



Pathway to Excellence Grant Guidelines

GUIDELINES

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MISSION AND PURPOSE

The NCAA Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee, Management and Presidents Councils have approved the implementation of the Division III Pathway to Excellence Grant. This grant is designed to provide financial assistance to the division's member schools and conferences that are committed to enhancing underrepresented groups in entry-level, intercollegiate athletics administrative positions.

Entry-level administrative positions should include exposure to a variety of the following areas: strategic planning; budget management; fundraising; campus and NCAA compliance; sport oversight; student-athlete welfare issues and initiative; academics; underrepresented group engagement; and staff oversight/management.

ELIGIBILITY

Schools and conference offices must be an active NCAA Division III member and be able to execute all recipient responsibilities to be eligible to submit a proposal. Conferences must also be multisport conferences.

Interested schools and conferences are encouraged to seek the guidance of their individual human resources department during proposal development and submission.

At no point may a recipient receive more than one Division III diversity grant. Grant requirements must also be fully executed per the contract prior to receiving additional funding for a subsequent diversity grant. A one-year wait period is required before receiving the Division III Pathway to Excellence Grant successively.

ADMINISTRATION AND BUDGET

The NCAA Division III governance staff administers the program. Administrative duties of the national office staff, in collaboration with the grant selection committee include: review of proposals and selection of recipients, annual reporting, evaluation of whether the grant is fulfilling its mission and purpose, approval of any modifications to the grant's guidelines, and development of orientation programming.

This initiative is funded by the Division III budget with a total annual budget of \$1.6 million, which allows for a total of 46 schools and conferences to receive funding annually.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

The NCAA provides \$30,000 in funding directly to selected schools and conferences ("recipients") for each of the two years of grant to support the salary and wages of the hired employee¹. Additionally, the NCAA provides recipients with \$3,000 at the beginning of each year to be used for professional development of the hired employee.

¹ *Hired employees are allowed to start prior to the recipient receiving funding from the NCAA but the recipient is responsible for all costs associated with salary, wage and benefits until funding is received.*

TIMELINE

The call for proposals occurs annually between September and the end of January.

Proposals will be reviewed annually in February/March, with the announcement of selections being made in late March/early April.

Contracts will be dispersed to selected recipients in mid-April and funding will be dispersed annually in September.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

All proposal materials must be successfully submitted prior to the deadline via the [NCAA Program Hub](#) to be eligible for review by the selection committee. Requested information includes:

1. Primary grant contact information.
2. The title of the proposed position, which should be developed in accordance with the proposed job responsibilities.
3. A description of the proposed position², including the percentage of time commitment for each major area of job responsibility³ and a thorough explanation of job responsibilities.
4. Current and proposed organizational charts.
5. Supervisor(s), including a short biographical statement, specific ways he or she plans to interact with the hired employee and how the supervisor will provide productive work experience. (*NOTE: Supervisor(s) may not be listed as mentors*).
6. Mentor(s), including a short biographical statement and the specific ways he or she plans to interact with the hired employee. (*NOTE: Mentor(s) may not be listed as supervisors*).
7. An explanation of why you are pursuing this grant and how it will benefit your organization.
8. An overview of how the school/athletics department or the conference is committed to diversity and inclusion.
9. An explanation of how a diverse candidate search will be conducted.
10. An overview of how the hired employee will be exposed to other campus, conference or community groups.
11. An outline of professional development opportunities in which the employee hired will participate.

² Proposed position must report within the athletics department or conference office.

³ Job descriptions may include assistant coaching, athletic training, or strength and conditioning responsibilities but should be no more than 25% of the job responsibilities. No head coaching responsibilities are allowed at any point for positions funded by the grant.

12. A description of how the hired employee's performance will be evaluated.
13. A description of how the grant's success will be evaluated.
14. Salary and benefits information (with the regional cost of living taken into consideration).
15. Signature page.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection committee is responsible for the review of proposals and selection of recipients. The committee is comprised of five full-time employees from Division III member schools and conferences. Committee members who are willing and able to serve will be chosen by the division's Nominating Committee and must meet committee service requirements.

Committee composition is based on the following demographics: ethnicity (at least one ethnic minority), gender (at least one male and one female), geographic diversity (limit of one committee member from an individual conference with consideration to geographic location, and at least one former recipient (those who have served in the role of supervisor, mentor or employee). A committee roster and scoring guidelines can be found on the grant's webpage.

The selection committee has the right to recommend action, including the withholding of funds and obtaining full reimbursement of sums paid to the recipient, for such irregularities as unauthorized expenses, late, inaccurate or incomplete reports/evaluations or other grant reporting problems. The selection committee can also recommend the performance of an audit or review if one or more of these irregularities are identified.

AWARD AGREEMENT

A standardized award agreement will be issued to the recipients and will reference these guidelines. For operational efficiency, award agreements should not be altered.

The award agreement will specify the start and end dates of the grant, monetary allocations for each budget period, ramifications for improper use of funds, and any other applicable NCAA regulations and conditions of the award.

An award is accepted when the recipient and the NCAA execute the standard agreement.

DEFERMENT

Recipients may defer, in writing, funds for one year from the date of the initial offer and are required to confirm implementation by the end of the proposal submission deadline for the following cycle.

VACANCIES

Recipients must also notify the program administrator immediately when a vacancy occurs. Per the award agreement, recipients have four months to fill the position without forfeiting

the grant.

Award monies shall be returned to the NCAA on a pro rata basis during the time of the vacancy. Pro rata funds may be retained by the recipient so long as the funds benefit the newly hired employee (e.g., relocation expenses, meal plan, etc.). The recipient must send to the NCAA statements verifying monies used and outlining the applicable expenses in accordance with annual reporting.

RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Recipients require the following responsibilities:

- This grant requires a two-year commitment by recipients. Recipients must be able to financially support the position and execute all responsibilities and activities outlined in the submitted proposal. Recipients are required to provide a Federal Tax Identification Number and encouraged to establish direct deposit with the NCAA.
- Recipients are required to provide a minimum of 10 months of full-time employment and an in-kind gift of \$5,000 (at minimum) to the hired employee during each year of the grant.
- Recipients are responsible for all hiring and personnel decisions and should ensure that personnel decisions are both pursuant to these Guidelines and consistent with all local, state and federal laws. Recipients must follow the guidance of their individual human resources department during the hiring process and employment period of the grant including, but not limited to, ensuring the employee maintains full-time employment status. Recipients are also responsible for all costs associated with hiring at any point of the grant cycle.
- Recipients have full responsibility for the conduct of the projects or activities supported by the grant and for the results achieved. Recipients are required to monitor performance to assure adherence to goals, time schedules, or other requirements as appropriate to the project or terms of the award. All modifications to the responsibilities outlined in the proposal must be approved, in writing, by the program administrator prior to execution.

CRITERIA OF THE HIRED EMPLOYEE

To be approved for and to receive funding, Recipients should identify how hiring a specific candidate will help fulfill the mission and purpose of the grant. For the purposes of the grant, underrepresented groups are described pursuant to federal guidelines as below:

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native (not Hispanic or Latino): A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
2. Asian (not Hispanic or Latino): A person having origins in any of the original peoples of East Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia,

China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, or Vietnam.

3. Black or African American (not Hispanic or Latino): A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
4. Hispanic or Latino: A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic or Latino): A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

The NCAA provides professional development funding in the amount of \$3,000 to recipients during each year of the two years of the grant. These funds will be distributed at the same time as the salary funding in early September. As nontaxable benefits, all goods purchased through professional development funding must remain the property of the recipient.

Recipients are required to submit the grant reconciliation form and all corresponding proof of purchase documentation no later than August 15 at the end of each year. Additional grant funding payments for subsequent budget cycles will be contingent upon receipt and review of these documents.

If there is a remaining balance of \$300 or less, the unused funding may remain with the recipient. If the remaining balance exceeds \$300, any unspent funding more than \$300 must be returned to the NCAA (e.g., if \$700 of funding remains unused, \$400 must be returned). Annual allowances cannot be carried over.

Ineligible professional development expenses include: technology of any kind (unless approved in writing by the grant administrator), costs related to taking classes/courses that are **not tuition or textbook related** (e.g., activity fees, facility or technical support fees, late fees, etc.), tickets to sporting events, office supplies; costs associated with campus/conference office employee searches, and/or insurance of any kind. Recipients should contact the grant administrator prior to incurring any expenses for any clarifications.

REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At the beginning of the first year of the grant, the supervisor, mentor and hired employee are required to attend an orientation at the national office in Indianapolis. The NCAA coordinates travel logistics and covers the costs associated with attending the orientation.

Hired employees are also required to use a portion of the NCAA professional development funding to attend the NCAA Emerging Leaders Seminar in the first year of the grant (February), and the NCAA Convention in the second year of the grant (mid-January).

FINANCIAL REPORTING AND SURVEYS

Recipients are required to participate in NCAA related survey research activities.

Annual financial reporting is required for all recipients, including but limited to, confirmation of any changes to the hired employee's salary, wages and benefits information via a survey sent to recipients in May. Hired employees, supervisors and mentors may also be surveyed regarding their experience with the grant.

WEB ADDRESS FOR THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines policy can be found on the grant page at ncaa.org/scholarshipsandgrants.

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