

CENSUS TO ALLOW CHOICE OF MORE THAN ONE RACIAL CATEGORY MB

The Clinton Administration is proposing that the 2000 Census and other federal forms allow Americans for the first time to choose more than one racial category in identifying themselves.

The Office of Management and Budget's July 9 announcement culminates several years of interagency research and deliberation. The current federal categories, created in 1977, are widely believed to have become an inaccurate standard to measure a nation experiencing increased immigration and interracial marriage. However, the move to create a separate "multiracial" category lacked broad support in Congress and the administration, and was opposed by many leading civil rights groups, who feared it would dilute their numbers and impede the enforcement of existing laws.

An unresolved question is how to tabulate those who select more than one racial category. In its proposal, OMB says, "Standardized tabulation rules need to be developed by the Federal agencies working in cooperation with one another. When results from data collection activities are reported or tabulated, the number selecting more than one race should be given . . . Data producers are encouraged to provide greater detail about the distribution of multiple responses." It is expected that OMB will form an interagency task force to determine how to tabulate the multiple selections.

In deciding not to establish a multiracial category, OMB said "there is no general consensus for the definition of multiracial . . . [it] is more likely to be misunderstood by respondents, resulting in greater misreporting." OMB's research estimates that the counts for Whites and Blacks are unlikely to be affected in the near term, but that other groups may see a lowering of counts.

The public comment period for the proposed regulations ends September 8, 1997. For more information, contact the OMB Statistical Policy Office at 202/395-3093.

AGRICULTURAL APPROPRIATIONS CONSOLIDATES STUDIES HS

The House Appropriations Committee has provided the **Economic Research Service** \$71.6 million for its FY 1998 budget. This is an \$18.5 million increase above its FY 1997 funding level. The increase, however, occurs because the committee intends to consolidate all studies and evaluations previously carried out in the food stamp, child nutrition, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs. In its report, the committee emphasized that this work will fall into the Food and Consumer Economics Division of ERS which "conducts research and analysis of food programs and food policy issues." The report also states that the Committee "expects ERS to consult and work with the staff at the Food and Consumer Service as well as other agencies to assure that all studies and evaluations are meeting the needs of the Department."

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The National Agricultural Statistics Service was provided \$118.4 million for FY 1998, an \$18.1 million increase over FY 1997. In Fiscal 1998 the Census of Agriculture will be conducted, and \$36.1 million of the NASS appropriation, including most of the increase, will go to cover this survey which provides comprehensive data on all aspects of the agricultural economy.

The appropriations committee recommended \$105.7 million for the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants program (NRI). Although this is an increase of \$11.5 million over last year, it still falls short of the \$130 million request. In addition, \$8 million of the increase will go to three new categories within the NRI. One of the new categories is Plant and Animal Genomics, funded at \$3 million. After providing funds for five specific biotechnology consortiums, the committee has decided that instead of providing individual earmarks, it would include a competitive grant line item of \$4 million, so that "the projects previously funded as separate items should compete for these funds." The committee has also set aside \$1 million, within the NRI appropriation, for a competitive research program for the control of citrus tristeza virus, "a serious threat to the U.S. citrus industry." The Markets, Trade and Policy account received \$3.9 million, the same as last year.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences. *Update* is published 22 times per year. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$65; institutional subscriptions, \$130, overseas mail, \$130. ISSN 0749-4394. Address all inquiries to COSSA, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 842-3525, Fax: (202) 842-2788.

Special Research Grants were funded for FY 1998 at \$31.9 million. The administration asked for \$10.1 million, the final funding for FY 1997 was \$49.8 million. The Senate has traditionally added funding for additional projects when it marks up the bill, so the FY 1998 number will likely rise. Included in the Special Grants are \$664,000 for the Rural Policies Institute in Nebraska and Missouri, and \$423,000 for the Rural Development Centers in Iowa, Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Mississippi and Oregon. The Hatch Act Formula Grant program, again received \$168.7 million, the same as FY 1997 and FY 1996.

NSF RELEASES DRAFT OF STRATEGIC PLAN *HS*

Facing a September 30 deadline to submit a strategic plan to the Congress to comply with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the National Science Foundation has released a draft document and seeks comments from the scientific community. The full document can be found at the NSF Home Page (www.nsf.gov) under the Special Notices section. NSF would like comments by August 1.

The new plan follows by less than three years, *NSF in A Changing World*, which laid out three broad, closely interrelated goals whose intent was to place the Foundation in a position to help secure the nation's scientific and technological future. These goals were: enable the U.S. to uphold a position of world leadership in all aspects of science, mathematics, and engineering; promote the discovery, integration, dissemination, and employment of new knowledge in service to society; and achieve excellence in U.S. science, mathematics, engineering, and technology education at all levels.

The new document, whose working title is *NSF: A Catalyst for Progress*, adopts the vision, mission and goals statements from the earlier document. According to the new draft, "NSF sparks progress through catalytic, integrative investments in the work of a dynamic, diverse community of researchers and educators." It does this by leading the way "toward future progress, always at the edge, peering into the

unknown on the nation's behalf, and preparing future generations to do likewise."

The draft also discusses outcome goals. These are noted as: discoveries at and across the frontier of science and engineering; vital connections between discoveries and their use in service to society; a diverse, productive, globally-oriented workforce of scientists and engineers; and improved achievement in the essential mathematics and science skills needed by all Americans. In order to reach these outcome goals, NSF employs an investment strategy that seeks to develop intellectual capital, strengthens physical infrastructure, integrates research and education, and promotes partnerships. NSF implements these strategies through competitive merit review involving both external and internal assessments. NSF's role in connecting discoveries to society "is in making sure that the channels of communication are open, that results are accessible to potential users, that NSF researchers are alert to how the results of their research might be of value to others, and that NSF's investment portfolio appropriately supports national priorities in the context of the federal research and development enterprise."

In addition to the strategic plan, GPRA requires annual performance plans. Agencies must demonstrate to Congress how they will accomplish their goals and objectives using assessment measures. NSF expects these performance goals will fall into two broad categories: process goals for investing in or facilitating research and education projects and facilities operations; and result goals for NSF's investments at an aggregate level. The latter will be "descriptive standards" and will not be specific to a fiscal year, but will assess NSF's performance over time, including the use of external panels of experts.

NSF will host a public meeting on July 24 from 2 to 4 p.m. at NSF headquarters in Arlington to provide an opportunity for its constituents to express their views and suggestions about the draft strategic plan.

WHITE HOUSE REPORT SEEKS LARGE INCREASE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH *HS*

A Report to the President on the Use of Technology to Strengthen K-12 Education in the United States calls for the initiation of a major program of experimental research on education and educational technology.

The report, produced for the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST), argues for expenditures of \$1.5 billion to conduct such research. This would raise the figure spent on education research from the current less than 0.1 percent to 0.5 percent of total education spending, still paling by comparison to the 23 percent of all U.S. expenditures for medications applied to pharmaceutical research.

Under the direction of PCAST member, David Shaw, Chairman of D.G. Shaw & Co. and Juno Online Services, the report strongly recommends that a distinguished board of outside experts appointed by the President should oversee the research program. It should: "encompass basic research in various learning related disciplines and on various educationally relevant technologies; early stage research aimed at developing new forms of educational software, content, and technology-enabled pedagogy; and rigorous, well-controlled, peer-reviewed, large-scale empirical studies designed to determine which educational approaches are in fact most effective in practice."

The report also recommends: focusing on learning *with* technology, not *about* technology; emphasizing content and pedagogy, not just hardware; giving special attention to professional development; and ensuring equitable, universal access. In addition, 5 percent of all public K-12 U.S. educational dollars, approximately \$13 billion, "should be earmarked for technology-related expenditures." Currently, this spending amounts to approximately 1.3 percent.

INTERAGENCY REPORT ASSESSES CHILD DATA AS

A new report, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*, provides, in a single document, a composite picture of the well-being of the nation's children. The report presents 25 key indicators on critical aspects of children's lives, including their behavior and social environment, economic security, education and health. A "special" indicator on child abuse was also included in this year's report, due to the currently limited data available in this area.

America's Children is the result of a recently issued Presidential Executive Order and is the first in a series of planned annual reports that will monitor the overall status of the nation's children. It is the product of the many agencies within the Federal government that collect data on children through various mechanisms and who are part of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics founded in 1994. The Forum selected the indicators through careful examination of available data drawn "primarily from national surveys and from vital records."

"The Executive Order requires the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, a body created to foster greater coordination among Federal agencies that produce data about children. It challenges us to do better in collecting and reporting data on the nation's most valuable resource, our children," said Katherine Wallman, Chief Statistician at the Office of Management and Budget.

"The report provides a valuable tool for tracking the condition of children and can help inform policy decisions that will affect them," said Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Duane Alexander. "For the first time, the Federal government, paralleling to a degree the way it reports on the nation's economic status, is taking a composite look at how our nation's children are faring," he continued.

"As researchers, we know that data measuring our children's lives are like individual stars; only by studying the stars, or statistics, in relation to each other, do we begin to see important patterns -- a

constellation that is far greater than the sum of its parts," declared the National Science Foundation's Assistant Director for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences, Bennett Bertenthal. "By combining information on numerous topics, this report enables us to gain a better perspective on the whole of our children's lives, and to understand how each facet is related to the others. The value of the report will be realized in future years, as we monitor these and other indicators to learn how children's lives are changing with the changes in their environments," he concluded.

Gaps in Information

The report also "points to major gaps in coverage and timeliness of the Nation's information on children and youth." It "challenges the Nation as a whole -- and the Federal statistical agencies in particular -- to improve the monitoring of important areas of children's lives." At the end of each section is a description of indicators needing development. "These lists include many important aspects of children's lives for which indicators are lacking or are undeveloped: homelessness, long-term poverty, mental health, violent crime, and other behavior problems, early childhood development, and children with special needs." The report notes that the Forum is "exploring ways to collect new measures and improve existing ones" in these areas.

Copies of the report can be obtained from the National Maternal and Child Health Bureau Clearinghouse at 703/356-1964, or via the Internet on the National Center for Health Statistics home page: www.cdc.gov/nchswww/nchshome.htm

CAPITOL HILL FORUM LOOKS AT SCIENCE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AS

"The biological sciences and the social sciences are so dramatic and so new that infant brain development has seized the attention of the country -- feminists and traditionalists alike, but most of all, families of every variety and scientists throughout the country," declared Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues Co-Chair Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) in her opening remarks before the

Caucus' first-ever congressional hearing, *0-3 Child Development and Implications for Child Care*.

"Scientific research reveals extraordinary new information -- that early stimulation in a child's environment can determine the brain functions of a child. Parents of every income group are now aware of just how critical the 0 - 3 years are for children. We now know that children who do not meet certain cognitive, linguistic, emotional or motor goals within the first three years may never completely develop these critical life skills," Norton continued.

Research Needs Outstrip Ability to Address Them

"Our emerging understanding that the environment and, in fact, even our thoughts themselves can modify the structure of our brains has supplanted the old notion of *nature versus nurture*. Today we know that these two components inseparably shape the child's unique outcomes during the course of growth and development," explained Peter S. Jensen of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the hearing's lead witness. "What are the implications of these new models and new knowledge for the NIMH and the National Institutes of Health (NIH)?" he asked. He emphasized that "NIMH is devoting additional resources on this period of life, both to understand how health developmental patterns are established, as well as to ascertain which specific environmental factors portend risk for development of a behavioral or mental disorder." NIMH and the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), he said, "are working together to develop multi-site studies in partnership with Head Start programs and leading universities."

Jensen also emphasized that "[f]ailing to identify children in need due to the lack of evaluation and treatment resources becomes a self-perpetuating problem: when only a few children are identified, policy educational, and health care planners may not devote sufficient resources to meet the underlying, unspoken needs . . . [T]he pace of research progress is still too slow, and the research needs will always outstrip our ability to address them."

"The brain research you have heard about today is indeed exciting: it tells us that an infant's brain

grows rapidly in the first weeks and months of life -- more rapidly than previously suspected -- and that the early experiences of the growing child play a determining role in the basic wiring of the brain for life, said Sterling Professor of Psychology at Yale University Edward Zigler. Zigler was the first director of what is now ACYF and the federal official responsible for administering Head Start. "Social policy has done little to help families deal with their conflicting responsibilities," he said. Zigler made three recommendations to the Caucus. First, while commending the Congress for passing the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Zigler recommended that the Act be expanded. "Half of women are not covered," he said.

Noting that the "majority of caregivers are not engaging children in the kind of conversation and other activities that enhance growth and development," Zigler also recommended the "establishment of national standards for child care quality, to be used as guidelines by the states." Lastly, he encouraged support for the "expansion of parent education programs." Desiring to "conclude on a positive note," he underscored that "our nation's relatively new Early Head Start program is totally consonant with the new research on brain development."

NICHD Early Child Care Study Indispensable

"Our research has shown how early experiences in child care affect children's relationships with their mothers, their early understanding of the world, and their readiness for school." These are just a few of the many outcomes we are measuring in the Study of Early Child Care funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at NIH, said Marsha Weinraub, Professor of Psychology at Temple University, and one of the investigators of the study.

Weinraub emphasized that the disagreements among previous research findings regarding the effects of child care over the last two decades occurred because "research studies available throughout the 1980s were not large enough to take into account all of the critical family, child and child-care variables that influence the development of young children." Conclusions, said Weinraub,

"about the effects of early child care were based on small samples of primarily white children, most from middle class families."

The NICHD study, emphasized Weinraub, is the response of Director Duane Alexander to the "unanimous call from child development experts for more comprehensive research on the effects of child care . . . Following stringent scientific review by independent experts, 10 teams of investigators were selected from universities and research institutes across the country." Weinraub informed the Caucus that the NICHD Early Child Care Research Network expects "to have many more detailed reports of the effects of child care available in the next year." In addition to the five reports published thus far, another 14 reports are currently in preparation. "We have a lot more work to do," Weinraub maintained.

"Your work is indispensable," declared Norton. "I consider your work pathbreaking," she continued. "We would hope that Congress and NIH would want to continue to fund this study." Norton pledged to personally make sure that the study receives additional funds to allow researchers to continue to gather information regarding the effects of day care beyond the first grade. "We have started to gather a rich body of evidence and need to continue to gather this evidence and see where it takes us," she concluded.

ACADEMY REPORT REDISCOVERS GEOGRAPHY *HS*

In order to assess what Thomas Wilbanks of Oak Ridge National Laboratory calls "a well-documented growing perception, that geography is useful, perhaps even necessary, in meeting certain societal needs," the National Research council recently released, *Rediscovering Geography: New Relevance for Science and Society*. Wilbanks, who chaired the committee that prepared the report, noted that it is about geography as a means, rather than as an end; about subject matter, tools, and perspectives, rather than about an academic discipline. It is directed mainly toward readers outside geography.

In 1989, the National Education Summit designated geography as one of five core subject

areas for study in the K-12 grades. This gave impetus to demands for improved geographic education that led to the development and implementation of national geography standards in 1994. In addition, there have been significant increases in the number of undergraduate majors and graduate students. Geographic research perspectives have influenced such diverse fields as planning, economics, social theory, epidemiology, anthropology, ecology, environmental history, conservation biology, and international relations. The importance of spatial perspectives and the concepts of place and scale have also extended the importance of geography to other disciplines. The report examines how these developments have connected geography to the broad concerns of society and science.

It also notes geography's contributions to critical issues such as economic health, global climate change, ethnic conflict, health care, and environmental degradation. In a chapter on geography's contribution to decision making, the report describes examples such as, housing policy in Minneapolis-St. Paul, management of the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, electoral mapmaking in Los Angeles, adapting to climate change in river basins, and the development of agricultural policy.

The committee made a number of recommendations to improve geographic understanding and literacy among scientists and the general public. These include more emphasis on priority driven, cross disciplinary projects and increased interactions between academic geography and users of its research. In addition, strengthening geographic institutions such as professional and academic organizations was another goal.

Copies of the report are available from the National Academy Press 1/800-624-6242.

BROWN UNIVERSITY JOINS COSSA *MB*

COSSA is pleased to announce that Brown University has joined the Consortium as a Contributor. We are looking forward to working with the university on issues of common concern.

**SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT:
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH** *MS*

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency for further information or application materials. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

**National Institute on Aging
National Institute of Mental Health
National Institute of Nursing Research**

The three Institutes invite qualified researchers to submit applications to investigate prevention issues relevant to AIDS in middle-aged and older populations. This announcement solicits AIDS prevention research proposals to study primary prevention of disease transmission as well as secondary and tertiary prevention of negative behavioral and social consequences of HIV/AIDS for persons with AIDS, their families, and communities. Thus, the primary goals are to:

- 1) identify social and behavioral factors associated with HIV transmission and disease progression later in life;
- 2) examine behavioral and social consequences of HIV infection/AIDS across the life course;
- 3) develop and evaluate age appropriate behavioral and social interventions for a) preventing AIDS in middle-aged and older adults and/or b) ameliorating problems associated with older adults' care giver responsibilities or burdens;
- 4) explore health care issues surrounding AIDS care; and
- 5) strengthen existing research and evaluation methods

Mechanism of Support: This announcement will use the NIH investigator-initiated research project grant (RO1) and the First Independent Research Support and Transition (FIRST) award (R29) mechanisms. It is anticipated that up to \$1,000,000 will be available to support applications in response to the announcement.

Deadlines: On-going

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Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality
Sociologists for Women in Society
Southern Sociological Society
Southwestern Social Science Association
Speech Communication Association

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