



June 6, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin the FY 2026 appropriations process, we thank you for your substantial support for our nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) in prior years. African American communities continue to experience disproportionate educational and economic challenges. Continued increased investment during FY2026 in these institutions with demonstrated positive educational and economic impact would help our communities greatly.

Collectively, HBCUs and PBIs have minimal institutional wealth and serve more than 700,000 primarily first-generation, low-income and minority students whose personal finances present special challenges to educational success. Students who attend these institutions rely disproportionately on federal assistance when compared to their peers at other institutions. For example, greater than 70 percent of students who attend four-year HBCUs depend on Federal Pell Grants for their education, a substantially greater share than the 32 percent of students at other four-year, nonprofit colleges and universities.ⁱ PBIs are required to meet stringent eligibility requirements related to student enrollment, family income, institutional wealth, and percentage of minority students, including serving at least 50 percent low-income or first-generation students.

HBCUs are the cornerstone of higher education for the African American community and make a considerable economic impact in our nation. For over a hundred years, HBCUs have served as an engine of social mobility for millions of students. Although HBCUs comprise only three percent of all colleges and universities, they graduate a high percentage of Black professionals in our country, including: 30 percent of Black STEM undergraduates; 45% of Black engineers; 55% of Black lawyers; 80% of Black judges; and 50% of Black public school teachers.ⁱⁱ Further, HBCUs comprise 8 of the top 10 institutions that graduate the largest number of African Americans who earn doctoral degrees in science and engineering.ⁱⁱⁱ PBIs represent an increasing cadre of four-year and two-year institutions that serve as the access point for a growing number of urban and rural Black students whose personal and financial situations inhibit their ability to pursue higher education in many states.

Given their success in educating African American students, these institutions play a key role in addressing the education gap for Black students and in growing our economy. Only 17.3% of Black

adults aged 25 or older have a Bachelor's degree, and only 1.5% have a doctoral degree.^{iv} The recent report by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis documented that the return on investment of higher education is quite high, with college graduates earning substantially more than workers without a college.^v In addition, research shows that college graduates increase economic activity at both the regional and national levels, with high-value colleges contributing \$265,000 more per student to local economies.^{vi} However, African Americans are over-represented in community colleges, with 51% of African Americans attending community colleges.^{vii} Further, although STEM fields offer in-demand careers that drive economic growth, the U.S. has a lower percentage of college graduates with degrees in STEM than many countries, including China, Russia, Germany, Iran, France, and India.^{viii} Increasing the number of African American graduates with a 4-year degree, and specifically in STEM fields, is essential to helping the U.S. remain competitive globally and strong economically.

Unfortunately, HBCUs have endured over 100 years of disparate treatment by state and federal policymakers - treatment that has compounded over time, leaving them under-resourced compared to peer institutions. Further, HBCUs and PBIs have suffered disproportionately from the implementation of unfavorable federal policies in recent years. To illustrate, cuts to Title III Institutional Aid, modifications to Pell Grant eligibility requirements, and restrictions on federal loans together resulted in a loss of more than \$250 million in federal support. The expiration of the only HBCU mandatory funding during the 116th Congress for approximately eight months placed the HBCU community in a dire state. Such cuts are especially challenging for HBCUs and PBIs given that they are under-resourced institutions with less financial capacity to tap endowments or other savings to offset cuts.

Given that the communities we represent rely on these institutions to educate our students, uplift our neighborhoods, and revitalize our local economies, we urge you to increase investment in HBCUs and PBIs so that they can continue delivering educational experiences that prepare the next generation of leaders with the skills needed to strengthen our economy and improve the well-being of our nation. We appreciate your consideration of our requests. The amounts that follow are the minimum levels of funding needed to restore federal investment in HBCUs and PBIs. Although we support funding of new programs, we do not endorse cutting already-established HBCU or PBI accounts to fund new programs. In addition, we urge you to support hundreds of thousands of students served by HBCUs and PBIs by increasing federal student aid programs targeted to low-income students, specifically the Pell Grant Program. African American families generally have lower assets and incomes, making federal financial aid critically important to college attainment. Substantially increasing federal investment in the Pell Grant program will strengthen the economic well-being of low-income students and college affordability.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter, please contact Morgan Bodenarain. Thank you for your consideration.

TOP 10 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS ACROSS SUBCOMMITTEES

1. **LHHS:** Title III, Parts A, B, C, and F
 - **LHHS:** Strengthening Predominantly Black Institutions (Title III, Part A and F), \$75 million discretionary/\$25 million mandatory;
 - **LHHS:** Strengthening HBCUs Undergraduate Program (Title III, Part B and F), \$514 million discretionary/\$86 million mandatory;
 - **LHHS:** Strengthening HBCUs Graduate Program (Title III, Part B), \$130 million;
 - **LHHS:** Endowment Challenge Grants (Title III, Part C), \$200 million

2. **LHHS:** HBCU Capital Financing Program (Title III, Part D), \$20.7 million, and Raise Statutory Cap on Loan Guarantees;
3. **LHHS:** Master's Degree Programs at HBCUs and PBIs (Title VII), \$26 million
4. **AG:** 1890 Research, Education, Extension, and Facility Programs, \$387 million;
5. **NSF:** HBCU STEM programs – LSAMP, HBCU-UP, AGEP, CREST, \$175 million;
6. **NSF:** HBCU Research - Excellence in Research \$27 million, NSF INCLUDES, \$230 million;
7. **DOD:** HBCU/Minority Institutions Program, \$575 million
8. **INTERIOR:** HBCU Historic Preservation Program, \$130 million, with bill language waiving the matching requirement;
9. **LHHS:** HBCUs Centers of Innovation: College Success, \$15 million; Teacher Diversity, \$25 million; STEM \$75 million; and Social Justice \$50 million; and
10. **HUD:** HBCU Grant Program, \$15 million; University Community Fund, \$15 million.

Agriculture

1890 Education and Facility Programs – Congress provides resources to American public land-grant universities, including many HBCUs, to support education and research and upgrade facilities. We ask that the House maintain its commitment to these programs by supporting small increases in allocations for 1890 Education and Facility Programs in FY 2026.

- *Evans-Allen Research Funding – \$125 million*
- *1890 Institutions Capacity Building Grants – \$30 million*
- *1890 Extension Programs – \$102 million*
- *1890 Institutions Facility Improvements – \$100 million*
- *1890 Center of Excellence - \$10 million*
- *1890 Scholarship Program - \$20 million*

Commerce-Justice-Science

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) – Minority University Research & Education Program – NASA partners with higher education institutions to ensure underrepresented students can meet future workforce needs in STEM fields. The FY 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act supported this program at \$38 million. We request a \$60 million appropriation in the FY 2026 Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – Jose E. Serrano Education Partnerships Program/Minority Serving Institutions – NOAA's Office of Education partners with HBCUs and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to increase the number of students from underrepresented communities who graduate with degrees in particular science fields. This department also provides scholarships to students to complete degrees in the STEM fields related to NOAA's mission. To ensure more scholarship support and STEM training at HBCUs and MSIs, we ask the funding level be raised to \$30 million.

National Science Foundation (NSF) – The overall U.S. science and technology workforce represents 5 percent of all U.S. jobs and has grown more rapidly over time than the total labor force. However, only one to two percent of African-American 9th graders eventually graduate with STEM degrees ten years after entering high school. We ask that your Committee increase investments to

\$175 million for the four NSF “Broadening Participation” programs that help HBCUs and MSIs bolster their STEM programs:

- *Centers for Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST)* - \$40 million
- *Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP)* - \$10 million
- *HBCU Undergraduate Program (HBCU-UP)* - \$55 million
- *Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP)* - \$70 million

HBCU Excellence in Research – In FY 2017, the Senate Appropriations Committee recommended \$10 million to establish the HBCU Excellence in Research program at the National Science Foundation. This new initiative would help build HBCU participation in larger research directorates and provide strategic opportunities for HBCUs that stimulate sustainable improvement in their research and development capacity and competitiveness. We request \$27 million for this vital program that aligns with the recommendation in the 2016 report to Congress on *Advancing Historically Black Colleges and Universities* by the Subcommittee on Advancing Historically Black Colleges and Universities of the Advisory Committee of the National Science Foundation Directorate for Education and Human Resources.

NSF INCLUDES - The National Science Foundation Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science (NSF INCLUDES), is a comprehensive national initiative designed to enhance STEM leadership, diversity, and innovation. HBCUs can serve as best practice models for other colleges and universities to further drive participation of African Americans in the STEM workforce. We request \$230 million for this program targeted to HBCUs.

Minority Institutions Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity – This program was authorized in the *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008*. Funds assist HBCUs and MSIs in improving their instrumentation, connectivity, hardware, and software for instruction and research. We support an allocation of \$75 million to improve the technological competitiveness of under-resourced institutions serving high percentages of students underrepresented in higher education.

Defense

Historically Black Colleges and Universities/Minority Institutions Program (HBCU/MI) – The HBCU/MI program supports research on HBCU campuses and helps to attract students to high-demand fields that protect our country’s national security efforts. We request that the House continue to support this important program by increasing the federal investment to \$575 million in the FY 2026 Department of Defense Appropriations bill. This investment will build and enhance STEM capabilities related to national defense priorities on HBCU campuses.

Education

Title III Strengthening Institutions Programs (Discretionary and Mandatory) – Title III programs are the cornerstone of federal support to HBCUs and PBIs, providing critical operating and capital resources for institutions. Discretionary funding provides support for undergraduate and graduate education programs and support services that are essential for student success. Additionally, Title III discretionary funding enables these under-resourced institutions to build their endowments and financial sustainability. Title III mandatory funding supplements and works in conjunction with the

discretionary formula program to enhance academic instruction at HBCUs and PBIs, especially in the STEM fields. We ask that Congress increase funding for the Title III programs in the FY 2026 LHHS Appropriations bill, including re-funding the Endowment Challenge Grant, as listed below.

- *Title III, Part B, Section 323, HBCU Undergraduate (Discretionary) - \$514 million*
- *Title III, Part F, Section 371, HBCU Undergraduate (Mandatory) - \$86 million*
- *Title III, Part B, Section 326, HBCU Graduate (Discretionary) - \$130 million*
- *Title III, Part A, Section 318, PBI Undergraduate (Discretionary) - \$75 million*
- *Title III, Part F, Section 371, PBI Undergraduate Competitive (Mandatory) - \$25 million*
- *Title VII, Sec. 723/724, Master's Degree Programs at HBCUs & PBIs (Discretionary) - \$26 million*
- *Title III, Part C, Endowment Challenge Grants - \$200 million*

Title II, Teacher Quality Enhancement, Augustus Hawkins Centers of Excellence at MSIs- This competitive grant program funds reforms within teacher preparation programs at HBCUs, PBIs, and other MSIs to address the national teacher shortage crisis and diversify the teaching profession to better reflect the student population. Research demonstrates that all students – and especially students of color – benefit from teacher diversity. For example, Black teachers are more likely to advance Black students for gifted-and-talented programs. HBCUs, PBIs, and other MSIs serve as key pipelines for awarding bachelor's degrees in education earned by people of color, even though they award only about 11% of the nation's bachelor's degrees in education. This program is named after former and late Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins and was authorized as a part of P.L. 110-315. Increased and targeted investment is needed to meet national priorities and requirements, particularly those related to building a more diverse and better-trained teaching workforce. We request an appropriation of \$35 million for FY 2026.

Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program – This program supports the participation of underrepresented minority youth in STEM through outreach and hands-on learning projects and supports a marketing campaign aimed at encouraging minorities to enter the STEM fields. We request an \$20 million appropriation for FY 2026.

HBCU Capital Financing Program – The HBCU Capital Financing program provides low-cost capital to finance physical improvements on HBCU campuses by guaranteeing and administering loans. As a result of these investments, HBCUs are able to provide students with modern learning and living environments. We urge the Committee to increase loan subsidies to \$50.5 million in FY 2026. This increase would support approximately \$20.7 million in new loans for a total annual loan volume of \$600 million. We also request appropriations language to exceed the cumulative loan guarantee statutory cap, which Congress has approved in previous years.

Howard University – Howard University was federally chartered in 1867. This appropriation provides partial support to Howard University for construction, development, improvement, endowment, and maintenance of the University and its hospital. Given the critical role of this institution in educating African-American students and aiding African-American residents in the DC region, we request \$375 million. These funds will enable this comprehensive, research-oriented, flagship institution to continue to provide a high-quality and affordable education to its predominantly African-American student body.

HBCU College Success Centers of Innovation – Using the authority provided under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), we request report language to provide \$165 million to four Centers of Innovation to improve education for African Americans: (1) College Success (\$15 million), (2) Teacher Diversity (\$25 million), (3) STEM (\$75 million), and (4) Social Justice (\$50 million). An HBCU College Success Center of Innovation could help close a significant college attainment gap between African and white Americans. Today, young African Americans between the ages of 25 and 29 are only half as likely as their white counterparts to hold a college degree, and HBCUs have a demonstrated history in graduating a large segment of the nation's student populations who are underrepresented in higher education. An HBCU Teacher Diversity Center of Innovation could accelerate the training of effective minority teachers through both traditional and nontraditional teacher training programs - a key national need given that students of color are expected to comprise 56% of the student population by 2024, yet African American teachers comprise only 7% of the current teaching workforce. An HBCU STEM Center of Innovation could dramatically reduce the racial/ethnic disparities in STEM fields, given HBCUs' documented success in graduating African-American undergraduates and graduates with STEM degrees. An HBCU Social Justice Center of Innovation could develop solutions to persistent social issues, given that HBCUs are uniquely situated to address these issues with real-time impact and first-hand knowledge of the problems. For example, many HBCUs are located in areas that are historically underserved and economically depressed, and HBCU students disproportionately navigate the challenges of poverty, inadequate healthcare, mass incarceration, and low-performing schools.

The Research and Development Infrastructure Grant Program – This critical infrastructure Grant Program under FIPSE was established under Division H of the Consolidate Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328) and provides funding to eligible institutions of higher education that are four-year HBCUs, Tribal Colleges or Universities, PBIs, and other minority serving institutions, with funds to implement transformational investments in research infrastructure, including research productivity, faculty expertise, graduate programs, physical infrastructure, human capital development, and partnerships leading to increases in external funding. We are requesting report language to provide \$350 million for this program in FY 26.

Homeland Security

Science & Technology Directorate – University Programs, Homeland Security Centers of Excellence – The Homeland Security Centers of Excellence bring together leading experts to conduct multidisciplinary research to enhance homeland security capabilities. We respectfully request \$70 million in the FY 2026 Homeland Security Appropriations bill to strengthen our nation's national security.

FEMA Nonprofit Security Grant Program - The Nonprofit Security Grant Program provides funding support for target hardening and other physical security enhancements and activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of terrorist attack. The intent is to integrate nonprofit preparedness activities with broader state and local preparedness efforts. It is also designed to promote coordination and collaboration in emergency preparedness activities among public and private community representatives, as well as state and local government agencies. Due to the alarming number of bomb threats HBCU campuses have been forced to endure since 2022, we request \$680 million for this program, with \$100 million to help harden the campuses and secure the safety of HBCUs and the students they serve.

Science & Technology Directorate – University Programs, Homeland Security Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) – The Homeland Security MSI program enhances the ability of these institutions to develop security-related STEM research and curricula as well as prepare students for successful careers in the homeland security workforce. The current two programs center on building Scientific Leadership and Summer Research opportunities in connection with the DHS Centers of Excellence. We respectfully request \$21 million in the FY 2026 Homeland Security Appropriations bill to strengthen our nation’s national security.

Housing and Urban Development

HBCU Grant Program – We request \$115 million to re-establish the HBCU Grant Program, a unique competitive grant initiative to enable Historically Black Colleges and Universities to affect positive change in their communities through community development efforts that bring together institutions, students, and neighborhood organizations. This initiative, last funded in FY 2010 through the HUD Office of University Partnerships, offers an excellent model for an HBCU: federal partnership for urban and rural revitalization, focused on housing, public service activities, public facilities, and economic development, including skills training.

University Community Fund – The University Community Fund provides competitive grants to assist universities, including HBCUs and MSIs, in forming partnerships with the communities in which they are located. These partnerships undertake a range of activities that foster and achieve neighborhood revitalization, with special attention to underserved communities. We request \$15 million in the FY 2026 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for this program.

Interior

HBCU Historic Preservation Program – Considering that most HBCU campuses are over 125 years old, historic preservation costs are daunting. In 1998, the National Trust for Historic Preservation designated the nation’s HBCUs among the nation’s most endangered historic sites. These funds provide urgently needed assistance to HBCUs. These institutions are combating rising financial challenges associated with maintaining historic properties, and the matching requirement presents challenges for some institutions. We request \$130 million for this program in the FY 2026 Interior Appropriations bill so that some of our nation’s most historically significant structures are not lost forever. To increase access to this important program, we request bill language to exempt HBCUs from the matching requirement consistent with language included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-260).

ⁱ Smith, D.A. (September 19, 2022). The Facts on HBCUs: Top 10 Facts about Historically Black Colleges and Universities. New York, NY: The Century Foundation. [The Facts on HBCUs: Top 10 Facts about Historically Black Colleges and Universities \(tcf.org\)](https://www.tcf.org/publications/the-facts-on-hbcus-top-10-facts-about-historically-black-colleges-and-universities/)

ⁱⁱ Edwards, A., Ortugas, J., Smith, J., & Smythe, A. (2023). *HBCU Enrollment and Longer-Term Outcomes* (EdWorkingPaper No. 23-883). Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute at Brown University. <https://edworkingpapers.com/ai23-883>

ⁱⁱⁱ Einaudi, P., Gordon, J., & Kang, K. (August 9, 2022). *Info Brief: Baccalaureate Origins of Underrepresented Minority Research Doctorate Recipients*. Retrieved from National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics: <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf22335>

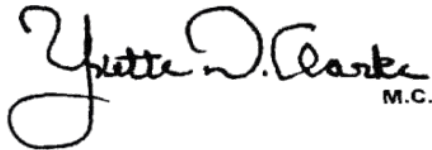
^{iv} Kim, J.H., Soler, M. C., Zhao, Z., & Swirsky, E (2024) *Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: 2024 Status Report Executive Summary*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education. <https://www.equityinhighered.org/resources/report-downloads/>

^v Vandenbroucke, G. (March 23, 2023). The Return on Investing in a College Education. St. Louis, MO: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. <https://www.stlouisfed.org/publications/regional-economist/2023/mar/return-investing-college-education>

^{vi} Rothwell, J. (November 17, 2015). What Colleges Do for Local Economies: A Direct Measure Based on Consumption. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-colleges-do-for-local-economies-a-direct-measure-based-on-consumption/>


^{vii} Camardelle, A., Kennedy II, B., & Nalley, J. (September 21, 2022). The State of Black Students at Community Colleges. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. [The-State-of-Black-Students-at-Community-Colleges.pdf \(jointcenter.org\)](https://www.jointcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/The-State-of-Black-Students-at-Community-Colleges.pdf)

^{viii} Oliss, B., McFaul, C., & Riddick, J.C. (November 27, 2023). The Global Distribution of STEM Graduates: Which Countries Lead the Way? Washington, DC: Center for Security and Emerging Technology Within Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service. <https://cset.georgetown.edu/article/the-global-distribution-of-stem-graduates-which-countries-lead-the-way/>



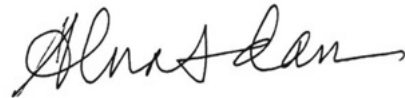
Yvette D. Clarke
M.C.

U.S. Representative Yvette D. Clarke (NY-09)
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus



Danny D. Davis

U.S. Representative Danny Davis (IL-07)



Alma Adams

U.S. Representative Alma Adams (NC-12)