HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

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. With competing fiscal priorities on HBCU campuses, dedicated and consistent funding is crucial for many institutions to complete projects that improve the quality of education and campus life and protect significant historic assets. This competitive grant program has played a critical role in safeguarding historic and architectural treasures on HBCU campuses.

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. Nearly a decade later, Congress again funded this critical program with an appropriation of $4 million in FY 2017. Recently passed legislation extends the authorization of this program to FY 2025. The program supports projects that help to preserve historic structures on HBCU campuses that are either listed on the National Register of Historic Places individually or contribute to a National Historic District.

FY 2021 Appropriations Request

Please support $10 million for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Grant Program in the FY 2021 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 2018 Enacted Funding: $5 million
FY 2019 Enacted Funding: $8 million
FY 2020 Enacted Funding: $10 million
FY 2021 President’s Budget Request: $8 million
FY 2021 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 and demonstrate a clear investment in education for underrepresented communities and in our nationally significant historic fabric.
HBCU Grant Program: Highlighted Projects

Howard University, Washington, DC
$500,000
Built in 1939, Founders Library serves as the main library for students of Howard University and also served a key role in the Howard National Historic Landmark District designation. This project will improve accessibility for all students and visitors while preserving the historic fabric of the building.

Tougaloo College, Mississippi
$270,000
Tougaloo College has received several competitive grants to restore historically significant buildings on its campus. Most recently, the school received funding to rehabilitate the interior of the John W. Boddie House. Located prominently on campus, the mansion served as the residence of the college’s first president, the first classrooms, and later as a dormitory for faculty and students.

Fisk University, Tennessee
$442,400
In 2004, Fisk University received a grant to begin restoration efforts on the John Weasley Work House, the Victorian home of John W. Work III. A composer and ethnomusicologist, Work taught at Fisk University and was one of the first academic scholars of rural African American folk music. The restoration was completed in 2011 by the nation’s largest African-American owned and operated architecture firm.

Spelman College, Georgia
Founded in 1881 as the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary, Spelman College is one of two all-women HBCUs. Packard Hall is the second oldest building on campus and originally housed classrooms and administrative offices before being converted into a dormitory. The grant from the National Park Service helped fund an extensive project, which included restoring the exterior of the building, adapting the space from a dormitory to administrative offices, and adding stair wings.

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
Bennett College was 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. Black Hall houses the Bennett College Micro-Laboratory for Effective Teaching.

South Carolina State University, South Carolina
$500,000
This grant will help stabilize Wilkinson Hall by repairing stone and brick work, rehabilitation windows and gutters, and waterproofing the building. Wilkinson Hall was constructed in 1938 as the college’s first separate library building and is part of the South Carolina State National Register Historic District.

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