

**NATURAL HAZARDS ENGINEERING RESEARCH  
INFRASTRUCTURE (NHERI)**

**\$11,750,000**  
**-\$3,240,000 / -21.6%**

**Natural Hazards Engineering Research Infrastructure Funding**  
(Dollars in Millions)

FY 2017 Actual <sup>1</sup>	FY 2018 (TBD)	FY 2019 Request	Change over	
			FY 2017 Actual Amount	Percent
\$14.99	-	\$11.75	-\$3.24	-21.6%

<sup>1</sup> FY 2017 Actual includes \$2.49 million in forward funding

The Natural Hazards Engineering Research Infrastructure program was established in 2015 by NSF as a distributed, multi-user, national research facility for use by the Nation’s natural hazards engineering research community. NHERI facilities provide researchers access to large, shared, state-of-the-art facilities, unavailable through any other agency, to study the performance of civil infrastructure, including buildings, geostuctures, and underground structures, to individual natural hazards, and to combinations of natural hazards. These facilities are essential research infrastructure to support two federally-mandated interagency programs: the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program and the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program.

The portfolio of research investigations, which is funded separately through NSF’s highly competitive, parallel proposal evaluation process, involves large scale experimentation linked to numerical modeling, and collection and sharing of data to increase the knowledge gleaned from investment in these facilities. Such research is essential to the development of more comprehensive and more realistic predictive models of how civil infrastructure responds to earthquake, wind, storm surge, and tsunami loading. These advances, in turn, enable the design of more hazard-resilient civil infrastructure and improved safety for citizens during these events.

The research infrastructure includes earthquake and wind engineering experimental facilities; a post-disaster, rapid response research (RAPID) facility; cyberinfrastructure; computational modeling and simulation tools; and a research data repository. The research infrastructure investment also supports education and community outreach activities.

During FY 2015 and FY 2016, NHERI was established by NSF through eleven cooperative agreements:

- Network Coordination Office (NCO) at Purdue University,
- Cyberinfrastructure (CI) at the University of Texas at Austin,
- Computational Modeling and Simulation Center (SimCenter) at the University of California, Berkeley,
- Twelve-Fan Wall of Wind at Florida International University,
- Large-Scale, Multi-Directional, Hybrid Simulation Testing Capabilities at Lehigh University,
- Large Wave Flume and Directional Wave Basin at Oregon State University,
- Geotechnical Centrifuges at the University of California, Davis,
- Large, High-Performance Outdoor Shake Table at the University of California, San Diego,
- Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel, Wind Load and Dynamic Flow Simulators, and Pressure Loading Actuators at the University of Florida,
- Large, Mobile Dynamic Shakers for Field Testing at the University of Texas at Austin, and
- RAPID Facility at the University of Washington.

The NCO serves as the national and international scientific leader, community focal point, and network-wide coordinator for NHERI governance and community-building activities. Key activities include convening the governance groups, working with the Council of Awardees to develop consensus-based

policies and procedures for NHERI, and the annual Council work plan, implementing the facility scheduling protocol to provide user access to the experimental facilities, leading development of a community science plan, running NHERI-wide education and community outreach programs, and building strategic partnerships. NHERI awardees and the natural hazards engineering community work together, through governance and awardee activities, to establish a shared vision for NHERI, set natural hazards engineering research and education agendas and priorities, and make NHERI a highly value-added and productive research infrastructure.

The CI awardee serves as the integrator for enabling NHERI to be a virtual organization for the natural hazards engineering community, by providing an array of information, resources, and services, including the definitive NHERI website; data repository (Data Depot); software service delivery platform with computational modeling, simulation, and educational tools (Discovery Workspace); collaboration tools; access to high performance computing resources; and user training and support. The CI awardee also establishes and implements the NHERI-wide cybersecurity plan with all NHERI awardees.

The SimCenter develops a portfolio of computational modeling and simulation software and educational modules that reflects a balance of community-prioritized, new capabilities for earthquake, wind, and multi-hazard engineering research and education. The SimCenter’s tools are integrated into the CI awardee’s Discovery Workspace.

The experimental facilities provide well-maintained and fully-functioning facilities, services, and staffing to enable earthquake engineering, wind engineering, and post-disaster, rapid response research requiring experimental work and data collection. Data generated by these experimental resources and their users are archived and shared in the publicly accessible NHERI Data Depot.

Along with direct operations and maintenance support for NHERI awardees, NSF provides separate support for research to be conducted at the NHERI experimental facilities through ongoing research and education programs. The support for such activities is primarily provided through the Engineering for Civil Infrastructure (ECI) core research program in the Civil, Mechanical and Manufacturing Innovation (CMMI) division in ENG.

**Total Obligations for NHERI**  
(Dollars in Millions)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	ESTIMATES <sup>1</sup>				
	Actual	(TBD)	Request	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Operations & Maintenance	\$14.99	-	\$11.75	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00

Outyear funding estimates are for planning purposes only. The current cooperative agreement ends in FY 2019.

**Management and Oversight**

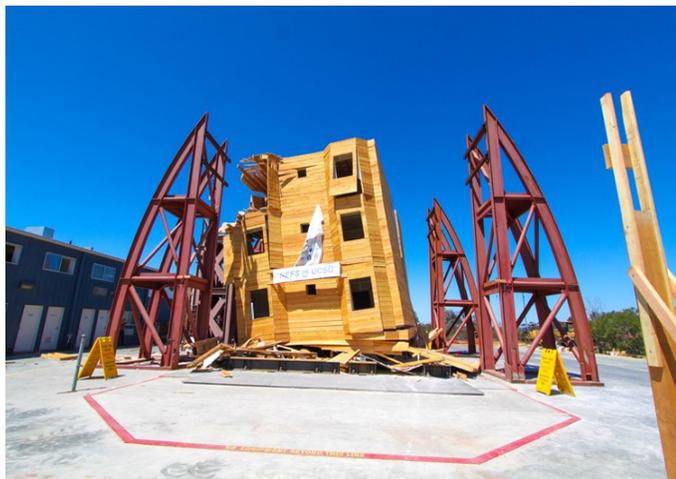
- **NSF Structure:** The NSF Program Officer for NHERI is located within ENG/CMMI. The Deputy Director of the Large Facilities Office in the Office of Budget, Finance, and Award Management provides advice and assistance.
- **External Structure:** Each NHERI awardee is led by a principal investigator (PI), who is responsible for the overall award operations. The NCO awardee coordinates NHERI governance and network activities. Governance is comprised of the following groups: (a) a Council, which consists of the PI of each NHERI award, to provide collective and coordinated leadership for NHERI as a national facility, (b) Network Independent Advisory Committee, with diverse representation from the broad scientific and engineering communities served by NHERI, to provide independent external guidance and advice to the Council, (c) User Forum, consisting of representatives from the broad scientific and engineering communities served by NHERI, and (d) Council-identified committees, comprised of internal awardee staff and/or users, to advise the Council on community priorities and needs for NHERI.

## Major Multi-User Research Facilities

- Reviews: NSF provides oversight to NHERI awardees through cooperative agreements. Individual and joint awardee operations and activities are reviewed through quarterly and annual project reports submitted by awardees, and site visit reviews, as well as reverse site visit reviews, conducted by NSF program officers.

### Renewal/Competition/Termination

- In FY 2010, NSF supported two studies to assess the need for earthquake engineering experimental and cyberinfrastructure facilities beyond 2014, as described in the Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) NSF 10-071.<sup>19</sup> One study, a workshop held by the National Research Council on the Grand Challenges in Earthquake Engineering Research, was completed in FY 2011, and the second study was completed in FY 2012. These studies provided input to NSF for the determination of support for future earthquake engineering research infrastructure beyond FY 2014.



The above image displays the University of California, San Diego outdoor shake table, which allows large structures to be tested against seismic activity. Here, a wooden building shows damage after testing. *Credit: UCSD/Jacobs School of Engineering.*

- The plan to support a smaller “second generation” Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation (NEES) (NEES2) during FY 2015-2019 was presented to the National Science Board at their July 2012 meeting and described in DCL NSF 12-107.<sup>20</sup> The plan proposed a lower annual operations budget, reflected in the \$8.0 million reduction from FY 2014 in the FY 2015 Budget Request, from \$20.0 million to \$12.0 million, to allow larger investment in earthquake engineering research using NHERI facilities.
- In 2012, the National Institute of Standards and Technology and NSF jointly supported a workshop that led to a roadmap report for measurement science research and development for windstorm and coastal inundation impact reduction, which was published in January 2014.<sup>21</sup>
  - In February 2013, NSF released solicitation NSF 13-537 to compete and operate NEES2 for FY 2015-FY 2019. Based on the merit review of proposals submitted under NSF 13-537, NSF made no award.
  - Based on the above studies and report, NSF established the plan for NHERI in FY 2014. This led to the release of solicitations NSF 14-605 and NSF 15-598 to establish NHERI through two competitions. Those competitions were completed in FY 2016. Awards for NHERI operations involve commitments for five years, contingent on available funds and satisfactory performance.
  - During 2018 and 2019, ENG will develop a post-NHERI decadal science plan for natural hazards engineering research, education, and research infrastructure. NSF will use this decadal science plan as input for natural hazards engineering research infrastructure support beyond 2019.

<sup>19</sup> <http://nsf.gov/pubs/2010/nsf10071/nsf10071.jsp>

<sup>20</sup> [www.nsf.gov/pubs/2012/nsf12107/nsf12107.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2012/nsf12107/nsf12107.jsp)

<sup>21</sup> [www.nist.gov/customcf/get\\_pdf.cfm?pub\\_id=915541](http://www.nist.gov/customcf/get_pdf.cfm?pub_id=915541)