



FY 2021 Appropriations Priorities

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Agency	Account	APLU FY2021 Request
National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)		\$170 million
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)	Water Resources Research Act Program (WWRA)	\$11 million
	Cooperative Research Units (CRUs)	\$25 million
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Office of Science and Technology	\$748 million
Department of Interior	Joint Fire Science Program	\$16 million

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES (NEH)

APLU FY2021 Request: \$170 million

FY2020 PBR = \$33.4 M to close program; FY2020 = \$162.3 M; FY2019 = \$155 M

The NEH is the lead federal agency focused on the development and support of scholarship in the humanities. NEH grants are awarded on a merit-reviewed basis to organizations and institutions in every U.S. state and territory. NEH is a vital source of funds for scholars and researchers whose work helps citizens and policymakers better understand and address the social, economic, political and cultural challenges facing our nation and world today. For example, the NEH agency-wide initiative, Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War, supports projects to promote discussion and foster a deeper understanding among returning veterans and the public of the military experience and impact of war. NEH programs also support teacher training on humanities topics, digitization of historical documents, and production of documentaries of critical periods of our nation's history.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (USGS)

WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH ACT (WRRRA) PROGRAM

APLU FY2021 Request: \$11 million

FY2021 PBR = \$0; FY2020 = \$10 M; FY2019 = \$6.5 M

The Water Resources Research Act (WRRRA) Program partners the federal government with states and local governments to invest in university-based research to address local and regional water management issues. The National Institutes for Water Resources are essential to solving state, regional, and inter-jurisdictional water resources problems with federal funding serving as the driving force of collaboration in water research and education. WRRAs leverage federal funds with a match to address a range of water-related issues, from drought mitigation and emergency management to protecting aquifers and reducing water treatment costs. The Institutes also train the next generation of water

resources managers and scientists. Water challenges have a far-reaching and increasing impact on our society, including human and ecological health and food production.

COOPERATIVE RESEARCH UNITS (CRUs)

APLU FY2021 Request: \$25 million

FY2021 PBR = \$0; FY2020 = \$24 M; FY2019 = \$18.4 M

The Cooperative Research Unit (CRU) Program has 40 units within 38 states, where each unit is a partnership among the U.S. Geological Survey, a State natural resource agency, a host university, and the Wildlife Management Institute. Each unit is embedded in a university, has its research program significantly influenced by the management agencies, and effectively bridges the gap between science and management. The Units work to address a host of problems including diseases impacting wildlife and the marine aquaculture industry, minimizing impacts of natural resource exploration, combatting invasive species, as well as many other natural resource management issues. CRUs also train the next generation of natural resource professionals, grounding them in science while providing practical experience. APLU requests \$25 million in FY2021 to fill the current 39 CRU scientist vacancies that continue to erode the CRU's cooperative capacity, and to fund longstanding requests for new CRU programs in unrepresented states.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

APLU FY2021 Request: \$ 748 million

FY2021 PBR = \$ \$484.7 M; FY2020 = \$716 M; FY2019 = \$706 M

The Science and Technology account (S&T) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds an array of scientific research and technology development that enables more cost-effective and impactful solutions to environmental and public health challenges. For example, the Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program provides research grants to universities across the country, leveraging expertise from the academic community while simultaneously pioneering new technologies and strengthening the workforce pipeline. In 2017, the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) released a comprehensive assessment of the program that reinforced this position. Specifically, NASEM found that STAR is not only scientifically impactful, but that its merits extend to numerous aspects of public life, including public health decisions, reductions in regulatory compliance costs, workforce development, and research infrastructure.¹

Despite its value, funding for STAR has deteriorated consistently since its peak of \$138 million in FY2002 to \$39 million in FY2016.² In the years since, the level fell even lower to \$28 million. It is vital that the U.S. is equipped with the best available technologies and information to support national, state, and local environmental goals and enable success in environmental mitigation, protection, and remediation.

APLU is also very supportive of restoring the STAR Graduate Fellowship program. The STAR Fellowship program served as a critical workforce pipeline program for multidisciplinary researchers trained to

¹ National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, "A Review of the Environmental Protection Agency's Science to Achieve Results Research Program", 2017, available at <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24757/a-review-of-the-environmental-protection-agencys-science-to-achieve-results-research-program>.

² These figures have been adjusted for inflation and represent 2016 dollars.

address complex environmental challenges. APLU requests Congress direct EPA to re-establish the STAR Graduate Fellowship program to meet workforce needs in environmental research and management. We further request that Congress provide an increase of \$5 million to the STAR program overall to accommodate the reinstatement of the STAR Graduate Fellowships without compromising the funding available for research grants.

JOINT FIRE SCIENCE PROGRAM (JFSP)

APLU FY2021 Request: \$16 million

FY2021 PBR = \$3 M; FY2020 = \$6 M; FY2019 = \$6 M

APLU urges Congress to fund the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) at the authorized amount of \$16 million, with \$8 million in the US Department of Interior Wildland Fire Management budget and \$8 million in the USDA Forest Service Wildland Fire Management budget. In FY 2018, JFSP funding was cut in half, eliminating funding for new fire science research under the program. We respectfully request that funding is appropriated to the fully authorized amounts considering the urgent need to address the nation's fire management and science needs.

The JFSP model for funding critical research, based on management priorities and with requirements for active science delivery, makes the program uniquely valuable and the only one of its kind. No other program offers researchers the opportunity to address fire management challenges in direct response to manager priorities. Based on direction from Congress, the program is a partnership of six federal land management agencies that work together to identify, and address problems associated with managing wildland fuels, fires, and fire-impacted ecosystems. Fire and land managers from the USDA Forest Service and US Department of Interior together identify issues of critical interest, competitively allocate funding to researchers at universities to tackle those issues via applied research and require active delivery of science to managers and policymakers, linking science to management.

With a relatively limited budget, the JFSP has improved efficacy and accountability of agency research and management by directing university and federal researchers to address topics of critical importance. Past JFSP projects have focused on such salient issues as understanding smoke impacts to communities, overcoming barriers to prescribed fire, identifying how drivers of fire costs affect decision making, analyzing fire behavior, and understanding fire effects on resources and communities.

About the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities. With a membership of over 200 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations, APLU's agenda is built on the three pillars of increasing degree completion and academic success, advancing scientific research, and expanding engagement. Annually, our U.S. member campuses enroll 4.3 million undergraduates and 1.2 million graduate students, award 1.2 million degrees, employ 1.1 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$46.7 billion in university-based research.