



COSSA

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FEATURED NEWS

NIH Discontinues National Children's Study

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has decided to discontinue the National Children's Study (NCS). At the December 12 meeting of the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD), a working group charged by NIH director Francis Collins to evaluate whether the NCS "as currently outlined is feasible, especially in light of increasing and significant budget constraints," concluded that the NCS as currently designed is not. The working group further recommended "that the NIH champion and support new study designs, informed by advances in technology and basic and applied research, that could make the original goals of the NCS more achievable, feasible, and affordable."

In the [statement](#) released announcing the NIH's decision, Collins said that he was "disappointed that this study failed to achieve its goals. Yet I am optimistic that other approaches will provide answers to these important research questions." He concurred "with the report's conclusions that research addressing the links between the environment and child health and development is much needed, and that the specific research in this area should be initiated within the scientific community, use mechanisms that can evolve with the science, employ the use of a growing number of clinical research networks, and capitalize on research and technology advances that have developed since the inception of the study."

[Read on](#) for details.

COSSA IN ACTION

COSSA Urges Census to Maintain Field of Degree, Marriage Questions in ACS

On December 9, COSSA submitted [public comment](#) to the U.S. Department of Commerce urging the decision to remove several questions from the 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) be reversed. As [previously reported](#), the ACS recently underwent a comprehensive review of its current 72 questions, which resulted in a proposal to remove questions deemed of "low benefit." COSSA's comments outline the importance of Person Question No. 12-Undergraduate Field of Degree-and Person Questions No. 21-23, relating to marital history, to the social science research community. The Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS), a COSSA sister organization, also submitted [public comment](#).

More information on the questions identified for removal and the call for public comment can be found in the [Federal Register Notice](#). Comments are due December 30, 2014.

CONGRESSIONAL NEWS

Congress passes FY 2015 Spending Bill, Adjourns for the Year

Congress adjourned this week for the remainder of 2014 after a busy, and often contentious, lame duck legislative session. Among its post-election activities was passage of a spending package for 11 of the 12 outstanding fiscal year (FY) 2015 appropriations bills. The "cromnibus," as it is being called inside the Beltway, was signed into law by President Obama on December 16.

COSSA has prepared a full analysis of the spending package outlining its impact on social and behavioral science research programs funded across the federal government. [Read on](#) for full details.

FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION NEWS

NSF Seeks Social Science Communications Specialist

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is seeking candidates for a new position within the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE). The [Communications Specialist](#) will "develop and implement a strategy to communicate information about the Directorate's support of research, education, and training in the social, behavioral and economic sciences." Among the required qualifications includes "experience with a science organization developing and implementing integrated communications strategies to promote research about social, behavioral, and economic sciences to a variety of audiences and stakeholders." The announcement closes on January 16, 2015.

SMRB Accepts Working Group Report on Pre-college Engagement in Biomedical Science

On December 15, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB) unanimously approved the [Report of the SMRB Working Group on Pre-college Engagement in Biomedical Science](#). Chaired by Clyde Yancy, Northwestern University, the working group was charged by NIH director Francis Collins "to recommend ways to optimize NIH's pre-college programs and initiatives that both align with the NIH mission and ensure a continued pipeline of biomedical science students and professionals." The Working Group's report included an overarching recommendation: the NIH should establish "a transformative body with strong galvanizing leadership and with representation of all relevant NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices and similarly committed non-NIH stakeholders."

[Read on](#) for more details.

NSF Updates Transparency and Accountability Practices

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently announced revisions to its guidelines for program officers and principle investigators (PIs) intended to better communicate the value of the research it funds. According to an NSF [press release](#), language added to the guidelines for program officers require that non-technical project descriptions "serve as a public justification for NSF funding by articulating how the project serves the national interest, as stated by NSF's mission: to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity and welfare; or to secure the national defense." Training and guidelines will also assist program staff in writing award abstracts and titles that better reflect the significance of funded projects.

On December 26, NSF will update its Policies and Procedures Guide for PIs to explain that staff may

contact successful applicants for assistance with preparing the award abstract and title, "an NSF document that describes the project and justifies the expenditure of Federal funds." NSF will also provide regular updates on its [Transparency and Accountability webpage](#). In a [statement](#), House Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX), who has been a vocal critic of NSF's funding decisions, said he was "encouraged" by NSF's actions, calling them a "step in the right direction."

New Releases from NCHS: Health Insurance Coverage, Contraception, Nut Consumption

The National Center for Health Statistics has released several new reports covering a variety of health-related topics:

- [Health Insurance Coverage: Early Release of Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, January-June 2014](#) - In the first six months of 2014, the uninsured rate dropped from 26.5 percent in 2013 to 20.4 percent, with a larger drop among young adults aged 19-25.
- [Current Contraceptive Status Among Women Aged 15-44: United States, 2011-2013](#) - During the survey period, 61.7 percent of women were currently using contraception, with the pill, female sterilization, condoms, and long-acting reversible contraceptives being the most common methods.
- [Nut Consumption Among U.S. Adults, 2009-2010](#) - Nearly 40 percent of adults consume nuts in a given day. Nuts are significantly more popular among non-Hispanic white adults than among Hispanic or black adults.

PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

Gilbert White Lecture Focuses on Reducing Losses from Natural Hazards

The National Academies' Board on Earth Sciences and Resources held its annual [Gilbert F. White Lecture in the Geographical Sciences](#) on December 4. Susan Cutter, Distinguished Carolina Professor at the University of South Carolina (and a past president of COSSA), delivered the lecture, which focused on "Why More Knowledge Is Not Reducing Natural Hazard Losses." She explained that despite huge increases in our knowledge of the physical processes and social forces that interact during natural disasters, losses from such events have only grown.

[Read on](#) for more from the lecture.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NIH: Cancer Institute Releases Series of Funding Announcements

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) recently released a series of funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) designed to enhance the diversity of the NCI-funded cancer research workforce. The awards support individuals from groups that have been shown to be underrepresented in the biomedical, behavioral, social, and clinical sciences.

- [NCI Mentored Research Scientist Development Award to Promote Diversity](#)

- [NCI Transition Career Development Award to Promote Diversity](#)
- [NCI Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award to Promote Diversity](#)

[Read on](#) for more information.

NIJ: Social Science Research on Forensic Science

In a recently issued Dear Colleague letter, Acting National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Director William Sabol emphasized NIJ's interest in receiving proposals "that examine the social science questions related to the effective use of forensic evidence to identify and process criminal offenders and to explore the impact of these advances on the criminal justice system." Particular areas of interest for fiscal year 2015 include digital forensics, ballistics forensics, and crime scene scanning technology. See the full [letter](#) for more details.

EVENTS CALENDAR

[American Historical Association Annual Meeting](#), New York, NY, January 2-5, 2015

[Association of American Law Schools Annual Meeting](#), Washington, DC, January 2-5, 2015

[American Economic Association Annual Meeting](#), Boston, MA, January 3-5, 2015

[Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting](#), Portland, OR, January 8-11, 2015

[COSSA Annual Meeting & Advocacy Day](#), Washington, DC, March 9-10, 2015

A list of COSSA member annual meetings and other events can be found on the COSSA [web page](#).

NEXT COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

In observance of upcoming holidays, the next COSSA Washington Update will be published on Tuesday, January 13 and biweekly thereafter. The COSSA office will be closed from December 24 through January 1. Happy Holidays to all and we will see you in 2015!

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

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 Boston University
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 Carnegie-Mellon University
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 Columbia University
 Cornell University
 Duke University
 George Mason University
 Georgetown University
 Harvard University
 Howard University

Linguistic Society of America
Midwest Political Science Association
National Communication Association
Population Association of America
Society for Research in Child Development

Membership Organizations

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American Evaluation Association
American Finance Association
American Psychosomatic Society
Association for Asian Studies
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Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations
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History of Science Society
Justice Research and Statistics Association
Midwest Sociological Society
National Association of Social Workers
North American Regional Science Council
North Central Sociological Association
Rural Sociological Society
Social Science History Association
Society for Anthropological Sciences
Society for Empirical Legal Studies
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 Sciences
American Council of Learned Societies
American Institutes for Research
The Brookings Institution
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
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

Indiana University
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Michigan State University
New York University
North Dakota State University
Northwestern University
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
Stanford University
State University of New York, Stony Brook
Texas A & M University
The George Washington University
The Ohio State University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Chicago
University of Connecticut
University of Delaware
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
University of Iowa
University of Maryland
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri, St. Louis
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
University of Oklahoma
University of Pennsylvania
University of South Carolina
University of Texas, Austin
University of Texas, San Antonio
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Washington University in St. Louis
West Virginia University
Yale University

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is an advocacy organization promoting attention to and federal support for the social and behavioral sciences.

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