

## **Behavioral and Social Science Research in the Administration's FY 2006 Budget**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Defense (DOD), and the Department of Education (ED) provide the major funding for social/behavioral research. Further support comes from many other agencies including the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor, in addition to the Federal Aviation Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The federal government is the primary sponsor of both basic and applied research in the social and behavioral sciences. Highlights of the FY 2006 budget include:

- The limits on discretionary spending will hinder growth in research budgets at a time when social/behavioral research results are needed for the nation's problems.
- New leadership at NSF's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate and NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research offer the chance to explore new opportunities at these agencies.
- Human and Social Dynamics (HSD) remains an NSF-wide priority and its funding significantly expanded in FY 2005. The continued expansion of HSD is limited in FY 2006 because of the overall budget picture.
- Modest proposed increases to the NIH budget may make it more difficult to implement recommendations of a new report that called for

additional support for behavioral and social science research that is not connected to any particular disease or condition.

- The Institute of Education Sciences continues its efforts to revamp the education research system, emphasizing evaluations for evidence-based policy and the What Works Clearinghouse.

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES (SBE) DIRECTORATE** ([www.nsf.gov/sbe](http://www.nsf.gov/sbe))

In February 2005, NSF announced that David Lightfoot, a linguist by training and the Dean of the Graduate School at Georgetown University, would assume the SBE Assistant Director post in June. He replaces Norman Bradburn, who left NSF in March 2004. In the interim, Wanda Ward has served as acting head of the Directorate. During 2004, NSF transferred the Office of International Science and Engineering out of the SBE Directorate into the Office of the Director.

In the FY 2005 appropriations bill, for the first time in many years Congress did not designate funding for the directorates and instead gave NSF Director Arden Bement the discretion to allocate the amounts (pending congressional approval). The SBE directorate received a significant increase from \$184.3 million in FY 2004 to \$196.9 million in FY 2005, an increase of 6.8 percent (see Table II-7). In FY 2006, reflecting NSF's small overall increase, SBE would get \$198.8 million.

Most of the increase would go to support the SBE-managed Human and Social Dynamics (HSD) NSF priority area. HSD focuses on supporting projects that focus on how humans and societies understand and cope with change. It requires multidisciplinary research teams and interdisciplinary approaches across the sciences. In 2004, HSD received over 800 proposals to support over 700 different projects. More than 40 percent of the scientists in the proposals came from non-SBE disciplines. Because of severe funding limitations, only 37 awards were made. In FY 2005, funding for HSD would climb to \$38.3 million, with \$31 million coming from SBE. The proposed FY 2006 budget asks for \$39.5 million for the priority, with \$31.4 million coming from SBE's budget.

The Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences (BCS) division's funding moved from \$71.5 million in FY 2004 to \$79 million in FY 2005 and the proposal for FY 2006 is \$79.8 million. BCS funds research in geography

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and regional science, human cognition, linguistics, cognition, perception, and social interaction, children's development, and anthropology and archaeology. There will be a competition for a new Children's Research Center in FY 2006 as well as a joint undertaking with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Smithsonian Institution to document endangered languages. BCS will also continue its emphasis on linking behavior and its biological bases.

The Social and Economic Sciences (SES) division's funding grew from \$86.4 million in FY 2004 to \$92 million, and would go to \$92.8 million in FY 2006. SES supports studies in economics, decision making, law and social science, political science, sociology, measurement methods and methodology, and the societal and ethical dimensions of science and technology. The division supports the major longitudinal surveys: the General Social Survey, Panel Study of Income Dynamics, and the American National Election Studies. NSF is re-competing the latter two in 2005. SBE also supports interdisciplinary experimental laboratories in political science, economics, and decision science. There are also five interdisciplinary centers studying decision making under uncertainty.

The Science Resources Statistics (SRS) division is part of the federal statistical system. After significant boosts to redesign its samples after the 2000 Census, SRS' funding decreased from FY 2004's \$26.3 million to \$25.9 million in FY 2005. The proposed SRS budget for FY 2006 is \$26.2 million. (For more on NSF SRS, see Chapter 21 on Statistics.)

Funding for the Science of Learning Centers (SLC) would increase from \$19.8 million in FY 2005 to \$23 million in FY 2006. The new funding should provide start-up support for a second cohort of up to four SLCs.

In the FY 2006 budget, the Research, Evaluation, and Communication (REC) component of the EHR directorate would be cut by almost one-half (43.2 percent), resulting in no new REC awards in FY 2006. (For information on the overall NSF budget, see Chapter 7.)

#### **NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)** (<http://obssr.od.nih.gov/>)

Behavioral and social science research is well integrated in most NIH institutes and centers, though not all, and it features prominently in several NIH multi-institute research programs including Roadmap

initiatives on interdisciplinary training and clinical research, minority health disparities, and obesity, among others.

The Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) in the Office of the Director coordinates research initiatives that are relevant to multiple NIH institutes and centers. In December, NIH Director Elias Zerhouni appointed David Abrams, a health psychologist, as the new Director of OBSSR. Abrams replaces Raynard Kington, who now serves as NIH's Deputy Director. Virginia Cain served as acting director of the Office in the interim.

Following the halcyon days of the NIH doubling campaign (1998-2003), growth has slowed considerably, demonstrated by the small percentage increase appropriated in FY 2005 and the even smaller proposed increase for FY 2006. This has spread to the behavioral and social science portfolio at NIH. According to estimates from the NIH Office of Budget (see Table 1 below), growth of behavioral and social science research (BSSR) from FY 2004 to FY 2005 is approximately \$59.9 million. From FY 2005 to FY 2006, the estimated increase would be only \$6.9 million.

**Table 1.** Behavioral Research and Social Science Research (in millions)  
Ten Largest NIH Funders

Participating ICs	FY 04 Actual.	FY 05 Est.	FY 06 Est.
NIDA (Drug Abuse)	464.8	434.5	473.7
NIMH (Mental Health)	444.9	446.8	456.8
NICHD (Child Health)	392.1	400.7	402.7
NCI (Cancer)	306.2	312.0	312.0
NIA (Aging)	266.1	273.3	274.6
NIAAA (Alcohol Abuse)	197.0	201.0	202.0
NHLBI (Heart, Lung, and Blood)	131.5	134.1	134.8
NINDS (Neurological Disorders)	124.0	126.6	127.0
NINR (Nursing)	107.9	110.6	111.2
NIDDK (Diabetes, Digestive, Kidney)	105.2	107.8	107.8
NIH Total	2,931.6	2,991.5	2,998.4

Source: NIH Office of Budget.

OBSSR's FY 2006 budget would also remain practically flat for the second year in a row, up only \$0.9 million from FY 2005 to FY 2006. In addition, the National Institute on Drug Abuse is estimated to take the

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lead over the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in funding behavioral/social research, a reflection of NIMH's increasing emphasis on mental illness rather than mental health.

In 2004, the NIH Director's Advisory Council appointed a panel to investigate basic behavioral and social research at NIH. The panel, chaired by Linda Waite of the University of Chicago, issued a report that recommended additional support for research that is not directly related to a disease or condition.<sup>1</sup> The report indicated that \$936.1 million of basic BSSR was funded in 2003, which is 34.9 percent of the overall behavioral and social science research funded in that year. The panel noted that 'undifferentiated' basic behavioral and social science research needs a home, in the same way that the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) is a home for much basic biomedical research at NIH.

The FY 2006 budget includes proposed funding to continue preparation for the National Children's Study, longitudinal research that will follow 100,000 children from the mother's pre-natal activities until the youngsters reach 21. The study will examine the actions and outcomes of environmental and genetic factors that influence the children's health and development.

The National Institute of Aging would maintain its funding for the Health and Retirement Study, allowing it to add a new cohort and continue to provide information essential to the major policy debates around Social Security, pensions, and the cognitive and financial well-being of the elderly. (For information on the overall NIH budget, see Chapter 8.)

### **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES** ([www.ed.gov/offices/IES](http://www.ed.gov/offices/IES))

Federally funded education research has become a crucial component of the nation's overall education research portfolio. The continued federal focus on improving education results, combined with identification and implementation of research-based programs, is fundamental to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. This, and similar legislation mandating research-based education programs, makes building the research

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<sup>1</sup> The report is available at:  
[http://obssr.od.nih.gov/Activities/Basic%20Beh%20Report\\_complete.pdf](http://obssr.od.nih.gov/Activities/Basic%20Beh%20Report_complete.pdf)

infrastructure imperative if the department is to fulfill its need for evidence-based policy and to wisely use increasingly scarce education resources.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is the federal government's principal agency conducting research on education. Its four Centers, the National Center for Education Research (NCER), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE/RA), and the recently transferred National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) comprise the central structure for the agency. The goal is to provide a comprehensive research and dissemination network driving education reform. The FY 2006 budget proposes \$479.1 million for IES.

NCER would be level-funded at \$164.2 million. NCER currently supports six National Research Centers (NRCs) that focus on evaluation, standards and testing; education policy; adult learning and literacy; improving low-achieving schools; rural education; and education reform. There is one additional NRC not funded through IES which studies gifted and talented education.

IES will hold competitions in 2005 to augment or replace the six existing NRCs with topics addressing assessment, standards and accountability; state and local policy; early childhood development and education; English language learners; and post secondary education. These new NRCs would be project oriented as opposed to the existing NRCs, which conduct long term, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary research. The new centers would receive approximately half the current NRCs' funding.

NCES, the primary data source for education programs nation-wide, would receive the same \$90.9 million in FY 2006 as it has in FY 2005. NCES supports large longitudinal data bases on vital education issues as well as information archives on specific programs and populations. It provides the data that allow for comparative international measures of U.S. students' achievement rates. (For more on NCES, see Chapter 21.)

In the NCEE/RA the proposed budget calls for the elimination of the Regional Educational Laboratories, which receive \$66.1 million in FY 2005. If the Administration is successful (it has not been in previous attempts to abolish this program) this would eliminate a critical link in

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the research-to-practice continuum which provides the bridge between research and the classroom, carries out research, initiates technology networks and publications, and provides schools consultation to identify and implement effective practices. Regional governing boards, representing the communities they serve, guide the Laboratories ensuring their activities are targeted to the educational needs of each region.

Also under NCEE/RA are information systems: the What Works Clearinghouse, focusing on research supporting the NCLB legislation; the National Library of Education (NLE); and the Education Resources Information Center Clearinghouses (ERIC). The Department is restructuring the NLE and ERIC in order to provide better information for policy makers, educators, parents and students.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) would receive an increase of \$22.5 million to \$116.6 million to expand their activities supporting the Administration's High School initiative. This would include State-level assessments at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level in reading and mathematics by 2007. NAEP is the only longitudinal national assessment of student progress providing information on educational trends.

The recently completed Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorization transferred Special Education research to the newly created NCSEER. Its budget would face a reduction of \$10.5 million in FY 2006, from \$83.1 million to \$72.6 million, by eliminating special projects inserted into its appropriation by members of Congress. NCSEER is expected to announce new research competitions in June 2005, focusing on assessment; early intervention; behavior problems; language development; individualized education programs; and post-secondary and secondary transitions. The new Special Education Studies and Evaluations program would receive \$10 million to assess the implementation of IDEA.

The IES research portfolio also include: individual research grants on cutting edge issues such as reading comprehension; mathematics and science education; teacher quality; and cognition and learning in the classroom; the Small Business Innovation Research Program encourages technological innovation and private sector commercialization; pre- and post-doctoral awards to support promising future researchers; and a proposed new field-initiated evaluation program. (For more on the Department of Education, see Chapter 5.)

## **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)**

In the current national security climate, DOD needs to know more about demands on military personnel, including more rapid adaptation to changing conditions, more skill diversity in units, increased information-processing from multiple sources, and increased interaction with semi-autonomous systems. Within DOD's overall Research and Development (R&D) account, DOD's basic and applied science portfolio supports behavioral, cognitive, and social science research. The majority of these studies are funded through intramural and extramural programs in the Army Research Institute (ARI) and Army Research Laboratory (ARL); the Office of Naval Research (ONR); the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR), and the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL).

These military service laboratories conduct and sponsor basic ("6.1"), applied/exploratory development ("6.2"), and advanced development ("6.3") research in the human systems area. All of the services fund research in the broad categories of personnel, training and leadership development; warfighter sustainment and physical performance; and system interfaces and cognitive processing. In addition, there are additional, smaller human systems research programs funded through the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the Marine Corps, and the Special Operations Command.

The details regarding support for human-centered DOD basic research were not available at press time. It appears, however, that levels of funding for social/behavioral studies would be reduced across all three services in the President's FY 2006 budget. In the applied and development arena, specific human factors and manpower, personnel, and training programs face reductions in the Army, and the Navy's programs in human systems and warfighter sustainment would receive substantial cuts. Similarly, the FY 2006 request proposes reductions in support for the Air Force's human effectiveness and crew systems and personnel protection accounts. (For more on DOD, see Chapter 6.)