2026

Threats to Global Competitiveness: Federal Research Funding Uncertainty

A report examining the rise of global talent recruitment programs targeting U.S. researchers and scientists.

BUSINESS FOR FEDERAL RESEARCH FUNDING

www.researchfunding.org

Every state in the nation receives federal research funding. Even communities without a research university or institution benefit from vendor & manufacturing contracts to build and maintain scientific laboratories and equipment across the country.

140-210%

Return on federally supported R&D since World War II

390,863

Jobs

$94.15B

Economic Activity

Economic Benefits from NIH Funding in 2025

22:1

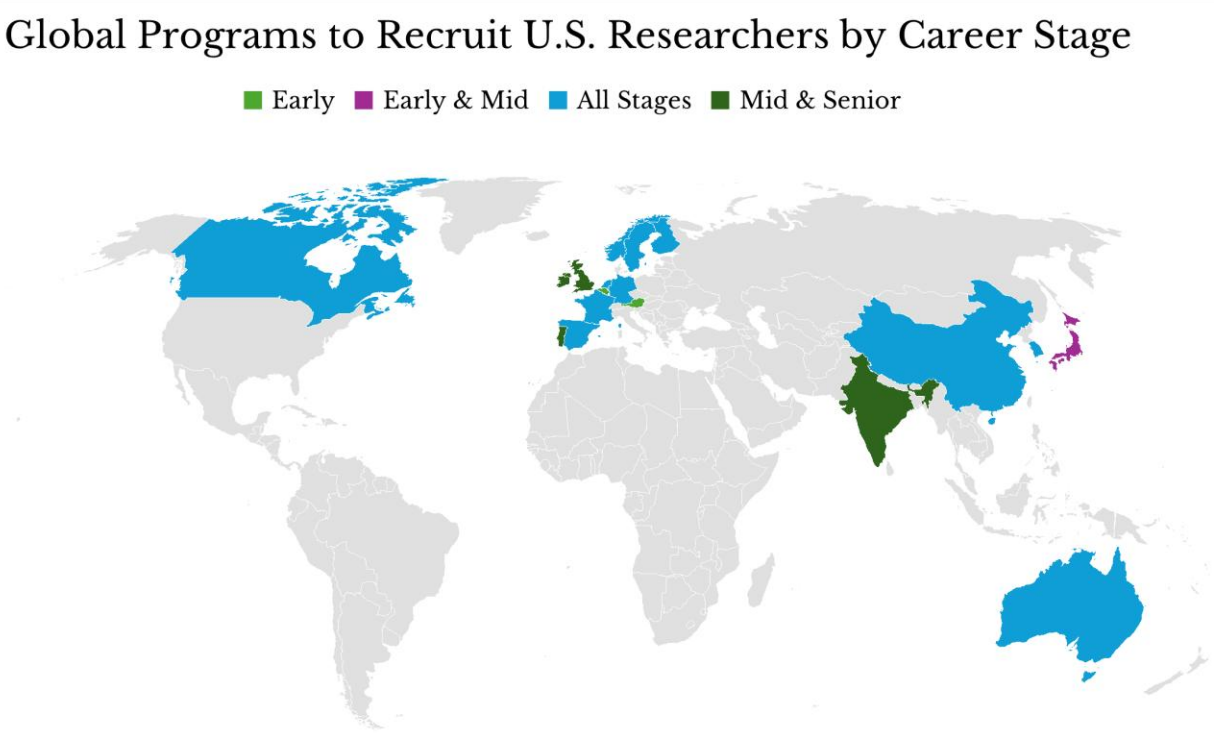
Return on the Department of Defense's Investment in Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Programs

National Science Foundation (NSF) grantees created many businesses that fostered innovations and the growth of new industries, including 3-D printing and deep-sea exploration.

Economic Impact of Federal Research Funding

Global Talent Recruitment Programs Targeting U.S. Researchers

Since March 2025, **21 countries and the European Union adopted programs to lure U.S. researchers** directly in response to the rise of paused and cancelled grants and steep proposed research funding cuts across many federal agencies. **More than half of U.S. states have lost early career and experienced researchers alike to these programs**, including Colorado, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Texas, Massachusetts, Alaska, Kentucky, Ohio, and Vermont.



Summary of Global Talent Recruitment Programs

- Target recruits from all career stages, U.S.-born scientists as well as returning citizens who attended school and/or currently work in the U.S. Many programs represent partnerships between government, academic institutions, and industry.
- Offer school and work opportunities in English with salaries competitive to U.S. positions, expedited visa or residency approvals in as short as a month, and support for up to 10 years.
- Many offer relocation support, financial bonuses specifically to U.S. applicants and/or a preference for those interested in permanently relocating.
- Support a range of academic disciplines with a focus on science & technology fields.

Global R&D Context

Over the last year, many U.S. graduate science programs cut their admissions programs by as much as 60-75%, rescinded offers, or paused admissions altogether. 58% of scientists report delays hiring in their own labs.

Source: Inside Higher Ed, 2025; STAT 2026.

51% of U.S. doctoral degree holders in science and engineering work in the private sector.

Source: National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Doctorate Recipients, 2023.

Since 2000, the **U.S.'s share of global R&D spending declined 9.7%**; China increased its share by **23%.**

Source: World Intellectual Property Organization, Global Innovation Index, 2025.

50% of U.S. PhD recipients in science and engineering living outside of the U.S. reside in Asia, followed by Europe (25%), other parts of North America (12%), and South America (5%).

Source: National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Survey of Doctorate Recipients, 2023.

Programs to Recruit U.S.-Based Researchers Abroad, 2025-present

Australia

- The Australian Academy of Science established the **"Global Talent Attraction Program" a national coordinated effort targeting established scientists currently based in the US, including "returning" Australians.** The network integrates host institutions, business and industry partners, and local and state government, and **offers researchers from all disciplines willing to commit to contracts of 8-10 years competitive salaries and relocation packages**.
- Monash University launched the Embedding Mid & Early-Career Researchers in Global Excellence at Monash (EMERGE) program, which targets those "affected by changes in international research priorities, funding or support." Thus far, **Monash has invested $10 million to successfully recruit a dozen U.S.-based researchers, including from Dartmouth College, Cornell University, and University of California-Berkeley**.

Austria

- The Austrian Academy of Science established the APART-USA **program to support 25 fellowships for post-doctoral researchers at Austrian universities and other research institutions.** Fellowship grantees receive a 4-year contract and €500,000 ($586K USD) in funding with potential for additional supplemental funding from host institutions. Awards announced in September include postdocs and professors from Colorado State University, Princeton, MIT, University of Delaware, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison in fields ranging from physics, chemistry, computer science, to cultural studies and humanities.

Belgium

- Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) opened 12 postdoctoral positions for international researchers (including access to €2.5 million ($2.9 million USD) in funding). VUB also partnered with Universite Libre de Bruxelles (VLB) and the Brussels Institute for Advanced Studies to offer temporary housing.

Canada

- The Ministries of Economic Development and Health announced the Canada Global Impact + Research Talent Initiative, which will invest $1.7 billion CAD ($1.2 billion USD) to recruit 1,000+ international and expatriate researchers. The initiative includes four programs targeting senior and early career researchers, including PhD students and post-docs, as well as investments in facilities and equipment. **The 2025 Budget also announced an "accelerated pathway" for current U.S. H-1B visa holders to gain permanent residency in select fields**.
- In April 2025, the University Health Network (UHN) in Toronto launched the **"Canada Leads 100 Challenge," designated $30 million CAD ($21.5 million USD) to recruit 100 young scientists from the US**.

China

- For years, China has employed numerous recruitment programs targeting US researchers, including the Thousand Talents Program (TTP), Qiming ("Enlightenment"), and Huoju ("Torch") –, which provide millions in funding and housing subsidies for researchers, and large gifts for recruiters and headhunters who successfully bring new talent to China. In 2025, China continued to expand on these programs by launching the "K visa," a new category to recruit researchers in science, technology, engineering or mathematics to relocate to Chinese universities and businesses. The K visa specifically targets early career researchers as job offers and/or employer sponsorship are not required prior to issuance.

European Union

- The European Commission announced the "Choose Europe for Science," including a €500 million ($586 million USD) Super Grant Program (2025-2027). The European Research Council (ERC) provides new matching funds to help first-time ERC grantees establish labs or research teams in 15 European cities, including relocation support. The initiative includes 11 possible moonshots, including ocean observation, next generation AI, automated transport and mobility, and space economy.

Finland

- The government created a new national initiative under its existing "Work in Finland" campaign to recruit hundreds of engineers and postdoctoral researchers in quantum computing, deep tech, AI, and health technology to Finnish institutions, universities and companies. The program is based in the newly established ELLIS Institute Finland (the second European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems (ELLIS) and includes **fast tracked residency permits of one month from application to approval**.
- Research Council of Finland (RCF) developed a €50 million ($58.6 million USD) program to fund Finnish universities' recruitment of international students and researchers from countries outside of Finland, with an emphasis on the U.S. The program goes through 2030 and recipients take up five-year professorships in the country. **The first round of awards was announced in January 2026, including 4 U.S. researchers** and two "Finish returnees."

France

- In 2025, French President Emanuel Macron pledged €100 million ($117 million USD) on programs to attract American researchers as part of a broader EU initiative (known domestically as "Choose France for Science" initiative). **In February 2026, France announced awards for 46 scientists; 41 of whom were previously at US institutions.** The government funds half of the costs of the awards; host institutions fund the remaining half.
- "Safe Place for Science," a program launched by Aix-Marseille Université, France's largest research university, received €15 million from the AMIDEX Foundation, a consortium of groups, to fund 15 foreign researchers in a range of fields. The program "welcome[d] American scientists" and received 300 applications in a month from federal agency and academic researchers.
- Universite Paris-Sarclay **established 5 new positions for American researchers**, 8 new positions for doctoral students, as well as several shorter-term research and laboratory positions, with a focus on environmental science, climate change, health, humanities and social sciences.

Germany

- Germany's Federal of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) launched the "Global Minds Initiative," which builds on programs offered by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the German Research Foundation (DFG). The Humboldt Foundation announced the first 74 awards in October 2025, including many researchers from US universities. In November, the DFG announced a new RFP designed to enable existing research consortia in science and the humanities to recruit new talent. Programs can be funded for up to 5 years, senior researchers are eligible to apply for funding to support postdoctoral researchers, and the call for proposals remained open until March 2026.
- In April, BioMed X, a biomedical research institute based in Heidelberg, announced the launch of the XBridge Program, which **matches researchers with existing NIH grant proposals with its network of phama partners**; selected applicants who invited to a pitch day where potential funders may select projects to sponsor; successful candidates – and in

	some cases, their current lab members – are offered positions at a BioMed X Institute.
India	• India established the Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty (VAJRA) program to recruit scientists of Indian origin to rejoin research institutions, including support to establish labs, hire staff, and relocation services.
Ireland	• The Ministry for Research, Innovation, and Science launched the Global Talent Ireland initiative, which provides senior and mid-career researchers from all disciplines with up to €3.25 million ($3.8 million USD) in funding (€2.25 million for mid-career) over 6 years, including research, equipment, and relocation support. The program is funded by more than €1 billion in support from the EU's Horizon Europe.
Japan	• The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) announced J-RISE (Japan Research & Innovation for Scientific Excellence), a ¥100 billion ($628 million USD) initiative to recruit early career researchers from abroad, including Japanese nationals currently working in other nations. **The allocated funds enable Japanese universities to offer salaries comparable to those offered in the U.S.**, target early career researchers under the age of 45 from "G7 countries and select nations from the Global South," and include support for enhancing institutional equipment and facilities infrastructure.
Netherlands	• In July, the Dutch government and the Dutch Research Council (NOW) launched the Tulip Fund Eppo Bruins, including €50 million ($58.6 million USD) to recruit and retain scientists currently working outside Europe. The Tulip Fund provides up to €1 million for host institutions to support each researcher, supports fundamental, applied, and practice-oriented research, and a wide range of disciplines.
Norway	• The Research Council of Norway created a €26 million ($30.5 million USD) governmental initiative to support 30-40 positions for foreign researchers in climate, health, energy, and artificial intelligence at colleges and universities throughout the country. Researchers employed or residing in European nations are ineligible. **Ten of the initial 13 recipients are from U.S.-based institutions**.
Portugal	• In May 2025, NOVA University of Lisbon Medical School established a €2 million ($2.3 million USD) fund to attract "international researchers of excellence." Researchers receive funding for 5-years.
South Korea	• The Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) increased funding for its annual Brain Pool Program, including providing up to 5 local research institutions with up to $3 billion won ($1.3 million USD) per year to recruit scientists across the world, and individual support for about 80 projects of up to $238K. Awards support research expenses, salaries, living allowances, and recruitment costs.
Spain	• In August, Spain expanded ATRAE, a governmental initiative to attract foreign scientists, including €45 million ($53 million USD) in funding and **a €200,000 bonus for American researchers selected for the program**. • **In March 2025, the Catalan President announced the creation of the "Catalonian Talent Bridge," a €30 million program ($35 million USD) to recruit up to 70 American researchers.** The public-private partnership supporting the project includes 12 Catalan universities and numerous

	research centers, including the Barcelona Supercomputing Center and the Genomic Analysis National Research Center.
Sweden	• **The Swedish Research Council established an open call for proposals to support researchers from the U.S.**, including grants of 2 million SEK (more than $200K USD) to academic institutions to support visiting international scholars. The program supports researchers for one year, but the application criteria considered researchers' interest in staying in Sweden, as well as universities' willingness to offer long-term employment to the researchers.
United Kingdom	• The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) established the Global Talent Fund, including £50 million ($58.6 million USD) in funding to attract and support the relocation of international researchers to the UK. Twelve UK research organizations will receive five-year grants, including support for research and relocation services. • The Royal Society announced an Accelerated International Route for its Faraday Discovery Fellowship, which provides mid-career researchers with grants up to £4 million ($4.7 million USD) over five years. Researchers interested in permanently relocating to the UK are also eligible to apply through the standard Faraday Discovery Fellowships, a £250 million ($293 million USD) fund supporting a wide range of scientific fields. • The Royal Academy of Engineering also announced an expedited international application process through its £150 million ($176 million USD) Green Future Fellowships, which supports researchers in climate science at all career stages with up to £3 million ($3.5 million USD) in funding for 10 years. Awardees must come from outside the UK and work with a local research center, including universities and new startup companies.

The Business for Federal Research Funding Coalition represents a united voice of the business and employer community in support of federal research and development funding. Learn more about the Coalition and how research funding supports our economy and global competitiveness by visiting our website.

www.researchfunding.org