Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP)

2016 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: September 22, 2016

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA

United States 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 **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** on **September 22, 2016**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C. of this RFA). Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within 6 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) seeks your comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we'll use them 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)). Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice 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 requests applications for the **Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP)** for fiscal year (FY) **2016** 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 grants in FY **2016** is approximately $945,400.

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 a **MSP** grant**.**

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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.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the MSP 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 to pursue and complete baccalaureate degrees in the Food, Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Human 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 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 the Food, Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences. NIFA is soliciting applications for student education that will:

(i) Prepare graduates to meet the demand for highly qualified personnel entering the 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 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.

All MSP projects are required to provide leadership skills opportunities. The development of leadership skills, knowledge and qualities are necessary for preparing students for agricultural related careers in private sector, government and academia. Projects must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to ensure that students are equipped with both technical and leadership abilities. Specific activities may include:

- Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles, including critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills, ethics and professionalism, and working in teams;
- Connecting the academic classroom experience with daily leadership roles and organizational activities;
- Providing opportunities for mentoring and shadowing; and
- Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

MSP supports social and behavioral science disciplines. Projects that integrate social and biological sciences to provide experiential learning opportunities for students in applied research, and related community development programs are encouraged. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is important for addressing many of the challenges facing agriculture and rural communities, such as increasing global demand for food production in the face of limited natural resources; improving health and reducing obesity by engaging in heathy diets; and alleviating poverty by fostering economic opportunity.

MSP is intended to promote advances in U.S. agriculture and forestry. Agriculture, however, is increasingly worldwide in scope and reach. To attain MSP’s goals for U.S. agriculture, applicants

may include international partnerships or engagement in proposals as appropriate. **Any international activity proposed under MSP such as partnerships, study abroad, exchanges, training, trips, etc., must first and foremost support MSP's domestic program goals.** Applicants must clearly describe and demonstrate how international activities proposed in applications submitted to MSP will contribute to and support advances in American agriculture.

If international activities (*e.g.*, partnerships, exchanges, travel) are proposed, then applicants shall describe indicators that will be used to assess those activities. Appropriate indicators include, but are not limited to, those posted at the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Food Security initiative Web site (www.feedthefuture.gov/progress).

NIFA encourages, but does not require, projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension (https://extension.org/).

By developing the next generation of a highly-skilled workforce for the food, agricultural, natural resources, and human sciences, the Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (MSP) directly aligns with:

- the FY 2014-2018 USDA Strategic Plan;
- the USDA Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan, and specifically addresses Goal 6 – Education and Science Literacy; and
- the 2014-2018 NIFA Strategic Plan, specifically addressing Strategic Goal 1 – Science (Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education, and extension programs) and Sub-goal 1.7 (Ensure the development of human capital, communities, and a diverse workforce through research, education, extension and engagement programs in food and agricultural sciences to support a sustainable agriculture system).

This initiative aligns with the recommendations regarding the importance of undergraduates made in the December 2012 President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) report to the President on Agricultural Preparedness and the Agriculture Research Enterprise. The offering of undergraduate scholarships is also consistent with the National Research Council's 2009 report, Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World, which recommends that academic institutions should broaden the undergraduate student experience by integrating opportunities to participate in research, education, and extension. Furthermore, four-year colleges and universities should enhance connections with community colleges, 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions.

The 2015-2020 Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Renewable Energy, and the Environment Report indicates shortages of graduates, specifically in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences disciplines, to fill the estimated 57,900 annual openings for individuals with baccalaureate or higher degrees in food, renewable energy, and environmental specialties between 2015 and 2020. The MSP aligns with the effort to produce graduates from colleges of agriculture and life sciences, forestry and natural resources, and veterinary medicine who tend to have relatively stronger interests and more extensive work experiences for careers in food, renewable energy, and the environment.

C. Program Area Description

Under the FY 2016 program, NIFA intends to support scholarship and training for baccalaureate degrees within the Food, Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences disciplines and/or the D.V.M. degree with MSP grants and SEL awards, as applicable.

FY 2016 MSP Program Areas of Emphasis (PAEs)

Applicants should propose training projects at the undergraduate and/or D.V.M. levels to support scholarships and/or SELs in the following PAEs:

(1) Veterinary Medicine (First Professional Degree in Veterinary Medicine, i.e. D.V.M.)
(2) Agricultural Sciences and Engineering
(3) Natural Resource Sciences Training
(4) Human Sciences Training
(5) Food Science and Human Nutrition Training
(6) Agrosecurity Science Training
(7) Agricultural Education

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 leadership skills opportunities for all projects (required, see above).
(6) 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.

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.

The anticipated start date for successful applications under this RFA is February 15, 2017 and the duration is 60 months.

Applicants are required to provide a 5-year budget with a zero dollar budget for any year where student support is not allocated (i.e. recruitment activities are only sponsored activities that year). Applicants should factor into their application a recruitment interval to meet the program requirements. **Due to statutory restrictions, no extensions beyond the 5-year period are allowed.** Any eligible institution may, however, apply for a new award with a different scope of work 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;
(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 is to 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 NIFA 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 2016, 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 2 (see Part II, C, 3); and (2) are 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 with current MSP awards must use a stand-alone application to request SELs 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

The amount available for NIFA support of this program in FY **2016** is approximately $945,400. The funds will be awarded through a grant**.** 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:

Scholarships:	*$6,500/scholar/year x 5 scholars x 4 years/scholar = $130,000*
Cost-of Education:	*$2,500/scholar/year x 5 scholars x 4 years/scholar = $50,000*
SELs:	*$4,000/scholar x 5 scholars = $20,000*
Total:	***$200,000***

The funds will be awarded through a grant. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

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 Bureau of the Fiscal Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/pmt/asap/asap_home.htm.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2016, you may submit applications to the MSP Program as one of the following two types of requests:

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

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

C. Project Types

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 an 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. All scholars in the cohort must be appointed within 12 months of the award start date. 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 – **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 using Award Category No. 2 only.

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.
- 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.

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422, institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See http://nifa.usda.gov/responsible-and-ethical-conduct-research for further information.

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. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of 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. We urge you to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the Project Director/Principal Investigator (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 Grants.gov. If not (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 long as 2 weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations, the AR should go to **"Register" in the top right corner of the Grants.gov web page (or go to** http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html**) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov.** Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the registration process. Refer to item 2. below to locate the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide".

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

To receive application materials:

1. You must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.

2. To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/download-application-package.html and enter the funding opportunity number

   Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-HEMS-005962

   in the appropriate box and click "Search." From the search result, click "Select Package" to access the application package. A Grant Application Package is tied to a particular funding opportunity. You may submit an application ONLY to the particular funding opportunity to which the Grant Application Package is associated.

   Contained within the application package is the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide." 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 you require assistance to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms) **or submitting the application,** refer to resources available on the Grants.gov website (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html). Grants.gov assistance is also available at:

Grants.gov customer support
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 (see https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants): Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. ET). Get help now!

Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of agency you are applying to
- Specific area of concern

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

You should prepare electronic applications following Parts V and VI of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed 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., PDF) in Part III section 3. of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or that attachments are in PDF format; see Part III section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

For any questions related to the preparation of an application, review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable RFA. 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 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET, excluding federal holidays.

1. <u>SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet</u>
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. See Part V., Section 2.18. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

2. <u>SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)</u>
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. <u>R&R Other Project Information Form</u>
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. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of **MSP**. See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

IMPORTANT – The Project Summary/Abstract is required in all applications and is limited to **two** pages. Applicants are encouraged to revisit the page numbers after converting the narrative to PDF format and make the necessary adjustments if the required page limit has been exceeded. **A Project Summary/Abstract that exceeds this page limit requirement will not be accepted for review.**

(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 2016 Project Type for which you are applying (Category 1 or 2);
(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 <u>and</u> save the file in PDF format with the title 'Project Summary'. **The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized.**

Program Area(s) of Emphasis for FY 2016 Funding Cycle
Veterinary Medicine (First Professional Degree in Veterinary Medicine i.e. D.V.M.)
Agricultural Sciences and Engineering
Natural Resource Sciences Training
Human Sciences Training
Food Science and Human Nutrition Training
Agrosecurity Science Training
Agricultural Education

Relevant Disciplines for the FY 2016 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 Sciences and Education Degree Programs	G
Agricultural Biosecurity	X
Other (please specify)	O

b. Field 8. Project Narrative (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format). Application will not be accepted for review if the project narrative is not included or not in PDF format.

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed **15** pages of written text regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced and up to **5** additional pages for figures and tables. Formatting shall be **one inch margins, no smaller than 12-point font (Times New Roman or similar), <u>and double-spaced</u>**. We have established this maximum (**20** pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices, as well as web links and search suggestions included in the narrative, should not be used to circumvent the page limit. **Project narratives that exceed this page limit requirement will not be accepted for review.**

The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

1. **Quality of Education**

   Using the 2011-2012 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) Student 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) Faculty participation in local, regional, or national scientific, professional or industrial conferences and meetings;
   (h) Faculty participation in international experiences;
   (i) Faculty participation in leadership, management and policy development;
   (j) Student 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 <u>must be contained within the page limit</u> 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 the Food, Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Human 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 **Food, Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences** 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. Food, Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences 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 **Food, Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences** 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. 2 for <u>Current</u> 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. 1 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 - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format)
If needed, provide a complete list of all references cited in the application.

d. Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format)
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.** Any such letter shall be included as a part of Other Attachments, see Field 12 below.

e. Field 11. Equipment Documentation - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format).

f. Field 12. Add Other Attachments

See Part V., Section 4.12. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Field 12 on the Form) for instructions regarding mandatory Felony Convictions or Tax Delinquent Status.

The following instructions are in addition to those noted in Part V 4.12 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- **Response to Previous Review – PDF Attachment. 1-Page Limit.**
  Title the attachment as 'Response to Previous Review' in the document header and save file as 'ResponsetoPreviousReview'. 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**, titled, "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW." If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.

- **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. **The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.**

- **Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Collaborative Arrangements' in the document header and save file as 'CollaborativeArrangement'. If it is 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 the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support signed by the AR of the consultant/collaborating organization) 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.

- **Expected Outcomes – PDF Attachment**
  Title the attachment "Expected Outcomes" in the document header and save file as "ExpectedOutcomes." Please use a format, similar to what is provided below, to submit expected impacts and attach it as the last page of the application.

Recommended Format for Submitting Expected Impacts

Primary Project Function: (Choose one)		
EDUCATION: ☐	EXTENSION : ☐	RESEARCH: ☐
DATA FOR MSP PROGRAM APPLICATIONS		
Total expected student impact during entire grant period		**Expected Number**
(1) Total number of students to be directly supported by this grant (i.e. scholarships included as a cost in your project budget) for graduate education		
(2) Number of minority students to be supported during the grant period (Provide the best estimate		

	based on past experience)	
(3)	Number of female students to be supported during the grant period (provide the best estimate based on past experience)	
(4)	Number of students supported by this grant (i.e. scholarships) who are pursuing their degree	
	4-A. Two year or other certificate	
	4-B. Undergraduate or other 4 year degree	
	4-C. Master's degree	
	4-D. Ph.D. degree	
	4-E. Post-doctorate training	
(5)	Number of students who will be supported by this grant on an internship or other experiential learning opportunity	
	5-A. Domestic experiences, with a government or non-governmental organization that is not affiliated with your institution.	
	5-B. International experiences, including study abroad, educational travel longer than a month, etc.	

Notes:

1. Please provide your best estimate based on past experiences, graduation rates, retention rates, etc.
2. Number of minority students to be supported during the grant period (question #2) should be less than or equal to total number of students supported by the grant (question #1).
3. Number of female students to be supported during the grant period (question #3) should be less than or equal to total number of students supported by the grant (question #1).
4. Response to question #4 should be the sum of 4-A through 4-E.
5. Response to question #5 should be a sum of 5-A and 5-B.

4. <u>R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)</u>
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This section of the Guide includes information about the people who require a Senior/Key Person Profile, and details about the Biographical Sketch and the Current and Pending Support, including a link to a suggested template for the Current and Pending Support.

A R&R Senior/Key Person Profile should be completed, at a minimum, for the PD, each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. A paraprofessional is an individual who through formal education, work experience and/or training has the knowledge and expertise to assist a professional person. **Note: Even if no other funding is currently reported under the 'Active' section of this attachment, you must still list information for this grant application under the 'Pending' section of this attachment for each senior/key person identified above.**

The time commitments for this project stated on the Current and Pending include Federal and any cost shared salaries. Time commitments stated on the Current and Pending should not be lower than the combined Federal and match percentage of salary on the budget.

5. <u>R&R Personal Data</u> – 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. However, NIFA strongly encourages applicants to provide the requested information to help NIFA identify and address any inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, or disability of its proposed PDs/PIs and co-PDs/PIs. Information not submitted will seriously undermine the statistical validity, and therefore the usefulness, of information received from others. The information you submit will be

kept confidential and will be used only for tracking and statistical purposes necessary to meet the demands of the agency and will not be part of the review process.

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 before the 12 month deadline. 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. 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.

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 (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format.) 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. **The Budget Justification must be submitted as a single PDF attachment to the R&R Budget Form. Applications will not be accepted for review if this document is not included or not in PDF format. All MSP grants have a maximum of $200,000 per application. Applications with a budget request that exceeds this cap will be excluded from review.**

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. <u>Supplemental Information Form</u>

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 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., enter "Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program") and the program code (i.e., enter "**KF**"). Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application. Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel.

b. **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List**. See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template. Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the questions are "N.A.".

C. Submission Dates and Times

Prior to electronic submission of the application via Grants.gov, it is strongly recommended that an administrative review be conducted to ensure that an application complies with all application preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review.
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 **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on September 22, 2016**. **Applications received after this deadline will not be accepted for review.**

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A. for Grants.gov contact information.

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. 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, contact the Agency 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.

When grant is for SEL that will be used by <u>To-Be-Recruited Scholars</u>: 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

You 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.

See Part V., Section 4.12. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Field 12 on the Form) for instructions regarding mandatory Felony Convictions or Tax Delinquent Status.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

We evaluate each application in a 2-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, a technical review panel will evaluate applications that meet the administrative requirements.

We select reviewers based upon their 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, and 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 of each application to producers and the general public.

When each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of **MSP** will recommend that the project: (a) be approved for support from currently available funds or (b) be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

MSP reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

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 <u>only</u> requesting funds for Category 2funds (SELs) for current USDA MSP Scholars:

1. Applications for Category 1 - 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 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 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 Category 2 - Special Experiential Learning (SEL) for Current, Eligible MSP Scholars

All applications submitted by current MSP Project Director(s) under Project Type Award Category 2 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) submitting an SEL Outcomes Report to the USDA that describes accomplishments of the Scholar(s) after completing the SEL - **this is <u>not</u> 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) developing materials targeted primary and secondary students (pre-K to grade 12); <u>and</u> (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, we take extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. See http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/competitive_peer_review.html for further information about conflicts of interest and confidentiality as related to the peer review process.

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. This requirement is 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. We will provide you 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 that 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).

E. Application Disposition

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by **MSP** for a period of three years.

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the NIFA awarding official 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 NIFA awarding official 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. 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 may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions at 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E.

B. Award Notice

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

(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 and the Federal Agency Identification Number assigned by NIFA;

(5) Project period, specifying the amount of time NIFA intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;

(6) Total amount of financial assistance approved for the award;

(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 may include, but are not limited to, the ones listed on the NIFA web page - http://nifa.usda.gov/federal-regulations .

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide—a compendium of basic NIFA policies and procedures that apply to all NIFA awards, unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary is available at http://nifa.usda.gov/policy-guide.

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

Please refer to Part II, C. for more information.

E. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html for information about NIFA award terms). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those, if any, will be identified in the award.

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://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/program/natl_needs%20exit%20form.pdf] 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.

(c) 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.

(d) 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.

(e) Project Director's Conference

The Project Director is required to use part of the CoE to attend at least one NIFA-sponsored Project Directors' Conference held during the life of the grant.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –
Dr. Ray A. Ali
Title: National Program Leader
Unit: Division of Community and Education
Institute of Youth, Family, and Community
Location: 4414 Waterfront Centre
Full Address and Directions
Phone: (202) 720-2727
Fax: (202) 720-2030
E-mail: MSP@NIFA.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contact –
Duane Alphs
Title: Team Leader
Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management
Location: 2152 Waterfront Centre
Phone: (202) 401-4326
Email: dalphs@nifa.usda.gov

Rochelle McCrea
Title: Team Leader
Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management
Location: 2160 Waterfront Centre
Phone: (202) 401-2880
Email: rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

We will send copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments 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, awardees 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. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all changes in approved goals or objectives prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests be approved for changes that are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel, prior to effecting such changes.

d. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all 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, prior to instituting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) 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. The terms and conditions of award include information about no-cost extensions of the award and when ADO’s prior approval is necessary.

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 2 CFR part 415, subpart C , 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 Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions, for 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.