

How 2019 US Science Budget Will Impact US Science Agencies?

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2019 is off to a rough start for US science agencies following the record-breaking 35-day partial government shutdown. The shutdown, which [impacted many large agencies through forced furloughs and closures](#), has left a lasting impact as institutions scramble to play catch-up. Fortunately, Congress and President Trump were able to agree on a spending deal just ahead of the February 15 deadline. How did US science agencies [fare under the final 2019 budget](#)? In this article, we look at the winners, the losers, and some reactions to the final spending bill.

A Look Inside the 2019 US Science Budget

Before the February 15 spending deal, there was a [concern over potential cuts](#) for research and science agencies. However, the 2019 budget bill, much like the 2018 budget bill, actually boosted the funding for some major institutes and projects. The National Science Foundation (NSF), NASA, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [are all slated to receive increased funding this year](#) as compared to 2018.

Project-wise, NASA's Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope, which is designed to answer critical questions about dark energy, exoplanets, and infrared astrophysics, will receive \$312 million in 2019. The White House had sought to eliminate the project altogether. The FDA's funding comes with instructions from Congress to combat the opioid epidemic, modernize agency data systems, and transform digital health. The NSF will [receive increased funding for research and education](#), as well as \$127 million to continue work on three research vessels, and \$103 million for renovations at its facilities in the Antarctic.

The Hard Numbers

Percentage-wise, NASA received the largest boost, with an increase of 11% over last year (totaling \$21.5 billion). The NSF received a 4% increase over 2018, totaling \$8.1 billion. The FDA received an increase of nearly 9%, totaling \$3.068 billion. But not every major agency managed to come out ahead of the game. The Environmental Protection Agency's funding [will remain flat](#). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) will see a \$500 million decrease in its funding, [leaving it with a budget of \\$5.4 billion](#). The National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST) will suffer an 18% decrease, receiving just \$1 billion for 2019.

Scientists Weigh In

Agencies who [did not receive increased funding](#) expressed disappointment. On the other hand, many seemed relieved that the cuts were not as drastic as President Trump initially proposed. The Environmental Protection Network fall in the former group. It is a non-profit organization of EPA alumni. The organization considers that a flat budget is "a recipe for a slow death". Ben Corb, spokesperson for the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, [praised Congress for their wisdom](#) in seeing the value of the scientific community's work. Rush Holt, chief executive of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, agreed. He also added that Congress definitely deserves credit for pushing back against Trump's proposed cuts. However, this is no time to be cutting research funding.

Still, in the aftermath of the shutdown, agencies are still struggling to make up for lost time, and the negative impacts [are expected to ripple throughout the coming year](#). The approval of the budget took nearly five-month delay. This, in turn, means that not much time remains before the exercise is repeated for 2020. Congress' pushback on budget cut requests for science agencies leaves some room for optimism. However, the [increasing US budget deficit](#), as well as the 2020 elections, certainly leaves open the possibility for the next budget fight to be even more contentious.

Was your work impacted by the government shutdown? How do you view the 2019 US budget for science agencies? Let us know your thoughts in the comments section below.

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