



# WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## **FEATURED NEWS**

### **Government Shutdown Averted, For Now**

Congress was able to pass a continuing resolution (CR) on September 30, the final day of fiscal year (FY) 2015, within hours of a deadline that would result in a government shutdown. However, the CR simply kicks the can to December 11, the new deadline for coming to a final agreement on FY 2016 appropriations. While policymakers have provided themselves an additional 10 weeks to complete work on the annual spending bills, the path to the finish line remains unclear, complicated further by recent events like the announcement from House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) of his retirement at the end of October and the upcoming Republican leadership elections. In addition, the Treasury Department announced last week that the federal government is expected to reach its borrowing limit ("debt limit") by November 5, several weeks earlier than originally expected. These

developments, coupled with real-time negotiations on a larger two-year budget deal, make for a challenging chess match that promises to continue well into December, if not longer. Observers fear that the real chance for a government shutdown will occur in December when the stakes for a budget deal are that much higher.

What's the likely outcome? It's anyone's guess at this point. However, there are several scenarios that could take shape in the coming weeks, including (but certainly not limited to): a grand budget bargain that raises caps on discretionary spending similar to the bipartisan budget deal struck two years ago, which would provide some relief to federal agencies and programs that have been feeling the pinch in recent years; a year-long CR that would fund the federal government at FY 2015 levels for the balance of FY 2016, keeping sequestration in place for another year; or a government shutdown that eventually forces action on one of the aforementioned scenarios. Check out COSSA's [funding updates](#), [policy statements](#), and [letters](#) for a refresher on the latest developments impacting federal agencies and programs of interest to the COSSA community.

## FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION NEWS

### NIH Associate Director for Data Science Discusses Opportunities and Challenges of Data Science

At the [September 1 meeting](#) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) [Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives](#) (DPCPSI) Council of Councils, Associate Director for Data Science (ADD) Philip Bourne discussed the opportunities and challenges of data science. Bourne began by asking: "What are we going to do with our data?" He explained that from his point of view, science is at point of significant change as a consequence of the amount of data that is being generated. Biomedical research is becoming more analytical, and scientific change is happening faster than anticipated as a result of faster accumulation of data. He suggested that one could now argue that biomedical research is at that point of digitization, noting that preclinical research has been digital for quite some time. The convergence of the use of the electronic health record (EHR) represents a further drive toward science digitization. Consequently, he stressed the need to assume that there will be some sort of "disruption" going forward, that is, a change in the way science is conducted as a result of digitization. Accordingly, NIH needs to begin thinking about how it will deal with any such disruption, said Bourne.

[Read on](#) for more details.

### National Science Board Seeks Nominations for 2016 Class

The [National Science Board](#), which is the policy-making body of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and independent advisory body to the President and Congress on federal science policy, is [seeking nominations](#) for eight vacancies with terms of 2016-2022. Eight seats on the 25-member Board turn over every two years; members are appointed by the President of the United States for six year terms. The NSB is particularly interested in receiving nominations of individuals with expertise in the following areas: large/complex facility planning, construction, management and transformation; international projects and the globalization of research; metrics and performance measurement; neuroscience and the brain; information science and large/complex/novel data and related analytics; undergraduate research; diversity enhancement; social communications and cognitive science and technology; science of education and STEM learning; biomedical engineering; advanced manufacturing; and sustainability, water and global change. Nominations are due

October 30.

## **Michael S. Lauer Named NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research**

On September 28, National Institutes of Health (NIH) director Francis Collins announced the selection of Michael S. Lauer as the new Deputy Director for Extramural Research. Collins noted that Lauer brings both research expertise and administrative skills to the job, as well as "keen insights into the world of extramural research." Lauer is expected to begin this new position within the coming weeks.

[Read on](#) for more details.

## **NIH Seeks Comments on Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-Being of Sexual and Gender Minorities**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking [comments](#) on its [FY 2016-2020 Strategic Plan To Advance Research on the Health and Well-Being of Sexual and Gender Minorities \(SGM\)](#). The agency is developing a strategic plan to guide its efforts and priorities in SGM research over the next five years. The plan was developed after substantive analysis and integration of portfolio analyses, community input, inter- and intra-agency collaborations, and recommendations from the NIH-commissioned Institute of Medicine report, [The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender \(LGBT\) People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding](#), released in 2011 (see Update, [April 18, 2011](#)).

The strategic plan promotes and supports the advancement of basic, clinical, and behavioral and social sciences research to improve the health of people whose sexual orientations, gender identities/expressions, and/or reproductive development vary from traditional, societal, cultural, or physiological norms. The agency intends to coordinate research in each of the areas above with NIH intramural and extramural program directors and researchers. The plan is expected to provide NIH with a framework. It is also expected that the research that results from the plan will lay a foundation for improved health and well-being among SGM individuals whose health needs have not traditionally received strong attention from the research community.

Comments must be received by November 2, 2015. For more information and/or to comment see the [Federal Register Notice](#).

## **USDA Starts Collecting Data on Post-Harvest Food Safety Practices**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), under an agreement with the Economic Research Service (ERS), has begun collecting data on food safety practices from fruit and vegetable packers and processors. The survey, the [2015 Produce Post-Harvest Microbial Food Safety Practices Survey](#), marks the first time since 1998 that USDA has collected such data. Information from the survey will be used to understand how businesses are implementing the 2011 *Food Safety Modernization Act* (FSMA). In addition, ERS will use the data to document changes in food safety practices, examine costs associated with compliance with the FSMA, and identify areas for future research.

## **White House Holds Forum on Citizen Science and Crowdsourcing;**

## OSTP Issues Memorandum to Agencies

On September 30, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Domestic Policy Council (DPC) hosted a [live-webcast](#) forum on citizen science and crowdsourcing. The forum, *Open Science and Innovation: Of the People, By the People, For the People*, recognized that a small portion of Americans are formally trained as "scientists;" however, citizen science and crowdsourcing can "educate, engage, and empower the public to apply their curiosity and talents to a wide range of real-world problems." Participants in the forum included citizen-science professionals, researchers, and stakeholders from Federal, state, local, and Tribal governments. It also included individuals from nonprofits, academia, and the private sector.

Also on September 30, OSTP director John Holdren issued a [Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies](#) that lays out principles and steps for agencies to follow for utilizing citizen science and crowdsourcing. Check out the memorandum for full details.

## PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

### CPR Briefing Highlights NIH Peer Review Process

The COSSA-led [Coalition to Promote Research](#) (CPR) recently organized its second congressional briefing of 2015 (see [Update, March 24, 2015](#)) designed to provide an overview of the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) peer review process for congressional staff.

The [briefing](#), *NIH Priority Setting: How Peer Review Assists the NIH in Selecting the Best Science*, highlighted the process used by the NIH's Center for Scientific Review (CSR) with the help of scientific experts from around the country. Briefing speakers included CSR director Richard Nakamura and Danielle Li of Harvard University. Felice Levine, executive director of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), served as the moderator.

[Read on](#) for more details.

### SBE-Funded Researchers Receive "Genius" Grants

Two of the recipients of the [2015 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship](#) (the so-called "genius" grants) are social scientists whose research is funded by the National Science Foundation's Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate. The fellowship is awarded to individuals in any field "who have shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction." Fellows receive a no-strings-attached cash prize to pursue their work as they see fit.

[Matthew Desmond](#) is an urban sociologist at Harvard University whose work focuses on "the impact of eviction on poor families and the role of housing policy in sustaining poverty and racial inequality in large American cities." He is the lead investigator on an SBE-funded research project, "Global Urbanization and Housing Affordability: Poverty, Property, and the City." MIT economist [Heidi Williams](#) conducts research on the "causes and consequences of innovation in health care markets." She is the recipient of an SBE CAREER award, "Empirical Studies of Innovation in Health Care Markets."

### Friends of IES Briefing Highlights Research on Improving Early

## Math Education

The Friends of the Institute of Education Science (IES), of which COSSA is a member, held a congressional briefing on September 25 on "Building Strength in Numbers: How Do Early Interventions in Math Instruction Add Up?" The briefing highlighted IES-funded research into how to improve math education for young children. It featured presentations from Prentice Starkey, WestEd; Douglas Clements, University of Denver; and Hirokazu Yoshikawa, New York University. Deborah Phillips, Georgetown, introduced the topic and moderated the session, and Taniesha A. Woods, NYC Administration for Children's Services, made concluding remarks. The briefing was a follow-up to one held the previous day for staff at the Department of Education. More information can be found [here](#).

## NAS Releases New Reports on Immigrants, Forensic Science

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has recently released two noteworthy reports. The first, [The Integration of Immigrants into American Society](#), compiles the available evidence on "how immigrants and their descendants are integrating into American society in a range of areas such as education, occupations, health, and language. The second report, sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), examined NIJ's efforts to advance forensic science research and recommend ways to improve its research program. The report, [Support for Forensic Science Research: Improving the Scientific Role of the National Institute of Justice](#), finds, "NIJ has made progress in the past five or six years toward improving its research operations and expanding efforts to build a research infrastructure in forensic science... However, although these improvements are commendable and important, more work is needed to bolster NIJ's ability to advance forensic science research."

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- NEA: Research: Art Works ([2016-NEA-ORA](#))
- NIJ: Research and Development in Forensic Science for Criminal Justice Purposes ([NIJ-2016-4305](#))
- NIFA: Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant Program ([USDA-NIFA-FINI-005395](#))
- IES: Low-Cost, Short Duration Evaluation of Education Interventions ([84.305L](#))
- IES: Low-Cost, Short Duration Evaluation of Special Education Interventions ([84.324L](#))

## COSSA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### SRCD Seeks Applications for 2016-2017 Policy Fellowships

The Society for Research and Child Development (SRCD), a COSSA governing member, is accepting applications for its [2016-2017 Policy Fellowship](#). The fellowship provides an opportunity for scientists to use their research skills in child development to inform public policy by working as resident scholars in congressional offices or executive branch agencies. Applications are due by December 15, 2015.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

- [Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting](#), Denver, CO, October 15-18,

2015

- [Town Hall Meeting on the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects NPRM](#), Washington, DC, October 20, 2015
- [Evaluation 2015](#), Chicago, IL, November 7-15, 2015
- [North American Regional Science Council Annual Meeting](#), Portland, OR, November 11-14, 2015
- [Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research Conference](#), Miami, FL, November 12-14, 2015
- [Social Science History Association Annual Meeting](#), Baltimore, MD, November 12-15, 2015
- [Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Annual Convention](#), Chicago, IL, November 13-15, 2015
- [American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting](#), Denver, CO, November 18-22, 2015
- [American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting](#), Washington, DC, November 18-21, 2015
- [National Communication Association Annual Convention](#), Las Vegas, NV, November 19-22, 2015
- [History of Science Society Annual Meeting](#), San Francisco, CA, November 19-22, 2015

A list of COSSA members' annual meetings and other events can be found on the COSSA [webpage](#).

COSSA members who have an upcoming event they would like to see listed in the Events Calendar and on our website should send an email to [jmilton@cozza.org](mailto:jmilton@cozza.org).

**Save the date!**  
**COSSA's 2016 Annual Meeting will take place on March 15 & 16.**

## Consortium of Social Science Associations Members

### Governing Members

American Anthropological Association  
American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Economic Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Historical Association  
American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Criminology  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association  
Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Law Schools  
Law and Society Association  
Linguistic Society of America  
Midwest Political Science Association  
National Communication Association  
Population Association of America  
Society for Personality and Social Psychology  
Society for Research in Child Development

### Membership Organizations

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences  
American Evaluation Association  
American Psychosomatic Society  
Association for Asian Studies  
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies

### Colleges and Universities

Arizona State University  
Boston University  
Brown University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Clark University  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Duke University  
Fielding Graduate University  
George Mason University  
Georgetown University  
Harvard University  
Indiana University  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY  
Johns Hopkins University  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Michigan State University  
New York University  
Northwestern University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Princeton University  
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey  
Stanford University  
Stony Brook University, SUNY  
Texas A&M University

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management  
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations  
Association of Research Libraries  
Council on Social Work Education  
Economic History Association  
History of Science Society  
Justice Research and Statistics Association  
Midwest Sociological Society  
National Association of Social Workers  
North American Regional Science Council  
Rural Sociological Society  
Social Science History Association  
Society for Research on Adolescence  
Society for Social Work and Research  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues  
Society of Behavioral Medicine  
Southern Political Science Association  
Southern Sociological Society  
Southwestern Social Science Association

### Centers and Institutes

American Academy of Arts and Sciences  
American Academy of Political and Social Science  
American Council of Learned Societies  
American Institutes for Research  
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences  
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research  
Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan  
Institute for Social Science Research,  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst  
Institute for Women's Policy Research  
NORC at the University of Chicago  
Owens Institute for Behavioral Research, University of Georgia  
Population Reference Bureau  
RTI International  
Social Science Research Council  
Vera Institute of Justice

The George Washington University  
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*The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research.*

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