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United States
Department of
Agriculture



Economic
Research
Service

Administrative
Publication
Number 046



Competitive Grant To Establish a Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research

Fiscal 2010

Request for Applications



Economic Research That Informs Food and Nutrition Assistance Policy



**Food Assistance & Nutrition
Research Program**

Abstract

The Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP) of USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), in collaboration with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), invites proposals for a competitive grant to establish and fund a center for behavioral economics and child nutrition research. The center will (1) facilitate new and innovative research on the application of behavioral economics theory to child nutrition program operations and activities, leading to program improvements that will benefit children's diets and health; (2) broaden the network of social scientists who participate in research that applies principles and theories of behavioral economics to the improvement of nutrition, food security, and health outcomes associated with participation in USDA's child nutrition programs; and (3) disseminate information obtained via its research program to a diverse stakeholder audience, including other researchers, policy and program officials, and the general public. Subject to the availability of funds, the center will receive an initial grant of up to \$1 million which will be expected to support activities over a 3-year period. This publication describes Center responsibilities and application requirements. **The deadline for submission of applications is May 19, 2010.**

Keywords: Food assistance programs, behavioral economics, child nutrition, economic incentives, child nutrition programs, FANRP, ERS, USDA

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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 and should be submitted through Grants.gov by May 19, 2010. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to mailing:

Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational Form (SF-424)

- Is all required information accurate and complete?
- Is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 10.253?
- Has the authorized organizational representative signed the SF-424?
- Is the CFDA Title: "Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program"?
- Is the Funding Opportunity Title: "Competitive Grant To Establish a Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research"?
- 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?

Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)

- Are budget items complete?
- Is the summary budget included?
- Is the budget duration within the stated 3 years?

Proposal and All Attachments in PDF

Program Summary Page

- Is the program title listed at the top?
- Has the Program Summary been included?
- Does the summary include program objectives?
- Is the summary no more than 250 words?
- Do the name and institution of the proposed Center Director appear on the page or on the following page?
- Does the page include the total amount requested?
- Does the page include the start and end date?

Table of Contents

- Are page numbers included for each item?

Program Description

- Is the program fully described?
- Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations, as specified?
- Does this section begin as page 1, as specified?
- Does the program description contain a tentative schedule or work plan of major steps of study?

Vitae and Publications List(s)

- Are vitae included for the proposed Center Director and key program personnel?
- Are the vitae current and pertinent?
- Are the publications lists complete and limited to the last 5 years?

Indirect Cost Rate Schedule

- For reimbursement of indirect costs, is a copy included of the applicant's indirect cost rate schedule that reports the applicant's federally negotiated audited rate?

General

- Does the proposal conform to all format and page limitations and deadline requirements?
- Are all copies complete?

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Overview

The Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Economic Research Service (ERS), in collaboration with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), invites proposals for a competitive grant award to establish a center for behavioral economics and child nutrition research. The center will (1) facilitate new and innovative research on the application of behavioral economics theory to child nutrition program operations and activities, leading to program improvements that will benefit children's diets and health; (2) broaden the network of social scientists who participate in research that applies principles and theories of behavioral economics to the improvement of nutrition, food security, and health outcomes associated with participation in USDA's child nutrition programs; and (3) disseminate information obtained via its research program to a diverse stakeholder audience, including other researchers, policy and program officials, and the general public.

The center will support further development of the USDA Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Initiative by administering a program of research grants to university and other institutions. The program will support researchers in conducting behavioral economics research applied to child nutrition program improvement; develop additional research capacity in this area by conducting workshops, conferences, and other activities that will expand researcher knowledge of behavioral economics principles and theories and their potential application to USDA child nutrition programs; and disseminate the findings from such research to stakeholder audiences, including researchers, policymakers, and program officials through such mechanisms as research summaries published on the Center website. ERS expects to make one award in fiscal year (FY) 2010 of up to \$1 million to fund the Center, with activities supported by that funding to take place over a 3-year period. There are no matching requirements from the Center over the term of the agreement.

The closing date for submitting applications under this announcement is **May 19, 2010**. Applications for this program must be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website at www.grants.gov. The Grants.gov website is the single access point to electronically find and apply for competitive Federal funding opportunities and manage grants from all Federal grantmaking agencies. Please email Joanne Guthrie at jguthrie@ers.usda.gov by **April 12, 2010**, to inform ERS of your intent to submit an application. Include the name of your organization. Providing notice of intent to submit is not a requirement for submitting an application. However, a notice of intent to submit will help ERS in the planning for the review process.

First-time users of Grants.gov should go to the "Apply for Grants" tab on the website and carefully read and follow the steps listed in order to apply. Your organization will need to be registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) at www.ccr.gov. Your organization also will need a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company, Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). To investigate if your organization already has a DUNS number or to obtain a DUNS number, contact Dun & Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711. Be sure to complete the Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) and Electronic Business Primary Point of Contact fields during the CCR registration process. These are mandatory fields that are required when submitting grant applications through www.grants.gov.

The posted notice through www.grants.gov is the only official program announcement. Any corrections to this announcement will be published on the ERS website at www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodNutritionAssistance/Compgrants.htm and the www.grants.gov website. The applicant bears sole responsibility in ensuring that the copy downloaded and/or printed from any other source is up-to-date, accurate, and complete.

Authority

The Authority for this program is contained in 7 U.S.C. 292, 411, 427, 1441a, 1621-1627, 1704, 1761-68, 2201, 2202, 3103, 3291, 3311, 3504; 22 U.S.C. 3101; 42 U.S.C. 1891-93; 44 U.S.C. 3501-11; 50 U.S.C. 2061 et seq., 2251 et seq. Under this program, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary of Agriculture may award competitive grants and cooperative agreements for the support of research programs to further USDA food and nutrition assistance programs.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for the Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research are restricted to public or private institutions of higher education.

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 Part 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, and 7 CFR Part 3016.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this program is 10.253. The CFDA Title is Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program.

Available Funds in FY 2010

ERS anticipates having available a total of approximately ***\$1 million*** to fund the Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research. Nothing in this announcement restricts the ability of ERS to make no awards or a lesser or greater award(s).

Matching Requirements

The competitive grant award to establish and operate the Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research requires no matching funds.

Program and Budget Period

ERS expects to fund the Center as a one-time award to conduct a 3-year program. Subject to the availability of future funds, ERS may choose to provide additional funding in future years. The award pursuant to this announcement will be made on or about ***September 30, 2010***.

Background and Purpose

USDA administers 15 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs that work both individually and collectively to provide participants with food or the means to purchase food. The child nutrition programs are specifically directed at improving the well-being of the Nation's children. Among these programs are the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. During FY 2009, more than 31 million children participated in the National School Lunch Program on a typical school day, while 11 million received breakfast through the School Breakfast Program. Total Federal spending on the child nutrition programs exceeded \$15.5 billion, representing a substantial investment in the nutrition and health of the Nation's children. Further information on USDA child nutrition programs can be found at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/ChildNutrition/> and <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>.

The child nutrition programs seek to promote healthy diets by requiring that meals and snacks meet nutrition standards. These standards address adequacy—that is, provision of sufficient amounts of protein, vitamins, and minerals—as well as avoidance of excess fat and saturated fat. Findings from the USDA's third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment (SNDA-III), conducted in the 2004-05 school year, indicate that most schools serve lunches and breakfasts that meet nutrition standards for protein, vitamins, and minerals, but fewer meet standards for total fat and saturated fat. The sodium content of meals is also high, compared with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These findings indicate that the child nutrition programs leave room for improvement. Given the important role these programs play in the daily diets of millions of American children, the impact on diet and health could be substantial.

It is widely urged that schools improve the nutritional quality of foods offered to children. Recently, with support from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, the Institute of Medicine released a report recommending new nutrition standards for school meals that are more consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These will require considerable changes—more dark green and orange vegetables, fruits, and whole grains; a switch to low-fat and skim milk; and a gradual reduction in the sodium content of foods that will likely require reformulation of many currently popular items. However, providing, selecting, and consuming healthy foods depend on the behavior and choices made by both providers (such as the school food authorities—SFAs) and consumers (in this case, the children participating in USDA child nutrition programs).

Food providers seeking to offer nutritionally improved meals face conflicting incentives as they strive to balance costs, revenues, and participation. SFAs that participate in the USDA child nutrition programs are required to operate as nonprofits. However, maintaining revenues is necessary to cover costs; SFAs seeking to offer nutritionally improved meals that may be costlier, but not necessarily more appealing to students, face conflicting incentives as they strive to balance participation, revenue, and costs. Changing how food is purchased, meals are prepared, and menus are developed in a way that cost effectively meets nutritional goals while maintaining student participation requires complex decisions. To the extent that behavioral economics can shed light on strategies to simplify and improve decisions and better align

incentives, behavioral economics can be used to develop strategies to assist child nutrition programs in providing children with healthier meals and snacks.

Merely offering healthier meals is not enough; children must also select and eat them. This may present a considerable challenge as many of the recommended changes in school meals are at variance from the typical American child's diet—for example, the recent SNDA-III data found that, on a typical school day, American children ate less than 20 percent of the recommended amount of whole grains and about 10 percent of the recommended amount of dark green and orange vegetables and legumes. Changing eating habits is notoriously difficult. Preliminary research by ERS and others suggests that insights from behavioral economics—which uses cognitive, social, and emotional factors to understand consumer decisions—have the potential to support students in making the choices they know are best for their nutrition, health, and achievement.

With support from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, FANRP seeks to extend this research by further investigating the extent to which behavioral economics principles and theories can be used to improve the effectiveness of the USDA child nutrition programs, supporting local authorities in their capacity to serve healthy meals to children, and identifying effective strategies to encourage children to eat those meals.

As part of its research program, FANRP seeks to establish a Center that will aid FANRP and FNS in stimulating new and innovative research in this area and developing research capacity by expanding the pool of researchers conducting behavioral economics research applied to child nutrition programs. The Center will assist FANRP in developing knowledge of this emerging field by supporting established researchers and mentoring emerging scholars whose interests focus on applying behavioral economics to the improvement of child nutrition and well-being as mediated by participation in USDA's child nutrition programs. It will do this primarily by administering a program of research grants to university and other institutions to support researchers in conducting behavioral economics research applied to child nutrition program improvement. It will also develop supporting activities that will stimulate interest in the application of behavioral economics in child nutrition program settings; these activities could include workshops, conferences, websites, etc. Finally, it will support dissemination of findings from such research to a diverse stakeholder audience that includes researchers, policymakers, program officials, and consumers through such mechanisms as posting research summaries on its website.

Center Awardee Responsibilities

The awardee, or Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research, will have the lead responsibility in soliciting, reviewing, and selecting research proposals for subawards. These subawards should reflect the goals of the program, which are to promote the development of innovative ideas and approaches for applying behavioral economics concepts and theories to the improvement of child nutrition, encourage established researchers not involved in behavioral economics and/or child nutrition research to enter the field, and nurture new talent. Consequently, subawards may fall into such categories as research grants to (1) experienced

investigators, including those involved in behavioral economics, child nutrition, or other areas; (2) recent Ph.D. graduates; or (3) Ph.D. candidates who are mentored by established researchers.

The Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research is expected to perform the following tasks:

Research Subaward Program

The Center will initiate and maintain a subawards program to foster new and innovative research that may include small-scale, economic, behavioral, and policy-related projects, including pilot research projects and feasibility studies; evaluation of findings from “natural experiments,” such as local differences in child nutrition program implementation and policies (e.g., differences in competitive food policies, differences in meal ordering or payment mechanisms, etc.); developing, testing, and refining research techniques; secondary analysis of available data sets; or similar research projects. Center subawards should include an appropriately balanced agenda of experimental and nonexperimental research. Further, the Center should provide intellectual leadership on the application of behavioral economics to child nutrition program issues by establishing links with a broad range of established scholars from other institutions.

Expanding the Research Base

The Center will broaden the network of researchers who collaborate in investigating the application of behavioral economics concepts and theories to the improvement of child nutrition and health outcomes associated with participation in USDA child nutrition programs. The Center will encourage experienced researchers in other areas to expand their research interests to address the application of behavioral economics to child nutrition and to support emerging researchers with interests in the area in developing their research abilities. The Center may do this by conducting workshops, conferences, and other activities that will expand researcher knowledge of behavioral economics concepts and theories and their potential application to USDA’s child nutrition programs; providing direction to research grant awardees; and encouraging them to participate in professional meetings and publish results of their work in social science journals.

Dissemination of Information

Communicating research findings and their implications for USDA child nutrition programs will be an important responsibility of the Center. Information should be communicated in a manner that makes it readily available and understandable to a diverse group of stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, program officials, and the general public. The Center will be expected to develop and maintain a system to disseminate results of funded studies through print or electronic methods, including but not limited to, creative use of a website and web-based technologies, newsletters, working papers, special reports, and briefings.

Research Area Guidance

The research and related activities of the Center are to promote research on behavioral economics concepts and theories as applied to the development of strategies for improving the healthfulness and appeal of meals served to children in child nutrition program settings. Some examples of potential study topics include:

- Developing food purchase and menu planning guides or software applications that simplify complex information on food composition and qualities to facilitate changing menus in accordance with Institute of Medicine guidelines;
- Identifying menu combinations that subtly encourage children to make healthier choices;
- Offering nutritious choices as the default option—for example, by automatically providing vegetables with an entrée unless an additional effort is made by the student to switch to a less nutritious side dish;
- Allowing students (or their parents) to pre-select foods before entering the foodservice line to avoid impulsive selections that may contribute to excess consumption;
- Manipulating payment mechanisms (cash, debit cards, etc) to encourage consumption of more nutritious foods;
- Increasing the prominence, visibility, and accessibility of nutritious choices in the cafeteria line, while placing less healthful foods where they are hard to see and reach; and
- Improving the dining environment through smaller group tables, improved lighting, reduced noise, and sufficient time to eat.

For additional information on related ERS research, see the following ERS publications:

- *Could Behavioral Economics Help Improve Diet Quality for Nutrition Assistance Program Participants?* (access at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err43/>),
- *When Nudging in the Lunch Line Might Be a Good Thing* (access at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/March09/Features/LunchLine.htm>) ,
- *Behavioral Economic Concepts To Encourage Healthy Eating in School Cafeterias: Experiments and Lessons From College* (access at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err68/>), and
- FANRP's Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodNutritionAssistance/Compgrants.htm>).

These publications have information on potential research themes. However, because FANRP is interested in identifying creative and innovative school environment strategies, applicants should not feel constrained to the listed concepts. The Center is expected to provide leadership in developing additional research topics and program applications.

FANRP Responsibilities

FANRP, in collaboration with FNS, will provide (1) input to reviews of research proposals submitted to the Center; (2) statements of USDA's behavioral economics and child nutrition research priorities; (3) reviews of Center reports to ensure that objectives and award conditions are being met; (4) coordination of activities between FANRP and the Center to ensure, for example, a diverse selection of research projects and to eliminate duplication of research efforts; and (5) technical contacts for Center subawardees.

Joint Responsibilities

FANRP will work with the Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research in jointly establishing broad research priorities and planning strategies to accomplish the objectives of this announcement.

Application Process

General Information

The guidelines below are provided to assist you in preparing a proposal. Please read these guidelines carefully before preparing your submission.

A checklist is provided at the beginning of this document to help you provide the necessary information for completing a proposal. An Application for Federal Domestic Assistance Form (SF-424) and a budget form (SF-424A) are required for the proposal. These forms (from the Short Organizational family of forms) are included in the application package, downloadable from www.grants.gov. A checklist is provided on page 17 to help you provide the necessary information for completing a proposal.

Submission Requirements

The purpose of a grant proposal is to persuade FANRP and members of the review panel that the proposal is worthy of support under the evaluation criteria listed below. The application should be self-contained, clearly present the merits of the proposed program, and be written with care and thoroughness. It is important that all the essential information for a comprehensive review 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 proposed Center Director and, where applicable, the name of the submitting institution are included on the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance form (SF-424).

Format and Content of Proposal

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

www.grants.gov/applicants/resources.jsp

Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational (SF-424)

The submission through Grants.gov must contain an Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational (SF-424), including authorized electronic signatures from your organization.

Table 1. Specific Instructions for Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational (SF-424)

Item	Specific Instruction
1. Name of Federal Agency	Enter "Economic Research Service, USDA"
2. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter "10.253"
CDFA Title	Enter "Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program"
3. Date Received	Leave blank
4. Funding Opportunity Number	Enter "FANRP2010004"
Funding Opportunity Title	Enter "Competitive Grant To Establish a Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research"
5a-g. Applicant Information	Enter requested information
6a. Project Title	Enter title of project proposal
6b-c.	Leave blank
7. Do not include social security number	Enter other center director information
8-9.	Enter requested information

Budget Information for Non-Construction Program (SF-424A)

A summary budget is required detailing requested support for the duration of the program, which is not to exceed 3 years. Funding levels accepted are up to \$1 million inclusive of indirect costs where applicable.

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 program, allowable under applicable Federal cost principles, and not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute or regulation.

Budget items include:

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

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

Indirect costs are limited by Federal statute to the federally recognized audited rate for the institution.

Electronic copies of the standard budget form and general instructions are available at www.grants.gov as part of the application package. Specific instructions for completing the proposal budget form are found below.

Table 2. Specific instructions for Budget Information for Non-Construction Program (SF-424A)

Item	Specific Instruction
1(a). Grant Program Function or Activity	Enter "FANRP"
1(b). Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter "10.253"
1(c), (d), (f).	Leave blank
1(e), (g).	Enter amount of Federal funds requested
2-4.	Leave blank
5(b),(c),(d),(f).	Leave blank
5(e),(g).	Enter amount of Federal funds requested (same as item 1)
6(a-k) (columns 1 and 5).	Allocate Federal funds to appropriate budget categories
6(a-k) (columns 2-4).	Leave blank
7-20.	Leave blank
21-23.	Optional

Program Summary Page

The proposal must contain a Program Summary Page, which must follow immediately after the budget form, and should not be numbered. The name and institution of the proposed Center Director should be listed on the summary page. The program summary is limited to 250 words. The program summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activities to be undertaken and should focus on the overall program goals and supporting objectives and plans to accomplish the goals. The importance of a concise, informative program summary cannot be overemphasized.

Table of Contents

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

Program Description

The application may not exceed 10 pages (whether single- or double-spaced) of written text and may not exceed a total of 40 pages, including attachments. The proposal should be assembled so that the Program Description immediately follows the Program Summary. To clarify page-limitation requirements, page numbering for the Program Description should start with 1 and should be placed on the bottom of the page. All proposals are to be formatted for 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), line count should be no more than 6 lines per inch, and pages should not be reduced.

The program description must address the following components (see also, Evaluation Criteria, page 13):

(1) Approach and Program Plan

A 3-year program plan should be included that discusses the kind of behavioral economics research activities that are needed to inform important child nutrition program issues and the role of the proposed Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research in carrying out those activities. The plan should demonstrate the applicant's grasp of the policy and research significance of past behavioral economics and child nutrition analyses, which current and future studies may build upon to advance policy knowledge, and the development and implementation of policies and strategies for improvement in child nutrition outcomes associated with participation in USDA's child nutrition programs. The plan should describe how the Center will implement its research award program to support identified research needs and develop research capacity. The applicant should describe approaches and tools (e.g., electronic mailing list management systems, web postings, hard copy mailings) to solicit research proposals and methods (e.g., panels, advisory committees, or other systems) to review and select proposed studies for Center subawards.

(2) Expanding the Research Base

The proposal should (1) describe methods to attract experienced and emerging researchers to behavioral economics research in the child nutrition program area, and (2) present a training and mentoring plan for emerging scholars that describes how new researchers will benefit from participation in the activities sponsored by the Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research. The discussion should describe intended activities, such as workshops, conferences and other activities, that will expand researcher knowledge of behavioral economics concepts and theories and their potential application to USDA's child nutrition programs. In addition, the discussion should include the expected number and types of emerging scholars to be supported, any special mentoring activities intended to support their professional development, the level of support anticipated, and methods to ensure diversity.

(3) Dissemination of Findings

The application must also include a detailed dissemination plan that describes the planned methods of disseminating Center-supported analyses to interested parties through use of web-based technologies and various media, including newsletters, working papers, special reports, briefings, and presentations to key stakeholder groups.

(4) Staffing and Organizational Plan

The application must include a staffing and organizational proposal for the Center, including an analysis of the types of background needed among staff members. The applicant shall identify the proposed Center Director and key staff. Full resumes (two-page maximum) of proposed staff members shall be included as a separate appendix to the application. The time commitment to the Center and other existing commitments for the Director and each proposed staff member should be clearly indicated in chart form.

Citations to Program Description

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

Budget Narrative

The application's budget summary narrative must link the core management functions, research, mentoring, and dissemination program to the Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research funding level. This section should discuss how the budget supports proposed research, training, and dissemination activities and should link the first-year funding to a 3-year plan.

Vitae and Publications List

To assist reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed program staff, the proposal must also include a short curriculum vitae and publication list of the Center Director and any other individual who expects to work on the program in a significant fashion, whether or not funds are sought for their support. Vitae are limited to two pages for each individual and the publications list should focus on the past 5 years.

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 proposal must list any other current public or private research support (including in-house support) to the proposed Center Director and key staff, whether or not salary support for the person(s) involved is included in the budget.

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.

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

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

- Record information for active and pending projects in separate sections by name, supporting agency, total funding amount, effective and expiration dates, percentage of time committed, and title of project.
- All current research to which the proposed Center Director and key staff 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.

What/When/Where To Submit

All applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov. Applicants may submit paper-copy applications under extenuating circumstances, such as outages of the Grants.gov website that can be substantiated by a valid case number with the Grants.gov support center.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the proposal contains all pertinent information when originally submitted. Prior to submitting, it is urged that the application be compared with the checklist on the inside front cover of this announcement.

Late proposals will not be considered unless extenuating circumstances are documented with Grants.gov.

**Reminder: Applications must be
submitted by midnight May 19, 2010**

Review and Evaluation Process

Intergovernmental Review

USDA has determined that this program is not subject to Executive Order No. 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, because it is a program that is national in scope and the only impact on State and local governments would be through subgrants. Applicants are not required to seek intergovernmental review of their applications within the constraints of Executive Order 12372.

Initial Screening

Each application submitted under this announcement will undergo a pre-review to determine that (1) the application was received by the closing date and submitted in accordance with the instructions in this announcement, and (2) the applicant is eligible for funding (Eligible Applicants, page 2). Applications that do not meet these pre-review items will not be reviewed further and will be ineligible for funding.

Competitive Review and Evaluation Criteria

Applications for the Center for Behavioral Economics and Child Nutrition Research that meet the initial screening requirements will be evaluated and rated by a technical review panel. The panel will use the evaluation criteria listed below to score each application. The evaluation criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed program and to determine the probability of its success. The evaluation criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive to the evaluation criteria within the context of this program announcement. These review results will be the primary element used by ERS in making funding decisions. Selection of the successful applicant will be based on the technical and financial criteria laid out in this announcement. Reviewers will determine the strengths and weaknesses of each application in terms of the evaluation criteria listed below, provide comments, and assign

numerical scores out of a possible 100 points. A summary of all applicant scores and strengths/weaknesses and recommendations will be prepared and submitted to ERS for decisions. The point value following each criterion heading indicates the maximum numerical relative weight that each section will be given in the review process. An unacceptable rating on any individual criterion may render the entire application unacceptable. Consequently, applicants should take care to ensure that all criteria are fully addressed in the applications.

Evaluation Criteria

(1) Approach and Program Plan (30 points)

The applicant demonstrates an understanding of significant behavioral economics research, especially as it applies behavioral economics concepts and theories to the improvement of child nutrition outcomes associated with participation in USDA's child nutrition programs. The applicant's plan for implementing a research subaward program demonstrates a commitment to bring a broad-based multifaceted approach to the development of a behavioral economics and child nutrition research program. The applicant indicates an ability to select projects for funding that are scientifically sound and are likely to result in improved diets and health and reduced obesity risk among children participating in USDA child nutrition programs. The applicant demonstrates the existence of, or innovative and realistic plans to establish, links with a broad range of established scholars from other institutions. The applicant describes approaches and means used to solicit research proposals (e.g., electronic mailing list management systems, web postings, hard copy mailings) and identifies panels, advisory committees, or other systems employed to review and select proposed studies. The applicant includes plans for program activities, with proposed time schedules, in the first year as well as a 3-year agenda.

(2) Expanding the Research Base (20 points)

The applicant proposes clear plans to develop and expand the diverse group of researchers that conducts behavioral economics research applied to the improvement of nutrition and health outcomes associated with participation in USDA's child nutrition programs by (1) encouraging experienced investigators to incorporate into their research a focus on the application of behavioral economics to child nutrition program improvement, and (2) influencing emerging researchers to focus their career goals on the application of behavioral economics concepts and theories to the improvement of child nutrition outcomes associated with participation in USDA child nutrition programs. The applicant's plan demonstrates methods to train and mentor Ph.D. candidates, postdoctoral students, and other research scholars that have received Center subawards by conducting, for example, workshops with grantees to monitor progress and offer direction to facilitate the successful completion of projects and dissemination of findings via presentations at professional meetings and publications in peer-reviewed journals.

(3) Dissemination of Information (10 points)

The applicant's mechanisms for sharing and communicating results of Center-supported studies with a broad audience of researchers, policymakers, program officials and the general public demonstrates an understanding of users' needs and effective strategies for meeting them. Dissemination of analyses and findings from Center projects may occur through creative use of websites and web-based technologies and various media, including newsletters, working papers, special reports, and presentations to appropriate stakeholder audiences such as the School Nutrition Association.

(4) Staffing and Organizational Arrangements (25 points)

The applicant's proposed Center Director and staff demonstrate appropriate levels of research experience, demonstrated research skills, administrative skills, public administration experience, and relevant technical expertise. The applicant demonstrates an adequate level of director and staff time commitments to the Center. The applicant demonstrates an ability to work in collaboration with other scholars and practitioners in search of similar goals. The applicant demonstrates existing or planned relationships with researchers at other universities and institutions. The applicant demonstrates the nature and extent of the organization's support for research, mentoring scholars, and disseminating information related to the central priorities of the host university for the Center. The applicant demonstrates the commitment of the university (and proposed institutional unit that will contain the Center) to support the Center's three major activities: (1) developing scholarly, policy-relevant research that applies behavioral economics concepts and theories to the improvement of child nutrition outcomes associated with participation in USDA's child nutrition programs; (2) broadening the involvement of researchers in behavioral economics and child nutrition research by both encouraging research in this area among established researchers and supporting and mentoring emerging scholars; and (3) disseminating research and other information to a broad and dissimilar set of research, policy, and consumer groups.

(5) Budget and Resource Allocation (15 points)

The applicant provides a budget that yields an efficient and effective allocation of funds to achieve the objectives of this announcement (i.e., granting subawards, building research capacity, mentoring, and disseminating information, as well as core administrative functions necessary to carry out the Center's mission). The application includes a narrative description and justification for proposed budget line items and demonstrates that the project's costs are adequate, reasonable, and necessary for the activities or personnel to be supported. The budget and narrative demonstrate a clear relationship to the approach. The applicant demonstrates the manner in which funds will be allocated to best serve the Center's goal to provide financial support for research, including, but not necessarily limited to, the level of indirect costs (1) charged by the Center and (2) allowed to the institutions of researchers receiving subawards.

Award Administration

FANRP reserves the right to negotiate with the proposed Center Director and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding program revisions or funding level prior to recommending any program for funding.

A proposal may be withdrawn by the proposed Center Director 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.

Duration of Award

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

Notice of Award

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

Management Information

Once a grant 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.

Authorization to make changes in approved program plans, budget, period of support, etc., will be governed largely by the terms and conditions of the competitive grant award agreement. Among other things, these terms and conditions will set forth the kinds of 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 program personnel and authorized organizational representatives read them carefully.

Financial Obligations

For any competitive grant 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 program at a particular level. Further, neither the approval of any application nor the award of any program grant 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 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 funds may not be transferred or delegated in whole or in part to another party (even if a grantee enters into a contractual relationship with that party), unless the grant agreement itself is transferred in whole or in part to another party by ERS.

Release of Information

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

How To Obtain Application Materials and Support

FANRP is using the Internet for primary distribution of information and application materials for these planning grants. All applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov. Applicants may submit paper-copy applications under extenuating circumstances, such as outages of the Grants.gov website that can be substantiated by a valid case number with the Grants.gov support center. If you have questions, contact:

Joanne Guthrie
FANRP/ERS
1800 M Street, NW, Room N2136
Washington, DC 20036-5831
Telephone: (202) 694-5373
Fax: (202) 694-5677
E-mail: jguthrie@ers.usda.gov