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The National Institute of Standards and Technology: An Appropriations Overview

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Summary

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), a laboratory of the Department of Commerce, is mandated to provide technical services to facilitate the competitiveness of U.S. industry. NIST is directed to offer support to the private sector for the development of precompetitive generic technologies and the diffusion of government-developed innovation to users in all segments of the American economy. Laboratory research is to provide measurement, calibration, and quality assurance techniques that underpin U.S. commerce, technological progress, improved product reliability, manufacturing processes, and public safety.

Concerns about the adequacy of federal funding for physical science and engineering research led to efforts by President George W. Bush (under his American Competitiveness Initiative and annual budget requests), President Obama (in his annual budget requests), and Congress (implicitly in appropriations authorizations in the America COMPETES Act and the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010) to double funding for the NIST laboratory and construction accounts, together with the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy Office of Science. However, appropriations did not keep pace with authorization levels or presidential requests. In addition, the appropriations authorizations for the accounts targeted for doubling have lapsed and President Obama's budget requests have not referenced a specific doubling goal or timeframe since his FY2013 request.

Continued funding for NIST extramural programs directed toward increased private sector commercialization has been a topic of congressional debate. Some Members of Congress have expressed skepticism over a "technology policy" based on providing federal funds to industry for development of pre-competitive generic technologies. This approach, coupled with pressures to balance the federal budget, led to significant reductions in funding for NIST. The Advanced Technology Program (ATP) and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), which accounted for over 50% of the FY1995 NIST budget, were proposed for elimination. In 2007, ATP was terminated and replaced by the Technology Innovation Program (TIP). TIP was subsequently eliminated in the FY2012 appropriations legislation.

In December 2014, Congress enacted the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014 as Title VII of Division B of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235), establishing a Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NMI). The NMI program is similar to the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation proposed by President Obama. The act does not appropriate funds specifically for the NMI program but instead authorizes NIST to spend up to \$5.0 million of appropriated funds each year from FY2015 to FY2024 to carry out the program. In addition, the act authorizes the Department of Energy to transfer up to a total of \$250.0 million to NIST between FY2015 and FY2024 to carry out the program. The act allows a number of existing manufacturing centers to be classified as centers for manufacturing innovation and eligible for participation in the network. Many issues related to the establishment, operation, management, and funding of the NMI remain to be addressed.

As Congress undertakes the FY2016 appropriations process, an overarching issue is how funding for NIST will be allocated between its core standards and measurement functions performed in its laboratories and its external programs, such as MEP and the NMI. President Obama has requested a total of \$1.120 billion for NIST for FY2016, up \$255.8 million from the FY2015 enacted level. The House has approved \$855.0 million for NIST for FY2016, \$8.9 million (1.0%) less than in FY2015 and \$264.7 million (23.6%) less than the request.

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Mission

The U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is the “lead national laboratory for providing the measurements, calibrations, and quality assurance techniques which underpin United States commerce, technological progress, improved product reliability and manufacturing processes, and public safety.”¹

By statute, NIST is “to assist private sector initiatives to capitalize on advanced technology; to advance, through cooperative efforts among industries, universities, and government laboratories, promising research and development projects, which can be optimized by the private sector for commercial and industrial applications; and to promote shared risks, accelerated development, and pooling of skills which will be necessary to strengthen America’s manufacturing industries.”²

NIST conducts leading-edge research in its seven research laboratories located in facilities in Gaithersburg, MD, and Boulder, CO.³ NIST employs approximately 3,000 scientists, engineers, technicians, and support personnel, and hosts about 2,700 associates from academia, industry, and other government agencies, who collaborate with NIST staff and access user facilities. Research is focused on measurement, standards, test methods, and basic “infrastructural technologies” that enable development of advanced technologies. Infrastructural technologies assist industry in characterizing new materials, monitoring production processes, and ensuring the quality of new product lines. Cooperative research with industry to overcome technical barriers to commercialization of emerging technologies is a major component of NIST’s work.

In addition, NIST manages extramural programs such as the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Consortia program, and the Network for Manufacturing Innovation. These programs are discussed in the next section.

History and Selected Statutory Authorities

Unlike most federal laboratories, NIST has a mission specified by statute (15 U.S.C. 271-282a), has a separate authorization and appropriation, and is headed by a Senate-confirmed presidential appointee. NIST was originally created by the NBS Organic Act of 1901 (P.L. 56-177) as the National Bureau of Standards (NBS), at a time when the first centralized industrial labs were being established.⁴

Under the act, NBS was charged with working on “the solution of problems which arise in connection with standards” and to engage in the “determination of physical constants and the properties of materials, when such data are of great importance to scientific or manufacturing interests and are not to be obtained of sufficient accuracy elsewhere.” These objectives remain central to NIST’s laboratory work today.

¹ Section 5111, Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-418).

² *Ibid.*

³ The seven laboratories are the Materials Measurement Laboratory, Physical Measurement Laboratory, Engineering Laboratory, Information Technology Laboratory, Communications Technology Laboratory, Center for Nanoscale Science and Technology, and Center for Neutron Research.

⁴ General Electric Research Laboratory, widely recognized as the first industrial research facility, was established in 1900 in Schenectady, NY.

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987

In 1987, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-107) established the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award under the management of NBS.⁵ The act directs the President or the Secretary of Commerce to “periodically make the award to companies and other organizations which in the judgment of the President or the Secretary have substantially benefited the economic or social well-being of the United States through improvements in the quality of their goods or services resulting from the effective practice of quality management, and which as a consequence are deserving of special recognition.”⁶

Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988

The following year, amid widespread concerns about the state of U.S. industrial competitiveness, the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-418) significantly expanded the role of NIST as the “lead national laboratory for providing the measurements, calibrations, and quality assurance techniques which underpin United States commerce, technological progress, improved product reliability and manufacturing processes, and public safety” by “moderniz[ing] and restructur[ing] that agency to augment its unique ability to enhance the competitiveness of American industry.”⁷ The act also changed the name from NBS to the National Institute of Standards and Technology to reflect its expanded mission. In addition to its long-standing work in standards and metrology,⁸ NIST was directed to offer support to the private sector for the development of pre-competitive generic technologies and the diffusion of government-developed innovation to users in all segments of the U.S. economy. Among its provisions, the act established the Advanced Technology Program, and a program now known as the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program.

Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program

The MEP is a program of regional centers that assist smaller, U.S.-based manufacturing companies in identifying and adopting new technologies. Operating under the auspices of NIST, centers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico provide technical and managerial assistance to firms. Federal funding for the centers is matched by nonfederal sources.⁹

Advanced Technology Program

The Advanced Technology Program (ATP) was designed “to serve as a focal point for cooperation between the public and private sectors in the development of industrial technology,” according to the report accompanying the bill, and to help solve “problems of concern to large segments of an industry.” Placed within the National Institute of Standards and Technology in recognition of the laboratory’s ongoing relationship with industry, ATP provided seed funding to single companies or to industry-led consortia of universities, businesses, and/or government laboratories for development of generic (broad-based), pre-competitive technologies that have

⁵ The program is currently managed under NIST’s Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

⁶ Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-107).

⁷ Section 5111, P.L. 100-107.

⁸ Metrology is the science of measurement.

⁹ For additional information on the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, see CRS Report R44308, *The Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program*, by John F. Sargent Jr.

many applications across industries. Awards, based on technical and business merit, were for high-risk work past the basic research stage but not yet ready for commercialization. Market potential was an important consideration in project selection. Scientific and technical review generally was performed by federal and academic experts. Business plan assessments were made by individuals from the private sector.

America COMPETES Act/America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010

The America COMPETES Act (P.L. 110-69) and the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-358) authorized NIST appropriations and several programs and activities.

Technology Innovation Program

In 2007, the America COMPETES Act replaced ATP with a new program, the Technology Innovation Program (TIP). While similar to ATP in the promotion of R&D expected to be of broad-based economic benefit to the nation, TIP appeared to have been structured to avoid what was seen as government funding of large firms that opponents argued did not necessarily need federal support for research. The committee report to accompany H.R. 1868, part of which was incorporated into P.L. 110-69, stated that TIP replaced ATP in consideration of a changing global innovation environment focusing on small and medium-sized companies. The design of the program also “acknowledges the important role universities play in the innovation cycle by allowing universities to fully participate in the program.”¹⁰ Appropriations for TIP were provided from FY2008 to FY2011, but no funding has been provided for the program thereafter.

NIST Doubling Effort

The America COMPETES Act authorized appropriations for NIST accounts for FY2008-FY2010, and the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 authorized appropriations for NIST accounts for FY2011-FY2013. The authorization levels for NIST were part of a larger effort to double funding for selected accounts—all of the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science, and the NIST laboratory and construction accounts—that support physical sciences and engineering research.¹¹

Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012

As part of the Public Safety Trust Fund provided for in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-96), a share of spectrum auction proceeds are to be made available to NIST as part of a Wireless Innovation (WIN) Fund to help develop cutting-edge wireless technologies for public safety users. WIN funds are to be used for developing leading-edge wireless technologies for public safety users, including helping industry and public safety organizations conduct research and develop new standards, technologies, and applications to advance public safety communications in support of the initiative’s efforts to build an interoperable nationwide broadband network for first responders. The spectrum auction provided

¹⁰ For more information on the Technology Innovation Program, see CRS Report RS22815, *The Technology Innovation Program*, by Wendy H. Schacht.

¹¹ For more information on the doubling effort, see CRS Report R41951, *An Analysis of Efforts to Double Federal Funding for Physical Sciences and Engineering Research*, by John F. Sargent Jr.

NIST with \$300.0 million for this purpose; efforts will begin in FY2015 and continue in FY2016 and beyond.¹²

Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014

In his FY2013 budget, President Obama proposed the creation of a National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI) to help accelerate innovation by investing in industrially relevant manufacturing technologies with broad applications, and to support manufacturing technology commercialization by bridging the gap between the laboratory and the market. Congress did not act on this request or a subsequent one made in the President's FY2014 request. President Obama renewed the request in his FY2015 budget. In December 2014, Congress enacted the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014 (RAMIA) as Title VII of Division B of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235), establishing a Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NMI), largely similar to the President's concept for the NNMI. As specified in the act, the purpose of the NMI is to improve the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturing and to increase the production of goods manufactured predominantly within the United States; to stimulate U.S. leadership in advanced manufacturing research, innovation, and technology; to facilitate the transition of innovative technologies into scalable, cost-effective, and high-performing manufacturing capabilities; to facilitate access by manufacturing enterprises to capital-intensive infrastructure, including high-performance electronics and computing, and the supply chains that enable these technologies; to accelerate the development of an advanced manufacturing workforce; to facilitate peer exchange and the documentation of best practices in addressing advanced manufacturing challenges; to leverage nonfederal sources of support to promote a stable and sustainable business model without the need for long-term federal funding; and to create and preserve jobs.¹³

The act did not appropriate funds specifically for the NMI program but instead authorized NIST to spend up to \$5.0 million of its appropriated funds each year from FY2015 to FY2024 to carry out the program. In addition, the act authorizes the Department of Energy (DOE) to transfer up to a total of \$250.0 million to NIST between FY2015 and FY2024 to carry out the program. The act also allows existing manufacturing centers to be classified as centers for manufacturing innovation, making them eligible to participate in the network. President Obama initiated the establishment of several such centers prior to enactment of RAMIA under the general statutory authority of several agencies, including the Department of Defense and Department of Energy.

Other NIST Programs

In July 2013, NIST launched two new programs: the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Consortia (AMTech) program and the Manufacturing Technology Acceleration Centers (M-TAC) program.

¹² Department of Commerce, *The Department of Commerce Budget in Brief: Fiscal Year 2016*, p. 111, <http://www.osec.doc.gov/bmi/budget/FY16BIB/EntireDocument-WebVersionWithCharts.pdf>.

¹³ For more information on the NMI, see CRS Report R43857, *The Network for Manufacturing Innovation*, by John F. Sargent Jr. For more information on the NNMI proposal, see CRS Report R42625, *The Obama Administration's Proposal to Establish a National Network for Manufacturing Innovation*, by John F. Sargent Jr.

Advanced Manufacturing Technology Consortia Program

Originally included in President Obama’s FY2013 budget request, AMTech makes planning awards to “establish industry-led consortia to identify and prioritize research projects supporting long-term industrial research needs.” AMTech seeks to incentivize manufacturers to share financial and scientific resources with universities, state and local governments, and nonprofit organizations.¹⁴ AMTech does not have a statutory authorization; the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6) provided first year funding of \$14.5 million.

Manufacturing Technology Acceleration Centers Program

The M-TAC program, a new pilot effort under MEP, seeks to address “the technical and business challenges encountered by small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers as they attempt to adopt, integrate, and execute advanced product and process technologies into their operations.”¹⁵

¹⁴ NIST, “President’s FY 2013 Budget Request for NIST Targets Advanced Manufacturing, Critical Science and Technology Programs,” press release, February 13, 2012, http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/releases/budget_2013.cfm.

¹⁵ Advanced Manufacturing National Program Office, “Explaining AMTech, M-TAC and NNMI: New NIST Programs in Support of Advanced Manufacturing,” http://www.manufacturing.gov/docs/Explaining_AMTech_M-TAC_NNMI.pdf.

NIST Appropriations

Overview of NIST Appropriations Accounts

Funding for NIST is generally provided through three appropriations accounts:

- The Scientific and Technical Research and Services (STRS) account supports NIST in-house laboratory research. The account also provided funding for the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program through FY2011.
- The Construction of Research Facilities (CRF, also referred to in this report as construction) account supports construction, maintenance, and repair of NIST facilities at its facilities in Gaithersburg, MD, and Boulder, CO. From FY2008 to FY2010, CRF provided funding for a competitive grant program that funded the construction of research facilities at U.S. universities and research institutions.
- The Industrial Technology Services (ITS) account supports a number of extramural programs. In FY2015, funding for the MEP and AmTech programs was provided in the ITS account. In earlier years, ITS provided funding for the Advanced Technology Program and the Technology Innovation Program.

NIST FY2016 Appropriations

President Obama has requested a total of \$1.120 billion for NIST for FY2016, up \$255.8 million (29.6%) from the FY2015 enacted level. The request includes \$754.7 for the STRS account, up \$79.2 million (11.7%); \$306.0 million for the ITS account, up \$167.9 million (121.6%); and \$59.0 million for the CRF account, up \$8.7 million (17.3%). The ITS account request includes \$141.0 million for the MEP program, up \$11.0 million (8.5%); \$15.0 million for the AMTech program, up \$6.8 million (83.5%); and \$150.0 million for the NMI program, which was not funded in FY2015. (See **Table 1.**)

On June 3, 2015, the House approved the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016 (H.R. 2578). The bill would provide a total of \$855.0 million for NIST, \$8.9 million (1.0%) less than in FY2015 and \$264.7 million (23.6%) less than the request. Of this amount, the STRS account would receive \$675.0 million, slightly below the \$675.5 million provided for FY2015 and \$79.7 million (10.6%) below the request. The ITS account would receive \$130.0 million for FY2016, \$8.1 million (5.9%) below the FY2015 level and \$176.0 million (57.5%) below the request. The House-approved level for ITS in FY2016 would provide no funding for the AmTech program (\$8.1 million in FY2015, \$15.0 million in the request) or the Network for Manufacturing Innovation (no funding in FY2015, \$150.0 million in the request), and would provide \$130.0 million for the MEP program, an amount equal to its FY2015 level and \$11.0 million (7.8%) below the request. The House-approved bill would provide \$50.0 million for the CRF account, slightly less than the \$50.3 million provided for FY2015 and \$9.0 million (15.3%) less than the request.

On September 30, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-53), a continuing resolution (CR) that provided funding for NIST and other agencies through December 11, 2015, until the enactment into law of an appropriation for any project or activity provided for in this act, or until the enactment into law of the applicable appropriations act for FY2016 without any provision for such project or activity.

On December 11, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-96), extending FY2016 funding provided by P.L. 114-53 for NIST and other agencies through December 16, 2015.

On December 16, 2015, the House Committee on Appropriations released a draft version of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (unnumbered at the time of publication of this report), which would provide FY2016 appropriations to NIST and other agencies. The draft would provide a total of \$964.0 million for NIST for FY2016, \$100.1 (11.6%) million more than in FY2015 and \$155.7 million (13.9%) less than the request. Of this amount, the STRS account would receive \$690.0 million for FY2016, \$14.5 (2.1%) million more than in FY2015 and \$64.7 million (8.6%) below the request. The ITS account would receive \$155.0 million for FY2016, \$16.9 million (12.2%) more than for FY2015 level and \$151.0 million (49.3%) below the request. FY2016 ITS funding would include \$130.0 million for the MEP program and \$25.0 million for the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation, including \$5.0 million for NNMI coordination activities. The explanatory language states that NIST’s AmTech Consortia activity is to be merged with the NNMI. The act would provide \$119.0 million for the CRF account for FY2016, \$68.7 million (136.6%) more than for FY2015 and \$60 million (101.7%) more than the request; \$60 million of the FY2016 appropriation is to be used for the “design and renovation of [NIST’s] outdated and unsafe radiation physics infrastructure.”

This section will be updated when final FY2016 appropriations are made.

Table I. NIST FY2016 Appropriations

(budget authority, in millions of dollars)

	FY2015 Enacted	FY2016 Request	FY2016 House	FY2016 Omnibus Draft
Base Budget				
Scientific and Technical Research and Services (STRS)	\$675.5	\$754.7	\$675.0	\$690.0
Industrial Technology Services (ITS)	138.1	306.0	130.0	155.0
Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)	130.0	141.0	130.0	130.0
Advanced Manufacturing Technology Consortia (AmTech)	8.1	15.0	0	^a
Manufacturing Innovation Institutes Coordination	^b	^b		
Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NMI)	^c	150.0		25.0 ^d
Construction of Research Facilities (CRF)	50.3	59.0	50.0	119.0
NIST, Total (Base Budget)	863.9	1,119.7	855.0	964.0
Wireless Innovation Fund	\$300.0^e	^e	^e	^e

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *Department of Commerce, Budget in Brief, Fiscal Year 2016*, <http://www.osc.doc.gov/bmi/budget/FY16BIB/EntireDocument-WebVersionWithCharts.pdf>.

Notes:

- a. The explanatory language states that the AmTech Consortia activity is to be merged with the NNMI.
- b. The Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014 authorizes NIST to use \$5 million per year for FY2015-FY2024 from funds appropriated to its Industrial Technology Services account to carry out the NMI program. The act also authorizes the Department of Energy to transfer to NIST up to \$250 million over the FY2015-FY2024 period from funds appropriated for advanced manufacturing R&D.

- c. The President's FY2015 budget proposed the establishment of a National Network for Manufacturing Innovation to promote the development of manufacturing technologies with broad applications. This request was not part of the President's FY2015 base budget request, but rather a part of the adjunct \$56 billion Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative proposal (OGSI). The OGSI included \$2.4 billion to establish up to 45 NNMI institutes. Both of the President's two previous budget requests sought mandatory appropriations to NIST of \$1 billion in support of up to 15 NNMI manufacturing innovation institutes.
- d. Includes \$5.0 million for NNMI coordination activities.
- e. The spectrum auction authorized by the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 provided \$300.0 million for NIST; these funds will be used in FY2015 and future years.

Funding Trends for NIST Accounts and Selected Programs

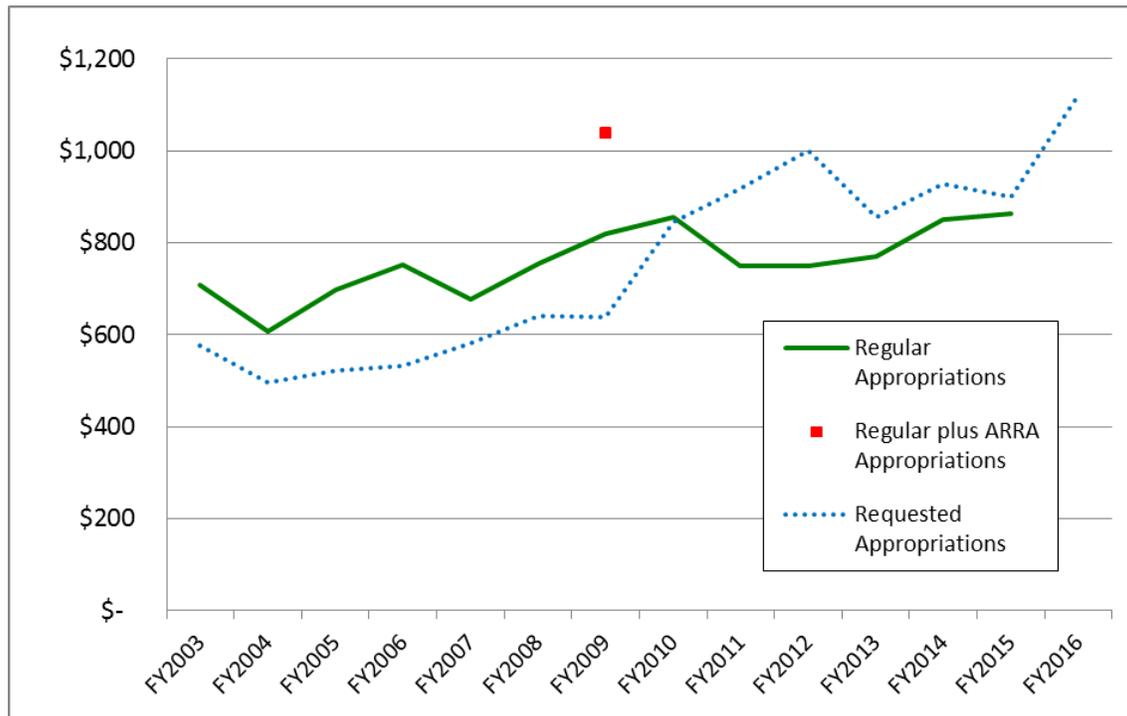
This section provides an overview of appropriations data for NIST in total and for each of its appropriations accounts, as well as for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership and the Advanced Technology Program and Technology Innovation Program. **Appendix A** provides requested and enacted funding levels for NIST and its accounts for FY2003-FY2015. **Appendix B** provides requested and enacted funding levels for selected NIST programs.

Total NIST Funding

Figure 1 illustrates total NIST funding levels, both requested and enacted appropriations, for FY2003-FY2015. Total appropriations for NIST grew from \$707.5 million in FY2003 to \$863.9 million in FY2015, a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 1.7%. Appropriations exceeded requests through FY2010; since then, requests have exceeded appropriations.

Figure 1. Total NIST Appropriations

Requested Appropriations, FY2003-FY2016; Enacted Appropriations, FY2003-FY2015
(In millions of current dollars)



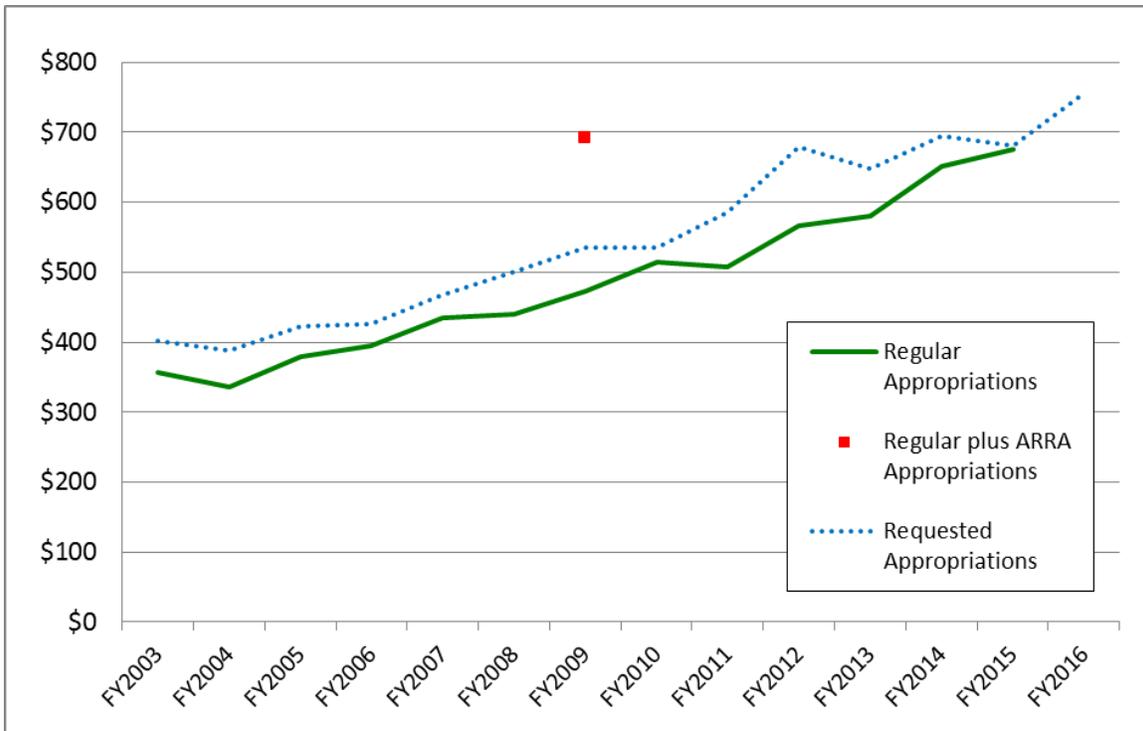
Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

Notes: ARRA=American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Scientific and Technical Research and Services Account

Figure 2 illustrates funding levels for the NIST STRS account, both requested and enacted appropriations, for FY2003-FY2015. This account has seen a steady rise in both request and appropriations levels. Total appropriations for the STRS account grew from \$357.1 million in FY2003 to \$675.5 million in FY2015, a compound annual growth rate of 5.5%. Appropriations and requests have grown concurrently, with appropriations trailing requests somewhat.

Figure 2. Scientific and Technical Research and Services Account
 Requested Appropriations, FY2003-FY2016; Enacted Appropriations, FY2003-FY2015
 (In millions of current dollars)



Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

Notes: ARRA=American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

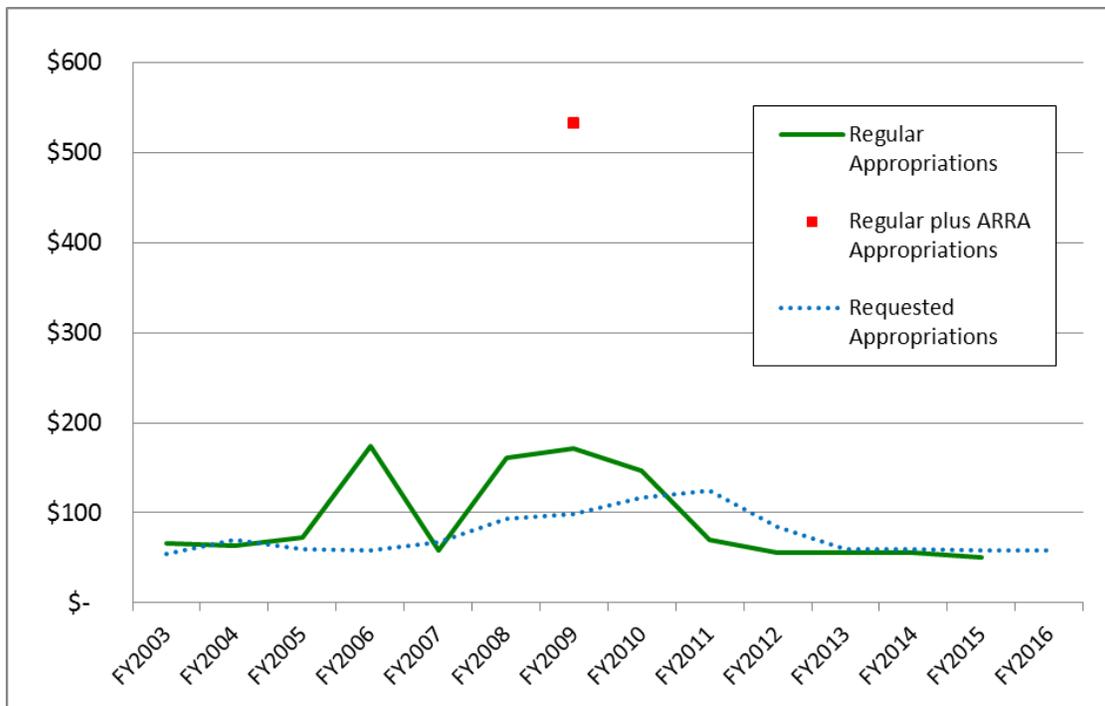
Construction of Research Facilities Account

Figure 3 illustrates funding levels for the NIST CRF account, both requested and enacted appropriations, for FY2003-FY2015. The construction account saw substantial fluctuations from FY2006 through FY2011. CRF funding jumped from \$72.5 million in FY2006 to \$173.7 million in FY2007, fell to \$58.7 million in FY2008, and then rose to \$532.0 million in FY2009 (of which \$172.0 million was provided for in regular appropriations and \$360 million provided under ARRA). In 2010, funding fell to \$147.0 million, and fell again in 2011 to \$69.9 million. From FY2012 through FY2015, appropriations have been relatively flat, ranging from \$50 million to \$56 million per year. Of the \$360 million that ARRA provided this account in FY2009, \$180 million was designated for the competitive construction grant program.

In fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010, the CRF account provided funding for the competitive construction grant program that funded the construction of research facilities at U.S. universities and research institutions. Appropriations for CRF also included funding for congressionally designated projects in some years. **Figure 4** illustrates the funding levels for the NIST CRF account excluding congressionally directed projects and the competitive grant program, for both requested and enacted appropriations, for FY2003-FY2015. From this perspective, funding for NIST internal construction, major renovations, safety, capacity, maintenance, and major repairs has been comparatively flat during this period, rising somewhat from FY2005 to FY2009, falling somewhat through FY2011, then remaining flat.

Figure 3. Construction of Research Facilities Account

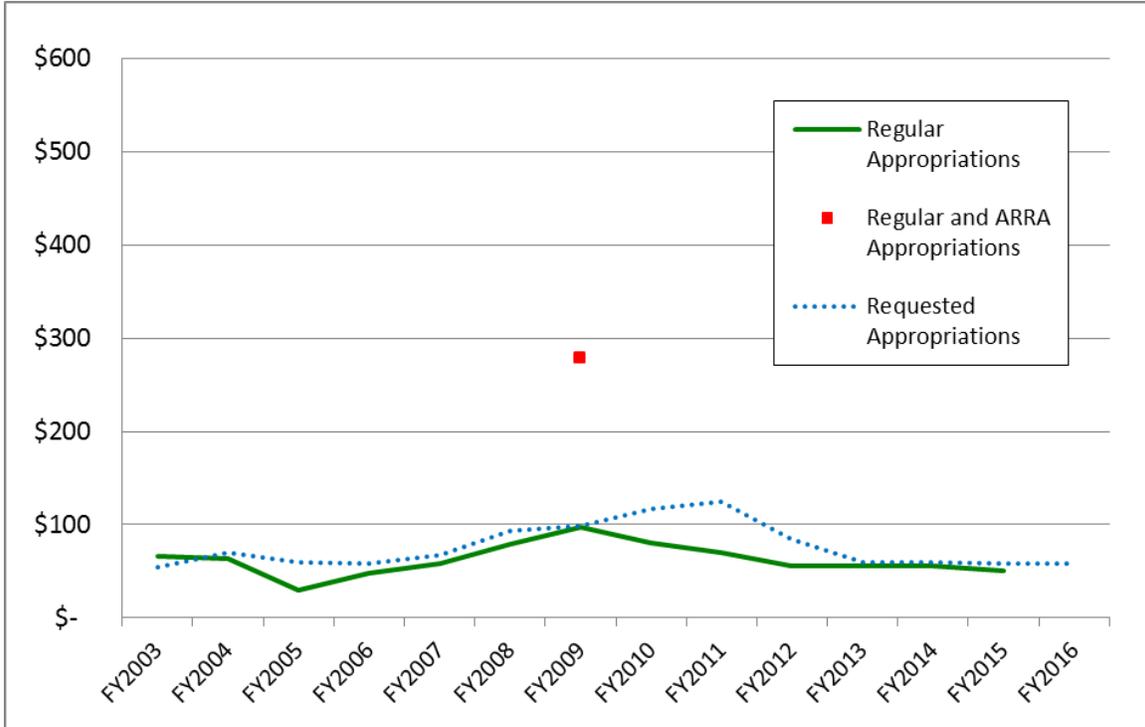
Requested Appropriations, FY2003-FY2016; Enacted Appropriations, FY2003-FY2015
(In millions of current dollars)



Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

Notes: ARRA=American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Figure 4. Construction of Research Facilities Account, excluding funding for congressionally directed projects and the competitive construction grant program
 Requested Appropriations, FY2003-FY2016; Enacted Appropriations, FY2003-FY2015
 (In millions of current dollars)



Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

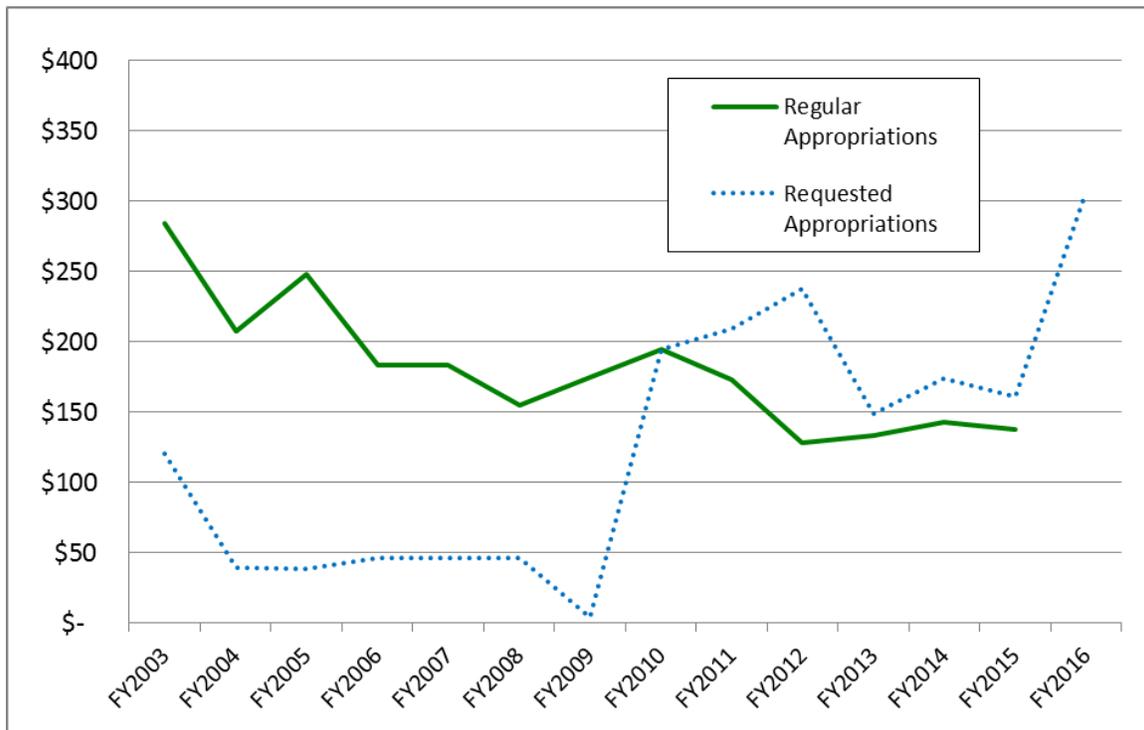
Notes: ARRA=American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Industrial Technology Services Account

Figure 5 illustrates funding levels for the NIST ITS account, both requested and enacted appropriations, for FY2003-FY2015. ITS requests and appropriations during this period have included the MEP, ATP, TIP, AMTech, and Baldrige programs in some or all years. Total appropriations for the ITS account fell from \$284.8 million in FY2003 to \$138.1 million in FY2015, a decline of 5.9% on a compounded annual basis. Substantial fluctuations in the levels of funding requested and provided for the MEP, ATP, and TIP programs are reflected in aggregate in **Figure 5**, and illustrated and discussed in more detail on the following pages.

Figure 5. Industrial Technology Services Account

Requested Appropriations, FY2003-FY2016; Enacted Appropriations, FY2003-FY2015
(In millions of current dollars)



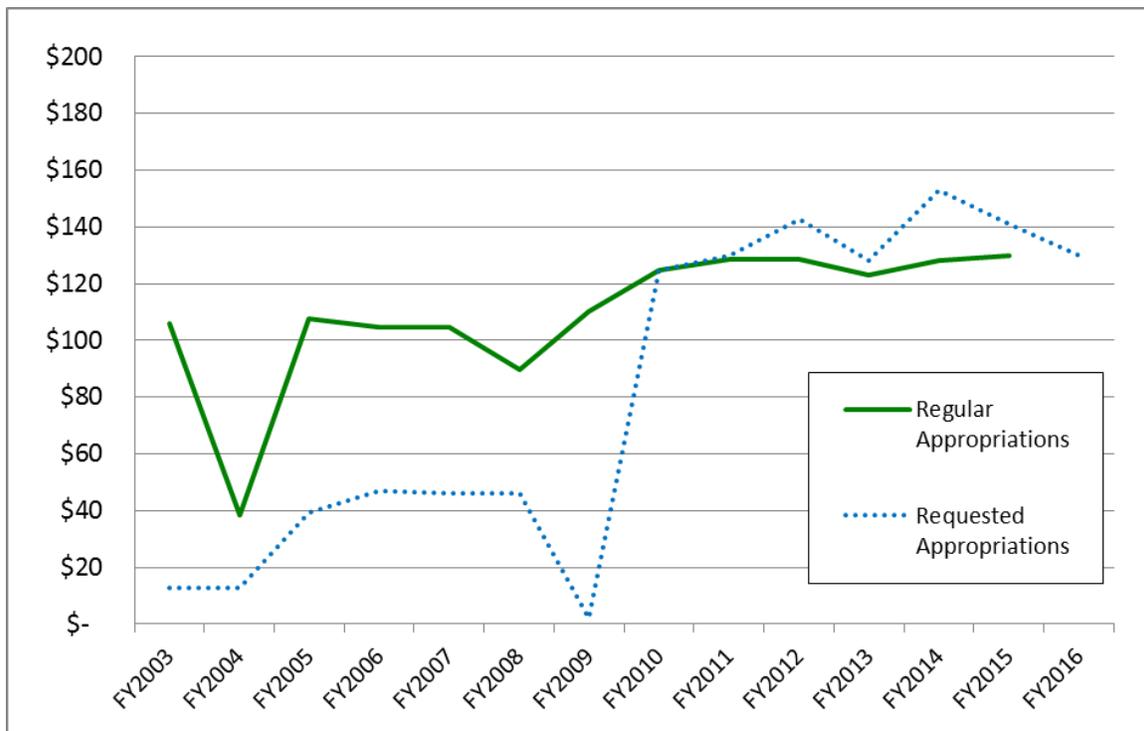
Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program

Figure 6 illustrates funding levels for the NIST MEP program, both requested and enacted appropriations, for FY2003-FY2015. FY2003 enacted appropriations of \$106.0 million were cut to \$38.6 million in FY2004, but returned to near the FY2003 level in FY2005 (\$107.5 million) and stayed near there through FY2007. The MEP funding dipped again in FY2008, to \$89.6 million, then rose over the next several years to \$130 million in FY2015. Requests from FY2003 to FY2009 were substantially lower than appropriations, falling to a low of \$2 million in FY2009. In FY2010, the Obama Administration requested \$124.7 million for MEP, and requests have since been consistently higher than enacted appropriations.

Figure 6. Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program

Requested Appropriations, FY2003-FY2016; Enacted Appropriations, FY2003-FY2015
(In millions of current dollars)

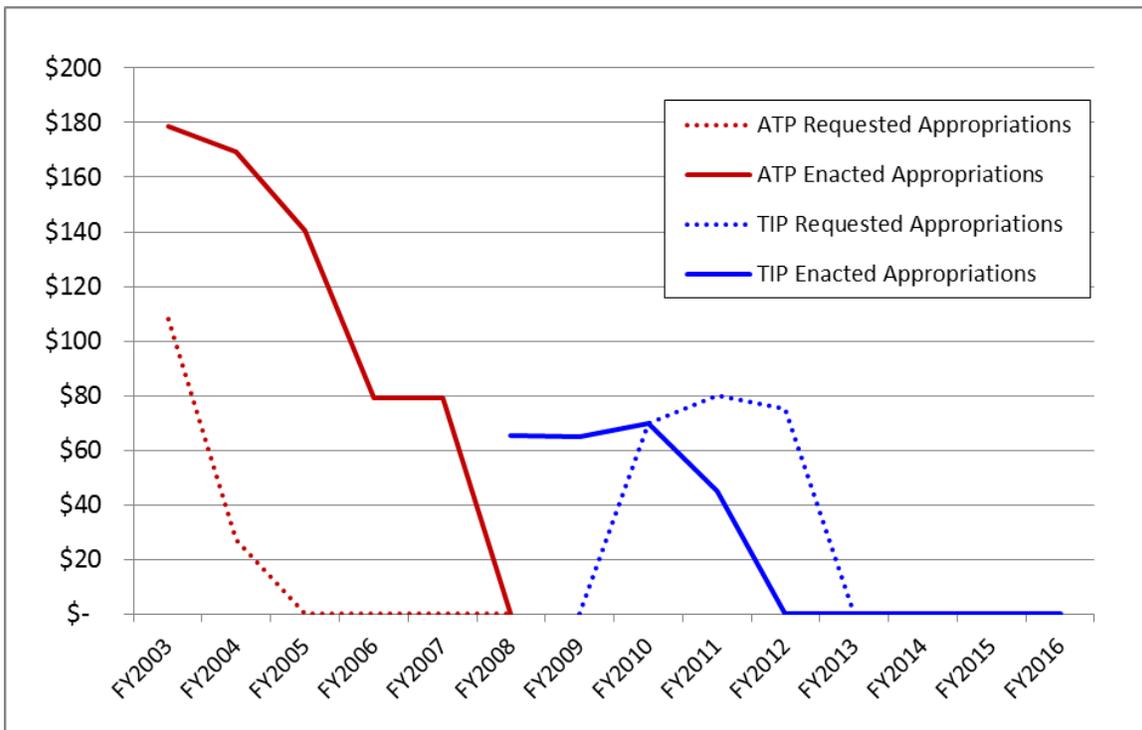


Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

Advanced Technology Program/Technology Innovation Program

The Advanced Technology Program saw its requests and appropriations fall from \$107.9 million in FY2003 to zero in FY2008; no funding had been requested for FY2005 and beyond. The Technology Innovation Program, which replaced ATP, was first funded at \$65.2 million in FY2008 and rose to \$69.9 million in FY2010 before falling to \$45.0 million in FY2011, and zero in FY2012. The \$69.9 million requested for TIP in FY2010 was fully funded; in FY2011 the TIP request was \$79.9 million, and in FY2012 was \$75.0 million. Requests for TIP in FY2013 and subsequent years were zero.

Figure 7. Advanced Technology Program and Technology Innovation Program
 Requested Appropriations, FY2003-2016; Enacted Appropriations, FY2003-FY2015
 (In millions of current dollars)



Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

Concluding Observations

When NBS was renamed NIST under the provisions of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, the laboratory was given additional missions and supporting programs. Two of the new programs—the Advanced Technology Program and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program—were intended to improve U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness. These programs generated criticism from some policymakers and analysts who objected to them on a variety of grounds, including whether such activities are appropriate for the federal government to undertake; whether they might result in suboptimal choices of technologies, choices better left to market forces; whether certain technologies, companies, or industries might be chosen for support based on criteria other than technical or business merit; and whether tax dollars should be awarded to already-profitable firms.

In contrast, NIST's historical mission of conducting laboratory research in support of standards and metrics continued to enjoy broad support and faced little controversy. Evidence of this support can be seen in the selection of the STRS account—through which NIST laboratory work is funded—as one of the targeted accounts in the doubling efforts of former President George W. Bush, President Obama, and successive Congresses. However, even with broad support and the absence of controversy, funding for the NIST STRS account did not grow at the pace its advocates supported in presidential budget requests and successive authorizations of appropriations due to tight overall fiscal constraints on the federal budget.

These issues are discussed in more detail below.

NIST Doubling Effort

In the early 2000s, many industry, academia, and policy leaders expressed growing concern that federal investments in physical sciences and engineering research were not growing fast enough to keep America on the leading edge of technological innovation and commercial competitiveness. In his 2006 State of the Union remarks, President Bush announced the American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) which, among other things, sought to double funding for targeted appropriations accounts that fund physical sciences and engineering research over a 10-year period. Among the targeted accounts were the NIST STRS and construction accounts. Subsequently, Congress passed the America COMPETES Act (P.L. 110-69), which set appropriations authorizations for the targeted accounts for FY2008-FY2010 that represented a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.1% that would have, if continued, resulted in a doubling over approximately seven years.

In his FY2010 *Plan for Science and Innovation*, President Obama stated that he (like President Bush) would seek to double funding for basic research over 10 years (FY2006 to FY2016) at the ACI agencies. Actual appropriations, however, did not keep pace with the America COMPETES Act authorization levels. In his FY2011 budget request, President Obama extended the period over which he intended to double these agencies' budgets to 11 years. In 2010, Congress enacted the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-358) setting appropriations authorizations for the targeted accounts for FY2011-FY2013 at a level that effectively set an 11-year doubling pace (a 6.3% CAGR). However, as with the original act, appropriations did not keep pace with the authorization act levels. While reiterating President Obama's intention to double funding for the targeted accounts from their FY2006 levels, the President's FY2013 budget request did not specify the length of time over which the doubling was to take place. President Obama's FY2014 budget expressed a commitment to increasing funding for the targeted accounts, but did not commit to doubling. The President's FY2015 budget did not

address the doubling effort. From FY2006, the base year for the doubling effort, through FY2015, funding for the NIST STRS and construction accounts has grown by 27.7% in nominal terms, a compound annual growth rate of 2.8%, which would result in doubling in about 28 years. It remains to be seen how support for internal R&D at NIST will evolve.

NIST Technology Policy

Some of NIST's external programs have faced substantial opposition over time. Beginning with the 104th Congress, many Members expressed skepticism over a "technology policy" based on providing federal funds to industry for development of pre-competitive generic technologies. This philosophical shift from previous Congresses, coupled with pressures to balance the federal budget, led to significant reductions in funding for NIST's external programs. The Advanced Technology Program and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which accounted for over 50% of the FY1995 NIST budget, were proposed for elimination. Although in the past strong support by the Senate led to their continued financing, funding for ATP remained controversial. Beginning in FY2000, the House-passed appropriations bills did not contain funding for ATP, and many of the budget proposals submitted by former President George W. Bush called for abolishing the program. In the 110th Congress, the America COMPETES Act eliminated ATP and replaced it with the TIP initiative. While TIP received appropriations from FY2008 to FY2011, it has received no appropriations since. In his FY2003 budget proposal, President Bush also recommended suspension of federal support for those MEP centers in operation for more than six years; the following year funding for the MEP program was significantly reduced. However, the FY2005 Omnibus Appropriations Act brought support for MEP back up to the level necessary to fully fund the existing centers. Since then, funding has grown from \$107.5 million in FY2005 to \$130.0 million in FY2015. For more information on the MEP program, see CRS Report R44308, *The Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program*, by John F. Sargent Jr.

Network for Manufacturing Innovation

In his FY2013 budget, President Obama requested \$1 billion in mandatory funding for the creation of a National Network for Manufacturing Innovation¹⁶ to help accelerate innovation by investing in industrially relevant manufacturing technologies with broad applications, and to support manufacturing technology commercialization by bridging the gap between the laboratory and the market. Congress did not act on this request or on the President's FY2014 request for the same amount. In FY2015, the President requested \$2.4 billion for the NNMI as part of his Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative. The President also requested \$5.0 million for coordination of manufacturing innovation institutes as part of NIST's budget request. In December 2014, Congress enacted the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014 as Title VII of Division B of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235), establishing a Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NMI). The act does not appropriate funds specifically for the NMI program but instead authorizes NIST to spend up to \$5.0 million of funds appropriated to NIST's ITS account each year from FY2015 to FY2024 to carry out the program. In addition, the act authorizes the Department of Energy to transfer up to \$250.0 million to NIST for the 10-year period FY2015 to FY2024 to carry out the program.¹⁷

¹⁶ For more information on President Obama's proposed National Network for Manufacturing Innovation, see CRS Report R42625, *The Obama Administration's Proposal to Establish a National Network for Manufacturing Innovation*, by John F. Sargent Jr.

¹⁷ The act authorizes the Department of Energy to provide the funds only from amounts appropriated for advanced manufacturing research and development within its Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy account.

Many issues related to the establishment, operation, management, and funding of the NMI remain to be addressed. For a broader discussion about the Network for Manufacturing Innovation and associated policy issues, see CRS Report R43857, *The Network for Manufacturing Innovation*, by John F. Sargent Jr.

As Congress undertakes the FY2016 appropriations process, an overarching issue is how funding for NIST will be allocated between the core standards and measurement functions performed by its laboratories and its external programs, such as MEP, AMTech, and the NMI. President Obama has requested a total of \$1.120 billion for NIST for FY2016, up \$255.8 million (29.6%) from the FY2015 enacted level. The House has approved \$855.0 million in total funding for NIST, including \$675.0 million for STRS; \$130 million for ITS, the entire amount directed to support the Manufacturing Extension Partnership; and \$50.0 million for construction of research facilities.

Appendix A. Requested and Enacted Appropriations for NIST Accounts

Table A-1. Requested and Enacted Appropriations for NIST Accounts

FY2003-FY2015

(In millions of current dollars)

Fiscal Year	NIST, Total		Scientific and Technical Research and Services (STRS) ^a		Industrial Technology Services (ITS) ^a		Construction of Research Facilities (CRF)	
	Request	Enacted	Request	Enacted	Request	Enacted	Request	Enacted
2016	\$1,119.7		\$754.7		\$306.0		\$59.0	
2015	900.0	\$863.9	680.0	\$675.5	161.0	\$138.1	59.0	\$50.3
2014	928.3	850.0	693.7	651.0	174.5	143.0	60.0	56.0
2013 ^b	857.0	769.4	648.0	579.8	149.0	133.6	60.0	56.0
2012	1,001.1	750.8	678.9	567.0	237.6	128.4	84.6	55.4
2011 ^c	918.9	750.1	584.5	507.0	209.6	173.2	124.8	69.9
2010	846.1	856.6	534.6	515.0	194.6	194.6	116.9	147.0
2009 ^d	636.0	819.0	535.0	472.0	4.0	175.0	99.0	172.0
2009 ARRA ^e	-	580.0	-	220.0	-	-	-	360.0
2008 ^f	640.7	755.8	500.5	440.5	46.3	154.8	93.9	160.5
2007	581.3	676.9	467.0	434.4	46.3	183.8	68.0	58.7
2006 ^g	532.0	752.0	426.3	394.8	46.8	183.6	58.9	173.7
2005 ^h	521.5	699.2	422.9	378.8	39.2	247.9	59.4	72.5
2004 ⁱ	496.8	608.5	387.6	336.5	39.6	207.8	69.6	64.3
2003 ^j	577.5	707.5	402.2	357.1	120.8	284.8	54.5	65.7

Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

Notes: Dashes in cells in this table indicate no request or appropriation was made for that year. Accounts may not add to totals due to rounding.

- a. Funding for the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program was provided in the STRS account appropriation through FY2011; in FY2012, funding was requested in the ITS account appropriation.
- b. Enacted levels reflect the 1.877% rescission, 0.2% rescission, and the 5% sequester applied to 2013 annualized CR level.
- c. Enacted levels include 0.2% across-the-board rescission.
- d. Enacted levels for STRS appropriation include \$3.475 million in congressionally directed projects. The FY2009 amount for CRF appropriation includes \$44 million in congressionally directed projects and \$30 million for a competitive construction grant program.
- e. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) amount for CRF includes \$180 million for a competitive construction grant program for research science buildings. Not reflected above, ARRA also included a \$20 million transfer from the Department of Health and Human Services for standards-related research on electronic medical records and an expected \$10 million from a Department of Energy interagency agreement to help develop a comprehensive framework for a nationwide smart electrical grid.
- f. The enacted FY2008 level for STRS appropriations includes \$893,000 in congressionally directed projects. The enacted FY2008 level for CRF appropriations includes \$51.3 million in congressionally directed

projects and \$30 million for a new competitive construction grant program that was not requested by the President.

- g. Enacted levels reflect across-the-board rescissions enacted in P.L. 109-108, FY2006 Science, State, Justice, and Commerce Appropriations Act and in P.L. 109-148, FY2006 Defense Appropriations Act (\$9.7 million). Does not reflect MEP unobligated balances rescission of \$7 million. The amounts for STRS and for the Construction of Research Facilities appropriation include \$11.9 million and \$125.4 million for congressionally directed projects, respectively.
- h. Enacted levels reflect across-the-board rescissions enacted in P.L. 108-447, FY2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (\$9.5 million). Does not reflect ATP unobligated balances rescission of \$3.9 million. The amounts for STRS and for the Construction of Research Facilities appropriation include \$8.8 million and \$42.9 million for congressionally directed projects, respectively.
- i. Enacted levels reflect across-the-board rescissions enacted in the FY2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. 108-199 (\$6.6 million) and NIST's share of the Department of Commerce's unobligated balances rescission (\$13.0 million).
- j. Enacted levels reflect an across-the-board rescission enacted in P.L. 108-7 (\$4.6 million).

Appendix B. Requested and Enacted Appropriations for Selected NIST Programs

Table B-1. Requested and Enacted Appropriations for Selected NIST Programs
(FY2003-FY2015, in millions of current dollars)

Fiscal Year	Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership		Advanced Manufacturing Technology Consortia		Manufacturing Innovation Institutes Coordination		National Network for Manufacturing Innovation		Advanced Technology Program		Technology Innovation Program	
	Request	Enacted	Request	Enacted	Request	Enacted	Request	Enacted	Request	Enacted	Request	Enacted
2016	\$141.0		\$15.0		-		\$150.0		-		-	
2015	141.0	\$130.0	15.0	\$8.1	\$5.0	a	b	-	-	-	-	-
2014	153.1	128.0	21.4	15.0	-	-	b	-	-	-	-	-
2013 ^c	128.0	123.0	21.0	10.6	-	-	b	-	-	-	-	-
2012	142.6	128.4	12.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$75.0	-
2011 ^d	129.7	128.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	79.9	\$44.8
2010	124.7	124.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69.9	69.9
2009	2.0	110.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65.0
2008	46.3	89.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65.2
2007	46.3	104.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$79.1	-	-
2006 ^e	46.8	104.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	79.0	-	-
2005 ^f	39.2	107.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	140.4	-	-
2004 ^g	12.6	38.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$27.0	169.1	-	-
2003 ^h	12.9	105.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	107.9	178.8	-	-

Source: Department of Commerce and NIST budget documents, FY2003-FY2015; P.L. 113-235.

Notes: Empty cells in this table indicate no request or appropriation was made for that year.

- a. P.L. 113-235 states that, “To the extent provided for in advance by appropriations Acts, the Secretary may use not to exceed \$5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2015 through 2024 to carry out this section from amounts appropriated to the Institute for Industrial Technical Services.”
- b. The President requested \$1 billion in mandatory funding for the NNMI for FY2013; \$1 billion in mandatory funding for FY2014; and \$2.4 billion in mandatory funding for FY2015.
- c. Enacted levels reflect the 1.877% rescission, 0.2% rescission, and the 5% sequester applied to 2013 annualized CR level.
- d. Enacted levels include 0.2% across-the-board rescission
- e. Enacted levels reflect across-the-board rescissions enacted in P.L. 109-108, FY2006 Science, State, Justice, and Commerce Appropriations Act and in P.L. 109-148, FY2006 Defense Appropriations Act.
- f. Enacted levels reflect across-the-board rescissions enacted in P.L. 108-447, FY2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (\$9.5 million). Does not reflect ATP unobligated balances rescission of \$3.9 million.
- g. Enacted levels reflect across-the-board rescissions enacted in the FY2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. 108-199, and NIST’s share of the Department of Commerce’s unobligated balances rescission.
- h. Enacted levels reflect an across-the-board rescission enacted in P.L. 108-7.

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