

I am applying for BIO parent grant because as an international student from a very poor country I have no options for support other than my department. I am not eligible for any loans from US institutions or banks, and most of the time I am not eligible for fellowships that are circulated by my department as they are restricted to citizens or permanent residents. I can not hope for any support from my home country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, since it is a country with one of the highest unemployment rates in the world. Although I am citizen of UK too, I have not been a resident in the UK for 15 years and therefore, by UK laws, I am not established or eligible for any support.

My only sources of support throughout my PhD are my department, my own work, and my partner. This year, circumstances have changed with regards to all those sources, and the amount of money I get has been significantly reduced. At the same time, my family size and living situation has changed so that my expenses have increased.

My department funding for the entire 2015/2016 year has been reduced to 4000. Entering into a PhD I was given 10000, with a promise that as I advance through my degree I will get more funding. The reverse has been true, even though I am maintaining normative time and fulfilling all my requirements. The following year the department will likely give me no funding at all.

I have also maintained two jobs, GSI and GSR. The GSR has now terminated because the research project I was working on is finished.

My family situation has changed quite a lot too. In July last year I had a second child. This necessitated moving to a different, bigger housing. Also, in order to be nearer child care and nearer campus I had to move to Berkeley, this has caused long commute hours for my partner, therefore less hours of work therefore less earning for him. At the same time his expenses have increased due to commute because he can no longer bicycle to work. Our rent and travel are more expensive, yet our earnings are smaller.

Additionally, I now have two children in day care, which has doubled the day care costs, and also increased the rate of babysitting services. Furthermore, since SHIP insurance discontinued, as of a few months ago to support dependants, my children's health care is an out of pocket expense every time.

Finally, last year I had an operation to remove high grade pre cancerous ovarian cells. This continues to be an issue that has to be monitored regularly and is not something that is covered by insurance.

My plan, in case I do not get funding from BIO is for either my partner to borrow money from his employer, or for myself to try and work more (although I am already a GSI at 50%) which would slow down my degree progress. Neither my partner nor I have any living family, so those would be the only options. I am trying to work through my requirements as fast as I can, in order to graduate as soon as possible, given the expenses. Since our children have only my partner and myself, it is very important for me to show them that hard work and determination pay off eventually. Both of my children are US citizens, this is their country and it is important for me they realize that opportunities and support exist here.

I hope you will be able to offer me some support this year. Many thanks.