

Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program – Special Experiential Learning Grants

FY 2005 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: September 30, 2005



U.S. Department of Agriculture

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

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

**HIGHER EDUCATION MULTICULTURAL SCHOLARS GRANTS PROGRAM-
SPECIAL EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING GRANTS**

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.220, Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program – Special Experiential Learning Grants.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on September 30, 2005 (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 Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments 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 RFA's for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted as provided for in the DATES portion of this Notice.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program – Special Experiential Learning Grants (SEL) fiscal year (FY) 2005 to fund competitive supplemental grants that support one- or two-year experiential learning activities for current USDA Multicultural Scholars. CSREES anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2005 to be approximately \$90,000.

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

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PART I-FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Legislative authority for this program is contained in section 1417(b)(5) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(5)).

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of this program is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. SEL is a competitive supplemental grants program that will support current USDA Multicultural Scholars for one- or two-year experiential learning activities that are not normally available to Multicultural Scholars and other students within the institution.

Examples of activities SEL may fund include, but are not limited to, those that provide opportunities for current USDA Multicultural Scholars to: (a) participate in research projects focused on multidisciplinary topics of national importance (e.g., bio-security, behavioral nutrition, obesity) at institutions other than their own; (b) complete apprenticeships, internships, or similar participatory learning experiences (e.g., practicum for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) students, internships abroad for agricultural marketing students); and (c) complete study abroad programs relevant to their majors.

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

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 \$90,000. will be available to fund applications in FY 2005.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2005, applications may be submitted to the SEL Program as a Supplemental Application only. A Supplemental Application is an application that requests additional project funding for an activity that is an addition to the activities approved in the original or amended award. Applications for supplemental funding will be reviewed using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V, B—Application Review Requirements.

C. Project Types

SEL applicants must propose project periods of one or two years. SEL applications must be submitted at least six months prior to the beginning date of the proposed experiential learning activities.

In FY 2005, SEL applicants may request a maximum of \$6,000 per year for each eligible USDA Multicultural Scholar they propose to support during that year, not to exceed \$30,000 per application. Each scholar may receive funding for experiential learning for a maximum of two years, not to exceed \$12,000 per scholar. There is no limit to the number of applications an institution may submit; however, the maximum amount an institution may be awarded is \$30,000. CSREES reserves the right to fund fewer Scholars than requested in any application.

PART III-ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by colleges and universities that: (1) are current Higher Education Multicultural Scholars grantees; and (2) support a USDA Multicultural Scholar who has at least one year remaining in his/her grant period.

Only current USDA Multicultural Scholars who have sufficient time remaining in their grant to complete proposed experiential learning activities prior to the termination of their awards will be considered eligible to receive SEL funds.

Before proposed experiential learning activities can commence, Scholars must have completed one academic year of full-time study, as defined by their institution, under the Multicultural Scholars' appointment. (Note: CSREES Form 2010 – Student Appointment Form for the USDA Multicultural Scholar(s) should be on file *prior* to submission of the supplemental application.)

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

A grantee must provide matching funds from non-Federal sources equal to at least twenty-five percent of the USDA award. (See Part IV, B.11.a.(2), Matching.)

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Application Package

Program application materials are available at the CSREES Funding Opportunities web site (<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm>). If you do not have access to the web page or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hardcopy, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, Competitive Programs, USDA/CSREES at (202) 401-5048. When calling the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting the RFA and associated application forms for the SEL. These materials also may be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to psb@csrees.usda.gov. State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for SEL.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

The applications should be prepared following the guidelines and the instructions below. Each application must contain the following elements in the order indicated:

1. General

Use the following guidelines to prepare an application. Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion:

- (a) Prepare the application on only one side of the page using standard size (8 1/2" x 11") white paper, one-inch margins, typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point font, and double spaced. Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman).
- (b) Number each page of the application sequentially, starting with the Project Description, including the budget pages, required forms, and any appendices.
- (c) Staple the application in the upper left hand corner. Do not bind. An original and six copies (seven total) must be submitted in one package, along with two additional copies of the "Project Summary," Form CSREES-2003, as a separate attachment.
- (d) Include original illustrations (photographs, color prints, etc.) in all copies of the application to prevent loss of meaning through poor quality reproduction.
- (e) The contents of the application should be assembled in the following order:
 - (1) Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)
 - (2) Table of Contents
 - (3) Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)
 - (4) Project Description
 - (5) References
 - (6) Appendices to Project Description
 - (7) Key Personnel
 - (8) Collaborative Arrangements (including Letters of Support)
 - (9) Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)
 - (10) Budget (Form CSREES-2004)

- (11) Budget Narrative
- (12) Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)
- (13) Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)
- (14) Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)
- (15) Page B, Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002), Personal Data on Project Director

2. Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)

Page A

Each copy of each grant application must contain a “Proposal Cover Page”, Form CSREES-2002. One copy of the application, preferably the original, must contain the pen and ink signature(s) of the proposing Project Director’s (PD) and the authorized organizational representative (AOR), the individual who possesses the necessary authority to commit the organization's time and other relevant resources to the project. If there are more than three co-PD’s for an application, please list additional co-PD’s on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information and signatures) and attach to the Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002). Any proposed PD or co-PD whose signature does not appear on Form CSREES-2002 or attached additional sheets will not be listed on any resulting grant award. Complete both signature blocks located at the bottom of the “Proposal Cover Page” form. Please note that Form CSREES-2002 is comprised of two parts - Page A which is the “Proposal Cover Page” and Page B which is the “Personal Data on Project Director.”

Form CSREES-2002 serves as a source document for the CSREES grant database; it is therefore important that it be accurately completed in its entirety, especially the e-mail addresses requested in Blocks 4.c. and 18.c. However, the following items are highlighted as having a high potential for errors or misinterpretations:

- (a) Type of Performing Organization (Blocks 6a. and 6b.). For Block 6a., a check should be placed in the appropriate box to identify the type of organization which is the legal recipient named in Block 1. Only one box should be checked. For Block 6b., please check as many boxes that apply to the affiliation of the PD listed in Block 16.
- (b) Title of Proposed Project (Block 7.). The title of the project must be brief (140 character maximum, including spaces), yet represent the major thrust of the effort being proposed. Project titles are read by a variety of nonscientific people; therefore, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition, introductory phrases such as “investigation of,” “research on,” “education for,” or “outreach that” should not be used.
- (c) Program to Which You Are Applying (Block 8.). Enter Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program – Special Experiential Learning Grants. **Also, in block 8, please identify, if available, the Department of Health and Human Services’ Payment Management System (DHHS-PMS) Payee Identification Number (PIN) that has been assigned to your organization for CSREES awards. This is a four character alpha numeric code used by DHHS-PMS to associate the Entity Identification Number (EIN) with the recipient’s business office where the financial responsibility and accountability for the organization rests. If a PIN has not been assigned to your organization, you will be assigned a DHHS-PMS PIN after an award has been made to your organization.**

(d) DUNS NO. (Data Universal Numbering System) (Block 11.). A DUNS number must be included for the legal recipient named in Block 1. (except applications from individuals). See Part VIII, G.

(e) Type of Request (Block 14.). Check the block for “Supplemental.” The “Prior USDA Award No.” must also be filled in to indicate the parent (current) grant for the SEL. Failure to fill in the “Prior USDA Award No.” may result in the proposal for a Supplemental award not being reviewed.

(f) Project Director (PD) (Blocks 16.-19.). Blocks 16.-18. are used to identify the PD and Block 19. to identify co-PD’s. If needed, additional co-PD’s may be listed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to Form CSREES-2002, the Proposal Cover Page, with the applicable co-PD information and signatures. Listing multiple co PD’s, beyond those required for genuine collaboration, is discouraged.

(g) Other Possible Sponsors (Block 21.). List the names or acronyms of all other public or private sponsors including other agencies within USDA to which your application has been or might be sent. In the event you decide to send your application to another organization or agency at a later date, you must inform the identified CSREES program contact as soon as practicable. Submitting your application to other potential sponsors will not prejudice its review by CSREES; however, submitting the same (i.e., duplicate) application to another CSREES program is not permissible.

Page B

Page B should be submitted only with the original signature copy of the application and should be placed as the last page of the original copy of the application. This page contains personal data on the PD(s). CSREES requests this information in order to monitor the operation of its review and awards processes. This page will not be duplicated or used during the review process. Please note that failure to submit this information will in no way affect consideration of your application.

3. Table of Contents

For consistency and ease in locating information, each application must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the Proposal Cover Page. The Table of Contents should contain page numbers for each component of the application. Page numbering should begin with the first page of the Project Description.

4. Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)

The application must contain a “Project Summary,” Form CSREES-2003. The summary should be approximately 250 words, contained within the box, placed immediately after the Table of Contents, and not numbered. The names and affiliated organizations of all PD’s and co-PD’s should be listed on this form, in addition to the title of the project. The summary should provide a clear overview of the SEL project succinctly describing its major features. It should be a self contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: merit; overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish project goal(s); anticipated impact on the study program of the Scholar in the area of Food and Agricultural Sciences; and

relevance of the project to the goals of the SEL program. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. **If the Project Summary does not specifically address relevance, merit and broader impacts on the Scholar’s degree program, the proposal may be returned without review.**

If there are more than three co-PD’s for an application, please list additional co-PD’s on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information) and attach to the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003).

SEL applicants must enter the number “5” on the on the “Need Area” line in the Higher Education Program box on the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003). Applicants should select one of the following codes that best describes the major academic discipline or subject matter to be addressed by the application and enter this code on the “Discipline” line in the upper right-hand corner of the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003).

Discipline	Code
General Food and Agricultural Sciences	G
Agribusiness Management and Marketing (includes Agricultural Economics)	M
Agricultural/Biological Engineering	E
Agricultural Social Sciences (includes Agricultural Education, Agricultural Communications, and Rural Sociology)	S
Animal Sciences	A
Aquaculture	Q
Conservation and Renewable Natural Resources (includes Forestry and Ecology/Wetlands)	C
Entomology – Animal	J
Entomology – Plant	T
Environmental Sciences/Management	L
Food Science/Technology and Manufacturing (including Food Safety)	F
Human Nutrition	N
Human Sciences/Family and Consumer Sciences (excludes Human Nutrition)	H
International Education/Research (enhancement of U.S. programs)	I
Plant Sciences and Horticulture (including Turf Sciences)	P
Related Biological Sciences (includes General/Basic Biotechnology, Biochemistry, and Microbiology)	B
Soil Sciences	D
Veterinary Medicine/Science	V
Water Science/Water Resources (including Water Quality and Watershed Management)	W
Other (and explain)	O

5. Project Description

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Description shall not exceed 10 pages of written text and up to five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (15 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Student Learning Experiences must use well-designed strategies (e.g., career exploration, externships, research, contact hours, skill building) and high-quality materials to engage Multicultural Scholars in opportunities to put into practice what they have learned in the classroom.

For each participating Multicultural Scholar, the Project Description must include the following information:

- a.** Name;
- b.** Pertinent information (e.g., major, academic classification, grade point average, plan for higher education and career);
- c.** Specific proposed experiential learning activity. Provide information about the objectives, specific tasks, timeline, expected outcomes and deliverables from the Scholar(s) participating in SEL;
- d.** Specific location of proposed experiential learning activity. Identify contact(s) if SEL activity will be undertaken away from the PD's location and include a letter(s) of support; and
- e.** An explanation of how proposed experiential learning activity would contribute to the Scholar's program of study.

In addition, for each proposed participating Scholar, the following three documents should be inserted immediately after the text in the Project Description portion of the application. (Note: these documents do not count towards the 10 page text limitation.)

- f.** A letter from the dean of the Scholar's college or equivalent administrative unit supporting the request and certifying that the proposed experiential learning opportunity would not jeopardize the Scholar's satisfactory progress toward degree completion;
- g.** A letter from the PD of the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program grant that is supporting the Scholar's eligibility, and outlining the relevance of the proposed experiential learning arrangements to the Scholar's degree objectives; and
- h.** A copy of the completed CSREES Form 2010 – Student Appointment Form (if not previously submitted).

6. References

All references to works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Description.

7. Appendices to Project Description

Appendices to the Project Description are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

8. Key Personnel

The following should be included, as applicable:

- (a) The roles and responsibilities of each PD and/or collaborator should be clearly described; and
- (b) Vitae of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. This section should include vitae of all key persons who are expected to work on the project, whether or not CSREES funds are sought for their support. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable, e.g., earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received. A chronological list of **all** publications in **refereed journals** during the past **four (4) years**, including those in press, must be provided for each project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also list only those **non-refereed** technical publications that have **relevance** to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals.

9. Collaborative Arrangements

If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application. See instructions in the application forms for completing Form CSREES-2004, Budget.

10. Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)

A "Conflict-of-Interest List," Form CSREES-2007, must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a vitae in response to item 9.(b) of this part. Each Form CSREES-2007 should list alphabetically, by the last names, the full names of the individuals in the following categories: (a) All co-authors on publications within the past four years, including pending publications and submissions; (b) all collaborators on projects within the past four years, including current and planned collaborations; (c) all thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors within the past four years; and (d) all persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement within the past four years, who stand to gain by seeing the project funded. This form is necessary to assist program staff in excluding from application review those individuals who have conflicts of interest with the personnel in the grant application. The program contact must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

11. Budget Form (Form CSREES-2004)

(a) General

Prepare the Budget, Form CSREES-2004, **in accordance with instructions provided with the application forms**. A budget form is required for each year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, and Federal cost principles, and these program guidelines, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project (see Part IV, D. for applicable funding restrictions). Applicants also must include a budget narrative to justify their budget requests (see section b. below.)

(b) Matching

A grantee must provide matching funds from non-Federal sources equal to at least 25 percent of the USDA award. The non-Federal share may come from institutional, private, State, or other non-Federal sources. The matching funds must be used to support Scholars' personal educational expenses and must be provided to the Scholars proportionately during each year of the grant.

The non-Federal share may come from institutional, private, State, or other non-Federal sources. Matching funds must be used to support SEL-supported Scholars' personal educational expenses during experiential learning activity and must be provided to the SEL-supported Scholars proportionately during each year of the grant. Grantee-provided matching support may be supplied in several forms including, but not limited to, fee waivers for experiential learning activities (e.g., laboratory fee waivers), or cash stipends paid directly to SEL-supported Scholars. Institutions are free to propose and contribute above the minimum matching requirement. In instances where SEL-supported Scholars voluntarily elect to live on campus, grantee-provided matching support also may be used to defray room and board. However, a grantee cannot require SEL-supported Scholars to live on campus unless it is the policy of the grantee to require all students with similar standing (e.g., all summer students) to do so.

Contributions toward the match from the institution should be identified on the Budget (Form CSREES-2004) in the column "Non-Federal Proposed Cost Sharing/Matching Funds". Cash and non-cash contributions from the institution and/or third parties should be identified on Line Q. of Form CSREES-2004, as appropriate, and described in the budget narrative.

Required cost-sharing commitments specified in the application will be referenced and included as a condition of any award resulting from this announcement. Third party cost-sharing commitments must be documented with a signed letter from the committing organization's AOR that is countersigned by the recipient's AOR. The letter must state: (1) the total dollar amount intended for the proposed project; (2) the budget categories to which contributed dollars would be applied; (3) whether the contribution is cash or in-kind (e.g., tuition and fee waivers); (4) if

the contribution is in-kind, the individual items included; and (5) if the contribution is to be split between cash and in-kind, the exact dollar amount for each category.

12. Budget Narrative

All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested, must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the Budget form.

13. Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)

All applications must contain Form CSREES-2005 listing other current public or private support (including in-house support) to which personnel (i.e., individuals submitting a vitae in response to item 9.(b) of this part) identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for person(s) involved is included in the budget. Please follow the instructions provided on this form. Concurrent submission of identical or similar applications to the possible sponsors will not prejudice application review or evaluation by the CSREES. However, an application that duplicates or overlaps substantially with an application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by another organization or agency will not be funded under this program. Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the pending section of the form.

14. Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)

A number of situations encountered in the conduct of projects require special assurances, supporting documentation, etc., before funding can be approved for the project. In addition to any other situation that may exist with regard to a particular project, applications involving any of the following elements must comply with the additional requirements as applicable.

a. Recombinant DNA or RNA Research

As stated in 7 CFR Part 3015.205 (b)(3), all key personnel identified in the application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health entitled, "Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules," as revised. If your project proposes to use recombinant DNA or RNA techniques, you must so indicate by checking the "yes" box in Block 20. of Form CSREES-2002 (the Proposal Cover Page) and by completing Section A of Form CSREES-2008. For applicable applications recommended for funding, Institutional Biosafety Committee approval is required before CSREES funds will be released. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

b. Animal Care

Responsibility for the humane care and treatment of live vertebrate animals used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Where a project involves the use of living vertebrate animals for experimental purposes, all key personnel identified in an application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the applicable provisions of the Animal Welfare Act of 1966, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.), and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary in

9 CFR Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of these animals. If your project will involve these animals, you should check “yes” in Block 20. of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section B of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving the use of live vertebrate animals results in a grant award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has approved the project. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

c. Protection of Human Subjects

Responsibility for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Guidance on this issue is contained in the National Research Act, Pub. L. No. 93-348, as amended, and implementing regulations promulgated by the Department under 7 CFR Part 1c. If you propose to use human subjects in your project, you should check the “yes” box in Block 20. of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section C of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving human subjects is recommended for award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the research plan and CSREES has accepted documentation of the IRB approval. Please refer to the application forms for additional instructions.

15. Certifications

Note that by signing Form CSREES-2002 the applicant is providing the certifications required by 7 CFR Part 3017, regarding Debarment and Suspension and Drug-Free Workplace, and 7 CFR Part 3018, regarding Lobbying. The certification forms are included in the application package for informational purposes only. These forms should not be submitted with the application since by signing Form CSREES-2002 your organization is providing the required certifications. If the project will involve a subcontractor or consultant, the subcontractor/consultant should submit a Form AD-1048, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions, to the grantee organization for retention in their records. This form should not be submitted to USDA.

16. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)

As outlined in 7 CFR Part 3407 (the CSREES regulations implementing NEPA), the environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that CSREES may determine whether any further action is needed. In some cases, however, the preparation of environmental data may not be required. Certain categories of actions are excluded from the requirements of NEPA.

In order for CSREES to determine whether any further action is needed with respect to NEPA, pertinent information regarding the possible environmental impacts of a particular project is necessary; therefore, Form CSREES-2006, “NEPA Exclusions Form,” must be included in the application indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefore. If it is the applicant’s opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion(s) must be identified.

Even though a project may fall within the categorical exclusions, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for an activity, if substantial controversy on environmental grounds exists or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present which may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by COB on September 30, 2005 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

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 USDA Multicultural Scholars participating in activities that have already been approved and funded by the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program.

Indirect costs are unallowable costs, and no funds will be approved for this purpose.

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. What to Submit

An original and six copies must be submitted. In addition submit two copies of the application's Project Summary. All copies of the application and the Project Summary must be submitted in one package.

2. Where to Submit

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by the USDA. The address for hand delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is:

Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program – Special Experiential Learning Grants
c/o Proposal Services Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 1420, Waterfront Centre
800 9th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Telephone: (202) 401-5048

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address:

Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Program – Special Experiential Learning Grants
c/o Proposal Services Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture
STOP 2245
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-2245

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the Form CSREES-2002. If the applicant's e-mail address is not indicated, CSREES will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter.

If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline, please contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, please cite that number on all future correspondence.

PART V-APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

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

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education (30 Points)

This criterion will be used to assess the degree to which the proposed experiential learning activity would advance the quality of a Scholar's education. Elements include: (a) integration of the activity into a Scholar's program of study; (b) contribution of the activity to Scholar's food and agricultural sciences career or graduate study interests; and (c) accessibility of the activity to the Scholar if the application is not funded.

2. Advance Preparations (20 Points)

This criterion will be used to assess the degree to which the proposed experiential learning activities are well-planned, as well as the likelihood that the activities will come to fruition and that key personnel will participate.

3. Key Personnel (20 Points)

This criterion will be used to assess the degree to which key personnel's credentials and experience are appropriate to the role they propose to play in the project, and the likelihood that key personnel's participation will contribute to the educational value of the project.

4. Potential Impact on Institutions**(10 Points)**

This criterion will be used to assess the potential impact of proposed experiential learning activity on other students and professionals at the degree-granting institution, and at the proposed location for the experiential learning activities.

5. Destination, Duration and Budget**(10 Points)**

This criterion will be used to assess the degree to which the proposed destination and duration for the experiential learning activity are appropriate to advance the Scholar's career and/or degree objectives, and justify the proposed budget.

6. Supporting Documentation**(10 Points)**

This criterion will be used to assess the degree to which support (e.g. letters of support) strengthen the application.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

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

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panelists will be made available in such a way that the panelists cannot be identified with the review of any particular application.

PART VI-AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

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

B. Organizational Management Information

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

C. Award Notice

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

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PD's chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;

- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);
- (10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and
- (11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

- 7 CFR Part 1, subpart A--USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.
- 7 CFR Part 3--USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.
- 7 CFR Part 15, subpart A--USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.
- 7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121--USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.
- 7 CFR Part 3015--USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301 6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.
- 7 CFR Part 3017--USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).
- 7 CFR Part 3018--USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.
- 7 CFR Part 3019--USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.
- 7 CFR Part 3052--USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non profit Organizations.
- 7 CFR Part 3407--CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

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

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

E. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

1. Outcomes Report

An Outcomes Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact personnel within 90 days after the student experiential learning activity. This report is prepared by the USDA Multicultural Scholar and submitted through the Project Director of the active Multicultural Scholars Program grant. *This is not an activity report with a daily log of tasks.* The Outcomes Report describes accomplishments and may include images.

2. Impacts

An impact assessment of the student experiential learning opportunity should be included in the Annual Performance and the Final Exit Reports (CSREES Form 2010) that include a summary of the overall progress toward project objectives, current problems or unusual developments, the next year's activities, and any other information that is pertinent to the ongoing project/concluding project or which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award.

PART VII-AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. A.A. Trotman; National Program Leader; Higher Education Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2251; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20250-2251; Telephone: (202) 720-2193; Fax: (202) 720-2030; e-mail: atrotman@csrees.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. Changes in Project Period: The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

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

D. Regulatory Information

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

E. Definitions

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

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

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

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

Citizen or national of the United States means (1) A citizen or native resident of a State, the District of Columbia, or any Insular Area; or, (2) a person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States.

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

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Multicultural means the variety of interests, talents, and cultural backgrounds of students that enhance the overall educational experience of all students.

Need Area means the specific area(s) of educational, applied research, or community development activities identified in the solicitation for applications and addressed by the applicant's proposal. Need Areas are derived from statutory language authorizing the grants program and specific Need Areas are targeted for funding support in the solicitation for applications.

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

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

Private sector means all non-public entities, including for-profit and non-profit commercial and non-commercial entities, and including private or independent educational institutions.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of one or more of the targeted need areas identified in the annual program solicitation supported by a grant awarded under this program.

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

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

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

State means any one of the fifty States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

Teaching means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience specific to the food and agricultural sciences at the undergraduate level of study, and matters relating thereto, conducted by colleges and universities offering a baccalaureate or higher degrees.

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

Underrepresented means proportionate representation as measured by degree recipients that is less than the proportionate representation in the general population--(i) As indicated by (A) The most current edition of the Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics; (B) The National Research Council's Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities; or (C) Other

standard statistical references, as announced annually in the Federal Register notice inviting applications for new awards under this program; or (ii) As documented by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary on a case-by-case basis.

United States means the several States, the territories and possessions of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

F. CSREES' Grants.gov Implementation Plans

Grants.gov is an internet web site for grant and other financial assistance information (e.g., allows grant seekers to find funding opportunities). It also will serve to facilitate electronic transmission of information pertaining to grants and other financial assistance information (e.g., electronic application submission).

In FY 2004, CSREES initiated the receipt of applications electronically through the Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) storefront for limited programs. As a result of this initiative, it was evident that improvements were necessary prior to further implementation of electronic applications. CSREES is working hard to provide Grants.gov as an option for programs in FY 2005. More information about CSREES' Grants.gov plans, including important announcements, program implementation, and detailed requirements, is posted on the CSREES' web site, http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/other_links/egov/egov.html, which will be updated as appropriate. It is suggested that this site be visited periodically for important updates.

Grants.gov is not available for submission of applications in response to this RFA. See the section titled, "Other Submission Requirements" for information about the format (i.e., hard copy or electronic) for the submission of proposals under this RFA.

G. DUNS Number

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A Federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number go to <http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

H. Required Registration for Grants.gov

The Central Contract Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. Such organizations must register in the CCR prior to the submission of applications via grants.gov (a DUNS number is

needed for CCR registration). For information about how to register in the CCR visit <http://www.grants.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.