



Postsecondary National Policy Institute

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)¹

HISTORY

HBCUs are [institutions of higher learning](#) established prior to 1964 with the education of Black Americans as their primary mission. Many were founded and developed in an environment of post-slavery segregation when most postsecondary institutions were not open to people of color. The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 included a single institution open to Black people, Alcorn State University in Mississippi. In 1890 the second Land-Grant Act required states to provide Black students with access to land-grant institutions or provide them with alternatives, ultimately creating 16 exclusively Black institutions. Subsequent institutions were founded by the Freedmen’s Bureau, Black churches, and the American Missionary Association, culminating in federal financial support and recognition for HBCUs in the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965.

FEDERAL FUNDING

- HBCUs are federally funded under Title III, [Parts B, D, and E](#), and [Title VII](#) of the HEA.
 - Title III, Part B funding for FY23 was [\\$395.9M](#) with an additional [\\$100.8M](#) allocated for eligible graduate schools.
 - Title III, Part D funding provided [\\$1.13B](#) in low-cost financing for capital projects to date.
 - Title III, Part F funding for FY23 was [\\$80.2M](#).
 - Title VII funding for FY23 was [\\$19.9M](#) to improve STEM graduate education.

INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

- In 2022, there were 100 HBCUs in 21 different states, with Alabama (13) and North Carolina (10) having the most institutions.
 - HBCUs are largely in the Southeastern states.
- Of the 100 HBCUs, 41 were public four-year institutions, 10 were public two-year institutions, 48 were private non-profit four-year institutions, and 1 was a private non-profit two-year institution.
 - 22 are considered land-grant institutions.

¹ Data are based on the author’s calculations of IPEDS and FSA unless otherwise cited or specified. Only degree-granting and Title IV participating institutions are included. Code and data available upon request.

ENROLLMENT

- In fall 2022, HBCUs enrolled 289,426 total students: 254,713 undergraduates and 34,713 graduate students.
 - 209,990 (72.6%) of the total enrollment at HBCUs identified as Black or African American.
- Total fall enrollment at HBCUs has declined from 311,671 in 2012 to 289,426 in 2022, a 7.1% decrease.
 - Non-HBCU enrollment declined at a greater rate during the same time period, dropping from 21.1 million in 2012 to 18.8 million in 2022, a 10.8% decrease.
- In 2022, 9.2% of all Black students in the U.S. were enrolled in HBCUs.
 - This is up from 8.4% of all Black students enrolled in HBCUs in 2012.
- Black bachelor's degree recipients at HBCUs are [more likely](#) to attend graduate school than Black bachelor's degree recipients at non-HBCUs.
 - 90.2% of Black HBCU bachelor's degree recipients attended graduate school within four years of graduating, compared to 82% of Black non-HBCU bachelor's degree recipients.

FINANCIAL AID

- According to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, [81.4%](#) of HBCU students received some form of federal Title IV financial aid in the 2019-20 academic year, compared to 54.9% of all students.
 - [67.9%](#) of HBCU students received a Pell grant, compared to 40.2% of all students.
 - [64.3%](#) of HBCU students received a federal student loan, compared to 34.5% of all students.
- Among HBCU students who received federal Title IV aid, the [average amount](#) received was \$13,126.
 - The average Pell grant amount for HBCU students was \$5,050.
 - The average Federal student loan amount for HBCU students was \$10,961.

COMPLETION/DEGREE ATTAINMENT

- At HBCUs, 37.2% of students graduated within 150% time.²
 - In comparison, 63.5% of students at public four-year institutions, 30.2% of students at public two-year institutions, 68.4% of students at private non-profit institutions, and 50.8% of students at private for-profit institutions graduated within 150% time.
- At HBCUs, 37.6% of Black students graduated within 150% time.
 - In comparison, 46.2% of Black students at public four-year institutions, 18.9% of Black students at public two-year institutions, 47.3% of Black students at private non-profit institutions, and 40.7% of Black students at private for-profit institutions graduated within 150% time.
- HBCUs conferred 5,302 associate's degrees, 32,987 bachelor's degrees, and 10,640 graduate degrees in the 2021-22 academic year.

² 150% time represents a six-year graduation rate for four-year institutions and a three-year graduation rate for two-year institutions for first-time, full-time students. Four-year institution counts only include bachelor's degree seeking cohorts.

- HBCUs conferred 26,671 bachelor's degrees to Black graduates, representing 13.5% of all bachelor's degrees conferred to Black graduates in 2021-22.

EARNINGS AND WEALTH

- According to the Baccalaureate & Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B) four years after receiving a bachelor's degree, Black HBCU graduates who reported having an income averaged a gross income of [\\$29,576](#) in 2019, \$8,000 less than the national average for all Black bachelor's degree graduates.³
 - Black graduates of all public four-year universities earned an average of \$37,109, Black graduates of all private non-profit universities earned \$36,042, and Black graduates of all private for-profit universities earned \$39,451 in 2019-20.
- Wealth accumulation can be [measured](#) differently from income. Four years after graduating:
 - [4.6%](#) of Black HBCU bachelor's degree recipients owned a home, compared to 9.7% of Black bachelor's degree recipients overall.
 - [54.7%](#) of Black HBCU bachelor's degree recipients had a retirement account, compared to 64.2% of Black bachelor's degree recipients overall.

DATA SOURCES

[Baccalaureate & Beyond Longitudinal Study](#). National Center for Education Statistics, February 2024.

[Fast Facts](#). U.S. Department of Education. March 2024.

[Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#). National Center for Education Statistics. March 2024.

[National Postsecondary Student Aid Study](#). National Center for Education Statistics, February 2024.

[U.S. Department of Education Program Data](#). March 2024.

³ Earnings and wealth estimates only include Black graduates who received their bachelor's degree before age 29.