Social, Behavioral and Economic Research:

Key to Your Constituents’ Health and Safety

Social and behavioral science plays an essential role in keeping U.S. citizens health and safety. Without it, the most innovative medical and technological research cannot be effectively applied to save lives, prevent disease, mitigate disasters and protect our troops.

Following are just a few ways that researchers — supported by the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, among others — have made a difference in the lives of people across the country:

» Making Kidney Transplants Possible.
Surgeons are increasingly skilled at kidney transplants, but the procedure must start with a healthy kidney. Even if a patient has a willing donor, the odds of compatibility are slim. Economists are changing this. With powerful software, they discovered a way to match an incompatible donor-patient pair with a similarly incompatible pair so that each of the patients receives a compatible kidney. In fact, a co-recipient of the 2012 Noble Prize in Economic Sciences, Alvin Roth, earned the award for his research on the practical applications of matching theory.

» Reducing the Spread of Infectious Disease.
Understanding various flu and influenza strains is key to stopping the spread of those infectious diseases. However, we also need to understand the role that human contact and social networks play. Social

"Social and behavioral research is an indispensable part of the scientific enterprise. Modifying behavior and the social environment are key to improving population health and reducing premature death."

Dr. Jane Clark, Dean, School of Public Health, University of Maryland, College Park

Maryland
and the National Institutes of Health 2012

5 th National ranking in NIH funding

$ 1,597 million NIH funds awarded

With a budget of $30.6 billion in fiscal year 2012, the National Institutes of Health awards over 80% of its funding annually to support biomedical, behavioral and social research and research training at universities throughout the United States.
» Improving Natural Disaster Outcomes.
Our ability to predict and track major storms and disasters has become more sophisticated — as have our alert systems. However, presidents do not always comply with evacuation orders, sometimes with deadly consequences. Social researchers are helping to mitigate this by investigating what makes people comply (or not), the communication between residents and those issuing orders, and how they might respond the next time. One result is a more effective disaster warning model that incorporates more current detection and communication technology.

» Keeping American Troops Safe.
The Army Research Institute recently began incorporating emotion recognition and nonverbal communication techniques into lesson plans. Soldiers are using these new techniques to diffuse conflicts and facilitate

Without adequate funding for social, behavioral and economic sciences, these critical contributions to the health and safety of our country would be

Maryland
and the National Science Foundation, 2012

10th
National ranking in NSF funding

$251 million
NSF funds awarded

Maryland is home to two of the top 25 organizations receiving Social, Behavioral and Economic Science funding from the National Science Foundation:

University of Maryland, College Park
The Johns Hopkins University

With a budget of nearly $7 billion in FY 2013, the National Science Foundation provides more than half (57 percent) of all federal support for academic basic research in the social sciences. In some disciplines such as Linguistics and Political Science, NSF supports more than 90 percent of all federally funded research conducted by America’s colleges and universities.