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Brian L. Barrow, CEO



U.S. Department of Education Announces Action to Support HBCU Response to Bomb Threats

Today, Vice President Kamala Harris and the U.S. Department of Education (Department) announced that Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that have recently experienced a bomb threat resulting in a disruption to the campus learning environment, are eligible to apply for grant funds under the Project School Emergency Response to Violence (Project SERV) program.

Project SERV provides short-term immediate funding for local educational agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) that have experienced a violent or traumatic incident to assist in restoring a safe environment conducive to learning.

"The recent bomb threats experienced by HBCUs have shaken students and fractured their sense of safety and belonging, which are critical to their academic success and wellbeing," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "We, at the Department of Education, recognize how these threats evoke a painful history of violence against Black Americans in this country

that is especially traumatizing to HBCU students, faculty, and staff. Today's announcement will improve access to Project SERV grants for HBCUs as these institutions work to address students' mental health needs, shore up campus security, and restore learning environments so that they can get back to doing what they do best—educating the next generation of great leaders."

The Department will work with HBCUs that have received recent bomb threats to determine if Project SERV can help with immediate needs, such as targeted mental health resources or enhanced security to restore the learning environment on their campuses. Funding for Project SERV is limited, and awards typically range from \$50,000 to \$150,000 per school.

"The bomb threats against HBCUs, particularly concentrated in Black History Month, constitute a uniquely traumatic event, given the history of bombings as a tactic to intimidate and provoke fear in Black Americans during the long struggle for civil rights in the 20th century," said Dietra Trent,

Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities. "In this context, even the threat of bombings at HBCUs can have a deep and unsettling impact on students, faculty, and staff that significantly disrupts the learning environment. Our HBCUs are pillars of strength and resiliency, and we will continue working to promote policies and practices that fortify that strength and advance educational equity, excellence, and economic opportunity through these institutions."

The Biden-Harris Administration is taking a whole-of-government approach to ensuring the safety and well-being of students, staff and faculty, and addressing these repeated threats to HBCU campuses. Following the first reports of the threats, Secretary Cardona and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas hosted a briefing with more than 40 presidents of HBCUs from across the nation to share information about grant programs, train-

ing resources, and other tools available to HBCUs to strengthen campus safety and security. Biden-Harris Administration leaders have also recently visited HBCU campuses, hearing firsthand about the need to modernize and update their operations, including campus safety and security, and the need for more resources to help bolster mental health services due to increased apprehension across the campus community.

In addition to today's announcement, the Department will provide HBCUs with a compendium of the resources that are available across the Federal government. These other resources can help with long-term improvements to campus mental health programs, campus safety and emergency management planning and response.

An HBCU that experienced a recent bomb threat may receive more information about the opportunity for support under Project SERV by emailing project.serv@ed.gov.