



Branch Alliance
for Educator Diversity

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Grant Supports Bolstering Teacher Preparation Programs at Minority Serving Institutions

AUSTIN, TEXAS — Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity (BranchED), the innovative organization that works with educator preparation programs (EPPs) at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), has been awarded a grant to assist MSI colleges and universities in preparing highly effective, diverse teachers and to gain insight about the specific needs, challenges, and aspirations of these institutions.

The 24-month, \$400,000 grant, awarded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, supports BranchED in providing capacity building support to EPPs that are striving to improve their programs to consistently prepare highly effective diverse teachers. Over the course of the grant, BranchED will conduct special outreach with MSI EPPs in Florida and New Mexico, collecting and analyzing data and gaining insight about their unique needs, challenges, and aspirations. Florida has 14 MSI EPPs, the third highest number in the country, including nine Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), four Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and a Predominantly Black Institution, which account for 24% of all the teacher preparation programs in Florida, but prepare 40% of all the candidates of color in the state. New Mexico has eight HSIs and one institution with dual designation as an Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution and a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution. Collectively, they account for 69% of all the EPPs in New Mexico and prepare 79% of all the candidates of color in the state.

“It’s no secret that the U.S. has an acute shortage of teachers of color,” BranchED President and CEO Cassandra Herring, Ph.D., said, explaining, “Educator preparation programs at MSIs are uniquely suited to address this shortage by preparing a more diverse teacher workforce for underserved student populations, and this funding from the Kellogg Foundation strengthens BranchED’s ability to provide transformational coaching and guidance for these institutions.”

“We are honored to partner with BranchED and their commitment to developing high-potential, diverse educators of tomorrow,” said Kinah Harrison, program officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. “Representation matters, particularly in communities of color. These programs will strengthen the teacher pipeline and improve education quality so children can thrive.”

Herring said the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed disparities in resources and educational challenges diverse student populations face. “It is time to break the silence about diversity and equity that leaves new teachers feeling underprepared to meet the needs of the diverse student bodies greeting them in virtual and traditional classrooms each day,” she said.

The BranchED program is designed to improve faculty practice through a variety of coaching methods. As a result, the program strives to ensure that what teacher candidates learn translate into behaviors applied in their classrooms. Among the transformational strategies MSI EPP participants gain from BranchED are implementing a culture of inquiry grounded in data empowerment, inclusive instructional strategies that engage local communities, reinventing collaborative partnerships and broadening the base of key stakeholders engaged in the work of educator preparation.

About BranchED

Based in Austin, Texas, Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity is the first and only non-profit organization in the nation dedicated to strengthening and growing educator preparation at Minority Serving Institutions, with broader goals of both diversifying the teaching profession and intentionally addressing critical issues of educational equity for all students. BranchED has begun expanding its reach into K-12 by supporting principal coaching and training. For more information, visit www.educatordiversity.org.

About W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal innovator and entrepreneur Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special attention is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit www.wkkf.org.