

19. STRENGTHENING FEDERAL STATISTICS

Federal statistical programs produce key information to illuminate public and private decisions on a range of topics, including the economy, the population, agriculture, crime, education, energy, the environment, health, science, and transportation. The share of budget resources spent on supporting Federal statistics is relatively modest—about 0.04 percent of GDP in non-decennial census years and roughly double that in decennial census years—but that funding is leveraged to inform crucial decisions in a wide variety of spheres. The ability of governments, businesses, and the general public to make appropriate decisions about budgets, employment, investments, taxes, and a host of other important matters depends critically on the ready availability of relevant, accurate, and timely Federal statistics.

The Federal statistical community remains alert for opportunities to improve these measures of our Nation's performance, which is critical to fostering long-term global competitiveness. For example, during 2011, Federal statistical agencies: (i) developed new tools to increase the transparency of information on college costs for parents, students, and policy makers (National Center for Education Statistics); (ii) expanded upon FBI data to provide the first publicly available national arrest estimates broken down by sex, age group, and race (Bureau of Justice Statistics); (iii) initiated collection of data on the number of "green jobs" by industry and State (Bureau of Labor Statistics); (iv) continued the timely release of major 2010 Census products and expanded the American Community Survey sample size to increase the accuracy of this fundamental data source (Census Bureau); (v) published the first estimates of data on veterans and military service members pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies (National Center for Education Statistics); (vi) published an Internet-based mapping tool that pinpoints the location of "food deserts" (i.e., low-income communities that lack ready access to healthy food) to identify new opportunities for business and employment and expand the availability of nutritious food (Economic Research Service); (vii) completed a new Cropland Data Layer for the 2010 crop year with higher resolution that improves the accuracy of cropland classification and the precision of the acreage estimates generated (National Agricultural Statistics Service); (viii) developed and released some of the first official estimates of gross domestic product for American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (Bureau of Economic Analysis); (ix) released a new report on domestic ethanol fuel production capacity (Energy Information Administration); (x) produced an analytic report mapping the results from individual State student assessments to results from the National Assessment for Educational Progress to provide a framework for com-

parisons across State assessments (National Center for Education Statistics); (xi) initiated work on a pilot survey to gather information about innovation among firms with fewer than five employees (National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics/NSF and Statistics of Income Division, IRS); (xii) developed a capacity to project selected income items for Social Security Disabled Worker beneficiaries (Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics, SSA); and (xiii) developed new data items related to economic stimulus programs, and other recently enacted legislation, that are administered through the tax system (Statistics of Income Division, IRS).

For Federal statistical programs to be useful to their wide range of users, the underlying data systems must be credible. To foster this credibility, Federal statistical programs seek to adhere to high-quality standards and to maintain integrity and efficiency in the production of data. As the collectors and providers of these basic statistics, the responsible agencies act as data stewards—balancing public information demands and decision-makers' needs for information with legal and ethical obligations to minimize reporting burden, respect respondents' privacy, and protect the confidentiality of the data provided to the Government. The Administration remains committed to maximizing the cost-effective use of resources for the collection of Federal statistics within a constrained fiscal environment. Accordingly, the President's plan to consolidate agencies focused on trade and competitiveness would merge statistical programs currently in the Department of Commerce, the Department of Labor, and the National Science Foundation into the new department; this proposal would be submitted to the Congress following enactment of consolidation authority, as proposed by the "Reforming and Consolidating Government Act of 2012." This chapter presents highlights of principal statistical agencies' 2013 budget proposals.

Highlights of 2013 Program Budget Proposals

The programs that provide essential statistical information for use by governments, businesses, researchers, and the public are carried out by agencies spread across every department and several independent agencies. Excluding cyclical funding for the decennial census, approximately 40 percent of the total budget for these programs provides resources for 13 agencies or units that have statistical activities as their principal mission (see Table 19–1). The remaining funding supports work in more than 80 agencies or units that carry out statistical activities in conjunction with other missions such as providing services, conducting research, or implementing regulations. More comprehensive budget and program information about the Federal statistical system, including its core programs,

will be available in OMB's annual report, *Statistical Programs of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2013*, when it is published later this year. The following highlights elaborate on the Administration's proposals for the programs of the principal Federal statistical agencies, giving particular attention to new initiatives and to other program changes, including terminations or reductions.

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA): Funding is requested to continue BEA's core programs and to: (1) continue to implement a critical modernization of the Bureau's information technology system that would lead directly to an increase in the operational efficiency and security of BEA's statistical production and analysis; (2) produce gross domestic product by industry on a quarterly basis to provide real-time information on the health and stability of sectors within the U.S. economy; and (3) provide measures of median, as well as mean, income and other measures of the distribution of income across households to improve understanding of how the business cycle affects U.S. households. In order to fund these priorities, BEA will seek operational efficiencies as well as modifications to reporting thresholds and published detail on surveys of operations of multinational corporations.

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS): Funding is requested to: (1) improve BJS' criminal victimization statistics derived from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and continue to address recommendations of the 2008 National Research Council report, *Surveying Victims: Options for Conducting the National Crime Victimization Survey* with special emphasis on sub-national estimates and the crimes of rape and sexual assault; (2) explore the use of administrative records data in police and correctional agencies for providing statistical data in these areas including recidivism information, arrests, and offenses known to the police; (3) expand the surveys of inmates of prisons and jails to inform the process of re-entry; (4) maintain BJS' core statistical programs that provide law enforcement data from more than 3,000 local agencies on the organization and administration of police and sheriffs' departments; nationally representative prosecution data on resources, policies, and practices of local prosecutors; court and sentencing statistics, including Federal and State case processing data; data on correctional populations and facilities from Federal, State, and local governments; and information about prisoner re-entry and recidivism; and (5) continue to support the enhancement of criminal justice statistics available through State analysis centers.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): Funding is requested to provide support for ongoing BLS programs, and to: (1) modify the Consumer Expenditure survey to support the Census Bureau in its development of a supplemental statistical poverty measure; and (2) add an annual supplement to the Current Population Survey to capture data on contingent work and alternative work arrangements in even years, and on other topics in odd years. The funding request also includes program reductions that: (1) continue the elongation of National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth started in 2012; and (2) eliminate the International Labor Comparisons program.

Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS): Funding is requested to maintain BTS' core statistical programs, and to: (1) continue implementation of the 2012 Commodity Flow Survey; (2) develop and manage the International Freight Data System to support the Automated Commercial Environment/International Trade Data System; (3) enhance production of a core set of transportation performance indicators including the Transportation Services Index; (4) establish a Safety Data portal to serve U.S. DOT and other transportation safety communities; (5) initiate a long distance travel data program for use in making transportation investments; (6) deploy the performance metrics program to safeguard the quality of DOT data; and (7) reintroduce the international *Journal of Transportation and Statistics*. The budget proposes to move BTS along with the rest of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration to the Office of the Secretary of Transportation.

Census Bureau: Funding is requested to continue Census Bureau core programs, and to: (1) conduct the 2012 Economic Census and the 2012 Census of Governments, including distribution of, and data capture from, millions of census forms; (2) continue research and testing for the 2020 Census to support fundamental changes to program, business, operational, and technical processes; (3) complete the 2010 Count Question Resolution program and publish the Public Use Microdata Sample as well as the 2010 Census data products for Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and (4) expand research and production capacities in order to complement the official poverty measures with annual supplementary measures of poverty from the Current Population Survey.

Economic Research Service (ERS): Funding is requested to continue ERS' highest priority core programs, including research: (1) exploring how investments in rural people, business, and communities affect the capacity of rural economies to prosper in the new and changing global marketplace; (2) on economic issues related to developing natural resource policies and programs that respond to the need to protect and maintain the environment and the challenges of climate change while improving agricultural competitiveness and economic growth; (3) on production agriculture, domestic and international markets, Federal farm policies, and trade to develop and disseminate analysis of the U.S. food and agriculture sector's performance in the context of increasingly globalized markets; and (4) to evaluate the Nation's nutrition assistance programs, to study the relationship among the many factors that influence food choices and health outcomes including obesity, and to focus on enhancing methodologies for valuing societal benefits associated with reducing food safety risks.

Energy Information Administration (EIA): Funding is requested to maintain core energy statistics, analyses, and forecasting programs, and to: (1) restore important electricity trade data collection and add collection of monthly oil production data; (2) revitalize the energy consumption data program to enhance understanding of energy use and provide benchmarking and

performance measurement of energy efficiency programs; (3) modernize the systems and tools used to produce EIA's weekly petroleum and natural gas statistical reports, on which industry and market participants heavily rely; (4) enhance energy modeling and analytic capabilities to address a range of important topics, including international markets, short-term forecasts, end-use efficiency, refinery activities, the interrelationship of energy and financial markets, and the analysis of refined product markets; (5) leverage technology to more efficiently manage data collection and processing across the agency; and (6) enhance customer access and usability of EIA's information by developing more integrated and interactive dissemination platforms.

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS): Funding is requested to continue NASS' core programs, and to: (1) fully fund the Census of Agriculture during the peak data collection and processing year 2013; and (2) improve the quality of county estimates. Increases to support these initiatives will be partially offset by suspending the following programs for 2012 and 2013 -- Distiller Co-Products for Feed Survey, Nursery Report, and Post-Harvest Chemical Use Survey. In addition, NASS will reduce the frequency of chemical use reports and model Milk Production data in eight out of twelve months during the year.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): Funding is requested to continue NCES' core programs, and to: (1) conduct the National Assessment of Educational Progress, including administration of the 2013 national and State reading and mathematics assessments at grades 4, 8, and 12; (2) pilot a State-representative sample of the Program of International Student Assessment of 15 year-olds in reading, mathematics, and science for a limited number of participating States; (3) conduct a college choice follow-up data collection for the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 cohort as it enters postsecondary education; (4) conduct field testing and development work for the Longitudinal Study of Early Adolescence; (5) continue developmental work on measuring adults' acquisition of education and training oriented toward work, including certificates and certifications, and begin collecting related data in partnership with other Federal statistical agencies; and (6) continue the development of State longitudinal data systems by assisting States in expanding their systems to include unit record data on students from prekindergarten through K-12 as well as postsecondary levels and by furthering the voluntary Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability of State systems.

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS): Funding is requested to continue data collection, analysis, and dissemination activities for key national health data systems, including the National Vital Statistics System, National Health Interview Survey, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), and National Health Care Surveys, and to continue to: (1) provide timely, accurate estimates of high priority health measures; (2) enhance the quality and usability of health data through improved access tools and tutorials; (3) use

birth and death data collected by the States for tracking priority health initiatives in prevention, cancer control, out-of-wedlock births, and teenage pregnancy; (4) monitor health care utilization through the family of provider surveys; (5) provide NHANES data on diet and nutrition, blood pressure, chronic diseases, and other health indicators; and (5) provide information annually and quarterly on the health status of the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population through confidential household interviews conducted by the National Health Interview Survey. Requested funding would also support the expansion of Vital Statistics to fully implement electronic birth records in the eight remaining jurisdictions.

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES), NSF: Funding is requested to maintain and enhance ongoing programs, and to explore and increase support for emergent areas of responsibility ascribed to NCSES in Section 505 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010, including using the data it collects to support research on methodologies in areas related to NCSES' work, and supporting the education and training of researchers in the use of large-scale, nationally-representative data sets. As a cost-saving measure, NCSES will accelerate efforts to rely more heavily on data from the National Survey of College Graduates built from the American Community Survey to meet its needs for data on the overall science and engineering workforce.

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (ORES), SSA: Funding is requested to continue ORES' core programs, and to continue to: (1) modernize ORES' processes for developing and disseminating data from the Social Security Administration's major administrative data files for statistical purposes; (2) support outside surveys and linkage of SSA administrative data to surveys; (3) create new public use files of administrative data, such as earnings histories for a sample of Social Security Numbers, and information on samples of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries; (4) strengthen microsimulation models that estimate the distributional effects of proposed changes in Social Security programs; (5) develop a topical module for the redesign of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to address Social Security's data needs for microsimulation models, program evaluation, and analysis; (6) provide statistical and analytical support for initiatives to improve Social Security and other government agency programs; (7) fund retirement research through three Retirement Research Centers; and (8) expand disability research and commission expert studies on critical program design issues through the Disability Research Consortium.

Statistics of Income Division (SOI), IRS: Funding is requested to continue SOI's core programs, providing high quality statistical data derived from tax and information returns. Areas of special emphasis in 2013 will include: (1) further modernizing tax data collection systems by efficiently assimilating data captured from the electronic filing of tax and information returns to the SOI program; (2) integrating population and information return data with SOI-edited data to provide rich longitu-

dinal and/or cross-sector data that can be used to better understand the complex interaction between taxes and economic behavior; (3) developing improved statistical techniques for identifying and correcting outliers and data anomalies in IRS administrative population files;

(4) contributing data and analytical support to IRS' ongoing efforts to improve customer service, compliance, and employee satisfaction; and (5) partnering with tax policy experts within and outside of government to produce top quality research on important tax administration issues.

Table 19–1. 2011–2013 BUDGET AUTHORITY FOR PRINCIPAL STATISTICAL AGENCIES¹

(In millions of dollars)

	2011 Actual	Estimate	
		2012	2013
Bureau of Economic Analysis	93	92	97
Bureau of Justice Statistics ²	68	53	68
Bureau of Labor Statistics	610	609	618
Bureau of Transportation Statistics	24	25	38
Census Bureau ³	1180	910	1000
Salaries and Expenses ³	289	276	289
Periodic Censuses and Programs	891	634	711
Economic Research Service	82	78	77
Energy Information Administration	95	105	116
National Agricultural Statistics Service ⁴	156	159	179
National Center for Education Statistics ⁵	265	266	266
Statistics ⁵	126	127	133
Assessment	130	130	125
National Assessment Governing Board	9	9	8
National Center for Health Statistics ⁶	139	139	162
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, NSF ⁷	42	44	42
Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics, SSA	29	29	29
Statistics of Income Division, IRS	39	40	40

¹ Reflects any rescissions.

² Includes funds for management and administrative costs of \$8.3, \$8.3, and \$8.3 million in 2011, 2012, 2013, respectively, that were previously displayed separately.

³ Salaries and Expenses funds include discretionary and mandatory funds.

⁴ Includes funds for the periodic Census of Agriculture of \$33.1, \$41.6, and \$62.5 million in 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively. The annual increases of \$8.5 million and \$20.9 million in Census funding are for the 2012 peak preparation year and 2013 final data collection and processing, respectively.

⁵ Includes funds for salaries and expenses of \$18, \$18, and \$18 million in 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively, that are reflected in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) budget. In addition, NCES manages the IES grant program for the State Longitudinal Data System which is funded at \$42 million, \$38 million, and \$53 million in 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively.

⁶ All funds from the Public Health Service Evaluation Fund. The estimates do not include resources from the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

⁷ Includes funds for salaries and expenses of \$6.9, \$7.6, and \$7.6 million in 2011, 2012, and 2013, respectively, that were previously displayed separately.