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Owing their origin to Plato's Academia in 387 B.C., academies of science were first established in America by Benjamin Franklin when he founded the American Philosophical Society in 1743. Four years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences was founded in Boston. The Maryland Academy of Science was founded in 1797. The United States Congress chartered the National Academy of Sciences in 1863 to investigate and report on scientific questions of concern to public policy makers. Now, more than 50 academies exist in the United States for the advancement of science. Many of these are at the state and local level and are members of the National Association of Academies of Science, founded in 1926.

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