

## Priorities for Legislation Reauthorizing the National Science Foundation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency whose mission is to: promote the progress of science; advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and secure the national defense. NSF is the only federal agency that supports basic scientific research across all major scientific disciplines. The Social, Behavioral and Economics Directorate (SBE), one of six research directorates, is the primary source of funding for population science. The SBE Directorate funds not only competitively awards individual research projects, but also funds or co-funds several large data infrastructure projects important to the demographic research community, including the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, the General Social Survey, and the Census Bureau Research Data Centers.

Over the past six years, NSF's budget has stagnated, barely keeping up with modest inflation, and well behind other agencies' research budgets, including NIH and the Department of Energy.

The most recent legislative reauthorization for NSF expired in 2013. House Science Committee Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) is expected to introduce reauthorizing legislation in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

FY 2021 Appropriation is \$8.5 billion

NSF funding accounts for roughly 27% of all federal research dollars at U.S. colleges and universities

SBE represents a small portion of the NSF budget but supports almost 70% of social and behavioral research nationwide

### Recommendations to Strengthen NSF and Its Impact

PAA & APC recommend the following provisions be included in any NSF reauthorization legislation:

- Authorize the doubling of the NSF budget within 5 years
- Ensure that all directorates—especially SBE—share equitably in budget growth
- Encourage NSF to lengthen grant award timelines to better align with training activities, which have longer durations
- Encourage extending the RAPID (Grants for Rapid Response Research) grant model to help early career scientists secure funding
- Encourage NSF to continue to invest in mid-scale infrastructure and ensure that social and behavioral science is represented in the review process

Several of these policy recommendations were included in comments PAA & APC recently submitted to NSF as the agency prepares to update its strategic plan. [Click to view](#) the comments.