

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Cooperative State Research,  
Education, and Extension Service****Food and Agricultural Sciences  
National Needs Graduate Fellowship  
Grants Program**

**AGENCY:** Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of application.

**SUMMARY:** The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is announcing the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program Solicitation of Proposals for Fiscal Years (FY) 1997 and 1998 and 1997 Supplemental Grants for Special International Study or Thesis/Dissertation Research Travel Allowances. Applications are invited for competitive grant awards to colleges and universities for doctoral fellowships to meet national needs for the development of professional and scientific expertise in the food and agricultural sciences for FYs 1997 and 1998. Additionally, CSREES seeks applications from recipients of presently active national needs fellowship grants for supplemental grants to support special international study or thesis/dissertation research experiences for current Fellows.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jeffrey L. Gilmore, USDA/Higher Education Programs, 202-720-1973, jgilmore@reeusda.gov

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

I. Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants

*Authority*

The authority for this program is contained in Section 1417(b)(6) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(6)). Under this program, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary may make competitive grants, for periods not to exceed five years, to land-grant colleges and universities, colleges and universities having significant minority enrollments and a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, and to other colleges and universities having a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, to administer and conduct graduate fellowship programs to help meet the Nation's needs for

development of scientific and professional expertise in the food and agricultural sciences.

*Targeted Areas*

Food and agricultural sciences areas appropriate for fellowship applications are those in which shortages of expertise have been determined and targeted by CSREES for national needs graduate fellowship support. Beginning with FY 1997, CSREES will support six national needs areas on a biennial basis and combine appropriations from two fiscal years into one competition to be held during odd-numbered years. The targeted national needs areas to be supported for the combined FY 1997/98 competition are: Biotechnology—Animal; Biotechnology—Plant; Engineering—Food, Forest Product, or Agricultural; Human Nutrition and/or Food Science; Marketing or Management—Food, Forest Products, or Agribusiness; and Water Science. In FY 1997/98, only the doctoral level of study will be supported.

*Proposal Limitations*

For the FY 1997/98 program, a proposal may request funding in only one national needs area. A proposal may request a minimum of two fellowships and a maximum of four fellowships in the national needs area for which funding is requested. No limitation is placed on the number of proposals an institution may submit. However, the same college or equivalent administrative unit within an institution may only submit a maximum of six proposals, and no more than one proposal may be submitted in any one national needs area by the same college or equivalent administrative unit within an institution. While proposals must document institution willingness to recruit and train at least two, but not more than four, fellows in a national needs area, CSREES may fund fewer fellows than requested in a proposal.

*Available Funding*

CSREES anticipates that approximately \$5,800,000 will be available for fellowship grants for the FY 1997/98 combined competition, including \$2.9 million from FY 1997 appropriations and \$2.9 million in anticipated FY 1998 appropriations. Contingent on the availability of these funds, approximately \$970,000 will be allocated to each of the six national needs areas. This program is highly competitive, and it is anticipated that available funding will support approximately 108 doctoral fellows through approximately nine grants in each of the six targeted areas. No-year

funds drawn from expired fellowship grants with unspent funds remaining may be used to fund additional fellows. Please note that Congress has not yet enacted a Fiscal Year 1998 appropriations bill for the Department. Therefore, the \$5.8 million cited for FY 1997/98 grants is only tentative and USDA is not bound by this estimate. If Congress appropriates other than the anticipated amount, these combined appropriated FYs 1997 and 1998 funds will be allocated equally among all six national needs areas.

Each institution funded will receive \$54,000 for each doctoral fellowship awarded. However, it is anticipated that total program funds available will not be evenly divisible by \$54,000. Therefore, one fellowship may be supported on a partial basis with a lesser amount of funds, or one fellowship may be supported fully by a combination of FY 1997/98 funds and unspent funds remaining from expired fellowship grants. Except in the case of a partially funded fellowship, fellowship monies must be used to: (1) support the same doctoral fellow for three years at \$17,000 per year; and (2) provide for an institution annual cost-of-education allowance of \$1,000, not to exceed a total of \$3,000 over the duration of the grant. Total funds awarded to an institution under the program in FY 1997/98 shall not exceed \$648,000.

*Application Information*

An application package is available that provides the forms, instructions, and other relevant information needed by institutions to apply to the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program described herein. Copies of the application package may be requested from the Proposal Services Unit; Grants Management Branch; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; Washington, D.C. 20250-2245. The telephone number is 202-401-5048. These materials may also be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to psb@reeusda.gov which states that you want a copy of the application materials for the Fiscal Year 1997/98 Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program. The materials will then be mailed to you (not e-mailed) as quickly as possible.

The proposal narrative must be typed on one side of the page only, using a font no smaller than 12 point, and double-spaced. All margins must be at least one inch. The proposal should be

paginated and a Table of Contents should be included preceding the proposal narrative. Applicants are cautioned to comply with the 20-page limitation for the narrative section of the proposal. Applicants also are cautioned to include *summary* faculty vitae through the use of Form CSREES-708.

#### *When and Where to Submit Proposals*

An original plus six copies of a proposal and one copy of the institution's latest graduate catalog must be submitted. All proposals must be received by 3:30 p.m. eastern time May 15, 1997. Proposals submitted through the U.S. mail should be sent to the following address: Proposal Services Unit; Grants Management Branch; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; Washington, DC 20250-2245. Hand-delivered proposals, including those submitted through an express mail or a courier service, should be sent to the following address: Proposal Services Unit; Grants Management Branch; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 303, Aerospace Center; 901 D Street, SW.; Washington, DC 20024. Proposals transmitted via a facsimile (FAX) machine will not be accepted.

Submission of an Intent to Submit a Proposal form (Form CSREES-706) is neither required nor requested for the FY 1997/98 competition.

## II. 1997 Special International Study or Thesis/Dissertation Research Travel Allowances

### *Authority*

Under the authority contained in Section 1417(b)(6) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(6)), and in accordance with the Administrative Provisions for the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program (7 CFR part 3402.5(e)), CSREES will award supplemental grants, on a competitive basis, for special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances. Institutions eligible to receive supplemental grants are those that have active National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants (awarded in FY 1996 or earlier). Please note that CSREES will solicit proposals for special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances again in 1998.

### *Eligibility*

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to any current Fellow with sufficient time to complete the international experience before the termination date of the fellowship grant under which he/she is supported. Before the international study or thesis/dissertation research travel may commence, a Fellow must have completed one academic year of full-time study, as defined by the institution, under the fellowship appointment and arrangements must have been formalized for the Fellow to study and/or conduct research in the foreign location(s). All national needs areas previously supported under the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowships Grants Program are eligible for the supplementary grants for special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances.

### *Available Funding*

CSREES has determined that no FY 1997 appropriations will be targeted to supplemental grants supporting special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances; rather, no-year funds drawn from expired fellowship grants with unspent funds remaining will be used to support such supplemental grants. Estimated funds for supplemental grants in FY 1997 are approximately \$60,000.

For each travel allowance, the institution may request up to \$3,000. Travel allowance monies may be used only to pay travel and living expenses for the Fellow while the Fellow is on the specific international assignment as proposed in the application for the special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances. No limitation is placed on the number of applications an institution may submit. Awards will be made to the extent possible based on availability of funds. To the extent possible, all applications associated with one CSREES grant number should be submitted at the same time in order to facilitate the award of these supplemental grants and minimize accounting activity at the grantee institution.

### *Application Information*

A separate application must be submitted by a fellowship grant project director at an eligible institution on behalf of each Fellow for which a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance is requested. Applications for the special international study or thesis/

dissertation research travel allowance supplemental awards may be submitted at any time prior to 3:30 p.m. eastern time on October 15, 1997. However, to allow time for CSREES to process the applications, proposals should be submitted at least three months prior to the proposed beginning date of the international travel experience. Applicants are urged to submit their proposals early.

(Note: Proposals for these special supplemental awards should *not* be submitted as part of the application for a FY 1997/98 Graduate Fellowship grant.)

Each application must include an "Application for Funding," Form CSREES-661, and a "Budget," Form CSREES-55. To provide the office of Higher Education Programs (HEP) with sufficient information upon which to evaluate the merits of the requests for a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance, each application for a supplemental grant must contain a narrative which provides the following: (1) the specific destination(s) and duration of the travel; (2) the specific study or thesis/dissertation research activities in which the Fellow will be engaged; (3) how the international experience will contribute to the Fellow's program of study; (4) a budget narrative specifying and justifying the dollar amount requested for the travel; (5) summary credentials of both the U.S. and international faculty or other professionals with whom the Fellow will be working during the international experience (summary credentials must not exceed three pages per person; "Summary Vita—Teaching Proposal," Form CSREES-708, may be used for this purpose); (6) a letter from the dean of the Fellow's college or equivalent administrative unit supporting the Fellow's travel request and certifying that the travel experience will not jeopardize the Fellow's satisfactory progress toward degree completion; and (7) a letter from the fellowship grant project director certifying the Fellow's eligibility, the accuracy of the Fellow's travel request, and the relevance of the travel to the Fellow's advanced degree objectives.

The narrative portion of the application must not exceed 10 pages, excluding the summary vita/vitae. The narrative should be typed on one side of the page only, using a font no smaller than 12 point, and double-spaced. All margins must be at least one inch.

An application package containing the forms, instructions, and other relevant information needed by institutions to apply for the special

international study or thesis/ dissertation research travel allowances may be requested from the Proposal Services Unit; Grants Management Branch; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; Washington, D.C. 20250-2245. The telephone number is 202-401-5048. These materials may also be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to [psb@reesda.gov](mailto:psb@reesda.gov) which states that you want a copy of the application materials for the Fiscal Year 1997/98 Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program. The materials will then be mailed to you (not e-mailed) as quickly as possible.

#### *Evaluation of Applications*

Applications for the special international travel allowances will be evaluated as they are received until available funds for the supplemental grants are exhausted. Upon receipt of an application, CSREES staff will first determine the eligibility of the Fellow for whom the application was submitted for an international travel experience. Eligible and complete requests then will be reviewed, using the criteria and weights indicated below, by professional staff from USDA or other Federal agencies, as appropriate. Proposals judged to be worthy of funding will be eligible for supplemental awards. Since awards for supplemental grants will be made as reviews are completed, there is no assurance funds will be available late in the application period for every acceptable proposal.

The evaluation criteria for special international study or thesis/ dissertation research travel allowance applications are indicated below. The points are provided as a guide to the relative importance of each criterion, but all criteria must be addressed satisfactorily.

a. Destination and duration—the degree to which the destination and duration of the travel experience is appropriate for enhancing the Fellow's academic program—10 points.

b. Travel experience activities—the degree to which the specific international experiences contribute to

the Fellow's program of study—30 points.

c. Advance preparations—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—20 points.

d. Budget—the degree to which the budget for the international experience is justified—10 points.

e. Personnel—the degree to which the personnel, both U.S. and international, involved with the travel experience have the appropriate credentials and experience to direct the Fellow's international experience, and the likelihood that their participation as mentors, trainers, advisors, or teachers will contribute to the educational value of the travel experiences—20 points.

f. Supporting documentation—the degree to which letters from the dean of the college (or equivalent administrative unit) and the fellowship grant project director support the application—10 points.

#### *When and where to Submit Applications*

An original plus six copies of each application must be submitted. Each copy of the application should be stapled securely in the upper left-hand corner. Please do not bind the original or the copies of the application. All copies of the application must be mailed in one package. Applications transmitted via a facsimile (FAX) machine will not be accepted. Applications submitted through the U.S. mail should be sent to the following address: Proposal Services Unit; Grants Management Branch; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; Washington, D.C. 20250-2245. hand-delivered proposals, including those submitted through an express mail or a courier service, should be brought to the following address: Proposal Services Unit; Grants Management Branch; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 303, Aerospace Center; 901 D Street, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20024. The telephone number is 202-401-5048. Applications may be submitted at any time prior to 3:30 p.m. eastern time on October 15, 1997.

#### III. Applicable Regulations

This program is subject to the administrative provisions found at CFR part 3402 (59 FR 68072, December 30, 1994) which set forth procedures to be followed when submitting grant proposals, rules governing the evaluation of proposals, the awarding of grants, and post-award administration of such grants.

In addition, the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations, 7 CFR part 3019 (60 FR 44122 (August 24, 1995)), to this program. Other Federal statutes and regulations that apply to this program are identified in the administrative provisions.

#### IV. Supplementary Information

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.210. For the reasons set forth in the Final Rule-related notice to 7 CFF part 3015, subpart V, 48 FR 29115, June 24, 1983, when the authority to administer this program resided in the Agricultural Research Service, this program is excluded from the scope of Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials.

Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the collection of information requirements for this program have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0022 and 0524-0024.

#### V. Program Contact

If you have questions concerning the submission of Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program proposals, please contact Dr. Jeffrey Gilmore, Higher Education Programs, Science and Education Resources Development, CSREES, USDA, at 202-720-1973 (voice), 202-720-2030 (fax), or [jgilmore@reesda.gov](mailto:jgilmore@reesda.gov) (Internet),

Done at Washington, D.C., this 4th day of March, 1997.

B.H. Robinson,

*Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-5915 Filed 3-10-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3416-22-M