National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics

Survey Description

Survey of State Government Research and Development

NCSES 27-002 | November 05, 2026

Contents

Survey Overview (FY 2025 Survey Cycle) 2

Key Survey Information 3

Survey Design 4

Data Collection and Processing 5

Survey Quality Measures 6

Data Availability and Comparability 7

Data Products 8

Survey Overview (FY 2025 Survey Cycle)

Purpose

The Survey of State Government Research and Development is the only source for comprehensive uniform statistics regarding the extent of research and development (R&D) activity performed and funded by departments and agencies in each of the nation's 50 state governments, the government of the District of Columbia, and the government of Puerto Rico.

Data collection authority

The information is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended, and the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010. It is collected under Office of Management and Budget control number 0607–0933, expiration date 30 June 2026. The survey is conducted by the Census Bureau under Title 13, U.S. Code, § 8(b) for the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). NCSES has reviewed this product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and approved its release (NCSES-DRN26-048).

Major changes to recent survey cycle

None.

Key Survey Information

Frequency	Annual.
Initial survey year	FY 2006.
Reference period	State government fiscal year ending in 2025.
Response unit	State government departments, agencies, commissions, public authorities, institutions, and other entities that operate separately or somewhat autonomously from the central state government—but where the state government maintains administrative or fiscal control over their activities—with the capacity to perform or fund R&D; units are collectively referred to as *agencies*.
Sample or census	Census.
Population size	A total of 589 agencies.
Sample size	Not applicable.
Key variables	• State government department or agency • Total expenditures for R&D • R&D expenditures by source of funds (federal, state, and other) • Expenditures for intramural performance by source of funds • Expenditures for intramural performance by type of work (basic research, applied research, and experimental development) • Expenditures for extramural performance by source of funds • Expenditures for extramural performance by type of performer (academic institutions, companies and individuals, nonprofit organizations, and other state or local governments) • Federal funds for R&D by state and federal agency • R&D expenditures by governmental function (agriculture, energy, environment and natural resources, health, transportation, and other) • Capital outlays for state government R&D-related facilities • R&D personnel and full-time equivalent by type (researchers, technicians, and support staff)

Survey Design

Target population

The target population consists of all state departments, agencies, commissions, and dependent entities that funded R&D activities for state government fiscal years ending in 2025. Several industry-specific state commissions, which are generally chartered by state legislatures but are administered independently, are considered state agencies and are included in the survey's population of interest. Excluded are state-run colleges and universities, which are canvased as part of the NCSES Higher Education Research and Development Survey. State-run laboratories or experiment stations controlled by state universities are also excluded from the respondent universe, as are any entities determined to be nonprofit or private as defined by the Census Bureau. Most state fiscal year periods begin 1 July and end the following 30 June. For example, FY 2025 is defined as the state fiscal period beginning on 1 July 2024 and ending on 30 June 2025. There are, however, five exceptions to the 30 June fiscal year end: New York (ends 31 March); Texas (ends 31 August); and Alabama, the District of Columbia, and Michigan (all end 30 September). Data presented in these statistics are for each of the respective fiscal year periods as defined by the states. For comparability, all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico are surveyed at the same time.

Sampling frame

The total universe includes all state government-dependent units with the capacity to perform or fund R&D, including those for the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as defined by the Census Bureau's *Government Finance and Employment Classification Manual*. The sampling frame was developed with the assistance of a state coordinator who was appointed by the governor of each state, the governor of Puerto Rico, and the mayor of the District of Columbia. For FY 2025, emails were sent to the chief of staff for each governor's office asking them to appoint a state coordinator. For the FY 2025 survey, state coordinators were provided with the list of agencies that were previously identified as having the potential to perform or fund R&D from the FY 2024 survey cycle. The list also included agencies identified by Census Bureau and NCSES staff from a systematic review of state session laws and a review of agencies reporting to the Census Bureau's Census of Governments program. State coordinators were asked to review this list and add agencies that they believed were involved with R&D and were not already identified. State agencies that have reported $0 R&D for the last three survey cycles were marked as inactive for this survey cycle to reduce respondent burden and will be reactivated in 2 years. State coordinators also adjusted the agency universe to remove agencies that have never had any qualifying R&D to report to NCSES, to add any agencies they thought were missing or could have R&D to report, to address organizational changes within their respective states since the previous survey, and to provide updated agency contact information.

Sample design

The Survey of State Government R&D is a census.

Data Collection and Processing

Data collection

The survey was funded by NCSES. Data collection was conducted by the Census Bureau via an email containing a fillable PDF survey form. The survey was launched in November 2025, and responses were collected through June 2026. The respondent questionnaire consisted of one screening question intended to reduce the burden on agency respondents who did not have qualifying R&D expenditures during FY 2025, seven questions regarding R&D-related expenditures, and two questions regarding counts of employees.

Data processing

Data collected under the survey are subject to automated data correction procedures using a combination of logical edits incorporated into the survey form, as well as telephone and email follow-up with survey respondents by staff members from NCSES and the Census Bureau for any other data anomalies.

Estimation techniques

All state and national totals are aggregates of reported and, where applicable, imputed state agency data.

Survey Quality Measures

Sampling error

Not applicable.

Coverage error

In addition to a Census Bureau review of state session laws to identify agencies with the capacity to fund R&D, NCSES utilizes the expertise of an appointed state coordinator to assist in identifying state government agencies that have the capacity to perform or fund R&D. State coordinators are also offered the opportunity to review survey responses from their respective state agencies before data are finalized for release. In cases where the state coordinator refused to cooperate or where some agencies did not respond to the survey, there may be an undercount of state government R&D activities. The undercount may occur despite efforts by staff members of NCSES and the Census Bureau to conduct additional queries and outreach with state agencies in states that did not appoint a coordinator. In other instances, the appointed state coordinator could misinterpret the NCSES definition and examples of qualifying R&D activities and not identify all state government-dependent units with the capacity to perform or fund R&D. However, no measures of coverage error are produced.

Nonresponse error

Of the 589 agencies in the survey universe, 554 (94.1%) responded to the survey. Of the 554 respondents, 371 (67.0%) reported having R&D activities in FY 2025. Data were imputed for eight agencies. A mathematical imputation method (for more information, please refer to the Technical Notes) was used to impute for six agencies known to have R&D in the past, namely California Food and Agriculture, District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority, Kansas Soybean Commission, New Jersey State Parole Board, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. Data for an additional two agencies, Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council, were imputed using information from the organization's annual report. Two of these nonresponding agencies were refusals due to staff shortages. One of the agencies with imputed data indicated that they performed or funded R&D, but they could not provide specific performance or funding data.

Measurement error

All responses, including the initial agency data submissions and final state coordinator reviews, were received via email or telephone. Census Bureau staff performed basic logical edit checks and reviewed respondent comments, allowing staff to detect errors and work with respondents to correct them. Despite these efforts, some of the data reported could include expenditures for non-R&D activities, such as commercialization, environmental testing, or routine survey work. Similarly, some state data may also exclude minor R&D expenditure amounts from agencies not surveyed.

Data Availability and Comparability

Data availability

Data presented in trend tables in this survey are from the most recently completed survey cycle. Agency-level data are available beginning with FY 2009. No survey of state governments' FY 2008 R&D activity was conducted.

Data comparability

References to data prior to FY 2025 should be restricted to those published in this survey for three reasons: (1) when completing the current survey, survey respondents may revise their prior year data; (2) state coordinators may identify additional agencies to be canvassed that were not surveyed during the prior survey cycle, and many of these agencies will provide prior year data during the current survey collection cycle; and (3) NCSES reviews data from prior years for consistency with current responses and, if necessary, may revise these data in consultation with respondents.

For FYs 1995, 1988, and 1987, data collections of state government R&D were conducted by nonfederal organizations that were supported by NSF grants. Prior to those efforts, NCSES collected state government R&D data for FYs 1977, 1973, 1972, 1968, 1967, 1965, and 1964 in collaboration with the Census Bureau's Census of Governments and related programs. Because of differences in the survey populations, in definitions of covered R&D activities, and in collection methods over time, the results of these historical surveys are not comparable with the statistics collected for FY 2006 and subsequent Surveys of State Government R&D.

Data Products

Data from the Survey of State Government R&D are published in NCSES InfoBriefs and data tables available at the survey home page. Data from the Survey of State Government R&D are also used in the annual report *National Patterns of R&D Resources* and the biennial report *Science and Engineering Indicators*.

Electronic Access

Microdata beginning with the FY 2009 survey are available in NCSES's interactive data tool. Public use files beginning with the FY 2006 are available at the Survey of State Government R&D microdata page.