

COPAFS News

Remembering Robert Parker (1940-2025)

Robert P. Parker, age 84, of Washington DC, passed away peacefully in his home at Ingleside at Rock Creek on February 16. He spent 10 years at the Census Bureau, developing new economic statistics programs. He then worked for 30 years at the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), rising to positions of Chief Statistician and Associate Director for National Economic Accounts. At BEA, he directed the preparation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accounts and played a major role in improving their reliability, relevance, and transparency. After BEA, he spent 5 years as Chief Statistician of the Government Accountability Office, directing congressional reports on federal statistics, including a study of the American Community Survey, the replacement for the decennial Census "long form." When he left BEA, an article in Barron's weekly report dubbed Bob "The King of Stats." He was a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, recipient of the Shiskin Award for Economic Statistics, and of the Butler Award by the New York Association for Business Economics.

Bob was almost always present at the COPAFS Quarterly Meetings and served on the COPAFS Board for five years. When I first became Executive Director, Bob was incredibly welcoming and encouraging to me. We saw each other periodically at various receptions through the years. Truly a giant in federal statistics, Bob will be missed as a statistician and a friend.

COPAFS Welcomes the Annie E. Casey Foundation

COPAFS is pleased to welcome the Annie E. Casey Foundation as its newest member! The AECF is one of the dominant organizations in child welfare and juvenile justice in the U.S., and one of the most influential "watchdogs" for child well-being, as they collect and publish most of the data on children in poverty in the U.S. annually, through its *Kids Count Data Book*. Started in 1948 in Seattle by UPS founder James E. Casey and his siblings George, Harry and Marguerite. The foundation was named in honor of their mother. Originally a charity, chiefly focused on providing foster care, the organization gradually shifted to a broader role in attempting to advance child well-being through social experimentation, research and publicity. Along the way, it divested its direct services foster care operation, while increasing its focus on family-strengthening (a model that was proposed by the AECF) economic stability, community change research, advocacy and action. Through its extensive publicity efforts, the AECF has become a major source of information on the welfare of children in the United States

Recent Actions by the New Administration

The White House continues to raise concern among federal data stakeholders. COPAFS will continue to track actions which affect federal statistics directly and will begin to provide a weekly summary of these to COPAFS members in addition to the monthly update. The pace of EOs and their implementation has not slowed down

Some items of note from February:

- Feb 10 – Over 100 IES contracts were cancelled for convenience, many with firms that were in the field for various data collection efforts.
- Feb 19 – [Executive Order](#) is signed which effectively terminates any unnecessary federal advisory committees, including those advising federal statistical agencies.



- Feb 20 – The NCES Commissioner, Peggy Carr, was placed on administrative leave. Peggy has over 20 years of experience at NCES and has been instrumental in conducting the NAEP or Nation’s Report Card. This loss of expertise at NCES is a serious blow to the federal statistical system and the nation.
- Feb 26 – The OMB Director, Russell Vaught, released a [memo](#) further detailing reductions in staff across the federal government. The memo proscribes “a significant reduction in the number of full-time equivalent positions . . .”
- Feb 28 – The U.S. Census Bureau cancels two [upcoming meetings](#) of the 2030 Census Advisory Committee. These cancellations occurred more than a week after President Trump issued an EO asking for a list of unnecessary federal advisory committees.

A friendly reminder that COPAFS is a non-partisan organization, however we are dedicated to “Advancing Excellence in Federal Statistics” and will move forward with this mission over the coming months. Your support is greatly appreciated and if there are specific concerns you have, please reach out to me.

Follow COPAFS on Social Media

Be sure to follow COPAFS on Bluesky (@copafs.bsky.social) and LinkedIn for updates on the latest actions affecting the federal statistical system.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: Government Advances in Statistical Programming (GASP) 2025

We invite you to submit an abstract for the next Government Advances in Statistical Programming (GASP) conference scheduled for 25-26 June 2025, 12-5 pm ET. There is no fee to present or attend the conference. **Submissions are due on April 5, 2025.** The virtual conference is open to anyone and will feature various ways for you to share your work:

- Regular presentation: Regular presentation sessions will include several talks with a common theme. Each speaker will have about 12-15 minutes followed by Q&A.
- Lightning talk: Quick 5-7 minute presentation on a particular application, code, visualization, etc. Lightning talks will be grouped into a session and presented back-to-back, with most Q&A delayed until the end.
- Students: Separate lightning talk sessions may be set up for students (e.g., using government data, code demonstrations, or data visualizations of government activities).
- Other: A panel, an unconference session, workshop, demo, or interest group meeting.

To submit an abstract, complete this [google form](#). If you have questions, contact Lisa Frehill (lisa.frehill@hq.doe.gov) or Peter Meyer (meyer.peter@bls.gov).



Sign-on Letter for SSA's Retirement and Disability Research Consortium

On February 21, the Social Security Administration (SSA) [announced](#) that it was terminating their Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC) cooperative agreements, halting critically important research nationwide.

Established in 2017, the RDRC has played an important role in improving SSA's efficiency, fiscal oversight, and decision-making by conducting independent, data-driven research. Its work has helped to streamline SSA programs, reduce improper payments, and ensure benefits reach those who need them most, all of which are essential in today's budget-conscious environment.

The [Population Association of America](#) is leading a [sign-on letter](#), urging leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, Senate Finance Committee, and House Ways and Means Committee to work with the Administration to restore funding for the RDRC program immediately.

Organizations and individuals may sign at the links below:

- Organization: <https://form.jotform.com/250574414595058>
- Individual: <https://form.jotform.com/250574954215157>

The deadline to sign is **COB, Monday, March 10.**

COPAFS Transmits Data Access Letter to Congress

On February 11, COPAFS transmitted a [letter](#) seeking protection of public access to federal data. Over 230 organizations and 2,600 individuals signed on to the letter and it was transmitted to Senate and House leadership as well as over 300 Congressional offices.

Congress Sends Questions on Federal Data Access to OMB

On February 12, Congress sent a [letter](#) to OMB Director Russell Vaught calling on OMB to “immediately restore public access to federal datasets and data-driven tools, which are essential to government accountability, public and private sector research, and the work of businesses and non-profits.” The letter also asked for responses by February 19 to three questions about the status and plans for public access to federal data. To date, no response has been released publicly.

Congress Sends Questions on IES Contract Cancellations to Acting Education Secretary

On February 21, Congress sent a [letter](#) to the Acting Secretary of Education, Denise Carter, and the Acting Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, Matthew Soldner, raising serious objections to the termination of several contracts in IES and NCES. The letter goes on to detail the actions taken by the Administration and asks 23 questions of the Acting Secretary and Acting Director about the reasons these contracts were terminated and how this affects the nation's knowledge about our education system.



Fed Stats in the News

Feb 2 - Thousands of U.S. Government Web Pages Have Been Taken Down Since Friday

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/02/upshot/trump-government-websites-missing-pages.html?searchResultPosition=8>

Feb 3 - Trump administration's data deletions set off 'a mad scramble,' researcher says

<https://apnews.com/article/cdc-census-federal-data-trump-6a9ba7c01a42b72e2c0a119325ba3753>

Feb 4 - Congress Urged to Protect Federal Statistics From Trump 'Purge'

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-02-04/congress-urged-to-protect-federal-statistics-from-trump-purge?sref=SFtCN2M4>

Feb 4 - Federal research data is being erased. Here is what you can do about it

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/federal-research-data-being-erased-heres-what-you-can-shea-swauger-w5f5c/?trackingId=9SUx1fDiTciSDNWUXWZ6yA%3D%3D>

Feb 25 - Peggy Carr (NCES) Placed on Administrative Leave

https://www.yahoo.com/news/naep-costs-may-played-role-222341826.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xILmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAB8i-zoLCfWO1x8bW-7OTLwhmN6bZPEl3VpFD0zvg4MtlwFTi6-onyIAmK_GBsiC1t35-Ud8DsQ5jpM5ykFUP5rFBLRWCZsHhaJccRaJanyqBOGoA2stsDxYuxP-3xzZ7fh6Q6LAGYKQPLAD_ww0VJx8Vv6PKZ33uSz8VxMhLcha



Upcoming Events

COPAFS Quarterly Meeting: March 7

The next Quarterly Meeting will be held on **Friday, March 7, 2025**. The meeting will be held at the AERA Convening Center (1430 K St, NW) with a virtual option available. The agenda will be posted in February.

Mark your calendars for subsequent Quarterly Meetings in 2025:

- Friday, June 6
- Friday, September 5
- Friday, December 5

A friendly reminder that you can download the presentations from our Quarterly Meetings at <https://copafs.org/meetings-events/quarterly-meetings/>. You can also view the recordings of past Quarterly Meetings on the Members Only [site](#).

AERA 2025 Annual Meeting: April 23-27

The 2025 Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association will take place on April 23-27 at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, CO. The conference theme is “Research, Remedy, and Repair: Toward Just Education Renewal.” For more information, click [here](#).

AAPOR 80th Annual Conference: May 14-16

The 80th Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research will take place on May 14-16 at the St. Louis Union Station Hotel in St. Louis, MO. The conference theme is “Reshaping Democracy's Oracle: Transforming Polls, Surveys, and the Measurement of Public Opinion in the Age of AI.” For more information, click [here](#).

2025 ACS Data Users Conference: May 29 & June 3

The 2025 American Community Survey (ACS) Data Users Conference will be held on May 29 (virtual) and June 3 (in-person), 2025. We will have virtual breakout sessions with remote attendees on May 29, 2025 and in-person networking, plenary discussions, and roundtable listening sessions on June 3, 2025.

For more information, go to <https://acsdatacommunity.prb.org/p/conferences>

2025 FCSM Research & Policy Conference: October 21-23

Save the Date! The 2025 FCSM Conference will be held at the College Park Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. The Call for Abstracts will be issued February 10. Please visit www.fcsmconf.org for details as they become available.



Agency Releases

Bureau of Economic Analysis (DOC)

- Feb 28 – [Personal Income and Outlays, January 2025](#). Personal income increased \$221.9 billion (0.9 percent at a monthly rate) in January. Disposable personal income (DPI)—personal income less personal current taxes—increased \$194.3 billion (0.9 percent) and personal consumption expenditures (PCE) decreased \$30.7 billion (0.2 percent). Personal outlays—the sum of PCE, personal interest payments, and personal current transfer payments—decreased \$52.7 billion in January. Personal saving was \$1.01 trillion in January and the personal saving rate—personal saving as a percentage of disposable personal income—was 4.6 percent.
- Feb 6 - [U.S. Travel and Tourism Satellite Account for 2018–2023](#). The travel and tourism industry, as measured by the real output of goods and services sold directly to visitors, increased 7.0 percent in 2023 after increasing 20.8 percent in 2022.² By comparison, the broader economy, as measured by real gross domestic product (GDP), increased 2.9 percent in 2023 after increasing 2.5 percent in 2022.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (DOL)

- Feb 20 – [Major Work Stoppages in 2024](#). There were 31 major work stoppages beginning in the year. The lowest annual total of major work stoppages was 5 in 2009 and the highest was 470 in 1952. Between the years 2005–2024, there have been an average of 17.4 work stoppages beginning in the year. A major work stoppage involves 1,000 or more workers and lasts at least one shift during the work week, Monday through Friday excluding Federal holidays. There were 271,500 workers involved in major work stoppages that began in 2024. Service-providing industries accounted for 232,500 workers, or 85.6 percent of idled workers over the year.
- Feb 19 – [State Job Openings and Labor Turnover, December 2024](#). Job openings rates decreased in 5 states on the last business day of December. Hire rates increased in 2 states. Total separations rates increased in 3 states and decreased in 2 states. Nationally, the job openings rate decreased in December, while the hires and total separations rates were unchanged.

Bureau of Transportation Statistics (DOT)

- Feb 20 – North American Transborder Freight, December 2024. Total transborder freight: \$126.3 billion of transborder freight moved by all modes of transportation, increasing 3.9% compared to December 2023. Freight between the U.S. and Canada: \$62.4 billion, up 2.1% from December 2023. Freight between the U.S. and Mexico: \$63.8 billion, up 5.6% from December 2023.
- Feb 13 – [Passenger Enplanements Domestic and International, November 2024](#). U.S. airlines carried 77.1 million systemwide (domestic and international) scheduled service passengers in November 2024. When adjusted for seasonality, November enplanements are up 2.4% from October and down 0.2% from the all-time high reached in June 2024. There were 67.7 million domestic passengers and 9.4 million international passengers on U.S. airlines flights in November, not adjusting for seasonality.



Census Bureau (DOC)

- Feb 12 – [Business Formation Statistics Monthly Data Release](#). The BFS provide timely and high frequency information on new business applications and formations in the United States. The BFS are a standard data product of the Census Bureau, developed in research collaboration with economists affiliated with the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, the University of Maryland, and the University of Notre Dame.
- Feb 6 - [Comparative and Bridge Statistics From 2022 Economic Census](#). The comparative statistics table includes 2017 and 2022 national, state and selected geography data, tabulated on the 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), at the two- to six-digit NAICS levels. Data include the number of firms, establishments, employees, sales, and annual and first-quarter payroll. The table allows users to compare the 2017 and 2022 data even if there have been changes to the NAICS codes that might otherwise impact the comparability.

Economic Research Service (USDA)

- Feb 6 – [Farm Income and Financial Forecasts Update](#). USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) releases farm income and balance sheet estimates and forecasts three times a year. These core statistical indicators provide guidance to policymakers, lenders, commodity organizations, farmers, and others interested in the financial status of the farm economy. ERS' farm income statistics also inform the computation of agriculture's contribution to the U.S. economy's gross domestic product. A recording of this webinar is available.

Energy Information Administration (DOE)

- Feb 25 – [Planned Retirements of US Coal-fired Electricity Generation to Increase](#). Electricity generators plan to retire 12.3 gigawatts (GW) of capacity in 2025, a 65% increase in retirements compared with 2024. Last year, 7.5 GW was retired from the U.S. power grid, the least generation retired since 2011, according to data reported in EIA's [latest inventory of electric generators](#). Coal generating capacity accounts for the largest share of planned capacity retirements (66%), followed by natural gas (21%).
- Feb 18 – [Consumption of Renewable Diesel Continues General Growth Trend on West Coast](#). West Coast renewable diesel consumption has approximately doubled since the first quarter of 2023 (1Q23), with increased domestic production supplying most of the growth. Much of that production growth has come from California, where [Marathon's Martinez plant](#) and [Phillips 66's Rodeo plant](#) have added new capacity. Most of the remaining growth has come from increasing production in other parts of the United States, where renewable diesel plants are commonly producing fuel to ship to the West Coast via rail, tanker, or barge.



National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA)

- Feb 27 – [Census of Agriculture data for Northern Mariana Islands released](#). There were 316 farms, up 25% from the last census. Land in farms totaled 2,833 acres, with an average farm size of 9 acres. The total value of sales was \$ 2.8 million, with an average value of \$ 8,731 per farm. Vegetables and melons represented the largest category of production, with sales of \$ 1.3 million.
- Feb 24 – [Response Period for 2024 Census of Horticulture is Extended](#). NASS will continue to collect the [2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties](#) through April 18, 2025. Conducted just once every five years, the Census of Horticultural Specialties is the only source of detailed production and sales data for U.S. floriculture, nursery, and specialty crop industries, including greenhouse food crops. Growers are encouraged to complete their survey either online at agcounts.usda.gov or by mail as soon as possible. The online questionnaire is user friendly, accessible on most electronic devices, and saves producers time by calculating totals and automatically skipping questions that do not apply to their operations.

National Center for Education Statistics (IES)

- Feb 19 - [More than Half of Public School Leaders Say Cell Phones Hurt Academic Performance](#). According to the latest findings from the [School Pulse Panel \(SPP\)](#), 77 percent of public schools prohibit students from using cell phones during any class, with a higher percentage of elementary schools (86 percent) implementing such a policy compared to high/secondary schools (55 percent). Also, 38 percent of schools with cell phone policies have restrictions for cell phone use outside of class, such as during free periods, between classes, or during extracurricular activities. Notably, 30 percent of schools prohibit cell phone use during all classes as well as in these situations outside of class.
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National Center for Health Statistics (CDC)

- Feb 20 - [Changes in Drug Overdose Mortality and Selected Drug Type by State: United States, 2022 to 2023](#). The age-adjusted rate of drug overdose deaths in the United States decreased 4.0% from 2022 (32.6 deaths per 100,000 standard population) to 2023 (31.3). The jurisdictions with the highest rates in 2023 were West Virginia (81.9) and the District of Columbia (60.7), and the states with the lowest rates were Nebraska (9.0) and South Dakota (11.2). Between 2022 and 2023, age-adjusted rates of drug overdose deaths decreased in 20 states and did not change significantly in 25 states. The rate increased between 2022 and 2023 in 6 states: Alabama, Alaska, California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.
- Feb 5 - [Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2023](#). In 2023, maternal mortality rates decreased significantly for White non-Hispanic (subsequently, White) and Hispanic women. The observed decrease for Asian non-Hispanic (subsequently, Asian) and increase for Black non-Hispanic (subsequently, Black) women was not statistically significant. In 2023, the maternal mortality rate for Black women was 50.3 deaths per 100,000 live births and was significantly higher than rates for White (14.5), Hispanic (12.4), and Asian (10.7) women.



Federal Register Notices

There were 8 federal register notices posted by federal statistical agencies from January 26, 2025 to February 25, 2025. Links to each of these notices are organized by agency below.

Bureau of Economic Analysis (DOC) – No New Notices

Bureau of Justice Statistics (DOJ) – 3 New Notices

<i>Date</i>	<i>Notice</i>
Jan 31	Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed eCollection eComments Requested; Reinstatement, With Change, of a Previously Approved Collection for Which Approval Has Expired: Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories (CPFFCL)
Jan 30	Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed eCollection eComments Requested; Extension of a Previously Approved Collection; Title: Application for Suspension of Deportation (EOIR-40)
Jan 30	Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed eCollection eComments Requested; Extension of a Previously Approved Collection; Number of Law Enforcement Employees as of October 31

Bureau of Labor Statistics (DOL) – No New Notices

Bureau of Transportation Statistics (DOT) – No New Notices

Census Bureau (DOC) – 2 New Notices

<i>Date</i>	<i>Notice</i>
Feb 20	Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; 2026 Government Units Survey
Feb 20	Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Current Population Survey (CPS) 2025 Field Test

Economic Research Service (USDA) – No New Notices

Energy Information Administration (DOE) – No New Notices

National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA) – 2 New Notices

<i>Date</i>	<i>Notice</i>
Jan 30	Notice of Intent To Request Revision and Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection - the Annual Organic Survey
Jan 30	Notice of Intent To Request To Reinstatement an Information Collection - Data related to the production and marketing of foods directly from farm producers to consumers or retailers



National Center for Education Statistics (DOEd) – 1 New Notice

<i>Date</i>	<i>Notice</i>
Feb 20	Committee and Quarterly Board Meetings: March 6

National Center for Health Statistics (HHS) – No New Notices

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NSF) – No New Notices

Office of Research, Evaluation & Statistics (SSA) – No New Notices

Statistics of Income Division (IRS) – No New Notices