

# Policy in Action: Setting the Stage for Science in 2022

December 29, 2021



Following a whirlwind 2021 for science in policymaking, APS’s government relations team previews the policy agenda for 2022. Here’s some of what’s ahead.

## **ARPA-H poised to shoot for the moon**

In the United States, President Joe Biden, Congress, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) all announced their support for the development of an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, or ARPA-H, which would fund “moonshot” projects to advance health and prevent disease. As the ARPA-H idea moves through the twists and turns of the legislative process, APS has weighed in at key moments to keep behavioral science’s contributions to health on the minds of all parties. Most recently, in October, Senate appropriators announced their support for this agency, proposing a \$2.4 billion annual budget.

In part thanks to APS’s advocacy, we anticipate that when ARPA-H is launched, there will be immediate opportunities for APS members to submit funding proposals for moonshot health ideas as well as to explore job openings as ARPA-H program managers—temporary government employees who guide agency funding decisions. Now is the time to start thinking about a research idea you might bring to ARPA-H. These opportunities will likely present a once-in-a-generation chance to have your work funded by a new government agency.

## **APS experts convening on COVID-19**

In June, APS launched its Global Collaboration on COVID-19 to bring together psychological scientists conducting research relevant to the global pandemic. Visit [psychologicalscience.org/covid-initiative](https://psychologicalscience.org/covid-initiative) to learn more about what's ahead for this initiative, including a January 21 event focused on the biology and psychology of infection, featuring a stellar lineup of speakers.

Throughout 2022, collaboration working groups associated with the initiative will continue to discuss ways psychological science has been—or should have been—leveraged to respond to the pandemic. One of the newest such groups, led by Jonathan Wai (University of Arkansas), is focused on psychology and education and education policy. The group is examining how COVID has affected education and learning as well as the interplay between COVID and college admissions processes.

## **Continued pushes for psychological science in policymaking**

The APS COVID-19 collaboration is one way that APS is working to ensure psychological science contributes to ongoing policy work related to COVID-19. Similarly, APS continues its push to ensure that research psychology is recognized in policymaking broadly. We started 2021 with calls that newly elected President Biden involve experts from our field in his COVID-19 response team, and we now are encouraging that pandemic recovery efforts also leverage wisdom from our field.

APS advocacy has progressed similarly in Europe. When the European Union launched its Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), APS encouraged full integration of our field in this effort. In a promising response, HERA informed APS that it will aim to “look into the possible links and contributions from psychological science and the other behavioral sciences to HERA’s work and operations” and eagerly awaits the products of APS’s COVID collaboration.

APS has connected policymakers to psychological scientists and their work in other areas, too. Over the last few months, Congress has initiated a new caucus focused on understanding the social determinants of health; we’ve been in touch with offices on Capitol Hill to ensure that the fundamental and applied research that psychological scientists conduct is at the fingertips of policymakers seeking to improve health.

## **Congressional support for the behavioral and social sciences**

In July, the U.S. House of Representatives issued reports associated with the annual appropriations process expressing key statements of enthusiasm for psychological science. These statements echoed APS’s concerns focused on strengthening support for behavioral science at NIH, integrating behavioral science into the country’s COVID-19 strategy, and emphasizing the importance of the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) behavioral science directorate.

In late October, APS heard that the Senate shared many of the same views previously expressed by the House. Specifically, the Senate appropriations chair released a version of the federal budget that also called to strengthen funding for the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, which supports psychology work funded by NIH. This budget also proposed funding boosts to NIH and NSF,

main funders of psychology research in the United States.

As this article goes to press, the APS government relations team is hopeful that the House and Senate will work together to develop a budget to send to the president's desk—one that continues to echo APS priorities.

Separate from the appropriations process, APS has been tracking excitement around the idea of creating a new arm of the National Science Foundation (NSF) focused on use-inspired research. Different models for this arm have circulated throughout the year, and APS has advocated for full inclusion of the behavioral and social sciences in whatever form things take. Last we heard, an NSF Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnership was gaining steam. Stay tuned to future issues of the *Observer* for updates.

## **Webinars for APS members led by government funders**

Interested in top science funders that support psychological science research? Be sure to check out APS's library of government research, funding, and policy webinars, available online. In these recordings—free to access for APS members—you can learn about such opportunities as NIH's high-risk high-reward funding streams, NSF's education grants, and social science funding announcements in Canada.

Stay tuned for further programming in the new year, and please let APS know at [aps@psychologicalscience.org](mailto:aps@psychologicalscience.org) if you'd like to hear from other important funders in your area of psychological science.

## **New opportunities for graduates of PCSAS-accredited clinical psychology programs**

The Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System, or PCSAS—an APS-supported initiative that advances the clinical science model of training and integrates the science and practice of psychology—is increasingly recognized by employers throughout the country. Graduates of PCSAS-accredited programs are now eligible for the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, for example. And as of December 2021, PCSAS programs are eligible to apply for the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration's Graduate Psychology Education Program, which has a pot of nearly \$25 million in available grant money the programs can now access. APS will continue to advocate for PCSAS to ensure that clinical psychological scientists have the broadest set of career opportunities available to them as they advance their science and practice. Keep up with developments involving these and other APS policy initiatives at [psychologicalscience.org/policy](https://psychologicalscience.org/policy).