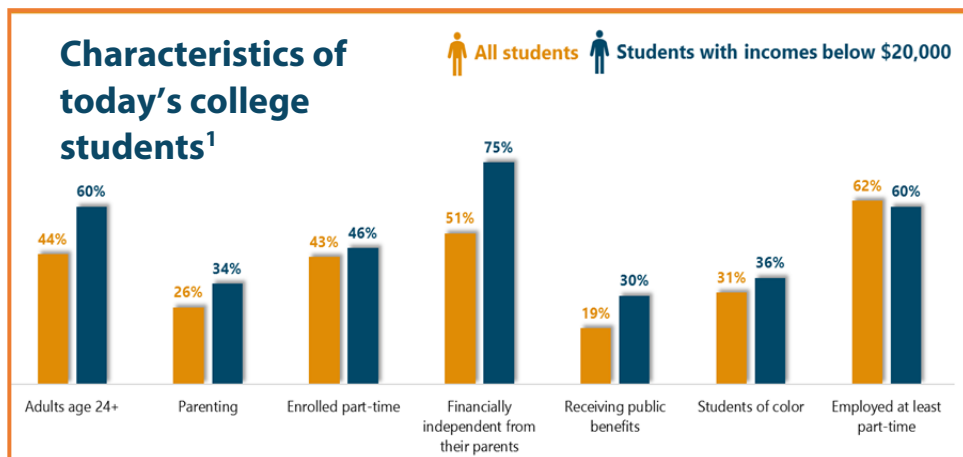


The composition and financial needs of today's student population have changed significantly over time. Only 37 percent of students today attend a four-year institution immediately after high school.¹ Today, more students work, have family obligations, and/or attend classes part-time.²

Overwhelming evidence links each level of postsecondary education achieved with improved social, economic, and health outcomes.³ However, postsecondary education is often out of reach for students with low incomes, many of whom receive little or no financial support from their family for school and who have significant unmet need, even after financial aid.⁴ Students of color (approximately 40 percent of all college students) face additional systemic barriers that hinder access and completion, contributing to less successful outcomes in higher education.⁵ For these reasons today's students require robust supports that promote their ability to attain a postsecondary credential leading to a living-wage job.⁶

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) provides nutrition assistance to low-income individuals and families. SNAP is critical because food insecurity is one of the greatest threats to health, wellbeing, and academic success—especially for community college students.⁷ Moreover, access to SNAP and other public benefits can increase student financial stability and improve the likelihood of completing a degree or certificate program.⁸

People qualify for SNAP by meeting income, asset, and immigration status requirements. Students—defined as those *enrolled at least half time*—have additional eligibility criterion, such as being the primary caregiver for a young child. Some people enrolled in school do not count as “students” for SNAP purposes, including those enrolled in college less than half-time, or taking certain courses that don't require a high school diploma to enroll, such as English language or certificate programs. People in these circumstances may be eligible if they meet the standard requirements, without also needing to meet the special student criteria.



¹ “College Students Aren't Who You Think They Are,” Center for Law and Social Policy, June 2017, https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2017/08/2017June_CollegeStudentsAren'tWhoYouThinkTheyAre.pdf.

² Carrie Welton, *Student Access to Benefits*, Center for Law and Social Policy, 2017. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2017/12/2017.12.6%20Student%20Access%20to%20Benefits%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>.

³ Philip Oreopoulos and Uros Petronijevic, *Making College Worth It: A Review of Research On The Returns To Higher Education*, National Bureau of Economic Research, May 2013, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w19053.pdf>.

⁴ Katherine Saunders, *Barriers to Success: Unmet Financial Need for Low-Income Students of Color in Community College*, Center for Law and Social Policy, June 2015, <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/barriers-success-unmet-financial-need-low-income-students-color-community>.

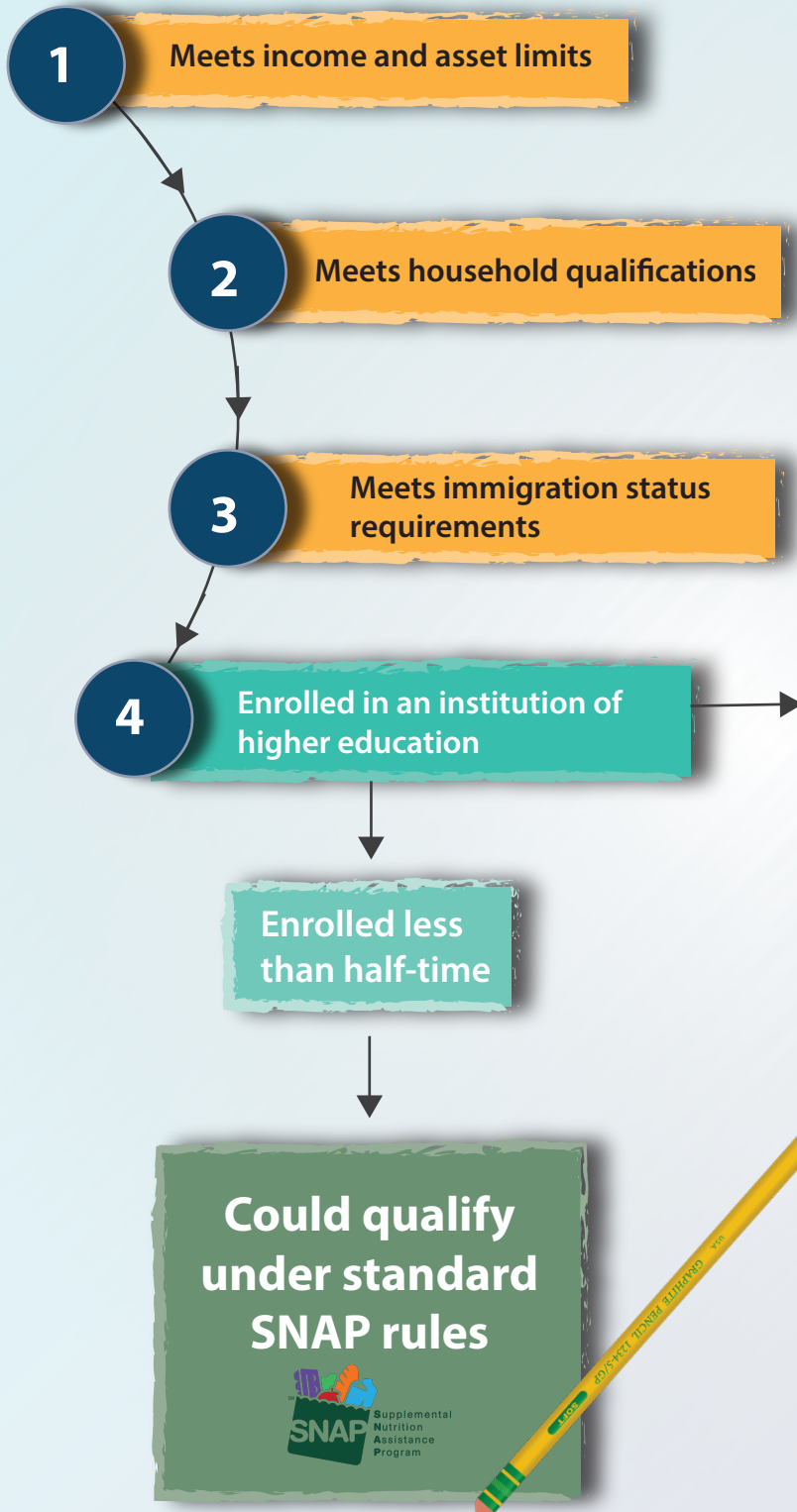
⁵ Anthony Carnevale and Jeff Strohl, *Separate & Unequal: How Higher Education Reinforces the Intergenerational Reproduction of White Racial Privilege*, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, 2013, <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/separate-unequal/#full-report>.

⁶ Laura Perna, “Testimony Provided to the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training Committee on Education and the Workforce United States House of Representatives,” Penn Institute for Urban Research, October 2015. <https://penniu.upenn.edu/publications/my-testimony-to-congress-how-we-can-improve-college-access-and-completion>.

⁷ Sara Goldrick-Rab, Jed Richardson, and Anthony Hernandez, *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education*, Wisconsin Hope Lab, March 2017 https://www.acct.org/files/Publications/2017/Homeless_and_Hungry_2017.pdf.

⁸ Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield and Katherine Saunders, *Benefits Access For College Completion: Lessons Learned from A Community College Initiative To Help Low-Income Students*, Center for Law and Social Policy, July 2016, <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2017/04/Benefits-Access-for-College-Completion-Lessons-Learned.pdf>.

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) provides nutrition assistance to low-income individuals and families. SNAP is critical because food insecurity is one of the greatest threats to health, wellbeing, and academic success for low-income college students. This graphic illustrates how—once meeting the regular eligibility requirements—students* can qualify for SNAP through one of these additional criteria.



***If enrolled at least half-time, may qualify for SNAP through any ONE of these criteria:**

- Responsible for a dependent child under the age of 6
- Responsible for a dependent child between the ages of 6 & 12 for whom you have trouble securing child care
- Works at least 20 hours a week in paid employment
- Receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance or services
- Age 17 or younger or age 50 or older
- Single parent enrolled full-time & responsible for a dependent child age 12 or under
- Participates in a state or federally funded work study program
- Participates in an on-the-job training program
- In school through a state or federally approved employment and training program
- Unable to work for health reasons