
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume IV, Number 1
January 11, 1985

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RUSSELL SAGE GRANT SUPPORTS COSSA RESEARCH GUIDE

Thanks to a grant recently provided by the Russell Sage Foundation, and building on the cooperation of COSSA's Member associations, in 1985-86 the Consortium will undertake to prepare a comprehensive guide to research support available from the federal government for the social and behavioral sciences.

The COSSA Guide to Research Support is expected to be in print by mid-1986. Its audience will be not only the constituent major disciplines but those working in inter- and cross-disciplinary fields. Most federal grants and contracts programs are not intended primarily to support disciplinary research *per se* (the National Science Foundation being to a considerable extent an exception), but to advance research in specific topical areas, defined either scientifically or in terms of their policy or societal relevance.

The Russell Sage Foundation, located in New York City, is the leading U.S. foundation devoted primarily to research in the social sciences. Founded in 1907, it has played a prominent role both in the stimulation of research, through its grants programs and its program of visiting scholars, and in the application of theoretical and methodological work in the policy arena.

COSSA Washington Update is published 20-24 times per year, normally biweekly, by the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), 1200 Seventeenth Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202/887-6166). Individual subscriptions are available in COSSA for \$25.00; institutional subscriptions, \$90.00; overseas airmail, \$40.00. ISSN 0749-4394 COSSA Members, Affiliates, and Contributors are listed on the back.

Risa I. Palm, *President*

David Jenness, *Executive Director*

The preparation of the Guide will be undertaken by the COSSA staff, with the guidance of an advisory committee whose members will include active researchers from diverse areas of social science, federal program managers, association representatives, and those whose scholarly work addresses science policy and the relationship between the federal government and research universities. The Guide will not only list programs and opportunities, but provide contextual information on aspects of the organization of science funding, agency procedures and guidelines, and effective 'grantsmanship.' Thus, the Guide should be useful not only to researchers but also to administrators, advisors to students, officers of professional groups, and others.

Several of COSSA's Member associations already provide their members with information about research support. However, such efforts are confined to what is relevant to the single discipline. Some disciplines have no printed material conveying such information, and deal with inquiries on a case-by-case basis. The COSSA Guide will certainly be the most comprehensive source in the social and behavioral sciences -- though it may not provide as much detail about specific programs as is contained in materials prepared by individual associations or groups. The Guide, if successful, may free some of the smaller associations from the need to publish individual volumes. It should also reduce the burden of inquiries directed to association offices, and be cost-effective with regard to information-gathering and marketing. The Guide will be priced at a level that can be afforded by individuals as well as by departmental and university research offices.

As mentioned, a major emphasis of the COSSA Guide will be to identify sources of support for inter- and sub-disciplines, and to relate the topical orientation of grant (and contract and fellowship) programs to disciplinary traditions. Social and behavioral science fields tend to identify their methods and research interests with one or a few agencies, thus missing other opportunities. Moreover, scientists with highly specialized self-identifications tend to have rather narrow professional networks, and may not realize that there are parallel groups of researchers deriving from other disciplinary traditions, with their own patterns of or need for funding. (As one example, "human ecology" is a subfield, under various names, in psychology, anthropology, economics, geography, sociology, history, and perhaps other main fields.)

Moreover, as is obvious, many disciplines bridge largely arbitrary divisions between social science and other "branches of knowledge," such as biological and physical science, the humanities, and mathematics. Not only does this widen the range of possible grant-supporting programs for researchers who are carefully guided, but it identifies special intersections of which many in the field are not aware.

Virtually no federal programs, save certain fellowship programs, restrict support to those with particular professional labels (e.g., the field in which the Ph.D. was earned, or the department in which an applicant works). However, while many or most programs are in principle open to submittals from most or all disciplines, the substantive or mission emphases of the agency or the program limit, in practice, what applications are likely to succeed.

Much of the background for the Guide has been prepared through COSSA's monitoring of federal research budgets, since its formation in 1981, and through the editorial preparation of the feature, "Sources of Research Support," which highlights a different research or fellowship program in each issue of the COSSA Washington Update.

Nevertheless, the COSSA staff are interested in having comments and suggestions from the readership of the Update, especially in two regards. First, what would be the most useful format for the volume? That is, what order of presentation, what kinds of indexes and other analytical apparatus, what sort of contextualizing information, what physical properties (size, shape, bound vs looseleaf), what frequency of issue? Second, what special fields of research need particular investigation? That is, easily ignored fields marginal to the principal disciplines but important in their own right; topical fields that involve researchers from disparate traditions or with different professional orientations; research areas that may need new mechanisms (grants programs, review panels, etc.) within the federal structure to bring them special visibility or adequate stability. Members of COSSA's Affiliates, few of which are able to survey and communicate research resources in a systematic way, may want to give special consideration to recommending how the COSSA Guide might best work for them.

99th CONGRESS OPENS FOR BUSINESS

On January 3rd the 99th Congress was sworn in, elected its leaders, and promptly recessed until after the inauguration on January 21. Rep. Thomas P. O'Neill (D-MA) was re-elected Speaker of the House, Rep. James Wright (D-TX) was re-elected Majority Leader, and Rep. Robert Michel (R-IL) was re-elected Minority Leader. In moves reflecting the ascension of younger Democrats to power, Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-MO) was named Chairman of the Democratic Caucus, Rep. William Gray (D-PA) became the new Chairman of the Budget Committee, and Rep. Les Aspin (D-WI) replaced 80-year-old Rep. Melvin Price (D-IL), deposed by the Caucus as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Gephardt, Gray, and Aspin are all in their forties and were first elected to the House in the 1970s. The party line-up in the House is 252 Democrats and 182 Republicans, with one seat still in dispute. Committee and subcommittee assignments were postponed until after the inauguration.

The new Republican leadership team selected in December, Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS) and Majority Whip Alan Simpson (R-WY), took over in the Senate. Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV), will once again lead the Democrats. The party line-up in the Senate is 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats. The Senate has postponed its committee and subcommittee assignments until they consider the recommendations of a committee chaired by Sen. Dan Quayle (R-IN) to reduce the number of committee and subcommittee assignments per Senator and to reform the Senate rules and floor procedures.

At the moment, discussion about the legislative agenda for 1985 focuses on budgetary decisions. The President's budget is scheduled to be released on February 4. However, there are reports that Congress is set to ignore that budget, and instead focus its attention on one being put together by Senate Majority Leader Dole and his fellow Republicans, which is expected to be released on February 1. The key word at the moment concerning Fiscal Year 1986 budgets is 'freeze.' As far as COSSA can tell, this word has different meanings to different people. There is a 'freeze' in terms of absolute dollars for agencies, but not for specific programs within agencies. There is a 'freeze' that means no increases for defense and no cost-of-living increases for entitlement programs. There is also a 'freeze' that includes increases at the inflation rate. How this word is finally defined may foretell the fates of the budgets that most concern COSSA and its constituents.

Beyond budgets and appropriations, there are a number of items that Congress will consider that COSSA will monitor and lobby. They include:

Science Policy Study: The House Science and Technology Committee, chaired by Rep. Don Fuqua (D-FL), has undertaken a two-year study of science policy in the U.S. The Committee has asked the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to prepare an analysis of the social and behavioral sciences and their contributions to society. COSSA will meet with CRS staff responsible for the analysis and will continue to monitor and assist the Committee with its study.

NIH Reauthorization: The bill reauthorizing the National Institutes of Health (NIH), vetoed by the President last October, included provisions specifically suggesting appointment of social and behavioral scientists to NIH advisory councils. Some in the House are talking of quickly re-passing the same bill and trying to override another presidential veto. Others, in the Senate, would like to take another, longer look at the legislation.

Department of Science and Technology: The President's Commission on Industrial Competitiveness has released a report supporting the idea of a Cabinet-level Department of Science and Technology. Presidential Science Advisor, Dr. George Keyworth III, also advocates this idea, which has surfaced periodically in the last twenty years. Although the general feeling is that this is an idea whose time has still not come, proposals to reorganize the Commerce Department and merge the Energy and

Interior Departments may lead to the hour of decision on a new Department. COSSA will continue to monitor the situation.

Education Reauthorizations: The authorizations of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and the National Institute of Education (NIE) both expire at the end of 1985. There are provisions that allow for a one-year extension without action by the Congress. Both the House and Senate Education Subcommittees intend to move forward on the HEA this year. Whether a final bill will emerge is uncertain. Traditionally, NIE has been reauthorized in the HEA. However, Congress and the administration may reorganize the entire research and statistics operations of the Department of Education.

Health and Human Behavior Initiative: COSSA will continue to press for the congressionally mandated, but never funded, health and human behavior initiative in the Public Health Service.

Other items such as the extension of the Research and Development Tax Credit, research at the Agriculture Department, and attempts to eliminate the National Activities section of the Job Training Partnership Act which includes some social science research at the Department of Labor, will also merit COSSA's attention.

For more information on any of these issues contact Dr. Howard Silver at COSSA (202/887-6166).

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND THE MEDIA

Over the past few months, COSSA has been considering how to strengthen the relationship between the social sciences and the media as part of a longer-range concern with public perceptions of the social and behavioral sciences.

At a recent meeting of a newly formed COSSA public information network, representatives of COSSA Member associations described their current public information activities and their goals in this area. The majority of associations maintain a primarily passive role, answering inquiries from journalists and referring them to 'experts' in the discipline. Keeping track of whether social scientists who are contacted by the press are accessible, helpful, articulate, and knowledgeable is often difficult, but is necessary for maintaining good relationships with journalists as well as for assuring that social science is accurately represented.

Many among the memberships of the associations comprising COSSA fear that publicity in the mass media will misrepresent or oversimplify complex research methods and findings, and that because of these risks, participating in media endeavors will damage their reputation within the academic community. One of the few studies of the reporting of social science research in the media indicates that these fears are not unfounded. In a

paper presented at the American Sociological Association (ASA) 1984 Annual Meeting, Eleanor Singer and Phyllis Endreny of Columbia University show that stories in newspapers, magazines and on television usually focus on a single study and state the findings as though they were universal truths, without referring to the evidence on which the study is based, the methodology, any published source, the identity of the researcher or institution, or the context. These reservations on behalf of the membership in part explain why so little staff time and money is devoted to public information activities.

In an article in ASA Footnotes (December 1984), Albert E. Gollin recognizes the concerns of academics but goes on to make a case for increasing publicity of, in his case, sociology:

For the discipline as a whole, publicity can materially affect the flow of recruits into sociology at the undergraduate and graduate levels; improve the morale of sociologists, who can derive gratification from the enhanced importance accorded to their field as a result of publicity and the sense of excitement that accompanies public recognition that its contributions are valuable; and increase resources flowing to sociology as a consequence of increased public esteem and the demonstrated usefulness of sociological work. And, in turn, with an enhanced flow of highly-qualified recruits and financial support, the capacity of the field to achieve more that is of both scientific and practical import will grow.

How is this progress to be accomplished? A number of suggestions have been made, at least to start with, including: systematizing the practice of providing referrals to the media; targeting specialized media for release of information on particular issues; training writers who usually deal with the physical and biological sciences in the social and behavioral sciences; expanding the focus from newspapers to periodicals and the electronic media; locating people trained in both journalism and the social sciences; and offering a social science fellowship for journalists. The public information network will meet later this month to exchange specific publicity strategies. New ideas are coming to light as social scientists attempt to analyze the relationship between the media and popular perceptions of social science. For example, in the November 1984 Anthropology Newsletter, Susan L. Allen posits the concept of 'media anthropology,' which she perceives as "the application of the principles of anthropology to information, and the dissemination of that information for the purpose of public education." This concept can be extended to other disciplines as well. Given the reliance of most people on the mass media as their primary source of information, the social science community should be concerned about the representation of its endeavors.

COSSA would appreciate hearing from social scientists who have had experiences with the media, or who have studied the relationship between social science and the media. If you have done any work in this area, please contact Eileen Chotiner in the COSSA office.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for more information.

Research on the Oldest Old
(National Institute on Aging)

The National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health, is currently seeking grant applications for research and research training which focus on the oldest old -- those over age 85. This special initiative is being sponsored jointly by the Behavioral Sciences Research and Biomedical Research and Clinical Medicine Programs of the NIA, and is coordinated with related programs in the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. The program is concerned with a broad array of research activities, including the assessment of existing data and methodological innovations; general characteristics of the oldest old; and interactions with society, including health care systems. Research applications need not be limited to any particular methodology of data collection or analysis. Designs may include demographic, epidemiological, econometric, and clinical studies with cross-sectional, longitudinal, or cohort designs. Cross-national comparisons are strongly encouraged.

Funding Mechanisms: Grants

Review Process: Peer review

Disciplines Supported: All fields of science are eligible

Deadlines: March 1, July 1, November 1

Contact (for all topics other than biomedical):

National Institute on Aging
Behavioral Sciences Research
Attention: "Oldest Old"
Building 31C, Room 4C32
Bethesda, MD 20205
301/496-3136

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