

Destination Organization & HBCU Engagement Guideline

An approach to deepen institutional relationships, create community impact, and build a pipeline for diverse talent

Background

Destinations International has a 10-year vision to diversify the workforce and retain talent among people of color, underrepresented identities, and abilities. This vision enables destinations to connect with and appeal to travelers of all abilities and backgrounds, ultimately enhancing promotion efforts and creating lasting community impact. Engaging youth and developing a pipeline of talent is a crucial component to this success.

The [DI Foundation HBCU Scholarship](#) is designed to provide students pursuing degrees in hospitality or tourism management with tuition assistance. It provides access to resources and relationships to drive greater awareness and passion for the destination space. Scholarship recipients attend DI's Annual Convention, participate in networking and mentorship sessions, and receive hands-on professional development guidance from industry leaders. The scholarship also aims to strengthen relationships between DMOs and HBCUs to fuel talent pipelines and impact the community at localized levels.



The Destinations International Foundation HBCU Scholarship provides students with \$8,000 for tuition assistance, event access, mentorship, and growth opportunities.

Destination Organization Involvement Makes a Difference

As DI enters the third year of this scholarship program in 2025, we recognize the opportunity to further equip DMOs as they engage with HBCUs surrounding the scholarship program to ensure that recipients can fully benefit from its experience. We acknowledge that relationships may vary from destination to destination and are here to support you as you see fit.

As a destination organization in proximity to an HBCU with a hospitality or tourism management management program, we recommend you follow the guidelines below for activation. Twice a year, we will invite all destinations with HBCUs to come together and share best practices, challenges, and inspiration for continued success.

73%

of destination employees expressed greater desire for cultural diversity in their organizations.

8%

of entry level destination employees identify as Black/African American.

Based on findings from 2023 Social Inclusion Study for Destination Organizations (n=453)

Overall Activations

1. Destination Organization and HBCU Relationship Establishment

Destination organizations have a point-of-contact at a nearby HBCU and established a shared interest in student awareness.

2. Destination Awareness

Destination organizations facilitate presentation(s) to HBCU program students, explaining the purpose and importance of DMOs in the community and the value of having an inclusive and diverse workforce.

3. Student Ambassadorship Program

Destination organization establishes and rolls out an ambassadorship program to involve HBCU students in events and meetings in the community. Students are invited to "apply" as volunteer ambassadors.

4. Destination Office Visits

Destination organization coordinates office visit days with HBCU students. In addition to touring the office and visitors center, students have the opportunity to hear from different departments about their roles and responsibilities.

5. Destination Shadow Days

Destination organization coordinates an extended shadow day (or days) with students based on interests. Students are tasked with small projects to gain exposure to day-to-day work.

6. Destination Internships

Destination organization establishes internship opportunities and works with HBCU to validate requirements, skillsets, and responsibilities. HBCU supports destination by promoting internship offering as part of curriculum.

7. Curriculum Involvement

Destination engages more extensively in HBCU curriculum, providing sessions on destination management and related fields.

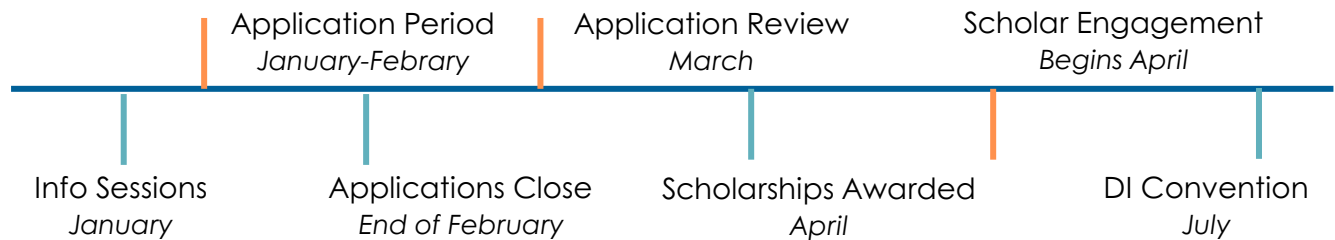
8. Community Involvement

If a destination has community/industry related partners who value workforce development and diversification, partners are encouraged to engage with students.

9. Student Mentorship

Destination pairs student(s) with employee(s) for 1:1 mentorship experience.

Scholarship-Related Activations



1. [December-January] Info Sessions for Destination awareness + DI HBCU scholarship

Destination organization joins DI and scholarship alum (as applicable) when creating awareness on the DI Foundation HBCU program. Destination organization reiterates the purpose of organization and importance in the community and furthers connection with both program faculty and students.

2. [April] Upon awarding scholarship

As scholarship recipients are identified, DI will re-introduce student(s) to destination organizations. Destination is encouraged to congratulate recipient and present a timeline for engagement leading up to DI's Annual Convention.

3. [April-June] Post-awarding scholarship engagement

Destination engages students in various touchpoints (see overall activations above) to develop relationships and create more awareness/exposure to industry.

- o If the destination has employees attending DI Annual Convention, a "conference buddy" is identified and shared with DI.

- o If destination has community/industry related partners who value workforce development and diversification, destination (with support of DI) offers opportunity for student "sponsorship" at Annual Convention to support with travel-related expenses.

4. [July] Destination and student involvement at DI Annual Convention

- o If a destination has employees attending DI Annual Convention, "conference buddy" serves as a friendly face for student at event.

- o If destination does not have employees attending DI Annual Convention, DI will assign a buddy and keep destination informed on student experience.

5. [July-Onward] Continued engagement

Destination organizations continue to support and engage students in various touchpoints(see overall activations above) as appropriate.

DI encourages pledges to the scholarship program year-round. Roughly 20 organizations and 60 industry professionals pledge annually.