



SUSTAINABILITY PROFESSORSHIP

Overview and Application Instructions

Please fill out the on-line form. The application in this document cannot be submitted

OVERVIEW:

The **HBCU Sustainable Communities Initiative (HBCU SCI)**, funded by the Southern Company Foundation, seeks to promote opportunities for HBCUs within the Southern Company geographic footprint (Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia). The program is designed to impact 550 students over a 4-year period to produce Black baccalaureate degree earners in disciplines leading to careers in sustainability. The student-centered goals of the program are:

- Improve college completion rates of HBCU students
- Increase the conversion rate of student interns to full time employees immediately upon graduation
- Increase HBCU alumni representation in leadership positions in sustainability-related careers.

To create broader impact, **matching challenge grants will be awarded to four HBCUs to establish Sustainability Professorship, funded by the Southern Company Foundation**. The endowment is intended to expand the capacity of select HBCUs to develop and strengthen program offerings in sustainability-related studies and activities, thus equipping students with the necessary lens to identify and potentially address economic and environmental issues in their communities. The overall goal is to create long-term program impact as HBCUs increase the output of equity-minded engineers, scientists, researchers, planners, policymakers, and social entrepreneurs for years to come.

THE OPPORTUNITY:

Four selected HBCUs in the Southern Company's geographic footprint will each receive a \$500,000 grant after raising \$500,000 in match funds. This will establish \$1 million endowments at each institution, expected to yield \$50,000 per year towards the salary of a professor in sustainability. Funds may be used to support a tenure-track faculty position or to fund a position, such as a department chair or research center director, to be occupied by a tenure-track faculty member.

The sustainability endowment fund aims to increase the capacity of HBCUs to offer programs in the areas of environmental studies, climate change, energy policy, economic development, urban planning, and related areas that educate students and prepare students for careers that promote sustainability of our communities and cities. See the [United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) for ideas about topics linked to sustainability work.

MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENT:

To be eligible to receive grant funds, the institution shall provide matching funds, in an amount equal to or greater than the grant award (\$500,000) used for the establishment of the endowment fund. There are no restrictions regarding the origin of funds. Funds may come from other matching grants, donors, institutional funds, etc.

Upon verification of matching funds, grant funds will be released to the Awardee.

THE PROCESS:

- 1) Complete the HBCU SCI Endowment Application, which can be accessed at: hbcusci.org/sustainability-professorship-application
- 2) Submit your application by **March 25, 2025 at 11:59 PM Local Time**
- 3) Applications will be reviewed by a panel of several HBCU faculty members and experts in sustainability (from institutions outside of the six eligible states).

APPLICATION CRITERIA:

Applications will be scored based on the degree to which applicants convey the following proposal elements:

Proposed Program (30%): There is a compelling need for the program. There has been momentum towards enhancing or expanding current sustainability programs and initiatives. The proposed activities advance the goals of HBCU SCI. Program deliverables are ambitious and achievable. The plan reflects creativity and includes short and long-term planning. A statement regarding how students will benefit from the program (qualitatively) is included. The proposal includes quantitative impact expressed through metrics such as anticipated number of students served by the program.

Organizational Capacity & Qualifications (35%): The institution and proposed faculty members show demonstrated experience and expertise in sustainability studies. The institution has the infrastructure to support program growth. *Matching Funds Plan:* The applicant has outlined a plan to raise matching funds. A detailed timeline is included in the plan. The Institutional Advancement / Development team is involved in the planning to raise matching funds. The applicant has referenced current or recent donors whose funding priorities align with sustainability initiatives.

Program Sustainability (15%): There is institutional commitment to support the program. The institution has a well-devised plan for addressing personnel changes that could impact program delivery.

Evaluation (15%): Measurable outcomes are stated. A plan for measuring outcomes and program effectiveness is included.

Overall Application (10%): The application is complete, and all requested attachments have been provided. The application is well-organized and presents a logical flow of activities.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Application Deadline: March 25, 2025, 11:59 PM (Local Time)

Anticipated Notification of Awards: 2025

Grant Funds Released to Awardee: Upon verification of matching funds.



MATCHING FUNDS ENDOWMENT APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

ELIGIBILITY

Geographical Area*

Where is your institution located?

- Alabama
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Mississippi
- Tennessee
- Virginia
- Other

U.S. Department of Education Institution Category

- HBCU
- Minority Institution
- Predominantly Black Institution
- Other

INSTITUTION

College/University

Address

Website

Email

Phone Number

CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name

Last Name

Title

Email Address

Phone Number

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (Maximum of 500 words)

Upload a one-page overview that provides a high-level summary of your responses. Be sure to address the need, intended beneficiaries, anticipated outcomes, and plans for program sustainability. *(Recommendation: Complete the Executive Summary after responding to all prompts within the application)*

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Upload a letter on institutional letterhead signed by the institution's president (or chief fundraising officer) indicating that 1) The application has been reviewed, 2) The institution's leadership is in support of pursuing the Sustainability Professorship grant and 3) The institution is committed to raising \$500,000 within certain time frame as a match to the Sustainability Professorship grant.

APPLICATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1) Brief History of the Program of the program from which the endowed professor will teach or conduct research.
- 2) Overview of Program Mission and Goals
- 3) Describe students typically enrolled in this program (demographics, major/minor, classification, career interests, etc.)

PROPOSAL

- 4) The endowment must be designated for a tenure-track faculty member. Indicate to whom the funding will be attached.
 - a. Specific Professor (endowed throughout professor's tenure at institution)
 - b. Department Chair (endowment supports the person in this position; person may change)
 - c. Center Director (endowment supports the person in this position; person may change)

- 5) Statement of Need: Describe how Program will benefit from receiving funding. (Considerations may include current program budget, program staff, particular challenges funding will help to address, current and pending grants in support of the program)
- 6) Program Overview: Provide an overview of how the program addresses or will address the goals of the HBCU Sustainable Communities Initiative, including an implementation timeline.
- 7) What is your institution's plan, including timeline, to identify matching funds?

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY & QUALIFICATIONS

- 8) Explain and provide demonstrated commitment of institutional structures and/ or programs dedicated to advancing sustainability on your campus. (Consider programs, initiatives, and dedicated faculty and staff)
- 9) Indicate student and alumni accomplishments that demonstrate student interest in sustainability work.
- 10) Describe current and future community and corporate partnerships dedicated to the advancement and support of the institution's commitment to sustainability education, training, and research.
- 11) Provide an overview of the qualifications for the professor or position (e.g., research center director, chair of department) that will be endowed through this grant

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

- 12) What are the long-term plans for maintaining or expanding your program with funding from sources outside of this grant?
- 13) If 4A was chosen: What is your succession plan (with respect to endowment funds) should the named professor depart your campus?

If 4B was chosen: What is your succession plan (with respect to endowment funds) should the named department dissolve?

If 4C was chosen: What is your succession plan (with respect to endowment funds) should the named center change its focus or sunset proposed activities?

EVALUATION

- 14) **Evaluation Plan**
Describe your plans for evaluation. Identify measurable program outcomes. How will you determine if you have been successful?