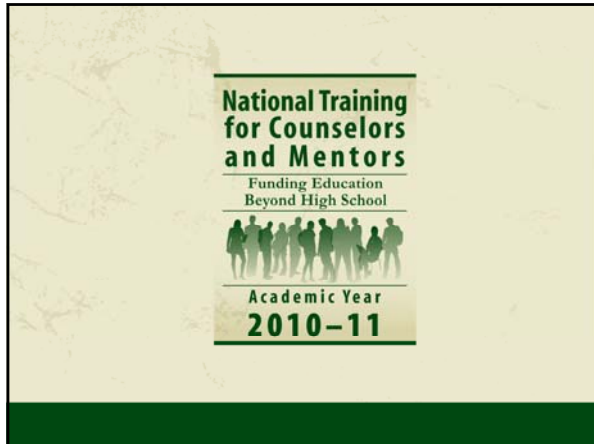
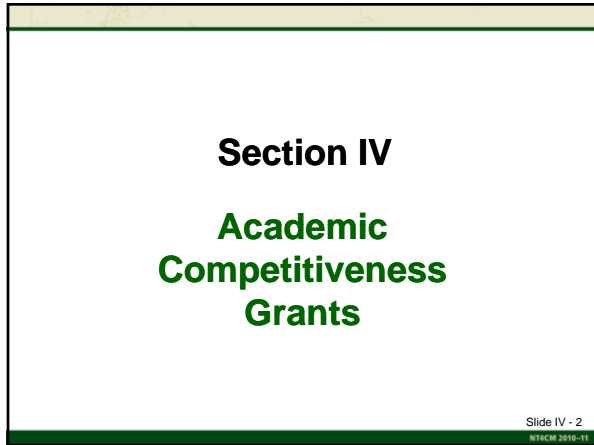
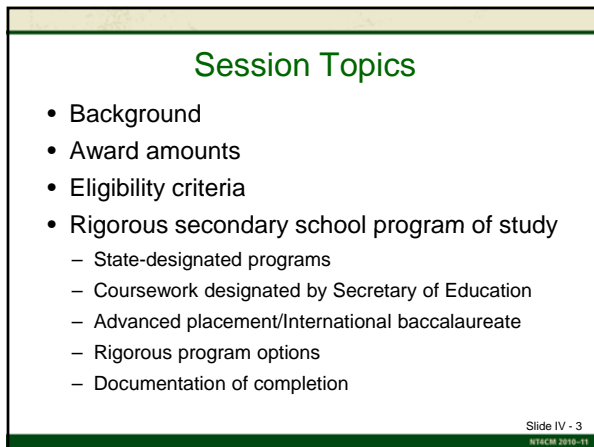


Section IV: Academic Competitiveness Grants







Section IV: Academic Competitiveness Grants

Session Topics

- Student application process
- Role of counselors
- Resources

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Background

- One of two grant programs created by The Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (HERA)
 - National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent, or SMART, Grants for third- and fourth-year students
- Purpose of programs
 - To encourage students to be academically prepared for college
 - To encourage states to develop rigorous programs

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Award Amounts

- Up to \$750 for first-year students
- Up to \$1,300 for second-year students

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Eligibility Criteria

- Completion of a rigorous secondary school program
- Federal Pell Grant recipient for same award year
- First- or second-year student in a:
 - Two- or four-year degree program, or
 - One- or two-year certificate program offered at a two- or four-year degree-granting institution

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Additional Eligibility Criteria: Second-year Students

Have at least a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in an eligible program at end of freshman year of college

- GPA only checked once at end of first year

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Rigorous Secondary School Program of Study

- State-designated programs
- Coursework designated by Secretary of Education
- Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB)

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State-designated Programs

- An advanced or honors diploma established by a state and in existence for the 2004-05 school year or later
- State Scholars Initiative
- Program designated by state as rigorous

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Coursework Designated by Secretary of Education

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I and at least one higher level class)
- 3 years of science (biology, chemistry, physics)
- 3 years of social studies
- 1 year of a foreign language

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AP/IB

Successful completion of any secondary school program for a student who completes at least two courses with a minimum passing test score on the exams in those courses

- Score of at least 3 for AP exams
- Score of at least 4 for IB exams

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Rigorous Program Options

- All states have at least one designated rigorous program
- Students from every state have at least three ways to meet rigorous program requirement

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Documentation of Completion

- Colleges required to collect and retain documentation that a student meets at least one of the options
- Colleges may document the program option that is the most efficient for them
 - Students may be eligible under more than one definition of rigorous program

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Student Application Process:
FAFSA on the Web

- Submit FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Respond to prompts if data indicates possible eligibility
- Wait for follow-up contact from school

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Student Application Process: Paper FAFSA

- *Student Aid Report (SAR)* indicates possible eligibility
- SAR includes toll-free number for Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)
 - Students can call FSAIC for answers to questions about eligibility

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Student Application Process: Self-identification

- Student self-identifies to financial aid office at college in person or in writing
- Student has to submit documentation

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Role of Counselors

- Tell students about ACG program
- Encourage students to take rigorous courses
- Provide documentation of completion of rigorous program in a timely manner
 - To students or directly to colleges
- Inform students enrolled in AP or IB courses of the importance of taking course exams
- Emphasize importance of first-year GPA

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Section IV: Academic Competitiveness Grants

Resources

[ACG Recognized State Rigorous Secondary School Programs of Study:](http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html)
www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html

- Rigorous high school program codes
- Programs listed by graduation year
- "Submit a question" feature

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Questions?



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