

2017

How America Pays for College

Sallie Mae's 10th
national study of
college students
and parents



Conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs



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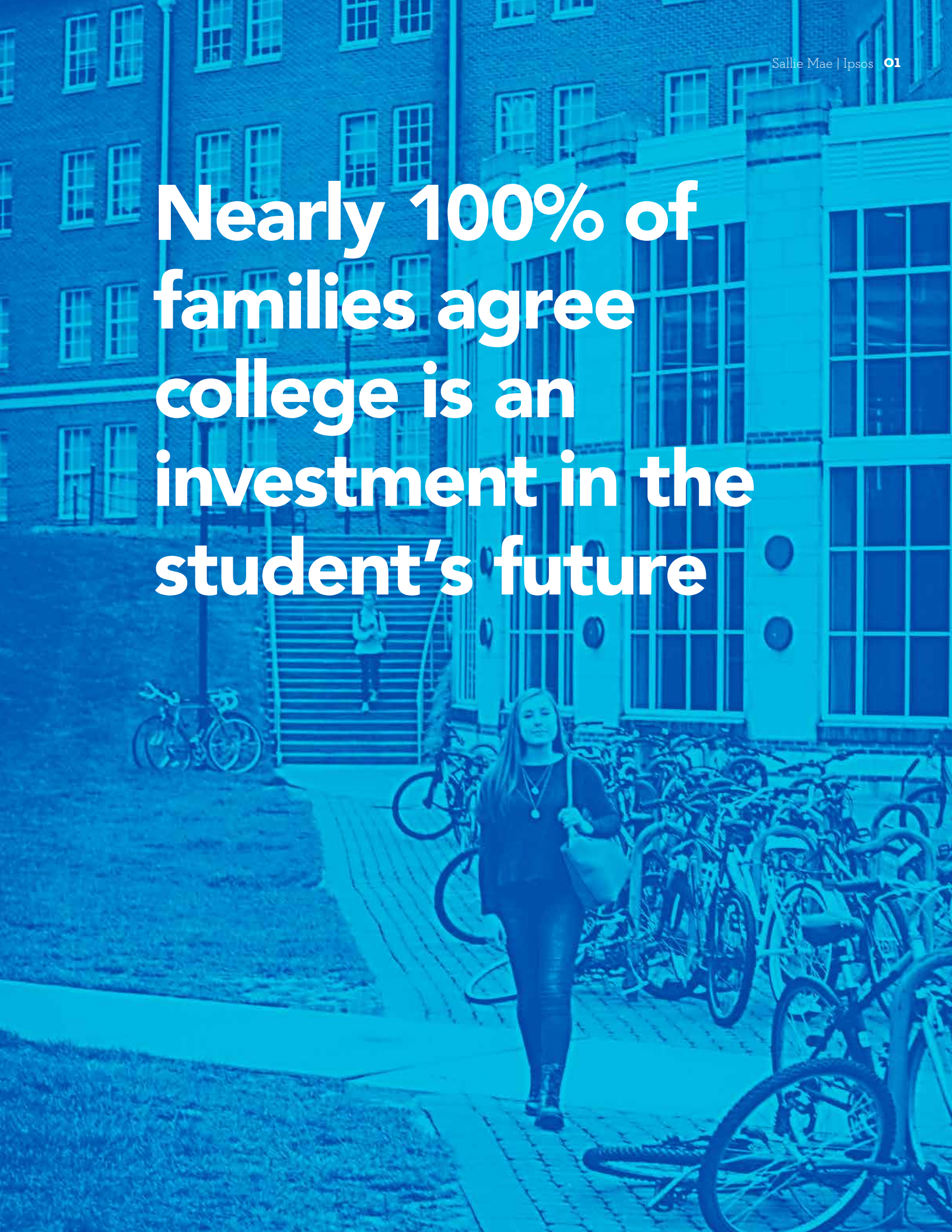
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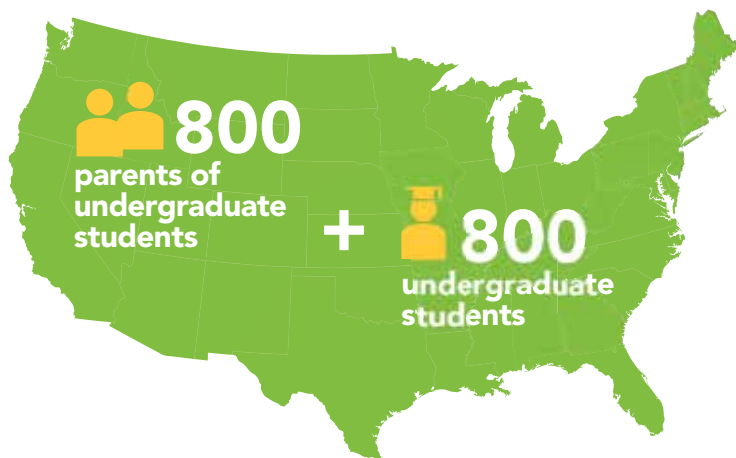
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Nearly 100% of families agree college is an investment in the student's future



About this study

How America Pays for College, introduced in 2008, is a Sallie Mae national study conducted by Ipsos that annually surveys undergraduate students and parents of undergraduates about how much they pay for college and the resources they use to fund the expense.



Now in its tenth year, this study also asks families about their attitudes toward the value of a college education, what they are doing to make college more affordable, and the relationship between education-related choices and cost considerations.

To evaluate trends in paying-for-college behaviors over time, this study examines all resources families use to pay for college. This includes conventional resources, such as savings, scholarships, grants, and student loans, as well as less frequently used resources, such as contributions from relatives and friends, credit cards, other sources of credit, and retirement funds.

How America Pays for College 2017 reflects the results of telephone interviews Ipsos conducted with:

- 800 parents of children ages 18 – 24 enrolled as undergraduate students, and
- 800 undergraduate students ages 18 – 24

The interviews were conducted in English and Spanish between March 22 and April 24, 2017. This timing improves the likelihood that responses reflect actual, not projected, amounts for any given academic year. The survey sample, which changes from year to year, comprised a cross-section of key demographic variables.

Data reflect expenses on an academic-year basis (July 1 to June 30). Year-over-year comparisons reference the survey and report publication year.

Total dollar amounts reported by parents and students are gross costs, before any financial aid is applied, and include their estimates of direct and indirect costs of attending college, including tuition, room and board, any additional cost-of-living expenses, and other expenses.

Percentage amounts may not sum to 100 percent and dollar amount breakdowns may not sum to the total reported, due to rounding.

Words like “cost,” “spent,” and “expense” refer to amounts provided by survey respondents; amounts they report may differ from tuition rates published by schools.

Dollar and proportional amounts are reported on a composite basis as well as on a frequency basis.

- The composite view illustrates how the typical American family pays for college. Composite data are computed using a formula that spreads individual responses across the entire survey sample. Results of these calculations are in Tables 2A-2D and 3A-3D.
- The frequency view presents the usage rate of each resource, and the average amounts contributed by users of those resources, detailed in Tables 1A and 1B.

Low-income households are defined as those with annual income of less than \$35,000; middle-income as those with annual income from \$35,000 to less than \$100,000; and high-income as those with annual income of \$100,000 or more. Geographic regions discussed mirror those used by the U.S. Census Bureau.

This report includes a full set of response tables associated with each itemized question. For details on methodology, including sampling, weighting, and margin of error, see the technical notes section at the end of this report.



How America Pays for College: a 10-year overview

“

We always wanted him to go to college. That was number one.

Kathy P.,
parent of college freshman

”

Introduced in 2008, *How America Pays for College* typically focuses on the current academic year, spotlighting year-over-year changes in behavior. This year's *How America Pays for College* report, marking the 10-year anniversary of the study, takes a deep dive into differences in paying-for-college attitudes and behaviors over the past decade.

Notably, the balance of contributions from source categories has shifted. While some up-and-down movement is expected annually in the proportion of contributions from various resources, scholarship and grant contributions have grown into the leading position. The proportion of costs covered by scholarships and grants shifted up or down frequently in the early years of this study but, since 2011-12, this source has increased each year but one, and the average amounts contributed have increased steadily since that same year, regardless of total average spending.

Parent income and savings contributions have been uneven. This is particularly notable because the level of contribution from

parent income and savings appears to be a lever in determining total college spending and student borrowing. The years when parent income and savings contributions were at their highest correlate to the years when average spending on college was at its highest; the years when parent income and savings were at their lowest correlate to the years when student borrowing was its highest.

Use of 529 college savings plans seems to have plateaued. In the first year of this study, 529 plans, instituted in 1996, were still relatively new. That year 6 percent of families reported using funds from a 529 plan to pay for college. The usage rate increased over time as more families signed up for these plans. The growth, however, has stagnated. The peak usage rate, 17 percent, was in 2012-13. Parents of this year's freshmen have had the opportunity to enroll in a 529 plan since their child was born, yet only 13 percent of families reported using funds from a 529 plan to pay for college this year.

This absence of growth in dedicated college savings corresponds with a similar lack of growth in planning ahead to pay for college. We started tracking whether families had created a plan to pay for all years of college in 2010, and those who agree they have a plan has hovered around 4 in 10 families. Not only has there been no increase in the proportion of families who have a plan, but those who agree today are less certain than those eight years ago. More families somewhat agree and fewer strongly agree they have a plan, compared to 2010.

Lack of planning also spills over to student loans. In 2008, we asked students to estimate their future monthly student loan payments. Some were close to what might be expected based on their loan amounts, but many were off base, both over- and underestimating the amounts. Students this year responded in a similar way. While some were on target, many estimates were exceedingly high or low compared to calculations based on their loan amounts, indicating a lack of planning for future outcomes.

Over time, families seem to have grown more sensitive to cost. In 2008, 58 percent of families eliminated colleges due to cost at some point during the college selection process. This year, 69 percent reported doing so. In addition, fewer families believe the cost of a college is an indicator of the quality of education.

Further, more families are seeking financial aid. Filing rates for the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA) have increased gradually over time to 86 percent this year, from 74 percent in 2008.

The primary reason for attending college—the reason parents and students have most agreed with for 10 years—has been “College is an investment in the student's future.” For 10 years, it has compelled nearly 100 percent of families to attend college.

“**Your earning potential is much greater if you have a college degree, so it makes financial sense.**”

Lisa C.,
parent of college sophomore

”

2017 Highlights

The 2017 *How America Pays for College* report finds both stability and change, with family commitment to college as strong as ever, but some fluctuation in how they are paying.

Planning

Close to 9 in 10 families said they knew the student would attend college as early as his or her enrollment in preschool. Despite that knowledge, far fewer families—less than 4 in 10—had created a plan to pay for all years of college before their child enrolled. Families cited saving as the most prevalent planning tool, followed by research on cost and financial aid. They employed a variety of other tactics as well, such as investing in their child’s skills to increase his or her chances of winning a scholarship, or enrolling in dual high school and community college classes while in high school to reduce future costs.

Planning, however, might not have taken into account any college expenses beyond the undergraduate years. For many families, the college journey won’t end with an associate’s or bachelor’s degree: 59 percent anticipate the student will eventually enroll in graduate school.

How families differ in their attitudes and paying for college behavior

This year, *How America Pays for College* examined several different categories of families to identify any trends or patterns of behavior that distinguish one segment from another within that category.

Influencers

Four influencer segments were identified based on the primary stimulus that inspires a student to attend college: Society, Career, Self, and Community.

Society-influenced families see college as the norm. Parents in these families are highly likely to have attended college themselves. Society-influenced families are more likely to believe that college cost correlates to the quality of education received, and they spend more on college, on average, than other families. They are also more likely to have a plan to pay

for college, and parents in these families contribute more from their income and savings than other influencer segments.

Career-influenced families see college as a path to a specific profession or to higher-paying jobs. While academic program is the primary reason for choosing their college, cost is also a strong factor. Students from these families are more likely to seek ways to reduce costs, including accelerating time to degree. They work more hours, and they pay a higher portion of college costs from their own income and savings.

Self-influenced families are driven more by the social and intellectual reasons for attending college than by future earnings. They are the least likely to have a plan to pay for college. They are more likely to choose their college based on personal reasons. They rely more on scholarships and grants, and less on student borrowing, than other influencer segments.

Community-influenced families are motivated to attend college by those around them: friends, siblings, coaches, or other members of the student's immediate community. They are more likely to have decided to attend college in high school rather than at an earlier age, and are more likely to be first-in-family to attend college. Their primary reason for selecting their college is location. They are less likely than others to be pursuing a bachelor's degree, and less likely to expect to attend graduate school.

First-in-family

Families in which the student is the first generation to attend college make different choices from families in which one or both parents attended college.

First-in-family students spent less on college than second-generation students, with a higher proportion attending community college, attending school in state, and living at home. Families with a first-generation student reported lower household incomes than second-generation families. Parents of first-in-family students contributed significantly less than parents of second-generation students, and first-in-family students relied more on grants.

First-in-family students were more likely to decide they would attend college when they were in high school, and were more likely to be influenced to attend college by a teacher or counselor. The financial aid package was a primary driver in their school choice, and they were more influenced by the practical payoff of career opportunity than second generation students.

Geographic regions

On a regional basis, families in the South, Midwest, and West had more similarities with one another than differences. Attitudes and behaviors of families who live in the Northeast diverged from those in other regions.

Northeast families spent significantly more on college. Students from the Northeast region were twice as likely to enroll in four-year private colleges. While the financial aid package was a factor in school choice for these families, the academic program surpassed cost considerations. These families were more willing to borrow to pay for the education they aspire to attain, and they borrowed more than twice as much as families from other regions. Northeast parents contributed significantly more from their income and savings to pay their students' college costs, and more of them reported working extra hours to afford college.

Families in other regions differed in their approach to making college more affordable. Those from the West spent the least on college. They were more likely to choose a school based on location, and they were more likely to attend part time. Students from the Midwest were more likely to have increased their work hours and they were less likely to plan to attend graduate school. Students in the South were most likely to attend college in state and to live at home.

Borrowers

Forty-two percent of families borrowed this year to cover some college expenses. The mindset of families who borrow to pay for college is different than those who don't borrow in several ways.

Families who borrowed and those who didn't relied on nearly the same amount of funding from non-borrowed resources. Those who borrowed, however, seem to have used that additional funding to reach for a higher-cost education, spending about 80 percent more on college this year than families who didn't borrow.

Borrowing families were more likely to choose more expensive options, such as private colleges, attending out-of-state schools, and living away from home. Their school choice is driven more by academic program and prestige of the university than by cost. These families were more likely to aspire to fulfilling the American dream in their decision to attend college.

On the other hand, those who borrowed were less likely to have a plan to pay for college, and they were less confident they made the right financial decisions about how they are paying for college.

Affordability

Families continued to focus on affordability. Finding free money for college is an important conduit to affording college. Scholarships alone covered 20 percent of college costs, the largest contributor to how American families paid for college. Forty-nine percent of families used scholarships in 2016-17. Colleges and universities continued to be the most prevalent provider of scholarships, with 87 percent of families who used scholarships reporting they obtained one from the student's school. A substantial number of those with scholarships also reported receiving awards from private sponsors or community groups (75%) and from state-based programs (65%).

In addition to finding ways to earn or save more to pay college expenses, many families reduced cost through school selection. More than two-thirds eliminated colleges from their consideration due to cost, and nearly three-fourths chose an in-state school to reduce cost. When making their final selection, a similar proportion of families—one-fourth—based their decision on the college's cost of attendance or financial aid package as families who based their decision on academic program.

How families pay for college

How America Pays for College 2017 finds that families paid about the same for college in 2016-17 as they did in 2015-16, but the balance of resources used to pay has shifted. This year's report showed students and parents are contributing an equal share, while scholarships and grants constitute the largest share of sources used to pay college costs.


Through a combination of income, savings, and borrowing, students covered 30 percent of costs in 2016-17, the highest it has been since 2009, while parents covered 31 percent. In comparison, the proportion contributed by students in the prior year totaled 25 percent, while the contribution from parents accounted for 36 percent.

Parents, though contributing less than the previous year, continued to provide the largest share of funding outside of scholarships and grants. Parent income and savings covered 23 percent of college costs, compared with 29 percent the previous year, and parent borrowing paid 8 percent of costs, compared with 7 percent in 2015-16.

Meanwhile, contributions from student income and savings decreased slightly and student borrowing increased. This year, students paid 11 percent from out-of-pocket funds, compared with 12 percent the prior year, and 19 percent from borrowed funds, compared with 13 percent in 2015-16.

“ I definitely didn't realize that there were so many other things that you had to cover, even if you had a quote unquote full scholarship. ”

Taylor M.,
college senior



**Nearly 9 in 10
families knew the
student would
attend college
since he or she
was in preschool**



Introduction

How America Pays for College has been providing a picture of the sources American families use to pay for an undergraduate education for 10 years. Year after year, the study finds on a family-by-family basis that Americans use a wide variety of resources to fund this significant investment. On an aggregated basis, the data allow us to see how a typical family is paying for college and whether the funding sources have changed over time.

The sources families use to pay for college include parent income and savings, student income and savings, borrowing by parents, borrowing by students, scholarships and grants, and gifts from relatives and friends. Together, these resources form a composite¹ view of how America pays for college.

How families are paying for college

As families seek ways to make college more affordable—not only by earning more and by making cost-reducing college and lifestyle choices, but also by seeking financial aid—scholarships and grants rise to the top of resources families use to pay college costs.

Composite view of funding sources

Scholarships remain the number one resource; borrowing increases as income and savings contributions decline.

The average amount families reported paying for college during the 2016-17 academic year was \$23,757, similar to the \$23,688 reported in 2015-16. Although the total amount families spent did not change substantially year-over-year, the mix of resources

used to pay those costs did. While scholarships and grants remained the number one source of funding, the contribution from students was the highest since 2011-12, and nearly equaled the contribution from parents. Through a combination of income, savings, and borrowing, students covered 30 percent of costs in 2016-17, while parents covered 31 percent. In comparison, the proportion contributed by students in the prior

Figure 1A

How the Typical Family Pays for College, Average Amount, Year-over-Year

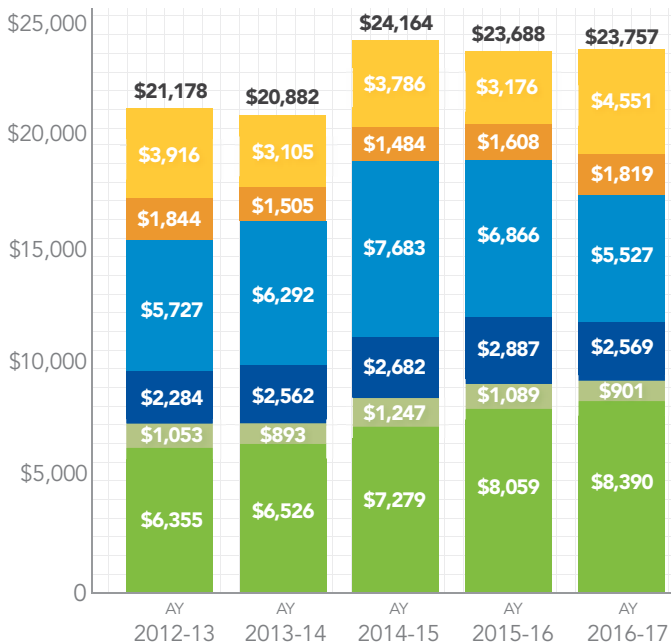
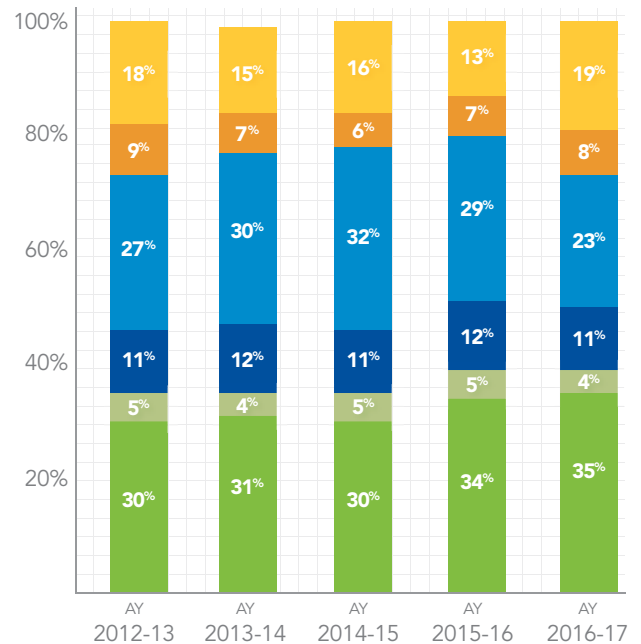


Figure 1B

How the Typical Family Pays for College, Funding Source Share, Year-over-Year



- Scholarships & grants
- Student income & savings
- Parent borrowing
- Relatives & friends
- Parent income & savings
- Student borrowing

The amount families paid for college in 2016-17 is similar to 2015-16, but the proportion of funding drawn from each source type shifted. Combined student income, savings, and borrowing contributions increased to nearly the share contributed by parents.

¹ Detailed components of these categories are in Tables 2A-2D and 3A-3D

year totaled 25 percent, while the contribution from parents accounted for 36 percent. Parents continued to provide the largest share of funding outside of scholarships and grants.

The share of college costs covered by scholarships and grants was the highest in this report's history, covering more than one-third—35 percent—of 2016-17 costs. On average, scholarships and grants paid \$8,390 of the expense, compared to \$8,059 in 2015-16, an increase of \$331.

Income and savings paid for 34 percent of college costs in 2016-17, down from 41 percent the prior year. Parent income and savings—typically one of the highest-contributing resources—funded 23 percent of costs, or \$5,527, down from 29 percent, or \$6,866, in 2015-16.

A decline in contributions from parent income is chiefly responsible for the overall decrease in parent support. Income contributions dropped to \$3,192 from \$4,341 the prior year. Money withdrawn from retirement savings decreased to \$260 from \$379. The proportion of contributions from college savings plans such as 529s (\$1,445) and other parent savings and investments (\$630) were the same as 2015-16.

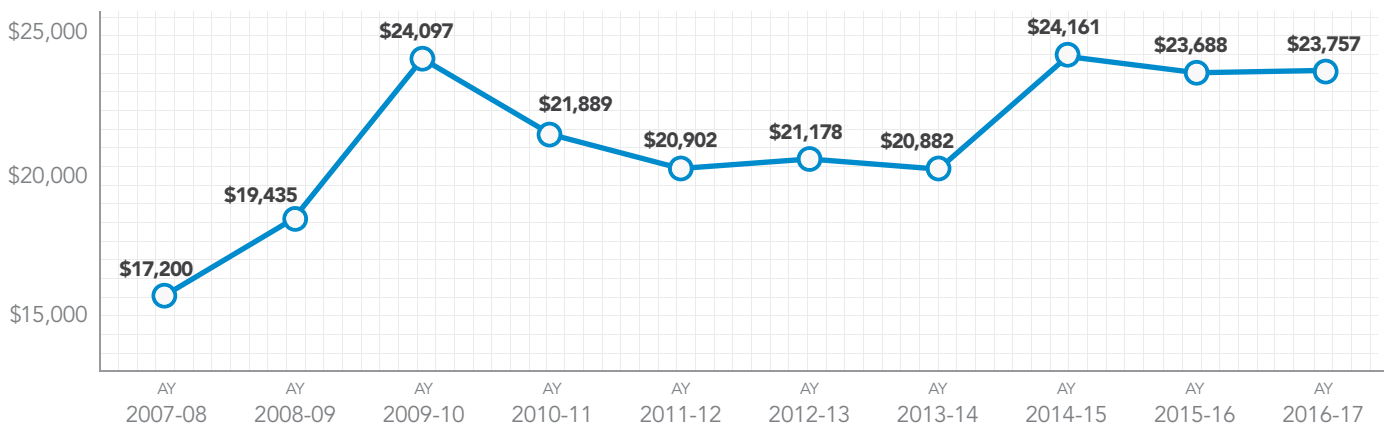
Student income and savings covered 11 percent of costs in 2016-17, declining to \$2,569 from \$2,887 the prior year. Additionally, contributions from relatives and friends, typically the smallest-contributing resource (4% this year), declined, to \$901 from \$1,089.

Borrowed money paid for 27 percent of costs, up from 20 percent the prior year. While parent borrowing increased slightly to \$1,819 from \$1,608, to cover 8 percent of costs, money borrowed by the student filled most of the gap created by reduced parent income and savings contributions. Student borrowing paid for 19 percent of college costs, roughly \$4,551, the highest proportion student borrowing has paid since 2008-09.

Over the 10 years of this study, the average total amount spent on college reported by those surveyed has gradually increased by about 38 percent, though not in a direct trajectory.

Figure 2

Average Amount Spent on College, over Time



Over the 10 years of this study, the average total cost of college reported by respondents has gradually increased by about 38 percent, though not in a direct trajectory.



Use of 529 college savings plans

Although 529 college savings plans have been available since 1996, only a small portion of families uses them to pay for college. Thirteen percent of families used 529 plans in 2016-17, down from 16 percent the prior year, and the lowest percentage in the past five years.

Families who paid for college with 529 plans this year used higher average dollar amounts than in 2015-16 (\$10,031 vs \$8,315, respectively).

13%



Families using
529 plans

\$10,031



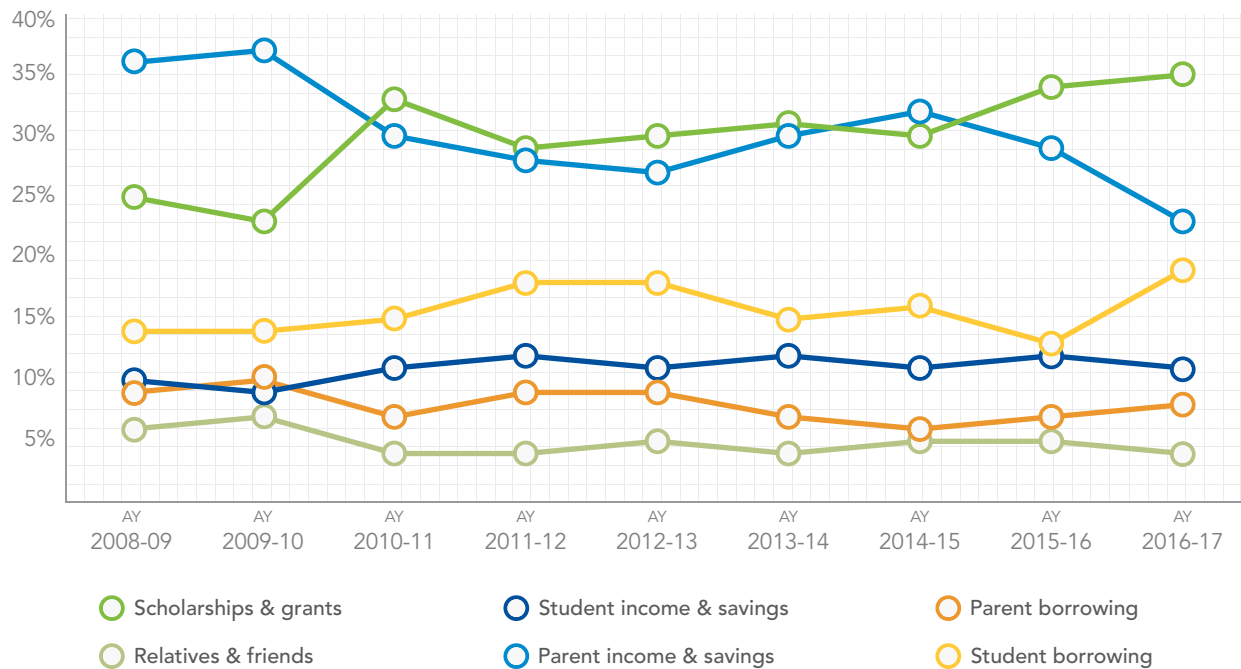
Average amount families
used from 529 plans

21



Years that 529 plans
have been in use

Figure 3
Proportion of Costs Paid by Source Type, over Time



Parent income and savings contributions have been well above average in the same years that total spending peaked (2009-10 and 2014-15). The years when parent income and savings have contributed the least correspond to the years when student borrowing has been at its highest.

Over that same period, the proportion of costs paid from scholarships, grants, and parent income and savings fluctuated more than the other four funding sources. Interestingly, parent income and savings have been well above average in the same years that total average college costs have peaked: 2009-10 and 2014-15 (paying 37% and 32% of costs, respectively). This raises the question of whether access to parent income and savings influences choices—such as school type, in-state location, or living arrangements—that increase the cost of college for a family.

When parent income and savings are less available, the funding gap appears to be bridged by borrowing, more so student borrowing than parent borrowing. The years in which parent income and savings have contributed the least toward total cost are 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2016-17 (paying 28%, 27%, and 23% of costs, respectively). These years correspond to the years when the proportion of costs paid from student borrowing has been at its highest (18%, 18%, and 19%, respectively).

Scholarships and grants

More families are looking for “free” money and other forms of financial aid to help pay for college.

Scholarships and grants—the top resource families used to pay for higher education in 2016-17—are critical to college affordability. Colleges and universities are the single largest source of scholarships, and a school scholarship can significantly reduce the net price a family pays.

This year, 7 in 10 families sought scholarships. Forty-nine percent of families reported using scholarships as a resource to pay for college, and an additional 21 percent said they had applied for one.

Of those who used scholarships, nearly 9 in 10 received them from the college (87%), three-fourths received them from community organizations or private entities, including those with

with online applications (75%), and two-thirds received them from their state or local government (65%).

FAFSA completion

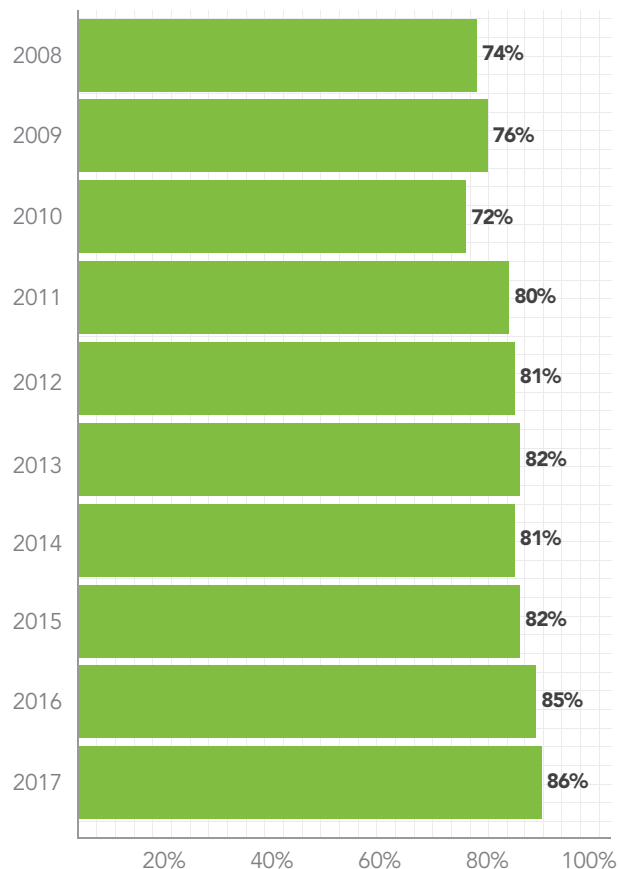
More families are seeking financial aid, as demonstrated by the increase in the percentage of families who complete the U.S. Department of Education's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Submitting a FAFSA is the single most important step families can take to obtain assistance with paying for college. It is the gateway to more than \$150 billion² in financial aid from the federal government, including federal student loans, grants, and work-study funds. Many states and colleges, and some private scholarship providers, use FAFSA data to determine eligibility for aid they manage.

Over the course of 10 years, FAFSA filing rates have gradually increased to 86 percent of families this year, from 74 percent in 2008. This may indicate growing awareness of the role of FAFSA in accessing aid, or it may be an indicator of a growing need for financial assistance.

Figure 4

FAFSA Filing, over Time



Over the course of 10 years, FAFSA filing rates have gradually increased to 86 percent from 74 percent.

“ My friends at school were getting scholarships, so it was kind of like a friendly competition for us to look for scholarships or grants. ”

Geenen J.,
college freshman

² Source: Office of Federal Student Aid (<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>)

“The biggest factor for me was financial aid. The college that I’m graduating from, I got a full academic scholarship because of my ACT and GPA.”

Taylor M.,
college senior

Affordability measures

In addition to pursuing financial aid, families take other measures to make college more affordable.

The cost of college remains a primary concern for families, and the proportion who eliminate colleges due to cost has increased gradually over time. This year nearly 7 in 10 families (69%) did so at some stage in their college search and selection process, up from 6 in 10 (58%) in 2008.

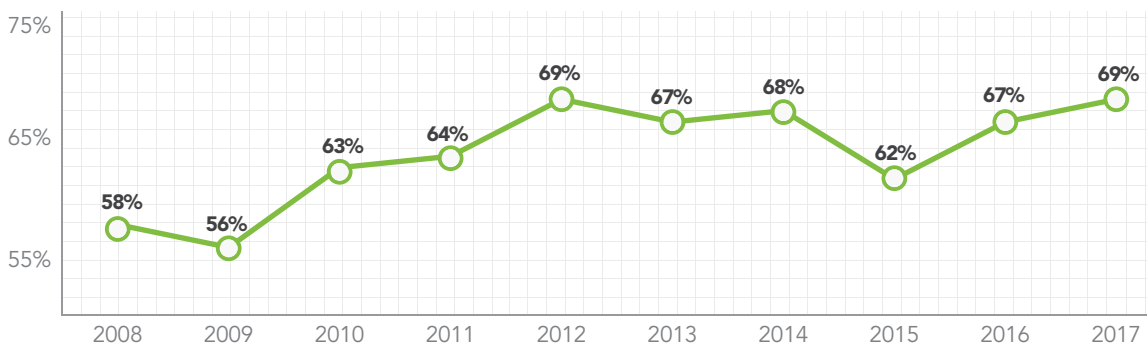
Fewer families this year than 10 years ago believe that expensive schools necessarily offer a superior education. In 2017, 54 percent of families said more expensive schools always or sometimes offer a superior education, compared with 60 percent in 2008.

When it came to making the final selection of a college—whether families had already eliminated colleges along the way—cost was the deciding factor for about one-quarter of families (when cost of attendance and financial aid package are combined). The primary reasons for final school choice were

- Academic program (25%)
- Location (22%)
- Personal choice (e.g., social life, campus activities or sports, religious affiliation, etc.) (16%)
- Cost of attendance (12%)
- Financial aid package (12%)
- Prestige of the university (3%)

Figure 5

Elimination of Colleges from Selection Set Due to Cost, over Time



At some point during the college selection process, most families eliminate colleges from consideration because of cost. This year, 69 percent of families did so, the highest proportion (along with 2012) in the 10 years of this study.

Almost all families—98 percent—are taking deliberate steps to make college more affordable, and the number one way they save on college costs is to choose an in-state school. Nearly three-fourths of families (73%) did this in 2017. In addition:

- Students reduced their personal spending in 68 percent of families and parents did so in 47 percent.
- Students increased their work hours in 50 percent of families and parents worked more hours in 30 percent.
- Half of students (50%) were living at home.
- Nearly half of students who don't live at home (47%) reduced their housing costs by adding a roommate.
- One in four students (26%) enrolled in an accelerated program, and 15 percent reduced class hours.
- One in five students (18%) changed majors to pursue a more marketable profession.

Other affordability measures some families took included filing for education tax credits (40%), making student loan payments while the student is enrolled (29%), and taking advantage of military benefits (4%).

The majority of students—76 percent—worked to help pay their costs: 55 percent were working year-round, 15 percent worked only during school breaks, and 6 percent worked only during the school term.



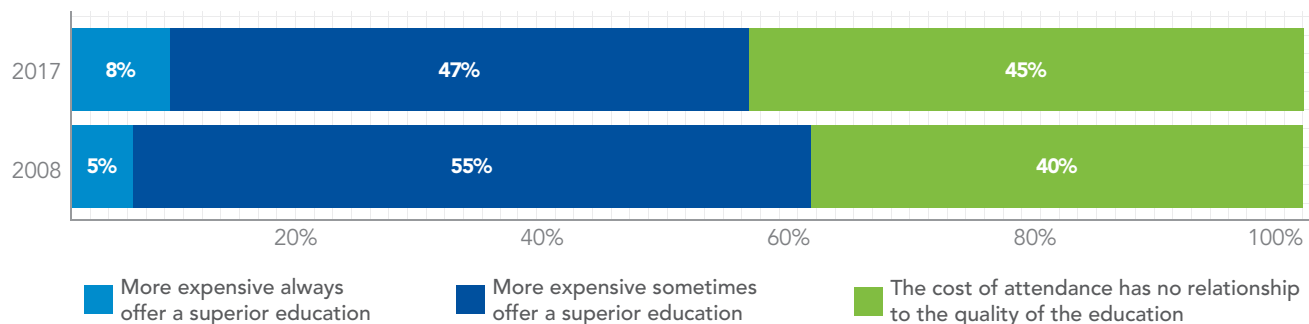
98% of families take steps to make college affordable



76% of students work to help pay for college

Figure 6

Perceived Relationship between Cost of Attendance and Quality of Education



Fewer families in 2017 than in 2008 equate cost of attendance with quality of education.

Frequency of resources used

By looking at the usage rate of various resources—distinct from the composite view—we see which resources are used more, or less, frequently than others, and average amounts contributed by only those users, as detailed in Tables 1a and 1b.

Scholarships—used by 49 percent of families—were the most frequently used resource to pay for college in 2016-17, followed by grants, used by 47 percent of families. The usage rate of both these resources did not change compared to the prior year, but average amounts users paid from these resources increased: the scholarship average amount rose by more than \$700, and the grant amount by more than \$250. Eleven percent of families paid for college using only external resources in 2016-17, primarily scholarships and grants, and some contributions from relatives and friends.

Parent income, historically the most-used resource for paying for college, dropped to the third most-used resource in 2016-17: 46 percent of families relied on parent income, fewer than the 51 percent who used parent income in 2015-16. Additionally, the average amount used from this source declined by nearly \$1,200. Use of parent personal contributions overall declined to 55 percent of families, from 59 percent in 2015-16. Notably, use of college savings plans such as 529s also declined, to 13 percent of families from 16 percent the prior year, but the average amount paid through them increased by about \$1,700.

Overall use of student personal contributions by 51 percent of families was similar to the previous year's 52 percent. Slightly fewer students contributed income: 33 percent, compared with 35 percent in 2015-16. The average amount from student income increased by nearly \$300 from the prior year, but the amount from Federal Work-Study declined by \$116. Fewer students contributed savings—24 percent, compared with 29 percent the prior year. The average amounts used from student savings and student investments were slightly higher than the

previous year (\$45 and \$354, respectively). Significantly more students from low- and middle-income households than from high-income households contributed their income and savings (53%, 56%, and 35%, respectively).

About the same portion of students as in past years, 16 percent, received funding from relatives and friends. The average amount received in 2016-17 was about \$700 lower than the previous year.

Forty-two percent of families borrowed to help pay for school this year. About one-seventh of families (14%) utilized funds borrowed by the parent and more than one-third (36%) used funds borrowed by the student. The Federal PLUS Loan continued to be the most commonly used parent loan resource—used by 9 percent of all families—and accounted for the highest average amount borrowed (\$10,226), though that amount was about \$1,100 lower than the previous year. Use of other parent borrowing sources continued to range between 1 and 3 percent of families. The average amounts used from several other parent borrowing categories were also lower than the previous year, particularly private education loans, which came down by nearly \$2,400, and retirement account loans, by \$1,100.

More students borrowed this year and they borrowed higher amounts than the previous year. Students borrowed in 36 percent of families, compared to the previous year's 29 percent. The dominant source of borrowed money was federal student loans, used by 33 percent of students. Ten percent of students used private student loans, 4 percent used credit cards, and 5 percent used some other type of loan. The average amount of federal loans rose by almost \$1,500, and private loans by \$1,700. Increases in credit card and other loan amounts were small (\$11 and \$48, respectively).

“ I didn't exactly know what I wanted to do with my life, so I didn't want to go away to college. I didn't want to waste more money. ”

Ariel G.,
college senior

Table 1A: The Role of Various Non-borrowed Funding Sources to Pay for College, Frequency of Sources and Average Amounts Used

	2017		2016		2015		2014		2013	
	% of total families	Average amount*	% of total families	Average amount*	% of total families	Average amount*	% of total families	Average amount*	% of total families	Average amount*
Parent income and savings	55%		59%		58%		59%		60%	
Parent current income	46%	\$7,162	51%	\$8,350	47%	\$9,782	46%	\$6,973	52%	\$6,896
College savings plan (529s)	13%	\$10,031	16%	\$8,315	17%	\$9,129	15%	\$9,233	17%	\$7,959
Retirement savings withdrawals	5%	\$4,321	5%	\$4,814	6%	\$5,276	7%	\$8,870	5%	\$2,710
Other parent savings or investments	8%	\$6,901	9%	\$5,940	13%	\$5,045	12%	\$6,210	11%	\$4,249
Student income and savings	51%		52%		53%		56%		51%	
Student current income	33%	\$3,659	35%	\$3,362	36%	\$3,567	36%	\$3,278	34%	\$3,130
Student savings	24%	\$2,962	29%	\$2,917	28%	\$2,309	31%	\$2,592	27%	\$2,764
Federal Work-Study	10%	\$2,353	9%	\$2,469	10%	\$2,619	8%	\$2,354	5%	\$1,605
Other student savings or investments	8%	\$3,868	10%	\$3,514	9%	\$2,590	7%	\$2,702	8%	\$2,618
Scholarships and grants	71%		70%		63%		66%		65%	
Scholarships	49%	\$9,712	50%	\$8,976	46%	\$8,843	44%	\$8,025	39%	\$8,349
Grants	47%	\$7,722	47%	\$7,464	45%	\$7,114	43%	\$6,643	45%	\$6,538
Relatives or friends	16%		15%		16%		17%		18%	
		\$5,176		\$5,899		\$6,546		\$4,788		\$5,244

*Among those who used each source

Table 1B: The Role of Various Borrowed Funding Sources to Pay for College, Frequency of Sources and Average Amounts Used

	2017		2016		2015		2014		2013	
	% of total families	Average amount*	% of total families	Average amount*	% of total families	Average amount*	% of total families	Average amount*	% of total families	Average amount*
Parent borrowing	14%		12%		12%		10%		12%	
Federal PLUS Loans	9%	\$10,226	9%	\$11,293	8%	\$11,030	5%	\$10,343	7%	\$9,887
Private education loans	3%	\$6,479	1%	\$8,858	2%	\$6,553	2%	\$10,408	2%	\$7,316
Home equity loans or HELOC	1%	\$6,517	2%	\$7,406	1%	\$3,724	2%	\$9,805	1%	\$4,602
Parent credit cards	3%	\$4,450	2%	\$4,443	2%	\$3,312	3%	\$2,678	3%	\$4,681
Retirement account loans	1%	\$4,643	<.5%	\$5,765	1%	\$3,868	1%	\$5,062	1%	\$3,952
Parent other loans	2%	\$6,599	1%	\$6,273	3%	\$6,423	4%	\$10,037	5%	\$11,817
Student borrowing	36%		29%		33%		29%		32%	
Federal student loans	33%	\$8,835	25%	\$7,378	30%	\$8,454	28%	\$7,788	29%	\$8,815
Private education loans	10%	\$10,707	8%	\$8,998	8%	\$12,102	7%	\$9,375	9%	\$9,324
Student credit cards	4%	\$1,626	5%	\$1,615	3%	\$1,410	3%	\$2,150	3%	\$3,156
Student other loans	5%	\$7,293	6%	\$7,245	6%	\$4,927	4%	\$6,757	5%	\$6,927

*Among those who used each source

Role of borrowed resources

More than 4 in 10 families relied on borrowing in 2016-17, a typical proportion compared with other years. Students, who borrow more frequently than parents, feel responsible for paying back loans borrowed by their parents as well as loans they borrowed.

Frequency of borrowing

The proportion of families who rely on student borrowing has remained relatively stable over 10 years. While there are fluctuations in the percentage of families whose students borrowed each year of the study, the range consistently clusters—up to four percentage points in either direction—around one-third of families.

In 2016-17, students in 36 percent of families borrowed student loans, used credit cards, or borrowed some other type of loan to pay for college. Among those who used student loans, 72 percent borrowed only federal student loans, 22 percent borrowed both federal and private student loans, and 5 percent borrowed only private student loans.

Borrowing behavior can change from year to year in individual families. Among non-freshmen families who borrowed this year, about half borrowed last year. Among non-senior families who borrowed this year, about two-thirds expect to borrow next year.

The variability in student borrowing each year the student is enrolled is most likely due to some families' utilization of student loans on an as-needed basis rather than as a permanent component of their paying-for-college budget.

Table a: Year-to-Year Borrowing

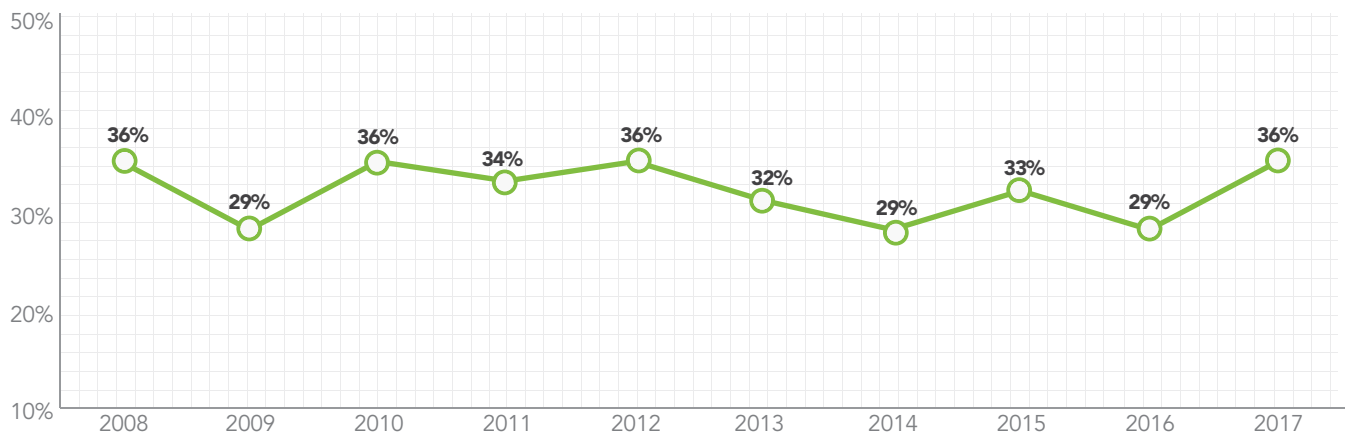
Prior year borrowing*	Prior year borrowing*			Expect to borrow next year**	Expect to borrow next year**		
	Yes	No	Not sure		Yes	No	Not sure
Borrowers 2016-17	51%	44%	5%	Borrowers 2016-17	68%	20%	12%
Non-borrowers 2016-17	7%	91%	2%	Non-borrowers 2016-17	16%	70%	15%

* Excludes families of freshmen 2016-17

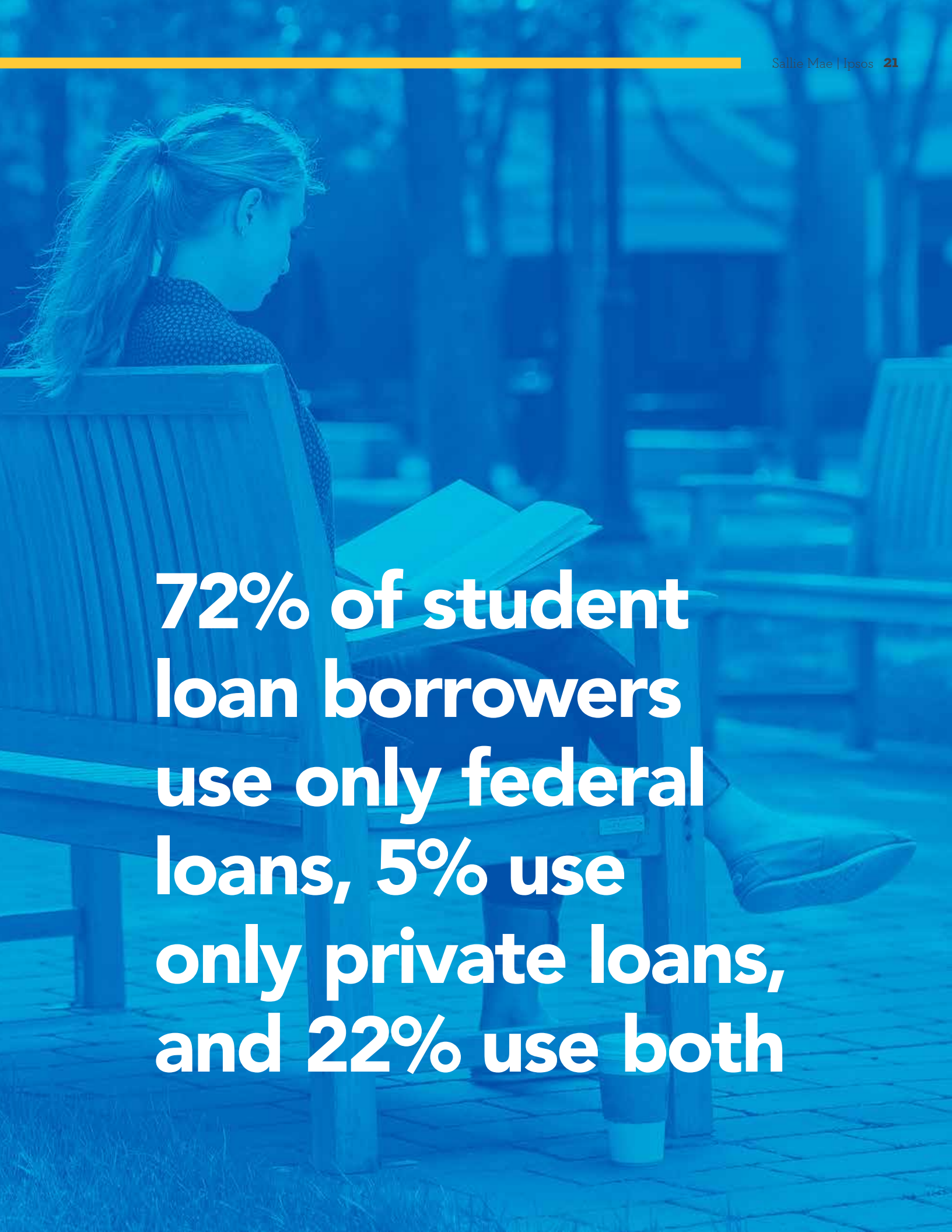
** Excludes families with seniors 2016-17

Figure 7

Proportion of Students Who Borrowed for the Current Academic Year, Year-over-Year



Student loans are a constant resource for families. The proportion of students who borrow fluctuates from year to year but clusters around one-third of students.



**72% of student
loan borrowers
use only federal
loans, 5% use
only private loans,
and 22% use both**

Differences between borrowers and non-borrowers

Motivations differ between families who borrow and families who don't: borrowing families reach for more.

Families who borrowed and families who didn't both used about the same combined dollar amounts—\$17,500—from non-borrowed sources (parent and student income and savings, scholarships, grants, and contributions from relatives and friends). Families who supplemented those resources with borrowed money are notably different from those who didn't borrow.

Families who borrow to pay for college reach for a higher cost education than families who don't borrow. In 2016-17, families who borrowed spent an average of \$31,082 for college, nearly twice as much as families who did not borrow. Students from families who borrowed were more likely than students from families who did not borrow to

- Attend four-year private colleges (36% vs 11%)
- Attend college out of state (30% vs 17%)
- Attend college full time (93% vs 85%)
- Live away from home (60% vs 41%)
- Pursue a bachelor's degree (76% vs 62%)

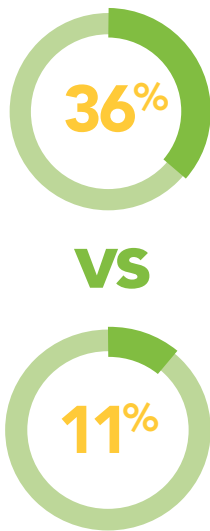
Families who borrowed primarily chose their school based on academic program. They were more likely than families who didn't borrow to consider prestige of the university, and less likely to focus on cost and location.

In addition, more students and parents who borrowed expressed aspirational motives for attending college. They were more likely than families who didn't borrow to

- Strongly agree that college is part of the American Dream (43% vs 34%)
- Strongly agree they would attend college for the social and intellectual experience regardless of future earnings (29% vs 21%)
- Plan to attend graduate school (63% vs 55%)

Although these families were more likely to say they always knew the student would attend college (89% vs 82%), they were less likely to say they created a plan to pay for it before the student enrolled (35% vs 42%).

Not surprisingly, borrowers were more likely to say student loan debt is acceptable (29% vs 16%) and that they would rather borrow than not attend college (86% vs 68%). In contrast, they were more likely to say they considered not attending college due to cost (36% vs 27%). They also felt less confident they made the right financial decisions about paying for college: 41 percent are completely confident, compared to 63 percent of non-borrowers.



More students from families who borrowed than students from families who didn't borrow attend four-year private colleges

Figure 8A

How the Typical Family Pays for College, Average Amount, by Borrowing Status

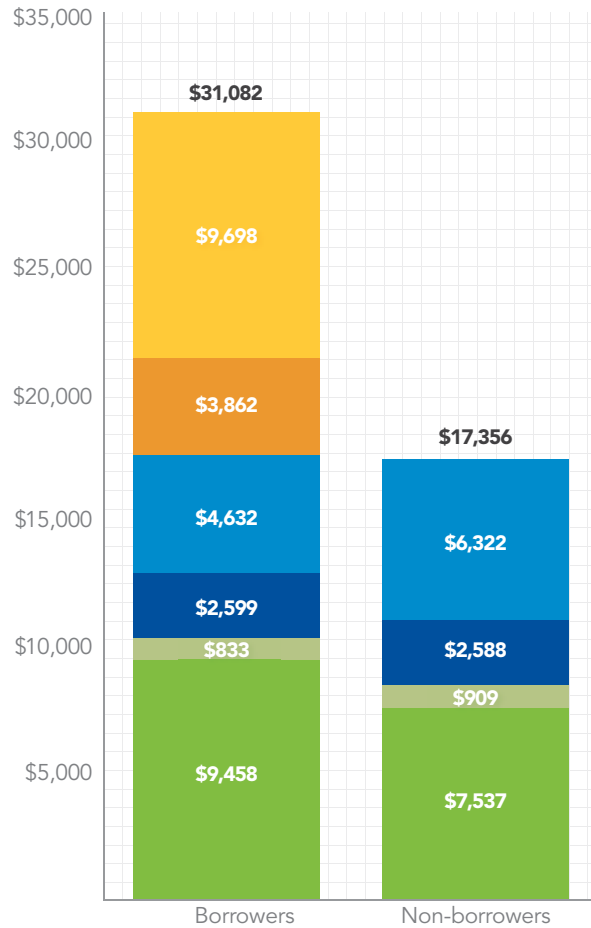
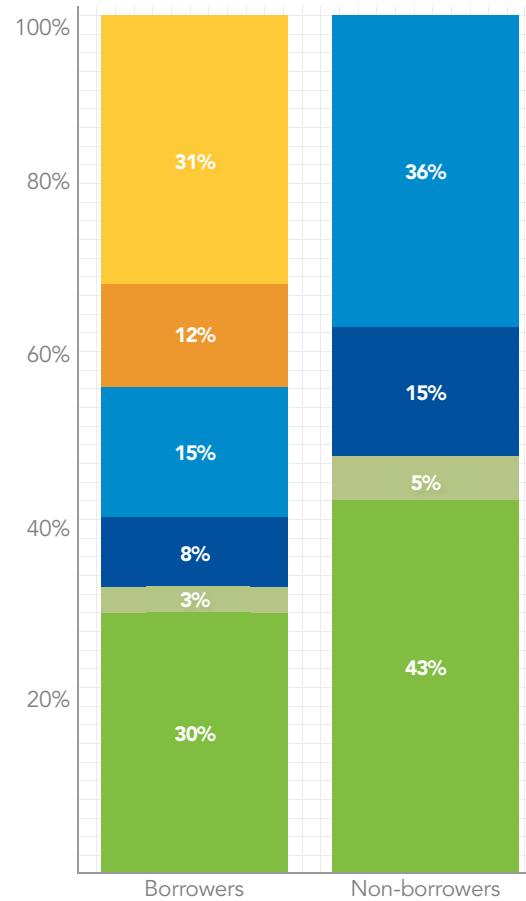


Figure 8B

How the Typical Family Pays for College, Funding Source Share, by Borrowing Status



- Scholarships & grants
- Student income & savings
- Parent borrowing
- Relatives & friends
- Parent income & savings
- Student borrowing

Families who borrowed and families who didn't both used, on average, about the same dollar amounts from combined non-borrowed sources. Families who borrowed used loans to pay for a more expensive education.

Table b: School Choice Reasons by Borrowing Status

Primary reason for school choice	Families who borrowed	Families who did not borrow
Annual cost before aid	9%	16%
Location	17%	26%
Academic program	29%	22%
Prestige	6%	2%

Paying back student loans

Students and parents have different expectations about who will be responsible for paying back loans, and there seems to be an absence of correlation between the loan amount and how much they expect the monthly payments to be.

While student loans are an important piece of the paying-for-college puzzle, success in student loan repayment requires effective communication at the outset, particularly around the obligation for loan repayment and the expectation of who will be responsible for repayment.

Parents and students differ in their assumptions about the extent of their loan repayment responsibilities. Far fewer parents expect to be solely responsible for the loans they borrowed, compared to the proportion of students who own responsibility for the loans students borrowed.

When the student is the borrower, 84 percent of students expect to be solely responsible for repayment, while only 58 percent of parents expect the student to be solely responsible. Twelve percent of parents expect to assume full responsibility for their

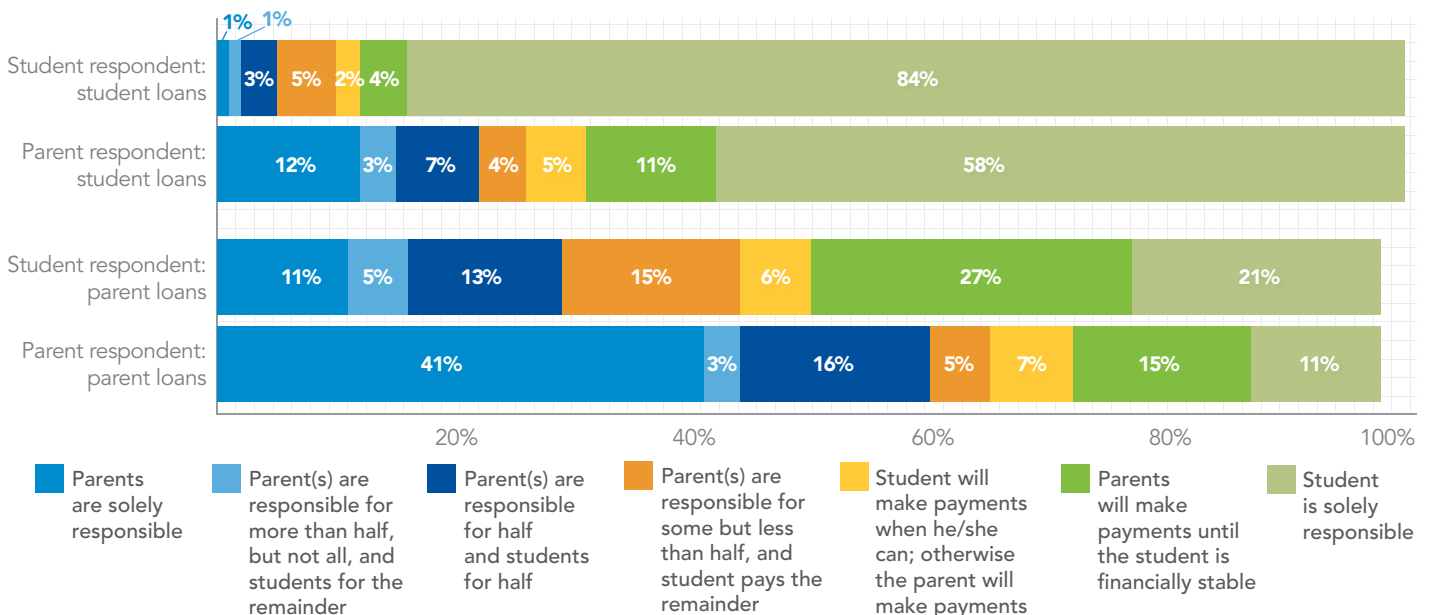
students' loans, but merely 1 percent of students expect their parents to repay their loans. Twice as many parents (30%) as students (15%) expect to contribute to student loan payments, to some extent, with the student.

Likewise, when the parent is the borrower, the repayment expectations are disparate. Students are twice as likely (21%) as parents (11%) to expect to take full responsibility for loans borrowed by the parent, one-quarter as likely (11%) to expect the parent will be solely responsible (41%), and nearly 50 percent more likely to expect to share in repaying loans borrowed by parents.

Separately, students seem not to be fully cognizant of how much they will repay. Students were asked to estimate their future monthly student loan payments based on the amount of loans they currently have. Similarly to 2008, a scatterplot of responses indicates little correlation between the amounts students reported borrowing and their estimated monthly payment amount.

Figure 9

Responsibility for Loan Repayment



More students than parents expect to be solely responsible for repaying both their loans and their parents' loans.

Figure 10

Estimated Monthly Loan Payment Amount



When asked to estimate their monthly payments based on current loan amount, student responses had low correlation to projected payments.

Assumptions for projected payments:

Total amount borrowed at 8 levels, \$5k, \$10k, \$15k, \$20k, \$25k, \$30k, \$35k, and \$40k

Amount borrowed assumes 70% unsubsidized federal Direct loans at 3.76% interest rate and 30 percent private loans at 7% interest rate

Standard 10-year repayment, \$50 minimum monthly payment per loan type

Thirty-month combined in-school and grace period remaining

Plans and influences

The majority of families have had a lifelong expectation that their student will go to college, but most don't have a plan to pay for it.

“ We always talked about the importance of education. The boys were both very good students. They knew they wanted a career that involved thinking and not manual labor. ”

**Lisa C.,
parent of college sophomore**

When families decide the student will attend college

Students and parents have had a lifelong expectation that college was in the student's future.

Most parents and students—86 percent—said they knew from the time the student was preschool age or younger that the student would attend college, while approximately 1 in 10 families said the realization came when the student was in high school. Three percent decided the student would attend when he or she was in primary school, and fewer than 1 percent were not sure when they knew the student would attend college.

Families in which parents did not attend college were more likely to have decided later: 14 percent say they decided when the student was in high school, compared to 5 percent of families in which parents attended college.

Most families—85 percent—said they expected the student would attend college regardless of what he or she would study.

After completing his or her undergraduate program, 59 percent of families anticipate the student will eventually go to graduate school: 37 percent expect to earn a master's degree, 18 percent a doctoral degree, and 3 percent a professional degree.

Planning to pay for college

More than one-third of families have a plan to pay for all years of college.

Families plan to pay for college in a number of ways. The most prevalent planning tool is saving, cited by nearly half of those who said they had a plan. Types of savings accounts include 529 plans, student savings accounts, and group accounts to which family and friends are encouraged to contribute.

In addition to saving, planning includes budgeting, identifying available financial resources, creating a hierarchy of funding sources, and researching college costs and financial aid eligibility. Other planning tactics families cite are investing in their child’s skills or talents to improve their chances of winning scholarships, and earning college credits by enrolling in Advanced Placement courses or dual high school/community college courses. Some parents give their child a college spending limit, and a few choose to work at a college to take advantage of employee discounts.

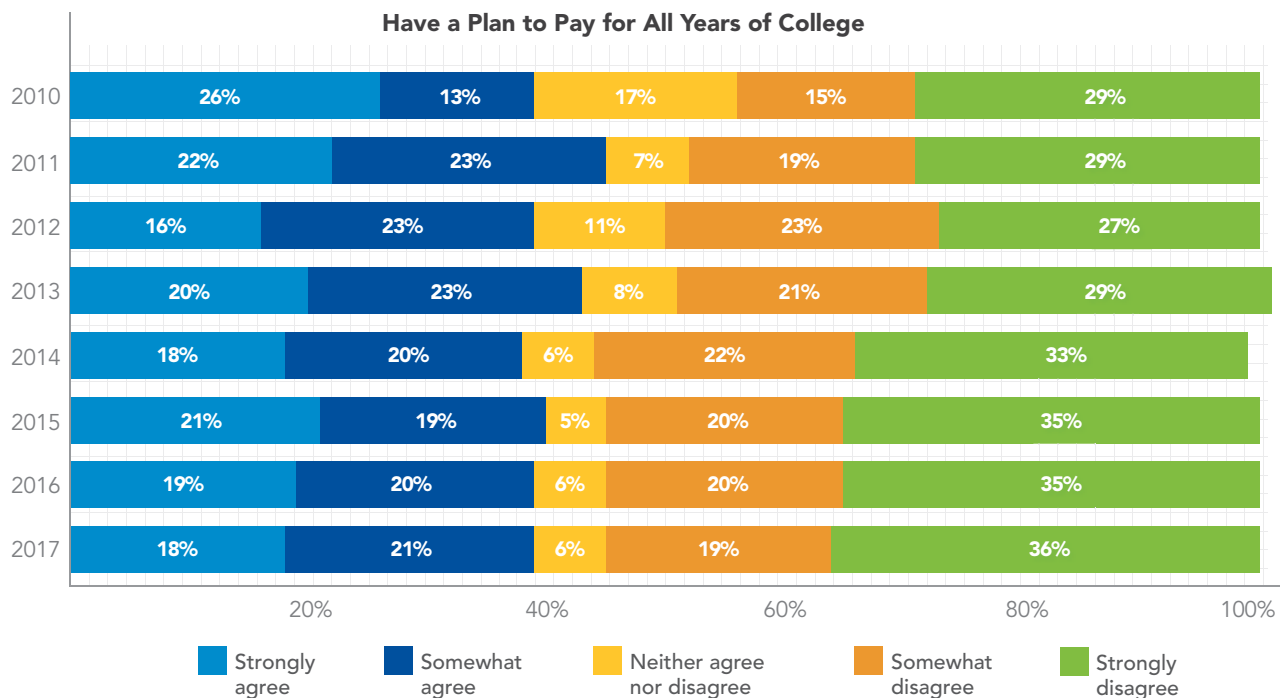
Despite the wide array of approaches families might take to build a plan to pay for college, most don’t have a plan. Although nearly 9 in 10 families have anticipated their child’s college attendance since preschool, fewer than half that many agree they had a plan to pay for all years of college before the student enrolled.

Families who always knew their child would attend college are more likely to have a plan to pay for it than families whose child decided later (42% vs 22%, respectively). Students from families without a plan are more likely to use federal student loans and less likely to receive income and savings contributions, such as 529 plan funds and other parent savings and investments, from their parents: 39 percent used parent savings, vs 55 percent of planners.

Table c: Differences in Resources Used by Planning Status

Resources used	Planners	Non-Planners
Federal student loans	25%	39%
Parent income and savings	55%	39%
529 plan funds	26%	5%
Other parent savings	14%	5%

Figure 11



The majority of families do not have a plan to pay for all years of college before the student enrolls. Planning has remained persistently low over time.

Families are less certain now than eight years ago about whether they have a plan to pay for college. Since 2010, approximately 4 in 10 families have agreed they have a plan to pay for college. The proportion of those who strongly agree, however, has declined to 18 percent from 26 percent. The proportion of families who strongly disagree they have a plan to pay for college has increased to 36 percent from 29 percent in 2010.

College is an investment

For families with a child enrolled as an undergraduate, the belief that college is an investment in the future has not wavered in 10 years.

Nearly all (98%) of the current generation of college students and parents agree that college is an investment in the future: 85 percent strongly agree and another 13 percent agree. This is slightly higher than the 95 percent agreement level recorded in 2008, the first year of the study.

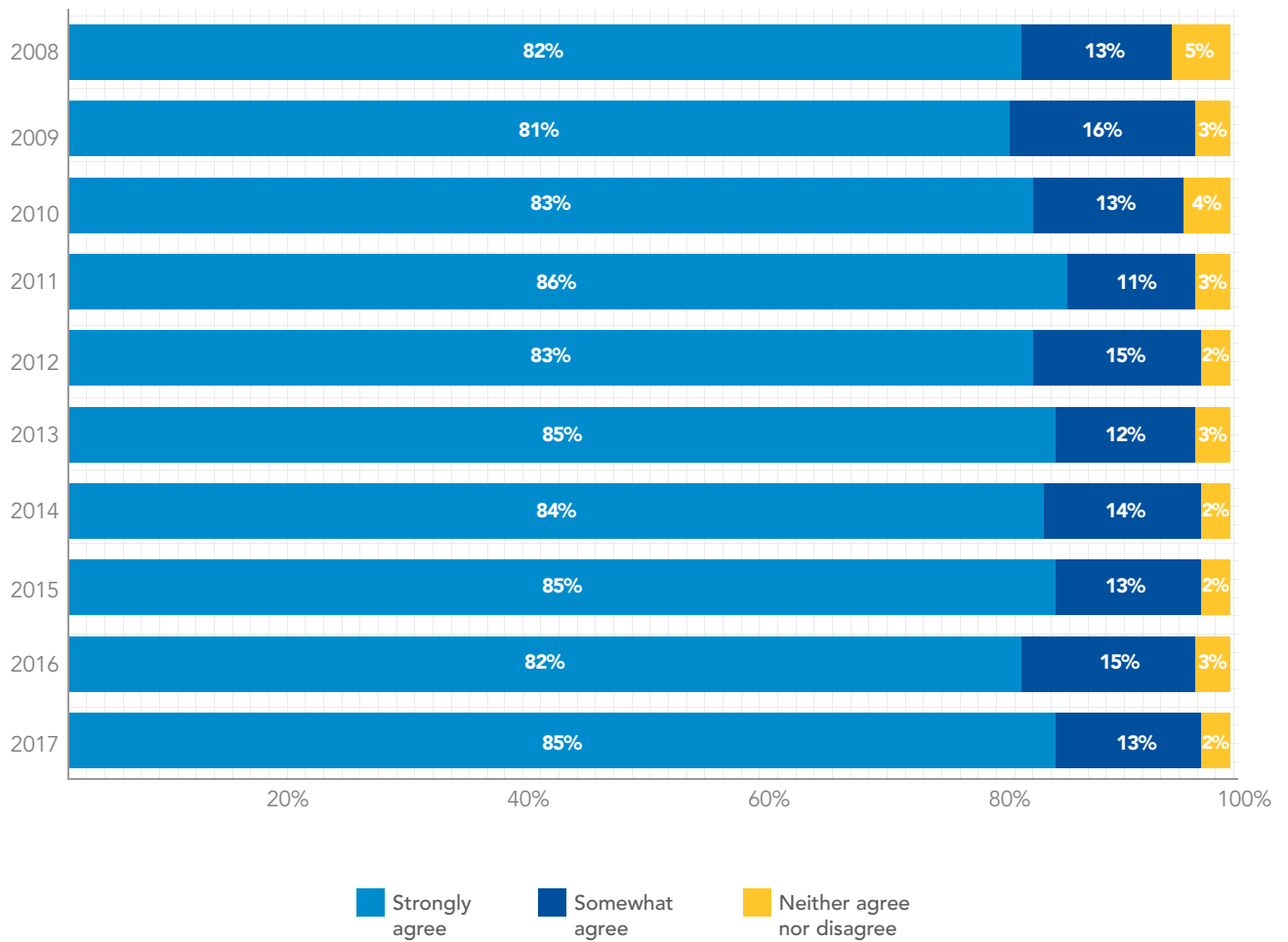
Investment is often associated with financial payoff. Interestingly, compared with 10 years ago, students are less sanguine in their agreement that by attending college they will earn more money. In 2017, 88 percent of families agreed with this statement, a slight decline from 2008's 91 percent. Those who strongly agree, however, decreased to 56 percent from 73 percent in 2008.

As a potential payoff, "investment" can mean different things to different families—financial, social, intellectual—and these sensitivities motivate families differently when it comes to making choices about college, from which school to attend and what major to choose, to how much to spend and how to pay.

“ A student loan is acceptable because one thing that you do need is an education. It will get you a better job and it’s just always good to get an education. ”

Dana R.,
parent of college senior

Figure 12

College is an Investment in the Future

Perceiving college as an investment has been a consistent belief among nearly 100 percent of families for 10 years.



Differences among select population segments

Choices and attitudes differ among people who fall into various categories: those with distinct influencers motivating them to attend college; those whose parents did not experience college; and those from different U.S. geographic regions.

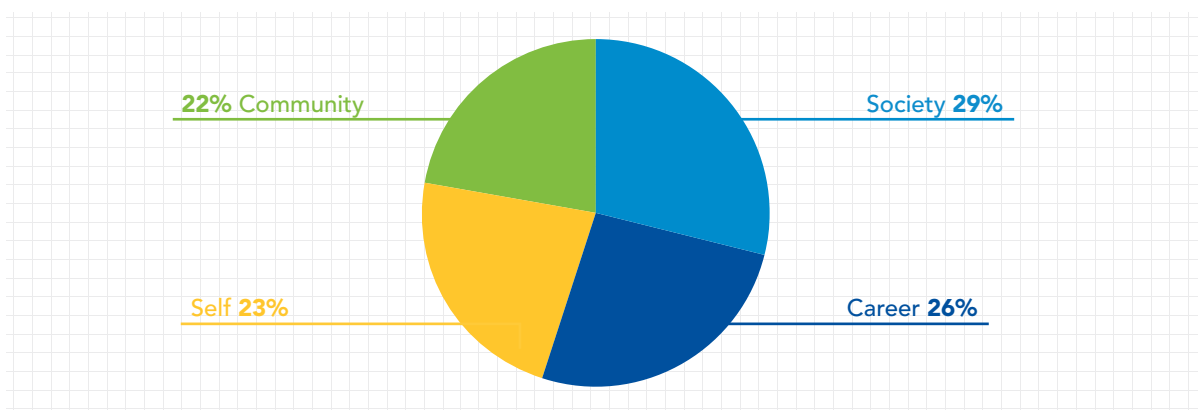
Choosing college: influencer types

Many factors influence decisions about college. Those influences can be grouped by common themes into four categories.

1. **Society:** Attending college because it is the norm. Students in these families are expected to attend college, typically a prestigious, possibly more expensive, four-year public or private school, to obtain a bachelor's degree and then continue to graduate school. Society parents often borrow to pay for college and expect to be solely responsible for repaying loans.
2. **Career:** Attending college as entry into a specific profession, or to earn more money. When making decisions about college, these students select a school with the academic program they need to achieve their career goals, and most believe they will need a graduate degree.
3. **Self:** Attending college for social and intellectual reasons more than for future earnings. Personal choice and financial aid play a big role in school selection. These families pay slightly more for college, but they use more scholarships and grants.
4. **Community:** Attending college is strongly influenced by friends, siblings, advisors, coaches, and other members of the student's immediate community. Families in this category pay a little less for college and choose a school based on its location. They are more likely to think an undergraduate college degree is sufficient.

Figure 13

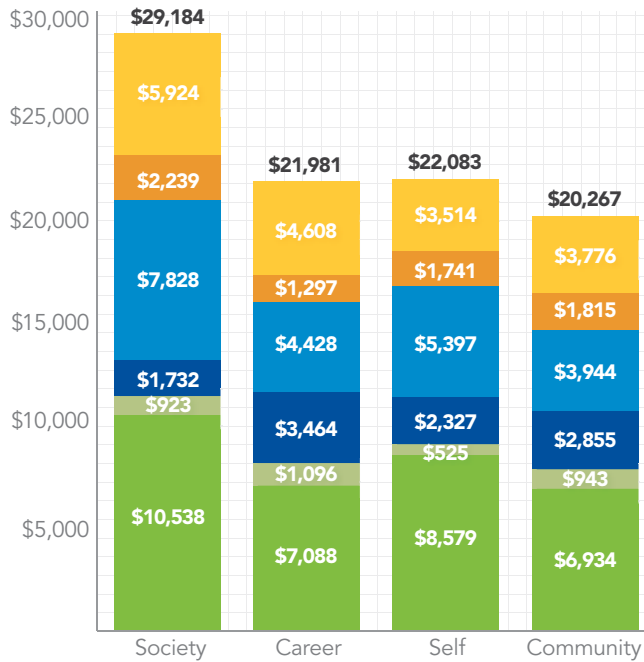
Proportion of Families in Each Influencer Category



Parents and students in each influencer category share common attitudes and beliefs while displaying different attitudes from those in other categories.

Figure 14A

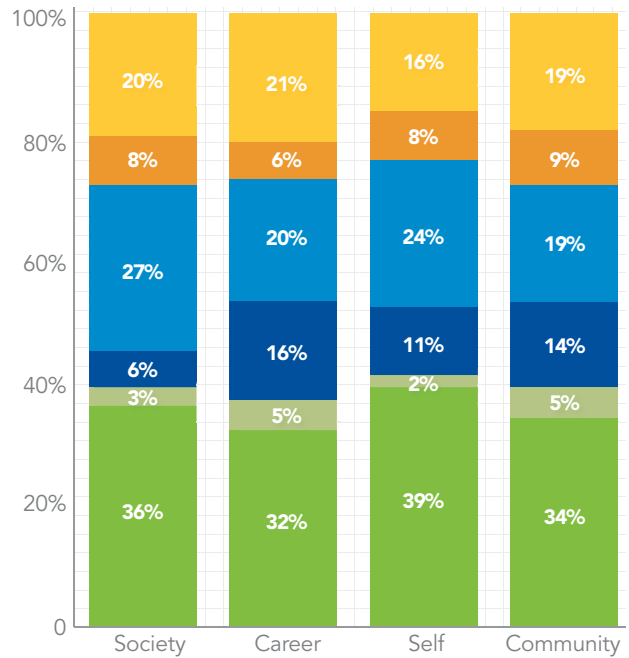
How the Typical Family Pays for College, Average Amount, by Influencer Type



- Scholarships & grants
- Student income & savings
- Parent borrowing
- Relatives & friends
- Parent income & savings
- Student borrowing

Figure 14B

How the Typical Family Pays for College, Funding Source Share, by Influencer Type



Society-influenced families spend more on college, and average amounts from parent income and savings are higher.

Society-influenced families spend more on college and rely more heavily on parent income and savings than other families. Career-, Self-, and Community-influenced families spend similar amounts on college, but draw on resources differently.

Society-influenced parents contribute a higher share of college costs from their income and savings (27%) than other parents, while students contribute a much lower share from their income and savings (6%). Students from both Career-driven and Community-driven families contribute more from their income and savings (16% and 14%, respectively) than either Society-driven or Self-driven students. The portion paid from scholarships and grants is highest among Self-driven families (39%), and the portion paid from student-borrowed money is lowest among those same families (16%). Use of funding from parent borrowing and relatives and friends is similar across influencer categories.

Society-influenced families—who spent about \$7,000 more for college in 2016-17 than other families—see a higher correlation between the cost of college and the quality of education. Three-fifths (59%) of Society-influenced families believe more expensive schools always or sometimes provide a better college education, compared to 51 percent or fewer in the other three categories.

Career-driven students take more actions to make college affordable. In addition to paying more from their own income and savings, these students are more likely to say they reduced personal spending (74%, compared with 68% overall), they increased work hours or earnings (57%, compared with 50% overall), and they are earning their degree over a shorter period of time (32%, compared with 26% overall). Career- and Community-influenced students are equally likely to be working (79% each)—more so than Society- (75%) and Self-driven students (72%)—although Community-influenced students are more likely to work year-round (59%, compared with 55% overall).

Factors that drive decisions about which college to attend and what type of degree to pursue vary by influencer category.

Career-driven families are more likely than others to base their college choice on the academic program (30%). Cost of attendance is a stronger factor for Career- and Self-driven families (16% and 15%, respectively) than for Society- and Community-driven families. Society- and Self-influenced families are more likely to consider the financial aid package (18% and 17%, respectively). Society-influenced families are slightly more likely than others to consider prestige (7%). Location is much more important to Community-driven families (29%) than others. Personal choice is slightly stronger among Self-driven families (19%) than among other families.

Children of college-educated parents grow up with more societal influences telling them college is the norm or they need a college degree to achieve the best future. One or both parents attended college in four-fifths (80%) of Society-influenced families and nearly three-fourths (73%) of Career-driven families. In Community- and Self-driven families, students are more likely to be the first in their family to attend college (36% and 35%, respectively).

Society-influenced families know their child will attend college much earlier than other families (96% compared to 86% overall). Community- and Self-driven families, on the other hand, are more likely to decide the student will go to college when the student is in high school (16% and 15%, respectively, compared with 10% overall). Families with a plan to pay for college are most likely to have been influenced to attend college by Society or their Community (45% and 42%, respectively, have a plan to pay for college). In contrast, about one-third of Self- (31%) and Career-driven families (36%) have a plan to pay for college.

Society-influenced students are currently pursuing higher levels of education, with more than three-quarters (77%) studying for a bachelor's degree, compared with 68 percent or fewer in other categories. Community-influenced students are the least likely to be pursuing a bachelor's degree (60%), and fewer Community-influenced students (48%) expect to attend graduate school compared with Society-, Career-, and Self-driven students (63%, 63%, and 59%, respectively).

Expectation of loan payment responsibility differs by influencer category

When parents borrow to pay for their child's education, they often expect the student will be responsible for paying down some or all of that borrowed money. Fewer than half these families expect the parent to repay parent-borrowed funds. Society-influenced and Self-influenced families most frequently say that the parent will be solely responsible for repaying parent loans (47% and 38%, respectively). Community-influenced families most frequently say the parent will make payments on parent-borrowed loans until the student is financially stable (32%). Career-influenced families most frequently say that parents and students are each responsible for repaying half the loan (28%).

On the other hand, more than three-quarters of Career-, Self-, and Community-influenced families believe the student is solely responsible for paying loans borrowed by the student. Society-influenced families also cite student sole responsibility most frequently, but fewer of them do so (64%) than the other influencer types. Additionally, they are more likely than the other influencer types to say the parent has sole responsibility for repaying student loans (12%, vs 6% or fewer).



74% of Career-driven students reduce personal spending to afford college



38% of Self-driven families say the parent will be solely responsible for repaying parent loans



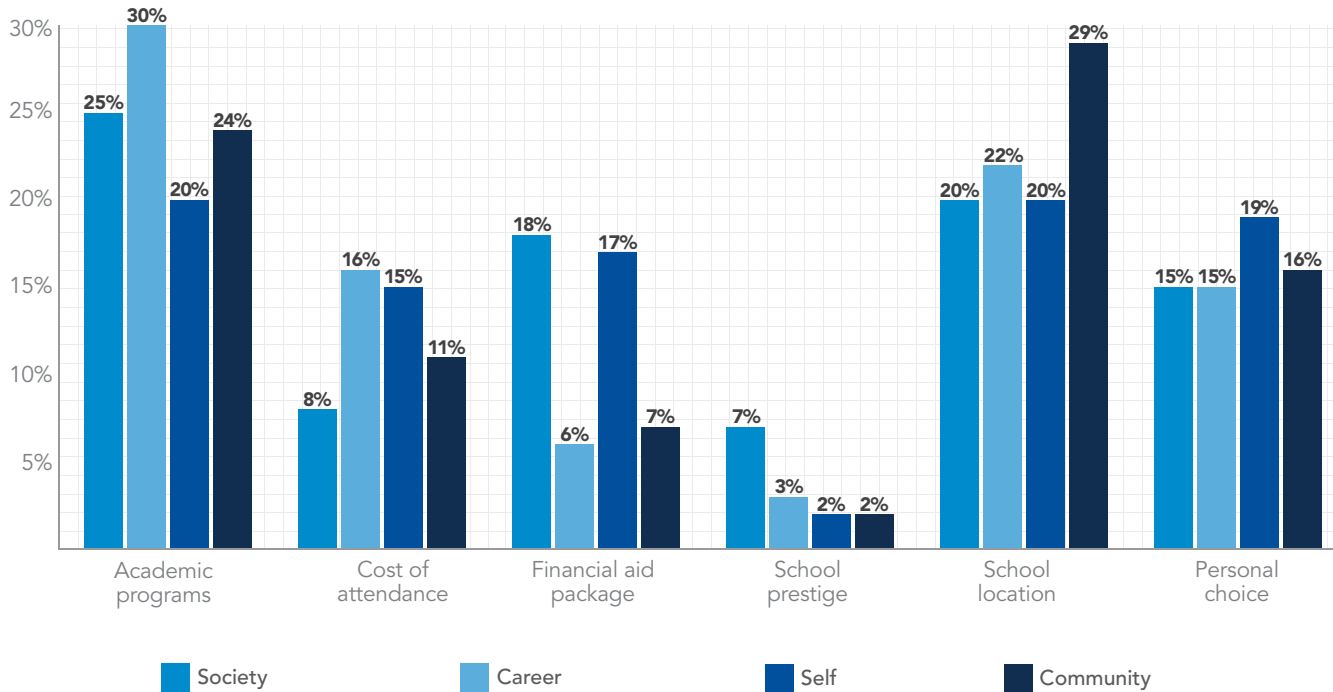
77% of Society-driven students are studying for a bachelor's degree



16% of Community-driven families decide the student will go to college when they are in high school

Figure 15

Basis for College Selection by Influencer Type



Criteria for choosing a school highlights differences in influencer categories. Society-driven families are less concerned than other groups with overall cost and more concerned with the financial aid package; Career-driven families focus most on academic program; Self-driven families are slightly more likely to consider personal choice reasons; Community-influenced families focus first on location.

First generation in family to attend college

By making lower cost choices, students who are the first in their family³ to attend college spend less on college than students whose parents attended college.

Twenty-nine percent of families reported their student is the first in their family to attend college. College students who are first in their family to attend college spent, on average, \$20,646 per year on school, about \$4,200 less than students whose parents attended college. Lower spending can be attributed to school choice: a higher proportion than second-generation attend community college and a higher proportion attend school in state and live at home.

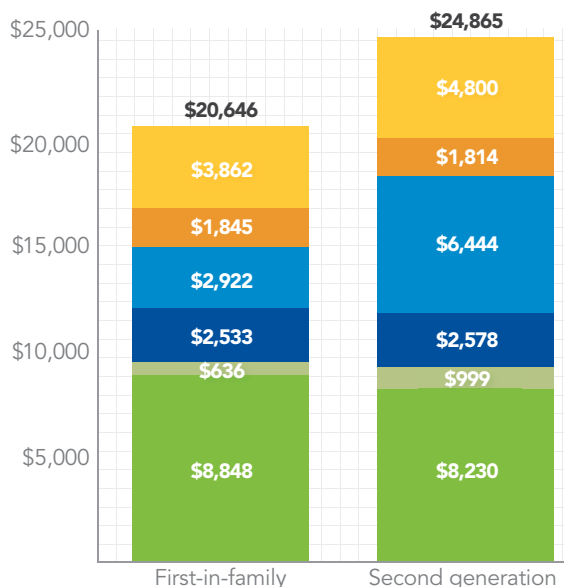
The proportion of first-in-family students enrolled in two-year public colleges is significantly higher than among second-generation students (42% and 31%, respectively), while the proportion enrolled in four-year public colleges is significantly lower (36% vs 45%, respectively). The proportion enrolled in private colleges is similar among both groups (23% and 24%, respectively).

Eighty-two percent of first-in-family students attend college in their home state, and 61 percent live at home to reduce college costs, compared with 75 percent and 46 percent, respectively, of second-generation students.

³ First-in-family, or first-generation, denotes families in which neither parent attended college; second-generation denotes families in which one or both parents attended college

Figure 16A

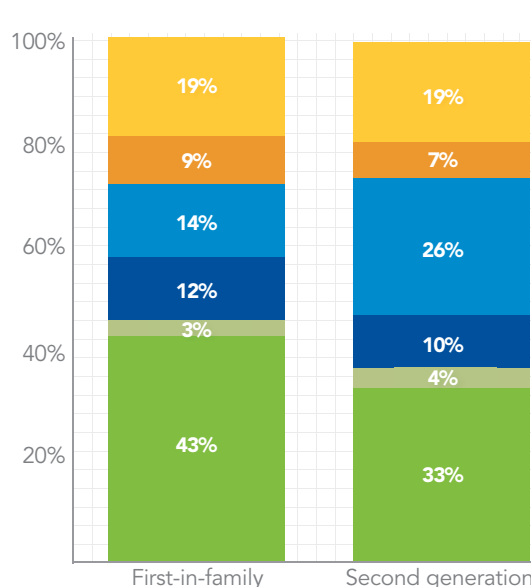
How the Typical Family Pays for College, Average Amount, by First-in-Family Status



- Scholarships & grants
- Student income & savings
- Parent borrowing
- Relatives & friends
- Parent income & savings
- Student borrowing

Figure 16B

How the Typical Family Pays for College, Funding Source Share, by First-in-Family Status



Families in which neither parent attended college spend less on their student’s education, and parents in those families contribute much less from their income and savings than parents who attended college.

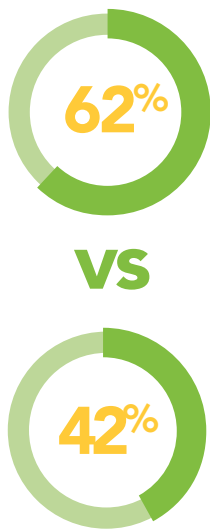
First-in-family students are less likely than second-generation students to be studying for a bachelor’s degree (58% vs 72%, respectively) and more likely to be unsure of which degree type to pursue (12% vs 3%, respectively). This may be partly due to lower enrollment beyond sophomore year: 78 percent of first-in-family students are enrolled as underclassmen, compared with 64 percent of second-generation students.

First-in-family students receive less financial support from parents and fund a larger share of costs with scholarships, grants, and their own income and savings than students whose parents attended college.

Combined parent income, savings, and borrowing pay 23 percent of total costs for first-generation students, less than the 33 percent of costs parents of second-generation students pay. This is likely due to lower average household incomes: a significantly higher proportion of first-in-family students are from low-income households (50% vs 30%, respectively) and a significantly lower proportion are from high-income households (2% vs 26%, respectively). A higher proportion of first-in-family students are Hispanic (28% vs 12%, respectively).

Table d: Income by First-in-Family Status

Household income	First-generation	Second-generation
<\$35k	50%	30%
\$35 – \$100k	48%	44%
\$100k+	2%	26%



More first-in-family students rely on grants than second-generation students.

Students in both groups contribute a similar amount of money from their own income and savings (approximately \$2,500) but, because first-in-family students spend less overall, their income and savings pays a larger share of their total costs.

The combination of scholarships and grants pays more of the costs of first-in-family students than of second-generation students, 43 percent compared to 33 percent, although the dollar amounts used are similar (\$8,848 and \$8,230, respectively). While the same proportion of first- and second-generation students use scholarships, 49 percent, first-in-family students rely more on grants (62% vs 42%, respectively).

Likely due to parents' lack of experience with college, slightly fewer first-generation families have had a lifelong expectation of attending college and a plan to pay for it. Absence of a plan may contribute to their focus on the practical financial costs and benefits associated with college.

Fewer first-generation families than second-generation families always expected their child to attend college: 80 percent of first-generation families agree they expected their child to attend from the time the child was preschool age or younger, compared with 88 percent of second-generation families; 80 percent agree they always expected the student to attend college regardless of what he or she would study, compared with 87 percent of second-generation families.

A high school teacher or counselor is more likely to have influenced first-generation families to attend college (10% vs 4% second-generation), while a societal expectation that college is the "norm" is less likely to have influenced them (8% vs 21% second-generation students).

First-generation families are less likely to agree they had created a plan for paying for all years of college before the student enrolled (25% vs 44% second-generation), and they are more likely to say they considered not attending college due to cost (45% vs 25% second-generation). Parents of first-in-family students are more worried than second-generation parents about a number of economic factors that could affect their ability to pay for the next year of college.

The financial aid package awarded has more influence on the specific college chosen by first-in-family students than second-generation students (18% vs 10%, respectively). First-generation families are less likely than second-generation to believe that cost is synonymous with quality: 57 percent agree that the cost of attendance at a college has no relationship to the quality of education offered, compared to 40 percent of second-generation families.

The practical payoff of career opportunity is a stronger influence on college attendance for first-in-family college students. First-generation families are more likely to agree that they wanted to attend college because it is required for their desired career (92% vs 83% second-generation), and they are less likely to agree they would attend college for the social and intellectual experience regardless of future earnings (47% vs 57% of second-generation families).

Northeast region is different

On a regional basis, families who live in the Northeast U.S. region are different from other regions: they spend about 70 percent more on college, borrow more to pay for college, and fund a larger share of the expense with contributions from parents.

Higher spending in the Northeast correlates to school choice. Enrollment in private schools is significantly higher among Northeast families than those in other regions of the country. Forty percent of students from the Northeast attend private four-year colleges, compared with 22 percent in the Midwest, 19 percent in the South, and 14 percent in the West.

Cost is not the leading consideration for Northeast families when choosing a school. While Northeast families cite the financial aid package as a decision-driver more so than families in other regions (18% vs Midwest 13%, South 11%, and West 8%), the academic program is the topmost reason for their choice of college (32%)—cited more frequently than families in other regions (Midwest 27%, South 25%, and West 18%).

More students in the Northeast region attend college full time (97% vs the average 88%), which also contributes to higher average costs.

A greater ability and willingness to borrow to pay for college among Northeast families corresponds with higher parent contributions and family borrowing, compared with other regions. On average, respondents in the Northeast report higher household incomes. A larger proportion of students in the Northeast are from middle-income households (53% vs the average 45%) and a smaller proportion are from low-income families (24% vs the overall average of 36%).

More parents in the Northeast contribute to paying their students' college costs: 25 percent contribute borrowed funds and 62 percent contribute income and savings, compared with overall averages of 14 percent and 55 percent, respectively. To help make college more affordable, a higher proportion of Northeast parents say they have increased their work hours and have reduced their own personal spending.

Families from the Northeast are more likely than those from other regions to strongly agree that they would rather borrow than not attend college (58% vs Midwest 43%, South 46%, and West 45%). Accordingly, borrowing in the Northeast is higher than in other regions: student borrowing in the Northeast averaged \$8,486, nearly twice that of the next highest region (the Midwest); and parent borrowing in the Northeast, \$4,242, was nearly three times that of the next highest region (the West).

Students and parents in other regions focus on different ways to make college more affordable.

Families in the West region behave most differently from those in the Northeast. While they are less likely to have eliminated colleges due to cost (62% vs Northeast 70%, Midwest 73%, and South 71%), their students are the least likely to attend private colleges. Their primary reason for choosing their college is location (30% vs Northeast 14%, Midwest 16%, and South 25%), and they have the highest rate of part-time students (15% vs Northeast 3%, Midwest 9%, and South 13%). West students borrow much less than students in other regions; although their average cost of attendance is the lowest of the four regions, their borrowing covers the lowest proportion of total costs (11% vs Northeast 24%, Midwest 21%, and South 18%).

Table e: School Type Enrollment by Region

School type attending	All respondents	Northeast region	Midwest region	South region	West region
4-year public	42%	34%	36%	53%	43%
2-year public	34%	26%	39%	29%	42%
4-year private	23%	40%	22%	19%	14%
2-year private	1%	1%	3%	0	0

Families in the Midwest are the least likely to strongly agree they are willing to stretch themselves financially to obtain the opportunity of college (49% vs Northeast 57%, South 59%, and West 62%). Students in the Midwest are more likely than other regions to say they are working more hours to make college affordable. Fewer of them are planning to attend graduate school (50% vs Northeast 62%, South 63%, and West 59%).

Students from the South are the most likely to attend college in their home state (85% vs Northeast 68%, Midwest 72%, and West 82%). To make college more affordable, more students in the South are living at home (55% vs Northeast 48%, Midwest 43%, and West 53%), and they are more likely than students in other regions to say they changed majors to pursue a field of study that is more marketable.

Figure 17A

How the Typical Family Pays for College, Average Amount, by Region

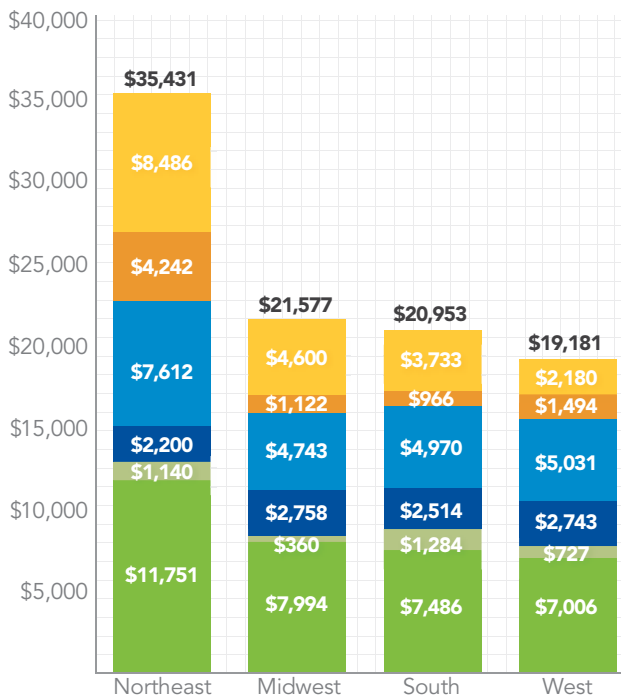
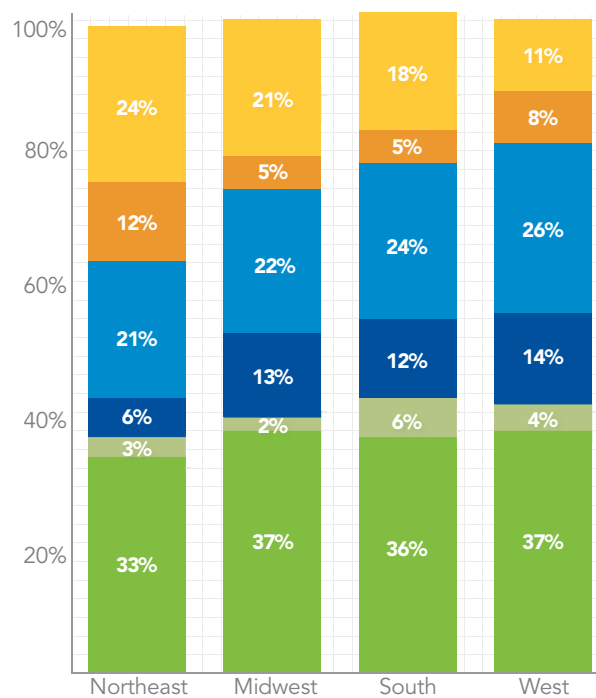


Figure 17B

How the Typical Family Pays for College, Funding Source Share, by Region



■ Scholarships & grants ■ Student income & savings ■ Parent borrowing
■ Relatives & friends ■ Parent income & savings ■ Student borrowing

Families who live in the Northeast spend more on college and those in the West spend less. Resource use among families in the Midwest and South are very similar, though Midwestern students borrow slightly more while Southern students receive more funding from relatives and friends.

Conclusion

For 10 years, *How America Pays for College* has contributed to the dialogue on how American families are managing the opportunities and challenges of investing in higher education.

This study has clearly shown that families take different paths to pay for college. This is particularly evident this year when examining the differences in motivation, attitude, and spending patterns among populations who fall into several groups analyzed: influencer type, first-in-family status, and geographic region.

Overall, parent income and savings play a central role in determining funding paths. Parents of dependent undergraduates are expected to be responsible for a large portion of college costs, as evidenced by the assessment of their income and assets in the financial aid process. While a significant source of college funding, contributions from parent income and savings have been uneven over the past 10 years. At their peak, parent income and savings covered 37 percent of costs; this year they paid for 23 percent.

Important considerations associated with parent contributions are correlations with other behaviors: overall spending and student borrowing. When parent spending has been at its peak, families report spending more on the total cost of college. In the years when contributions from parent income and savings have been at their lowest, student borrowing has climbed.

Amounts contributed from parent income and savings may be connected to parent planning, including saving for college, as well as by their income. This year, nearly 9 in 10 families said they knew from the time their child was in preschool that he or she would attend college. Yet, fewer than 4 in 10 families had a plan to pay for college before the student enrolled, a number that has not grown since we started tracking it in 2010. Significantly, families with a plan contribute three times more from parent income and savings than families without a plan.

Although there has been growth in the use of 529 college savings plans since the start of this study, it has not been persistent. This year, 13 percent of families reported using 529 college savings funds, an increase from the 9 percent who reported doing so in 2008, but a slight decrease from the top usage reported, 17 percent (in both 2013 and 2015).

Utilized by 42 percent of families this year, borrowing is a mainstay of the college-funding budget for some families, particularly those who reach for a more expensive education. Variations in the planned use of borrowing from year to year, however, indicate that it may be an unbudgeted resource for other families. Students borrow more than 70 percent of the money borrowed for college.

While families juggle the challenges of planning and saving, they search for ways to make college more affordable. Nearly 100 percent of families this year report taking at least one cost-saving action. Rising sensitivity to cost is reflected in the increase over 10 years in the proportion of families eliminating colleges from consideration because of price. Further, more families today than in 2008 believe that there is no relationship between the cost of attendance and the quality of education provided.

Families are increasingly seeking financial aid. The proportion of families who filed a FAFSA this year—86 percent—is 12 percentage points higher than it was in 2008.

Notably, scholarship and grant contributions have grown at a faster pace over the past decade than other resources. As a result, they now cover more college costs than other resources. More than one-third of costs were paid from scholarships and grants this year, up from one-quarter of costs in 2008-09.

Finding the resources to pay for college can be challenging for American families, but they are willing to undertake that challenge because of the value they place on the opportunity higher education offers. One thing that has not changed in 10 years is the level of enthusiasm parents and students feel about why the student attends college: nearly 100 percent believe college is an investment in the student's future.

Data tables

Following are the 2017 survey questions and their respective responses. Selected population responses have been included where the base size of each domain was large enough to evaluate as significant.

Table 2A: Composite of College Funding Sources, Average Value Contributed from Each Source, by Income Level

		Total	Income			
			<\$35k	\$35k – <\$100k	\$100k+	
Borrowed	Parents	Federal Parent PLUS Loans	\$1,016	\$533	\$1,204	\$1,439
		Private education loans	\$237	\$141	\$309	\$242
		Home equity loans or lines of credit	\$137	\$179	\$59	\$240
		Credit cards	\$159	\$221	\$44	\$306
		Retirement account loans (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	\$79	\$65	\$104	\$48
		Other loans	\$191	\$164	\$218	\$177
	Student	Federal student loans, such as Direct (Stafford) or Perkins loans	\$2,933	\$2,495	\$3,341	\$2,789
		Private education loans	\$1,147	\$815	\$1,262	\$1,468
		Student credit cards	\$83	\$157	\$51	\$26
		Student other loans	\$388	\$391	\$389	\$380
Non-Borrowed	Parents	Parent current income	\$3,192	\$1,603	\$2,984	\$6,403
		College savings funds, such as a 529 plans	\$1,445	\$552	\$870	\$4,262
		Other parent savings or investments	\$630	\$269	\$597	\$1,330
		Retirement savings withdrawals (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	\$260	\$224	\$268	\$306
	Student	Student current income	\$1,221	\$1,216	\$1,288	\$1,081
		Student savings	\$743	\$773	\$699	\$784
		Federal Work-Study	\$263	\$285	\$321	\$97
		Other student savings or investments	\$343	\$265	\$296	\$582
	Other	Scholarships (received from the school, state, private organizations, or businesses)	\$4,782	\$3,052	\$5,122	\$7,029
		Grants (federal, state, or school based)	\$3,608	\$3,871	\$4,085	\$2,096
	Relatives or friends (money that doesn't have to be repaid)	\$901	\$664	\$929	\$1,250	
Total Paid		\$23,757	\$17,935	\$24,438	\$32,335	

Table 3A: Composite of College Funding Sources, Average Percent of Total Cost of Attendance Met by Each Source, by Income Level

		Total	Income			
			<\$35k	\$35k – <\$100k	\$100k+	
Borrowed	Parents	Federal Parent PLUS Loans	4%	3%	5%	5%
		Private education loans	1%	1%	1%	1%
		Home equity loans or lines of credit	1%	1%	0%	1%
		Credit cards	1%	1%	0%	1%
		Retirement account loans (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	0%	0%	0%	0%
		Other loans	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Student	Federal student loans, such as Direct (Stafford) or Perkins loans	12%	14%	14%	9%
		Private education loans	5%	5%	5%	5%
		Student credit cards	0%	1%	0%	0%
		Student other loans	2%	2%	2%	1%
Non-Borrowed	Parents	Parent current income	13%	9%	12%	20%
		College savings funds, such as a 529 plans	6%	3%	4%	13%
		Other parent savings or investments	3%	2%	2%	4%
		Retirement savings withdrawals (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Student	Student current income	5%	7%	5%	3%
		Student savings	3%	4%	3%	2%
		Federal Work-Study	1%	2%	1%	0%
		Other student savings or investments	1%	2%	1%	2%
	Other	Scholarships (received from the school or outside organizations or businesses)	20%	17%	21%	22%
		Grants (federal, state, or school based)	15%	22%	17%	7%
	Relatives or friends (money that doesn't have to be repaid)	4%	4%	4%	4%	

Table 2B: Composite of College Funding Sources, Average Value Contributed from Each Source, by Race/Ethnicity

			Total	Race		
				White	Black	Hispanic
Borrowed	Parents	Federal Parent PLUS Loans	\$1,016	\$1,035	\$838	\$1,019
		Private education loans	\$237	\$214	\$503	\$251
		Home equity loans or lines of credit	\$137	\$91	\$40	\$139
		Credit cards	\$159	\$132	\$25	\$162
		Retirement account loans (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	\$79	\$59	\$181	\$147
		Other loans	\$191	\$161	\$163	\$161
	Student	Federal student loans, such as Direct (Stafford) or Perkins loans	\$2,933	\$3,085	\$3,791	\$1,958
		Private education loans	\$1,147	\$1,307	\$1,244	\$160
Student credit cards		\$83	\$83	\$110	\$154	
Student other loans		\$388	\$407	\$558	\$250	
Non-Borrowed	Parents	Parent current income	\$3,192	\$3,104	\$3,250	\$2,680
		College savings funds, such as a 529 plans	\$1,445	\$1,667	\$1,183	\$604
		Other parent savings or investments	\$630	\$676	\$202	\$594
		Retirement savings withdrawals (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	\$260	\$213	\$503	\$238
	Student	Student current income	\$1,221	\$1,293	\$806	\$1,315
		Student savings	\$743	\$791	\$392	\$748
		Federal Work-Study	\$263	\$230	\$585	\$230
		Other student savings or investments	\$343	\$396	\$239	\$178
	Other	Scholarships (received from the school, state, private organizations, or businesses)	\$4,782	\$5,133	\$4,851	\$3,079
		Grants (federal, state, or school based)	\$3,608	\$3,670	\$3,273	\$3,840
	Relatives or friends (money that doesn't have to be repaid)	\$901	\$939	\$1,046	\$880	
Total Paid			\$23,757	\$24,685	\$23,783	\$18,787

Table 3B: Composite of College Funding Sources, Average Percent of Total Cost of Attendance Met by Each Source, by Race/Ethnicity

			Total	Race		
				White	Black	Hispanic
Borrowed	Parents	Federal Parent PLUS Loans	4%	4%	4%	5%
		Private education loans	1%	1%	2%	1%
		Home equity loans or lines of credit	1%	0%	0%	1%
		Credit cards	1%	1%	0%	1%
		Retirement account loans (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	0%	0%	1%	1%
		Other loans	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Student	Federal student loans, such as Direct (Stafford) or Perkins loans	12%	13%	16%	10%
		Private education loans	5%	5%	5%	1%
Student credit cards		0%	0%	1%	1%	
Student other loans		2%	2%	2%	1%	
Non-Borrowed	Parents	Parent current income	13%	13%	14%	14%
		College savings funds, such as a 529 plans	6%	7%	5%	3%
		Other parent savings or investments	3%	3%	1%	3%
		Retirement savings withdrawals (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	1%	1%	2%	1%
	Student	Student current income	5%	5%	3%	7%
		Student savings	3%	3%	2%	4%
		Federal Work-Study	1%	1%	3%	1%
		Other student savings or investments	1%	2%	1%	1%
	Other	Scholarships (received from the school or outside organizations or businesses)	20%	21%	20%	16%
		Grants (federal, state, or school based)	15%	15%	14%	20%
Relatives or friends (money that doesn't have to be repaid)		4%	4%	4%	5%	

Table 2C: Composite of College Funding Sources, Average Value Contributed from Each Source, by School Type

		Total	School type			
			2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	
Borrowed	Parents	Federal Parent PLUS Loans	\$1,016	\$82	\$962	\$2,318
		Private education loans	\$237	\$54	\$213	\$526
		Home equity loans or lines of credit	\$137	\$6	\$136	\$311
		Credit cards	\$159	\$28	\$184	\$295
		Retirement account loans (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	\$79	\$1	\$56	\$226
		Other loans	\$191	\$4	\$80	\$638
	Student	Federal student loans, such as Direct (Stafford) or Perkins loans	\$2,933	\$1,037	\$2,802	\$5,692
		Private education loans	\$1,147	\$396	\$1,085	\$2,249
Student credit cards		\$83	\$35	\$86	\$145	
Student other loans		\$388	\$177	\$389	\$660	
Non-Borrowed	Parents	Parent current income	\$3,192	\$1,657	\$3,509	\$4,687
		College savings funds, such as a 529 plans	\$1,445	\$328	\$1,545	\$2,752
		Other parent savings or investments	\$630	\$77	\$765	\$1,146
		Retirement savings withdrawals (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	\$260	\$133	\$291	\$339
	Student	Student current income	\$1,221	\$1,067	\$1,392	\$1,134
		Student savings	\$743	\$589	\$850	\$764
		Federal Work-Study	\$263	\$63	\$288	\$491
		Other student savings or investments	\$343	\$235	\$516	\$192
	Other	Scholarships (received from the school, state, private organizations, or businesses)	\$4,782	\$1,228	\$4,278	\$10,441
		Grants (federal, state, or school based)	\$3,608	\$2,286	\$3,000	\$6,485
	Relatives or friends (money that doesn't have to be repaid)	\$901	\$582	\$1,064	\$1,061	
Total Paid		\$23,757	\$10,065	\$23,490	\$42,551	

Table 3C: Composite of College Funding Sources, Average Percent of Total Cost of Attendance Met by Each Source, by School Type

		Total	School type			
			2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	
Borrowed	Parents	Federal Parent PLUS Loans	4%	1%	4%	5%
		Private education loans	1%	1%	1%	1%
		Home equity loans or lines of credit	1%	0%	1%	1%
		Credit cards	1%	0%	1%	1%
		Retirement account loans (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	0%	0%	0%	1%
		Other loans	1%	0%	0%	2%
	Student	Federal student loans, such as Direct (Stafford) or Perkins loans	12%	10%	12%	13%
		Private education loans	5%	4%	5%	5%
Student credit cards		0%	0%	0%	0%	
Student other loans		2%	2%	2%	2%	
Non-Borrowed	Parents	Parent current income	13%	17%	15%	11%
		College savings funds, such as a 529 plans	6%	3%	7%	7%
		Other parent savings or investments	3%	1%	3%	3%
		Retirement savings withdrawals (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Student	Student current income	5%	11%	6%	3%
		Student savings	3%	6%	4%	2%
		Federal Work-Study	1%	1%	1%	1%
		Other student savings or investments	1%	2%	2%	1%
	Other	Scholarships (received from the school or outside organizations or businesses)	20%	12%	18%	25%
		Grants (federal, state, or school based)	15%	23%	13%	15%
Relatives or friends (money that doesn't have to be repaid)		4%	6%	5%	3%	

Table 2D: Composite of College Funding Sources, Average Value Contributed from Each Source, by Family Borrowing Status

		Family borrowing status			
		Total	Borrowed	Did not borrow	
Borrowed	Parents	Federal Parent PLUS Loans	\$1,016	\$2,165	n/a
		Private education loans	\$237	\$501	n/a
		Home equity loans or lines of credit	\$137	\$290	n/a
		Credit cards	\$159	\$336	n/a
		Retirement account loans (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	\$79	\$166	n/a
		Other loans	\$191	\$404	n/a
	Student	Federal student loans, such as Direct (Stafford) or Perkins loans	\$2,933	\$6,255	n/a
		Private education loans	\$1,147	\$2,445	n/a
Student credit cards		\$83	\$174	n/a	
Student other loans		\$388	\$824	n/a	
Non-Borrowed	Parents	Parent current income	\$3,192	\$3,232	\$3,139
		College savings funds, such as a 529 plans	\$1,445	\$664	\$2,136
		Other parent savings or investments	\$630	\$447	\$809
		Retirement savings withdrawals (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	\$260	\$289	\$238
	Student	Student current income	\$1,221	\$1,165	\$1,289
		Student savings	\$743	\$676	\$818
		Federal Work-Study	\$263	\$392	\$154
		Other student savings or investments	\$343	\$367	\$327
	Other	Scholarships (received from the school, state, private organizations, or businesses)	\$4,782	\$5,139	\$4,560
		Grants (federal, state, or school based)	\$3,608	\$4,320	\$2,977
		Relatives or friends (money that doesn't have to be repaid)	\$901	\$833	\$910
Total Paid		\$23,757	\$31,083	\$17,357	

Table 3D: Composite of College Funding Sources, Average Percent of Total Cost of Attendance Met by Each Source, by Family Borrowing Status

		Family borrowing status			
		Total	Borrowed	Did not borrow	
Borrowed	Parents	Federal Parent PLUS Loans	4%	7%	n/a
		Private education loans	1%	2%	n/a
		Home equity loans or lines of credit	1%	1%	n/a
		Credit cards	1%	1%	n/a
		Retirement account loans (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	0%	1%	n/a
		Other loans	1%	1%	n/a
	Student	Federal student loans, such as Direct (Stafford) or Perkins loans	12%	20%	n/a
		Private education loans	5%	8%	n/a
Student credit cards		0%	1%	n/a	
Student other loans		2%	3%	n/a	
Non-Borrowed	Parents	Parent current income	13%	10%	18%
		College savings funds, such as a 529 plans	6%	2%	12%
		Other parent savings or investments	3%	1%	5%
		Retirement savings withdrawals (including 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, or other IRAs)	1%	1%	1%
	Student	Student current income	5%	4%	7%
		Student savings	3%	2%	5%
		Federal Work-Study	1%	1%	1%
		Other student savings or investments	1%	1%	2%
	Other	Scholarships (received from the school or outside organizations or businesses)	20%	17%	26%
		Grants (federal, state, or school based)	15%	14%	17%
		Relatives or friends (money that doesn't have to be repaid)	4%	3%	5%

Q. Of the total [named dollar amount] cost of attendance, how much money did you (student)/your child use to pay for college this year from each of the following sources? Your best estimate is fine.

- a. Grants (federal, state, or school based)
 b. Scholarships (received from the school, outside organizations, businesses, or state programs)

Table 4: Grant Use and Average Amounts

	N	% of total families*	Average amount**
Total	658	47%	\$7,722
Income			
<\$35k	276	58%	\$6,895
\$35 – \$100k	323	52%	\$8,010
\$100k+	59	20%	\$10,010
Race/ethnicity			
White	475	46%	\$8,110
Black	89	52%	\$6,207
Hispanic	106	48%	\$8,094
Borrowing status			
Borrowed	330	52%	\$8,751
Did not borrow	319	43%	\$6,721
Grade level			
Freshman	206	46%	\$7,629
Sophomore	248	51%	\$8,501
Junior	113	44%	\$7,340
Senior	75	43%	\$6,255
School type			
4-year public/state college/university	270	46%	\$6,711
4-year private college/university	168	52%	\$13,585
2-year public/community college	217	47%	\$4,684

Base: Parents of college students and college students

* Percent of total families naming amount >\$0

** Among those who used each source

Table 5: Scholarship Use and Average Amounts

	N	% of total families*	Average amount**
Total	694	49%	\$9,712
Income			
<\$35k	219	45%	\$6,799
\$35 – \$100k	325	52%	\$9,984
\$100k+	150	51%	\$13,458
Race/ethnicity			
White	543	52%	\$9,928
Black	88	50%	\$9,288
Hispanic	92	42%	\$7,487
Borrowing status			
Borrowed	357	55%	\$9,614
Did not borrow	334	45%	\$9,842
Grade level			
Freshman	249	54%	\$9,775
Sophomore	221	46%	\$8,755
Junior	103	41%	\$9,458
Senior	110	63%	\$12,572
School type			
4-year public/state college/university	327	54%	\$7,940
4-year private college/university	230	70%	\$15,983
2-year public/community college	133	29%	\$3,959

Base: Parents of college students and college students

* Percent of total families naming amount >\$0

** Among those who used each source

Q. You told us that you/your child received [\$ amount] in scholarships to pay for college this year. How much of this amount was:

- a. Awarded by the state/government
- b. Awarded by the college
- c. Awarded by a community or nonprofit organization (e.g. business, charity, employer, local club or organization, etc.)

Table 6: Scholarship Sources

	N	From state	From college	From community
Total	712	65%	87%	75%
Income				
<\$35k	227	64%	88%	73%
\$35 – \$100k	332	70%	85%	79%
\$100k+	153	55%	89%	70%
Race/ethnicity				
White	551	64%	87%	76%
Black	95	65%	87%	73%
Hispanic	93	66%	83%	87%
Borrowing status				
Borrowed	362	66%	88%	79%
Did not borrow	347	63%	85%	71%
Grade level				
Freshman	252	65%	83%	77%
Sophomore	227	64%	88%	71%
Junior	110	68%	88%	84%
Senior	112	62%	91%	74%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	331	71%	80%	72%
4-year private college/university	230	59%	96%	78%
2-year public/community college	146	62%	87%	76%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who reported using scholarships

Q. Did you or your parents apply for any scholarships this year?

Table 7: Non-Scholarship Users Who Applied

	N	Yes	No	Don't know
Total	736	43%	55%	2%
Income				
<\$35k	274	43%	53%	4%
\$35 – \$100k	320	43%	57%	0%
\$100k+	143	43%	57%	0%
Race/ethnicity				
White	503	41%	59%	1%
Black	91	47%	53%	0%
Hispanic	140	37%	63%	1%
Borrowing status				
Borrowed	294	49%	51%	0%
Did not borrow	424	40%	58%	3%
Grade level				
Freshman	218	49%	51%	0%
Sophomore	268	39%	57%	5%
Junior	163	52%	47%	0%
Senior	67	26%	74%	0%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	292	45%	55%	1%
4-year private college/university	100	41%	59%	0%
2-year public/community college	339	42%	55%	3%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who reported not using scholarships

Q. Why didn't you or your parents/child apply for any scholarships?

Table 8: Reasons for Not Applying for Scholarship

N	407
Didn't know about any	12%
Didn't know where to find out about scholarships	2%
Missed deadline	11%
Had problem with application	1%
Don't qualify	15%
Didn't think I would get chosen for one	1%
Other	60%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who did not apply for scholarships

Q. Of the total [named dollar amount] cost of attendance, how much of your/your child's college funding came from relatives or friends (money that does not have to be repaid)? Your best estimate is fine.

Table 9: Use of Funds from Relatives & Friends

	N	% of total families*
Total	224	16%
Income		
<\$35k	88	17%
\$35 – \$100k	95	15%
\$100k+	41	14%
Race/ethnicity		
White	169	16%
Black	35	19%
Hispanic	33	15%
Borrowing status		
Borrowed	109	16%
Did not borrow	107	14%
Grade Level		
Freshman	79	17%
Sophomore	85	17%
Junior	36	13%
Senior	23	13%
School type		
4-year public/state college/university	115	19%
4-year private college/university	44	12%
2-year public/community college	64	14%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

* Percent of total families naming amount >\$0

Q. Of the total [named dollar amount] cost of attendance, how much money did you (student)/ your child use to pay for college this year from each of the following sources? Your best estimate is fine.

- Federal Work-Study
- Your/your child's savings
- Your/your child's current income
- Other student savings or investments

Table 10: Use of Student Income & Savings

	N	% of total families
Total	727	51%
Income		
<\$35k	264	53%
\$35 – \$100k	360	56%
\$100k+	103	35%
Race/ethnicity		
White	557	53%
Black	83	46%
Hispanic	130	59%
Borrowing status		
Borrowed	365	55%
Did not borrow	356	48%
Grade level		
Freshman	199	42%
Sophomore	251	52%
Junior	185	67%
Senior	70	40%
School type		
4-year public/state college/university	312	51%
4-year private college/university	183	53%
2-year public/community college	227	48%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

* Percent of total families naming amount >\$0

Q. Of the total [named dollar amount] cost of attendance, how much money did you (parent)/your parents use to pay for college this year from each of the following sources? Your best estimate is fine.

- Parent current income
- College savings fund, such as a 529 plan
- Retirement Savings withdrawal (including 401k, Roth IRA, or other IRA)
- Other parent savings or investments

Table 11: Use of Parent Income & Savings

	N	% of total families*
Total	778	55%
Income		
<\$35k	180	36%
\$35 – \$100k	382	60%
\$100k+	216	74%
Race/ethnicity		
White	580	55%
Black	86	48%
Hispanic	125	57%
Borrowing status		
Borrowed	352	53%
Did not borrow	415	56%
Grade level		
Freshman	274	59%
Sophomore	277	57%
Junior	120	44%
Senior	100	59%
School type		
4-year public/state college/university	375	62%
4-year private college/university	204	60%
2-year public/community college	194	41%

Base: Parents of college students and college students
* Percent of total families naming amount >\$0

Q. When making payments to the college, did you/ your child/your parent use a monthly payment plan or other installment payment plan (rather than pay the full amount due at the beginning of each term)?

- Yes, we used a payment or installment plan.
- No, we made lump sum payments at the beginning of each term.
- N/A, we made no direct payments/all costs covered by financial aid.

Table 12: Use of Payment Plan

	N	Yes	No	N/A
Total	1600	26%	68%	3%
Income				
<\$35k	568	26%	67%	3%
\$35 – \$100k	724	25%	68%	4%
\$100k+	308	28%	68%	2%
Race/ethnicity				
White	1153	23%	70%	3%
Black	216	35%	57%	5%
Hispanic	266	33%	61%	2%
Borrowing status				
Borrowed	738	36%	56%	3%
Did not borrow	839	17%	77%	3%
Grade level				
Freshman	534	28%	66%	3%
Sophomore	551	26%	65%	6%
Junior	295	24%	73%	2%
Senior	183	27%	68%	1%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	679	24%	71%	2%
4-year private college/university	363	35%	56%	6%
2-year public/community college	543	23%	71%	3%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

**Q. Were any types of loans, or other types of credit or borrowed money used to pay for college this year?
Some examples may include student loans, home equity, or credit cards. Please select all that apply.**

- a. I borrowed to pay for college. d. Someone else borrowed.
b. My parent borrowed to pay for college. e. Did not borrow money to pay for college this year.
c. My child borrowed to pay for college.

Table 13: Who Contributed Borrowed Funds

	Family borrowed*		Who borrowed**				Total student	Total parent
	N	Yes %	N	Student only % [‡]	Parent only % [‡]	Both % [‡]		
Total	1600	45%	725	62%	15%	20%	88%	34%
Income								
<\$35k	568	42%	238	70%	13%	13%	83%	26%
\$35 – \$100k	724	50%	365	58%	16%	22%	80%	38%
\$100k+	308	40%	122	57%	16%	24%	81%	40%
Race/ethnicity								
White	1153	30%	341	66%	10%	21%	87%	31%
Black	216	33%	71	59%	20%	17%	76%	37%
Hispanic	266	24%	64	68%	15%	12%	80%	27%
Grade level								
Freshman	534	42%	226	60%	20%	17%	77%	37%
Sophomore	551	41%	226	59%	20%	16%	75%	36%
Junior	295	58%	171	68%	7%	24%	92%	31%
Senior	183	45%	82	58%	5%	30%	88%	35%
School type								
4-year public/state college/university	679	50%	340	65%	17%	15%	80%	32%
4-year private college/university	363	73%	264	52%	13%	32%	84%	45%
2-year public/community college	543	21%	116	77%	13%	4%	81%	17%
Region								
Northeast	333	62%	207	52%	16%	28%	80%	44%
Midwest	372	46%	170	66%	11%	21%	87%	32%
South	488	43%	208	61%	18%	16%	77%	34%
West	397	34%	136	74%	14%	11%	85%	25%

* Base: Parents of college students and college students

** Base: Parents of college students and college students in families who borrowed

‡ Categories are mutually exclusive. These are percent of families who borrow.

Q. Of the total [named dollar amount] cost of attendance, how much money did you (parent)/ your parents use to pay for college this year from each of the following borrowed sources? Your best estimate is fine.

- Federal Parent PLUS Loan
- Private education loan in your/your parent's name, not including any loans where you/your parent are only a cosigner
- Home equity loan or line of credit
- Credit cards in your/your parent's name
- Retirement account loan (including 401k, Roth IRA, or other IRA)
- Other loans in your/your parent's name

Table 14: Use of Parent Borrowed Funds

	N	% of total families*
Total	200	14%
Income		
<\$35k	52	10%
\$35 – \$100k	107	17%
\$100k+	41	14%
Race/ethnicity		
White	129	12%
Black	34	18%
Hispanic	21	9%
Grade level		
Freshman	69	15%
Sophomore	64	13%
Junior	42	15%
Senior	23	13%
School type		
4-year public/state college/university	89	14%
4-year private college/university	98	28%
2-year public/community college	11	2%

Base: Parents of college students and college students
* Percent of total families naming amount >\$0

Q. Of the total [named dollar amount] cost of attendance, how much money did you (student)/ your child use to pay for college this year from each of the following borrowed sources? Your best estimate is fine.

- Federal student loans, such as Direct, Stafford, or Perkins loans
- Private education loans in your/your child's name, including loans where your parent/you or anyone else is a cosigner
- Credit cards in your/your child's name
- Other loans in your/your child's name

Table 15: Use of Student Borrowed Funds

	N	% of total families*
Total	522	36%
Income		
<\$35k	167	33%
\$35 – \$100k	266	41%
\$100k+	89	31%
Race/ethnicity		
White	414	39%
Black	79	43%
Hispanic	55	24%
Grade level		
Freshman	140	30%
Sophomore	152	31%
Junior	139	51%
Senior	74	42%
School type		
4-year public/state college/university	243	40%
4-year private college/university	202	57%
2-year public/community college	74	16%

Base: Parents of college students and college students
* Percent of total families naming amount >\$0

Q. Did you or your [parent/student] borrow any money to help pay for college the previous year (2015-2016)?

Table 16: Prior Year Borrowing

	N	Yes	No	Not sure
Total	1066	28%	69%	4%
Income				
<\$35k	389	20%	73%	7%
\$35 – \$100k	495	34%	64%	2%
\$100k+	183	25%	73%	2%
Race/ethnicity				
White	777	29%	67%	4%
Black	138	28%	66%	6%
Hispanic	173	23%	70%	7%
Borrowing status				
Borrowed	501	51%	44%	5%
Did Not Borrow	554	7%	91%	2%
Grade level				
Freshman	0	0%	0%	0%
Sophomore	551	22%	75%	3%
Junior	295	35%	63%	2%
Senior	183	28%	66%	6%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	454	33%	63%	4%
4-year private college/university	257	41%	53%	7%
2-year public/community college	345	11%	88%	1%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who are not freshmen

Q. Do you expect that you or your [parent/student] will borrow any money to help pay for college next year (2017-2018)?

Table 17: Anticipate Next Year Borrowing

	N	Yes	No	Not sure
Total	1417	40%	47%	13%
Income				
<\$35k	525	31%	52%	18%
\$35 – \$100k	621	49%	39%	11%
\$100k+	270	38%	53%	9%
Race/ethnicity				
White	996	42%	46%	12%
Black	197	41%	40%	19%
Hispanic	248	35%	46%	19%
Borrowing status				
Borrowed	654	68%	20%	12%
Did not borrow	739	16%	70%	15%
Grade level				
Freshman	534	34%	49%	17%
Sophomore	551	42%	44%	14%
Junior	295	50%	44%	6%
Senior	0	0%	0%	0%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	560	46%	42%	13%
4-year private college/university	312	52%	36%	11%
2-year public/community college	528	28%	57%	15%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who are not seniors

Q. Will you/your parents be solely responsible for repaying this borrowed money or will your child/you be jointly responsible for making some payments?

- a. Parent(s) only
- b. Parent(s) are responsible for some but less than half
- c. Parent(s) are responsible for half
- d. Parent(s) are responsible for more than half, but not all
- e. Student is solely responsible
- f. Parents will make payments until the student is financially stable
- g. Student will make payments when they can, otherwise the parent will make payments
- h. Not sure

Table 18: Responsibility for Repaying Parent Education Loans

	Total	Parent	Student
N	237	163	74*
Parent(s) only	32%	41%	11%
Parent, less than half	8%	5%	15%
Parent half	15%	16%	13%
Parent, more than half	4%	3%	5%
Student only	14%	11%	21%
Parent, then student when stable	18%	15%	27%
Parent when student is unable	6%	7%	6%
Not sure	3%	4%	2%

Base: Parents of college students and college students in families where parent borrowed federal or private education loan(s)

* Small sample base

Q. Will your child/you be solely responsible for repaying this borrowed money or will you/your parents be jointly responsible for making some payments?

- a. Parent(s) only
- b. Parent(s) are responsible for some but less than half
- c. Parent(s) are responsible for half
- d. Parent(s) are responsible for more than half, but not all
- e. Student is solely responsible
- f. Parents will make payments until the student is financially stable
- g. Student will make payments when they can, otherwise the parent will make payments
- h. Not sure

Table 19: Responsibility for Repaying Student Loans

	Total	Parent	Student
N	534	224	310
Parent(s) only	5%	12%	1%
Parent, less than half	5%	4%	5%
Parent half	5%	7%	3%
Parent, more than half	2%	3%	1%
Student only	73%	58%	84%
Parent, then student when stable	7%	11%	4%
Parent when student is unable	3%	5%	2%
Not sure	0%	0%	1%

Base: Parents of college students and college students in families where student borrowed federal or private education loan(s)

Q. Can you tell me the name of the school your child/you attended in the 2016-17 school year? And which campus is that? (Match to school type.)

Table 20: Enrollment by Type of School

	N	4-year public	4-year private	2-year public	2-year private
Total	1600	42%	23%	34%	2%
Income					
<\$35k	568	39%	17%	43%	1%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	43%	24%	33%	1%
>\$100k+	308	49%	30%	21%	1%
Race/ethnicity					
White	1153	42%	25%	32%	0%
Black	216	47%	19%	31%	4%
Hispanic	266	42%	13%	45%	1%
Region					
Northeast	333	34%	39%	26%	1%
Midwest	372	36%	22%	39%	3%
South	488	53%	19%	29%	0%
West	397	43%	14%	42%	0%
Grade level					
Freshman	534	42%	20%	37%	1%
Sophomore	551	30%	20%	49%	1%
Junior	295	51%	32%	17%	0%
Senior	183	65%	28%	8%	0%
Borrowing status					
Borrowed	738	46%	36%	17%	1%
Did not borrow	839	40%	11%	48%	1%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. In which state is student attending college? (Match to home state.)

Table 21: Enrollment by Home State

	N	In-state	Out-of-state
Total	1600	77%	23%
Income			
<\$35k	568	79%	21%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	79%	21%
\$100k+	308	70%	30%
Race/ethnicity			
White	1153	76%	24%
Black	216	75%	25%
Hispanic	266	89%	11%
Borrowing status			
Borrowed	738	70%	30%
Did not borrow	839	84%	17%
Grade level			
Freshman	534	77%	23%
Sophomore	551	76%	24%
Junior	295	76%	24%
Senior	183	81%	19%
School type			
4-year public/state college/university	679	87%	14%
4-year private college/university	363	45%	55%
2-year public/community college	543	88%	12%
Region			
Northeast	333	68%	32%
Midwest	372	72%	28%
South	488	85%	15%
West	397	82%	18%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. What general subject area is your child/are you currently studying/majoring in?**Table 22: Student Course of Study**

	% Major
N	1600
Agriculture (Agricultural Business and Management, Animal Science, Food Science, Plant Science, Soil Science)	1%
Architecture and related services (Architecture, City/Urban, Community and Regional Planning, Environmental Design Landscape, Architecture)	1%
Biological and biomedical sciences (Biology, Biochemistry, Biophysics and Molecular Biology, Microbiological Sciences and Immunology, Zoology/Animal Biology, Genetics, Physiology, Pathology and Related Sciences, Ecology, Evolution, Systematics and Population Biology, Neurobiology and Neurosciences)	10%
Business, management, marketing, and related support services (Business Administration, Management and Operations, Accounting and Related Services, Business/Managerial Economics, Entrepreneurial and Small Business Operations, Finance and Financial Management Services, Hospitality Administration/Management, Human Resources Management and Services, International Business, Management Information Systems and Services, Management Sciences and Quantitative Methods (Actuarial Science), Marketing, Real Estate, Insurance, Specialized Sales, Merchandising and Marketing Operations, Construction Management)	13%
Communication, journalism, and related programs (Communication and Media Studies, Journalism, Public Relations, Advertising, and Applied Communication)	3%
Computer and information sciences and support services (Computer and Information Sciences, Information Science/Studies, Computer Science, Computer Software and Media Applications, Computer/Information Technology Administration and Management)	7%
Education (Education Administration and Supervision, Special Education and Teaching, Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods, Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas)	5%
Engineering (Aerospace, Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, Architectural Engineering, Biomedical/Medical Engineering, Ceramic Sciences and Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, Electrical, Electronics and Communications Engineering, Engineering Physics, Engineering Science, Environmental/Environmental Health Engineering, Materials Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Metallurgical Engineering, Mining and Mineral Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, Ocean Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, Systems Engineering, Polymer/Plastics Engineering, Construction Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Geological/Geophysical Engineering, Mechatronics, Robotics, and Automation Engineering, Biological/Biosystems Engineering)	8%
Health professions and related programs (Communication Disorders Sciences and Services, Dental Support Services and Allied Professions, Health and Medical Administrative Services, Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services, Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, and Treatment Professions, Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions, Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Sciences and Administration, Public Health, Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Professions, Medical Illustration and Informatics, Dietetics and Clinical Nutrition Services, Registered Nursing)	11%
Homeland security, law enforcement, firefighting, and related protective services	1%
Liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities (Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, English Language and Literature, Rhetoric and Composition/Writing Studies, Philosophy, Religion/Religious Studies, Theological and Ministerial Studies, History)	6%
Mathematics and statistics (Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Statistics)	1%
Physical sciences (Chemistry, Geological and Earth Sciences/Geosciences, Physics)	1%
Psychology (Psychology, Clinical, Counseling and Applied Psychology)	5%
Public administration and social service professions (Human Services, Public Policy Analysis, Social Work)	2%
Social sciences (Anthropology, Criminology, Economics, Geography and Cartography, International Relations and National Security Studies, Political Science and Government, Sociology, Urban Studies/Affairs)	6%
Visual and performing arts (Visual and Performing Arts, Dance, Design and Applied Arts, Drama/Theatre Arts and Stagecraft, Film/Video and Photographic Arts, Fine and Studio Arts, Music, Arts, Entertainment and Media Management)	5%
Other	28%
Undecided	1%

Base: Parents of college students and college student

Q. Did you/your child start college knowing what you/he/she wanted to do for a career?

Table 23: Career Decision at College Onset

	N	Yes	No	Don't know
Total	1600	70%	30%	0%
Income				
<\$35k	568	69%	31%	1%
\$35k – <\$100k	722	71%	29%	0%
\$100k+	306	69%	31%	0%
Race/ethnicity				
White	1149	69%	31%	0%
Black	216	73%	25%	2%
Hispanic	266	69%	31%	0%
Borrowing status				
Borrowed	737	73%	27%	0%
Did not borrow	836	67%	32%	0%
Planning status				
Planners	617	77%	23%	0%
Non-planners	979	65%	34%	0%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	676	71%	29%	0%
4-year private college/university	363	71%	29%	0%
2-year public/community college	541	66%	33%	1%
Region				
Northeast	332	71%	29%	0%
Midwest	371	71%	29%	0%
South	487	71%	29%	0%
West	397	67%	33%	1%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. Do you agree with the following statement? I've always expected to attend/my child to attend college regardless of what I/he/she would study.

Table 24: Expectation of College Regardless of Major

	N	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Total	1600	85%	14%	0%
Income				
<\$35k	568	83%	17%	0%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	86%	13%	1%
\$100k+	308	88%	12%	0%
Race/ethnicity				
White	1153	84%	16%	1%
Black	216	92%	8%	0%
Hispanic	266	89%	12%	0%
Borrowing status				
Borrowed	738	89%	11%	0%
Did not borrow	839	82%	17%	1%
Planning status				
Planners	619	92%	8%	0%
Non-planners	981	81%	18%	1%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	679	90%	9%	0%
4-year private college/university	363	92%	8%	0%
2-year public/community college	543	75%	24%	1%
Region				
Northeast	333	86%	14%	0%
Midwest	372	83%	15%	2%
South	488	87%	13%	0%
West	397	85%	15%	0%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. What is the primary reason you/your child chose the school he/she is attending in 2016-17?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. Annual cost of attendance before financial aid | e. Location |
| b. Financial aid package the school is giving | e. Personal choice (social life, activities, sports, religion, family legacy, etc.) |
| c. The prestige of the college/university | f. Other |
| d. The academic program related to my desired major | |

Table 25: Primary Reason Chose Current College

	N	Cost	Financial aid	Prestige	Academic program	Location	Personal	Other/ don't know
Total	1600	12%	12%	3%	25%	22%	16%	9%
Parents	800	7%	13%	5%	27%	20%	18%	10%
Students	800	17%	12%	2%	23%	23%	15%	8%
Income								
<\$35k	568	12%	13%	3%	19%	22%	19%	12%
\$35k - <\$100k	724	12%	13%	3%	26%	25%	15%	8%
\$100k+	308	15%	8%	5%	36%	14%	15%	8%
Race/ethnicity								
White	1153	14%	12%	2%	26%	23%	14%	9%
Black	216	9%	14%	4%	27%	17%	22%	8%
Hispanic	266	14%	10%	7%	21%	28%	15%	7%
School type								
4-year public/state college/university	679	11%	11%	4%	31%	21%	17%	6%
4-year private college/university	363	2%	15%	5%	37%	9%	22%	11%
2-year public/community college	543	22%	12%	2%	10%	31%	12%	12%
Region								
Northeast	333	12%	18%	3%	32%	14%	13%	8%
Midwest	372	14%	13%	2%	27%	16%	17%	10%
South	488	11%	11%	3%	25%	25%	14%	11%
West	397	12%	8%	5%	18%	30%	20%	8%
Planning status								
Planners	619	11%	8%	6%	35%	19%	14%	8%
Non-planners	981	13%	15%	2%	19%	24%	18%	10%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. At about what grade were you/was your child when you first realized you/he/she would attend college?**Table 26: Age When Realized Would Attend College**

	N	Pre school or earlier	Grades 1 – 5	Grades 6 – 8	High school
Total	1600	86%	1%	2%	10%
Parents	800	85%	1%	3%	11%
Students	800	86%	2%	1%	10%
Income					
<\$35k	568	83%	2%	3%	10%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	87%	1%	2%	11%
\$100k+	308	89%	1%	0%	9%
Race/ethnicity					
White	1153	84%	1%	3%	11%
Black	216	92%	1%	1%	5%
Hispanic	266	89%	1%	0%	10%
Region					
Northeast	333	86%	1%	1%	12%
Midwest	372	83%	2%	3%	11%
South	488	88%	1%	2%	10%
West	397	85%	1%	3%	10%
Planning status					
Planners	619	92%	1%	2%	6%
Non-planners	981	82%	2%	2%	14%
Borrowing status					
Borrowers	738	90%	1%	1%	7%
Non-borrowers	839	82%	1%	3%	13%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. What type of degree or level of undergraduate education are you/your child currently working toward?

Table 27: Current Degree Type Expected to Earn

	N	BA degree	AA degree	Voc/tech certificate	No degree	Not sure
Total	1600	68%	23%	3%	1%	6%
Income						
<\$35k	568	59%	28%	5%	2%	5%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	69%	22%	1%	1%	7%
\$100k+	308	82%	15%	1%	0%	3%
Race/ethnicity						
White	1153	70%	21%	3%	1%	6%
Black	216	66%	27%	3%	1%	3%
Hispanic	266	61%	25%	2%	6%	7%
Grade level						
Freshman	534	64%	25%	2%	1%	9%
Sophomore	551	57%	31%	4%	2%	5%
Junior	295	83%	11%	1%	0%	5%
Senior	183	91%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Enrollment status						
Full time	1414	70%	22%	1%	1%	6%
Part time	171	55%	27%	11%	2%	5%
Borrowing status						
Borrowed	738	76%	15%	2%	0%	7%
Did not borrow	839	62%	28%	3%	2%	5%
Family college experience						
First-in-family	461	58%	22%	5%	3%	12%
Second-generation	1137	72%	23%	2%	0%	3%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. What is the highest level of education you/your child plans to achieve?

- a. Certificate or technical training
- b. Associate's degree (AA, AS)
- c. Bachelor's degree (BA, BS)
- d. Master's degree (MA, MEd, MBA, MEd)
- e. Doctoral degree (PhD)
- f. Professional degree (JD, MD, DDS)
- g. Other

Table 28: Expected Future Degree Achievement

	N	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctoral	Professional	Certificate/ technical	Not sure
Total	1600	4%	32%	37%	18%	3%	2%	4%
Parents	800	6%	34%	35%	11%	5%	3%	6%
Students	800	2%	30%	40%	25%	2%	0%	1%
School type								
4-year public/state college/university	679	2%	32%	38%	21%	3%	0%	5%
4-year private college/university	363	1%	30%	41%	20%	3%	1%	3%
2-year public/community college	543	9%	33%	35%	13%	3%	3%	4%
BA degree seekers								
4-year public/state college/university	593	0%	32%	40%	21%	3%	0%	4%
4-year private college/university	312	0%	27%	44%	23%	4%	0%	2%
Grade level								
Freshman	534	5%	34%	34%	18%	3%	2%	5%
Sophomore	551	5%	32%	37%	17%	5%	2%	3%
Junior	295	2%	30%	46%	18%	2%	0%	2%
Senior	183	1%	29%	37%	23%	4%	0%	7%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. How, if at all, have your/your child's plans to earn an advanced degree affected your/your child's choices for your undergraduate degree?

- a. It had no effect on my/our decisions.
- b. I/My child chose a less expensive college knowing I/he/she would have to pay for grad school.
- c. I/My child chose to live at home and made other cost-saving measures in order to save for grad school.
- d. I/My child borrowed fewer loans, with my parent's/our help, because I/he/she knew I/he/she would be responsible for any borrowing to pay for grad school.
- e. I/My child chose a college with an accelerated Master's degree program to earn course credit for undergraduate and graduate degrees simultaneously.
- f. I/My child chose a college with a strong graduate school acceptance rate for my/his/her major.
- g. I/My child was very aggressive in seeking scholarships and financial aid, knowing I/he/she would have to pay for grad school.
- h. I/My child changed major to align more closely with the program I/he/she wanted to study in graduate school.
- i. Other

Table 29: Anticipation of Graduate School Effect on Undergraduate Decisions

	N	No effect	Less expensive	Live at home	Less borrowing	Accelerated Master's program	Grad school acceptance rate	Sought scholarships	Changed majors	Other
Total	940	49%	4%	3%	2%	3%	5%	2%	4%	22%
Parents	405	57%	3%	3%	3%	2%	8%	0%	0%	10%
Students	534	43%	4%	4%	1%	3%	3%	3%	6%	30%
School Type										
4-year public/state college/university	417	52%	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	4%	25%
4-year private college/university	234	53%	0%	4%	2%	5%	6%	1%	2%	21%
2-year public/community college	280	43%	6%	4%	2%	2%	7%	1%	4%	18%
Planning Status										
Planners	376	46%	2%	3%	2%	4%	9%	2%	4%	23%
Non-planners	564	51%	5%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	4%	21%
Borrowing Status										
Borrowed	465	55%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	3%	21%
Did not borrow	459	43%	6%	5%	4%	3%	8%	3%	4%	22%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who expect to earn a post-baccalaureate degree
Table does not include "don't know" responses (17% total).

Q. Please state whether you: strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.

- a. I am willing to stretch myself financially to obtain the best opportunity for my/my child's future.
- b. I would rather borrow to pay for college than not be able/have my child not be able to go at all.
- c. College is an investment in my/my child's future.
- d. Having a college degree is more important now than it used to be.
- e. I would go/send my child to college for the intellectual and social experience regardless of whether I/my child earned more money with a college degree.

Table 30: Attitudes Toward College, Rated "Strongly Agree"

	N	Stretch financially	Rather borrow	Invest future	Degree important	Experience
Total	1600	57%	47%	85%	64%	25%
Parents	800	57%	48%	84%	63%	24%
Students	800	57%	47%	85%	66%	26%
Income						
<\$35k	568	61%	46%	81%	63%	25%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	56%	47%	85%	65%	26%
\$100k+	308	53%	51%	89%	66%	22%
Race/ethnicity						
White	1153	55%	46%	84%	62%	21%
Black	216	60%	53%	89%	73%	41%
Hispanic	266	69%	54%	85%	73%	30%
School type						
4-year public/state college/university	679	57%	50%	83%	68%	23%
4-year private college/university	363	59%	55%	89%	69%	27%
2-year public/community college	543	57%	39%	83%	57%	26%
Borrowing status						
Borrowed	738	64%	60%	85%	70%	29%
Did not borrow	839	51%	37%	84%	59%	21%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Table 31: Attitudes Toward College, Scale 1-5

	N	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Stretch Financially	1600	57%	30%	5%	5%	3%
Rather Borrow	1600	47%	29%	6%	10%	8%
Invest Future	1600	85%	13%	1%	1%	1%
Degree Important	1600	64%	18%	6%	8%	3%
Experience	1600	25%	29%	8%	22%	16%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. Please state whether you: strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.

a. I wanted/I wanted my child to attend college because a college degree is required for my/my child's desired occupation.

b. I wanted/I wanted my child to attend college because I/my child will earn more money with a college degree.

c. A college education is part of the American Dream.

Table 32: Reasons for Continuing Education, Rated "Strongly Agree"

	N	Occupation	Earnings	American dream
Total	1600	66%	57%	38%
Parents	800	64%	57%	46%
Students	800	68%	56%	30%
Income				
<\$35k	568	65%	60%	38%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	65%	53%	37%
\$100k+	308	70%	59%	40%
Race/ethnicity				
White	1153	65%	53%	37%
Black	216	69%	71%	40%
Hispanic	266	72%	59%	49%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	679	68%	59%	42%
4-year private college/university	363	60%	56%	33%
2-year public/community college	543	68%	54%	36%
Borrowing Status				
Borrowed	738	66%	62%	43%
Did not borrow	839	66%	53%	34%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Table 33: Reasons for Continuing Education, Scale 1-5

	N	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Occupation	1600	66%	20%	5%	6%	4%
Earnings	1600	57%	29%	4%	6%	5%
American dream	1600	38%	38%	12%	9%	4%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. Which of the following is the main reason you decided you/your child would attend college? Please choose one.

- a. When I realized what I wanted to do when I grew up/When my child first told me what he/she wanted to do when he/she grew up
- b. When I realized my own/my child's potential
- c. When I realized college is the norm
- d. When I/he/she started talking about it with friends or siblings
- e. When high school teachers or counselors started encouraging me/my child to attend college
- f. When I/we started looking at colleges or started applying to colleges
- g. Other

Table 34: Reasons for Deciding Student Should Attend College

	N	Career	Potential	Norm	Friends	High school counselors	Looking at colleges	Other
Total	1600	19%	17%	17%	6%	6%	8%	26%
Parents	800	15%	20%	15%	8%	4%	8%	30%
Students	800	24%	14%	20%	4%	8%	9%	21%
Income								
<\$35k	568	21%	17%	13%	6%	8%	8%	27%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	20%	19%	16%	6%	6%	9%	25%
\$100k+	308	15%	13%	31%	5%	1%	9%	25%
Race/ethnicity								
White	1153	21%	16%	17%	6%	5%	10%	26%
Black	216	19%	14%	22%	4%	7%	7%	29%
Hispanic	266	13%	22%	13%	7%	13%	12%	20%
School type								
4-year public/state college/university	679	18%	19%	21%	6%	6%	8%	22%
4-year private college/university	363	21%	12%	22%	4%	3%	12%	25%
2-year public/community college	543	21%	18%	11%	6%	8%	7%	30%
Planning Status								
Planners	619	20%	15%	21%	6%	5%	10%	23%
Non-planners	981	19%	19%	15%	6%	7%	8%	27%
Borrowing status								
Borrowed	738	20%	15%	21%	5%	6%	10%	24%
Did not borrow	839	19%	20%	15%	6%	6%	7%	28%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. Please state your level of agreement with the following statement: Before my child/I enrolled, our family created a plan for paying for all years of college.

- a. Before my child/I enrolled, our family created a plan for paying for all years of college.
- b. My family has a contingency plan to pay for college in case unexpected events (such as parent job loss or medical emergency) occur.
- c. We considered our child/I considered not attending college because of the cost.

Table 35: Planning to Pay for College, Rated “Strongly Agree”

	N	Had plan	Contingency plan	Considered not attending
Total	1600	18%	16%	12%
Parents	800	22%	22%	9%
Students	800	15%	10%	15%
Income				
<\$35k	568	11%	11%	17%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	14%	12%	11%
\$100k+	308	41%	35%	5%
Race/ethnicity				
White	1153	18%	14%	10%
Black	216	20%	23%	15%
Hispanic	266	16%	16%	17%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	679	22%	20%	12%
4-year private college/university	363	22%	16%	11%
2-year public/community college	543	11%	11%	12%
Borrowing Status				
Borrowed	738	14%	12%	14%
Did not borrow	839	21%	19%	10%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Table 36: Planning to Pay for College, Scale 1-5

	N	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Had plan	1600	18%	21%	6%	19%	36%
Contingency plan	1600	16%	22%	9%	21%	31%
Considered not attending	1600	12%	19%	6%	17%	46%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. What did you include in your plan for how to pay for college?

- a. Saved for college before attending
- b. Identified resources we would need to help pay for college
- c. Created a hierarchy of our payment sources (like scholarships first, then savings, then loans etc...)
- d. Set up a college savings fund to which others (friends, grandparents, etc ...) could contribute
- e. Parents gave child a bottom line figure and told him/her he/she couldn't choose anything that cost more than that
- f. Created a budget that included target costs and target amounts for savings, scholarships, financial aid and borrowing
- g. Invested in the student's skills/talents to increase the likelihood of winning scholarships
- h. Parent took employment at a college so student can attend tuition free
- i. Student enrolled in Advanced Placement courses in high school to earn college credits
- j. Researched college costs and financial aid eligibility
- k. Other [specify]

Table 37: Planning Actions

N	619
Saved	40%
Identified resources	4%
Prioritized payment sources	17%
Savings fund for others to contribute	8%
Limited school choice	1%
Budget	18%
Invest in skills	5%
Employed at college	1%
AP courses	1%
Research costs and financial aid	4%
Other	40%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who had a plan to pay for college

Q. Earlier you said you and your family had not created a plan for how to pay for all years of college before enrolling. How do you feel about not having a plan?

- a. I'm not too worried; we've got this year covered
- b. We'll figure it out as we go
- c. I worry I/my student will have to drop out
- d. I wish my family had planned better, but it is too late now
- e. I'm overwhelmed and wish someone could help me figure this out
- f. I'm frustrated that college is so expensive and don't believe anyone at my income level can afford it
- g. Other

Table 38: Feelings About Not Planning

N	890
Not worried	20%
Figure it out each year	12%
Worry	5%
Wish we planned better	8%
Overwhelmed	3%
Frustrated	4%
Other	54%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who did not have a plan to pay for college

Q. Please let me know whether or not you eliminated any schools based on cost at each of the following steps in the college application process:

- a. Before deciding which colleges to research
- b. Before deciding which colleges to apply to
- c. After finding out which colleges your child was/you were admitted to but before looking at financial aid packages
- d. After looking at the financial aid packages

Table 39: Elimination of Colleges Based on Cost, Percentage Saying Yes at Each Point

	N	Before researching	Before applying	After admission	After financial aid
Total	1600	40%	46%	39%	48%
Parents	800	35%	39%	33%	41%
Students	800	45%	52%	44%	55%
Income					
<\$35k	568	40%	47%	43%	51%
\$35 – \$100k	724	43%	47%	40%	51%
\$100k+	308	32%	39%	29%	37%
School type					
4-year public/state college/university	679	43%	48%	43%	50%
4-year private college/university	363	36%	39%	38%	48%
2-year public/community college	543	38%	47%	35%	45%
Race/ethnicity					
White	1153	39%	43%	35%	45%
Black	216	44%	48%	47%	62%
Hispanic	266	44%	51%	44%	57%
Borrowing status					
Borrowed	738	41%	46%	41%	52%
Did not borrow	839	39%	45%	37%	46%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Table 40: Elimination of Colleges Based on Cost, Cumulative after Saying Yes at Each Point

	N	Before researching	Before applying	After admission	After financial aid
Total	1600	40%	54%	62%	69%
Parents	800	35%	47%	53%	62%
Students	800	45%	61%	70%	76%
Income					
<\$35k	568	40%	56%	64%	70%
\$35 – \$100k	724	43%	56%	63%	72%
\$100k+	308	32%	46%	53%	61%
School type					
4-year public/state college/university	679	43%	56%	63%	71%
4-year private college/university	363	36%	46%	56%	64%
2-year public/community college	543	38%	56%	63%	70%
Race/ethnicity					
White	1153	39%	51%	60%	68%
Black	216	44%	59%	66%	75%
Hispanic	266	44%	58%	62%	71%
Borrowing status					
Borrowed	738	41%	54%	62%	70%
Did not borrow	839	39%	55%	62%	69%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. The next question is about balancing your choice of college and the cost of that institution. How confident, if at all, are you that you have made the right financial decisions regarding paying for college?

- a. Not at all confident
 b. Somewhat unconfident
 c. Neither confident nor unconfident
 d. Somewhat confident
 e. Completely confident

Table 41: Confidence in Paying for College Choices

	N	Not at all confident	Somewhat unconfident	Neither	Somewhat confident	Completely confident
Total	1600	1%	5%	8%	33%	53%
Parents	800	1%	3%	8%	31%	57%
Students	800	2%	7%	8%	35%	48%
Income						
<\$35k	568	1%	7%	8%	37%	47%
\$35 – \$100k	724	1%	5%	8%	32%	54%
\$100k+	308	1%	5%	8%	27%	60%
School type						
4-year public/state college/university	679	1%	6%	8%	38%	47%
4-year private college/university	363	1%	7%	6%	39%	46%
2-year public/community college	543	2%	3%	9%	22%	65%
Race/ethnicity						
White	1153	1%	4%	7%	32%	56%
Black	216	2%	10%	9%	34%	45%
Hispanic	266	2%	7%	7%	37%	47%
Borrowing status						
Borrowed	738	2%	8%	11%	39%	41%
Did not borrow	839	1%	3%	6%	27%	63%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. Which of the following three statements best describes how you think the cost of attending a college relates to the quality of education you receive at that college?

- a. More expensive schools always offer a superior education
- b. More expensive schools sometimes offer a superior education
- c. The cost of attendance has no relationship to the quality of the education

Table 42: Cost and Quality of Education

	N	Expensive means superior	Expensive sometimes means superior	Cost and quality are not related
Total	1600	7%	47%	45%
Parents	800	6%	41%	51%
Students	800	7%	54%	38%
Income				
<\$35k	568	7%	45%	46%
\$35 – \$100k	724	7%	47%	46%
\$100k+	308	6%	54%	40%
School type				
4-year public/state college/university	679	6%	46%	46%
4-year private college/university	363	5%	53%	40%
2-year public/community college	543	9%	46%	45%
Race/ethnicity				
White	1153	5%	50%	44%
Black	216	10%	47%	43%
Hispanic	266	10%	43%	44%
Borrowing status				
Borrowed	738	7%	47%	44%
Did not borrow	839	6%	49%	45%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. For the 2016-2017 academic year did you complete the FAFSA?

- a. Yes
 b. No, I started one but did not submit it
 c. No, I have not started nor submitted one
 d. Don't know

Table 43: Completed FAFSA

	N	Yes	No, started but didn't finish	No, never started	Don't know
Total	1600	86%	3%	11%	1%
Parents	800	85%	1%	12%	2%
Students	800	86%	5%	10%	0%
Income					
<\$35k	568	88%	2%	9%	1%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	89%	2%	8%	1%
\$100k+	308	73%	5%	21%	1%
Race/ethnicity					
White	1153	86%	3%	10%	1%
Black	216	83%	3%	11%	3%
Hispanic	266	88%	2%	10%	0%
Grade level					
Freshman	534	88%	3%	7%	2%
Sophomore	551	84%	3%	13%	0%
Junior	295	89%	2%	9%	0%
Senior	183	79%	2%	16%	3%
Region					
Northeast	333	87%	1%	8%	4%
Midwest	372	86%	3%	10%	0%
South	488	84%	2%	13%	0%
West	397	86%	4%	10%	1%
School type					
4-year public/state college/university	679	87%	2%	9%	2%
4-year private college/university	363	87%	1%	12%	0%
2-year private college*	16	59%	0%	41%	0%
2-year public/community college	543	83%	5%	12%	0%
Borrowing status					
Borrowed	738	93%	1%	4%	2%
Did not borrow	839	79%	4%	16%	0%

Base: parents of college students and college students

*Small sample size

Q. Why didn't you submit the FAFSA?**Table 44: Reasons for Not Submitting FAFSA**

N	214
Don't qualify	27%
Missing information for application	3%
Missed deadline	2%
Had problem with application	2%
Other	66%

Base: Parents of college students and college students who either never started or started the FAFSA but did not complete/submit it

Q. For the 2016-17 academic year, did you/your child take any of the following actions to make college more affordable?

- a. Military benefits, ROTC, or National Guard
- b. Student lives at home or with relatives, rent free
- c. Student got roommate to save on rent
- d. Enrolling part-time
- e. Parent increasing work hours or earnings
- f. Student increasing work hours or earnings
- g. Parent reducing personal spending
- h. Student reducing personal spending
- i. Earning degree over a shorter period of time
- j. Changed majors to pursue field of study that is more marketable
- k. Filing for education tax credits or student loan interest tax deductions
- l. Making payments on student loans, rather than postponing them, to reduce total loan costs
- m. Your child/I chose a school that was in-state to pay lower tuition fees

Table 45: More Affordable Actions, Percentage Taking Action

	N	Military	Live at home	Add roommate*	Parent work more	Student work more	Parent reduced spending	Student reduced spending	Part time	Shorter time to degree	Changed majors	Tax credits/deduction	Early loan payments	In-state tuition
Total	1600	4%	50%	47%	30%	50%	47%	68%	15%	26%	18%	40%	29%	73%
Income														
<\$35k	568	3%	51%	52%	26%	46%	40%	74%	19%	33%	21%	35%	32%	78%
\$35 – <\$100k	724	4%	55%	45%	34%	56%	52%	68%	15%	22%	18%	46%	31%	74%
\$100k+	308	4%	38%	42%	30%	45%	47%	54%	8%	20%	14%	37%	21%	60%
Race/ethnicity														
White	1153	4%	45%	47%	26%	54%	43%	68%	14%	23%	16%	44%	26%	71%
Black	216	3%	51%	38%	35%	42%	52%	65%	17%	32%	22%	33%	35%	71%
Hispanic	266	5%	69%	56%	41%	55%	58%	78%	17%	34%	25%	37%	32%	82%
School type														
4-year public/state college/university	679	5%	40%	54%	34%	50%	46%	63%	11%	23%	19%	37%	29%	82%
4-year private college/university	363	3%	33%	36%	33%	55%	51%	71%	12%	24%	20%	53%	40%	34%
2-year public/community college	543	2%	76%	50%	24%	48%	45%	72%	22%	29%	16%	36%	23%	88%
Borrowing status														
Borrowed	738	2%	40%	47%	36%	58%	52%	75%	14%	25%	20%	54%	45%	65%
Did not borrow	839	5%	59%	47%	25%	44%	43%	62%	15%	27%	17%	29%	16%	79%

Base: Parents of college students and college students except where noted

* Parents of college students and college students where student is not living at home (total N=680)

Q. Are you/Is your child working in the 2016-2017 school year?

Table 46: Working Students

	N	Yes, year round	Yes, only on school breaks	Yes, only while at school	No
Total	1600	55%	15%	6%	24%
Income					
<\$35k	568	56%	8%	6%	30%
\$35 – <\$100k	724	59%	18%	7%	16%
\$100k+	308	45%	22%	3%	30%
Race/ethnicity					
White	1153	59%	14%	6%	21%
Black	216	45%	19%	8%	29%
Hispanic	266	56%	15%	6%	22%
Enrollment status					
Full time	1414	53%	16%	6%	25%
Part time	171	75%	8%	1%	16%
School type					
4-year public/state college/university	679	51%	17%	5%	27%
4-year private college/university	363	49%	17%	10%	24%
2-year public/community college	543	65%	12%	5%	19%
Planning status					
Planners	619	45%	20%	5%	30%
Non-planners	981	62%	12%	6%	20%

Base: Parents of college students and college students

Q. When thinking about paying for college, to what extent are you worried about each of the following economic factors? Please use a five-point scale, where 5 means very worried and 1 means not at all worried. You may use any of the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 for your rating.

- a. The value of your home will go down.
- b. The value of your savings or investments will be lower than you expected.
- c. Loan rates will go up.
- d. Student loan money will be less available.
- e. Student won't be able to find summer job to earn money for next semester.
- f. Life insurance alone may not be enough to cover the cost of college if I or child's other parent were to die.
- g. Schools will have to raise tuition to cover their increased costs.
- h. Scholarship and grant money will be less available.
- i. Earned income will go down due to job loss.
- j. Our funds will run out before our child has completed college.

Table 47: Parent Economic Concerns, Percentage Rated "Extremely Worried"

	N	Home value will decrease	Savings value will be lower	Loan rates will increase	Student loan money less available	Student won't find summer job*	Schools will raise tuition	Income will decrease due to job loss	Scholarships/grants less available	Funds will deplete	Life insurance insufficient
Total parents	800	8%	18%	29%	21%	10%	29%	20%	24%	19%	20%
Income											
<\$35k	218	4%	18%	41%	30%	11%	36%	36%	25%	24%	31%
\$35k – <\$100k	398	11%	22%	32%	21%	11%	30%	18%	29%	22%	21%
\$100k+	184	3%	8%	11%	8%	6%	19%	5%	12%	8%	6%
Race/ethnicity											
White	594	7%	16%	23%	16%	8%	25%	15%	19%	18%	17%
Black	93	13%	26%	49%	28%	8%	40%	20%	38%	20%	31%
Hispanic	132	6%	31%	41%	31%	19%	31%	41%	42%	29%	31%
Region											
Northeast	176	15%	26%	42%	27%	8%	36%	25%	30%	24%	29%
Midwest	189	8%	8%	18%	14%	6%	24%	11%	19%	17%	12%
South	242	4%	17%	28%	24%	11%	29%	18%	23%	16%	19%
West	193	5%	22%	30%	16%	14%	27%	25%	25%	21%	22%
Borrowing status											
Borrowed	358	14%	33%	44%	26%	15%	37%	23%	36%	27%	32%
Did not borrow	434	2%	6%	18%	16%	5%	22%	18%	15%	13%	11%
Family college experience											
First-in-family	268	16%	29%	42%	33%	15%	34%	31%	35%	34%	34%
Second-generation	531	4%	12%	23%	14%	7%	26%	14%	18%	12%	13%

Base: Parents of college students except where noted

* Parents of college students where student is a freshman, sophomore, or junior (total N=698)

Table 48 Parent Economic Concerns, Scale 1-5

	N	1 (Not at all worried)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely worried)
Home value will decrease	800	54%	12%	14%	12%	8%
Savings value will be lower	800	35%	13%	26%	7%	18%
Loan rates will increase	800	31%	7%	17%	16%	29%
Student loan money less available	800	40%	9%	18%	13%	21%
Student won't find summer job*	698	52%	14%	19%	5%	10%
Schools will raise tuition	800	19%	14%	23%	16%	29%
Income will decrease due to job loss	800	40%	15%	21%	5%	20%
Scholarships /grants less available	800	29%	11%	21%	14%	24%
Funds will deplete	800	43%	11%	16%	10%	19%
Life insurance insufficient	800	53%	10%	13%	4%	20%

Base: Parents of college students

*Parents of college students where student is a freshman, sophomore, or junior

Q. Now I would like you to think about different types of debt. On a five-point scale, where 5 is totally acceptable and 1 is totally unacceptable, please tell me how you feel about carrying the following types of debt.

- a. Student loan
- b. Car or vehicle loan
- c. Mortgage
- d. Home equity line of credit
- e. Credit card debt
- f. Installment loan for major retail purchases (furniture, appliances etc.)
- g. Cash advances or payday loans
- h. Personal loan

Table 49 Debt Acceptance, Rated Totally Acceptable*

	N	Student loan	Vehicle loan	Mortgage	HELOC	Credit card	Installment loan	Cash advance/ payday loan	Personal loan
Total	1600	23%	18%	34%	11%	6%	5%	7%	9%
Parents	800	21%	22%	42%	13%	5%	4%	8%	7%
Students	800	24%	15%	26%	8%	6%	5%	5%	10%
Income									
<\$35k	568	25%	17%	27%	9%	5%	4%	4%	8%
\$35k – <\$100k	724	19%	20%	35%	11%	6%	5%	9%	10%
\$100k+	308	28%	17%	45%	13%	6%	5%	7%	7%
Race/ethnicity									
White	1153	23%	19%	35%	10%	6%	4%	7%	8%
Black	216	18%	14%	32%	16%	8%	8%	5%	10%
Hispanic	266	28%	15%	31%	9%	6%	3%	9%	10%
Region									
Northeast	333	21%	16%	37%	12%	4%	3%	9%	9%
Midwest	372	27%	20%	34%	8%	6%	5%	4%	5%
South	488	22%	22%	36%	13%	6%	6%	8%	12%
West	397	20%	14%	29%	10%	6%	4%	5%	7%
School type									
4-year public/state college/university	679	25%	19%	36%	12%	5%	3%	7%	9%
4-year private college/university	363	25%	23%	39%	13%	8%	3%	5%	9%
2-year public/community college	543	18%	16%	28%	8%	5%	7%	8%	8%
Borrowing status									
Borrowed	738	29%	23%	38%	14%	8%	5%	6%	12%
Did not borrow	839	16%	14%	31%	8%	4%	4%	7%	6%
Planning status									
Planners	619	26%	17%	35%	9%	6%	4%	8%	8%
Non-planners	981	21%	19%	33%	12%	6%	5%	6%	9%

Base: Parents of college students and college students
*5 on a scale of 1-5

Technical notes

Target population

Ipsos conducted the *How America Pays for College 2017* survey by telephone between Wednesday, March 22, 2017, and Monday, April 24, 2017. Ipsos interviewed 1,600 individuals: 800 parents of 18- to 24-year-old undergraduate students and 800 18- to 24-year-old undergraduate students.

Sample design

Two sample sources were used for this study:

- a purchased list of college students aged 18 – 24
- a list of parents of college students aged 18 – 24 from Ipsos panels

The sample design was a disproportionate stratified probabilistic sample for both students and parents. Both samples were designed to over-represent African-Americans and Hispanics, with a minimum of 100 responses from each group in both the parent and the student sample. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

The student sample frame was merged with official information on U.S. colleges obtained from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). This allowed the sample to be further stratified by relevant variables, such as region and size of college (as shown in Table f).

Weighting

To correct for the disproportionate stratified sample, both samples were weighted using a statistical technique called raking, in which all of the population marginal profiles of interest are replicated in the sample. The sample of parents was weighted by gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, education, and college information (region, size, and type). The sample of students was weighted by gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and college information (region, size, and type). All of the demographic profiles used for both parents and students in the weights were sourced from the April 2015 Current Population Survey (CPS). The NCES provided additional data for the college information weights.

Margin of error (MoE)

The MoE is a measure of sampling error. It is used to quantify the range of possible values for an observed sample statistic, taking into account the possible sample variation, i.e., the larger the MoE, the greater the uncertainty in the survey results with respect to the statistic being analyzed. More specifically, the MoE can be defined as the maximum absolute difference between the statistic and the actual population parameter being estimated that would be expected from a simple random sample, with a pre-determined confidence level.

When estimating percentages from this survey using the whole sample (1,600), the MoE is estimated to be approximately +/- 2.5 percentage points, with a confidence level of 95 percent. When comparing data between waves, a simple rule of thumb to judge whether the observed difference is statistically significant is to sum the margin of error for the two waves – for comparing the 2016 and 2017 surveys this would be 5 percent. If the difference is larger, then it is considered statistically significant.

If percentages are being estimated from sub-domains of the survey, i.e., not using the whole sample, then the MoE will be higher than the one stated above, and must be re-calculated. Assuming that each domain being compared has a different sample size, the rule when estimating percentages from a base of n cases is $\text{MoE}(n) = 1/\sqrt{n}$. In this context, to judge whether the observed difference between two domains (groups) with different sample sizes, say n_1 and n_2 , is statistically significant, this difference should be compared to $(1/\sqrt{n_1}) + (1/\sqrt{n_2})$. If it is larger, then it's considered statistically significant.

Effective base sizes

As discussed in the previous section, the MoE depends on the sample size of the domain being analyzed. To serve as a guideline of the precision and confidence the reader should have for the survey estimates, Table g shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error around a single percentage estimate in the study.

Calculating *How America Pays for College*

The primary goal of the *How America Pays for College* national survey is to understand how and what the “typical American family” is paying for a college education. To enable this understanding and for these figures to be tracked over time, Ipsos has continued to calculate figures for the total cost of college, and the use and value of the variety of funding sources, in the same way as they have been calculated in previous waves.

There are two types of averages presented in this report: one relative to the entire population, which are composite scores (see Tables 2A – D and 3A – D) and others that mention amounts among users of a specific item or funding source, which measure frequency (see Tables 1A and 1B).

Qualitative interviews

Ipsos conducted 10 in-depth interviews between Tuesday, April 11, and Monday, April 17, 2017. These interviews, approximately 30 minutes in length, were conducted with four pairs of college students and their parents, three parents of college students, and three current college students. Each respondent received a \$75 incentive for participating in the interview.

Table f: Distribution of Student Sample

Region	College enrollment size	Students
Midwest	<5000	50
	>5000	126
Northeast	<5000	39
	>5000	108
South	<5000	77
	>5000	219
West	<5000	28
	>5000	153
Total		800

Table g: Margin of Error for Different Domain Sizes

Sample size	Margin of error
50	14.1%
100	10.0%
200	7.1%
300	5.8%
400	5.0%
500	4.5%
600	4.1%
700	3.8%
800	3.5%
900	3.3%
1,000	3.2%
1,100	3.0%
1,200	2.9%
1,300	2.8%
1,400	2.7%
1,500	2.6%
1,600	2.5%



SallieMae.com/HowAmericaPaysforCollege