

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



Economic  
Research  
Service



# Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program

## Fiscal 2001

Competitive Grants and Cooperative  
Agreements Program: Description  
and Application Process



**Food Assistance &  
Nutrition Research Program**

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## Checklist

All proposals submitted under the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP) must contain the applicable elements described in this brochure. 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 Funding Cover Page
  - Is all required information accurate and complete?
  - Has the Principal Investigator and the authorized organizational representative signed the Cover Page?
  - Is this a developmental award application?
  - 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?
- ✓ Table of Contents
  - Are page numbers included for each item?
- ✓ Project Summary
  - Has the Project Summary been included?
  - Do the name and institution of the Principal Investigator and co-investigators appear on the page, or on the following page?
  - Does it include research objectives?
  - Is it no more than 250 words?
- ✓ Project Description
  - Is the project fully described?
  - Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations, as specified?
  - Does this section begin as page 1, as specified?
  - Does it contain a tentative schedule or workplan of major steps of study?
- ✓ Citations to Project Description
  - Are all references cited?
  - Are all citations referenced?
  - Do all citations contain a title and are they in accepted journal format?
- ✓ 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?
- ✓ Budget (form ARS-455)
  - Are budget items complete?
  - Is the summary budget included?
  - Is the funding level total in line N within the stated limit of \$400,000 for the 3-year duration of the project proposal?
  - Is the budget duration within the stated limit of 3 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
  - Does the proposal conform to all format and page limitations and deadline requirements?
  - Are there an original and 12 copies?
  - Are all copies complete?

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## Overview

Applications are invited for competitive grant and cooperative agreement awards from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for fiscal 2001. This document provides background on the research areas of interest to the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP), application procedures, deadlines for submission, and guidance for the application process.

USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) anticipates awarding approximately \$2 million in fiscal 2001 for competitive grants and cooperative agreements. ERS will accept proposals under this program for funding levels, inclusive of indirect cost when applicable, between \$100,000 and \$400,000 (for the duration of the grant and/or the cooperative agreement, not to exceed 3 years). ERS will also consider supporting up to three research projects in the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000 for the development of expertise by newly graduated researchers or by senior researchers who are new to food assistance and nutrition issues. Applications intended for consideration of a developmental award must state that intention in the cover page. Parties interested in smaller grants should consult the FANRP website on the Internet at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/funding>

### Authority

The authority for this program is contained in the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (P.L. 106-378). Under this program, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary may award competitive grants and cooperative agreements for the support of research projects to further USDA programs, especially the Food Stamp Program (FSP), Child Nutrition Programs (School Breakfast, National School Lunch, Summer Feeding, and Adult/Child Care Feeding), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Proposals may be submitted by any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal agencies, private organization, corporation, or individual.

### 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.

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## Priority Research Areas

ERS is accepting proposals for support of high-priority research of importance to USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs in five research areas. Proposals should focus on research and evaluation studies that have direct implications for USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs. Anticipated funding in fiscal 2001 for competitive grants and cooperative agreements will be approximately \$2 million.

The five Priority Research Areas listed below highlight the research priorities for which ERS has determined that competitive grants or cooperative agreements are appropriate. ERS is especially interested in proposals that make use of existing data, such as the Current Population Survey (CPS), the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD), the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), the Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals (CSFII), the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES), the National Food Stamp Program Survey (NFSPS), the National Health and Nutrition Education Survey (NHANES), the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), or the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K). Of particular interest are those proposals that use existing longitudinal data or that make creative and innovation linkages between data sets, such as links between administrative data sets from various USDA programs or links between administrative and survey data. The suggested topics and questions discussed below within each Priority Research Area are not meant to be exhaustive. Applicants may propose other topics within any of the Priority Research Areas, but they must provide persuasive justifications for those topics in their proposals.

FANRP has a wide variety of ongoing research projects. To avoid duplication, applicants are encouraged to read project descriptions in the "Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program, Final Report: Fiscal 2000 Activities" or in the FANRP Project Database. The report and the FANRP Project Database are available on the FANRP website at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/fanrp>. In addition, the site contains information on various data sets that are available for food and nutrition assistance research.

Applicants may address multiple issues, but must specify one of the five Priority Research Areas below:

- I. Workforce Attachment, Income Volatility, and Administrative Costs
  - A. Understanding Program Participation Decisions of the Working Poor
  - B. Income Volatility and Administrative Efficiency
  - C. Mother's Work and Time Constraints
- II. Food Assistance as a Safety Net
  - A. Food Spending, Food Security, and Food Assistance Participation
  - B. Coping With Constrained Resources
- III. Targeting High Needs Subgroups
  - A. The Elderly: Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Nutrition and Health
  - B. Reaching Teenage Girls
  - C. Childhood Obesity
- IV. Eating Patterns, Food Choices, and Health Outcomes
  - A. Eating Patterns and Diet Quality
  - B. The Development of Eating Patterns and Obesity
  - C. Understanding How Diet and Food Assistance Program Participation May Reduce Health Disparities



- V. Nutrition Education: Public and Private Returns to Information
  - A. Economics of Information Acquisition and Intertemporal Food Choices
  - B. Nutrition Education: Market Segmentation, Outreach, and Evaluation

## **I. Workforce Attachment, Income Volatility, and Administrative Costs**

### ***A. Understanding Program Participation Decisions of the Working Poor***

Application rules, program requirements, and administrative practices associated with food assistance programs impose costs on participants. In making participation decisions, households weigh the monetary and nonmonetary costs of these programmatic factors against program benefits. The various food assistance programs administered by USDA target different segments of the population, differ greatly in their administrative demands on participants, and deliver different types and amounts of benefits. Given the higher opportunity cost of their time, employed individuals generally find programs with high time demands less attractive. However, the working poor is a broadly defined group that includes different types of households whose decisions regarding participation in food assistance programs are likely to vary depending on their workforce attachment, family composition, prior experiences with public assistance, and alternative sources of food assistance. FANRP encourages research on factors influencing food assistance participation decisions and dynamics for different subgroups of the working poor and the relationship of these factors to recent economic conditions. The use of administrative caseload data and recent survey data (e.g., the 1996 SIPP Panel, SPD, PSID, NFSPS, and the CPS monthly core labor force files, the March Annual Demographic and Food Security Supplements) is encouraged.

### ***B. Income Volatility and Administrative Efficiency***

High income volatility is a factor that complicates the tradeoffs between benefit targeting, payment accuracy, and participation for means-tested food assistance programs. Low-income workers do not always work regular hours, and they tend to change jobs frequently. These patterns make it difficult to determine income eligibility and increase the probability of administrative error. While this is an issue for all the means-tested programs, high income volatility makes tradeoffs acute for programs with stringent quality control requirements and complex benefit structures, such as the Food Stamp Program (FSP). The FSP requires substantial documentation and verification of all sources of income and many categories of expenses at the time of application and at periodic renewals. Food stamp recipients are also required to report intermittent changes in circumstances. State and local agencies have some flexibility regarding administrative practice in this area; however, the research base for assessing the costs and benefits of alternative practices is sparse. Studies that broadly examine the social costs and benefits of alternative administrative practice (e.g., change reporting and recertification requirements) are encouraged. This includes estimation of the time and money costs to participants of complying with program procedures and rules, the impact of this burden on participation in the FSP and other food assistance and/or work support programs, the administrative costs of specific practices (e.g., application processing, benefit determination, recertification, change reporting, and case management), optimal duration for certification and reporting periods, the benefit savings attributed to quality control procedures, and other potential benefits to taxpayers and the general public associated with administrative practice. Cost-benefit comparisons with other income support programs are also of interest.

### ***C. Mother's Work and Time Constraints***

As increasing numbers of mothers join the labor force, less time is available for food preparation and related activities. Working mothers also may rely more heavily on prepared foods eaten away from home, such as meals and snacks provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and/or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Working mothers also might purchase more prepared foods, either from the grocery store or from foodservice establishments, such as fast food restaurants and take-outs. Some working mothers may transfer some food purchasing and preparation responsibilities to their children and/or other household members. In addition, mother's work may influence how children spend their time, with potential impacts on the child's energy balance. Research is needed on how working mothers, particularly low-income mothers, cope with the increased time constraints associated with labor force participation, and how this affects their use of food assistance programs, their food expenditures and types of foods purchased, and the impacts of such coping strategies on their children's dietary patterns, diet quality, and obesity. Research is encouraged using existing data, such as the NFSPS, CSFII, NHANES, or the CES.

## **II. Food Assistance as a Safety Net**

### ***A. Food Spending, Food Security, and Food Assistance Participation***

Food stamp benefits are specifically designed to increase the food purchasing power of participating households. Food assistance from other programs can also add substantially to the resources that low-income households have available to meet their food needs. A better understanding of the links among food assistance program participation, the type and value of benefits, shopping patterns, and food expenditures could contribute to the overall understanding of how food assistance programs perform as a safety net. Substantial new data on food expenditures of U.S. households have been collected since 1995 as a component of the CPS Food Security Supplement. Alternative approaches for measuring food expenditures have been tested and several split-panel experiments undertaken. Analysis of these data is encouraged to study methodological improvements in measuring food expenditures, at-home versus away-from-home food spending, and patterns of spending by store type, and in understanding the relationships among these measures, food program usage and food security. Researchers are encouraged to correct for selection bias when examining food assistance program impacts. Studies using food expenditures data from the CES, PSID, CSFII, NFSPS and other nationally representative databases are also encouraged.

### ***B. Coping With Constrained Resources***

When facing constrained resources, households make choices and undertake strategies to meet basic household needs, including adequate food intake, as best they can. These strategies include adjustments to diet quality and quantity, trading off food expenditures against expenditures for other (nonfood) necessities, drawing on support from friends and family, drawing on community emergency food resources, and participating in State and Federal cash welfare and food and nutrition assistance programs. Data on many of these behavioral responses are now available in the CPS Food Security Supplements, which can be matched with the monthly core CPS labor files and the March Annual Demographic Supplement. Longitudinal data from the core SIPP panel surveys (including the Well-Being Supplement data) and the SPD also offer potential for studying these issues. In general, research is needed to integrate this information into a comprehensive picture of how households of various kinds combine these strategies and resources to meet their food needs and how effective these strategies are at reducing the more severe forms of food insecurity



and hunger. Food security measures have also been incorporated into other national surveys (e.g., NHANES, CSFII, ECLS, PSID, and NSFPS). Studies using these data to link nutritional, behavioral, and educational outcome measures with food security status and food assistance program use are of special interest.

### **III. Targeting High Needs Subgroups**

#### ***A. The Elderly: Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Nutrition and Health***

The elderly face a variety of barriers to consuming a nutritious diet. Food preparation difficulties, transportation limitations, social isolation, and health problems mean that the provision of food alone may not be sufficient to ensure consumption of a nutritious diet. FANRP would like to encourage research (preferably using existing data) to stratify the elderly on the basis of their barriers to a nutritious diet, to identify the relative sizes of these strata, and to suggest the combinations of services that may be most effective in overcoming these barriers for different groups. In addition, research is encouraged on the cost-effectiveness of the various approaches to delivering food assistance, nutrition, and related services as a means of allowing vulnerable elderly to continue to live independently, thereby delaying or avoiding the need for costly institutional care.

#### ***B. Reaching Teenage Girls***

Teenage girls tend to have high rates of eating disorders, are more likely to skip lunch, and tend to have low levels of calcium intake. Yet, the teenage years are an important time from the perspective of nutrition. Adequate intakes of important nutrients, such as calcium and iron, during these years enable teenage girls to build up bone mass density and develop nutritional stores that, later in life, may improve birth outcomes for their children. The SBP and the NSLP offer nutrient-rich meals that have the potential to improve diets, but teenage girls have low participation in these programs compared with other school-age children. Research is needed on why teenage girls are less likely to participate than other school-age children, potential strategies for increasing their participation rates and their overall diet quality, and the potential costs and benefits of implementing such strategies.

#### ***C. Childhood Obesity***

An increasing proportion of children are overweight or obese, yet little is known about the potential health and economic consequences associated with this trend. FANRP is interested in estimating the short- and long-term public and private costs of increased childhood obesity. In addition, FANRP is interested in better understanding the role of factors that might be amenable to change via food assistance programs (e.g., foods provided and nutrition education). To what extent do food assistance programs, such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the FSP, the CACFP, the SFSP, SBP and the NSLP (which can also provide after-school snacks), provide an opportunity for nutrition education and promotion of behaviors associated with obesity prevention (e.g., physical activity)? Research is encouraged using the ECLS-K and other existing data sets that include information on children's weight status and activity levels.

### **IV. Eating Patterns, Food Choices, and Health Outcomes**

#### ***A. Eating Patterns and Diet Quality***

Diet quality depends on the overall choices of individual foods. These choices are often made in terms of how some foods substitute for or complement each other. For example, individuals who eat breakfast cereal typically consume milk as a complement food, whereas individuals who drink soft drinks typically substitute them for other beverages, such as milk.

Major patterns of substitution or complementarity among foods may therefore create patterns that have important effects on overall diet quality. FANRP encourages research that will identify eating patterns “typologies” that are associated with diet quality and link them to socioeconomic and lifestyle characteristics of individuals, including food assistance program participation. Results of this research may be useful in identifying better methods of dietary assessment, for categorizing individuals for better targeting of nutrition information, for program design, and for service delivery.

### ***B. The Development of Eating Patterns and Obesity***

Cross-sectional data do not allow researchers to determine whether certain dietary patterns (such as high intake of calories from fat), episodic food insecurity, or activity levels are associated with the development of obesity, or whether they represent a consequence of being overweight or obese (for example, obese individuals may seek comfort in high-fat foods). To obtain insights into the factors associated with the development of eating patterns and obesity, a long-term perspective is needed. This might be obtained from longitudinal studies—such as the Framingham Study, MR. FIT, or the Nurse’s Health Study—or from using multiple years of cross-sectional data to create synthetic cohorts. FANRP is interested in funding research using existing data sets that employs such a longitudinal perspective. Of particular interest is understanding the role that eating patterns and food assistance programs may play in the prevention of obesity and associated health problems, such as diabetes.

### ***C. Understanding How Diet and Food Assistance Program Participation May Reduce Health Disparities***

Reducing health disparities among groups of different sociodemographic characteristics is a Federal objective. Healthful diet during pregnancy and the early years of life may improve birth outcome, and enhance children’s growth, development, and learning. Diet also may affect the risk of a number of major health conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Research is needed in identifying the extent to which participation in food assistance programs and food choices may reduce health disparities by promoting healthy child development and preventing diet-related disease. In particular, research is needed to better understand the role that eating patterns may play in health promotion and disease prevention among low-income groups, the economic, cultural, and informational factors that may contribute to differences in eating patterns among sociodemographic groups, and how food assistance and nutrition education programs may be most effective in reducing diet-related health disparities.

## **V. Nutrition Education: Public and Private Returns to Information**

### ***A. Economics of Information Acquisition and Intertemporal Food Choices***

The evidence of the benefits of a healthy diet is encouraging. An individual’s level of nutrition information has the potential to influence his or her diet quality. Yet the quantitative information is limited on the returns to investment in the various approaches to nutrition education. FANRP is interested in understanding the public and private returns to the provision of information through the various nutrition education activities offered by the food assistance programs. Research is also needed on the intertemporal costs and benefits of food choices and how different sociodemographic groups discount the long-term benefits of healthier diets.



***B. Nutrition Education: Market Segmentation, Outreach, and Evaluation***

To develop effective nutrition education messages, it is important to understand the food assistance clientele's perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, emotions, concerns, and motivations relating to barriers to healthy eating and increased physical activity. FANRP is interested in funding research to identify and characterize market segments for nutrition education and outreach purposes. Research is also needed to develop nutrition education messages and strategies that would be tailored to the needs of the identified market segments. In addition, research is needed on tools to assess the effectiveness of nutrition education, with special emphasis on tools that avoid the problems of self-report bias. Examples might include linking scanner data to a community intervention or point-of-sale data from school cafeterias.

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## Eligibility Requirements, Award Types, and Indirect and Other Costs

The Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP) may award competitive grants or cooperative agreements under this announcement. **Applicants need not specify the type of award in their proposal. FANRP reserves the right to determine the type of award.** The type of award made for a selected proposal will be governed by the nature and degree of involvement desired by FANRP in the project and the type of institution requesting funding (see “Authority,” page 1). In accordance with Federal statutes, the amount of indirect cost ERS will pay is governed by the type of award and the type of institution receiving the award.

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.

The research proposed must be specifically designed for the five Priority Research Areas described previously. Proposals may include requests for conferences that bring together members of the interested research community to identify research needs, update information, or advance an area of research recognized as an integral part of the research effort.

### Types of Awards

- **Competitive Grants:** Competitive grants will be supported when the research topic does not require substantial involvement between ERS staff and the recipient during the performance of the award.
- **Cooperative Agreements:** Cooperative agreements will be supported when the research topic requires more substantial involvement between ERS and the investigator(s). There are two types of cooperative agreements: cooperative research agreements and assistance-type cooperative agreements. In a cooperative research agreement, ERS staff and extramural researchers are close collaborators and contributors to support the research; in an assistance-type cooperative agreement the extramural researchers are responsible for conducting the greater part of the work on the project. Cooperative research agreements require both parties to contribute to the funding of the project; assistance-type cooperative agreements do not have this joint funding requirement.

### Indirect and Other Costs

Federal statutes dictate the amount of indirect costs that ERS pays by type of award and institution. In cooperative research agreements, ERS pays: no indirect costs to State cooperative institutions (i.e., land-grant universities and their constituent schools and departments); the negotiated indirect cost rate not to exceed 10 percent of total direct costs to nonprofit institutions other than State cooperative institutions; and the negotiated indirect cost rate not to exceed the audited rate of any federally recognized audit agency to other institutions. In competitive grants and assistance-type cooperative agreements, 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.

ERS does not pay tuition remission/reimbursement under any type of agreement.



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## 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 the FANRP office at (202) 694-5270 or e-mail: FANRP@ers.usda.gov. Prior to technical examination, a preliminary review will be made for responsiveness to the five Priority Research Areas (for example, relationship of the proposal to one of the five research areas and proposed 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.

Peer review panels will be convened to review proposals in each research area. All applicants will be notified in writing by October 31, 2001, as to whether their proposal has been accepted for an award by FANRP.

Peer review panel members will be selected based upon their training and experience in relevant research or technical fields, taking into account the following factors:

- The level of formal social science or technical education and other relevant experience of the individual as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research and other relevant activities;
- The need to include as peer reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant social science or technical fields;
- The need to include as peer reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (for example, universities, industry, private consultant(s), and geographic locations); and
- The need to include as peer reviewers individuals with relevant program knowledge and experience.

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.

SAMPLE ONLY

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## Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The proposal evaluation process includes both internal staff review and evaluation by peer review panels with members drawn from universities, industry, private consultants, and government officials. Peer review panels will be selected and structured to provide expertise and objective judgment in the evaluation of the proposals.

The peer review panel will use the following criteria and weights to evaluate proposals (100 points total):

### ***Research Merit of the Proposal (weight: 35 points)***

This criterion is used to assess the conceptual adequacy of the hypothesis or research question, the clarity and delineation of objectives, the adequacy of the description of the undertaking, and how the anticipated results will advance policy knowledge and the development and implementation of programs. Background information should be brief for proposals that address one of the topics described on pages 2-7; a more extensive justification is needed for a proposal with a nonlisted topic.

### ***Overall Approach (weight: 30 points)***

This criterion relates to the probability of success of project; time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; analytic approach; and research design, appropriateness of data, and suitability and feasibility of methodology.

### ***Workplan, Budget, and Cost-Effectiveness (weight: 20 points)***

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost-effective. Reviewers will evaluate if the workplan is reasonable and sufficient to ensure timely implementation and completion of the study. The workplan should also provide evidence of the adequacy of available or attainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation. When achievement of the workplan requires collaboration, evidence of the adequacy of support from and commitment to cooperation from any collaborative organization.

### ***Key Personnel (weight: 15 points)***

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications of the key persons who will carry out the project.



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## How To Obtain Application Materials

FANRP is using the Internet for primary distribution of information and application materials for its Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program. Please note that this document, with a downloadable budget form, is available on the FANRP website at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/funding>. Photocopies of materials and the budget form (ARS-455) are acceptable. Paper copies may also be requested from:

Ms. Cathi Ferguson  
FANRP/ERS  
1800 M Street, NW, Room N2129  
Washington, DC 20036-5831  
Telephone: (202) 694-5270  
Fax: (202) 694-5677  
Email: [FANRP@ers.usda.gov](mailto:FANRP@ers.usda.gov)

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## Application Process

### Overview

These guidelines are provided to assist you in preparing a proposal to the Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program of the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program. 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. A budget form ARS-455 is required for the proposal, and it may be obtained using the Internet or by requesting a paper copy; contact information is provided on page 11.

### Submission Requirements

The purpose of a grant or cooperative agreement proposal is to persuade FANRP and members of the food assistance and nutrition research community who provide advice to FANRP that the proposed project is important, methodologically sound, and worthy of support under the criteria listed on page 10. Therefore, the proposal must be submitted in response to one of the five Priority Research Areas (page 2). The application should be self-contained, should clearly present the merits of the proposed project, and should be written with care and thoroughness. It is important that all essential information for comprehensive evaluation be included. Omissions often result in processing delays and may jeopardize funding opportunities.

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 Funding Cover Page and **at the top of each page**. This will permit easy identification in the event that the application becomes disassembled during the review process.

### Format and Contents of Proposals

#### *Application for Funding Cover Page*

Each copy of the proposal must contain an Application for Funding Cover Page. This is designed by the applicant but must be the first page of the application. At least one copy of this information must contain pen-and-ink signatures as outlined below. In completing this cover page include the following information:

- *Title of Proposal.* The title of the proposal must be brief (80-character maximum), yet represent the major thrust of the project. Because this title will be used to provide information to those who may not be familiar with the proposed project, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition, phrases such as “investigation of” or “research on” should not be used.
- *Statement of Whether This Is a Developmental Award Application.*
- *Program to Which You Are Applying.* “FANRP”
- *Priority Research Area.* Choose the Priority Research Area that is most appropriate to the research being proposed (i.e., Workforce Attachment, Income Volatility, and Administrative Costs; Food Assistance as a Safety Net; Targeting High Needs Subgroups; Eating Patterns, Food Choices, and Health Outcomes; Nutrition Education: Public and Private Returns to Information). It is important that only one research area be



selected. When the appropriateness of the chosen research area may be in question, the final program area assignment will be made by the FANRP staff. The Principal Investigator will be informed of any changes in assigned research area.

- *Principal Investigator/Project Director.* List the name of the proposing Principal Investigator; there can be only one Principal Investigator or Project Director, who must sign the Application for Funding Cover Page. If the proposal has one or more co-investigator(s), all must be listed (signatures of co-investigators are not required) on the Application for Funding Cover Page. Co-investigators should be limited to those required for major research collaboration; minor collaborators or consultants are more appropriately designated as collaborators (see page 15). Only the Principal Investigator listed will receive direct correspondence from FANRP.
- *Type of Institution.* Identify the institution type of the Principal Investigator (awards can be to only one institution or individual); no other designation is accepted: Hispanic-Serving Institution, Land-Grant 1994 (Tribal Colleges and Universities), Land-Grant University 1862, Land-Grant University 1890 or Tuskegee University, Public University or College (Non-Land Grant), Private University or College, Cooperative Extension Service, State Agricultural Experiment Station, USDA/REE Laboratory, Other Federal Research Laboratory, State or Local Government, Minority-Owned Business, Female-Owned Business, Small Business, Private Profit-Making, Private Nonprofit, Individual, Other (specify). Contact your institution's business office if you have any question regarding the proper identification of type of institution.
- *Telephone Numbers.* Please list the telephone and fax numbers and the e-mail addresses (if available) of the Principal Investigator and co-investigators. In addition, please include a telephone number where a message can be left, if different from above.
- *Signatures.* Sign and date the Application for Funding Cover Page. All proposals must be signed by the proposing Principal Investigator and, for those proposals being submitted through institutions or organizations, endorsed by the authorized organizational representative who possesses the necessary authority to commit the applicant's time and other relevant resources. The Principal Investigator, who signed the Application for Funding Cover Page, will be listed on the grant or cooperative agreement award document in the event that an award is made. Proposals that do not contain the signature of the authorized organizational representative cannot be considered for support.

### ***Table of Contents***

A Table of Contents, itself unpaginated, should be placed immediately after the Application for Funding Cover Page. This table should direct the reader to the pages for all sections of the proposal, beginning with the Project Description on page 1.

### ***Project Summary***

The proposal must contain a Project Summary, and must be assembled as the third page of the proposal (immediately after the Table of Contents) and should not be numbered. The names and institutions of the Principal Investigator and all co-investigators should be listed on the summary page (if space is insufficient, please use a separate sheet immediately following the Project Summary in the proposal). The Project Summary is limited to 250 words. The summary is not intended for the general reader; consequently, it may contain technical language comprehensible by persons in disciplines relating to the food and

agricultural sciences. The project summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on:

- Overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; and
- Plans to accomplish project goal(s).

The importance of a concise, informative project summary cannot be overemphasized.

### ***Project Description***

The written text may not exceed 15 pages (whether single- or double-spaced) of written text and may not exceed a total of 20 pages including figures and tables. The proposal should be assembled so that the Project Description immediately follows the Project Summary. To clarify page limitation requirements, page numbering for the Project Description should start with 1, and should be placed on the bottom of the page. The 15-page limitation does not include figures, tables, or attachments such as the survey instrument (if relevant). 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. The project description must contain the following components:

- *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 reviewed. The current status of research in this field should also be described.
- *Rationale and Significance.* Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research. The objectives' specific relationship to the potential long-term improvement in the efficiency of the USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs should be shown clearly. These purposes are described under Priority Research Areas on page 2. 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. Specifically, this section must include:
  - 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; and
  - A tentative schedule or workplan for conducting major steps of study.



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.

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

### ***Citations to Project Description***

All references cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an accepted journal format.

### ***Collaborative Arrangements***

If the nature of the proposed project requires collaboration or subcontractual 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)***

To assist peer reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed project staff, all personnel who will be involved in the proposed project must be identified clearly. 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.

### ***Budget (Form ARS-455)***

A summary budget is required detailing requested support for the overall project period, which is not to exceed 3 years. Funding levels accepted are between \$100,000 and \$400,000, inclusive of indirect cost where applicable, for the duration of the project (not to

exceed 3 years). ERS will also consider supporting up to three research projects in the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000 for the development of expertise by newly graduated researchers or by senior researchers who are new to food assistance and nutrition issues.

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:

- Salaries and wages
- Nonexpendable equipment
- Materials and supplies
- Domestic travel
- Publication costs/page charges
- Computer costs
- Other direct costs
- Indirect costs
- Cost sharing (ignore this category, may be requested later for cooperative agreements)

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.

See page 11 to obtain a paper copy or an electronic copy.

#### ***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 listed on the Application for Funding Cover Page, whether or not salary support for the person(s) involved is included in the budget. FANRP 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 FANRP 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***

Each project description is expected to be complete without the need to refer to additional materials. However, additions to the Project Description (appendices) are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed research. This total 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).

Manuscripts sent in support of the proposal should be single-spaced and printed on both sides of the page. Each manuscript must be identified with the name of the submitting organization, the name of the Principal Investigator, and the title of the proposal, and be securely attached to each copy of the proposal. Staff of FANRP will not collate applicant proposals or proposal addenda.

Information may not be appended to a proposal to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the project description. Extraneous materials will not be used during the review process.

### ***What/Where To Submit***

An original and 12 copies of the application are required. Due to the volume of proposals that are expected and 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 submitted proposals, use First Class or Express mail, or a courier service. To be considered for funding this fiscal year, proposals (an original and 12 copies) must be transmitted by May 18, 2001 (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 Submitting Proposals:

Economic Research Service, USDA  
FANRP Business Office  
1800 M Street, NW, Room N2129  
Washington, DC 20036-5831

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## **Proposal Disposition**

FANRP will select those proposals that will be offered an award based upon peer review, research priorities, and the availability of funding.

FANRP 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 FANRP for a period of one (1) year. The remaining copies will be destroyed.

SAMPLE ONLY  
OUT OF DATE



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## **Duration of Awards**

The total period for which a grant or cooperative agreement is awarded (including all funded and unfunded time extensions) may not exceed 3 years.

## **Management Information**

Once a grant or cooperative 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 the FANRP office.

## **Notice of Award**

A competitive grant or cooperative 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 or Cooperative Agreement Award, by the Administrative and Financial Management Division, ARS, USDA.

## **Financial Obligations**

For any competitive grant or cooperative 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 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.

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## Post-Award Administration

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 or cooperative agreement. Among other things, these terms and conditions will set forth the kinds of post-award changes that may be made by the awardee and the kinds of changes that are reserved to the FANRP Office. It is urged that all key project personnel and authorized organizational representatives read them carefully.

### Release of Information

ERS receives grant and cooperative 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 or cooperative 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.



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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.