

## **HBCU Planning Grant & Feasibility**

The Connecticut Historically Black College & University Alumni Network (“Alumni Network”) and the City of New Haven (“City”) request \$250,000 in CIF Round 8, matched by \$50,000 from the City, to do two things: (1) complete a feasibility study and community engagement process to establish the first HBCU presence in the Northeast via a satellite campus at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU); and (2) run immediate programming that connect CT students to HBCUs. The Alumni Network, the City and its partners are in an active concept phase, convening voices, aligning goals, and testing what is programmatically and financially achievable in New Haven’s higher-education ecosystem.

This planning effort will move the concept from ideation to a coordinated, partner-ready implementation plan and a Request for Qualifications to select an HBCU partner, drawing inspiration from San Francisco’s HBCU satellite initiative. Funding will support analysis to assess workforce demand, identify degree pathways that best align with CT’s growth sectors: biotech, quantum, aerospace, health care, and technology, and define the institutional and employer partnerships required to sustain enrollment, retention, and post-graduate employment. Deliverables include a full feasibility analysis, a structured community engagement process, early design and architectural visioning informed by public input, and a strategic plan detailing the academic model, accreditation, governance, affordability, and phased facilities plan.

To ensure no time is lost while planning advances, the Alumni Network will run a focused set of interim programs that expose Greater New Haven, and students statewide, to HBCUs now. This includes a Regional HBCU College Fair with FAFSA and scholarship clinics; a series of micro-fairs and HBCU Networking Nights in Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury, and New Haven; support for multi-day HBCU college tours and day trips tied to classics and sporting events; HBCU student summer send-offs. A part-time Program & Operations Coordinator will manage logistics, compliance, and volunteer support, and a lightweight CRM will track students from first contact through application and enrollment. These activities expand access immediately, stress-test partnerships and workflows, and seed the operating spine the satellite will formalize at launch.

This effort is not merely exploratory, but it is essential predevelopment work needed to shape the roadmap required to launch the Northeast’s first HBCU, a vision first proposed in New Haven in 1831 but never realized. Establishing an HBCU satellite provides CT with a generational opportunity to expand pathways into high-wage fields for historically excluded residents, honor the obligation to repair history, grow the state’s talent base, strengthen workforce competitiveness, and demonstrate leadership in racial equity at a time when many are retreating from inclusion and normalizing anti-intellectualism. This initiative positions CT to lead the nation by grounding equity in data, policy, economic development strategy, and disciplined implementation toward inclusive growth.

## WHY AN HBCU?

In 1831, on land now occupied by the I-95/I-91 interchange, New Haven nearly became home to what would have been the nation's first Black college—decades before Howard, Spelman, Morehouse, or even Cheyney (which is the recognized first HBCU established in 1837). New Haven's freemen rejected the proposal by a 700–4 vote, citing reasons in town-meeting resolutions that were explicitly racist and protectionist. The decision emboldened local opponents of Black education, sparking riots and violence against Black residents and white abolitionists, and helped set the stage for Connecticut's 1833 "Black Law." That law enabled the prosecution that ultimately closed Prudence Crandall's Black school in Canterbury, CT, a case later cited in arguments for the Dred Scott decision of 1857. In short, New Haven's refusal to establish the college set back civil rights for generations. As a result, the Northeast never developed an HBCU system, leaving generations of Black residents without a regional institution dedicated to their advancement. The result was a century-long gap in access to education and the professional, cultural, and economic mobility that HBCUs later fostered across the Mid-Atlantic and the South.

As Senator Gary Winfield has noted, "racialized choices [produce] racialized outcomes" (CT Mirror, 2023). The legacy of the 1831 rejection is still visible today in measurable disparities. Black residents though only 11% of CT's population, account for more than 40% of its prison population—one of the largest racial incarceration gaps in the nation (CT Mirror, 2023; Prison Policy Initiative, 2022). CT ranks second nationally on the Census Gini Index for income inequality, and its Bridgeport–Stamford metro area is among the most unequal in the country. Despite a long-standing racial imbalance law, the state's schools remain among the most racially and economically segregated, divided by housing and district lines (The Civil Rights Project, 2023).

These educational inequities drive persistent economic divides. Nearly 27% of Black New Haven residents live below the poverty line; more than double the rate of White residents (DataHaven, 2023). By contrast, Black poverty in metro Atlanta is about 17%, and in Prince George's County, Maryland—part of the D.C. metro area—it falls to the low teens (Pew Research Center, 2021). Both regions are anchored by robust HBCU ecosystems that stabilize families and expand opportunity. Likewise, the Black Median household income in CT is just \$32,000, compared to roughly \$65,000 in Atlanta and \$89,000 in the D.C. metro (Pew Research Center, 2021). Black homeownership in CT stands at 39%, versus nearly 50% in those same regions (Urban Institute, 2022). The business landscape reveals an even sharper gap: only about 2% of CT businesses are Black-owned, while in metro Atlanta, Black entrepreneurs own 8.8% of all businesses, the highest share in the nation (Annual Business Survey, 2021; Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 2024).

New Haven, a city defined by education, hosts six major colleges and universities within close proximity, none of which are historically Black. Nearly two centuries after 1831, there is still no HBCU in New England. The nearest institutions, in Pennsylvania and Delaware, are 190

to 250 miles away. For students seeking an HBCU experience, or simply a setting where they are not a minority, that distance creates financial and logistical barriers, driving talent out of the region. Employers have long emphasized that large, diverse, and readily available talent pools drive corporate location decisions. GE's move to Boston and Amazon's HQ2 selections illustrate that companies choose regions where hiring is easy and innovation networks are strong. An HBCU presence in New Haven would directly address this gap by cultivating new STEM, education, health, and policy professionals, anchoring industry partnerships, and retaining graduates. It aligns equity goals with economic growth.

CT's growth sectors face persistent talent shortages. For example, engineering and technology roles are projected to outpace available labor, and life sciences jobs have grown far faster than the overall market, and thus employers continue to struggle to hire specialized talent. At the same time, Black representation remains disproportionately low; only 6–9% in STEM and roughly 2% in architecture and aerospace (Pew Research Center, 2021; NESBE, 2020). Establishing an HBCU in New Haven would transform the state's research and industry strengths into a targeted, equitable talent pipeline. By aligning degree and certificate programs with employer demand and curating pathways to post-graduation employment through paid apprenticeships and internships, such a campus would broaden access to high-demand fields, supply employers with the skills they need, and achieve the dual objective of diversifying STEM while strengthening Connecticut's competitiveness through homegrown talent.

HBCUs are proven economic engines. Nationally, they generate an estimated \$16.5 billion annually, support more than 136,000 jobs, and increase alumni lifetime earnings by \$130–146 billion (United Negro College Fund, 2017). Beyond education, HBCUs fuel tourism, business growth, and civic pride through recurring cultural events. Howard University's homecoming generates roughly \$50 million in annual spending, while Atlanta's combined HBCU homecomings produce about \$80 million. Similar events in Durham, North Carolina, and Tallahassee, Florida, contribute millions more to local economies each year (Reuters, 2016; WayMaker Journal, 2019; City of Durham, 2019). These recurring events, and the alumni and enterprises they inspire, create enduring economic engines that grow year after year. Each graduating class contributes not only a skilled workforce but also a base of consumers, homeowners, and entrepreneurs.

Thus, launching an HBCU satellite campus in New Haven is both a moral obligation and a pragmatic economic development strategy. It repairs a historic wrong while building the diverse, high-skill workforce that employers need. By combining academic innovation, cultural inclusion, and workforce alignment, New Haven can become the Northeast hub for HBCU excellence, producing jobs, building wealth, advancing racial equity, and ensuring that statewide prosperity is shared. This initiative is not only about education. It completes a story nearly two centuries in the making and secures a more inclusive and competitive future for CT.

## BUDGET

<u>Budget</u>	<u>Cost</u>
<b>A) Admin/Operations</b>	
<i>Staff – Program &amp; Operations Coordinator (0.50–0.75 PTE incl. fringe)</i>	\$ 60,000
<i>CRM/Data, Outreach &amp; Marketing, Insurance/Compliance</i>	\$ 15,000
<b>B) HBCU Satellite Planning (Core)</b>	
<i>Feasibility Study (market, academic, financial, accreditation scan)</i>	\$ 80,000
<i>Strategic Planning, Coordination &amp; Community Engagement Consultants</i>	\$ 60,000
<i>Early Architectural Design (visioning/community engagement boards)</i>	\$ 30,000
<b>C) Events &amp; Student Exposure (Interim)</b>	
<i>HBCU Classics/Sporting Events/College Tours (tickets, travel, buses)</i>	\$ 20,000
<i>College Fairs/Networking Micro-Fairs/ Send-Offs (venues/AV/security)</i>	\$ 35,000
<b>All Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 300,000</b>
 <u>Expenses</u>	 \$ 300,000
 <u>Income</u>	
DECD	\$250,000
City of New Haven	\$50,000
 <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	 <b>\$300,000</b>
 <b>NET</b>	 <b>\$0</b>