November 13th, 2019

Dear Members

I am writing to you to thank you for your support of COPAFS in 2019 and your support for me as its new Executive Director. In the past few years the leadership of COPAFS has changed more than one might have anticipated, but this very change has allowed us to reflect on the contributions that COPAFS can bring to the federal statistical system by supporting its community and supplying that which is most valued by you.

COPAFS has been best known over the years for its signature (publicly-available) quarterly meetings. We have supplemented these during the past year by engaging Nancy Potok, the US Chief Statistician, to provide an update at each of those meetings. She is also giving a members-only briefing at 9 a.m. on the second Friday of the months between quarterly meetings, hosted generously by the American Statistical Association and the American Educational Research Association. This has been extremely helpful in keeping COPAFS members apprised of the many developments in the federal statistical agencies and aware of activities mandated in the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act.

Due to the efforts of Corinna Turbes, our Associate Director for Strategic Communications and Policy Analysis, COPAFS is now issuing a greatly improved Monthly Update for its members. This expanded Monthly Update has received rave reviews for its content and scope of information.

COPAFS has also increased its educational work with the Hill and with the broader statistical community through five “Friends of Statistics” groups supporting BLS, NCHS, EIS, NASS/ERS, and the Census Project. The activities of these groups are a matter of extreme importance to many of the statistical agencies, given that they are often restrained from communication with Congress.

For the past five years, COPAFS has been operating from a reserve built-up from past workshops and activities funded primarily by the Census Bureau. This reserve has now been substantially depleted – it will only support COPAFS operations, in their current state, for two more years at the most. In addition, the annual FCSM conference that COPAFS has been supporting over the years was moved to a less frequent time-frame, which has reduced COPAFS’ revenue stream.
In June, COPAFS hosted a small but successful conference, Stats for America, to enhance outreach and communication among the federal agencies and with the media and other data users. This augmented the COPAFS budget – but not in an amount sufficient to fully cover 2019 costs.

COPAFS is actively engaged in the following activities to expand our membership and better meet their needs:

- Enhancing our website to maximize the benefit to members and supporters, and to help with recruiting new members,
- Providing new capabilities in our digital communications, such as making recordings of our quarterly meetings available to members a week after the meetings,
- Continuing to enhance our Monthly Update,
- Working closely with our Friends Groups,
- Increasing our efforts related to implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act.

To sustain these expanded activities and help put COPAFS on a sustainable path moving forward, we are taking two steps:

- We are requesting your support through a 10% increase in your 2020 dues over the 2019 amount,
- We are evaluating and rebalancing the budget for the FCSM conference to ensure that it is financially sustainable for COPAFS to continue to host the event

I am attaching for your information a COPAFS first – the 2019 COPAFS Annual Report.

We thank you for your considerable support and look forward to receiving suggestions from you on how COPAFS can enhance its scope of influence, better serve its members, and advance excellence in federal statistics.

Best regards,

[Signature]