

HACU

HISPANIC  
ASSOCIATION  
OF COLLEGES &  
UNIVERSITIES

# FEDERAL UNDERFUNDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS OF HSI<sub>s</sub> IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

September 22, 2021



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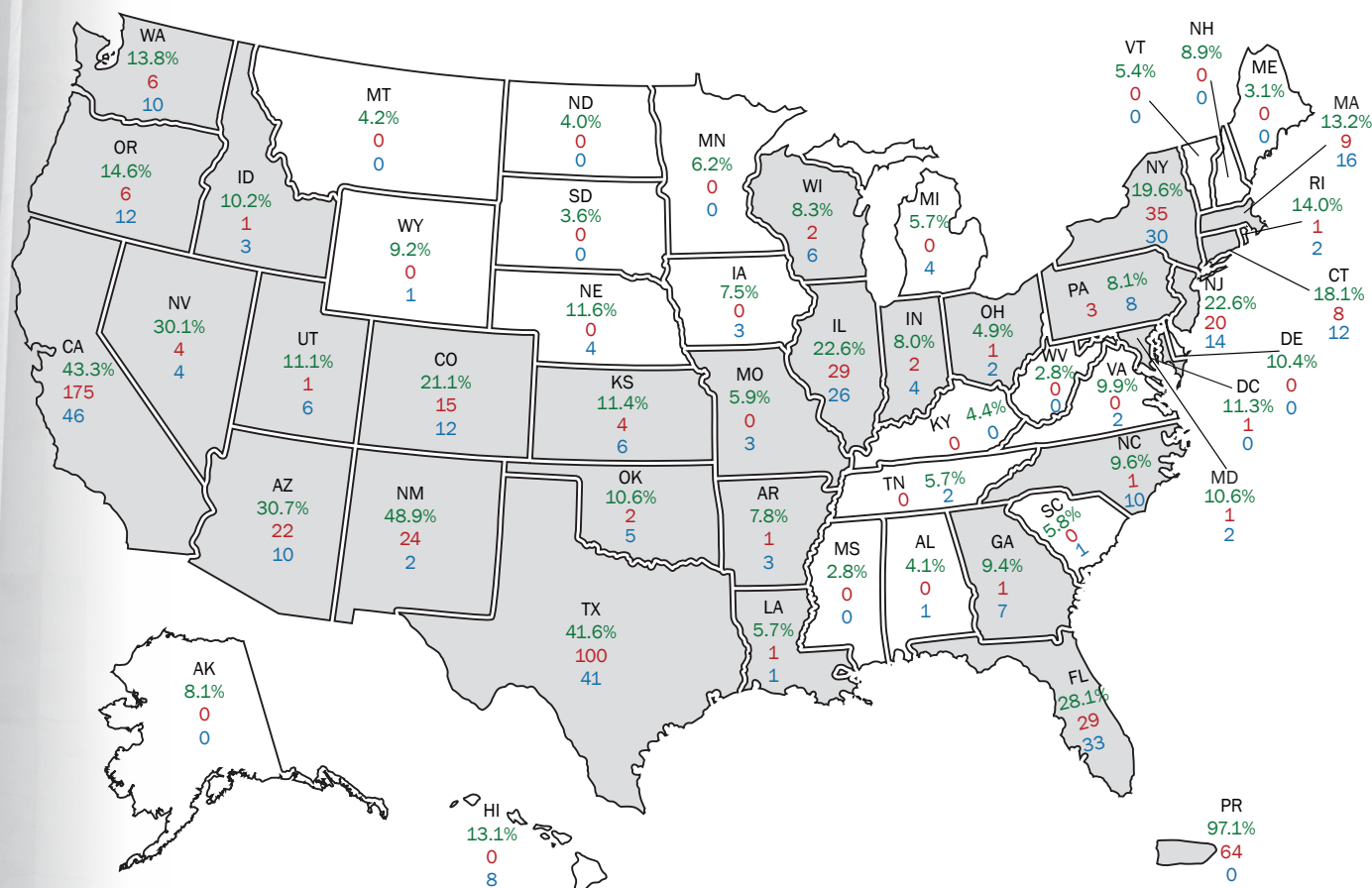
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# About Us

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) was established in 1986 with a founding membership of eighteen institutions. Today, HACU represents 500 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain as well as Hispanic-Serving School Districts (HSSDs) in the U.S. Together HSIs represent only 16% of institutions nationwide yet they are home to almost two-thirds of the Hispanic student population. Among other requirements laid out in the Higher Education Act (HEA), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), enroll at least 25% full-time enrollment Hispanic students, and offer access to a significant proportion of the nation's most underserved and underrepresented student groups. HACU is the only national educational association that represents HSIs. HACU's mission is to champion Hispanic success in higher education.



- **Percentage of Undergraduate Students that are Hispanic**
- **Number of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)**  
(25.0 % minimum Hispanic Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment)
- **Number of Emerging HSI**  
(15.0 - 24.9 % Hispanic FTE)

Total HSIs = 569  
Total Emerging HSIs = 362  
  
Total Undergraduate (UG) Student Headcount = 15,963,586  
Total Hispanic UG Student Headcount = 3,328,570  
Total Hispanic UG Student Percentage = 20.9%  
Reference: 2019-20 IPEDS Data

HACU Office of Policy Analysis and Information. 04/6/2021.

Source: 2019-20 IPEDS data using Title IV eligible, 2 year & 4 year, Public and Private, nonprofit institutions.

# Foreword

The first part of this report provides a narrative of the precursors of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Hispanic higher education in the context of America's evolution and how HSIs have fared within U.S. federal policy and funding of postsecondary education. This first account contextualizes the urgency of markedly increasing federal investments in HSIs as one of the main drivers for our national recovery and prosperity in the age of COVID-19 and beyond. HSIs educate the most diverse and neediest college student population of 5.3 million, which includes more than two of every three Hispanics in college, one of every four Blacks, two of every five Asian Americans, one of every four Native Americans, and sizeable number of non-Hispanic White college students. Yet, HSIs remain at the bottom of the federal funding priorities, compared to other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The first section of this report documents these facts.

The second part of this report summarizes the findings yielded by data gathered via a recent survey conducted by HACU with HSIs across the country on their infrastructure needs. This survey was carried out from August 27 to September 2, 2021, by a team of HACU staff listed on the inside back cover of this publication. We are grateful to all of them for their nimble and efficient work in this important project. The key questions in the survey were adapted from a study with HBCUs on the same topic published by the U.S. General Accounting Office in June of 2018. However, HACU's survey is simpler and briefer than the one done by the GAO.

Let us be clear, HACU and its supporters wholeheartedly commend the U.S. Congress and the Administration for investing significantly in HBCUs and other MSIs and urge them to continue doing so. Likewise, we exhort Congress and the President to invest with equal commitment in HSIs and their underserved students; they truly are the future of the nation. All HACU and HSIs want is equity in federal funding without diminishing support for other MSIs or HBCUs. HACU co-founded the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education with sister associations representing HBCUs and other MSIs two decades ago and continues to work with them on issues of importance for all institutional cohorts. We are confident that Alliance members and other fair-minded parties concur with the premise of this report: **The federal government should invest equitably in all MSI cohorts, particularly in HSIs.**

This premise is even more compelling in these times of major natural disasters in regions and states with large concentrations of HSIs. The physical, technological, and human infrastructure needs of HSIs have been magnified by unprecedented storms, wildfires, heat waves, and freezing weather amid the most devastating pandemic in over a century.

In solidarity,



Antonio R. Flores

# Federal Underfunding and Infrastructure Needs of HSIs in the Age of COVID-19

The ensuing report summarizes the findings and recommendations of pertinent data analyses and of a recent survey conducted by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) on the most pressing infrastructure needs of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) across the United States and Puerto Rico. This study was prompted by a request from the Office of Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC) to substantiate the infrastructure needs of HSIs and to provide similar data as included in the June 2018 report by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) on the same issue. Although HACU lacks the resources and expertise of the GAO, due to the short notice of this request, a non-random sample survey was conducted using some of the key questions in the GAO study. A review of related literature and the drafting of required materials began the third week of August with the completion of the report on the week of September 13, 2021.

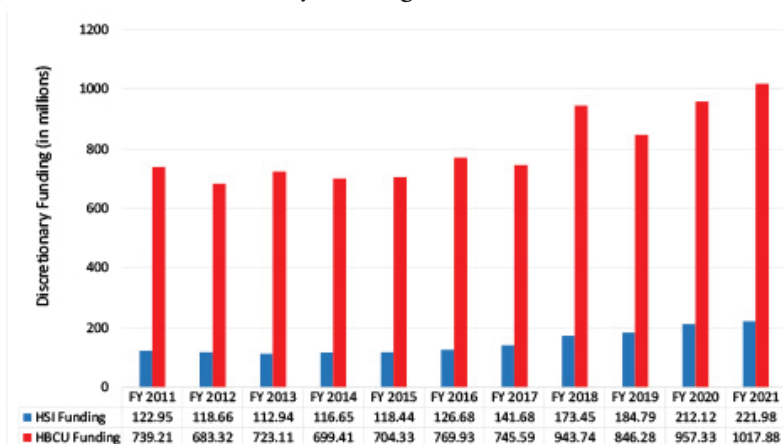
HACU's report provides a broad overview that not only provides infrastructure data, but also includes a comparison of federal funding patterns from 2011 to 2021 for HSIs and HBCUs to contextualize the survey findings. This analysis of pertinent demographic, education, and labor data also offers a comprehensive view of funding differentials between HBCUs and HSIs to address the key question for this report: *What formula for the allocation of funds under the proposed Institutional Grants for New Infrastructure, Technology, and Education (IGNITE) for HBCU Excellence Act (H.R. 3294/S. 1945) would be equitable to HSIs and HBCUs?*

## Emergence and Evolution of HSIs

The 1992 amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) established HSIs under Title III, Section 316, in federal statute for the first time in history. HSIs existed *de facto* before the annexation by the United States in 1848 of most of what was Mexico: Louisiana, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and California, and parts of Oklahoma, Utah, Oregon, and Nevada. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded control over vast territories and the people and institutions they created. It was not until the 1970 U.S. Census count that Hispanics existed as a national cultural and ethnic community in the U.S. Even so, it took 144 years for HSIs to be validated in federal legislation. The HEA amendments of 1998, Title V was created to expand the scope of support for HSIs, including Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans. In 2010, Title III, Part F was added into HEA to start a mandatory HSI STEM and Articulation Programs, which in 2020 was made permanent; this replicated an HBCU program under Part D.

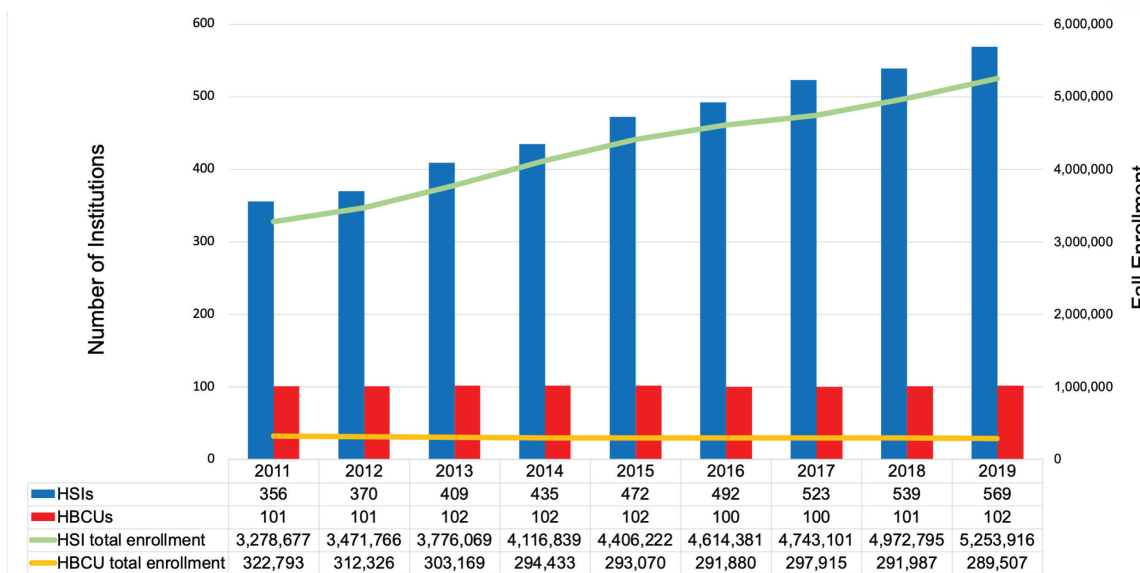
The first HSI Congressional appropriation in fiscal year 1995 was a meager \$12 million for more than 125 HSIs. With some minor improvements over the years, thanks to supporters and HACU's advocacy, this pernicious pattern of underfunding has persisted over the years. In fiscal year 1997, a small HSI grant program was started under USDA; and a more recent competitive grant initiative was launched in fiscal year 2017 under NSF. All HSI funding under Titles III and V of HEA and these two programs is included in the amounts reported in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1. Federal Discretionary Funding for HSIs and HBCUs: FYs 2011-2021



HBCUs emerged in 1890 with the second Morrill Act amendments, more than 100 years before HSIs. This law required states with land-grant institutions exclusively for Whites to establish similar institutions for Black students, albeit segregated; eventually 16 Black institutions were designated as land-grant colleges in southern and border states. *Brown v. Board of Education*, in 1954, made separate but equal unconstitutional and provided the basis for the enactment of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which included Title III with provisions to fund HBCUs while the Farm Bill continued to fund land-grant (1890s) included in the 101 current HBCUs cited in the GAO report. Figure 2, below, shows the enrollment data of all HSIs and HBCUs for a period of nine consecutive years.

**Figure 2. HSI and HBCU Fall Enrollment: 2011 – 2019**



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

As documented by Figure 1, above, from fiscal year 2011-2021, HBCUs have received \$8.830 billion in federal discretionary funding while HSIs have received a total of \$2.387 billion. Based on Figures 1 and 2, additionally HBCUs received \$2,541 per student and HSIs received \$41 per student. Additionally, HBCUs have received \$3.176 billion from the 2020 and 2021 COVID-19 relief funds and HSIs have received only \$1.174 billion. Furthermore, the total FY 2022 budget request for HSI programs is \$561.5 million for its 569 institutions as compared to \$1.1 billion for the 102 HBCU institutions.

Additionally, the HBCU Capital Financing Program, under Title III, Part D of HEA, provides HBCUs low-cost capital to finance or refinance repairs, renovations, and construction at HBCUs. This program has provided a total of \$2.970 billion in low-interest loans since the program's inception in 1994. In the past three years, a total of \$1.92 billion in loans has been forgiven. HACU has been advocating for a similar program for HSIs without success.

## Disproportionate Impacts of COVID-19

The great American paradox: the most advanced country with the most expensive and expansive health care system in history also holds the dubious distinction of having the most COVID-19 cases and deaths. But proportionate to their numbers in the U.S. population, which is now estimated at over 63 million, Hispanics have paid the highest price with the most cases and deaths and the worst drop in average life expectancy last year: Latinos lost 3.05 years, compared to 2.10 for Blacks and 0.68 for Whites; they also had 73 COVID-19 cases per 10 thousand people, compared to 23 of Whites and 62 of Blacks (*JAMA Network Open* [June 24, 2021]).

HSIs educate more than two-thirds of the 3.8 million Hispanic students in higher education, which are three times as likely to get COVID-19 and have four times the chance of dying from it than Whites. HSIs also enroll over 600,000 Black students (three times as many as HBCUs) who have the second highest infection and death rates. These two populations are also largely low-income and first-generation college students. HSIs are severely under-resourced and thus had serious challenges when they had to shift from in-person to virtual teaching. Many of their mostly poor students lacked the broadband connectivity, software, and hardware required for online learning. HSIs and Latino students have been the most impacted health-wise and educationally and socially by COVID-19

# Trends and Projections

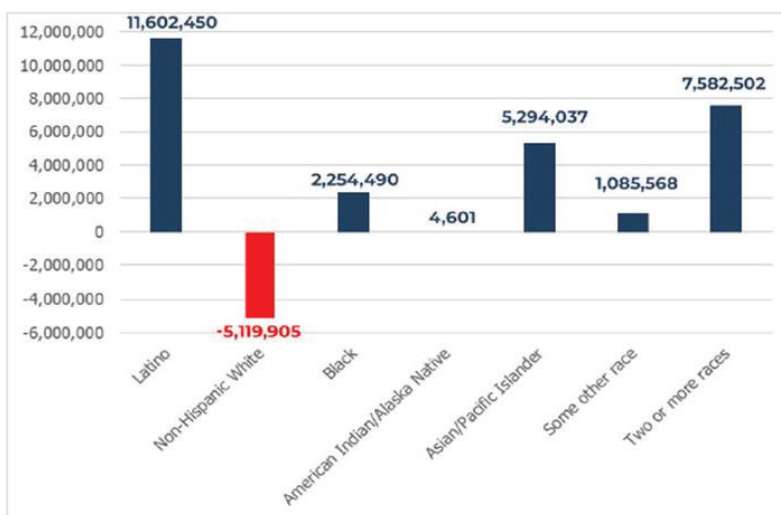
Demographic trends and projections, along with workforce developments and needs, provide a basis to define national priorities for higher education capacity building in the years and decades ahead.

## Demographics

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that from 2010 to 2020 Hispanics accounted for more than half the total growth of the national population and are now over 63 million. This demographic growth is clearly reflected on the K-12 and college enrollments.

In effect, the Hispanic population growth rate was more than three times that of the nation's from 2010 to 2020, or 23% versus 7.4%. Hispanics accounted for 51.1% of the total U.S. population growth and are nearly one of every five U.S. residents and one of every four of those 18 years old or younger. The following figure depicts these facts:

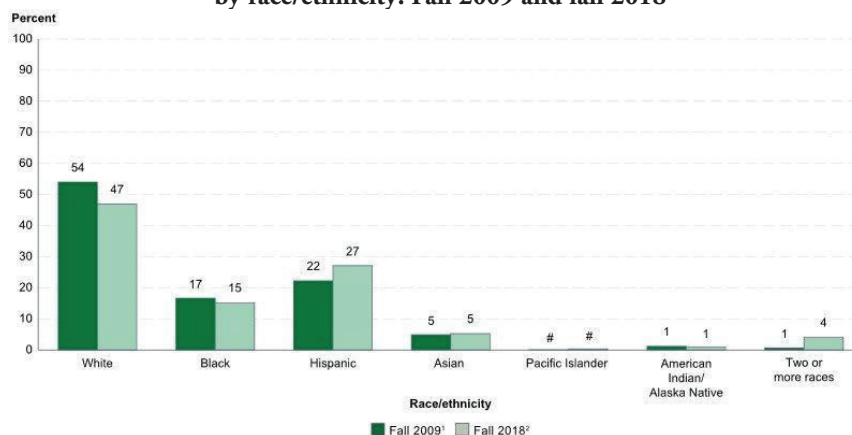
**Figure 3. Components of Nation's Population Change, by Population Group 2010-2020**



Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 SF1, and Census 2020 redistricting legacy file data

Consequently, the general population growth patterns are also found in public school enrollment changes as shown by Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Percentage distribution of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity: Fall 2009 and fall 2018**



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

As the Hispanic growth-rate in K-12 enrollment continues to accelerate, the number of Hispanic high-school graduates is expected to increase by 49% between 2012-13 and 2028-29, compared to 23% for Asian/Pacific Islanders, and to a net drop of 3% and 15% for Blacks and Whites, respectively (<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020024abbrev.pdf>, p. 16). In fact, NCES projected in the same study (p. 25) an increase of 14% in Hispanic college enrollment between 2017 and 2028 from 3.5 million to over 4.0 million, but it may be under-projecting as in 2020 there were already 3.8 million Hispanics college students, 67% of them at HSIs.

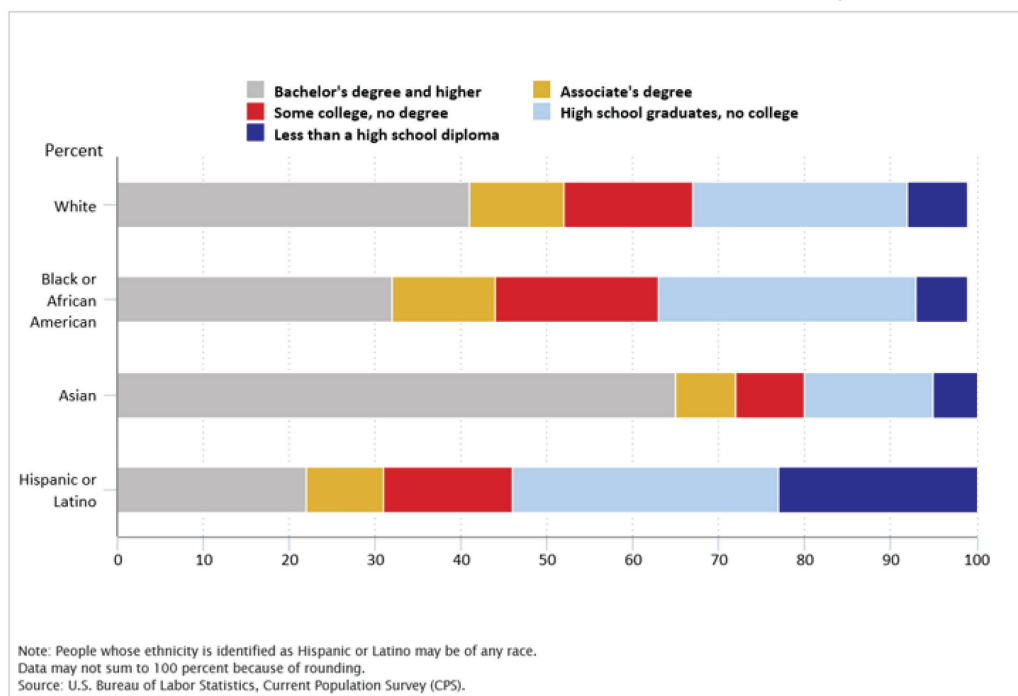
# Workforce

Given the preceding demographic trends and projections, it is evident that the nation's labor force is also becoming increasingly Hispanic. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports (<https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/civilian-labor-force-participation-rate.htm>) that Hispanics have the highest participation rate in the American labor force, which in 2019 was 66.8%, compared to 63.0% for Whites and 62.4% for Blacks. Similar differences are reported for the prior 20 years and projected for the following 10 years.

A U.S. BLS study projected that the Latino share of the workforce will increase dramatically from 1 in 10 in 2010 to 1 in 3 by 2050, while Whites will decrease from 81% to 75%, Blacks will remain at 12%, Asian Americans will increase from 5% to 8% and all others from 2% to 5% during the same span of time (<https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/10/art1full.pdf>, pp. 15-16). Currently, more than half of all the new workers joining the nation's labor force is Hispanic. For America to remain competitive in the global economy, a much better educated and trained Hispanic labor force is not only necessary but it is required. As the backbone of Hispanic postsecondary education, HSIs must be placed at the top of federal investment priorities without any further delay.

The following chart clearly depicts this national challenge:

**Figure 5. Educational Attainment of the Labor Force Age 25 and Older and by Race and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, 2019 Annual Averages**



## The Survey

HACU administered a Qualtrics survey on infrastructure needs for HSIs, in which data were collected from a target population of 569 HSIs representing 2-year public institutions, 4-year public institutions, and 4 year-private institutions. Survey questions were modeled after validated questions in the 2018 HBCU GAO report allowing for a systematic benchmark against which results could be compared.

## Methods

A nonrandomized sample of 153 respondents resulted from a population of 569 HSIs, but only 111 of the returned questionnaires yielded usable data. The questionnaire developed by HACU was pilot tested for reliability with approximately 10 volunteers, including HACU staff. The questions used were adopted from the GAO study on HBCUs and thus were considered valid. The institutions responding with usable data closely resemble the make-up of the current 569 HSIs identified by HACU with respect to type of institution, as shown in the corresponding table below. Thus, the data from the survey are deemed representative of the total HSI cohort.

# Participants and Procedures

The Qualtrics survey was sent via email to college presidents, university chancellors and government relations specialists at 569 HSI institutions in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico after a pilot study was performed on a small sample of the target population. A cover letter was attached to the email soliciting participation and outlining the objectives of the study. A PDF of the survey was also attached to the survey email so that respondents were afforded the opportunity to collect the necessary documentation prior to completing the survey. A follow-up email was sent three days after the initial solicitation. Within five days, 153 university officials responded to the survey, but only 111 of the completed questionnaires were usable; 37% of them were from 2-year public institutions, 38% from 4-year private institutions, and 32 % from 4-year public institutions. There were no responses submitted from 2-year private institutions. The results from this survey on institutional type are comparable to the percentages of institutional type for our 569 HSI institutions as the table below indicates.

## Survey Respondents and HSIs by Institutional Type

Institutional Types	Survey Respondents (111 survey respondents)	HSIs Demographics (569 HSI Institutions)
2-year public	41 (37%)	235 (41%)
2-year private	0	15 (2%)
4-year public	32 (29%)	150 (26%)
4-year private	38 (34%)	169 (30%)

## Limitations

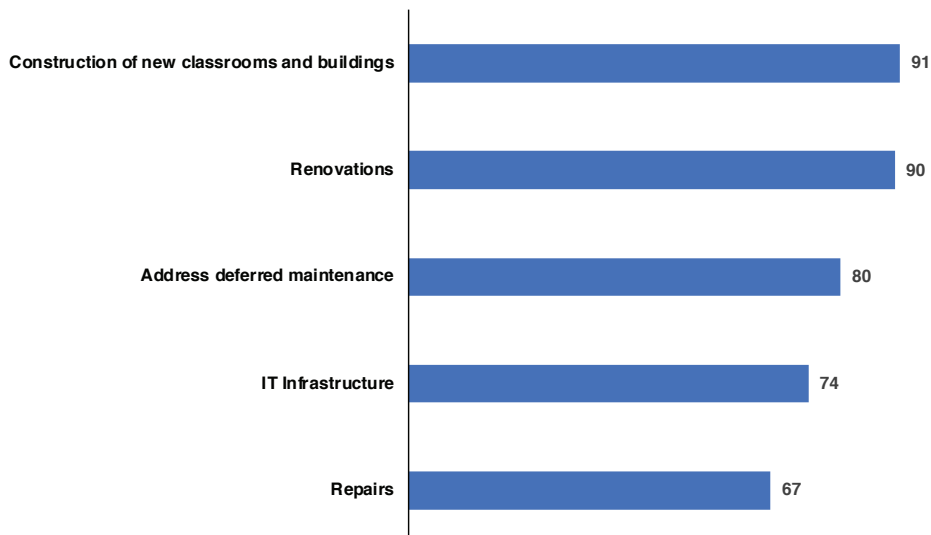
There are several potential limitations to this survey. Time and resources constraints limited the number of responses that could be collected over a five-day period. Due to the nature of the survey instrument, respondents could not get clarifications on questions and many survey questions went unanswered or were skipped, rendering the questionnaire unusable for 42 cases.

## Findings

Graphics are used to present the findings from our survey of 111 respondents. The type and style of charts and figures mirror those from the aforesaid GAO report on HBCUs. They provide the percentage of respondents affirming need for specific items in the survey with HSIs.

Figure 6 depicts infrastructure needs requiring capital financing. More than nine in every 10 HSIs need funding for construction of new buildings, facilities, and classrooms, and for renovations; eight of every 10 for deferred maintenance; three of every four for IT infrastructure; and more than two thirds for repairs. Overwhelmingly, HSIs need capital investments now.

Figure 6. Institutional Capital Financing Needs



In Figure 7 most respondents reported that bonds by institutions and tuition and fees are the two main funding sources for capital project needs, followed by state resources, private donations and alumni giving. Endowments, however, were the least reported funding source for capital project needs. Only one of every five cited endowments because most HSIIs have meager endowments, and some do not have endowments.

**Figure 7. Funding Sources for Capital Project Needs**

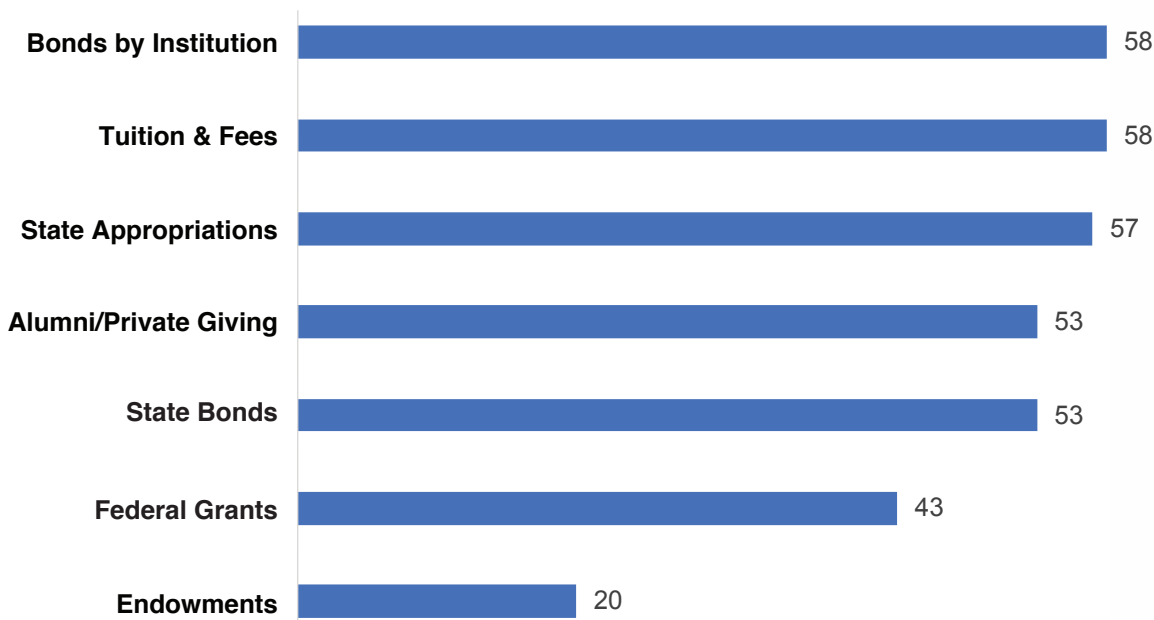
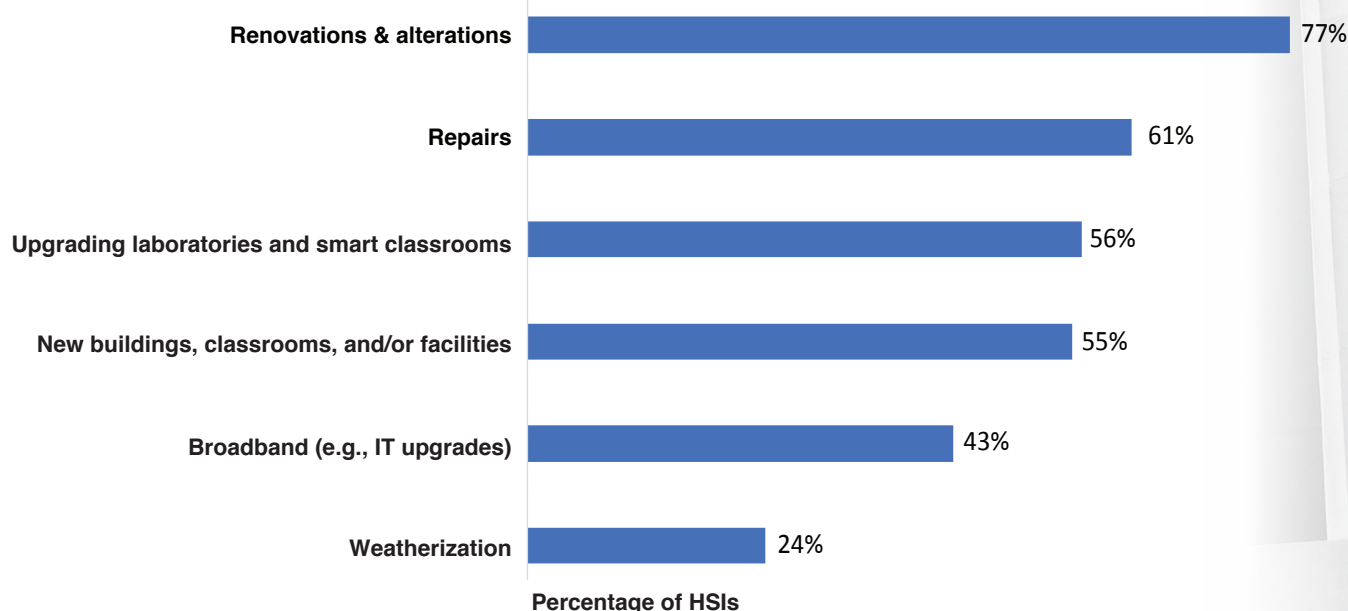


Figure 8 captures the collective ranking of the most urgent needs identified by respondents to the survey. Respondents were asked to provide the total number of buildings in their institution's real property portfolio. Based on the estimated 7,850 total buildings, respondents reported that 78% of the buildings are functional, 35% need repair, and 12% need replacement. However, for those capital financing projects that require immediate attention, 77% needed renovations and alterations; 61% required repairs; and 56% required upgrading laboratories and smart classrooms, followed closely by new buildings, classrooms, and/or facilities.

More than three of every four HSIIs need immediate renovations and alterations, nearly two of every three prompt repairs, and more than half are urged of new buildings and facilities.

**Figure 8. Capital Financing Projects that Required Immediate Attention**



Respondents reported that their deferred maintenance backlog has increased over the last three years to an estimated \$17.5 billion. This aggregate amount was reported by less than one-fifth of the 569 HSIs responding to the survey; thus, the total amount needed by all HSIs could be as high as more than \$90.0 billion. Approximately 82% reported that their capital financing resources do not meet their capital financing needs.

**The following qualitative responses to open-ended questions further support the above findings:**

- We continue to balance keeping education affordable while ensuring the legacy of our institution can continue well into the future. Due to our corrosive environment, we see a shorter life expectancy than normal on many of our facilities. We also strive to ensure weather related deferred maintenance are prioritized to mitigate larger potential needs.
- We are experiencing a shortage of classrooms, and residence hall spaces, and have deferred repairs and renovations to our student center and residence halls.
- As an HSI with a proud 100-year history, this is our primary financial challenge, for today and into the future, for meeting the educational needs of our students.
- The university is in dire need of additional capital funding to address a variety of capital needs. Priority projects include infrastructure, athletics, energy infrastructure, and various on-campus academic buildings. Total capital needs are approximately \$50 million.
- The heating and air conditioning systems in our facilities are at the “end of life.” The systems are not energy efficient, require one to two weeks to switch from heating to cooling and vice-versa, do not allow adjustment of temperature by room, and are expensive to repair and obtain replacement parts due to age of some units.
- Although, we recently outfitted classrooms with technology upgrades within the past 5-years, the pandemic has us reevaluating technology required in the classroom to meet new modalities such as offering simulcasting live classroom feeds.
- The college has a significant range of unmet capital improvement requirements ranging from renovating existing laboratories and classrooms, to replacing aging IT infrastructure and the construction of a new building to meet growing demand.
- The capital infrastructure at our institution is in a “repair and maintain” stage. We approximately 6 of our 26 buildings in need of systemic renovation, however, we do not have the resources to proceed. We have a long way to go to sustain our campuses to improve or extend the useful life of our assets. This is compounded as we begin to assess and put numbers related to the technology infrastructure needs and or the capital equipment needs of our academic and CTE programming.
- We are prioritizing sustainability projects (e.g., utility company energy audit of all campus buildings) and using sustainability measures to make other much needed improvements.
- Our university was founded in 1940 and we have many historical buildings on campus which have significant deferred maintenance needs. These buildings on our campus have been granted historical designation and we have applied for “grant funded project funding,” however, we have not received any funding awards. We need to renovate some of these buildings for both energy efficiency and safety needs (due to natural disasters, like hurricanes).
- Our campus buildings date primarily from the 1970’s and are in dire need of updating to current standards. We also have several 1930’s historic buildings which need total renovation.
- Many of our buildings date back to 1950/1960 construction and need HVAC, roof, electrical, security systems and other upgrades.
- We have significantly older facilities that are not ADA accessible.
- Our Geriatric Services Center and maintenance or major repairs cannot be carried out due to a lack of capital financing.
- Current campus dates to the 1960s and 70s. Renovations, updates, and new construction are needed to propel the college forward and position the college for the students of tomorrow. Conclusions and Recommendations

The forgoing facts patently document the history of federal-funding neglect and inequity for HSIs and make a compelling case for the immediate reversal of such federal underfunding.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

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## Conclusions

1. Although Hispanics have been in this country before it was a nation, they were not recognized as national ethnocultural community until the 1970 Census, 122 years after the annexation of their territories by the U.S.
2. Educational institutions existed in those territories long before 1848 that could very well have been designated as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), but HSIs were not recognized in federal legislation until 1992, or 144 years after the occupation of Hispanic lands and institutions.
3. Federal investments in HSIs have been disproportionately inequitable, compared to other cohorts of institutions, including HBCUs, which were created by the federal government 131 years ago and 102 years before HSIs.
4. HSIs have been severely and chronically underfunded by the federal government since their inception and their limited increases in funding have translated to lower per-student allocations as 25-30 new HSIs emerge each year.
5. Hispanics remain the least college-educated population in America and its labor force, and more than two thirds of all Latino college students attend HSIs, which are also the backbone of educational opportunity for other underserved populations.
6. HSIs and Hispanics have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they both lack the IT infrastructure and expertise on campus or students at home to effectively teach and learn online.

## Recommendations

1. HACU recommends using the CRSSA mandatory funding formula for the allocation of funds to HSIs. This strategy, although not entirely fair and equitable as is not proportionate to the number of institutions or students served, would provide 39.22% to HSIs. In lieu of using the CRSSA mandatory allocation formula, another option is the use of Pell Grant institutional cohort data, which indicates need, to allocate funds. Either approach ensures that HBCUs, TCUs, and other MSIs continue to be funded, but also that HSIs are not unfairly underfunded by the federal government.
2. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, HSIs already lacked sufficient funding and resources for up-to-date and “smart” technology equipped classrooms, modern science labs, human patient simulators and skills labs, libraries, and other infrastructure needs. Currently, many HSI classrooms are out of date, libraries lack essential digital assets and holders, and buildings are not equipped with the necessary broadband technology to enhance the learning experience for all students. Now these needs are compounded and even more urgent as more frequent and extreme weather events impact their infrastructure. HACU urges the establishment an HSIs Capital Financing Grant Program with an authorization and appropriation level of \$10 billion to address the pressing infrastructure needs of HSIs.
3. HACU requests an expeditious GAO report to comprehensively assess the capital financing needs of all HSIs within a suitable policy framework. The U.S. Government Accountability Office has the resources and researchers to perform a more extensive and complete report on the capital financing needs of all HSIs and emerging HSIs.

As the nation looks to rebuild the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that existing federal investments strengthen our workforce by enhancing the educational infrastructure of HSIs. They are a microcosm of America’s diversity and the backbone of educational opportunity for underserved populations. While comprising 17% of all colleges and universities nationally, HSIs serve 33% of all Pell recipients in the country, some of the most financially needy students. To pave a path of success and opportunity for all the students they serve, HSIs need equitable federal support.

Yet, HSIs only receive a mere 68 cents for every dollar going to all other colleges and universities annually, per student, from all federal funding sources. HACU urges Congress and the Administration to close this unconscionable federal funding gap, beginning with the fair allocation of infrastructure resources that is based on the facts of this report and the national interest, whether through the Institutional Grants for New Infrastructure, Technology, and Education (IGNITE) for HBCU Excellence Act (H.R. 3294/S. 1945) bill or other appropriate funding vehicle.

# Acknowledgments

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) is thankful to HACU staff who helped to prepare and conduct the survey on HSIs infrastructure needs and financial deficiencies, and on the drafting and editing of this report. They spent countless hours and days reviewing related literature, gathering information from pertinent databases, and analyzing and summarizing the data from the survey. Their diligence and dedication are truly remarkable. The team included the following HACU staff members (in alpha order):

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