

Illinois schools snare most R&D investment in the Midwest

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By: [John Pletz](#) December 19, 2011

(Crain's) — Illinois colleges and universities grab more research dollars than other Midwestern states, but budget pressures in Washington loom as a threat to their biggest source of funding.

Illinois schools received \$2.1 billion in research funding in 2009, the latest data available. Ohio got \$1.9 billion, followed by Michigan at \$1.7 billion, Wisconsin at \$1.2 billion and Indiana at \$1.0 billion. More than half that funding comes from the federal government.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is the state's top research institution, ranking 27th nationally with \$564 million in research funding in 2009. Northwestern University was 39th at \$515 million, followed by the University of Chicago at 48th with \$378 million and the University of Illinois at Chicago at 57th with \$342 million.

As for the state's two national research laboratories, Argonne in Darien ranked 10th with \$543 million in funding, while Fermilab in Batavia ranked 13th with \$377 million.

Future investment may stall, however, given congressional moves to reduce federal spending.

"In an uncertain budget climate, we have assets that we need to be protecting," says Matthew Summy, president of the Illinois Science and Technology Coalition, a member of the group that put together the data about R&D activity at the state's colleges and universities as part of the Illinois Innovation Index. Other members include the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, World Business Chicago and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

"We believe there will be a shift in dialogue at the federal and state level about the nature of research, and understanding commercial potential of our research assets will be a greater part of the discussion," Mr. Summy adds.

The state's universities aren't totally dependent on the federal government. Of the \$54.9 billion in total R&D spending Illinois schools, about 59% comes from the federal government. The colleges and universities themselves are the next biggest source, accounting for 20% of all R&D funding.

Private industry accounts for just 6% of the total.

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