

 FAST FACTS

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Question:

What data do you have on historically Black colleges and universities in the United States?

Response:

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are institutions that were established prior to 1964 with the principal mission of educating Black Americans ([source](#)). These institutions were founded and developed in an environment of legal segregation and, by providing access to higher education, they contributed substantially to the progress Black Americans made in improving their status ([source](#)).

In 2022, there were 99 HBCUs located in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Of the 99 HBCUs, 50 were public institutions and 49 were private nonprofit institutions ([source](#)). The number of HBCU students increased by 47 percent (from 223,000 to 327,000 students) between 1976 and 2010, then decreased by 11 percent (to 289,000 students) between 2010 and 2022 ([source](#)). However, the number of HBCU students was about the same in 2022 as it was just prior to the coronavirus pandemic in 2019 (also rounded to 289,000 students). In comparison, the number of students in all degree-granting institutions increased 91 percent (from 11.0 million to 21.0 million students) between 1976 and 2010, then decreased 12 percent (to 18.6 million students) between 2010 and 2022 ([source](#)).

Although HBCUs were originally founded to educate Black students, they enroll students of other races as well. The composition of HBCUs has changed over time. In 2022, non-Black students made up 24 percent of enrollment at HBCUs, compared with 15 percent in 1976 ([source](#)).¹

Black enrollment at HBCUs fluctuated between 1976 and 2022, with a peak in 2010 (266,000 students). Meanwhile, the total number of Black students enrolled in all degree-granting postsecondary institutions (both HBCUs and non-HBCUs) was more than twice as high in 2022 as in 1976, despite annual declines since its peak in 2011 (3.1 million students), including throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, although Black enrollment in HBCUs fell from 219,000 in 2019 to 212,000 in 2020, it rebounded to 219,000 in 2022. As a result, the percentage of Black students enrolled at HBCUs fell from 18 percent in 1976 to a low of 8 percent in 2014, then rose to 9 percent, where it has remained through 2022 ([source](#), [source](#), and [source](#)).

Female enrollment at HBCUs has been higher than male enrollment in every year since 1976. The percentage of female enrollment at HBCUs increased from 53 percent in 1976 to 64 percent in 2022. Also in 2022, some 88 percent of HBCU students attended 4-year institutions, while the remaining 12 percent attended 2-year institutions. About 77 percent of HBCU students attended public institutions, while the remaining 23 percent attended private nonprofit institutions ([source](#)).

In academic year 2021–22, some 48,800 degrees were conferred by HBCUs: 11 percent were associate's degrees, about two-thirds were bachelor's degrees (67 percent), 16 percent were master's degrees, and 6 percent were doctor's degrees. Of the degrees conferred by HBCUs, the majority (74 percent) were conferred to Black students. Black students earned 44 percent of the 5,300 associate's degrees, 81 percent of the 32,800 bachelor's degrees, 70 percent of the 7,600 master's degrees, and 61 percent of the 3,000 doctor's degrees conferred by HBCUs in 2021–22. Of all degrees conferred by HBCUs to Black students, more than two-thirds were conferred to female students (69 percent) ([source](#)).

Of all the bachelor's and master's degrees conferred to Black students, the percentage conferred by HBCUs has decreased over time. For example, HBCUs conferred 35 percent of the bachelor's degrees and 21 percent of the master's degrees Black students earned in 1976–77, compared with 13 and 5 percent, respectively, in 2021–22 ([source](#), [source](#), [source](#), and [source](#)). Additionally, the percentage of Black doctor's degree recipients who received their degrees from HBCUs was lower in 2021–22 (10 percent) than in 1976–77 (14 percent) ([source](#), [source](#), and [source](#)).

The total revenue for HBCUs in 2021–22 was \$10.7 billion, with \$1.9 billion from student tuition and fees. Total expenditures were \$9.9 billion, of which \$2.3 billion was spent on instruction ([source](#)).

Ninety percent of all undergraduate students at HBCUs received some type of financial aid² in 2019–20. Specifically, 83 percent received grants,³ 65 percent took out student loans,⁴ 4 percent received work-study awards,⁵ 2 percent received federal veterans education benefits,⁶ and 18 percent had parents who took out federal Direct PLUS Loans ([source](#)).

Among undergraduates at HBCUs who received any financial aid in 2019–20, the average total amount received was \$17,300. The average amount received from grants was \$9,200, and the average amount received from loans directly to students was \$7,700 ([source](#)).

Student financial aid comes from federal, state, and institutional sources. Among undergraduates at HBCUs in 2019–20, 82 percent received federal aid, 27 percent received state aid, and 35 percent received institution aid ([source](#)). The average amounts for students receiving financial aid from these sources were \$13,200, \$3,400, and \$6,400, respectively ([source](#)).

¹ Data come from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Prior to 2010, IPEDS required institutions to report all students as belonging to a single racial/ethnic group (i.e., White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native). From 1992 to 2009, under this single-choice design, the percentage of non-Black students fluctuated between 17 and 18 percent. Beginning in 2010, IPEDS asks institutions to separately report students of single racial/ethnic backgrounds and those of two or more races. Since this reporting change, students reported as Two or more races have been included in the percentage of non-Black students. Although students reported as Two or more races may be Black (and another race), it is not possible to determine that with the available data.

² Aid includes all types of financial aid from any source except parents, friends, or relatives. Direct PLUS Loans to parents and other types of aid such as veterans benefits and job training funds are included, but federal tax credits for education are not included. Aid does not include emergency aid related to COVID-19.

PLUS Loans to parents or other forms of financing such as credit cards, home equity loans, or loans from individuals.

ⓘ Work-study includes federal, state, and institution work-study.

ⓘ Federal veterans education benefits include benefits to dependents. Amounts are based on Veterans Benefits Administration data. Interpret this estimate with caution. It is unstable, or less precise, because the standard error is more than 30 percent but less than 50 percent of the estimate.

Related Tables and Figures: (Listed by Release Date)

- [2024, Digest of Education Statistics 2023, Table 302.20. Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in college, by race/ethnicity and level of institution: 1960 through 2022](#)
- [2024, Digest of Education Statistics 2023, Table 302.60. Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college, by level of institution and sex and race/ethnicity of student: 1970 through 2022](#)
- [2024, Digest of Education Statistics 2023, Table 306.10. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level of enrollment, sex, attendance status, and race/ethnicity or nonresident status of student: Selected years, 1976 through 2022](#)
- [2024, Digest of Education Statistics 2023, Table 318.45. No. & % distribution of STEM degrees/certificates conferred by postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, level of degree/certificate, & sex of student: Academic years 2012–13 through 2021–22](#)

Other Resources: (Listed by Release Date)

- [2024, White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)
- [2022, NCES Blog: Research Roundup: NCES Celebrates Black History Month](#)
- [2019, Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2018](#)
- [2016, First-Time Postsecondary Students in 2011–12: A Profile](#)
- [2012, Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study](#)
- [2007, Characteristics of Minority-Serving Institutions and Minority Undergraduates Enrolled in These Institutions](#)
- [2006, Economic Impact of the Nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)
- [2004, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 1976 to 2001](#)
- [1985, The Traditionally Black Institutions of Higher Education 1860 to 1982](#)

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