

SCIENCE PHILANTHROPY INDICATORS REPORT 2026

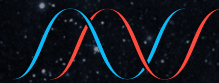
France A. Córdova, Kate E. Lowry, Chris Martin, and Bob Conn
July 22, 2026



SCIENCE
PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE

Our Mission

**To advance scientific
discovery through
visionary philanthropy.**



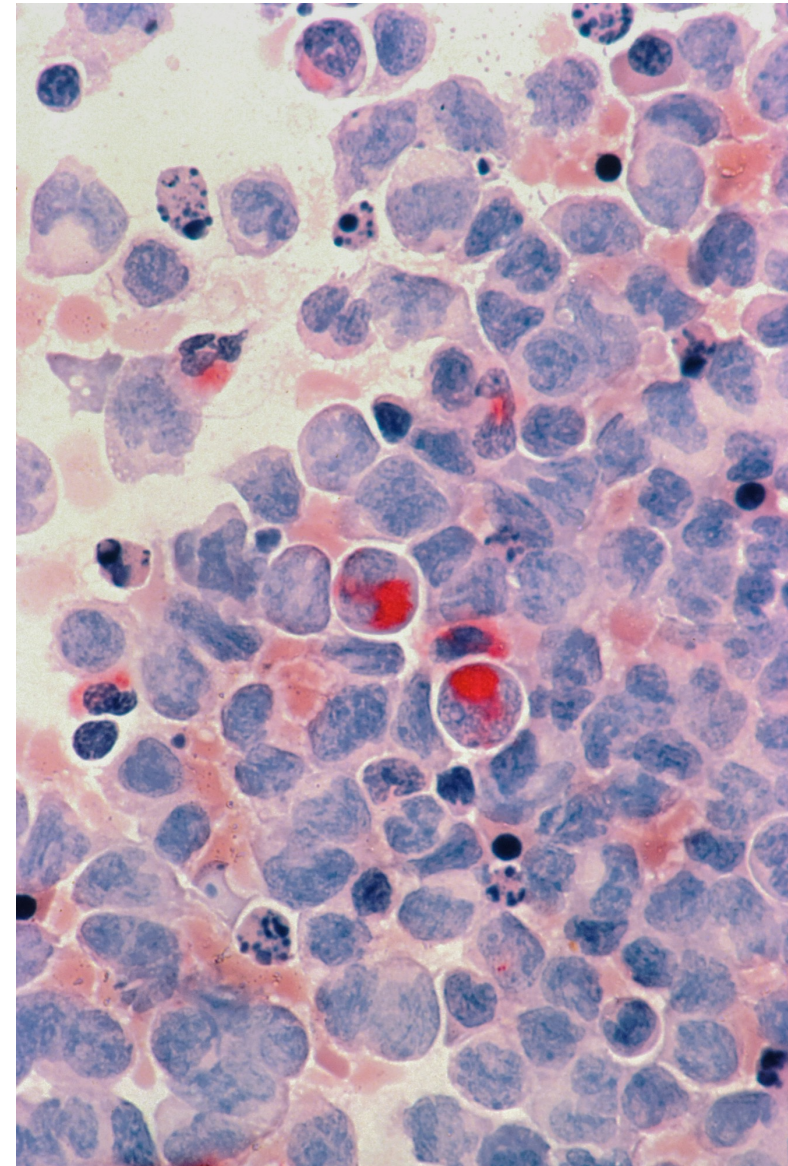
SCIENCE
PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE

About Us

WHO WE ARE

The Science Philanthropy Alliance is the world's first and longest-standing organization dedicated to advising philanthropists on giving to discovery science.

Founded in 2014 by six forward-looking funders, the Alliance has grown into a vibrant nonpartisan network of 50 member organizations and a global community of funders, scientists, and advisors committed to advancing discovery for the benefit of humanity.



CURRENT ALLIANCE MEMBERS

SCIENCE
PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE

Allen Family
Philanthropies

RITA ALLEN
FOUNDATION

Fondation
Azrieli
Foundation

bi[o]hub

Sergey Brin
Family Foundation

The Brinson Foundation

Brown Science
Foundation

BURROUGHS
WELLCOME
FUND

CIRCLE OF SERVICE
FOUNDATION
Supporting great organizations to enhance community,
opportunity and well-being

Shurl and Kay
Curci Foundation

Dalio Philanthropies

Dana
Foundation

DCH
FOUNDATION

DORIS DUKE
FOUNDATION

Fund for Science
and Technology

Gates Foundation

HEISING-SIMONS
FOUNDATION

LYDA HILL
PHILANTHROPIES

THE
KAVLI
FOUNDATION

W. M. KECK
FOUNDATION

LASKER
FOUNDATION

LEINWEBER
FOUNDATION

LÉON LEVY
FOUNDATION

MANTON
FOUNDATION

GORDON AND BETTY
MOORE
FOUNDATION

Mussallem
CHD Alliance

NOMIS
FOUNDATION
Creating the Spark

the David &
Lucile Packard
FOUNDATION

Pew

PREBYS
FOUNDATION

RESEARCH
CORPORATION
for SCIENCE
ADVANCEMENT

rwjf robert wood johnson
foundation

SALL FAMILY
FOUNDATION

Schmidt Sciences

Shanahan
Family
Foundation

SIEGEL
FAMILY
ENDOWMENT

SIM NS
FOUNDATION

ALFRED P. SLOAN
FOUNDATION

JOHN TEMPLETON
FOUNDATION

TEMPLETON
World Charity Foundation

WALDER
FOUNDATION

W
wellcome

W
WINN FAMILY
FOUNDATION

WoodNext
Foundation

Anonymous (3)

Why Discovery Science?

BREAKTHROUGHS BEGIN WITH DISCOVERY

Discovery science asks fundamental questions about how our world works and enables breakthroughs that transform our health, technology, and lives.



What We Do

OUR ADVISORY SERVICES

GUIDANCE

Personalized guidance to help funders clarify their vision and turn it into meaningful action.

ANALYSIS

Rigorous research and broad sector knowledge to help donors cut through complexity and answer key questions.

STRATEGY

Actionable strategies that help donors determine not just what to fund, but how.

CONNECTION

A unique network of science experts, institutions, and funders to help donors bring their vision to life.

Alliance Membership

FOSTERING A COMMUNITY OF SCIENCE PHILANTHROPISTS



Field Leadership

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF DISCOVERY SCIENCE



Stanford SOCIAL INNOVATION^{Review}

Informing and inspiring leaders of social change

Philanthropy & Funding

Three Priorities for Science Philanthropy

How philanthropy can help sustain scientific discovery in a changing research landscape.

By **France Córdova** | Jun. 17, 2025

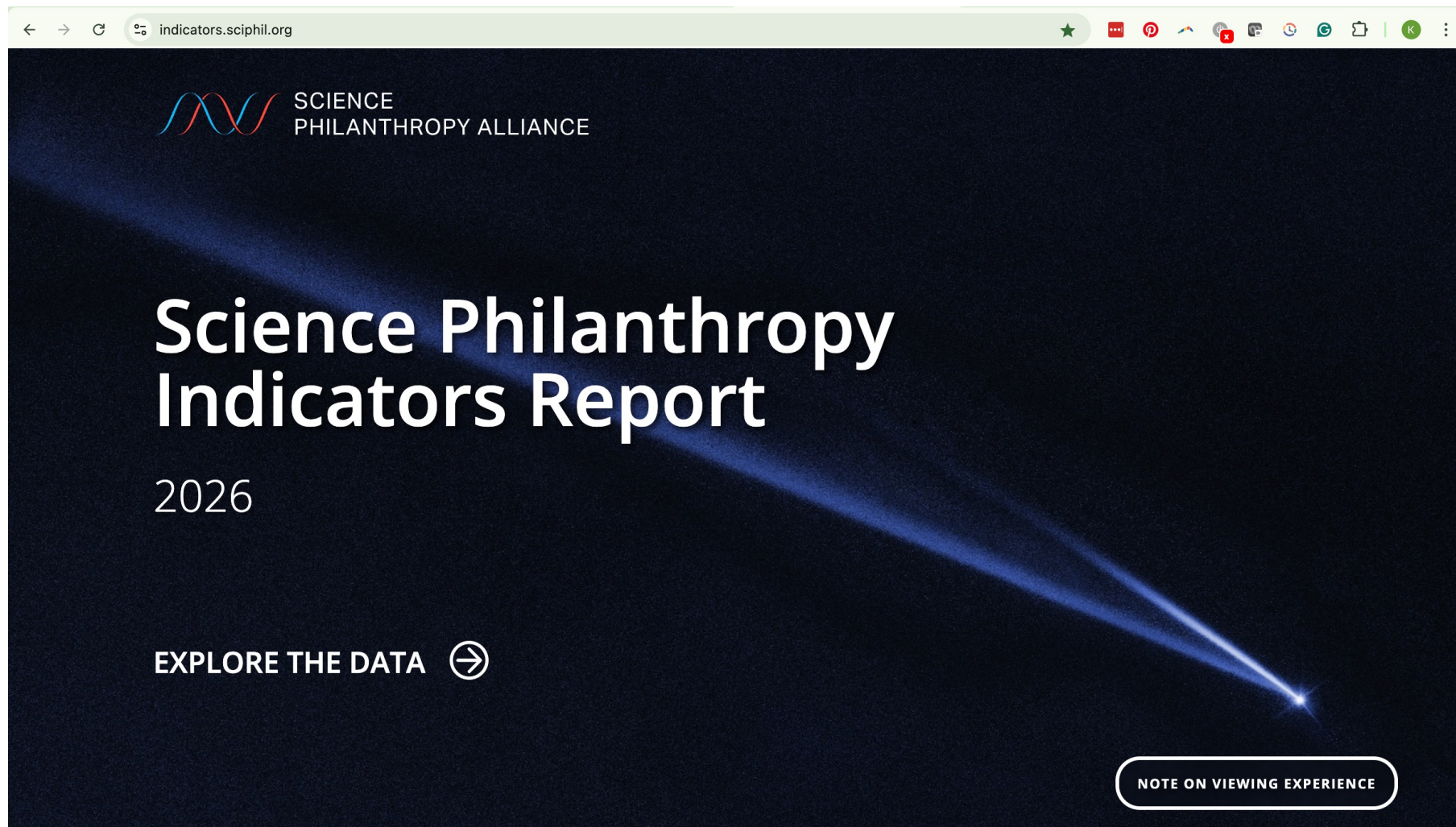


(Illustration by Peter Grant)

In March 2025, US President Donald Trump penned a [public letter](#) to Michael Kratsios, his incoming director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, outlining a vision to “usher in the Golden Age of American Innovation.” The letter asks, “How can we ensure that scientific progress and technological innovation fuel economic growth and better the lives of all Americans?”

As a former director of the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and university president, and current president of the nonprofit philanthropic advisory the Science Philanthropy Alliance, I’ve spent much of my career focused on that very question. The ambition is worthy. Yet it arrives at a moment of deep uncertainty for scientific enterprise in the United States.





Access the interactive report at: indicators.sciphil.org

A Collaboration between the Science Philanthropy Alliance and the UC San Diego Frontiers in Science & Innovation Program



Chris L. Martin

President
Explorative Science Foundation



Kate E. Lowry

Strategy Director
Science Philanthropy Alliance



Robert W. Conn

Former President and CEO
The Kavli Foundation



France A. Córdova

President
Science Philanthropy Alliance

Key Findings

\$18.3B

The amount of current philanthropic funding
for basic and applied R&D in 2024

The federal government is the largest research funder at universities and nonprofits, totaling \$63.6B (50%) in 2024.

\$8.8B

The amount of legacy philanthropic funding
for basic and applied R&D in 2024

Estimated philanthropic support for R&D expenditures is \$27.0B (21%), with \$18.3B in current and \$8.8B in legacy philanthropy.

\$21.2B

The amount of research expenditures self-
funded by universities in 2024

Universities self-funded an additional \$21.2B (17%) through other non-philanthropic revenue sources.

We project federal funding at universities and nonprofits to be \$59.9B in 2025 and \$60.4B in 2026. If the 2027 President's Budget were enacted, federal funding would further drop by 23%.

Key Findings

COMPUTER AND
INFORMATION SCIENCES

SOCIAL SCIENCES

LIFE SCIENCES

MATHEMATICS AND
STATISTICS

The science fields that have grown the most in
support over the last decade

46%

The percentage of graduate students in the
U.S. who are international

58%

The percentage of postdocs in the U.S. who are
international

Most science R&D expenditures (74%) at universities are for the life sciences, totaling \$66.8B in 2024.

An additional \$19.3B is for engineering R&D at universities.

The fields that have grown the most are computer sciences, life sciences, social sciences, and mathematics and statistics.

The federal government supports 25% of doctoral students and nearly 50% of postdocs in science and engineering.

Across all science and engineering fields, 46% of graduate students and 58% of postdocs in the U.S. are international.

Key Findings



California, New York, and Texas: States with the most university R&D and graduate students and postdocs in science and engineering

California, New York, and Texas have the most university R&D and graduate students and postdocs in science & engineering.



China: The most overall R&D funding, including by business

China surpassed the U.S. in 2024 in terms of the most R&D expenditures (adjusted for purchasing power parity).



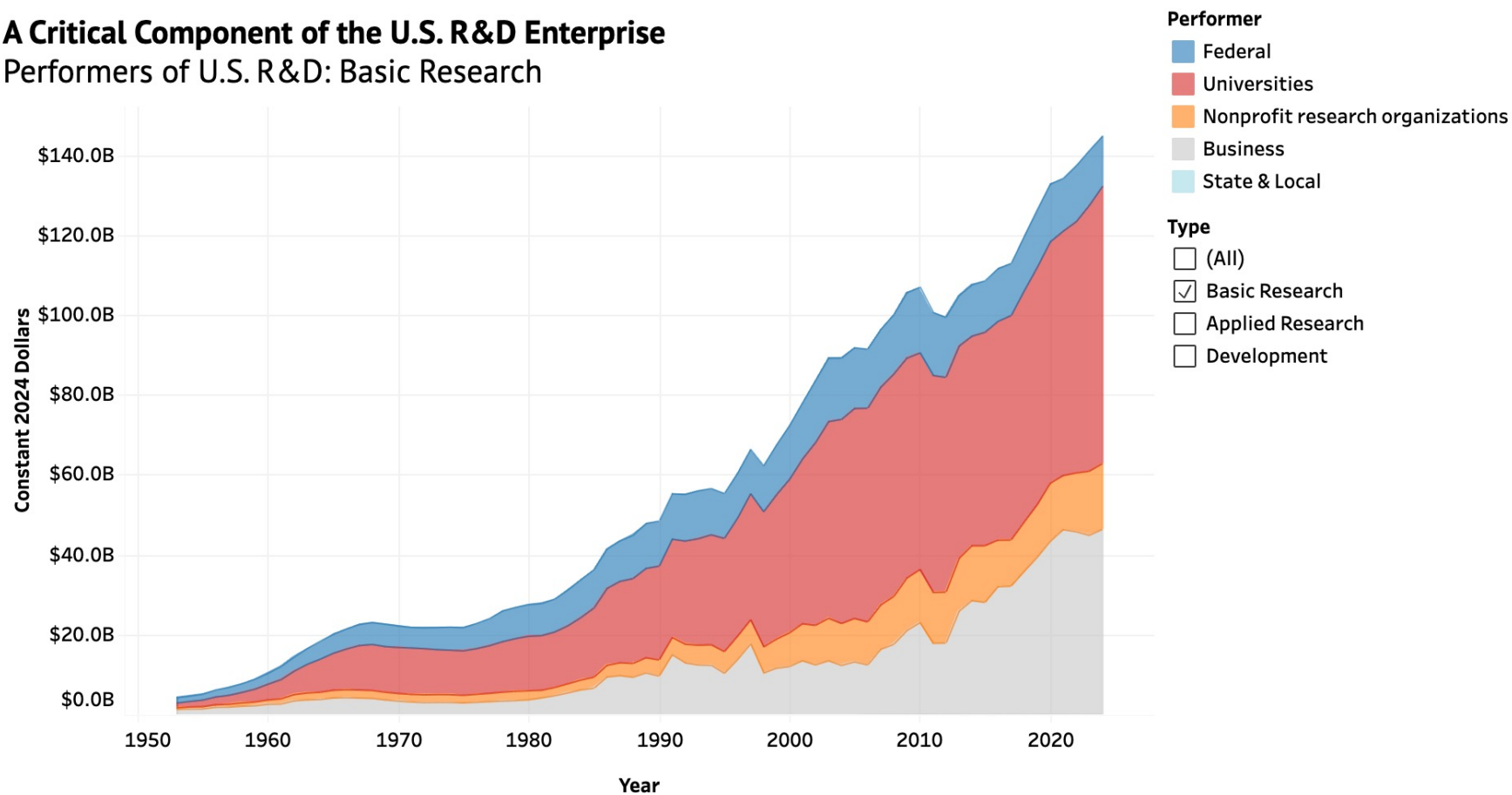
U.S.: The most R&D funded by government and higher education and nonprofits

The U.S. ranks first in terms of R&D performed by the higher education sector and R&D funded by government and by higher education and nonprofits, which includes philanthropy.

Switzerland has the most basic research expenditures as a percentage of GDP, followed by Korea, Austria, and Denmark.

A Critical Component of the U.S. R&D Enterprise

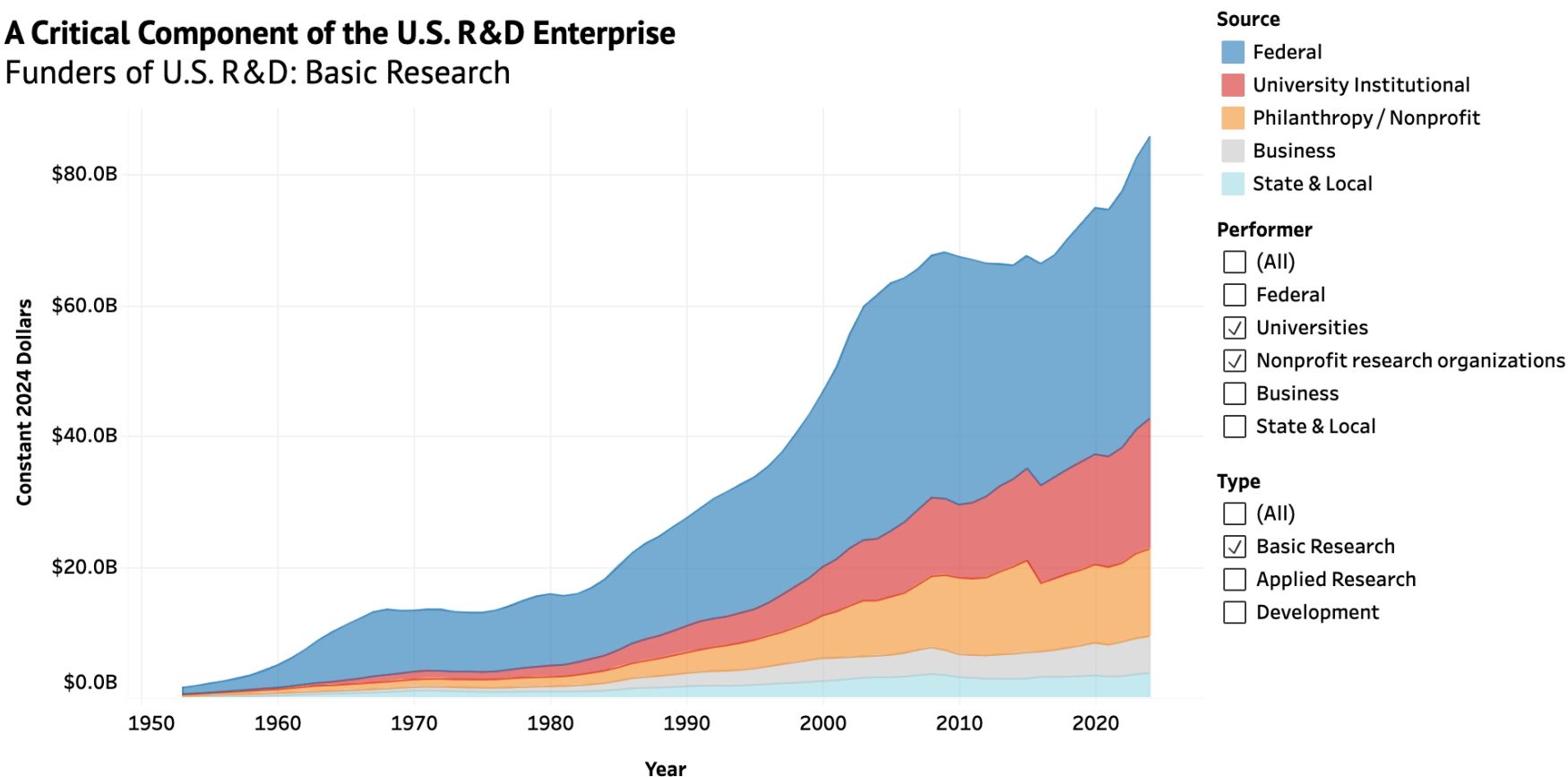
Performers of U.S. R&D: Basic Research



Science Philanthropy Indicators Report 2026. Science Philanthropy Alliance. Data Source: National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. 2026. National Patterns of R&D Resources: 2023–24 Data Update. NSF 26-313. Alexandria, VA: U.S. National Science Foundation. Available at <https://ncses.nsf.gov/data-collections/national-patterns/2023-2024>

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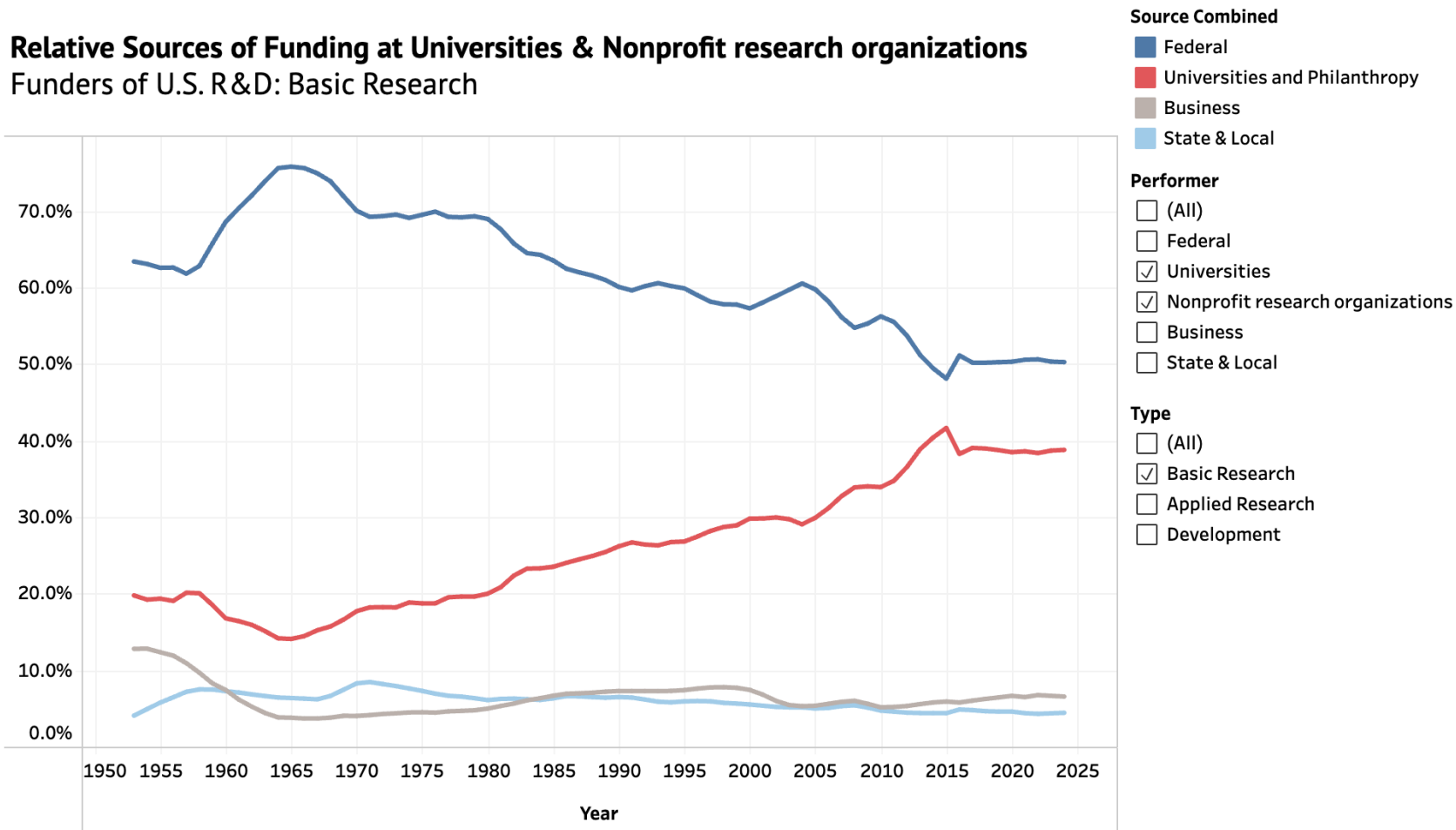
Funders of U.S. R&D: Basic Research



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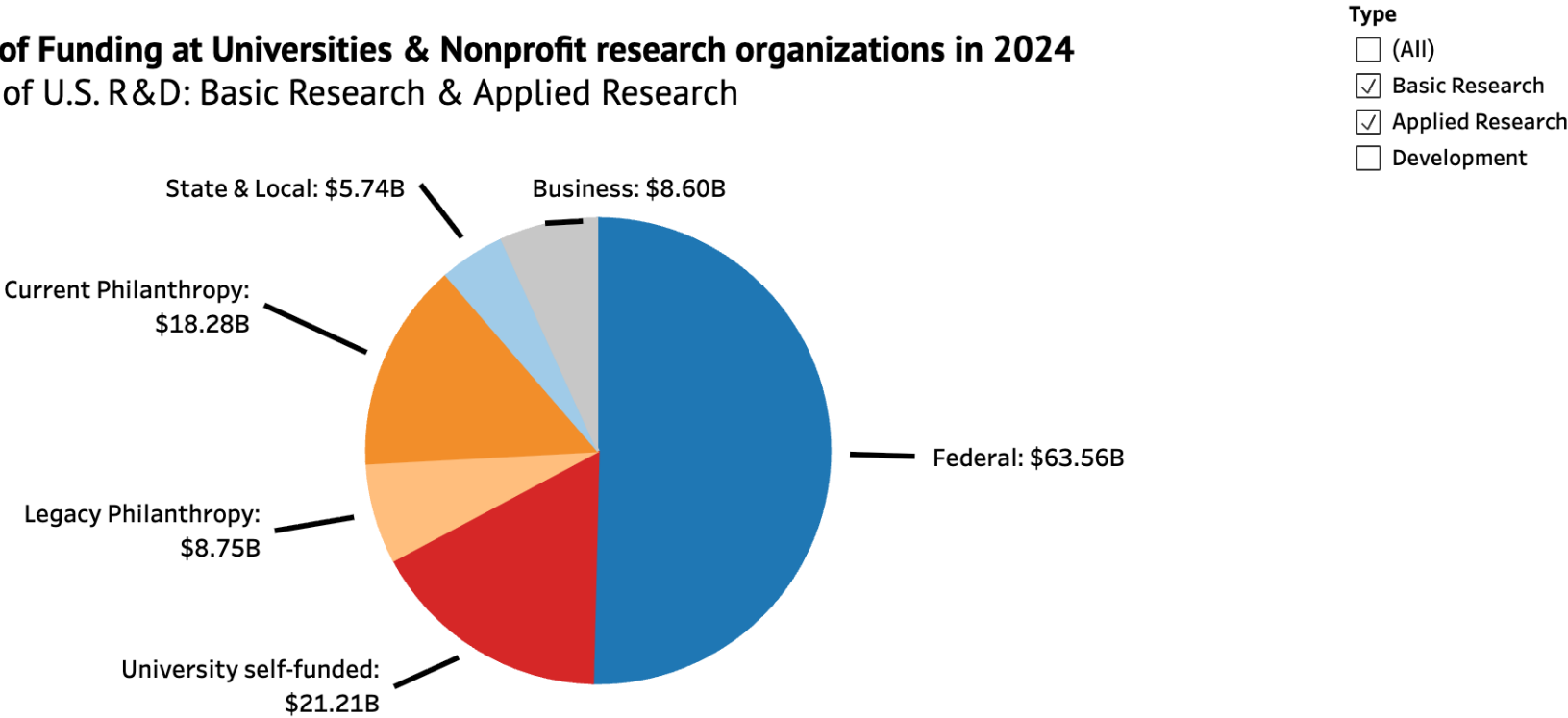
Relative Sources of Funding at Universities & Nonprofit research organizations

Funders of U.S. R&D: Basic Research



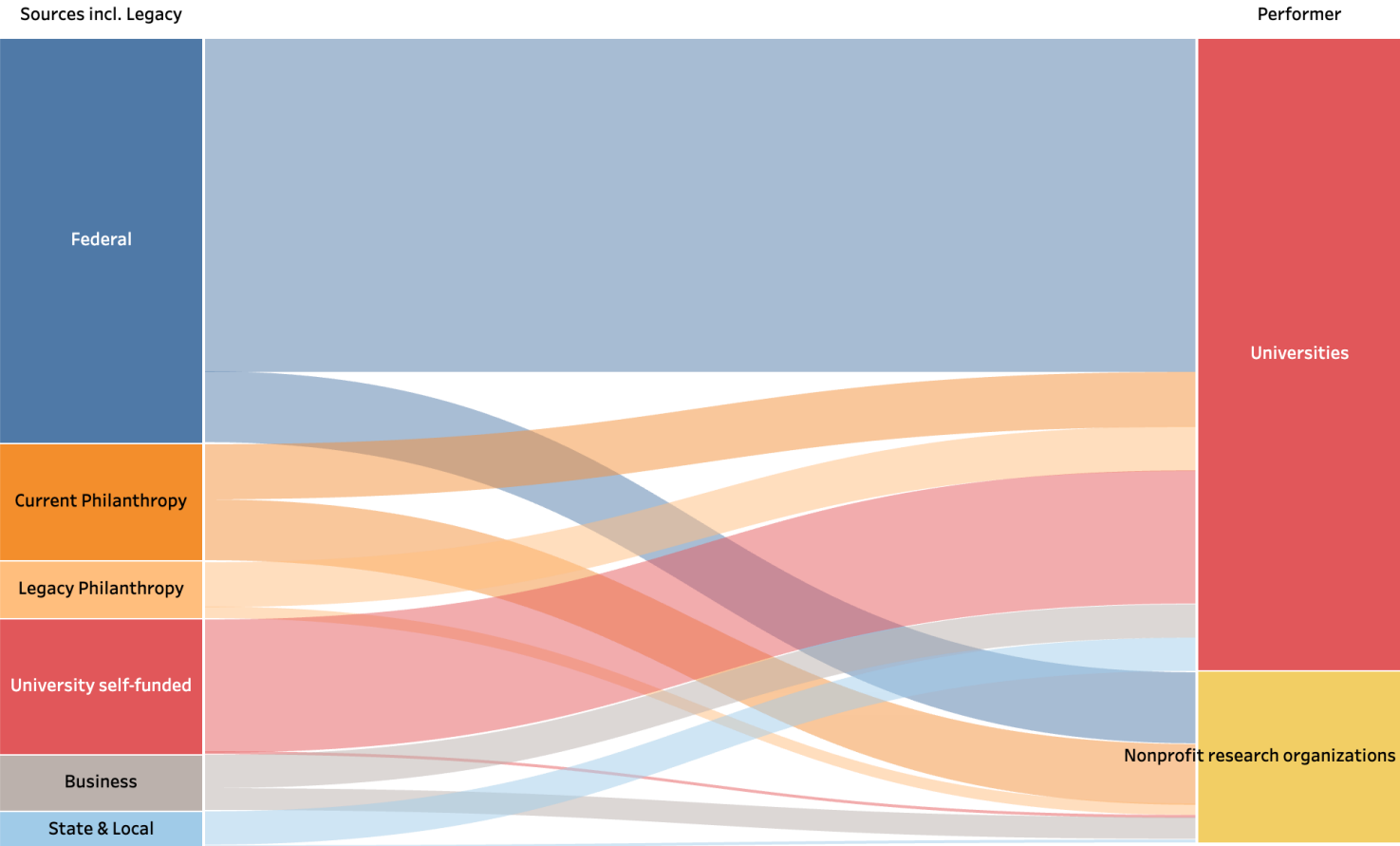
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Sources of Funding at Universities & Nonprofit research organizations in 2024
Funders of U.S. R&D: Basic Research & Applied Research



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Note: This figure is adapted to estimate “legacy philanthropy” at both universities and non-profit research organizations as Conn et al. (2023) did for universities.

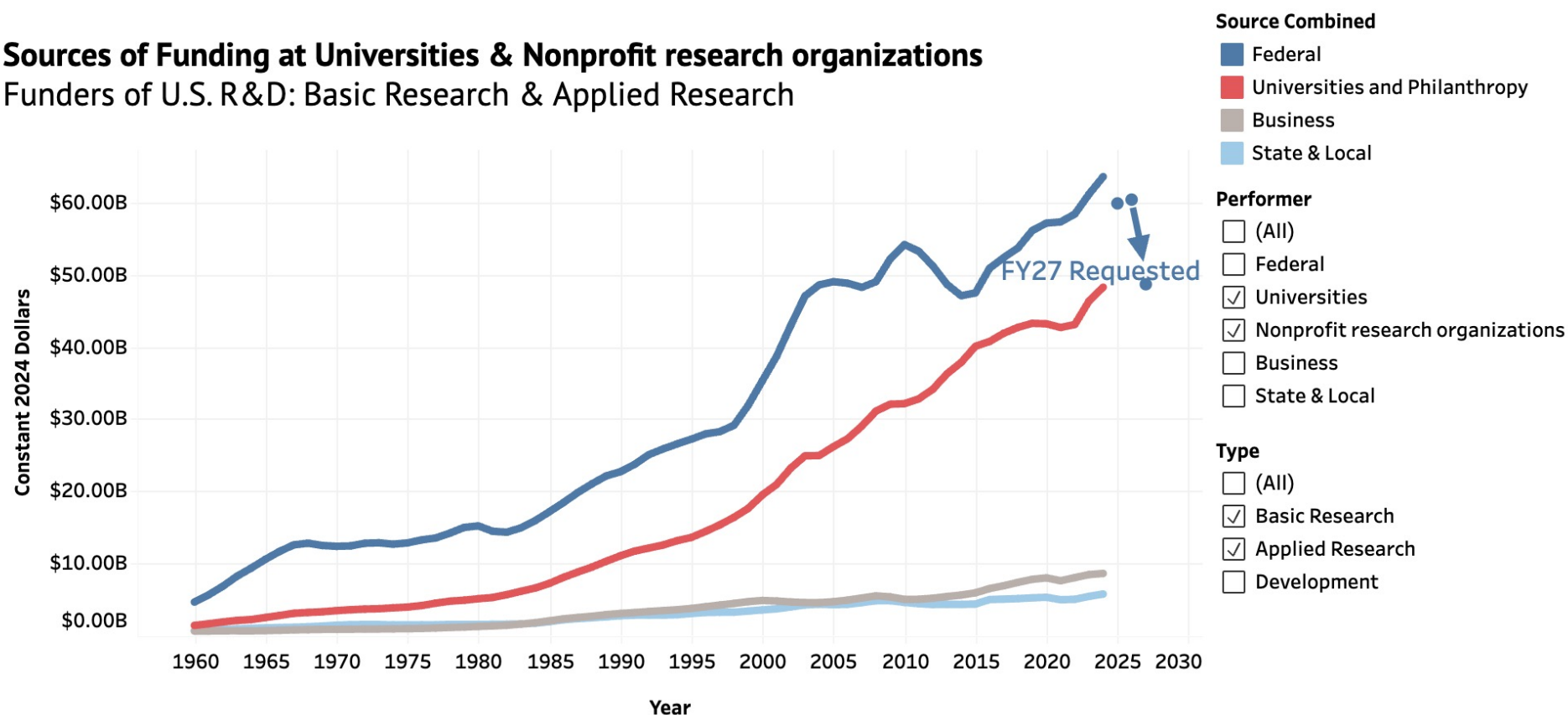
Flows of Funding to Universities & Nonprofit research organizations in 2024
Funders of U.S. R&D: Basic Research & Applied Research



Science Philanthropy Indicators Report 2026. Science Philanthropy Alliance. Data Source: National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. 2026. National Patterns of R&D Resources: 2023–24 Data Update. NSF 26-313. Alexandria, VA: U.S. National Science Foundation. Available at <https://ncses.nsf.gov/data-collections/national-patterns/2023-2024> Note: This figure is adapted to estimate "legacy philanthropy" at both universities and non-profit research organizations as Conn et al. (2023) did for universities.

Sources of Funding at Universities & Nonprofit research organizations

Funders of U.S. R&D: Basic Research & Applied Research



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Live Demo and Questions



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