



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Center for
Nutrition Policy
& Promotion

3101 Park
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

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Dear Colleagues:

We are pleased to announce that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is developing a web-based system and set of tools called the Nutrition Evidence Library (NEL) to support the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC), which will be established later this year. The NEL will require the work of abstractors. This message requests your help in selecting abstractors, as described below.

This new system will provide the DGAC with a portfolio of scientific evidence abstracts for use as a resource during the DGAC's upcoming review of the current science on nutrition and health. After its review, the DGAC will provide a report with recommendations for the development of the revised *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which is the primary source of dietary health information for policymakers, nutrition educators and health providers.

We are looking for a select group of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, university faculty and other professionals to serve as *Nutrition Evidence Library Abstractors* to help us add information to the library. We hope that you will encourage your students, fellows, research associates and colleagues to become involved and apply for this national service volunteer opportunity.

There are some tangible benefits to being selected as an NEL abstractor volunteer. Volunteers will gain invaluable experience by participating in an evidence-based review training workshop in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the evidence abstracting process. Today, using an evidence-based approach is becoming an accepted way to develop guidelines for nutrition and health because it offers a transparent framework for integrating the best current research into nutrition programs and policy development.

NEL abstractors will learn the steps to using an evidence-based approach and conducting a systematic review, as well as how to navigate the NEL. After training, abstractors will begin reviewing and processing articles, which will be assigned by Federal staff from the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. A stipend of \$240 per every set of 8 completed abstracts will be provided.

Serving as a *Nutrition Evidence Library Abstractor* is a scholarly and professional development activity and a great benefit to the scientific community. This national level of service will be acknowledged with an official letter of appreciation following each year of service as an abstractor. Abstractors will not only gain knowledge and experience in systematic review methodologies, but will play a critical role in supporting the efforts of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee through their abstracting work.

Attached to this letter you'll find information about the responsibilities, qualifications, and application process. Please don't hesitate to contact the NEL Management Team Leaders, Dorothea Vafiadis (703-305-2309) and Joan Lyon (703-305-7600), for further information.

Thank you for your support!

Brian Wansink

Brian Wansink, M.S., Ph.D.
Executive Director

Robert Post

Robert C. Post, Ph.D., MEd., MSc.
Deputy Director

Nutrition Evidence Library (NEL) Evidence Abstractor: Responsibilities, Qualifications, and Application Process

Nutrition Evidence Library Abstractors for NEL will participate in developing a portfolio of evidence abstracts for use as a resource by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC). The specific responsibilities, qualifications, time commitment, stipend, and application process follow.

Responsibilities

1. Complete an evidence-based practice training workshop and validation exercise, free-of-charge (valued at approximately \$5K).
2. Read and abstract assigned articles.
3. Complete worksheets and overview tables using the electronic NEL portal and web tools in a standardized format.
4. Participate in teleconferences and respond to email communications.

Qualifications

- Advanced degree in nutrition (MS, MPH, MD, PhD, or graduate student candidates) and 5 years experience in the field (epidemiology, nutrition, public health, diet and energy balance) is preferred
- Ability to produce consistent work in a timely manner; work as part of a team and use computer and web-based programs and tools
- Ability to abstract critical information and research characteristics from technical articles
- Knowledge of current science in human nutrition or a related public health field
- Knowledge and experience with research methodologies, including experimental design and statistics

Postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and other professionals with limited experience in nutrition, but strong ability to abstract critical information and research characteristics from technical articles, are encouraged to apply.

Time Commitment and Stipend: *Nutrition Evidence Library Abstractors* are expected to produce worksheets for at least 30-60 articles per year with a minimum two-year commitment and an estimated average of 3 hours of work per week. However, depending on Evidence Abstractor availability, the number of articles abstracted per year may vary. Evidence Abstractors will receive a monetary stipend of \$240.00 per set of 8 completed and approved evidence abstracts.

Computer Requirements: *Nutrition Evidence Library Abstractors* must have access to a computer with high-speed internet access. No special software is required; all of the tools and templates are provided online on USDA's Nutrition Evidence Library portal. Minimum requirements to complete the necessary worksheets are:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 or newer with 1284 x 1024 screen resolution in 256 colors
- Adobe Acrobat Reader and Flash (v9) must be installed on your computer (free downloads)
- Your computer must be set to accept Java, JavaScript (also a free download), and cookies

How to Apply: Applications may be submitted by electronic mail to NutritionEvidenceLib@cnpp.usda.gov, no later than Friday, March 28, 2008.

The following information should be included for each interested individual:

1. Name, address, daytime telephone number and email address.
2. A letter of application (300 words or less) that clearly states the name and affiliation of the applicant, the basis for the application (i.e. specific attributes which qualify the applicant for service as an *Nutrition Evidence Library Abstractor*) and any potential conflicts of interest.
3. A current copy of the applicant's curriculum vitae.
4. A list of three professional references with contact information.

All applications must include the required information. Incomplete applications will not be processed for consideration. Federal employees are encouraged to apply and will be considered, but certain restrictions may apply.

The Departments will make every effort to ensure that the pool of *Nutrition Evidence Library Abstractors* includes a broad representation of geographic areas, females, ethnic and minority groups, and the disabled. Selection of *Nutrition Evidence Library Abstractors* will be made without discrimination on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and cultural, religious, or socioeconomic status.

Contacts: NEL Management Team Leaders, Dorothea K. Vafiadis at 703-305-2309 and Joan Lyon at 703-305-7600.