Date: March 22, 2019

To: U.S. Collaborative of Poverty Centers (CPC) Affiliates and IRP Thematic Research Network Members

From: Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP), University of Wisconsin–Madison

Re: Call for Proposals for Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships for Timely Program Evaluations Using Existing Data

Purpose

The Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison seeks to support researcher-practitioner partnerships committed to analyzing existing program, administrative, and other data to inform the effectiveness of policies or programs targeted at or likely to affect low-income populations. This initiative has been generously funded by The JPB Foundation. Proposals are invited from researcher-practitioner teams in which at least one partner is an affiliate of a U.S. Collaborative of Poverty Centers (CPC; see sidebar) institution or a member of one of IRP's Thematic Research Networks. IRP anticipates funding two to four projects, with total funding (including direct and indirect costs) ranging from $50,000 to $175,000 per project, over a 12-month to 23-month award period beginning June 1, 2019. **The proposal deadline is midnight (CDT) May 6, 2019.**

Background

This initiative is a partnership between IRP and The JPB Foundation. IRP is a center for interdisciplinary research into the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality and the impact of related policies and programs. IRP coordinates the CPC in an integrated set of activities with the goal of improving the effectiveness of public policies and programs to reduce poverty and inequality and their impacts on the well-being of the American people.

Along with the CPC, IRP also coordinates five national Research Networks. The networks are: Poverty and Geography; Poverty and Family Functioning; Poverty, Employment, and Self-Sufficiency; Poverty and the Transition to Adulthood; and Poverty, Tax and Transfer Policies.

Each network includes researchers, policymakers, and practitioners with a variety of professional, disciplinary,

U.S. Collaborative of Poverty Centers (CPC)

The Collaborative marshals the joint resources of the nation's poverty centers to create a sustainable, nationwide infrastructure to facilitate the exchange of applied poverty-policy research ideas and findings. Institutions include:

- Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- Center on Poverty and Social Policy, Columbia University
- Center on Race and Wealth, Howard University
- Economic Self-Sufficiency Policy Research Institute, University of California, Irvine
- Poverty Solutions, University of Michigan
- Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, Stanford University
- University of California, Davis, Center for Poverty Research
- University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research
- West Coast Poverty Center, University of Washington
- Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities, University of Notre Dame

methodological, and policy perspectives, to ensure that the networks bring a range of approaches to bear on current policy issues and are responsive and informative to the larger policy, practice, and research communities. The networks function to advance applied, policy-relevant research on the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality in order to inform policies and programs. Each provides intellectual leadership and training guidance in its thematic area.

The JPB Foundation seeks to advance opportunity in the United States through transformational initiatives that empower those living in poverty, enrich and sustain our environment, and enable pioneering medical research. The Foundation promotes opportunities for people to move and stay out of poverty by supporting work in the areas of health equity, democracy, and economic justice.

IRP and The JPB Foundation have established this grant program to support timely analyses of existing data to evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing programs and policies targeted at or likely to affect low-income populations. The program is administered by IRP Director Lawrence Berger.

Project Description

Federal, state, and local governments in the United States spend hundreds of billions of dollars each year on a wide array of programs that aim to improve economic and social well-being and, thereby, improve the health and productivity of the population. In addition, community-based organizations spend roughly $150 to $200 billion annually on services to low-income families. Vast amounts of detailed data are generated in the course of delivering these programs and services. However, many organizations and agencies lack the internal resources, capacity, and expertise to rigorously evaluate their own work. Moreover, they report difficulty identifying and building collaborations with researchers willing to engage in meaningful and equal partnerships, in part due to limited funding opportunities to support such partnerships. As such, the efficacy of many social welfare policies and programs remains unexamined and unknown, despite the existence of data that could be used for rigorous evaluation, and opportunities to improve programs in a timely manner are missed.

IRP and The JPB Foundation seek to facilitate rigorous rapid-response evaluations of ongoing policies and programs targeted at or likely to affect low-income populations by supporting structured researcher-practitioner partnerships committed to analyzing existing program, administrative, and other data to inform policy and program effectiveness. Evaluations may consist of randomized control trials or rigorous quasi-experimental designs and may include mixed methods.

The initiative stands to facilitate partnerships between nationally recognized poverty researchers and governmental and nongovernmental practitioners and their agencies to produce new, actionable evidence to inform policy and practice in a short timeframe. Moreover, it aims to promote two-way interactions and exchanges between the research and practice communities, thereby fostering an environment of mutual respect, learning, and shared experience.

For the purposes of this call for proposals, research partners must be Ph.D.-holding, university-affiliated faculty or research staff. Practitioners may be affiliated with public or private, nonprofit or for-profit agencies or local, state, or federal governmental agencies. At least one partner must be an affiliate of a CPC institution or a member of one of IRP's Thematic Research Networks.

Areas of Interest

We invite researcher-practitioner partnership proposals to evaluate a wide range of promising programs and policies targeted at or likely to affect low-income populations in the United States. While programs may address any area of relevance to such populations, specific areas of interest include policies and programs that promote human capital development, educational attainment, employment, or self-sufficiency; enhance family functioning and child development and well-being; encourage housing stability; improve health outcomes for low-income and poor populations; and increase or stabilize family economic resources.

Terms

1. Applications must include an affiliate of a CPC institution or member of one of IRP's Thematic Research Networks.

2. Applications must include both a university-affiliated researcher and a public, nonprofit, or private agency engaged in policy or program implementation and delivery that is the subject of the evaluation.

3. The research partner must hold a doctorate or the highest degree appropriate for their discipline.

4. The grant contract period will begin June 1, 2019, and end May 31, 2020, (for 12-month grants) or April 30, 2021 (for 23-month grants).

5. Funding requests must range from $50,000 to $175,000 over a 12- or 23-month period. 12-month grants may not exceed $100,000 in total funding. 23-month grants may not exceed $75,000 in the first 11 months (June 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020) and $100,000 in total funding in the final 12 months (May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021). These amounts include indirect costs at the applicant's institution, if required (see item 4 under *Application Instructions* below). Indirect costs may not exceed The JPB Foundation's published rate of 10%.

6. Receipt of a grant from IRP will require a commitment to:

   a. submit a brief project plan upon notification of award (this will be used to trigger initial funding; format requirements will be shared at a later date);
   b. submit brief biannual progress reports (1–2 pages) of work accomplished during the preceding period of the award by October 31, 2019, (for both 12- and 23-month grants) and April 30, 2020, and October 31, 2020, (for 23-month grants);
   c. submit a detailed final report by July 31, 2020 (for 12-month grants) or April 30, 2021 (for 23-month grants) describing the program or policy components, implementation process (if applicable), population served, data used, research design, findings, and implications for policy and/or practice;
   d. present the research at a seminar, workshop, or other mutually agreed upon public event sponsored by IRP, if requested;
   e. agree to have the research summarized in an IRP publication (*Focus*; *Fast Focus*), webinar, and/or podcast, if requested;
   f. participate in follow-up activities such as program evaluation of this initiative and efforts to support future awardees, if requested; and
   g. provide IRP with copies of all publications stemming from the award.

7. All publications associated with the grant should acknowledge the support of IRP and The JPB Foundation.

8. Support is subject to the availability of funds as well as the recipient making satisfactory progress toward meeting the grant objectives. Nothing in this description of applications should be construed as committing IRP to dividing available funds among all qualified applicants.

Letter of Intent Instructions

By midnight (CDT) April 12, 2019, please complete the brief **letter of intent form** here: **https://irpwisc.formstack.com/forms/researcher_practioner_loi**

Application Instructions

Applicants should submit **their full proposal via the online application form by midnight (CDT) May 6, 2019**. Proposal receipt will be acknowledged. The application, collected and submitted as a single file (PDF or Word), must include the following components in the order listed:

1. A cover sheet providing the title of the proposed research, researchers' and practitioners' names, degrees, institutional affiliations with full addresses and telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
2. An abstract of no more than 250 words, describing the project objectives, data, and methods.
3. A detailed description of the proposed 12- to 23-month project to evaluate an existing policy or program that has the potential to reduce poverty or its effects, and for which data are already being collected. The description may not exceed 10 single-spaced pages in 12-point type with one-inch margins all around, exclusive of references or appendixes. It should:
   a. provide detailed program information and expected outcomes, including a logic model (note: the logic model graphic may be included as an appendix, although should be discussed in the narrative), as well as a description of the population served, relevant implementation-related information, expected take-up, and any prior evidence suggestive of program effectiveness;
   b. present a detailed rigorous research design that carefully describes the issue(s) to be examined, hypotheses to be evaluated, methodology proposed, data sources to be used, and anticipated results, including their potential implications for policy and/or practice;
   c. describe how the researcher-practitioner collaboration will be structured, how the partnership will benefit each, and how the applicants plan to sustain the partnership at the end of the grant period; and
   d. present evidence of any prior researcher-practitioner partnership experience (if applicable).
4. An itemized budget showing personnel costs, travel costs, computer services, supplies, other direct costs, and indirect costs if required. The 12-month awards will be issued in the following two increments: June 1, 2019-April 30, 2020 and May 1, 2020-May 31, 2020. The 23-month awards will be issued in the following two increments: June 1, 2019-April 30, 2020 and May 1, 2020-April 30, 2021. As such, the itemized budget should be presented in these periods. Note also that applicants are encouraged to request that their home institution forego or charge minimal indirect costs.
5. Curriculum vitae for all key personnel.
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; consult your institution's IRB office). The University of Wisconsin will not execute subcontracts without documentation of IRB exemption or approval.

Applications should be submitted to:
https://irpwisc.formstack.com/forms/researcher_practitioner_partnerships

Selection Criteria

IRP will evaluate proposals in collaboration with the IRP Executive Committee and CPC. Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. The relevance of the policy or program for low-income populations and its potential for achieving its stated outcomes.
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 rigor of the research design, including choice of data, methods of analysis, and other procedures.
5. The reasonableness of estimated cost and time commitments in relation to anticipated results.
6. The qualifications and experience of personnel, including demonstrated familiarity with the relevant literature, data, and methods to be used.
7. The demonstrated organizational capacity for and commitment to the success of the researcher-practitioner partnership.

Notification

Applicants will be notified of their application outcome on or about June 1, 2019.

Questions

Questions should be submitted to IRP Lab Manager Vee Yeo (vyeo@wisc.edu).

Timeline of Important Dates

Letter of intent deadline	April 12, 2019 (midnight CDT)
Deadline for proposal receipt	May 6, 2019 (midnight CDT)
Notification of award	June 1, 2019
Contract begins	June 1, 2019
Progress reports due	October 31, 2019 (for both 12- and 23-month grants); and April 30, 2020, and October 31, 2020 (for 23-month grants)
Award period ends	May 31, 2020 (for 12-month grants); April 30, 2021 (for 23-month grants)
Final report due	July 31, 2020 (for 12-month grants); April 30, 2021 (for 23-month grants)