

## Federal Research Funding of the Geosciences (1970-2017)

In 2016, 6.6% of the \$66.7 billion in total federal research funding was allocated to geoscience research. Historically, the percentage of total federal research funding applied to the geosciences declined from 10% in 1970 to an all time low of 5% in 2010, and rebounded to 6.9% in 2014 and 2015. The rebound was driven by an increase in funding for basic research, primarily within the atmospheric sciences and interdisciplinary geosciences. During this time period, there was a decline in the percentage of basic research funding applied to the life sciences, most notably for medical sciences which decreased from 20% in 2008 to 17% in 2015, and in the biological sciences which declined from 30% in 2010 to 25% in 2016. Preliminary data on total 2017 federal research funding indicates that the percentage of total federal research funding applied to the geosciences was expected to decline from 6.6% in 2016 to 6.2% in 2017.

Within the geosciences, research funding has primarily supported atmospheric science research which received 36% of the \$4.4 billion in total federal geoscience research funding in 2016; however, an increasing percentage of funding has been applied to interdisciplinary geoscience research since the mid-1980's. In 2016, interdisciplinary geoscience research received 34% of total federal geoscience research funding, while the geological sciences declined from 34% in 1991 to 13% in 2016, and oceanography declined from 23% in 2011 to 17% in 2016.

Federal geoscience research funding at universities and colleges is primarily applied to interdisciplinary geoscience research, which received 35% of the \$1.1 billion in total federal geoscience research funding in 2016. Oceanographic research which suffered a precipitous decline in the percentage of funding between 1990 and 1995, rebounded in 1996, and in 2016 received 28% of federal geoscience research funding at universities and colleges. Similar to the trends in total federal research funding, the percentage of research funding applied to the geological sciences at universities and colleges declined from 32% in 1994 to 14% in 2016.

Read more in the 2018 Status of the Geosciences Report available at:

<https://store.americangeosciences.org/status-of-the-geoscience-workforce-report-2018-digital-edition.html>

- Leila Gonzales

