



## 2012–2013 Emerging Scholars Small Grants Competition

### Request for Proposals: Research on Family Complexity, Poverty, and Public Policy

(Deadline for Proposal Receipt: **5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time on March 1, 2012**)

#### Purpose

The Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) seeks to fund research that will enhance our understanding of the relationship of family complexity to poverty and public policy, one of three integrated research themes shaping IRP's research agenda as a National Poverty Research Center. IRP anticipates funding up to five projects, with a maximum award of \$20,000 each, to emerging scholars as defined below. Grantees will benefit from consultation with IRP senior affiliates, with each other, and—during a workshop at which grantees will present their draft paper—with other senior poverty scholars.

#### 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 is one of three National Poverty Research Centers sponsored by the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (ASPE/DHHS). IRP has established this small grants program as part of an integrated set of research, training, and dissemination activities.

IRP's Director is Timothy Smeeding; the Associate Director of Research and Training is Katherine Magnuson; and the Associate Director of Programs and Management is Jennifer L. Noyes. Coordinators of the 2012–2013 small grants program on family complexity, poverty, and public policy are IRP Affiliates [Daniel R. Meyer](#) and [Marcia \(Marcy\) Carlson](#).

#### Focal Theme and Questions of Interest

Family change and poverty is one of IRP's focal research themes. Over the past 50 years, major demographic changes (such as increases in cohabitation, nonmarital childbearing, divorce, and repartnering) have led to an increase in family complexity in the United States. Particularly notable is the rise in multi-partner fertility, when adults have children by more than one partner. These changes and trends in family life are important for understanding both the causes and consequences of poverty. As the reach and effects of many antipoverty policies vary by family structure, changes in family life pose challenges to the effective design of social programs and policies.

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As a result of these trends and challenges, we invite research proposals that are responsive to one of the following two questions:

- **How does family change and increasing family complexity relate to poverty or inequality?** Proposals in this area could consider, for example, descriptions of whether families of different income levels have different levels of complexity; the extent to which family changes or family complexity cause poverty or increase inequality; how complex families allocate resources; or the extent to which family complexity has differential effects on children, depending on income levels. These papers should also address implications for public policy.
- **How do family change and increasing family complexity create challenges for public policy, and what is the evidence that social policies increase (or attenuate) family complexity or its consequences?** Proposals in this area could consider, for example, the effects of policy on family structure and stability; how eligibility or benefits within income support programs are affected by family composition changes; or the implications of family complexity for the design and evaluation of public programs.

## Terms

1. Applicants must hold a doctorate or the highest degree appropriate for their discipline. Applicants must have received their Ph.D. or its equivalent after January 1, 2004.
2. University of Wisconsin–Madison faculty and postdoctoral fellows are ineligible for funding.
3. The grant contract period will be May 1, 2012, to August 31, 2013.
4. Grants may not exceed \$20,000. This amount includes indirect costs at the applicant's institution, if required.
5. Receipt of a grant from IRP will require a commitment to:
  - submit a draft paper for review and comment by March 20, 2013;
  - present this draft paper at a meeting in New Orleans on April 10, 2013, which is the day before the Population Association of America annual meeting (travel expenses for this meeting are the responsibility of the grantee and can be part of the submitted budget);
  - submit a revised paper by June 19, 2013;
  - present the paper at a structured mentoring workshop to be held in Madison on July 10, 2013 (travel expenses for this event will be paid by IRP);
  - attend a research conference to be held in Madison on July 11–12, 2013 (immediately following the mentoring workshop); and
  - submit a final paper suitable for academic publication no later than August 31, 2013. All publications should acknowledge the support of IRP and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (ASPE/DHHS).

## Availability of Funds

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

## Application Instructions

Applicants should submit their proposal via e-mail to [rsnell@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:rsnell@ssc.wisc.edu) by **5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time on March 1, 2012**. Fax submissions will not be accepted. Proposal receipt will be acknowledged.

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

1. A cover sheet giving the title of the proposed research, applicant's name, institutional affiliation with full address and telephone number, e-mail address, and home address.
2. A one-page abstract, describing research objectives, data, and methods.
3. Description of the applicant's proposed research, not to exceed 8 double-spaced pages exclusive of References or Appendices. The proposal should carefully describe the issue(s) to be examined, hypotheses to be evaluated, methodology proposed, data sources to be used, and anticipated results of the research, including their potential implications for public policy.
4. An itemized budget showing the researcher's time, research assistant's time, travel costs, computer services, supplies, and indirect costs if required. Please note that the University of Wisconsin is not collecting any indirect costs for these awards; applicants are encouraged to request that their home institution forego or charge minimal indirect costs.
5. Curriculum vitae for all investigators.
6. A letter from the office of research and sponsored programs of the applicant's institution confirming administrative approval of the proposal.
7. A timely plan for obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption for human subjects research (typically secondary data analysis is eligible for exemption approval). The University of Wisconsin will not execute subcontracts without documentation of IRB exemption or approval.

## Selection Criteria

IRP will evaluate proposals in collaboration with affiliated scholars and ASPE staff. **Award notification will be made on April 13, 2012**. Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. The relevance of the topic to IRP's focal theme of family change and poverty (as discussed above).

2. The potential usefulness of the proposed research for the advancement of scientific knowledge and the development and implementation of public policy.
3. Clarity of stated objectives, methods, and anticipated results.
4. The appropriateness and soundness of the research design, including choice of data, methods of analysis, and other procedures. The reasonableness of estimated cost and time commitments in relation to anticipated results.
5. The qualifications and experience of personnel, including demonstrated familiarity with the literature and data to be used.

## Questions

Grantees may direct process-related questions to Deb Johnson ([djohnson@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:djohnson@ssc.wisc.edu)) and budget-related questions to Bill Wambach ([wambach@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:wambach@ssc.wisc.edu)). Research-related questions should be directed by e-mail to Marcy Carlson ([carlson@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:carlson@ssc.wisc.edu)).

<b>Timeline of Important Dates</b>	
Deadline for proposal receipt	5:00 p.m. CST, March 1, 2012
Notification of award	April 13, 2012
Contract begins	May 1, 2012
Complete initial draft paper due	March 20, 2013
Present draft paper (New Orleans)	April 10, 2013
Complete revised paper due	June 19, 2013
Present revised paper (Madison)	July 10, 2013
Final paper due	August 31, 2013

1/20/12