

**Healthy Food, Healthy Lives (HFHL) Institute**  
**Request for Proposals Fall 2008**  
**Food Policy Grant Program**

The University of Minnesota Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives (HFHL) Institute is supported by the office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. Affiliated units include the Academic Health Center, the Colleges of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, University Extension, and the School of Public Health. The College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences serves as the fiscal agent for the Institute.

The mission of the HFHL Institute is to increase and sustain the University's impact in the interdisciplinary arena of food, agriculture and health by building the University's capacity in research, learning and community engagement. The priority areas for focus are food safety, prevention of obesity and chronic disease, and food policy. Within these priority areas, of special importance is the integration of agriculture and health sciences.

The major goal of the HFHL Institute is to utilize and help build the strengths of the University of Minnesota in the area of food and health to advance scientific and public knowledge and influence public policy. One of the mechanisms used is funding interdisciplinary research teams whose goal is the development and implementation of cutting edge extramurally funded research and training programs.

**Focus of this Request for Proposals**

The HFHL Institute is requesting applications for research grants to fund faculty research teams or faculty-community collaboratives. The focus of the research proposal must be on food policy. Projects can evaluate the impact of current food policies and programs, or investigate issues with a clear policy impact. Funds will be distributed through a competitive review process.

The grants to be funded through this program must utilize novel and innovative approaches to answer potentially high impact research questions. The proposal should be highly interdisciplinary, including members from at least three distinct disciplines. The research should have a high potential for growth and for becoming self-supporting over time.

Policy refers to regulations, laws, policy-making actions or formal or informal rules established by formal organizations or government units. In the context of this grant program, policies are those that influence the food environment and shape or guide eating behavior to improve the public's food intake and body weight or health. Topics are not limited to, but could include:

- Linking food policy to health, chronic disease or obesity (e. g. Competing demands on food crops for energy production (among other things) have led to rapid increases in food prices, coupled with increases in energy prices as well. These trends pose major challenges for the poor who are also subject to chronic health problems linked to obesity, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer. One could study changes in food consumption when food prices and inflation hit households below the median household income; the effects of food labeling policies on food choices and subsequent health; the impact of food advertising, particularly to children, on consumers' food choices and subsequent health)

- Policy impact on vulnerable populations  
(e. g. Investigate the health impact of advertising to children, school lunch policies (federal, state and local), foods available to children, food programs (i.e. food stamps, WIC); study the links between the location and types of food outlets available in low income neighborhoods and peoples' food consumption patterns and subsequent health)
- Food pricing and health- economic approaches or effects  
(e. g. Study the impact of farm subsidies on relative food prices of fresh processed and high fat foods; price impacts on choices of food consumed away from home (FAFH) and food purchased at grocery stores and how this affects health; collect data on prices of FAFH for use in these analyses)
- Simulation modeling – simulate putting a food policy into practice and show the potential outcomes.  
(e. g. Use food consumption (demand) models to simulate changes in prices, information streams, and other variables to estimate impact of changes in foods eaten on subsequent health; use Game Theory, behavioral economics and/or experimental economics techniques to predict consumer choice by various population groups)

### **Funding**

Up to three \$100,000 grants will be awarded. Projects should be faculty-led, or led by faculty-community collaboratives, focused on well defined problems, and should assemble an interdisciplinary team for basic, translational, or community-based participatory research. Funding new collaborations and team development will be a high priority.

Appropriate uses of the funds may include, but are not restricted to:

- support for graduate students, or other research personnel, including research personnel based in the community
- shared equipment
- laboratory supplies
- database or other infrastructure development
- purchase of support services for research
- Up to 5% of the principal investigator's salary (no other faculty salary support may be included)

The funds should be designated for the direct support of research, although they may not be used to support a currently funded program.

The most important criteria for funding will be interdisciplinarity, innovation, significance (potential impact), utilization of new collaborations, quality of the research proposal, and potential for future external funding.

The funds must be spent within a one-year time period, although no-cost extensions will be allowed with appropriate justification. Expected performance criteria include building on competitive advantages, developing new synergies among research teams, publications demonstrating interdisciplinarity, generation of significant preliminary data, submission of a

proposal for extramural funding, potential for public impact, integrating the research activities with teaching, and training of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

**Who is Eligible:**

Faculty members from any University program or department are eligible to apply for these grants. However, it is important to understand that this RFP is intended for support of multi-disciplinary, multi-investigator (faculty teams) proposals. A faculty member may apply for only one grant per cycle on which he/she would be the PI or co-PI. There is no limitation to the number of grants on which a faculty member could participate as an investigator or other role.

**Proposal Requirements:**

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Research Plan (not to exceed 5 pages)
  - Statement of Hypothesis and Specific Aims
  - Background and Rationale
  - Preliminary Results (if applicable)
  - Research Design and Methods
- Budget and budget justification
- Biosketch for the Principal Investigator(s) and Co PI's
- Letters of support from collaborating investigators
- References (need not be included within 5 page limit)
- The following questions must be addressed separately from the proposal, on one page
  - How is this proposal interdisciplinary and why is an interdisciplinary team necessary to carry out this work?
  - How is this proposal highly innovative?
  - What is the potential impact of this proposal?
  - What future research might this project lead to that could be funded externally?
  - What are the potential future external sources of funding?

**Criteria for evaluation of grant applications include:**

- Interdisciplinarity
- Innovation
- Potential impact
- Expertise and track record of members of the research team
- Intellectual merit of the proposed research
- Identification of specific extramural granting opportunities, plus potential competitiveness for external funding
- Leveraging of resources
- Appropriateness of budget
- Graduate student involvement and support

**Review Process:**

The HFHL Institute Director will select the reviewers, with advice from the HFHL Advisory Board. The review panel will include faculty members multiple colleges and disciplines, and may include external reviewers. The review panel will recommend additional members and reviewers for specific proposals depending upon the number of applications submitted and the areas of proposed research. Recommendations of the review panel will be submitted to the HFHL Director for final decision and approval.

**Application Process:**

1. The deadline for submission is **November 21, 2008 (4:30 pm)**. Grant applications (original plus 6 copies) should be submitted to Laura Richardson, Food Science and Nutrition 266 FScN, 1334 Eckles Ave. St Paul, MN 55108. A hard copy of the Proposal Routing Form (PRF) should be completed and signed by the department head and dean for the PI, co-PIs and any other key investigators. (DO NOT SEND THE PRF and PROPOSAL TO SPONSORED PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION). An electronic version of the application and PRF (PDF files) should also be sent to [hfhl@umn.edu](mailto:hfhl@umn.edu). This request for proposals is not restricted to one per college.
2. Awards will be announced the week of **December 15, 2008**.
3. Funding will commence **January 5, 2009**.