

# Policy Update: April 2017

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### **Apply Now: SRCD Pre-doctoral Summer Internship at NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research**

SRCD is excited to announce that it will be sponsoring a pre-doctoral internship this summer at the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) on the NIH campus. The internship will be a full time immersion experience for a graduate student in developmental science for the months of July and August, 2017 (with the possibility of starting during June) and will provide a stipend. An immersion in the

work of OBSSR over the summer will provide the intern with an outstanding opportunity to learn about behavioral and social science research related to health at NIH and how this work is linked with human development. The intern will assist OBSSR senior staff in a variety of projects. These may include reviewing ongoing research at NIH to summarize a focus on behavioral and social aspects of health and possible gaps, participating in meetings across NIH institutes and centers that focus on behavioral and social sciences, and helping to plan for presentations and meetings on the behavioral and social aspects of health. Click [here](#) for additional information and to apply online. Applications are due **Monday, May 15**.

### **Upcoming Webinar on Parenting Young Children**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 26

**Time:** 12:00-1:00 pm Eastern

**About the Webinar:** The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine recently released a report informing a national framework for strengthening the capacity of parents of young children birth to age 8. The report is intended to serve as a roadmap for the future of parenting and family support policies, practices, and research in the United States. The full report can be accessed [here](#).

Three members of the study committee that authored this report will discuss the report's conclusions and recommendations:

Dr. Kimberly Boller, Senior Fellow, Mathematica Policy Research

Dr. Natasha Cabrera, Professor of Human Development and Director, Family Involvement Laboratory, University of Maryland, College Park

Dr. Eric Dearing, Professor, Counseling, Developmental, and Educational Psychology Department, Lynch School of Education, Boston College

Click [here](#) to register for this webinar.

### **Upcoming Webinar on Equity and Culture in Teaching**

**Date:** Thursday, May 4

**Time:** 2:00 - 3:00 pm Eastern

**About the Webinar:** Researchers argue that children of color require, in addition to high-quality teaching, classroom learning opportunities that capitalize on culturally situated forms of learning and development. This webinar will discuss how teachers' intentional use of cultural and social interactions can successfully foster students' academic achievement and social-emotional development. This webinar will feature a

presentation by Dr. Stephanie Curenton, Associate Professor and Director of the Ecology of School Readiness Lab at the Boston University School of Education. Her research focuses primarily on the development of low-income and minority children in various contexts, and related state and federal policies. This webinar will be adapted from a plenary session at the 2016 National Research Conference on Early Childhood.

Click [here](#) to register for this webinar.

### **Join SRCD at the March for Science on April 22**

SRCD is partnering with the [March for Science](#), taking place in Washington, DC and cities across the world on April 22, 2017. As one of the largest international organizations focused on the science of child development, SRCD is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge about child development and to evidence-based policy. For these reasons, the Executive Committee of the Governing Council of SRCD fully endorses the March for Science.

According to its mission statement, "The March for Science champions robustly funded and publicly communicated science as a pillar of human freedom and prosperity. We unite as a diverse, nonpartisan group to call for science that upholds the common good and for political leaders and policymakers to enact evidence-based policies in the public interest." SRCD member participation in the march will support the goals of science which are integral to the mission of the SRCD.

The Society for Research in Child Development, while explicitly nonpartisan, is dedicated to research on child development, promoting equity and justice in developmental science, and fostering an inclusive and international scientific community promoting research on infant, child, and adolescent development in diverse contexts and across a life-long trajectory. SRCD will work with march organizers and other scientific organizations to further the principles of scientific freedom, integrity, and dissemination.

If you are planning to march in Washington, DC and would like to meet up with other members of SRCD, a group will be meeting in front of the [Smithsonian Castle](#) (Jefferson street side facing the National Mall) at 10:00 am. More information on the March for Science is available [here](#), and SRCD March for Science shirts are available [here](#).

### **Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow**

Emily Douglas, Ph.D., is a Congressional Fellow whose placement is in the office of Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR). Click [here](#) to learn more about her work, including working on a special investigation of children's deaths in foster care.

## **Legislative Branch Updates**

### **House Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing on Health and Human Services Budget**

On March 29, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies held a Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) budget hearing. Subcommittee Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) opened by emphasizing the importance of funding the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), stating “these two institutions in particular are every bit as important for national defense and national security for the American people as the Pentagon is... these things are part of our defense too.” He noted that the committee would be hesitant to consider cuts to HHS as deep as those proposed in the Trump administration’s “skinny budget,” but would consider “finding a way in the total budget to not only maintain the offsets the president wants but spread them more broadly across the full budget.” Subcommittee Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) stated in her opening remarks that the current budget proposal would have “literal life and death consequences for American families” if passed, and that there would be “severe negative consequences for public health departments across our country.” Furthermore, she expressed concern that the proposed cuts would “turn back the clock” on life-saving biomedical research at NIH. Ranking Member of the full committee, Representative Nita M. Lowey (D-NY) gave a brief opening statement before introducing the hearing’s only witness, Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price. Representative Lowey said she was “very optimistic that at the end of this process we will make major changes to the skinny budgets that have been submitted to us.” She noted that the skinny budget “doesn’t contain many numbers, and the few clear details would have catastrophic results for Americans...The Department of Health and Human Services would be cut by 18 percent, putting critical priorities at risk,” including “biosecurity, medical research, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, early childhood development, combatting disease and epidemics, vaccine development,” and many more. She also noted that she hopes Secretary Price will return to testify on the full budget when it is released in May, given how many questions are still unanswered by the skinny budget. Secretary Price opened his testimony expressing admiration for the way HHS supports communities across the country, often in ways that many Americans will never know about. He used his testimony to highlight three key priorities: mental health and substance abuse, emergency preparedness

and response, and childhood obesity. Secretary Price noted that HHS is working to combat opioid misuse, increase the availability of treatment, and reduce deaths from overdoses. Mental health issues that are a high priority to HHS include suicide prevention, serious mental illness, and children's mental health. In the area of emergency response and preparedness, Secretary Price stated that the budget proposes to reform key emergency programs and create a new federal emergency response fund to help HHS rapidly respond to emerging public health threats. He concluded his testimony by noting that he intends to augment the department's current efforts in the area of childhood obesity. To watch the full hearing and read witness testimony, click [here](#).

### **Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing on STEM Education**

On March 15, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies held a hearing entitled "STEM Education: Preparing Students for the Careers of Today and the Future." Subcommittee Chairman Roy Blunt (R-MO) opened the hearing by pointing to the promise of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education for the future. For example, he noted that "workers with associate level STEM degrees earn, on average, 66% more annually than their peers with the same education level." And that "the median annual wage for STEM workers is more than double the median wage for all workers." In response to these promising figures, Chairman Blunt called for federal policies to support students pursuing STEM degrees, as well as provide better teacher preparation and opportunities for diversity and inclusion within STEM. Subcommittee Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) used her opening remarks to emphasize the need for "economic opportunity for all workers, not just those at the top," and discussed the importance of investments in education and training in STEM fields, noting that students in many schools still lack access to a high quality STEM education. Witnesses provided testimony on a range of issues, including: the need for STEM education partnerships between business and industry; the lack of representation of women, people of color, and rural communities in STEM degree programs; the importance of community and technical colleges providing strong STEM education and training; examples of federal support of K-12 STEM education initiatives, such as the use of Title I funding to support academic coaches in STEM; the value of afterschool or non-traditional programs to support STEM learning; the importance of having a society of STEM-literate citizens; educational outreach methods outside of traditional academic settings; the success of STEM job creation in Washington state; and the promise of federal funding for STEM in increasing opportunity for rural and underserved communities. Witnesses included: Sarah Tucker, Ph.D., Chancellor, West Virginia Council for Community & Technical College Education; Larry Plank, Ed.S., Director Of K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Education,

Hillsborough County Public Schools; Neil Lamb, Ph.D., Vice President For Educational Outreach, HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology; and Caroline King, Chief Policy And Strategy Officer, Washington STEM. To watch the full hearing and read witness testimonies, click [here](#).

## **House Science Subcommittee Hearings on Future of NSF**

Legislation regarding the National Science Foundation (NSF) is expected to be introduced in Congress later this year. In March, the Research and Technology Subcommittee of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee held two hearings regarding the future of NSF to inform the development of legislation.

The first hearing, held on March 9, opened with Subcommittee Chair Barbara Comstock (R-VA) indicating that the purpose of the hearing was for the subcommittee to have an overview of the priorities of NSF, especially given the [American Innovation and Competitiveness Act](#) signed into law earlier this year that provided funding for specific NSF functions. Subcommittee Ranking Member Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) conveyed the view that funding for NSF should be a high priority for Congress in light of the potential funding cuts across the government, and that Congress “should not make the mistake of changing the science priorities of the agency,” a concern given past attempts by the Committee to target cuts at specific areas of research, especially the social, behavioral, and economic sciences and geosciences. Chairman of the full Science Committee, Lamar Smith (R-TX), then offered opening remarks, stating that “full reauthorization of NSF will rebalance priorities” of NSF, making certain that the merit review process at NSF results in the funding of research in areas of “national interest.” In her testimony, NSF Director France Córdova underscored NSF’s role in supporting groundbreaking research across nearly all areas of science and technology and highlighted the long-term research agenda of NSF. In response to questions from subcommittee members, Dr. Córdova discussed the multiple sources of input into the scientific directions of NSF, including the role of the National Academy of Sciences and scientific expertise within and outside of the agency. She noted the contributions of the social and behavioral sciences especially in the areas of national security and cybersecurity, commenting that virtually all areas of human endeavor stand to benefit from research in the social and behavioral sciences. The testimony of Allison Lerner, Inspector General of NSF, focused on management and oversight of the agency.

A March 21 hearing opened with comments by Subcommittee Chair Barbara Comstock (R-VA) emphasizing the need to balance the importance of NSF in keeping the U.S. at the forefront of scientific discovery while

also setting priorities given budgetary constraints. Ranking Subcommittee Member Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) expressed concern about the view expressed by some on the subcommittee that social and behavioral sciences do not need a separate directorate at NSF, noting that this research would suffer in quality if only funded through other directorates. He underscored the role of social, behavioral, and economic sciences in cybersecurity, defense, and health. Full Committee Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) emphasized the importance of listening to experts about the future directions of NSF, and expressed concern about the tendency by some to confuse challenges to reproducibility with scientific misconduct. Acting Chief Operating Officer of NSF, Dr. Joan Ferrini-Mundy, underscored the role of NSF in supporting research across fields of science and technology; the need to recognize that important impacts of science are not necessarily apparent initially; that flexibility is needed to fund the best ideas coming from differing sources; that NSF engages in multiple scientific collaborations across government, the private sector, and the international community; and the importance of a well prepared scientific workforce reflecting the diversity of the population. Dr. Maria Zuber, Chair of the National Science Board, similarly emphasized the importance of investing in science across all fields and preparing the STEM workforce, also noting the importance of maintaining the trust of the public. Dr. Jeffrey Spies, Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer for the Center for Open Science at the University of Virginia, focused on further strengthening an already effective process at NSF regarding openness, integrity, and reproducibility of research. Finally, Dr. Keith Yamamoto, Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Strategy at the University of California, San Francisco, discussed ways that NSF could further encourage transdisciplinary research. There was further discussion of social and behavioral sciences at NSF following a question from Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-WA) about the consequences of significant cuts in this area. Dr. Ferrini-Mundy emphasized NSF's commitment to these sciences, and Dr. Zuber indicated that these sciences are on the verge of a breakthrough, especially with the increased use of computational and data driven approaches.

To watch the full hearings and read witness testimonies, click [here](#). More detailed summaries of each hearing are available [here](#) from the Consortium of Social Science Associations.

## **Executive Branch Updates**

### **Federal Hiring Freeze Lifted, Replaced with Guidance from OMB on Long-Term Workforce Reduction**

On April 12, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a [memorandum](#) to heads of executive branch departments and agencies lifting the government-wide hiring freeze, but requiring departments and

agencies to prepare for a long-term reduction in the Federal workforce. The memo directs heads of departments and agencies to (1) begin to take immediate actions towards workforce and cost reductions; (2) develop a plan to maximize employee performance; and (3) submit an Agency Reform Plan to OMB in September 2017 as part of the budget submission to OMB for FY 2019, to include a plan for long-term workforce reductions. The memo indicates that overarching goals are to “[c]reate a lean, accountable, more efficient government” that focuses on the programs where there is a unique federal role and where the need of citizens is greatest, and to remove barriers from front-line employees delivering results. The memo focuses especially on providing guidance for the development of Agency Reform Plans. In the fall of 2017, as part of FY 2019 Budget submissions to OMB, agencies will be required to submit their proposed Agency Reform Plans. Agencies are expected to develop their plans in consultation with key stakeholders and their workforce in addition to OMB. OMB will work with agencies to review these plans during the summer of 2017 as they work to finalize the President’s FY 2019 Budget Request, with variation anticipated in targets for specific agencies. A final government-wide Reform Plan will be released with the President’s FY 2019 Budget Request to Congress. These steps toward government-wide reform must be viewed as preliminary in light of the authority of Congress over appropriations. However, it is important to note that planning for long-term workforce reduction and reform will be taking place across federal agencies.

## **Child and Family Policy Research Meetings in DC**

### **COSSA Holds Annual Meeting**

The Consortium of Social Science Associations, of which SRCF is a Governing Board Member, held its Annual Meeting on March 29. An in-depth summary of the panels is available on [COSSA’s website](#). Brief highlights from each of the sessions follow:

*Strangers In Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right.* The first presentation was the keynote address given by Arlie Russell Hochschild on her book, New York Times Best Seller *Strangers In Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. Dr. Hochschild gave a brief synopsis of her five-year study of Tea Party supporters in Lake Charles, Louisiana, covered extensively through interviews in the book. Her presentation focused on using empathy in her interactions to try to understand the “red state paradox,” in which states that scored the lowest on indicators of health, education, and economic prosperity receive more in federal subsidies than they generate in tax dollars, yet have strong negative feelings about government intervention and the federal government in general. She suggested that the next step for



individuals in uniformly liberal states would be to consider the “blue state paradox,” in which blue-collar workers have been leaving the Democratic Party despite Democrats’ championing of workers’ rights and identifying as the party of the working class.

*Staying Focused, Moving Forward.* The next presentation was a panel discussion featuring the following experts in social science policy: Ron Haskins, The Brookings Institution; Kei Koizumi, American Association for the Advancement of Science; Kenneth Prewitt, Columbia University; and Wendy Naus, COSSA. Panelists spoke about concerns for the social sciences in the new administration, including negative impacts of evidence-based cutting and the potential for decreases in social science research funding and federal support for social science programs based upon the president's “skinny budget.” Despite these concerns, panelists pointed to indications of the field moving forward in a productive direction, including “thinking outside of the box” and allying with the natural sciences, arts, politicians, and the media in promoting the value of social scientific research.

*From Research to Reward: Communicating the Value of Social Science.* Stephen Mautner from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine provided a lunchtime presentation on a new resource from the National Academies, *From Research to Reward*. This video series features personal stories of how advancements in science can benefit society as a whole, with the first six videos focusing on the behavioral and social sciences. Mautner showed two examples of short video clips from the series, one on how research in economics informed the kidney donor matching process and another on how applied behavioral science research informed and continues to be useful in creating updated vehicle safety systems.

*Mobilizing Students as Ambassadors for Social Science.* This breakout session, led by Jeffrey Martin and Anne Kelsey of the American Anthropological Association, discussed how to mobilize and engage students as social science ambassadors, including helping student groups get the resources they need and how to incentivize engagement for student members of associations.

*Promoting Your Expertise with National Media Outlets.* Communications consultant Caitlin Kizielewicz provided a workshop breakout session focusing on practical strategies for promoting social science research in the media. This session also gave participants the opportunity to articulate and receive feedback from other participants on key messages to convey to the media.

*Social Science in Government Service.* In this breakout session, a panel of social and behavioral scientists working in the federal government offered discussion of federal careers for social scientists and the ways

that social science is used in government. Moderated by Angela Sharpe of COSSA, the panel included: Iris Wagstaff, American Association for the Advancement of Science; Monica Ramirez Bosco, National Institutes of Health; Elizabeth Corona, Environmental Protection Agency; and Missy Heggeness, U.S. Census Bureau.

*Advocating for Social Science from Home.* Jennifer Zeitzer of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology led this breakout session focused on how social scientists can advocate closer to home, such as by visiting the district office of their member of Congress, engaging with local press, or inviting elected officials to their universities.

*The Benefits of Public Engagement by Social Scientists.* The conference concluded with a plenary presentation by John Sides, co-founder and editor-in-chief of the *Monkey Cage* blog, a political science blog published by the *Washington Post* that provides political scientists a platform to share their research with the broader public. Dr. Sides explained that the blog functions as a collaborative of researchers from many universities, with over 2000 unique contributors and over 500 repeat contributors in its 10-year history. He also noted that feedback from contributors has been overwhelmingly positive, with 90 percent describing the experience of writing favorably and many also reporting favorable contact from media, the policy community, and colleagues following their blog post.

## **Federal Reports and Requests**

### *Reports*

#### **New Reports and Briefs from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation**

Several new publications are available from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

(1) *Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education (ECE): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers.* This [guidebook](#) clarifies and defines access to early care and education, describes indicators of access, discusses measurement of these indicators, and identifies data sources for early care and education access.

(2) *Issues in Accessing and Using Administrative Data.* This [report](#) outlines issues to consider when using administrative data for social policy research.

(3) *Using Aggregate Administrative Data in Social Policy Research*. This [report](#) provides an overview of how aggregate administrative data can be used in social policy research.

(4) *Unpacking the “Black Box” of Programs and Policies: A Conceptual Overview of Mediation Analysis*. This [report](#) provides an overview of mediation analysis, a tool that can be used to identify which elements of an intervention contribute to improved outcomes and which do not.

(5) *Culture of Continuous Learning Project: A Breakthrough Series Collaborative for Improving Child Care and Head Start Quality*. This is a [project overview](#) of ACF’s Culture of Continuous Learning project testing the Breakthrough Series Collaborative methodology, as an approach to changing early care and education program culture.

(6) *Working Toward a Definition of Infant/Toddler Curricula: Intentionally Furthering the Development of Individual Children within Responsive Relationships*. This [brief](#) discusses the definition of the word curriculum in the context of working with toddlers and infants.

(7) *Self-Regulation and Goal Attainment: A New Perspective for Employment Programs*. This [report](#) explores the role of self-regulation in the ability of people to obtain and maintain employment.

(8) *Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Consortium Year in Review – 2016*. This [report](#) provides an overview of the work of the Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Consortium throughout 2016.

### **New Reports, Briefs, and Research Summaries from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)**

New publications are available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

(1) *Impact of Couples-Based Family Strengthening Services for Incarcerated and Reentering Fathers and Their Partners*. This [brief](#) summarizes findings on the impact of four couples-based family strengthening services from prison-based programs and discusses their implications.

(2) *Predictors of Reentry Success*. This [brief](#) looks at reentry success through measures of recidivism and other outcomes for reentering men in five states.

## *Requests*

### **National Science Foundation Seeks Nominations for Advisory Committees**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is currently accepting recommendations for membership to its directorate and office advisory committees and technical boards. All advisory committees and technical boards are accepting recommendations, but two that might be of particular interest are The Advisory Committee for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Science (SBE), which advises the SBE Directorate on matters pertaining to support for research, education, and human resources in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences, and the Advisory Committee for Education and Human Resources (EHR), which provides guidance and recommendations to NSF's science and engineering programs and largely focuses on STEM education. Recommendations for advisory committee positions must include the name of the submitting individual, the organization or the affiliation providing the member nomination, the name of the recommended individual, the recommended individual's CV, expression of interest, and contact information. Self-recommendations are accepted. Please see the [Federal Register notice](#) for more information on how to submit names.

### **Federal Funding Opportunities**

This month's FFO highlights two doctoral dissertation funding opportunities from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families. The purpose of these funding opportunities is to support doctoral dissertation research addressing issues related to Head Start and child care, respectively. Both funding announcements aim to support work that will inform policy decisions and solutions, particularly for underserved/understudied populations, utilizing the most rigorous research methodology, and promoting mentor-student relationships that support students' independent lines of research. Completed applications are due by June 12, 2017. Click [here](#) to read about these and other federal funding opportunities.