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NASA Appropriations and Authorizations: A Fact Sheet

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Overview

Congressional deliberations about the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) often focus on the availability of funding. This fact sheet provides data on past and current NASA appropriations, as well as the President's budget request for FY2022 and congressional action on FY2022 appropriations and authorizations of appropriations.

Table 1 shows budget authority for NASA for FY2015-FY2021. Except where noted, the amounts shown include regular appropriations, supplemental appropriations, rescissions, transfers, and reprogramming. They are taken from NASA's congressional budget justifications for FY2017-FY2022.¹ Congressional budget justifications are available on the NASA budget website (<http://www.nasa.gov/news/budget/>) for the current year and for past years back to FY2002.

Table 2 shows FY2021 appropriations as enacted (before the transfers and reprogramming reflected in **Table 1**), the Administration's request for FY2022, and FY2022 appropriations recommended by the House Committee on Appropriations (H.R. 4505 as reported and H.Rept. 117-97). Additional information will be added as Congress continues to act on FY2022 appropriations and authorizations. Note that the NASA Authorization Act of 2021 (S. 1260, Title VI, Subtitle B) does not include authorizations of appropriations for NASA for FY2022.

A note on name changes: In FY2019, the Education account was renamed as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Engagement. Since the FY2019 budget request, the Trump and Biden Administrations have proposed renaming the Exploration account as Deep Space Exploration Systems. Enacted appropriations have so far retained the name Exploration. The Trump Administration budget requests for FY2019-FY2021 also proposed new names for the Space Technology and Space Operations accounts. Enacted appropriations retained the current names, which are also used in the Biden Administration budget request for FY2022.

Figure 1 shows NASA's total annual budget authority from the agency's establishment in FY1958 to FY2021, in both current dollars and inflation-adjusted FY2021 dollars.

¹ FY2016, FY2017, and FY2019 Education and STEM Engagement amounts are not shown in the FY2018, FY2019, and FY2021 congressional budget justifications and are instead taken from the explanatory statement for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113), *Congressional Record*, December 17, 2015, pp. H9741-H9743; the explanatory statement for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31), *Congressional Record*, May 3, 2017, pp. H3374-H3375; and the explanatory statement for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-93), *Congressional Record*, December 17, 2019, pp. H10969-H10971.

Table I. NASA Budget Authority, FY2015-FY2021

(in \$ millions)

	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
Science	\$5,243	\$5,584	\$5,762	\$6,212	\$6,887	\$7,143^a	\$7,301
Earth Science	1,784	1,927	1,908	1,921	1,931	1,972	2,000
Planetary Science	1,447	1,628	1,828	2,218	2,747	2,713	2,700
Astrophysics	731	762	783	850	1,191	1,306	1,356
James Webb Space Telescope	645	620	569	534	305	423	415
Heliophysics	636	647	675	689	713	725	751
Biological and Physical Sciences ^b	—	—	—	—	—	5	79
Aeronautics	642	634	656	685	725	784	829
Space Technology	600	686	687	760	927	1,100	1,100
Exploration	3,543	3,996	4,324	4,790	5,045	5,960	6,517
Exploration Systems Development	3,212	3,641	3,929	4,395	4,087	4,513	4,545
<i>Orion</i>	<i>1,190</i>	<i>1,270</i>	<i>1,330</i>	<i>1,350</i>	<i>1,350</i>	<i>1,407</i>	<i>1,404</i>
<i>Space Launch System</i>	<i>1,679</i>	<i>1,972</i>	<i>2,127</i>	<i>2,150</i>	<i>2,144</i>	<i>2,528</i>	<i>2,561</i>
<i>Exploration Ground Systems</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>399</i>	<i>472</i>	<i>895</i>	<i>593</i>	<i>578</i>	<i>580</i>
Exploration R&D	331	355	395	395	958	1,447	1,973
Space Operations	4,626	5,032	4,943	4,749	4,640	4,135	3,988
Space Shuttle	8	5	—	—	—	—	—
International Space Station	1,525	1,436	1,451	1,493	1,490	1,516	1,322
Space Transportation	2,254	2,668	2,589	2,346	2,110	1,746	1,873
Space and Flight Support	839	923	903	910	1,000	857	777
Commercial LEO Development	—	—	—	—	40	15	17
Education / STEM Engagement	119	115	100	100	110	120	127
Space Grant	40	40	40	40	44	48	51
EPSCoR	18	18	18	18	21	24	26
MUREP	32	32	32	32	33	36	38
Other	29	25	10	10	12	12	12
Safety, Security, & Mission Svcs.	2,755	2,772	2,769	2,827	2,755	2,913^c	2,937
Construction and EC&R	446	427	485^d	657^e	372	433	429
Inspector General	37	37	38	39	39	42	44
Total	18,010	19,285	19,762^d	20,817^e	21,500	22,629^{ac}	23,271

Sources: FY2015-FY2020 from NASA FY2017-FY2022 congressional budget justifications. FY2021 initial operating plan from NASA FY2022 congressional budget justification.

Notes: Except where noted, amounts include regular appropriations, supplemental appropriations, rescissions, transfers, and reprogramming. Some totals may not add because of rounding. R&D = Research and Development. LEO = Low Earth Orbit. STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. EPSCoR = Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research. MUREP = Minority University Research and Education Program. EC&R = Environmental Compliance and Remediation. n/s = not specified.

- Not adjusted to reflect rescission of \$70 million from prior year unobligated balances (Section 521(c)).
- Included in International Space Station before FY2021.
- Does not include additional \$60 million appropriated by the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136).
- Includes \$109 million in additional emergency funding from Section 540 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31) that is not shown in the NASA FY2019 congressional budget justification.
- Includes \$81 million in supplemental emergency funding from the Further Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements Act, 2018 (Division B of P.L. 115-123) that is not shown in the NASA FY2020 congressional budget justification.

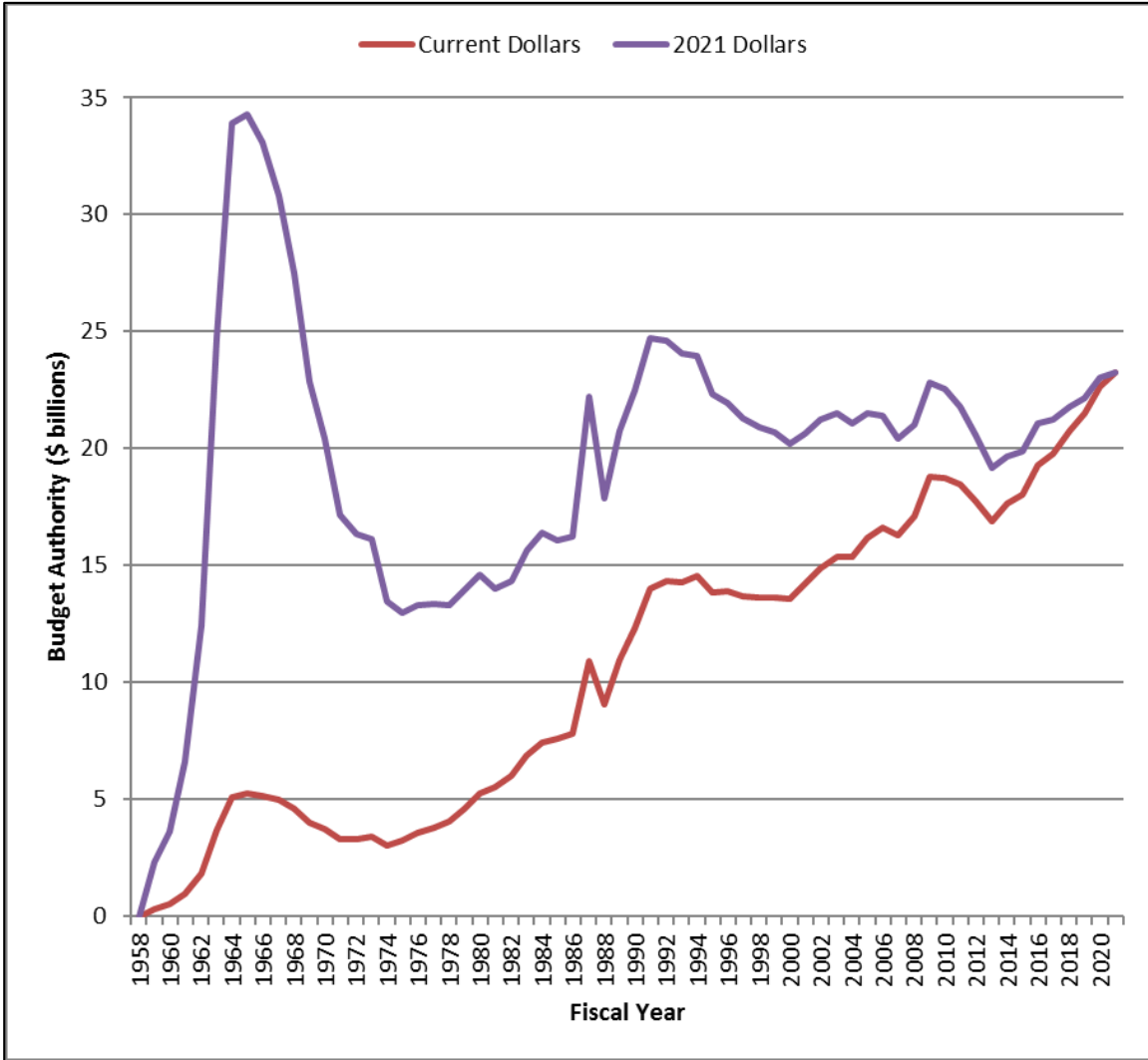
Table 2. NASA Appropriations, FY2022
(budget authority in \$ millions)

	FY2021 Enacted	FY2022 Appropriations		
		Request	House Cmte.	Senate Enacted
Science	\$7,301	\$7,931	\$7,970	
Earth Science	2,000	2,250	2,250	
Planetary Science	2,700	3,200	3,235	
Astrophysics	1,356	1,400	1,446	
James Webb Space Telescope	415	175	175	
Heliophysics	751	797	773	
Biological and Physical Sciences	79	109	90	
Aeronautics	829	915	935	
Space Technology	1,100	1,425	1,280	
Exploration / Deep Space Expl. Sys.	6,555	6,880	7,279	
Exploration Systems Development	4,583	4,484	4,733	
<i>Orion</i>	<i>1,407</i>	<i>1,407</i>	<i>1,407</i>	
<i>Space Launch System</i>	<i>2,586</i>	<i>2,487</i>	<i>2,636</i>	
<i>Exploration Ground Systems</i>	<i>590</i>	<i>590</i>	<i>690</i>	
Exploration R&D	1,973	2,397	2,547	
Space Operations	3,988	4,017	3,961	
International Space Station	n/s	1,328	n/s	
Space Transportation	n/s	1,772	n/s	
Space and Flight Support	n/s	817	n/s	
Commercial LEO Development	17	101	45	
STEM Engagement	127	147	147	
Space Grant	51	57	60	
EPSCoR	26	26	26	
MUREP	38	48	48	
Other	12	16	13	
Safety, Security, & Mission Services	2,937	3,049	3,030	
Construction and EC&R	390	390	390	
Inspector General	44	46	46	
Total	23,271	24,802	25,038	

Sources: FY2021 enacted: P.L. 116-260 and explanatory statement, *Congressional Record*, December 21, 2020, pp. H7944-H7947. FY2022 request: FY2022 NASA congressional budget justification. FY2022 House committee: H.R. 4505 as reported and H.Rept. 117-97.

Notes: Some totals may not add because of rounding. R&D = Research and Development. LEO = Low Earth Orbit. EPSCoR = Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research. MUREP = Minority University Research and Education Program. EC&R = Environmental Compliance and Remediation. n/s = not specified.

Figure I. NASA Funding, FY1958-FY2021



Sources: Compiled by CRS. FY1958-FY2008 from National Aeronautics and Space Administration, *Aeronautics and Space Report of the President: Fiscal Year 2008 Activities*, <http://history.nasa.gov/presrep2008.pdf>, Table D-1A. FY2009-FY2014 from NASA congressional budget justifications, FY2011-FY2016. FY2015-FY2021 as in **Table I**. Current dollars deflated to FY2021 dollars using GDP (chained) price index from President’s budget for FY2022, Historical Table 10.1, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/historical-tables/>.

Note: Transition quarter between FY1976 and FY1977 not shown. FY2020 amount does not include additional \$60 million appropriated by the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136).

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