

**Information Items regarding and for AEA Committees on  
Economic Statistics (AEASStat) and Government Relations (AEACGR)**

**February 19, 2021**

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- **On January 17, 2021, the AEA Committees on Economic Statistics (AEASStat) and Government Relations (CGR) sent a copy of the report, *Necessary Improvement in the U.S. Statistical Infrastructure: A Report to the Biden/Harris Administration* (<https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=13507>) along with a letter to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and key officials in her office. The letter indicates 4 areas in which actions by the Treasury Department could further improvement in the U.S. statistical system and its benefits to economic researchers, businesses, communities and policy makers. As other Biden nominees are confirmed by the Senate, similar letters will go to the Commerce, Labor and Agriculture Secretaries, OMB Director, and CEA Director.**
- **On February 9, 2021, AEASStat and CGR jointly developed and submitted one of 18 comments received on a Federal Register Notice Request for Comments for the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building.** The Advisory Committee had asked for comments on any or all of 10 questions it had posed about its mandate. The request and associated questions can be viewed at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-12-15/pdf/2020-27489.pdf>. The AEA Committees' response is posted at: <https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=13947>.
- **The Committee on Economic Statistics (AEASStat) will sponsor three sessions on economic measurement at the January 2022 ASSA Meetings.** The Committee solicits both individual papers and proposals for sessions of three or four papers, with preference given to full session proposals. The Committee is interested in receiving submissions in any area of economic data and statistics. One of the three sessions organized by the Committee will be published in the *AEA Papers and Proceedings*. For more information or a list of papers selected for past AEASStat sponsored sessions, see links below. **Abstracts are due by April 1, 2021** to John Haltiwanger, Chair, Committee on Economic Statistics, at [aeastat@aeapubs.org](mailto:aeastat@aeapubs.org).
- **The White House has issued a Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government through Scientific Integrity and Evidence Based Policymaking. On January 27, 2021, President Joe Biden created a task force that will conduct a 120-day review of scientific integrity policies across the U.S. government, including documenting instances in which “improper political interference” interfered with research or led to the suppression or distortion of data. The review is part of a lengthy memorandum from Biden on his plans for “restoring trust” in government by emphasizing scientific integrity and the use of evidence in policymaking. The memo also calls on federal research agencies to name chief scientific officers, and for all agencies to spend 90 days reviewing the role of dozens of panels that provide scientific advice to government.** <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/memorandum-on-restoring-trust-in-government-through-scientific-integrity-and-evidence-based-policymaking/>

- **Climate change is emerging as a priority among top U.S. economic agencies and institutions, consistent with Presidential priorities**
  - The Treasury has launched a “Climate 21” Project (<https://climate21.org/treasury/>). "Climate change is an existential threat," Yellen said. "Both the impact of climate change itself and policies to address it could have major impacts, creating stranded assets, generating large changes in asset prices, credit risks and so forth that could affect the financial system. These are very real risks." Yellen also said she would be appointing a Senior Lead for Treasury Department climate change efforts.
  - As reported by the *New York Times*, the Federal Reserve Board is putting new emphasis on climate change financial impacts. A top Federal Reserve official issued a stark warning on Thursday morning: Banks and other lenders need to prepare themselves for the realities of a world racked by climate change, and regulators must play a key role in ensuring that they do. “Climate change is already imposing substantial economic costs and is projected to have a profound effect on the economy at home and abroad,” Lael Brainard, one of the central bank’s six Washington-based governors, [said](#) at an Institute of International Finance event. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/18/business/economy/federal-reserve-climate-change-banks.html>
  
- **The American Statistical Association is publishing bi-weekly public updates on developments in the measurement of 2020 Census Quality Indicators.** Paul Beimer, Robert Fay, and Richard Salvo have been given special access to 2020 Census records to independently evaluate data quality. Their ongoing findings will be posted biweekly at <https://www.amstat.org/ASA/Science-Policy-and-Advocacy/2020%20Census-Quality-Indicators-February-2021-Public-Update.aspx>
  
- **The 12 Federal Reserve Banks are holding an online seminar series on Racism and the Economy** (<https://www.minneapolisfed.org/policy/racism-and-the-economy>). The first two subject matter seminars, *Racism and Employment* and *Racism and Education*, were excellent. The next in the series concerns *Racism and Housing*. All seminars are available for viewing from the link provided above.
  
- **Addressing Structural Racism to Improve Health.** In a Feb. 10, 2021 blog on the subject, Bill Riley, Director of NIH’s Office of Behavioral, Social and Economic Sciences, explains how the social and behavioral sciences applicable to addressing racism have and will continue to contribute to expanding NIH efforts in this arena. <https://obsr.od.nih.gov/addressing-structural-racism-to-improve-health/>