



# AEA Committee on Government Relations'

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

AUGUST 14, 2012

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

*The Committee on Government Relations is a subcommittee of the American Economic Association charged with representing the interests of the economics profession in Washington DC and other locations around the country without taking a position on questions of economic policy or on any partisan matter.*

### Funding Threatened by Recent Developments

Recent developments threaten funding for key economic data and grants crucial to the continued quality and vitality of economic research. The April [CGR newsletter](#) highlighted plans by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for FY2013 that put the National Longitudinal Survey at risk and the National Science Foundation's plans to transfer money from standing programs like the Economics Program to new interdisciplinary initiatives. And new threats to economic research continue to emerge:

#### No Funds for Economics at NIH

The House Subcommittee responsible for National Institutes of Health appropriations passed a FY2013 NIH spending bill with the provision "that none of the funds from all Institute, Center, and Office of the Director accounts within the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, shall be used for any economic research programs, projects or activities."

#### Elimination of the ACS

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an annual survey by the Census that provides the only objective, consistent, and comprehensive data about U.S. social, economic, and demographic characteristics down to the neighborhood level. The House voted to make the response to the ACS voluntary which would substantially increase the cost of the ACS and degrade the quality of its data. The House then voted to completely eliminate the ACS. An [AEA press release](#) describes the devastating consequences for economic research of eliminating the ACS.

#### Termination of the 2012 Economics Census

The Economic Census is a comprehensive survey of U.S. business activity on a local to national level conducted once every five years. It provides detailed industry and geographic source data for the national income accounts. It is the benchmark for key economic indicators. FY2013 is the peak data collection year for the 2012 Economic Census. The House voted to reduce Economic Census funding by \$44 million or 29%. According to Robert Groves, Director of the Census Bureau, "cuts of this magnitude will force the Census Bureau to terminate the 2012 Economic Census." A [joint statement](#) by the CGR and the AEA Committee on Economic Statistics describes the critical importance of the Economic Census for government and business decisions.

#### Improved Prospects for FY2013?

But there is good news too. BLS dropped its plans to cut the FY 2012 budget of NLS and is reassessing its FY2013 plans for NLS. Elimination of the ACS and severe cuts in the Economic Census budget face strong bipartisan opposition in the Senate.

The unprecedented and unwarranted attempt to ban economics from NIH is encountering widespread and growing opposition. See [press release](#) and [letter](#) from almost 100 national organizations. The full House Appropriation Committee postponed voting on this bill and now the House and Senate leaders have agreed to a continuing resolution that postpones decisions on the FY2013 budget until the new Congress convenes next year.

## New Funding Opportunities

The National Institute on Aging Division of Behavioral and Social Research (BSR) (<http://www.nia.nih.gov/research/dbsr>) is soliciting research applications from the economics community on:

Implications of the Economic Downturn for Health, Wealth, and Work at Older Ages (R01)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-12-009.html>

Macroeconomic Aspects of Population Aging (R01)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-12-186.html>

Economics of Retirement (R01)

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-11-138.html>

For more information please contact

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## The National Science Foundation SBE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program (SPRF)

([http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2012/nsf12591/nsf12591.htm?WT.mc\\_id=USNSF\\_25&WT.mc\\_ev=click](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2012/nsf12591/nsf12591.htm?WT.mc_id=USNSF_25&WT.mc_ev=click))

In the past, the only way to get an NSF-funded postdoc for an economist was to convince an NSF program to fund one as part of an award, unless the candidate qualified for the minority postdoc program. Postdoctoral fellowships are now available for economists engaged in interdisciplinary research from the dedicated SBE postdoc program

The research has to be (a) within the SBE sciences (b) interdisciplinary (c) require that the candidate acquire new skills beyond what he/she learned by completing his Ph.D. For this competition interdisciplinarity means:

- Interdisciplinarity of Fellow-Mentor team. Eg, Economist/Psychologist is better than Economist/Economist
- Interdisciplinarity of the research approach: are you integrating different methods from different fields?
- Interdisciplinarity of the expected intellectual significance of the results: is this going to have an impact on more than one field.

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