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HBCU WEEK NOW EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR INAUGURAL STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL

**Submissions for new film festival showcasing
the history, legacy and cultural heritage of HBCUs are now due May 7**

BALTIMORE (April 1, 2025) — HBCU Week NOW, a public media partnership spearheaded by Maryland Public Television (MPT) dedicated to honoring the rich history, legacy and cultural heritage of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) through compelling short films and digital media showcased on its signature [YouTube](#) channel, will present its first-ever HBCU Week NOW Student Film Festival in 2026.

The festival — which is being produced in partnership with the national media arts nonprofit [Black Public Media](#), which will administer the open call for submissions — has extended the deadline for submissions to Wednesday, May 7 (from the previously issued date of April 12).

“HBCU students and alumni have long been at the forefront of storytelling, using film as a powerful medium to capture the depth, brilliance and resilience of our communities. With the launch of HBCU Week NOW Student Film Festival, we’re providing the platform for these emerging filmmakers to share their voices and perspectives with the world,” said Travis E. Mitchell, MPT senior vice president and chief content officer. “Black Public Media has been a leader in championing storytelling, and we’re excited to partner with them to bring this initiative to life.”

“For more than 45 years, Black Public Media has worked with independent filmmakers and public media outlets to bring the perspectives and art of talented creatives to public media,” said Leslie Fields-Cruz, BPM executive director. “We are excited to partner with the HBCU Week NOW team in the important work of identifying the next generation of these filmmakers at our nation’s HBCUs, and we look forward to spotlighting the selected student projects at next year’s groundbreaking film festival.”

Premiering in Winter 2026, the festival has announced an open call for submissions of short films. Submissions are due by Wednesday, May 7, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. The submission link is available at: <https://bit.ly/HBCUWNSFFOpenCall>.

Eligible applicants are currently enrolled HBCU students and recent graduates (from the last three years or less). Students do not have to be enrolled in a film or media program.

This narrative showcase seeks submissions of completed films in all genres that reflect the HBCU experience. Ten short films, up to 30 minutes in length will be selected, with each filmmaking team receiving \$5,000.

HBCU faculty members and administrators are encouraged to share this opportunity with their students and networks, facilitate resources (such as providing access to equipment, workshops, or mentorship to help students prepare their submissions) and to nominate talent by encouraging participation.

Registration information, the application link and a pre-recorded information webinar can be found [HERE](#). For further questions, please contact Qiona Woffard, director of talent development at BPM, at qiona@blackpublicmedia.org.

HBCU Week NOW is a public media partnership that includes: Maryland Public Television, PBS North Carolina, South Carolina Educational Television, WXXI Rochester, Louisiana Public Broadcasting, WABE Atlanta, Howard University Television, and WORLD, a leading public media digital channel.

ABOUT HBCU WEEK NOW

HBCU Week NOW creates and distributes multi-platform digital content for a global audience about the students, alumni, leaders, and innovative programs of the nation's HBCUs. Partnering PBS stations are collaborating to produce a collection of original long-form and short films, live events, and other HBCU-themed programming. HBCU Week NOW is made possible by support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and is sponsored by Morgan State University. Subscribe to @HBCUWeekNOW on YouTube Follow @HBCUWeekNOW on Instagram. Visit hbcuweeknow.com for more information.

ABOUT BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA (BPM)

BPM supports the development of visionary content creators and distributes stories about the global Black experience to inspire a more equitable and inclusive future. For 45 years, BPM has addressed the needs of unserved and underserved audiences. BPM-supported programs have won five Emmys®, 10 Peabodys, five Anthem Awards, 14 Emmy® nominations and an Oscar® nomination. BPM continues to address historical, contemporary, and systemic challenges that traditionally impede the development and distribution of Black stories.

ABOUT MARYLAND PUBLIC TELEVISION

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) affiliate, offering entertaining, informative, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates and distributes local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® Awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and Thinkport.org. MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit mpt.org.

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