



National Institutes of Health

Path to Excellence and Innovation (PEI) Initiative

FACT SHEET

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the largest biomedical research organization in the world. In FY 2024, NIH's 27 Institutes and Centers (ICs) obligated approximately \$7.9 billion via contract awards to support the NIH mission. However, less than 1% of NIH's contract awards are obligated to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

The NIH Small Business Program Office (SBPO) administers the **Path to Excellence and Innovation (PEI) Initiative** as a comprehensive vehicle to strengthen the capacity of HBCUs to compete for, win, and manage contracts. The major goals of the PEI Initiative are to develop capabilities, pursue opportunities to procure NIH contracts, and improve collaboration among HBCUs, the NIH, other Federal agencies, businesses and organizations.

Administered in Accordance with Executive Action, Legislation and Federal Regulation

- **Presidential Executive Order 14283**
- **HBCU PARTNERS Act (Public Law 116-270)**
- **Federal Acquisition regulation (FAR) 26.3**

Included in Executive Order 14283, issued April 23, 2025, *The White House Initiative To Promote Excellence and Innovation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, it is the Administration's policy directive for "collaborating with agencies to improve the competitiveness of HBCUs for other sources of Federal research and development funding ..."

Additionally, as noted in Section 2, Findings and Purposes, the HBCU **Propelling Agency Relationships Towards a New Era of Results for Students (PARTNERS) Act** determined that HBCUs have served this country as engines of economic growth, and among the purposes directed Federal agencies to:

- **Align** HBCUs with the educational and economic competitiveness priorities of the United States.
- **Bolster and facilitate** productive interactions between HBCUs and Federal agencies.
- **Encourage** HBCUs participation in and benefit from Federal programs, grants, contracts, contracts, and cooperative agreements.

Additionally, FAR 26.3 requires federal agencies to promote increased participation of socially and economically disadvantaged businesses in government contracting.



PEI Initiative Achievements

Contract Awards: The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) Scientific Research Preparatory Program awarded four contracts to HBCUs and one award to a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI).

Bowie State University
Jackson State University
North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University
Fayetteville State University
University of Puerto Rico

HBCU Partnership Development Activity with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Fredrick National Laboratory for Cancer Research (FNL).

FNL HBCU Partnerships:

Howard University
Bowie State University
University of the Virgin Islands
HBCU Relationships in Progress
Morgan State University
Jackson State University
Tougaloo College Research and Development Foundation
Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
Central State University

NIH HBCU IDIQ: Several HBCUs and their business partners received contracts.

Successfully hosted various panels and conferences including:

- **During the 2022 HBCU Conference Week** facilitated a session hosted by Dr. Jon Lorsch that garnered 222 participants.
- **In July 2023**, the PEI Initiative successfully hosted a conference in collaboration with NIH Leadership, presentations from The White House, Congressional Representatives, numerous federal agencies, State Government, Industry, and Academia on current successful initiatives.
- **In April 2024**, the PEI Initiative hosted a conference to facilitate collaborations between academia, business, the NIH and the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H).

PEI Initiative Eligibility Requirements

Federal prime or subcontracting **past performance** within the last five years;

Possession of **capabilities** relevant to the NIH's mission;

- Biomedical research and development
- Information Technology
- Business & Professional Support Services
- Public Health Outreach, Communications and Research
- Laboratory services/products
- Construction Services

Willingness to commit one representative who will devote **10 hours monthly** to PEI activities;

Confirmed **endorsement from the institution's senior leadership**;

Willingness to subcontract the first three to five opportunities pursued with a designated PEI business partner.

PEI Initiative Advisory Committee

The **PEI Advisory Committee** provides guidance to the NIH Small Business Program Office on how to maximize contract opportunities, offers strategic insights and advises on the growth of contract opportunities for NIH PEI Initiative across the 27 NIH Institutes and Centers. Members:

- Were appointed by the Head of Contracting Activity and constitute a cross-section of the NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices.
- Are from the NIH Institutes and Centers that have historically awarded grants and contracts to HBCUs.
- Advisory Committee members provide input, skills, and knowledge towards specific projects and serve for a one-year appointment.