



October 29, 2020

## **Information Sources for Policymakers: Congressional Budget Office 101**

A Presentation at the Academy Health 2020 Health Policy Orientation

Lara Robillard, Principal Analyst  
Budget Analysis Division

# Role

CBO was created by the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 to give the Congress a stronger role in budget matters.

CBO provides analysis of budgetary and economic issues that is objective and impartial.

CBO is strictly nonpartisan and does not make policy recommendations.

# Structure

CBO's Director is appointed jointly by the Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the Senate and has a four-year term.

CBO hires its employees solely on the basis of professional competence without regard to political affiliation.

About 260 people work at CBO. Most have advanced degrees.

# Responsibilities

The Budget Act requires CBO to provide:

- Baseline budget projections, which are detailed in annual reports on projected spending, revenues, and deficits under current law; and
- Cost estimates for legislation that summarize the legislation's incremental budgetary effects relative to the baseline.

# Output

CBO's yearly output typically includes:

- Producing roughly 750 formal cost estimates and related mandate statements;
- Fulfilling thousands of requests for technical assistance, typically from committees and Members before legislation is formally introduced; and
- Publishing about 70 reports, testimonies, and working papers.

# Processes

CBO's work reflects:

- A detailed understanding of federal programs and the tax code;
- Careful reading of the relevant research literature;
- Extensive analysis of data collected and reported by the government's statistical agencies and by private organizations; and
- Consultation with numerous outside experts.

All reports and analyses of public proposals are shared widely and made available at [www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov).