RM

2023 EDITION

A Guide to Recruiting at HBCUs

Key facts to know and top Historically Black Colleges and Universities to visit

At a Glance

Employers building strong teams know it's essential to recruit candidates from a variety of backgrounds.

Recruiting a diverse slate of candidates often begins at the entry-level, making the role of university recruiters especially important in finding promising candidates and bringing them into an organization. And while there are many ways to build a successful university recruiting strategy, seeking out candidates from a wide range of colleges and universities is an important one.

One important piece of that puzzle is investing in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), a group of more than

100 universities with historical significance and hundreds of thousands of bright, talented students. To help more talent teams establish or expand their presence at HBCUs, we've put together a guide with key facts to know about these institutions, tips for recruiting there, what students at HBCUs value in the workplace, and the top schools for subjects like STEM, business, and liberal arts.

Use this guide to bolster your recruiting strategy and achieve your hiring goals this year and beyond.

What's Inside

5 Facts to Know About HBCUs

When making plans to recruit at HBCUs, it's important to understand their historical context, as well as why these schools provide such a unique learning environment. We asked a former HBCU student to share some key facts for talent teams to know.

> **"As someone who attended two HBCUs (Howard University and North Carolina A&T State University) during my undergraduate career, I have been able to experience the recruiting process of companies visiting to reach the best and the brightest students."**

- Kiara Nelson, Class of 2020

01 HBCUs have existed for almost 200 years.

At a time when African-Americans were unable to pursue an education at white institutions, HBCUs were created to equip African-Americans with basic education. As a recruiter, it is important to know that you are about to encounter a group that takes pride in its history, reputation, and legacy.

02 HBCU students often have more meaningful experiences.

An ongoing study reveals that Black students at HBCUs have more meaningful experiences compared to those at Predominantly White Institutions. This may be due to the environment of HBCUs, where family and collaboration are highly valued. The similarity of experiences among Black HBCU students creates a diverse community of support that allows them to not only succeed, but to have a memorable time doing it as well.

03 HBCU students feel supported at their institutions.

When surveyed, Black HBCU students and graduates were more than twice as likely to recall a time where they felt supported by a professor or faculty member. Because many HBCUs serve first-generation, low-income students, it is important that students are welcomed by a nurturing environment that helps them tackle many hurdles. This support is displayed in numerous ways; as some professors offer mentorship, guidance, and networking to their students, and can help them find internships and entry-level roles.

04 HBCUs are responsible for a quarter of African-American STEM graduates.

According to the United Negro College Fund, HBCUs are responsible for 25% for all African-American science, technology, engineering, and mathematics degrees. The top universities that helped produce these graduates include Florida A&M University, Howard University, Morgan State University, and North Carolina A&T State University.

05 There are over 100 HBCUs across 20 states.

While many companies heavily recruit at popular HBCUs such as Howard University, Spelman College, and Morehouse College, there are more HBCUs that companies should be open to recruiting from. If you're anywhere among the eastern states, there's an HBCU within reach for recruitment! HBCUs are spread across 20 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Want to dive deeper? You can read the full article, **here.**

5 Tips for Recruiting at HBCUs

If you're reading this guide, you likely already have a presence at HBCUs or are hoping to establish one. To help strengthen your employer brand on campus and reach the right candidates, here are our top tips:

01 Don't limit yourself to the most well-known HBCUs.

Not only are there more than 100 HBCUs in the U.S., but there are a number of which that produce particularly strong graduates in industries that traditionally lack diversity. For example, North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro and Florida A&M University in Tallahassee are known to generate significant numbers of graduates in STEM. If employers are willing to go the extra mile and look in addition to heavily-recruited schools, they could benefit from seeing a more diverse group of graduates who are eager to apply to their companies.

RippleMatch has a presence on more than **50% of active HBCUs** – get in touch to find out how we can help you reach more candidates from these schools.

02 Develop a strong relationship with campus career centers.

In addition to broadening the scope at which recruitment actually happens, companies that are looking to create a more diverse workforce should be open to communicating regularly with career centers at HBCUs. Getting in contact with the right point person can make it easier to introduce the company's goals and initiatives, as well as set up a regular cadence of events.

03 Engage students through special events.

While making the effort to get on campus and communicate directly with prospective employees at HBCUs is perhaps the most traditional way for companies to introduce themselves to a more diverse talent pool, make the effort to set up events in which students from specialized programs at HBCUs get the opportunity to gain a more organic understanding of what it's like to actually work at a company. From panels with employees to professional development workshops to virtual office tours, there are countless ways to get creative.

04 Create programs for underrepresented identities.

One strategy that companies can look into is creating educational partnerships with various HBCUs to offer experiences students can value as they move forward post-grad. For example: Howard West, a program developed in partnership between Google and Howard University, allows Howard and other HBCU students to receive hands-on computer science training at the Googleplex for a full academic year.

05 Share with candidates how you'll invest in their growth.

RippleMatch data on our candidates at HBCUs reveals that these students rank professional development as a top priority when searching for a job. In your recruitment marketing materials and throughout the interview process, be sure to share information about career mapping, mentorship, employee resource groups, and any other forms of professional development investment.

Looking for more? You can read the full article **here.**

What HBCU Students Value at Work

Understanding what students value in a career can help you highlight the things that matter most. See below for data on HBCU students that we collected between February 2022 and 2023.

Career Development

On average, students at HBCUs rank professional development as their top priority when searching for a job. On a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important), HBCU students rank professional development as a 4.48 – the average across all students on our platform is a 4.38. HBCU students also rank upward mobility as important, giving it a composite score of 4.18 (compared to our platform average of 4.03). Finally, job stability is especially important to students at HBCUs. Tied for the second most important value, it's important to show how your company makes long-term investments in its employees.

Company Culture

Students at HBCUs rank a 'sense of community' and 'work-life balance' as more important than the average of all students. Recruiters should showcase how their inclusive culture promotes happiness inside and outside of the workplace – sharing information about employee resource groups or flexible work policies can help your company stand out.

Social Impact

On average, RippleMatch users rate a company's social impact initiatives as 3.6/5 in terms of importance. Students at HBCUs rate a company's social initiatives as a 3.9/5. While things like career development and company culture are rated as slightly more important,

companies with a socially-conscious mission can benefit from highlighting their impact. Companies that aren't geared toward social good can still share their corporate social responsibility programs such as paid volunteering time or company-wide charitable initiatives.

WHAT MATTERS TO HBCU STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

We asked candidates to rank what they value in a workplace from Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (5).

	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT (3)	VERY IMPORTANT (4)	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT (5)
Professional Development			4.48
Job Stability			4.45
Work-Life Balance			4.45
Sense of Community		4.25	
Upward Mobility		4.18	
Compensation		4.08	
Social Impact	3.92		
Company Prestige	3.56		

The Top 20 HBCUs Overall

Now that you're armed with essential facts and data on HBCUs and their students, it's time to look at your options. In the following pages, we've rounded up HBCUs with standout programs in various academic disciplines. While every HBCU contains talented students, these schools can be a great place to establish or expand your recruitment efforts.

These are the top 20 HBCUs according to U.S. News & World Report 2022-23 rankings:

Spelman College
Atlanta, GA | Enrollment: 2,417

Howard University
Washington, DC | Enrollment: 8,964

Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, AL | Enrollment: 2,184

Morehouse College
Atlanta, GA | Enrollment: 2,554

Xavier University of Louisiana
New Orleans, LA | Enrollment: 2,755

Hampton University
Hampton, VA | Enrollment: 2,863

Florida A&M University
Tallahasee, FL | Enrollment: 7,301

Delaware State University
Dover, DE | Enrollment: 4,339

Claflin University
Orangeburg, SC | Enrollment: 1,779

North Carolina A&T State University
Greensboro, NC | Enrollment: 11,596

Fisk University
Nashville, TN | Enrollment: 914

Morgan State University
Baltimore, MD | Enrollment: 7,034

Tougaloo College
Tougaloo, MS | Enrollment: 687

Dillard University
New Orleans, LA | Enrollment: 1,202

North Carolina Central University
Durham, NC | Enrollment: 5,892

University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Princess Anne, MD | Enrollment: 1,812

University of the District of Columbia
Washington, DC | Enrollment: 2,944

Bowie State University
Bowie, MD | Enrollment: 5,381

Jackson State University
Jackson, MS | Enrollment: 4,763

Norfolk State University
Norfolk, VA | Enrollment: 5,016

The Top 10 HBCUs in STEM

HBCUs produce 25% of all Black STEM graduates. These schools have especially strong programs. Read our full article on the top HBCUs for STEM **here.**

Alabama A&M University
Huntsville, AL | Enrollment: 5,107

AAMU provides an excellent STEM Knowledge Center where students can access tutoring, software, education advising, and career support.

Alabama State University
Montgomery, AL | Enrollment: 3,499

ASU not only has great programs for STEM students but also specific initiatives to help students from underrepresented backgrounds succeed.

Florida A&M University
Tallahassee, FL | Enrollment: 7,301

Florida A&M University is currently ranked as the #I HBCU for Research and Development by the National Science Foundation.

Hampton University
Hampton, VA | Enrollment: 2,863

Hampton University recently received a grant to provide need scholarships for students majoring in STEM, and created an incoming freshman program around mathematics preparedness.

Howard University
Washington, D.C. | Enrollment: 8,964

Howard proves their STEM program's strength by being ranked as the top producer of African American undergraduates who later earn science and engineering doctoral degrees.

Jackson State University
Jackson, MS | Enrollment: 4,763

JSU features a special summer program called "Bridge to the Future" for incoming freshmen in the College of Science, Engineering and Technology.

Morgan State University
Baltimore, MD | Enrollment: 7,034

MSU attracts underrepresented youth to STEM fields through multiple programs, such as through the school's partnership with NASA.

North Carolina A&T State University
Greensboro, NC | Enrollment: 11,596

NCAT partners with the Association for Women in Science to promote equality and work toward increasing the amount of women in STEM.

Prairie View A&M University
Prairie View, TX | Enrollment: 8,372

Prairie View has a 'Traveling STEM Mobile Road Show' to excite high school students about STEM and the idea of pursuing a STEM degree, to help close the representation gap in science/math fields.

Spelman College
Atlanta, GA | Enrollment: 2,417

Because Spelman is a women's college they're not only helping increase the amount of Black students entering STEM fields, but also working to increase the low amount of women in STEM.

The Top 10 HBCUs in Computer Science

Recruiting computer science majors from top HBCUs, you can connect with talented candidates and improve representation. Read our full article on the top HBCUs for Computer Science **here**.

Alabama A&M University
Huntsville, AL | Enrollment: 5,107

Alabama A&M provides students with state-of-the-art laboratories, and faculty who are internationally recognized authorities in their fields.

Bowie State University
Bowie, MD | Enrollment: 5,381

Bowie State's ABET accredited CS program features small class sizes and an External Advisory Board to guide them on what skills students need to be competitive.

Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville, NC | Enrollment: 5,563

Fayetteville CS students work on innovative research surrounding topics like cybersecurity, robotics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning.

Florida A&M University
Tallahassee, FL | Enrollment: 7,301

FAMU's Computer and Information Sciences department is split between three majors: computer science, computer information studies, and IT.

Fort Valley State University
Fort Valley, GA | Enrollment: v2,526

FVSU's CS program focuses on the study of logical organization, design, and functions of computers, with an emphasis on scientific and technical applications.

Howard University
Washington, D.C. | Enrollment: 8,964

Howard partners with Google on a semester-long program where CS students can gain real world experience, training, and networking opportunities.

Morgan State University
Baltimore, MD | Enrollment: 7,034

MSU's CS program provides students with a comprehensive skillset they can immediately use in their profession, and trains them to adapt to industry changes.

Norfolk State University
Norfolk, VA | Enrollment: 5,016

NSU's CS program focuses on the practical and theoretical sides of CS and prepares students for a future as computer software engineers, system analysts, and more.

North Carolina A&T State University
Greensboro, NC | Enrollment: 11,596

North Carolina A&T is the largest public HBCU in the nation, and they've been named the top public school for combining research and teaching by the Wall Street Journal.

Xavier University of Louisiana
New Orleans, LA | Enrollment: 2,755

Xavier's CS program focuses on the core principles of learning, discovery, engagement, and innovation to help create a diverse set of skills for students.

The Top 10 HBCUs in Business

HBCUs produce great candidates with strong business competencies – the schools listed below have especially standout business programs. Read our full article on the top HBCUs for business **here**.

Bowie State University
Bowie, MD | Enrollment: 5,381

Bowie State University created a Business Innovation Center where students can have direct access to entrepreneurs and other mentors.

Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville, NC | Enrollment: 5,563

Through its University-Industry Collaboration Initiative, Fayetteville students can they pitch solutions to real-world business problems.

Florida A&M University
Tallahassee, FL | Enrollment: 7,301

The FAMU School of Business and Industry provides an interactive learning experience, connected alumni network, and professional leadership training.

Hampton University
Hampton, VA | Enrollment: 2,863

Hampton University's business school offers a rigorous five year undergraduate/graduate program leading to a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

Howard University
Washington, D.C. | Enrollment: 8,964

Howard's School of Business has been named the #1 "greatest opportunity for minority students," by the Princeton Review, and U.S. News ranked it #2 in their list of top HBCUs.

Morehouse College
Atlanta, GA | Enrollment: 2,554

Business majors make up 25% of the graduates from Morehouse, which ranked as #4 on the list of top HBCUs from U.S. News.

North Carolina A&T State University
Greensboro, NC | Enrollment: 11,596

North Carolina A&T's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation provides a space where students can cultivate their business ideas as they're learning.

North Carolina Central University
Durham, NC | Enrollment: 5,892

At NCCU, business majors make up around 15% of graduates. The School of Business holds an impressive 85-95% job placement rate depending on specific major.

Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, AL | Enrollment: 2,184

The Tuskegee baccalaureate program in business focuses on balancing practical theory and real-world experience to prepare students for the workforce.

Xavier University of Louisiana
New Orleans, LA | Enrollment: 2,755

Xavier's business school gives students a unique opportunity through their Entrepreneurship Institute — a resource for students who want to start their own business.

The Top 10 HBCUs in Liberal Arts

Looking for candidates with great critical thinking and communication skills? Check out these HBCUs with excellent liberal arts programs and standout students or read our full article on the top HBCUs for Liberal Arts **here.**

Alcorn State University
Lorman, MS | Enrollment: 2,533

The School of Arts and Sciences is the largest school at Alcorn State University, and offers majors such as English, Fine Arts, and Music.

Delaware State University
Dover, DE | Enrollment: 4,339

DSU offers a B.S. in integrated studies, where students select two areas of study and combine them into one cohesive program.

Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville, NC | Enrollment: 5,563

FSU received a grant to create a Liberal Arts Innovation Center where students can test, develop, and report on technology trends.

Fisk University
Nashville, TN | Enrollment: 914

Fisk University's liberal arts-based programs are known for producing graduates who are ready to contribute to society, with popular majors including psychology, english, and political science.

Kentucky State University
Frankfort, KY | Enrollment: 2,135

Kentucky State University offers a unique liberal studies degree where honors students can double-major along with another area of study they're interested in.

North Carolina A&T State University
Greensboro, NC | Enrollment: 11,596

North Carolina A&T offers a unique experience in its Department of Liberal Studies by allowing students to design their own majors and learn across multiple disciplines.

Spelman College
Atlanta, GA | Enrollment: 2,417

Spelman has an impressive reputation for producing highly-skilled graduates, with the highest graduation rate among HBCUs at 76%.

Tougaloo College
Tougaloo, MS | Enrollment: 687

Tougaloo's liberal arts department emphasizes the examination of values, ideas, ideals, and culture in their studeis and programs.

Virginia State University
Petersburg, VA | Enrollment: 4,649

In 2022, Virginia State University reported the largest year-over-year enrollment increase in a decade, and is a top performer on social mobility, according to U.S. News.

Winston-Salem State University
Winston-Salem, NC | Enrollment: 4,689

WSSU's liberal arts program offers a customizable major in interdisciplinary studies or African-American studies, with minors in philosophy and religion.

RippleMatch HBCU Resources

In addition to providing you with a greater understanding of HBCU students, tips for recruiting at HBCUs, and the top HBCUs to consider, RippleMatch has a slew of additional resources to support your D&I efforts.

Webinars

Building Genuine Recruitment Relationships With HBCUs

This Talent Talk featured five D&I leaders and an in-depth discussion about what it takes to build a genuine and mutually beneficial recruitment relationship with HBCUs and their students.

Watch the replay

Homecoming at MongoDB: Connecting With the HBCU Community

This webinar explored the impact of one of our partner's recruitment events that pays homage to the tradition of HBCU Homecoming.

Watch the replay

Articles

7 Ways to Foster Strong Recruitment Relationships With HBCUs

This article includes seven action items for companies looking to build strong connections with HBCUs.

Read the article

The Top Challenges to HBCU Recruitment – and How Recruiters Are Tackling Them

This article details the HBCU-related challenges discussed by more than 100 talent professionals during a RippleMatch workshop.

Read the article

How RippleMatch Can Help

RippleMatch can provide you with access to a diverse talent network, including candidates from 180+ HBCUs and HSIs, and help you improve applicant diversity by 50%.

Plus, when it comes to your hiring process, RippleMatch allows you to see where diverse talent drops out of your funnel, so you can take corrective action with actionable insights.

Book a demo

About RippleMatch

RippleMatch helps employers recruit their future. Our recruitment automation platform replaces job boards as the main way Gen Z finds careers and automates the time-intensive work that goes into building diverse, high performing teams.

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We have resources for leaders who care about recruiting and retaining the next generation of talent. Check out our other guides and reports to help inform your talent acquisition strategies.

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