COSSA HEADLINES

A look at what's new and noteworthy in social science policy

Advocacy in 2026 & Beyond

And Other Updates from COSSA

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Today

- State of Play
- State of Science Funding
- Looking Ahead and Advocacy in 2026

A year ago…

Executive Orders and policy directives create chaos

- **Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions (1/20/25) – Rescinds Biden Administration Executive Orders**
- **Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing (1/20/25)**
- **Establishing and Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" (1/20/25)**
- **Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity (1/20/25)**
- **Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Trust to the Federal Government (1/20/25)**
- Restoring Accountability to Policy-Influencing Positions within the Federal Workforce (1/20/25)
- Withdrawing the U.S. from the WHO (1/20/25)
- Hiring Freeze (1/20/25)
- Return to In-Person Work (1/20/25)
- Restoring Freedom of Speech and Ending Federal Censorship (1/20/25)
- **Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity (1/21/24)**
- Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling (1/29/25)
- Advancing United States Interests When Funding Nongovernmental Organizations (2/6/25)
- **Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative (2/11/25)**
- **Establishing the President's Make America Healthy Again Commission (2/13/25)**
- **Radical Transparency about Wasteful Spending (2/18/25)**
- **Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President's DOGE Deregulatory Initiative (2/19/25)**

2025: “Shock and awe”

Grant and program terminations
Politicization of funding decisions
Federal advisory councils terminated
Federal employees fired
15% indirect cost cap
Recissions of appropriated funds
Lawsuits
Closing Dept. of Education
Public access policies
Research security
Data sources/websites removed
“Big Beautiful Bill”

Immigration and student visas
Brain drain/research pipeline
Academic freedom
DEI programs/staff terminated
Reproducibility
Peer review changes
Emphasis on applied research
Conflicts of interest
Uniform Guidance changes
Forward funding NIH grants
Misinformation
Increase in political appointees

Schedule F classification
DOGE
Gender ideology
“Illegal discrimination”
Wasteful spending
Make America Healthy Again
Transparency in higher ed
New “Schedule G” classification
NGO oversight
Trust in science
Government Shutdown

Trump Administration: Year 1 vs. Year 2

2025

- 225 Executive Orders
- 25,000 science personnel gone from federal service
- Conditioning research funding/ using cuts as punishment for non-research issues
- 7,800+ research grant terminations – 5,200 reinstated
- Major funding cuts proposed

2026

- Fewer EOs, ongoing implementation
- Ongoing changes to federal workforce
- Court orders may impact strategy
- Expect agencies to alter programs to align with Trump priorities
- Unclear what FY 2027 budget will look like

Trump Administration: Year 1 vs. Year 2 (cont.…)

2025

- "Big Beautiful Bill" sailed through Republican Congress
- Republican Congress passed Trump recissions package
- Trump nominees approved
- Republican Congress in lock-step with Trump policies/little to no pushback

2026

- A second reconciliation bill will be harder to achieve
- A second recissions package is a nonstarter for some in Congress
- "Buyer's remorse" for some appointments (e.g., RFK Jr.)
- Major Republican defections in 2025 (e.g., Marjorie Taylor Greene)
- **Mid-term election year!**

Lawsuits

Trump Administration faced 600+ lawsuits in 2025:

- Loss rate = 70-80%
- <5% appealed to Supreme Court, meaning lower court decisions tend to stick

Trump Admin vs. Congress: Research Funding

- Congress rejected deep funding cuts sought by Trump Administration
- Congress also rejected major changes to research policy and federal agencies.

FY 2026 Science Funding

(in millions)	FY 2025 Enacted	FY 2026 President's Request	FY 2026 Final	FY 2026 vs. FY 2025
National Science Foundation	9060.0	3903.2	8750.0	-3.4%
National Institutes of Health	46801.0	28350.0	47216.0	0.9%
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	9222.1	4321.0	9203.0	-0.2%
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality	369.0	240.0	345.4	-6.4%
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	7376.0	6200.0	7439.6	0.9%
Institute of Education Sciences	793.1	261.3	789.6	-0.4%
International Education & Foreign Language Studies	85.6	0	80.7	-5.8%
Bureau of the Census	1382.5	1676.5	1490.3	7.8%
Bureau of Economic Analysis	117.3	110.7	118.0	0.6%
Bureau of Labor Statistics	704.0	648.0	708.5	0.6%
Bureau of Justice Statistics	35.0	33.0	33.0	-5.7%
National Institute of Justice	30.0	22.0	22.0	-26.7%

Check the details

- NSF – Congress protected against the Administration moving funds to its priority areas.
  - "… the agreement directs NSF to **equitably distribute funding** to support all basic research directorates… No directorate shall receive more than a 5 percent reduction relative to the **fiscal year 2024 enacted level**."
- NIH – Congress provides roughly flat funding for each NIH institute/center.
- IES – Congress provide flat funding and maintains current programs, despite Administration's attempts to shutter the Dept. of Education.

Trump Admin vs. Congress: Indirect Costs

- **Trump Admin:** Imposed a 15% F&A cap for grantees of federal science agencies (NSF, NIH, DOE, NASA, DOD)
- **Courts**: Ruled against the caps across agencies. Appeals court this month upheld ruling that NIH cannot reduce caps.
- **Congress**: Calling for a process for assessing the need to update F&A policies.

FY 2026 Language: Indirect Costs

- Commerce-Justice-Science Bill (applies to NSF, DOJ):

  The agreement acknowledges that there is **room for improvement in the system used to identify and recover indirect cost rates** under the Uniform Guidance, particularly with respect to the need for greater transparency into these costs. Various models have been suggested to achieve these improvements, including the **Financial Accountability in Research (FAIR) model advanced by the Joint Associations Group on Indirect Costs (JAG), which the Committees believe merit further consideration**.

FY 2026 Language: Indirect Costs

- Labor-HHS-Education Bill (applies to NIH, HHS, Dept of Ed):

The agreement recognizes that **indirect cost recovery has been essential for supporting research at universities, nonprofit laboratories, medical centers and other entities eligible for Federal research awards** and is key to sustaining U.S. leadership in scientific research and technological innovation. The agreement acknowledges that **there is room for improvement in the system** used to identify and recover indirect cost rates under the Uniform Grant Guidance, particularly with respect to the need for greater transparency into these costs. Various models have been suggested to achieve these improvements, including the **Financial Accountability in Research (FAIR) model advanced by the Joint Associations Group on Indirect Costs (JAG), which the Committees believe merit further consideration**. Therefore, the agreement directs the departments and agencies funded in the Act to **engage in discussions with the Committees on proposals to achieve these improvements**, including on the FAIR model. Under this agreement, **neither NIH, nor any other department or agency, may develop or implement any policy, guidance, or rule**, including publication of a notice of proposed rulemaking, that would **alter the manner in which negotiated indirect cost rates have been implemented and applied under NIH regulations**, as those regulations were in effect during the third quarter of fiscal year 2017.

Trump Admin vs. Congress: Multi-Year Funding

- **Trump Admin:** In FY 2025 NIH started providing multi-year funding, paying out the entire cost of a 4- or 5-year grant in year 1, resulting in 2,000 fewer grants compared to FY 2024. For FY 2026, NIH looked to spend half of NIH's grant budget on multi-year grants
- **Congress**: Limits multi-year funding to FY 2025 levels and requires monthly reporting

FY 2026 Language: NIH Multiyear Funding

- Labor-HHS-Education Bill, NIH Section:

"…in fiscal year 2026 NIH proposes to continue a fiscal year 2025 policy to **reserve half of the agency's budget allocation for competing RPGs for awards that fully fund their outyear commitments as part of the initial grant obligation. The agreement notes strong concern about the impact of this policy on application success rates and the consequent reduction in the number of grants NIH can fund**; including on the impact for institutions who receive only a few NIH grants. The agreement includes a general provision to **limit the amount of funds that can be obligated for awards that fully fund out-year commitments and directs NIH to fund as many new awards as possible based on meritorious applications**. The agreement urges Institutes· and Centers that receive funding increases in fiscal year 2026 to obligate additional funds to support new and competing research project grants. The agreement directs NIH to submit the report under this heading in Senate Report 119-55. Additionally, NIH is directed to provide the Committees with an analysis of the types of research funded by this model in fiscal year 2025, and the selection criteria to identify grants to be funded by the multi-year approach. Throughout fiscal year 2026, NIH is directed to brief the Committees no less than monthly on the status of grant announcements, applications, awards, continuations, terminations or cancelations. Such briefing shall include a report on grant awards by Institute or Center that fund more than the current year of performance.

Trump Admin vs. Congress: Closing the Department of Education

- **Trump Admin:** In November, Administration announced new "interagency agreements" with Depts. of Interior, Labor, State, and HHS, effectively transferring Dept. of Education responsibilities.
- **Congress**: Concerned and asserting oversight.

FY 2026 Language: Closing the Dept of Education

- Labor-HHS-Education Bill (applies to Dept of Ed):

  "Interagency Agreements and Program Transfers .-The agreement notes that it **provides funding to the Department of Education** to carry out specific programs, projects, and activities that have been authorized in law for the Department of Education to carry out. It also continues a provision that **prohibits the transfer of such funding to another Federal agency unless such transfer authority is provided in an appropriations law**. The agreement further notes that **no authorities exist for the Department of Education to transfer its fundamental responsibilities** under numerous authorizing and appropriations laws, including through procuring services from other Federal agencies, of carrying out those programs, projects, and activities to other Federal agencies. The agreement notes **concern about the Department of Education's recent, unprecedented use of Interagency Agreements to transfer significant programmatic responsibilities, procure services, and detail staff to other Federal agencies, including to the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, State, and Interior.** The agreement is concerned about the assignment of such programmatic responsibilities to agencies that **do not have experience, expertise, or capacity to carry out these programs** and activities and lack developed relationships and communications with relevant stakeholders, including States…"

FY 2026 Language: Closing the Dept of Education

- Continued…

The agreement is concerned that fragmenting responsibilities for education programs across multiple agencies will create inefficiencies, result in additional costs to the American taxpayer, and cause delays and administrative challenges in Federal funding reaching States, school districts; and schools. The agreement is also concerned this will weaken Federal support to protect the rights of students, children, youth, and families under Federal education laws. Given these concerns, the agreement **directs the Department of Education and signatory agencies to provide biweekly briefings to the Committees on implementation of any such interagency agreements.** These briefings shall include information on staffing transfers, implementation costs, metrics on the delivery of services, availability of technical support for programs to grantees, the issuance of Notices Inviting Applications or other funding opportunities, plans for maintaining high standards of quality and objectivity in grant competitions through multireviewer peer panels, rates of accessing funds by grantees and any resulting delays through the draw down of funds, updates on monitoring for grantees' compliance with all federal requirements, implementation of reporting requirements by grantees and Federal agencies and communications with eligible grantees, States, and other stakeholders. Such information shall include comparisons to prior years on a comparable basis.

Budget Season is Upon Us

1. FY 2026 APPROPRIATIONS

- FY 2026 began **October 1, 2025**
- 6 of 12 bills complete and signed into law
- 6 remaining bills (including NIH, Dept. of Ed bill) stuck in Senate
- Funding runs out Jan. 30

2. FY 2027 BUDGET REQUEST

- FY 2027 begins October 1, 2026
- President supposed to release budget in February.
- President's "wish list"

3. FY 2027 APPROPRIATIONS

- Congress must pass 12 FY 2027 bills before September 30, 2026
- Congressional oversight hearings begin soon
- Election year complications

- FY 2026 RECISSIONS? - RECONCILIATION #2?

- Several unknowns
- Will Congress try to rescind appropriated FY 2026 funding like they did for FY 2025?
- Will Congress move forward on another reconciliation package?

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40 YEARS OF ADVOCACY & ACTION

What we're watching in 2026

- Funding
  - Will the President seek steep cuts again?
  - Recissions?
- Key vacancies
  - NSF Director
  - NIH IC Directors
  - Census Bureau Director
  - IES Director
  - NIJ Director
  - BJS Director
- Changes to federal science agencies
  - Restructuring (e.g., NSF, Dept. of Ed) and workforce shortages
  - Program changes
  - Changes to peer review
  - Ongoing implementation of EOs

Local, grassroots action is EVERYTHING right now.

- Share your stories – local impacts, jobs, economy, communities affected, etc.
- Write, call your elected officials at all levels.
- Attend townhall meetings.

COSSA 2026

SOCIAL SCIENCE ADVOCACY DAY

March 23-24, 2026 Washington, DC

- Register now!
- Informational webinar February 4 @ 2:00pm ET

Goals of Social Science Advocacy Day

1. Make the case for why social and behavioral science research, and science in general, must be protected and prioritized.
2. Urge support for increased funding for federal research agencies.
3. Establish yourself, your organization, and the social and behavioral science community as a reliable resource to policymakers.

Take Action


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40 YEARS OF ADVOCACY & ACTION
Search
HOME
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WASHINGTON UPDATE
SOCIAL SCIENCE
EVENTS
JOIN COSSA
Action Center
Home » Action Center
Be a Social Science Advocate
Use your power as a constituent and a scientist
Action Center
Did you know that when it comes to informing policy, you hold power as a constituent and as a scientist? Whether in local, state, or federal office, those serving in public office do so on behalf of the people they represent. They make decisions based on what they understand

COSSA ACTION

Urge Congress to Support Robust Federal Investment in Scientific Research

Despite Congress passing a continuing resolution (CR) that extends funding to January 30, a lack of clarity on FY 2026 funding damages the ability of federal science agencies like the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Institute of Education Sciences, and federal statistical agencies to meet their missions. Those harms are passed on to researchers who rely on support from the federal government. With all the uncertainty in Washington these days, fueled by the destructive effects of a government shutdown and Trump Administration policies—including the termination of thousands of research and training grants, program cancellations, mass layoffs, pauses or cancellations of important data collections, and elimination of federal advisory bodies, to name a few — the stakes have never been higher. As Congressional appropriators look to advance legislation that will determine funding for federal science and statistical agencies for the next year, it is essential that our community fights for federal science funding and the scientific workforce.

Write to your Members of Congress **TODAY** to urge them to complete the FY 2026 appropriations process without further delay. When you're done, share this alert with others and spread the word on social media using #WhySocialScience. Thank you for taking action on this critical issue!

TAKE ACTION

COSSA101

A CRASH COURSE ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

COSSA

CONSORTIUM of SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

At-Home Advocacy Guide

YOUR GUIDE TO ADVOCATING FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, FUNDING, AND POLICY WITHOUT LEAVING HOME.

2025 EDITION

2025 Edition

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CONSORTIUM of SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

Advocacy Handbook for Social & Behavioral Science Researchers

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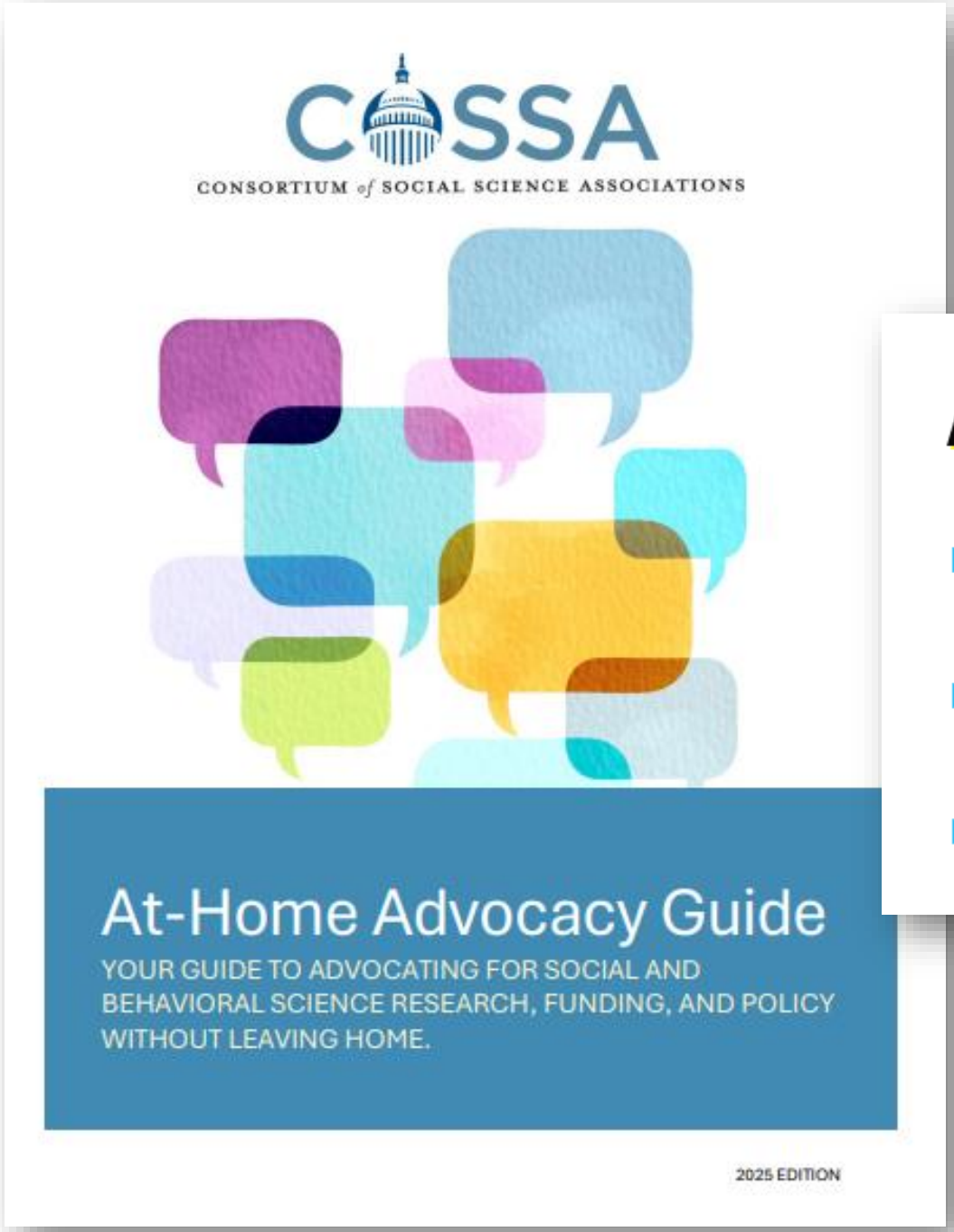

Advocacy is for EVERYONE!

- Level 1 ★ STAY INFORMED
- Level 2 ★ SIMPLE ACTIONS
- Level 3 ★ BIG ACTIONS

COSSA ACTION

Featured Alert

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Notable Resources

Washington Update

- Biweekly newsletter providing members and the public with coverage of policy developments.

Member Messages

- Timely updates on developments impacting SBS, analysis of pending legislation and policies, action alerts, and access to members-only resources and events.

COSSA 101 Series

- A Crash Course on the Federal Government
- Current Courses: *What is a Government Shutdown?* & *What is Appropriations?*

Why Social Science?

- COSSA's monthly blog that aims to shares relatable and accessible information about SBS research with the public.

Social Media

- Twitter/X: https://twitter.com/COSSADC
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/cossa1981/
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/SocialScienceAssociations
- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/cossadc/
- Bluesky: https://bsky.app/profile/cossa.bsky.social
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Questions?

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Restoring Gold Standard Science (5/23)

- Addresses “reproducibility crisis” caused by “falsification of data” and “highly misleading” research.
- Tenets of Gold Standard Science:
  - Reproducible, transparent, and falsifiable;
  - Subject to unbiased peer review;
  - Clear about errors and uncertainties;
  - Skeptical of assumptions;
  - Collaborative and interdisciplinary;
  - Accepting of negative results as positive outcomes; and
  - Free from conflicts of interest.
- OSTP issued guidance to agencies (6/23)

Gold Standard Science (continued)

- Federal agency implementation plans released for NSF, NIH, DOE, NASA and USDA
  - Includes info on how agency is already complying or plans to address the tenets in the future.
- Implementation plans to be updated every year.

Improving Oversight in Federal Grantmaking (8/7)

- Adds a layer of political review to development of funding opportunities and award decisions.
- Require all discretionary grants to "**permit terminations for convenience**"
  - No longer advance agency priorities or "national interest"
- Each agency **revise terms and conditions of current grants** to permit immediate termination for convenience.
- OMB to change Uniform Guidance to include termination clauses for all opportunities.