



Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program

Fiscal 2005

Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program

Description and Application Process



Checklist

All proposals submitted under the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP) must contain the applicable elements described in this brochure and should be mailed by May 23, 2005. 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?
 - 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?
 - Have you included the requested total funding amount from the budget form?
- ✓ 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 \$300,000 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?

Contents

Overview	1
Authority	1
Applicable Federal Statutes, Regulations, and Guidelines	1
Priority Research Areas	2
Strengthening Economic Incentives in Food Assistance Programs	3
Food Assistance as a Safety Net	4
Food Choices, Diet Quality, Obesity, and Health Outcomes	4
Eligibility Requirements, Award Types, and Indirect and Other Costs	6
Types of Awards	6
Indirect and Other Costs	6
Peer Review of Applications	7
Evaluation Factors and Criteria	8
Research Merit of the Proposal	8
Overall Approach	8
Workplan, Budget, and Cost-Effectiveness	8
Key Personnel	8
How To Obtain Application Materials	9
Application Process	10
Overview	10
Submission Requirements	10
Format and Contents of Proposals	10
Application for Funding Cover Page	10
Table of Contents	11
Project Summary	11
Project Description	12
Citations to Project Description	13
Collaborative Arrangements	13
Vitae and Publications List(s)	13
Budget	13
Indirect Cost Rate Schedule	14
Current and Pending Support	14
Additions to Project Description	15
What/When/Where To Submit	15
Proposal Disposition	16
Duration of Awards	17
Management Information	17
Notice of Award	17
Financial Obligations	17
Post-Award Administration	18
Release of Information	18

Overview

Applications are invited for competitive grant and cooperative agreement awards from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for fiscal 2005. 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 \$1.5 million in fiscal 2005 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 \$300,000 (for the duration of the grant and/or the cooperative agreement, not to exceed 3 years). Parties interested in smaller grants should consult the FANRP website at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/funding>.

Authority

The authority for this program is contained in the Omnibus Budget Appropriations Act, Fiscal 2005 (P.L. 108-447). 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 food and nutrition assistance programs, especially the Food Stamp Program (FSP), Child Nutrition Programs (School Breakfast, National School Lunch, Summer Food Service, and Child and Adult Care Food Program), 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 agency, 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.

Priority Research Areas

ERS is accepting proposals for support of high-priority research of importance to USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs in three 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 2005 for competitive grants and cooperative agreements will be approximately \$1.5 million.

The three 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 Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), the Current Population Survey (CPS), the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD), the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES), the National Food Stamp Program Survey (NFSPS), the American Time Use Survey (ATUS), or the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). 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 2004 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>. In addition, the site contains information on various data sets that are available for food and nutrition assistance research at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/data>.

Applicants may address multiple issues, but must specify one of the three priority research areas below:

I. Strengthening Economic Incentives in Food Assistance Programs

- A. Program Incentives, Policy Choices, and Economic Impacts
- B. Evaluating Program Effectiveness

II. Food Assistance as a Safety Net

- A. Household Tradeoffs, Well-Being, and Competing Needs

III. Food Choices, Diet Quality, Obesity, and Health Outcomes

- A. Food Choices of Low-Income Populations
- B. Obesity, Health, and Developmental Outcomes

I. Strengthening Economic Incentives in Food Assistance Programs

A. Program Incentives, Policy Choices, and Economic Impacts

Economics literature has a tradition of investigating how incentives affect the behavior of economic and political agents. FANRP is interested in studies that draw on this tradition to assess food assistance policy choices, participation behaviors, program effectiveness, and program impacts on local, regional, and national economies.

Food Stamp Program (FSP) caseloads have been rising in recent years more rapidly than would be expected based on macroeconomic factors alone. Coupled with recent declines in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, the caseload increase raises questions about whether the FSP's role as a safety net is changing. In the past, the program acted as an automatic stabilizer for the macroeconomy and as additional income support to clients receiving cash welfare. Have eligible individuals changed the way they make participation decisions? If so, how important are economic factors versus policy choices? Studies examining these issues as well as research to quantify the impact of the FSP on local and regional economies are encouraged.

FANRP is also interested in studies that can inform the upcoming 2007 reauthorization of the FSP. These studies include assessments of reforms enacted during the last reauthorization as well as research that identifies promising reforms. Projects with timelines of 1 year or less and using the most recent household survey and administrative data are especially encouraged.

The WIC Program has grown rapidly and is facing new cost-containment pressures, including the proliferation of WIC-only stores, rising food prices (such as milk in 2004), decreasing rebates on infant formulas, and increasing costs from infant formulas not covered by the rebates. FANRP would like to better understand the new challenges in managing the program and identify possible solutions to these problems. What is the potential for using regulatory incentives or market forces, rather than regulatory rulemaking, to contain costs and/or improve participants' nutrition, and what are the tradeoffs? How does WIC affect participants' breastfeeding decisions, taking into account both the positive incentives of breastfeeding promotion and the negative incentives of providing free infant formula?

Research on the costs and benefits (in terms of quantity, quality, convenience, and customer satisfaction) of alternative food procurement and distribution systems used by food assistance programs is also of interest to FANRP. For example, within the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), what are the costs and benefits of establishing food-buying cooperatives, directly contracting with farmers ("farm-to-school"), or using the U.S. Department of Defense procurement system for purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables (DoD Fresh)?

B. Evaluating Program Effectiveness

FANRP is interested in evaluating program effectiveness by using experimentally designed evaluations of demonstration projects or by taking advantage of opportunities for natural experiments that allow examination of program effects or modifications. Opportunities for natural experiments can be created by local variation in program eligibility, conditions affecting access, or service delivery. To the extent that researchers have access to appropri-

ate State or local data, examining the effects of local variations may provide insights into program effectiveness and the factors that influence it. Examples include: State variations in categorical eligibility for the FSP or adjunctive eligibility for WIC; differential State takeup of FSP administrative options; local differences in WIC delivery of nutritional services and breastfeeding promotion; and differing aspects of the school meals environment, such as locally determined wellness policies and competitive foods. Effects of participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) might be examined by comparing low-income children who are on a waiting list for Head Start (or another CACFP-participating child care organization) with enrolled participants.

Another area of interest is to develop practical outcome measures that do not rely (or do not exclusively rely) on self-reporting. Evaluation strategies for the school meal programs may include the use of administrative data on food purchasing by school food services, point-of-sale data in school meal programs, or digital camera recordings of plate waste. For the FSP or WIC, store scanner data may be a means of assessing impacts. Such research should address the validity of the method and its practicality in terms of cost and respondent burden.

Studies evaluating smaller or more narrowly targeted food assistance programs, such as the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, or Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, are also encouraged, if they can build on existing or easily obtainable data.

II. Food Assistance as a Safety Net

A. Household Tradeoffs, Well-Being, and Competing Needs

Low, variable, and uncertain income flows can create difficult choices among competing needs in low-income households. Understanding the tradeoffs that households make under these circumstances and the role that food assistance programs have on food purchases, food security, and overall well-being is of interest. Do food stamps and other food assistance benefits reduce income volatility for households? What role do these programs play in household budgets? Does it matter, in terms of smoothing food consumption and/or expenditure volatility, whether benefits are issued in cash or in-kind or whether they are targeted to individuals or households? Are food assistance benefits supplanting other sources of assistance and permitting greater expenditures on other household necessities like housing, medical care, or transportation? Research on these issues using existing survey data—such as SIPP, CPS Food Security Supplement, SPD, PSID, and the BLS Consumer Expenditure Survey—is encouraged.

FANRP is also interested in research on the dual constraints of time and income and the tradeoffs made in low-income households. Understanding the tradeoffs these households (particularly single-parent households) make in balancing work, child care, and household tasks is important to food assistance programs in assessing benefit needs and understanding participation decisions. Tradeoffs for time spent in food shopping, food preparation, eating, and accessing food assistance are also pertinent. Likewise, understanding and comparing activity levels and time-use patterns of low-income and higher income households could be useful for obesity and nutrition research. Recent data from the ATUS is available to examine some of these issues.

III. Food Choices, Diet Quality, Obesity, and Health Outcomes

A. Food Choices of Low-Income Populations

Little is known about how the different food assistance programs influence the food choices of low-income populations. With the release of new expert nutrition recommendations, such as the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, now is an opportune time to examine how targeting and benefits of food assistance programs influence food choices of participating individuals and households. It is also an opportune time to examine the implications for achieving Federal dietary guidance objectives, such as increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. FANRP is interested in research to investigate how program effects vary depending on the audience to which the program is targeted; the form of benefits offered (funds for food purchases; commodities; meals; snacks; or nutrition education); or the flexibility of benefits. For example, is it beneficial to be able to use FSP benefits to purchase almost all grocery items; should they be expanded to allow for purchases of hot ready-to-eat meals or to allow for payment of transportation to get to food stores; or should they be restricted to purchases of specified nutritious foods? ERS also invites research that assesses potential modifications to the form and/or flexibility of program benefits that can help low-income households and individuals meet updated nutrition recommendations, within existing budget constraints.

Food choices depend on prices and markets, as well as on program benefits and consumer preferences. Therefore, FANRP also is interested in research on certain factors in explaining food choices among low-income households and individuals, especially those that participate in food assistance programs. The factors include the number and kinds of available food stores, the availability and variety of foods sold, food prices, advertising and promotion, shopping convenience, and time factors.

B. Obesity, Health and Developmental Outcomes

FANRP is interested in research on the impacts of food assistance program participation on obesity, nutrition and diet quality, food security, health, and developmental outcomes. Data have become available recently that allow examination of a large number of nutrition, health, and child developmental outcomes in relation to the food security and food assistance program participation status of children and their households. The data are from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey-Birth Cohort (ECSL-B), and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K).

FANRP is also interested in research using longitudinal data that will shed light on the relationships between such variables as participation in food assistance programs, food security, dietary behavior, and relevant lifestyle characteristics (e.g., physical activity) and such outcomes as obesity, health, and academic and social development and achievement. Of particular interest are studies using longitudinal data from the ECLS-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID).

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 one of the three 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

- **Grants:** Grants will be awarded 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 awarded 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 non-

Peer Review of Applica- tions

profit 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.

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 three Priority Research Areas (for example, relationship of the proposal to one of the three 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, 2005, 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.

Evaluation Factors and Criteria

The proposal evaluation process includes peer review panels consisting of experts from academia, government, and the private sector. In addition to reviewers' comments, FANRP's selection process considers coverage of priority research areas, overlap among proposals and ongoing projects, program needs, potential benefits resulting from research collaborations on particular projects, and the availability of funding.

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 2-5; 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 is needed 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.

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:

Tina Terry
FANRP/ERS
1800 M Street, NW, Room N2129
Washington, DC 20036-5831
Telephone: (202) 694-5270
Fax: (202) 694-5677
E-mail: FANRP@ers.usda.gov

SAMPLE ONLY
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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 9.

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 8. Therefore, the proposal must be submitted in response to one of the three 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.
- *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., Strengthening Economic Incentives in Food Assistance Programs; Food Assistance as a Safety Net; Food Choices, Diet Quality, Obesity, and Health Outcomes). 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 13). 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.
- *Requested Funding Amount.* List the total amount of funding requested from the budget form.
- *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 application 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.

SAMPLE ONLY
OUT OF DATE

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 \$300,000, 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:

- 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 9 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,

Reminder: Applications must be mailed by May 23, 2005

Proposal Disposition

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.

SAMPLE ONLY
OUT OF DATE

Duration of Awards

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. 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).

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/When/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 23, 2005 (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

Post-Award Administra- tion

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

The total period for which a grant or cooperative agreement is awarded 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.

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.