



U.S. Department of Commerce

FY 2014 Appropriations Recommendation

HACU requests a U.S. Department of Commerce appropriation of \$250M for FY 2014 under the Minority-Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Program (MSIDWTOP) for Hispanic-Serving Institutions as defined in the Higher Education Act of 2008.

Funding History: The MSIDWTOP was authorized in the 2008 HEA Reauthorization Act (Public Law 110-315). There currently is no specific wireless technology infrastructure enhancement program funded by federal resources to assist MSIs to improve their digital and wireless technology capacity.

Although authorized in 2008, funding has never been appropriated for this program which would address the digital divide by targeting resources for wireless technology equipment, training and education, capacity building and technical assistance to eligible recipients: **Hispanic-Serving Institutions**, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Predominantly Black Institutions, and Asian American/Native Alaskan/Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions.

Need:

- In spite of major technology advances and the increasing affordability of computer software, a significant gap persists between minority and white students.
- In 2010, 83 percent of white students were likely to have a computer at home, compared to only 71 percent of Hispanic students.
- In 2010 only 65 percent of Hispanic households utilized the Internet compared to 77 percent for whites (and 66 percent for African Americans).
- Hispanic Americans, the fastest-growing and youngest ethnic population in America, represent the best promise for the nation to meet the needs of a high technology workforce.
- The digital divide remains a major stumbling block for minorities, particularly those attending Minority-Serving Institutions, to prepare themselves for careers in STEM fields.
- HSIs remain the most federally under-funded category of higher education institutions serving one of the neediest ethnic populations in America.
- Targeting HSIs and other MSIs will produce the best return on investment by providing funding for state of the art technology essential for research, teaching and outreach and closing the digital divide for college students.

HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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