

institution must show a strong commitment to the Consortium's support. Such commitment may be provided as dedicated space, salary support for investigators or key personnel, dedicated equipment or other financial support for the proposed Center.

Each Center need not be limited by geographical boundaries. A research team may consist of investigators or institutions that are geographically distant, to the extent that the research design requires and accommodates such arrangements. Nothing in this announcement precludes non-academic entities from being affiliated with an applicant.

### Part III—Application Preparation and Evaluation Criteria

This part contains information on the preparation of an application for submission under this announcement, the forms necessary for submission, and the evaluation criteria under which the applications will be reviewed. Potential applicants should read this part carefully in conjunction with the information provided in Part II.

In general, SSA seeks organizations with demonstrated capacity for providing quality policy research, training, and working with government policymakers. In the program narrative section of the application, applicants should reflect on how they will be able to fulfill the responsibilities and the requirements described in the announcement. The application should specify in detail how administrative arrangements would be made to minimize start-up and transition delays. Applications that do not address all four major tasks discussed in Center Responsibilities in Part II will not be considered for an award.

It is anticipated that the applicant will have access to additional sources of funding for some projects and arrangements with other organizations and institutions. The applicant (including the Center Director and other key personnel) shall make all current and anticipated related funding arrangements (including contact information for grant/contract/cooperative agreement administrators) explicit in an attachment to the application (Part IV, Section B–12). As part of the annual review process, this information will be updated and reviewed to limit duplicative funding for Center projects.

#### *A. Content and Organization of Technical Application (See "Components of a Complete Application," Part IV, Section B)*

The application must begin with the required application forms and a three-page (double-spaced) overview and summary of the application. Staff resumes should be included in a separate appendix. The core of the application must contain seven sections, presented in the following order:

(1) A brief (not more than 10 pages) background analysis of the key retirement policy issues and trends with a focus on the primary research themes of the proposed Center. The analysis should discuss concisely, but comprehensively, important priority research issues and demonstrate the applicant's grasp of the policy and research significance of recent and future social, economic, political, and demographic trends.

(2) A research and evaluation prospectus for a five-year research agenda, outlining the major research themes to be investigated over the next five years. In particular, the prospectus will describe the activities planned for the priority research areas and other additional research topics proposed by the applicant. The prospectus should discuss the kind of research activities that are needed to both address current Social Security reform issues and anticipate future policy debates. The prospectus should follow from the background analysis section. It may, of course, also discuss research areas and issues that were not mentioned in the analysis if the author(s) of the application feel there have been gaps in past research, or that new factors have begun to affect or soon will begin to affect national retirement policy. If a Center intends to enhance data for retirement research purposes, they should include a discussion of the technical expertise of Center staff and proposed mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of data.

The prospectus shall include detailed descriptions of individual research projects that will be expected in the Center's first year of operation. The special instructions attachment of the application kit provides guidelines for project proposals. It also should be specific about long-term research themes and projects. The lines of research described in the prospectus should be concrete enough that project descriptions in subsequent research plan amendments can be viewed as articulating a research theme discussed in the prospectus. An application that contains an ad hoc categorization of an

unstructured set of research projects, rather than a set of projects that strike a coherent theme, will be judged unfavorably.

**Note:** Once a successful RRC applicant has been selected, SSA will review the RRC research agenda and determine research priorities. This may include the addition, modification, or removal of proposed research projects. After review, each Center will submit to SSA a revised research plan and budget. The research plan will be periodically reviewed and revised as necessary. The application should discuss how the Centers select research projects to propose, including involvement of the outside scholars/practitioners, SSA, and other advisors and participants in the Consortium.

(3) A prospectus for dissemination, including ways to reach a broad audience of researchers, policymakers, and the public. Dissemination plans should detail proposed publications and conferences.

(4) A prospectus for training and education, including proposed training and educational strategies to meet the goals described in Part II, Section A, Task 3.

(5) A staffing and organization proposal for the Center, including an analysis of the types of background needed among staff members, the Center's organizational structure, and linkages with the host institution and other organizations. In this section, the applicant should specify how it will assure an effective approach to research, and where appropriate, identify the necessary links to university departments, other organizations and scholars engaged in research and government policy making.

The applicant should identify the Center Director and key senior research staff. Full resumes of proposed staff members must be included as a separate appendix to the application. The time commitment to the Center and other commitments for each proposed staff member shall be indicated. Note that once the cooperative agreement has been awarded, changes in key staff will require prior approval from SSA. The kinds of administrative and tenure arrangements, if any, the Center proposes to make should also be discussed in this section. In addition, the authors of the application and the role that they will play in the proposed Center must be specified.

This section shall discuss the financial arrangements for supporting research assistants, dissertation fellowships, affiliates, resident scholars, etc. The discussion should include the expected number and type of scholars to