2022 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
Putting Social and Behavioral Science to Work for America

From COVID-19 to racial inequity, climate change to a struggling economy, a disrupted educational system to an uncertain labor market, the country finds itself in urgent need of immediate policy solutions—solutions that are based on unbiased, sound, and reliable science. Fortunately, there is virtually no aspect of human life that cannot be informed by research in the social and behavioral sciences.

The pandemic has shown that "business as usual" policies and practices, even when it comes to science, are not enough. Congress can strengthen the U.S. scientific enterprise by making it more sustainable, diverse, and responsive to emerging needs. By investing in and utilizing social and behavioral science insights, we can put *people* at the center of policymaking.

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I Enhance the Research and Data Enterprise & Expand the Use of Social and Behavioral Science and Data in Decision-Making

The U.S. scientific enterprise has long been the leader in global innovation, thanks in large part to the federal government's decades-long, sustained investment in fundamental, basic research. However, bridging the chasm between scientific discovery and effective policy has proven harder to achieve. A more holistic integration of social and behavioral science expertise within and across the federal government can help bridge the gap between scientific discovery and policy.

The U.S. scientific enterprise requires stable and predictable funding. Even before COVID-19, federal science agencies have struggled with unpredictable funding year-to-year, annual budget caps on domestic spending, government shutdowns, and hiring freezes, especially over the last four years. These challenges have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

COSSA calls on the 117th Congress to:

- ▶ Double federal R&D and STEM education funding, from 0.7% of GDP to 1.4%, over the next five years.
- ▶ Increase funding for social and behavioral science research in fiscal year (FY) 2023 appropriations.
- ▶ Ensure federal statistical agencies have sufficient resources to meet their mandates and thrive.
- ▶ Establish dedicated funding for evidence-building activities at federal agencies.

II Champion Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Science

We know from social and behavioral science research that our country is governed by social systems that were designed to bestow advantages and disadvantages unequally. The social and behavioral sciences have helped to

illuminate those structural inequities and the harms that they create; however, the scientific community has failed to effectively apply these insights to address the inequities within the scientific enterprise itself.

Congress should use social and behavioral science to build a diverse and inclusive U.S. scientific enterprise that reflects the diversity of the American population and to facilitate the collection of detailed demographic information to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion across the federal government.

COSSA calls on the 117th Congress to:

▶ Direct the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to undertake a consensus study that proposes a roadmap for addressing systemic racism and other barriers to participation in academia and the scientific workforce.

▶ Enact legislation addressing sexual and other forms of harassment in science and provide adequate funding for implementation, including scientific research and data collection.

▶ Ensure the collection of detailed demographic information is standardized across federal science grant-making agencies.

III Strengthen Trust in Science and Government Data

As demonstrated by responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health recommendations, many Americans are skeptical of the integrity and quality of scientific information and recommendations produced by the federal government. In addition, the independence and autonomy of data-producing statistical agencies have been eroded by bureaucratic red tape and years of neglect. The government must continually work to build and maintain trust in the federal scientific and data enterprise, ensuring that science is used as a tool for progress—not for furthering political agendas. Congress can advance this goal by strengthening the integrity and independence of the nation's scientific and data enterprise and ensuring that the government has access to scientific advice that is independent, credible, and free from politics.

COSSA calls on the 117th Congress to:

▶ Encourage the use of well-qualified, independent, unbiased scientific advice in effective policymaking, consistent with the National Science and Technology Council's January 2022 report, "Protecting the Integrity of Governing Science."

▶ Reconstitute lapsed and eliminated advisory committees for science and statistical agencies.

▶ Protect the integrity, stature, and independence of the federal statistical system to preserve trust in federal data.