

be supported and the level of support anticipated.

If the applicant envisions an arrangement of several universities or entities, this section should describe the specifics of the relationships, including leadership, management, and administration. It should pay particular attention to discussing how a focal point for research, training, and scholarship will be maintained given the arrangement proposed.

The application also should discuss the role, selection procedure, and expected contribution of the outside scholars/practitioners (See Part II, Joint Responsibilities).

(6) An organizational experience summary of past work at the institution proposed as the location (or the host) of the Center that relates directly or indirectly to the research priorities of this request. This discussion should include more than a listing of the individual projects completed by the individuals who are included in the application. It should provide a sense of institutional commitment to policy research on issues involving retirement policy. The application must list in an appendix appropriate recent or current research projects, with a brief research summary, contact person references, and address and telephone numbers of references. This section should also discuss the experience of the research staff in working with the government agencies and their demonstrated capacity to provide policy relevant support to these agencies.

(7) A budget narrative that links the research, training, dissemination, and administration to the Center's funding level. The special instructions attachment of the application kit provides information on the distribution and presentation of budget data. Though SSA believes that all three of the stated goals and objectives are important, it is expected that the substantial majority of funds will support Research, Evaluation, and Data Development. Funding should also be allocated to address occasional SSA requested activities (described in Part II, Section B-1). This section should also discuss how the five-year budget supports proposed research, training, dissemination, and administrative activities and should link the first year of funding to a five-year plan. The discussion should include the appropriateness of the level and distribution of funds to the successful completion of the research, training, dissemination, and administrative plans.

The availability, potential availability or expectation of other funds (from the

host institution, universities, foundations, other Federal agencies, etc.) and the uses to which they would be put, should be documented in this section. When additional funding is contemplated, applicants shall note whether the funding is being donated by the host institution, is in-hand from another funding source, or will be applied for from another funding source. Formal commitments for the 5 percent, non-federal, minimum budget share should be highlighted in this section.

Seeking additional support from other sources is encouraged. However, funds pertaining to this announcement must not duplicate those received from other funding sources.

#### *B. Review Process and Funding*

In addition to any other reviews, a review panel consisting of at least three qualified persons will be formed. Each panelist will objectively review and score the cooperative agreement applications using the evaluation criteria listed in Part III, Section C below. The panel will recommend Centers based on (1) the application scores; (2) the feasibility and adequacy of the project plan and methodology; and (3) how the Centers would jointly meet the objectives of the Consortium. The Agency will consider the panel's recommendations when awarding the cooperative agreements. Although the results from the review panel are the primary factor used in making funding decisions, they are not the sole basis for making awards. The Agency will consider other factors as well (such as duplication of internal and external research effort) when making funding decisions.

All applicants must use the guidelines provided in the SSA application kit for preparing applications requesting funding under this cooperative agreement announcement. These guidelines describe the minimum amount of required project information. However, when completing Part III—Program Narrative, Form SSA-96-BK, please follow the guidelines under Part III, Section A, above. Disregard instructions provided on pages 3, 4, and 5 of the SSA Federal Assistance Application Form SSA-96-BK.

All awardees must adhere to SSA's Privacy and Confidentiality Regulations (20 CFR part 401) as well as provide specific safeguards surrounding client information sharing, paper/computer records/data, and other issues potentially arising from administrative data. SSA reserves the option to discuss applications with other Federal or State staff, specialists, knowledgeable

persons, and the general public. Comments from these sources, along with those of the reviewers, will be kept from inappropriate disclosure and may be considered in making an award decision.

#### *C. Selection Process and Evaluation Criteria*

The evaluation criteria correspond to the outline for the development of the Program Narrative Statement of the application described in Part III, Section A, above. The application should be prepared in the format indicated by the outline described in The Components of a Complete Application (Part IV, Section B).

Selection of the successful applicants will be based on the technical and financial criteria laid out in this announcement. Reviewers will determine the strengths and weaknesses of each application in terms of the evaluation criteria listed below.

The point value following each criterion heading indicates the maximum numerical relative weight that each section will be given in the review process. An unacceptable rating on any individual criterion may render the application unacceptable. Consequently, applicants should take care that all criteria are fully addressed in the applications. Applications will be reviewed as follows:

(a) Quality of the background analysis. (See Part III, Section A-1) (10 points)

Applications will be judged on whether they provide a thoughtful and coherent discussion of political, economic, social, and demographic issues influencing retirement and solvency. Reviewers will judge applicants' abilities to discuss the past, present, and future role of government programs and policies which affect these trends. Applications should tie the trends and influences discussed to their proposed research agenda.

(b) Quality of the research and evaluation prospectus. (See Part III, Section A-2) (40 points)

Reviewers will judge this section on whether the research agenda is scientifically sound and policy relevant. They also will consider whether the applicant is likely to produce significant contributions to their proposed research areas and how closely the proposed projects fit the objectives for which the applications were solicited.

The application will be judged on the breadth and depth of the applicant's commitment to research and evaluation of the priority research areas described in Part II, Section A. Again, extra weight will be given to quality projects that