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**President's 2015 Budget Request -- Implications for Statistical Agencies**

The President's request to Congress for 2015 funding of federal programs was released today (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Appendix>). In recent years, the President's budget has defined the upper limit on what actually gets appropriated by Congress.

This comes in the wake of very late announcement of the agencies' FY 2014 appropriations (<http://www.copafs.org/2014appropriations.aspx>). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is the first to announce the impacts of the 2014 budget on its programs ([http://www.bls.gov/bls/budget2014\\_enacted.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/budget2014_enacted.htm)). Other statistical agencies are expected to post their 2014 impacts within the next two weeks.

In general, the President's 2015 budget reflects modest but uneven administration support for a strong statistical system. A table showing the absolute amounts of 2015 funding requested by the President was prepared by Steve Pierson of the American Statistical Association and is available at (<http://community.amstat.org/blogs/steve-pierson/2014/02/10/fy15-statistical-agency-budget-developments>). But, as usual, the **budget figures cannot be compared year-to-year on their own** since adjustments need to be made for actions such as transfers of new responsibilities, the imposition of new mandates, or changes in administrative funding of agencies within Departments. For example, the 2015 budget reflects a decentralization of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) formerly central rent accounts. Following is an initial summary of some of the implications of the 2015 budget which attempts to account for these aberrations.

**The Bureau of the Census** would get a \$270 million increase under the President' request, most of which would be dedicated to the research and testing necessary to improve efficiency and lower unit costs of the 2020 Decennial Census. The 2015 request would also keep the economic census on track.

**The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)** would receive an increase of \$12 million, but would be required to use \$8-10 million of that to cover newly transferred costs of lease and building management. The remaining \$2 million increase would be used to initiate "Big Data for Small Business," a new data program that will allow a new Small Business GDP measure. The 2015 programs of the BEA would be less affected by its own appropriations than by the inability of other budget-squeezed agencies (most critically the BLS) to provide BEA all of the measurements the agency requires to measure GDP and compile the National Income and Product Accounts.

The President's budget request for **The Bureau of Justice Statistics** provides an over 30-percent increase in direct plus at least some interdepartmental transfers. The agency intends to enhance the quality and availability of statistics in a number of areas.

**The Bureau of Labor Statistics** would be given additional funding in 2015, but with that funding comes new responsibilities to conduct a supplement to the Current Population Survey and for other mandates that will fully utilize the additional funds. In that case, the President's 2015 budget would provide funding to cover all of BLS's 2014 programs, but would *not* provide funding sufficient for BLS to restore programs that were discontinued in 2013 and 2014, including its discontinued export price program.

**The Energy Information Administration (EIA)** would see a \$5.5 million increase under the 2015 President's budget. The budget document lists a number of priorities for the agency in 2015.

The USDA's **Economic Research Service (ERS)** would see an absolute increase of \$5 million under the President's 2015 budget. However, that budget request includes a transfer of rental accounts from GSA to the agency. That amount is reflected in the budget line, "Other goods and services from Federal sources," which would increase by \$6 million. Since the new responsibilities appear to cost more than the amount of the requested increase, ERS could effectively receive a statistical program budget *cut* of \$2 million under the President's request.

**National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)** would, under the 2015 request receive an additional \$18 million. But, like ERS and many other agencies, a part (\$8.5 million) of the increase would go toward decentralization of GSA's central rent account. With the remaining 9.5 million, NASS will launch a series of USDA priority initiatives, including 2 bee surveys and a geospatial data program. This may mean that some of the commodity-specific programs NASS reinstated in 2014 could be cut again in 2015.

The 2015 President's request for the **National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)** is \$122.7 million. That is \$19.7 million greater than the 2014 appropriation. The NCES will launch two substantial new programs. It would obtain State-level data Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) data from a sample of States and would collect student-level administrative National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS) data every two years.

The National Science Foundation's Economic and Behavioral Sciences Division would see a \$15 million increase, but it cannot be discerned from the 2015 budget release how much of that would go to the **National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES)**

The Internal Revenue Service's **Statistics of Income (SOI)** unit is likely to continue to see small inflation-adjusted declines in its funding under the President's 2015 request. The SOI staff level has been trending downwards as the agency's purchasing power declines. Thus, opportunities for additional/expanded data products and increased joint research work may suffer.