

Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP)

FY 2012 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 29, 2012

MSP Program Office:

Telephone: 202-720-1973

Email: MSP@nifa.usda.gov

Program website: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/msp/msp.html>

Program code: KF

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE;
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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 August 29, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will 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 National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) 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 and Oversight Division; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: Policy@nifa.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 Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP) for fiscal year (FY) 2012 to conduct undergraduate and D.V.M. 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. The amount available for support of this program is approximately \$990,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for MSP projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an MSP grant. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

In FY 2012, special emphasis is placed on training that will address the changing demographics of the nation and the development of 21st century skills in USDA mission areas that include STEM (Science, Technology, Education, and Mathematics) disciplines and social sciences. The next generation workforce in USDA mission sciences will be multicultural, and as for all Americans, their educational development will require tools that creatively and innovatively contribute to their areas of emphasis, profession, and U.S. global competitiveness.

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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/NIFA 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 1999, Congress changed the statutory language of the authorization to the “Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program.”

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program, as outlined in this RFA, is to provide scholarships to support recruiting, engaging, retaining, mentoring, and training committed, **eligible multicultural scholars**, resulting in either baccalaureate degrees within the food and agricultural sciences disciplines or the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) degree. The scholarships are intended to encourage outstanding students from groups that are historically underrepresented and underserved in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) specifically for the USDA mission sciences, to pursue and complete baccalaureate degrees in food and agricultural sciences, or achieve a D.V.M. that would lead to a **diverse and highly skilled work force**.

Through these scholarships, the goal of the MSP is to increase the participation of any group historically underrepresented in STEM and USDA mission areas and prepare them for the professional and scientific workforce in these areas. Underrepresented/underserved groups are those whose representation among food and agricultural professionals is disproportionately less than their proportion in the general population as indicated in standard statistical references, or as documented on a case-by-case basis by national survey data (e.g. the U.S. Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Agricultural Education Information Systems, etc.).

To accomplish this goal, 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) proven capabilities for achieving representation of diverse, multicultural groups in STEM and in the USDA mission areas. Applications are sought for student education that will:

- (i) Prepare graduates to meet the demand for highly qualified personnel entering the STEM workforce within the food and agricultural sciences domain;
- (ii) Pipeline more undergraduates into graduate education in USDA mission sciences;

- (iii) Contribute to the reduction of the disparity among underrepresented and underserved populations entering graduate schools to reflect the demographics of this country and enable the American system of higher education to remain globally competitive;
- (iv) Promote student success within food, agricultural and related science disciplines at the undergraduate/D.V.M. level; and
- (v) Focus on student learning, academic preparation, social support structure, and professional mentoring to ensure entry into food and agricultural sciences areas and completion of graduate education or high level of competitiveness for the workforce.

In collaboration with eligible institutions the FY 2012 MSP grants aim to:

- (i) Advance national STEM education achievement by supporting students representing a multicultural pool of graduates entering the future food and agricultural scientific and professional workforce;
- (ii) Support America's academic competitiveness in STEM by supporting scholarships in D.V.M. and/or undergraduate degree level training grounded in curricula to advance food and agricultural sciences;
- (iii) Increase the number of qualified students from historically underrepresented and underserved groups pursuing undergraduate/D.V.M. degrees in training programs that have the highest chance for success; and
- (iv) Enhance workforce diversity in STEM fields by supporting experiential learning opportunities of MSP Scholars in the public and private sectors.

In addition to coursework 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 exposed to a wide spectrum of careers in the food and agricultural sciences. Such plans should include increasing knowledge about academic, governmental, private sector and non-profit enterprises that involve Scholars and will strengthen the likelihood of successfully meeting the goals of the MSP grants.

The MSP also provides funding through Special Experiential Learning (SEL) opportunities to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through programs that provide MSP Scholars with hands-on opportunities to solve complex problems including policy development and management, 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 would not normally be available to students without support.

Applications are being solicited for the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program to support academic training at both the baccalaureate and D.V.M. levels in the identified Program

Areas of Emphasis. Applications are also being solicited for SEL funding of USDA MSP Scholars.

FY 2012 MSP Program Areas of Emphasis

- (1) **Veterinary Medicine (First Professional Degree in Veterinary Medicine i.e., D.V.M.)** – specifically targeted is professional entry in food animal veterinary medicine;
- (2) **Agricultural Sciences and Engineering** – specifically in agronomy, agricultural process engineering, agricultural biotechnology, animal science, crop sciences, and other STEM related sciences that address the workforce demands for expertise relevant to USDA mission areas
- (3) **Natural Resource Sciences Training** – particularly transdisciplinary training programs in sciences for global food security, food and agricultural sustainability to find solutions for real world issues relating to water, renewable energy, effects of climate change on environmental sustainability – including green jobs, and land use management relating to food, feed, and fiber;
- (4) **Human Sciences Training** – specifically addressing the rural/urban interface as it pertains to food and agricultural sciences, including rural economic prosperity and family consumer sciences, specialty crops and markets and trade, agricultural communication, and the links to developing economic and social policy;
- (5) **Food Science and Human Nutrition Training** – specifically focused on development of food and agricultural science expertise to address diet, nutrition for improved health – reducing childhood obesity, and improving food quality;
- (6) **Agrosecurity Science Training** – specifically addressing food and agricultural science impacts on animal and crop health, including insect and pest management; and
- (7) **Agricultural Education** – specifically addressing the incorporation of STEM disciplines with traditional agriculture education in formal (i.e. pre-K-12) and/or non-formal (e.g. extension) education preparation/training programs.

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.**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to respond to this request with training that will use USDA investment 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;

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

(3) Provide professional mentoring in D.V.M. and/or undergraduate degree programs in the food and agricultural sciences;

(4) Increase the numbers of students from underrepresented/underserved groups who attain baccalaureate and/or D.V.M. degree level programs with scientific and professional competencies to meet the technologically advanced needs of the 21st century food and agricultural systems workforce;

(5) Provide exceptional undergraduate and/or D.V.M. training in the food and agricultural sciences to develop human capital to participate in meeting the mission of the USDA and the **challenges that NIFA is addressing: (i) Keep American agriculture competitive while ending world hunger, (ii) Improve nutrition and end child obesity, (iii) Improve food safety for all Americans, (iv) Secure America's energy future, and (v) Mitigate and adapt to climate change;**

(6) Provide relevant leadership, research, management and professional learning experiences for D.V.M. and/or undergraduate training that demonstrates the potential for USDA MSP Scholars to participate in the emerging emphasis areas, which require the knowledge and technical skills in food and agricultural science disciplines, as well as link the training project goals to workforce outcomes; and

(7) Develop performance measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the D.V.M. and/or undergraduate training that the Scholars will receive. This includes assessing expertise in the Program Areas of Emphasis, with clear demonstration of pipelining to workforce or further educational training in the identified core competencies for: (a) subject matter and related disciplines; (b) skills in 21st century communication; and (c) aptitude to operate in a globally-oriented and technologically-driven world economy.

Applicants to the MSP grants program must consider the contribution of proposed training grants in preparing outstanding multicultural Scholars to meet the national demand for 21st century skills and America's competitiveness in the global science and technology economy. The National Academies Report on [*The New Biology for the 21st Century: Ensuring the United State Leads the Coming Biology Revolution*](#) is a highly recommended reference as it provides vision for addressing the major societal challenges of food, climate, energy, and health. The report lays out potential for the coordinated and focused approach needed, using integrative support and ownership, to address fundamental problems faced by society. The MSP grant program is an opportunity to give attention to the recommendations to produce future innovations and innovators in STEM fields integral to the food and agricultural systems domain.

The National Academy of Science 2009 report entitled, *Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World* recommends that academic institutions with undergraduate programs in

agriculture implement nine steps to better meet the needs of students, employers, and the broader society. For information on the full report, please refer to http://dels.nas.edu/ag_education/report.shtml and click on recommendations.

In addition, a 2009 white paper on Human Capacity Development prepared by the Academic Programs Section of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities also supports the recommendations of the above publications. The MSP grants can impact the number of people including underrepresented and underserved minorities, who enter college to pursue degrees in food, agricultural and related sciences, by leveraging K-12 activities of beneficiaries of funded MSP projects. MSP Scholars can have enormous influence on K-12 students and their parents, to see that training in food, agricultural and related sciences can lead to new careers, robust personal and community prosperity, and advance America's competitiveness. Copies of the white paper entitled "Human Capacity Development - The Road to Global Competitiveness and Leadership in Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (FANRRS)," can be found at: <http://www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=1639>.

C. Program Area Description

Under the FY 2012 program, NIFA intends to support scholarship and training for baccalaureate degrees within the food and agricultural sciences disciplines and/or the D.V.M. degree with MSP grants and SEL awards, as applicable.

The MSP directly aligns with the USDA Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_02-2012_2.pdf), and specifically addresses Goal 6 – Education and Science Literacy, by recruiting, cultivating, and developing the next generation of scientists, leaders, and a highly-skilled workforce for food, agriculture, natural resources, forestry, environmental systems, and life sciences to out-educate our global competitors.

a. Multicultural Scholarship Program 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 receive an annual cost-of-education allowance for each Scholar supported by an award.

Applicants are 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. **The statutory limit for this program is 5-years. 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.

(1) Student Eligibility as Beneficiary Scholars

Awards to Scholars are made by eligible institutions (grantees) receiving funds under this program. **No NIFA awards will be made directly to students; therefore, students cannot apply directly to USDA/NIFA for MSP scholarships.** Persons eligible to be appointed as Scholars 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 D.V.M 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 D.V.M 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 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, as described later in this RFA.

In summary, MSP Scholars are to be supported in the following manner: freshmen (or first-year DVM) are to receive support for 4 years, sophomores are to receive support for 3 years, and juniors 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, socioeconomic status, 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.**

An 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/NIFA**, and provided such grants or awards do not come from other federal sources.

(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 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 NIFA. Undergraduate and/or D.V.M. scholarship appointments may be held only by persons who enroll and pursue a full-time 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:**

- (a) Continuing their enrollment as a full-time student, as defined by each grantee institution, leading to an undergraduate degree in a discipline in the food and agricultural sciences or DVM;

- (b) Maintaining good academic standing and satisfactory degree progress as determined by their institution; and
- (c) Engaging in service learning projects, with populations from groups historically underrepresented and underserved in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

MSP monies budgeted for scholarship awards shall be used by the grantee to pay, in order of precedence: (1) MSP Scholars' tuition and mandatory fees; (2) on-campus room and board; (3) off-campus room and board; (4) books and supplies; (5) other aligned broader context activities; and (6) 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 prior to completion. 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 grants 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, or other reasonable non-academic and non-disciplinary cause(s) 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 12 total months of cumulative leave 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 grantee institution, is subject to the same provisions as a MSP Scholar at the four-year grantee institution.

b. Special Experiential Learning (SEL) Funding

SEL funded activities may include, but are not limited to, those that provide opportunities for eligible MSP Scholars to participate in: (a) research projects focused on multidisciplinary topics of national importance at institutions or organizations other than their own; (b) apprenticeships, internships, or similar participatory learning experiences including, but not limited to, practicums for DVM students, internships abroad or externships in the private or public sector; and (c) 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 2012, applications for SEL funding may be submitted by colleges and universities that: (1) are current MSP grantees, who have at least one year remaining in the grant period, to support a current, eligible MSP Scholar, under Award Category 3 (see Part II, C, 3); and (2) new applicants to Award Category No. 1 (see Part II, C, 1) for the MSP Program may propose SEL opportunities for future To-Be-Recruited MSP Scholars. **Applicants in FY 2012 may apply for both Categories in one application. Applicants with current MSP awards must use a stand-alone application to request SEL for current, eligible 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 NIFA Form 2010 – Student Appointment Form for the current, eligible MSP Scholar(s) submitted to NIFA, prior to submitting an application for SEL support (see Part IV, B.3).

(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 NIFA Form 2010 – Student Appointment Form for the eligible MSP Scholar(s), been filed, with NIFA; (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 NIFA, the specific information about the SEL for evaluation at least 90 days prior to travel.**

SEL support is intended to provide opportunities for undergraduate and DVM students, who are eligible MSP Scholars, to build the skills and knowledge needed to advance their study, and contribute to careers and enter graduate education in Food and Agricultural Science disciplines.

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. Approximately \$990,000 is available to fund student training including SEL applications in FY 2012.

Each MSP application may request any combination of undergraduate and/or D.V.M. degree level scholarships (\$6,500 per student per year for up to four years). For each award, there is a \$2,500 per student per year cost-of-education allowance for the institution. For the SEL support there will be \$4,000 per eligible USDA MSP Scholar.

An example of funding for five MSP Scholars starting as freshmen, with associated SELs:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Scholarships:</i> | $\$6,500/\text{scholar}/\text{year} \times 5 \text{ scholars} \times 4 \text{ years}/\text{scholar} = \$130,000$ |
| <i>Cost-of Education:</i> | $\$2,500/\text{scholar}/\text{year} \times 5 \text{ scholars} \times 4 \text{ years}/\text{scholar} = \$50,000$ |
| <i>SELs:</i> | $\$4,000/\text{scholar} \times 5 \text{ scholars} = \$20,000$ |
| Total: | \$200,000 |

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2012, 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. B.). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in an appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

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.

NIFA reserves the right to fund fewer Scholars than requested in any application.

1. Award Category No. 1 – Single Institution Application – An applicant can request \$6,500 in scholarship support per Scholar per year for up to four (4) years. In addition, the applicant may request \$2,500 per Scholar per year for up to four years as a cost-of-education institutional allowance (in lieu of indirect costs). Each applicant may request NIFA/USDA funding for a minimum of \$108,000 for scholarship support for a cohort of students. A cohort of students can be comprised of any combination of two-year, three-year, or four-year appointments. The appointments must conform to the MSP eligibility requirements (Part I, C, a, (1)). For this project type, \$4,000 may be requested in SEL support, for TO-BE-RECRUITED USDA MSP Scholars (See Part II C. 3.). A single application may propose D.V.M. and/or baccalaureate level training that addresses any of the seven (7) Program Areas of Emphasis (Part I, B.); – singly or in combination, **up to a maximum of \$200,000 per application in Award Category No. 1.**

2. Award Category No. 2 – Multi-Institutional Application – An application submitted under this category would require participation of a minimum of two (2) eligible applicants. Priority within this award category will be given to multi-institutional groups which include at least one Minority Serving Institution. “Minority serving institution” is defined as an institution of higher education whose enrollment of a single minority group or a combination of minority groups exceeds fifty percent of the total enrollment. These institutions can include two-year public or private non-profit institutions of higher education that award associate degrees, however, please see special requirements for these applicants in Part III, A (attach documentation to Field 12, Other Project Information). **The same scholarship, Cost-of-Education, and minimum funding requirements apply as provided in Award Category No. 1.** Each application under this category may request scholarship support for a cohort of up to 15 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., 6) for Award Category No. 2 must be satisfied. Similarly, a Multi-Institutional application may request up to a **maximum of \$600,000** per application in Award Category No. 2.

Note: Multi-Institutional Training Projects (Award Category No. 2) must include both the R&R Budget and the 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 **each eligible USDA MSP Scholar** that may be used for approved activities (Part I, C,

b, (1)), over the active period of the award. Funds requested in this category may not exceed \$20,000. This support may be provided through multiple grant awards.

Current USDA MSP grantees without previous SEL funding, may apply for SEL funding for currently eligible USDA MSP Scholars only using Award Category No. 3.

Funding Limitations

- There is no limit to the number of applications an eligible institution may submit. However, an institution may only receive up to a maximum of **two** awards in Category 1 and/or Category 2.
- NIFA reserves the right to fund fewer MSP Scholars than requested in an application, and to partially fund SEL requests.
- Applicants, in any Award Category, may not request partial scholarships.

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. MSP Scholars from 2-year colleges are expected to transfer and complete their baccalaureate degrees in the partner 4-year institution(s). **In such instances, the baccalaureate-level institution must be the applicant.**

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

There are no matching requirements for the MSP program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA. **Applicants are advised to submit early to the Grants.gov system.**

New Users of Grants.gov

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 (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as much as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations the AR should go to **“Get Registered” on the Grants.gov left navigation bar (or go to http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. A quick reference guide listing the steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website: <http://www.grants.gov/assets/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>.** Item 2. below mentions the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains additional explanatory language regarding the registration process.

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
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-NIFA-HEMS-003871** 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 “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA 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 Adobe forms), **or submitting the application** then refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://www.grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

Grants.gov customer support
1-800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [Federal Holidays](#).
Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov iPortal: Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. ET). Get help now!

Please have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov, to help expedite your inquiry:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of Agency You Are Applying To
- Specific Area of Concern

See http://grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp or <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA 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 the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (i.e., content format, pdf file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, subsequent submissions of an application 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/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs.

For any questions related to the preparation of an application please review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable request for applications. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm Eastern Time, excluding Federal holidays.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. **A project’s duration should not exceed 60 months. Project Start Date should not occur before June 1, 2013.**

2. R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract (Must be PDF format).

IMPORTANT – All summaries/abstracts must contain the following information at the top of the page:

- (1) The names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and Co-PDs;
- (2) The title of the project (must be descriptive of the proposed training);
- (3) The specific FY 2011 Project Type for which you are applying (Category 1, 2, 3, or combination);
- (4) The Program Area of Emphasis AND discipline(s) (see below); and
- (5) The number of Scholars and/or SELs to be supported.

In addition to the above, the Project Summary must:

- (1) Be concise and precise at approximately **250 words**;
- (2) Include the relevance of the project to the goals of the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program;
- (3) Provide a specific description of the activity to be undertaken with a focus on goals, strategies, and anticipated project outcomes; and
- (4) Specify the target audience (region, geography, gender, age, and other demographics) aligned with MSP grants purpose and priorities.

Title the attachment ‘Project Summary’ in the document header and save the file in PDF format with the title ‘Project Summary’. **The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized.** Failure to identify Program Area(s) of Emphasis, number of Scholars and how training will advance the MSP grants program purpose, priorities and goals may result in the proposal being rejected.

| Program Area(s) of Emphasis for FY 2012 Funding Cycle |
|--|
| Veterinary Medicine (First Professional Degree in Veterinary Medicine i.e. D.V.M.) – specifically targeted is professional entry in food animal veterinary medicine |
| Agricultural Sciences and Engineering – specifically in agronomy, agricultural process engineering, agricultural biotechnology, animal science, crop sciences, and STEM related sciences that address the workforce demands for expertise relevant to USDA mission areas |
| Natural Resource Sciences Training – particularly transdisciplinary training programs in sciences for global food security, food and agricultural sustainability to find solutions for real world issues relating to water, renewable energy, effects of climate change on environmental sustainability – including green jobs, and land use management relating to food, feed, and fiber |
| Human Sciences Training – specifically addressing the rural/urban interface as it pertains to food and agricultural sciences, including rural economic prosperity, specialty crops and markets and trade, agricultural communication, and the links to developing economic and social policy |
| Food Science and Human Nutrition Training – specifically focused on development of food and agricultural science expertise to address diet, nutrition for improved health – reducing childhood obesity, and improving food quality |
| Agrosecurity Science Training – specifically addressing food and agricultural science impacts on animal and crop health, including insect and pest management |
| Agricultural Education – specifically addressing the incorporation of STEM disciplines with traditional agriculture education in formal (i.e. preK-12) and/or non-formal (e.g. extension) education preparation/training programs. |

| Relevant Disciplines for the FY 2012 Funding Cycle | Code |
|---|-------------|
| Animal Science | A |
| 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, Biofuels, or Climatology/Climate Change) | 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 (1st professional degree training) | V |
| General, Interdisciplinary, Sustainable Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Social | G |

| | |
|--|---|
| Sciences and Education Degree Programs | |
| Agricultural Biosecurity | X |
| Other (please specify) | O |

b. Field 8. Project Narrative (MUST be PDF format).

The Project Narrative shall not exceed fifteen (15) pages of written text and up to five (5) additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum of twenty (20) pages has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Formatting should be one inch margins and no smaller than 12 point font (Times New Roman or similar). A *Table of Contents* must be the first page(s) of the narrative and is not included in the page limit. **Applications that do not conform to these limits may be rejected.**

Project Narrative must include all of the following:

1. Quality of Education

Using the 2008-2009 academic year as the baseline, provide complete and accurate annual data by major, first-generation college, gender and racial/ethnic group (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native) for (i) institution-; (ii) College-/Department-; and (iii) Program-level in the following categories:

- (a) Total enrollment;
- (b) Total baccalaureate or Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degrees conferred;
- (c) Retention from Year 1 through Year 2;
- (d) Years to degree completion;
- (e) Participation in service learning, internship, experiential research, extension and/or outreach; and
- (f) Participation by faculty, staff and students in opportunities to develop multicultural competency.

Provide data at the Department- and Program-level only for:

- (g) Participation in local, regional, or national scientific, professional or industrial conferences and meetings;
- (h) Participation in international experience;
- (i) Participation in leadership, management and policy development;
- (j) Participation in industry experiences or internships;
- (k) Use of student services (including academic support, financial, career, student organizations, multicultural, safety and health); and
- (l) Post-graduation placement in employment (describe entry job types) or graduate education.

2. Progress Report

If the application is from an institution that has received an MSP grant funded competitively by this agency in the past five years, include a clearly marked progress report describing results to date from the previous award. The progress report must be contained within the page limit and should contain the following information:

- (a) A comparison of actual accomplishments with the objectives established for the previous award;
- (b) The reasons established objectives were not met, if applicable;
- (c) A listing of any graduated MSP Scholars, new curricula, service-learning (including with Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) or 4-H programs), or other outputs, including those outputs identified in the project logic model resulting from the award; and
- (d) The Grant Number (xxxx-**38413**-xxxxx) for the award.

3. **Rationale and Significance**

- (a) Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project;
- (b) Describe the specific relationship of the project's objectives to one or more of the particular program priorities; and
- (c) Provide the measurable objective(s) of the proposed training project with a full description of:
 - (i) How projected workforce demand has been used in developing the training program;
 - (ii) How the training project will impact broad awareness about the proposed area of training;
 - (iii) How the training project will impact your institution; and
 - (iv) How the training project will reverse the trend in low enrollment, retention rates, and completion of baccalaureate or Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degrees by multicultural students for USDA **mission areas that include STEM disciplines and social sciences.**

4. **Approach**

Describe fully showing content and context as it relates to how the proposed training will allow Scholars to achieve competence in the Program Area(s) of Emphasis through:

- (a) A recruitment and selection plan that must be clear, comprehensive (identify demographics of the recruitment and selection target group including entry requirements) and time-bound;
- (b) Curricula that offer relevant and rigorous (provide number of credits and describe common core and specialization) courses as well as hands-on and on-site instructional approaches;
- (c) Experiential, interdisciplinary or capstone opportunities to develop understanding of the related natural and human-made perturbations, ethics, socio-economic, global, policy development, cultural competency, and pedagogical issues;
- (d) Mentoring for success of the Scholar, including how the project will handle at-risk students, with a plan, and a timetable for the process of mentoring, to assist students with their matriculation;
- (e) Integration of evidence-based "best practices" and special features into the student support services and the academic training activities;
- (f) Partnering to access new strategies for developing critical thinking and problem solving skills built into the training and leading to enhanced scholarship;

- (g) Service learning that includes linkages to K-12 audiences to clarify branding, and to enhance awareness and understanding of food, agriculture and related sciences in the contexts of STEM education and global competitiveness;
- (h) Opportunities for developing self-efficacy including decision-making, analyzing and assessing information to make conclusions, participation in workshops and professional meetings;
- (i) A management plan with timeline for deliverables and rigorous academic and project review;
- (j) A matrix identifying expected outcomes, the project outcome measures associated with clearly established measurable performance targets for each of the elements above (a-i).

5. Evaluation and Assessment

Clearly define a plan with a timeline to extensively evaluate the project using formative and summative assessment tools that can help inform future modifications to the student support services and strategies. Identify pitfalls and limitations to proposed approaches and how these will be addressed. Clearly:

- (a) Define the approach for longitudinal tracking of the Scholars after completion of the program; include strategies for tracking of MSP Scholars up to three years after completion – exit point and if employed where and at what level, if graduate training then what institutions and in what level/areas of study;
- (b) Describe how outcomes measures were chosen; and
- (c) Define how each measure will be used to demonstrate that the proposed project advances:
 - i. The grant program goal of increasing the numbers of highly trained, scientifically competent **multicultural graduates** entering either the food systems workforce or further graduate training,
 - ii. Student learning outcomes with specific expectations for student-deliverables such as grade-point average at graduation,
 - iii. The NIFA goal for preparation of a highly skilled next generation workforce, and
 - iv. The national STEM educational goals; and
- (d) Provide strategies to assess, at the project-level, management for successful outcomes.

6. Institutional Support

- (a) Fully describe the institutional climate for the proposed training, specifically addressing:
 - i. Recruitment of multicultural students to higher education programs and careers in disciplines of food and agricultural and related sciences;
 - ii. Support and mentoring of students by faculty, upper-level students and other professionals;
 - iii. Academic support services such as tutoring, study-groups, or supplemental instruction programs; and
 - iv. Community building and psycho-social networking for supporting MSP Scholars within the institution.

- (b) Provide signed documentation (not to exceed two pages per supporting enterprise) from senior leadership of the College/Department at the institution to demonstrate support for proposed training project (see Field 12 below).

7. Dissemination

- (a) Dissemination plan, for proposed training project, must be clearly articulated and fully describe the strategies identifying opportunities for communicating results in food, agricultural and related issues with accuracy, objectivity, responsibility and awareness of any limitations;
- (b) Dissemination to diverse communities – including K-12, higher education, government, private sector, non-profit sector, and the general public – should use information that is comprehensive and understandable; and
- (c) MSP Scholars – gaining broad awareness of and skills to communicate the role of the food systems domain in achieving national STEM education goals.

8. Key Personnel

Describe the plan for leadership and support of the proposed project. Indicate the responsible parties, their roles and responsibilities, as well as any cooperating institutions and their personnel. Individuals described in this section should also be listed on the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) described in Section IV, B, 4, and copies of their CVs, Current & Pending Support forms, and Conflict of Interest lists should be included in the application.

9. Special Experiential Learning (SEL) activities

A. When applying for SEL awards under Award Category No. 3 for Current Eligible USDA MSP Scholars, the Project Narrative should include all of the following:

- (i) The anticipated, specific destination(s) and duration of the experiential learning activity;
- (ii) The specific experiential learning activities (specific tasks) in which USDA MSP Scholars will be engaged;
- (iii) Information about the objectives, timeline, expected outcomes and deliverables from the eligible, USDA MSP Scholar(s) participating in a SEL;
- (iv) Description of how the SEL will contribute to the USDA MSP Scholar's program of study;
- (v) The criteria that will be used to evaluate success of the SEL;
- (vii) Identification of contact personnel where the SEL activity will be undertaken, the nature of support to be provided to insure success of the Scholars' learning

experience, and the CVs or credentials of the faculty or other professionals with whom the USDA MSP Scholar will be working during the SEL;

(viii) A budget narrative specifying and justifying the dollar amount requested for the SEL (see R&R Budget below);

(ix) A letter from the dean of the USDA MSP Scholar's college or equivalent administrative unit supporting the SEL request and certifying that the activity will not jeopardize the USDA MSP Scholar's satisfactory progress toward degree completion (see Field 12 below);

(x) A letter from the MSP grant project director certifying the USDA MSP Scholar's eligibility and the relevance of the travel to the training program objectives (see Field 12 below); and

(xi) A copy of an updated NIFA Form 2010 – Fellowship/Scholarship Appointment Form for any current USDA MSP Scholar participating in the proposed SEL opportunity.

B. When applying for SEL awards under Award Category No. 3 for To-Be-Recruited USDA MSP Scholars – The applicant must provide the *anticipated* measurable objectives and expected student learning and performance outcomes relating how the SELs will contribute to the program of study described in the narrative section.

If an application of this type is recommended for an award, the portion of funds for SEL(s) will be withheld until the MSP Scholars have been appointed and are eligible to participate in the SEL. To release the funds the Project Director will provide, at least 90 days prior to travel, the specifics for the SEL as outlined above along with the identity of the eligible USDA MSP Scholar(s) to the USDA MSP Program Office (MSP@nifa.usda.gov).

c. Field 9. Bibliography & Cited References - (Must be PDF format)

Provide a complete list of all references cited in the application.

d. Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources - (Optional document – Must be PDF format)

If necessary, describe the types, location, and availability of instrumentation and physical facilities necessary to carry out the work proposed. If special academic, private or government laboratories or facilities are being used, include a letter in the application from the authorized representative of the facility describing the proposed arrangements and availability.

e. Field 12. Other Attachments – Not all will apply to every application.

1. **Fellowships/Scholarships Entry and Exit Form (PDF Format).** All applicants in Categories 1 and 2 should attach a blank copy of the NIFA Form 2010. (See Part IV, B.3.) http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/all_forms.html
2. **Response to Previous Review (PDF Format).** This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B., “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on **no more than one page**. If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.
3. **When SEL funds are requested include (In PDF format):**
 - a. **A letter from the Dean** of the USDA MSP Scholar’s college or equivalent administrative unit supporting the USDA MSP Scholar’s SEL request and certifying that the activity will not jeopardize the USDA MSP Scholar’s satisfactory progress toward degree completion; and
 - b. **A letter from the MSP grant project director** certifying the USDA MSP Scholar’s eligibility and the relevance of the travel to the USDA MSP Scholar’s training program objectives.
4. **Letters of Commitment (PDF format).** When relevant, any applicant may attach signed letters of commitment.
5. **Appendices (PDF format).** Appendices are strictly limited to:
 - i. **Examples of materials from no more than two (2) previous projects** similar to those proposed in this project; and
 - ii. **Supporting documentation** for institution support and/or partnerships.

NOTE: Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Narrative. Extraneous materials will not be used during the peer review process.

6. **For Category 2 Applicants partnering with Minority Serving Institutions,** attach documentation (**in PDF format**) indicating that in each academic year over a 5-year period prior to this program announcement more than 40 percent (40%) of the students were from a group historically underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences (see Part II, C(2)).

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. Each key person (Project Director, co-Project Director, senior associate, or other professional personnel) must be listed on this form. The following two items must be submitted for each person listed, regardless of whether NIFA funds are sought for their support:

- (a) Biographical Sketch or Vitae (PDF Format). The vitae must:

- (1) **Be no more than 2 pages in length**, excluding lists of publications and/or graduate students trained/mentored;
- (2) Include a presentation of academic and research credentials including, as applicable: earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received;
- (3) Indicate TOTAL number of graduate students mentored or trained as well as **a chronological list of names of all graduate students trained (with role identified as chair or committee member) or mentored during the past four (4) years**; and
- (4) Include all relevant publications in refereed journals during the past four (4) years, including those in press.

(b) A ‘Current and Pending Support’ form (see NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide p. 33, item 5.3, for guidelines and information format) for each senior/key person identified (PDF Format). Note: Even if no other funding is currently reported under the ‘Active’ section of this attachment, each senior/key person must list this grant application under the ‘Pending’ section of this attachment.

5. R&R Personal Data – As noted in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.

6. R&R Budget

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This form (accompanied by the required Budget Justification attachment) contains the itemized listing and description of your project’s budget. All costs should be fully explained and justified. Complete all applicable fields. Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions. The following, additional information may be helpful:

- (a) Complete one R&R Budget Form for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget and narrative for the entire project from applicants and subawardees. **All applicants and subawardees should provide a five-year budget with a zero dollar budget for any year where support is not allocated.** Careful planning will allow efficient recruitment and appointment of MSP Scholars within the stipulated 12-month interval. Due to statutory restrictions no extensions beyond the five-year period are allowed. Signed letters of commitment from the subaward AR(s) are required. Attach (PDF Format) in Field 12 “Other Project Information”.
- (b) Funding requests for this program are restricted to student scholarships, cost of education allowance, and/or Special Experiential Learning funds.
 - (1) On the R&R Budget Form, in Section E (Participant/Trainee Support Costs), the scholarship amount is placed on Line 2 “Stipends.”
 - (2) The cost-of-education allowance (CoE) should appear on Line 5 “Other.”
 - (3) The SEL (Category No. 3), if applicable, should be entered on Line 3 “Travel” of the R&R Budget Form.
 - (4) Costs in other sections of the budget, including PD salaries in Section A, items in Section F “Other Direct Costs,” or Section H “Indirect Costs” are not allowed.

- (c) **Subaward Attachment.** This form is necessary only if there is a subaward or applicant is submitting a Category No. 2 project. Annual budget(s) and cumulative budget with justification is required for each subcontractual arrangement. For each partner, make sure (1) to 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 narrative, and to be considered in Award Category #2 (see Part II, C, 2) and (2) the budget figures reflect the budget sharing criteria that: **(i) no single institution may receive more than fifty percent (50%) and (ii) any institution may not receive less than fifteen percent (15%) of the requested funding.**

Cost-of-Education Allowance: A cost-of-education allowance (CoE) is provided in lieu of indirect costs (indirect costs are unallowable). Institutions receive a \$2,500 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 Directors are required to reserve part of the CoE to attend (along with eligible USDA MSP Scholars) at least one NIFA-sponsored Project Directors and Beneficiaries Meeting, held during the performance period of the grant.** The purpose of the NIFA-sponsored Project Directors' and Beneficiaries 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. Scholars, working with Project Directors, are required to engage wider audiences including students in Pre-K through 12 and two-year post secondary institutions to increase awareness and understanding of USDA mission science areas in STEM education and enhancing America's competitiveness. **In addition, institutions may use the CoE to defray program-related expenses including, but not limited to, program evaluation costs, 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 CoE to a Scholar's tuition and fees; however, such is not required.

Budget Justification: Attach a separate document (PDF format) to justify that the total budget, including funds requested from USDA, will be appropriate to carry out the activities of the project. All costs must be fully explained and justified. If the proposed project is a Category No. 2 project, be sure that funds are allocated adequately between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s) and each subaward amount is also 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 historically underrepresented and underserved groups entering the future workforce. Justify how SELs associated with student training will develop human capital in students from groups historically underrepresented and underserved in the food and agricultural sciences.

7. Supplemental Information Form

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

- (a) **Field 1. Funding Opportunity.** Enter the Funding Opportunity Name “Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program” and Funding Opportunity Number “**USDA-NIFA-HEMS-003871**”
- (b) **Field 2. Program Code.** Enter the program code name “Multicultural Scholars Program” and the program code “KF”
- (c) **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** A Conflict of Interest List for EACH senior/key person is required under this program. Provide the full names **with institutional affiliation** of the individuals in the following categories: (1) all thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors; (2) all co-authors on publications within the past three years, including pending publications and submissions; (3) all collaborators on projects within the past three years, including current and planned collaborations; (4) all persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement within the past three 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.

A suggested template for the Conflict of Interest List can be found at:
http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict_of_interest.doc.

C. Submission Dates and Times

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on August 29, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will 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 NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **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 fifty percent (50%) **and** (ii) any institution may not receive less than fifteen percent (15%) of the requested funds for the baccalaureate and/or D.V.M. degree level training project (see Part II, C).

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 and NPL has approved, 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 90 days prior to the use of the SEL funds.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, section 1.9 in the document entitled “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.”

For information about the **status of a submitted application**, see Part III., section 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

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. Review Criteria

All applications submitted in response to this RFA shall be technically evaluated by a review panel using the evaluation criteria below. The percentage weight that will be given to each criterion is listed after the criterion.

The evaluation criteria in section 1 below will be used in reviewing all applications submitted under Project Types Award Category 1 and/or Award Category 2 in response to this RFA, **except** those only requesting funds for Category 3 funds (SELs) for current USDA MSP Scholars:

1. Applications for Categories 1 & 2 - Baccalaureate or D.V.M. Training

a) Educational Quality and Merit (40%) – The proposal will be evaluated on the basis of:

- i. Thoroughness, quality, necessity, innovation, and originality;
- ii. Technically sound approach based on proven practices, and potential to enhance positive learning experiences and help develop the leadership and professional skills of the Scholars, relevant to USDA mission areas that include STEM disciplines and social sciences;
- iii. Demonstrated awareness of previous and comparable training, outreach, mentoring and education programs that address the needs identified for the target audience;

- iv. Clarity and alignment of proposed measurable objectives with matching measurable outcomes with the MSP grants purpose, priorities, and goals;
- v. Clarity and conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities related to target beneficiaries (who; how many; from where; and to be trained in what Program Area(s) of Emphasis), recruitment, selection criteria, and deliverables (success deliverables identified for Scholars (e.g. entry and exit targets));
- vi. Conceptual adequacy and soundness based on proven practices of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted audience including suitability and feasibility of the approach for retaining, training and graduating highly skilled and technically competent multicultural Scholars in USDA mission areas;
- vii. Clarity of strong curriculum, student learning outcomes and plan for assessing, guiding and sustaining the MSP Scholars in their MSP training;
- viii. Expected outcomes of the project in terms of the number of first-generation and underrepresented and underserved minorities trained and placed in careers or graduate education in areas related to USDA mission areas;
- ix. Defined approach for longitudinal tracking of the Scholars after completion of the program and sustainability beyond the life of the grant; and
- x. Probability for successful investment in human capital development for USDA mission areas that include STEM disciplines and social sciences.

b) Relevancy (20%) – Explanation and documentation that the training project is directed toward:

- i. Specific areas identified in Part I, B in this RFA. These areas are designed to yield improvements in the trend in enrollment and retention rates of multicultural students in USDA mission sciences;
- ii. Involving key stakeholders in evaluation of performance markers and student quality linking entry and completion requirements for career placement or graduate education;
- iii. Addressing projected workforce demand in the MSP grants Program Area(s) of Emphasis; and
- iv. MSP Scholars gaining food, agriculture, and related sciences-based knowledge, 21st century workforce skills, and capabilities to become part of the human capital pipeline for NIFA challenge areas to secure impacts beyond the life of the project.

c) Adequacy of plans for evaluation, dissemination and management of the proposed project (20%) – Plan and methods for evaluating success of project activities and documenting potential impact(s) against measurable short and mid-term outcomes are suitable and feasible and address:

- i. Time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives;
- ii. Effective functioning of key personnel to have a strong workflow scheme that facilitates successful achievement of program and project goals and objectives;
- iii. Full description of monitoring and evaluation rubrics;
- iv. Participatory evaluation of project activities, development and use of outcomes-based measures and reporting, and effectiveness in communication of activities, outputs, and impacts to wide-ranging audiences; and
- v. Administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, and collaborative efforts for enriched learning provided to Scholars participating in supervised internships, preK-12 outreach, USDA mission outreach, extension, service-learning, or research projects in diverse fields.

d) Institutional Support (10%) – Probability of success of the project is appropriate given demonstration that:

- i. The climate, personnel, support resources, collaborations and facilities are available, committed and well-positioned;
- ii. The integration needed to ensure that the project will recruit, retain, train, graduate and place the target audience in either graduate training in food, agricultural and related sciences or careers to secure MSP investment;
- iii. The support for project objective(s) including outreach and service-learning to impact broad awareness about the USDA mission areas of training; and
- iv. The support for any remaining MSP Scholars to degree completion, after federal funding has ended.

e) Key personnel (10%) – Demonstration of feasibility and competence gained through:

- i. Prior experience in education, outreach, mentoring, experiential learning, training, and placement of food, agricultural and related sciences baccalaureate and first professional degree Doctor of Veterinary Medicine-level students;
- ii. Qualifications of applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project;
- iii. Strong commitment in guiding Scholars to develop self-efficacy in their program of study and support them to clearly articulate, via traditional and/or social media, and service learning, the role of USDA mission areas in achieving national STEM education goals; and
- iv. Individual faculty showing a strong track record of facilitating the graduation of multicultural students in area(s) of proposed training.

2. Applications for Special Experiential Learning (SEL) for Current, Eligible MSP Scholars

All applications submitted by current MSP Project Director(s) under Project Type Award Category 3 to request support for SEL, in response to this RFA shall be technically evaluated by a peer review panel using the evaluation criteria below.

a) Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education (10%)

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 MSP Scholar's academic program).

b) Proposed Approach (40%)

i. **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 with measurable targets for deliverables; (2) the planned activity(ies); (3) established and documented evidence of availability of facilities and personnel at host institution(s); and (4) the completeness of arrangements for the SEL.

ii. **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.

iii. **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.); (3) development of materials targeted primary and secondary students (pre-K to grade 12); and (4) disseminating impacts and achievements to a wider 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 (20%)

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); (2) provides opportunities for the Scholar to develop 21st century workforce skills; and (3) the documented commitment (**letters**) to support the Scholar(s) in the educational value of the international research experience.

d) Key Personnel (10%)

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 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) Impacts for Broader Contexts (20%)

The degree to which the proposal describes significant features of the SEL activities that will focus on: (1) approaches for Scholar(s) to be engaging in and generating a new body of knowledge that strengthens the academic program, and; (2) an emphasis on learning, understanding and translating/communicating the information relative to the **Program Area(s) of Emphasis (Part I, B.)** and alignment to influences and competitiveness in a 21st century global context.

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., 1801 Robert Fulton Drive, Suite 340, Reston, Virginia 20191. Phone: (888) 349-7715. 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 NIFA program. NIFA 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 NIFA 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 NIFA 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 NIFA 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 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 which the Director 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 Director 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.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA 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 NIFA 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:

2 CFR Part 220 – Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21).

2 CFR Part 225 – Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87).

2 CFR Part 230 – Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122).

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, A-87, and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225 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 3016 – USDA Implementation of Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

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 (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—USDA Implementation of Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

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

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

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions.

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 MSP 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 NIFA MSP Grants Program Office (MSP@nifa.usda.gov), a Fellowships/Scholarships Entry Form (OMB No. 0524-0039), [Page 1 of Form NIFA-2010, http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/all_forms.html] when eligible, committed students are appointed and approved as Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program under an award. This information must also be provided for replacement Scholars 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 NIFA-2010] that provides information about academic accomplishments including products, recognitions, service learning, and professional mentoring outcomes, for each Scholar 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 **as well as to determine continued eligibility as a beneficiary of the award.**

(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 NIFA-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, NIFA 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 MSP Scholar and submitted through the Project Director of the active Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program award. ***This should not be an activity report with a daily log of tasks.*** The Outcomes Report describes accomplishments and may include images.

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual summary reports to NIFA's electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions.

Annual Performance Report:

Annual performance reports are due 90 days after the anniversary date of the award and should be submitted to NIFA.

Annual performance reports must:

- (1) Identify each participant of target audience (historically underrepresented and underserved in USDA mission STEM fields) in advancing from the baseline established in funded objectives;
- (2) Address the collaborations and placement of MSP grants target audiences to demonstrate successful pipelining in USDA mission area STEM fields;
- (3) Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments as gains in USDA mission area STEM fields knowledge, skills, and capabilities, as well as new participants in USDA mission area science through outreach activities, new careers or advanced or graduate training with the goals established for the reporting period;
- (4) If established goals were not met, give the reasons;
- (5) Include documentation of outputs; i.e., significant activities, including dissemination activities, events, services or products that contribute toward achieving the goals and objectives of the project;

- (6) Include documentation on the impact to institution of having a MSP grants program including participation of non MSP Scholars in program activities, or interactions of MSP with non MSP students;
- (7) Include outcomes/impacts; i.e., a change in knowledge, actions or conditions; and
- (8) Include any other indication of each Scholar's increased capacity for carrying out the USDA mission.

Final Technical Report:

A final technical report must be submitted within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any.

Generally, the final technical report should be a summary of the completed project, including:

- 1) Identification of all of the MSP project participants from the target audience who were recruited, trained and gainfully employed and or pursuing graduate education (full funding details and funds aligned to each beneficiary for the target audience will be needed);
- 2) A review of project objectives and accomplishments;
- 3) A description of outcomes resulting from the project, including impacts at the institutional level, and activities undertaken to disseminate these outcomes;
- 4) An explanation of partnerships and new collaborations that resulted from the project, including future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project;
- 5) A description of the project's impact on the Scholars, PD(s), the institution(s) involved, and the community;
- 6) Any pertinent data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The final technical report also must contain any other information specified in the terms and conditions of the award; and,
- 7) Soft and/or hard copies or samples of products or publications resulting from this project must be sent to the NIFA National Program Leader overseeing MSP (see Part VII).

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

For informational purposes, the "Federal Financial Report," Form SF-425, consolidates into a single report the former Financial Status Report (SF-269 and SF-269A) and the Federal Cash Transactions Report (SF-272 and SF-272A). The [NIFA Agency-specific Terms and Conditions](#) include the requirement that Form SF-425 is due on an annual basis no later than 90 days following the award's anniversary date (*i.e.*, one year following the month and day of which the project period begins and each year thereafter up until a final report is required). A final "Federal Financial Report," Form SF-425, is due 90 days after the expiration date of this award.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Dr. Ray A. Ali, National Program Leader
Division of Community and Education
Institute of Youth, Family, and Community
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 2251
Washington, DC 20250-2251
Telephone: 202-720-2727
Fax: 202-720-2030
E-mail: MSP@NIFA.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary 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 NIFA 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 any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. 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 NIFA 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

Please refer to [7 CFR 3430. Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs-- General Grant Administrative Provisions](#), for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

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.