

# Higher Education Challenge Grants Program

## Purpose

The Higher Education Challenge (HEC) Grants Program is designed to improve teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences by enhancing curricula, increasing faculty teaching competencies, and encouraging student experiential learning opportunities in response to identified State, regional, national, or international educational needs.

## Awards

\$150,000 to \$500,000. A grant recipient is required to match the USDA funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources. Award duration is 2 to 3 years.

## Who May Apply

- U.S. public or private nonprofit colleges and universities offering a baccalaureate or first professional degree in at least one discipline or area of the food and agricultural sciences;
- land-grant colleges and universities (including land grant institutions in the Insular Areas);
- colleges and universities having significant minority enrollments and a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences;
- other colleges and universities having a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences.

Other institutions are encouraged to form partnerships/collaborations with the institutions above.

## Contact Information

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## Impacts

- enabled teachers to update existing courses or develop new curricula or related materials to improve the quality of instruction and meet changes anticipated within the food and agricultural sciences system;
- increased teaching competency by funding faculty continuing education that results in new teaching skills and methodologies;
- encouraged development and use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Multi-institutional, regional or national collaborations are encouraged;
- developed experiential learning opportunities where students are placed in team-oriented, problem-solving, decision-making situations in the context of real-world experiences.



Projects supported by the HEC Grants Program will:

- address a State, regional, national, or international educational need;
- involve a creative or non-traditional approach to address that need that can serve as a model to others;
- encourage and facilitate better working relationships in the university science and education community, as well as between universities and the private sector, to enhance program quality and supplement available resources;
- result in benefits that will likely transcend the project duration and USDA support.

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