

ASM Statement on the Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Process and a COVID-19 Emergency Supplemental
November 12, 2020

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) urges Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to swiftly complete work on the fiscal year (FY) 2021 appropriations bills before the current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on December 11. As we continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, federal science and public health agencies need certainty and are harmed by disruptive long-term CRs that prevent new programming. At the same time, we also call on Congress to negotiate and pass additional emergency supplemental funding that is long overdue and essential to our ongoing response to and recovery from the current public health crisis.

[Increased annual funding](#) is essential to the long-term sustainability of federally-funded research across multiple agencies; research that drives discovery, spurs innovation and improves the health of animals, humans, the environment and our economy. The Senate Appropriations Committee's action this week to release all twelve FY 2021 spending bills is a welcomed step forward, and we especially thank Chairman Roy Blunt (R-MO) for proposing a \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and an additional \$160 million for public health preparedness. However, the funding levels proposed for FY 2021 across all science agencies and for many public health programs by both the House and Senate are woefully inadequate if we are to maintain our global leadership in science while also overcoming COVID-19 and its collateral damage on research and clinical laboratory operations.

The dire situation we face as a country as we struggle to respond to COVID-19 requires that Congress provide additional funding to support essential pandemic response priorities such as COVID-19 testing, public health infrastructure and vaccine deployment. We must also provide relief for the broader ecosystem through support for restarting stalled research across all disciplines and federally-coordinated, transparent measures to alleviate clinical laboratory shortages that go beyond COVID-19.

At this critical moment, we call on Congress and the Administration to come together and pass without delay a spending package that includes both the FY 2021 appropriations bills and emergency funding for COVID-19 response.

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The American Society for Microbiology is one of the largest professional societies dedicated to the life sciences and is composed of 30,000 scientists and health practitioners. ASM's mission is to promote and advance the microbial sciences. ASM advances the microbial sciences through conferences, publications, certifications and educational opportunities. It enhances laboratory capacity around the globe through training and resources. It provides a network for scientists in academia, industry and clinical settings. Additionally, ASM promotes a deeper understanding of the microbial sciences to diverse audiences.