



**NIH Office of Acquisition & Logistics Management
Path to Excellence & Innovation Initiative
Frequently Asked Questions by Historically Black Colleges & Universities**

1. What is the Path to Excellence and Innovation Program (PEI)?
 - a. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management (OALM) launched the PEI Initiative in response to Executive Order [\(EO\) 13779: The White House Initiative to Promote Excellence and Innovation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.](#)

The PEI Initiative is a tremendous opportunity for the National Institutes of Health to work more collaboratively with Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

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.

2. Is there an application for the PEI program?
 - a. Yes, there is an application process, however, the application window is currently closed. The PEI applications will launch in Fiscal Year 2021, monitor beta.sam.gov and/or [subscribe to our listserv](#) for updates.
3. How do I access the PEI Database?
 - a. The PEI Database is still undergoing development and is unavailable for public access. It is important to note that only accepted PEI HBCU and business partner participants will have initial access to this database.
4. How do you suggest HBCUs market their capabilities to federal programmatic officials?
 - a. By identifying what agencies or prime contractors need, and then showing them how your HBCU can fulfill that need.
 - i. (<https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-guide/how-win-contracts#section-header-12>)
 - b. NIH: Select at a minimum of 3 Institutes or Centers (ICs) that possess the same or similar capabilities and contact the programmatic officials via email, letter or phone at each IC.
 - c. Other Federal Agencies: Determine which agency(ies) possess the same or similar capabilities and contact the programmatic officials via email, letter or phone at each agency.
5. How do I locate contract opportunities?
 - a. Beta.sam.gov

- i. “Organizations within the federal government publish notices on proposed contract actions valued at more than \$25,000. These notices, or contract opportunities, cover announcements through official solicitations in the pre-award process. Anyone interested in doing business with the government can use this system to research active opportunities.”
 - b. FPDS.gov (to migrate to beta.sa.gov)
 - i. Contracts whose estimated value is \$10,000 or more are reported to FPDS. Every modification to that contract, regardless of dollar value must be reported to FPDS-NG.
 - 1. This resource is helpful when striving to identify existing contracting opportunities within a specific agency. Contract data includes incumbent name, NAICS code(s), awarding agency, funding agency, and period of performance.
 - c. Agency Forecast
 - i. Each federal agency is required under Public Law 100-656, the Business Opportunity Development Reform Act of 1988, to compile and make available projections of contracting opportunities that small, disadvantaged businesses may be able to perform.
 - ii. While this law doesn’t mention HBCUs, the agency forecasts are a particularly useful tool for HBCUs with small business teaming partners.
- 6. What are the criteria for developing my institution’s capability statement?
 - a. The two links below offer guidance on capability statement best practices.
 - i. [\[HHS\] How to Write a Good Capability Statement](#)
 - ii. [\[HHS\] Template Capability Statement](#)
- 7. Where can I find a list of upcoming events and/or training?
 - a) <https://oamp.od.nih.gov/content/nih-small-business-program-office-fy-2020-upcoming-events>
 - b) Monitor beta.sam.gov
- 8. What is the difference between contracts and grants?
 - a. *Contract* means a mutually binding legal relationship obligating the seller to furnish the supplies or services (including construction) and the buyer to pay for them. It includes all types of commitments that obligate the Government to an expenditure of appropriated funds and that, except as otherwise authorized, are in writing. In addition to bilateral instruments, contracts include (but are not limited to) awards and notices of awards; job orders or task letters issued under basic ordering agreements; letter contracts; orders, such as purchase orders, under which the contract becomes effective by written acceptance or performance; and bilateral contract modifications. Contracts do not include grants and cooperative agreements covered by [31 U.S.C.6301](#)

Grant	Contract
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance mechanism to support research for the public good • Peer review of broad criteria • Limited Government oversight and control • Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legally binding agreement to acquire goods or services for the direct use or benefit of the Government. • Award based on stated evaluation factors • More Government oversight and control • Deliverables

Source: [NIH Contracts vs. Grants Webpage](#)

9. Is there a federal contracting “set-aside” for Historically Black Colleges & Universities?
 - a. Currently, there are no federal policies or regulations that provide HBCUs with a socio-economic set-aside.
 - b. [Click here to learn more about the set-asides overseen by the Small Business Administration.](#)

10. What is a subcontract?
 - a. Subcontract means “any contract...entered into by a subcontractor to furnish supplies or services for performance of a prime contract or a subcontract. It includes but is not limited to purchase orders, and changes and modifications to purchase orders.”
 - i. Source: [FAR 44.101](#)

11. What are the benefits of entering into a partnership or subcontracting relationship?
 - a. There are many benefits! [Please click here to review the benefits highlighted in the Small Business Administration’s How to Win Contract’s Resource.](#)