Thanks to your efforts in 2018, APA’s dedicated members of the Federal Action Network sent nearly 35,000 messages to Congress, ensuring psychology’s voice was heard on a range of critical education, research, public health, and human rights issues. Consequently, APA ended the year celebrating many legislative victories, including increasing funding for psychology research, education, and training programs, establishing new programs to combat the opioid crisis, and protecting the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program.

As the new year begins with the 116th Congress, your continued commitment to advocacy will be essential to APA’s success once again in 2019! Together we can continue to make a difference for the discipline and profession of psychology.
APA Staff Meets with Members of Congress on the 116th Congress’ Opening Day
A delegation of APA’s Government Relations staff met with more than 63 bipartisan members of Congress to help celebrate the swearing in of the 116th Congress and begin building new champions for APA’s advocacy agenda. Get to know your Congressional delegation via House.gov and Senate.gov.

116th Congress Starts with Unfinished Business
In 2018, the 115th Congress approved five of the 12 annual appropriations bills before the 2018 mid-term elections. The remaining bills, including those providing funding for the departments of Commerce, Justice, State (funds the National Science Foundation and NASA), Interior (funds the Indian Health Service), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) operated on a continuing resolution (CR) which expired December 7, 2018. (See November 2018 FAN Legislative Update). APA will continue to advocate for a swift resolution of outstanding FY 2019 appropriations to ensure sustained stable science funding.

The Farm Bill Becomes Law
On December 20, the President signed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334), also known as the Farm Bill into law. The bill passed the House by a vote of 369-47 and the Senate by a vote of 87-13. The statute, negotiated by the conference committee, maintains and modestly strengthens the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides food to nearly 40 million Americans a month.

The earlier version of the House bill proposed harmful cuts to SNAP including punitive work requirements. The cuts would have led to more than two million people facing reduced or eliminated benefits, thereby increasing hunger and poverty in the United States. The
negotiated bill supports a jobs pilot program, better data collection, and increased emergency food through The Emergency Food Assistance Program. Protecting SNAP is an **APA priority**.

The association thanks APA members who advocated to prevent cuts to the program. APA is committed to continuing to work with Congress to build on this foundation to strengthen SNAP to support low-income families better.

**APA Opposes Public Charge Rule; Submits Regulatory Comments Highlighting Harms**

APA submitted [comments](#) to the Department of Homeland Security opposing a proposed rule aimed at reconfiguring how the government evaluates whether a would-be immigrant is likely to become a “public charge,” that is, to depend on the government for their subsistence. The proposed rule would expand the list of factors, including federal programs, considered in a public charge determination, which would dramatically decrease the number of low-income immigrants to the U.S. Additionally, it would curtail the ability of immigrants to access public benefits such as Medicaid or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

APA highlighted the rule’s potentially harmful impact on the physical and mental health of immigrants and other vulnerable populations, its facilitation of prejudicial attitudes, and the public health threat the proposed rule poses to the general population. Moreover, APA endorsed the [comments](#) submitted by the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and worked with Division 22 to deliver additional remarks specifically focused on the proposed rule’s negative impacts on persons with disabilities.

**Landmark Criminal Justice Reform Legislation Signed into Law**

On December 21, President Trump signed bipartisan, landmark criminal justice reform legislation known as the First Step Act ([Public Law 115-391](#)). The Senate approved the bill on December 18 with the House following suit on December 20.

While the legislation includes essential prohibitions on juvenile solitary confinement and the shackling of incarcerated pregnant women, it only will assist a small percentage of incarcerated people and only applies to federal prisons. The legislation does not address increasing concerns about mental and behavioral health in criminal justice systems. APA along with its coalition partners will continue to work toward addressing these issues as well as the implementation of the First Step Act in 2019.
In December, the 115th Congress voted to reauthorize, and the President signed the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018 (H.R. 6964) ([Public Law 115-385](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-115/pdf/PLAW-115-S1981EN.pdf)). APA supported the updated legislation, which strengthens JJDPA’s core protections, requiring states to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. The statute also adds accountability measures and stipulates the use of evidence-based and trauma-informed approaches to juvenile justice policy and practice. Additionally, the new statute takes steps to address the needs of system-involved girls, including a ban on the shackling of pregnant adolescents during labor, delivery, and recovery.

### Congress Takes Steps to Address Maternal Mortality Disparities

In December, Congress passed and the President signed the following bills into law: H.R. 315, the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act ([Public Law 115-320](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/315)), S. 3029, the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act ([Public Law 115-328](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3029)), and H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act ([Public Law 115-344](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1318)). The legislation responds to the United States’ higher rates of death from pregnancy and childbirth than any other developed nation, with wide racial disparities in those rates. The legislation also supports research and programs to address the root causes of the problem. APA is committed to advancing women’s reproductive health and addressing disparities in reproductive health outcomes and will advocate ensuring full funding of these programs.

### APA’s Grant Writing Master Class Webinar: HRSA’s Graduate Psychology Education Program

Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) [Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program](https://www.hrsa.gov/grants/graduate-psychology-education-program) is a federal program that supports interprofessional practicum, internship, and postdoctoral training throughout rural and urban settings in underserved communities. One of APA’s top education advocacy priorities is to expand funding for the GPE Program. In 2018, APA’s annual GPE advocacy campaign successfully more
than doubled funding for GPE in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 to $18 million (see October 2018 Federal Action Network (FAN) Legislative Update).

APA anticipates HRSA will release a Funding Opportunity Announcement for the FY 2019 grant cycle soon. Accordingly, APA-accredited programs should be preparing now to apply to ensure that these funds have maximum impact. If you are training your students, interns, or postdocs to provide integrated care in underserved communities, the webinar is an opportunity to learn more about applying for a GPE grant. The one-hour webinar:

- Describes the GPE program
- Provides pointers from veteran grantees on submitting a successful application
- Offers answers and feedback on any questions you have to help you prepare an application.

An archived recording of the webinar recording is available at APA Online Academy. Please note, you will need to register to gain access to the recording as well as download the webinar slides, a copy of the previous NOFO, and a copy of HRSA tips for applying for the GPE NOFO.

Webinar presenters included:

- Jaime “Jim” L. Diaz-Granados, PhD, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, American Psychological Association
- Ana Julia Bridges, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Arkansas
- Joseph H. Evans, PhD, Professor, Psychology, University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Karen A. Studwell, JD, Associate Executive Director, Education Government Relations, APA

Public Service Loan Forgiveness: How You Get It, and Why We’re Fighting to Preserve It

In December 2018, the APA Office of Early Career and Graduate Student Affairs within the Education Directorate sponsored a webinar to discuss the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF). Webinar participants included Eddy Ameen, PhD, Associate Executive Director, Early Career and Graduate Student Affairs, and Jennifer B. Smulson, Senior Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer, Education Directorate. Nearly 600 early career psychologists registered for the webinar, and more than 250 participated in the live presentation.

The U.S. Congress created PSLF in 2007 to encourage individuals to enter and continue to work full-time in the public sector. Under PSLF, borrowers may qualify for forgiveness of the remaining balance due on their eligible federal student loans after they have made 120 payments under specific repayment plans while employed full-time in qualified employment settings.

The webinar:

- Provides an overview of PSLF, sharing common considerations to become and stay eligible for loan forgiveness
- Describes resources freely available as well as the exclusive tools available to APA members who have student debt
- Examines well-publicized challenges that recent applicants to the program have experienced
- Reviews threats to the program on Capitol Hill and APA’s work in a broad coalition to defend PSLF, and
- Highlights APA’s efforts to engage its members to become advocates for the preservation of this program, including steps individuals can take and provide answers to many of your questions.

A non-captioned recording link to the PSLF webinar is available here, along with the webinar slides and Hill Visits Talking Points for PSLF.

Call for Applications: APA Minority Fellowship Program – Deadline Approaching

APA’s Minority Fellowships are about more than financial support. Appointed Fellows join a lifetime community of mentors and peers committed to both professional success and the improvement of ethnic minority behavioral health issues. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides the support for APA’s Minority Fellowship Program (MFP). APA is committed to increasing the number of ethnic minority professionals in the field and bettering the outcomes of the communities they serve.

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (MHSAS) Fellowship supports the training of doctoral ethnic minority students and postdoctoral trainees who are committed to focusing on the behavioral health needs of ethnic/racial minority communities through services and policy. **Deadline: January 15, 2019.**

The Services for Transition Age Youth (STAY) Fellowship supports the training of students pursuing a terminal master’s degree in psychology who are committed to providing direct services to racial/ethnic minority transition age youth (16-25 years old). **Deadline extended: January 15, 2019.**

ICYMI: New HRSA Program Will Help Clinicians and Patients in the Fight Against Opioid Addiction

On December 27, 2018, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) launched the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Program. The program will support the HHS Five-Point Opioid Strategy through the increase of patient access to high-quality substance use disorder preventive, treatment, and recovery services.

The program will also “provide eligible health care clinicians with student loan repayment assistance in exchange for their service on the front lines of the opioid crisis in underserved communities. As a result, more patients who need help with substance use treatment will have access to highly qualified clinicians.”

Clinicians accepted to the program are eligible to receive up to $75,000 for three years of full-time service at a health care facility that has been designated...
by HRSA as an NHSC-approved substance use disorder site. There is also a part-time service option that will provide a maximum award of $37,500. For more information about the NHSC Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Program and how to apply see HRSA’s website. Applications are due Thursday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m. ET.

Federal Funding and Other Resources

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Screening and Management of Unhealthy Alcohol Use in Primary Care: Dissemination and Implementation of PCOR Evidence (R18)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Notice of Funding Opportunity

Department of Education
- Grants and Funding

Health Resources & Services Administration
- Grants and Cooperative Agreements
- Faculty Loan Repayment Program
- National Health Service Corps Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Program – Feb. 21, 2019

National Institutes of Health
- Grants and Funding
- Predoctoral Training in Advanced Data Analytics for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (BSSR) - Institutional Research Training Program [T32]
- NIH Loan Repayment
- Research Training and Career Development Programs
- NIMH Programs to Enhance Workforce Diversity
- Office of Disease Prevention – How to Apply for Funding

National Science Foundation
- Funding Opportunities
- Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)
- Mid-scale Research Infrastructure-2
- Dear Colleague Letter: Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure (Mid-scale RI) Opportunities
- EHR Core Research (ECR): STEM Learning and Learning Environments, Broadening Participation, and Workforce Development (NSF 19-508)
- Discovery Research preK-12 (NSF 17-584)
- Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Education and Human Resources (NSF 17-590)
- Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) (NSF 17-537)
- Future of Work at the Human-Technology Frontier: Core Research

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- Funding Opportunities

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Grant Announcements and Awards
- 2019 Capacity Building Opportunity – January 31, 2019
- Provider’s Clinical Support System - Medication Assisted Treatment Grant – February 26, 2019
- Cooperative Agreement to Support the Southeast Asia Regional Technology Transfer Center for HIV and Substance Use and Mental Health- February 26, 2019
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