WHO ARE TODAY’S STUDENTS?
Nationally, today’s students are more diverse than any previous generation of college students: in age, race, and income level. They’re more mobile and may not live on campus. Most participate in the workforce, either full-time or part-time. Work and family responsibilities beyond the classroom—whether that is on-campus or online—often compete with today’s students’ educational goals.

NATIONWIDE, TODAY’S STUDENTS ARE:

37% 64% 24% 13% 40%
OLDER THAN 25 WORKING WHILE IN COLLEGE PARENTING LIVING ON CAMPUS PART-TIME

Amy Glynn, Vice President of Financial Aid & Community Initiatives at CampusLogic, advocates for addressing the potential burden caused by Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) income verification on some students by leveraging technology and stopping “over-verification.”

“We just need institutional leaders to be champions with the courage to move away from the attitude of ‘that’s the way it’s always been done’ and toward a system and financial aid experience that will benefit both students and schools.”

Higher Education Trends At-a-Glance | Maine | 1
To better understand how Maine compares to the national higher education landscape, look to the data below detailing trends in enrollment, federal student aid, tuition and fees, earnings, and attainment comparing national and state level data.

**ENROLLMENT**

Maine’s total student enrollment is **72,771**

**61%**

Maine students attend full-time.

**FEDERAL STUDENT AID**

About **62%** of Maine’s college students and their families take out federal student loans,¹ compared to **70%** nationwide.²

¹Includes Direct Subsidized Loan, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Parent PLUS, Grad PLUS, and Perkins Loan.

²https://www.cnbc.com/2017/07/03/this-is-the-age-most-americans-pay-off-their-student-loans.html


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**Maine’s Fall Student Enrollment, 2017**

- Full-time: 39.2%
- Part-time: 60.8%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS), Enrollment by Student Level survey, Fall 2017 preliminary data. Includes undergraduate and graduate fall enrollment.
SNAPSHOT: How do Maine’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

Maine’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are relatively on-par with the national average.

Source: College Board. Trends in College Pricing 2018. Figure 5 and 6. https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing


ATTAINMENT

In 2016-2017, below-average rates of Maine students obtained associate’s degrees and certificates compared to the rest of the nation, but above-average rates of Maine students obtained bachelor’s degrees.


Note: Certificates only include less than one year and at least one year but less than 4 years.
SNAPSHOT: How do Maine’s numbers stack up?

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019, 46% of Maine residents ages 25-64 have obtained a certificate or postsecondary degree.

NATIONALLY, 47.6% of Americans ages 25-64 have obtained a certificate or postsecondary degree.3

Maine Education Levels for Residents Ages 25-64

- High School Graduate or less: 11.3%
- Some college, no credential: 21.1%
- Certificate: 36.8%
- Associate Degree: 11.5%
- Bachelor’s Degree: 17.4%
- Graduate or Professional Degree: 2.0%


Percentage of Maine Residents Ages 25-64 with at least an Associate’s Degree by Race

- Hispanic: 24% (20% National Average)
- White: 48% (47% National Average)
- African-American: 42% (31% National Average)
- American Indian: 35% (25% National Average)
- Asian & Pacific Islander: 63% (56% National Average)

SNAPSHOT: How do Maine’s numbers stack up?

EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT

Americans who earn a postsecondary degree or credential have higher earnings potential.

Source: Georgetown University Center for Education and Workforce. Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees. https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/certificates/

Maine workers with higher levels of postsecondary attainment have more earning power than their peers with less than a bachelor’s degree. However, the median earnings of Maine residents is below the national average.


The majority of jobs nationwide in 2020 will require education beyond high school.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO TODAY’S STUDENTS FACE?

**AFFORDABILITY**
- 49% Financially Independent
- 31% At or Below Federal Poverty Line

**PART-TIME VS. COMPLETION**
- 40% Part-Time
- 38% of students with additional financial, work, and family obligations leave school in their first year⁵

**WORK**
- 64% Work While in College

**PARENTING**
- 24%

**EMERGENCY COSTS**
- Early data from the University Innovation Alliance (UIA), a coalition of eleven public research universities, shows that about 4,000 Pell-eligible college seniors, who are in good academic standing, are at risk of being dropped from their classes or not allowed to graduate because less than $1,000 is owed to their institutions.⁴

**VETERAN-STATUS**
- 4% Undergrads are Veterans
  - but they face unique challenges, such as applying competencies learned in military service to civilian careers and academics.

HOW CAN FEDERAL POLICY HELP SET TODAY’S STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS?

Outcomes are critical for today’s students—including completion, employment, equity, and value—to be gained from higher learning. Federal policy needs to catch up to the way that today’s students are learning and reward institutions and systems that deliver the strongest career and educational outcomes.

**FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID** should be redesigned with a focus on the needs of a wide range of students, especially those who work full- or part-time, are financially independent, or need to enroll in courses outside the traditional two-semester approach. Redesign approaches could include rethinking Pell eligibility for workforce programs, or simpler loan repayment to match today’s students’ needs.

**DATA** gathered through federal, state, and workforce data systems should cover the full spectrum of today’s students, not just first-time, full-time students. Today’s students, families, schools, and taxpayers need clear information to make informed choices about higher learning.

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⁴ [https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Completion%20Grants%20release%208_16_17%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Completion%20Grants%20release%208_16_17%20FINAL.pdf)
⁵ [https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics](https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics)