



USDA & Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Award \$400,000 to Thurgood Marshall College Fund for internships for Women/Minorities in STEM Fields

New York, NY (May 11, 2012) – The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) is encouraging employers across the country to recruit minority students for job opportunities related to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). “Many students start out pursuing STEM degrees, but they often end up discouraged, and change their major,” states Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., TMCF’s President & CEO. “We want to help ensure these students get the attention and guidance they need to not only graduate, but to find good jobs in their chosen STEM fields.”

In 2010, Bayer Corporation concluded that, “significant numbers of women and underrepresented minorities are missing from the U.S. STEM workforce today because they were not identified, encouraged or nurtured to pursue STEM studies early on.” According to the data, although minority students express as much desire to pursue STEM careers as their white and Asian peers, they are failing to grasp the fundamentals of science and math in elementary school, and therefore are not prepared to tackle STEM courses in high school and college. The country’s *public* Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) know this reality well, and have developed programmatic interventions to help fill this education gap so that their graduates are prepared to compete after earning STEM degrees.

In an effort to recruit talented minority students for STEM jobs upon graduation, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) recently awarded TMCF nearly \$400,000.00 to fund a 10-week summer internship program that will introduce the brightest STEM students to the USDA and APHIS. This exciting program will place thirty-seven public HBCU students who have an interest in agriculture-related disciplines within the USDA/APHIS. Students will receive extensive hands-on training in one of twenty locations across the country where they will have the opportunity to work in their selected program area. “APHIS, like USDA, is committed to and values a diverse workplace. Investing in students and student internships like those sponsored by the Thurgood Marshall College Fund will help ensure APHIS’ future workforce is as diverse as it can be,” states Dr. Gregory L. Parham, Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

“As we celebrate 25 years providing support to *public* HBCUs, we have renewed our focus on identifying premium job opportunities for our best and brightest students. The USDA/APHIS program is a wonderful example of the first step in the process. TMCF interns will have the chance

this summer to show USDA staff what *public* HBCUs are producing. Our goal is that many of these internships will lead to full-time jobs," states Mr. Taylor, Jr.

ABOUT APHIS

Established in 1972, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is a relatively new Agency, but much of the important work that falls under its mission today has been the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for more than 100 years. In fact, for most of the 20th century, the early animal and plant health bureaus within USDA operated independently of one another. The creation of APHIS consolidated these functions. In the years since, the Agency has continued to expand its mission in order protect and preserve American agriculture. The Mission of APHIS is to protect the health and value of American agriculture and natural resources.

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The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) is named for the U.S. Supreme Court's first African-American Justice. Established in 1987, TMCF supports and represents nearly 300,000 students attending its 47 member-schools that include *public* Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), medical schools and law schools. TMCF helps students with a clear intention and the motivation to succeed and acquire a high-quality college education at an affordable cost. TMCF also efficiently connects high performing, world-ready students with top tier employment opportunities—access that students or employers might not have on their own. Through its scholarships and programs, TMCF plays a key role in preparing the leaders of tomorrow. TMCF is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable organization. For more information about TMCF and its initiatives, visit: www.ThurgoodMarshallCollegeFund.org.