Historically Black Colleges and Universities Grant Program

Since Reconstruction, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have provided African Americans with greater access to higher education and told the story of the struggle for social justice. The historic buildings and landscapes on HBCU campuses—many of which were built and designed by African American architects, planners, and students—hold a diverse and empowering collection of stories and artifacts that help tell the full American story and reflect the important legacy of the Black educational experience and communities that surround and support these institutions.

Background
The HBCU Grant Program was enacted in 1996 and competitive grants were awarded to projects “honoring and preserving the unique and important role [HBCUs] played in advancing the realization of a more free, equal, and just society.” However, appropriations for the program lapsed in FY 2009. In FY 2017, Congress renewed its commitment to preservation projects at HBCUs and appropriated $16.3 million between FY 2017 and FY 2019. All of these awards have gone to support bricks and mortar, job-creating projects. Recently passed legislation extends the authorization of this program to FY 2025 and the program received full funding for the first time in FY 2020.

FY 2022 Appropriations Request

Please support $10 million for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Grant Program in the FY 2022 Interior Appropriations bill.

APPROPRIATIONS BILL: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
AGENCY: National Park Service
ACCOUNT: Historic Preservation Fund
ACTIVITY: Grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Recent Funding History:
FY 2019 Enacted Funding: $8 million
FY 2020 Enacted Funding: $10 million
FY 2021 Enacted Funding: $10 million
FY 2022 President’s Budget Request: TBD
FY 2022 NTHP Recommendation: $10 million

JUSTIFICATION: Full funding for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Grant Program will further protect and interpret America’s diverse heritage, demonstrate a clear investment in education for underrepresented communities, and support job-creating projects to preserve our nationally significant historic fabric.
HBCU Grant Program: Highlighted Projects

Benedict College, South Carolina
FY 2019 $500,000

Built in 1902, Pratt Hall is Benedict College’s second oldest building and one of the five structures located within the Benedict College Historic District. Originally, the building served as a training school for nurses and a small hospital for the students and patients from the surrounding African American community. Later the building was repurposed into a girl’s dormitory and is currently home to the Division of Business and Finance. This $500,000 grant will help Benedict College to architecturally preserve the National Register building by eliminating existing damage, including repairing the roof and gutters, repairing and replacing windows, upgrading mechanical systems, repairing the wheelchair lift, and replacing piping.

Miles College, Alabama
FY 2019 $499,869

Miles College received a grant to restore historic Williams Hall, the oldest building on the college’s campus. Erected in 1907, Williams Hall served as a historic site of the Civil Rights Movement but has fallen into disrepair over recent years. Miles College intends to stabilize and restore the building and then repurpose it into a teaching museum that would honor the founders, students, alumni, and College’s role in the modern-day fight for racial justice.

Harris-Stowe State University, Missouri
$500,000

The Vashon Community Center building served as one of the few public recreational facilities open to African Americans when it was built in 1936. Currently used for storage, the $500,000 HBCU grant along with $1.2 million from the state of Missouri will allow Harris-Stowe State University to rehabilitate the space and reopen it to the public. The university plans to house the Don and Heide Wolfe Jazz Institute and the National Black Radio Hall of Fame in the refurbished building.

Bennett College for Women, North Carolina
FY 2019 $460,000

Bennett College, one of only two all-women HBCUs in the United States, was first part of the fourth round of NPS grant recipients in FY 2004. The grant was used to rehabilitate Black Hall, named for Ethel F. Black, a trustee of the school. In FY 2019, the college received a $460,000 grant to renovate the historic 1915 Susie Jones Alumnae House, which originally served as the college president’s home when it the institution was still coeducational.

For additional information, contact Shaw Sprague, Vice President of Government Relations and Policy, SSprague@savingplaces.org, (202) 588-6339 or Tom Cassidy, Senior Advisor, TCassidy@savingplaces.org, (202) 588-6078.