

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

BECR New Perspectives Fellowships

Creating an Inclusive Research Agenda on the Behavioral Economics of Food Choices

Applications accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed quarterly (March, June, September, and December).

Purpose

The BECR Center seeks applicants for the New Perspectives Fellowship, which aims to provide mentorship, training, and a seed grant to expand the number of researchers from under-represented populations conducting research on healthy food choice using behavioral economic strategies. Fellowships will last 18 months and scholars will remain at their own institutions during the fellowship.

The Duke-UNC USDA Center for Behavioral Economics and Healthy Food Choice Research (BECR Center)

The newly funded USDA Center for Behavioral Economics and Healthy Food Choice Research (BECR) at Duke University and the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill (PI: Matthew Harding, Duke University) strives to apply behavioral economics theories and concepts to uncover potential interventions to improve food choice behaviors contributing to improved nutrition, food security, and the health of American consumers, and to increase the effectiveness of policies and programs designed to improve diets, especially for low-income households. The team will build the field of behavioral economics around food consumption choices with a particular focus on identifying the most successful levers required to motivate healthy food choices and quantifying their effectiveness with regard to the individual consumer, food retailers, and the food industry. The Center has three areas of focus: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clients, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients, and the general population. With this Request for Proposals, we are seeking to award fellowships to new investigators who come from diverse backgrounds and have research interests that align with those of the BECR Center.

Who Should Apply: We recognize that understanding the behavioral economics of healthy eating choices is a complex problem and that substantial disparities in individuals' available food choices – whether healthy or not – exist across the population due to various factors, such as socio-economic status. Therefore, the Fellowships are aimed at encouraging scholarly participation by individuals whose backgrounds or unique circumstances enable them to better understand populations and communities historically underrepresented in academic research. The

fellowships are open to emerging researchers who are U.S. citizens of appropriate research interests and particularly encourage candidates from lower income backgrounds or geographies, and ethnic and racial minority groups.

Recipients of the Fellowships should be employed by a university, college, or research-based organization. They will be mentored by an established researcher associated with the Center. Along with the mentorship, seed grants will be provided to enable recipients to initiate an original research project at their home institutions, while benefiting from the resources and networks available through the Center. Recipients of the Fellowship will be able to attend all training sessions, meetings, webinars, and other events offered by the Center. Recipients will also have the opportunity to present their findings during the annual meetings organized by the Center. Recipients will not receive a stipend in addition to the seed grant.

Total Awards

Up to *six* Fellowships will be awarded on a rolling application basis (reviewed quarterly). Each fellowship includes a seed grant in the amount of \$15,000 over an eighteen-month period.

Eligibility Criteria

- The BECR Center is dedicated to supporting emerging researchers. Thus, applicants must be emerging researchers who are interested in behavioral economics applied to food choice, and have received a doctoral degree (including MD or JD) within the last 10 years prior to the date of the award.
- Applicants are encouraged from a broad range of disciplines including, but not limited to, economics, public health, nutrition, marketing, business, psychology, or a related field.
- Applicants must be based in the United States or its territories and employed in a university, college, or research-based organization.
- The Fellowship program encourages applications from individuals whose backgrounds or unique circumstances enable them to better understand populations and communities historically underrepresented in academic research. Candidates from lower income backgrounds or geographies, and ethnic and racial minority groups are particularly encouraged to apply. The BECR Center embraces diversity and inclusion across multiple dimensions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and identity, and socioeconomic status.

Application Instructions

Applicants should submit a personal and research statement that includes:

- Applicant information (name, title, affiliation)
- Applicant background and why they qualify for the fellowship
- Summary of how the Fellowship will further the applicant's research interests and experience

Each personal statement should be no more than *two* (2) pages, 1.5 spaced with 1-inch margins and 12-point font, and be accompanied by a curriculum vita (CV).

Complete applications should be converted to PDF and submitted via email, all as one document (personal and research statement and CV). Please submit your completed application to the BECR Center at BECR@duke.edu.

For questions related to this RFA please contact the Assistant Director, Terry Hartman, MPH, MS at terry.hartman@duke.edu or (919) 613-5907.

Selection Criteria

1. A clear alignment of the applicant's research interests and prior experience with the focus of the research of the BECR Center.
2. A desire to gain a new research perspective on the field of behavioral economics applied to food choice.
3. Individuals who received a doctoral degree (including MD or JD) within the last ten years prior to the date of the award.
4. The Fellowships are designed to encourage scholarly participation by individuals whose backgrounds or unique circumstances enable them to better understand populations and communities historically underrepresented in academic research. Therefore, the applicant's background and diversity will play a major role in the selection process.

Award decisions will be made and notifications sent on a rolling basis. The selection process and decisions on all awards will be made by the BECR Center Director, Matthew Harding, PhD, assisted by Terry Hartman, MPH, MS, and faculty collaborators.