



Analysis of the FY2021 House Appropriations Funding Bills

In a flurry of markups last week, the House Appropriations subcommittees marked up and passed out of subcommittee all 12 appropriations bills. The full Appropriations Committee passed the State and Foreign Operations, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Agriculture appropriations bills on Thursday and Interior and the Environment and the Legislative Branch appropriations bills on Friday.

The full Appropriations Committee is scheduled to take up FY2021 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies, and Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bills on Monday, and the Defense, CJS, and Transportation-HUD appropriations bills on Tuesday.

302(b) allocation

On Thursday, the House Appropriations Committee approved 302(b) allocations for each appropriations subcommittee. Below is a chart describing the subcommittee increases from FY2020. Due to imposed budget caps, Congress only had increased funding of \$5 billion to allocate across the federal government.

Subcommittee	FY2020 (in billions)	FY2021 (in billions)
Agriculture	\$23.5	\$24.0
Commerce, Justice, Science	\$70.7	\$71.5
Defense	\$622.7	\$626.2
Energy and Water	\$48.3	\$49.6
Financial Services and General Government	\$23.8	\$24.6
Homeland Security	\$50.5	\$50.7
Interior, Environment	\$36.0	\$36.8
Labor, HHS, Education	\$183.0	\$182.9
Legislative Branch	\$5.0	\$5.3
Military Construction, VA	\$103.5	\$102.6
State, Foreign Operations	\$46.7	\$47.9
Transportation, HUD	\$74.3	\$75.9

Below are funding levels and additional items of interest included in the House FY2021 spending bills. The APLU [Appropriations Priorities Chart](#) has been updated to reflect this new information. The appropriations chart includes comparisons to APLU requests, the President's Budget Request, percentage increases compared to FY2020, and other important context.

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration ([bill text](#), [summary](#), and [report language](#))

The House Agriculture appropriations bill includes an increase of \$47.86 million over FY20 for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, representing a 3 percent increase. Hatch Act and Smith-Lever programs received no increases. Other capacity funding, including Evans-Allen (research programs) received \$73 million, an 8.9 percent increase over FY20. The 1890s Extension program received an 8.7 percent increase over FY20, leaving the mark at \$62 million. Cooperative forestry accounts, via McIntire-Stennis, received \$38 million, or 5.55 percent increase over FY20. The Tribal College research, extension and teaching programs each received increases as well, with Payments for 1994 Institutions receiving the largest percentage increase in the portfolio of 12.5 percent over FY20. The AFRI competitive grants program received \$435 million, a \$10 million increase over FY20.

The Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA), which APLU member institutions supported via Dear Colleague letter circulation, did not receive funding in the House FY21 agriculture appropriations bill. Report language directs the Chief Scientist to complete a strategic plan, which includes collaboration strategies for working with ARS and NIFA related to AGARDA implementation within 180 days of passage of the bill. Notably, within the Office of the Chief Scientist, the Committee also directs Under Secretary Hutchins to collaborate with NIFA, ARS, and the Office of the Chief Economist to issue a competitive grant program, funded at a level of \$4 million for a Farm of the Future testbed and demonstration site. This is a new program.

Within the bill and report language, the Genome to Phenome program received support for high throughput genotyping and plant facilities. The New Technologies for Agricultural Extension received a \$2 million increase to better serve the Cooperative Extension System by adopting new tools, technology, training, and services that will increase entrepreneurial opportunities and e-commerce in rural communities where enough high-speed broadband exists.

Finally, Sec. 759 of the House bill states that the Secretary of Agriculture may waive the matching funds requirement under Section 412(g) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7632(g)).

Commerce-Justice-Science ([bill text](#), [summary](#), and [report language](#))

The House CJS appropriations bill allocates \$8.550 billion to the National Science Foundation, representing a 3.26 percent increase from FY2020.

In the committee report for NSF, the House notes its support for infrastructure investments that “expand our understanding of the universe and inspire students to pursue careers in the sciences” and recognizes that “current and future large scientific facilities represent an enormous investment of Federal resources that must be administered wisely.” The Committee directs NSF to report, within 180 days, on the implementation of the recommendations in the National Science Board [2018 report](#) entitled “Bridging the Gap: Building a Sustained Approach to Mid-scale Research Infrastructure and Cyberinfrastructure at NSF”. In terms of infrastructure

planning, the Committee iterates its concern about NSF's planning for the construction and development of the next generation of competitive large-scale facilities to support NSF-funded science disciplines, including ground-based telescopes. The Committee encourages NSF to develop a comprehensive and prioritized list of large-scale facilities requested by NSF-supported science disciplines.

The Committee also recognizes the value of understanding how students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds may succeed in an academic setting. To this end, within 180 days of enactment of this Act, the Committee directs the NSF to provide a report on how NSF funded research is contributing to the success of HBCUs. Of the funds appropriated, NSF is encouraged to support research to identify and understand how HBCUs with diverse academic cultures successfully graduate African American students at a higher rate than other institutions; produce a higher rate of African American STEM students receiving PhDs; and instill in students a greater sense of well-being. The bill also provides \$20,000,000, equal to the fiscal year 2020 level, for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Excellence in Research Program.

Lastly, the report notes the importance of maintaining leadership in artificial intelligence and commends NSF for its significant investments in this area. The Committee urges NSF to invest in the ethical and safe development of AI. Within 90 days of enactment of this Act, NSF shall provide the Committee with a report on its efforts to prioritize investments in AI research. In addition, the Committee encourages NSF to report to the Committee on any cooperative projects on Artificial Intelligence between United States entities and international partners.

The bill provides increases from FY2020 levels to National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) accounts such as \$819 million to the Aeronautics Research Directorate and \$50 million to the Space Grant Program. However, the bill provides flat funding of \$1.100 billion to the Space Technology Directorate and only provides \$7.097 billion, a decrease of 0.58 percent, to NASA's Science Mission Directorate.

Within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Oceanic and Atmospheric Research is provided \$584.4 million, representing an increase of 5.97 percent increase. The Sea Grant Program would receive \$71 million, representing an increase of 4.05 percent over FY2020. While funding for the total Sea Grant program was listed as \$74 million in FY2020 consolidated appropriations, \$7 million accounted for an amberjack survey and lobster research specified in the Senate report. Therefore base programs in FY2020 for Sea Grant was \$67 million. In the House FY2021 mark, the Marine Aquaculture Program would receive \$13 million, representing flat funding from FY2020.

The National Institute for Standards and Technology's (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEP) and National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI) both receive increases under the House CJS appropriations bill. The MEP program would receive \$153 million, a 5.48 increase from FY2020 levels and the NNMI program would receive \$17 million, representing a 6.25 percent increase. Lastly, the Economic Development Administration's Regional Innovation program is provided with \$35 million, an increase of 6.06 percent from FY2020 levels.

Defense ([bill text](#), [summary](#), and [report language](#))

The House Defense appropriations bill includes a 0.69 percent increase for DoD Science and Technology Basic Research 6.1 accounts, allocating \$2.621 billion for FY2021. Combined, 6.1-6.3 Science and Technology accounts, would receive a decrease of 2.84 percent, declining from \$16.074 billion in FY2020 to \$15.620 for FY2021. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) saw an increase of 1.56 percent for FY2021. The bill overall provides \$3.512 billion for the agency.

Of particular note, the Minerva Research Initiative received \$17 million in the House bill, which is significant given that the President's Budget Request would eliminate the program. The program was allocated \$11.414 million in FY2020. University Research Initiatives at all the Services received increases over the President's budget request and the Army and Air Force University Research Initiatives budget received increases over FY 20 enacted from the House.

To view a breakdown of the basic research program elements that APLU tracks, please view the [APLU FY2021 Appropriations Chart](#).

Energy and Water Development ([bill text](#), [summary](#), and [report language](#))

The House Energy and Water appropriations bill provides increases for both the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science and ARPA-E. DOE's Office of Science would receive a 0.71 percent increase to \$7.050 billion, and ARPA-E would receive a 2.35 percent increase to \$435 million.

In addition to annual appropriations, to support the economic recovery from COVID-19, the bill also provides an additional \$23.5 billion in emergency funding for the Department of Energy to modernize energy infrastructure for a clean energy future. At the DOE Office of Science, the bill provides \$6.25 billion for national laboratories, scientific user facilities, and universities to accelerate ongoing construction projects across the country. The House bill also provides \$250 million for demonstrations of transformational energy technologies at ARPA-E.

Financial Services and General Government ([bill text](#), [summary](#), and [report language](#))

The House Financial Services committee report (pg. 38) has the below section in it pertaining to research grant flexibility.

- **Research Grant Flexibility.**—The Committee is aware that many university-based laboratories are closed or severely limiting operations due to the pandemic. Researchers working in these laboratories—including graduate students and postdoctoral fellows—comprise the backbone of the U.S. research enterprise. To mitigate impacts from the pandemic, the Committee encourages OMB to provide maximum flexibilities for Federal research grant funds to help maintain the research workforce and activities.

Interior and Environment ([bill text](#), [summary](#), and [report language](#))

Consistent with APLU's request, the bill would fund the National Endowment for the Humanities at \$170 million, \$7.7 million above FY2021. The President's Budget Request would provide \$33.4 million to close the agency.

APLU's other priority areas for the Interior and Environment bill received increases with the exception of the Joint Fire Science Program which stayed flat. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) Water Resources Research Act (WRRRA) program received a remarkable 10 percent increase over FY20, in line with the APLU request for FY21. In report language, the Committee encouraged the continuation of the development of multi-state research teams to coordinate needed research for aquatic invasive species in the Mississippi River basin. The USGS is encouraged to use the additional resources provided in the recommendation to support poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) research.

Also, within the USGS, the Cooperative Research Units received a 4.17 percent increase over FY21 with a House mark of \$25 million. The \$1 million increase supports maintenance of the educational pipeline through our institutions, including improving and increasing youth involvement in science and resource management. The Committee report emphasizes the need to fill critical vacancies, specifically vacancies needed to build quantitative fisheries capacity in inland waters of the Upper Mississippi Basin. Of note is that the House mark recommends that \$700,000 from within available funds to establish a CRU with a programmatic focus on water scarcity with an institution of higher education that does not currently have a CRU.

The Office of Science and Technology within the Environmental Protection Agency is funded at \$745 million, \$28.9 million above the FY20 enacted level. There are many research priorities under the Office of Science and Technology listed. The support of the Science to Achieve Results (STAR) grant program is notable in the list of priorities, with an appropriation of \$7 million, a 16.6 percent increase over the enacted level for FY20.

The Joint Fire Science Program received \$3 million for the USDA Forest Service, but no allocation was marked for the Department of Interior as in past years, resulting in a 50 percent decrease in funding in the House mark compared with the combined appropriation in FY20 of \$6 million.

Labor-Health and Human Services-Education ([bill text](#), [summary](#), and [report language](#))

Health and Human Services

The House bill provides \$47 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an increase of \$5.5 billion above the FY 2020 enacted level. The bill provides \$42 billion in annual appropriations, an increase of \$500 million above the 2020 enacted level and \$8.6 billion above the President's budget request, as well as \$5 billion in emergency appropriations.

The bill also provides the Title VII Health Professions and Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs with \$782.5 million, a \$48 million increase from FY 2020 enacted levels.

Additionally, the bill provides \$343 million, or a 1.48 percent increase, in funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The President's budget once again proposed eliminating the agency and consolidating AHRQ into the NIH as a new institute.

Education

With the tight fiscal environment this year, proposed funding levels in the House bill fall significantly short of the higher education community's request levels. Nevertheless, the House bill would provide modest increases this year across each of the education programs tracked by APLU.

First, the House bill would provide \$22.475 billion for the Pell Grant program, consistent with appropriations levels from the previous several years. The House bill would increase the maximum Pell award by \$150 to \$6,495. The bill would also boost funding for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) program to \$880 million, an increase of \$15 million. As you may recall, the President's budget proposed zeroing out the SEOG program.

Under the House bill, the Federal Work Study (FWS) program would see a \$30 million boost to just over \$1.2 billion. The TRIO and GEAR UP programs would also both see modest increases of \$10 million and \$5 million respectively, putting TRIO funding at \$1.1 billion and GEAR UP funding at \$370 million. In comparison, the President's budget requested to cut the FWS program by more than half; the PBR also requested cuts to TRIO and to eliminate GEAR UP entirely.

The House bill would also provide a boost to Title VI programs supporting international education as well as the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program, both of which the President's budget proposed to eliminate. Under the House bill, international education programs funding would increase to approximately \$80.3 million, representing an increase of more than 5 percent. In addition to increasing GAANN funding to \$24 million (an increase of \$1 million), the committee also directs the Secretary to consider mental health services programs (those falling under CIP 51.15) as an area of national need for the next grant competition. According to the committee report, an academic area related to health professions has only been designated once since 2012, despite nearly one fifth of the U.S. adult population having suffered from some form of mental illness.

The bill would increase funding for the Institute of Education Sciences to \$630.5 million, an increase of slightly more than 1 percent. Alternatively, the President's budget proposed to cut IES funding to \$565 million.

The House bill also includes a range of policy provisions of interest. First, it would prohibit the U.S. Department of Education from implementing its new Title IX rules and block ED from implementing an HHS regulation that would define sex as male or female determined at birth. The bill would also reinstate access to the Pell Grant program for incarcerated individuals. Further, it would strengthen the 90/10 rule, increasing the non-federal revenue threshold for for-

profit institutions to 15 percent (for a ratio of 85/15), and would include all Federal education assistance, including veterans education benefits, in the calculation.

The committee report also directs ED to conduct a number of new studies. First, the committee requests that ED conduct a study on the number of Pell recipients that reach their lifetime eligibility unit (LEU) limit of 12 semesters, along with their enrollment status at the time and the progress they have made toward their degree. The House also requests that ED examine the number of students who do not reach their LEU limit, and the potential impact of allowing these students to use remaining semesters toward postbaccalaureate studies. A report of this nature would provide evidence in support of the College Affordability Act's proposal to increase the LEU limit to 14 semesters and to allow students to use any remaining Pell benefit to pursue their first postbaccalaureate degree.

The committee report also directs ED to provide a report detailing how to improve the effectiveness of Federal financial aid policy to support first-generation college students. Further, the committee report takes issue with the disproportionate levels of support that colleges and universities provide to students who are parents. In addition to increasing appropriations for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program by \$2 million to \$55 million, the committee directs ED to provide a report detailing: 1) the percentage of students who are parents in colleges and universities, disaggregated by race, socioeconomic status, and age; 2) services institutions provide for student parents; 3) outreach methods to ensure students are informed of available resources; 4) the availability of on-campus and subsidized childcare; and 5) the availability of lactation rooms for nursing mothers. The Committee requests this report no later than one year after enactment of this Act. ED would need to collect additional data from colleges and universities to complete this report.

The committee report also requests funding for several additional priority areas, including supporting the basic needs of students. Specifically, the bill would set aside \$5 million for a competitive grant program for colleges to help students in need with housing, food, childcare, and other expenses. Participating campuses would need to carry out or expand upon at least two of the activities listed in the committee report. At least 25 percent of funds must be awarded to community colleges, and priority would be given to HBCUs, HSIs, other MSIs, and institutions with 25 percent or higher Pell enrollment.

Finally, the bill includes the below report language pertaining to Section 117 of the Higher Education Act:

- Disclosure of Foreign Gifts and Contracts.—The Committee reminds colleges and universities receiving Federal funds that section 117 of the HEA requires institutions to disclose certain gifts from or contracts with foreign entities and that the Department makes such information publicly available on its website. The Committee directs the Department to work with institutions to improve the reporting process. Disclosure requirements increase transparency and help protect our national security and academic integrity.

State and Foreign Operations ([bill text](#), [summary](#), and [report language](#))

The House Appropriations Committee approved the FY2021 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill on a 29-21 party line vote.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Higher Education remained flat at \$235 million in the House bill. The Committee emphasized that the funding should be allocated in an open and competitive manner. Within Higher Education programs, new and ongoing partnerships received support in the House mark at \$35 million. These partnerships are focused on building the capacity of higher education institutions and systems in developing countries. The House SFOPS report recommended not less than \$142,200,000 for the research initiatives of the Bureau for Food Security, of which \$55,000,000 is for the Feed the Future Innovation Labs.

The bill would flat fund the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program at \$16 million, \$14.1 million more than the President's FY21 budget request, and \$2 million below the APLU's FY2021 request. The bill does not specify funding for the Capacity-Building / Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) Program.