,195	110,119
2017	20,038,307	19,667,804	29,029	192,107	46,526	102,841
2018	21,171,529	20,770,388	43,458	197,975	43,630	116,078
2019	22,737,500	22,338,855	51,167	180,583	48,238	118,657
2020	23,514,241	23,133,501	43,995	172,866	47,056	116,823
2021	24,921,476	24,509,691	43,774	195,954	49,016	123,041
2022	26,006,971	25,605,479	38,591	207,483	49,169	106,249
2023	29,316,897	28,880,018	35,407	224,361	42,429	134,682
2024	31,724,628	31,246,822	38,627	239,738	48,803	150,638
2025	31,833,205	31,332,192	41,811	256,707	43,969	158,526

Source(s):

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, FFRDC Research and Development Survey.

Figure 1. Total R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers: FYs 2015–25**Note(s):**

In FY 2024, Idaho National Laboratory (INL) revised reporting methodology to align with reporting practices of other Department of Energy laboratories. INL now categorizes all work as R&D, except for manufacturing and for security and protection projects. This revision contributed to a \$963.9 million increase in reported R&D at the laboratory between FY 2023 and FY 2024.

Source(s):

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, FFRDC Research and Development Survey.

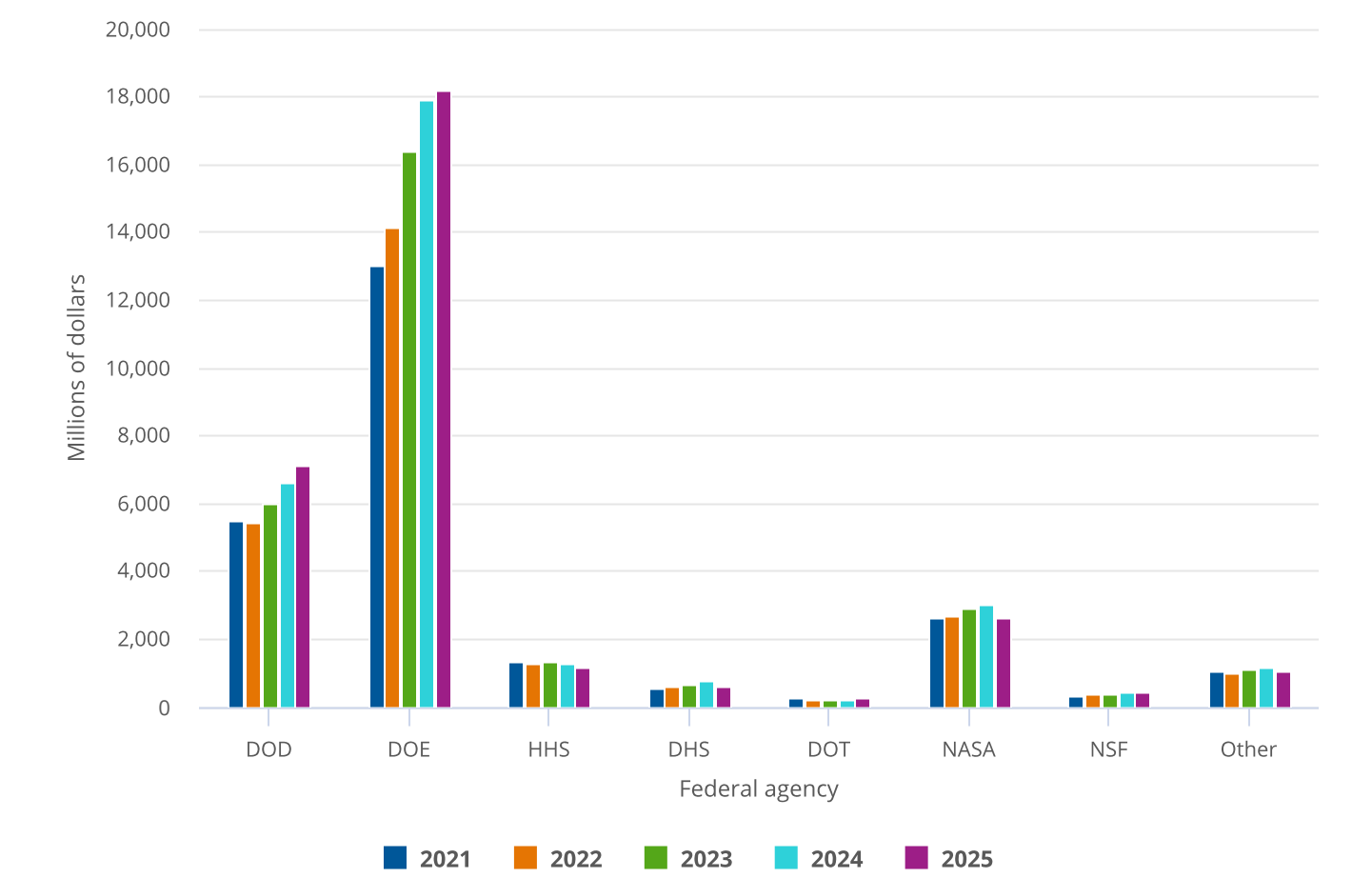
R&D by Funding Source

Federal funding sources accounted for 98.4% (\$31.3 billion) of FFRDC R&D expenditures in FY 2025 ([table 1](#)). This level of support is typical for FFRDCs, which are privately operated R&D organizations that are exclusively or substantially financed by the federal government. Nonfederal sources funded the remaining R&D, which totaled \$501.0 million: businesses (\$256.7 million), nonprofit organizations (\$44.0 million), state and local governments (\$41.8 million), and all other sources (\$158.5 million), such as funds from foreign governments and foreign or U.S. universities.

Federal Agency Sources of R&D Funding

Four agencies accounted for 92.8% of federally funded R&D expenditures at FFRDCs, which is typical: the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Defense (DOD), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) ([figure 2](#)). DOE accounted for \$18.2 billion of federally funded R&D spending (58.0%); DOD, \$7.1 billion (22.6%); NASA, \$2.6 billion (8.4%); and HHS, which includes the National Institutes of Health, \$1.2 billion (3.7%). These four agencies were the only agencies with funding expenditures greater than \$1 billion in FY 2025. FFRDCs identified 22 other agencies as sources of federal funding in FY 2025 ([table 2](#)).

Figure 2. Federally financed R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers, by federal agency: FYs 2021–25



DOD = Department of Defense; DOE = Department of Energy; DHS = Department of Homeland Security; DOT = Department of Transportation; HHS = Department of Health and Human Services; NASA = National Aeronautics and Space Administration; NSF = National Science Foundation.

Source(s):
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, FFRDC Research and Development Survey.

Table 2. Federally financed R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers, by federal agency: FY 2025

(Thousands of current dollars)

Federal agency	All federal R&D expenditures
All federal agencies	31,332,192
Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts	31
Agency for International Development	2,939
Central Intelligence Agency	1,615
Consumer Product Safety Commission	2
Department of Agriculture	7,354
Department of Commerce	102,422
Department of Defense	7,096,078
Department of Energy	18,172,281
Department of Health and Human Services	1,172,272
Department of Homeland Security	568,800
Department of Housing and Urban Development	75
Department of Justice	20,777
Department of State	74,583
Department of the Interior	15,983

Table 2. Federally financed R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers, by federal agency: FY 2025

(Thousands of current dollars)

Federal agency	All federal R&D expenditures
Department of the Treasury	142,779
Department of Transportation	226,975
Department of Veterans Affairs	85,988
Environmental Protection Agency	12,584
Executive Office of the President	2,794
General Services Administration	6,395
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	2,632,428
National Science Foundation	445,850
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	22,257
Office of Personnel Management	1,019
Office of the Director of National Intelligence	13,767
Tennessee Valley Authority	1,100
Other agencies not listed ^a	503,044

^a Some funding sources were not identified for security reasons or because the original source was not known.**Source(s):**

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, FFRDC Research and Development Survey, FY 2025.

R&D expenditures from the two largest funding agencies nominally grew from FY 2024 to FY 2025—DOE increased by \$278 million (1.6%) and DOD increased by \$488 million (7.4%). The increase in DOE-funded expenditures during this period was significantly below the annual growth rate of 11.3% for DOE from FY 2021 to FY 2024. R&D expenditures funded by HHS, DHS, and NASA all declined in FY 2025. HHS-funded expenditures decreased by \$75 million (6.0%), DHS funded expenditures decreased by \$163 million (22.3%), and NASA funded expenditures decreased by \$371 million (12.4%). Although DOD and DOE funded more than \$1 billion in expenditures at several FFRDCs, the majority of HHS- or NASA-funded expenditures were at two FFRDCs ([table 3](#)):

- Jet Propulsion Laboratory accounted for 86.7% (\$2.3 billion) of NASA-funded expenditures at FFRDCs (\$2.6 billion).
- Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research accounted for 73.8% (\$865.1 million) of HHS-funded FFRDC expenditures (\$1.2 billion).

Table 3. Federally financed R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers, by federal agency and FFRDC: FY 2025

(Thousands of current dollars)

FFRDC	All federal R&D expenditures	DOD	DOE	HHS	DHS	DOT	NASA	NSF	Other
All FFRDCs	31,332,192	7,096,078	18,172,281	1,172,272	568,800	226,975	2,632,428	445,850	1,017,508
Aerospace Federally Funded Research and Development Center	1,375,531	1,171,392	32,954	0	2,803	4,230	113,396	1,328	49,428
Ames National Laboratory	48,401	460	47,930	0	0	0	0	11	0
Argonne National Laboratory	1,214,360	26,423	1,123,859	14,354	20,363	4,873	2,041	24	22,423
Arroyo Center	45,514	45,514	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brookhaven National Laboratory	748,362	3,008	719,051	3,112	465	0	8,190	0	14,536
Center for Advanced Aviation System Development	178,207	0	0	0	0	178,207	0	0	0
Center for Communications and Computing	89,010	89,010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Center for Enterprise Modernization	202,236	0	0	0	0	0	0	462	201,774
Center for Naval Analyses	109,637	109,637	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses	5,102	0	73	0	0	80	56	0	4,893
CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare	188,326	0	0	188,326	0	0	0	0	0
Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory	389,129	5,001	383,978	0	0	0	150	0	0
Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research	865,189	59	0	865,066	0	0	0	0	64
Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center	56,663	0	0	0	56,663	0	0	0	0
Homeland Security Systems Engineering and Development Institute	162,060	0	0	0	144,160	0	0	0	17,900
Idaho National Laboratory	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jet Propulsion Laboratory	2,281,569	0	0	0	0	0	2,281,569	0	0
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory	1,164,340	25,662	1,096,438	25,369	767	634	2,583	4,373	8,514
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory	2,136,131	387,905	1,697,332	11,553	23,548	217	9,110	0	6,466
Lincoln Laboratory	1,490,895	1,406,533	9,114	12,666	15,357	19,819	13,440	596	13,370
Los Alamos National Laboratory	4,031,401	113,707	3,757,008	8,038	3,732	0	55,997	180	92,739
National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center	44,266	9	0	0	28,604	0	0	0	15,653
National Cybersecurity Center of Excellence	29,616	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29,616
National Defense Research Institute	79,304	75,375	0	0	0	214	0	0	3,715
National Radio Astronomy Observatory	128,107	1,681	0	0	0	0	534	125,817	75
National Renewable Energy Laboratory	827,343	22,155	760,736	0	4,441	2,547	1,961	0	35,503
National Security Engineering Center	1,493,714	1,295,906	1,163	0	0	0	0	0	196,645
National Solar Observatory	39,766	0	0	0	0	0	659	39,107	0
NSF National Center for Atmospheric Research	189,694	5,672	3,262	0	0	4,270	12,053	153,685	10,752
NSF National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory	116,122	89	4,449	0	0	0	615	110,969	0
Oak Ridge National Laboratory	2,258,500	97,144	1,946,794	6,054	7,833	4,351	44,173	0	152,151
Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	1,602,283	233,014	1,235,606	25,916	80,031	0	1,362	306	26,048
Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory	134,477	1,006	133,110	0	0	0	361	0	0
Project Air Force	54,987	54,987	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandia National Laboratories	4,613,538	1,286,421	3,174,055	697	64,325	5,033	1,302	0	81,705
Savannah River National Laboratory	245,815	19,988	223,487	0	1,072	0	0	0	1,268
Science and Technology Policy Institute	8,350	0	18	397	0	0	136	6,677	1,122

Table 3. Federally financed R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers, by federal agency and FFRDC: FY 2025

(Thousands of current dollars)

FFRDC	All federal R&D expenditures	DOD	DOE	HHS	DHS	DOT	NASA	NSF	Other
SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory	586,167	27,471	544,930	10,561	495	0	200	2,315	195
Software Engineering Institute	157,001	141,505	825	162	10,323	0	209	0	3,977
Systems and Analyses Center	247,901	227,120	1,303	0	13,959	0	0	0	5,519
Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility	182,630	0	182,629	1	0	0	0	0	0

NA = not available; imputed data not reported at this level.

DOD = Department of Defense; DOE = Department of Energy; DHS = Department of Homeland Security; DOT = Department of Transportation; FFRDC = federally funded research and development center; HHS = Department of Health and Human Services; NASA = National Aeronautics and Space Administration; NSF = National Science Foundation.

Source(s):
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, FFRDC Research and Development Survey, FY 2025.

Expenditure Trends at Specific FFRDCs

The majority of FFRDCs (27 centers) increased R&D spending in FY 2025 compared with FY 2024; 14 FFRDCs reported lower R&D totals in FY 2025 (table 4). Twelve FFRDCs had expenditures of more than \$1 billion each (a combined \$25.5 billion) in R&D expenditures for FY 2025: the NASA-sponsored Jet Propulsion Laboratory; eight DOE-sponsored national laboratories specializing in energy and the environment, national security, and nuclear science (Argonne, Idaho, Lawrence Berkeley, Lawrence Livermore, Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, Pacific Northwest, and Sandia National Laboratories); and three FFRDCs sponsored by DOD (National Security Engineering Center, Lincoln Laboratory, and Aerospace FFRDC).³ Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory were the two largest performers with \$4.7 billion and \$4.1 billion in total R&D, respectively. Between FY 2024 and FY 2025, four FFRDCs increased their R&D expenditures by more than \$100 million: Oak Ridge National Laboratory (\$173.4 million), Argonne National Laboratory (\$142.3 million), Lincoln Laboratory (\$127.1 million), and Los Alamos National Laboratory (\$118.7 million). Jet Propulsion Laboratory reported a significant decrease in FY 2025 R&D expenditures (\$366.3 million).

Table 4. R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers, by FFRDC: FYs 2021–25

(Thousands of current dollars and percent change)

FFRDC	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	% change 2024–25
All FFRDCs	24,921,476	26,006,971	29,316,897	31,724,628	31,833,205	0.3
Aerospace Federally Funded Research and Development Center	1,128,241	1,152,833	1,259,428	1,318,429	1,386,475	5.2
Ames National Laboratory	34,214	38,520	40,638	39,563	49,079	24.1
Argonne National Laboratory	856,568	962,973	1,234,635	1,106,000	1,248,328	12.9
Arroyo Center	38,304	40,856	42,433	37,714	45,514	20.7
Brookhaven National Laboratory	637,658	655,988	691,417	760,512	760,892	0.1
Center for Advanced Aviation System Development	230,484	189,490	186,163	186,463	200,867	7.7
Center for Communications and Computing	65,255	74,759	77,391	85,168	89,010	4.5
Center for Enterprise Modernization	263,661	235,436	258,155	281,401	202,634	-28.0
Center for Naval Analyses	96,391	93,567	96,103	100,011	109,637	9.6
Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses	5,630	4,323	4,405	5,031	5,281	5.0
CMS Alliance to Modernize Healthcare	348,269	286,693	281,709	248,842	188,326	-24.3
Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory	319,051	330,294	402,122	425,393	392,036	-7.8
Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research	861,605	904,182	929,754	893,491	865,189	-3.2
Green Bank Observatory ^a	8629	10,752	12,326	13,582	na	-
Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center	34,888	52,984	66,264	77,563	56,663	-26.9
Homeland Security Systems Engineering and Development Institute	183,588	183,261	217,908	255,498	162,439	-36.4
Idaho National Laboratory ^b	516,691	637,579	653,100	1,617,015	NA	-
Jet Propulsion Laboratory	2,388,355	2,417,556	2,671,305	2,647,837	2,281,569	-13.8
Judiciary Engineering and Modernization Center ^c	5,493	na	na	na	na	-
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory	966,972	1,031,716	1,190,504	1,206,851	1,231,251	2.0
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory	1,613,673	1,659,808	2,110,938	2,230,018	2,179,730	-2.3
Lincoln Laboratory	1,136,133	1,142,615	1,265,060	1,377,063	1,504,118	9.2
Los Alamos National Laboratory	2,974,164	3,294,559	3,768,323	3,958,302	4,076,960	3.0
National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center	44,968	45,870	41,321	50,470	44,266	-12.3
National Cybersecurity Center of Excellence	33,671	27,955	23,010	23,557	29,616	25.7
National Defense Research Institute	66,170	61,097	67,157	71,499	79,304	10.9
National Radio Astronomy Observatory	94,202	92,476	102,863	105,183	129,001	22.6
National Renewable Energy Laboratory	559,151	603,356	718,852	898,498	879,428	-2.1
National Security Engineering Center	1,468,298	1,286,520	1,370,949	1,442,573	1,504,115	4.3
National Solar Observatory	17,684	33,849	39,856	38,632	39,822	3.1

Table 4. R&D expenditures at federally funded research and development centers, by FFRDC: FYs 2021–25

(Thousands of current dollars and percent change)

FFRDC	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	% change 2024–25
NSF National Center for Atmospheric Research	181,010	188,238	210,233	201,507	213,463	5.9
NSF National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory	75,251	81,505	94,257	104,871	117,630	12.2
Oak Ridge National Laboratory	1,760,578	1,803,543	2,019,259	2,113,418	2,286,846	8.2
Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	1,168,268	1,294,614	1,449,496	1,609,117	1,630,715	1.3
Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory	115,505	120,347	131,042	140,958	138,610	-1.7
Project Air Force	47,966	46,517	48,729	47,810	54,987	15.0
Sandia National Laboratories	3,542,756	3,811,529	4,275,484	4,634,973	4,668,417	0.7
Savannah River National Laboratory	191,803	182,654	244,736	253,483	249,166	-1.7
Science and Technology Policy Institute	9,784	10,593	9,977	11,952	8,350	-30.1
SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory	396,780	432,078	483,193	539,118	600,450	11.4
Software Engineering Institute	120,443	129,316	130,141	147,400	157,001	6.5
Systems and Analyses Center	173,792	201,338	224,574	234,871	248,119	5.6
Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility	139,479	152,832	171,687	182,991	185,670	1.5

na = not applicable. NA = not available; imputed data not reported at this level.

FFRDC = federally funded research and development center.

^a Green Bank Observatory split from the National Radio Astronomy Observatory into separate FFRDCs on 1 October 2016; however, its expenditures continued to be reported under the National Radio Astronomy Observatory for FYs 2017–20. On 1 October 2024, Green Bank Observatory was reincorporated into the National Radio Astronomy Observatory and is no longer a separate FFRDC.

^b In FY 2024, Idaho National Laboratory (INL) revised reporting methodology to align with reporting practices of other Department of Energy laboratories. INL now categorizes all work as R&D, except for manufacturing and security or protection projects.

^c The Judiciary Modernization Engineering Center was decertified as an FFRDC on 31 January 2021.

Source(s):

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, FFRDC Research and Development Survey.

Data Sources, Limitations, and Availability

The statistics on FFRDC R&D expenditures presented in this report come from the FY 2025 FFRDC Research and Development Survey. This annual survey is completed by FFRDC administrators and collects data from FFRDCs on R&D expenditures by source of funds (federal government, state and local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, or other); federal agency source; type of R&D (basic research, applied research, or experimental development); type of cost (salaries, software, equipment, subcontracts, other direct costs, and indirect costs); R&D personnel headcounts and full-time equivalents; and total operating budget. This survey has been a census of the full population of FFRDCs since FY 2001. For a list of criteria used to define the set of FFRDCs, see the general guidelines of the Master Government List of FFRDCs at <https://nces.nsf.gov/resource/master-gov-lists-ffrdc/general-notes>.

The full set of data tables from this survey and more information on the survey methodology are available at <https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/ffrdc-research-development/2025>.

NCSES has reviewed this product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and approved its release (NCSES-DRN26-024).

Notes

- 1 The [Master Government List of FFRDCs](#) provides details on sponsoring agencies, administrator types, and locations and contains general and historical notes. See also Congressional Research Service. 2021. *Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs): Background and Issues for Congress*. Available at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R44629>. Accessed 27 June 2025. And see Cunningham JA and Link AN. 2022. The Returns to Publicly Funded R&D: A Study of U.S. Federally Funded Research and Development Centers. *Annals of Science and Technology Policy*: 6(3):228–314. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1561/110.00000023>.
- 2 For annual R&D expenditures by source of funds, FY 2001–25, see the [full set of data tables](#): table 1.
- 3 For FFRDC sponsoring agencies and locations, see the [full set of data tables](#): table 6.

Suggested Citation

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES). 2026. *R&D Spending at Federally Funded R&D Centers Holds Steady in FY 2025*. NSF 26-322. Alexandria, VA: U.S. National Science Foundation. Available at <https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf26322>.

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