

THE FACTS:

MAKING THE CASE FOR THE COLLEGE ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY GUIDE

Our current education system is not ensuring that all young people who are college-ready make it to college. Students from low-income families and those that would be the first in their family to attend college are underrepresented on college campuses.

- Each year, an estimated 200,000 college capable low-income students graduate from high school but do not pursue a college degree.ⁱ
 - Only 29% of first generation students enroll in postsecondary education immediately after high school, compared with 73% of students whose parents have received a bachelor's degree.ⁱⁱ
 - Preparation is a significant issue: Only 45% of first-generation college-bound students take the SAT or ACT, compared to 82% of students whose parents have a bachelor's degree.ⁱⁱⁱ
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Even those that do make it to college are not finding supportive college homes and graduating.

- Students in the poorest quarter of the population have an 8.6% chance of getting a college degree. Students in the top quarter have a 74.9% chance.^{iv}
 - Among high school graduates who are academically qualified to go to college, low-income students are far less likely to end up obtaining a college degree than their high-income peers – 43% vs. 80%.^v
 - Seventy-Five percent of students from high-income families complete college by age 24, yet only nine percent of students from low-income families are completing college by this age.^{vi}
 - Roughly 75% of first-generation students who attend college have not received a bachelor's degree eight years out of high school.^{vii}
 - Less than half of the students who attend community college or a non-selective four-year institution ever graduate—nearly 80% of the nation's post-secondary student body.^{viii}
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But the opportunity for college is there.

- About 4,000 colleges and universities in the United States enroll more than 15 million students.
- There are more than 3,000 college-readiness initiatives that target underserved groups, and the federal government invests more than \$1 billion annually in Upward Bound and related programs.^{ix}
- A record \$135 billion in financial aid is available to students and their families.^x
- Over 60% of all college students received financial aid. At private colleges and universities, that number jumps to over 75%.^{xi}
- In 2004-05 grant aid averaged \$1,800 per student at two-year public colleges, \$3,300 at four-year public colleges, and \$9,600 at private four-year colleges.^{xii}

ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau (2002). *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, July 2002). Online at www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p23-210.pdf

ⁱⁱ The Educational Research Institute (2005)

ⁱⁱⁱ The Educational Research Institute (2005)

^{iv} Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education (2005). Thomas Mortenson.

^v Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2006). J. Yellen, Speech to the Center for the Study of Democracy, 2006-2007 Economics of Governance Lecture University of California, Irvine, November 6, 2006

^{vi} "Family Income and Higher Education Opportunity" (June 2005). Postsecondary Education Opportunity

^{vii} U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). 2003-04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04) Undergraduate Financial Aid Estimates for 2003-04 by Type of Institution (NCES 2005-163).

^{viii} U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). 2003-04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04) Undergraduate Financial Aid Estimates for 2003-04 by Type of Institution (NCES 2005-163).

^{ix} "Pre-College Programs Make the Difference for Many Low-Income Students" (Feb 21, 2007). *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. http://www.diverseeducation.com/artman/publish/article_7022.shtml

^x The College Board (2006). *Trends in Student Aid*

^{xi} U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). 2003-04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04) Undergraduate Financial Aid Estimates for 2003-04 by Type of Institution (NCES 2005-163).

^{xii} U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). 2003-04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04) Undergraduate Financial Aid Estimates for 2003-04 by Type of Institution (NCES 2005-163).

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