



COPAFS

Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN FEDERAL STATISTICS

February 2018 Stakeholder Update

1. COPAFS Outreach & Events

- *Roundtable Discussion of Evidence Priorities in President Trump's FY 2019 Budget*
The Bipartisan Policy Committee and COPAFS held a virtual roundtable to learn about the Administration's budget proposal's implications for evidence-based policymaking, including activities in statistical agencies and evaluation offices. Listen to the discussion [here](#).
- *What Can Be Done to Protect Engaged Government Data?*
As part of [Endangered Data Week](#), the Center for Data Innovation hosted a panel discussion about the risks to open government data, especially in agencies that are underfunded and understaffed, and what can be done to protect this data in the years to come. John Thompson spoke in his role as former Census director. Watch the panel [here](#).
- *Friends of NCHS Annual Meeting*
The Annual Meeting was held on February 16, 2018. The meeting included an insightful presentation from NCHS Director Charles Rothwell. The presentation included updates on 2019 NHIS redesign, FY 2019 budget composition, and key NCHS priorities.

This meeting resulted in a **letter in support of the [Friends of NCHS FY 2019 Request](#)**

- *Friends of BLS*
In addition to participating in educational meetings on the hill, the Friends of BLS have circulated a sign-on letter that was sent to key appropriators on the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education committees in support of additional FY 2018 funding. **View both [House](#) and [Senate](#) letters.** We are also working towards submitting a letter in support of increasing the FY 2019 BLS budget to these committees.
- *Hill Visits*
Several visits were made to the Hill this month to educate lawmakers and staff on the importance of the federal statistical agencies. Offices met with include:
 - Lamar Alexander (R-TN), HELP committee (chair), Appropriations
 - Thad Cochran (R-MS), Appropriations
 - Tom Cole (R-OK-4), Appropriations, Budget
 - Chuck Fleishmann (R-TN-3), Appropriations
 - Andy Harris (R-MD-1), Appropriations
 - Lindsey Graham, (R-SC), Appropriations, Budget
 - Chris Coons (D-DE), Appropriations, Commerce Justice Science Subcommittee
 - Steve Womack (R-AR-3), Appropriations, Budget (chair)
 - Evan Jenkins (R-WV-3), Appropriations
 - Mark Laisch, Labor, Health and Human Services and Education subcommittee staff

2. Budget and Appropriations Update

Since the last stakeholder update, the Administration has released the FY 2019 President's budget. In addition, the bipartisan budget agreement for the FY 2018 appropriations included an increase to the spending caps for non-defense discretionary spending for two years and an additional \$182 million for the 2020 Census. The FY 2019 Budget requests for the primary Statistical Agencies are available on the COPAFS [home page](#).

Most of the Statistical Agencies continue to be flat funded. This continues to present challenges where the agencies are required to absorb the increases in salaries, produce key statistical products, and to innovate to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Of interest:

- The *Bureau of Labor Statistics* budget has fallen behind its FY 2009 funding level by over \$90 million.
- The *Economic Research Service* is facing severe cuts, with their budget nearly cut in half, and \$10 million of their request is directed towards reducing staff. This will result in cuts to essential research functions, such as rural data programs and food safety.
- The *Census Bureau* appropriation request for FY 2019 was \$3.8 billion, with \$3.5 billion for periodic programs, including \$3 billion for the 2020 Census and \$211 million for the American Community Survey. The Economic Census has a request of \$99.4 million.
- Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT-1) is circulating a Dear Colleague letter in support of the Department of Energy's research and development functions, including a request of \$135 million in FY 2019 for *Energy Information Administration*, which is \$20 million over the administration's request. Read Rep. Welch's letter [here](#).

3. Reorganization

We expect more details of regarding reorganization with the release of the President's Management Agenda, scheduled for release this spring, but here is what we know now.

- The Office of Management and Budget's Analytical Perspective Documents indicated the Administration is considering consolidation the *Economic Research Service* into *National Agricultural Statistics Service*. Read the Analytical Perspectives [here](#).
- *Bureau of Transportation Statistics* is proposed to be moved to the Under Secretary for Policy at the Department of Transportation.

4. Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Research and Policy Conference

Program and event details were finalized this month for this 3-day conference. Registration will be open for the conference until the start of the conference, with the ability to accept walk up registration, if you wish to attend. Registration link and program details available [here](#).

5. Commission on Evidence Based Policy Making

In addition to the virtual round table with the Bipartisan Policy Center, there will be a session on advancing the recommendations in the published report from the Commission on Evidence Based Policy Making at the FCSM Research and Policy Conference on Thursday, March 8th at 2:30.

6. Census Bureau

The U.S. Census Bureau asked COPAFS to circulate a federal register notice on their published proposed criteria for census tracts, block groups, census designated places (CDPs), and census county divisions (CCDs-defined in 21 states as the statistical equivalents of minor civil divisions) for the 2020 Census in the *Federal Register* on February 15, 2018. Notices are available [here](#) and on the Census Bureau's Participant Statistical Areas Program website.

Acting Director Ron Jarmin testified before Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in February about the readiness to count in Native American territory in 2020, along with Carol Gore, Jefferson Keel, and James Tucker. Watch testimony [here](#).

There has been no announcement as to whether a question regarding citizenship status will be included on the 2020 Census.

7. Bureau of Labor Statistics

We continue to monitor the nomination of Dr. William Beech as Commissioner of BLS, who is waiting for final confirmation vote in the full Senate.

Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta will testify at a FY 19 budget hearing the House Appropriations Committee for Labor, Health and Human Services on Tuesday, March 6 at 10 am. Details available on webcast and location [here](#).

8. NEW REPORT: AAPOR's *Spam Flagging and Call Blocking and Its Impact on Survey Research*

The goal of this report is to provide relevant information on the issue of cellular telephone flagging and blocking to inform the AAPOR membership of the full scope of the issue. COPAFS was pleased to have assisted in the preparation of this report. [Read the report here](#).

9. Quarterly Meeting Rescheduled

The quarterly meeting, scheduled for March 2nd, had to be rescheduled due to weather. We will be in touch with details on when the rescheduled meeting will take place.