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 MINNESOTA, first-generation college student Moises Mendoza shares his story with Higher Learning Advocates.

All actors within the college process should redesign forms that are required for enrollment and reevaluate how they are messaging information that gets delivered to high school students... financial aid applications such as the FAFSA and the CSS profile are not straightforward and require a high level of parental involvement. Redesigning these forms... can be beneficial to all applicants, and especially for historically marginalized students who are first-generation and have little to no support in the process.

To learn more about Moises’s story, visit todaystudents.higherlearningadvocates.org.
SNAPSHOT: How do Minnesota’s numbers stack up?

To better understand how Minnesota 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

Minnesota’s total student enrollment is 414,617. 53% of Minnesota students attend full-time.

FEDERAL STUDENT AID

About 72% of Minnesota’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
SNAPSHOT: How do Minnesota’s numbers stack up?

TUITION & FEES

Minnesota’s institutions of higher education tuition & fees are above the national average at public two-year institutions and for in-state students attending 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, about-average rates of Minnesota students obtained postsecondary degrees and credentials compared to the rest of the nation.

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

ATTAINMENT continued

As of February 2019, 54.9% of Minnesota 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.¹

Minnesota Education Levels for Residents Ages 25-64

- High School Graduate or less: 28.3%
- Some college, no credential: 25.4%
- Certificate: 16.9%
- Associate Degree: 12.8%
- Bachelor’s Degree: 12.7%
- Graduate or Professional Degree: 4.0%

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

Hispanic: 24% (National Average: 23%)
White: 47% (National Average: 53%)
African-American: 31% (National Average: 31%)
American Indian: 25% (National Average: 23%)
Asian & Pacific Islander: 63% (National Average: 56%)


¹http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#state/MN
SNAPSHOT: How do Minnesota’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/

Minnesota workers with higher levels of postsecondary attainment have more earning power than their peers with less than a bachelor’s degree. The median earnings of Minnesota residents is above 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.**
- 40% Part-Time

**COMPLETION**
- 38% of students with additional financial, work, and family obligations leave school in their first year³

**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% of 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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³ [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)

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)