

Fiscal Year 2025 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 (e.g. demographers, sociologists, economists, and epidemiologists). In FY 2025, we urge the Subcommittee to adopt the following funding recommendations for agencies under its jurisdiction: \$51.3 billion, NIH; \$220 million, NCHS; \$500 million, AHRQ; \$900 million, IES; and \$812 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 \$51.3 billion for the NIH, a \$4.2 billion increase over the agency's comparable FY 2024 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 in FY 2025.

PAA has worked with Subcommittee staff and numerous offices to submit proposed report language highlighting population research activities funded by the NIA and NICHD. With respect to NICHD, the requested report language is especially important for two reasons: 1) it reinforces the agency's statutorily required mandate to support population research, and 2) urges the Institute to address its recent drastic cuts to large-scale longitudinal, nationally representative surveys and report on its plans regarding large data collection activities. NICHD-funded surveys are invaluable resources whose publicly accessible data support research and training activities nationwide. As an illustration, there are over 45,000 registered users in 49 states who rely on data from the NICHD-funded Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement alone. The report language underscores how essential these data are as public goods for advancing scientific progress.

National Center for Health Statistics

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the nation's principal health statistics agency. 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 while striving for the production of more timely, high-quality, granular data, PAA and APC, as members of the Friends of NCHS, recommend the agency receive \$220 million in FY 2025, which is \$32.6 million above its FY2024 appropriation. In addition, our organizations urge the Subcommittee to reiterate support for the agency's participation in the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Data Modernization Initiative (DMI). NCHS should benefit from DMI funds, as the Committee intended, to make long overdue and necessary systematic and technological upgrades as well as to facilitate 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 as well as to facilitate full implementation of its Virtual Data Enclave initiative to enhance public access to NCHS data.

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 2025, which is \$131 million above AHRQ's FY 2024 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 2024 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 \$812 million in FY 2025 and to adopt, once again, report language expressing support for implementation of 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 2025, and to ensure that NCES receives, at a minimum, the President's request, \$306.5 million, which is consistent with the agency's FY 2024 level. Additional funding for NCES is necessary not only to support its programs, but also to meet the agency's ongoing staffing needs.

Thank you for considering our support for these agencies as the Subcommittee drafts the FY 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.