The **National Academy of Sciences** (NAS) is a private, non-profit society of distinguished scholars. Established by an Act of Congress, signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, the NAS is charged with providing independent, objective advice to the nation on matters related to science and technology. Scientists are elected by their peers to membership in the NAS for outstanding contributions to research. The NAS is committed to furthering science in America, and its members are active contributors to the international scientific community. Nearly 500 members of the NAS have won Nobel Prizes, and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, founded in 1914, is today one of the premier international journals publishing the results of original research.

Founded in 1964, the **National Academy of Engineering** (NAE) is a private, independent, nonprofit institution that provides engineering leadership in service to the nation. The mission of the National Academy of Engineering is to advance the well-being of the nation by promoting a vibrant engineering profession and by marshalling the expertise and insights of eminent engineers to provide independent advice to the federal government on matters involving engineering and technology. The NAE has more than 2,000 peer-elected members and foreign members, senior professionals in business, academia, and government who are among the world’s most accomplished engineers. They provide the leadership and expertise for numerous projects focused on the relationships between engineering, technology, and the quality of life. The NAE operates under the same congressional act of incorporation that established the NAS, which is directed “whenever called upon by any department or agency of the government, to investigate, examine, experiment, and report upon any subject of science or art.”

The **National Academy of Medicine** (NAM), established in 1970 under the name Institute of Medicine (IOM), is an independent organization of eminent professionals from diverse fields including health and medicine; the natural, social, and behavioral sciences; and beyond. It serves alongside the NAS and the NAE as adviser to the nation and the international community. Through its domestic and global initiatives, the NAM works to address critical issues in health, medicine, and related policy and inspire positive action across sectors. In addition to its honorific functions, the NAM administers fellowships, scholarships, and awards; hosts workshops, expert meetings, and symposia; and conducts programs to enrich the broader work of the academies. The NAM also publishes *Perspectives*, an expert commentary and discussion paper series.

The three Academies work together as the **National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine** to provide independent, objective analysis and advice to the nation and conduct other activities to solve complex problems and inform public policy decisions. The Academies also encourage education and research, recognize outstanding contributions to knowledge, and increase public understanding in matters of science, engineering, and medicine. The Academies' service to government has become so essential that Congress and the White House have issued legislation and executive orders over the years that reaffirm its unique role.