Victory Report: Cutting 88% of DEI Grants at the NSF

How Conservative Nonprofits Exposed Billions in Taxpayer Dollars for DEI-Focused Research

Executive Summary

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has drastically decreased federal research grants that previously funded projects containing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) language.

> ***In some cases, research programs receiving millions of dollars in NSF grants were focused on advancing DEI as an aspect of their research.***

Research into DEI-focused grants began around 2022, when the National Association of Scholars (NAS) published a report finding that the NSF boosted DEI-related research spending by about 300% between 2020–2021. The NAS study built upon Leif Rasmussen's 2021 research for the Center for Partisanship and Ideology, which found that 30.4% of all grants had DEI terms as of 2020, up from 2.9% in 1990. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) then led a Senate Commerce Committee investigation into the Foundation's pattern of funding "woke" research, and President Trump's January 2025 executive order, "End Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing," was followed by a DOGE audit. On April 18, 2025, the NSF announced new grant terminations.

DeepAudit, an AI research-focused nonprofit, recently found that NSF grant applications containing DEI language fell from about $3.4 billion in 2021 to $400 million in 2025, an 88% drop. DeepAudit also found that the number of grants with DEI language in 2025 dropped to 2001 levels.

This victory featured several independent efforts to cut wasteful NSF spending, rather than a single, coordinated strategy. To make similar cuts, organizations should:

- Conduct research into an agency's public financial filings or other public documents (e.g. grant applications, in the case of NSF), using AI to search for problematic keywords and phrases
- Share findings with media to bring attention to wasteful spending
- Instigate a congressional investigation backed by nonprofit research
- File a lawsuit or complaint
- Influence the administration to create an executive order to stop certain kinds of wasteful government spending

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