

# FAMILY ECONOMICS

Family economics examines how individuals and families obtain and use resources—such as money, time, human capital, material resources and community services—by exploring the relationship between individuals and families and the larger economy and by studying the impact of public issues, policies and programs on family economic well-being.

## 2007-2009 RESEARCH PRIORITIES

### Planning for a Secure Financial Future

Financial security is the ability to meet day-to-day obligations while planning, saving and investing to achieve future financial goals such as education, retirement, homeownership and small business startup. By building assets and managing debt, households are better able to contribute to the economic vitality of their

communities. More research is needed to determine the practices that motivate people to build wealth and not debt. Additional research is needed to examine the relationships between economically secure families, community prosperity, civic engagement and rural entrepreneurship.

### Household Food Security and Health

Research has explored the links between family socioeconomic status and issues of food security and health. Resources such as community food support programs, the local health care system and employer-sponsored benefit programs profoundly influence family food security and health. How families use these

resources also can influence their food security and health. Independently, none of the resources can fully address these issues. To comprehensively address health and food security, research must look at all of these resources and the interactions among them.

### Loss in Times of Disaster

Research is needed on the economic consequences and adjustments of households following natural disasters, terrorism and wars. Vulnerability is the risk of substantial losses from which families may have difficulty recovering, or may never recover. These losses are emotional, social and financial because of loss of family members, personal

health, jobs, houses, household goods, cars, financial incomes, assets and social support at interpersonal and community levels. Research is needed on the kinds of resilience demonstrated, the best practices to meet human needs following disasters and information from households to inform practices.

### Developed by the Family Economics Research Coordinating Committee (NCCC052)

This committee, functioning under the National Agricultural Experiment Station System, facilitates collaboration among family economics researchers nationally and internationally. The committee provides a forum to examine research methodology and family economic issues in depth from a multidisciplinary perspective. The committee fosters development of research related to the economic well-being of individuals and families that is of interest to multiple institutions across the nation. For more information, see [HOMEPAGE: NCCC052](#).

#### Leadership team:

Fran Lawrence, Ph.D., Chair  
Louisiana State University Agricultural Center  
School of Human Ecology  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

225-578-1726    flawrence@lsu.edu

Craig Gundersen, Chair Elect  
Iowa State University  
Department of Human Development and Family Studies  
Ames, IA 70803

515-294-6319    cgunder@iastate.edu