DISCOVERY & IMPACT

FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

CU Denver is committed to advancing discovery and innovation through research and creative works that address community needs and contribute to the public good. As Colorado's public urban research university, we bring together researchers, scholars, artists, designers, and community partners to better understand complex challenges and develop creative, practical, and impactful solutions for our city, region, state, and world. This commitment reflects the vision of the CU Denver 2030 Strategic Plan and its emphasis on research and creative works that improve lives, strengthen communities, and create new opportunities for discovery and innovation.

Our research strengths span a broad range of disciplines and include intelligent systems for public impact, thriving cities and communities, behavioral and community health, the future workforce and learning, and advanced industry and resilient infrastructure. Across these areas, CU Denver faculty advance knowledge and creative practice in artificial intelligence and data science, cybersecurity, sustainability and resilience, transportation and urban systems, health and well-being, education and workforce development, energy systems, and the natural and built environments. Arts, culture, the humanities, and creative works enrich these efforts by bringing new perspectives and expanding the impact of research and scholarship.

Our talented and diverse community of artists, educators, engineers, historians, policy experts, scientists, urban planners, and many others advances knowledge while creating meaningful local, regional, national, and global impact. Undergraduate and graduate students are active participants in this work, gaining hands-on experience through research, scholarship, and creative activities that prepare them to address the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. By working across disciplines and in partnership with our communities, we deepen understanding, foster innovation, and help shape a better future.



CU DENVER RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS: FY26

$22.9M
new sponsored project awards

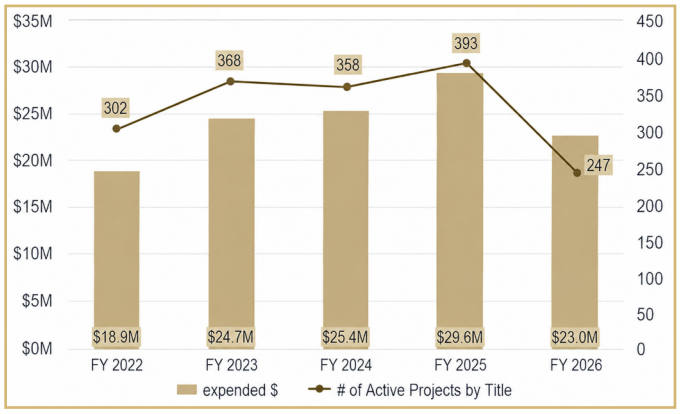
187
active principal investigators and project directors[1]

247
active sponsored projects[2]

$23.0M
sponsored project expenditures

[1] By distinct count of expenditure PIs
[2] By distinct count of expenditure project titles

SPONSORED PROJECT EXPENDITURES 5-YEAR TREND



FY26 Federal Funding Sources

NIH & other DHHS: $10.1M
NSF: $4.6M
Dept. of Education: $850K
Dept. of War: $155K
Other Fed: $3.0M

Top-5 FY26 Projects by Awarded Dollars

F. Banaei-Kashani (CEDC) NSF $1.6M
K. Kauerz (SEHD) Gates Foundation $999K
F. Banaei-Kashani (CEDC) NSF $805K
M. Moore (CLAS) NSF $644K
D. Mays (CEDC) NSF $500K

STUDENT RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, & CREATIVE WORK

CU Denver students are building robots, creating documentary films, and developing new medical imaging techniques.

- CU Denver's diverse student population is growing the next generation of research talent with 106 PhDs awarded in FY26
- 127 students received EURēCA! program funding to participate in Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities
- 292 students presented at the 2026 Research and Creative Activities Symposium (RaCAS)



University of Colorado **Denver**

Research Team Grants Program 2025

Building Research Teams. Advancing Public Impact

Deserai Anderson, School of Public Affairs, "Local Responses to Mass Violence: A Comparative Study of Gun Violence Prevention Policies in Colorado"

Benjamin Crawford, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences | Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences, "Resilient Cities at the Heat-Water-Carbon Nexus: A Foundation for the Urban CORE Collaborative"

Benjamin Greenwood, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences | Department of Psychology, "Does Psilocybin Enable Stress Resistance?"

Hai Lin, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences | Department of Chemistry, "Center for Advanced Computational Molecular Science"

Wes Marshall, College of Engineering, Design and Computing | Department of Civil Engineering, "Human-Centered Transportation at CU Denver (HCT@CU)"

Christopher Phiel, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences | Department of Integrative Biology, "Maternal Exercise Reprograms the Epigenome to Shape Offspring Brain Health"

Elizabeth Steed, School of Education & Human Development, "Meeting the Moment: Evaluating the Potential of AI to Support Families with Children with Early Behavioral Concerns"

Research Team Grants program is CU Denver's flagship program for building high-impact research teams and accelerating pathways to external funding. Administered by the Research Development Office, the program invests in innovative faculty-led research and creative initiatives that address community needs, align with university research strengths, and demonstrate strong potential for future support from federal agencies, foundations, industry, and other sponsors. By supporting team formation, proposal development, and interdisciplinary collaboration, RTG helps expand CU Denver's research capacity while advancing discovery and innovation for the public good.

Investing in Faculty. Advancing Discovery and Creativity.

Open/All-Disciplines Seed Grants provide early-stage funding that helps faculty generate new ideas, build collaborations, and strengthen future proposals for external funding. By investing in promising research, scholarly, and creative activities across the university, the program helps grow CU Denver's research enterprise and expand opportunities for discovery and innovation.

Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences (HASS) Impact Grants support impactful research and creative work in the humanities, arts, and social sciences, recognizing the important contributions these disciplines make to communities and society. The program helps faculty advance bold ideas, engage the public, and showcase the transformative power of scholarship and creativity.