



ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC &
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES

APLU OVERVIEW OF PRESIDENT TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS

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Shortly after his inauguration, President Trump signed 26 [executive orders](#) (EOs) on his first day in office, setting the record for the most day one executive orders since President Roosevelt in 1937.

His day one actions include a lengthy list of recissions (detailed below), establishment of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), action on immigration, and a commitment to reinstate TikTok. President Trump also took initial steps of significant impact to the federal workforce, enacting a federal hiring freeze, regulatory freeze, and return to office mandate with allowances for exceptions.

A breakdown of other EOs with relevance to institutions of higher education is below. APLU included the actions with unique impacts to institutions higher education, rather than all actions with potential impact. At this time, the exact impact of many EOs on higher education remains unclear, and their specific effects will depend on how implementing agencies interpret and enforce them.

ON IMMIGRATION:

“Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism”: (Issued January 29)

The order sets the administration’s policy to combat antisemitism “using all available and appropriate legal tools” and directs each agency head to submit a report detailing all pending administrative complaints of antisemitism against or involving institutions of higher education. The Attorney General is directed to include an analysis of all court cases involving institutions of higher education alleging civil rights violations and the Secretary of Education to include an analysis of all Title VI complaints related to antisemitism. Further, the order directs reports to include recommendations for “familiarizing institutions of higher education with the grounds for inadmissibility” for alien students that take certain actions or espouse support for terrorist organizations as defined under 8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The EO sets expectations for institutions to report such activities so the federal government may investigate and potentially initiate removal.

“Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship”: (Issued January 20)

This EO ends birthright citizenship, in which individuals born in the U.S. are American citizens, regardless of their parents’ status in the country. Of note to higher education, the order extends to individuals born to mothers lawfully but temporarily in the U.S., such as on student or nonimmigrant visas, and the father is not a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. As the Fourteenth Amendment has historically been interpreted to guarantee birthright citizenship, this order is [already being challenged](#) in court.

“Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program”: (Issued January 20)

This EO suspends the United States Refugee Admissions (USRAP) program beginning on January 27. The Secretary of Homeland Security is directed to produce a report within 90 days advising the president whether to resume the program, with additional reports required every 90 days until the program restarts. The Secretaries of State and Homeland Security may jointly decide to admit refugees on a case-by-case basis in the interim.

“Securing our Borders”: (Issued January 20) This EO includes several provisions aimed at securing U.S. borders, including deterring and preventing the unlawful entry of aliens into the country, detaining and removing aliens in violation of immigration law, and partnering with state and local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration law.

“Protecting the American People Against Invasion”: (Issued January 20) This EO includes several provisions of potential impact to higher education to “faithfully execute the immigration laws against all inadmissible and removable aliens.” The order allows the Secretary of Homeland Security to deputize state and local law enforcement officials to serve as immigration officers and permits the Secretary of the Treasury to facilitate all visa bonds permitted under law. The order directs the review of Temporary Protected Status designations made by the Biden administration and ensures employment authorizations are provided in a manner consistent with federal law. Under the EO, “sanctuary jurisdictions” are not permitted to receive federal funds.

“Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats”: (Issued January 20) This EO requires “enhanced vetting” and screening of individuals both seeking admission to and already in the U.S. Within 60 days, the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security, with the Attorney General and Director of National Intelligence, must produce a report identifying countries with insufficient vetting and security processes to warrant suspending admission of these nationals to the U.S. The EO further requires the evaluation of all visa programs to ensure hostile nations are not harming the “security, economic, political, cultural, or other national interests of the U.S.”

ON DIVERSITY PROGRAMS, GENDER, AND CLIMATE:

“Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity”: (Issued January 21) Under this EO, the Department of Labor Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs will cease “allowing or encouraging federal contractors and subcontractors to engage in workforce balancing based on race, color, sex, sexual preference, religion, or national origin.” The head of “each agency” shall include in every contract or grant award a term requiring the contractual counterparty or grant recipient to agree that its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government’s payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code; and a term requiring such counterparty or recipient to certify that it does not operate any programs promoting DEI that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. Further, “each agency shall identify up to nine potential civil compliance investigations of publicly traded corporations, large non-profit corporations or associations, foundations with assets of 500 million dollars or more, State and local bar and medical associations, and institutions of higher education with endowments over 1 billion dollars” and “within 120 days of this order, the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education shall jointly issue guidance to all State and local educational agencies that receive Federal funds, as well as all institutions of higher education that receive Federal grants or participate in the Federal student loan assistance program under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq., regarding the measures and practices required to comply with *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023)”

“Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing”: (Issued January 20) This EO sets up a 60 day process for each federal agency to end “to the maximum extent allowed by law, all DEI, DEIA, and “environmental justice” offices and positions (including but not limited to “Chief Diversity Officer” positions); all “equity action

plans,” “equity” actions, initiatives, or programs, “equity-related” grants or contracts; and all DEI or DEIA performance requirements for employees, contractors, or grantees.”

“Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth To The Federal Government”: (Issued January 20) This EO defines sex strictly as male or female, directing agencies and federal employees to enforce sex-protective laws without recognizing other gender identities. It requires the Secretaries of State, DHS, and OPM to update identification documents, such as passports and visas, to align with this definition. The EO also prohibits federal funding for promoting gender ideology, leaving agencies discretion to assess grants, which could affect research depending on interpretation and enforcement. While it mandates changes to Bureau of Prisons medical care policies, it does not address private or academic healthcare.

ON REGULATIONS:

“Regulatory Freeze Pending Review”: (Issued January 20) This EO prohibits agencies from sending a rule to the Federal Register until a department or agency head (appointed after January 20, 2025) reviews and approves the rule, unless the OMB Director deems the rule necessary in an emergency situation. The EO withdraws rules, submitted to the Federal Register, but not yet published, from consideration and directs agencies to postpone for 60 days the effective date of rules published in the Federal Register but not yet effective. During this period, agencies can open a comment period on these rules.

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT RECISSIONS:

“Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions” (Issued January 20)

Reversal of **Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government** ([Executive Order 13985](#) of January 20, 2021), which cited the economic harms of racial inequity in higher education outcome, and required agencies to complete an equity analysis.

Reversal of **President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology** ([Executive Order 14007](#) of January 27, 2021), which established a presidential advisory council on science, technology, and innovation with a membership including the nation’s leading scientists and engineers.

Reversal of **Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI)** ([Executive Order 14031](#) of May 28, 2021), which listed ED as one of many agencies working to address disparate outcomes among AANHPI.

Reversal of **White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics** ([Executive Order 14045](#) of September 13, 2021). The Biden EO established ED as the lead agency in a multi-agency working group, and a separate presidential advisory commission, to identify and address educational inequity for Hispanic Americans, from early childhood through higher education.

Reversal of **White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal**

Colleges and Universities ([Executive Order 14049](#) of October 11, 2021). The Biden multi-agency initiative housed at ED consulted with tribes and TCUs to improve Native education from early childhood through adulthood, including strengthening TCUs and supporting TCUs in federal programs.

Reversal of **White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans** ([Executive Order 14050](#) of October 19, 2021). The Biden multi-agency effort, housed at ED, worked to improve outcomes from early childhood through higher education, including supporting HBCUs' and Predominantly Black Institutions' participating in federal programs.

Reversal of **Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals** ([Executive Order 14075](#) of June 15, 2022), which established a multi-agency effort to address LGBTQI discrimination and improve outcomes, including improving guidance for educational institutions to promote safe and inclusive learning environments.

Reversal of **Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence** ([Executive Order 14110](#) of October 30, 2023) which established a government-wide effort to guide responsible artificial intelligence development and deployment through federal agency leadership, regulation of industry, and engagement with international partners. This may indicate the Trump administration's interest in deregulation of AI.

Reversal of **Promoting the Arts, the Humanities, and Museum and Library Services** ([Executive Order 14084](#) of September 30, 2022), which promoted the importance of the arts, humanities, and library services role in "advancing economic development, wellbeing, and resilience of all communities." This EO contained equity language and referenced the humanities' role in "[tackling] the climate crisis". It also established the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, as well as interagency cooperation to advance the arts and humanities.

Reversal of **Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government** ([Executive Order 14091](#) of February 16, 2023), which included ED among many agencies establishing agency equity action plans, coordinating across agencies on equitable processes and outcomes.

Reversal of **White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity Through Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)** ([Executive Order 14124](#) of July 17, 2024). The Biden EO established an initiative at ED and a presidential advisory board to promote federal opportunities to HSIs, recruit at HSIs, share best practices, and strengthen programming to improve economic mobility.