

# Serving Students Screener

College is supposed to be a path towards upward social mobility for all students, yet our current higher education system has significant room for improvement when it comes to advancing opportunity for today's students, including low-income students and students of color. That's why it's more important than ever that proposals to improve our nation's higher education system put serving students at the forefront. This fact sheet highlights the type of questions candidates and federal policymakers should consider as they develop plans to advance our current system to ensure it serves all students.

## Higher Education Fact:

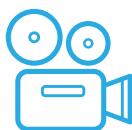
## Question to Ask:

Students who graduate from college earn more than \$1 million dollars more over the course of their lifetimes.



How does this plan prioritize connecting pathways that will ultimately help students who want to earn a bachelor's degree?

Young people can easily pull up data to help them decide what movie is worth watching, but they don't have the data they need to make one of the most important financial decisions of their lives: which college to attend. Nearly half of all students are missing from the federal database tracking graduation rates, for example.



How does this plan address making improvements to our federal postsecondary data system so that all students have a full picture when deciding where to attend college or whether to take out loans?

Black and Hispanic adults are almost half as likely to get a postsecondary degree as their white peers. These gaps have remained stagnant or grown larger over the last twenty years.



How does this plan propose to make investments in programs or institutions that help close racial completion gaps and/or create on-campus support for students of color?

The Pell Grant used to cover 80% of college costs at a public four-year college, but today, covers less than a third.



How does this plan address strengthening the Pell Grant and other need-based aid programs and ensure that non-tuition costs like food and housing are covered?

Children from families in the top 1% are 77 times more likely to attend an elite college compared to the children from low-income families.



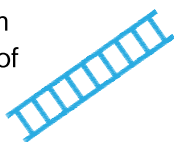
How does this plan incentivize institutions to close existing gaps in access for students from low-income households?

A white college dropout is less likely to default on their student loans than a black college graduate.



How does this plan propose to address systemic racism and support students that are most likely to default on their loans, like students of color?

College should be a ladder out of poverty, but the system is failing lower-income students. Today, fewer than 15% of low-income students get a four-year degree, while more than 6 in 10 wealthy students do.



How does this plan seek to eliminate unmet need and focus first on the students most at risk of stopping out due to financial challenges?

Students who start college but don't finish are three times as likely to default on their loans.



How does this plan help address the college completion crisis?

A college degree benefits students and society as a whole. College graduates face lower unemployment, earn more, pay more in taxes, are healthier, and are more civically engaged.



How does this plan address the importance of increasing attainment nationwide?

We have a leaky pipeline in higher education, as only half of all students who enter postsecondary education earn a degree.



How does this plan intend to hold schools accountable for getting the students they enroll across the finish line?

Today's college students are more diverse than any previous generation—37% of students are 25 or older, 24% are parents, 40% attend part-time and 64% work while attending school.



How does this plan support today's students, including those who are parents (many in need of childcare), and those balancing work and school at the same time?

The number one reason students go to college is to get a job so they can have a stable and secure life.



How does this plan propose to guarantee that all college graduates are gainfully employed and can earn enough money to pay off their student debt?