

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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The Future of Publicly-Funded Research in the US

Albany, NY - A new report funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) presents a new plan for getting the most value from the \$112 billion the US government invests in research each year.

Finding our Future: A Research Agenda for the Research Enterprise, the result of a partnership project among NSF, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Center for Technology in Government (CTG), details the challenges facing the research enterprise, outlines an ideal future, and presents a research agenda and action recommendations for moving toward that future.

The research enterprise is a complex endeavor involving thousands of organizations, administrators, and investigators representing every scientific discipline and field of knowledge. More than 20 different federal agencies invest over \$100 billion dollars in research each year with the hopes of scientific, technological, and intellectual advancements that will (immediately or eventually) benefit the public at large.

The research enterprise has grown 11-fold in 50 years, representing a \$99 billion increase in federal research and development investments since 1949. In 2001 NIH and NSF alone received over 59,000 research proposals competing for well over \$10 billion dollars. The research demands of a post 9/11 world indicate continued expansion of this enterprise.

"Publicly-supported research is essential but complex and expensive. And it has developed so rapidly in the past 50 years that it has outgrown traditional methods of management," said CTG Director Sharon Dawes. "In the midst of this growth the enterprise has turned a lens on itself and asked what do we need to know to do a better job."

As large and complex as it is, the enterprise is rife with challenges. There are thousands of different organizations that have different processes for making research proposals to dozens of organizations that have different processes for reviewing them. Each player - from investigators to administrators to program officers - brings different skills and resources to their part of the process. These activities are all embedded in a political, economic, and social environment that influences our overall research priorities.

"Much of today's ground-breaking research extends beyond the bounds of any single discipline. The report recommends that the research enterprise begin to support this new interdisciplinary research," said CTG Project Director Theresa Pardo.

Among the report's nearer term action recommendations are:

- Improving the way research findings are communicated to other researchers and to the public
- Evaluating research initiatives and proposal strategies to increase opportunities for multidisciplinary research and collaboration
- Coordinating research program announcements across traditional disciplinary boundaries

The vision and research agenda were collaboratively developed by experts from within the research enterprise itself. Research scientists and administrators, program officers, and program leadership from federal agencies, universities, and private foundations shared their knowledge and expertise to inform the development of this agenda.

The Center for Technology in Government is an applied research center devoted to improving government and public services through policy, management, and technology innovation. The Center, located at the University at Albany, works with government to develop well-informed information strategies that foster innovation and enhance the quality and coordination of public services.