



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

## Analysis of the Final FY 2019 Omnibus Appropriations Bill | February 15, 2019

After the longest partial-government shutdown in U.S. history, Congress came to a compromise on February 14 on funding the entire federal government for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2019, which began on October 1, 2018. The omnibus spending package contains 7 individual appropriations bills, including the Agriculture; Commerce, Justice, Science; Interior and Environment; Homeland Security; Financial Services and General Government; State and Foreign Operations; and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development appropriations bills. On February 15, President Trump signed the bill into law, closing a painful chapter and officially kicking off work on FY 2020 funding.

The final package includes necessary increases for many programs important to the social and behavioral sciences including the National Science Foundation and the Census Bureau.

### At a Glance....

- **The final bill provides \$8.1 billion for NSF in FY 2019**, which is 4 percent above the enacted FY 2018 level and higher than either the House or Senate proposals.
- **The bill provides a \$1 billion increase to the Census Bureau** as it ramps up for the 2020 Census.
- The agreement includes language **slowing the Department of Agriculture's plans to relocate and reorganize the Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.**
- **The final bill would provide NIJ with \$37 million and BJS with \$43 million for FY 2019**, which is \$5 million less for each agency than FY 2018.

Congress will soon get to work on writing the FY 2020 appropriations bills. However, before they can do this in earnest, lawmakers must first negotiate a larger budget deal to address top-line budget caps that are currently placed on discretionary spending for FY 2020. These budget caps are automatically triggered by the statutory mandates of the *Budget Control Act of 2011*, which was originally enacted to tamp down discretionary spending and reduce the federal deficit. Instead, Congress has provided relief each year by passing legislation to "raise the caps." Another agreement must be reached in the months ahead in order to avoid major reductions in discretionary spending next year, including for science agencies.

The Trump Administration will soon release its budget request for FY 2020. While the budget will have very little bearing on the funding debates in Congress, it will provide valuable insight into the science policy and funding priorities of the Administration. At the end of the day, the Congress holds the power of the purse and decides the level of taxpayer support for research. Stay tuned in the coming weeks for COSSA's analysis of the President's FY 2020 budget request.

The following pages include COSSA's analysis of final FY 2019 funding for the National Science Foundation, Census Bureau, Economic Research Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and National Institute of Justice.

[Text of the final bill](#) and [explanatory statement](#) are available online.

## National Science Foundation

The final omnibus spending bill for FY 2019 provides \$8.1 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF), which is a 4 percent increase over FY 2018 enacted levels. The final allocation for NSF was a higher top-line amount than the House and Senate proposed in their respective FY 2019 bills. The conference committee enthusiastically rejected the Trump Administration’s proposed reductions to NSF.

The final bill provides \$6.5 billion for the Research and Related Activities account, which funds NSF’s six research directorates, a 2.9 percent increase over the FY 2018 enacted amount. The bill would provide a modest 0.9 percent increase for the Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate. Much like in the earlier House and Senate bills, the largest comparative increase provided to NSF is for the Major Research Equipment, Facilities, and Construction account, which the committee recommended receive \$295.7 million, a 61.8 percent increase over the FY 2018 enacted amount.

The bill does not include any language targeting the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Science Directorate (SBE) for cuts, which we have seen in recent years. The bill as written preserves NSF’s flexibility to fund the very best science across all scientific domains. The absence of language targeting SBE is a significant win for the social science research community and NSF more broadly.

The final bill includes text reiterating “House and Senate language regarding support for existing NSF research infrastructure,” meaning that language included in the original Senate bill, noted below, is considered as part of the final FY 2019 appropriation:

*“The Committee is supportive of NSF using its position as the lead Federal agency in supporting basic research in all fundamental science areas and expects that as NSF uses the 10 Big Ideas as a focusing tool, the funding for the fundamental scientific disciplines will be maintained.”*

The language continues:

*“The Committee has provided significant funding above the amount provided in fiscal year 2018 and also above the amount requested in fiscal year 2019. **Therefore, NSF shall maintain its core research at levels not less than those provided in fiscal year 2017.**” [emphasis added]*

As noted in previous COSSA analyses, this language seems to clarify that the NSF should not diminish funding for its core research to support the new [10 Big Ideas initiative](#), which has been a concern expressed by some.

	FY 2018 Enacted	FY 2019 Request	FY 2019 House	FY 2019 Senate	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2019 vs. FY 2018
<b>National Science Foundation</b>	<b>7767.4</b>	<b>7472.0</b>	<b>8174.9</b>	<b>8068.7</b>	<b>8075.0</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
Research and Related Activities	6334.5	6150.7	6651.5	6556.2	6520.0	2.9%
Education and Human Resources	902.0	873.4	902.0	915.0	910.0	0.9%
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction	182.8	94.7	268.0	249.3	295.7	61.8%
Agency Operations and Award Management	328.5	333.6	333.6	328.5	328.5	0.0%
National Science Board	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4	0.0%
Office of the Inspector General	15.2	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	1.0%

## Census Bureau

The agreement continues the funding ramp-up for the Census Bureau as it enters the final fiscal year before the 2020 Census, providing it with \$3.8 billion, a \$1 billion increase compared to FY 2018. All of the additional funds will go towards Periodic Censuses and Programs, which is responsible for producing the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS).

The agreement does not address the addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, though it does reiterate language from the House and Senate reports instructing the Bureau to enhance its partnership and communications efforts aimed at maximizing self-response and reaching hard-to-count communities.

	FY 2018 Enacted	FY 2019 Request	FY 2019 House	FY 2019 Senate	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2019 vs. FY 2018
<b>Bureau of the Census</b>	<b>2814.0</b>	<b>3800.5</b>	<b>4799.7</b>	<b>3821.4</b>	<b>3821.4</b>	<b>35.8%</b>
Current Surveys and Programs	270.0	249.1	270.0	270.0	270.0	0.0%
Periodic Censuses and Programs	2544.0	3551.4	4529.7	3551.4	3551.4	39.6%

## Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture’s two statistical agencies receive relatively stable funding under the FY 2019 agreement, with the Economic Research Service (ERS) receiving flat funding compared to FY 2018 and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) seeing an anticipated decrease as it ramps down from the 2017 Census of Agriculture. The agreement provides \$600,000 to NASS for a Geospatial Improvement Initiative, which was requested in the [President’s budget proposal](#).

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) will receive an additional \$63.5 million above the FY 2018 enacted level. The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), the Department’s main competitive extramural grants program, will receive a \$15 million increase, continuing a multi-year trajectory of budget growth and bringing it to a total of \$415 million for FY 2019. The agreement continues to fund the Rural Health and Safety Education Program at \$3 million “to address the opioid abuse epidemic and to combat opioid abuse in rural communities.”

The explanatory statement includes language requiring the Department to slow down proposed changes to USDA research activities (see COSSA’s [previous coverage](#)), citing the lack of a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis justifying them. Regarding the planned relocation of ERS and NIFA’s headquarters out of the Washington, DC region, the statement says:

*“The conferees are concerned about the unknown costs associated with the proposed move of the National Institutes of Food and Agriculture and the Economic Research Service to a new location outside of the National Capital Region. In submitting the fiscal year 2020 budget justification, the Department is directed to include all cost estimates for the proposed move of the two agencies, as well as a detailed analysis of any research benefits of their relocation. There is an expectation that this process will be followed in the future for any other potential proposed agency relocations by the Department.”*

The agreement goes on to direct USDA to halt plans to administratively move ERS out of the Research, Education and Economics mission area:

*“The conferees support an indefinite delay in the proposed transfer of ERS to the Office of the Chief Economist. At this time, the conferees find it appropriate for ERS to remain under the Research, Education and Economics mission area. The conferees take this position as several questions remain about the merits of the proposed transfer as well as the proposed relocation of ERS outside of the National Capital Region. Insufficient information and justification relating to the reorganization and relocation make moving forward on these proposals premature at this time.”*

The inclusion of this language is a major victory for the USDA research stakeholder community (including COSSA), which has mobilized against these proposals.

	FY 2018 Enacted	FY 2019 Request	FY 2019 House	FY 2019 Senate	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2019 vs. FY 2018
<b>Economic Research Service</b>	<b>86.8</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>86.8</b>	<b>86.8</b>	<b>86.8</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>National Agricultural Statistics Service</b>	<b>191.7</b>	<b>165.0</b>	<b>173.7</b>	<b>174.8</b>	<b>174.5</b>	<b>-9.0%</b>
Census of Agriculture	63.4	45.3	45.4	45.3	45.3	-28.5%
<b>National Institute of Food and Agriculture</b>	<b>1407.8</b>	<b>1257.7</b>	<b>1446.6</b>	<b>1423.2</b>	<b>1471.3</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Hatch Act	243.7	243.2	259.0	243.7	259.0	6.3%
Agricultural and Food Research Initiative	400.0	375.0	415.0	405.0	415.0	3.8%

## Department of Justice

Science programs at the Department of Justice did not receive the increases granted to many other programs in the CJS bill. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research and evaluation arm of the Department received a \$5 million decrease in the final FY 2019 bill, amounting to an 11.9 percent decrease from FY 2018 enacted levels. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the principal statistical agency within the Department, also received a \$5 million reduction from FY 2018 levels, amounting to a 10.4 percent cut from the last fiscal year. The reasons for the cuts below the FY 2018 levels are unknown at the time of this writing and are surprising given that the House and Senate requested increased and flat funding, respectively, in their individual bills. Similar to past spending bills, Congress has directed NIJ and BJS to invest in certain priorities. NIJ is given resources to pursue research on domestic radicalization and school safety research and resources to support the National Crime Victimization Survey and the National Center for Restorative Justice. BJS is directed to dedicate money to the National Crime Statistic Exchange (NCS-X). The Congressional priorities expressed for both NIJ and BJS has been present in appropriations reports from previous fiscal years.

	FY 2018 Enacted	FY 2019 Request	FY 2019 House	FY 2019 Senate	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2019 vs. FY 2018
<b>Bureau of Justice Statistics</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>-10.4%</b>
<b>National Institute of Justice</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>-11.9%</b>

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