

The National Institutes of Health  
Path to Excellence and Innovation Initiative

# HBCU CORNER

*The mission of the PEI Initiative is to empower HBCUs with the knowledge, resources, and skills they need to effectively and consistently compete for and win contracts from the National Institutes of Health and thereby diversify revenue streams and create more research opportunities for those academic institutions.*



## Happy One Year Anniversary to the NIH Path to Excellence and Innovation (PEI) 2.0 Initiative

On May 25, 2022, The National Institutes of Health (NIH), Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management (OALM), and Small Business Program Office, celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Path to Excellence Innovation (PEI) 2.0 Initiative. To commemorate this remarkable year, the Initiative hosted a virtual One Year Review and Reflection Webinar on June 29, 2022. The virtual webinar comprised of an overview of the Initiative's accomplishments, lessons learned, various success stories from the cohort's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), and words of appreciation from participating Small Business representatives.

Alongside NIH senior leadership, there were 17 HBCUs and 23 Small Businesses represented. During this session, Ms. Diane J. Frasier, NIH Head of the Contracting Activity and Director, Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management (OALM), welcomed participants to the webinar and provided a high-level description of the accomplishments achieved thus far.

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Within the last year, the Initiative has successfully launched the only federally approved HBCU database by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The **PEI Database** identifies upcoming and active solicitations unique to the academic institutions or small businesses' capabilities. Cohort members also participated in a **Curriculum Training** which provided attendees with a 20-hour Fundamentals of Contracting coursework and gave guidance on several topics, including developing capability statements, effectively participating in matchmaking events, along with best practices for building mutually beneficial teaming relationships. The Initiative supported and encouraged cohort members to **Pursue Opportunities**. Thus, responses were made to RFIs, sources sought notices, solicitations, and debriefing sessions on solicitations were made where there was an award win.

Additionally, several engaging **learning sessions** were conducted. During the **Small Business Feedback Forum**, the businesses in this cohort came together to provide the PEI support staff with input on the initiative from an industry perspective. While at a **President's Roundtable**, we engaged in a vibrant conversation with the Presidents of the HBCUs. The commitment from the HBCU administrators is critical to the success of the PEI Initiative. Finally, the initiative conducted **HBCU Assessments and established a Technical Assistance Center (TAC)**. The HBCUs in the cohort participated in in-depth interviews with the acquisition subject matter experts (SMEs) from the PEI TAC. The purpose of this activity was to ascertain each institution's respective level of procurement readiness so that NIH could provide meaningful, individualized, one-on-one technical assistance as needed. In an effort to seek full engagement, an SME has been assigned to each HBCU in the cohort, and the TAC is staffed with a small business liaison who facilitates discussions with small business partners on teaming best practices and the importance of building relationships with HBCUs.

## Event Analytics:

### HBCUs Attending

Bowie State University  
 Central State University  
 Cheyney University  
 Clark Atlanta University  
 Delaware State University  
 Fayetteville State University  
 Fisk University  
 Florida A & M University  
 Howard University  
 Jackson State University  
 Morehouse School of Medicine  
 Morgan State University  
 Norfolk State University  
 N.C. A & T State University  
 Texas Southern University  
 University of the Virgin Islands  
 Xavier University

### Business Participation

23 Business Partners

	Center for Biomedical Informatics & Information Technology (CBIT)	Clinical Proteomic Tumor Analysis Consortium (CPTAC)	NCI Experimental Therapeutics Program (NExT) Chemical Biology Consortium (CBC)
<b>RFP Issued</b>	January 21, 2022	April 4, 2022	January 19, 2022
<b>Due Date</b>	February 9, 2022	April 22, 2022	March 22, 2022
<b>Procurement Type</b>	Limited Competition	Sole Source	Full & Open
<b>HBCU Bidder</b>	(1) HBCU response	(1) HBCU response	(1) HBCU/HUBZone team response
<b>Result</b>	No Award to HBCU	No Award	RFP Decision Pending
<b>Notes</b>	Proposal rating: Acceptable	RFP recently reissued in June 2022	

*Chemise Smith and Crystal Canja presented an overview of Frederick National Laboratory’s engagement with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, including contracts pursued.*

Furthermore, we also heard from Eddie Billingslea, Ph.D., of the NIH UNITE Initiative “E” Committee. The NIH created the UNITE Initiative to address structural racism in the biomedical research enterprise. Each letter in the acronym UNITE has a meaning, and a committee tasked with specific objectives. The letter “U” represents Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning. The letter “N” focuses on new research on health disparities/minority health/health equity. The letter “I” is Improving the NIH culture and structure for equity, inclusion, and excellence. The letter “T” signifies Transparency, communication, and accountability with NIH’s internal and external stakeholders. Dr. Billingslea discussed the NIH UNITE Initiative “E” during his presentation, which highlighted the agency’s extramural research ecosystem, changing NIH policies, culture, and structures to promote the extramural workforce diversity and inclusion.

Finally, Crystal Canja, HBCU/MSI Program Manager, and Chemise Smith, Small Business Liaison Officer of the NIH Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research, presented their amazing journey of teaming with HBCUs in the cohort and shared their accomplishments along the way. While two HBCUs (the University of the Virgin Islands and Texas Southern University ) and two business partners (Intellectual Concepts and Williams Consulting ) discussed their success stories. We closed out this session by having an open dialogue with all of the PEI 2.0 Cohort regarding their wins over the past year. Subsequently, each presentation provided knowledgeable information and solidified all of the efforts made to effectively meet the one-year milestone of the PEI 2.0 Initiative.

In lieu of a phenomenal year and lessons learned, the first expansion of the PEI Initiative has been extended for an additional 6 months, rendering the program to become an extensive 24-month acquisition training program that provides a comprehensive overview of NIH funding mechanisms and federal contracting policies. As the Cohort strives to meet its milestones, we challenge all members to make the PEI Initiative relevant to their institution and business by adhering to the **PEI Motto: Commitment, Communication, and Collaboration.**

# Upcoming Events



The National Institutes of Health, Path to Excellence and Innovation Initiative is presenting a session titled "*The Role of HBCUs in Creating Entrepreneurial Equity*" during the 2022 National HBCU Week Conference on September 21, 2022, from 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm.

RSVP for this workshop via the Whova App after registering for the conference. We look forward to engaging with you during this session!