



## ASN Research Advocacy: Federal Budget and Appropriations Timeline

The congressional procedure for allocating funding for the various departments, agencies, and programs within the federal government is separated into two parts: the budget process and the appropriations process. The congressional budget sets overall funding for the federal government as well as a general framework for each budget category. The budget also includes mandatory spending for programs the federal government is required to fund from year to year (e.g. Medicare), as dictated by law. The congressional appropriations process sets the final, annual funding levels for each discretionary funding program based on the passed budget resolution. The entire process begins in February and sets funding for the next fiscal year (FY), which begins October 1\* of the same calendar year.

### FY 2010 Appropriations Measures of Importance to ASN

- 1. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010.**
  - Sets funding for the National Institutes of Health (and its 27 institutes and centers), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- 2. Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010.**
  - Sets funding for the US Food and Drug Administration.
- 3. Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010.**
  - Sets funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Prosthetic Research Program.

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The following budget and appropriations timeline outlines the process for funding the federal government. It also includes information on how and when ASN members can advocate Congress to ensure appropriate funding for programs of interest.

First Monday in February:

The President submits his/her budget to Congress. This begins the congressional budget process. The budget proposes funding levels for various departments and agencies and includes justification for cuts or increases to programs.

#### **ASN Action:**

*House and Senate authorizing committees (with jurisdiction over the management of departments and programs) will quickly hold hearings on the President's budget after its release. It is important to advocate on behalf of research programs and agencies and recommend particular budget allocations by the time of these hearings, especially if they differ from the President's proposal.*

Six weeks after the  
the budget is released:

Authorizing committees submit their views and estimates for programs under their jurisdiction. While only recommendations, the budget committees—and subsequently the appropriations committees—often consider these suggested allocations when deciding actual program budgets.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact members of the authorizing committees, requesting appropriate increases in their views and estimates. They should also contact committee members after the release of the views and estimates (if favorable), thanking them for their support of the program.*

March-May:

Senate and House Budget Committees report their budget resolutions to the full chambers. The budget resolution is non-binding legislation that sets overall discretionary spending as well as divides spending totals into functional categories. At this time, amendments may be proposed to increase funding for certain program accounts (programs and agencies are bunched into various budget functions by topic. For example, Function 550 includes all health programs, including the National Institutes of Health and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality).

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact their members of Congress, urging them to vote in favor of amendments that support their programs of interest.*

May-July:

House and Senate Appropriations Committees allocate funding—within function areas—to various programs and agencies. Appropriations Committees and/or Subcommittees will often hold hearings on the state of programs and their budgetary needs. Appropriations subcommittees are structured in the same manner as the 12 appropriations measures. Each subcommittee—and bill—addresses a specific set of departments, agencies, and programs.

➤ This begins the appropriations process.

**ASN Action:**

*Organizations can testify at congressional hearings or submit statements for the record on behalf of research agencies and programs. Advocates should contact their members of Congress, particularly those members sitting on the appropriations committees, urging them to support increased funding.*

July-August:

Appropriations Subcommittees mark-up appropriations bills, which allocate funding to federal departments, agencies, and programs (a markup is when a committee reviews and debates pending legislation and potentially amends it). The bills are subsequently sent to the full appropriations committee for markup and passage.

**ASN Action:**

*Again, advocates should contact members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, encouraging them to support increased funding for programs of interest.*

August-September:

Appropriations bills move to the House and Senate floor for debate and vote.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact their members of Congress, asking them to vote for/against an appropriations measure, as appropriate.*

September-October:

Once both the House and Senate have passed their complimentary appropriations bills, the two chambers negotiate the differences between their bills. Often, differences in numbers will be averaged; however, this is not always the case.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact the conferees to urge them to support the higher funding allocation for their valued program(s). Conferees usually consist of the full appropriations committee chair and ranking member as well as the relevant appropriations subcommittee chair and ranking member in both the House and Senate.*

September-October:

The agreed upon conference bill moves to the House and Senate for another vote. Once passed by both chambers, the measure will be sent to the President for his/her signature or veto.

**ASN Action:**

*If the President is expected to veto a measure that the Society supports, advocates should contact the White House and urge the President to sign the measure into law. If the President vetoes the legislation, advocates should contact their members of Congress, urging them to override the veto (to override a veto, both chambers of Congress must re-pass the legislation by a two-thirds majority).*

\*All timelines are estimates. The appropriations process is often highly political and erratic and bills are not always passed before the beginning of the federal fiscal year (October 1).

**Alternate Appropriations Scenarios**

- When appropriations bills are not passed before October 1, Congress must pass a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government until the bills are passed. A CR usually maintains funding at the previous fiscal year's levels.
- Congress also has the option of combining bills into one large appropriations measure, called an omnibus. It is sometimes desirable to bunch appropriations bills if one bill is likely to get massive support and another is facing a presidential veto because the President cannot veto one bill within an omnibus.

The House and Senate separately negotiate, debate, and vote on the combined omnibus legislation.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact their members of Congress, encouraging them to include valued programs in the omnibus legislation at the supported funding level.*

If the House and Senate omnibus bills differ from one another, House and Senate conferees will meet to negotiate the final legislation.

**ASN Action:**

*Again, advocates should contact their members of Congress, urging them to support the higher funding level for programs of interest.*

Both chambers will debate and vote on the negotiated legislation.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact their members of Congress and urge them to vote in favor of the legislation.*

- Congress may also negotiate emergency supplementary funding measures on a one-year basis. In recent years, the supplementals included funding for natural disaster relief and the Iraq and Afghanistan wars; however, additional programmatic support may be attached to these bills, including funding for health research.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees negotiate what domestic programs may receive increases in the supplementary legislation.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates and staff should contact House and Senate Appropriations Committee Members and staff to encourage them to include additional funding for priority programs in the supplemental.*

The House and Senate will separately debate and vote on the supplemental legislation.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact their members of Congress, urging them to maintain funding for their programs within the supplemental.*

If the House and Senate provide differing levels of support within their supplemental bills, the two chambers will negotiate the differences.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact their members of Congress and encourage them to maintain the higher funding allocation for programs of interest.*

Both chambers will debate and vote on the negotiated legislation.

**ASN Action:**

*Advocates should contact their members of Congress and urge them to vote in favor of the legislation.*