

Closed Captioning for FY 18 Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program Webinar

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We are going to wait two or three more minutes to see if anyone else comes in. Thank you for letting us know if you can hear us. If anybody else can hear us, I would appreciate it that you can put a Y in your chat box so that I can know that you can hear me.

We will get started. Again, welcome to the FY18 Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program webinar. We will be recording this webinar so that we can post it on the website along with close captioning the event. On your screen is a link that if you need close captioning, you can click on the link. If you need close caption, you can open it in a new browser following the link on the page.

My name is Ariela Zycherman, and I am here with Katrena Hanks, and we are most of the program staff for the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program. If you have program specific questions, you can email either of us and our contact information will be at the end of the webinar. We are not going to talk about a lot of the intricacies of project development, but how to read the RFA and apply it successfully.

The purpose of the MSP program is to provide funds for institutions of higher education to conduct scholarship programs leading to bachelor's degrees within the food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences or doctors of veterinary medicine degrees. The purpose is to start building a workforce as diverse and as representative of the United States young people that will fill these jobs in the future. It is also to make sure that USDA mission areas are filled by young and well-trained students. We don't award degrees to individuals, but to institutions who can create programs that support students in their retention and ultimate graduation into the sciences.

The purpose is part of the goal. It is to prepare graduates to meet the demand for highly qualified personnel entering the workforce; to support undergraduates in transitioning to graduate education, and to contribute to the reduction of the disparity among underrepresented and underserved populations in graduate schools. The definition for underrepresented is very broad. It includes gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economics, and first generation. It also refers to the ability for all students who don't normally go to college or who don't normally enter the science workforce to do so. We promote student success in all FANH disciplines for the undergraduate degrees. We do a lot of focus on social support, so mentoring and making sure the students get what they need and making sure they can graduate not only because they have financial support, but because they have social support from other mentors who are able to show them and help them through the process of getting through undergraduates and applying for jobs and graduate school.

The request for applications is your instruction manual for writing a grant. It is available online, and I will show you what it looks like in a minute. The applications are due June 20 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern standard Time. We only accept grant applications through grants.gov. Anticipated funding for FY18 is \$945,000. It is not a very big program and is a very competitive program. Last funding rate last year was only for 15%. Keep that in mind that when you are going to apply that this is a highly competitive program and is meant for excellence in education that promises to bring undergraduates to graduate completion.

The first step when applying is to read the RFA. This is what our program page looks like, and to see the RFA, you click on this box that says view RFA, and you will be able to have that PDF handy. It is also

available on grants.gov. You can find the RFA there and we are going to go over some of the intricacies of the RFA now.

The first and maybe most important part is the eligibility question. Eligible MSP applicants are institutions that confer a bachelor's or DVM degree in at least one of the disciplines in the FANH sciences. So in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences, and it is very broad, but it must be a bachelor's degree or a doctorate in veterinary medicine. Pre-veterinarian doesn't count. Institutions are broad, but they are all institutions or college or university that gives out degrees. The land-grant universities, all three kind, public or private nonprofit colleges with significant minority enrollments. Hispanic institutions are an example of that. Other public or private nonprofit colleges and universities are another example. I want to really talk about the two I just said. One of the big questions is, am I eligible because I am not at a land-grant. The answer is yes. Are we eligible if we can answer a national need? The answer is yes. If you can identify a national need but you already support efforts to address it, that is eligible too. This also means public or private nonprofit colleges and universities. I am from a liberal arts college, and am I eligible? The answer is yes. The bottom line is you must be a degree conferring institution. The last one is a foundation maintained by an eligible college or university. That would be a foundation as part of that. We don't get a lot of those, but they are eligible. The next thing is that individuals are not eligible to apply to this program. We cannot take applications from students who want to go and receive a scholarship to one of these programs and individuals who think they can get a degree, but are not in an institution are also not eligible. If you are a student and you are listening to this webinar and you would like to apply, you can look on one of our public databases. There is the current research information system, and you can look for multicultural scholars. You can use that as a keyword and see what programs come up and if any of them are interesting to you. You can search for either of those things in your browser and see what comes up. You have to contact the University directly. We don't act as an intermediary, and every program has a different recruitment program.

The last thing that I wanted to say because it is really worth stressing is that two year colleges that award associates degrees are not eligible to be the primary applicant, but, and I said but because it is very important, they can partner with a bachelor's or DVM granting institution. The two year institution can support students in the first two years or the last year of the associate's degree, and move them toward a bachelor's degree or a DVM degree in the later years. We do encourage that kind of partnership between two year colleges and four year colleges as a way to move students to the path on the way to graduation. Don't be discouraged if you are from a two year college as there are possibilities to participate in this program even though you are not necessarily the grant holder.

This program has three program areas. The first is the multicultural scholars program, and that is essentially the scholarship portion. The second is special experimental learning. It is extra learning in addition to the curriculum you are engaged in. The third part is a combined program from the get-go. This is very similar to years past, but maybe slightly tweaked to make the application process a little smoother. I am going to go to each of them.

The multicultural scholars program grants up to \$200,000. It offers scholarship to students and successful projects to create innovative framework grounded in curricula. Moving those students through existing or modified curriculum toward the bachelors or DVM or established bachelors or DVM program so that the scholars can go through them. They can offer professional mentoring and increase the number of students who are representative who can obtain a bachelor's or DVM degree. It can provide leadership skills and develop performance measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of

the training. This is about how you support the students moving to the bachelor's degree and moving through the existing curriculum, and making sure they have the support that they need.

The second program area is the special experience learning program. This is up to \$20,000, and only people who already have a MSP grant and don't have a previous grant can apply. What it does is that it offers funding for students to do an extra activity in the summer or in the internship during the year to bolster or make more complete their education. So it could be apprenticeship, internship, a research product, or some type of participatory learning that can help the students. The SEL is a one-time award for students and grantees. We will talk about the budgets later, but this is the overview of the program areas.

The last is an application for both programs. This is a little bit different than previous years. It is up to \$220,000, so the budget went up a little bit. It has both the MSP and the SEL come portions combined. The idea is that if you know what the SEL is going to be for your program, you can ask for it upfront as part of your larger scholarship program and part of the curricula and see if it can be a more robust picture of what is happening. Otherwise, you would apply for the MSP now and the SEL in the couple of years.

This program accepts two types of applications. New applications and resubmitted applications. All applications must be received by the relevant date, which is June 20 at 5:00 p.m. They are all reviewed competitively in the same pool and resubmitted applications are using the same criteria as the new applications with one exception, and that is our response to reviewers, which we will talk about in a couple of minutes. The difference between the two applications is that a new application has never been submitted to the MSP program and a resubmitted application is an application that has been previously submitted to the MSP program, but wasn't funded. The program directors have to respond with a one-page response to the peer review panel. A question that we get very often is that once I got the review, I changed a lot of things in my program. Is it a resubmitted application or a new application? My advice is if you use the reviews to recraft your application, even if it is completely different, then it is a resubmitted application and the response to the previous peer panel is the way you explain your thought process and how you developed your program over time. That is just something to think about.

Project types. So if you are familiar with project types, there are usually four project types. Education, extension, research, and integrated. For the MSP program, we only accept education projects. I put a couple of bullets here to talk a little bit about what we expect the goals to be or the process to be for the grants. The first is to develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. So how do these goals fit into your mission area and how to do they get into strategic plans. These projects must focus on developing skills necessary for entry and mid-level technical employment or for entering graduate program in FANH sciences. This is not different in the program goals, but it is a reiteration that it is about technical goals and work force development and making sure that students are going to the next level of education. The project must align with at least one of the following, but you can have more.

- *Connection Interruption*

I am going to start again with the single function education project only for MSP. The project has to align with one of the following. Either they can increase the number of graduates with the necessary technical skills for entry level positions in FANH sciences. They can also improve the technical competencies needed for the workforce to ensure leadership skills.

- *Connection interruption- Recording Ended*

So single function education projects again. You have to increase the number of graduates and improve the technical compensation needed for the workforce to ensure that the U.S. agriculture remains competitive, and an example of that is leadership skills or career mentoring. And number 3, enhancing that diversity of the workforce in FANH sciences. A good project will do for at least one of those, but it can do all three of them fairly easily.

So the budget. MSP is pretty prescriptive with how you are allowed to spend money. For the MSP grants, and they are up to \$200,000, they require a minimum of \$108,000. The way it is broken up is that \$6500 in scholarships per scholar for a two year, three year, or four year program, and it is up to you to see how you will fund your student. For each year, the school is allowed \$2500 in cost of education institutional allowance per scholar per year. We don't allow indirect costs, but we do allow these cost of education institutional allowances. We are also a little bit prescriptive and how you can use this money. The scholarship money should be used for tuition and mandatory fees on campus room and board, off-campus room and board, books and supplies, relevant activities, and educational expenses. It is a very small amount of money per year when you think of all of those things. That \$2500 cost of education can be used for the program director to go to a project directors meeting here and it can be used to defray program costs, student travel, publication, salaries, laboratory fees and things like that. The cost of actually paying out the education and mentoring programs to get those students to graduation. The minimum of \$108,000, if each student, if each student cost \$9000 per year, this \$108,000 will be 12 years of education. That would be three years for students who are going four years at the school. It would be four years for students going three years of school, and six students for two years. That is sort of how you think about it, but you can go up to \$200,000 in scholarships. We have no preference in the program for whether or not you fund your students for two, three, or four years, but we do want to make sure that each student is part of a cohort and supported and mentored in their education toward completing their degree. That is really what we are aiming for it. The SEL grant as a reminder is \$20,000, and it is a one-time grant for students and a one-time award for students. If you think about that, if five students can go once, or you can have less money depending on how your university chips in and depending on what kind of university you are in. This is not a huge amount of money, but it can be spent in a way that is developed. MSP and SEL grants follow a guideline based on components. For all of these programs, except for the SEL by itself, schools are entitled to a zero budget for up to 12 months to do recruiting activities. The grant is five years long, and you can spend up to a year recruiting students to make sure that you are not spending money before the students are on board. For the SEL, it is a one-year grant. If you get the SEL at the beginning, you can use it any time during those four years or five years. If you get it afterwards, you have one or two years to spend the money assuming that you have a project that you are ready to spend that on.

MSP does not require matching support for the program. You don't have to provide anything and your university doesn't have to chip in anything. It is important to show that your university is enthusiastic about this project and is prepared to support this project and has a way of handling students that need extra support and whether they are prepared to take on this role, but we don't require any matching funds in the very official way that match each other.

Here is some key information to review, and this is all in the RFA. If you can look at that, it is important to take a note of these things. The program code is KF. That is one of the most important things when submitting. When it asks what program code you are applying to, KF is what you put down there. If the application gets routed to another program, it is very hard for us to know that you were looking for our program. The code of federal domestic assistance number is 10.220. The rest talks about requested

project types and requested program areas. The application deadline again is June 20. A university could apply 100 times to this program, but the number of awards per institution is two. We are only willing to give out two awards for a university. Two awards may be getting awarded from the same university especially when they are in different schools. Those are the kind of things that we do see, but no more than two. No more than two awards per institution.

Application details to remember, and this is all in the RFA, but this is things that we need to stress. Page limits are enforced. This is one of the reasons that we send back applications from the get-go. For MSP and the MSP and SEL combined, the project narrative should be no more than 15 pages and up to five additional pages for figures and tables, or 20 pages total. The one thing that you can keep in mind for this is that when the pages and figures are embedded in this package, it is not clear that they take up five pages, it makes the reviewer uncomfortable, like you are trying to pull wool over their eyes. It may be important to make sure that you don't go over the actual text so that it is clear that it is 15 pages of text and five extra pages of tables. If you are applying for the SEL only, the program area 2, the project narrative should not be any more than 10 pages of written text and up to five additional pages for figures and tables. One of the reasons for that is that you have to already have had a MSP project and you are really explaining the existing project to reviewers and then adding what you want to tell them about the SEL. You don't have to go into much details about graduation rates and the curriculum, only what is necessary to understand the importance of the SEL. For both things, the MSP, and for the MSP and SEL, or for the SEL, an additional one page response to reviews when you are resubmitting is allowed. The formatting is one inch margins, 12 point font, and 1.5 spaced.

Reasons a project maybe misdirected, rejected at initial screening or may not be received, and I mentioned some of them already, but you cannot say them enough times. The first is an incorrect program code. KF is the correct code and other iterations will cause it to be misdirected and not received by the program office. If it is submitted after the deadline. I will say again June 20 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern standard Time. If it comes in one minute late, it will be rejected. Critical materials are missing. They are an abstract, a project narrative, a budget and a budget narrative. Also, budget request that exceeds the amount for a particular project type. If you are applying for a MSP, it could be rejected if you had the wrong amount listed. The page limit is exceeded is another one. We just talked about page limits. Then 15 pages and documents that are not in PDF are unreadable by grants.gov, and we cannot read them and we are not going to chase everyone that submits documents in incorrect forms because it is a drain on resources. Documents have to be in PDF.

So here are some proposal tips. The first is to identify a national need related to workforce development and diversity. So how do you do that? You can use the FAEIS database, the food and agricultural education information system, which is an open-source database with data on graduation and enrollment rates in food and agriculture. You can look there and you can look at some studies that have been done on the future workforce and training students. There are many places, but make sure that you have some data on what the national need is and how your program can help support that need. Pay close attention to the narrative instructions and evaluation criteria when constructing your narrative. I am not going to spend a lot of time here because they are really project specific, but the important thing is to remember in the narrative instructions to include all of the things that we asked you to include. Every detail and every data point, include those. Then, the evaluation criteria is what the peer review panel will use to interpret those data points and those project structures and whatever else you are including from the narrative instruction. This kind of explains what the intentions are between the narrative instructions and that review. It is really important to look at both of those things when you are reviewing your narrative instructions and your narrative period. If you're working with institutional

partners, mentors, or others, it is good to demonstrate your level of commitment with letters of support to show what they are going to do and what they plan to do with it and what it will look like in practice. For those mentors, demonstrating expertise and graduating in multicultural scholars is always important. Showing that you are excellent in research is a great thing, but if you haven't worked with students directly or you haven't brought a lot of students to graduation or spent a lot of time with students working with them to make sure they get to the program, then it might not be the right program to be the program director for. Think about what you can say to show that you are graduating those students and you have experience with underrepresented and minorities and making sure that they do graduate. Then, include all of the necessary information and attachments, whatever those are for your particular program.

Don't wait until the last minute to submit. Grants.gov goes out sometimes and unfortunately if a webpage can go down. It is important that you think about submitting early so that there are not any last-minute connections broken, because it doesn't matter because the deadline is the deadline. Starting early is important. Technical assistance is available through grants.gov. If you have an issue with grants.gov, you have to call them directly. If you haven't received electronic notification that your proposal has been accepted for review, contact us. That is within 15 days. That is little short and I should probably change that a little bit. By any chance that you put in the wrong program code and you don't think that it has been received, you can send us an email. But if we don't hear from you and we don't know that we should be looking for it, it is going to miss panel, and we are not able to review it. If you are not applying this year but are interested in seeing what successful proposals are like and what review criteria are in practice, you can serve as a reviewer. We will see if we can find the proper expertise for you to fit in on the panel this year.

Just a little bit more on grants.gov, if you aren't familiar with it, it requires that you have a DUNS and SAMS identification. Make sure that your university has the ability to apply and make sure that everything is in Adobe PDF. Go to the grants.gov support pages. They are very helpful and they can really make sure that you are able to submit when you are ready to submit. Again, just do it early.

Just to finish up again, my name is Ariela Zycherman, and I am here with Katrena Hanks, and we are most of the program staff. I am not sure if anyone is still there because we had some technical problems. But if you are, we are happy to answer questions if you type them in the chat box and we will try to get to them. So thank you for listening and hopefully we will be able to post this properly and make it available on the webpage. Thanks a lot. We will sit here and wait for some questions if there are any. Again, I am sorry for the technical difficulties, and if there are not any question, thanks a lot and you can always email us or call us.