

**SOCIAL *and* BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE ADVOCACY DAY**  
**MARCH 10, 2015**

**MENU *of* TALKING POINTS**

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**GENERAL TALKING POINTS**

(Use for opening the meeting and explaining its purpose)

- Thank you for taking time to meet with us today. We are here as members of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), which works to advance federal support for social and behavioral science research.
- [Introduce yourself and briefly describe your work; hand the staffer the “COSSA” folder of materials and your business card]
- Today we would like to talk with you about:
  - The critical role the federal government plays in funding social and behavioral science research, including at the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, among other agencies;
  - Important social and behavioral science research occurring at institutions in our state/district; and
  - Why this research is important for addressing challenges of local and national significance.
- Social and behavioral science research is supported across the federal government, including at the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Defense, federal statistical agencies, and many other departments and agencies. This support helps us as a nation better understand and address complex, human-centered questions, such as:
  - How to convince a community in the path of a tornado to seek cover; or
  - Ways to slow the HIV/AIDS epidemic; or
  - How to thwart cybercrime and protect Americans’ privacy and security in an increasingly connected world.
- Funding for the social, behavioral and economic sciences not only advances science, but is contributing to local economies. **Included in your folder is a fact sheet on how federal social science funding impacts our state.**
- Can I ask how familiar you are with social and behavioral science research funded by the federal government?
- [Based on their response, refer to the agency-specific talking points on the following pages to describe social science research supported by the federal government]

## OUR “ASKS”

(Be sure to state these “asks” before completing your meeting)

- We fully appreciate the difficult funding trade-offs Congress must make each year, especially during times of tight budgets. However, cuts to scientific research—including social and behavioral science research—will only exacerbate the nation’s “innovation deficit,” which continues to threaten the U.S.’s standing as the global scientific leader.
- We ask for your support in a couple of ways:
  1. I understand that programmatic requests for fiscal year (FY) 2016 are due March 26. Would your office be willing to submit a programmatic request in support of FY 2016 funding for the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and/or other research agencies? **There are materials in your folder explaining the funding levels we are requesting.**
  2. Please reject efforts to cut funding for social and behavioral science research at NSF, NIH, Census, and other agencies. We have witnessed attempts recently in both the appropriations bills and in authorizing legislation aiming to single-out social and behavioral science accounts for cuts. These are misguided efforts. **Your folder contains examples of this research and its contributions to issues of national importance.**
  3. Please support efforts to avert sequestration this year. If sequestration must occur, I hope you will do all you can to avoid any additional cuts to nondefense discretionary spending, including funding for research.
  4. Finally, I hope you will use me and COSSA as resources in the future. I would be happy to provide you with additional information at any time.

## AGENCY-SPECIFIC TALKING POINTS

(You may choose to discuss any or all of the following agencies, depending on the interests of the staffer)

### National Science Foundation (NSF)

- NSF provides funding for 24% of all federally-supported basic research in U.S. colleges and universities. The Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate—one of seven directorates at NSF—funds 55% of the university-based social and behavioral sciences research in the nation. Yet, it remains the smallest of the directorates, accounting for only 3.7% of the entire NSF budget in FY 2014.
- The discoveries made through SBE-funded research often have profound impacts on people's lives. As a result of this research, we are:
  - Learning how to respond to disasters;
  - Enhancing teaching and learning in education, including STEM education;
  - Improving the safety of our troops in combat areas;
  - Reducing violence among our youth;
  - Improving public health;
  - Modeling water planning to enhance sustainability;
  - Improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice system; and
  - Helping paralyzed individuals communicate, to name a few.
- Scientists funded by SBE are trained in a wide range of disciplines and contribute substantially to the knowledge that benefits the U.S. taxpayer. Without this science, policy-making on major national issues will not be based on evidence and billions of dollars will be wasted.
- **We support the President's request of \$7.7 billion for NSF for FY 2016. At the very least, we ask that NSF funding be insulated from cuts in FY 2016, including through sequestration, and keep pace with inflation.**
- **We also ask that the SBE directorate at NSF not be singled-out for cuts in FY 2016 and, instead, Congress maintain NSF as a supporter of *all fields* of science, as its mission states.**

FY 2015 (current year)	\$7.3 billion
FY 2016 President's Request	\$7.7 billion
FY 2016 COSSA's Request	\$7.7 billion

## National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- NIH is the world's leading supporter of basic biomedical and behavioral research. Investment in NIH fosters scientific discoveries to enhance the health and well-being of the American people.
- More than 80 percent of the NIH's budget supports high-quality jobs for more than 300,000 research personnel at 3,000 universities, medical schools, and other research institutions in every state.
- The **NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)** was established by Congress in recognition of the important role behavioral and social factors often play in illness and health. The Office's mission is to stimulate behavioral and social sciences research throughout NIH to improve our understanding, treatment, and prevention of disease.
- Public health achievements of behavioral and social science research supported by NIH include:
  - **Reducing Tobacco Use**—The biggest public health success story of the 20<sup>th</sup> century may possibly be the reduction of tobacco use and smoking-related diseases. Behavioral and social sciences research has led to the development of interventions, such as smoking bans in public places. These interventions have led to declines in smoking rates. Without them, according to the CDC, more than 45 million Americans might still be smoking, resulting in thousands of preventable deaths, not to mention the millions of dollars in the accompanying excess costs.
  - **Preventing Diabetes**—For many years, scientists believed that medication was the only tool to treat diabetes. The landmark Diabetes Prevention Program demonstrated that lifestyle interventions (e.g. modest changes in diet and regular physical activity) can reduce the risk of developing Type-2 Diabetes in high-risk adults. The lifestyle intervention was so successful that a group-based lifestyle intervention was offered to all of the study participants in the next phase of the program. The findings led to “Small Steps, Big Rewards,” the first national diabetes prevention campaign.
  - **Slowing the HIV/AIDS Epidemic**—Social and behavioral science research has extended our understanding of decision-making, drug use, and sexual behavior. The result has been innovative interventions to modify behaviors that slowed the spread of HIV/AIDS. Accordingly, the number of people infected with HIV each year has dropped from a peak of 150,000 in the early 1980s to approximately 50,000 in 2011. The mother to child transmission has fallen 94 percent from its peak in 1992.
- **We request a budget of at least \$32 billion for NIH in FY 2016.** While the President's budget request represents a welcome first step to better synchronizing NIH funding with biomedical inflation, the ongoing and emerging health challenges confronting the United States and the world, and the unparalleled scientific opportunities to address these challenges, demand a funding level of at least \$32 billion in FY 2016.

FY 2015 (current year)	\$30.3 billion
FY 2016 President's Request	\$31.3 billion
FY 2016 COSSA's Request	\$32 billion

## Federal Statistical Agencies

- Accurate, objective, representative, timely, reliable and accessible data and statistics are necessary ingredients to the conduct of evidence-based analyses of federal programs.
- Statistics from the Census Bureau and a dozen other statistical agencies measure progress in our nation and gauge, among other things, the state of:
  - The American economy (BEA and Census in Commerce; BLS in Labor; IRS Statistics of Income)
  - Employment, retirement, and the labor force (BLS; ORES in the Social Security Administration)
  - Health of the American people (NCHS in HHS)
  - Health care costs, utilization, and availability (NCHS, Census)
  - Educational attainment and progress (NCES in Education; NCSES in NSF)
  - Agriculture, farming, and food in the U.S. (ERS and NASS in USDA)
  - Energy and natural resources (EIA in Dept. of Energy; ERS)
  - Our transportation network (BTS in Dept. of Transportation)
  - Crime and the justice system (BJS in DOJ)
- Statistics from the Census Bureau and other federal statistical agencies are necessary for a range of activities affecting the American people, including:
  - Allocating fairly, to whom and where needed, over \$400 billion in federal funds to states, cities and local governments for public health and safety, education, housing, poverty and other services.
  - Developing a Homeland Infrastructure Protection Plan.
  - Producing the economic indicators the Federal Reserve Board uses to determine interest rates.
  - Measuring the nation's food security.
  - Drawing school district boundaries.
  - Establishing and enforcing fair lending practices.
  - Helping small businesses make good business decisions.
- Statistical agencies have been underfunded for at least the last three years, causing some of them to stop producing certain measures and jeopardizing the confidence with which others can provide the statistics that help the country, its businesses, and communities run efficiently and effectively.
- **We urge your support for the levels requested in the President's FY 2016 budget request for all statistical agencies. These levels will restore lost capabilities of those agencies to accomplish their core responsibilities.**

	FY 2015 (current year)	FY 2016 President's Request	FY 2016 COSSA's Request
Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)	\$100 million	\$110 million	\$110 million
Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)	\$41 million	\$61.4 million	\$61.4 million
Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)	\$592.2 million	\$632.7 million	\$632.7 million
Bureau of the Census	\$1.08 billion	\$1.5 billion	\$1.5 billion
Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS)	\$26 million	\$29 million	\$29 million
Economic Research Service (ERS)	\$85.4 million	\$86 million	\$86 million
Energy Information Administration (EIA)	\$117 million	\$131 million	\$131 million
Statistics of Income (within IRS)	\$36 million	\$38 million	\$38 million
National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)	\$172.4 million	\$180.3 million	\$180.3 million
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)	\$103.1 million	\$124.7 million	\$124.7 million
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)	\$155.4 million	\$160.4 million	\$160.4 million
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES)	\$50.8 million	\$54.3 million	\$54.3 million
Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (ORES, within Social Security Administration)	\$30 million	\$27 million	\$27 million

## Department of Justice (DOJ)

- DOJ's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) houses the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Both NIJ and BJS saw significant cuts in the FY 2015 omnibus bill, this at a time when evidence-based policy making for our justice system is needed more than ever.
- NIJ is the research arm of the Department of Justice. The institute plays a critical role in helping us understand and implement science-based strategies for crime prevention and control.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) national data collections provide statistical evidence needed by criminal justice policy decision makers.
- Social science research supported by the agencies inform issues such as:
  - Human trafficking;
  - Evaluation of anti-gang programs;
  - Policing;
  - Crime and justice;
  - Children exposed to violence;
  - Sentencing alternatives to incarceration;
  - Elder abuse; and
  - Reentry and probation.
- **We urge your support for the President's budget request for both agencies, which total \$52.5 million for NIJ and \$61.4 million for BJS.**
- The request plans to continue DOJ's school safety initiative and proposes a new \$4 million research program on domestic radicalization to better understand violent extremism and advancing evidence-based strategies for effective prevention and intervention.
- Taken together, NIJ and BJS represent the only dedicated sources of federal research support committed to enhancing our understanding of crime and the criminal justice system.
- Increased investment in criminal justice science is needed to ensure future policies and decisions are evidence-based and to contain escalating costs associated with public safety.

	FY 2015 (current year)	FY 2016 President's Request	FY 2016 COSSA's Request
National Institute of Justice (NIJ)	\$36 million	\$52.5 million	\$52.5 million
Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)	\$41 million	\$61.4 million	\$61.4 million