

Fiscal Year 2018 Testimony on behalf of the  
**Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers**  
Submitted to House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations  
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Thank you, Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro for this opportunity to express support for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), 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 2018, we urge the Subcommittee to adopt the following funding recommendations: \$2 billion above the final FY 2017 funding level for the NIH, in addition to funds authorized by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act; \$170 million for the NCHS; \$670 million for the IES; and, at least, \$640.9 million, for the BLS.

The PAA and APC are very concerned that the FY 2017 appropriations process is not finalized. The current continuing resolution constrains the ability of federal agencies to fully execute new initiatives and compels them to spend more conservatively on existing programs. As a result, agencies, such as the NIH, cannot fully fund existing grants nor award as many new meritorious grants. Although meritorious grants could be funded later in the fiscal year, any delay in funding hinders research progress and productivity. The CR also impedes the ability of federal statistical agencies to collect and disseminate data. We hope the FY 2017 appropriations process is resolved soon, providing the following agencies with these recommended funding levels: NIH, \$34.1 billion; NCHS, \$170 million; IES, \$728 million; and BLS, \$640.9 million.

**National Institutes of Health**

Demography is the study of populations and how or why they change. A key component of the NIH mission is to support biomedical, social, and behavioral research that will improve the health of our population. 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 National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

### **National Institute on Aging**

By 2030, there will be 72 million Americans aged 65 and older. To inform the implications of our rapidly aging population, policymakers need objective, reliable data about the antecedents and impact of changing social, demographic, economic, health and well being characteristics of the older population. The NIA Division of Behavioral and Social Research (BSR) is the primary source of federal support for basic population aging research.

In FY 2018, three major research center programs that the Division supports, the Roybal Centers for Translational Research, Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research, and Centers on the Demography and Economics of Aging, as well as the Health and Retirement Survey (a longitudinal study that has collected data, including biomarkers, from more than 27,000 Americans over the age of 50 since 1992, establishing itself as a unique, accessible data source), will be eligible for funding renewal. These programs provide vital direct and indirect support to the population sciences. With additional support in FY 2018, the Institute can support these programs while also contributing to the NIA's efforts to address the scourge of Alzheimer's disease. The BSR division is also eager to support and expand its data collection efforts consistent with recommendations contained in a 2016 [report](#) issued by outside experts, including PAA members, regarding the Institute's data infrastructure. As members of the Friends of NIA,

PAA and APC an additional \$500 million in FY 2018 to support aging research activities at NIA and across the NIH.

### **Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child Health and Human Development**

Since 1968, NICHD has supported research on population processes and change. This research is housed in the Institute's Population Dynamics Branch, which supports research and research training in demography, reproductive health, and population health and funds major national studies that track the health and well-being of children and their families from childhood through adulthood. These studies include Fragile Families and Child Well Being, the first scientific study to track the health and development of children born to unmarried parents, and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), tracing the effects of childhood and adolescent exposures on later health. The Add Health study received a 2016 Golden Goose Award, recognizing its significant and unique scientific contributions.

In addition to supporting individual research grants and surveys, NICHD supports the Population Dynamics Centers Research Infrastructure Program. These highly productive centers, based at U.S. universities and private research institutions nationwide, have advanced U.S. science by fostering groundbreaking interdisciplinary research on human health and development, and increased the scientific pipeline by nurturing the careers of junior researchers. With additional funding in FY 2018, the Institute will be able to maintain its strong commitment to these centers of research excellence as well as the rest of the Population Dynamics Branch's impressive research portfolio. As members of the Friends of NICHD, PAA and APC request that NICHD receive a funding increase in FY 2018 that is proportionate to the \$2 billion increase over FY 2017 for NIH.

### **National Center for Health Statistics**

NCHS is the nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data on the health of the U.S. population. NCHS funds and manages the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), which contracts with the states to collect birth and death certificate information. NCHS also funds several complex large surveys, such as the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and National Survey of Family Growth, to help data users understand the population's health, influences on health, and health outcomes.

In recent years, NCHS has made noteworthy progress toward modernizing the NVSS, moving many states from paper-based to electronic filing of birth and death statistics and expediting the release of these data to the user community. However, persistent flat funding levels in recent years, and the loss of funds from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), are hampering the agency's ability to enact additional innovations and make necessary survey redesigns and system improvements. PAA and APC are concerned that funding for NCHS, as a component of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), will be further constrained if the PPHF is eliminated altogether. The fund currently comprises 16 percent of the CDC budget.

As members of the Friends of NCHS, PAA and APC request that NCHS receive \$170 million in budget authority in FY 2018. NCHS could use this additional money to support ongoing implementation of electronic death records nationwide and to implement necessary technical innovations to its core surveys, including a redesign of the NHIS.

### **Bureau of Labor Statistics**

BLS produces essential economic information for public and private decision making. Population scientists who study and evaluate labor and related economic policies use its data extensively. The agency also supports the National Longitudinal Studies program and the

American Time Use Survey, which are invaluable datasets that inform how complex factors, such as changes in work status, income, and education, interact to affect outcomes.

Despite receiving a minor funding increase in FY 2016, the agency is struggling to overcome years of insufficient support. Between FY 2009 and FY 2015, the purchasing power of BLS appropriations decreased *every year*. Given the importance and unique nature of BLS data, we urge the Subcommittee to provide BLS with no less than the agency's FY 2017 request, \$640.9 million, in FY 2018. This funding would allow BLS to support its core programs and surveys and to conduct other postponed activities, including development of a supplemental statistical poverty measure—an initiative currently stalled under the existing CR.

#### **Institute of Education Sciences**

PAA and APC support \$670 million for the IES in FY 2018, an amount that accounts for inflation since the last appropriation (in 2016), plus four-percent growth over the same period. IES is the independent and nonpartisan statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education charged with providing and disseminating rigorous scientific evidence on which to ground education policy and practice. Adequate funding for all IES programs in FY 2018 will enable the Institute to best support important research, data collection and statistical analysis, and dissemination. This work contributes to a growing evidence base that informs effective and efficient educational practice and policy across the nation.

Thank you for considering our organization's positions on these agencies under your subcommittee's jurisdiction.