

## COPAFS News

### March, 2025

#### **Substantive Changes Proposed for the 2025 Annual Business Survey**

The Census Bureau posted [proposed changes](#) to the 2025 ABS on March 31 and kicked off a 30-day comment period. The most significant change is the further reduction in sample size. The 2023 ABS sampled approximately 850,000 employer businesses to produce detailed statistics by owner demographics, in the 2024 ABS the sample was reduced to approximately 330,000 employer businesses and 8,000 nonprofits to reduce the burden on the respondents. For the 2025 ABS, the sample is further reduced to 222,000 employer businesses and 8,000 nonprofits.

A summary of the changes Census is implementing in the 2025 ABS:

- Reduce sample size from 338,000 employer businesses and nonprofit organizations to 230,000.
- Introduce sampling changes that decrease the chances of respondents being selected into the survey year after year. Further, mail out strategy changes to remove chronic nonresponders.
- Remove Telephone Follow-Up to reduce the type of contacts with respondents and increase cost savings.
- Streamline content—Content removed includes questions on work from home, sexual orientation, gender identity, business collaboration with other entities like universities, and management practices.

#### **National Center for Education Statistics Staff Terminated**

On the evening of Tuesday, March 11, almost all the staff at the National Center for Education Statistics received a notice that their jobs had been eliminated pursuant to the Education Department's Reduction in Force (RIF) plan. ASA's Ron Wasserstein has published an oped in [Ed Week](#) and posted on [LinkedIn](#) about NCES and the short-sighted decision to effectively terminate an entire federal statistical agency. While it is doubtful that this is the final word on NCES, this is an astonishing loss, even if temporary, to the American public's understanding of our schools.

#### **AERA, NCME, and others send letter to Congress on Saving Federal Education Data, Statistics, and Research**

The [letter](#) asks House and Senate leadership to intervene through their oversight responsibilities in the Administration's sudden, arbitrary termination of more than 1,300 employees across the U.S. Department of Education. This action has resulted in barely a skeletal staff at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), leaving only three staff remaining at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This sweeping reduction, coupled with last month's mass cancellation of contracts and since followed by the March 20, 2025 Executive Order, Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities, dismantles the Department's essential research and statistics agencies and their key functions, preventing them from executing their Congressionally mandated responsibilities.

#### **America's Essential Data tells stories that underline importance of federal data**

America's Essential Data is a collaborative effort dedicated to documenting the value that data produced by the federal government provides for American lives and livelihoods. This effort



supports federal agency implementation of the bipartisan Evidence Act of 2018, which requires that agencies prioritize data that deeply impact the public. America's Essential Data wouldn't be possible without the federal data users and stakeholders who share their use cases. Share your own data story at <https://essentialdata.us/>

#### **ASA/GMU's Nation's Data at Risk, Year Two: Ongoing Monitoring**

The ASA/GMU [project to assess the health of the federal statistical agencies](#) plans to monitor and share updates on the health of the federal statistical agencies as we become aware of them rather than wait to issue a full report. Monitoring [updates](#) are posted as they occur.

#### **PRB to Launch a Federal Data Forum**

The Population Reference Bureau is launching a forthcoming Federal Data Forum—an online community for public data stakeholders—that will empower data users by providing a safe and centralized space for them to share information about threats to federal data, what to do when data are no longer available, and how organizations and individuals can help.

Many organizations are already speaking out regarding the loss of federal data. Individual data users are also getting involved, posting information on social media and contacting Congress about this issue. The new Forum is meant to supplement these efforts by sharing information with a broader community of data users, enabling peer-to-peer networking and learning, and offering a daily or weekly digest with the latest updates, to inform data advocacy efforts.

Seed funding for this project is being provided by the Massive Data Institute at Georgetown University but **PRB is seeking funding to help sustain this effort** and would be happy to engage with potential sponsors about their vision.

#### **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 continue to provide a weekly summary of these to COPAFS members in addition to the monthly update. The weekly updates will be rolled up in the monthly updates for archival purposes.

Some items of note from March:

- Mar 2 – Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick announced that government spending may be removed from the calculation of U.S. GDP, going against national and international reporting standards which have been adhered to for 100 years.
- Mar 4 – Trump administration bans 2 economic advisory panels: Federal Economic Statistics Advisory Committee (FESAC) and Bureau of Economic Analysis Advisory Committee (BEAAC)
- Mar 11 – Essentially all staff at NCES were informed their job would be eliminated.
- Mar 19 – The BLS Data Users Advisory Committee and the BLS Technical Advisory Committee are officially terminated.
- Mar 20 – [Executive Order](#) Moving to Close the Dept of Education issued.
- Mar 20 – [Statement](#) from the White House decrying the state of education in the U.S. uses NCES statistics to make the case for gutting the Dept of Education and all but eliminating NCES.



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- Mar 25 – [Reorganization](#) at SSA moves the Office of Research, Evaluation and Statistics under the Chief Information Officer along with nine other offices.
  - Mar 27 – Significant cuts and a major [reorganization](#) proposed by Secretary of Health Human Services, Robert Kennedy, implies that considerable changes at both AHRQ and NCHS are coming soon.

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.



## Fed Stats in the News

**Mar 2 – Commerce May Exclude Government Spending from GDP**

<https://apnews.com/article/trump-gdp-economy-government-spending-lutnick-7414ba1bd441bd4bf64620bfd66923b2>

**Mar 3 – Former NCES Commissioner Blasts Education Data Cuts**

<https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/65248/former-trump-commissioner-blasts-doge-education-data-cuts>

**Mar 4 - Trump administration disbands two expert panels on economic data**

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-administration-disbands-two-expert-panels-economic-data-2025-03-05/>

**Mar 5 – FESAC and other Advisory Committees Terminated**

[https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/trump-admin-disbands-two-committees-advising-on-economic-stats-990d0b85?st=o9GbEa&reflink=desktopwebshare\\_permalink](https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/trump-admin-disbands-two-committees-advising-on-economic-stats-990d0b85?st=o9GbEa&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink)

**Mar 5 – Experts worry about degradation of economic data after advisory committees disbanded**

<https://www.marketplace.org/2025/03/05/advisory-committees-economic-data-commerce-department-bureau-of-labor-statistics/>

**Mar 6 - Judge pauses GOP states' lawsuit to limit people in the US illegally from census count**

<https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/judge-pauses-gop-states-lawsuit-to-limit-people-in-the-us-illegally-from-census-count>

**Mar 7 - U.S. adds 151,000 jobs, short of expectations, as federal workforce shrinks**

<https://www.nbcnews.com/business/economy/february-jobs-report-what-numbers-say-about-economy-trump-second-term-rcna195015>

**Mar 10 - Postal workers conducting the census is part of a Trump pitch for taking over USPS**

<https://www.npr.org/2025/03/10/nx-s1-5311969/usps-privatization-trump-commerce-lutnick>

**Mar 11 – Good Policy Requires Good Data**

<https://cew.georgetown.edu/resource/cew-blog-good-policy-requires-good-data/>

**Mar 11 – How Trump is Reshaping Reality by Hiding Data**

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/interactive/2025/government-data-trump-deletion/?itid=hp\\_opinions\\_p001\\_f014](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/interactive/2025/government-data-trump-deletion/?itid=hp_opinions_p001_f014)



**Mar 11 – AI Impacts in BLS Employment Projections**

<https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2025/ai-impacts-in-bls-employment-projections.htm>

**Mar 12 – The Threat to Federal School Data is a Threat to Us All**

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/opinion-the-threat-to-federal-school-data-is-a-threat-to-us-all/2025/03>

**Mar 12 – Statement from the Data Quality Campaign on the Impact of the Trump Administration's Crippling Layoffs at the Department of Education**

<https://dataqualitycampaign.org/news/the-trump-administrations-layoffs-at-the-department-of-education/>

**Mar 13 - Trump administration is gutting the National Center for Education Statistics**

<https://www.epi.org/blog/trump-administration-is-gutting-the-national-center-for-education-statistics-here-are-five-things-we-only-know-about-schools-thanks-to-the-nces/>

**Mar 13 - Trump's hiring freeze has halted local head counts and could threaten the U.S. census**

<https://www.npr.org/2025/03/13/nx-s1-5324706/federal-hiring-freeze-special-census-white-house-westfield-aurora>

**Mar 14 - Chaos and confusion as the statistics arm of the Education Department is reduced to a skeletal staff of 3**

<https://hechingerreport.org/proof-points-chaos-confusion-statistics-education/>

**Mar 14 - Layoffs Gut Federal Education Research Agency**

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/academics/2025/03/14/layoffs-gut-federal-education-research-agency>

**Mar 15 – School Safety Data Illuminates Paths Forward: My Professional and Personal Journey**

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/school-safety-data-illuminates-paths-forward-my-josh-de-la-rosa-m8ode/?trackingId=GC6cEYJCSVWNSp0lMpahig%3D%3D>

**Mar 18 – Disbanded US advisory committee raises concerns about economic data integrity**

<https://www.ksby.com/us-news/disbanded-us-advisory-committee-raises-concerns-about-economic-data-integrity>

**Mar 18 – What will NCES layoffs mean for the Nation's Report Card?**

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/Education-Department-nces-layoffs-leaves-naep-assessments-nations-report-card-barebones/742837/>

**Mar 18 – USAFacts Opinion on the Importance of Federal Data**

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/usafacts\\_at-usafacts-the-only-opinion-we-have-is-activity-7307815169181593603-5nlp/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/usafacts_at-usafacts-the-only-opinion-we-have-is-activity-7307815169181593603-5nlp/)



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**Mar 19 – R.I.P. DUAC and BLSTAC**

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7308493217585389569/>

**Mar 21 - 'Bad sign': Purge of data experts raises alarms over economic reports**

<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/03/21/labor-commerce-department-economy-data-doge-00241559>

**Mar 21 – The US government data purge is a loss for policymaking and research**

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-us-government-data-purge-is-a-loss-for-policymaking-and-research/>

**Mar 21 - Closing Education Department puts 'American competitiveness' at risk, expert warns**

<https://www.npr.org/2025/03/21/nx-s1-5334678/trump-department-of-education-states>

**Mar 21 - Staff Shortages Put Census Bureau Surveys at Risk, Report Says**

<https://www.fedweek.com/federal-managers-daily-report/staff-shortages-put-census-bureau-surveys-at-risk-report-says/>

**Mar 24 - BLS expert alarmed by advisory committee cuts**

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-shift/2025/03/24/bls-expert-alarmed-by-advisory-committee-cuts-00244491>

**Mar 25 – Census Bureau advisors are feeling like they don't count**

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/agency-oversight/2025/03/census-bureau-advisers-are-feeling-like-they-dont-count/>

**Mar 25 – The nation's statisticians worry about the state of federal data gathering**

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/agency-oversight/2025/03/the-nations-statisticians-worry-about-the-state-of-federal-data-gathering/>

**Mar 27 – Major cuts are set to hit HHS. Here's what's affected.**

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2025/03/27/health-and-human-services-cuts/>

**Mar 27 - Dramatic Cuts to Ed. Data Programs Will Have Far-Reaching Consequences, Researchers Warn**

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/dramatic-cuts-to-ed-data-programs-will-have-far-reaching-consequences-researchers-warn/2025/03>



## Upcoming Events

### **COPAFS Quarterly Meeting: June 6**

The next Quarterly Meeting will be held on **Friday, June 6, 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 May.

Mark your calendars for subsequent Quarterly Meetings in 2025:

- 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 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference: May 14-16**

The 80<sup>th</sup> 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 Conference is Cancelled**

The in-person FCSM Annual Conference scheduled for October 21-23, 2025 at the University of Maryland, College Park is cancelled. The FCSM Planning Committee is exploring alternative approaches to this year's conference. When available, information will be posted on <https://fcsmconf.org/> and circulated via email.



## Agency Releases

### Bureau of Economic Analysis (DOC)

- Mar 31 – [2023 U.S. Space Economy Statistics](#). These statistics provide estimates of the U.S. space economy's gross domestic product (GDP) and gross output by industry in current and chained (or “real”) dollars, as well as by-industry estimates of private employment and compensation. The space economy accounted for \$142.5 billion, or 0.5 percent, of total U.S. GDP in 2023. Real GDP grew by 0.6 percent in the space economy, reflecting the second consecutive year of positive real growth. The statistics also show the space economy accounted for \$240.9 billion of gross output in 2023 and \$57.9 billion of private-sector compensation and supported 373,000 private-sector jobs.
- Mar 26 – [U.S. International Investment Position, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter and Year 2024](#). The U.S. net international investment position, the difference between U.S. residents’ foreign financial assets and liabilities, was –\$26.23 trillion at the end of the fourth quarter of 2024. Assets totaled \$35.89 trillion, and liabilities were \$62.12 trillion (chart 2). At the end of the third quarter, the net investment position was –\$24.15 trillion (revised).

### Bureau of Labor Statistics (DOL)

- Mar 28 – [State Employment and Unemployment – February 2025](#). Unemployment rates were higher in February in 1 state and stable in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Thirty states had jobless rate increases from a year earlier, 1 state had a decrease, and 19 states and the District had little change. The national unemployment rate changed little over the month at 4.1 percent but was 0.2 percentage point higher than in February 2024.
- Mar 21 – [Total Factor Productivity – 2024](#). Total factor productivity (TFP) in the private nonfarm business sector increased 1.3 percent in 2024. The 2024 increase in TFP reflects a 2.9-percent increase in output and a 1.6-percent increase in the combined inputs of capital and labor. Capital input grew 2.9 percent and labor input—which is the combined effect of hours worked and labor composition—increased 0.7 percent. The 2024 growth in TFP, output, and combined inputs shows a similar pattern as 2023 and represents 2 years of growth consistent with the pre-COVID-19 year of 2019.

### Bureau of Transportation Statistics (DOT)

- Mar 18 – [U.S. Airline Employment – January 2025](#). U.S. airline industry (passenger and cargo airlines combined) employment decreased to 1,009,141 workers in January 2025, 5,188 (0.51%) less workers than in December 2024 (1,014,329). U.S. scheduled-service passenger airlines employed 543,887 workers in January 2025, or 54% of the industry-wide total. Passenger airlines lost 411 employees in January 2025. United Air Lines, Inc. led scheduled passenger carriers, adding 791 employees; Southwest Airlines Co. added 194, and Envoy Air added 98.
- Mar 17 – [Docked Bikeshare Trips – February 2025](#). From February 2024 to February 2025, docked bikeshare trips starting and ending at a docking station on six of the largest systems fell 5.7%.