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# WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## FEATURED NEWS

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### **COSSA Releases Analysis of the Trump Administration's FY 2018 Budget Request**

The Trump Administration released its fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget request on May 23. The budget seeks dramatic reductions totaling \$3.6 trillion across nearly every department of the federal government, including most science and research agencies. COSSA has prepared an [in-depth analysis](#) of the FY 2018 budget request, which includes details on the President's proposals for the dozens of departments, agencies, and programs of interest to social and behavioral science researchers.

The release of the President's budget request marks the official start of the FY 2018 appropriations process, though some Congressional committees have already begun holding their oversight hearings even without a budget in front of them. It is important to remember that the President's budget is just one step in the annual appropriations process. Congress still holds the power of the purse. As always, COSSA will report on ongoing developments in the FY 2018 appropriations process in the *COSSA Washington Update*.

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### The American Academy of Arts & Sciences Answers "Why Social Science?"



This week's *Why Social Science?* guest post comes from John Tessitore, Senior Program Advisor at the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, who writes about how findings from the social sciences helped inform the Academy's recent report, "America's Languages: Investing in Language Education in the 21st Century." Read it [here](#) and [subscribe](#).

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### COSSA Joins Scientific Societies in Raising Concerns with Visa Changes

COSSA joined 54 scientific societies on a [letter](#) to the White House Office of Management and Budget and the Bureau of Consular Affairs at the Department of State raising concerns about the [proposed supplemental questions](#) for visa applicants. The letter discusses the community's concerns about a possible chilling effect on international travelers to the United States, which would negatively impact U.S. higher education and scientific collaborations. The signatories also raise concerns about the lack of clarity on which visa applicants would be affected, that social media information would be collected, and that the burden of this proposed change would be carried by already vulnerable populations.

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## CONGRESSIONAL NEWS

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### House Science Committee Holds Hearing on Overhead Costs of Research

The Subcommittee on Research and Technology and the Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology co-hosted a [hearing on the overhead costs of research](#) on May 24. The focus of the hearing was the indirect costs incurred from research, reimbursed by the government as part of research grant awards. The subcommittees primarily discussed the indirect costs from awards made by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Witnesses included Dale Bell from the Division of Institution and Award Support at NSF; John Newmann of the Government Accountability Office; James Luther, Vice President for Finance and Compliance at Duke University; and Richard Vedder, Director of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity.

Committee members expressed concern about the rising proportion of federal funds going to reimburse indirect costs, which include administrative and facilities costs. Members also expressed concern that the process for negotiating indirect cost rates is becoming more complicated, benefitting larger and wealthier research institutions.

No consensus on how to address the rising proportion of indirect costs emerged. While some members suggested that indirect costs should be taken into consideration when NSF decides to award a grant, others focused on how NSF can continue to fund quality research despite the rising indirect costs.

This hearing represented a continuation of discussions from the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress about the administrative burden on federally funded researchers, which Research and Development

Subcommittee leadership expressed interest in continuing. Witness testimony and an archived webcast of the hearing is available on the Science Committee [website](#).

## House Appropriations Subcommittee Holds Oversight Hearing on Advances in Biomedical Research

On May 17, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) held an [oversight hearing](#) to discuss the advances in biomedical research by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). NIH Director Francis Collins was accompanied by Institute directors Anthony Fauci (Allergy and Infectious Diseases), Gary Gibbons (Heart, Lung, and Blood), Joshua Gordon (Mental Health), Doug Lowy (Cancer), and Nora Volkow (Drug Abuse).

Welcoming the agency before the Subcommittee, Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) noted that "investment in NIH has been the key driver in making the United States the world leader of biomedical research and has led to vast improvements in life expectancy and quality of life." Rep. Cole expressed pride in increasing NIH's funding by \$2 billion both in [FY 2017](#) and [FY 2016](#). He also expressed disappointment with the Administration's proposed cuts to NIH's budget in [FY 2018](#). Specifically, Rep. Cole noted he fears that the proposed cuts would "stall the progress" that Congress' recent "investments were intended to achieve and potentially discourage promising scientists from entering or remaining in biomedical research."

Questions from Subcommittee members covered a wide range of topics, including indirect costs, early stage investigators, the Institutional Development Award, minority health and health disparities, the opioid epidemic, the Grant Support Index (GSI), the ECHO study, international competition, public health preparedness, e-cigarettes, and the impact of the hiring freeze and a "good government shut down."

[Read on](#) for more details.

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## FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION NEWS

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### EPA Advisory Board Accepting Nominations

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [Board of Scientific Counselors](#) (BOSC) is accepting nominations for new members. The BOSC advises the EPA's Office of Research and Development on technical and management issues related to its research programs: Air, Climate, and Energy; Chemical Safety for Sustainability; Human Health Risk Assessment; Homeland Security; Safe and Sustainable Water Resources; and Sustainable and Healthy Communities. EPA is seeking nominees with expertise in the following fields (among others): climate/global change, public health, exposure science, risk assessment, sustainability, science policy, program evaluation, social science, behavioral science, and decision science. Nominations are due by June 30, 2017. More information is available in the [Federal Register notice](#).

### Library of Congress Releases Digital Records to Public and Researchers

The U.S. Library of Congress recently announced that it is making the largest release of records (25 million) in the library's history accessible [online](#) through free bulk downloads and on [data.gov](#). The Library is the main research body for the U.S. Congress and home of the U.S. Copyright Office. The new dataset comprises more than 45 years (1968-2014) of information, including books, serials, computer files, manuscripts, maps, music, and visual materials. The records, until now, have only been available through a paid subscription or on an individual basis. [Announcing](#) the data's availability, the Library notes that "the rich data included in these

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## PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

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### Letters Urge Congressional Leaders to Support Research Agencies

COSSA joined dozens of scientific societies and research universities on a [letter to Congressional leaders](#), sent on May 24, urging them to reject the Trump Administration's proposed cuts to science agencies including the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, and more.

Similarly, in a [Dear Colleague letter](#) sent to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee responsible for the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill, 29 Senators expressed their support for the National Science Foundation. The letter calls for the National Science Foundation to receive at least \$8 billion in fiscal year 2018 to help ensure the U.S. will remain a world economic leader.

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## FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- AHRQ: National Research Service Award (NRSA) Institutional Research Training Grant (T32) ([RFA-HS-17-011](#))
- NIH: [Click here for a list of recent NIH funding opportunities.](#)

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## EVENTS CALENDAR

- [American Evaluation Association Summer Institute: Finding Your Pathway in Evaluation](#), June 4-7, 2017, Atlanta, GA
- [Graduate Training in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: A Public Workshop](#), June 8-9, 2017, Washington, DC
- [Law and Society Association Annual Meeting](#), June 20-23, 2017, Mexico City, Mexico
- [Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues Annual Meeting](#), June 23-25, 2017, Albuquerque, NM
- [Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting](#), July 27-30, 2017, Columbus, OH
- [Joint Statistical Meetings](#), July 28-August 3, 2017, Baltimore, MD

A list of COSSA members' annual meetings and other events can be found on the COSSA [events page](#). 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@cossa.org](mailto:jmilton@cossa.org).

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## Consortium of Social Science Associations Members

### Governing Associations

American Anthropological Association  
American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Economic Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Criminology  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association

### Colleges and Universities

Arizona State University  
Boston University  
Brown University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Clark University  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Duke University  
Fielding Graduate University  
Florida State University

Association of American Law Schools  
Law and Society Association  
Linguistic Society of America  
Midwest Political Science Association  
National Communication Association  
Population Association of America  
Society for Personality and Social Psychology  
Society for Research in Child Development

### Membership Organizations

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences  
American Association of Geographers  
American Council of Learned Societies  
American Evaluation Association  
American Historical Association  
American Psychosomatic Society  
Association for Asian Studies  
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies  
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management  
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations  
Association of Research Libraries  
Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences  
Council on Social Work Education  
Economic History Association  
History of Science Society  
Midwest Sociological Society  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Council on Family Relations  
North American Regional Science Council  
Rural Sociological Society  
Social Science History Association  
Society for Prevention Research  
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 Science  
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, Amherst  
NORC at the University of Chicago  
Owens Institute for Behavioral Research, University of Georgia  
RTI International  
Social Science Research Council

George Mason University  
George Washington University, The  
Georgetown University  
Harvard University  
Howard University  
Indiana University  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY  
Johns Hopkins University  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Michigan State University  
New York University  
North Carolina State University  
Northwestern University  
Ohio State University, The  
Pennsylvania State University  
Princeton University  
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey  
Stanford University  
Texas A&M University  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
University of Chicago  
University of Colorado, Boulder  
University of Illinois  
University of Iowa  
University of Maryland  
University of Michigan  
University of Minnesota  
University of Missouri  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Texas, Austin  
University of Texas, San Antonio  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Virginia Tech  
West Virginia University  
Yale University

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*The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for and widespread use of social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research. COSSA serves as a united voice for a broad, diverse network of*

*organizations, institutions, communities, and stakeholders who care about a successful and vibrant social science research enterprise. The COSSA membership includes professional and disciplinary associations, scientific societies, research centers and institutes, and U.S. colleges and universities.*

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