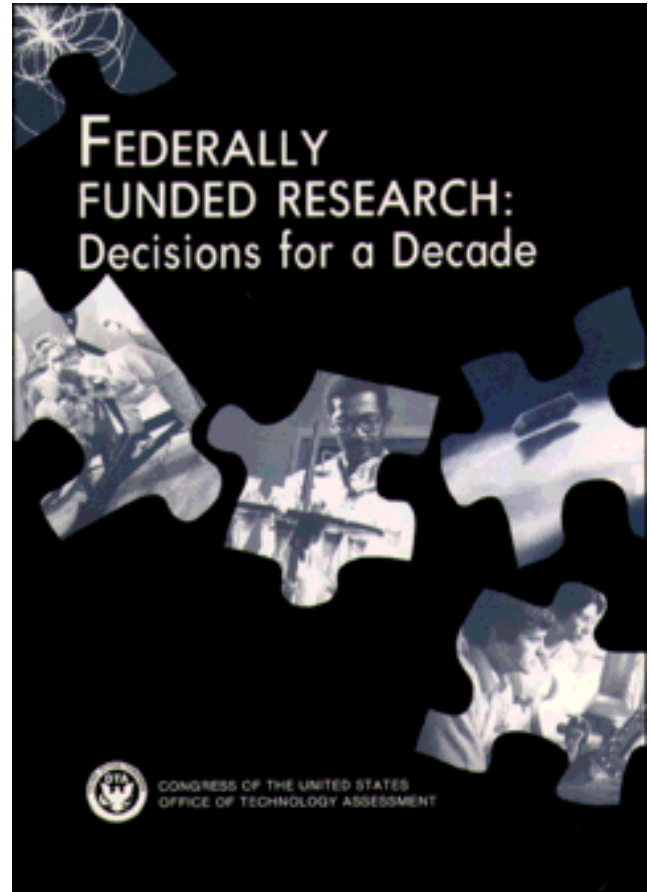


*Federally Funded Research: Decisions for
a Decade*

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Foreword

The Nation relies on federally funded research to address many national objectives. With global competition, changing student demographics, rising demands for research funds, and the prospect of constricted budgets, Congress and the executive branch must make difficult choices in supporting U.S. science and engineering. The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology asked OTA to examine the Federal research system—a conglomeration of many separate systems that sponsor, oversee, and perform research—and the challenges that it will face in the 1990s.

Given the exceptional history, strength, and character of U.S. research, there will always be more opportunities than can be funded, more deserving researchers competing than can be sustained, and more institutions seeking to expand than the prime sponsor—the Federal Government—can fund. The objective for government, then, is to ensure continued funding for a full portfolio of first-rate research and a high-caliber research work force to assure long-term scientific progress. This report analyzes what OTA identifies as four pressing challenges for the research system in the 1990s: setting priorities in funding, understanding trends in research expenditures, preparing human resources for the future research work force, and supplying appropriate data for ongoing research decisionmaking. Managing the Federal research system requires more than funding; it means devising ways to retain the diversity and creativity that have distinguished U.S. contributions to scientific knowledge.

The advisory panel, workshop participants, reviewers, and other contributors to this study were instrumental in defining the key issues and providing a range of perspectives on them. OTA thanks them for their commitment of energy and sense of purpose. Their participation does not necessarily represent endorsement of the contents of this report, for which OTA bears sole responsibility.



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