



# COPAFS

## *Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics*

Founded in 1981, the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS) represents researchers, educators, public health professionals, civic groups, and businesses that rely on the quality and accessibility of statistics that can only be effectively collected by the federal government.

### Challenges Facing Federal Statistics

#### New Demands for Data

Data users increasingly demand more timely and granular information. Meanwhile while survey response rates are declining and costs are rising. Statistical agencies are moving to take advantage of new technologies and data sources to reduce costs while maintaining high quality and reliability.

#### Funding

Insufficient funding for statistical agencies, which has been widespread and ongoing for a number of budget cycles and was particularly acute in Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018.

The agencies have been forced to delay critical hiring, reduce the amount of data that they collect and disseminate, and put innovative research on hold. Without a course correction, the ultimate result will be a deterioration in the high quality statistics that so many rely on to make critical choices.

#### 2020 Census

Between now and 2020, the Census Bureau will require a significant funding increase in order to put in place the critical infrastructure and conduct the operations necessary for a complete and accurate enumeration for the 2020 Census, including partnerships with local communities to secure the necessary participation.

#### Bureau of Labor Statistics

Since 2009 the appropriated budget for BLS has fallen 15 percent in FY2018. BLS does not have the resources or administration support to educate members of its Congressional Appropriations or Oversight Committees of the consequences of systematic underfunding.

#### Economic Research Service

ERS is the primary source of economic information and research in the USDA, informing effective policies. The ERS serves as the world's premier source of agricultural economic research and information. Recent budget proposals would severely curtail the agency's research functions, data and statistical resources, and staff.

### Benefits of Membership

Assurance that the unique needs of your organization as a federal statistical data user are communicated to the agencies that produce the statistics on which you rely.

Provision of effective informational and educational materials for policy and program decision makers that clearly demonstrate the value of the products produced by federal statistical agencies.

Quarterly meetings where news from federal statistical agencies is relayed and substantive issues are discussed by producers of federal statistics and their users.

### What COPAFS does

**Support** the need for adequate funding of federal agencies to produce high quality statistics. For example, COPAFS is a co-chair of the Friends of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Friends of the National Center for Health Statistics



**Inform** members of Congress, COPAFS members, and other stakeholders of critical issues facing agencies that produce federal statistics.

**Alert** members and stakeholders of breaking issues that need immediate support and attention.

**Educate** members of Congress and their staff on the value and importance of federal statistics both nationally and in their own states and districts.

**Build** broad support across a wide spectrum of data users. Efforts have been focused on advancing the recommendations of **Commission on Evidence-Based Policy Making**, a bipartisan effort.

**Build partnerships** with foundations that can help fund critical research in the statistical agencies and academia in order to ensure the on-going modernization of how statistical data are created and made available to the public and researchers and to fund educational efforts.

**Work** closely with the Chief Statistician of the United States and the statistical agencies to help inform and promote modernization efforts underway and assist agencies in keeping abreast of new stakeholder data needs.

Management and facilitation of substantive workshops and conferences or third-party evaluation of statistical issues affecting your members:

- Bi-annual Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology's Research and Policy Conference
- 2019 Health Statistics Conference (TBA)
- Smaller workshops to build collaboration and innovation in federal statistical agencies and their users

Monthly Stakeholder Updates