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COSSA Washington Update

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SENATE PASSES CJS SPENDING BILL; DEFEATS COBURN AMENDMENT TO ELIMINATE POLITICAL SCIENCE AT NSF; VITTER AMENDMENT FALLS

On November 4, the Senate passed the FY 2010 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill by a vote of 71-28. In doing so, it also voted down the amendment by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) to eliminate the National Science Foundation's (NSF) political science program by a vote of 62-36 (for the earlier debate on the Coburn Amendment, see Update, October 26, 2009).

Prior to consideration of the Coburn amendment and eventual passage of the bill, the Senate first invoked cloture, by a vote of 60-39, so that they could then declare non-germane (thus refusing to take a vote on it) the amendment by Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) to add a question on citizenship to the 2010 Census Questionnaire.

Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) again defended the political science program by referencing Elinor Ostrom's Nobel Prize in Economics. Coburn railed against excessive spending, admitted that he knew he would lose the vote, but again declared political science research unworthy of inclusion in the nation's scientific enterprise.

The Senate version of the CJS bill includes $6.917 billion for the NSF, slightly less than the House. For the Research and Related Activities Account, which funds all the research directorates and certain other offices like Polar Programs and Integrated Activities, the Senate allocated $5.618 billion, compared to the House number of $5.642 billion.

The Census Bureau received its full funding from the Senate for the 2010 count minus $50 million for excessive reimbursement. The Senate provided the Salaries and Expenses part of the Bureau's budget, $259 million, the same as the House. The Senate was a little more generous to the Economics and Statistics Administration account, which includes the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The Senate allocated $100.6 million compared to the House's $97.3 million.

For the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the House and Senate committee both allocated the President's request of $48 million. NIJ also received $2 million from the Office of Violence Against Women funding, and $5 million from the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants. Both the House and the Senate accepted the Department's proposal to set-aside one percent of funding within the Office of Justice Programs for research and statistical purposes.

The Senate provided the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) $15 million for the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) redesign plus $20 million to conduct and analyze the survey. It then provided $5 million for the rest of BJS' activities for a total FY 2010 appropriation of $40 million. The House accepted the Administration's full request of $60 million for BJS. To reconcile these differences the bill now goes to a House-Senate conference committee.

On October 28, Congress passed a new Continuing Resolution that goes through December 18 to fund those agencies of the government whose spending bills have not received approval yet. Congress hopes that this will provide enough time to finish as many of the seven remaining appropriations bills as possible.

COSSA HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING

On November 2, COSSA held its invitation-only annual meeting. Following last year's meeting that heard from academics surveying the political, economic, and foreign policy landscape following the presidential election, COSSA this year returned to its tradition of having policy makers, many from the new Obama Administration, discuss their plans and progress. The nearly 80 attendees heard a variety of talks that covered the National Institutes of Health, the Census Bureau, and research and evaluation at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. They also heard a panel discuss research needs in education, and a panel that focused on changes in science policy since January. The following articles discuss in detail the presentations.

KINGTON AT COSSA ANNUAL MEETING: TIME HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER FOR BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE AT NIH

National Institutes of Health (NIH) deputy director Raynard Kington shared with the COSSA audience examples of the "most important things going on" at the agency as it relates to social and behavioral science research. Kington began by highlighting President Barack Obama's visit to announce the $5 billion in funding for grants through "the Recovery Act [American Reinvestment and Recovery Act] to conduct cutting-edge research all across America" (see Update, October 12, 2009). According to Kington, approximately 1,600 behavioral and social science research projects totaling nearly $560 million have been award via ARRA. This translates into more than 10 percent of all Recovery Act awards and more than 10 percent of all of the current ARRA spending. He further underscored the presidential commitment to science, referencing the President's remarks at the National Academy of Sciences' 2009 annual meeting where Obama emphasized that science is "more essential for our prosperity, our security, our health, and our environment than it has ever been." Part of that commitment includes plans to invest three percent of the gross domestic product in research and innovation, and support for high-risk, high-return research for early career scientists.

NIH Basic Behavioral and Social Science Opportunity Network Launched

Kington discussed the recently announced NIH Basic Behavioral and Social Science Opportunity Network (OppNet). He described OppNet's genesis to COSSA annual meeting participants. As Acting NIH Director, Kington indicated the establishment of OppNet was under construction during his appearance in April before the House Labor and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee (see Update, April 06, 2009). He explained that the initiative is the result of long-standing Congressional interest in increased NIH basic behavioral and social sciences research (b-BSSR) and an equal Congressional interest in a formal NIH home for b-BSSR. There is an "equal understanding" that b-BSSR transcends specific health issues and NIH institutes, centers and offices (ICO) and that it enhances applied BSSR with inclusive explanations of the mechanisms of behavior and social processes, he further explained. The goal of OppNet is "to advance basic behavioral and social sciences research through activities and initiatives that build a body of knowledge about the nature of behavior and social systems."

According to Kington, OppNet "prioritizes activities and initiatives that focus on basic mechanisms of behavior and social process that is relevant to multiple NIH ICO missions and public health challenges, and that build upon existing NIH investments without replicating them." The OppNet structure is modeled after the NIH Neuroscience Blueprint, a "cooperative effort among NIH ICOs that support neuroscience research. It will include the participation of 24 of the 27 ICOs. Similar to the Blueprint, it will be multi-tiered, consisting of an ICO Director Steering Committee, an ICO Staff Coordinating Committee, and Project-specific Working Groups. In addition, a staffer from the Office of

Behavioral and Social Sciences Research will provide "facilitation/support." The development of OppNet was co-chaired by National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) director Jeremy Berg and National Institute on Aging (NIA) director Richard Hodes. In August, Bill Elwood joined the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research as the coordinator for the OppNet.

The funding associated with OppNet is substantial. Like the Blueprint, OppNet will have a common funding pool. It includes $10 million from the NIH Office of the Director's ARRA appropriation which has to be obligated before September 30, 2010. For the fiscal years (FY) 2011-2014, the funding will come from base appropriations proportional to the total appropriation. This translates into $20 million in FY 2011 and $30 million in FY 2012 – 2014. The program was officially launched on October 2, at an initial steering committee meeting. A second meeting of the steering committee was scheduled for November 6. Funding opportunity announcements are expected by the end of 2009.

The "Conceptual Structure of OppNet," according to Kington, includes dual tracks examining **Individual Behavior** (behavioral economics/neuroeconomics, self-control/emotion-regulation/impulsivity, stress/coping mechanisms, judgment/decision making, motivation, and automatic and effortful processing/habit formation) and **Social Processes** (social cognition, provider-patient communication, family interactions, social networks, organizational behavior, and cultural change). Both tracks will support: **Mechanisms Research** -- understanding basic principles of aspects of individual behavior and understanding basic principles of how social processes work; **Tool Development –** supporting the development of measures, methods, taxonomies, and technologies related to individual behavior; and **Research Training –** boot camps, short courses, and career development.

Innovation Wanted and Supported

Kington discussed a number of programs the NIH is promoting around innovation and high-risk, high reward research, including the NIH Director's Pioneer Award Program, a program established in the previous administration by then-director Elias Zerhouni. The Award provides up to $500,000 in direct costs each year for five years and the proposed research must reflect ideas substantially different from those already being pursued in the investigator's laboratory or elsewhere.

Kington noted the "buzz" around the Roadmap Transformative Research Projects Program (TR01). The TR01 had in its first phase the Science of Behavior Change (see Update, September 22, 2008 and related story). It supports exceptionally innovative, high-risk, original and/or unconventional research projects that have the potential to create or overturn fundamental paradigms. The TR01 also pilots novel approaches to peer review and program management, Kington explained, noting that awardees participate in an annual symposium.

He also called attention to the NIH Director's New Innovator Award. This award is for very junior scientists, reflecting the belief by some that creativity is at its peak in our younger years. With this particular award, the emphasis is on innovation and creativity and applications do not require preliminary data or a detailed annual budget. The award is for $300,000 in direct costs for five years.

The objective of the NIH Partners in Research Program, explained Kington, is to communicate the importance of the public's role in the research process. It allows the agency to reach out to communities that NIH has not had a relationship with in the past. It is designed to improve communication of findings to communities and convey community needs to NIH investigators, he noted. As of September 2008, 74 two-year awards, representing 37 partnerships have been issued. According to Kington, the program has good geographical representation, and consists of a broad range of scientific approaches, research questions and communities. Administratively, the awards are distributed across 14 of the NIH institutes and centers.

'Challenges Remain'

Nevertheless, despite the fact this is a "good time for the social and behavioral sciences" at the NIH, Kington pointed out that challenges remain in how behavioral and social science research is viewed by the public. He highlighted recent headlines, mostly pertaining to these sciences, and dealing with such issues as sexual behavior, substance use and abuse, international cultural issues, and firearms (See Update, September 15, 2009 and Coalition to Protect Research). Noting that the NIH has aggressively defended the science, he also acknowledged that the NIH needs to get better at defending "cute titles" which have been the most controversial and easy to ridicule. Kington declared that it would be better if grant titles stuck to the science but he acknowledged that NIH cannot mandate that to happen.

New NIH Leadership

He concluded his remarks by pointing out that there is new NIH leadership with the recent appointment of NIH director Francis Collins, who is not new to NIH as he is the former director for the National Human Genome Research Institute. Kington stressed that he believes Collins is the best informed of the NIH directors when it comes to social and behavioral science research because of his experience with ELSI [Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications]. "Collins," said Kington, "is a good choice under these challenging times." Collins has repeatedly emphasized to the scientific community that he wants "to be seen as the director of the entire amazing enterprise, all 27 institutes and centers with all the investigators and the science that they represent" (see Update, September 15, 2009).

GROVES AT COSSA ANNUAL MEETING: PROGRESS REPORT ON DECENNIAL OPERATIONS

Census Director Robert Groves briefed COSSA annual meeting attendees on the current status of Census Bureau progress for the decennial 2010 count. Groves reported that the decennial is on schedule and that the 2010 Census design is fundamentally better than Census 2000. "Every household will receive the short form which is simple, straightforward and easy to understand," said Groves. In addition, "13 million households in census tracts with high concentrations of Spanish speakers will receive a bilingual questionnaire," Groves noted. Furthermore, "because the Master Address File has been maintained throughout the decade, it should provide a better framework for mailing out questionnaires."

The Bureau is making a special effort to ascertain if people are being counted twice or missing people who may be residing elsewhere. "We now have a Coverage Follow-up operation that will take advantage of those questions to improve the accuracy of the census count…this should reduce differential coverage of subgroups with tenuous attachments to households," said Groves.

Groves announced that the additional funding provided by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) assisted with the paid advertising campaign and the partnership program to enhance and expand census outreach efforts. "We are currently reviewing and finalizing the promotion ads developed using ARRA funds and negations are now underway for national and local media buys," said Groves. "With this additional funding, the Census Bureau will now exceed the scope of the Census 2000 communication campaign in terms of its reach," he explained.

Groves stated that over the next couple of months, hundreds of important tasks must be completed across all components of the decennial census programs and that unexpected external events could lead to delays or operational problems. "Because of natural disasters and economic dislocation, the places where people reside can change quickly." However, he related that the Census Bureau will get the message out that people are to be counted on Census Day at their usual residence.

"There's a new class of homelessness," said Groves touching on the impact of the current economic hard times. He spoke of families living in RV's or with their in-laws who could be difficult to count due to the stigma attached to their living situation. "This will be daunting task, but we hope that messaging and education will help alleviate some of the burden," caused by these new housing arrangements, Groves remarked.

He outlined both internal the external challenges that the census faces. One internal problem is that "like many federal agencies," said Groves, "the Bureau has experienced significant retirements in its senior ranks particularly with senior statisticians." To address this issue, he plans on further engaging outside statisticians during key phases of the census process. Groves also warned of the threat of Internet scams and cybercrimes like "phishing" and the widespread misuse of the Census Bureau's logo and brand. The Chief Information Officer has been employed to establish a team that unites IT security officials with experts from the private sector to help monitor this issue.

Groves noted that 344 additional Local Census Offices (LCOs) are scheduled to open at the end of December but risk running into space build-out issues, equipment deployment issues, telecom issues or even bankruptcy issues with the lessor. "We must begin recruiting for our major field operations next year including deployment of toll-free jobs lines to the LCOs…we know there are some places in the country with high employment rates where we may have more difficulty in attracting enough applicants."

When asked about the recent death involving a census worker and the negative press it has generated involving the census and worker's safety, Groves responded that the Bureau has beefed up its worker safety training. Reflecting on the political contentiousness that often accompanies the decennial, Groves commented that it is difficult to combat negative press in this age of technology. "More and more people get the news from non-traditional social media sources like blogs, You Tube, and Facebook rather than from the networks and newspapers of decades past," said Groves. "The sheer volume of these media sources makes it far more difficult for us to get out the facts…but we are working steadily to address these issues."

The theme of the decennial is "It's in our Hands" and Groves urged everyone to take part and own the Census. "We all have a part to play in achieving a successful 2010 Census," Groves concluded.

Asked about looking ahead to the 2020 count, planning for which is already underway, Groves noted the difficulties of predicting technology. He wondered whether there would even be a postal system in 2020 to mail and receive Census forms. For those who talk about conducting the 2020 Census on the Internet, he questioned what will it even look like 11 years from now.

BOSTIC AT COSSA ANNUAL MEETING: REVITALIZING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION AT HUD

Raphael Bostic, new Assistant Secretary of the Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), discussed the revitalization of research and evaluation in the Department.

Bostic defined the recent history of HUD's role in research as "absent." This is going to change in a dramatic way, he assured the audience. Starting with his confirmation hearing, new HUD Secretary Shaune Donovan's made a commitment to promoting research and evidence-based policy, Bostic told the gathering. Spurred on by a National Academies' report *Revitalizing Research at HUD*, which Bostic helped write, PD&R is now going to assert a leadership role in bringing a research perspective to all HUD activities.

As part of the Department's "Transformation Initiative," PD&R is set to receive a one percent set-aside of almost the entire HUD budget for research, demonstrations, and technical assistance, he asserted. The research agenda, according to Bostic, would include short-term real-time activities regarding the housing and economic crisis that would also look at the impacts of incentives, consumer education, counseling, and full disclosures, on people's housing market behavior.

Bostic noted that a second area of PD&R interest is affordable rental housing. What programs actually work? What is the affect of rigid rules and administration in 43,000 public housing authorities across the country? These are two questions that need answering, he said. Other concerns include rural housing and community investment, cities in transition, and neighborhood transformation.

HUD is also interested in research and data on energy efficiency and sustainable development. Studies of the built environment, smart growth, and consumer preferences are part of this agenda, Bostic indicated.

Understanding economic security and at-risk populations are also a large part of PD&R's purview, he remarked. These issues encompass studies of homelessness, disadvantaged youth, and the elderly aging-in-place.

Bostic noted that OMB is pushing the agencies to conduct more regular and rigorous program evaluations (see later story) and that HUD intended to comply. Expressing a concern with the privatization of public knowledge, calling it a barrier to knowledge, he suggested PD&R would undertake a significant data initiative.

He announced that PD&R will continue to fund Ph.D. dissertations for career development activities. He would also like to begin a sabbatical program that would bring researchers on-site at HUD. Bostic told the group that he has spent much of his first few months in office conducting outreach opportunities with various groups. He hopes that the social and behavioral science community will respond to the new opportunities at PD&R.

COSSA ANNUAL MEETING: EDUCATION RESEARCH NEEDS

The Annual Meeting included a panel entitled "Building Education Research Knowledge: Short-Term and Long-Term Needs." The session was moderated by Felice Levine of the American Education Research Association (AERA), and included panelists John Easton, new Director of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), William Tate, of Washington University, St. Louis, and a member of the COSSA Board, and Lindsay Hunsicker, from the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Minority Staff. The panel discussed the future of education research and its continued importance in informing policy and facilitating reform.

Director Easton related that his goal is to figure out what the second generation of IES should look like. He drew a contrast with previous director Russ Whitehurst's predilection for emphasizing Randomized Control Trials as the preferred methodology for research. Easton suggested he favored a more "expanded tool box."

He has set out five goals for this second generation that he hopes to accomplish during his tenure. First, he wants to maintain IES's focus on rigorous research, but with a greater focus on making that research more relevant. Second, he said researchers need to start looking at schools and districts as organizations. Third, he believes the nation needs to put more resources into education research and development. Easton's fourth goal goes to the heart of his overarching theme to make research more relevant. He believes IES needs to do more to facilitate the use of evidence by practitioners. And lastly, he wants IES to play a stronger role in encouraging districts and states to develop data systems and use that data more effectively.

Easton also mentioned that IES is planning comprehensive evaluations of programs using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Race to the Top funds. The goal is to get timely information that discovers which programs are working and which are not, and also why these programs have succeeded or failed.

For Tate the key is to link education to the provision of other services. Using geospatial analysis, he discussed how in the St. Louis area those students who do well on the Missouri 10^{th} grade science test are in schools proximate to the clustering of biotech companies in the region. He railed against the lack of coordination between health and education activities and stressed that solving educational deficiencies can only happen with comprehensive strategies that examine the economic, health and other social factors in a city or region.

Hunsicker said that research has taken a more central role in discussions about education reform that are happening on Capitol Hill. She explained that there is a desire to pass more funding for research that has been proven to be effective, but at the same time Congress also wants to direct federal dollars towards new research. She cautioned that while randomized control trials are important, it is still important to look at other research methods.

She told the audience that as we move forward on education research we need to continue to have a conversation about how to use research to inform policy, and also translate that research into something useful. She noted that Congress would like to see more research done on how to scale up experiments from the local to the national level and how to translate them into different communities with different populations, resources, and needs.

During the Q&A session Howard Silver, COSSA Executive Director, asked Hunsicker what questions she would like researchers to answer if she only had a choice to fund one or two big studies. She responded that she would like to know what happens to all the money that is put into professional development, noting there is little accountability and few results to show for the investments. She also said she would like answers on what needs to be done to turn around failing schools, a major priority for Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

COSSA ANNUAL MEETING: CHANGES IN SCIENCE POLICY?

To conclude the meeting, three science policy practitioners examined what if anything has changed in science policy since the advent of the Obama Administration. Kei Koizumi from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy discussed science funding. He noted the enactment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) on February 17 and the important inclusion of funding for science agencies in the legislation: the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Office of Science at the Department of Energy (DOE). For the regular FY 2010 appropriations process, Koizumi noted the Administration's commitment to investing in basic research "across all the sciences." The Administration, he emphasized, remains in favor of keeping NSF on a budget-doubling path over the next few years.

This, however, may become difficult, as Koizumi noted that reducing the $1.4 trillion deficit is beginning to move to the forefront of budget planners for next year and beyond. He declared that there are "tough budget times ahead." However, there is still, he suggested, pressure for more spending on science and he thought the investment might continue to be robust.

He also noted opportunities for the social and behavioral sciences in the energy arena. Despite the stalling of the Baird bill to create a behavioral and social research program at DOE (see Update, August 10, 2009), the Department itself is contemplating more social science research investment on consumers' energy behavior and policy research.

Dahlia Sokolov, staff director for the Research and Science Education Subcommittee of the House Science and Technology Committee, noted the panel's three hearings in the previous Congress on the social and behavioral sciences contributions to public policy. She reminded the audience that the American COMPETES Act that helped contribute to enhanced funding for science agencies is coming up for reauthorization next year. This would include reauthorization for NSF.

One area the Subcommittee and the full Committee will continue to address, according to Sokolov, is further efforts to improve Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. The role for social and behavioral scientists to play in this endeavor, she noted, was to help with teacher training, curricula development, and translating the research on science of learning into programs that work. She believes that the federal government needs to do a better job of inter-agency coordination, as many agencies fund programs in STEM education without connecting to others.

Al Teich, director of Science and Policy Programs at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), focused his remarks on a program initiated by the Bush Administration's Science Adviser John Marburger. The COSSA Annual Meeting once more heard about the Science of Science and Innovation Policy (SciSIP), which has remained an important initiative into the new Administration and, according to Teich, has become institutionalized at NSF. He hopes that SciSIP's activities will lead to more international collaborative research, better peer review systems, enhanced tools for accountability, and evidence as to the role of centers vs. individual investigator-initiated research.

Teich informed the audience about an AAAS-sponsored workshop on SciSIP in March 2009 that brought NSF's grantees together to focus on building a community of researchers. He also suggested that the researchers have to connect with policy makers and understand the policy context in which science and technology agendas are hammered out.

ROBINSON CONFIRMED TO RUN OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS; LYNCH NAMED TO HEAD JUSTICE STATISTICS' BUREAU

On November 5, the Senate confirmed Laurie Robinson as the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) at the Department of Justice. Robinson officially returns to the position she held during the Clinton Administration from 1993-2000. (For Robinson's background see Update, May 18, 2009.) OJP oversees the National Institute of Justice, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, which provides federal grants for state and local law enforcement. Unshackled from her "silence until confirmed" posture, Robison spoke on November 6 at the American Society of Criminology meeting in Philadelphia and suggested that interesting times and more dollars were coming for research and data at the Department of Justice.

On October 29, President Obama nominated James P. Lynch to head the Bureau of Justice Statistics**.** Lynch is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at John Jay College, City University of New York, and a former member of the COSSA Board of Directors. He was previously a professor in the Department of Justice, Law, and Society at American University from 1986 to 2005 and chair of the Department from 2003 to 2005.

Lynch currently serves as the Vice President-elect of the American Society of Criminology. He previously served on the Committee on Law and Justice Statistics of the American Statistical Association. He was a member of the National Academies' panel, chaired by current Census Bureau director Robert Groves, which produced two reports examining BJS' programs. The first called for the revitalization of the National Crime Victimization Survey, while the second called for the structural independence of BJS (see Update, July 13, 2009).

Lynch has published three books and numerous articles on crime statistics, victimization surveys, victimization risk, and the role of sanctions in social control and is also co-editor of the Journal of Quantitative Criminology. He received his B.A. degree from Wesleyan University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago. Lynch needs Senate confirmation to take up the reins at BJS.

2010 CENSUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONVENES FOR DECENNIAL UPDATE

On November 5 & 6 the 2010 Census Advisory Committee (CAC) convened to address policy, research, and technical issues related to the upcoming 2010 decennial. The CAC, chaired by current National Urban League and former Mayor of New Orleans Marc Morial, considers the goals of the decennial census, including the American Community Survey and related programs, and users' needs for information provided by the decennial census from the perspective of outside data users and other organizations having a substantial interest and expertise in the conduct and outcome of the decennial census.

Census Director Robert Groves met with the twenty organizations represented, including COSSA, to provide a brief update on the overall affairs of the Census Bureau and its future priorities. Groves reported that the 2010 Census design is fundamentally better than the Census 2000 design. Echoing his comments at the COSSA Annual Meeting, Groves noted that: "For the first time every household will receive the short from, which is simple, straightforward and easy to understand." Groves informed the CAC that he has met multiple times with staff from the Government Accountability office (GAO), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Department of Commerce Office of the Inspector General regarding risk assessment and preparation. He reported that he is confident that Census 2010 will be successful but not without continuing hard work on the road ahead.

2010 Census Integrated Communications

Steven Jost, the Bureau's Associate Director for Communications, presented the Committee with plans for the 2010 Census integrated communications activity. The Bureau kicked off its communications campaign in late October to reach every resident in America with the launch of its 2010 Census Web site, **2010CENSUS.GOV**. The Web site serves as a platform for a national dialogue about how the census develops a "Portrait of America." It features an animated marquee that symbolizes the Census Bureau's place at the intersection of the American experience. By clicking on images representative of the population, visitors can view video vignettes designed to ease fears about the census and encourage participation in the once-a-decade population count. Jost announced that the marquee will evolve over time, bringing the diverse voices of America to the site.

The site also provides a substantial amount of information regarding the Bureau's commitment to privacy and confidentiality, Jost explained. Inside the site, the director's blog offers a look at census efforts nationwide. Comments are enabled so that readers can share their thoughts and participate in the conversation. Social media sites like Twitter and Facebook along with other tools will provide additional opportunities for the public to get involved. Site features include an interactive census form that provides a history and explanation for each of the 10 questions. This form is one of the shortest in history and takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Next year, in order to track census progress and motivate localities, the site will include a map widget that displays interactive mail back response rates.

The Web site also demonstrates the Census Bureau's commitment to reaching traditionally hard-to-count populations. In mid-November, a one-page description about the census will be available on the site in 59 languages. In addition, users will be able to download an in-language guide about how to answer the form. By the end of 2009, according to Jost, there will be a version of the entire site in Spanish. Jost also shared that the 2010 advertising plan will involve NASCAR and Super Bowl advertising, as well as decorated traveling interactive RV's. The Census Road Tour vehicles will incorporate music and celebrities as part of its mobile communication campaign.

The American Community Survey

The U.S. Census Bureau released new American Community Survey (ACS) data in late October covering the three-year period between 2006 and 2008 on a wide range of socioeconomic, housing and demographic characteristics for communities across the nation, part of an ongoing statistical portrait of America. Among the dozens of topics covered in the survey are educational attainment, commute times, housing characteristics, occupation, language ability and various other social, economic and housing topics. Some of the highlights for metropolitan areas included:

Journey to work

- The New York metro area has the longest mean travel time to work, 34.5 minutes, followed by the Washington, DC, metro area, 33.2 minutes.
- Only one metro area, Grand Forks, ND, has a mean travel time to work of less than 15 minutes.
- The percent of workers who drove alone to work ranges from 50.4 percent in the New York metro area to 87.3 percent in the Jackson, TN, and Monroe, MI, metro areas.

Foreign-born

- The percent foreign-born in metro areas ranges from 0.9 percent in the Altoona, PA., metro area to 36.9 percent in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL metro area.
- Two other metro areas have populations that are more than 30 percent foreign born: San Jose, and Los Angeles, CA.

Language spoken

- For metro areas where data are available, the percent of people five years and over who speak a language other than English at home ranges from 1.8 percent in Charleston, WV to 84.2 percent in McAllen, TX.
- The only other metro area where more than three-quarters of people five years and over speak a language other than English at home is El Paso, TX.

Housing

- Median home value in metro areas ranges from $68,200 in Odessa, TX, to $739,700 in San Jose, CA the only metro area with a median home value above $700,000.
- Six other metro areas, all in California, have median home values in excess of $600,000: Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Salinas, Napa, Santa Barbara and Oxnard.

Household size

- Two metro areas, Provo-Orem, UT and Laredo, TX, have average household sizes above 3.5 people per household.
- The metro area with the smallest average household size is Ocean City, NJ, at two people per household.

Susan Schechter of the ACS office indicated that the data provides a portrait of communities throughout the nation with populations as small as 20,000, including all states, congressional districts and metropolitan areas; about half of all counties; and about eight percent of all places. While the 2010 Census will produce a count of the nation's population and basic demographics, the ACS provides statistics about the social, economic and housing characteristics of states and local communities. What is now the ACS was part of the decennial census in earlier decades as the "census long form" that went to about one-in-six residential addresses in Census 2000.

"Moving the once-a-decade, long-form questions to an ongoing survey throughout the decade has enabled the Census Bureau to produce annual, detailed socioeconomic and housing data that help leaders, planners and businesses make better-informed decisions," affirmed Schechter. As part of the Census Bureau's reengineered 2010 Census, the data collected by the ACS help federal officials determine where to distribute more than $400 billion to state and local governments each year. The CAC recognizes the important role the ACS plays and recommended devoting more time and energy to the ACS in future meetings.

Other Meeting Highlights

Yuling Pan, Anna Chan, and Laurie Schwede of the Bureau's Statistical Research Division presented highlights from three planned studies concerning census data. The first study observes census enumeration of Non-English Speaking (NES) households. This study will examine the measures taken by enumerators to collect the required census and to determine what changes if any are needed to improve the conduct of in-person interviews with NES households. The study will focus on the enumeration process, translation issues as well as socio-cultural issues. It will also observe non-response follow-up (NRFU) and debrief interviews with interviewers and respondents.

The second planned study involves comparative ethnographic studies of enumeration methods and coverage in race/ethnic communities. The objective here is to identify ways to improve census enumeration methods and coverage for race/ethnic populations. This study aims to identify and explore four sets of issues affecting census accuracy and completeness: 1) Enumeration Methods; 2) Questionnaire Issues; 3) Household Structure; and 4) Residence Coverage Issues

The third and final study involves a complete ethnographic study of group quarters enumeration. The objective here is to explore the feasibility and optimal method to carry out coverage measurement for each type of group quarter, identify the challenges and successes in enumerating different types of group quarters, and to pinpoint social dynamics and factors most likely to affect different Census Bureau methods for implementing Census Coverage Measurement.

Joan Hill of the Decennial Statistical Studies Division, and Nicholas Jones and Roberto Ramirez of the Population Division presented an update on the 2010 Census Alternative Questionnaire Experiment (AQE) on Race and Hispanic Origin Research. The goal of the 2010 alternative questionnaire experiment is to improve the race and Hispanic origin questions by testing different questionnaire design strategies and to increase accuracy, completeness and reliability for race and Hispanic origin in the 2020 Census.

Some of the AQE design strategies involve allowing the reporting of multiple responses to Hispanic origin question, removing the term "Negro," clarifying the Asian and the Pacific Islander checkbox categories, and limiting the use of the term "race." The AQE team reported that they have conducted 15 experimental panels and mailed sample forms to 30,000 housing units per panel. The team explained that the current focus is to integrate experimental forms into Census production process and to define data receipt requirements and put them into place. The team plans to implement the AQE mail-out experiment around Census Day 2010, along with re-interviews in the summer, and also conduct focus groups in the Spring/Summer of 2011.

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES INCREASED EMPHASIS ON PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Peter Orszag announced that "rigorous, independent program evaluations can be a key resource in determining whether government programs are achieving their intended outcomes as well as possible and at the lowest possible cost." Therefore, as part of the FY 2011 budget process OMB will launch a number of government-wide efforts to strengthen program evaluations.

First, OMB will ask agencies to make information about already existing evaluations available on-line. Second, a new inter-agency working group will promote stronger evaluations across the government. The centerpiece of the initiative are new voluntary evaluations in agencies that will show "how their Fiscal Year 2011 funding priorities are evidence-based or otherwise subject to rigorous evaluation; assess their own capacity to support evaluation and suggest pathways for strengthening that capacity; propose new evaluations that could improve government programs in the future; and identify impediments to rigorous program evaluation in their statutes or regulations."

OMB is interested in impact evaluations, or evaluations aimed at determining the causal effects of programs. The initiative will initially focus on social, educational, economic, and similar programs whose expenditures are aimed at improving life outcomes for individuals.

In proposing new spending or significant expansion of existing spending, OMB asks agencies to "provide credible evidence of a program's effectiveness." Agencies should "identify key priorities for further evaluations in the coming years." OMB also requires agencies to assess their capacity to "conduct rigorous, independent evaluations." In addition, agencies are encouraged to strengthen their internal evaluation capabilities and staff.

Once again an administration will make an attempt to link program evaluations to budgetary decisions. Almost all administrations have tried this in the past. The most recent efforts, GPRA (Government Performance Results Act) and PART (Program Assessment Rating Tool), produced reams of results, but when political considerations were more important than the effectiveness of programs, politics usually triumphed. Will it be different this time? The size of the deficit, $1.4 trillion in FY 2009, may force the issue.

A DECADE LATER --DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM REPORTS PERSISTENCE OF BENEFITS OF LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Based on 10 years of data, the results from the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) reveal that intensive lifestyle changes aimed at modest weight loss reduced the rate of developing type 2 diabetes by 34 percent compared with a placebo in people at high risk for the disease. The Diabetes Prevention Program Outcomes Study (DPPOS) examined the persistence of the interventions tested in the DPP and found that participants in the lifestyle changes group delayed the onset of type 2 diabetes by approximately four years compared with the placebo. Conversely, participants given metformin delayed onset by two years. In elderly individuals, the benefits of intensive lifestyle changes were especially pronounced, according to the study chair David Nathan at Massachusetts General Hospital. Nathan noted that people age 60 and older lowered their rate of developing type 2 diabetes in the next ten years by about half.

According to National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease (NIDDK) director Griffin Rodgers, "the spiraling epidemics of obesity and type 2 diabetes in the United States and worldwide shows no sign of abating. Millions of people could delay diabetes for years and possibly prevent the disease altogether if they lost a modest amount of weight through diet and increased physical activity." About 11 percent of adults or 24 million people have diabetes. Up to 95 percent of those individuals have type 2 diabetes. Another 57 million overweight adults have glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet in diabetic range, a condition that substantially raises the risk of a heart attack or stroke or of developing type 2 diabetes in the next 10 years.

The DPPOS is a continuation of the DPP, a large randomized trial of more than 3,320 overweight or obese adults with elevated glucose levels. The initial findings of the DPP were announced in 2001, a year earlier than scheduled because results were so clear: after three years, intensive lifestyle changes reduced the development of type 2 diabetes by 58 percent compared with a placebo. Metformin (850 milligrams twice a day) reduced it by 31 percent compared with a placebo. DPP participants were offered a 16-session program explaining how to make intensive lifestyle changes and the DPPOS was started.

The intensive lifestyle changes consisted of lowering fat and calories in the diet and increasing regular physical activity to 150 minutes per week. Participants received training in diet, exercise and behavior modification skills. William Knowler, NIDDK in Phoenix and principal investigator for the study, acknowledged that "sustaining even modest weight loss with lifestyle changes is highly challenging, but it produced long-term health rewards by lowering the risk of type 2 diabetes and reducing other cardiovascular risk factors in people at high risk of developing diabetes." The lifestyle materials are available for educational purposes on the DPP web site. For a list of scientific publications by DPP researchers, see the DPP/DPPOS Study web site. The DPPOS is scheduled to follow participants for five more years to learn more about the effects of these interventions on the development of type 2 diabetes and its complications.

DPP and DPPOS have been funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; National Institute on Aging; National Eye Institute; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities; National Center for Research Resources; and Office of Research on Women's Health within the NIH. Additional funding came from the Indian Health Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Diabetes Association.

NSF'S EHR ADVISORY COMMITTEE EXAMINES TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

The Education and Human Resources (EHR) Advisory Committee of the National Science Foundation (NSF) met on November 4, to discuss the role of technology in education.

Arden Bement Jr., Director of NSF, opened the afternoon session by saying we need to learn more about new technology and how it can be used to stimulate student learning. He commented that in some respects STEM education is the liberal arts of the 21st Century. He said it isn't necessarily important if we get more Ph.D.s in STEM fields, but that what we really need is to increase the number of people in general who get a STEM education. Bement said we need more doctors, lawyers, policymakers, etc., who understand math, science and technology, and we need to create a workforce that understands and knows how to effectively use technology.

Dirk Van Damme leads the Center for Education Research and Innovation (CERI) part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). CERI has started the New Millennium Learners (NML) Project whose mission is to help OECD countries improve the quality, equity, and efficiency of their education systems.

The NML Project carries out assessments of learning outcomes and skills using tools such as PISA. Currently the project is looking at the link between PISA test scores and the use of technology in schools. The NML Project started in 2007 and is set to finish at the end of 2010. The project is examining among other things: the penetration and use of technology in education; researching the affects of digital technology on learners; and looking at the role of technology in teacher training and the use of technology by teachers. Though in its early stages the project has already found that while countries are spending more money to deliver technology to schools this has not translated into schools using technology as an effective tool in education. Van Damme said "There is a second digital divide, not in access but in use."

He also mentioned the importance of funding education research and development, noting that in European OECD countries only one percent of total public research expenditures in 2008 were spent on education research compared to 7.5 percent on health research.

Judith Sunley, Deputy Director of the Social and Behavioral and Economics (SBE) directorate, also discussed STEM issues. She said there is a distinct difference between social studies that is taught in K-12 and social science education. She added that a social science curriculum can go hand-in-hand with STEM education in high school. Sunley noted that technology is changing the way SBE researchers are conducting research from doing advanced computations to changing methods in data mining and collection. Cyber-technology will allow researchers to access and study more data and offer them new research opportunities. Sunley told the committee it is important that we educate the next generation of SBE researchers on how to effectively use technology in their research.

A key theme during the meeting was the need to break down departmental silos and interact more with different agencies and also increase the intra-agency interaction within NSF. NSF is currently working with several federal agencies including the Department of Education and the Department of Energy to collaborate more on the issue of STEM education. There was also a call by Sunley for greater collaboration with SBE by other directorates to help solve the problems such as a lack of STEM majors going on to graduate in STEM fields.

NIA USES ARRA FUNDS TO EXTEND RESEARCH ON HEALTH, ECONOMICS OF OLDER AMERICANS

Using resources provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the National Institute on Aging (NIA) recently announced the awarding of four grants designed to expand the Health and Retirement Study (HRS). The HRS is the premier long-term study and data resource on the combined health, economic, and social factors influencing the well being of individuals over the age of 50. The grants total more than $19 million over the next two years and will supplement the cooperative agreement between the NIA and the University of Michigan, which conducts the HRS. According to NIA director Richard Hodes, the infusion of Recovery Act funds allows the agency to “augment the quality of the data [it is] collecting, expand minority participation in the study cohort, and add genetic analysis to the study.

In its 17th year, the HRS follows more than 22,000 people over the age of 50, collecting data every two years, from pre-retirement to advanced age. The Study regularly adds new groups to the survey sample to keep the study fully representative of the population. HRS provides data about these older Americans to help address the challenges and opportunities associated with population aging in the U.S. HRS' unique combination of data allows for better understanding of the nature of health and well-being in later life.

An additional $3 million of ARRA funding over the next two years provided by the Social Security Administration (SSA) is “integral to the success of the proposed expansion in the minority cohort.” The funds will provide support for the interviews. SSA's participation will also include linkages to pension and earnings data for the new members of the HRS, contributing to the enhancement of a valuable research data resource. “This will allow for more in-depth analyses of minority population data, which is critically important at a time when the older population is becoming more diverse,” noted Richard Suzman, director of NIA's Division of Behavioral and Social Research, who was instrumental in conceptualizing and starting the study. In addition, “the ability to link genetic information with social, psychological and economic data should result in much deeper understanding of how we age,” said Suzman.

“We expect to see new additions to the more than 10,000 researchers who have already registered to use the data and the more than 1,000 authors and co-authors who have published more than 1,400 publications and dissertations,” noted David Weir, the principal investigator of the HRS at the University of Michigan.

The ARRA-supported awards focus on data collection in four crucial areas:

Enroll approximately 3,000 new participants, through the addition of more than 1,000 African-American and more than 1,000 Hispanic individuals. More than doubling the current oversampling of minority adults between the ages of 51 and 61 in the study will improve the statistical power of HRS data on the sources of disparities in health and economic status.

Repeat collection of biomarker and psychosocial data in 2010 through face-to-face interviews with about 9,200 participants, from whom such data were first collected in 2006. This will enable researchers to analyze changes in these measures over time and link changes to other life circumstances and health events.

Conduct genome-wide scans of previously collected saliva samples from approximately 13,000 participants. As a result, researchers will be able to perform multiple association studies to identify potential genetic risks and influences on a broad range of health conditions as well as social and behavioral aspects of normal aging. Researchers also will be able to better understand the environmental contexts in which genetic risk and protective factors are expressed.

Conduct pilot research on methods for diagnosis of dementia, cognitive impairment without dementia, or normal cognition for individuals in a subsample of 120 HRS participants age 70 or older. This will extend the methods of the 2001–2003 Aging, Demographics, and Memory Study supplement to the HRS and set the stage for a better understanding of trends in the prevalence, causes and outcomes of dementia in the United States.

More information about the HRS is available on the NIA's web site at http://www.nia.nih.gov/ResearchInformation/ExtramuralPrograms/BehavioralAndSocialResearch/HRS.htm. The HRS Web site, http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu, provides more information on the study as well as an online bibliography of publications using the HRS data.

NIH: SCIENCE OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE AN AGENCY-WIDE RESEARCH PRIORITY

Advancing the science of behavior change has been identified by the National Institutes of Health directors as a top priority for agency-wide research efforts. A June 15 -16, 2009 meeting brought together scientists from a wide range of disciplines to "radically move this science forward." The NIH acknowledges that "behavior has large and pervasive effects on health outcomes." Accordingly, "better understanding of the mechanisms underlying behavior change promises substantial improvements in public health as well as savings in healthcare costs." The June meeting represented "the coalescing of efforts" to help the NIH shape a new agenda "for a cross-NIH, cross-disciplinary initiative on the basic science of behavior change."

More than 60 invited experts shared their perspectives from the fields of psychology, neuroscience, economics, sociology, nursing, biology, medicine, health behavior and health education, public health, epidemiology, gerontology, pharmacology, dentistry, marketing, communication, decision making, computer science, and engineering. Additionally, staff from 17 of the 27 NIH institutes and offices of the NIH Director participated. The meeting agenda addressed key areas of behavior change science: 1) acquisition and prevention of behavior; 2) changing existing behaviors; and 3) maintenance of behavior.

Key Themes

According to the report's summary, participants called for more basic research into factors that shape health decision making and the conditions under which knowledge leads to action versus inaction. It is noted that behavioral economics and decision research approaches may be ready for translation into community-based studies. There was also a call for more policy-relevant research and greater efforts to translate behavioral research findings into policy. Key themes included:

- **Integrated Multilevel Approaches to Behavior Change** – The challenge is how to initiate and maintain health promoting behaviors that have repercussions at the population level.
- **Behavior "Bundles" and The Need to Target Multiple Behaviors at Once** – Considerable support emerged from the meeting for approaches that target multiple behaviors at once, recognizing the difficulty in changing multiple risk behaviors simultaneously.
- **Developmental Perspectives on Behavior Change** – Behavior change research should occur within the framework of the human lifespan.
- **Environmental Context of Behavior and Behavior Change** – Participants underscored the importance of studying environmental context of choice and responses to that context, including situational control, stress and brain adaptation, gene-environment interaction, and application of ecological modes, behavioral economics, social network analysis, rational decision making, choice architecture, and framing.
- **New Methods and Measurement** – There is a significant need for more sophisticated examination of behavioral mechanisms of change as an end to itself. Understanding behavioral mechanisms of change will depend on parsing social identity and social context, which will help expose and remedy health disparities.
- **Cost Effectiveness** – Behavioral interventions are often expensive and typically not covered by insurers.
- **Dissemination of Interventions** – As behavioral research produces more cross-cutting, multi-behavioral interventions, better dissemination strategies will become increasingly important for realizing meaningful public health impact.
- **Treatment Adherence and Relapse** – There are a variety of areas in which basic science is needed to help improve research on patient adherence and relapse.
- **Scientific Infrastructure Needs** – Advances in the science of behavior change require transdisciplinary and multilevel approaches.

To downloaded the report see: http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/documents/SOBC_Meeting_Summary_2009.pdf

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