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FEATURED ARTICLE

COSSA's Analysis of the President's FY 2015 Budget Request for Social

and Behavioral Science

On March 4, the Obama Administration rolled out details of its fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget request to Congress. The proposal totals \$3.901 trillion, including \$1.014 trillion in discretionary spending, keeping within the budget caps negotiated by Congress in late 2013. Total federal R&D funding would reach \$135.4 billion in FY 2015, \$1.7 billion or 1.2 percent more than FY 2014, and would include \$65.9 billion for non-defense R&D, an increase of \$477 million or 0.7 percent.

In general, the President's budget request seeks increases for most federal science programs and agencies of relevance, although the level of increase varies. The Administration attributes the small increases-in some cases very small-to the Congressionally-set spending caps.

Snapshot of the President's FY 2015 Budget Request

	FY 2015 Request	Change from FY 2014
National Institutes of Health (HHS)	\$30.36 billion	+0.7%
National Science Foundation	\$7.26 billion	+1.2%
Census Bureau (DOC)	\$1.2 billion	+28.2%
Institute of Education Sciences (ED)	\$637.2 million	+10.4%
Bureau of Labor Statistics (DOL)	\$610.1 million	+3.0%
Education and Cultural Exchanges (State)	\$577.9 million	+1.6%
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (HHS)	\$439.7 million	-5.2%
National Agricultural Statistical Service (USDA)	\$179.0 million	+10.9%
National Endowment for the Humanities	\$146 million	0%
Bureau of Economic Analysis (DOC)	\$107.2 million	+12.0%
Bureau of Justice Statistics (DOJ)	\$55.4 million	+23.1%
National Institute of Justice (DOJ)	\$47.5 million	+18.8%

Alongside the FY 2015 budget request, the President also released a proposal that would provide an additional \$56 billion in discretionary spending above the spending caps. The President's "Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative" is intended to supplement the requested levels and would provide \$5.3 billion in additional R&D funding to agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy, National Institute of Standards and Technology, among others. According to the Administration, while the funding proposals included in the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative exceed the spending caps for FY 2015, the additional investments would be fully paid for through a set of targeted spending cuts and increased revenue created by closing certain tax breaks. Despite the Administration's efforts to "pay" for the additional funding, the House and Senate are unlikely to have an appetite in the current political environment to appropriate spending above the caps agreed to last December. In fact, appropriations committee chairs have indicated their intentions to write their bills according to the levels in the budget agreement, signaling that the President is unlikely to receive the additional \$56 billion.

The release of the President's budget request marks the official start of the FY 2015 appropriations process. Congressional appropriations and oversight committees have begun their budget hearings in earnest over the last few weeks. Appropriations chairs have set an ambitious timeline for the 12 annual appropriations bills, with committee markups potentially occurring in May and floor consideration over the summer in an effort to move the process as far along as possible before the November midterm elections. Some of the more non-controversial bills could see markups in April.

[Read on](#) for complete details of the President's FY 2015 budget request for federal agencies and programs important to social and behavioral science.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & NEWS

Obama Science Advisor, Science Committee Members Defend Social and Behavioral Science at House Hearing

On March 26, the House Science, Space and Technology Committee held an [oversight hearing](#) to review the President's fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget request for federal science agencies. The sole witness was Dr. John Holdren, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and President Obama's Science Advisor. While the purpose of the hearing was to engage in a dialogue with the Administration's top science official about the President's proposals for federal R&D programs in FY 2015, committee members used the hearing to show just how far apart the majority and minority are in terms of research areas they believe are worth federal support. The Committee is also in the midst of its consideration of reauthorization of the *America COMPETES Act* via the majority's *Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science and Technology Act* (H.R. 4186), or [FIRST Act](#). Committee members used the budget hearing to debate the legislation, again demonstrating the deep divide that exists between the majority and minority.

In response to a question, Holdren discussed the "abundant documentation" that justifies federal investment in social and behavioral science and its value to the American public. In addition, given the modest proportion of NSF funding dedicated annually to social and behavioral science, Holdren stated that the U.S. is "getting a lot of bang for the buck."

[Read on](#) for full details of the hearing.

NIH Officials Testify Before House Appropriations Subcommittee; Social and Behavioral Science Research Discussed

On March 26, National Institutes of Health (NIH) director Francis Collins made his annual appearance before the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies to testify on President Obama's proposed fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget request for the agency. Collins was joined by the directors of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (Anthony Fauci); National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (Gary Gibbons); National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Stroke (Story Landis); and National Cancer Institute (Harold Varmus). Collins faced questions about "questionable grants," the Public Health Service (PHS) Evaluation "tap," and the NIH's commitment to social and behavioral science research.

Click [here](#) to read COSSA's full report on the hearing.

Senator Harkin Chairs Last NIH Hearing; Laments the Agency's Funding Status

On April 2, National Institutes of Health (NIH) director Francis Collins made his second visit to Capitol Hill in as many weeks to testify before the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) is retiring at the end of his term, making this his final NIH appropriations hearing. Harkin reflected on his service as chair of the Subcommittee and expressed pride that the Congress, on "a bipartisan basis" was able to transform the NIH into "the jewel and crown of biomedical research not only in the United States, but globally." Acknowledging the hearing was a bittersweet moment for him, he highlighted some of the advances made by NIH over the last 25 years and suggested that the leadership of NIH is threatened most by members of Congress who are obsessed by budget deficits.

Click [here](#) for full details.

More than 130 House Members Request \$7.5 Billion for NSF in FY 2015

On April 1, Reps. G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), David McKinley (R-WV), and 132 other Members of Congress sent a [letter](#) to the chair and ranking member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies calling for a \$7.5 billion budget for the National Science Foundation (NSF) in fiscal year (FY) 2015. The letter states, "We urge you to support \$7.5 billion to fund the NSF to ensure that we continue to cultivate STEM talent so our nation remains globally competitive." The President's FY 2015 budget request for NSF is \$7.255 billion, which is 1.2 percent over the FY 2014 enacted level. The \$7.5 billion requested in the letter-which is also the amount being supported by many throughout the scientific community, including COSSA-would represent an increase of 4.6 percent. For comparison, the last NSF reauthorization bill-the *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010*-authorized the NSF budget at \$7.4 billion for FY 2011, \$7.8 billion for FY 2012, and \$8.3 billion for FY 2013.

FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES & NEWS

France Cordova Sworn in as NSF Director; Next SBE Assistant Director Named

On March 31, France Cordova, President Emerita of Purdue University, was [sworn in](#) as the fourteenth Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Cordova, a renowned astrophysicist and previously a member of the National Science Board, was first nominated by President Obama in July 2013 and re-nominated in January 2014; she was confirmed by the Senate on March 12. She will serve a six-year term as NSF Director, replacing Subra Suresh who left NSF in June 2013 to become president of Carnegie Mellon University. Cora Marrett, NSF's Deputy Director, had been serving as NSF Acting Director since Suresh's departure.

In addition on March 12, NSF [announced](#) the appointment of Fay Lomax Cook as the next Assistant Director (AD) of the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE). Cook comes from Northwestern University, a COSSA member university, where she is a faculty fellow at the Institute for Policy Research and a professor of human development and social policy in the School of Education and Social Policy. She will officially assume her position in September, replacing Myron Gutmann whose term as SBE AD expired in August 2013. SBE Deputy Director Joanne Tornow has been serving as Acting SBE AD since Gutmann's departure.

NOTABLE PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

AAAS Congressional Briefing: R&D Spending in the FY 2015 Budget Request

On April 4, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) held a congressional briefing to discuss trends in R&D funding and the President's FY 2015 budget request. Congressman Rush Holt (D-NJ) delivered opening remarks on the continued importance of investing in research and development, particularly in difficult economic times. Matt Hourihan, the director of AAAS' R&D Budget and Policy Program, presented an analysis that outlined specific figures and trends in R&D funding across multiple agencies. Our [special budget issue](#) of the COSSA Update goes into further detail on funding levels of specific agencies.

Hourihan's presentation focused on the prevailing trend in federal spending since FY 2010, which he chose as a starting point because of its peak in R&D funding in recent years. Since FY 2010, R&D has seen a \$24 billion decrease with defense R&D taking the biggest hit, down almost 25 percent. Nondefense spending, on the other hand, has ebbed since FY 2010 but in FY 2014 was only down about 4 percent. The President's budget request would keep nondefense R&D mostly unchanged since FY 2014. However, once the Opportunity, Growth and Security Initiative is factored in,

nondefense R&D spending would rise to the FY 2010 enacted levels.

Breaking the trends down further, Hourihan noted that while nondefense R&D has not taken as big a hit as defense, the only increase has been in what he outlined as the "Commerce" section, which includes the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), up 38.4 percent since FY 2010. The other R&D agencies, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), have all experienced net funding losses (adjusted for inflation) since FY 2010. The President's requested budget for FY 2015, if enacted, would mark the first significant upward trend since prior to FY 2010.

For more information, visit AAAS' [website](#).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NSF Issues Dear Colleague on Youth Violence Research

On March 12, the National Science Foundation (NSF) issued a [Dear Colleague letter](#) on *Youth Violence: Opportunity for Breakthroughs in Fundamental Basic Research*. The purpose of the Dear Colleague is to encourage the submission of proposals to "enable a better understanding of the contributing factors, causes, and consequences of violence perpetrated by and against youth." This activity follows on the release of the 2013 [report](#), *Youth Violence: What We Need to Know*, which was a report of the Subcommittee on Youth Violence of the Advisory Committee to the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate. There are no new funds associated with this research; interested PIs are encouraged to engage with SBE programs officers in advance of their proposal submission to discuss how best to proceed.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is an advocacy organization promoting attention to and federal support for the social and behavioral sciences.

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