



RACE AND ETHNICITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Look at Low-Income Undergraduates

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ABOUT THE BRIEF

Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report and its accompanying microsite provide a data-informed foundation for those working to close persistent equity gaps by offering a comprehensive review of the educational pathways of today's college students and the educators who serve them.

This companion brief was made possible through the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Visit www.equityinhighered.org to learn more about the project and to download the full report containing more than 200 indicators on race and ethnicity. Also available on the site are downloadable figures, detailed data, and other resources on race and ethnicity in higher education.



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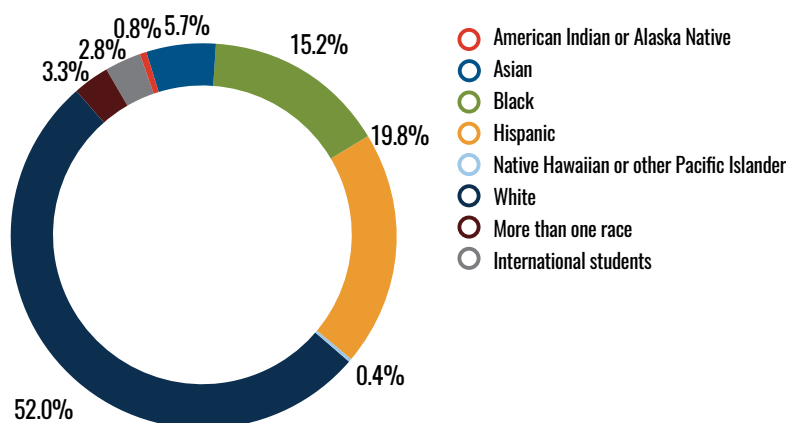
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INTRODUCTION

As the United States has become more racially and ethnically diverse over the past several decades, so too has higher education. More students of color are seeking a postsecondary credential than ever before. The increase in access for students of color has led to higher levels of educational attainment and the opportunity for upward socioeconomic mobility for a more diverse student population.

However, the educational journeys of today's students vary greatly by race and ethnicity. In 2015–16, 45.2 percent of all undergraduates identified as a racial or ethnic group other than White. Overall, students of color—particularly Black students¹—had lower persistence rates and completion rates, higher debt burdens, and lower median annual earnings than their White peers (Espinosa et al. 2019).

Figure 1: Undergraduate Enrollment, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Many equity gaps remain, including among students with the most financial need. This brief examines student income alongside race and ethnicity, analyzing data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2015–16 to provide an overview of low-income undergraduate students, who they are, where they enroll, and how they pay for college.

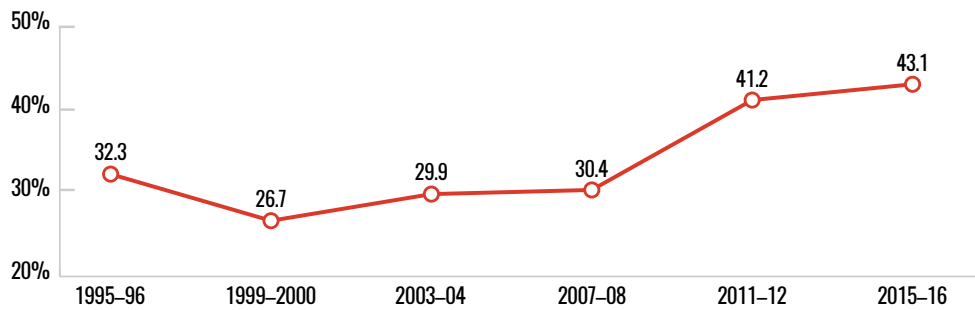
The federal government considers low-income students as those whose family income is at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty threshold.² In 2019, for a U.S. family of four, 150 percent of the federal poverty level was a household income of \$38,625.³ In 1996, the share of low-income students was 32.3 percent. From 2000 to 2016, the share of low-income students increased from 26.7 percent to 43.1 percent.

¹ The terms Black and African American are used interchangeably.

² The federal poverty guidelines are published annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The U.S. Department of Education uses these guidelines for federal outreach and student services programs for low-income students. For more information, please visit <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/trio/index.html>.

³ This number reflects the household income among those living in the 48 contiguous states, Washington, DC, and outlying jurisdictions. For more information, including income for individuals living in Alaska and Hawaii, please visit <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>.

Figure 2: Share of All Undergraduates Who Were Low Income: 1995–96 to 2015–16



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016

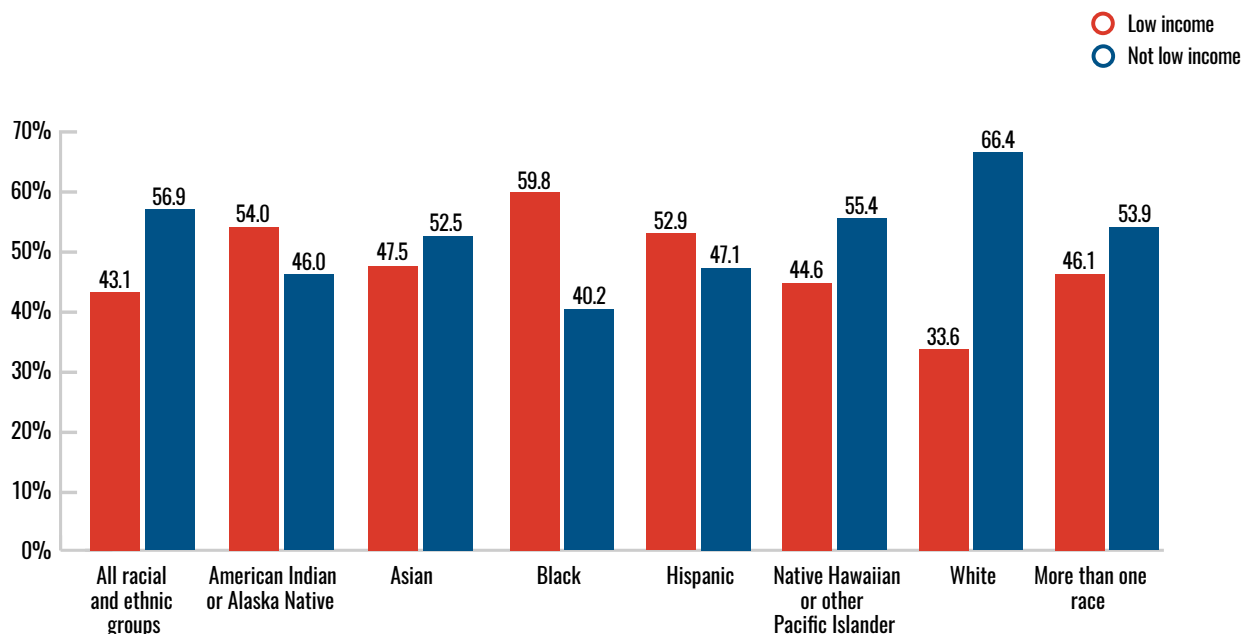
Note: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold.

The National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2015–16 captured data on income and family size from the 2014 calendar year and calculated income percent of poverty level using the 2014 Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. In 2014, for a family of four in the U.S., 150 percent of the federal poverty level was a household income of \$35,775.

THE NATION'S LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

More than four in 10 undergraduate students were low income in 2015–16. By race and ethnicity, students of color were more likely to be low income than White students.

Figure 3: Share of Undergraduates Who Were Low Income, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16



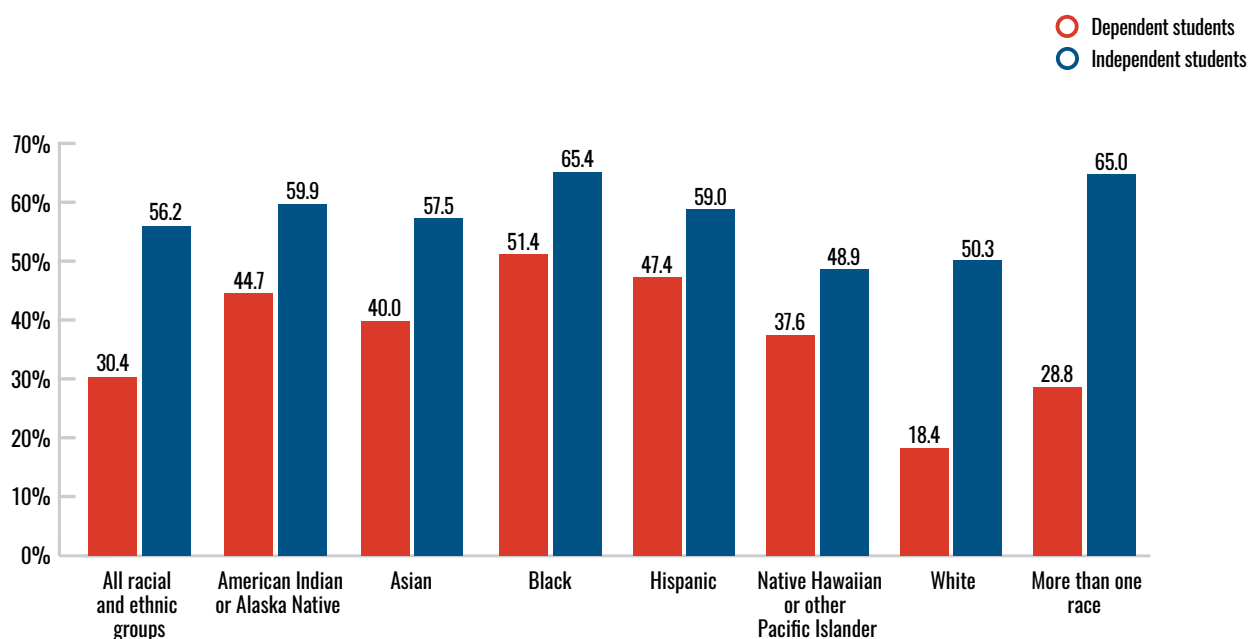
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Note: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold.

- Overall, 43.1 percent of all undergraduates were low income and lived at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.⁴
- More than half of all Black (59.8 percent), American Indian or Alaska Native (54.0 percent), and Hispanic (52.9 percent) undergraduates were low income.
- White students were the least likely of all racial and ethnic groups to be low income (33.6 percent).

Overall, over half of all independent students were low income (56.2 percent), compared with 30.4 percent of dependent students.

Figure 4: Share of Dependent and Independent Undergraduates Who Were Low Income, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

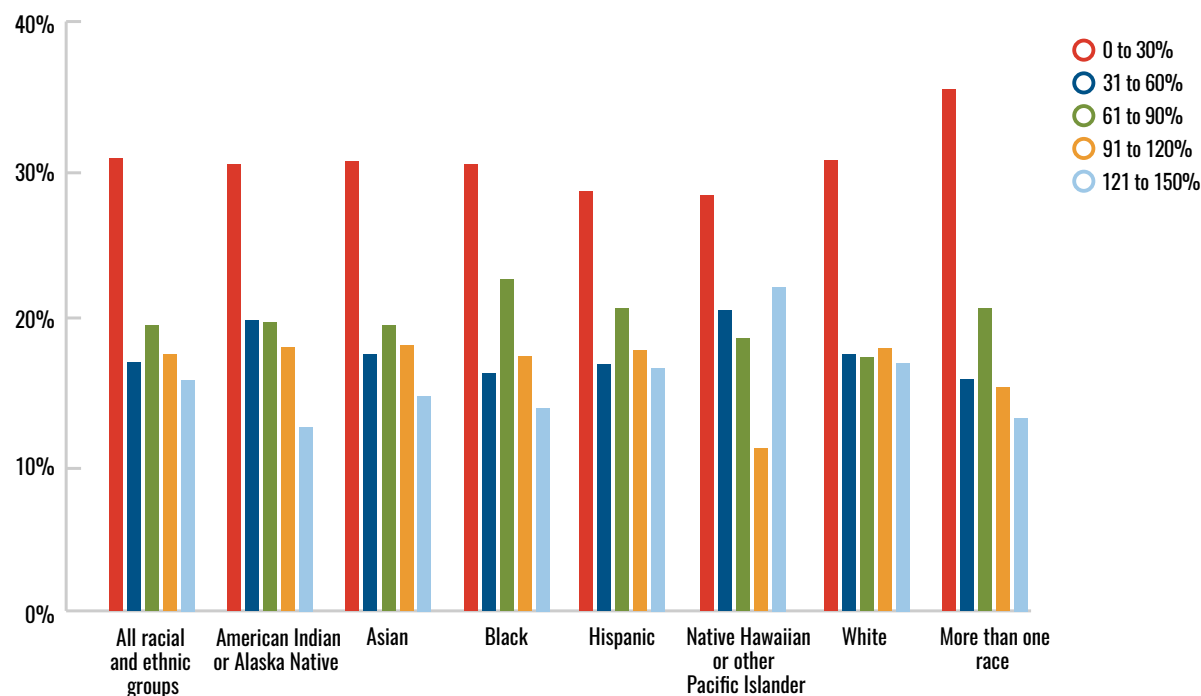
Note: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold.

- Dependent students of color were more than twice as likely as dependent White students (18.4 percent) to be low income, with the exception of dependent students of more than one race, 28.8 percent of whom were from low-income backgrounds.
- Regardless of dependency status, Black students were more likely to be low income than any other racial or ethnic group. Over half of all dependent Black students were low income (51.4 percent), and 65.4 percent of independent Black students were low income.
- Independent White students (50.3 percent) and students of more than one race (65.0 percent) were over 30 percentage points more likely to be low income than dependent students of the same race.

⁴ Includes dependent and independent students. Income for dependent students is based upon the student's family, while income for independent students is based upon the individual student's income.

Roughly three in 10 low-income students were from households at 0 to 30 percent of the federal poverty threshold. In 2014, for a family of four in the U.S., 30 percent of the federal poverty threshold was a household income of \$7,155.

Figure 5: Distribution of Low-Income Students Across Poverty Levels, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

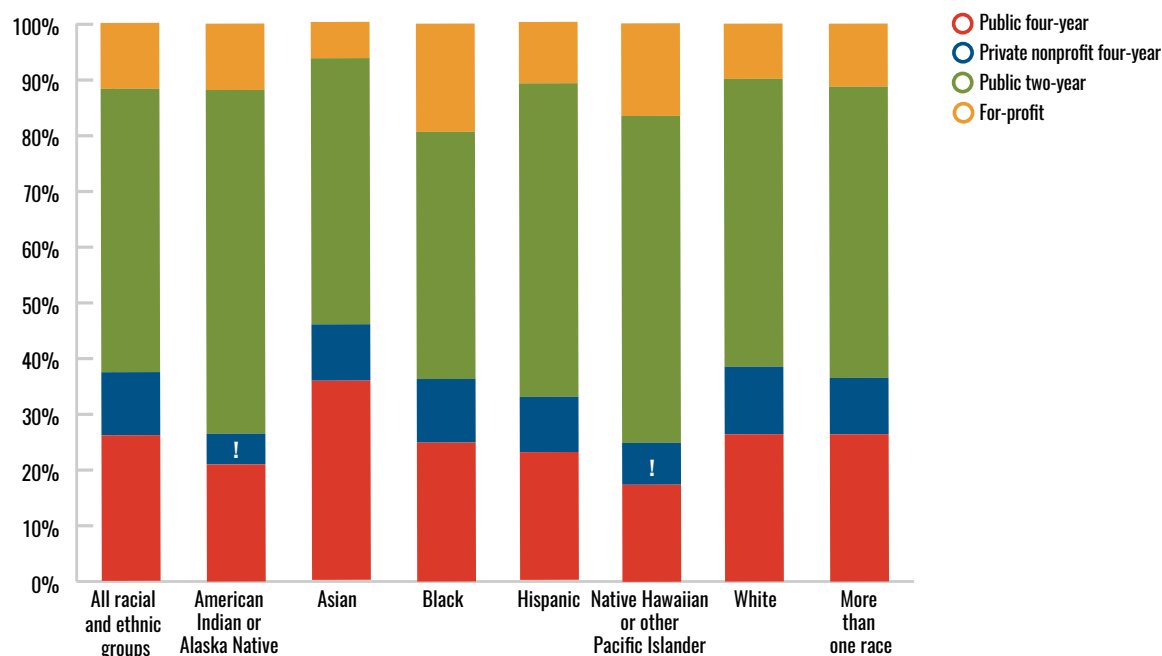
Note: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold.

- Over one-third of low-income students of more than one race (35.4 percent) were from households at 0 to 30 percent of the federal poverty threshold—the highest share of any racial or ethnic group.

ENROLLMENT BY SECTOR

Half of all low-income students were enrolled in public two-year institutions (50.8 percent), followed by public four-year (26.1 percent), for-profit (11.8 percent), and private nonprofit four-year (11.3 percent) institutions.⁵

Figure 6: Enrollment of Low-Income Undergraduates Across Sectors, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

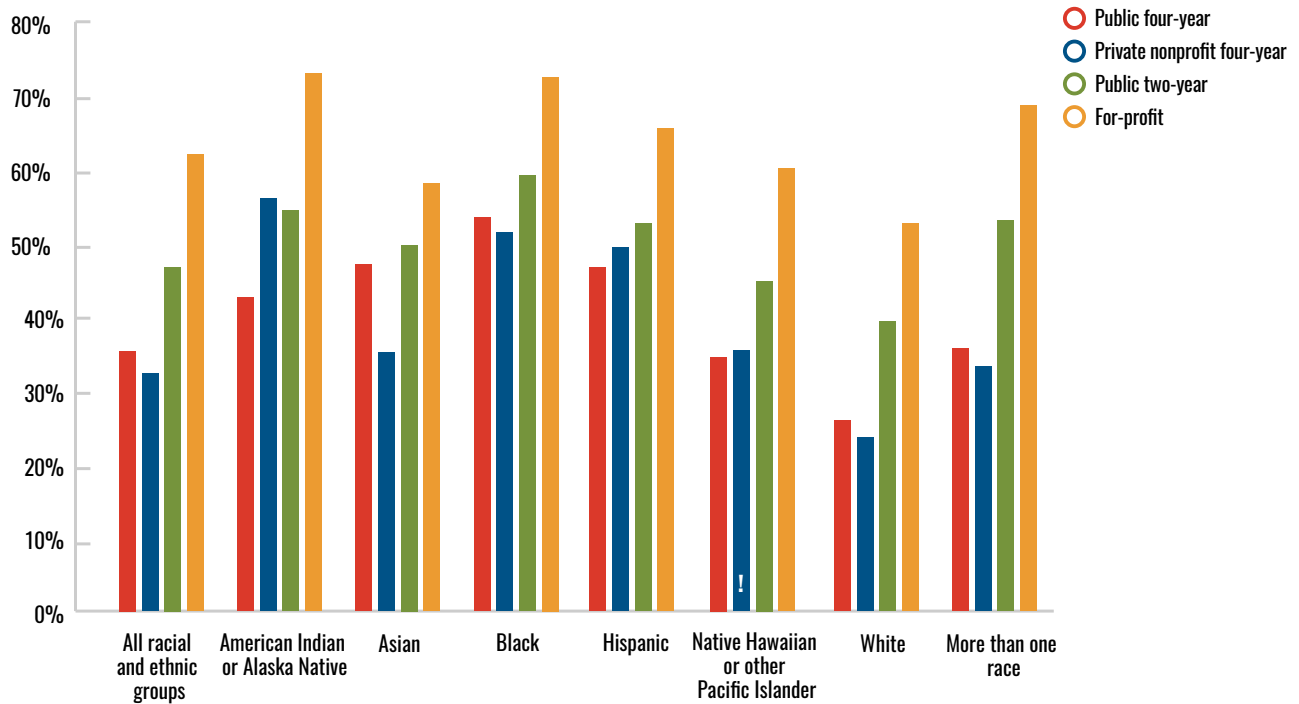
Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | Institutions were categorized into sectors based upon control of the institution and the length of the predominant award granted. ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%.

- Nearly one in five low-income African Americans were enrolled in a for-profit institution—the highest share of any racial or ethnic group.
- Low-income American Indian or Alaska Native students were more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to be enrolled in a public two-year institution (61.6 percent).
- Low-income Asian students were more than twice as likely as low-income Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders to be enrolled in a public four-year institution (35.7 percent and 17.4 percent, respectively).

Over half of all students at for-profit institutions were low income (62.0 percent), compared with 46.7 percent of students at public two-year, 35.3 percent of students at public four-year, and 32.3 percent of students at private nonprofit four-year institutions.

⁵ Institutions were categorized into sectors based upon control of the institution and the length of the predominant award granted.

Figure 7: Share of Undergraduates in Each Sector Who Were Low Income, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | Institutions were categorized into sectors based upon control of the institution and the length of the predominant award granted. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%.

- Across all sectors, students of color were more likely to be from low-income backgrounds than White students.
- Across all sectors, the majority of Black students were low income.
- Over half of all African Americans at four-year institutions were low income, compared with about one-quarter of all White students at four-year institutions.
- Nearly three-quarters of all American Indian or Alaska Native (73.0 percent) and Black (72.5 percent) students at for-profit institutions were low income—the highest shares of any racial or ethnic groups.

FIELDS OF STUDY BY AWARD LEVEL

Health care fields were the top field of study among low-income associate degree-seeking students, with 22.9 percent of students enrolled in these fields.

Table 1: Enrollment of Low-Income Associate Degree-Seeking Students Across Fields of Study, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16

	STEM Fields	Business and Personal and Consumer Services	Health Care Fields	Social Sciences and Humanities	General Studies and Other Fields	Manufacturing, Military Technology, and Other Applied Fields	Undecided
All racial and ethnic groups	14.4%	15.1%	22.9%	7.8%	17.3%	18.7%	3.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	23.5%	10.6%!	17.9%	9.1%!	18.2%	20.1%	‡
Asian	20.4%	16.3%	20.2%	6.6%	18.0%	14.1%	4.3%
Black	10.4%	19.5%	24.9%	6.6%	15.7%	19.9%	3.1%
Hispanic	13.8%	14.6%	21.5%	9.7%	14.2%	22.1%	4.0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	6.0%!!	11.7%!	33.4%	7.4%!	17.8%!	10.3%!!	‡
White	14.5%	13.0%	24.2%	7.0%	20.3%	17.1%	3.9%
More than one race	17.8%	14.3%	19.3%	8.9%	15.4%	21.4%	2.9%!

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | STEM fields include biological and physical science, science technology, math, agriculture, computer and information sciences, and engineering and engineering technology. | General studies and other programs include fields such as liberal arts and sciences, interpersonal and social skills, personal awareness and self-improvement, and multi- or interdisciplinary studies, among others. | Other applied fields for sub-baccalaureate credentials include the following fields of study: manufacturing, construction, repair and transportation; military technology and protective services; education; architecture; communications; public administration and human services; design and applied arts; law and legal studies; library sciences; and theology and religious vocations. | ‡ Estimate suppressed. Reporting standards not met. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%. | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is > 50%.

- One-third of low-income Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders seeking an associate degree were enrolled in health care fields—the highest share of any racial or ethnic group.
- Low-income American Indian or Alaska Native (23.5 percent) and Asian (20.4 percent) students seeking associate degrees were the most likely to choose STEM fields.⁶ In contrast, only 13.8 percent of low-income Hispanic and 10.4 percent of low-income Black students chose STEM fields.
- Nearly one in five low-income Black students seeking an associate degree were enrolled in business and personal and consumer services, the highest share of any group. In contrast, 13.0 percent of low-income White students seeking an associate degree were enrolled in these fields.
- Approximately one in five low-income Hispanic students (22.1 percent), students of more than one race (21.4 percent), American Indian or Alaska Native students (20.1 percent), and Black students (19.9 percent) seeking associate degrees were enrolled in manufacturing, military technology, and other applied fields.⁷

6 STEM fields include biological and physical science, science technology, math, agriculture, computer and information sciences, and engineering and engineering technology.

7 Other applied fields for sub-baccalaureate credentials include the following fields of study: manufacturing, construction, repair, and transportation; military technology and protective services; education; architecture; communications; public administration and human services; design and applied arts; law and legal studies; library sciences; and theology and religious vocations.

STEM fields were the top field of study among low-income bachelor's degree-seeking students in 2015–16, with 21.2 percent of students enrolled in these fields.

Table 2: Enrollment of Low-Income Bachelor's Degree-Seeking Students Across Fields of Study, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16

	STEM Fields	Business	Education	Health Care Fields	Humanities	Social Sciences	General Studies and Other	Other Applied Fields	Undecided
All racial and ethnic groups	21.2%	18.2%	5.2%	11.9%	7.8%	12.7%	4.4%	17.3%	1.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	10.6%!	24.0%	16.6%!	7.6%!	17.5%!	7.7%!	0.7%!	15.1%!	‡
Asian	34.7%	18.6%	2.6%	15.3%	5.0%	9.1%	3.1%	9.9%	1.9%!
Black	15.2%	20.2%	4.7%	13.1%	4.9%	13.6%	4.7%	22.4%	1.2%
Hispanic	20.6%	16.9%	4.7%	11.5%	8.5%	13.1%	3.6%	19.7%	1.4%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	10.0%!	17.6%!	1.1%!	22.8%!	3.3%!	29.1%!	‡	12.5%!	‡
White	21.4%	16.8%	6.5%	11.9%	9.0%	12.3%	4.9%	15.9%	1.3%
More than one race	21.5%	19.2%	3.4%!	8.3%	10.2%	15.6%	5.3%!	14.7%	1.7%!

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | STEM fields include biological and physical science, science technology, math, agriculture, computer and information sciences, and engineering and engineering technology. | General studies and other programs include fields such as liberal arts and sciences, interpersonal and social skills, personal awareness and self-improvement, and multi- or interdisciplinary studies, among others. | Other applied fields for bachelor's degrees include the following fields of study: personal and consumer services; manufacturing, construction, repair, and transportation; military technology and protective services; architecture; communications; public administration and human services; design and applied arts; law and legal studies; library sciences; and theology and religious vocations. | ‡ Estimate suppressed. Reporting standards not met. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%. | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is > 50%.

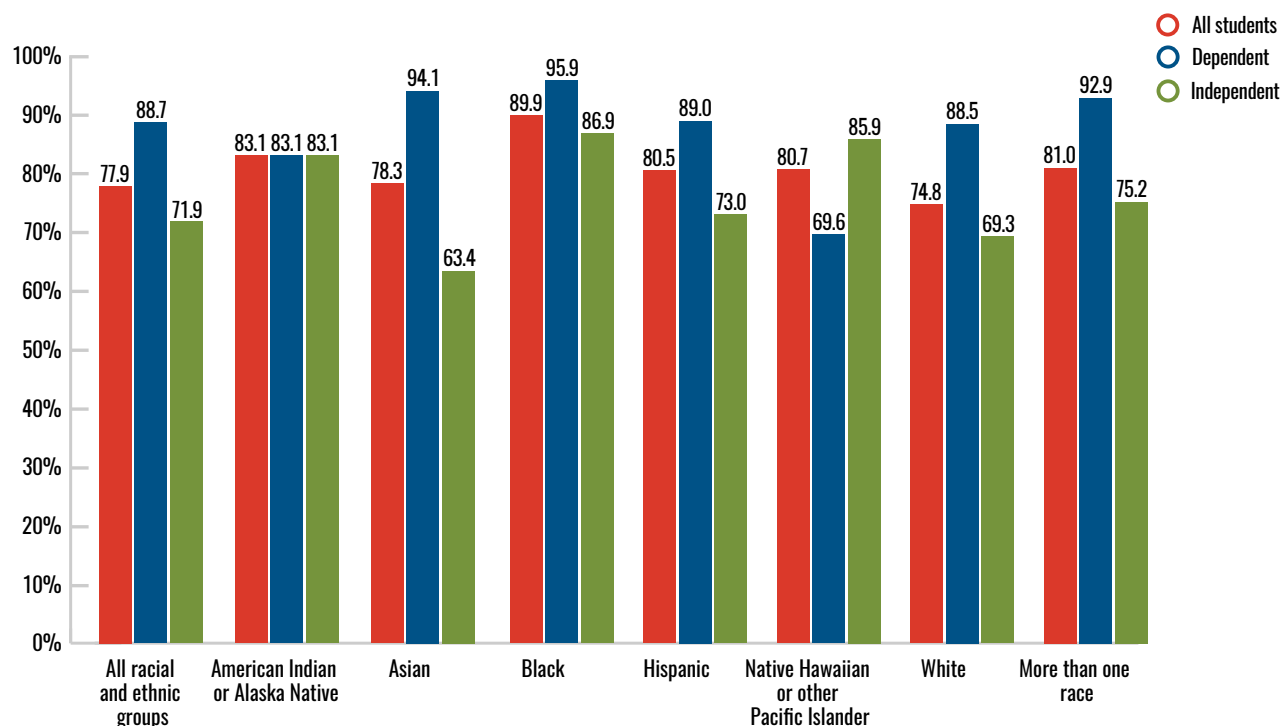
- In 2015–16, 34.7 percent of low-income Asian students seeking bachelor's degrees were enrolled in STEM fields, more than double the share of low-income Black students who were enrolled in STEM (15.2 percent).
- Low-income Black (22.4 percent) and Hispanic students (19.7 percent) seeking bachelor's degrees were more than twice as likely as low-income Asian students (9.9 percent) to be enrolled in other applied fields.⁸
- Low-income students of more than one race were more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to be seeking a bachelor's degree in the humanities (10.2 percent).
- Nearly one-quarter of all low-income American Indian or Alaska Native students were seeking bachelor's degrees in business (24.0 percent)—the highest percentage of any group.

⁸ Other applied fields for bachelor's degrees include the following fields of study: personal and consumer services; manufacturing, construction, repair, and transportation; military technology and protective services; architecture; communications; public administration and human services; design and applied arts; law and legal studies; library sciences; and theology and religious vocations.

FINANCIAL AID

Low-income dependent students were more likely than financially independent students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (88.7 percent and 71.9 percent, respectively).⁹

Figure 8: Share of Low-Income Students Who Completed the FAFSA, by Dependency Status and Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

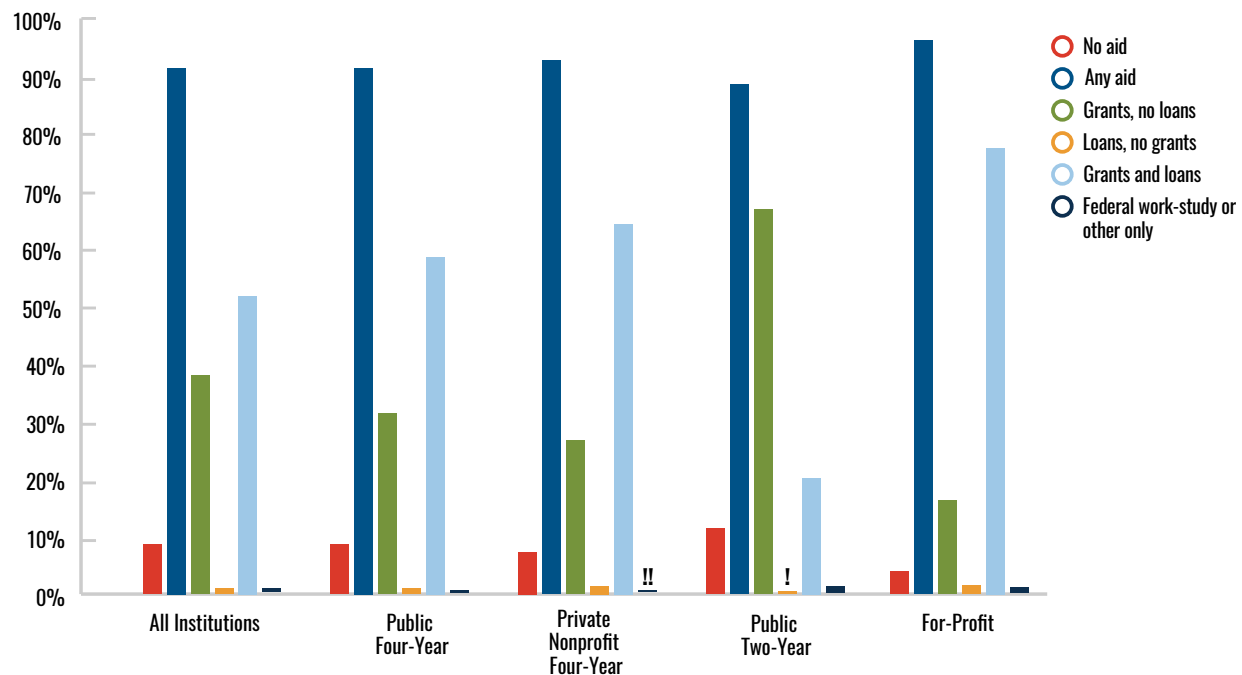
Note: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold.

- Regardless of dependency status, a larger proportion of low-income Black students completed the FAFSA than any other racial or ethnic group. Nearly 96 percent of dependent and 86.9 percent of independent low-income Black students completed the FAFSA in 2015–16.
- Low-income dependent Asian students were approximately 30 percentage points more likely to complete the FAFSA than low-income independent Asian students (94.1 percent and 63.4 percent, respectively). This was the largest gap between dependent and independent students of any racial and ethnic group.
- A larger proportion of low-income independent Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders completed the FAFSA (85.9 percent) than dependent students (69.6 percent). This was the only racial or ethnic group for which this was the case.

⁹ The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used to determine eligibility for grants, loans, and work-study, and is often required by many state and institutional aid programs as well.

More than nine in 10 low-income students received some form of financial aid to pay for college in 2015–16.

Figure 9: Types of Financial Aid for Low-Income Full-Time Undergraduates, by Sector: 2015–16



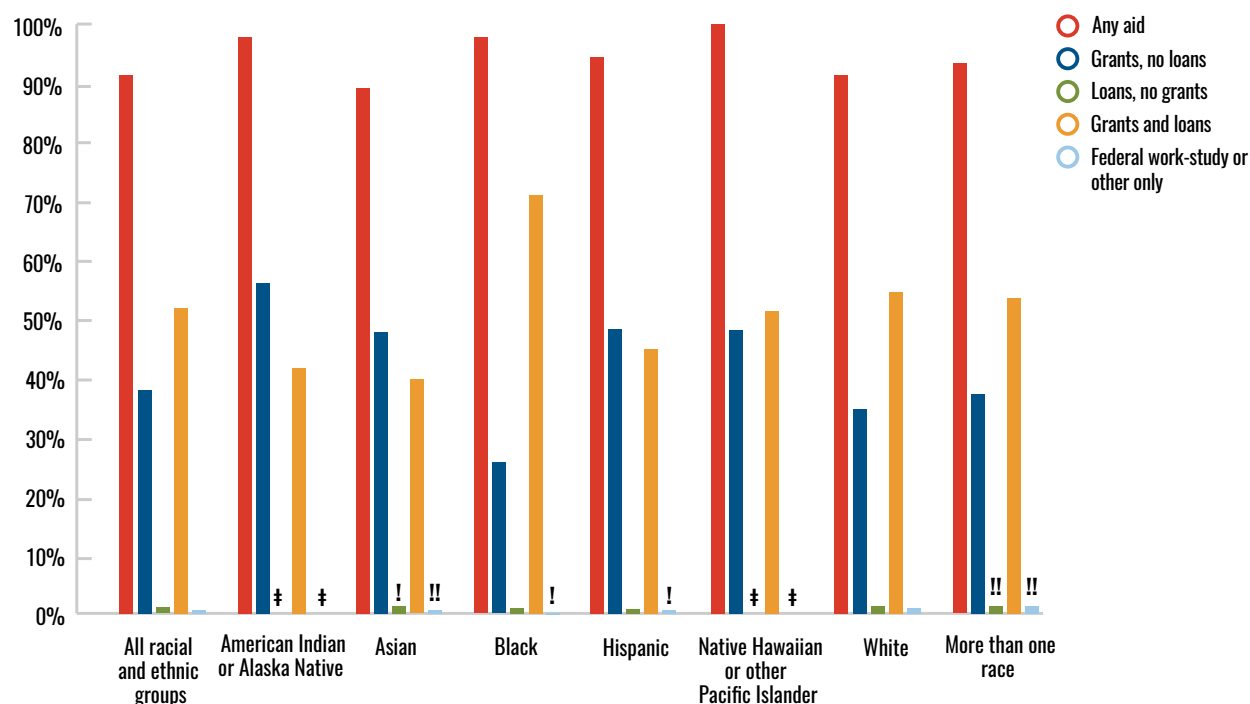
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | Institutions were categorized into sectors based upon control of the institution and the length of the predominant award granted. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%. | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is >50%.

- Across all sectors, the majority of low-income students received some form of financial aid, ranging from 88.6 percent of students at public two-year institutions to 96.1 percent of students at for-profit institutions.
- Nearly two-thirds of low-income students enrolled at public two-year institutions received grants, but did not have loans (66.8 percent), compared with 31.4 percent of students at public four-year, 26.7 percent of students at private nonprofit four-year, and 16.2 percent of students at for-profit institutions.
- Over half of all low-income students received both grants and loans (51.8 percent). Over three-quarters of students at for-profit institutions received both grants and loans (77.5 percent), compared with 58.6 percent of students at public four-year and 64.4 percent of students at private nonprofit four-year institutions.
- Only one in five low-income students at public two-year institutions received both grants and loans to help pay for college (20.2 percent).

How low-income students paid for college varied greatly by race and ethnicity.

Figure 10: Types of Financial Aid for Low-Income Full-Time Undergraduates, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | The category "loans" includes all federal loans to students, state loans, institutional loans, and other private loans. This category does not include Parent PLUS loans. | # Reporting standards not met. | ! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >30% but <50%. | !! Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error is >50%.

- The majority of low-income students across all racial and ethnic groups received some form of financial aid to pay for college, although low-income Asian students were the least likely to receive financial aid (89.2 percent).
- The proportion of low-income students who received grant aid, but did not have loans ranged from 25.6 percent of Black students to 56.0 percent of American Indian or Alaska Native students.
- The share of low-income students who received both grants and loans ranged from 39.7 percent of Asian students to 71.0 percent of Black students.

The data presented here provide information on the average amount borrowed per borrower. The average amount borrowed per borrower includes only those students who took out loans to finance their education.

Borrowing to help pay for college in 2015–16 was higher among low-income students at private nonprofit four-year (\$8,352) and for-profit (\$8,179) institutions than at public four-year (\$7,411) and public two-year (\$5,078) institutions.

Table 3: Average Amount Borrowed per Borrower Among Low-Income Undergraduates in 2015–16, by Sector and Race and Ethnicity

	All Institutions	Public Four-Year	Private Nonprofit Four-Year	Public Two-Year	For-Profit
All racial and ethnic groups	\$7,268	\$7,411	\$8,352	\$5,078	\$8,179
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$6,641	\$7,346	‡	\$5,311	\$7,798
Asian	\$7,373	\$6,290	\$9,620	\$5,314	\$10,004
Black	\$7,189	\$7,588	\$8,107	\$4,939	\$7,839
Hispanic	\$6,933	\$6,574	\$7,561	\$4,846	\$7,987
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	\$7,590	‡	‡	‡	\$8,252
White	\$7,436	\$7,730	\$8,674	\$5,169	\$8,529
More than one race	\$7,686	\$8,359	\$9,070	\$5,593	\$7,698

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | Institutions were categorized into sectors based upon control of the institution and the length of the predominant award granted. | Includes all federal loans to students, state loans, institutional loans, and other private loans. This category does not include Parent PLUS loans. | ‡ Estimate suppressed. Reporting standards not met.

- Students of more than one race had the highest average amount borrowed per borrower (\$8,359) among all low-income students at public four-year institutions.
- The average amount borrowed among low-income students enrolled at private nonprofit four-year institutions ranged from \$7,561 for Hispanic students to \$9,620 for Asian students.
- Low-income Asian students enrolled at for-profit institutions had the highest average amount borrowed per borrower (\$10,004) than any other racial or ethnic group.

Half of all low-income associate degree recipients in 2015–16 borrowed to pay for college. Among those who borrowed, the average amount of debt was \$20,373.

Table 4: Average Amount Borrowed per Borrower Among Low-Income Associate Degree Recipients, by Select Sector and Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16

		% Who Borrowed	Average Amount Borrowed per Borrower
All Institutions	All racial and ethnic groups	50.0%	\$20,373
	Asian	23.7%	\$17,374
	Black	71.1%	\$23,165
	Hispanic	33.5%	\$15,857
	White	57.0%	\$20,285
	More than one race	51.6%	\$24,497
Public Two-Year	All racial and ethnic groups	39.6%	\$17,236
	Black	58.1%	\$19,414
	Hispanic	22.2%	\$10,230
	White	48.8%	\$17,879
For-Profit	All racial and ethnic groups	89.4%	\$26,001
	Asian	73.1%	\$20,525
	Black	96.0%	\$29,731
	Hispanic	86.3%	\$21,981
	White	89.0%	\$25,186
	More than one race	87.8%	\$29,565

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | Institutions were categorized into sectors based upon control of the institution and the length of the predominant award granted. | Totals include other racial and ethnic groups and sectors not separately shown.

- Low-income Black students were more likely than any other group to borrow to pay for their associate degree. Overall, 71.1 percent of these associate degree recipients borrowed an average of \$23,165. In comparison, 33.5 percent of low-income Hispanic associate degree recipients borrowed an average of \$15,857.
- Overall, low-income associate degree recipients at for-profit institutions were much more likely to borrow and borrowed more than their peers at public two-year institutions. Nearly 90 percent of low-income associate degree recipients who completed their degree at a for-profit institution borrowed an average of \$26,001. In comparison, 39.6 percent of low-income associate degree recipients who completed their degree at a public two-year institution borrowed \$17,236.
- More than half of all low-income Black students who completed their associate degree at a public two-year college borrowed (58.1 percent), compared with 39.6 percent of students at public two-year colleges overall. The average debt of Black associate degree recipients was \$19,414, the highest amount of any racial or ethnic group.
- Among low-income associate degree recipients at for-profit institutions, nearly all Black graduates borrowed (96.0 percent), compared with 73.1 percent of Asian graduates. The average debt of Black associate degree recipients who borrowed was about \$9,000 more than that of Asian graduates at these institutions (\$29,731 and \$20,525, respectively).

Almost three-quarters of low-income bachelor's degree recipients in 2015–16 borrowed to pay for college (72.6 percent). The average amount of debt among borrowers was \$30,866, with differences emerging by sector and race and ethnicity.

Table 5: Average Amount Borrowed per Borrower Among Low-Income Bachelor's Degree Recipients, by Select Sector and Race and Ethnicity: 2015–16

		% Who Borrowed	Average Amount Borrowed per Borrower
All Institutions	All racial and ethnic groups	72.6%	\$30,866
	American Indian or Alaska Native	73.3%	\$28,922
	Asian	58.8%	\$25,809
	Black	90.7%	\$34,880
	Hispanic	67.7%	\$25,551
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	89.2%	\$38,033
	White	75.0%	\$31,682
	More than one race	82.0%	\$32,575
Public Four-Year	All racial and ethnic groups	70.0%	\$28,611
	Asian	53.5%	\$21,069
	Black	87.8%	\$31,707
	Hispanic	62.0%	\$23,655
	White	74.3%	\$29,854
	More than one race	85.0%	\$31,192
Private Nonprofit Four-Year	All racial and ethnic groups	72.3%	\$30,984
	Asian	62.6%	\$26,344
	Black	93.9%	\$37,998
	Hispanic	78.3%	\$22,425
	White	72.9%	\$31,673
	More than one race	69.5%	\$33,933
For-Profit	All racial and ethnic groups	90.4%	\$41,076
	American Indian or Alaska Native	98.1%	\$37,294
	Asian	93.7%	\$46,575
	Black	96.2%	\$41,392
	Hispanic	90.8%	\$36,117
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	97.6%	\$49,145
	White	88.1%	\$43,259
	More than one race	90.2%	\$38,180

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016

Notes: Low-income undergraduates are those whose family income (for dependent students) or individual income (independent students) is at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold. | Institutions were categorized into sectors based upon control of the institution and the length of the predominant award granted. | Totals include other racial and ethnic groups and sectors not separately shown.

- Among low-income bachelor's degree recipients at public four-year institutions, borrowing rates ranged from 53.5 percent of Asian graduates to 87.8 percent of Black graduates. Asians had the lowest average amount of debt (\$21,069), while African Americans had the highest (\$31,707).
- Nearly 94 percent of low-income Black bachelor's degree recipients at private nonprofit four-year institutions borrowed an average of \$37,998 for their studies, compared with 78.3 percent of Hispanic students who borrowed an average of \$22,425.
- Low-income students at for-profit institutions were much more likely to borrow and borrowed more than low-income students at public and private nonprofit four-year institutions. The average amount borrowed per borrower ranged from \$36,117 for Hispanic students to \$46,575 for Asian and \$49,145 for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students.

REFERENCES

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