

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Hispanic-Serving Institutions Scholars Program**

INFORMATION COLLECTION JUSTIFICATION

A. Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The purpose of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Scholars Program is to strengthen the long-term partnership between USDA and the HSIs; to increase the number of students studying and graduating in food, agriculture, natural resources, and other related fields of study; to develop a pool of scientists and professionals to fill jobs in the food, agricultural, natural resources system; and to create a talent pipeline for USDA.

The USDA/HSI Scholars Program is a joint human capital initiative between the USDA and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Through the program, USDA will offer scholarships to high school and college students who are seeking a bachelor's degree in the fields of agriculture, food, or natural resource sciences and related disciplines at Hispanic-Serving Institutions. This program will offer a combination of paid work experience with a USDA sponsoring agency through an appointment under the Fellowship Experience Program (FEP). FEP will permit the recruitment and selection of exceptional students majoring in agriculture-related fields of study at USDA and partner universities. Under the FEP, students will fill Excepted Service positions, receive mentoring, and provided with developmental assignments. These temporary appointments will be made using the Schedule A in 5 CFR § 213.3102 (r) and may not exceed 4 years based on defined criteria.

When students graduate, they will be eligible to compete for job opportunities at USDA. Additionally, the experience the students gain through classroom instruction in their respective degree paths, along with their USDA work experience, will make them strong candidates for opportunities in agriculture and agri-business related fields. The USDA/HSI Scholars Program is designed to integrate classroom study into a degree university program such as agriculture and natural resources, which prepares the student to compete for positions in the sponsoring agency's future workforce and with paid tuition, fees, books, use of a laptop computer, and leadership training. The program is conducted in accordance with a planned schedule and a working agreement between USDA agencies and the student.

The USDA/HSI Scholars Program will offer scholarships and internships for a period of up to 4 years. Each USDA/HSI Scholars Program applicant is required to submit an Application Form to the USDA/HSI Program Liaison assigned to the HSI University to which they want to apply.

High school applicants are required to submit biographical information; educational background information; extracurricular activities; and an essay. The applicant's guidance counselor provides information on the student's academic status and grade point average. A former or present teacher of the applicant provides information that assesses the applicant's interests, character, and potential.

College applicants are required to submit biographical information; educational background information; extracurricular activities; and an essay. Two letters of recommendation are required—one from a Department Head, Dean, or University Vice President, and another from a College Professor. There are no sections included in the application that these individuals will need to complete.

The collection of this information from all applicants is necessary to appropriately assess them based on their academic background, extracurricular activities and interests, and potential performance and completion of the USDA/HSI Scholars Program. This information is shared with all reviewing officials at each step of the scholar selection process. Reviewing officials include, but are not limited to, University Professors, Deans and Vice Presidents; Agency Administrators, Program Directors and Agency Coordinators; and the USDA/HSI National Office Personnel.

Refer to Attachment 1 for USDA/HSI Scholars Program supporting authorities.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The purpose of the collections is to determine the eligibility of applicants to the USDA/HSI Scholars Program.

Each applicant to the program will be required to apply to announcements of the USDA/HSI Scholars Program and submit an application with required documentation. The required documentation will include:

- A resume;
- Proof of acceptance or enrollment in school, a letter of acceptance, proof of registration, or letter from school official on official letterhead;
- University transcript or proof of acceptance in an accredited university; and
- Two letters of recommendation.

The information collected is used by several parties. A detailed description is below.

The USDA/HSI Program Liaison uses the information to:

- Review all components of the application for completeness; and

- Determine if the application meets the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for the USDA/HSI Scholars Program.

The HSI personnel uses the information to determine if the applicants are a good fit for the university based on the applicant's:

- Proposed major (program of study);
- Interests;
- Future academic/professional goals; and
- Grade Point Average.

Based on that information, they select the top applications to be forwarded to the USDA/HSI National Program Office for consideration.

The USDA/HSI National Office personnel uses the information to determine if the applicants are a good fit for the National Scholars Program based on their:

- Proposed major (program of study);
- Interests;
- Future academic/professional goals; and
- Grade Point Average.

The USDA Agency personnel uses the information to determine if the applicants are a good fit for the agency based on their:

- Proposed major (program of study);
- Interests;
- Future academic/professional goals; and
- Grade Point Average.

This process will take place once a year from February 1st until the yearly scholar selection processes concludes in May.

3. **Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, (e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses) and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The USDA/HSI Scholars Program utilizes a fillable form that can be printed and mailed to the USDA Program Liaison. The application form will be available on the USDA-OAO-HSINP website.

- 4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose described in item 2 above.**

USDA currently has two scholars program--USDA/1890 National Scholars Program (OMB No.: 0503-0015) and USDA's 1994 Tribal Scholars Program (OMB No.: 0503-0016). Both programs have received OMB approved data collection numbers. The new USDA/HSI Scholars Program's applications mirror the 1890 and 1994 applications. Because the schools participating in these programs are different institutions, students are required to submit an application for the school they are or will be attending. USDA is the only agency (Department) that collects this information.

- 5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

This collection does not impact small businesses or other small entities.

- 6. Describe the consequence to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

The USDA/HSI Scholars Program would not be able to function consistently without this annual collection.

- 7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.**

- requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;
- requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
- requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;
- requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;
- in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
- requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential

information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

This information collection is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines established in 5 CFR 1320.5.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of the publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.**

On Friday, June 2, 2017, the notice was published in the Federal Register, Vol. 82, No. 105, 25595. One public comment was received. However, the comment was not related to the burden hours or time it takes to complete the application.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions, and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting form, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

- Dr. Laura Sanders (Professor, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL)
- Brennan Wells (Thurgood Marshall College Fund Student Intern)
- Margaret Ochoa Espinosa (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Student Intern)

- 9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

This information collection activity involves no payments or gifts to respondents.

- 10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

No additional assurance of confidentiality is provided with this information collection. Any and all information obtained in this collection shall not be disclosed except in accordance with 5 U.S.C.552a.

- 11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

This information collection activity will ask no questions of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.**
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying, and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

Respondents: USDA/HSI Scholars Program Applicants

Frequency of response..... Annual

APPLICATION: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

NOTE: Three individuals (high school student, teacher, and guidance counselor) complete a section of each application.

Estimated number of respondents to complete all sections of application.....300

It is expected that approximately 100 high school students each year will submit an application and each application will have three respondents to include the applicant and two references for the application.

Estimated average time to complete whole application.....3.0 hours

Applicant section.....1.50 hours

Teacher section.....0.75 hours

Counselor section.....0.75 hours

Estimated average time per respondent.....1.0 hour

Estimated number of respondents per application.....3

Estimated total annual response.....100

Estimated total Collection Burden.....300 hours

Respondent's estimated annual cost for the hour

Burdens for collections of information.....\$16,650.00

(Estimated total Collection Burden (300 hours) x Burden Cost for collection (\$55.50)
= \$16,650.00)

Applicant section (\$9/hr @ 1.5 hours).....\$13.50

Teacher section (\$30/hr @ 0.75 hours).....\$22.50

Counselor section (\$26/hr @ 0.75 hours).....\$19.50

Total burden cost for HSI scholarship respondents' inclusive of
applicant, teacher, and counselor recommendations collection.....\$55.50

APPLICATION: COLLEGE STUDENT

NOTE: Three individuals (college student, college professor, and department head,
dean of college, or one of the Vice Presidents of University) complete a section of
each application.

Estimated number of respondents to complete all sections of application ...300

It is expected that approximately 100 college students each year will submit an
application and each application will have three respondents to include the applicant
and two references for the application.

Estimated average time to complete whole application.....3.0 hours

Applicant section.....2.0 hours

Professor section.....0.5 hours

Dept. Head, Dean, or Vice President of the University.....0.5 hours

Estimated average time per respondent.....1 hour

Estimated number of respondents per application.....3

Estimated total annual response.....100

Estimated total Collection Burden.....300 hours

Respondent's estimated annual cost for the hour

Burdens for collections of information.....\$17,100.00

(Estimated total Collection Burden (300 hours) x Burden Cost for collection (\$57.00)
= \$17,100.00)

Applicant section (\$9/hr @ 2.0 hours).....\$18.00

Professor section (\$35/hr @ 0.50 hours).....\$17.50

Dept. Head, Dean or Vice President of University section

(\$43/hr @ 0.50 hours).....\$21.50

Total burden cost for HSI Scholarship respondents' inclusive of applicant, Professor, and Department Head, Dean or Vice President of the University recommendations collection:.....\$57.00

Total estimated annualized cost to respondents of the hour burdens of the collection of information per scholarship cycle:

Burdens for collections of information for high school applicants.....\$16,650.00

Burdens for collections of information for college applicants.....\$17,100.00

Burden cost for collection total.....\$33,750.00

13. **Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.**

There are no capital or startup costs.

14. **Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

Annual Federal Government Cost

Estimated time/cost for USDA Liaisons to screen applications upon receipt.

	GS13/ Step 5-6 Salary*	Hourly Rate		Time per Application		# of Applications		USDA Liaisons		Total
Staff Costs	\$101,894.50 /2080 hrs (26 Pay Periods x 80 hrs) = hourly rate	\$48.99	x	.75 hours	x	200	x	4	=	\$29,394.00

*Average salary includes locality pay.

Estimated time/cost for USDA HSI National Program (HSINP) Office Personnel to develop profiles for distribution to Agencies.

	GS13/ Step 5-6 Salary*	Hourly Rate	Time per Application	# of Applications	USDA HSINP	Total
Staff Costs	\$101,894.50 /2080 hrs (26 Pay Periods x 80 hrs) = hourly rate	\$48.99	x 2 hours	x 40	x 1	= \$3,919.20

*Average salary includes locality pay.

Total Annual Federal Government Cost.....\$33,313.20

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-1.

There is no change in burden.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

The Office of Advocacy and Outreach has no plans to publish information it collects in connection with this program.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The Office of Advocacy and Outreach will display the date and OMB control number.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act."

The Office of Advocacy and Outreach can certify compliance with all provisions in the Act.