



## **Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015: What It Contains for Federal Statistical Agencies December 12, 2014**

This is a quick summary of the 2015 appropriations for statistical agencies specified in the so-called “CRomnibus” appropriations package that was passed yesterday (December 11) by the House of Representatives and is likely to be passed by the Senate and signed into law within the next hours or days. The implications of those appropriations will be summarized after the Act is passed and signed, and as statistical agencies begin announcing budget impacts and subsequent program changes or options.

### **Agriculture**

The Economic Research Service appropriation is \$85.4 million. While this is \$7.3 more than in FY2014, and \$1.9 million more than requested, virtually the entire addition will go to cover newly transferred responsibilities for building space and security – not for any increase in programs.

For the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the appropriation is \$172.4 million, of which \$47.8 million is for the Census of Agriculture. The bill provides \$ 6.6 million below the request. And, like ERS, NASS must also absorb facilities-related costs in FY 2015 that were formerly covered by the General Services Administration.

### **Commerce, Justice and Science**

The Bureau of Economic Analysis appropriation is \$96 million. The \$1 million increase from FY 2014, however, will be utilized not for programs but to supplement a \$4 million carryover to cover 2015 costs of facility rental, build out and 2016 relocation for which BEA is now responsible.

The Bureau of the Census Appropriation is \$1,088 million, which includes \$248 million for salaries and expenses and \$840 million for periodic censuses and programs. The agreement directs that Census to continue efforts to assess the necessity of questions included on the American Community Survey (ACS) and improve non-response follow-up procedures, but does *not* make the ACS voluntary. Appropriations for periodic surveys will be at a level that is half of what had been requested for ramp-up and research in preparations for the 2020 Decennial Census. See Terri Ann Lowenthal’s blog for details and the Census Project’s assessment of impacts, at: <http://censusprojectblog.org/2014/12/09/really/>

The Bureau of Justice Statistics appropriation is \$41 million, which is \$4 million less than in 2014 and \$10 million less than the amount requested. The \$41 million is lower than amounts previously approved in separate House and Senate versions of CJS appropriations. It is unclear from the report whether some portion of \$4 million specified for evaluation of violence against women, or of \$30 million specified for regional information sharing will supplement BJS programs.

The National Science Foundation is slated to receive \$7.344 billion in FY15, an increase of \$126.7 million over the 2015 request. There is no language in the Omnibus specifying restrictive conditions on research in the social and behavioral sciences, nor are there separate line-items for NSF Directorates. The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics will receive its allocation from NSF appropriations, as determined by NSF.

### **Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics FY 2015 appropriations are at \$592.2 million, which is equal to FY 2014 appropriations and \$17.9 million less than the President's request, and carries a mandate to assess Metropolitan Statistical Areas. At this level of funding, BLS cannot continue to fund current programs will be forced to make program cuts of some sort.

The National Center for Health Statistics is provided \$155.4 million, a \$1.5 million increase in base discretionary funding over FY 2014 and consistent with the president's request for 2015. As the Friends of NCHS (<http://www.academyhealth.org/Advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=8351>) point out in a recent communication, two important aspects of this appropriation need to be noted.

1. The omnibus does not include any funding for NCHS from the mandatory Prevention and Public Health Fund established by the Affordable Care Act. In FY2012 and FY2013, NCHS received approximately \$30 million each year to supplement its data collection initiatives, bringing total funding for the agency closer to \$170 million. The Prevention Fund allocation was eliminated in the FY2014 omnibus, and it is not restored in the FY2015 "CRomnibus."
2. NCHS is provided full budget authority for its \$155 million base budget. For many years, NCHS's base budget had been funded entirely through the "evaluation tap," and after the FY2014 omnibus, roughly half of its base was from the tap. With this new budget authority, NCHS's base budget will be more stable going forward.

The National Center for Education Statistics direct appropriation level is \$103.1 million for statistics and \$129 million for National Assessment. The total, \$232.1 million is \$3.9 million less than in 2014, and is 15.3 million less than the level of the 2015 request.

### **Transportation**

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics is slated to receive the same \$26 million from the National Highway Trust Fund as it has for a number of years. The House-passed bill includes a provision that bars the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration from using funds to complete its "National Roadside Survey" that has been conducted for four decades.

