

# The State of Black Students at Community Colleges

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This research brief examines administrative data to describe the characteristics and select educational and economic outcomes for Black students who attended community colleges. Given the role of community colleges during economic downturns and the disproportionate enrollment of Black students, it is essential to understand how community colleges can be tools for economic recovery in the context of COVID-19

when Black adults continue to face high unemployment rates.<sup>1</sup> From our analysis of the limited data on Black community college students, we find that while Black students are disproportionately represented at community colleges, the system does not produce equitable outcomes.

**From our analysis of the limited data on Black community college students, we find that while Black students are disproportionately represented at community colleges, the system does not produce equitable outcomes.**

Future research and policy concerning community colleges must address the barriers that prevent these institutions from serving as an equitable education solution for Black communities. Other key findings in this brief include the following:

- Despite the historic lure to community colleges during previous recessions, Black student enrollment has steadily declined over time and has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. From Fall 2019 to Fall 2021, enrollment fell 18 percent for all Black students and 23.5 percent and 15 percent for Black men and Black women, respectively.
- Black community college students experience the lowest graduation rates when compared to their peers of other races and ethnicities. The gap between Black and white graduation rates more than doubled from four percentage points in 2007 to 11 percentage points in 2020, the latest year data is available.
- Community colleges award Black students certificates at higher rates than other groups. In the 2019-2020 year, fewer than half (47 percent) of the awards given to Black community college completers were associate degrees, while the opposite is true for all other racial groups.
- The typical Black community college graduate earns \$20,000 less per year than their classmates. White households with workers who hold a high school diploma earn \$2,000 more than Black community college graduates.
- Over two-thirds (67 percent) of Black students borrowed money to pay for community college compared to 51, 36, and 30 percent of white, Hispanic, and Asian students, respectively. Black community college graduates owe 123 percent of the original amount they borrowed 12 years after beginning their community college journey.

# INTRODUCTION

Earning a credential beyond a high school diploma is imperative for access to good jobs. An estimated two-thirds of all jobs in the economy require some education and training beyond high school.<sup>2</sup> Increasingly, Black students are completing their bachelor's degrees as attainment has risen from 20 to 28 percent since 2011.<sup>3</sup> Some students also choose to delay or even forego a bachelor's degree after high school and instead pursue vocational or technical training at community colleges to gain credentials for occupations that only require certifications or an associate degree.

## WHAT ARE COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

Community colleges are an essential access point to higher education for Black students. While community colleges pursue many competing missions, two of their most salient priorities include preparing students for transfer to four-year degree programs and graduating them from terminal

programs that lead to occupations that do not require a bachelor's degree. Today, more than one-third (36 percent) of all Black undergraduate students can be found in the nation's community colleges.<sup>4</sup>

Historically, community colleges helped counter economic downturns because they are accessible and proximal to those most likely to become unemployed.<sup>5</sup> During

**Community colleges, sometimes referred to interchangeably as junior colleges, technical colleges, and two-year colleges, are postsecondary institutions. In two years or less, community colleges offer a variety of credentials ranging from the GED and professional certifications to associate degrees. Community colleges also offer general education course credit that students can use to transfer to major programs at four-year colleges and universities.**

the Great Recession, Black students enrolled in community colleges at higher rates than other racial groups.<sup>6</sup> These higher community college enrollment rates were associated with higher unemployment rates and fewer available jobs for Black workers.<sup>7</sup> But unlike the Great Recession period, Black student enrollment has declined during the COVID-19 economic downturn, especially at community colleges.



# BACKGROUND

Community colleges were initially recognized as junior colleges in the United States. The original purpose of the junior college, which researchers trace as far back as the mid-19th century, was to prepare students who were not yet ready for university education.<sup>8</sup> A two-year education at the junior college was understood as an extension of the high school, offering a combination of college preparatory coursework, remedial courses, and technical/vocational education.<sup>9</sup> In the 1940s, junior colleges were rebranded as community colleges to recognize their access to local communities and an expanded mission to prepare students for occupations that did not necessarily require education beyond a two-year degree.<sup>10</sup>

Despite being understood as more accessible and affordable than four-year colleges and universities, community colleges have not been immune to the systemic racism that has erected barriers for Black students in education. In the early and middle part of the 20th century, most community colleges excluded Black students through de jure and de facto segregation, which resulted in unequal access to well-funded and high-quality postsecondary education.<sup>11</sup> Those community colleges that served higher shares of Black students typically suffered from state underinvestment, a trend that continues today.<sup>12</sup>

The community college demonstrates how equal and open access does not always facilitate more equitable access to higher education and better careers. Today, community colleges, which disproportionately enroll higher numbers of Black students, suffer from a \$78 billion funding shortfall compared to four-year institutions which enroll disproportionately higher shares of white students.<sup>13</sup> Researchers have also criticized community colleges for their history of tracking Black students away from four-year colleges and universities.<sup>14</sup> This troubling trend has been recognized in the uneven rates of transfer from two-year to four-year programs among Black students compared to white students.<sup>15</sup>



Source: Adapted from “The \$78 billion Community College Funding Shortfall,” Center for American Progress, 2020.

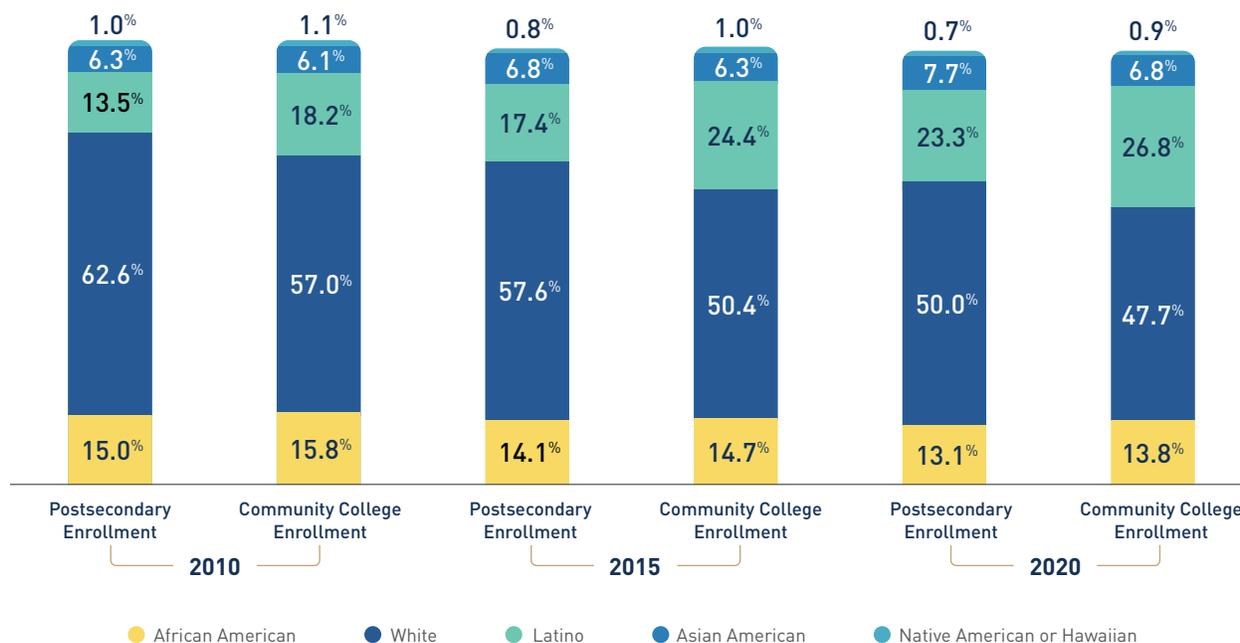
Community colleges still enroll Black students at higher rates than white students despite their complex history of segregation and tracking. Understanding how Black students fare is critical given the disproportionate representation of Black students in two-year schools, the many competing goals of community colleges, and new economic challenges emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. The following section explores the characteristics of Black students who attend community colleges.

# BLACK STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Typically in moments of economic uncertainty, individuals turn to colleges and universities to obtain additional training to gain more credentials and become more employable in the labor market.<sup>16</sup> Between 2006 and 2011, spanning before and after the Great Recession, postsecondary school enrollment increased by 2.8 million students, with two-year colleges accounting for half of that increase.<sup>17</sup> However, in the years following the Great Recession, community college enrollment declined between 2010 and 2020. Black student enrollment declined by a staggering 44 percent, from 1.2 million in 2010 to 670,000 in 2020.<sup>18</sup> Further, the share of Black students in community college fell from 16 to 14 percent during the same period.

**Figure 1: The share of Black students enrolled in community college fell over the last decade**

Postsecondary and community college enrollment by race, 2010-2020



Source: Joint Center analysis of data provided by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Spring 2010 through Spring 2021. Public and for-profit institutions are included.

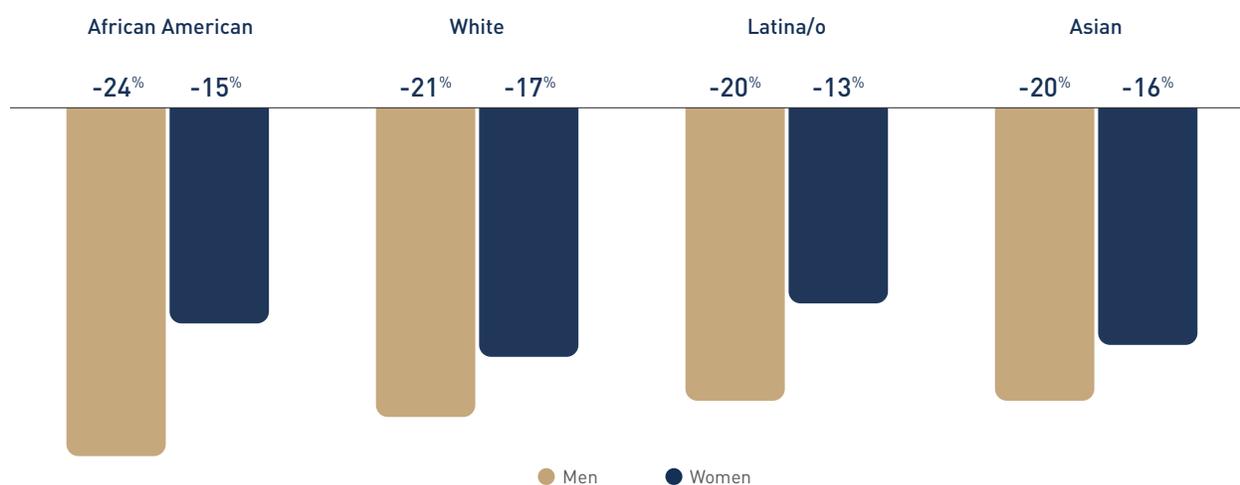


## PANDEMIC PERIOD ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Although recessionary events have caused enrollment spikes at community colleges in the past,<sup>19</sup> the current pandemic recession shows a different trend. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the trend of rapidly declining Black student enrollment. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center's *Stay Informed* series tracked college enrollment trends in near real-time during the COVID-19 era. Preliminary data for fall 2021 shows a decline of 15 percent in community college enrollment from pre-pandemic levels in 2019 compared to just four percent at public four-year institutions.<sup>20</sup> In the same period, Black student enrollment at community colleges decreased by 18 percent, with enrollment falling for Black men by 24 percent and Black women by 15 percent.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 2: Black men face the greatest declines in community college enrollment**

Community college enrollment changes by race and gender, 2019-2021

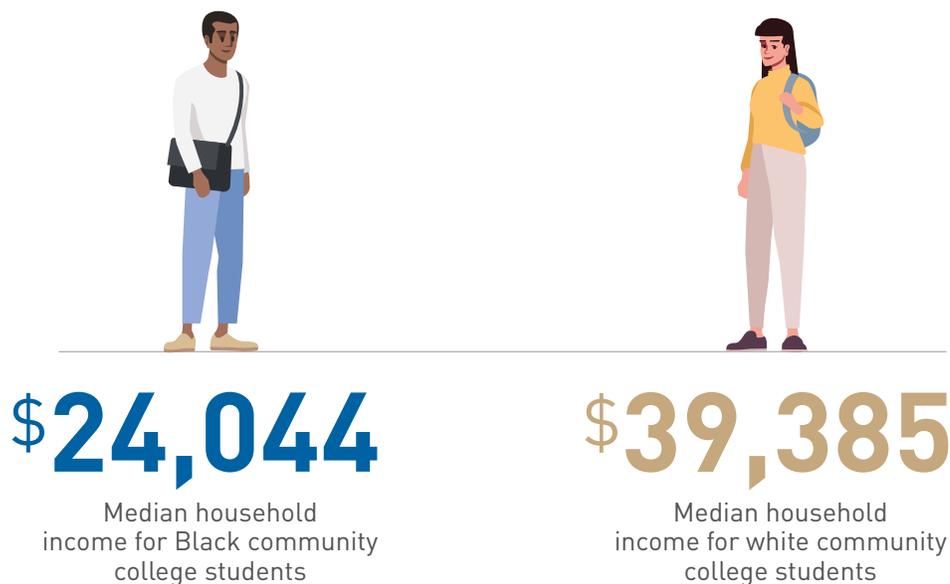


Source: Joint Center analysis of data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Fall 2021.

A mix of factors may be contributing to these declines. For instance, young Black adults' concerns about the cost of attendance at community college affect their enrollment despite community colleges being relatively more affordable than four-year schools.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, these drops signal that Black adults — particularly Black men — may face barriers such as food, housing, and employment insecurity that prevent them from pursuing educational opportunities that could aid in economic recovery.

## SELECT BLACK STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Black community college students experience financial hardship at a greater rate than other racial groups. According to the 2016 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, the median income for Black community college student households was \$24,044 compared to \$39,385 for white students.<sup>23</sup> Of community college students, 36 percent of Black students are in poverty, followed by 28 percent of Latina/o students, and 18 percent of white students.<sup>24</sup>



Community colleges provide greater course scheduling flexibility and lower tuition costs, leading to a large share of parents in college attending two-year institutions.<sup>25,6</sup> Student parents make up 20 percent of the overall college population, but are overrepresented at the community college level, where 42 percent of all student parents are enrolled.<sup>27</sup> Black students are more likely to be parents when compared to other racial groups. About 40 percent of Black women and 21 percent of Black men in college are parents.<sup>28</sup> Thirty-five percent of Black students in community colleges are parents.<sup>29</sup>

Community college students are often employed while in school. Among Black community college students, 78 percent report having a job at some point during the school year.<sup>30</sup> The employment levels of Black students are comparable to other racial groups, as 79 percent of community college students hold a job at some point during the school year.<sup>31</sup>

# OUTCOMES

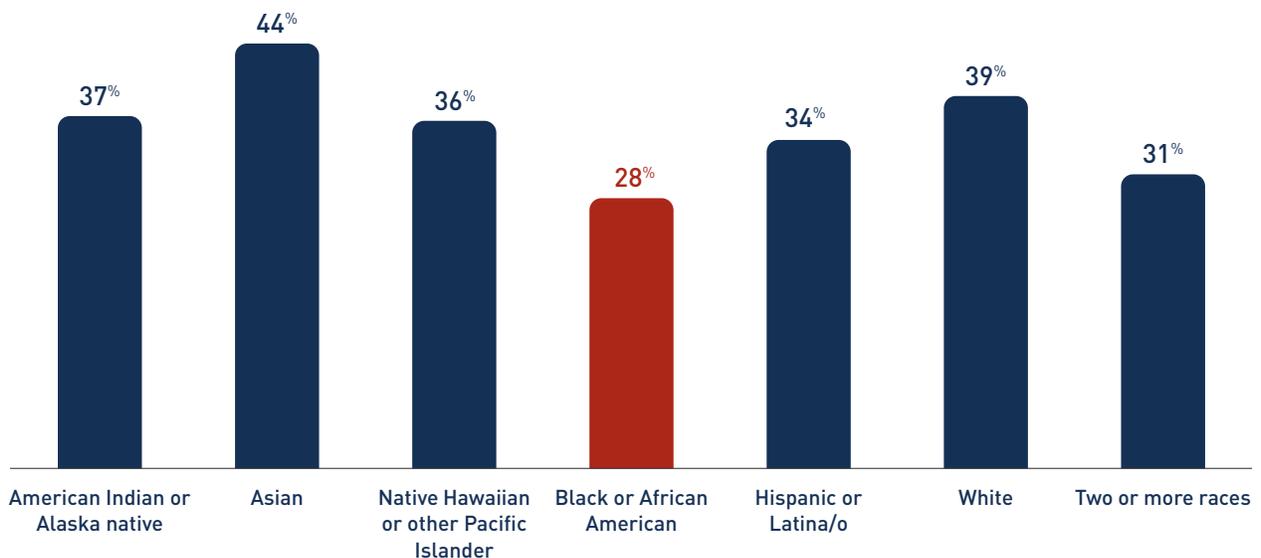
Although many see community colleges as an accessible entry point into higher education and a tool for achieving educational equity, Black students face drastically different outcomes than their non-Black classmates. From completion rates to earning potential, community colleges largely fail to deliver equitable results for Black community college students.

## GRADUATION RATES

Although the number of Black credential and degree recipients has increased over the past two decades, Black students in two-year institutions typically experience the lowest graduation rates across race and ethnicity. In 2019-2020, the last year for which racially disaggregated graduation rates are available, only 28 percent of Black community college students graduated within three years (150 percent normal completion) compared to 44, 39, and 34 percent of Asian, white, and Latina/o students, respectively (Figure 3).<sup>32</sup>

**Figure 3: Black students have the lowest graduation rates at community colleges**

Graduation rates within 150% of normal completion time, by race, 2019-2020



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Graduation Rates component 2020 provisional data.

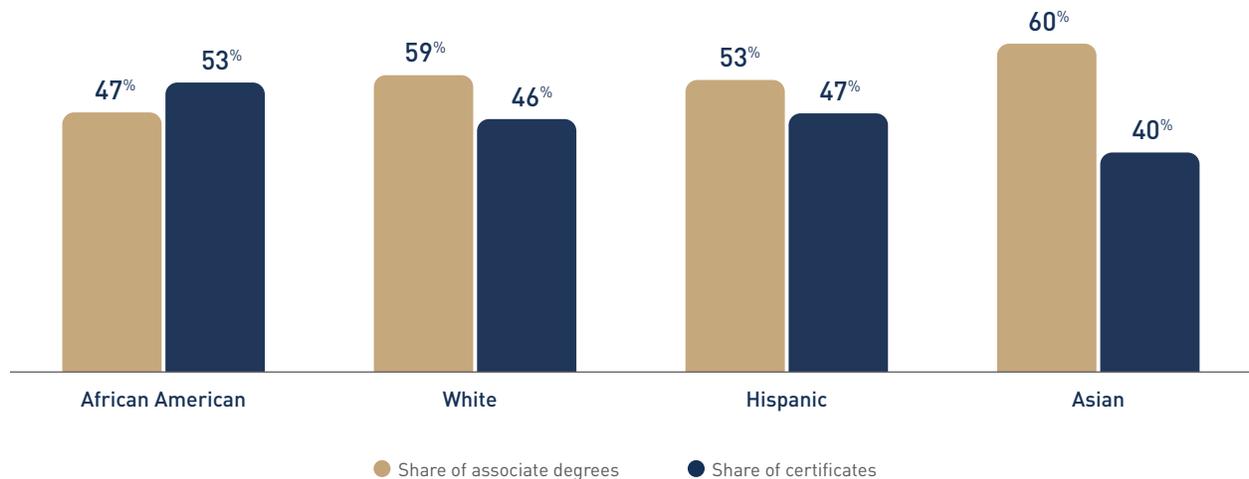


## CERTIFICATES VS. DEGREES

Although community colleges offer a variety of pathways to a career, they are most recognized for awarding associate degrees and certificates. Associate degrees can lead to increased earnings, but these returns are dependent on the field of study and occupation.<sup>33,4</sup> While all postsecondary credentials may provide valuable returns on investment for students, certificates fall near the bottom of the list of credentials that boost earning power.<sup>35</sup>

**Figure 4: Black students are more likely to be awarded certificates than degrees**

Degrees and certificates by award type and race, 2019-2020



Source: Joint Center analysis of data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2019-2020.

Joint Center analysis finds a troubling indicator with this evidence in mind: Community colleges award Black students certificates at higher rates than other groups. In the 2019-2020 school year, fewer than half of the awards given to Black community college completers were associate degrees, while the opposite is true for all other racial groups.<sup>36</sup> More research is needed to understand the different benefits of certifications and associate degrees for Black students.

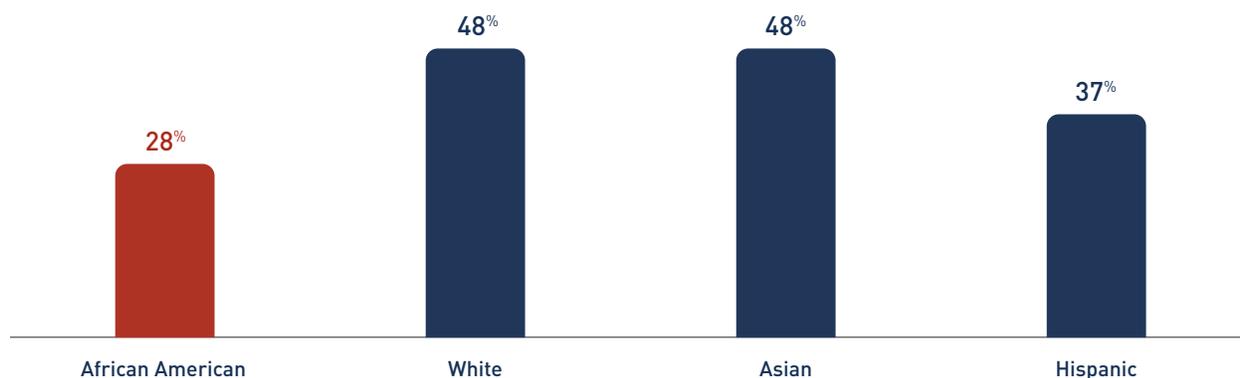


## RATES OF TRANSFER

In addition to offering associate degrees and certifications, community colleges continue to provide transfer education to help students transition to four-year degree programs.<sup>37</sup> These four-year degree programs may lead to higher paying jobs, but research has long shown disparities between Black transfer rates and the transfer rates of other groups to four-year degree programs.<sup>38</sup> Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Black community college students were the least likely to transfer to four-year colleges and universities compared to their peers.<sup>39</sup>

**Figure 5: Prior to COVID-19, Black community college students were the least likely to transfer to four-year degree programs**

Transfer rates from public two-year colleges to public four-year college by race, 2011-2017



Source: Shapiro, Doug, Afet Dundar, Faye Huie, Phoebe K. Wakhungu, Ayesha Bhimdiwala, Angel Nathan, and Youngsik Hwang. "Transfer and mobility: A national view of student movement in postsecondary institutions, Fall 2011 cohort" (2018).

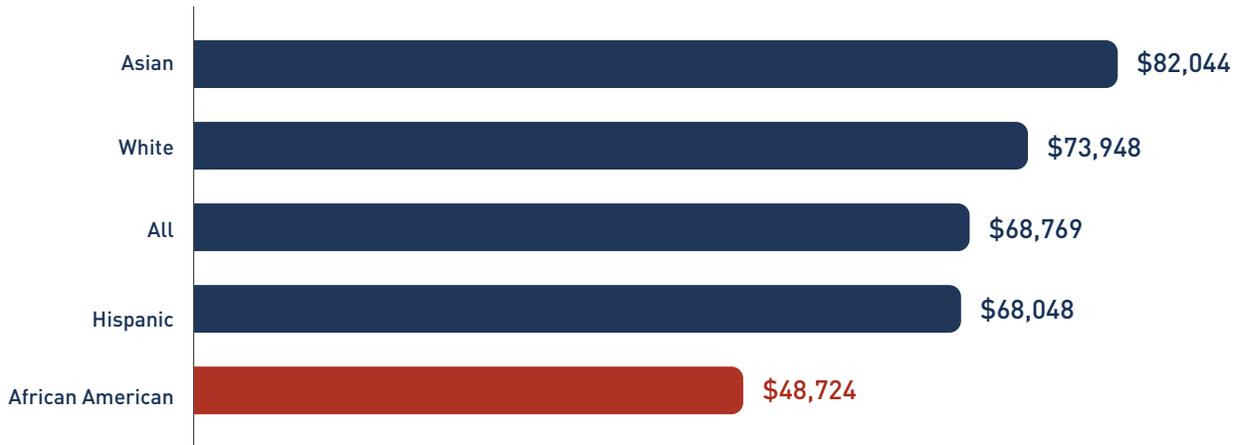
More recent data shows that transfer rate gaps may be worsening for Black students during the pandemic. While the share of all students transferring from community college to public four-year colleges fell by 11.6 percent, Black student transfers making that same transition fell more sharply by 14.2 percent.<sup>40</sup>

## EARNINGS

One of the primary reasons students and workers seek higher education is to increase their earning potential, but Black workers do not equitably benefit. In 2020, Black households with workers who graduated from a community college earned nearly \$16,000 per year more than Black households without associate degrees.<sup>41</sup> Yet, deep racial disparities in household income persist, regardless of educational attainment. That same year, white families with workers who held a high school diploma earned \$2,000 more than Black community college graduates.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 6: Black workers face significantly lower earnings than their counterparts after obtaining an associate degree**

Median household income by race for associate degree holders, 2021

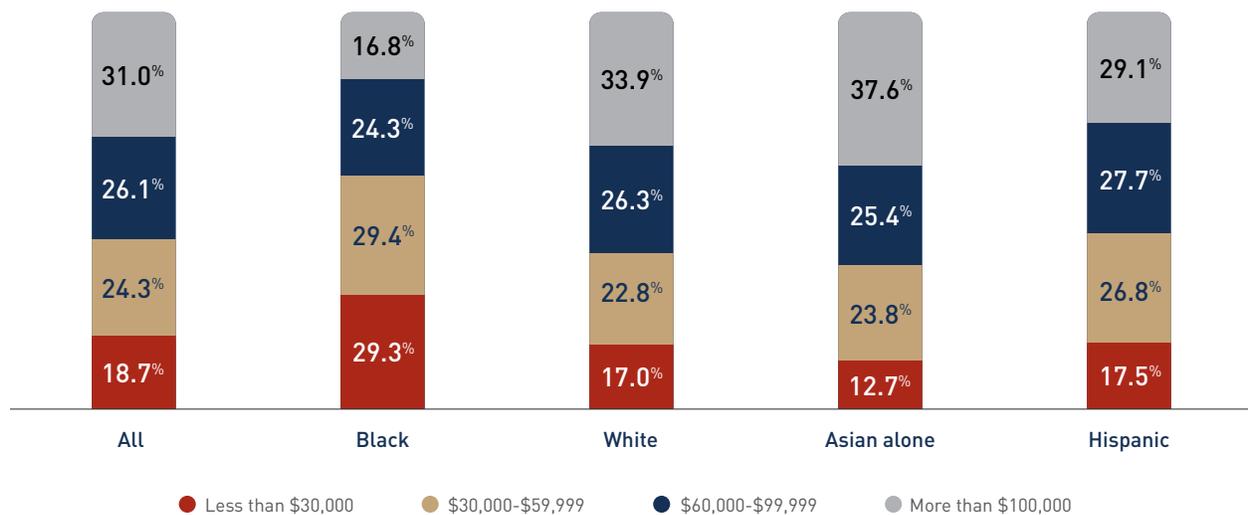


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2021 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

After obtaining an associate degree, Black workers face significantly lower earnings than their counterparts. In 2020, the median income for U.S. households with associate degree holders was \$68,769. A typical white household with an associate degree holder earned \$73,948 per year, while a typical Black household with an associate degree holder earned just \$48,724 (Figure 6).<sup>43</sup> Further, 29.3 percent of Black households with associate degrees earned less than \$30,000 per year (the equivalent of two full-time workers earning minimum wage), compared to 18.7 percent of all households with associate degrees (Figure 7).<sup>44</sup>

**Figure 7: Black community college graduates are more likely than their peers to to earn poverty wages**

Household income of associate degree holders by race, 2021



Note: A "poverty wage" is a wage that would leave a full-time, year-round worker below the federal poverty guideline. In 2022, the poverty threshold for a family of four is \$27,750.

Source: Joint Center's analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2021 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

## BLACK STUDENT DEBT AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The contrast between the earning potential of Black students pursuing degrees and certifications at community colleges with the amount of debt required to attend those institutions is concerning. Community colleges are a more affordable alternative to four-year institutions, especially for students from low-income backgrounds.<sup>45</sup> About two-thirds of community college students graduate with zero debt.<sup>46</sup> In 2021, the average cost of attending an in-district community college was \$3,730 per year.<sup>47</sup> Over the past 20 years, community college tuition has increased by only 46 percent, compared to a 76 percent increase in tuition costs at public four-year institutions during that same period.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the relative affordability of community colleges, deep racial disparities in student loan debt persist. Black students are more likely to borrow for school, owe more in student loans, and are twice as likely to default on student loans than white borrowers.<sup>49</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Education, Black associate degree recipients are more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to take out loans to attend two-year institutions. In 2016, over two-thirds (67 percent) of Black students borrowed money to pay for community college compared to 51, 36, and 30 percent of white, Hispanic, and Asian students, respectively (Figure 8).<sup>50</sup> On average, Black students borrowed \$22,303, more than any other racial/ethnic group.

Figure 8: Total borrowing: Associate degree recipients, by race and ethnicity: 2015–16

	Percent who borrowed	The average amount borrowed per borrower	Percent of borrowers who are independent borrowers
All racial and ethnic groups	48%	\$18,501	64%
American Indian or Alaska Native	67%	\$18,225	76%
Asian	30%	\$17,459	60%
<b>Black or African American</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>\$22,303</b>	<b>77%</b>
Hispanic or Latina/o	36%	\$15,778	56%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	47%	*	46%
White	51%	\$17,794	64%
More than one race	51%	\$21,795	65%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016.

\*Estimate suppressed. Reporting standards not met.

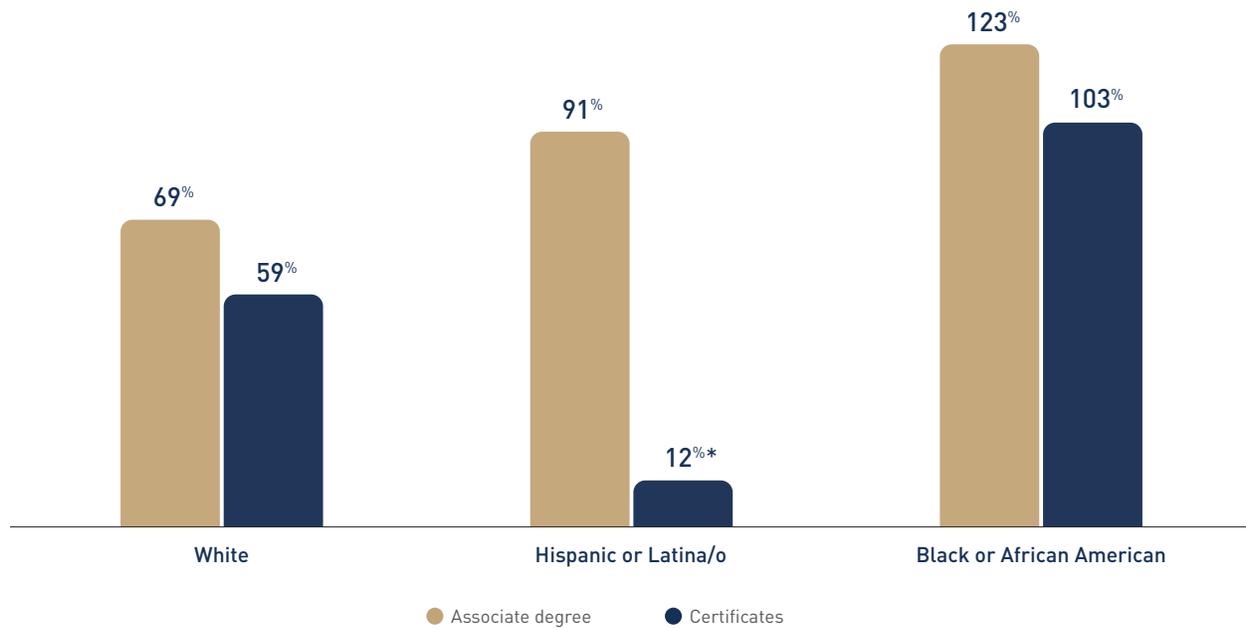
In addition to taking on larger amounts of student debt, Black and Indigenous students are more likely to be the sole carriers of their student loan debt, meaning they were less likely than any other group to receive support with their loans from parents or other family members. In 2016, 77 percent of Black borrowers were the independent holders of their community college loans (Figure 8). Those same students, on average, took out \$14,986 in loans compared to \$9,063, \$5,719, and \$5,170 for white, Hispanic, and Asian students, respectively.<sup>51</sup>

Black students in public institutions borrow at starkly different rates and levels than Black students in for-profit institutions. Just over 57 percent of Black students who receive associate degrees at public two-year institutions took out loans, averaging \$10,652 borrowed per student.<sup>52</sup> Yet 92.9 percent of Black students who receive associate degrees from for-profit two-year institutions took out student loans, averaging \$28,075 borrowed per student.<sup>53</sup>

Black students also face racial disparities in their ability to repay their loans. The typical Black associate degree recipient owes 123 percent of the original amount they borrowed 12 years after beginning their degree, compared to 69 and 91 percent for white and Hispanic students, respectively (Figure 9). After the same period, the typical Black certificate recipient still owes 103 percent of the original amount borrowed compared to 68 percent for all recipients.<sup>54</sup>

**Figure 9: After 12 years, the typical Black borrower owes 123% of their original loan amount**

Ratio of the amount still owed to amount borrowed 12 years after first beginning postsecondary education by award level and race and ethnicity, 2021



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, BPS:04/09, and 2015 Federal Student Aid Supplement

Note: Data for Asian recipients is not available for certificate recipients, so they were not included in this chart.

\*Interpret with caution. Ratio of standard error to estimate is >50%.

## CONCLUSION

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The community college serves as a gateway to higher education for Black students in America. But access to opportunity does not necessarily mean equity in enrollment, graduation, transfer, debt, and earnings

outcomes. Investments in community colleges should consider the inequitable outcomes for Black students described in this research brief. Additionally, college administrators, advocates, and policymakers should do the following:

**The community college serves as a gateway to higher education for Black students in America. But access to opportunity does not necessarily mean equity in enrollment, graduation, transfer, debt, and earnings outcomes.**



### **Improve access to basic needs support for Black students**

More than one in three Black community college students are in poverty, and widespread inequality in community colleges deepened throughout the pandemic for Black students facing basic needs insecurity. An alarming 70 percent of Black students experienced food or housing insecurity or homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>55</sup>

Basic needs insecurity is also closely associated with enrollment declines.<sup>56</sup> While COVID-19 emergency funds authorized by Congress pushed community colleges to introduce more support for meeting students' basic needs, barriers to accessing those supports remain. For example, 68 percent of Black male students at community colleges experience basic needs insecurity. Still, only 31 percent of those with need accessed on-campus resources meant to connect students with aid because too few knew they were available or do not know how to apply.<sup>57</sup>

Policymakers and college leaders should invest in expanding outreach and marketing efforts to ensure students are aware of available resources. They should also invest in on-campus infrastructure to improve basic needs security, such as food pantries and on-campus resource hubs and caseworkers who help students easily apply for food, housing and child care assistance, and more.

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## Improve access to campus-based child care

Though many Black student parents enroll in community college, the lack of support for parents makes it more challenging to complete a credential. Black (27 percent) and Indigenous (28 percent) student parents are the most likely to have earned some college credit but not completed a degree.<sup>58</sup> Even though most student parents work, single parents have higher unmet financial needs than their peers and hold more student debt.<sup>59</sup> Congress first authorized Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) funding in 1998 in an amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965.<sup>60</sup> The program's goal is to support institutions in the design and implementation of campus-based child care options for low-income student parents. Currently, fewer than half of community colleges offer campus-based care.<sup>61</sup>

CCAMPIS funding should be increased to expand campus-based childcare at all community colleges. Additionally, college leaders should make student parents a priority for basic needs programs and help students access child care subsidies and other family support services.

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## Strengthen transfer pathways

Black students experience barriers to transfer success.<sup>62</sup> States and postsecondary systems should enact policies that guarantee students will receive credit for any courses taken for their general education core or the associate degree if they have completed one.

Public colleges and universities should also consider students who transfer with an associate degree from a community college in the same state as having fulfilled the destination school's general education requirements. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) should also strengthen their relationships with community colleges.

Evidence shows that Black students transferring from community colleges to HBCUs are more likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree compared to Black students who transfer to predominantly white institutions.<sup>63</sup>

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## Evaluate community college outcomes by race and ethnicity

By analyzing data to reveal inequities among student groups, it may be possible to uncover barriers to racial equity in higher education. To maximize community college outcomes and advance racial equity, college leaders should regularly disaggregate data by race and use multiple approaches to collect and analyze data by race.<sup>64</sup> Further, federal law should require annual reporting and disclosure of community college outcome data by race and allocate resources to those colleges that will boost the credential and career outcomes of Black students.

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## Make two-year community college tuition-free

One of the most common arguments against making two-year college tuition-free is that these colleges are already primarily free after accounting for various types of student aid. There are also concerns that making community college tuition-free would affect enrollment at HBCUs, but HBCU leaders support the proposal when paired with additional aid for HBCU students.<sup>65</sup> As our analysis shows, Black students still shoulder the most debt at community colleges. The average in-state net price at a community college in 2018 accounted for 20 percent or more of the median household income for Black households in 14 states.<sup>66</sup> The Biden administration campaigned to make two years of college tuition-free and should work with Congress to make good on that promise.

*The Biden administration campaigned to make two years of college tuition-free and should work with Congress to make good on that promise.*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**Dr. Alex Camardelle** is the director of the Workforce Policy Program at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, where he leads a program that centers Black workers in policy debates concerning the future of work, workforce development, and access to good jobs. Prior to joining the Joint Center, Dr. Camardelle served as the senior policy analyst for economic mobility at the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, where his research and advocacy supported policy reforms shaping workforce development, worker justice, and access to core safety net programs for individuals and families with low incomes. He also worked at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, where he was responsible for strengthening economic opportunity through research, grantmaking, and partnerships. Dr. Camardelle holds a B.A. in political science from the University of Alabama, and a master's of public administration in policy analysis and evaluation and a Ph.D. in educational policy studies, both from Georgia State University. His scholarship focuses on race, workforce development, and political economy.



**Brian Kennedy II** is a senior policy analyst for the Workforce Policy Program at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Prior to joining the Joint Center, Kennedy served as a policy advisor in the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Recovery Programs where he supported the administration of American Rescue Plan funds to states and local governments. Previously, Kennedy worked as a consultant with Frontline Solutions, a Black-owned and led consulting firm supporting non-profits and philanthropic organizations. Kennedy has also worked as a senior policy analyst with the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center, focusing on living wages and social safety net programs. Kennedy earned bachelor's degrees in history and political science from North Carolina Central University and a master's degree in public policy from the Heller School at Brandeis University. Kennedy is also the co-host of "At The Intersection," a Durham-based podcast about policy, culture, and identity.



**Justin Nalley** is a senior policy analyst for the Workforce Policy Program at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Nalley brings his experience advocating for access to equitable resources for Black communities to produce timely policy research and data analysis, which centers Black workers in workforce development, post-secondary access, and access to quality jobs. Before joining the Joint Center, Nalley served as the senior public policy analyst for the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland. In this role, Nalley researched, lobbied, and conducted state fiscal analysis to shape policy for Black youth and families in public education, juvenile justice reform, and voting rights. Nalley was also instrumental in the formation and recognition of the first union at the ACLU of Maryland and held the role of shop steward, leading contract negotiations. He also worked at Baltimore City Public Schools as an analyst, ensuring the large urban district received accurate state revenue to support their students. Nalley is a member of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators and the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. Nalley attended the University of Maryland Eastern Shore before earning his Bachelor of Business Administration from Temple University and Master of Public Administration from West Chester University.



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6. Lisa Barrow and Jonathan Davis, “The Upside of Down: Postsecondary Enrollment in the Great Recession,” *Economic Perspectives* 36, no. 4 (2012).
7. Britton, “College or Bust... or Both: The Effects of the Great Recession on College Enrollment for Black and Latinx Young Adults.” Britton finds that unemployment increased the likelihood of college enrollment by 5.8 percentage points for Black students and 6.6 percentage points for Latinx students after the Great Recession began. For both Black and Latinx young adults, there was an increased likelihood of enrollment in two-year colleges in particular.
8. J. M. Beach, *Gateway to Opportunity? : A History of the Community College in the United States*, vol. 1st ed (Sterling, Va: Stylus Publishing, 2010), Book. “The junior college idea can be traced to university campuses in 1835 at Monticello College, and in 1858 at Susquehanna University. Some scholars have pointed to Lewis Institute in Chicago, formed in 1896 as the first private junior college. The first public institution to be named a junior college in the United States was Joliet Junior College in Illinois in 1901.”; “The college preparatory high school in conjunction with the junior college would take over the first year or two of undergraduate general studies. This institution [junior college] would prepare students to enter a university, which would be strictly for specialized professional study and disciplinary research.”
9. Ibid. “Some junior colleges were built out of secondary schools, some were built out of universities, some were built out of normal schools, and some were independent mostly private organizations, and of these, some were nonacademic technical institutes. From the beginning, junior colleges combined an erratic mixture of curricula: college-level transfer, college preparatory, remedial, and technical/vocational.”
10. Claire Krendl Gilbert and Donald E Heller, “Access, Equity, and Community Colleges: The Truman Commission and Federal Higher Education Policy from 1947 to 2011,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 84, no. 3 (2013). The Truman Commission felt that the term “junior” did not actually express the purpose these schools were serving — implying instead that students would be moving on to four-year colleges. But one of the principal tasks in which the two-year colleges were engaging was terminal vocational education. Furthermore, the commission wanted two-year colleges to be fully integrated into the life of their communities, which made the term “community college” more appropriate than “junior college.”
11. J. M. Beach, *Gateway to Opportunity? : A History of the Community College in the United States*, 1st ed. (Sterling, Va: Stylus Publishing, 2010), “Despite new policy initiatives and judicial reform, both de facto and de jure segregation remained in effect in much of the country until the late 1960s and early 1970s. The 17 southern states that had de jure segregation until the 1950s did not quickly end these legal statutes, and even when they did, de facto segregation was left in place. In a 1962 study of southern and bordering states’ private and public community colleges, only 19 out of 245 schools (8 percent) specifically served Blacks, all of them public and most of them in Florida. The remaining six institutions were in three other states. This left 13 of 17 southern states (76.5 percent) without a Black-serving community college. And those few institutions that did serve African Americans offered a distinctly unequal curriculum. As far as the sparse records indicate, only five formerly segregated junior colleges had integrated by 1960.”

- 12.** The Institute for College Access and Success, “Inequitable Funding, Inequitable Results: Racial Disparities at Public Colleges,” (Washington, DC, 2019). “Public Associate Colleges (community colleges) receive the lowest revenue per student but serve a much higher share of underrepresented students of color (38%); “... in one year, the United States spends \$5 billion less educating students of color at public colleges than their white peers.”
- 13.** Victoria Yuen, “The \$78 Billion Community College Funding Shortfall,” *Center for American Progress* (2020).
- 14.** Peter Riley Bahr, “Cooling out in the Community College: What Is the Effect of Academic Advising on Students’ Chances of Success?,” *Research in Higher Education* 49, no. 8 (2008).
- 15.** Judith R Blau, “Two-Year College Transfer Rates of Black American Students,” *Community College Journal of Research & Practice* 23, no. 5 (1999).
- 16.** Schmidt, Erik, “Postsecondary Enrollment Before, During, and Since the Great Recession,” P20- 580, Current Population Reports, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2018.
- 17.** *Ibid.*
- 18.** Joint Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Fall Enrollment in Colleges and Universities” surveys, 1976 and 1980; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), “Fall Enrollment Survey” and IPEDS Spring 2001 through Spring 2021, Fall Enrollment component.
- 19.** Barrow and Davis, “The Upside of Down: Postsecondary Enrollment in the Great Recession.”
- 20.** The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center Stay Informed “Fall 2021 Enrollment.” (Washington, DC: Last modified October 2021).
- 21.** *Ibid.*
- 22.** Motunrayo Olaniyan, Pei Hu, and Vanessa Coca, “College Enrollment During the Pandemic: Insights into Enrollment Decisions among Black Florida College Applicants.” (Philadelphia, PA: Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, 2022). “[Black College] Applicants who expected to take out loans or use their savings to pay for college were 6 percentage points less likely to enroll in the fall semester compared to those who did not need to take out loans or use their savings.”
- 23.** Joint Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study: 2016 Undergraduates. Data retrieved based on Adjusted Gross Income (AGI).
- 24.** *Ibid.*
- 25.** Huerta, Adrian H., Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, and Daisy Ramirez. “‘I Had to Figure It Out’: A Case Study of How Community College Student Parents of Color Navigate College and Careers.” *Community College Review* 50, no. 2 (2022): 193-218.
- 26.** Schumacher, Rachel. “Prepping Colleges for Parents: Strategies for Supporting Student Parent Success in Postsecondary Education. Working Paper.” Institute for Women’s Policy Research (2013).
- 27.** Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) “Parents in College by the Numbers.” (2018).
- 28.** *Ibid.*
- 29.** Joint Center analysis of U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study: 2016 Undergraduates.
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- 32.** U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Graduation Rates component 2020 provisional data.
- 33.** Thomas Bailey and Clive R Belfield, “Community College Occupational Degrees: Are They Worth It,” *Preparing today’s students for tomorrow’s jobs in metropolitan America* (2012).

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- 40.** Joint Center analysis of data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, May 2022. Since 2020, upward transfer rates have fallen for all groups: -15.5 percent for white, -8.3 percent for Asian, -14.2 percent for Black, and -7.4 percent for Hispanic.
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- 52.** U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016.
- 53.** *Ibid.*
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