

**Testimony on behalf of the
Population Association of America/ Association of Population Centers
Regarding the Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations for the Census Bureau
National Science Foundation and Bureau of Justice Statistics**

Submitted to the
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
The Honorable Matt Cartwright, Chair and
The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member
Submitted by: Mary Jo Hoeksema, Director, Government and Public Affairs
Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers

Thank you, Chairman Cartwright and Ranking Member Aderholt and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, for this opportunity to express support for the Census Bureau, National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). These agencies are important to the [Population Association of America \(PAA\)](#) and [Association of Population Centers](#) (APC), because they provide direct and indirect support to population scientists and the field of population, or demographic, research overall. In FY 2023, we urge the Subcommittee to recommend the following funding levels for these agencies: Census Bureau, \$2 billion; NSF, \$11 billion; NIJ, \$50 million; and, BJS, \$60 million.

The PAA and APC are two affiliated organizations that together represent over 3,000 social and behavioral scientists and the over 40 population research centers that receive federal funding and conduct research on the implications of population change. Its members, which include demographers, economists, sociologists, and statisticians, conduct scientific and applied research, analyze changing demographic and socio-economic trends, develop policy and planning recommendations, and train undergraduate and graduate students. Their research expertise covers a wide range of issues, including adolescent health and development, aging, health disparities, immigration and migration, marriage and divorce, education, social networks, housing, retirement, and labor. Population scientists compete for funding from the NSF and NIJ and rely on data produced by the nation's statistical agencies, including the Census Bureau and BJS, to conduct research and research training activities.

The Census Bureau

The Census Bureau is the premier source of data regarding U.S. demographic, socio-economic, and housing characteristics. While PAA/APC members have diverse research expertise, they share a common need for access to accurate, timely data about the nation's changing socio-economic and demographic characteristics that only the U.S. Census Bureau can provide through its conduct of the decennial census, American Community Survey (ACS), and a variety of other surveys and programs.

PAA and APC understand that the Census Bureau's funding level declines dramatically in the initial years of the decennial planning cycle, and the Administration's request reflects, appropriately, this anticipated decrease in funding. Nonetheless, PAA and APC urge the subcommittee to support increased funding for the Census Bureau in FY 2023 above the Administration's request as recommended by [The Census Project](#). In FY 2023, Congress has a

unique opportunity to initiate multi-year funding for the Bureau, providing the agency with resources that it needs to not only sustain and strengthen its mission, but also to recover from years of postponed enhancements and pursue numerous necessary operational improvements. The ambitious FY 2023 funding recommendation (\$2 billion) that census stakeholders are supporting would enable the Bureau to pursue initiatives not only in the President's budget, but also additional activities recommended by census stakeholders, including:

- **The American Community Survey**—While the President's budget requests an additional \$10 million to improve how the ACS measures the sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) population, census stakeholders and data users in the public, private, non-profit sectors believe the ACS needs an immediate infusion of substantial funding to pursue other long overdue enhancements to the survey. These enhancements include increasing the survey's sample size, improving its non-response follow up operations, addressing steadily declining response rates, revising content, and making other methodological and operational improvements. An independent report issued in 2022 by The Census Project urges an infusion of \$100 to \$300 million to protect the ACS from further data quality deficiencies and take up a long list of activities to ensure the survey is accurately capturing data about the nation's increasingly complex population and households. PAA and APC support the report's recommendations and urge the Committee to provide the Bureau with additional funding to pursue necessary innovations to the survey's content, operations, and data products.
- **2030 Census**—The President's Budget proposes \$252 million for the 2030 Census in FY 2023 (a \$249 million increase from only \$3 million in FY 2022). This is nearly twice the increase requested a decade ago for the 2020 Census in the comparable cyclical year (FY 2013) (\$64.8 million), as the Bureau intends to continue research and testing to design the next decennial headcount, including work to develop and maintain the completeness of the address list (so that less of the country must be updated in the field), the use of administrative records as a source of data for enumeration, and bringing efficiencies to field operations to reduce non-response follow up. Early decade investments in the decennial census will allow the Bureau to sustain critical capabilities and, as a result reduce the risk of additional funding needs in the peak years later in the decade.
- **Modernize and Sustain the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP):** Policymakers, particularly as the economy emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, need high quality, accurate data to assess the impact of government assistance programs on families and communities. The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is designed to achieve that goal, yet its funding has fluctuated routinely, especially during years in which the government has been funded via a series of continuing resolutions. Stabilizing and increasing support for SIPP, to no less than \$48 million in FY 2023 -- an increase of \$1.4 million from FY 2022 enacted (\$46.6 million) -- will help Congress make evidence-based policy decisions on the effectiveness of government assistance program. However, additional funding for SIPP would enable the Bureau to pursue necessary innovations designed to enhance the survey's sample, address decreasing response rates, and improve the survey's content. Restoring minor cuts to the SIPP

program does not provide the resources necessary to modernize the survey and its operations. A bolder investment in the survey is warranted.

- **Innovations to Existing Surveys and Programs**—The President’s FY 2023 budget proposes several initiatives that would improve existing surveys and programs, including: \$4.5 million to develop and test a self-response web-based instrument for the Current Population Survey (CPS), which is the primary source of information regarding national unemployment rate and provides other data regarding employment, unemployment, and people not in the labor force; an additional \$3.7 million to support the Community Resilience Estimates (CRE) program, which began during the pandemic to provide more granular population data; and, an additional \$66.6 million to support “critical updates to data collection methods for surveys that produce vital statistical data on the U.S. population and economy.”

In sum, PAA and APC join other census stakeholders in urging the Subcommittee to provide the Census Bureau with \$2 billion in FY 2023 to complete all 2020 Census operations and data delivery objectives; enhance the ACS, initiate planning for the 2030 Census; improve the SIPP; and, enrich the quality and granularity of all census data sets.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

For over 75 years the mission of NSF has been to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense. Understanding the implications of complex population dynamics is vital to the agency’s mission, and in particular the Directorate of Social, Behavioral and Economic (SBE) Sciences, which is the primary source of support for the population sciences within the NSF. The SBE Directorate funds critical large-scale longitudinal surveys, such as the *Panel Study of Income Dynamics*, which inform pressing policy decisions and provide the empirical evidence to help policy makers to formulate effective decisions. It also has participated in cross-cutting, interdisciplinary initiatives of interest to population scientists, such as the *Coastlines and People* program, which supports research on the implications of climate change on populations, and *Mid-scale Infrastructure*—two areas of emphasis among the agency’s research priorities.

NSF is the funding source for about 27 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America’s colleges and universities, including basic behavioral and social research. However, the SBE Directorate funds approximately 65 percent of basic, university-based social and behavioral sciences research in the nation.

PAA and APC, as members of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), applaud the Administration’s proposed NSF FY 2023 budget request, \$10.5 billion, which represents a 19 percent increase in funding over the FY 2022 enacted level. Moreover, the budget request envisions an allocation for SBE of \$330 million, which would represent a historical high-water mark for this directorate, and an estimated increase of one-third over what we anticipate the FY 2022 allocation will be. We note that the PBR indicates that SBE priority investments include climate change research and a boost to the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES), which plays a key role in the development of the National Secure Data Service. We continue to support the Committee’s longstanding practice of not stipulating specific funding

levels for individual NSF directorates; however, it is helpful to understand the Administration's views on research priorities, and in this instance we concur.

We note that efforts are currently underway in Congress to reach bi-cameral agreement on legislation to advance translational and interdisciplinary research, emerging technologies, and public-private partnerships. Meanwhile, NSF has launched a new Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP) directorate in anticipation of, and to dovetail with, enactment of this legislation. We urge the Committee to continue to ensure that funding for the TIP will not come at the expense of other, existing directorates.

We urge Congress to accelerate the growth of NSF's budget by providing NSF with at least \$11 billion in FY 2023. The funding level will enable the NSF SBE Directorate to continue its support of social science surveys and a robust portfolio of population research projects. The NSF also continues to focus on interdisciplinary research initiatives, recognizing that social and behavioral science contributes to many critical areas of research. For example, the *Mid-scale Infrastructure* program is currently funding broad-scale, sensor-based data collection projects that represent collaborations among population scientists and computer scientists. Increased funding in FY 2023 will allow NSF to continue funding the most promising grant applications and reduce the number of high caliber proposals that are rejected solely for lack of sufficient funds.

Bureau of Justice Statistics and National Institute of Justice

After years of declining budgets, PAA and APC are participating in the new Office of Justice Programs Research and Statistics Coalition to raise awareness about the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and National Institute of Justice (NIJ). Both agencies are important sources of data and funding for population scientists conducting research on topics such as prisoner reentry, the social and environmental dynamics of health and crime, and the effects of incarceration across the lifespan. The coalition's recommendations, which PAA and APC support, would provide BJS with \$60 million and NIJ with \$50 million in FY 2023.

Thank you for considering our requests and for supporting federal programs that benefit the population sciences under the subcommittee's jurisdiction.