



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. The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 included only one 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 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 F](#), and [Title VII](#) of the HEA.
 - Title III, Part B funding for FY24 was [\\$401M](#) with an additional \$101.3M allocated for eligible graduate schools.
 - Title III, Part D funding provided \$1.14B in low-cost financing for capital projects to date.
 - Title III, Part F funding for FY24 was \$80.2M.

INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

- In 2023, there were 101 HBCUs in 21 different states, Washington, D.C. and the Virgin Islands.
 - States with the most HBCUs were Alabama (13), Georgia (10), and North Carolina (10).
- Of the 101 HBCUs, 41 were public four-year institutions, 10 were public two-year institutions, 49 were private non-profit four-year institutions, and 1 was a private non-profit two-year institution. 22 are considered land-grant institutions.

ENROLLMENT

- In fall 2023, HBCUs enrolled [257,668](#) undergraduates and 34,856 graduate students.
 - 213,344 (72.9%) of the total enrollment at HBCUs identified as Black or African American.
- Enrollment at HBCUs has declined from 300,153 in 2013 to 292,524 in 2023, a 2.6% decrease.
 - Non-HBCU enrollment declined at a greater rate during the same period, dropping from 20.1 million in 2013 to 18.8 million in 2023, a 6.6% decrease.
- In 2023, [10.3%](#) of all Black students in the U.S. were enrolled in HBCUs.

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.

- This is up from 9.4% of all Black students enrolled in HBCUs in 2013.

FINANCIAL AID

- According to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, [81.4%](#) of HBCU students received 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.
- HBCU students who received federal Title IV aid received an [average amount](#) of \$13,126, with an average Pell Grant amount of \$5,050, and an average Federal student loan amount of \$10,961.

COMPLETION/DEGREE ATTAINMENT

- At HBCUs, 37.2% of students graduated within 150% time.²
- HBCUs conferred 5,202 associate's degrees, 31,924 bachelor's degrees, and 10,037 graduate degrees in the 2022-23 academic year.³
 - HBCUs conferred 16.0% of all bachelor's degrees conferred to Black graduates in 2023.

EARNINGS AND WEALTH

- According to the Baccalaureate & Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B), four years after receiving a bachelor's degree, Black HBCU graduates averaged a gross income of [\\$29,576](#) in 2019, \$8,000 less than the national average for all Black bachelor's degree graduates.⁴
- 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, November 2023.

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

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

[National Postsecondary Student Aid Study](#). National Center for Education Statistics, November 2023.

[U.S. Department of Education Program Data](#). February 2025.

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.

³ Black bachelor's degree recipients at HBCUs are [more likely](#) to attend graduate school than Black bachelor's degree recipients at non-HBCUs.

⁴ Earnings and wealth estimates only include Black graduates who received their bachelor's degree before age 29.