

Fiscal Year 2024 Testimony on behalf of the
Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers
Submitted to House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations
In support of funding the NIH, NCHS, AHRQ, BLS, and IES
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Thank you, Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro for this opportunity to express support for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). These agencies are important to the members of the Population Association of America (PAA) and Association of Population Centers (APC) because they provide direct and indirect support to population scientists and the field of population, or demographic, research overall. In FY 2024, we urge the Subcommittee to adopt the following funding recommendations for agencies under its jurisdiction: \$50.924 billion, NIH; \$215 million, NCHS; \$500 million, AHRQ; \$900 million, IES; and \$868.5 million, BLS. In addition, we urge the subcommittee to accept report language, previously submitted, regarding population research programs and surveys supported by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the NIH.

National Institutes of Health

Population, or demographic, research is the study of populations and how or why they change. The health of our population is fundamentally intertwined with the demography of our population. Recognizing the connection between health and demography, NIH supports population research programs primarily through the NIA and the NICHD. As members of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research, PAA and APC recommend the Subcommittee continue to prioritize NIH funding by endorsing an appropriation of \$50.924 billion for the NIH, a \$3.465

billion increase over the agency's comparable FY 2023 program level. In addition, we urge the Committee to ensure that any funding for the new Advanced Research Project Agency for Health (ARPA-H), supplements, rather than supplants, the essential foundational investment in the NIH. Finally, we ask that NIA and NICHD, as components of the NIH, receive commensurate funding increases (7.3 percent over their FY 23 levels) in FY 2024.

National Center for Health Statistics

As members of the Friends of NCHS, PAA and APC thank the subcommittee for providing the agency with a meaningful funding increase in FY 2023. We ask that the Subcommittee build on this momentum in FY 2024 to ensure that NCHS, as the nation's principal health statistics agency, can enhance its capacity to provide more timely, high-quality, granular data on the health of the U.S. population. Population scientists rely on large NCHS-supported health surveys, especially the National Health Interview Survey and National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, to study demographic, socioeconomic, and behavioral differences in health and mortality outcomes. They also rely on the vital statistics data that NCHS releases to track trends in fertility, mortality, and disability. NCHS health data are an essential part of the nation's statistical and public health infrastructure. In order for NCHS to continue monitoring the health of the American people and to allow the agency to make much-needed investments in the next generation of its surveys and products, PAA and APC, as members of the Friends of NCHS, recommend the agency receive \$215 million in FY 2024, which is \$28 million above its FY2023 appropriation. In addition, our organizations urge the Subcommittee to reiterate its support for the agency's participation in the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Data Modernization Initiative (DMI). NCHS should be benefitting from DMI funds, as the Committee intended, and

applying them to make long overdue and necessary systematic and technological upgrades as well as facilitating enhanced use of Electronic Health Records. PAA and APC are especially supportive of NCHS using additional funding to improve the quality of vital statistics data to inform research regarding the underlying causes of mortality and health disparities across different populations and geographies.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

As members of the Friends of AHRQ, PAA and APC support providing the agency with \$500 million in FY 2024, which is \$126.5 million above AHRQ's FY 2023 enacted level. AHRQ funds research that focuses on the delivery of effective and efficient medical care, including prevention of dangerous and deadly medical errors. AHRQ is attracting attention as an increasingly important scholarly setting and potential source of grant support for population scientists. In addition, population scientists use data from the agency's health services research surveys and electronic health records to inform their own studies and research training activities.

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Population scientists who study and evaluate labor and related economic policies use BLS data extensively. The field also relies on unique BLS-supported surveys, such as the American Time Use Survey and National Longitudinal Surveys, to understand how work, unemployment, and retirement influence health and well-being outcomes across the lifespan. As members of the Friends of Labor Statistics, PAA and APC are grateful to the Subcommittee for providing the agency with steady increases since FY 2018—especially after years of flat funding. We are also pleased that the Subcommittee included language in its FY 2023 report expressing support for a

new youth cohort for the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). As the Subcommittee knows, the current NLSY 1979 and 1997 cohorts cannot provide adequate information about teens and young adults entering the labor market. PAA and APC are enthusiastic about the new NLSY cohort and urge the Subcommittee to sustain its support for its development. We urge the Subcommittee to provide BLS with \$868.5 million in FY 2023 and to adopt, once again, report language expressing support for the new NLSY cohort.

Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) plays a critical role in supporting research used in developing and examining the effectiveness of education programs and curricula. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the statistical arm of IES, provides objective data, statistics, and reports on the condition of education in the U.S. Population scientists rely on NCES surveys to conduct research on an array of topics, such as linkages between educational access/attainment to health outcomes of specific populations, economic well-being, and incarceration rates. As members of the Friends of IES, we urge the committee to provide the agency with at least \$900 million in FY 2024, and to ensure that NCES receives, at a minimum, the President's request, \$316 million, which is approximately \$9 million over the agency's FY 2023 level. Additional funding for NCES is necessary to not only support its programs, but also needed to address the agency's ongoing staffing crisis.

Thank you for considering our support for these agencies as the Subcommittee drafts the FY 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.