

# MASSACHUSETTS

colleges and universities receive

**\$105.0 million**

in

annual federal investment in

**Social & Behavioral Science Research**

Federal agencies supporting social & behavioral science research in Massachusetts include:



Dept. of Health and  
Human Services (incl.  
NIH): \$64.4M



Other Federal  
Departments and  
Agencies: \$16.9M



National Science  
Foundation: \$15.2M



Dept. of Defense:  
\$8.5M

Massachusetts institutions supported by federal social & behavioral science investment include:



Harvard  
University:  
\$28.7M



Boston  
University:  
\$17.0M



Brandeis  
University:  
\$11.2M



Northeastern  
University:  
\$11.0M



University of  
Massachusetts  
Amherst: \$7.3M



Boston College:  
\$7.0M

**Federal investments in social and behavioral science research contribute to  
Massachusetts's economy and generate knowledge that helps us make  
America healthier, safer, and more prosperous.**

# WHY SOCIAL SCIENCE?

## MODEST INVESTMENT, BIG PAYOFF

Of the \$44 billion the federal government spends on research and development each year, less than 5% (\$1.9 billion) goes to social and behavioral science research. This modest investment has yielded significant payoffs in the form of meaningful contributions to nearly every aspect of American life.

Knowledge derived from social and behavioral science research has made our population healthier, our democracy fairer, our nation safer, and our economy stronger. But more still needs to be done—investment in social and behavioral science must continue to grow to yield benefits for the American people.



### DID YOU KNOW?

#### WHERE YOU LIVE CAN MAKE YOU HEALTHIER

Built environments can greatly influence health behaviors. Social science has taught us that the “walkability” of neighborhoods—how conducive an area is to pedestrian activity versus driving—can influence obesity rates, which in turn influences the incidence of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other health outcomes. Everything from the number and proximity of grocery stores to the availability of public bike share programs and parks to the prevalence of locations where people can gather and socialize affect behaviors, such as diet, activity, stress levels, and social dynamics.

#### THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION HAS ROOTS IN LINGUISTICS

Study of the systematic nature of language—a central question within linguistics—has made important contributions to the creation of computer languages. In fact, the IT industry is one of the principal employers of linguistically-

trained professionals. Major leaps in emulating human mental capabilities in the fields of information technology and computer science, such as in machine translation and artificial intelligence, have been possible thanks to basic linguistic research.

#### ANTHROPOLOGISTS SLOWED THE SPREAD OF EBOLA

Anthropologists working for the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response were the first to discover why Ebola was spreading so quickly during its initial outbreak in West Africa. As a cultural practice, communities in the affected areas delay burying their dead for days at a time, often bringing the bodies into their homes for mourning and funeral preparation. Working with a global network of anthropologists, the UN team delivered briefings and targeted reports, producing evidence that helped guide policy and shape interventions and strategy in combatting the epidemic.

#### ECONOMICS RESEARCH CAN IMPROVE GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

Fundamental research in economics has improved government policies, including in the areas of trade liberalization, air-transport deregulation, monetary economics, welfare-to-work reform, and antitrust practices. Much of this fundamental

research got its start with support from the federal government.

#### POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH SUPPORTS COUNTER-TERRORISM AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Political science plays a critical role in understanding causes of international conflict and informing the means to prevent it. Research in the discipline, including federally funded projects, has tracked the growth of violent extremist organizations and relationships among groups to understand patterns in how they evolve and operate. Other political science work has mined foreign language data across the globe to understand causes of international strife and inform decision making on conflict prevention.

#### SOCIAL SCIENCE CAN HELP YOU SAVE FOR RETIREMENT

Research in psychology and economics has shown that individuals are not saving enough for retirement and that they are generally passive when it comes to their savings behavior. Research conducted with support from the federal government led to enactment of the *Pension Protection Act of 2006*, which encourages employers to adopt features such as automatic enrollment, employer contribution, contribution escalation, and qualified default investment alternative practices. As a result, an increasing number of U.S. families are now saving more for retirement.

