IRP RIDGE Center for National Food and Nutrition Assistance Research
2012–2013 Small Grants Program

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Funding for the Period from July 1, 2012, to December 31, 2013
Deadline for proposal receipt: April 16, 2012; deadline for notice of intent: March 23, 2012

Purpose

The Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) seeks to stimulate innovative research related to federal food assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) and the National School Breakfast/Lunch Program, and to support training of researchers interested in food assistance issues.

Background

IRP is a university-based center for interdisciplinary research into the causes and consequences of poverty and social inequality in the United States. It also serves as the RIDGE (Research Innovation and Development Grants in Economics) Center for National Food and Nutrition Assistance Research, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service. The RIDGE program supports small grants for studies focusing on food assistance programs.

The RIDGE Center Director is Judith Bartfeld; the Center Associate Director is Timothy Smeeding; and the USDA RIDGE Program Director is Alex Majchrowicz.

Focal Theme for 2012-2013

Sharp increases in food insecurity over the past several years have been accompanied by large increases in participation in federal food and nutrition assistance programs—including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) as well as school meals. Some view the growth in these programs as signs of a flexible safety net that is doing its job; others worry about growing dependence on public programs. The focus of this year’s funding competition is on understanding the role of food assistance programs in the context of the Great Recession and continued high rates of poverty and unemployment. We are interested in supporting research that seeks to shed light on patterns of participation, the role of food assistance programs as part of the broader safety net, and the impacts of food assistance programs on any of a range of recipient outcomes. Research should focus specifically on the role of food assistance programs during and after the Great Recession.
More detail on the research priority is available at: http://www.irp.wisc.edu/initiatives/funding/usdasgp.htm.

Terms of the Grants

1. Applicants must hold a doctorate or the highest degree appropriate for their discipline.
2. Grants may not exceed $40,000. These amounts include indirect costs at the applicant's institution, if required, and expenses incurred for obligatory participation in a fall 2013 conference in Washington, DC (see # 5 below). **Indirect costs are limited to not greater than 26 percent MTDC per the award of the prime grant.**
3. Grant recipients are expected to attend a workshop at IRP in spring 2013 to discuss their early research results. The Institute will cover the travel expenses to this workshop of one investigator per project (co-investigators may attend, but must cover their own expenses); applicants need not include support for travel to the workshop in their applications.
4. Attendees are asked to prepare a draft paper—recognizing that what they are discussing is a work in progress and findings may be preliminary and incomplete—and submit it to the IRP RIDGE Coordinator (djohnson@ssc.wisc.edu) at least 10 days prior to the workshop.
5. Grant recipients will present their research results at a USDA/ERS conference in Washington, DC, in fall 2013. Recipients should prepare a paper and submit it to the IRP RIDGE Coordinator (djohnson@ssc.wisc.edu) at least 10 days prior to the conference.
6. Grant recipients are required to furnish the Institute with brief quarterly progress reports, and a final report describing the results of their research and an executive summary thereof no later than November 30, 2013. The final report will consist of the paper they present at the fall conference, revised to respond to comments received there. The final report may appear in the IRP Discussion Paper series. The executive summary must follow a format provided by ERS. These reports should be submitted to djohnson@ssc.wisc.edu.

Availability of Funds

Program support is subject to the availability of funds. Nothing in this description of applications should be construed as committing the Institute to dividing available funds among all qualified applicants.

Application Instructions

A notice of intent that includes name of principal investigator and co-investigator(s) and tentative project title, must be e-mailed by March 23, 2012, to: rsnell@ssc.wisc.edu.

Applicants must submit five hard copies and an e-mailed electronic copy (PDF) of their proposal by 5:00 p.m. Central Daylight Time on April 16, 2012. Fax submissions will not be accepted. Proposal receipt will be acknowledged.

Five hard copies of your application should be addressed to:
IRP RIDGE Center for National Research
Institute for Research on Poverty
University of Wisconsin–Madison
The electronic copy of your application should be e-mailed to: Robin Snell at rsnell@ssc.wisc.edu.

The application must contain in a single file the following components in the order listed:

1. A cover sheet giving the title of the proposed research, applicant’s name, institutional affiliation with full address and telephone number, home address, and time period of the proposed research.
2. A one-page abstract, describing purpose, data, and methods.
3. Description of the applicant's proposed research, not to exceed 10 double-spaced pages exclusive of References or Appendixes. The proposal should carefully describe the issues to be examined, hypotheses to be evaluated, methodology proposed, data sources to be used, and anticipated results of the research. The anticipated results should be related to policy issues.
4. A budget showing funds requested from the Institute and funds available or applied for from other sources. The budget must be itemized—showing, for example, the researcher’s time, research assistant’s time, travel costs, computer services, supplies, and indirect costs if required. Indirect costs are limited to not greater than 26 percent MTDC per the award of the prime grant. Please note that equipment purchases are not allowable.
5. A statement of qualifications of the applicant.
6. Applicant’s curriculum vitae.
7. A one-paragraph summary of any other current or recent projects that have been funded by the RIDGE Program (through any of the participating institutions) or by the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP).
8. A letter from the office of research and sponsored programs of the applicant’s institution confirming administrative approval of the proposal.

Application Processing and Selection Criteria

Applications will be screened for relevance to the subject areas described above. If judged irrelevant or inadequate by any of the criteria listed below, the application will not be considered further. If judged relevant, the application will be evaluated by a panel of experts. The evaluation will employ the criteria listed below. The Institute will consult with ERS before making any funding decisions. Award notification will be made in early June.

Selection Criteria

1. The potential usefulness of the proposed research for the advancement of scientific knowledge concerning the development or analysis of government policy related to food assistance programs.
2. The relevance of the topic to the Center’s 2012–2013 research focus: understanding the role of food assistance programs in the context of the Great Recession.
3. Clarity of statement of objectives, methods, and anticipated results. The appropriateness and soundness of methodology, including research design, choice of data, methods of analysis, and other procedures.

4. The reasonableness of estimated cost and time commitments in relation to anticipated results. The qualifications and experience of personnel, including demonstrated familiarity with the literature.

Questions

Applicants may direct process-related questions to Deborah Johnson (djohnson@ssc.wisc.edu) and budget-related questions to William Wambach (wambach@ssc.wisc.edu). Research-related questions should be directed by e-mail to Judith Bartfeld (bartfeld@wisc.edu).

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<tr>
<th>IRP RIDGE Center for National Research</th>
<th>Timeline of Important Dates</th>
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<td>Notice of Intent E-mail Deadline</td>
<td>March 23, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for proposal receipt</td>
<td>April 16, 2012, 5:00 p.m. CDT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notification of award</td>
<td>Early June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract begins</td>
<td>July 1, 2012</td>
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<td>Quarterly progress reports (6 total) due</td>
<td>Mid-January, April, July, and October</td>
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<td>Initial paper draft due</td>
<td>10 days before spring IRP workshop</td>
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<td>Spring workshop (Madison)</td>
<td>April 2013 (exact date TBD)</td>
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<td>Revised paper due</td>
<td>10 days before fall ERS conference</td>
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<td>Fall ERS RIDGE Conference</td>
<td>Fall 2013 (exact date TBD)</td>
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<td>Final report and executive summary due</td>
<td>November 30, 2013</td>
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<td>Contract ends</td>
<td>December 31, 2013</td>
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<td>Deadline for submitting final invoices</td>
<td>February 28, 2013</td>
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