To: Massachusetts Legislative Directors, Education LAs and Science LAs

From: **Boston University** – Jennifer Grodsky and Jessica Wong, Federal Relations
Harvard University – Suzanne Day, Kara Haas, and Peter DeYoe, Office of Federal Relations
Massachusetts Institute of Technology – David Goldston, Philip Lippel, Hannah Frye, and Tom Giancola, Washington Office
Tufts University – Mary Jeka and Rocco DiRico, Government and Community Relations

Date: March 26, 2025

Re: Fiscal Year 2026 Programmatic Requests

To support your programmatic requests to the Appropriations Committee, please find attached the FY 2026 funding priorities for Massachusetts research universities. The Commonwealth is a national leader in research and education in no small part because of the dedication of its Congressional delegation. We are grateful for your continued, strong support and partnership as we work together to support innovation and strengthen America's competitive advantage.

History bears out that investments in students and scientific research are some of the best, most profitable, and most important commitments the federal government makes. In Massachusetts, we understand the power of the knowledge economy and the economic, social, and security benefits that our innovation ecosystem broadly shares. For that reason, we encourage you to prioritize funding for agencies and programs that support college access and affordability and that advance scientific research and innovation in cutting edge fields ranging from gene therapies and RNA-based treatments to improved AI applications and quantum computing. These are all areas in which the Commonwealth is uniquely positioned to lead and that can make a real difference for our communities.

We also appreciate your willingness to stand up against policies that would disrupt or cut vital research funding, such as the broad funding freeze, the more targeted stop work and termination orders on specific research projects, the cancellation or postponement of grant reviews, and the cap on the National Institutes of Health's research support, which would devastate the biomedical enterprise – and the many waiting for a cure – in Massachusetts and across the country. Individually, these disruptions slow discovery and innovation and threaten to dismantle the teams of scientists, students, and staff that are working to address the country's most pressing challenges; together, they are threatening to hollow out our future scientific workforce and cede global leadership in science and technology to competitor nations. Already many schools are having to reduce the number of graduate students in STEM fields being admitted for the coming academic year, diminishing the future of science.

The federal-university partnership that is built on the investments in these programs is a cornerstone of the U.S. competitive advantage. Outcompeting our global rivals will require robust commitments to strengthen that partnership. With strong commitments from the federal government, we are certain that Massachusetts will continue to lead the world through education and innovation. We appreciate your continued support and all your hard work on behalf of our institutions, students, faculty, and staff. Thank you for considering these requests, which we will

also submit jointly through your respective forms and processes. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us with questions or for more information.

LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

National Institutes of Health (NIH)
FY 2026 Request: At least $51.3 billion for NIH
FY 2025 Enacted: $47.08 billion
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC)
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), André Carson (D-IN), and Suzan DelBene (D-WA)

More than 200 Massachusetts institutions successfully competed for almost $3.5 billion in funding from NIH in FY2024, making it an important driver of the economy. According to the 2025 United for Medical Research study, every dollar invested in NIH generates more than $2.56 in economic activity and more than 407,782 jobs nationwide. In addition to the economic benefits, researchers at our universities are developing new treatments and cures for diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and mental health disorders to improve human health and reduce the personal and economic toll of these diseases. NIH also provides training support to students and early career biomedical researchers. Our request would allow the agency to keep pace with inflation as well as ensure real growth in NIH-funded research.

Advanced Research Projects Agency – Health (ARPA-H)
FY 2026 Request: $1.7 billion
FY 2025 Enacted: $1.5 billion

ARPA-H seeks to transform health care by bringing together a variety of scientific disciplines to tackle health problems that require research breakthroughs, serving as an important complement to NIH, which focuses on discovery research. Modeled on DARPA, ARPA-H invests in high-risk, high-reward research using nimble contracting approaches and bold, cross-disciplinary milestone-driven projects to accelerate the development of health solutions that will be accessible to diverse populations. We support $1.7 billion for ARPA-H, which will allow the agency to continue its work on important initiatives, like the Sprint for Women's Health that is led by the Investor Catalyst Hub in Cambridge. It also will ensure support for ongoing efforts, like the MIT project to develop new treatments for metabolic disorders, and the Harvard-led effort involving 25 states to combat antibiotic resistance.

Department of Education, Pell Grants
FY 2026 Request: $7,595 Maximum Award
FY 2025 Enacted: $7,395
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Reps Seth Magaziner (D-RI) and Maxine Waters (D-CA)

Although Congress made a significant investment in the Pell Grant program in FY2022 and 2023, we encourage you to continue to work toward the doubling of the maximum award for students with the most financial need. As you understand, the Pell Grant program is the cornerstone of the federal student aid portfolio, providing more than $471 million to help more than 97,000 students

attend Massachusetts colleges and universities. Our universities supplement the Pell Grant and other federal aid programs by providing students with our own institutional aid. Through these federal and institutional investments, we can maintain affordability and outstanding educational quality.

Department of Education, Federal Work Study (FWS)
FY 2026 Request: $1.31 billion
FY 2024 Enacted: $1.23 billion
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sens. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA)

Federal Work Study helps students succeed in college and prepare for the world of work. Massachusetts universities participate in campus-based student aid programs at a very high level, with nearly 24,000 students in Massachusetts receiving FWS in the 2022-23 academic year.

Department of Education, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
FY 2026 Request: $966 million
FY 2024 Enacted: $910 million
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sens. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA)

Campus-based student aid programs, like Federal Work Study and SEOG, help students by leveraging federal dollars with universities' own aid. SEOG awards are available to students with "exceptional need" and are an important complement to the Pell Grant program. More than 43,000 students in Massachusetts received SEOG during the 2022-23 academic year.

Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
FY 2026 Request: $853.9 million
FY 2024 Enacted: $793.1 million
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sens. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Reps. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Jared Huffman (D-CA)

Investing in peer-reviewed education research activities at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) results in innovations in both teaching and learning, improving classrooms around the nation. IES is the only federal agency exclusively devoted to funding educational research and is playing a critical role in understanding learning loss due to the pandemic. It is essential that Congress ensure proper staffing and agency infrastructure to maintain this vital national resource.

Department of Education, International Education and Foreign Language (IFLE)
FY 2026 Request: $91 million
FY 2024 Enacted: $85.7 million
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Todd Young (R-IN)

The Title VI/ Fulbright-Hays International Education and Foreign Language (IFLE) programs support training in critical foreign languages, educational outreach activities for K-12 schools, and curriculum development for the multidisciplinary study of regions around the world, including Eurasia, Africa, and the Middle East. In an increasingly interconnected world, these international

education programs are an essential means for Massachusetts to develop a globally engaged citizenry. As the IFLE portfolio is reassigned within the Department of Education, it is critical that Congress ensure these vital programs continue.

Department of Education, Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN)
FY 2026 Request: $28.6 million
FY 2024 Enacted: $23.5 million

GAANN fellowships provide financial support for Massachusetts graduate students pursuing doctoral education in fields that are critical to national priorities, including: biology; chemistry; computer and information sciences; engineering; mathematics; nursing; physics; and educational assessment, evaluation and research.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES

National Science Foundation (NSF)
FY 2026 Request: $9.9 billion
FY 2025 Enacted: $9.06 billion
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA)
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Reps. Joe Neguse (D-CO) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

NSF is a major sponsor of basic research in the physical sciences and engineering, supporting work across scientific disciplines with the potential to expand the frontiers of knowledge and support discovery. NSF also supports STEM education and training through K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, and informal settings, like libraries and museums, and seeks to grow the future STEM workforce. In FY2024, NSF provided nearly 1,144 competitive awards in Massachusetts, totaling more than $554 million. Congress recognized the enormous role NSF plays in the American innovation ecosystem when it enacted the CHIPS & Science Act (P.L. 177-167), authorizing historic funding increases to meet the societal challenges of our time. However, the agency's budget was cut by 8% in FY24. Providing at least $9.9 billion will restore the funding cuts and allow the agency to fund additional meritorious proposals, including through the Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships Directorate's use-inspired research in critical fields like AI, machine learning, and robotics.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Science account
FY 2026 Request: $9 billion
FY 2025 Enacted: $7.33 billion
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Reps. Judy Chu (D-CA), Glenn Ivey (D-MD), and Don Bacon (R-NE)

NASA is a key federal contributor to advancing research in the physical sciences on Earth and in space, and NASA-funded climate research is critical to understanding our planet. Massachusetts institutions continue to play key roles in major NASA missions. Researchers seek funding through the Science Mission Directorate's pool of grants, which are divided across the Directorate's four discipline-specific Divisions and the Space Grant Program to encourage space education. According to the agency's most recent fiscal year data, NASA provided educational institutions in Massachusetts with more than $52 million.

DEFENSE

Department of Defense (DOD) Basic (6.1) Research
FY 2026 Request: $2.79 billion
FY 2024 Enacted: $2.63 billion

Our institutions support strong investments that allow for at least six-percent growth in basic research, or 6.1, programs, within the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Defense-wide, including those program elements that support extramural research, fellowships, and partnerships across a wide variety of scientific fields from biomedicine to critical technology areas like AI and biotechnology. We support sustained investments in the University Research Initiatives programs, the Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative, which supports teams of faculty conducting research in high priority fields that cross typical scientific disciplines, and the National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowships program, which provides fellowships for doctoral students pursuing a degree of interest to the DOD. We also support the restoration of the Minerva Initiative, a research program that deepens understanding of social, cultural, and political forces of strategic importance, that was eliminated by the Administration.

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)
FY 2026 Request: $4.37 billion
FY 2024 Enacted: $4.12 billion

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) funds high-risk, high-reward research that can lead to innovative applications for the warfighter. DARPA is known for its willingness to fund ambitious research, leading to game-changing technologies such as GPS, automated voice recognition, and the Internet.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES

Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science
FY 2026 Request: $9.5 billion
FY 2025 Enacted: $8.2 billion
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sens. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Reps. Bill Foster (D-IL), Randy Weber (R-TX), Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM), and Nicholas LaLota (R-NY)

The DOE Office of Science is a key sponsor of discovery-based and use-inspired basic research in fields including physics, chemistry, materials science, environmental science, advanced scientific computing, biology, and applied mathematics. Massachusetts universities and scientific organizations received more than $116 million in DOE Office of Science funding in fiscal year 2024. Massachusetts scientists also take advantage of world-class user facilities at the ten DOE National Laboratories funded through the Office of Science. Congress recognized the importance of the Office of Science in the CHIPS and Science Act, and an investment of $9.5 billion will ensure the Office has the resources it needs to begin to support its mission priorities.

DOE Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E)
FY 2026 Request: not less than $500 million
FY 2025 Enacted: $460 million

ARPA-E supports early-stage energy technologies with transformational potential to lessen our reliance on energy imports, reduce energy-related emissions such as greenhouse gases, and improve energy efficiency. The request would allow the agency to continue its work on the technologies needed to improve the management and disposal of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel and enhance the resilience, reliability, and security of the energy infrastructure. There are currently 51 active ARPA-E awards in the Commonwealth.

INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Science and Technology
FY 2026 Request: $876 million
FY 2025 Enacted: $758.1 million

EPA's Science and Technology (S&T) programs provide the foundation for credible decision-making to safeguard human health and ecosystems from environmental pollutants. EPA supports research in several areas, including air quality, chemical safety, climate change, water, and homeland security, among others.

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
FY 2026 Request: $225 million
FY 2025 Enacted: $207 million
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI)
Dear Colleague: Generally circulated by Reps. Dina Titus (D-NV) and Mike Carey (R-OH)

NEH provides support for humanities research, education, preservation, and public programs in areas such as history, preserving endangered languages and cultures, and literature. NEH programs stimulate creativity and innovation, helping us better understand the social and international dimensions of complex questions, as well as enhancing the quality of life for MA residents. Over the last five years, Massachusetts civic organizations, historical societies, museums, filmmakers, and universities have successfully competed for more than 250 NEH-funded grants.

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
FY 2026 Request: $225 million
FY 2025 Enacted: $207 million

NEA provides support for the public to participate in and engage with the arts across a wide variety of media and programs, including exhibits, concerts, readings, and other performances. This commitment to the arts – through state, local, and public-private partnerships – shares the benefits of these programs with every district in every state. From FY 2019 to 2023, the NEA distributed more than $34.4 million in grants in Massachusetts.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) - Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)

FY2026 Request: $500 million
FY2025 Enacted: $445.2 million

AFRI is the leading organization for competitive research grants in agricultural sciences. Massachusetts institutions play key roles in grant programs that support increased food production, improvement of food security, and enhancing human nutrition. Increased funding for this program will provide additional grant opportunities to continue this work and train the next generation of the agricultural research workforce.