



# COSSA

## Washington UPDATE



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**SAVE THE DATE: COSSA COLLOQUIUM ON SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY: NOVEMBER 29 AND 30.**

### **Congress Returns from Independence Day Break; One Month to go Before August and Convention Recess**

Having missed one of the hottest weeks in Washington, DC history, the members of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress will return from their Independence Day "district work period" on July 9. With one month to go before they leave for the traditional August break followed by the two national party conventions, the work on the FY 2013 appropriations process remains uncertain.

Before leaving on June 29, the House of Representatives passed the spending bill for the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, which makes it the sixth one to get through the House floor. Eleven of the twelve appropriations bills have received approval by

the House Appropriations Committee, with the large Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill slated for action soon. The even larger Defense spending bill and the Agriculture bill may make it to the floor before August.

In passing the HUD spending legislation, the House provided \$52 million for the Department's Office of Policy Development and Research. This is the same as the president's request and \$6 million more than FY 2012 and the Senate Appropriations recommendation for FY 2013. The House also provided \$50 million, same as last year and \$7 million more than the Senate panel, for HUD's Transformation Initiative (TI). The TI has three elements: (1) research, evaluation, and program metrics; (2) program demonstrations; and (3) technical assistance and capacity building. Funding to support these activities is provided by transfers from HUD programs.

### **CJS Spending Bill in Queue for Senate Floor Action**

On the Senate side, the Appropriations Committee has approved nine of the twelve FY 2013 funding bills. The remaining three - Defense, Interior, and Legislative Branch may get marked up in July. None of the 12 has reached the Senate floor.

The leadership may push the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) bill to the floor as early as the third week of July. But that is still uncertain. This is the bill that includes funding for the National Science Foundation and the Census Bureau, and may see amendments on the floor to duplicate the action of the House, which defunded the political science program at NSF and the American Community Survey (see Update, [May 14, 2012](#)).

In the meantime, no one expects the FY 2013 appropriations process to come to completion before a lame duck session following the presidential and congressional elections in November. A Continuing Resolution will again be necessary to fund the government when FY 2013 begins on October 1, 2012.

Also looming are the automatic spending cuts, known as sequestration, scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2013. If these actually occur, agencies could receive budget reductions as high as eight to nine percent. The "if" is a big one because the thinking is that, with the economy still struggling, cutting government spending that significantly will make things worse. In addition, sequestration would also cut defense spending by large amounts and the House has already voted not to let that happen. In June, both the Senate, in the Farm Bill, and the House Budget Committee, asked the Obama administration for specific details on how it would implement the sequestration.

Thus, another grand deal seems in the works that would also take into account the expiring Bush tax cuts, the temporary social security tax reductions, and entitlement spending. Before we get to that point in late November or sometime in December, an election will take place and much anguish and hand wringing will occur. Stay tuned!

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## **ERS Celebrates Morrill Act Anniversary and New Headquarters**

On June 28 the Economic Research Service (ERS) held an open house to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the founding of the land grant universities. ERS' own origins trace back to 1905, when USDA established an Office of Farm Management. ERS also celebrated its move into new quarters at 355 E Street, SW, in Washington, DC.

Catherine Woteki, Under Secretary for USDA's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area, opened the morning's event with a remarkable figure-over the years over 20 million graduates have passed through the classrooms of the land grant universities. Referring back to the Morrill Act, passed in the middle of the Civil War in 1862, Woteki noted that the short document was filled with vital principles for the universities in these difficult economic times, pointing out that the land grants were originally meant to give working class kids a shot at college. A poignant fact to consider as tuitions continues to rise.

Mary Bowman, ERS Administrator, took the podium next. She discussed this year's agency-wide strategic evaluation to hunt for areas where improvement could be made or where more data could be warranted. A team of senior staff is currently working on this project. ERS expects to release the results in late July. So far, strengths revealed by this evaluation include:

- Objectivity and neutrality of information;
- ERS data provides a national context for issues; and
- ERS data provides quality and depth.

Areas for improvement identified include:

- Timeliness;
- Consumability;
- Accessibility; and
- Cooperation and collaboration (to minimize duplication within USDA.)

ERS also used the forum to announce the overhaul of their website, which went live June 26. The site was re-engineered to be more customer-centric and accessible. However, if you preferred to find data on the old site, the entire thing is archived and searchable within the new website. ERS' site can be found at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/>.

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## Briefing on Usefulness of NLS Held

The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago hosted a briefing on June 26 titled: "The National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS): Providing Insight and Information to Today's Headlines and Policymakers." The NLS, housed within the Bureau of Labor Statistics at the U.S. Department of Labor, include one of the richest sources of national, objective information related to wages, earnings, unemployment, and careers. These data play a significant role in our understanding of employment, economics, education and myriad other economic and policy concerns. The event, which took place on Capitol Hill, attracted a standing room only crowd to hear speakers describe just how indispensable the NLS are. COSSA co-sponsored the event.

Dan Black, Professor at the University of Chicago's Harris School, provided listeners with a history of the NLS. What Black referred to as "the old NLS" began at the Department of Labor with two original cohorts of men in 1966 and two of women in 1967. Some of the women were followed well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The NLS now consists of the: *National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)*, a survey of young men and women born in the years 1980-84 whose respondents were ages 12-17 when first interviewed in 1997; the *National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79)*, a survey of men and women born in the years 1957-64 whose respondents were ages 14-22 when first interviewed in 1979; and *NLSY79 Children and Young Adults*, a survey of the biological children of women in the *NLSY79*. According to Black, over the years 6,000 scholarly papers have been written with the data provided by the NLS examining a vast array of subjects from the consequences of obesity to the impact of getting a GED.

Karen Militello, Field Manager with the NORC, discussed the life of a field agent for the NLS. About 200 interviewers conduct the initial and ongoing interviews for the NLS. She stressed the importance of bi-annual data collection due to the inherent limits of respondents' memories. Field interviewers sit down and have face-to-face connections with respondents and can even be effective at bringing them back into the study and, thus, enriching the data NLS provides.

Carolyn Hill, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute, discussed the uses of the NLS data. Hill pointed out that longitudinal surveys provide information that simply is unavailable from cross sectional data. The NLS "asterisk" tables allow us to ask

incredible complex and current questions, Hill declared, making them a vital research tool for Nobel Prize Winners down to Undergraduates.

Vicki Shabo, Director of Work & Family Programs at the National Partnership for Women & Families, discussed a few ways her organization has made use of NLS data to prove invaluable points and drive home arguments on behalf of women and families. Shabo referred to one specific example where paid maternity leave was examined and, through NLS data, it was determined that it provides positive benefits for taxpayers since mothers are less likely to need public assistance after receiving paid maternity leave.

Karlyn Bowman, Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, closed the panel with a discussion of what the world would be like without the NLS. In her words, the field would "cede to partisan myth-making." It is in the public good, declared Bowman, to create non-partisan information.

The briefing came on the heels of an attempt by the BLS to cut funding for the NLS in FY 2012. An appeal to Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis reversed the BLS decision. The Senate Appropriations Committee made clear that the NLS should continue (see Update, [June 26, 2012](#)). At one point, the NLS was hoping for a new cohort, but the budgetary constraints that agencies now live with have made that almost impossible.

For more information on the NLS, please see their homepage [here](#).

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## NSF Geography Program Changes Procedures for Submitting and Reviewing Proposals

Concerned with declining success rates, the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Geography and Spatial Sciences (GSS) program has altered its solicitation submission dates and evaluation procedures.

A Dear Colleague letter from Mark Weiss, Director of the Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, noted that the percentage of regular research projects funded by GSS relative to the number of proposals the program considered for funding dropped from the 20 percent to 24 percent range in the early 1990s to the 16 percent to 18 percent range for much of the first decade of the 2000s. During the last two fiscal years, that percentage dropped to the 12 percent to 15 percent range.

Weiss further announced, that to address these problems, the GSS program has implemented a new schedule for the submission and evaluation of proposals, and it is adopting special merit review criteria in order to better identify potentially transformative research that has larger-scale, longer-term significance. These changes are outlined in a new GSS program solicitation [NSF 12-570](#).

**Effective immediately, GSS will conduct one annual competition for new research proposals submitted to the program. The next submission deadline is September 13, 2012. Starting in 2013, the proposal-submission deadline will be the first Thursday in September.** In addition to regular research proposals, proposals for conferences, workshops, group-travel, and other community-development activities as well as research coordination network (RCN) proposals must be submitted by this deadline. GSS will continue to conduct two competitions annually for doctoral dissertation research improvement (DDRI) proposals, although the proposal-submission deadlines have changed slightly to the 2nd Thursday of February and the 2nd Thursday of October each year.

By going to once-a-year solicitations, GSS hopes to increase the success rate, reduce program officer and panel reviewer burdens, reduce travel costs, and allow the program to commit a much larger share of its funds for the annual competition, estimated at \$6-7 million per year.

The proposals will still undergo merit review based on the criteria identified by the National Science Board: What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity? What are the broader

impacts of the proposed activity. Now, however, for the GSS program the criteria will include: What is the expected larger-scale, longer-term significance of the project (as described in the proposal) if the project is conducted successfully? What is the likelihood that the project (as described in the proposal) will be conducted successfully?

For questions or more information contact GSS program directors: Thomas J. Baerwald, (703) 292-7301, or [tbaerwal@nsf.gov](mailto:tbaerwal@nsf.gov); Antoinette WinklerPrins, (703) 292-4995 or [anwinkle@nsf.gov](mailto:anwinkle@nsf.gov); or David McGinnis, (703) 292-7307 or [dmcginni@nsf.gov](mailto:dmcginni@nsf.gov).

## Research on Children in Military Families: NIH Support for Conferences and Scientific Meetings

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), nearly two million U.S. children live in military families and are affected by a recent or current deployment of a parent to the combat zones of Iraq or Afghanistan. Since September 11, 2011, approximately 700,000 children have had a parent deployed to these regions.

Despite increased attention on children and family members of military personnel, very little research exists on the impact of these experiences on child health and well-being or on the effectiveness of programs designed to address the psychosocial and mental health needs of children and their families.

Accordingly, the NIH [Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)] have issued a funding opportunity announcement (FOA), *Research on Children in Military Families: The Impact of Parental Military Deployment and Reintegration on Child and Family Functioning* ([PA-12-223](#)), which calls for scientific conferences and meetings to examine what is known and to identify the gaps in current research.

According to NIH, active duty personnel and reservists may experience multiple deployments to combat zones, which underscores the need for research to fully understand the impacts of these experiences. Reports suggest that children in military families often experience multiple stressors before and during their parents' deployment and during phases of reunion with the family. Studies have also shown that pending deployment and the anticipation of deployment may result in family members of active duty and reservists experiencing emotional distress and destabilization, as well as such physical reactions as somatic complaints and sleep disturbances. The deployment of a parent confronts children and youth with developmental challenges and stressors that are less well documented. Family stress research has consistently demonstrated that such difficulties interfere with parenting, family life, and child adjustment. The limited availability of support services for children and families of reservists, in particular, may give rise to significant mental health and other psychosocial challenges. Therefore, more research is needed to examine whether and to what extent family stress associated with military deployment and reintegration will have an impact on family roles, routines, and support, as well as child emotional and behavioral outcomes.

At the same time, the NIH recognizes that returning military personnel, particularly those with multiple deployments to combat zones, may have major depression or traumatic brain injury, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and other co-morbid conditions. A developing body of literature indicates that these may be associated with an increased risk of domestic violence and child maltreatment.

According to the FOA, NIDA is interested in applications which focus on behavioral, cognitive and neurobiological factors as antecedents to, or impacting on, consequences of drug abuse. Of particular interest are studies aimed at reducing drug abuse and addiction and its associated adverse social, behavioral, and health consequences. There are few research studies targeting

particular concerns of military families, especially the effect of military life on neurodevelopment and substance use outcomes for children. The Institute encourages scientific meetings on parental military deployment, combat-related stress and reintegration with the family which is likely to affect cognitive, behavioral, social and affective processes that are known to influence substance use, abuse, and addiction in the children within these families. The knowledge may also inform novel treatments that are sensitive to the effects of stress and trauma from military deployment on child development outcomes and risk for drug abuse.

Relevant questions include but are not limited to:

- What is known about the impact of parental military deployment on child outcomes? Are there specific impacts on child adjustment when the mother or female head of household is deployed?
- How do parenting practices change when the military parent returns home from combat? Are there gender differences? Are there differences among racial/ethnic groups? How do these changes in parenting practices affect child adjustment and mental health outcomes including risk for drug abuse? Are these outcomes related to the gender of the child?
- To what extent do combat related PTSD and other co-morbid conditions such as substance use disorders, depression, sleep disturbance, and other anxiety disorders interfere with parenting?
- What is known about the ways in which combat exposure affects marital relations, family roles and responsibilities, and family dynamics? Are there gender differences in the ways in which combat related stress and PTSD affect family functioning and child adjustment outcomes?
- What is the process of adjustment when military personnel return home and the long-term consequences of separation and reintegration on children's development?
- What effect does the anticipation of deployment or multiple deployments have on family functioning and child adjustment?
- What is known about the health and adjustment of children and families in National Guard and Reserves versus Active Duty military?
- Are there particular family/child vulnerabilities or risk factors that are exacerbated by parental military service and combat related PTSD? Are there particular protective factors that may buffer against challenges associated with combat related PTSD?
- To what extent do parental military deployment, combat-related stress and reintegration with the family affect cognitive, behavioral, social and affective processes that are known to influence substance use, abuse, and addiction in the children within these families?

For more information contact:

Valerie Maholmes, NICHD, (301-496-1514 or [maholmev@mail.nih.gov](mailto:maholmev@mail.nih.gov)); or

Karen Sirocco, NIDA (301-451-8661 or [siroccok@mail.nih.gov](mailto:siroccok@mail.nih.gov)); or

Wendy J. Nilsen, OBSSR (301-496-0979 or [nilsenwj@od.nih.gov](mailto:nilsenwj@od.nih.gov)).

**Applications are due beginning July 12, 2012.** For more information and/or to apply, see: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-12-223.html>.

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**Address all inquiries to COSSA at [newsletters@cossa.org](mailto:newsletters@cossa.org) Telephone: (202) 842-3525**

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