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

IN KENTUCKY ...
Dr. Aaron Thompson, President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education and member of Higher Learning Advocates’ Champions Network, advocates for student access and success, and better connections between higher learning and workforce systems.

“
To overcome those systemic challenges, institutions and systems need to focus dollars and resources on completion and creating wrap-around services and supports that provides each student with the maximum likelihood of success during the difficult journey to completion.

DR. AARON THOMPSON’S POLICY POWER PLAYS:
- Build a stronger pipeline from higher education to career that enables students to see a career at the end of the education system.
- Use financial incentives to focus institutions on college completion and student success.
- Value alternative models of vocational education as a way to improve the long-term sustainability of higher education.

“
SNAPSHOT: How do Kentucky’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how Kentucky 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**

Kentucky’s total student enrollment is **260,731**

60% Kentucky students attend full-time.

**FEDERAL STUDENT AID**

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

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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
SNAPSHOT: How do Kentucky’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

Kentucky’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are above the national average at public two-year institutions and for in-state students at public four-year institutions.

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

ATTAINMENT

In 2016-2017, Kentucky students obtained postsecondary degrees below the national average, but obtained certificates at more than twice the national average.

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

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019,

45.5%

of Kentucky 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.†

Kentucky Education Levels for Residents Ages 25-64

- High School Graduate or less: 15.4%
- Some college, no credential: 11.1%
- Certificate: 10.0%
- Associate Degree: 9.1%
- Bachelor’s Degree: 11.0%
- Graduate or Professional Degree: 43.3%


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

- Hispanic: 24% National Average: 27%
- White: 35% National Average: 35%
- African-American: 31% National Average: 26%
- American Indian: 25% National Average: 24%
- Asian & Pacific Islander: 63% National Average: 57%


†http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#state/KY
SNAPSHOT: How do Kentucky’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/

Kentucky 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 Kentucky 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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affordability</th>
<th>Part-Time vs.</th>
<th>Completion</th>
<th>Work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49% Financially Independent</td>
<td>40% Part-Time</td>
<td>38% of students with additional financial, work, and family obligations leave school in their first year</td>
<td>64% Work While in College</td>
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<tr>
<td>31% At or Below Federal Poverty Line</td>
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#### 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.

#### Veteran-Status
- 4% of undergrads are veterans

**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)