

Investing in better  
futures® for students  
and for all of us.

# FACT SHEET



## UNCF: Investing In Better Futures...

For students, the HBCUs they attend, the economy to which they will contribute and the civil society they will serve.

UNCF, the country's largest and most effective minority education organization, helps students get the college education they need and that we as a nation need them to have.

At a time when college is more important—and more expensive—than ever, for both students and the economy, each year UNCF enables nearly 50,000 students to attend its 37 member historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other colleges and almost 8,000<sup>1</sup> students to receive degrees by:

- **Providing operating funds** that make it possible for UNCF's member HBCUs to offer their students quality academic programs in a small-college environment and still keep their average tuition approximately 27% lower than comparable institutions.<sup>2</sup>
- **Awarding more than 14,000<sup>3</sup> scholarships and internships each year** so students from low- and moderate-income families can afford college tuition, books and room and board.
- **Serving as a national advocate for the importance of HBCUs, minority education and college readiness** by representing HBCUs' and students' public policy interests in Washington, DC, in cities around the country and in the media.

## UNCF Gets Results

UNCF's 37 member HBCUs offer their students a small-college experience at average tuition lower than that of comparable institutions, and outperform other colleges and universities at graduating low-income African American students.

### **HBCU students' academic performance exceed their numbers.**

America's 101 HBCUs represent only 3% of all four-year nonprofit colleges and universities. But they enroll 10% of all African American students, 15% of all African Americans with bachelor's degrees and 19% of all bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) awarded to African American graduates.<sup>4</sup>

### **HBCUs provide education at significantly lower cost than that of comparable non-HBCUs.**

HBCUs' cost-of-attendance is 27% less than attending a comparable non-HBCU (\$26,791 vs. \$35,049, respectively).<sup>5</sup>

### **HBCUs prepare students for STEM employment and further education.**


- Almost 20% of STEM bachelor's degrees<sup>6</sup> awarded to Black graduates were conferred at HBCUs.
- Between 2015 and 2019, six of the top 10 institutions where African American science and engineering Ph.D.s earned their bachelor's degrees were HBCUs.<sup>7</sup> <sup>A</sup>

**HBCUs provide better learning environments.** African American HBCU graduates report receiving more support and experiencing higher levels of engagement than their peers at non-HBCUs, according to multiple studies conducted by UNCF and Gallup over the last decade.<sup>8</sup> <sup>B</sup>

### **HBCUs build and strengthen communities, states and the country.**

A 2024 independently researched study, [\*Transforming Futures: The Economic Engine of HBCUs\*](#), documents HBCUs' local, regional and national effect: More than 136,000 jobs created nationally, \$16.5 billion in overall annual economic impact and \$146 billion in added lifetime earnings for HBCU graduates.<sup>9</sup>

**UNCF HBCUs are nationally respected.** Although smaller than competing institutions, UNCF-member colleges and universities occupy four of the top 10 spots in the 2025 *U.S. News & World Report's* ranking of HBCUs.<sup>10</sup>



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### UNCF Scholarships and Programs Get Results

UNCF scholarships and programs help to put a college education within reach for students from low- and moderate-income families and increase their recipients' chances of graduating.

**UNCF annually awards** more than 14,000 scholarships worth about \$64 million<sup>11</sup>.

**African American UNCF scholarship recipients** have a 70% six-year graduation rate,<sup>12</sup> more than 1.5 times the 40% six-year graduation rate of all African American college students nationwide and higher than the 62% six-year graduation rate of all students.

**UNCF scholarships' rates of success**, extrapolated to the entire population of African American college students, would increase the annual number of African Americans earning college degrees by 16,500 annually, contributing significantly to the country's college completion goals.


#### UNCF programs include:

- **Fund II/UNCF STEM Scholars Program**—a \$48 million initiative designed to build a national pipeline that prepares African American, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American/Alaskan Native students for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).<sup>13</sup>
- **UNCF Emergency Student Aid**—A scholarship program that enables UNCF-member college students to meet unexpected financial emergencies, so they can stay in college, graduate and begin their careers. More than \$36 million in emergency scholarships have been provided since 2009.
- **Fidelity Scholars Program**—A \$190 million partnership with Fidelity Investments, assisting students in certain geographic regions who have mid-level GPAs with scholarship funds and other services so they can attend, thrive and graduate from college.<sup>14</sup>

### UNCF Protects the Interests of HBCUs and their Students

UNCF makes the case, in Washington, DC, and around the country, for the importance of HBCUs and college education, for college readiness and every child's right to a strong K-12 education.

- UNCF and its member HBCU presidents serve as the voice of students and HBCUs before Congress and federal agencies on education policy and student and institutional aid.
- UNCF and its member HBCU leaders advocate for education to national and local audiences through speeches, op-ed columns, articles and other communication media.
- UNCF works with grassroots and grassroots local leadership organizations in communities around the country to make sure that when better schools and education reform are discussed, parents and other citizens of color are at the table, and that all students—not just some students—receive an education that prepares them for success in college.



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## UNCF Students Need Your Support

A disproportionate number of African American students face obstacles in going to and graduating from college.

- Seventy-three percent of all UNCF HBCU undergraduate students came from families whose income was low enough that they received Pell Grants, the federal government's principal low-income student aid program, compared to 36% of their non-HBCU peers.<sup>15</sup>
- Only 5% of African Americans who took the ACT college entrance exam met college-readiness benchmarks in English, reading, math and science, compared to 21% of all students.<sup>16</sup>
- Sixty percent of all African American high school graduates enrolled in college, compared to 61% of all high school students.<sup>17</sup>
- Forty-five percent of African American college students graduated from college within six years, compared with 64% of all students.<sup>18</sup>

## America Invests in UNCF

Students look to UNCF for the education they need. And UNCF looks to you.

- Hundreds of thousands of individuals, corporations and foundations have contributed more than \$6 billion to send students to and through college since the organization began in 1944.<sup>19</sup>
- Charity Navigator gives UNCF four out of four stars,<sup>20</sup> and *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* ranks it among the country's top charitable organizations. UNCF maintained a cost ratio of 17% of total expenses—6% for administrative costs and 11% for fundraising in fiscal year 2024.

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## Endnotes

- 1 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 2, UNCF Impact
  - 2 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 3, Other notable HBCU facts
  - 3 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 2 UNCF Impact
  - 4 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 3, HBCUs Impact
  - 5 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 3, Other Notable HBCU facts
  - 6 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 3, HBCUs Impacts
  - 7 National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. 2021. Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2021. Special Report NSF 21-321. Alexandria, VA: National Science Foundation. Available at <https://nces.nsf.gov/wmpd>.
  - 8 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 3, Other notable HBCU facts
  - 9 Transforming Futures, p. 6
  - 10 US News and World Report, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/hbcu>
  - 11 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 2, UNCF Impacts
  - 12 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 2, UNCF Scholarship Impacts
  - 13 "UNCF and Fund II Foundation Launch a \$48 Million Scholarship Program to Support African American Students Pursuing STEM Careers," March 7, 2016
  - 14 UNCF and Lilly Endowment, Inc., Announce \$50 Million Initiative to Better Prepare Students for 21st Century Jobs, October 6, 2015
  - 15 Represents the average of the percentages across institutions. four-year non-HBCU figure includes four-year public and private nonprofit Title IV participating and U.S. service institutions. UNCF Patterson Institute special tabulations of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2020 data collection year.
  - 16 The ACT Profile Report - National. ACT, Inc. Graduating class of 2021. Table 3.3. Percent of Students Who Met ACT College Readiness Benchmark Scores by Race/Ethnicity. Retrieved 8/24/22 from <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/2021/2021-National-ACT-Profile-Report.pdf>.
  - 17 3-year moving average 2018-2020. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2021. Table 302.20. Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in college, by race/ethnicity: 1960 through 2020. Retrieved 7/11/22 from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21\\_302.20.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_302.20.asp).
  - 18 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2021. Table 326.10. Graduation rate from first institution attended for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students at 4-year postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, time to completion, sex, control of institution, and percentage of applications accepted: Selected cohort entry years, 1996 through 2014. These figures include 4-year public, private not-for-profit, and private for-profit Title IV participating institutions. Retrieved 6/29/22 from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21\\_326.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_326.10.asp).
  - 19 The UNCF Fact Sheet: An Annual Snapshot of Key Statistics, p. 2, UNCF Impact
  - 20 Charity Navigator website
- A These institutions include: 1) Howard University, 2) Spelman College, 3) University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 4) University of Maryland, College Park, 5) North Carolina A&T State University, 6) Florida A&M University, 7) University of Florida, 8) Morehouse College, 9) Hampton University, 10) University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- B Gallup (2015). Gallup-USA Funds Minority College Graduates Report. <http://www.gallup.com/services/186305/gallup-usa-funds-minority-college-graduates-report.aspx>. HBCU First. (n.d.). USA Funds minority report: Gallup. HBCU First. [https://hbcufirst.com/Portals/20/Research/USA\\_Funds\\_Minority\\_Report\\_GALLUP.pdf](https://hbcufirst.com/Portals/20/Research/USA_Funds_Minority_Report_GALLUP.pdf); United Negro College Fund. (2022). UNCF HBCU resource guide. United Negro College Fund. <https://uncf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-UNCF-HBCU-Resource-Guide-FINAL.pdf>.