

What is a Hispanic-Serving Institution?

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities ([HACU](#)) represents almost 500 schools committed to Hispanic higher education success. It is the only national educational association that represents Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and was instrumental in convincing Congress to appropriate money specifically for HSIs, beginning in 1995. WTAMU is proud to have a growing Hispanic student population. To be recognized as “Hispanic-serving” is a great benefit to our efforts to recruit students from the area.

For [HACU’s membership purposes](#), HSIs are defined as colleges, universities, or systems/districts where total Hispanic enrollment constitutes a minimum of 25% of the total enrollment. Generally speaking, “total enrollment” includes full-time and part-time students at the undergraduate or graduate level. Member enrollment statistics are self-reported by the institution for the fall semester of the year prior to the membership year. HACU’s [HSI member institutions](#) are listed on HACU’s website, and West Texas A&M University is currently listed as an HSI. WTAMU has had a total Hispanic enrollment of at least 25% since the fall of 2014.

HACU is sometimes asked for an “official” list of HSIs. Unfortunately, no such list is produced by the Department of Education or the federal government. Listing as an HSI by HACU does not “certify” an institution as an HSI for federal grant purposes. The Department of Education has generated a [“List of Title III and Title V Eligible Institutions”](#) and WTAMU is on that list.

GRANT-SEEKING AS AN HSI

Some federal funding is set aside specifically for HSIs. The Department of Education writes:

*A Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is **defined as** an institution of higher education that—*
(A) is an eligible institution; and
(B) has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application.
(<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/ideshsi/definition.html>)

Eligibility for HSI grants is determined by several factors, including the enrollment status given above, a significant enrollment of financially “needy” students, and low average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student. Some exceptions to some rules can be made, so a Designation of Eligibility must be requested and approved before an HSI grant application will be accepted.