

Call for Competitive Grant Proposals

**Behavioral Health Economics Research on
Dietary Choice and Obesity**

Deadline: July 3, 2008

**Economic Research Service
United States Department of Agriculture**

CHECKLIST

All proposals submitted under the Program of Research on Behavioral Health Economics must contain the applicable elements described in this announcement, and should be mailed or submitted electronically through www.grants.gov by July 3, 2008.

The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to mailing.

- ✓ Application for Federal Domestic Assistance – Standard Core Form (SF-424)
[available at: http://www07.grants.gov/agencies/approved_standard_forms.jsp]
 - Is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number: 10.256?
 - Has the authorized organizational representative signed the SF-424?
 - Is the CFDA Title: Behavioral Health Economics Research Program?
 - For paper submissions, have the Principal Investigator and the authorized organizational representative signed the SF-424?
 - For paper submissions, does one copy contain pen-and-ink signatures?
 - Have you included a telephone number, fax number, and/or e-mail address where a message may be left for you?

- ✓ Budget (form SF-424A)
[available at: http://www07.grants.gov/agencies/approved_standard_forms.jsp]
 - Are budget items complete?
 - Is the summary budget included?
 - Is the funding level total within the stated limit of \$30,000 for the full duration of the project proposal?
 - Is the budget duration within the stated limit of 3 years?

- ✓ Proposal and All Attachments in PDF (only for electronic submissions through [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov))

- ✓ Project Description
 - Is the proposal description—EXCLUDING figures, tables, references, and other attachments such as survey instruments (if relevant)—a maximum of 3 pages?
 - Is the project description—INCLUDING figures, tables, references, other attachments, such as a survey instrument—a maximum of 10 pages?
 - In addition to the proposal descriptions, has a timeline of milestones been included?
 - Do the name and institution of the Principal Investigator and co-investigators appear on the proposal?
 - Does it contain a timeline for the study?

- ✓ Documentation from Collaborator(s), or Host Institution (where appropriate)

- ✓ Vitae and Publications List(s)

- Are vitae included for the Principal Investigator and co-investigators, senior associates, and other key project personnel (including subcontractors—see instructions)?
 - Are the vitae current and pertinent?
 - Are the publications lists complete and limited to the last 5 years?
- ✓ Indirect Cost Rate Schedule
- For reimbursement of indirect costs, is a copy included of the applicant's indirect cost rate schedule that reports the applicant's federally negotiated audited rate?
- ✓ General
- For paper submissions, are an original and 12 copies of the package included?

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Overview

Applications are invited for competitive grant awards from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support research on behavioral economic strategies to promote healthy eating and obesity prevention. The findings from successful proposals are expected to advance USDA's effort to ensure a healthy, well nourished population.

USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) anticipates awarding up to eight individual grants. The maximum funding level, including indirect costs, per grant is \$30,000 for the duration of the agreement, not to exceed three years. This document provides background on the research areas of interest, application procedures, deadlines for submission, and guidance for the application process.

Grant proposals may be submitted by any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal, State, or county agencies, private organization, corporation, or individual. Proposals submitted by non-United States organizations will not be considered.

Applications may be submitted in hard copy or electronically through the Grants.gov website at www.grants.gov. The Grants.gov website is the single access point to electronically find and apply for competitive Federal funding opportunities and manage grants from all Federal grantmaking agencies in one place.

First-time users of grant.gov should go to the "For Applicants" tab on the website and carefully read and follow the steps listed in order to apply. Your organization will need to be registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). In order to register with the CCR, a requirement for registering with Grants.gov, your organization will need a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company, Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). To investigate if your organization already has a DUNS number or to obtain a DUNS number, contact Dun & Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711.

Be sure to complete the Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) and Electronic Business Primary Point of Contact fields during the CCR registration process. These are mandatory fields that are required when submitting grant applications through www.grants.gov.

Please note: The DUNS and CCR requirements described above are applicable to all applicants whether you choose to apply through Grants.gov or submit a paper application package.

Authority

The authority for this program is contained in the Omnibus Budget Appropriations Act, Fiscal 2003 (P.L. 108-7).

Applicable Federal Statutes, Regulations, and Guidelines

Applicable Federal statutes, regulations, and guidelines include the following: (a) guidelines to be followed when submitting grant proposals and cooperative agreements and rules governing the evaluation of proposals; (b) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations, 7 CFR 3019; (c) the USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, 7 CFR Part 3015; (d) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 7 CFR Part 3016; and (e) Cooperative Research Agreement 7 USC 3318b.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 10.256.

Priority Research Areas

Background

It is widely recognized that consistent overconsumption, poor diet-quality, and inactivity can lead to severe health conditions. And the continued popularity of weight-loss programs and diet books indicate that individuals are interested in improving their own health and wellness. Public information programs like the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and mandatory nutrition labels have also been in existence for years. Yet the incidences of diet-related health conditions like obesity and diabetes continue to rise. So, why do poor diet and lifestyle choices persist among nearly all segments of the population?

Traditional economic analysis emphasizing the role of prices, income, and time-consistent preferences seem to inadequately explain why so many people choose to take on these risky health behaviors. Consequently, more researchers are turning to behavioral economics, which identifies predictable and systematic contradictions to many standard assumptions of economics. For example, the idea of complete rationality is challenged by repeated observance of cognitive biases that can lead to systematic errors in decision-making. A growing body of research also suggests that today's food environment is replete with instances in which these biases can influence dietary choice. As such, behavioral studies on dietary choice may identify how such biases impact food choices and offer novel ways for improving diets and health.

ERS is interested in research proposals that integrate behavioral economics into standard economics models of consumer food consumption and dietary behavior to examine creative solutions for improving the diets and health of Americans. Studies that have implications for USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs, nutrition education, food safety, and food labeling are especially encouraged. Studies proposing analysis of existing data, use of experimental methods with an applied empirical focus, or a combination of both are all eligible for funding. A list of existing nationally representative cross-sectional and longitudinal data useful when examining food issues is provided at the end of this section.

Priority Research Areas

Four research areas highlight priorities for the grant proposals. Suggestive examples of questions that may be addressed are provided under each area.

1. Food and nutrition assistance programs

ERS is interested in funding research on behavioral economics interventions to improve the diets and health of individuals who participate in any one of the food assistance and nutrition programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, such as the Food Stamp Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

ERS is interested in how behavioral economic factors affect the choices of food assistance program participants both with regard to the choices directly affected by the program, such as foods purchased with food stamp benefits or chosen as part of the school meals program, as well as choices that may be indirectly influenced by these programs. ERS is also interested in research that aims to explore ways to improve program uptake and program effectiveness.

Research in this priority area should focus on ways in which relationships between food choices and behavioral economic concepts—such as hyperbolic discounting, self-control, loss aversion, mental accounting, stress, and visual stimuli—may be applied to program design and delivery to increase program effectiveness or program participation rates. Research in this area should also consider the potential costs and benefits of these behavioral interventions.

For example:

- How much would altering the convenience of unhealthy foods in school cafeterias affect diet quality, both at school and at home?
- Would changing the timing of food stamp benefits increase purchase of produce or other healthful foods?
- Would the option to pre-order healthful groceries be an effective option among food assistance program participants?

2. *Nutrition education and information programs*

In recent years, policymakers have increasingly turned to information to influence consumer and producer behavior. Information policy involves providing (or requiring) information about specific product attributes, the proper use of a product, or best production practices. USDA and other federal health agencies seek to promote healthier eating through nutrition education and information programs such as the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, MyPyramid, and nutrition labeling. ERS is interested in behavioral economics research that examines how consumers acquire and use nutrition information and how the effectiveness of information and education programs can be improved.

For example:

- How could nutrition information on food labels be presented to make consumption choices and serving size information more salient?
- What would be the impact of changing labeling norms, such as framing regular versions of certain snack products as high-fat or high-sodium while renaming the low-sodium or low-fat versions as regular?
- What are the most effective ways to present the effect of repeated, but poor choices so as to amplify the benefits of small changes and encourage better decision making?

3. *Obesity and poor diets*

With obesity as a major public health concern, there is a growing need to encourage consumers to make healthier food and lifestyle choices. ERS is interested in general

policy-oriented research that examines how behavioral economic factors explain choices that result in poor diet quality and adverse health outcomes among the population overall and among low-income individuals, minority population groups, and children. Research in this priority area should focus on ways to apply behavioral economic concepts to diet and lifestyle choices that promote better health outcomes.

For example:

- Could loss aversion, though use of deposit contracts, be leveraged effectively to encourage physical activity or weight-loss, and at what cost?
- What other cognitive biases influence what we eat, how much, and how much we think we eat?
- What incentives would be needed to encourage individuals with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes or metabolic syndrome, to make necessary diet and lifestyle improvements?

4. *Food marketing and food environment*

Aspects of the eating environment, such as the social atmosphere, presence and level of distractions or even lighting can affect food choices by setting consumption norms and inhibit monitoring accuracy. These subtle cues can have large impacts on consumption volume, often without the individual being aware of their effect. ERS is interested in behavioral economics research that examines how such cues may encourage individuals to make healthier choices. ERS is also interested in behavioral industrial organization research that seeks to understand firm behavior when product demand is influenced by consumer decisionmaking errors.

For example:

- How are firms' product pricing, marketing, and promotion strategies affected when consumers have systematic biases in decisionmaking?
- How much can portion sizes be reduced without inducing compensating behavior that encourages people to just eat more?
- What would be the impact of changing the order in which food is displayed at cafeterias or information presented on menus?

The topics and questions discussed within each Priority Research Area are intended to stimulate research proposals. Applicants are encouraged to propose other policy-relevant topics.

ERS encourages the publication of research findings in scholarly journals. ERS also anticipates that the findings from the successful proposals will be presented at a behavioral health economics conference to be held at ERS in 2010 or as determined later. ERS may summarize and synthesize the findings in an ERS report.

Examples of nationally representative data sources:

| |
|--|
| American Community Survey |
| American Time Use Survey |
| Consumer Expenditure Survey |
| Current Population Survey |
| Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey-Birth Cohort |
| Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey-Kindergarten Cohort |
| Food Stamp Program State Policy Database |
| ERS Food Stamp Program Access Study Dataset |
| National Sample of Food Stamp Program Electronic Benefit Transfer Transactions, 2003 |
| National Food Stamp Program Survey, 1996 |
| National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey |
| Nielsen Homescan Consumer Panel Survey ¹ |
| Panel Study of Income Dynamics |
| School Health Policies and Programs Study |
| Survey of Income and Program Dynamics |
| School Nutrition and Dietary Assessment Study |
| Survey of Program Dynamics |

Note: For descriptions, go to

www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/data/

¹ ERS has acquired the Nielsen Homescan data for the years 1998-2006. Because the data are owned by Nielsen and are proprietary, use of the data is subject to the terms and the conditions of the contract under which the information was purchased. The contract limits the use of the data to issues of interest to the Department and allows sharing the data with external researchers when, as third-party consultants, the external researchers carry out the work of the Department. USDA-funded research agreements, therefore, can use these data subject to the terms of the contract.

Eligibility and Indirect and Other Costs

Grant proposals may be submitted by any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal, State, or county agencies, private organization, corporation, or individual. Proposals submitted by non-United States organizations will not be considered.

Indirect and Other Costs

Federal statutes dictate the amount of indirect costs that ERS pays by type of award and institution. In competitive grants, ERS pays the negotiated indirect cost rate not to exceed the audited rate of any federally recognized audit agency to State cooperative institutions and institutions other than State cooperative institutions and nonprofit institutions; and the negotiated indirect cost rate (no statutory limitation) to nonprofit institutions other than State cooperative institutions. For reimbursement of indirect costs, the applicant must include a copy of its indirect cost rate schedule with the application. Tuition shall be treated as an allowable cost, subject to negotiation, where reimbursement of such costs is not prohibited by law.

Peer Review of Applications

All proposals received will be acknowledged. If you do not receive an acknowledgment within 30 days of the submission deadline, please contact Lisa Mancino at (202) 694-5563 or e-mail: lmancino@ers.usda.gov. Prior to the review, a preliminary review will be made for meeting proposal eligibility requirements. Proposals that do not fall within the guidelines as stated in this document will be eliminated from program competition, and the applicant will be notified in writing.

All applicants will be notified in writing by **August 17, 2008**, as to whether their proposal has been accepted for an award. Applications submitted through Grants.gov may be monitored online at the website and will also receive a written notice from the program office. Peer review panel members will be selected based upon their training and experience in behavioral economics and other relevant research or technical fields.

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may have an impact on review or evaluation. Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as proposal content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The proposals will be selected based on a review by ERS and an outside panel consisting of three experts in behavioral economics and relevant fields. In addition to reviewers' comments, selection process will consider coverage of priority research areas, overlap among proposals and ongoing projects, program needs, potential benefits resulting from research collaborations on particular projects, proposed research products, and the availability of funding.

The review panel will use the following criteria and weights to evaluate proposals (100 points total): *Research Merit of the Proposal* (25), *Overall Approach* (25), *Feasibility* (30), *Relevance to Food Policy and Programs* (20).

How To Obtain Application Materials

ERS uses the Internet for primary distribution of information and application materials for its Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program. The Economic Research Service will accept applications for this program submitted electronically through www.grants.gov.

However, applicants may submit paper-copy applications instead.

Please note that this document, with downloadable Application for Federal Domestic Assistance (SF-424) and budget forms (SF-424A) may be requested from:

Lisa Mancino
Food Economics Division
Room N2098
1800 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-5831
Telephone: (202) 694-5563
Fax: (202) 694-5688
E-mail: lmancino@ers.usda.gov

Photocopies of materials and the application (SF-424) and budget form (SF-424A) are acceptable.

Application Process

Overview

These guidelines are provided to assist you in preparing a proposal for under this competitive grants announcement. Please read these guidelines carefully before preparing your submission. A checklist is provided at the beginning of this document to help you provide the necessary information for completing a proposal. An Application for Federal Domestic Assistance Form (SF-424) and a budget form (SF-424A) are required for the proposal, and they may be obtained using the Internet or by requesting a paper copy; contact information is provided under “*How To Obtain Application Materials*” above.

Submission Requirements

The proposal should demonstrate that the proposed project is important, methodologically sound, and worthy of support under the “*Evaluation Factors and Criteria*” above. The application should present the merits of the proposed project, and should be written with care and thoroughness. In preparing the proposal, applicants are urged to ensure that the name of the Principal Investigator and, where applicable, the name of the submitting institution are included on the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance Form (SF-424).

Format and Contents of Proposals

For electronic submissions through www.grants.gov, the proposal and all attachments must be submitted in portable document format (pdf). Using pdf allows applicants to preserve the formatting of their documents. In order to save a document as a pdf, the applicant will need to use pdf generator software. Grants.gov has published the following web page on tools and software that the applicant can use:
www.grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp.

The Standard Application for Funding Cover Page (SF-424)

Each copy of the proposal must contain an Application for Federal Domestic Assistance (SF-424) and be the first page of the application package. At least one copy of the form must contain pen-and-ink signatures if submitting by paper or electronic signatures if submitting via Grants.gov. Electronic copies of the form and general instructions are available at http://www07.grants.gov/agencies/approved_standard_forms.jsp. Instructions specific to this announcement are provided below.

Specific instructions for SF-424

| Item | Specific instruction |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Type of Submission | Check “Application” |
| 2 Type of Application | Check “New” |
| 3 Date Received | Leave blank |
| 4 Applicant Identifier | Leave blank |
| 5 a & b Federal Identifiers | Leave blank |
| 6 & 7 State Use Only | Leave blank |

| | |
|--|--|
| 8-9 | Complete using general instructions (appendix A) |
| 10 Name of Federal Agency | Enter "Economic Research Service, USDA" |
| 11 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number | Enter "10.256" |
| CDFA Title | Enter "Behavioral Health Economics Research Program" |
| 12 Funding Opportunity Number | Enter "BHER-001" |
| Funding Opportunity Title | Enter "Behavioral Health Economics Research Program" |
| 13-14 | Leave blank |
| 15-18 | Complete using general instructions (appendix A) |
| 19 | Check "c" |
| 20-21 | Complete using general instructions (appendix A) |

Standard Budget Form (SF-424A)

A summary budget is required detailing requested support for the overall project period, which is not to exceed 3 years. Funding levels accepted are up to a maximum of \$30,000, inclusive of indirect cost where applicable, for the duration of the project (not to exceed 3 years). Funds may be requested under any of the budget categories listed, provided that the item or service requested is identified as necessary for successful conduct of the proposed project, allowable under applicable Federal cost principles, and not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute or regulation.

Budget items include:

- Personnel
- Fringe benefits
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Contractual
- Other direct costs
- Indirect charges

Salaries of faculty members and other personnel who will be working on the project may be requested in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project.

Electronic copies of the standard budget form and general instructions are available at http://www07.grants.gov/agencies/approved_standard_forms.jsp. Instructions specific to this announcement are provided below.

Specific instructions for SF-424A

| Item | Specific instruction |
|--|---|
| 1(a) Grant Program Function or Activity | Enter "Behavioral Health Economics Research Program" |
| 1(b) Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number | Assistance Number Enter "10.256" |
| 1(c), (d), (f) | Leave blank |
| 1(e), 1(g) | Enter amount of Federal funds requested |
| 2-4 Leave blank | Leave blank |
| 5(b), (c), (d), (f) | Leave blank |
| 5(e), (g) | Enter amount of Federal funds requested |
| 6 a-k (columns 1 and 5) | Allocate Federal funds requested to appropriate budget categories |
| 6 a-k (columns 2-4) | Leave blank |
| 7-20 | Leave blank |
| 21-23 | Optional |

Project Description

The proposal description may not exceed 3 pages of written text. The proposal description PLUS figures, tables, references, other attachments, such as a survey instrument (if relevant), may not exceed a total of 10 pages.

The project description should follow the following format:

Introduction: A clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives or research questions of the proposed project should be included. The most significant published work in the field under consideration, including the work of key project personnel on the current application, should be referenced. The current status of research in this field should also be indicated.

Rationale and Significance: Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research. The objectives' specific relationship to the purposes described under "Priority Research Areas" section above should be addressed. Any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.

Research Methods: The hypotheses or questions being asked and the methodology being applied to the proposed project should be stated explicitly. Items that might be referenced in this section:

- A description of the research proposed in the sequence in which it is to be performed;
- Techniques to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the techniques;
- Explanation of data collection methods, including interviewer training, sample design and selection, and measures for obtaining adequate response rates (for proposed projects that plan to collect survey data);

- Results expected;
- Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;
- Discussion of relevant variables and of model specification issues (for proposed projects that plan to use multivariate analysis);
- Possible application of results;
- Pitfalls that may be encountered;
- Limitations to proposed procedures;
- A tentative schedule or workplan for conducting major steps of study, including a budget narrative; and
- Identification of research reports and outlets.

Hazardous to Personnel

In describing the research plan, the applicant must explain fully any materials, procedures, situations, or activities that may be hazardous to personnel (whether or not they are directly related to a particular phase of the proposed project), along with an outline of precautions to be taken to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards.

Format

All proposals are to be submitted on standard 8½” x 11” paper. In addition, margins must be at least 1 inch, type size must be 12 point (equivalent to this size for some printers is 10 pitch or 10 characters per inch, which is also acceptable), there should be no more than six (6) lines per inch, and there should be no page reductions.

Proposed Research Products

ERS encourages the publication of research findings in scholarly journals. ERS also anticipates that the findings from the successful proposals will be presented at a behavioral health economics conference to be held at ERS in 2010 or as determined later. ERS may summarize and synthesize the findings in an ERS report.

Note: The sections detailed below are not included in the page limitations for the Project Description section.

Collaborative Arrangements

If the nature of the proposed project requires collaboration or sub-contractual arrangements with other research scientists, corporations, organizations, agencies, or entities, the applicant must identify the collaborator(s) and provide a full explanation of the nature of the collaboration. Evidence (that is, letters of intent) should be provided to assure peer reviewers that the collaborators involved have agreed to render this service. When a project requests funds for multiple institutions, a lead institution must be designated.

Only one proposal may be submitted for the project and only from the lead institution. Other institutions may be designated as subcontractors. Proposals with Application for Funding Cover Pages from more than one institution are not permitted and will be returned without review. Identical proposals submitted by different investigators from different institutions are also not permitted and will be returned without review.

Vitae and Publications List(s)

For the Principal Investigator and each co-investigator listed on the Application for Funding Cover Page, for all collaborators and other senior personnel who expect to work on the project in a significant fashion (for instance, expectation of co-authorships on ensuing publications) whether or not funds are sought for their support, and for all subcontractors, the following should be included:

- *Curriculum Vitae (CV)*. The curriculum vitae should be limited to a presentation of academic and research credentials, such as educational, employment, and professional history, honors, and awards. The vitae shall be no more than two pages each in length, excluding publications listings; and
- *Publications List(s)*. A chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past 5 years, including those in press, must be provided for each professional project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also list only those non-refereed technical publications relevant to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete references as these usually appear in journals.

Indirect Cost Rate Schedule

For reimbursement of indirect costs, the applicant must include with the application a copy of its indirect cost rate schedule that reports the applicant's federally negotiated audited rate.

Current and Pending Support

The information in this section of the proposal provides reviewers with an opportunity to evaluate the contribution the proposed work will make to the investigators' overall research program.

The proposal must list any other current public or private research support (including in-house support) to the Principal Investigator or co-investigators, whether or not salary support for the person(s) involved is included in the budget. ERS must be informed of changes in pending grant support that arise after the proposal has been submitted. Nonflexible funds—including Principal Investigator and support staff salaries, office space, and other indirect costs—may be excluded when these funds are received through a noncompetitive process. Analogous information must be provided for any pending proposals, including this proposal, that are now being considered by, or that will be submitted in the near future to, other possible sponsors, including other USDA programs or agencies. Note that this proposal must be listed as Pending.

In addition to completing the information, Investigators also should include a brief statement of research objectives or project summaries for all projects listed in Current and Pending Support. Concurrent submission of identical or similar proposals to other possible sponsors will not prejudice proposal review or evaluation by the Program Manager or experts engaged by the Program Manager for this purpose. However, a

proposal that duplicates or overlaps substantially with a proposal already reviewed and funded (or that will be funded) by ERS will not be funded under this program.

Please include the following information under the heading “Current and Pending Support”:

- Record information for active and pending projects in separate sections by name, supporting agency, total funding amount, effective and expiration dates, percentage of time committed, and title of project.
- All current research to which the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, and other senior personnel have committed a portion of their time must be listed, whether or not salary for the person involved is included in the budgets of the various projects.

Additions to Project Description

Additions to the Project Description (appendices) are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed research. These may include reprints (papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals) or preprints (manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal must be accompanied by letter of acceptance from the publishing journal).

What/When/Where To Submit

To submit an application electronically, log onto Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) and follow the instructions.

For paper submissions, an original and 12 copies of the application are required. Due to the difficulty in identifying proposals submitted in several packages, all copies of each proposal must be mailed in a single package.

In addition, please ensure that each copy of the proposal is stapled securely in the upper left-hand corner. Every effort should be made to ensure that the proposal contains all pertinent information when originally submitted. Prior to mailing, it is urged that the proposal be compared with the checklist on the inside front cover of this announcement.

To ensure prompt receipt of non-electronic submitted proposals, use First Class or Express mail, or a courier service. To be considered for funding this fiscal year, proposals must be transmitted by July 3, 2008 (as indicated by postmark or date on courier bill of lading).

Late proposals will not be considered. Electronic or fax submissions will not be accepted.

Address for paper submissions by mail:

Lisa Mancino
Food Economics Division
Room N2098
1800 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-5831

Reminder: Applications must be submitted electronically on Grants.gov or as paper submission via mail by July 3, 2008.

ERS reserves the right to negotiate with the Principal Investigator or project director and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (for example, reductions in the scope of work), funding level, or period or method of support prior to recommending any project for funding.

A proposal may be withdrawn by the Principal Investigator at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the proposal; however, withdrawn proposals normally will not be returned. One copy of each proposal that is not selected for funding (including those that are withdrawn) will be retained by ERS for a period of one (1) year. The remaining copies will be destroyed.

Post-Award Administration

Duration of Awards

The total period for which a grant agreement is awarded may not exceed 3 years.

Management Information

Once a grant agreement has been reviewed and recommended for funding, specific management and organizational information relating to the applicant shall be requested on a one-time basis prior to the award. Copies of forms needed in fulfilling the requirements will be provided by ERS.

Notice of Award

A competitive grant agreement award document, containing the budget, terms and conditions of the award, and other necessary information, will be prepared and forwarded to each grantee or cooperator, along with a Notice of Competitive Grant Agreement Award, by the Administrative and Financial Management, ARS, USDA.

Financial Obligations

For any competitive grant agreement awarded, the maximum financial obligation of ERS shall be the amount of funds authorized for the award. This amount will be stated on the award instrument and on the approved budget. However, in the event of an erroneous amount is stated on the grant award instrument, the approved budget, or any supporting document, ERS reserves the unilateral right to make the correction and to make an appropriate adjustment in the amount of the award to align with the authorized amount. Nothing in these guidelines or any program announcement shall obligate ERS, the Department, or the United States to take favorable action on any application received in response to any announcement, or to support any project at a particular level. Further, neither the approval of any application nor the award of any project grant or cooperative agreement shall commit or obligate the United States in any way to make any renewal, supplemental, continuation, or other award with respect to any approved application or portion of an approved application.

Awardees will be required to ensure that all funds are expended in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant or cooperative agreement award, Departmental regulations, and the applicable Federal cost principles in effect on the date of the award.

Responsibility for the use and expenditure of grant or cooperative agreement funds may not be transferred or delegated in whole or in part to another party (even if a grantee or cooperator enters into a contractual relationship with that party), unless the grant or cooperative agreement itself is transferred in whole or in part to another party by ERS.

Authorization to make changes in approved project plans, budget, period of support, etc., will be governed largely by the terms and conditions of the competitive grant award agreement. Among other things, these terms and conditions will set forth the kinds of postaward changes that may be made by the awardee and the kinds of changes

that are reserved to ERS. It is urged that all key project personnel and authorized organizational representatives read them carefully.

Release of Information

ERS receives grant agreement proposals in confidence and will protect the confidentiality of their contents to the extent permitted by law. When a proposal results in a grant agreement, however, it becomes part of the public record and is available to the public upon written request. Copies of proposals (including excerpts from proposals) that are not funded will not be released. Information regarding funded projects will be made available to the extent permitted under the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and implementing USDA regulations.

Requests to obtain authorized information (and fee schedule relating to the handling of this information) or to obtain information regarding procedures related to release of grantor cooperative agreement information should be directed to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Coordinator, ARS Information Staff, 5601 Sunnyside Ave., Bldg. 1, Rm. 2248, Mail Stop 5128, Beltsville, MD 20705-5128; telephone (301) 504-1640.