

# Working with Federally Funded Research and Development Centers

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# Key Points

- Definition of an FFRDC
- Typical ways others work with FFRDCs
- The contractual mechanisms to perform each type of sponsored research
- Typical challenges of University and Lab Collaborations

# What are FFRDCs?

- Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) (FAR 35.017)

FFRDCs are intended to provide federal agencies with R&D capabilities that cannot be effectively met by the federal government or the private sector alone. FFRDCs are required to have a long-term strategic relationship with the federal agency that supports them.

Currently, 42 FFRDCs work in the fields of defense, energy, aviation, space, health and human services, and tax administration.

All FFRDCs are sponsored by government agencies with whom they work as strategic partners, but they can be privately administered by universities and other not-for-profit organizations.

In FY 2023, the total R&D expenditures for all FFRDCs totaled \$28.8B

- *The Department of Energy total R&D expenditures for FY 2023 totaled \$16.3B*

# FFRDC use beyond the Sponsoring Agency is anticipated



**FAR**

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Part 35

Subpart

Section



## 35.017-3 Using an FFRDC.

- (a) All work placed with the FFRDC must be within the purpose, mission, general scope of effort, or special competency of the FFRDC.
- (b) Where the use of the FFRDC by a nonsponsor is permitted by the sponsor, the sponsor shall be responsible for compliance with paragraph (a) of this subsection.
  - (1) The nonsponsoring agency shall provide the documentation required by [17.503\(e\)](#) to the sponsoring agency.
  - (2) When a D&F is required pursuant to [17.502-2\(c\)](#), the nonsponsoring agency shall prepare the D&F and provide the documentation required by [17.503\(e\)](#) to the sponsoring agency.
  - (3) When permitted by the sponsor, a Federal agency may contract directly with the FFRDC, in which case that Federal agency is responsible for compliance with part [6](#).

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# Who are the FFRDCs?

- NSF maintains the master FFRDC list for the federal government
- DOE (17) and DOD (10) have the most FFRDCs
- Other agencies sponsoring FFRDCs –
  - *DOD – Department of Defense*
  - *DOE – Dept of Energy*
  - *NIH – National Institute of Health*
  - *DHS – Dept of Homeland Security*
  - *NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration*
  - *FAA – Federal Aviation Administration*
  - *NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*
  - *USDA – US Food and Drug Administration*

# Comprehensive List

**NSF National Science Foundation**  
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

SEARCH  
NSF Web Site

HOME | FUNDING | AWARDS | DISCOVERIES | NEWS | PUBLICATIONS | **STATISTICS** | ABOUT | FastLane

**Statistics**

- Master List of FFRDCs
- General Notes
- Historical Notes
- Prior Lists of FFRDCs

**Survey**

- Federal Funds for R&D
- Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering
- R&D Expenditures at Universities and Colleges

**Science Resources Statistics**

- SRS Home
- About SRS
- Topics A to Z

## Federally Funded R&D Centers

### Master Government List

Information on this list is current as of April 2009. More recent updates are noted.  
Grouped by:

FFRDC | Sponsoring agency | Administrator type | Location | Activity type

- **[Aerospace Federally Funded Research and Development Center](#)**  
*Administrator:* The Aerospace Corporation  
*Location:* El Segundo, CA  
*Sponsor:* [Department of Defense](#), [Department of the Air Force](#)
- **[Ames Laboratory](#)**  
*Administrator:* Iowa State University of Science and Technology  
*Location:* Ames, IA  
*Sponsor:* [Department of Energy](#)
- **[Argonne National Laboratory](#)**  
*Administrator:* UChicago Argonne, LLC  
*Location:* Argonne, IL  
*Sponsor:* [Department of Energy](#)

**View notes**

# Where would a Research Administrator See References to FFRDCs?

- Research collaboration – university announcements or grant proposals that mention partnerships with FFRDCs for joint research projects
- Funding opportunities – university research offices might highlight FFRDCs in funding announcements, especially for grants and contracts available to academic institutions
- Agency publications – federal agency reports or documents may reference FFRDCs and their collaborations with universities
- User Facility resources and opportunities

# How do they intersect with the university researcher community

- FFDRCs may be operated, managed, and/or administered by universities, or privately organized not-for-profit corporations, through long-term Government contracts
- Universities may act as the "host" institution for the FFRDC, providing access to researchers, labs, and infrastructure to conduct specialized research products
- Subcontract with laboratory technical staff to perform research for sponsored research projects where the university is the prime recipient or vice versa
- User Facility Resources (e.g. DOE's HPC resources mentioned in the keynote)
- Student and Research Opportunities

# What are some common confusions that come up in this research relationship?

- Agency Approval
- Authorizations to start work & Period of Performance
- Financial Accounting-proposal estimates and actual work
- GOGO vs. GOCO
- Agreements
- Site Access

# Upcoming changes and suggestions to ease the confusion

- Recent changes to DOE Orders for SPPs (as an example)
- Broader use of standard Current & Pending and ORCID registrations on FOAs
- Broader acceptance of the Uniform Guidance