



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Cooperative State
Research, Education,
and Extension Service

Program Solicitation

Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP)

Fiscal Year 2008

Closing Date: July 28, 2008

MSP Program:

Telephone: 202-720-1973

Email: MSP@csrees.usda.gov

Internet:

http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/rfas/multicultural_selg.html

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA)

10.220 Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants

CSREES Funding Opportunity Number

USDA-CSREES-HEMS-001486

***** PLEASE READ *****

**IMPORTANT ITEMS FOR THE USDA-CSREES MSP
FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2008 PROGRAM SOLICITATION**

The Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP) require all applications be submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). There are considerable online resources to help potential applicants with the new electronic forms and submission requirements.

If your institution is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov, you will be required to complete several steps prior to submitting an application. There is a one-time registration process. It can take as much as one month to complete, so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. The “Get Registered” tab on the Grants.gov left navigation bar (http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) provides information on registering your institution with Grants.gov and the steps necessary to apply for a grant. A quick reference guide listing these steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website: <http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>.

The Agency within USDA responsible for administering this grants program is the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). CSREES has also developed documentation to help navigate the process. The central point for all information related to electronic application submission is www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic. This site is updated frequently and it should be checked often for program-specific help concerning electronic submissions.

Helpful Submission Information	Website Address
Information pertaining to the transition to electronic submission can be found at the CSREES website.	www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic This page will be updated frequently and should be checked for program-specific help.
Applications for this grant program should be submitted through the Grants.gov website.	To access the electronic application via Grants.gov, go to www.grants.gov , under the “Apply for Grants” heading on the left side of page and click on “Download a Grant Application Package.” Enter the CFDA number 10.220 in the appropriate box to search by Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number.
The CSREES GRANTS.GOV Application Guide provides guidance for completing the forms required by Grants.gov and CSREES. Used in conjunction with this RFA for the MSP grants program, this guide will assist applicants with most field-specific questions.	Each applicant should use the CSREES document titled, “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov” also known as the “CSREES Application Guide,” that is part of this RFA package located at Grants.gov . This document provides guidance for completing the required forms at Grants.gov. Applicants should also reference the RFA for additional guidance not found in the application guide.

- Applications must be received by [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, on July 28, 2008. **Plan ahead. Do not wait until the last minute to submit your application.**
- Applicants who have problems with their submissions to Grants.gov are encouraged first to call the Grants.gov help desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence.

For any questions related to preparing application content, contact:
 Email: electronic@csrees.usda.gov
 Phone: 202-401-5048, Business hours are M-F, 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET, excluding Federal holidays.

For any questions related to Grants.gov content, contact:
 Email: support@grants.gov
 Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726, Business hours are M-F, 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. ET, excluding Federal holidays.

Part IV of this RFA provides additional information specific to the MSP program application submission. Applicants are advised to refer to this section to determine if specific information is required during the submission of the forms on Grants.gov. If directed by this RFA to provide information that is different from the CSREES Application Guide, the information in this RFA supersedes in all cases.

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM CSREES REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from CSREES review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” on <http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.

Applications for this grants program should include the following **Contents of a MSP Application Submitted via Grants.gov:**

Document Title	Required	Instruction Source	Additional Instructions within this RFA
SF 424 (R&R) Cover Sheet	✓	CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 17	MSP/SEL RFA Part IV. B.1., p.21
SF 424 (R&R) Other Project Information	✓	CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 24	MSP/SEL RFA Part IV. B.2., p.21
SF 424 (R&R) Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)	✓	CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 29	MSP/SEL RFA Part IV. B.3., p.29
SF 424 (R&R) Personal Data	Optional	CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 34	MSP/SEL RFA Part IV. B.4., p.30
SF 424 (R&R) Budget Fed & Non-Fed	✓	CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 36	MSP/SEL RFA Part IV. B.5., p.30
SF 424 (R&R) Subaward Budget Attachment	Only if there is a subaward or submitting a Multi-Institutional Training Project	CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 43 (Follow attachment guidelines)	MSP/SEL RFA Part IV. B.6., p.31
Supplemental Information	✓	CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 45	MSP/SEL RFA Part IV. B.7., p.31

**COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE;
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

THE HIGHER EDUCATION MULTICULTURAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM (MSP)

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.220.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on July 28, 2008 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy, Oversight, and Funds Management Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program and Special Experiential Learning Grants RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP) and Special Experiential Learning Grants (SEL) for fiscal year (FY) 2008 to conduct undergraduate scholarship programs to meet national and international needs for training food and agricultural scientists and professionals, or professionals in rural economic, community, and business development. In FY 2008, CSREES is soliciting the MSP/SEL application for: (1) Doctors of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) and/or undergraduate level degree in food and agricultural sciences; and (2) for Special Experiential Learning (SEL) opportunities for eligible USDA Higher Education Multicultural Scholar. **Applicants should be institutions that confer an undergraduate degree in at least one of the disciplines of food and agricultural sciences and/or D.V.M., first professional degree.** The amount available for support of this program in FY 2008 is approximately \$981,000. Awards are made to eligible colleges and universities.

Individuals are not eligible to apply for these grants to support their undergraduate/D.V.M. education.

This notice identifies the objectives for the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program – Special Experiential Learning Grants (MSP/SEL) projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an MSP/SEL grant. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program. **Applicants should be institutions that confer a baccalaureate degree in food and agricultural sciences, and/or the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.).** Awards are made to eligible colleges and universities.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Legislative authority for this program is contained in section 1417 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) (99 Stat. 1548; 7 U.S.C. 3152). USDA/CSREES administers this federal assistance grant program to support food and agricultural sciences baccalaureate and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) degree training of the next generation of scientists, policy makers, and educators in the Food and Agricultural Sciences. USDA initiated the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program in FY 1994. This program, functioning collaboratively with eligible higher education institutions, is developing intellectual capital to secure the preeminence of U.S. food and agricultural systems.

The MSP began as a “minority scholars program” funded by Congress in FY 1994 with approximately \$1,000,000 per FY in annual appropriations. Congress provided these funds to USDA for obligation without fiscal year limitation. In FY 1995, CSREES created the Higher Education Minority Scholars Program and awarded nearly \$3,500,000 in competitive grants to eligible institutions to fund undergraduate scholarships for students from minority groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences. In FY 1999, Congress changed the statutory language of the authorization to the “Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program,” and USDA awarded approximately \$1.9 million in new competitive grants that same FY. New competitions have been held annually since FY 2005 with annual appropriations of approximately \$981,000.

This RFA contains the requirements for submitting applications for the FY 2008 award cycle.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program is to provide scholarships to support recruiting, retaining, mentoring, and training committed, eligible multicultural scholars, resulting in either baccalaureate degrees within the food and agricultural sciences disciplines or the D.V.M. degree. The scholarships are intended to encourage outstanding students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences, to pursue and complete baccalaureate degrees in food and agricultural sciences, or achieve a D.V.M. as outlined this RFA.

Postsecondary participation and graduation rates of students in several racial and ethnic groups are substantially below those of students who are White and not of Hispanic origin. 2002 data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that White, non-Hispanic persons represent 70.9 percent of the total population of the United States and 62.5 percent of the college-aged population 18-24 years old, and received 78.8 percent of all bachelor degrees, and 87 percent of the baccalaureate degrees in the food and agricultural sciences awarded by colleges of agriculture, renewable natural resources, and forestry. African-Americans represent 12.3 percent of the total population and 14.3 percent of the 18-24 year olds, but received 7.5 percent of all baccalaureate degrees and only 2.8 percent of the food and agricultural science baccalaureate degrees. Hispanics were also

underrepresented. At 12.5 percent of the total population and 17.7 percent of the traditional college-age population of 18-24 year olds, Hispanics received only 4.6 percent of all baccalaureate degrees and 3.3 percent of the baccalaureate degrees in the food and agricultural sciences. For American Indian and Alaskan Native students, the percentages for total population, 18-24 year olds, are 0.9 percent and 1.1 percent, yet for baccalaureate degrees in the food and agricultural sciences, graduates were 0.6 percent each from these groups. For Asians and Pacific Islanders, the percentages for the traditional college-age population of 18-24 year olds were 3.7 percent and 4.4 percent. The percentage of Asians and Pacific Islanders receiving food and agricultural science baccalaureate degrees were 5.2 percent and 4.0 percent, respectively.

According to the data published by the Food and Agricultural Education Information System (FAEIS, 2005) for the period 2001–2002, of the reported baccalaureate degrees awarded in the Food and Agricultural Sciences (all disciplines, including Veterinary Medicine), less than 10 percent were earned by underrepresented groups (gender, ethnicity, race or first generation college). Further, it is projected (Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in the Food and Agricultural Sciences, United States, 2005-2010 - Purdue University and USDA, 2005) that there will be an increase of approximately 10,000 employment opportunities for college graduates in the food and agricultural sciences. The most recent data published by FAEIS (2006) [http://faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/newsletter/hort/faeis_newsletter_oct_06_hort.html] indicate that there are gaps that need to be addressed. It is clear that a large percentage of traditionally underrepresented groups in the Nation's population are not being recruited and matriculated in the food and agricultural sciences disciplines.

For each award cycle, the goals of the MSP are:

- (i) To advance the national Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education achievement, by supporting at least fifty (50) students, representing a multiculturally diverse pool of experts entering the future food and agricultural scientific and professional workforce, and advance the educational achievement of all Americans;
- (ii) To support America's academic competitiveness in STEM by supporting at least fifty (50) scholarships in D.V.M. and/or undergraduate degree level training grounded in curricula to advance food and agricultural sciences;
- (iii) To sustain and increase the volume of qualified multicultural students pursuing undergraduate/DVM training programs that have the highest chance for success as assessed through competitive peer review; and
- (iv) To help the United States of America achieve the objective of workforce diversity in STEM fields within the Federal government and the private sector by funding experiential learning opportunities in the public and private sectors for MSP Scholars.

To address these goals the MSP provides competitive grants to colleges and universities that have (1) a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of the food and agricultural sciences, and (2) unique capabilities for achieving representation of diverse cultural groups in the fields of food and agricultural sciences, or closely allied disciplines. Applications are sought for student

training that: (i) will prepare graduates to meet the demand for highly qualified personnel entering the workforce in the food and agricultural sciences domain; (ii) will pipeline more undergraduates into graduate education in the food and agricultural sciences; (iii) will address the substantial gap between White, Latino and African American populations entering graduate schools to enable the American system of higher education to remain competitive with the rest of the world; (iv) will promote students' success in food and agricultural science disciplines at the undergraduate/DVM level; and (v) will focus on student learning, e.g., academic preparation, social support structure (tutoring, mentoring, experiential opportunities in research and study abroad), and professional mentoring to ensure matriculation and entry into food and agricultural sciences areas of graduate education or the workforce.

In addition to course-work and related experiences that prepare students for graduation, grantee institutions will be expected to identify and develop opportunities through partnerships with food and agricultural research programs at other academic institutions, and cooperate with public and private entities, to ensure Scholars are provided with an increase in exposure to careers in the food and agricultural sciences. Such plans that involve Scholars will strengthen the likelihood of successfully meeting the goals of the MSP.

Finally, the MSP/SEL provides funding through the SEL awards to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs that provide MSP Scholars with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. SEL is a component of the MSP competitive grants program that will support MSP Scholars for one- or two-year experiential learning activities that are not normally available to other students within the institution.

The objectives of the FY 2008 MSP/SEL are to work collaboratively with eligible institutions, to:

- 1) Provide scholarship support for training students at the baccalaureate and D.V.M. levels, to pipeline those students into graduate education in nationally identified expertise shortage areas or into the workforce in the food and agricultural sciences;
- 2) Graduate an increased number of workforce-ready and globally competitive Scholars in the food and agricultural sciences with skills to participate in: (a) agronomy to support a bioenergy economy; (b) sustainable crop management and conservation; (c) agricultural bioprocessing/bioenergy byproducts utilization; (d) agricultural food, or animal or crop biosecurity, especially to assess risks and develop guidelines for evaluating and monitoring to enhance security; and/or (e) specialty crops;
- 3) Increase the percentage of undergraduate degrees awarded in the food and agricultural sciences relative to the number of undergraduate degrees in all fields of study;
- 4) To increase by 50, the number of outstanding students, including those from traditionally underrepresented groups, annually entering D.V.M. and/or undergraduate training in higher education in the food and agricultural sciences;

- 5) To support undergraduate/D.V.M. training to develop core competencies in 50 MSP Scholars to meet the emerging workforce demands in the food and agricultural sciences; and
- 6) To support SELs securing enhanced training in food and agricultural sciences for 15 eligible MSP Scholars.

Applications are being solicited for the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program to support undergraduate and veterinary (first professional) training scholarships for MSP SEL for both baccalaureate and D.V.M. levels of study in the identified Program Areas of Emphasis for meeting the goals of the MSP/SEL grant program.

FY 2008 MSP/SEL Program Areas of Emphasis

- 1) **Veterinary Medicine (First Professional Degree in Veterinary Medicine i.e., D.V.M.)**
- 2) **Agricultural Sciences and Engineering for Bioenergy** – specifically in agronomy, agricultural process engineering, agricultural biotechnology, and crop science to address the workforce demands for expertise to meet demands of a renewable energy economy;
- 3) **Natural Resource Sciences Training** – particularly transdisciplinary training programs in sciences for food and agricultural sustainability to find solutions for real world issues relating to water, energy, effects of global change on environmental sustainability, and land use management;
- 4) **Human Sciences Training** – specifically addressing the rural/urban interface as it pertains to food and agricultural sciences, including specialty crops and markets and trade, agricultural communication, and the links to economics and social policy;
- 5) **Food Science and Human Nutrition Training** – specifically focused on development of food and agricultural science expertise to address diet, health and safety; and
- 6) **Agrosecurity Science Training** – specifically addressing food and agricultural science impacts on animal and crop health, including insect and pest management.

Institutions that have not previously applied are especially encouraged to do so. (See eligibility information in Part III of this RFA.) **Applicants should be institutions that confer a baccalaureate degree in at least one of the areas of food and agricultural sciences, and/or Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.** Awards are made to eligible colleges and universities. **Individuals are not eligible to apply for these grants to support their D.V.M. and/or baccalaureate education in food and agricultural sciences.**

Funding preference will be given to applications that propose to:

- (1) Establish innovative frameworks, grounded in curricula, for D.V.M. and/or undergraduate training with collaborative knowledge and technology transfer components that transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries in agriculture (NOTE: innovative means new or unique or

creative approaches to training students that matriculate individuals with, in additions to core competencies, the ability to understand and function in capacities that add valuable expertise to meet the needs identified in the MSP/SEL Program Areas of Emphasis (Part I, B.);

(2) Establish D.V.M. and/or baccalaureate degree programs in which Scholars can pursue related summer research opportunities (especially at other colleges/universities, industry or federal agencies); or other learning opportunities in topics related to the identified Program Areas of Emphasis (Part I, B.);

(3) Provide professional mentoring in D.V.M. and/or undergraduate degree programs for areas relating to: bioenergy, agrosecurity; food, agricultural biotechnology and environmental sustainability; human nutrition and obesity;

(4) Increase the numbers of students from multiculturally (economic, social, cultural, racial, ethnic, geographical, gender, traditionally underserved populations) diverse groups who enter baccalaureate and/or D.V.M. degree level programs and matriculate with scientific and professional competence to meet the increasingly technologically advanced needs of the food and agricultural systems workforce;

(5) Partner to provide exceptional D.V.M. and/or undergraduate training in the food and agricultural sciences to develop human capital to participate in meeting the mission of the USDA and the strategic objectives of CSREES (http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/strat_plan.html);

(6) Provide relevant leadership, research, management and professional learning experiences for D.V.M. and/or undergraduate training in such a way as to demonstrate the potential for USDA MSP Scholars to participate in the emerging emphasis areas requiring knowledge and technical skills in food and agricultural science disciplines where the connections that link training project goals to workforce outcomes are clearly outlined; and

(7) Develop performance measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the D.V.M. and/or undergraduate training that USDA Higher Education Multicultural Scholars receive, while developing expertise in the Program Areas of Emphasis listed above, that will demonstrate proficiency in pipelining to workforce or further training; have the identified core competencies for: (a) subject matter and related disciplines; (b) skilled communication; and (c) aptitude to operate in a globally-oriented and technologically-driven world economy.

C. Program Area Description

Under the FY 2008 program, CSREES intends to support training for baccalaureate degrees within the food and agricultural sciences disciplines and/or the D.V.M. degree with MSP grants and SEL awards, if applicable. **The Program Code is KF for all applications submitted under this announcement.**

a. Multicultural Scholarship Grants

To allow for maximum flexibility under the program, institutions may apply for funds to support any combination of two-, three-, and/or four-year scholarships. In lieu of indirect costs, institutions may receive an annual cost-of-education allowance for each Scholar supported by an award.

Applicants are encouraged to provide a five-year budget with a zero dollar budget for any year where support is not allocated. Applicants should factor into their application, a recruitment interval to meet the program requirements. No extensions beyond the five-year period are allowed. Institutions may, however, apply and compete for new awards in any fiscal year(s) in which appropriated funds are available for this program. The title of *your application* should be different from the program code name. The Program Code name is **Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program**.

(1) Student Eligibility as Beneficiary Scholars

Awards to scholars are made by eligible institutions (grantees) receiving funds under this program. **No CSREES awards will be made directly to students; therefore, students cannot apply directly to USDA/CSREES for scholarships.** Persons eligible to receive scholarships must:

(a) be citizens or nationals of the United States as determined in accordance with Federal law (see Part VIII, E, Definitions); (b) have been accepted for enrollment, or be enrolled, at an institution awarded a project grant under this program, or at a two-year institution which has entered into an articulation agreement, bridging agreement, or other type of collaborative arrangement with a baccalaureate-level institution that has been awarded a project grant under this program; (c) be newly enrolled in a course of study leading to a baccalaureate degree, or to a DVM degree, in the food and agricultural sciences; (d) not have been enrolled previously in an academic program in the food and agricultural sciences at the same degree level; and (e) have a strong interest, as judged by the institution, in pursuing a baccalaureate degree, or DVM degree, in the food and agricultural sciences, and in a career as a food or agricultural scientist or professional.

A MSP Scholar must be enrolled as a full-time student, as defined by the institution, in a program of study in the food and agricultural sciences during each semester or quarter that he/she receives MSP support. However, the normal requirements for formal registration during part of this tenure may be waived if permitted by the policy of the grantee, provided that the MSP Scholar is making satisfactory progress toward degree completion and remains engaged in appropriate full-time scholarship activities such as study abroad experiences or internships. MSP Scholars are entitled to the normal term breaks and holidays observed by the institution. MSP Scholars may, but are not required to, take summer classes.

First-year DVM degree students and freshmen (including those participating in the program at two-year institutions) receiving scholarships may be supported for a total of four academic years (defined as eight semesters or 12 quarters of full-time study) within the five-year grant period,

provided they maintain their eligibility. Enrolled students changing their majors to a discipline in the food and agricultural sciences, transfer students from two-year and baccalaureate-level institutions, and students enrolling at the grantee institution, may be supported for a proportional number of years based upon their academic level at the time they enter the program (i.e., three years for sophomores and two years for juniors), provided they maintain their eligibility under the program. For Scholars finishing the baccalaureate program early, the institution has options for utilizing the unexpended monies prior to the expiration of the grant.

Students will be supported in the following manner – students entering as Freshmen (or First-Year DVM) are to receive support for 4 years, students entering as sophomores in the food and agricultural sciences for the first time are to receive support for 3 years, students entering as juniors in the food and agricultural sciences program are to receive support for 2 years.

The scholarship should be awarded to the same student for the time that correlates with that student's academic classification in a food and agricultural science baccalaureate program or in the DVM program.

Scholars may be selected, and MSP scholarships awarded, without regard to student financial need. Selection of students to receive scholarships will be based on academic ability, commitment to a career in the food and agricultural sciences, and enhancement of cultural diversity. Other considerations may include a student's status as a first-generation college student, chosen major in relation to the needs of the college or university, or projected human resource requirements of the food and agriculture industry. Students from all racial and ethnic groups are eligible for scholarships.

A MSP Scholar may seek and accept employment during the grant period; however, the intent of the program is for MSP Scholars to devote their full energies to their studies wherever possible. Therefore, grantee institutions are expected to monitor MSP Scholars' employment demands so their academic progress is not jeopardized.

A MSP Scholar may accept other grants and awards that support his/her academic program provided such support is for expenditures other than those supported by USDA/CSREES.

(2) Scholarship Appointments and Tenure

Within the framework of these guidelines, all decisions with respect to the appointment of MSP Scholars will be made by grantees. **Scholars must be identified and Scholarships must be awarded within twelve (12) months of the effective start date of a grant.** Grantee must notify and obtain approval from the Program Office Point-of-Contact if scholarship funds cannot be allocated within this twelve-month period. Failure to obtain this approval will result in the loss of funding for the unawarded scholarships. Institutions will be required to refund monies associated with unawarded Scholarships to CSREES. Undergraduate and/or D.V.M. scholarship appointments may be held only by persons who enroll and pursue full-time a D.V.M. or baccalaureate degree within the food and agricultural sciences disciplines supported by the grant. It is the responsibility of each grantee institution to award scholarships to students of outstanding academic ability deemed likely to graduate.

The grantee institution should only select MSP Scholars who are (1) making satisfactory academic progress and (2) planning to pursue a career related to the food and agricultural sciences. If the institution finds it necessary to terminate support of a MSP Scholar for academic or disciplinary reasons, or by decision on the part of the MSP Scholar, the MSP Scholar becomes ineligible for future assistance under the program.

Once accepted to the program, MSP Scholars must maintain their eligibility by (1) continuing their enrollment as a full-time student, as defined by each grantee institution, leading to a undergraduate degree in a discipline in the food and agricultural sciences or DVM; and (2) maintaining good academic standing and satisfactory degree progress as determined by their institution.

MSP monies budgeted for scholarship awards shall be used by the grantee to pay, in order of payment precedence: MSP Scholars' tuition and mandatory fees; on-campus room and board; off-campus room and board; books and supplies; and other student educational expenses. Any remaining scholarship funds shall be paid by the grantee to the MSP Scholar as a stipend according to standard institutional procedures. Each four-year grantee institution is responsible for disbursing grant funds to any MSP Scholars at collaborating two-year institutions.

If funds remain as a result of MSP Scholars completing their studies early or scholarships being terminated prematurely, such funds may be used, within the time remaining on the award to: (1) support a MSP Scholar's pursuit of additional education including graduate study in the food and agricultural sciences (especially in instances where the MSP Scholars have completed baccalaureate or DVM degree requirements early); (2) recruit and support a replacement MSP Scholar(s) provided that remaining funds are sufficient to support a MSP Scholar for at least one semester/quarter of study; or (3) offer enrichment activities for MSP Scholars. Such funds may not be used to increase the stipend amounts for current MSP Scholars.

For this program, a replacement MSP Scholar is a student who is recruited into the program, under the aegis of a specific MSP Scholarship, to take the place of a MSP Scholar who left the program prematurely, e.g., due to academic difficulty, disciplinary action, transfer to another institution, personal necessity, or early graduation. The tenure of such a replacement MSP Scholar is limited to whatever time is remaining on the grant before it expires; however, an institution may not appoint a replacement MSP Scholar unless there is time for the student to complete at least one semester/quarter of study before the expiration date of the grant. Replacement MSP Scholars must meet all of the eligibility criteria and other requirements established for MSP Scholar selection and are subject to the same provisions as other MSP Scholars during their tenure in the program. Replacement MSP Scholars are entitled, during their tenure, to the same benefits that other MSP Scholars receive from the grant award and MSP Program. Institutions may, but are not required to, continue a replacement MSP Scholar's tuition and other benefits beyond the expiration date of the grant using institutional or other funds.

A MSP Scholar who finds it necessary to interrupt his/her program of study because of health, personal situation, outside employment, or another non-academic and non-disciplinary reason must be allowed to resume funded study at any time within 12 months of the interruption, provided there is adequate time remaining before the award expires. A MSP Scholar who finds it

necessary to interrupt his/her program of study more than one time cannot exceed a total of 12 months cumulative leave status without forfeiting MSP eligibility.

Should a MSP Scholar require additional time beyond the grant period to complete his or her degree, it is expected that the grantee will endeavor to continue supporting the MSP Scholar through other means.

A MSP Scholar at a two-year institution, who participates in the MSP through an articulation agreement, bridging agreement, or other type of collaborative arrangement with a four-year institution, is subject to the same provisions as a MSP Scholar at the four-year grantee institution.

b. Special Experiential Learning Grants (SEL)

SEL funded activities may include, but are not limited to, those that provide opportunities for eligible MSP Scholars to: (a) participate in research projects focused on multidisciplinary topics of national importance at institutions or organizations other than their own; (b) complete apprenticeships, internships, or similar participatory learning experiences including, but not limited to, practicum for DVM students, internships abroad or externships in the private or public sector; and (c) complete study abroad programs relevant to their majors.

SEL funds may be used only to pay living expenses, travel expenses, additional tuition (e.g., practicum credits for courses that would not have been taken if not for this experiential learning activity), and/or a cash stipend for SEL-supported Scholars during SEL-approved experiential learning activities. SEL funds cannot be used to increase annual stipend amounts for MSP Scholars participating in activities that have already been approved and funded by the MSP Program.

(1) SEL Funding Eligibility

In FY 2008, applications for SEL may be submitted by colleges and universities that: (1) are current MSP grantees; and (2) support a MSP Scholar who has at least one year remaining in his/her grant period. New applicants, under Award Category No. 1 (see Part II, C, 1), for the MSP Program may propose SEL opportunities for future To-Be-Recruited MSP Scholars.

(a) **Current MSP Scholars.** To be eligible to receive SEL support, a current Scholar: (1) must have completed one academic year of full-time study, as defined by their institution, under the MSP appointment; (2) must have sufficient time remaining in their grant to complete proposed experiential learning activities prior to the termination of their award; and (3) must have a CSREES Form 2010 – Student Appointment Form for the current, eligible MSP Scholar(s) submitted to CSREES, prior to submitting the SEL application (see Part IV, B.2).

(b) **To-Be-Recruited MSP Scholars.** To be eligible to participate in a SEL activity, a MSP Scholar recruited after the award has been made to the institution must: (1) have been appointed as a MSP Scholar and the CSREES Form 2010 – Student Appointment Form for the eligible

MSP Scholar(s), been filed, with CSREES; (2) have completed one academic year of full-time study, as defined by their institution, under the MSP appointment; (3) have, at the time of participation in the SEL, sufficient time remaining in their grant to complete proposed experiential learning activities prior to the termination of their award; and (4) **have provided to CSREES, the specific information about the SEL for evaluation at least 150 days (approximately five months) prior to travel.** Before a SEL may commence, arrangements must have been formalized for the MSP Scholar to study and/or conduct research in a foreign location(s).

Supported SEL projects are intended to provide opportunities for undergraduate students, who are eligible MSP Scholars, to build the skills and knowledge needed to advance their study, and to function and contribute in careers and enter graduate education in disciplines within the Food and Agricultural Sciences.

(2) Non-eligibility for SEL Funding

In FY 2008, applications for SEL funding may not be requested with Award Category No. 2.

(3) eXtension Projects

MSP encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension (http://about.extension.org/mediawiki/files/5/51/EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY_-_March_14%2C_2006_-_YEAR_2.pdf). This content is for end users, as opposed to staff development, and must align with the eXtension Implementation Plan (available at <http://about.extension.org/wiki/Planning>). Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (COPs) (http://about.extension.org/wiki/Glossary_of_eXtension_Terms#Community_of_Practice_.28CoP.29;) or form new COPs that focus on national food and agricultural science needs and cultural diversity within that workforce (for examples of developing COPs and guidance on forming COPs, see http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Main_Page).

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. CSREES anticipates \$981,000 will be available to fund awards in the FY 2008 funding cycle for student training including SEL. MSP typically awards \$120,000 for training five (5) students at the baccalaureate and/or DVM level training. Each MSP application may request any combination of undergraduate and/or D.V.M. degree level scholarships. For each award, there is a \$1,500 per student per year cost-of-education allowance for the institution. For the SEL awards there will be \$4,000 per eligible USDA MSP Scholar, in FY 2008.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2008, applications may be submitted to the MSP/SEL funding opportunity as one of the following types of requests:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the MSP Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

(2) Resubmitted application. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the MSP Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

1. **Award Category No. 1 – Single Institution MSP/SEL Training Program Application** – An applicant can request \$4,500 in stipend support per scholar per year for up to four (4) years. In addition, the applicant may request \$1,500 per scholar per year for up to four years as a cost-of-education institutional allowance (in lieu of indirect costs). The institution must provide a 25 percent non-Federal (institutional or third-party) match of the total Federal funds requested. Each applicant may request CSREES/USDA funding for a minimum of \$72,000 for scholarship support for a cohort of students. A cohort of students can be comprised of any combination of two-year, three-year, four-year or DVM appointments. The appointments must conform to the MSP eligibility requirements (PART I, C, a., (1)).

2. **Award Category No. 2 –Multi-Institutional MSP/SEL Training Program Application** – Priority will be given to the multi-institutional group which includes at least one eligible institution that, in each academic year over a ten-year period, prior to this Program Announcement, matriculated at the D.V.M. or baccalaureate degree levels, in food and agricultural science disciplines, a graduating class in which more than 40 percent (40%) of the students were from a group traditionally underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences.

The same scholarship, Cost-of-Education, matching, and minimum funding requirements apply as provided in Award Category No. 1. Each application, under Award Category No. 2 may request scholarship support for a cohort of up to 20 students. A cohort of students can be comprised of any combination of two-year, three-year, four-year or DVM appointments. The appointments must conform to the MSP eligibility requirements (PART I, C, a., (1)). The budget sharing criteria (PART IV, B., 5) for Award Category No. 2 must be satisfied.

Note: Multi-Institutional Training Projects (Award Category No. 2) must include both the SF 424 (R&R) Budget Fed and Non-Fed and the SF 424 (R&R) Subaward Budget Attachment Forms. The forms should clearly identify the total grant funding anticipated for the applicant and each partner to demonstrate the required sharing percentage. All expenditures for the applicant and all partners should be further itemized in the Budget Justification. Funds **do not** have to be divided equally among project years.

3. Award Category No. 3 – Student Experiential Learning (SEL) – One-time \$4,000 for an eligible USDA MSP Scholar that may be used by eligible MSP Scholars (PART I, C, b., (1)), over the active period of the award.

There is no limit to the number of applications an eligible institution may submit; however, an institution may only receive support up to a maximum of **\$500,000 in awards including MSP and SEL**. This support may be provided through multiple grant awards.

CSREES reserves the right to fund fewer MSP Scholars than requested in an application, and to partially fund SEL requests.

A single application may propose D.V.M. and/or baccalaureate level training that addresses any of the six (6) Program Areas of Emphasis (Part I, B.); – singly or in combination, **up to a maximum of \$240,000 per application in Award Category No. 1**. Similarly, a single application that proposes to train **students through a multi-institutional training program may request up to a maximum of \$480,000 per application in Award Category No. 2**. An application submitted under Award Category No. 2 would require participation of a minimum of three (3) eligible applicants. Applicants, in an Award Category, may not request partial scholarships. Request for funding under Award Category No. 3 may be combined **ONLY** with Award Category No. 1. Also, current USDA MSP grantees, without previous SEL funding, may apply for SEL funding, for currently eligible USDA MSP Scholars, using Award Category No. 3. **An Award Category No. 1 or Award Category No. 3 application may request up to \$20,000 in SEL funding**. Each MSP application may request any combination of D.V.M. and/or undergraduate degree level scholarships. There is no limit to the number of applications an institution may submit. CSREES reserves the right to fund fewer Scholars than requested in any application.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Pursuant to **section 1417 of the NARETPA of 1977 (99 Stat. 1548; 7 U.S.C. 3152)**.

Applications may be submitted by: (1) land-grant institutions, (2) colleges and universities having significant minority enrollments and a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, and (3) other colleges and universities having a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food, and agricultural sciences. Research foundations maintained by an eligible college or university are eligible to submit undergraduate and/or D.V.M. training proposals under this RFA. **Applicants should be institutions that confer an undergraduate or D.V.M. degree in at least one of the disciplines in the food and agricultural sciences.**

Students attending two-year colleges that are legally authorized to offer a two-year or equivalent program of college-level studies which are principally creditable toward a baccalaureate degree, may be awarded a MSP Scholarship from eligible baccalaureate institutions in cases where an articulation agreement, bridging agreement, or other type of collaborative arrangement exists between the subject baccalaureate-level institution(s) and the two year college. **In such instances, the baccalaureate-level institution must be the applicant.**

An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline will result in CSREES excluding the application from review or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude CSREES from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Successful MSP applicants MUST provide matching funds from non-Federal sources equal to at least 25 percent of the USDA MSP award. This is equal to at least \$1,500 per year for each Scholar supported.

MSP grantees may provide matching funds through cash and/or in-kind contributions, including third-party in-kind contributions, fairly evaluated, including facilities. The non-Federal share of the funding may come from State government, local government, other non-profit entities, or private sources. Examples of qualifying matching contributions may include direct costs such as: rent for research space used exclusively for the funded project; duplication or postage costs; and staff time from an entity other than the applicant for job training.

Detailed records of matching funds and/or in kind contributions must be diligently kept to ensure successful audits. These records should include, but not be limited to the following examples: detailed cash contributions including dates, amounts and contributor information; detailed in-kind contributions including dates, actual contribution, verifiable cash value of contribution, duration of contribution, contributor information, and estimation of qualitative value of contribution to project success.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to CSREES in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) (also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR should see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. Download and install PureEdge Viewer, a small, free program that provides access to the grant application. See http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pureedge.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions**,” enter the funding opportunity number, USDA-CSREES-HEMS-001486 in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If assistance is needed to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating PureEdge forms, using PureEdge with a Macintosh computer), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

- Grants.gov customer support
Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726
Business Hours: M-F 7:00 am – 9 pm Eastern Standard Time
Email: support@grants.gov

See <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Part V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note: Some forms will contain a field with instructions to attach additional information in a separate file. All such attachments must be in PDF file format. Consult the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide (Part III. 3.1) for how to attach files using the proper format.

1. SF-424 (R&R) Cover Sheet – (Required Form)

Complete all applicable fields. The following, additional information may be helpful:

Field 2. Applicant Identifier – This field is provided for the Applicant’s use if they have an internal tracking system and they would like to use it to track applications they have submitted. This field is not required.

Field 3. Date received by State and State Application Identifier – This is not applicable for MSP applications; these fields do not need to be completed.

Field 5. Applicant Information – This must be the legal name of the eligible college or university (See Part III. A, Eligible Applicant). **Official correspondence will be directed to either the Project Director (Field 15) or the Authorized Representative (Field 19).**

Field 8. Type of Application – Only ‘New’ or ‘Resubmitted’ applications are permitted.

Field 13. Proposed Project Start Date and End Date – A project’s duration should normally be at least 42 months (to allow time for student recruitment and appointment) and not exceed 60 months. Project Start Date should not occur before October 2008.

Field 16. Estimated Project Funding –

a.) Total Estimated Project Funding = Amount of Federal funds requested (See Part II. C. 1 or 2 for maximum award amounts permitted)

b.) Total Federal & Non-Federal Funds = Federal funds + Matching Funds (Note: The Matching Requirement for this program is 25% of the USDA MSP/SEL award (see Part III. B.), so the amount listed in field 16. b. must be at least 25 % more than the amount listed in 16. a.)

Field 20. Pre-application – Not applicable to the MSP/SEL program. No attachments needed.

2. SF 424 (R&R) Other Project Information – (Required Form)

Complete all applicable fields. Note: If a ‘Yes’ response is provided for Fields 1, 2, or 4.a, the applicant must provide the necessary assurances prior to an award being made.

Field 6. Project Summary/Abstract – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

a. Project Summary/Abstract (Field 6. on the Form). The summary must include the relevance of the project to the goals of the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program (MSP/SEL). The summary should be approximately 250 words. The summary should provide a clear overview of the type of award – MSP and/or SEL project – succinctly providing information about its major features and a specific description of the activities to be undertaken.

The summary should focus on:

- (1) providing the Project Type (Part II, C);
- (2) identifying the **Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.)** being addressed;
- (3) identifying the major academic program (**discipline/code**) being addressed;
- (4) stating overall project **goal(s)** and supporting **objectives**;
- (5) defining **number of Scholars** at the baccalaureate and/or D.V.M. **degree level** to be supported under the application;
- (6) defining number and undergraduate and/or D.V.M. degree level of **SELs** to be supported;
- (7) concise **overview** of plans for training project to accomplish project goal(s) for the **Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.)**;
- (8) defining **relevance** of the project to the MSP/SEL program goals, and the USDA/CSREES Strategic Goals and Objectives
http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/strat_plan.html;
- (9) providing **anticipated National impact(s) on the Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.) and on multicultural expertise in the food and agricultural workforce**; and
- (10) Identifying if **Multi-Institutional Training Project Proposal**: Indicate if yes or no. (Do you plan to share Federal grant funds with other partners? See ‘Definitions’, Part VIII. E.); (i) Partners: If Multi-Institutional Training Project Proposal, list all partner institutions that will share grant funding (Note: Each Partner so identified needs to have their budget information submitted on a separate R&R subaward attachment). If not Multi-Institutional Training, enter: ‘N.A.’.; (ii) Total Funds Requested: (List total Federal funds requested for this application. If this project is a Multi-Institutional Training Project Proposal, also list each partner’s total funds requested next to the institution’s name).

The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. If the Project Summary does not specifically address relevance, merit, and broader impacts on the USDA Scholars’ training program for meeting the **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)**, the proposal will not be reviewed.

The **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)** addressed by the application should be identified in the Project Summary. Applicants also should select one of the disciplines listed below that best describes the major academic program area addressed by the application. The tables that follow provide the relevant disciplines under this solicitation. **The Project Summary must be submitted as a PDF attachment.**

Relevant Discipline for FY 2008 Funding Cycle	Code
Animal Science	A
General/Basic Biotechnology, Biochemistry and Microbiology	B
Plant Sciences and Horticulture (includes Turf Grass/Weed Science/Plant Breeding)	P
Conservation and Renewable Natural Resources (includes any aspect of Forestry, Air Quality, Sustainable Agriculture)	C
Environmental Sciences/Management (includes Economics, Decision Management and Biometry)	L
Soil Sciences (includes Soil Quality; Processes)	D
Water Sciences/Resources (includes Water Quality)	W
Agricultural/Biological Engineering (includes Rangeland, Urban/Rural Technology)	E
Agricultural Marketing and Management (includes Agricultural Economics)	M
Food Science/Technology/Manufacturing/Safety	F
Human Nutrition (includes obesity and relevant to USDA Strategic Goals)	N
International Agriculture (includes Disciplines Related to Global Food and Agricultural Systems and Competitiveness)	I
Agricultural Social Sciences (includes Rural Sociology)	S
Veterinary Medicine (first professional degree training)	V
Interdisciplinary, Sustainable Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences and Economics Undergraduate Degree Programs	G
Agricultural Biosecurity	X

b. Project Narrative (Field 7. on the Form). **(Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)**

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed twenty-five (25) pages of written text and up to five (5) additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum of thirty (30) pages has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Prepare the application on only one side of the page using standard size (8 1/2" x 11") white paper, one-inch margins, using no type smaller than 12 point font, and in **double space** (no more than three lines per vertical inch). Acceptable fonts are Courier, Courier New or Arial, Geneva, Helvetica, Times New Roman. Applications that do not conform to the preparation requirements will not be reviewed.

PLEASE NOTE: Appendices, not to exceed five (5) pages, to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the page limit. Reviewers are instructed to not review material in excess of this limit.

This portion of the application should describe how the proposed project offers unique opportunities for achieving the national objective of engaging outstanding students to pursue and complete D.V.M. and/or undergraduate degrees in an area of food and agricultural sciences for the development of scientific and professional expertise. The Project Narrative must include, and be organized into, the following four sections. A description of the information that must be included in each section is outlined below.

The **Project Narrative** must include **all** of the following:

Section 1 Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education

- (1) Discuss the quality of the institution's undergraduate/D.V.M. students;
- (2) For the discipline(s) of training – describe the strength of curricula and instructional approaches, linkages to assessment and learning, availability of experiential research and/or pre-professional training opportunities, and utilization of strategies for developing the leadership, management, critical thinking and problem-solving skills of students or unique mentoring experiences that may assist in preparing students for placement following graduation and a clear link between the training project goals and workforce outcomes is outlined;
- (3) Present evidence that the overall academic program has an established record that recognizes and addresses current trends and future needs, and prepares students for the Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.) identified in the application, as well as for successful careers in the food and agricultural sciences professional and scientific workplaces;
- (4) Discuss current or planned programs at the institution designed to encourage outstanding undergraduate/D.V.M. students, especially from traditionally underrepresented groups, to pursue and complete further undergraduate/D.V.M studies to pipeline into the workforce filling areas of management and leadership in food and agricultural sciences disciplines;
- (5) Identify the Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.) addressed by the application;
- (6) Identify the Award Category(ies) and the discipline addressed by the application;
- (7) Demonstrate the likelihood that the proposed program of undergraduate/D.V.M study will result in the development of outstanding graduates to meet the future needs of a globally interconnected, technologically advanced, rapidly diversifying and stakeholder-driven food and agricultural industry; and
- (8) Substantiate clearly, with data indicating prior undergraduate/D.V.M training success in the Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.), the quality of undergraduate/D.V.M training and/or pre-professional experiential learning available through the institution's undergraduate/D.V.M teaching, research and experiential program(s) in the food and agricultural sciences in the discipline(s) for which Scholars are being recruited and/or supported.

Supportive information should include: (1) student enrollment, retention and graduation rates by gender, racial groups, socio-economic groups, and ethnic groups for the past five years; (2) the mean standardized college entrance exam scores of students from traditionally underrepresented groups and of other students for the past five years; (3) placement of graduates during the past five years; and (4) the

enrollment, graduation rates and placement of students from traditionally underserved groups and first generation college students and/or past Scholars.

When applying for SEL awards under Award Category No. 3, for a Current Eligible USDA MSP Scholar, the Project Narrative should include all of the following: (a) The anticipated, specific destination(s) and duration of the experiential learning activity; (b) information about the objectives, timeline, expected outcomes and deliverables from the eligible, USDA MSP Scholar(s) participating in a SEL; (c) the specific experiential learning activities (specific tasks) in which USDA MSP Scholars will be engaged; (d) how the SEL will contribute to the USDA Scholar's program of study; (e) a budget narrative specifying and justifying the dollar amount requested for the SEL; (f) identify contact personnel where MSP/SEL activity will be undertaken and provide summary credentials of both the faculty or other professionals with whom the USDA Scholar will be working during the SEL and the nature of support to be provided to insure success of the Scholars' learning experience; (g) a letter from the dean of the USDA Scholar's college or equivalent administrative unit supporting the USDA Scholar's SEL request and certifying that the activity will not jeopardize the USDA MSP Scholar's satisfactory progress toward degree completion; (h) a letter from the MSP/SEL grant project director certifying the USDA Scholar's eligibility and the relevance of the travel to the USDA Scholar's training program objectives; and (i) the criteria that will be used to evaluate success of the MSP/SEL. A copy of an updated CSREES Form 2010 – Fellowship/Scholarship Appointment Form for any current USDA Scholar participating in the proposed MSP/SEL opportunity should be attached in Field 11 (see Part VI, D. 1, a(ii)).

For To-Be-Recruited USDA MSP Scholars who are to participate in the Special Experiential Learning (SEL) - Provide anticipated objectives relating how the SEL will contribute to the program of study in response to this announcement. When the MSP Scholars have been appointed and are eligible to participate in the SEL provide, at least 150 days prior to travel, the specifics for the SEL as outlined in Part IV, B., 2, b, Section 1 along with the identity of the eligible USDA MSP/Scholar(s) to the MSP grants Program Office. USDA MSP project directors should note that specific program evaluation and dissemination will be required of MSP/SEL activities and participants. The Program Office must receive the plans for: (1) an *Outcomes Report* to be submitted to the USDA that describes accomplishments of the Scholar(s) after completing the SEL - *this is not an activity report with a daily log of tasks*; and (2) disseminating impacts and achievements to a wide audience of educators and policy makers, in order to expand the pipeline of outstanding students interested in careers in the food and agricultural sciences.

Section 2 Proposed Approach

Describe in detail the on-going and future planned activities for:

(1) Recruitment and selection of Scholars to include:

(i) plans for the recruitment of outstanding students, especially from traditionally underrepresented groups, including a brief justification for centering recruitment efforts on any particular group(s) and specific two-year colleges and high schools targeted for recruitment efforts with institutional letters of support (attached to Field 11. Other Attachments – PDF), and the rationale for using proposed strategies and procedures;

(ii) strategies and procedures for recruiting and selecting students committed to the Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.) as participants in the Scholarship program, including selection criteria for choosing Scholars who are outstanding and deemed likely to pursue degrees in the identified Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.); identify the core competencies that each Scholar will be expected to attain; and describe plans designed to prepare Scholars for participation in further education or the **future workforce** as food and agricultural or veterinary professionals;

(2) Academic advising, research training, professional counseling, mentoring, pipelining to further undergraduate/D.V.M training or the workforce and student support services for Scholars to include:

(i) plans and procedures for assessing, monitoring, guiding, and sustaining Scholars' continued commitment and progress toward securing an education with the core competencies to be attained in preparation for a career that meets the need of the identified Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.); and **where Multi-Institutional Training Projects are proposed**, provide plans that are feasible, cohesive and effective in training a larger cohort of students across more than one institution;

(ii) description of proposed food and agriculture science baccalaureate and/or D.V.M. training indicating alignment with the Academic Competitiveness Council (ACC) report to advance goals for STEM education (<http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/competitiveness/acc-mathscience/report.pdf>);

(iii) explanation of the nature of career counseling and/or professional mentoring to be provided to Scholars as they move post-graduation into the food and agricultural sciences or veterinary medicine;

(3) Establish plans, where applicable, for advance preparations for experiential training, research and other learning activities so that there is likelihood that the activities will successfully occur and include:

(i) a description of plans for mentorship and scholarship during the experiential learning opportunity; and

(ii) goals of the experiential learning opportunity and link to the Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.) and overall objectives of the training project.

(4) Measure performance outcomes using the mean of two years prior to the project start date as the baseline, and demonstrate how the training project will help increase the number and/or percentage of students graduating with a D.V.M. or baccalaureate degree in Food and Agricultural Sciences versus the normal outcome without a grant award. Include:

(i) plans for meaningful and feasible assessments of learning outcomes that include direct and indirect measures of Scholars' knowledge, abilities and/or values related to the proficiency attained due to the training project;

(ii) plans for achieving a completion rate of greater than the institutional average for the specific D.V.M. or baccalaureate program of study. Completion rate is computed as number of Scholars graduated divided by number of Scholars recruited, expressed as a percentage;

(iii) description of the institution's mentoring and other support services and how they promote multicultural and/or first-generation college D.V.M. or baccalaureate student retention through graduation and pipelining to further graduate training or the workforce; and

(iv) plans for ongoing evaluating of the D.V.M. or baccalaureate training projects' management and effectiveness, measuring program outcomes and impacts, pipelining, and tracking Scholars' accomplishments after graduation. Provide details of how the proposed D.V.M. or baccalaureate training will lead to achieving the goals of the MSP/SEL grants program. The applicant should project a goal for tracking (e.g. expressed as a less than 10 percent "unable-to-contact" rate during the 36-month post-graduation follow-up phase). As an example, the Unable-to-Track Rate is computed as the number of "unable-to-contact" graduated USDA Scholars divided by the number of graduated Scholars, expressed as a percentage. An escalating unable-to-contact rate is of considerable concern. This project evaluation plan should include the tracking of the success of the D.V.M. or baccalaureate student training to meet the needs of the Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.); the measurable change due to the training; the process that will be used to evaluate the project management for successful outcomes; and the accrued changes in developed expertise for the Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.) due to the training program proposed. Include a discussion of how evaluation findings would be used to modify and improve future opportunities for Scholars.

(5) Wide dissemination of impacts and results of the D.V.M. or baccalaureate training program management and student achievement to the funding agency and interested parties including the general citizenry. Include plans for:

(i) outcomes reporting, including impacts of scholarship recipients and their experiential learning activities; and

(ii) disseminating project outcomes, impacts and achievements to meeting program purpose and goals to a wide audience of educators and policy makers.

Section 3 Institutional Commitment and Resources

Substantiate clearly, with supporting documentation, that:

(1) Processes, facilities and equipment, instructional and student mentoring/retention support resources and other attributes (e.g., professional ranking of department, other funding sources, CSREES program evaluation) are excellent for providing outstanding teaching and training at the forefront of science and technology related to the chosen discipline for the Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.);

(2) Scholarship recipients will be provided with curricula and experiential learning opportunities, including enrichment activities, that are germane to their course of study to prepare graduates to gain expertise in the Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.); and

(3) Applicants institution(s) are committed to supporting the Scholars' education and training, in the Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.), over and beyond the funds provided by USDA. Such support should be documented with signed letters of support.

Section 4 Innovation

Identify any **innovative**, special features of the proposed project that will be available **especially** to USDA Scholars, or required as a part of their degree programs. Such features may include:

- (1) Transdisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach coupling training in the Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.) with innovative training in ethics, leadership, communication, management and policy;
- (2) Multi-university collaborative approach;
- (3) Emphasis on attaining technical skills that are aligned with the ACC report for advancing goals for STEM education and transdisciplinary in function;
- (4) Undergraduate or veterinary research and/or pre-professional opportunities, internships, practicum, experiential learning opportunities, international research/educational experiences, and related work experiences;
- (5) Training grounded in scholarship using holistic concepts and analytical tools from a variety of disciplines to address sciences (environmental, social and economics) for sustainability to develop intellectual capital and create knowledgeable leaders and managers of food and agricultural sciences;
- (6) Pipelining into other veterinary medical or undergraduate training and/or the workforce;
- (7) Leadership and management experiences for the Scholars that enhance the skills of the emerging professional to contribute to Program Areas of Emphasis (Part I, B.) in the food and agricultural sciences;
- (8) Assessments of learning outcomes demonstrating the acquisition of skills to analyze issues, propose solutions, assess values and conflicts arising from issues and solutions in a diverse and global workforce;
- (9) Plans and procedures to measure and report training project performance outcomes and impacts; and
- (10) Opportunities for realignment of Multicultural Scholars training program to achieve successful project outcomes for the Program Areas of Emphasis (Part I, B.).

Field 11. Other Attachments - (Must be PDF format)

- **Matching Funds Documentation – PDF Attachment.** This grants program requires applicants to match Federal funds awarded on a twenty-five percent basis from non-Federal sources. Signed letters from each source of matching funds are required, and should be attached in this Field #11. Recommended contents of these letters are described below in item #5, SF 424 (R&R) Budget Fed & Non-Fed, Matching.

- **Fellowships/Scholarships Entry and Exit Form – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as “Fellowships/Scholarships Entry/Exit Form” in the document header and save file as “Fellowships/Scholarships Entry/Exit Form”. (see Part IV, B.2.)
- **Table of Contents – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as “Table of Contents” in the document header and save file as “Table of Contents”. Include an application ‘Table of Contents’ page that lists all forms and attachments comprising this complete application. Use titles from the Application Submission Checklist found at the end of this section (Part IV) as a guideline.

3. SF R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) (Required Form)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide. Biographical sketches for key personnel must be submitted. Each vita may not exceed two (2) pages. The following should be included, as applicable:

- (a) The roles and responsibilities of each PD and/or collaborator should be clearly described; and
- (b) Vitae of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. This section should include vitae of all key persons who are expected to work on the project, whether or not CSREES funds are sought for their support. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae must include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable: earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received and a chronological list of **all** D.V.M. or baccalaureate level training programs where leadership was provided, during the past **four (4) years**;
- (c) Provide **number of multicultural D.V.M. or baccalaureate students successfully mentored.** **All** relevant publications in **refereed journals** during the past **four (4) years**, including those in press, must be provided for each project member for whom curriculum vitae is provided. Also list only those **non-refereed** technical publications that have **relevance** to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals; and
- (d) Credentials of international or other personnel participating as mentors, trainers, advisors, teachers in directing the international travel experience or other training of the USDA Scholar, providing evidence for a scholarly experience that will enhance the D.V.M. or baccalaureate training. For to-be-recruited Scholars, this information should be submitted at least 150 days prior to the Scholar’s participation in the SEL.

Also, **you must attach ‘Current and Pending Support’ information** (see CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 30 & 31, item 4.3, for guidelines and information format) for each senior/key person identified above. **Note: Even if no other funding is reported under the ‘Active’ section of this attachment, you must still list information for this grant application under the ‘Pending’ section of this attachment for each senior/key person identified above.**

4. SF R&R Personal Data (Optional) – As noted in Part V, 5. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. If completing the information, **do not enter any data in the field requesting the social security number.**

5. SF 424 (R&R) Budget Fed and Non-Fed (Required Form)

This form (accompanied by the required Budget Justification attachment) contains the itemized listing and description of your project’s budget. Complete all applicable fields. Consult the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions. The following, additional information may be helpful:

Complete one SF 424 (R&R) Budget Fed and Non-Fed Form for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget for the entire project. If your project involves partners with whom you plan to share Federal funds (Award Category No. 2 Project Proposal), make sure (a) you include a budget form for the applicant institution and a R&R subaward attachment form for each project partner (subaward), for each 12-month period plus a cumulative budget, and (b) your budget figures reflect the budget sharing criteria that: (i) no single institution may receive more than forty percent (40%) and (ii) any institution may not receive less than fifteen percent (15%) of the requested funding. Applicants are encouraged to provide a five-year budget with a zero dollar budget for any year where support is not allocated. The latter planning will allow efficient recruitment and appointment of MSP/SEL Scholars within the stipulated 12-month interval. No extensions beyond the five-year period are allowed (see Part II, C.2.).

On the R&R Budget Fed and Non-Fed Form Field E, the student support is placed on Line 2, and the cost-of-education allowance should appear on the Line 5 designated “Other.” The SEL, if applicable, also appears in Field E on Line 3 of the R&R Budget Form.

Matching

CSREES does require twenty-five percent (25%) matching support for this program. The proposed institutional matching, the sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be identified and summarized. When used, third party matching commitments must be documented with a signed letter from the committing organization’s AR that is countersigned by the recipient’s AR. The letter must state: (1) the total dollar amount intended for the proposed project; (2) the budget categories to which contributed dollars would be applied; and (3) whether the contribution is cash or in-kind (e.g., tuition and fee waivers). Federal Cost Principles governing this grant program state that items not eligible for Federal funding may also not be used as an applicant’s contribution toward meeting matching requirements.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are unallowable. In lieu of indirect costs, institutions receive a \$1,500 per year cost-of-education (CoE) allowance for each Scholar supported by a D.V.M. or baccalaureate training award for up to 4 years. The Project Director is required to use part of the CoE to attend at least one CSREES-sponsored Project Directors’ Conference, held during the life of the grant. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative visioning for aligning training to STEM education goals; forming new

collaborations; providing stakeholder input into future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary and innovative training programs along with products/results. In addition, institutions may use the cost-of-education allowance to defray program-related expenses including, but not limited to, student retention and mentoring programs, Scholar travel to attend professional meetings, publications, or salaries of project personnel and/or to conduct research, laboratory fees and educational expenses (e.g., books and supplies). An institution may elect to apply the cost-of-education institutional allowance to a Scholar's tuition and fees; however, such is not required. As an example, a typical budget allocation to an institution to support one (1) scholar would be: \$24,000 as federal funding that is comprised of a stipend of \$4,500 per year (equals \$18,000 for four years), and \$1,500 per year for the institutional cost-of-education allowance (equals \$6,000 for four years) (if institution elects to apply the COE institutional allowance to the Scholar's tuition and fees). The institution must contribute (non-Federal) matching support at \$1,500 per year (equals \$6,000 for four years) for support of a single scholar. Under this scenario, the MSP Scholar is entitled to receive a total of \$6,000 per year comprised of \$4,500 per year from federal funds plus \$1,500 per year from the required institutional match.

Note: Institutions may not reduce MSP Scholar's stipends.

For years where no funds will be expended a zero-dollar budget should be included. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. [*Note for the Multicultural Scholars Program: The Federal dollars requested as scholarship, stipend, and the cost-of-education allowance would be a combined value that will appear on Line I on the budget form. There is no need to itemize and/or explain what the cost-of-education will be used for on the budget form. The explanation should be in the budget narrative which is attached to the budget forms.*] Justify that the total budget, including funds requested from USDA and any matching support provided, is allocated adequately between the applicant and any collaborating institution, and will be appropriate to carry out the activities of the project. Provide a summary of sources and amounts of all third party matching support. All costs must be fully explained and justified. **The Budget Justification must be submitted as a single PDF attachment to the R&R Budget Form.**

Cost-effectiveness. Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, and achieves multicultural diversity in the food systems domain. For example, discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise in students from traditionally underrepresented groups entering the future workforce. Justify how SEL associated with student training will develop human capital in students from groups traditionally underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences.

6. SF 424 (R&R) Subaward Budget Attachment

Only if there is a subaward or applicant is submitting a Multi-Institutional Training Project.

7. Supplemental Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Program Code (Field 2. on the Form). Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “**Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program**”) and the program code (i.e., enter “**KF**”).

b. Conflict of Interest List (Field 8. on the Form). A conflict of interest list is required under this program. Conflicts of Interest for Key Personnel must be submitted. Provide the full names **with institutional affiliation** of the individuals in the following categories: (a) all co-authors on publications within the past four years, including pending publications and submissions; (b) all collaborators on projects within the past four years, including current and planned collaborations; (c) all thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors within the past four years; and (d) all persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement within the past four years, who stand to gain by seeing the project funded. This form is necessary to assist program staff in excluding from application review those individuals who have conflicts of interest with the personnel in the grant application. The Program Contact must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

Application Submission Checklist

The following checklist contains suggested guidelines to verify prior to application submission:

- Have all attachments been submitted in the portable document format (PDF)?** Only PDF attachments will be accepted. See Part III of the CSREES Application Guide.
 - Do all submitted PDF documents have one-inch margins and are typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point and double spaced? Are all PDF documents numbered sequentially on each page of the attachment? Are all page limitations for a given attachment followed? Submitted applications that do not meet these requirements for PDF attachments will be returned without review.
- Have all five required components of the SF 424 Research and Related (R&R) Application Package been completed? Did you use the “Check Package for Errors” feature of the PureEdge viewer (see section 1.8 of the CSREES Application Guide)?**
 - SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
 - SF 424 R&R Other Project Information
 - SF 424 R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)
 - SF 424 R&R Personal Data (Optional)
 - SF 424 R&R Budget Fed and Non-Fed
 - SF 424 R&R Subaward Budget Attachment (Only if there is a subaward or if submitting an Award Category No. 2 Project Proposal)
 - Supplemental Information Form
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**
 - Have all required fields been completed? Field 5 must contain the name of the eligible college or university.
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Other Project Information**
 - Have the fields describing project potential or actual environmental impact been properly completed?

- Project Summary/Abstract**
 - Has the Project Summary PDF been attached to this form in Field 6?
 - Does this section adhere to the format?
- Project Narrative**
 - Has the Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 7?
 - Are responses provided for all Sections of the Project Narrative in the RFA for this section (Field 7, Sections 1-4)?
 - Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?
- Response to Previous Review (for resubmitted applications only)**
 - Only include if you are resubmitting an application that was previously not funded.
 - Include as a one-page attachment (PDF) in Field 11 and attach just before the Project Narrative.
 - Has the resubmitted application briefly addressed comments from the previous review?
- Collaborative Arrangements**
 - Has the Collaborative Arrangements PDF been attached to this form in Field 11?
- Appendices to Project Narrative**
 - Has the Appendix to Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 11?
- Matching Funds Documentation**
 - Has each signed letter to verify matching support been attached to this form in Field 11?
- Fellowships/Scholarships Entry/Exit Form (ONLY where SEL funding is requested for current eligible MSP Scholars)**
 - Has the Fellowships/Scholarships Entry and Exit Form been attached to this form in Field 11?
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)**
 - Biographical Sketch**
 - Has the biographical sketch (vitae) PDF for the PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel been attached?
 - Current and Pending Support**
 - Has the current and pending support PDF for all key personnel been attached?
 - Have all current and pending projects been listed and summarized, including this application?
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Personal Data (Optional) DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**
 - Have all fields been completed except for the social security number?
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Budget Fed and Non-Fed**
 - Have all fields been completed?
 - Has the Cost of Education Allowance been identified in the Other of Section E of the Budget?
 - Are SEL funds requested in Section D of the Budget form?
 - Are trainee stipends identified in Section E of the Budget form?
 - Has the number of trainee stipends the applicant proposes been included?
 - Budget Justification**
 - Has the Budget Justification PDF been attached to this form in Field K?

- Are budget items individually justified?
- For multi-institutional applications, has a budget justification been included for each institution involved (Only required if submitting an Award Category No. 2 Project Proposal)?
- For SEL, have the budgeted funds identified in Section D been justified?

◆ **Supplemental Information Form**

- ❑ Does Field 2 indicate the Program Code Name and Program Code to which you are applying?
- ❑ Have you included the required Conflict of Interest List (PDF) attachments for key personnel **identifying full names (first, middle initial, last) and organizational affiliation**? (See format in CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide, Section VI, 1.8, p.46, for instructions.) Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the questions are “N.A.”.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on July 28, 2008 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from CSREES** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of submission of the application, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 3152(b), no indirect costs may be recovered under the MSP Program. Funds are restricted to the clearly designated uses found within this RFA.

For Award Category No. 2 Proposals, the budget sharing criteria are: (i) no single institution may receive more than forty percent (40%) **and** (ii) any institution may not receive less than fifteen percent (15%) of the requested funding for the baccalaureate and/or D.V.M. degree level training project (see Part IV, B.,2,(5)).

When grant is for SEL that will be used by To-Be-Recruited Scholars: The SEL funds for To-Be-Recruited Scholars will be withheld until the Project Director has submitted, to the MSP Grants Program Office, all of the required documentation for eligibility of the MSP/SEL Scholar(s) for the SEL as well as the required specifics outlined in the RFA for the SEL. The

information must be submitted for approval, no less than 150 days prior to the use of the SEL funds (see Part IV, B., 2, b, Section 1).

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.”

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA.

1. Applications for Baccalaureate or D.V.M. Training

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing all applications submitted in response to this RFA, **except** those only requesting funds for SEL grants for current USDA MSP Scholars:

a) Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education (20 Points)

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the proposed program of D.V.M. and/or baccalaureate degree level study (training) will result in the development of outstanding graduates to meet the future needs of a globally interconnected, technologically advanced, rapidly diversifying and consumer driven food and agricultural industry. Elements include: quality (demonstrated track record or plan with high probability for successful completion) of the chosen academic training program, incorporation of learning outcomes assessments to prepare experts in the **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)**, to meet current and future demand for knowledgeable, multicultural graduates in chosen discipline(s); strength of the curriculum, instructional approaches, identification of the core competencies that each Scholar will be expected to attain; strategies for developing critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills and prior success in or potential for graduating Scholars to meet the

purpose and goals of the grant; and demonstration of a clear alignment between the training project goals to workforce outcomes for the future.

b) Proposed Approach (25 Points)

(i) Recruitment and selection: The applicant's strategies, procedures and established relationships for successfully identifying and recruiting outstanding student beneficiaries who are committed to careers in food and agricultural sciences and for pipelining into graduate training or professional opportunity **to increase the multicultural diversity of the workforce in the Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)**.

(ii) Academic training, advising, professional counseling, mentoring, and student support services: The applicant's plans and procedures for assessing **advancement of science training to meet STEM education goals**; monitoring; guiding and sustaining a Scholar's continued commitment, and securing **successful progress** toward an education in preparation for a career in the **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)**, and for providing appropriate professional counseling, mentoring, support services, and **pipelining Scholars** to further training or professional opportunities. **Where Multi-Institutional training projects are proposed, are there plans for feasibility, cohesiveness and effectiveness across institutions in preparation of a larger cohort of students.**

(iii) Program evaluation and dissemination: The adequacy and reasonableness of the applicant's plans, as reflected in the proposal, for (1) meaningful measuring of learning outcomes; (2) evaluating project management; (3) determining overall effectiveness of the **Scholars' training in the Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)** to prepare Scholars for careers as food and agricultural scientists or professionals; (4) tracking Scholars' accomplishments after graduation, (5) measuring performance outcomes that evaluate how training project increases the number and/or percentage of students graduating, above the numbers that would result without the grant (measure impacts at **both the funded project level and this MSP funding opportunity at the Program level**) and (6) disseminating project outcomes and achievements to a wide audience of educators and policy makers, in order to expand the pipeline of outstanding students entering graduate training or workforce in support of the **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)** in food and agricultural sciences.

c) Institutional Commitment and Resources (20 Points)

The degree to which the proposal substantiates clearly: (1) that the facilities and equipment, instructional support resources and other academic attributes are excellent for providing outstanding teaching and research at the forefront of science and technology related to the **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)**; (2) the commitment to support the Scholars education and attainment of proficiency over and beyond the funds provided by USDA during the grant; and continued support for the Scholar through other means, should a USDA Scholar require additional time beyond the grant period.

d) Key Personnel

(15 Points)

The qualifications and roles of key staff assigned to the project, particularly the project director and faculty or staff having the most frequent or influential contacts with Scholars. Elements include such attributes as competence and/or experience in graduating post-baccalaureate students, research, teaching, community service, working with diverse cultural groups, students at risk of not completing their degree programs, and leading similar projects.

e) Innovation

(20 points)

The degree to which the proposal describes any innovative, special features of the academic program(s) (see Part IV, B. 2, b, Section 4) that will be available especially to Scholars or required as a part of their degree program(s), including: an integrative interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, or cross-disciplinary approach; a focus on innovative, multi-disciplinary education programs, material, or curricula; a multi-university collaborative approach; an emphasis on a collateral specialization or minor in a related discipline; **alignment of training with ACC report for advancing goals for STEM** education; research opportunities, internships, practicum, experiential learning opportunities, developing leadership, management, critical thinking and problem solving skills that may integrally incorporate science and values for sustainability in food and agricultural sciences, international research/educational training, and related work experiences to effectively matriculate Scholars with the expertise and proficiency to contribute in the **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)** of the training project.

2. Applications for Special Experiential Learning (SEL)

The following criteria will be used **to review applications requesting only SEL for current USDA MSP Scholars. For FY 2008 applications that propose funding for SEL experiences in future years, the following criteria will be used to evaluate the merit of the SEL activity.**

a) Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education (20 Points)

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the proposed international/research learning experience for the eligible D.V.M. and/or undergraduate Scholar(s) will contribute to training and will result in the development of outstanding graduates to meet the future needs of a globally interconnected, technologically advanced, rapidly diversifying and consumer driven food and agricultural industry. Elements include: quality of the SEL activity to enhance the training program of the Scholar; and target area and duration for the developmental professional experience - the degree to which the SEL is appropriate for enhancing the USDA Scholar's academic program.

b) Proposed Approach

(40 Points)

(1) Advanced preparation – the degree to which the proposed study or research activities are well-planned, including the likelihood that these activities will come to fruition and that the participation of identified personnel will materialize based on: (1) the clarity of the learning objectives; (2) the planned activity(ies); (3) established and documented evidence of availability

of facilities and personnel at host institution; and (4) the completeness of arrangements for the SEL.

(2) **Academic advising, career counseling, mentoring, student support and pipelining** – the applicant's plans and procedures for assessing, monitoring, guiding, and sustaining a Scholar's progress in the SEL activities toward securing a positive impact on the academic program of the Scholar(s); strategies for application of critical thinking and problem solving skills in Scholars; and development of skills to sustain the discipline(s) and entry into the workforce or graduate training.

(3) **Program evaluation and dissemination** – the plans for (1) an SEL Outcomes Report to be submitted to the USDA that describes accomplishments of the Scholar(s) after completing the SEL - **this is not an activity report with a daily log of tasks**; (2) clear documenting of progress from entry to exit of training program to meet the needs of the Program Area of Emphasis (Part I, B.); and (3) disseminating impacts and achievements to a wide audience of educators and policy makers, in order to expand the pipeline of outstanding students interested in careers in food and agricultural sciences.

c) Institutional Commitment and Resources

(10 Points)

The degree to which the proposal substantiates clearly: (1) that the facilities and equipment, instructional/learning support resources and other academic attributes are excellent for providing outstanding international/research experiential learning opportunities at the forefront of science and technology related to the academic program of the Scholar(s); and (2) the documented commitment (**letters**) to support the Scholar(s) in the educational value of the international research experience.

d) Key Personnel

(10 Points)

The degree to which the personnel, both U.S. and international, involved with the research and/or travel experience have the appropriate credentials and experience to direct the USDA MSP/SEL Scholar's professional developmental experience, and the likelihood that their participation as mentors, trainers, advisors, or teachers will contribute to the educational value of the travel experiences.

e) Innovation

(20 points)

The degree to which the proposal describes any innovative, special features of the SEL activities that will focus on: (1) innovative approaches to generating a new body of knowledge that strengthens the academic program of the Scholar(s), and; (2) an emphasis on learning and understanding relative to the **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)** and alignment to global influences and competitiveness in a fast-evolving sphere.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220 and 230) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and 7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

1. Documentation of Progress on Funded Projects

Pursuant to 7 CFR Part 3402.23, Project Directors will be required to:

(a) Reporting on Individual Student Beneficiaries

(i) Student Appointment - Project Directors are required to complete and submit, to the CSREES MSP Program Office (MSP@csrees.usda.gov), a Fellowships/Scholarships Entry Form (OMB No. 0524-0039), [Page 1 of Form CSREES-2010, http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/all_forms.html] when eligible, committed students are appointed as Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program under an award. This information must also be provided for replacement Fellows appointed under the program.

(ii) Annual Student Progress in Training Program - Project Directors are required to complete and submit, to the MSP Program Office, an Annual Update Form (OMB No. 0524-0039), [Page 2 of Form CSREES-2010] that provides information about the academic accomplishment including products, recognitions and professional mentoring outcomes, for each Scholars supported. This information is treated as confidential. The Annual Update is used to assess the continuing progress of Scholars through their undergraduate training program to meet the objectives of the funded undergraduate or D.V.M. training project.

(iii) Exit and/or Termination - Project Directors are required to complete and submit, to the MSP Program Office, a Fellowships/Scholarships Exit Form (OMB No. 0524-0039), [Page 3 of Form CSREES-2010] as soon as a Scholar either (1) graduates; (2) is officially terminated from the Scholarship or the academic program due to unsatisfactory academic progress or disciplinary action; or (3) voluntarily withdraws from the Scholarship or academic program. If a Scholar has not completed all degree requirements at the end of the five-year award duration, CSREES may request a preliminary Fellowships/Scholarships Exit Form (Annual Update and Exit Reports) (OMB No. 0524-0039). In such a case, a final Fellowships/Scholarships Exit Form would be required at a later date.

(b) SEL Outcomes Report

An Outcomes Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact personnel within 90 days of completion of the SEL. This report is prepared by the USDA Scholar and submitted through the Project Director of the active Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program award. *This*

*is **not** an activity report with a daily log of tasks.* The Outcomes Report describes accomplishments and may include images.

(c) Annual Accomplishment and Final Technical Reporting on the Undergraduate/D.V.M. Training Project - Project Directors use the Current Research Information System (CRIS) to submit annual accomplishment reports and the Final Technical report (OMB No. 0524-0042). CRIS is an electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally funded projects. Annually, Project Directors describe progress towards achieving goals of funded project; highlighting success and reporting challenges and measures taken to address each; indicating unusual developments; planning for the next year's activities, and any other information that is pertinent and assessing overall progress of training of Scholars to meet the national need – impact on workforce. The final Technical Report includes a summary of the overall progress toward project objectives, addresses problems in concluding project or which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award. This information should include performance metrics and be aligned to the goals of the CSREES Strategic Plan, MSP grant program and the objectives of the funded undergraduate/D.V.M. training project. [Note: ***The Annual Accomplishment Report and the Final Technical Report address the funded undergraduate/D.V.M. training project as a whole and not the individual annual progress of each Scholar in his/her program of study.***] For additional information on the contents of CRIS reports see Part VII for agency contact details. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>.

When CSREES has accepted a Final Technical Report in CRIS **and** the Fellowships/Scholarships Exit Form (OMB No. 0524-0039) for **each Fellow** supported by an award, the grantee has satisfied the requirement of the final performance reporting for the award. Additional follow-up reports to track Scholars' career patterns also may be requested.

2. Evaluation of Program

Grantees should be aware that CSREES may, as a part of its own program evaluation activities, carry out in-depth evaluations of assisted activities through independent third parties. Thus, grantees should be prepared to cooperate with evaluators retained by CSREES to analyze both the institutional context and the impact of any supported project.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact: Dr. Audrey A. Trotman; National Program Leader, Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program, Science and Education Resources Development Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Stop 2251; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2251; telephone: 202-720-1973; fax: 202-720-2030; e-mail: MSP@csrees.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of the summary (consensus) review of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of

amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

Administrator means the Administrator of CSREES and any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Authorized departmental officer (ADO) means the Secretary or any employee of the Department who has the authority to issue or modify grant instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

Authorized representative (AR) means the president, or chief executive officer or other designated official of the applicant organization who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

Citizen or national of the United States means: (1) a citizen or native resident of a State, the District of Columbia, or any Insular Area; or, (2) a person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States. Where eligibility is claimed solely on the basis of permanent allegiance, documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to CSREES upon request.

College or university means an educational institution in any State which (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate, (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education, (3) provides an educational program for which a bachelor's degree or any other higher degree is awarded, (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution, and (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Education The terms “teaching” and “education” mean formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters relating thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering baccalaureate or higher degrees. (As defined in Section 1404 of the NARETPA)

First generation means an individual neither of whose parents completed a baccalaureate degree, or in the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree.

Food and agricultural sciences means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities concerned with the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, family and consumer sciences, rural economic, community, or business development, and closely allied disciplines.

Graduate degree means a Master’s or doctoral degree.

Grantee means the institution designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

Insular Area means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Land-grant colleges and universities means those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862 (12 Stat. 503-505, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 301-305, 307 and 308), including the land grant institutions in the Insular Areas or the Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 417-419, as amended 7 U.S.C. 321-326 and 328), including Tuskegee University, West Virginia State University.

Matching or Cost-sharing means that portion of project costs not borne by the Federal Government, including the value of third party in-kind or cash contributions.

Minority means Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Black (African-American), Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or any other group underrepresented in undergraduate and first professional degree study in the food and agricultural sciences as indicated in standard statistical references, or as documented on a case-by-case basis by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary.

Multi-institutional means a request for funding for a single academic program or an interdisciplinary program involving two or more institutions in a degree level training program.

Peer review is an evaluation of a proposed project for scientific, technical, or teaching quality and relevance performed by experts with the knowledge and skills to conduct the proposed work or to give expert advice on the merits of a proposal.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer as defined in this section.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant awarded under this program.

Project director means the single individual, designated by the grantee in the grant application and approved by the ADO, who is responsible for the direction and management of the project.

Project period means the total length of time, as stated in the award document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved may be delegated.

State means any one of the fifty States, any Insular Area as defined in this announcement, and the District of Columbia.

Traditionally underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences means groups that have been historically, and are currently, underrepresented among recipients of undergraduate and first professional degrees in the food and agricultural sciences.

Teaching formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters related thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering associate, baccalaureate, or higher degrees.

Underrepresented means proportionate representation as measured by degree recipients that is less than the proportionate representation in the general population--(i) As indicated by (A) The

most current edition of the Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics; (B) The National Research Council's Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities; or (C) Other standard statistical references, as documented by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary on a case-by-case basis.