



WASHINGTON UPDATE

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Congress Returns for a Busy Fall

Following a month-long August recess, Congress returns to work this week to a full agenda of must-pass items. At the top of the list will be passing a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government funded and avert a shutdown come October 1. However, unrelated controversies dealing with Planned Parenthood and the Confederate flag will likely make the road to a CR difficult in the coming weeks.

Assuming we get to October 1 without the government shutting down, the next big issue on the agenda is brokering some sort of deal to reverse or at least mitigate the impacts of sequestration, which include the current spending caps that are tamping down funding across federal agencies and programs. As [previously reported](#), work on the fiscal year (FY) 2016 appropriations bills sputtered out as Congress headed for recess because, among other reasons, Republicans have written the FY 2016 spending bills keeping within the spending caps, while Democrats and the White House vowed to block bills that do not bust through the caps. It does not appear that much has changed during the recess to bridge this divide, leaving many to wonder how any of these issues will get resolved in the remaining months of 2015.

COSSA IN ACTION

COSSA Comments on NSF Reauthorization; Senate Seeks Input on STEM Workforce

As [previously reported](#), the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee spent the summer engaging with scientific stakeholders to inform possible reauthorization of the *America COMPETES Act*, or legislation authorizing the National Science Foundation (NSF). In July, the Committee put out a request for input on the topic of "Maximizing the Impact of Basic Research." COSSA submitted detailed [comments](#) to the Committee on August 14.

The Committee is now seeking input on the topic of "Building a STEM Workforce."

[Read on](#) for full details.

FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION NEWS

HHS Releases Proposed Updates to the Common Rule

The Department of Health and Human Services has released its proposal to update the regulations that govern research involving human subjects (the Common Rule). The long-awaited [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (NPRM) explains the proposed changes and poses a number of questions for which the department is seeking public comment, to be submitted within 90 days of the NPRM's publication. The Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) plans to hold several webinars in the coming weeks to explain the changes as well as an in-person town hall meeting in Washington, DC in October.

The Common Rule has not been updated since 1991. The NPRM is the next step in a process that began in 2011 with the issuance of an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) that asked for input. In response, COSSA, along with 21 other organizations, submitted a [white paper](#) that gave the perspective of the social and behavioral science community. The National Academies also issued a [consensus report](#) in 2014 that discussed proposed revisions to the Common Rule in the context of the social and behavioral sciences. A number of the proposed changes attempt to address concerns raised by the social and behavioral science community, particularly those that attempt to make the level of review proportional to the potential level of harm. The NPRM states the drafters' intention to "more thoroughly addresses behavioral and social science research perspectives and the broader types of research conducted or otherwise supported by the other Common Rule agencies" and cites the consensus report as a source of guidance.

[Read on](#) for more details.

White House Chief Data Scientist Seeks Input

Embracing the use of data to improve government function and its interaction with people, the Obama Administration established the position of Chief Data Scientist (CDS) in February. [DJ Patil](#) joined the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in February as Deputy Chief

Technology Officer for Data Policy and Chief Data Scientist.

[Patil](#) is credited with helping to coin the term "data scientist." The former Vice President of Product at RelateIQ, Patil has also held positions at LinkedIn, Greylock Partners, Skype, PayPal, and eBay.

Prior to his stint in the private sector, he worked at the Department of Defense, where he directed efforts to bridge computational and social sciences in fields like social network analysis to help anticipate emerging threats to the U.S.

[Read on](#) for more details.

NIH Plans for Redirection of National Children's Study Funds

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Principal Deputy Director Lawrence Tabak provided an update on the "redirection" of National Children's Study (NCS) appropriated funding at the September 1 meeting of the NIH [Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives](#) (DPCPSI) Council of Councils.

Despite the NIH's discontinuation of the NCS, in FY 2015, Congress provided \$165 million for the study with direction to the agency to continue to support the mission and goals of the study, along with flexibility on how to carry this task out. Tabak announced that the awards associated with this funding will be made in September. As a consequence of not knowing whether Congress would continue to provide the funding associated with the discontinued study (see [Update, July 17, 2015](#)), however, NIH fully funded the FY 2015 awards via three initiatives:

1. Development of Tools to Enhance Studies of Environmental Influences on Pediatric Diseases
2. Influence of Environment on In Utero Development with the Goal of Identifying the "Seeds" of Future Diseases and Conditions
3. Expand Examination of Environmental Influences on Later Child Development by Leveraging Extant Programs

Tabak reported that the remaining funds will be used to close out the former NCS program.

[Read on](#) for more details.

OAR Outlines Overarching AIDS Research Priorities; Studies of Behavior and Social Conditions with Multiple Negative Outcomes Deemed Low Priority

At the September 1 meeting of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) [Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives](#) (DPCPSI) Council of Councils, Acting Associate Director for AIDS Research and Acting Director for the Office of AIDS Research (OAR) Robert Eisinger provided the Council with an update on OAR's activities, including the recent release of NIH's high-priority areas of HIV/AIDS research and accompanying guidelines for determining funding for this research (see [related story](#)).

Eisinger highlighted NIH director Francis Collins' [August 12 statement](#) extolling the "extraordinary progress that has been made in HIV/AIDS research over the past 34 years, transforming what was once a terrifying and almost inevitably fatal disease into a treatable disorder." The NIH recently issued a Notice, *NIH HIV/AIDS Research Priorities and Guidelines for Determining AIDS Funding* ([NOT-OD-15-137](#)), based on the recommendations of an external working group of the OAR

Advisory Council in coordination with OAR scientific staff and NIH ICs (see [Update, June 16, 2014](#)).

[Read on](#) for full details.

NIH Issues Guidelines for HIV/AIDS Research Priorities

In August, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) released a Notice, *NIH HIV/AIDS Research Priorities and Guidelines for Determining AIDS Funding* ([NOT-OD-15-137](#)), outlining its overarching HIV/AIDS research priorities along with the guidelines the agency will use to determine AIDS funding for the next three to five years beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2016 (see [related story](#)). NIH's Office of AIDS Research (OAR) is legislatively mandated to coordinate, plan, evaluate, and budget for the agency's AIDS research program (see [Update, June 16, 2014](#)).

[Read on](#) for full details.

PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

AAAS Seeks Stories on the Importance of Scientific Conferences

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is [soliciting stories](#) about the value scientific conferences bring to collaboration and the progress of science. As you may know, the White House Office of Management and Budget issued government-wide regulations in 2012 that put hard caps on the amounts federal agencies can spend on conference participation and travel. Congress put further restrictions in place, specifically for international conferences. All of this has resulted in the proliferation of onerous and timely approval processes for travel requests by federal employees and ultimately a major decline in attendance by scientists who work for the federal government. The scientific community sent a [letter](#) to Congress in April asking for these regulations to be changed. Share your [stories](#) to further urge action on this important issue.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- NIJ: Graduate Research Fellowship Program in the Social and Behavioral Sciences ([NIJ-2016-4321](#))
- NSF: Resource Implementations for Data Intensive Research in the Social Behavioral and Economic Sciences (RIDIR) ([NSF 15-602](#))
- NIH: [Click here for a listing of recent opportunities](#)

EVENTS CALENDAR

- [Economic History Association Annual Meeting](#), Nashville, TN, September 11-13, 2015
- [Innovations in Research: Collaborations & Transformations](#), Cleveland, OH, September 16, 2015
- [NIH Priority Setting: How Peer Review Assists NIH in Selecting the Best Science](#), Washington, DC, September 22, 2015
- [Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting](#), Denver, CO, October 15-18, 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@coffa.org.

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

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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

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

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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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