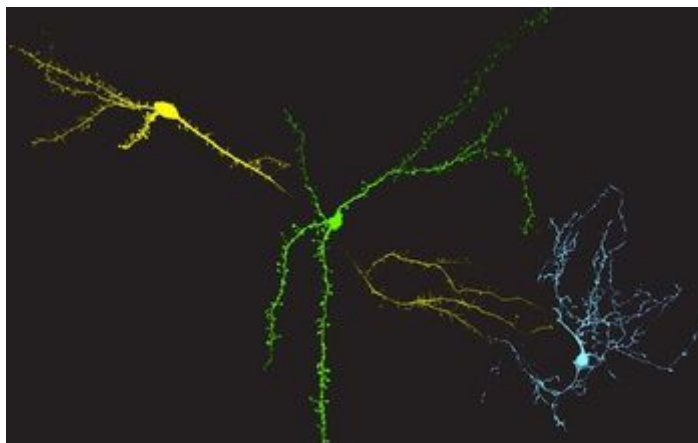




News Release 14-131

National Science Foundation is dedicated to support for The BRAIN Initiative

During a White House conference, NSF encourages new partnerships and announces a new funding opportunity to advance fundamental brain research



NSF awarded \$10.8 million in early-concept grants for brain research in August.
[Credit and Larger Version \(/news/news_images.jsp?cntn_id=132882&org=NSF\)](/news/news_images.jsp?cntn_id=132882&org=NSF)

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Today the White House announced its continued support for The BRAIN Initiative and revealed new commitments from non-federal agencies as part of the [call to action <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/02/24/white-house-call-action-advance-brain-initiative>](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/02/24/white-house-call-action-advance-brain-initiative) to advance brain research. Government leaders also highlighted the progress that has been made since the initiative was first announced [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/02/fact-sheet-brain-initiative>](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/02/fact-sheet-brain-initiative) on April 2, 2013.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) funded approximately \$20 million in BRAIN-related projects and activities in fiscal year 2014. This included the recently awarded [36 Early Concept Grants for Exploratory Research <http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=132371&org=NSF&from=news>](http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=132371&org=NSF&from=news) to enable new technologies to better understand how complex behaviors emerge from the activity of brain circuits.

"The BRAIN Initiative is truly an exciting and potentially game-changing effort to unlock the secrets of one of humankind's most enduring mysteries," said NSF Director France Córdoba, who spoke at the event. "Ultimately, our investments in brain discovery will transform our view of who we are, how we relate to one another and how we interact with our ever-changing environment."

Today, as part of The BRAIN Initiative, NSF announced [a new funding opportunity to support transformative and integrative research to accelerate our understanding of neural and cognitive systems](http://1.usa.gov/1uWTGXw) <http://1.usa.gov/1uWTGXw>. The competition focuses on two research themes: neuroengineering and brain-inspired concepts and designs, and individuality and variation--the first of which is [one of NSF's key BRAIN thematic areas](http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/brain/initiative/) http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/brain/initiative/.

The program will support 15 to 25 grants for up to \$12 million in total for fiscal year 2015.

NSF also announced the intention to expand its [Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers \(I/UCRC\) program](http://www.nsf.gov/eng/iip/iucrc/) <http://www.nsf.gov/eng/iip/iucrc/> to encourage new industry-university partnerships as part of The BRAIN Initiative. The I/UCRC program has fostered long-term partnerships among academe, industry and government in [various technology sectors via these centers](http://www.nsf.gov/discoveries/disc_summ.jsp?cntn_id=131407&org=CISE) http://www.nsf.gov/discoveries/disc_summ.jsp?cntn_id=131407&org=CISE for more than 30 years.

For these centers, NSF serves as catalyst to bring together different parties with mutual interests in specific fields to advance research and economic potential.

In [a letter to the research community](http://1.usa.gov/1Byelyi) <http://1.usa.gov/1Byelyi>, NSF underscored the need for new collaborations to focus on identification of links between brain structure and function.

NSF plans to engage the neuroscience community in the coming year with several more activities--[such as a BRAIN-focused "ideas lab,"](http://1.usa.gov/10jGvqG) <http://1.usa.gov/10jGvqG> an intensive workshop focused on finding innovative solutions to grand challenges.

"NSF has proposed to significantly increase our investments in new interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and workforce development, as well as exploration of brain-inspired technologies, novel materials and components, and advanced manufacturing techniques," said Joanne Tornow, deputy assistant director for NSF's Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences, who also spoke at the event.

Advancing great brain science

NSF is one of three federal agencies, along with the National Institutes of Health and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, with [significant investments in brain research](http://www.nsf.gov/brain) <http://www.nsf.gov/brain> that helped to jumpstart The BRAIN Initiative.

While BRAIN began as a largely government-supported initiative, more private sector and academic institutions have become involved.

Today's event included commitment statements from new federal agency partners such as the [Food and Drug Administration](http://www.fda.gov/) <http://www.fda.gov/> and [Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity](http://www.iarpa.gov/) <http://www.iarpa.gov/>, as well as from a wide range of industrial, private and academic partners to advance the initiative's long-term goals--the development of new neurotechnologies that will help researchers better understand how the brain works.

"We fully support the president's call for private sector companies, research universities, foundations and philanthropies to partner with government agencies in pursuing the BRAIN Initiative," Tornow said. "We must leverage all of our collective resources and skills to pursue this daunting scientific and technological challenge."

Other NSF-funded BRAIN-related activities in fiscal year 2014 included a [series of workshops sponsored by multiple scientific directorates](http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/brain/events/) [<http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/brain/events/>](http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/brain/events/), and multiple awards from core programs across the foundation. The [MIT-based Science and Technology Center for Brains, Minds and Machines](http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=129009) [<http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=129009>](http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=129009) was also established in 2014.

Visit [NSF.gov/brain](http://nsf.gov/brain) [<http://nsf.gov/brain>](http://nsf.gov/brain) for more information about NSF's support for The BRAIN Initiative.

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Related Websites

Understanding the Brain: <http://www.nsf.gov/brain> [<http://www.nsf.gov/brain>](http://www.nsf.gov/brain)

NSF BRAIN Initiative YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/NSFbraininitiative> ([/cgi-bin/good-bye?https://www.youtube.com/user/NSFbraininitiative](https://www.youtube.com/user/NSFbraininitiative))

Brain power: Bright ideas and smart tools for neuroengineering: <http://nsf.gov/brainpower> [<http://nsf.gov/brainpower>](http://nsf.gov/brainpower)

White House BRAIN Fact Sheet: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/02/fact-sheet-brain-initiative> [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/02/fact-sheet-brain-initiative>](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/02/fact-sheet-brain-initiative)

NIH BRAIN website: <http://www.nih.gov/science/brain/> [<http://www.nih.gov/science/brain/>](http://www.nih.gov/science/brain/)

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