

Peer Review Plan

Title of Review: Healthy Incentives Pilot Project Evaluation -- Review [X] **Influential Scientific Information**

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service [] **Highly Influential Scientific Assessment**

Agency Contact: Rich Lucas, Deputy Associate Administrator (703-305-2017)

Subject of Review: Healthy Incentives Pilot Project

Purpose of Review: Subject the information to formal, independent, external peer review to ensure its objectivity.

Type of Review: [] Panel Review [X] Individual Reviewers
[] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 10/2009 End: 12/2013 Completed: _____

Number of Reviewers: [] 3 or fewer [X] 4 to 10 [] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Knowledge of SNAP operations, behavior change, marketing, research design and statistical analysis

Reviewers selected by: [X] Agency [] Designated Outside Organization
Organization's Name: _____

Opportunities for Public Comment? [] Yes [X] No

If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:
How: _____
When: _____

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments? [] Yes [X] No

Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel? [] Yes [X] No

Other: See next page.

The Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 authorized USDA to carry out pilot projects to develop, test and evaluate methods of using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to improve the dietary and health status of households eligible for or participating in SNAP. Specifically, it provides \$20 million to test the effects of providing financial incentives at the point-of-purchase to encourage SNAP households to purchase fruits, vegetables or other healthful foods.

USDA conducted a public symposium with expert stakeholders to discuss the large number of nutrition, operational and evaluation options in designing the Healthy Incentives Pilot. Participants provided substantial information and a variety of views. This information was used to inform the development of competitive solicitations for the pilot and the rigorous evaluation. The evaluation will undergo the following peer review process:

Peer reviewers representing stakeholders, academia, and Federal Agencies will be selected to conduct an independent, informed and thorough review of three contract deliverables: 1) the data collection and analysis plan 2) draft of the interim report and 3) draft of the final report. The components and the charges to the reviewers are as follows:

1. Reviewers will be requested to determine if the plan for data collection is appropriate, whether the analysis proposed to be carried out reflects the original intent of the study, and whether the proposed methodology will provide the information required by the study. Reviewers will also be asked if there are alternate methodologies that ought to be considered within the funding parameters of the study.

Note: This component of the peer review plan was completed in February 2011; a summary report is available [here](#).

2. Reviewers will be asked to review drafts of the interim and final reports and assess the extent to which the conclusions follow from the analysis, and the strengths and limitations of the overall conclusions. Peer reviewers will be requested, as appropriate, to suggest ways to clarify assumptions, findings and conclusions, identify oversights, omissions and inconsistencies, and, if needed, encourage authors to more fully acknowledge limitations and uncertainties.

Some reviewers may participate in reviewing all three deliverables. All peer reviewers of the draft interim and final reports will be informed that the Agency does not have funds to make changes that require additional data collection, reconsideration of the research design, or significant modifications to the approved data collection and analysis methods. The reviewers will be informed that the Agency, while it will welcome recommendations that may improve the design of the study, requires a review of the current product that is cognizant of the funding constraints.

Each reviewer will be instructed to supply the results of their review in written form. Because this study is considered influential information, reviewers will be informed that the Agency is required to make available to the public the written charge to the peer reviewers, the peer reviewers' names, the peer reviewers' report(s), and the agency's response to the peer reviewers' reports.