

Transcript of Questions from Strauss Webinar on Zoom- October 2020.

Begin 30:05

I currently host a project for health education for immigrants. I recruit participants from a number of local resettlement organizations. Will this require letters of support from every organization I'm working with?

For certain projects we do require Letters of Support from the organization you work with. WE have college students doing a project in partnership with the local middle or high schools. The question we ask is "Have you even talked to that middle school or high school to get their approval to do your project at their school?" If the answer is "no", you can understand from our perspective, if you don't get that approval, your whole project falls apart. This is what we mean by Letters of Support from organizations you work with. This is not from organizations that you recruit from but where your project will effectively take place.

NT: If you don't already have an established relationship with an organization and you're thinking of applying in this coming year, I suggest that you wait a year if you're a sophomore. The organizations that you really need letters of mutual acceptance (much like Aram's experience) would be working in any of the correctional facilities, jails, juvenile halls, things like that, in any school at any level, and any medical facility or medically related organization. You need to have a letters of understanding/mutual cooperation. There may be other situations but those three for sure. We don't seriously consider an application if there isn't that kind of Letter of Support included in the application for those kind of projects.

To the original question, In this case "NO" because you are recruiting people to work with you from certain organizations so no you don't need a letter that says "person is recruiting from our organization". If you're doing a project at or in partnership with/in conjunction with a school, correctional facility, etc. you do need a letter. We mean Letters of Support from organizations that you establish a relationship partnership/conjunction with.

Can we do a project as part of an internship?

This is intended to be a project that takes place during your school year. So summer projects or an internship that has a beginning and an end date, and nothing after that, are definitely not something we fund. A summer tutoring project or whatever that ends, but say you have an internship at an organization that is part of your bigger project, then that's totally fine. You can explain to us how your internship fits into your larger project. This is not intended to fund an 8-10 week summer gig, but it's okay if some of your work you do over the summer is part of your project.

NT: Main focus, your project has to be yours, not doing something for someone else; it may be in conjunction, but your project needs to have your initials on it, your stamp.

Is work authorization required? Can non-DACA students participate?

Yes. As long as you're a registered college student at one of our authorized campuses and you go through our process, through your Campus Rep, you're eligible.

Will we get these slides?

Yes, we can post these online. WE were planning on posting the video with the slides, but we'll post these slides on our website as well, and we'll tell the Campus Reps as well where to find them.

Do you fund advocacy projects?

Advocacy on housing justice

Our goal – the project has to be something in the world of social change, not meant to be a for-profit corporation, so projects can be advocating for causes you believe in, absolutely.

Absolutely, some of our favorite projects are advocacy projects.

Where can we find our campus representative?

On the website [straussfoundation.org], Apply, Contacts and Deadlines. The contact information for your Campus Rep can be found there.

How do co-applications work? With multiple people applying.

We allow up to 2 people to apply together. You applying by yourself or with a co-applicant. The application that we see is separate resumes, separate personal statements. The project is a combined project so you don't have to submit that twice. We encourage you to write that together- its helpful to understand each of your respective roles- why you aren't applying individually. Each have to have Letters of Recommendations.

It is a little like two applications. When two people do a project together, we see two separate applications except the project description we want to see separate roles and each of the applicants has to have Letters of Recommendation. The award is still \$15,000 and you'll be splitting both the work and the money. It's still the same split: \$8000 for project, and \$7000 for Scholarship which you can split 50/50 for your Scholarship.

Are you ineligible if you're a college senior?

Yes, if you're entering your final year of college, you aren't eligible. Our award is for sophomores and juniors. If you're entering your last year of undergrad, you aren't eligible.

I actually don't know if some people are in a 5th year Masters program so they're technicallyI don't know if we've ever had that happen? Sally is saying "no", and she is the Chair. So no. Sophomores or Juniors.

Is it OK if my project proposal is a new project and not a project that I start in college?

Absolutely, we encourage you to propose a project that you're excited about and you're going to work on. You definitely don't need to have already made a lot of progress on, necessarily.

Yes but make sure you have a lot of passion for it because it goes all year and you still have to have school. Make sure it's something you really want to do, not "this will be a great way to get some extra

money". Make sure it's something you want to do. Think about the passion. will need to work very hard it. Behind closed doors, when we're deciding the winners, we are going to be asking "why is this person doing this project? " The passion is more important than something you have already worked on that you're less passionate about.

I run a nonprofit that works with students from colleges and universities all over the united states, we work with senior citizen centers, do I need letters of support from each one?

No, but it would be a good idea to have a letter from one of them who Ideally talks about their experience working with you. If it's dependent on one specific large center then, with hundreds and hundreds of seniors and you want to work just with them. Then absolutely, you need a letter from them. If you have multiple ones you intend to work with, you'd be best served by including a letter from one of them explaining why they want to work with you or how they have worked with you so far .

Since all Strauss scholars are full time students how do they do a project for a full year, not just a summer, how have Fellows managed to conduct projects in locations that they don't live?

Obviously, if you propose a project in an area outside of where you live, we're going to figure out if we believe how you're going to implement it. We had a project from a student that didn't live in Oakland, but her project was in Oakland. She would travel to Oakland every so often I want to say every couple of months, for a weekend. She recruited a volunteer who was on the ground in Oakland. Many times a letter of support will help where the partner organization will explain how the work , for example a curriculum, where you're designing a curriculum to do an after school thing, at a particular school outside of the area you're in, and there's a teacher who's taking the lead to teach that after-school curriculum to their students, then that teacher is your leader at that school. If you're implementing a project outside your local geography, you'll have to explain how you'll implement it in that geography- by a partner or volunteer

I'm a fourth year undergrad going into a fifth undergrad year, not for a Masters, be able to apply ?

As long as you are full time student, yes. You are effectively a Junior, 5th year Senior. Because you're not in your final year of Undergrad. You must be in your final year of undergrad.

Are these required meetings after you get the award or while you are applying?

The meetings are after you get the award , the Regional Meetings and the like, and we pay for your transportation to come. The end of the year meeting in April is at UCI campus or close by, and we pay to fly Northern Californian students to fly down and gas for the Southern Californians; everyone stays a night in a hotel.

Are international students eligible?

Yes, as long as you're a full- time registered student at one of our participating campuses.

If there's a lesson part of our project should we include a draft of the lessons in the proposal, or should we just mention it in our application?

A lesson part of the project should I include a draft or just mention it?

NT: Applications in the past, if there were Bullit point topics or subjects that would be in lessons, as an example, maybe like dietary or food education- indicate very briefly,diabetic health, cardiac health without going into great detail - Just to give an idea of topics you want to cover. One event: If it's like a lesson plan- one lesson- "we're going to do fusion today, how they're going to do it - with ping-pong balls." Just as an example.

Best to briefly give an idea of the lessons maybe using bullet points or one example.

Is there an interview process?

It may come as a shock to people because the dollar amount of the award is high, \$15,000 – one of the larger Scholarships, going for twenty plus years, so in terms of track record and longevity and money, the shocking answer is no. Why this is actually quite interesting for us. It also means your application should be that much more airtight. That's what we're going to go on. If we have a question on your application, something we don't understand in your proposal we will not reach out to you, it'll hurt you in your process if something is unclear. We do not have an interview to clarify.

This is part of the DNA, as a Trustee and a former Scholar, of what makes this place really special. We really trust you. Your project as implemented, we aren't going to assign somebody to effectively be Chairman of your Board, and tell you what to do afterwards; we aren't going to give you the award and say "we like the person not the project" let's give the award and then give a totally different project to do. We don't do that. Our goal is to really trust you on Day One, even through the application process. So, no, there's not an interview. It's because it's part of our DNA of really trusting our Scholars.

NT: My mother, [Dorothy Strauss] was the originator of this Foundation and was an English teacher, and while she always made accommodations for second language learners grammatically, the proposal, your application, had better be correct. We always honor her memory by making sure that the projects that we select are well-written. All the more reason to have someone else read it, listen to you, but particularly read, and proof- read it, edit it, don't rely just on auto correct.

How niche should projects be, in terms of location? I have a project that is applicable in multiple countries, should it be instead focused in one place?

However you want to focus the geography of your project, however you think it can be best implemented. We encourage you to go that route. If on Day One, If you think it's best served to launch in multiple countries, great.

Generally speaking, showing proof of concept in one place, and launching in one place successfully and expanding, has historically proved to be more fruitful for our students.

NT: If you're planning on doing something international, if you're going to be the lead person or whoever you get to be the lead person, better speak that language. Otherwise, I'm not interested.

Do Scholarship recipients need to be a full time student throughout the course of the project year?

Yes

How have past Scholars continue funding their projects?

One of the things we don't mention, it's a secret benefit, you will receive, assuming we continue the program, we have a partnership with another organization that actually has a crowd funding platform that's free. So unlike a 5-6 percent fee, you would be able to launch a crowd funding campaign using our Strauss partnership with this other organization where the first \$10,000 is 0 fees, and then only 2% after that.

So one example would be through crowd funding, but supported by us. My own personal example, after getting the Strauss, I applied for other grants from others. I was able to successfully get that. That has to be your own initiative, we'll help you with that. So you won't be alone, We know applying for money alone is hard.

How many applicants do you accept?

Each school nominates up to 3 and typically our winner count has been, the lowest has been 11, but the range is assumed to be 10-15.

To make sure that the Letter of Support is in addition to two letters of recommendation or one of the two letters? If they are going to do a project at a correctional facility, should they have 3 total letters?

Yes.

I have an internship from June – December, 2021.

Answer is the same. If that internship somehow ties into your project, that's fine, but the project is a full year, so if there's nothing related to your project afterwards, then there isn't a full year project, you wouldn't be eligible.

When it comes to the multiplier effect if you attach to an organization or department in the University from which you recruited members, is that a way to show multiplier effect in our proposal?

How can we demonstrate in our application that we will be able to recruit people?

When thinking about the multiplier effect, think about it in this framework: Is this just going to be a project that's going to help a few people one time or is it going to be something that can multiply and be bigger? From that framework, there's lots of ways it can go, if it's to become attached to a University and is an ongoing thing that recruits people every year. That definitely has a multiplier effect.

How can we demonstrate that you can recruit people? I don't think the bar is that high. I think we trust that our applicants will be able to recruit but it would be good if you can show a track record: "I've

already recruited somebody”, “we had a flyer to recruit people and 35 people sign-ups, and we’re going to interview them for 2 positions”. Things like that help us understand that you are able to recruit. By no means do you need big, immutable proof of ability to recruit.

When you have two applicants, can someone write a shared letter if we both have one person who knows us?

I think that’s okay, but you should ask “is that really the only person?”. You only have to get 2. Is there really, out of all the people who could talk about each of you, is there really one person who particularly happens to know both of you that well? We would look at that as an odd thing. I don’t think we’ve ever had that happen, at least since I’ve joined the Board. If you feel very strongly, ask your Campus Rep and yourself “is this really the best way , Is there really just one person who knows you really well?” If you feel very strongly, ask your Campus Reps. I would err on the side of “no”. If you really have an exception, reach out to us and we can talk about it.

NT: With Letters of Rec, we really learn about you. So, if there’s two of you, we’ll learn something about each of you with each letter. Which is a better way to go than a shared letter.

We don’t want to say no, but it will probably hurt your application.

Can Co- Applicants be from different schools, as long as they are from campuses we support?

Yes

Doing a project abroad, how do they work to make the projects full time during the academic year? How are international projects year long?

We get a lot of projects abroad, Kenya and India this year. You can spend the time abroad summer and return at winter break., they explain very clearly how they’re going to continue to implement things there. For example, this year we had a project which was to take place in India.

There’s one project this year that was supposed to be in India, on health and diet- related project. They were going to make a manual for healthy eating for that specific group in India, and then go there and continue to implement it on the ground and continue to implement the manual over there.

In the global world of zoom and technology we expect you to be able to continue doing things to make an impact whether you’re on the ground there or not. It’s your job to explain how you will. Dozens have been able to do this successfully, so we know it can be done.

Do we get extra space in the project description to explain a plan A and plan B in case we need to be remote?

Yes, if you want to assume your project will be in person, but you want an extra addendum – a one pager- we’re definitely open to you not forcing it into your description. Here’s an addendum to say “ if I’m forced to go remote here’s key changes in my project” . An addendum can describe how you will proceed if forced to go remote. One page.

Can a project have two possible partner organizations?

Yes, so if you're doing a project at two correctional facilities, encourage you to at least have a letter from one of them if not both. Probably both. But if you are saying, "I'm going to do it at one for sure, and possibly at a second", you definitely need a letter from the first. If you are saying, "my project depends on being implemented at doing it at two places", then you need a letter from both.

Can the money from our project be used to pay people who help us implement it or just for supplies?

We are fully aware that giving somebody a \$1000 or \$500 stipend to be part of your project, you can attract more talent, and they'll be more motivated because they're being paid something, that's fine.

I plan on graduating a semester early, am I eligible?

No, if you're graduating in December 2021, the point of the project is April to April, and so unfortunately, your project wouldn't be a project year, and we fund project years. So we wouldn't be able to do that

Add on to question on lessons, planning to make a prerecorded lecture in case quarantine continues would including an example of this just a transcript of it or a link to it. Would it be included or excluded from 4 page part of the proposal?

This would be part of one page addendum. If project is fully remote, this you would be doing prerecorded lecture. "Heres' a link to an example of what that prerecorded lecture would look like". Not part of 4 pages but an exhibit of what your project would look like in a covid world.

If a co applicant attends a different school how would your nomination work?

Example of one person is from Berkeley and one from UCLA, you have to be nominated by one, not both. For purposes of this, we would treat it, count it as one of the three from that nominating institution.

If two students apply from for a single project, does it count one or two nominees.

One nominee. One project, each can have up to two people.

Can you mention that the campuses are limited to the number of proposals they can send forward? Thus, applicants need to meet the Campus deadline and part of the process may include a campus interview.

We do not take applications directly. Please apply, please be thoughtful about your application. Also know who your Campus Rep is, they are there to help you. Go to them and say "this is what I'm thinking about"- bounce ideas off them. Make sure to Apply by their deadline, not ours. So, many of them will have an on campus interview, or will have follow ups you need to do before they submit to us. WE have had cases where the person hasn't met the Campus deadline, and the Campus Reps feel badly. It might have been a great application but since the proposal didn't get submitted by campus deadline, it can't get sent.

The Campus Rep is your friend, use them, They're there for you.