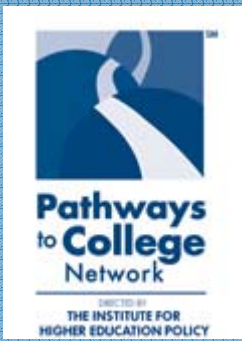


The Facts: Postsecondary Access and Success



Ensuring that more students succeed in postsecondary education is vital to our nation's economic health.

- Approximately 54% of all new job openings in the 2004–2014 decade are projected to be filled by workers with education beyond high school.ⁱ
- As of 2003, full-time workers with a bachelor's degree had median earnings of \$49,900, which was 62% more than the \$30,800 annual earnings of a typical high school graduate. In addition to the increased economic output implied by this higher salary, this median wage differential translates into an additional \$5,300 in annual taxes paid per worker.ⁱ

Too few students from low-income backgrounds and from underrepresented minority groups graduate from high school prepared for college.

- In today's economy, work readiness requires similar reading and math competence as does readiness for college, making a "college-preparatory" program beneficial for all, even those students who enter the workforce after high school rather than immediately attending college.ⁱⁱⁱ
- For the class of 2002, only 41% of African American high school graduates left school with reading skills and a course record that could qualify them to apply to a four-year college. For Hispanics, the figure was 38%. In contrast, 51% of White students graduated from high school prepared for entry into a four-year college program.^{iv}
- In 2002, only 52% of African American students and 56% of Hispanic students graduated from high school on time, as compared to 78% of their White peers.^v
- In 2005, the high school graduation rate for students from the bottom income quartile (up to \$36,174 annual income) was 68.6%, as compared to 83.4% for the second quartile, 89.0% for the third, and 92.5% for the highest-income students (\$96,560 or more annual income).^{vi}

Enrolling in college is strongly correlated with family income and race/ethnicity.

- Only 47% of recent high school graduates from families in the bottom income quartile (up to \$36,174 annual income) enter college, compared to 85% of students from the top income quartile (more than \$96,560 annual income).^{vii}
- Of students who were in eighth grade in 2000, only 20% of the lowest-income students are projected to attain a bachelor's degree by 2012, as opposed to 68% of the highest income group.^{viii}
- In 2002–04, 47.3% of White high school graduates aged 18 to 24 attended college, as compared with only 41.1% of African Americans and 35.2% of Hispanics.^{ix}



College has become increasingly expensive and financial aid hasn't kept up.

- The average published charges (tuition and fees combined with room and board) for attending a public four-year college are \$12,796 per year and \$30,367 for attendance at a four-year private college. The average annual price increase at public four-year colleges has outpaced inflation by about 4% for the past two decades.^x
- The maximum Pell Grant of \$4,050 (2005–06) – the primary source of federal financial aid for low-income students – pays for only 1 / 3 of the published price of attendance at a public for-year college.^{xi}
- In 2003–2004, just 56% of full-time students from families earning less than \$30,000 received sufficient grants and tax benefits to cover tuition and fees at a public four-year college.^{xii}

Getting students into college is not enough. Low-income and underrepresented minority college students earn degrees at significantly lower rates than their peers.

- Only 43% of low-income, college-qualified students who entered college in 1992 aiming for a bachelor's degree earned their degree by 2000, as compared to 80% of high-income students.^{xiii}
- Among students who began college in 1995–96, 58% of White students earned a bachelor's degree within six years, as compared to 42% of Hispanics and 36.4% of African Americans.^{xiv}

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