

# First Black Woman to Launch a Drone Academy in Texas Announces National HBCU Aviation and Drone Leadership Initiative

*Steffanie Rivers launches a national initiative to connect HBCU students with careers in aviation, drones, workforce development, and entrepreneurship.*

DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, July 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- First Black Woman to Launch a Drone Academy in Texas Announces [National HBCU Aviation and Drone Leadership Initiative](#)

Tennessee State University Graduate Expands Mission to Increase Black and Minority Representation in Aviation and Drone Technology

As demand for FAA-certified drone pilots continues to grow across the United States, Steffanie Rivers, founder of [TCB Drones Academy](#) and the first Black woman to launch a drone academy in Texas, has announced the National HBCU Aviation and Drone Leadership Initiative. The initiative is designed to introduce students and graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to career opportunities in aviation, drone technology, entrepreneurship, and workforce development.

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Representation creates opportunity. My mission is to help HBCU students discover careers in aviation, drone technology, and entrepreneurship.”

*Steffanie Rivers*

“As an HBCU graduate, I learned that leadership is not about waiting for opportunities,” Rivers said. “It's about creating opportunities for yourself while



Steffanie Rivers teaches students during the Alcorn State University Drone Pilot Prep Course as part of her National HBCU Aviation and Drone Leadership Initiative.

helping create them for others. Tennessee State University taught me the importance of leadership, community, and believing in myself."

Commercial drone technology is transforming industries including public safety, construction, infrastructure, agriculture, logistics, emergency management, energy, real estate, and engineering. Yet Rivers believes many students—particularly Black and minority students—remain unaware of the growing career opportunities available.

"One of the biggest misconceptions about drones is that they're simply a hobby," Rivers said. "The reality is that drones are creating careers, businesses, and economic opportunities across America. They represent one of the fastest-growing sectors of aviation and technology."

Through the National HBCU Aviation and Drone Leadership Initiative, Rivers plans to collaborate with colleges, universities, educators, workforce organizations, community leaders, and aviation professionals to increase awareness of drone careers and entrepreneurship. The initiative will include educational workshops, keynote presentations, career awareness events, mentorship opportunities, and workforce development discussions.

The initiative builds on Rivers' growing work with HBCUs, including classroom instruction and curriculum development discussions at Alcorn State University, as well as her ongoing relationship with Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock, Arkansas.

According to Rivers, the initiative is about much more than teaching students how to fly drones.



Steffanie Rivers provides hands-on FAA drone flight instruction, helping aspiring drone pilots develop practical skills for careers in aviation and emerging technologies.



Steffanie Rivers presents her vision for preparing HBCU students for careers in aviation, drone technology, and workforce development.

"When students see someone who looks like them succeeding in aviation and technology, it changes what they believe is possible," Rivers said. "Representation creates awareness. Awareness builds confidence. Confidence creates opportunity. I want more Black and minority students to know there is a place for them in aviation, entrepreneurship, and innovation."

As the founder of TCB Drones Academy, Rivers has dedicated her career to helping aspiring drone pilots, entrepreneurs, and professionals access [FAA drone training](#) and certification. Her work has introduced students and professionals to new career opportunities while increasing awareness of the economic impact of drone technology.

"This initiative isn't simply about teaching students how to fly drones," Rivers said. "It's about preparing future business owners, innovators, engineers, public safety professionals, and technology leaders. HBCUs have always produced extraordinary leaders, and I believe they can help shape the future of aviation."

The National HBCU Aviation and Drone Leadership Initiative will expand throughout 2026 with plans to partner with additional HBCUs, educational institutions, workforce organizations, and community leaders across the country.

Colleges, universities, workforce organizations, corporate partners, and community leaders interested in participating in the initiative are encouraged to contact TCB Drones Academy to explore partnership opportunities.

For more information about TCB Drones Academy or the National HBCU Aviation and Drone Leadership Initiative, visit [www.TCBDrones.com](http://www.TCBDrones.com) or email [info@tcbdrones.com](mailto:info@tcbdrones.com).

#### About Steffanie Rivers

Steffanie Rivers is the founder of TCB Drones Academy and the first Black woman to launch a drone academy in Texas. A graduate of Tennessee State University, she is an aviation entrepreneur, FAA drone educator, speaker, and workforce development advocate committed to expanding access to careers in drone technology and emerging industries. Through education, mentorship, and strategic partnerships, Rivers is helping prepare the next generation of aviation professionals, entrepreneurs, and technology leaders.

#### Media Contact

Steffanie Rivers  
TCB Drones Academy  
Email: [info@tcbdrones.com](mailto:info@tcbdrones.com)  
Website: [www.TCBDrones.com](http://www.TCBDrones.com)

Kevin D Williams

TEAM VISION LLC

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

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