



Fiscal Year 2012 Competition Highlights for the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program

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Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program

Fiscal Year 2012 Competition

Background and Focus

The Ronald McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair) Program is one of the seven programs known collectively as the Federal TRIO Programs. The McNair Program seeks to increase the attainment of Ph.D. degrees by students from underrepresented segments of society. Under this program, higher education institutions compete for grants which prepare eligible students for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. McNair serves:

1. Groups underrepresented in graduate education, as defined in the McNair Program regulations,
2. Low-income individuals who are first generation college students, and
3. Groups underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) as documented by standard statistical references or other national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary.

Funding History

The last McNair competition prior to fiscal year (FY) 2012 was conducted in FY 2007. Congress also appropriated additional funds in FY 2009 to fund additional projects from the FY 2007 competition. The total funding for the McNair Program in FY 2007 was \$49,123,529 for 200 new and continuing McNair grant awards serving a total of 5,610 participants. The average award amount was \$237,970 to serve an average of 27 participants.

Beginning with the FY 2012 competition, successful McNair applicants have a five-year grant cycle. The FY 2012 amount allotted for the McNair Program included a \$10 million decrease in discretionary funding from the FY 2011 level of approximately \$46.2 million to \$36.1 million. The \$10 million was reallocated to support the Upward Bound Math and Science (UBMS) Program in order to demonstrate the Department's commitment to improve STEM-based programs and to further the Administration's goal of strengthening the advancement of the nation's STEM-trained graduates.

Funding Band

The Department is statutorily required to conduct a second review of unsuccessful applications. The funding band for the FY 2012 McNair Program competition included applications scoring above 110.67 and below 113 total points. There were 174 applications which scored below the funding band cut-off of 110.67. Those applications that scored below the funding band were not eligible for a second review.

Applicants who scored within the funding band were notified that they could request a second peer review of their applications. The initial funding band included 25 applications. After correcting an administrative error, one additional application was included in the funding band for a total of 26 in the funding band. Represented in this group were nine new applicants not funded in the FY 2007 competition and seventeen currently funded grantees.

Of the twenty-six eligible applicants, six requested a second review. Upon review of these six requests, Departmental staff determined that none of the applicants provided adequate documentation to justify a second peer review of their applications. Since there were no second peer reviews of any applications in the funding band, each retained its original competitive score.

Award Facts

The Department received 334 applications of which 306 were deemed eligible and were reviewed.

In FY 2012 the Department awarded a total of \$31,810,191 on the first McNair slate to 136 projects to serve approximately 3,840 participants. On the second FY 2012 McNair slate a total of \$3,443,516 was awarded to 15 projects to serve approximately 405 participants.

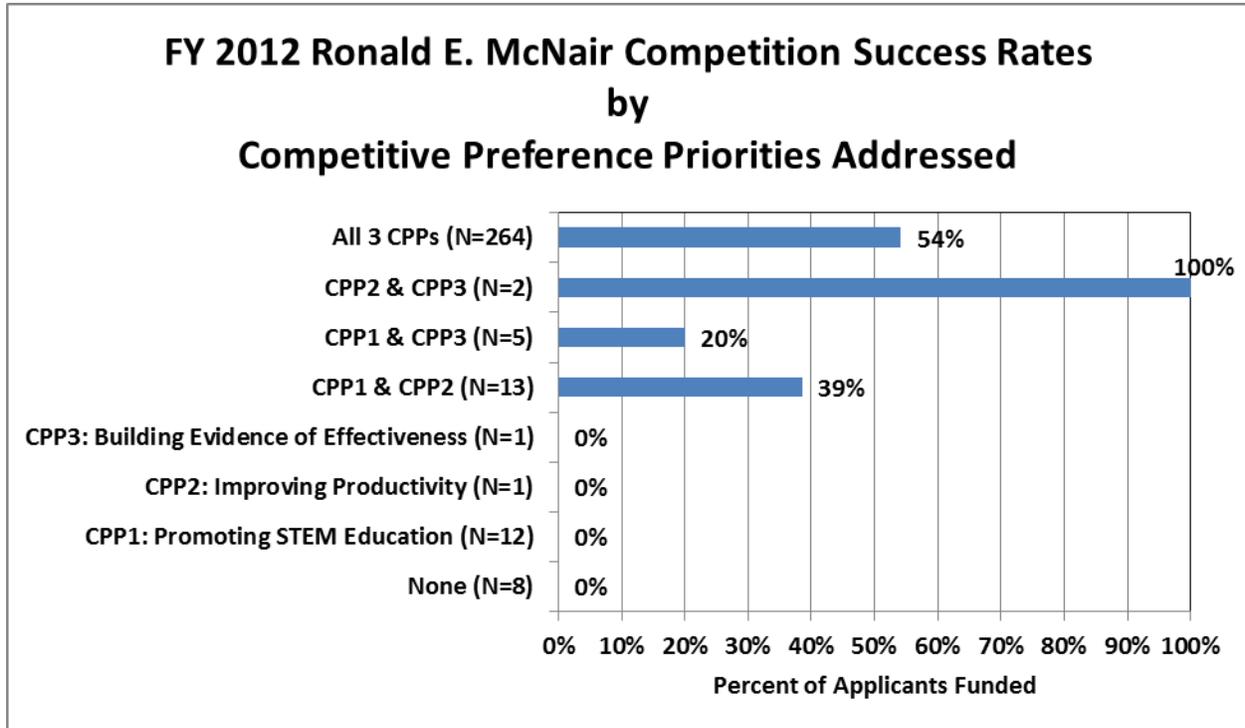
Fiscal Year 2012 McNair Program Reform

The Department took the following steps to more strategically align the McNair Program with overarching reform strategies for postsecondary completion and graduate school enrollment:

Three Competitive Preference Priorities (CPP) were introduced:

1. Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education;
2. Improving Productivity; and
3. Building Evidence of Effectiveness.

Applicants were eligible to receive up to six points for addressing CPP 1 and up to four points each for CPP 2 and CPP 3. As depicted in the table below, 100 percent of the applicants that addressed CPP 2 and CPP 3 combined were successful. Applicants that addressed CPPs 1, 2 and 3 combined had a 54 percent success rate.



Funding Formula Revision

In FY 2012 successful applicants for new McNair grants received a maximum grant of \$220,000 to serve at least 25 students.

For existing grantees proposing to serve the same campus, the Department applied a three-tiered funding strategy. The maximum award amount recommended for existing grantees was determined based on the applicant’s proposed cost per participant:

1. For an applicant currently receiving a McNair Program grant and not applying to serve a different campus, the maximum award was the amount equal to the applicant’s grant award amount for FY 2007, the first year of the previous cycle. These applicants were to continue to serve at least the same number of participants that had been approved for the current project, to the extent that continued service to the same number of participants did not result in a per participant cost of more than \$8,800.

2. For any applicant that proposed to serve fewer than the minimum number of 25 participants, the maximum award amount that could be requested was an amount equal to \$8,800 per participant.
3. Applicants serving more than 25 participants could, however, reduce the number of students served, as long as their cost per participant did not exceed \$8,800.

This framework created strong incentives for applicants to try to serve additional students, while leaving an option which allowed those who were not able to be as efficient to remain in the competition.

The per-student levels were based on proposed costs, meaning grantees that had been above these levels in their prior grants had the opportunity to adjust their funding in their new applications.

Fiscal Year 2012 Competition Issues

Public Comment Registered

Unhappiness with the Decreased Funding for the FY 2012 McNair Program Grant Competition

During the public comment period for the McNair Program application, we received numerous recommendations that the Department reconsider the planned \$10 million reduction in McNair funding. Concerns were voiced about the anticipated impact of the decreased funding on the number of awards that would be funded for the FY 2012 McNair Program competition. The members of the public who commented suggested that the Department had not provided a valid rationale for the decision to reallocate \$10 million of funding within TRIO. These members of the public, along with members of Congress, expressed concern that the Administration had not acknowledged the successes of the McNair Program nationwide in contributing to the graduation of students with bachelors' degrees and their subsequent enrollment in graduate studies, including in the STEM fields. Third, members of the public who commented thought that maintaining the number of awards at 200 projects would positively impact the President's 2020 goal.

In response, the Department maintained that the decision to shift TRIO funding from McNair to Upward Bound Math/Science promoted the achievement of the 2020 college completion goal by: (1) targeting more TRIO dollars to activities designed to improve college access and completion (instead of activities promoting doctoral study under McNair); (2) increasing the Department's investment in STEM; and (3) increasing the overall number of students served under TRIO by an estimated net 900 students.

Impact of the Funding Formulas on Eligibility

As described in the Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards published in the **Federal Register**, the maximum award amount for existing grantees recommended for funding was determined based on the applicant's proposed per participant cost. Funding guidelines required prior grantees to meet two criteria: (1) propose an award amount not to exceed the FY 2007 award amount; and (2) propose a per participant cost not to exceed \$8,800. During the second review process, two prior grantees recommended for funding were identified as exceeding the allowable costs per participant.

The Department determined that applicants whose costs per participant were not consistent with the Notice had likely made calculation errors that may have been caused by misunderstanding the funding guidelines. Therefore, in order to remain consistent with the approach the Department used for the first McNair slate, we adjusted the award amount for these two prior grantees such that per participant costs did not exceed \$8,800. This meant making small adjustments in the level of requested funds. This approach had a minimal effect on the budgets for these applicants while maintaining the integrity of the published funding formulae.

Status of Existing McNair Grantees

Out of 200 previously funded McNair Program grantees, in the FY 2012 competition:

- 145 were successful (72.5 percent)
- 55 were unsuccessful (26.5 percent)
 - Fifty-two were ultimately unsuccessful in the competition (six were NCCs¹.)
 - One submitted an ineligible application (This applicant was an NCC.)
 - Two did not re-apply

¹ NCCs (noncompeting continuations) were awarded to successful grantees with one or more years remaining from a previous competition.

Appendices

Impact on Currently Funded Minority Serving Institutions

Minority Serving Institutions (MSI)	Number of Currently-Funded McNair Projects Which Reapplied	Number of Applications Recommended for Funding	Success Rate of Current Grantees
All Current Grantees	197	145	74%
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)	14	4	29%
Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)	22	15	68%
Tribal Colleges and Universities	0	0	NA
Asian American and Native American Pacific Islanders (AANAPIS)	13	9	69%
Multiple MSI ²	5	3	60%
Total MSIs	54	31	57%

McNair Competition Success Rate

Applicants Type	Total Number of Eligible Applications	Number of Applications Recommended for Funding	Success Rate
All Applications	306	151	49%
Applications from Current Grantees ³	197	145	74%
Applications for New Grants	109	6	6%

² The "Multiple" category includes institutions that meet the criteria for a Hispanic Serving Institution and an Asian American, Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution.

³ Two currently-funded projects did not re-apply and one submitted an ineligible application (e.g., late).

Ronald E. McNair Program Competition Applicant Institution Profile

FY 2012 Ronald E. McNair Program Competition Applicant Institution Profile		
	Funded	Not Funded
Public 4 Year Institutions (N=228)	48%	52%
Private 4 Year Institutions (N=78)	53%	47%
Not an MSI (N=219)	54%	46%
AANAPISI (N=13)	62%	39%
AANAPISI & ANNH (N=2)	0%	100%
AANAPISI & HSI (N=11)	46%	55%
HSI (N=32)	47%	53%
HBCU (N=29)	14%	86%
Urban (N=258)	51%	49%
Rural (N= 48)	42%	58%
City - Large	48%	52%
City - Midsize	48%	52%
City - Small	48%	52%
Suburb - Large	52%	48%
Suburb - Midsize	67%	33%
Suburb - Small	50%	50%
Town - Fringe	50%	50%
Town - Distant	63%	38%
Town - Remote	50%	50%
Rural - Fringe	31%	69%
Rural - Distant	0%	100%

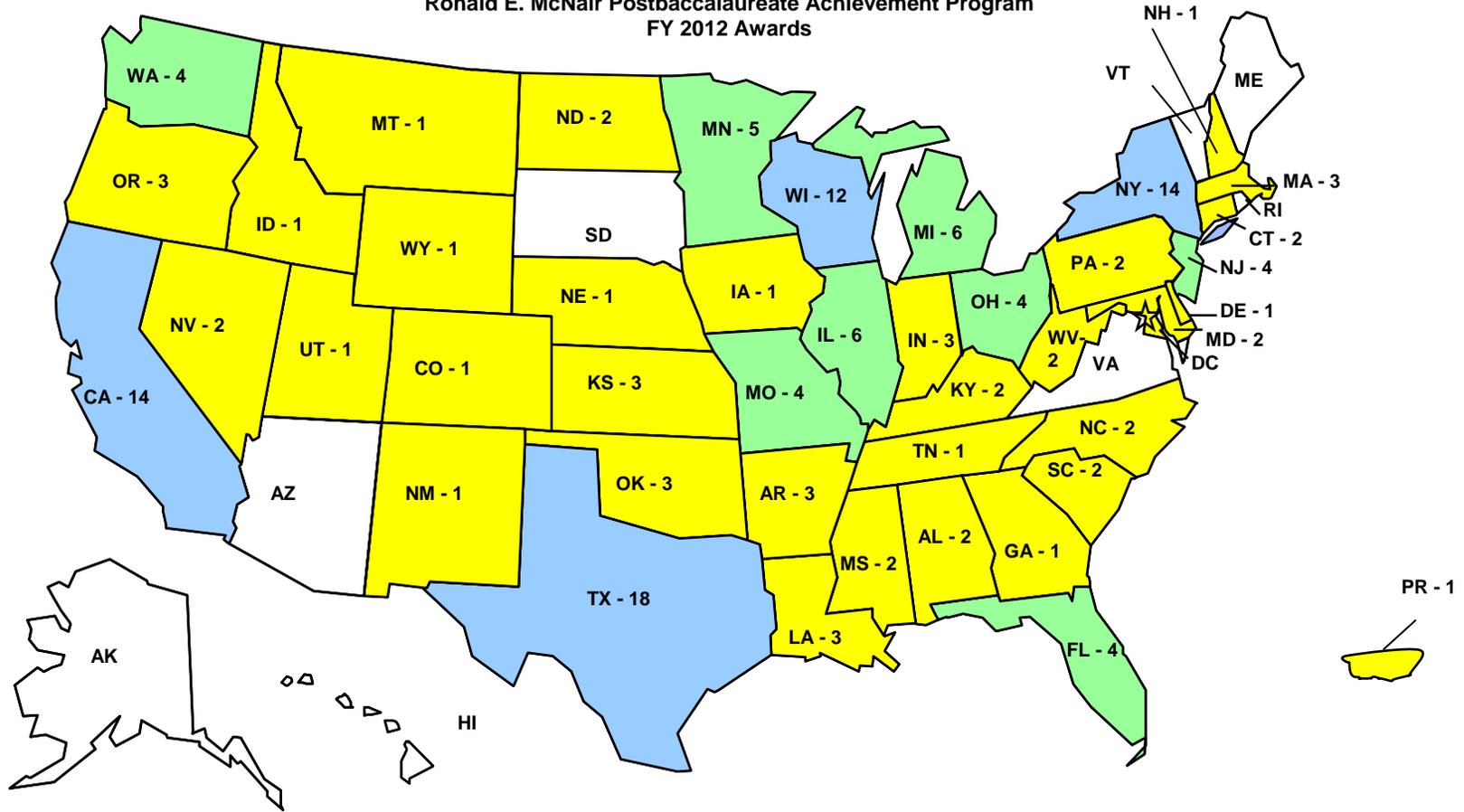
McNair Program Competition Breakdown by State and Number of Students Served

State	Number of Projects	Number of Students to Be Served
AL	2	56
AR	3	52
CA	14	408
CO	1	30
CT	2	50
DE	1	25
FL	4	105
GA	1	29
IA	1	26
ID	1	26
IL	6	182
IN	3	95
KS	3	87
KY	2	53
LA	3	94
MA	3	82
MD	2	61
MI	6	183
MN	5	143
MO	4	114
MS	2	54
MT	1	25
NC	2	25
ND	2	57
NE	1	27
NH	1	32
NJ	4	107
NM	1	28
NV	2	57
NY	14	425
OH	4	112
OK	3	81
OR	3	82
PA	2	63
PR	1	32
SC	2	57
TN	1	29
TX	18	498
UT	1	27
WA	4	110
WI	12	328
WV	2	55
WY	1	33
TOTAL	151	4245

The map of the United States, on the following page, displays the total number of Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program grants awarded, by state, in fiscal year 2012. The following states and territory have one award: Colorado; Delaware; Georgia; Idaho; Iowa; Montana; Nebraska; New Hampshire; New Mexico; Puerto Rico; Tennessee; Utah; and Wyoming. The following states have two awards: Alabama; Connecticut; Kentucky; Maryland; Mississippi; North Carolina; North Dakota; Nevada; Pennsylvania; South Carolina; and West Virginia. The following states have three awards: Arkansas; Indiana; Kansas; Louisiana; Massachusetts; Oklahoma; and Oregon. The following states have four awards: Florida; Missouri; New Jersey; Ohio; and Washington. The following state has five awards: Minnesota. The following states have six awards: Illinois and Michigan. The following states have more than seven awards: California (14); New York (14); Texas (18); and Wisconsin (12). All other states, territories, and provinces were not awarded grants in fiscal year 2012.

Grant Recipients by State

Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program
FY 2012 Awards



Others Not on the Map

Guam – 0 awards Palau – 0 awards
 Federated States of Micronesia – 0 awards

