



SUMMER 2024 UPDATE

HBCU ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE JUSTICE CORPS Interns Gain Experiential Learning at Partner CBO Sites

In the summer of 2022, the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice launched the HBCU Environmental Justice and Climate Corps. The 2024 HBCU interns are helping to build the capacity of DSCEJ environmental justice partner communities along the Gulf Coast Region spanning **Pensacola, FL, Mobile, AL, Gulfport, MS, New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA.**

The ever-increasing severe weather events in the advent of climate change has increased the need to support the survival of environmental justice communities. Due to systemic racism, these communities are located in highly polluted areas vulnerable to the adverse impacts of severe weather events.



These injustices are compounded by poverty and the lack of services and equal protection by regulatory agencies from pollution and government policies. Our partner communities are where our HBCU students live and study.

The HBCU internship, made possible by a grant from Waverly Street Foundation, is providing the students financial support while helping the students gain experiential learning through research and advocacy work with Gulf Coast partner communities. The interns are learning about the CBO's history, addressing priority concerns and developing and implementing a research to action plan with the CBO and other community leaders.



TAMARA BARNES

Bethune Cookman University MAJOR: Biology

Tamara is an intern at our partner CBO site, **Unity in the Family Ministry (UFM)**, located in **Pensacola, FL**. She is supporting the EJ Yes Summer Camp program working with middle school students in the Wedgewood Community. The residents in this community are exposed to environmental toxins due to the contaminants from eleven nearby landfills.

Tamara had the opportunity to teach the students about air quality focused on understanding air temperature, air pollutants, and greenhouse gases. The students are gaining a basic understanding of these topics, contributing to their overall knowledge of environmental science and environmental justice.

Tamara is working with the campers to help them understand the importance of being prepared for a natural disaster. They are learning about the municipalities in Pensacola, FL who manage disaster response. She is helping to facilitate discussions as the campers learn invaluable lessons about environmental and climate justice and tools that they can use to help resolve environmental threats to their community.



KAELYN DENNIS

Florida A & M University MAJOR: Business Management

Kaelyn is an HBCU intern at the **Deep South Center for Environmental Justice** located in **New Orleans, LA**. She is assisting the DSCEJ Grants Management Team with grant data entry and grants tracking, ensuring all active and inactive grants are entered into the Data Management System.

Kaelyn reviews all current records being maintained through the grants tracker system and ensures program managers receive timely alerts to ensure grant reports are submitted on time.



JEFF DACOSTA OSEI

Southern University A & M Urban Forestry PhD Candidate

Jeff is an HBCU intern at our partner CBO site, **Alsen St. Irma Lee Community Village**, in Alsen near **Baton Rouge, LA**. The Alsen community has been plagued with toxic emissions from nearby petrochemical plants and landfills.

Jeff is conducting GIS mapping and remote sensing research to determine the nearby landfill's alignment with sustainable urban development objectives. He is evaluating the impact of the Ronaldson Landfill to assess the environmental, socio-economic and public health implications on the community. Jeff develops and analyzes GIS maps of the landfill location and utilizes special multi-criteria and constraints to evaluate landfill safety.



NAHDIA PARKS

Howard University MAJOR: Environmental Science

Nahdia is an HBCU intern at our partner CBO site, **Clean, Healthy, Educated, Safe and Sustainable (CHESS)**, in Africatown near **Mobile, AL**. She is helping to build the capacity of CHESS by surveying the land of Africatown to determine areas of neglect due to industry pollution. Nahdia is developing and organizing an action plan to address the EPA/TRI goals that CHESS has established to reduce toxic emissions in Africatown.



TORI REX

Spelman University MAJOR: English

Tori is an HBCU intern at our partner CBO site **Economics Education Environmental Climate Health Organization (EEECHO)** in **Gulfport, MS**. She is working with EEECHO to help address community flooding that is destroying forests and wetlands in the Forest Heights, North Gulfport and Turkey Creek communities.

Tori is assisting EEECHO with their plan to create a resilient and sustainable community that addresses environmental challenges, promotes cultural preservation and empowers residents to actively participate in decision-making processes.



REGINALD ROBINSON

Xavier University MAJOR: Public Health

Reginald is an HBCU intern at our partner CBO site **Sankofa CDC** in **New Orleans, LA**. He assists with planning, coordinating, and execution of healthy food access in the Lower Ninth Ward. Reginald works with the Sankofa team to design and implement outreach strategies to increase community participation in healthy food initiatives and supports the development of educational materials and resources related to nutrition and healthy eating.

All interns will present their research and internship experience at the **10th Anniversary HBCU Climate Change Conference to be held in New Orleans, LA, March 5 - 9, 2025.**



WAVERLEY STREET FOUNDATION

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