SUNY RESEARCH FOUNDATION

2026 OPERATING PLAN

Approved May 20, 2025

Summary

The SUNY Research Foundation (RF) provides essential administrative services that enable SUNY faculty to focus their efforts on educating students and performing world-changing research across a wide range of disciplines. The RF is guided by our mission, vision, and values in carrying out 62 core functions in support of 29 state operated campuses, SUNY Administration and NY CREATES, with over a billion dollars in sponsored programs expenditures and thousands of employees dedicated to research administration. For the past two years, the RF has been recognized as a Top Workplace by the Albany Times Union. In compliance with the 1977 agreement between SUNY and the RF, the RF develops an annual Operating Plan and Budget for the fiscal year presented below.

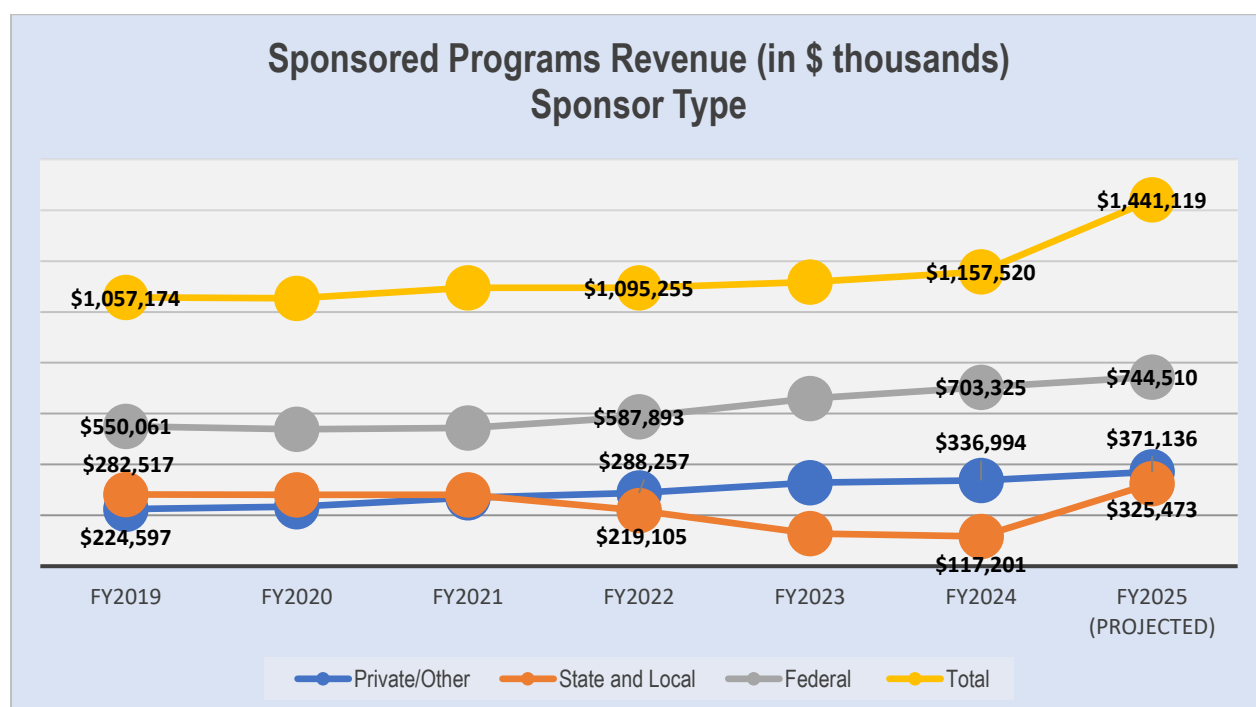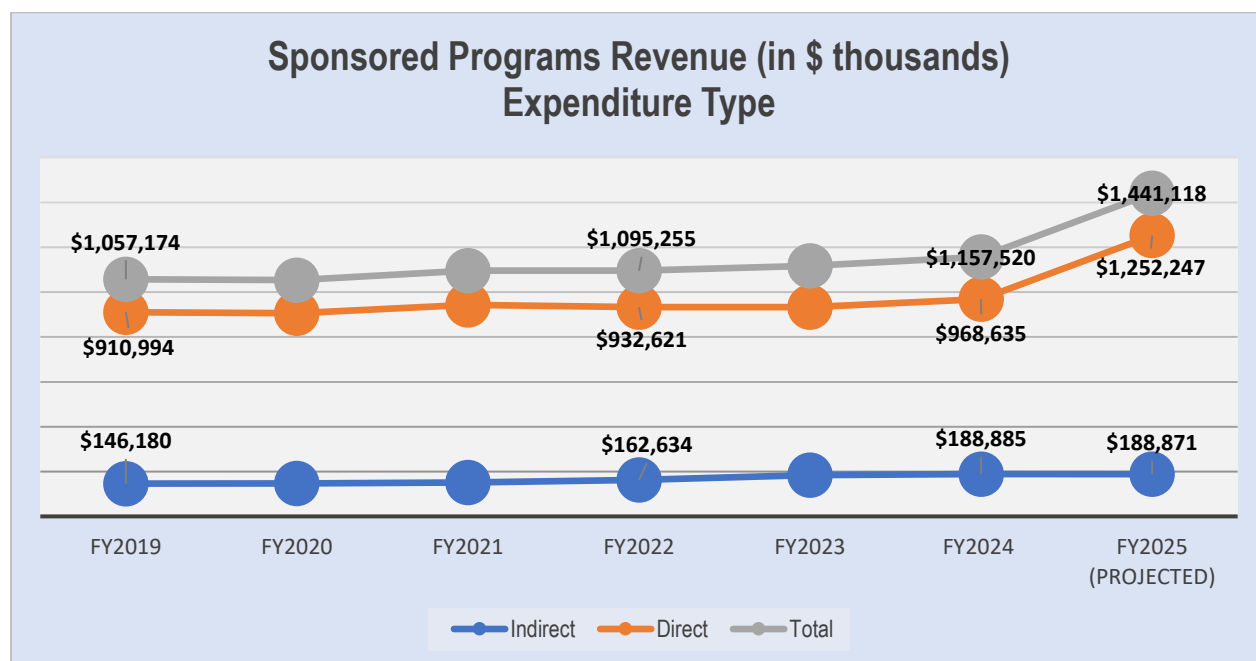| MISSION	VISION
The RF provides talent, services, and technology that empowers SUNY to research, innovate, and transfer discoveries that transforms the world's knowledge economy.	The RF partners with SUNY to make it the best place for faculty, students, and staff to research, innovate, and solve the world's most pressing problems.

RF VALUES

- **Service:** Our support and assistance to the SUNY community.

- **Learning:** A commitment to a pursuit of knowledge and the growth of our people, our abilities, and our business.

- **Agility:** Our ability to move quickly and adjust to changing customer needs.

- **Transparency:** Trust, accountability, and clear communication.

- **Diversity:** Inclusion and equity in our workforce for diversity of people, culture, thought, perspective, and background.

- **Innovation:** Creative problem solving, continuous improvement, and technological advancement.

- **Integrity:** Honesty, ethical behavior, and firm and committed adherence to our code of conduct.

Revenue (*Research Expenditures*) Projections

Operating locations annually provide projections for direct and indirect costs on their grants and contracts. Collectively, RF sponsored program expenditures are expected to be 25% higher through June 30, 2025, compared to FY24 and above initial projections. See below for sponsored program revenue projections by type:

Sponsored Programs Revenue (in $ thousands)
Expenditure Type

$1,057,174 $1,095,255 $1,157,520 $1,441,118

$910,994 $932,621 $968,635 $1,252,247

$146,180 $162,634 $188,885 $188,871

FY2019   FY2020   FY2021   FY2022   FY2023   FY2024   FY2025 (PROJECTED)

Indicator: Indirect — Direct — Total

Sponsored Programs Revenue (in $ thousands)
Sponsor Type

$1,441,119

$1,057,174 $1,095,255 $1,157,520

$703,325 $744,510

$550,061 $587,893

$282,517 $288,257 $336,994 $371,136

$224,597 $219,105 $325,473

$117,201

FY2019   FY2020   FY2021   FY2022   FY2023   FY2024   FY2025 (PROJECTED)

Private/Other — State and Local — Federal — Total

Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Plan Budget

Campus activity consists of direct and indirect costs from grants and contracts, investment income, and income from other campus activities such as royalties, equity distributions, and fees paid by third parties for service centers. There is significant uncertainty in FY26 both on the level of total federal research funding and the recovery of indirect costs. Campus projections are based on the best available information at time of submission and will be reevaluated throughout the upcoming fiscal year. The following table presents campus research, agency, and other revenue for each of the periods presented.

	2025 Plan	2026 Plan
Direct Funding	(in millions)	
Grants and Contracts Direct Costs	$1,062.7	**$1,354.2**
Agency Services Direct Costs	180.8	**194.1**
Total Direct Funding	**$1,186.3**	**$1,548.3**
Board Allocated Funding		
Grants and Contracts Indirect Costs	$199.1	$195.3
Investment Income (gross)	44.0	46.5
Fees Paid by Third Parties for Service Centers	10.5	7.8
Agency Services Indirect Costs	6.8	6.9
Royalties	3.7	3.2
Other Campus Activity	6.1	7.0
Total Board Allocated Funding	**$270.2**	**$266.7**
Board Allocated Uses		
Campus Operations and Support	$228.9	$224.6
Central Office Operations	32.7	32.5
SUNY Strategic Support	3.4	4.0
Royalties Paid to Inventors	1.5	1.3
Campus Initiatives and External Borrowing	0.5	1.3
Investment Advisory Fees	3.2	3.0
Total Board Allocated Use of Funds	**$270.2**	**$266.7**

Fiscal Year 2026 RF Corporate Office (RFCO) Budget

In the face of continued uncertainty and constraints in federal research funding for 2025 and beyond, this annual budget proposal reflects a strategic commitment to maintaining core operations, supporting essential research activities, and preserving institutional stability. While external funding challenges persist, this budget prioritizes resource efficiency, targeted investment in high-impact areas, and the sustainability of our research infrastructure. Through prudent financial stewardship and adaptive planning, we aim to uphold our mission and position ourselves for resilience and innovation in a shifting funding landscape. Below is a summary of the FY26 RFCO Budget:

Delivery of Core Services by RFCO

Compliance Services

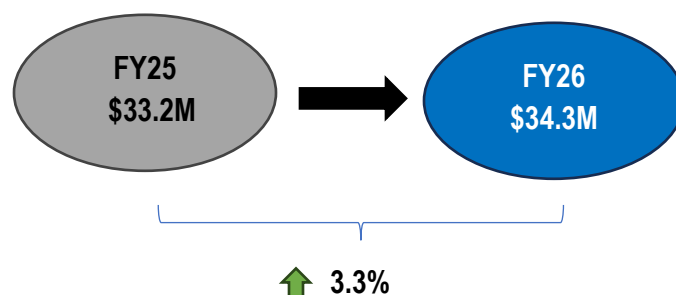Executive Office

Finance

Human Resources

Industry and External Affairs

Information Technology Services

Internal Audit Services

Legal Services

Sponsored Programs Services

FY25 $33.2M → FY26 $34.3M

⬆ 3.3%

The Fiscal Year 2026 budget increases spending by 3.3% compared to the Fiscal Year 2025 approved budget. The budget is responsive to external factors including inflationary pressure on incomes, federal transition, changing technology and information security needs as well as internal factors driven by our strategic plan, operational needs, and risk mitigation. Key investments in the FY26 budget include:

Salary plan that offers 3% cost of living.

Maintain staffing levels in core operations that support SUNY research.

Provide necessary training avenues and incentive programs to encourage best in class support to campuses.

Support critical information technology projects to enhance our business capabilities.

Evaluate key areas and tools for early adoption of AI

Development and execution of ITS infrastructure roadmap.

Enhance our data governance and data strategy objectives.

Implement a new RF strategic plan.

Explore the expansion of integrated services to achieve efficiencies across the system.

The following tables provide a reconciliation of the Operating Plan to the funding of the FY26 RFCO Budget. The two components of the RFCO budget represent general corporate operations in support of all RF locations and integrated campus services which support and are only paid for by participating RF locations. Funding comes from three sources including an annual assessment to the campus, prior year cost savings and rebates through our Bank of America program.

	2025 Plan	2026 Plan
Funding of RFCO budget	**(in millions)**	
Campus Funds for RFCO Operations	**$30.4**	**$30.6**
Campus Funds for Initiatives & External Borrowing	0.5	**0.0**
Campus Funds for Campus Services	**1.7**	**1.6**
Prior Year Budget Recovery and Rebates	**0.6**	**2.1**
Total Campus Funding	**$33.2**	**$34.3**

Central Office Budget Expenses		
Salaries and Fringe (*Net of Reimbursements*)	$21.4	$20.9
Campus Initiatives and External Borrowing	0.5	1.3
IT Managed Services and Pass-Through	5.6	5.7
Facilities	0.7	0.7
Insurance/ Fees	1.5	1.6
Other Costs	1.8	2.6
Total RFCO Operations	**$31.5**	**$32.7**

Campus Services		
Salaries and Fringe	1.7	1.6
Total RFCO Budget Expenses	**$33.2**	**$34.3**

Surplus / (Deficit)	-	-

Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Projects

PRIORITY 1

IMPLEMENTATION OF EIS REPLACEMENT APPLICATION

Migrate the current EIS Timekeeper software to the vendor's new Splash BI platform to ensure continued support. The aging platform lacks timely vendor support due to resource shifts, posing a critical risk to RF's payroll processing.

PRIORITY 1

DATA CENTER MIGRATION TO THE CLOUD

Our data center located in the SUNY Administration building has been repurposed and is no longer suitable for housing critical infrastructure. Additionally, existing hardware is approaching end-of-life and end-of-support, leading to increased risks and costs. Cloud migration reduces reliance on aging hardware and eliminates costly maintenance.

PRIORITY 1

LINUX UPGRADE

The Linux Operating System powers our Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI). The current Linux environment will be unsupported after June 2026, which places the organization at risk for potential system failure or security concerns. This project will upgrade over 100 servers, making the OCI environment reliable and secure.

PRIORITY 1

SECURE 2.0

Secure 2.0 was legislation enacted back in later 2022, that made significant changes to retirement savings plans, including expanding coverage, increasing savings, and simplifying retirement plan rules, with provisions impacting 401(k)s, IRAs, and other retirement accounts. This will implement the remaining provisions to ensure compliance with the act, and that we have the necessary monitoring tools.

PRIORITY 1

PACS V10 (PORTAL AND IRB UPGRADE)

This project will upgrade the Pre-Award and Compliance System (PACS) Portal framework and IRB module to version 10.x. The upgrade ensures continued support and security patching from both Huron and Microsoft, which is critical to protecting the system and its data. The scope covers upgrade activities for both the Shared and University at Buffalo instances of the system.

Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Projects

PRIORITY 2

IMPLEMENTATION OF ALM REPLACEMENT APPLICATION

This project will move us from the current ALM application to Spira, which is an application that ITS will use to create, organize and manage test scripts. More simply it is the tool to help with quality assurance as we manage through a software lifecycle.

PRIORITY 2

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF ORACLE AND OTHER SYSTEMS

The mission critical Oracle E-Business Suite Applications (EBS) with several modules of Human Capital Management (HCM) and Financials support essential functions that are core to the RF Central Office and 31 operating locations. This project is the first phase of performing an assessment of Oracle EBS HCM, Financial & Ancillary systems to collect and document the fit/gap of the current systems in meeting RF business needs.

PRIORITY 2

IMPLEMENTATION OF SSO REPLACEMENT APPLICATION

The contract with RF SUNY's current Single Sign-On (SSO) provider, OneLogin, expires on December 20, 2025. To ensure alignment with current and future business needs, we are evaluating alternative solutions. This initiative focuses on implementing the solution selected through the RFP process.

PRIORITY 2

AI PROOF OF CONCEPT

The AI Proof of Concept project aims to enhance service delivery, operational efficiency, and cost optimization by integrating AI-driven automation, analytics, and decision support. If successful, this initiative will provide valuable insights for enterprise-wide AI adoption, driving superior service, improved effectiveness, and cost savings.

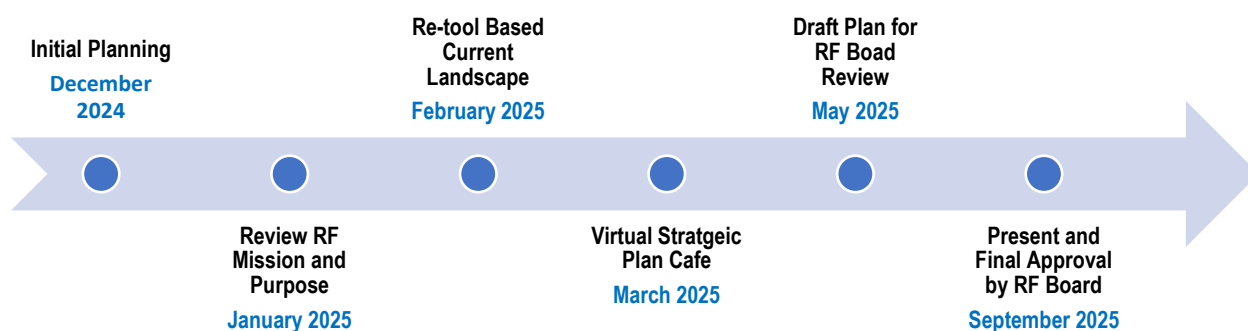## PRIORITY 2

REPORT CENTER PI DASHBOARD RE-DESIGN

This project aims to implement the redesign of the PI Dashboard based on campus community feedback and documented requirements, enhancing the Report Center PI Dashboard with more effective and efficient access to information.
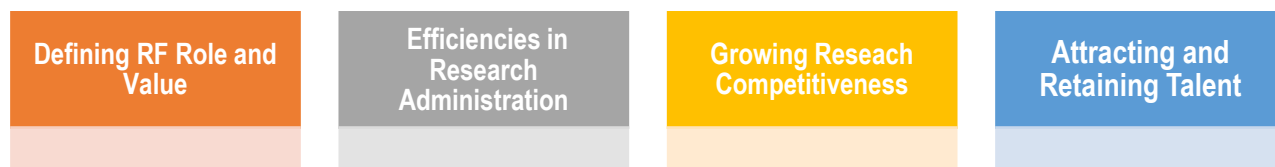
Strategic Plan FY26 – FY29

As we look ahead to Fiscal Year 2026, the RF will embark on the implementation of a new strategic plan focused on advancing research and innovation across the system. This initiative comes at a pivotal moment, as the national research landscape continues to evolve—driven by shifting priorities and funding models at the federal level, emerging technologies, and complex societal challenges. Our strategic planning process will align RF's unique strengths with these dynamic opportunities, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, supporting campus research objectives, and strengthening partnerships with industry and government. The goal is to help position SUNY as a leader in impactful, inclusive research and innovation that drives economic growth and serves the public good.

Strategic Plan Timeline

Initial Planning		Re-tool Based Current Landscape		Draft Plan for RF Boad Review	
December 2024		**February 2025**		**May 2025**	
	Review RF Mission and Purpose		Virtual Stratgeic Plan Cafe		Present and Final Approval by RF Board
	January 2025		**March 2025**		**September 2025**

Strategic Plan Focus Areas

The strategic plan provides a road map for RF operations for the next four years and represents the input from dozens of stakeholders and partners. It will be managed through a dynamic strategic schedule to include annual operating plan initiatives, key performance indicators, milestones and other operational insights as we move forward. This plan carries forward the RF's current mission, vision and core value statement and will focus on four high level goals below:

Defining RF Role and Value	Efficiencies in Research Administration	Growing Reseach Competitiveness	Attracting and Retaining Talent

Glossary

Agency Services Direct Costs
Campus-related organizations using RF human resources, payroll, and purchasing services (for example, clinical practice plans and campus-based foundations).

Fees Paid by Third Parties for Service Centers
The RF recovers costs from businesses and industries using RF-owned facilities, such as an MRI facility or nanotechnology clean room.

Grants and Contracts Direct Costs
Grants and contracts to faculty researchers and scholars provide direct dollars for expenditures that can be identified with a particular sponsored project. Examples include salaries, supplies, equipment, and travel.

Grants and Contracts Indirect Costs
Grants and contracts to faculty researchers and scholars provide indirect costs for overhead, or "facilities and administrative" costs. Cost recoveries come in the form of reimbursements by sponsors for things that cannot be directly and uniquely assigned to any particular project such as utilities and libraries.

Investment Income
Investment income is projected based upon an assumed average investment balance and a targeted long-term investment return.

Royalties
Intellectual property commercialization generates royalties from companies that have licensed RF-owned intellectual property.

Royalties Paid to Inventors
The SUNY Patent Policy dictates that 40-45% of royalties be paid to the inventor of intellectual property.

SUNY Strategic Support
SUNY System Administration receives a formula-based allocation that may be used in support of its strategic plan.