



# Postsecondary National Policy Institute

## WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### ENROLLMENT/DEGREE ATTAINMENT

- [The overall college enrollment rate](#) for 18- to 24-year-olds has been higher for females than for males every year since 2000.
  - In 2019, the [overall college enrollment rate](#) was 44% for female students and 37% for male students.
- [College enrollment rates](#) increased from 2000 to 2018 for white, Black, and Hispanic female students age 18 to 24.
  - From 2000 to 2018, Black and Hispanic female students age 18–24 saw the [largest increase in enrollment](#) rates.
  - Black female enrollment for students age 18–24 increased from 35% to 41%, while Hispanic female enrollment increased from 25% to 40%.
  - Enrollment for white females age 18–24 increased from 41% to 45%.
- In 2018–19, [women earned 61% of all associate's degrees](#), 57% of all bachelor's degrees, 61% of all master's degrees, and [54% of all doctoral degrees conferred](#).
- Sixty-six percent of females who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution in the year 2013 [completed that degree](#) within six years, compared to 59% of male students.
- First-time, full-time undergraduate female students seeking bachelor's degrees had [higher six-year completion rates](#) than their male counterparts at both public (65% vs. 59%) and private non-profit institutions (71% vs. 64%).
  - Male students had a higher six-year graduation rate at private for-profit institutions (28% vs. 25%).

### GRANTS, LOANS & DEBT

- In the 2016 academic year, [62% of Pell Grant recipients were female](#).
  - In the 2015–16 academic year, the average Pell Grant amount for females was \$3,700, an equivalent number to the average amount for males.
- In 2019, [61% of federal student loan recipients](#) were women.
- In the United States, women [hold nearly two-thirds](#) of outstanding student loan debt, with more than \$929 billion in total debt as of 2020.
- The mean total borrowed by women at public four-year institutions was \$29,611; \$32,086 at private non-profit four-year institutions; and \$42,778 at for-profit institutions.
- Women first-generation college students borrowed, on average, \$4,145 more than women whose parents held a bachelor's degree.

- [Black women, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian women, and American Indian/Alaska Native women who graduated in 2017](#), on average, had more cumulative debt than white women, Hispanic women, and Asian women one year after graduation.
  - Black women held over \$41,000 in debt, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian women held over \$38,000 in debt, and American Indian/Alaska Native women held over \$36,000 in debt.
  - White women held over \$33,000 in debt, Hispanic women held over \$29,000 in debt, and Asian women held over \$27,000 in debt.

## SOURCES

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