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How Much Power Does the Trump Administration Hold Over Harvard?

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3–4 minutes



Illustration by The Chronicle

The Trump administration announced on Monday its intent to review billions of dollars in federal funding awarded to Harvard University, one of the latest institutions to be pressured financially by the federal government's Joint Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism.

“Harvard has served as a symbol of the American Dream for generations — the pinnacle aspiration for students all over the world to work hard and earn admission to the storied institution,” Education Secretary Linda McMahon wrote in a press release. “Harvard’s failure to protect students on campus from anti-Semitic discrimination — all while promoting divisive ideologies over free inquiry — has put its reputation in serious jeopardy.”

Last month, after the Trump administration canceled \$400 million in funding to Columbia University, the university [announced](#) it had agreed to the government’s preconditions for negotiation — the most controversial stipulation mandating academic receivership for Columbia’s department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African studies.

Around the same time, the administration moved to [freeze](#) \$175 million of funding awarded to the University of Pennsylvania over Penn’s alleged failure under the previous administration to bar a transgender woman, Lia Thomas, from competing in female swimming competitions.

And on Tuesday, news [surfaced](#) of an additional funding freeze at Princeton University regarding grants awarded by the Departments of Defense and Energy and NASA. Reports suggest the pause was triggered by government dissatisfaction with Princeton’s alleged failure to suppress antisemitism on campus last year. .

Here’s a look at the funding to Harvard the government is targeting, how reliant the university — and its medical school in particular — is on research money, and what active grants and contracts are on the chopping block.

\$686 million

The amount [generated](#) by Harvard in operating revenues from federally sponsored research grants and contracts during the 2024 fiscal year. This means that more than 10 percent of the \$6.4 billion in operating revenues collected last fiscal year by Harvard originated from federally sponsored research support.

\$255.6 million; \$8.7 billion

The aggregate values, respectively, of the grants and contracts targeted for review by the federal government — many of which were awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services. The government [plans](#) to target not only funding awarded to Harvard directly but also funding awarded to 15 healthcare providers [affiliated](#) with Harvard's medical school.

11,982

The number of Harvard Medical School faculty members who were [active](#) at one of Harvard's 15 healthcare affiliates last November, compared with just 408 faculty members based out of academic departments.

1,046

The total number of active and pending grants and contracts awarded to Harvard that could be targeted with stop-work orders or termination notices during the government's review, according to disclosures available from USA Spending.gov.