

USDA Announces NEXTGEN Investment in 1890 Land Grant HBCUs

Investment goes to seven 1890 HBCUs to provide training and support to thousands of future food and agricultural leaders

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, June 22, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This week the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a \$262.5 million investment in institutions of higher education to foster the next generation of diverse agricultural professionals across the nation. This program is funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, which aims to lower costs for American families, expand access to markets to producers from all backgrounds and communities, build a clean energy economy and strengthen national supply chains.

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Dr. Mortimer Neufville, 1890 Foundation President & CEO

“Each generation of agricultural professionals faces new challenges as we feed our world's growing population, and the future generations give me hope that we will rise to the occasion to meet these challenges with opportunity,” said

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “We need to ensure our youth have the education and training they need to accelerate the development of an agricultural system that is climate-smart, sustainable, profitable and equitable. This historic investment from the Biden-Harris Administration in our nation's Minority-serving Institutions brings us closer to building a workforce that represents the richness and diversity of all the communities we serve.”

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) “From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program” (or “NEXTGEN”) will enable eligible institutions to build and sustain the next generation of food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences workforce. This includes efforts to strengthen USDA's workforce through enhanced educational support, experiential learning and exposure to early career opportunities. Eligible institutions include many of the nineteen 1890 Land-Grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The 1890 institutions will receive a combined \$60 million investment that will provide training and support.

North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina, in partnership with Tuskegee University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Virginia State University, Florida A&M University,

Fort Valley State University and University of Maryland at Eastern Shore are the 1890 universities receiving the NextGen investment. They will implement the “System Approach to Promote Learning and Innovation for the Next GenerationS (or SAPLINGS)” of Professionals and Leaders in Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences (or “FANH”) program with a goal of training grade 5-12 students and educators, as well as college students, families and partners. The goal is to substantially increase underrepresented Black and other student-of-color enrollment, retention, and graduation rates at 1890 land-grant universities and grow the next generation of diverse workers, leaders, and innovators for FANH careers.

“The 1890 Foundation is pleased with the number of our universities who have been awarded NEXTGEN grants,” said Dr. Mortimer Neufville, President and CEO of the [1890 Universities Foundation](#). “We look forward to future investments from the administration and further engagement with our 1890 universities system in an effort to prepare our workforce of food and agriculture professionals. These times and the challenges ahead of us clearly necessitate it.”

The USDA is transforming nation's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, and ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities. This includes building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and building clean energy capabilities in rural America. The 1890 Land-Grant [HBCUs](#) play a crucial role in these initiatives.

Charles Ellison

B|E Strategy

+1 301-526-2239

[email us here](#)

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