



CBEAR
Center for
Behavioral & Experimental
Agri-Environmental Research

*INFORMED BY BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE.
TESTED WITH EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN.*

EXTERNAL GRANTS PROGRAM RFP

Request for Proposals:

The Center for Behavioral & Experimental Agri-Environmental Research (CBEAR) is pleased to announce a new award program to support research involving the application of behavioral and experimental economics to agri-environmental issues in the United States. The USDA provided CBEAR with funding to award up to \$300,000 in proposals over a one year period. The initiative is seeking proposals for either (1) a *Research Grants Program* for grants up to \$75,000, or (2) a *Mini-Grants Program* for grants up to \$10,000 for junior researchers and up to \$20,000 for senior researchers. Junior researchers are researchers between appointment as a PhD candidate and 3 years from receiving a doctoral degree. Faculty, research associates and doctoral students at research institutions (including universities and think tanks) are eligible to apply. The application process for all grants is the same.

Proposals will undergo an objective review process and will be evaluated based on alignment with the CBEAR research mission (<http://centerbear.org/about/>), academic merit, innovation, likelihood of successful implementation, and potential impacts on agri-environmental policy. Proposals that do not meet the requirements (either in content or style) of this RFP will not be considered.

Proposal Submission and Selection Schedule:

June 1, 2015	RFP announcement made
September 30, 2015	Full proposals due (proposals sent to external committee for review)
November, 2015	Funding decisions made and PIs notified
January 1, 2016	Recommended start date
December 31, 2017	Final report due (two years after recommended start date)

Introduction:

In founded 2014 with financial support from the USDA's Economic Research Service, CBEAR engages an active coalition of internationally recognized researchers in behavioral and experimental policy research. CBEAR has four primary inter-related objectives. (1) To develop opportunities for program administrators and economists to identify how applications of behavioral and experimental economics can improve program performance, landowner satisfaction, and agri-environmental outcomes while reducing program costs. To provide evidence of the cost-effectiveness of these applications, CBEAR encourages the use of randomized controlled trials in agri-environmental programs. (2) To conduct behavioral economics research on agri-environmental policy using experimental and behavioral economics techniques, including lab and field experiments. (3) Expand and enhance the research base. (4) Disseminate research in a manner accessible to program administrators and policy makers through direct outreach efforts, publication of digital and online materials, and outreach to media outlets.



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Scope of Research Funded under this RFP:

The goal of the CBEAR External Grants Program is to fund novel research projects that use field or laboratory experiments to investigate issues related to the environment and agriculture, especially those related to governmental programs and producers in the United States. By “experiments,” we mean research projects in which exposure to one or more treatments is controlled by the researcher or a partner. (Consequently, “natural experiments” are not eligible for this program). Successful proposals will have a solid foundation in behavioral economics theory and have a strong plan to implement the project. Moreover, successful projects should have practical relevancy – the proposal should describe how the results may be used in policy or practice.

We expect to award up to ten *Mini-Grants* and up to three *Research Grants*. Mini-Grants can support more speculative research plans or pilot initiatives. They can also be used to support collaboration between researchers and agri-environmental program administrators to design a randomized controlled field trial that may be funded by the program. These funds can also be used to support the development of partnerships that will subsequently seek funding from other sources (e.g., the proposal can request travel funds and other support for meetings and experimental design). Particularly for Research Grant proposals, collaborations with federal, state, or local agri-environmental program officials are encouraged.

To receive the highest weight in the proposal evaluation process, all collaborations should include Letters of Commitment that specify how the agri-environmental program will be involved in the research and identify how the program would implement the recommendations that arise from the research.

Eligibility:

Proposals must be submitted by faculty, research associates, post-doctoral scholars/fellows or doctoral candidates at a higher educational institution or other research center. Researchers are welcome to submit multiple proposals. Junior researchers are welcome to submit proposals for either the *Research Grant* or *Mini-Grant Programs*. Doctoral candidates must apply with their major professor as a PI of the proposal. We encourage proposals from junior researchers, including doctoral candidates, post-doctoral researchers, and faculty who have received a Ph.D. in the last three years.

Proposal Requirements:

The main proposal comprises a Cover Page and a Research Statement. The Cover Page should not be longer than one page and should include:

- Project title
- Names, phone numbers and email addresses for PI and co-PI(s)
- Amount of funding requested
- Type of application (research, mini-junior, mini-senior)
- Type of data collection (field or lab)



- Bullet point list of up to three key research questions

The Research Statement should not exceed five pages single-spaced in 12 pt. Times font, excluding bibliography. Mini-Grant proposals may be much shorter. We recommend the following format:

- **Motivation:** This section should include a clear statement of intellectual merit of the research and expected significance. In addition, it should discuss the project's broader impacts (i.e. its importance for policy and agri-environmental program administration) and explain why your proposal is innovative.
- **Relevance:** This section should explain how the project is within the scope of research and the project's relevance to the CBEAR mission.
- **Contribution:** This section should be clear about the specific contribution to the scholarly literature, to program challenges, or both by highlighting what has been already done, what gaps remain, and how the research team's proposed project addresses these gaps.
- **Approach:** This section should include a brief description of the research design, including information about the treatments proposed and the number of participants needed for each treatment. Power analyses are encouraged. In addition, this section should explicitly state the proposed hypothesis(es) that will be tested and the method(s) used to test the hypotheses.
- **Researcher/Team Qualifications & Available Resources:** Researchers should provide a brief statement about their relevant expertise. Available resources, including research space and equipment, should be described.¹
- **Collaborator:** Collaborations with federal, state, or local agri-environmental program administrators are encouraged, but not required.

The proposal must also include a bibliography, two-page CVs of all relevant researchers, budget, budget justification, and project timeline, which do not count towards the total page limit for the Research Statement. The bibliography does not need to follow any specific format, but we prefer that you stick to one type (APA/MLA etc.) The two-page CVs do not need to follow a specific format. In the project timeline, list the main activities to be completed and their chronology.

Grant Recipient Requirements:

We require that a working paper be submitted to CBEAR no later than December 31, 2017 (for some Mini-Grants, a short summary may be sufficient). The working paper details the results of the funded research. Short (1-2 page) intermediate quarterly progress reports are also required. In addition, we will expect all grant recipients to be willing to work with CBEAR staff to develop a podcast and a two-page Behavioral Insights Brief that highlights the key policy-relevant findings from your study.

Submission:

¹ If your proposed research requires computer equipment or lab space, the Center for Experimental & Applied Economics at the University of Delaware is willing to share their equipment to support funded project. To ensure that the available to meet your needs, contact Kent Messer (messer@udel.edu) *before* submitting a proposal.



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Submissions should be made electronically to grant-submit@centerbear.org. Submissions should be made in a single PDF document. Questions or requests for more information regarding the research aims or the mission of CBEAR should be directed to Paul Ferraro (pferraro@gsu.edu) or Kent Messer (messer@udel.edu). Questions regarding formatting and grant submission should be directed to Maddi Valinski (mvalinski@centerbear.org).