Research on Food Security using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics

Second Round Request for Proposals

Date of RFP Announcement: September 12, 2019

Due Date for Requested Letter of Intent: October 10, 2019

Due Date for Applications: November 14, 2019

Executive Summary

The University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service and Food and Nutrition Service, seeks research proposals on food security using data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID). Research funded competitively under this announcement will focus on economic analyses of longitudinal household food insecurity and its links to food assistance program participation, work, income, consumption, and wealth. It is anticipated that five (5) grants at $50,000 each will be awarded.

I.   Background and Purpose

The Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) began in 1968 as a survey of 4,800 American families. The PSID survey has followed the descendants of original sample parents as they spilt to form their own households, and today there are more than 11,000 PSID families and 26,000 individuals. As the longest continuously running longitudinal survey -- spanning topics such as work, welfare, family structure, child development, consumption, health, and wealth -- the PSID is ideally suited for the study of household behaviors over time and across generations. See http://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/default.aspx for more details on the survey.

The USDA has been a long-time sponsor of food expenditure questions on the PSID and also sponsored the 18-item Household Food Security Module on the 1999, 2001, and 2003 main family surveys, as well as the 1997 Child Development Supplement (CDS). Recently, the Food and Nutrition Service provided funding to include the 18-item food security module on the 2014 CDS and on the 2015 and 2017 main family surveys.

The aim of this grant initiative is to expand upon the first round of PSID grants (see http://ukcpr.org/research/food-assistance-food-insecurity/psid) by competitively awarding cutting-edge longitudinal research on causal links between food insecurity and child, adult, and family well-being across the domains of income, employment, consumption, wealth, and family structure utilizing both the historical, and especially, the newly released data on food insecurity in the PSID. Examples of questions of interest include, but are not restricted to:

- How does food insecurity affect, or is affected by, employment, income, and participation in both food assistance and other transfer programs?
- How does food insecurity affect consumption spending (both food and nondurable) levels, volatility, and tradeoffs among expenditure categories cross-sectionally and over the life cycle?
- Does food insecurity have lasting effects on wealth accumulation? Are there differences by age, race, or ethnicity?
- Is wealth protective of the incidence and duration of food insecurity spells over the life cycle
- How do the links between food insecurity and employment, income, consumption, and wealth differ by family structure or health status of family members?

II. Award Information

A. Award Summary

We anticipate funding five (5) grants at a maximum of $50,000 per award. Research contracts will be established between the University of Kentucky Research Foundation (UKRF) and the grantee institution or organization.

Underwriting for awards made under this announcement is provided by a cooperative research agreement between the University of Kentucky Research Foundation and the Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (CFDA No. 10.253, Agreement Number 58-4000-6-0059-R). As per 7 U.S.C. 3318(b), indirect cost recovery is not allowed for state cooperative institutions, and is limited to 10% of direct costs for non-state cooperative institutions. Tuition is not a reimbursable expense for state cooperative institutions. See 7 Federal Register, Vol. 73, No. 183/Friday September 19, 2008, CFR Part 550, Section 550.14 for explanation.

For the purposes of this award, the 15-month budget period will commence on April 1, 2020, and conclude on June 30, 2021. Grant awards do not allow for reimbursement of pre-award costs. No-cost extensions will not be allowed.

B. Eligibility

The proposed principal investigator for this research award must hold a Ph.D. or equivalent academic degree, and be employed at a college, university, or research

organization. Members of minority and underrepresented groups, and early-career investigators, are strongly encouraged to apply.

C.   Disqualification Factors

Applications that exceed the budget ceiling amount, that do not utilize the PSID data, that do not address the topical domains, or that otherwise disregard RFP application guidelines will be considered non-responsive and not eligible for funding under this mechanism. Employees of the University of Kentucky and those who served as Principal Investigator (PI) on the prior round of PSID awards are not eligible to serve as PI for this competition, but may serve as co-Investigator (Co-I).

III.   Application Submission Information

A.   Letter of Intent to Submit an Application

If you plan to apply for this funding, we request, but do not require, a non-binding letter of intent to be submitted via email by October 10, 2019. The letter should only contain the names and contact information of any principal investigator and co-investigators, the title of the planned project, and the name of the college/university/organization that will serve as the point of contact for award administration. The letter of intent is not mandatory and will be used for planning purposes for grant reviews. Please submit the letter of intent as a PDF document to the UKCPR assistant director, at ukcpr@uky.edu.

B.   Submission of Full Proposals

Submit completed applications via email in both Word and PDF formats to the UKCPR assistant director, at ukcpr@uky.edu. The completed application must have an email timestamp of no later than Thursday, November 14, 2019, 5:00 p.m. EST. Email acknowledgement of receipt of all application materials will be provided on or about November 18, 2019, 5:00 p.m. EST.

C.   Content and Format of Grant Applications

Applicants must limit their project narratives to no more than five (5) pages. For the purposes of this announcement, the narrative begins with the Section 3: *Research Question and Policy Relevance* and ends with the Section 5: *Expected Results and Impact*. This page limit does not include the cover page, project summary, key personnel, budget, or appendices. The 5-page narrative must be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides, and standard 12-point font. Front matter and appendices may be single-spaced but must adhere to other requirements on font size and margins.

UKCPR seeks applications from principal investigators at institutions that can demonstrate the research and administrative capacity to undertake rigorous

research projects and manage federal awards. Applicants should specify in the project narrative how they will be able to fulfill one or more of the research objectives described in the RFP.

Each application must contain the following components, in order

1. *Cover Page*
   Each application must contain a cover page with the title of the proposed research; applicant's name and institutional affiliation (if multiple investigators, a PI must be identified); and contact information including full mailing address, email address, phone and fax numbers. The name and contact information of the institutional research representative should also be identified.

2. *Project Summary*
   A key component of the successful application will be a non-technical, 1-page single-spaced summary containing the title, PI(s), objectives, methods, policy implications, budget request, and timeline of the proposed project. The project summary must be in paragraph format and not bulleted lists.

3. *Research Question and Policy Relevance*
   The application shall present an analysis of key trends and past research on the focal area of interest in the proposed project. The background motivation should demonstrate the applicant's command of the policy and research significance of trends in the topic of interest. The section should also demonstrate how the proposed research expands upon the corpus of knowledge on the topic and how it assists ERS in meeting its Strategic Goal Number 4: *Improve the Nation's Nutrition and Health.*

4. *Research Design*
   The application shall present a research design that will be accomplished over the 15-month performance period. This prospectus should identify key research questions, conceptual and theoretical foundations of the focal hypotheses to be tested, key variables in the PSID data, and statistical methods of analysis.

   All proposals must contain 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 Kentucky Research Foundation will not establish awards without such approval.

5. *Expected Results and Impact*
   The applicant shall describe the type of information expected to result from the effort and link it to potential policy and scientific relevance in advancing

our understanding of food insecurity and its links to food assistance program participation, work, income, consumption, health, and wealth.

6. *Key Staff, Budget Narrative, and Timeline*
The application shall identify all key personnel involved in the project, including principal investigator(s), co-investigators, and senior staff. The applicant's budget and budget narrative must link the research to the funding requested, including the appropriateness of the level and distribution of funds to the successful execution of the project. This narrative includes identifying the distribution of effort of all key personnel to the project. The budget narrative must be in paragraph format, but we also encourage inclusion of a summary budget in a spreadsheet format as an appendix table. All PIs are required to present preliminary research findings at a progress conference, tentatively scheduled for early spring 2021 in Lexington, Ky., and should budget for this purpose.

As stipulated in Section II.A of the RFP, indirect cost recovery up to 10% is only allowed for non-state cooperative institutions. Tuition is also not an allowable expense for state cooperative institutions. Any cost normally treated as an indirect cost being budgeted as a direct cost will require budget narrative justification. The availability, or potential availability, of additional funds to be used in conjunction with those requested in this announcement should be made clear in the budget, and the uses of those additional funds identified.

7. *Curriculum Vitae*
Curriculum vitae of principal investigators(s) and co-investigators should be included in the appendices. The CV should include highest educational degree and institution, current and past employment and professional appointments, and from the past five (5) years, concurrent and prior funded grants, publications, and reports that are pertinent to the research proposed.

IV. Application Review Information

Applications will be initially screened for relevance to the subject areas described above, academic qualifications of the principal investigator, the ability of the applicant institution to administer a grant, inclusion of requested proposal sections, and adherence to RFP guidelines, such as the budget ceiling and page limits. Applicants who submit proposals not passing the initial screen will be notified in writing. Proposals passing the initial screen will undergo a full review by nationally recognized experts in food security and associated outcomes. Reviewers are not eligible for funding under this mechanism and extreme care will be taken to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Proposals will be evaluated based on a 100-point scale across several factors, including:

- **Research Merit** (40 points): Among other criteria, proposals will be scored based on the importance and relevance of the proposed project to research foci identified in this announcement, the clarity of the questions posed, how the research expands on the existing literature, and, most critically, how it assists USDA in meeting its strategic goal of improving the nation's nutrition and health.

- **Methodology** (30 points): Proposals will be judged based upon the appropriateness of the proposed research design for the questions being posed, the feasibility of the methodology given the PSID data, and the applicant's grasp of the significance of past research and the extent to which the proposed methods expand upon prior studies.

- **Personnel** (20 points): Reviewers will judge the proposed key personnel for the necessary skills, experience, and track record to produce an excellent product. Included in this will be the time commitment of senior personnel to the project in relation to the proposed budget and other funded projects.

- **Budget and work plan** (10 points): Among other criteria, proposals will be judged based on the feasibility of the timeline proposed, the reasonableness of the budget, and the quality of infrastructure at the PI's institution to successfully execute the proposed project.

In addition to the points awarded above, reviewers will weigh proposals based on overlap with ongoing projects, the extent to which the proposal integrates with the other highly scored proposals to form a more cohesive research portfolio, and potential future research and policy benefits.

V.   Award Administration Information

A.   Award Notices

Applicants will be notified of the status of their proposals on or about January 23, 2020.

B.   Contact Information

Questions relating to this announcement should be directed to the UKCPR assistant director via e-mail at ukcpr@uky.edu .

C.   Reporting requirements

The awardee shall submit no fewer than three reports during the duration of the grant consisting of:

(i) a progress report no later than November 30, 2020, summarizing progress toward completion, especially highlighting the achievement of key

milestones set out in the work plan. Changes in personnel and in budget allocation across categories, and challenges and how they were overcome should be included in the progress report.

(ii) a draft final report two weeks prior to the conference, tentatively scheduled for spring 2021, held in Lexington, Ky.

(iii) a final report due no later than June 30, 2021. The final report shall include the following components: Title Page, Acknowledgement, 250-word Abstract, a 2-3 page Executive Summary, Introduction, Research Methods, Data, Results, Discussion, and Conclusion.

Submit progress, draft, and final reports as Word documents to UKCPR assistant director at ukcpr@uky.edu.

D.   Invoicing

The awardee institution shall submit quarterly cost reimbursable invoices. The invoice shall include a brief description of work and expenses incurred, and include the contract number. The final one-fourth of the grant award will be held in reserve until receipt of the completed final report.

E.   Terms and Conditions

1.   Award Terms

UKCPR reserves the right to negotiate with the project investigators and/or their institutional representatives regarding the scope of work proposed, including funding level and project duration.

2.   Publication

(i)   The report and any attendant work products produced as a result of this award shall contain the following statement:

"This project was supported with a grant from the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research through funding by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Agreement Number 58-4000-6-0059-R. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policies of the sponsoring agencies."

(ii)   UKCPR requires grantees to submit working papers, policy briefs, and associated products funded by this grant to UKCPR at ukcpr@uky.edu for posting on its website at its discretion. Grantees retain publication rights to their projects for peer-reviewed outlets.

F.   Disclaimer

Nothing in this announcement should be construed as to obligate the University of Kentucky or the Economic Research Service to make any awards whatsoever. Awards are contingent upon funding availability and research needs.

The University of Kentucky is an equal opportunity institution.

Applicant Checklist

Full Proposals should include:

1. Cover Page

 a. Title of proposed research

 b. PI name, Organization, & contact information

 c. Authorized representative & contact information

2. Project Summary (1 page, single spaced)

(Note: Sections 3-5 are to be double spaced; 5 pages maximum)

3. Research Question and Policy Relevance

4. Research Design

5. Expected Results and Impact

6. Key Staff, Budget Narrative, and Timeline

7. Curriculum Vitae

8. Appendices (e.g. bibliography, summary budget, letters of support)