



National Science Foundation
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

NOBEL PRIZES - THE NSF CONNECTION ::

A SPECIAL REPORT

OVERVIEW



2017 LAUREATES

LAUREATES THROUGH HISTORY

PHYSICS

CHEMISTRY

PHYSIOLOGY OR
MEDICINE

ECONOMICS

CLASSROOM
RESOURCES

When a scientist who has received federal funding is awarded the Nobel prize, the public can share the pride as well as the research benefits. Some 231 laureates have been supported by the public through grants from NSF (and often from other federal agencies) at some point in their careers – and sometimes throughout their careers. By the time they are recognized internationally, their early fundamental research has developed implications for such broad areas as the environment, business and decision-making.

NSF was established as an independent federal agency in 1950 "to promote the progress of science," largely by supporting fundamental (or basic) research. Today, NSF makes more than 10,000 new awards each year to encourage discovery at the frontiers of knowledge. Knowledge for its own sake is often reward enough, and its outcome can't be predicted. But it often leads to breakthroughs like those recognized by the Nobel prizes. The result of NSF support is reflected, in part, by the large number of NSF-supported scientists listed in the links at left.

NSF's contributions reflect its focus on fundamental research. NSF's share of federal funding for basic academic research in physical sciences (including physics and chemistry) is 40 percent, non-health-related biology is 66 percent and social sciences is 52 percent.

The information presented here is based on [NSF's Awards Database](#), which covers awards from the 1970s to the present, as well as printed information that predates NSF electronic records and information from [Nobelprize.org](#), the official website of the Nobel Prize. (Information on awards that predate electronic records is by no means exhaustive, especially for laureates who received electronically available awards prior to their Nobel Prizes.)

For a chart showing the number of NSF-funded laureates by category and a list of all NSF-supported laureates through history, click [here](#).

By David Hart

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