



CONSORTIUM of SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

1430 K STREET NW, SUITE 550 • WASHINGTON, DC 20005 • PHONE: (202) 842-3525 • EMAIL: WNAUS@COSSA.ORG • WWW.COSSA.ORG

## Testimony in Support of Fiscal Year 2024 Funding for Federal Research Agencies

Prepared for the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations,  
United States Senate

Submitted by Wendy Naus, Executive Director,  
Consortium of Social Science Associations

May 12, 2023

On behalf of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), I offer this written testimony for inclusion in the official committee record. For fiscal year (FY) 2024, COSSA urges the Committee to appropriate:

- **\$50.924 billion** for the **National Institutes of Health**;
- **\$11.581 billion** for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, including **\$215 million** for the **National Center for Health Statistics**;
- At least **\$500 million** for the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**;
- At least **\$900 million** for the **Institute of Education Sciences**; and
- **\$173.6 million** for the Department of Education's **International Education and Foreign Language programs**.

First, allow me to thank the Committee for its long-standing, bipartisan support for scientific research. Strong, sustained funding for all U.S. science agencies is essential if we are to make progress toward improving the health and economic competitiveness of the nation.

### NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

COSSA joins the 373 [organizations](#) in support of at least **\$50.924 billion** for the **National Institutes of Health (NIH) base budget in FY 2024**. COSSA appreciates the Subcommittee's leadership and its long-standing bipartisan support of NIH, especially during difficult budgetary times. We also appreciate the Congress's interest in innovating and pushing the agency forward through support for high-risk, high-reward endeavors. It is critical that efforts to accelerate discovery in new, creative ways work in tandem with—not at the expense of—robust, sustainable support for fundamental and curiosity-driven research.

To that end, COSSA urges the Subcommittee to ensure that funding for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) supplement the \$50.924 billion recommendation for NIH's base budget, rather than supplant the investments NIH makes to biomedical and behavioral research across its institutes and center. To be truly transformative, increased investment is needed on all fronts.

In addition, as the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored, it is behavior change—not medical intervention alone—that can help gain control in the days and weeks immediately following a public health emergency. To that end, COSSA urges the Subcommittee to prioritize investment in NIH’s **Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)**, housed within the Office of the NIH Director. This critical office coordinates basic, clinical, and translational research in the behavioral and social sciences in support of the NIH mission, and co-funds highly rated grants in the behavioral and social sciences in partnership with individual institutes and centers. We are appreciative of the \$1.1 million increase provided to OBSSR in the final FY 2023 appropriations bill; however, behavioral and social sciences research at NIH remains grossly underfunded. For example, OBSSR’s FY 2023 budget of \$40 million represents only 1.3 percent of the total budget of the NIH Office of the Director; under the President’s proposal, this would decrease even further.

In addition, it is estimated that NIH funds roughly \$700 million in research related to behavioral and social science annually across its institutes and centers; however, about 62 percent of that is also classified as neuroscience research, leaving around \$270 million annually for non-neuroscience related social and behavioral studies. This amounts to less than 1 percent of the entire NIH budget annually. Given all we have learned from the pandemic over the last few years, research on the social influences of health is needed now more than ever. **We urge the Committee to emphasize support for OBSSR and direct NIH to finally support the office at levels commensurate with the need for these critical insights.**

#### CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$11.581 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including \$215 million for CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Social and behavioral science research plays a crucial role in helping the CDC carry out its mission by informing the CDC’s behavioral surveillance systems, public health interventions, and health promotion and communication programs that help protect Americans and people around the world from disease. One needs only to look at the varied responses across different communities to COVID-19 guidance and policies surrounding social distancing, mask-wearing, and vaccination to understand the critical role understanding the social aspects of public health plays in keeping Americans safe and healthy.

In addition, as the Department of Health and Human Services’ principal statistical agency, NCHS produces data on all aspects of our health care system, including opioid and prescription drug use, maternal and infant mortality, chronic disease prevalence, health care disparities, emergency room use, health insurance coverage, teen pregnancy, and causes of death. As a result of the rising costs of conducting surveys and years of flat or near-flat funding, NCHS has had to focus nearly all its resources on continuing to produce the high-quality data that communities across the country rely on to understand their health. Additional funding would allow NCHS to respond to rising costs, declining response rates, and an ever-more complex health care system and capitalize on opportunities surrounding advances in statistical

methodology, big data, and computing to produce better information more quickly and efficiently, while reducing the reporting burden on local data providers.

### **AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY**

**COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate no less than \$500 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**, which would allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated as a result of years of cuts and expand its research and training portfolio to address our nation’s pressing and evolving health care challenges. AHRQ funds research on improving the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of America’s health care system. It is the only agency in the federal government with the expertise and explicit mission to fund research on improving health care at the provider level (i.e., in hospitals, nursing homes, and other medical facilities). Its work is complementary—not duplicative—of other HHS agencies and requires robust support, especially given the critical role hospitals and group care settings have played in the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES**

**COSSA requests at least \$900 million for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in FY 2024.** Within the Department of Education, IES supports research and data to improve our understanding of education at all levels, from early childhood and elementary and secondary education, through higher education. Research further examines special education, rural education, teacher effectiveness, education technology, student achievement, reading and math interventions, and many other areas. IES-supported research has improved the quality of education research, led to the development of early interventions for improving child outcomes, generated and validated assessment measures for use with children, and led to the establishment of the What Works Clearinghouse for education research, highlighting interventions that work and identifying those that do not. With increasing demand for evidence-based practices in education, adequate funding for IES is essential to support studies that increase knowledge of the factors that influence teaching and learning and apply those findings to improve educational outcomes.

### **INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION & FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS**

The Department of Education’s International Education and Foreign Language programs play a major role in developing a steady supply of graduates with deep expertise and high-quality research on foreign languages and cultures, international markets, world regions, and global issues. **COSSA urges a total appropriation of \$173.6 million (\$152.1 million for Title VI and \$21.5 million for Fulbright-Hays)**, which would help make up for lost investment and purchasing power over many years of flat-funding. In addition to broadening opportunities for students in international and foreign language studies, such support would also strengthen the nation’s human resource capabilities in strategic areas of the world that impact our national security and global economic competitiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony on behalf of the social and behavioral science research community.