

Career Education in Washington

A factbook detailing the status
of for-profit higher education in
Washington



The CECU Research Foundation, a subsidiary of Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU), prioritizes funding and executing credible research regarding school outcomes and comparisons of how for-profit career colleges fare in comparison to their peer institutions in other sectors of higher education.

The information presented in this factbook uses the most recent data available through NCES along with relevant published reports that provide additional perspective.

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Director of Policy and Research | CECU

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Student Outcomes

For-profit colleges and the workforce

2022 - 2023 school year

For-profit colleges in Washington disproportionately contribute to the workforce in a wide range of fields including skilled trades, beauty and wellness, allied health, and more.

Profession	Total degrees conferred (2022-23)	Percentage of degrees/ certificates conferred by for-profit schools
Barbering/Barber	120	95.0%
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist	973	93.2%
Marine Transportation	284	93.0%
Cosmetology and Related Personal Grooming Services	2201	92.4%
Dental Assisting/Assistant	258	52.3%
Medical/Clinical Assistant	1067	45.2%
Pharmacy Technician/Assistant	104	30.8%
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician (HAC, HACR, HVAC, HVACR)	197	19.8%
Culinary Arts and Related Services	335	16.7%

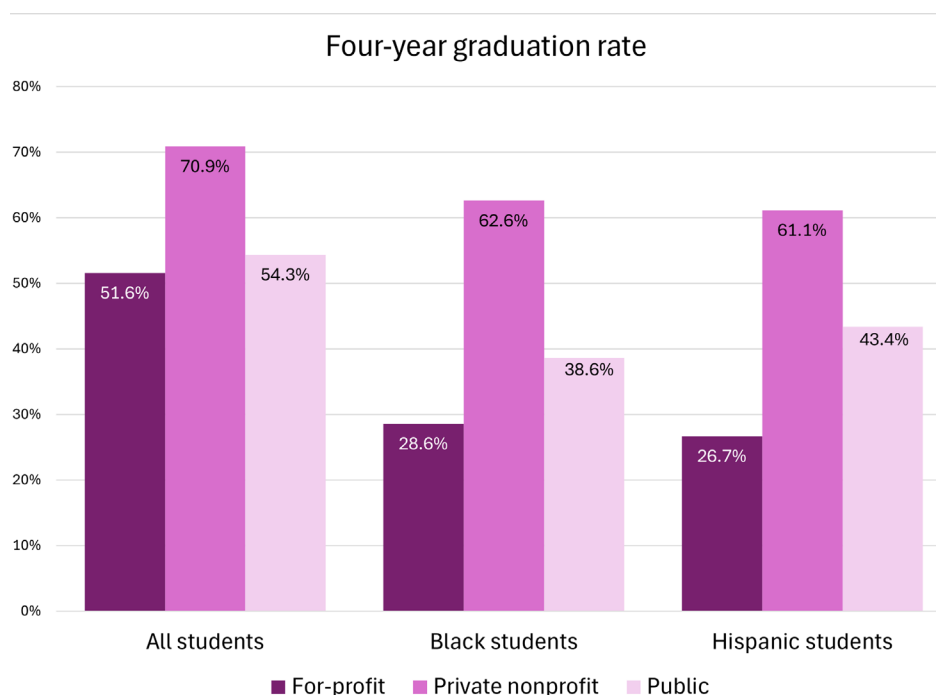
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Fall Enrollment component.

Four-year graduation rates

2022 - 2023 school year

Four-year graduation rates at for-profit colleges in Washington are generally lower than those at public and private nonprofit colleges. For-profit colleges had a four-year graduation rate just below public colleges with a 51.6% graduation rate compared to 54.3% at public schools.

Lower overall graduation rates may be impacted by the strong presence of four-year online degrees offered by for-profit institutions. These online degree programs can offer a flexible way to get a four-year degree for nontraditional students who often have families, a full time job, and other responsibilities. Online and distance ed learning can present its own challenges regardless of institutional control, therefore students should be cognizant of their own abilities to thrive in that particular academic environment.



NOTE: Values shown here are 150% graduation rates, representing the percentage of students that graduated within 6 years of entry to the institution. Data represents the 2017 entry cohort of students.

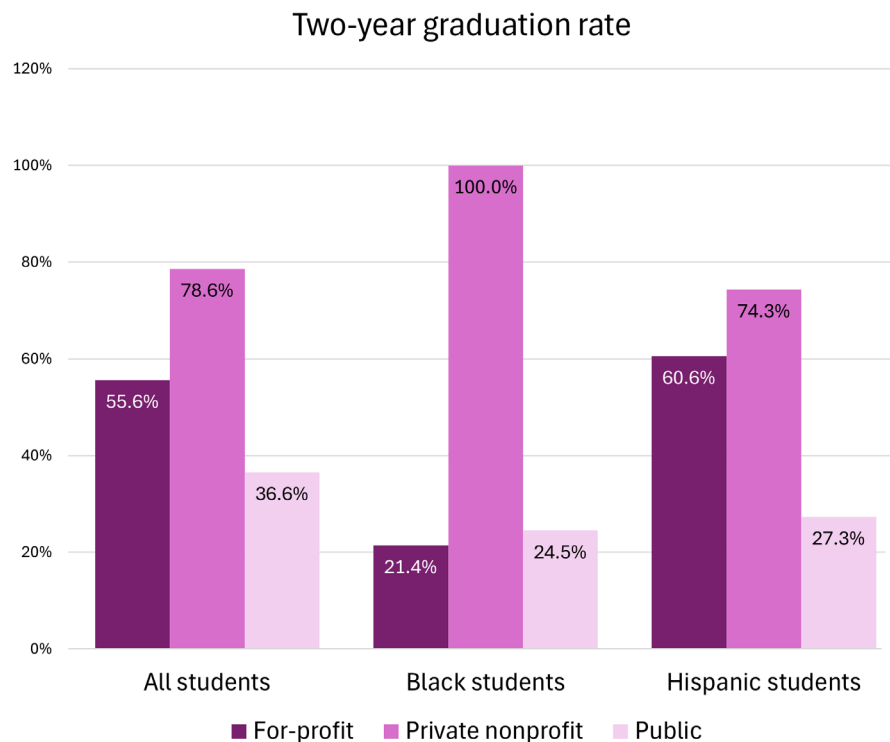
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Graduation rate component.

Two-year graduation rates

2022 - 2023 school year

For-profit colleges in Washington show strong outcomes at the two-year level, outperforming public colleges with a 55.6% overall graduation rate and a 60.6% Hispanic graduation rate.

On the other hand, graduation rates at public two-year colleges lagged significantly, with a graduation rate of just 36.6%.



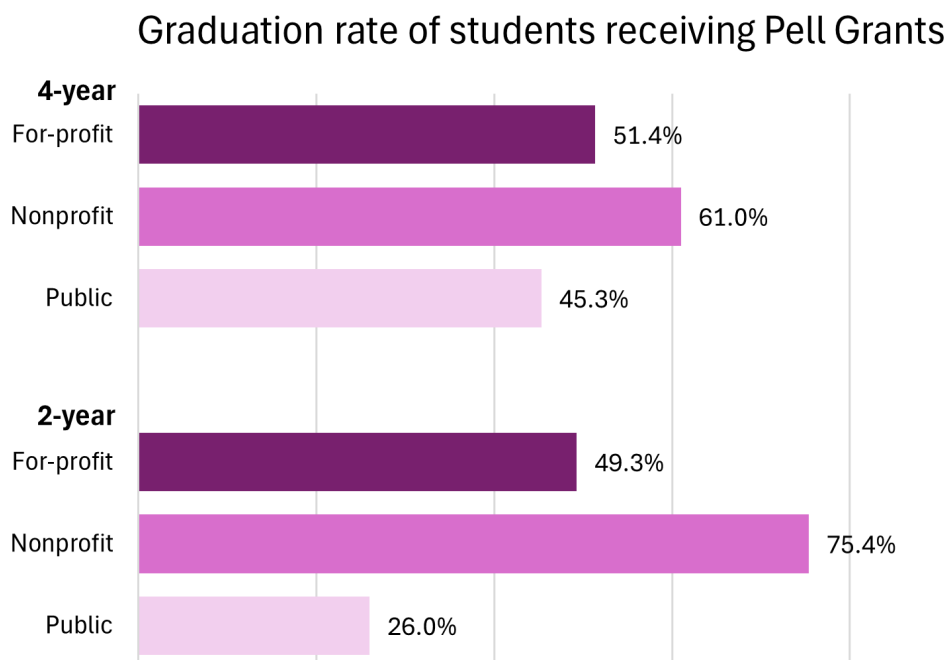
NOTE: Values shown here are 150% graduation rates, representing the percentage of students that graduated within 3 years of entry to the institution. Data represents the 2019 entry cohort of students.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Graduation rate component.

Graduation rate of students receiving Pell Grants

2022 - 2023 school year

Looking only at students who received Pell Grants, for-profit colleges in Washington show a strong performance when evaluating four-year and two-year graduation rates compared to public schools. For-profit colleges had a higher four-year (51.4%) and two-year (49.3%) graduation rates than public schools in Washington of the same level.



NOTE: Outcome data for Pell Grant recipients is not available at the less-than-two-year level. Data presented here represent 150% graduation rates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Graduation rate component.



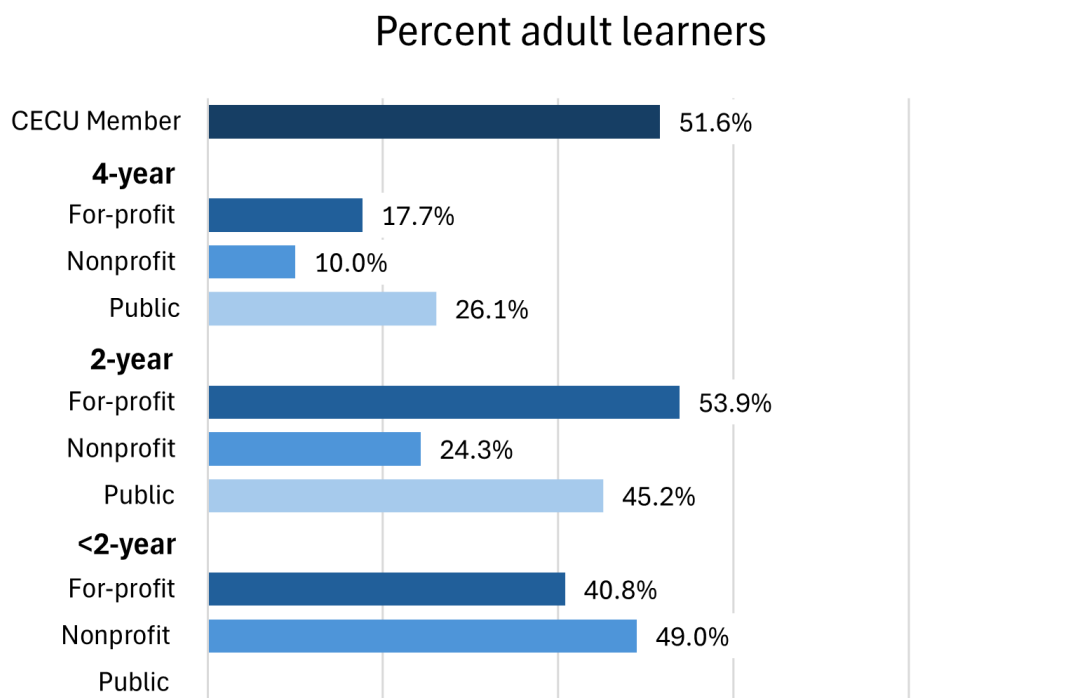
Student Profile

Adult learners

Fall 2023

Adult learners (classified as undergraduate students age 25 and older) face increased obstacles compared to their younger peers and often require a specific learning environment. For-profit colleges in Washington enrolled the highest percentage of adult learners among two-year schools (53.9%). Among four-year colleges, for-profit colleges enrolled a higher percentage of adult learners (17.7%) than nonprofit colleges (10.0%) of the same level.

Fifty-two percent of students enrolled at CECU member schools were 25 years or older in the 2023-24 school year.



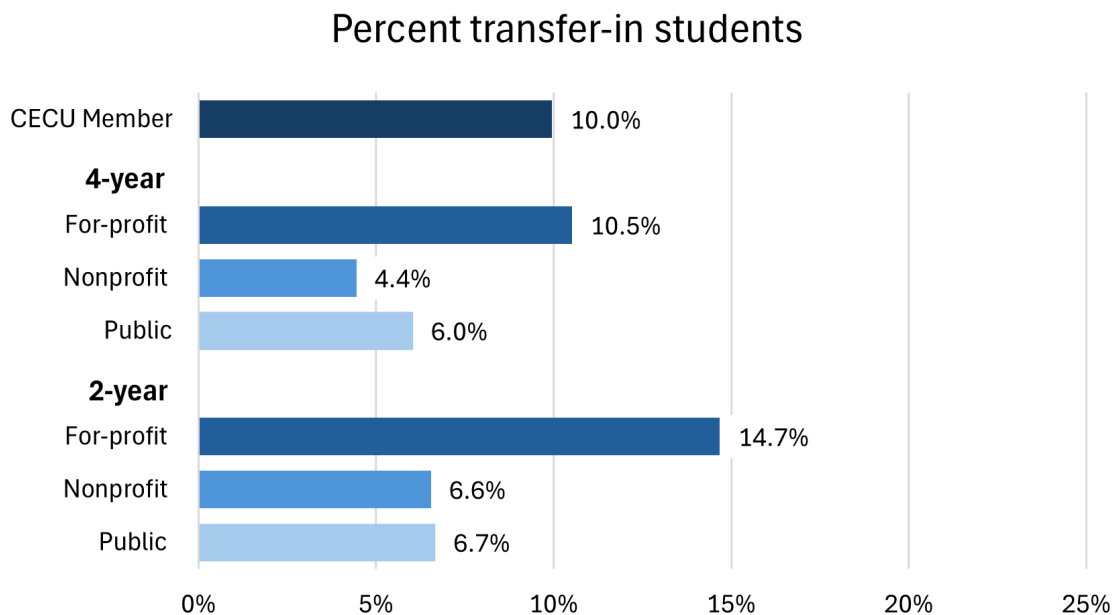
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Fall Enrollment component.

Transfer-in students

Fall 2023

Students do not always find success at an institution, either due to a poor fit at their original college of choice, a change in priorities, or challenging life circumstances. That said, at the four-year level, for-profit colleges in Washington are the top choice to transfer into (10.5%), followed by a public college (6.0%), and a private nonprofit college (4.4%). At the two-year level, a for-profit college is the top choice to transfer into (14.7%), followed by a public college (6.7%) and a nonprofit college (6.6%).

Ten percent of students at CECU member schools transferred in from another college.



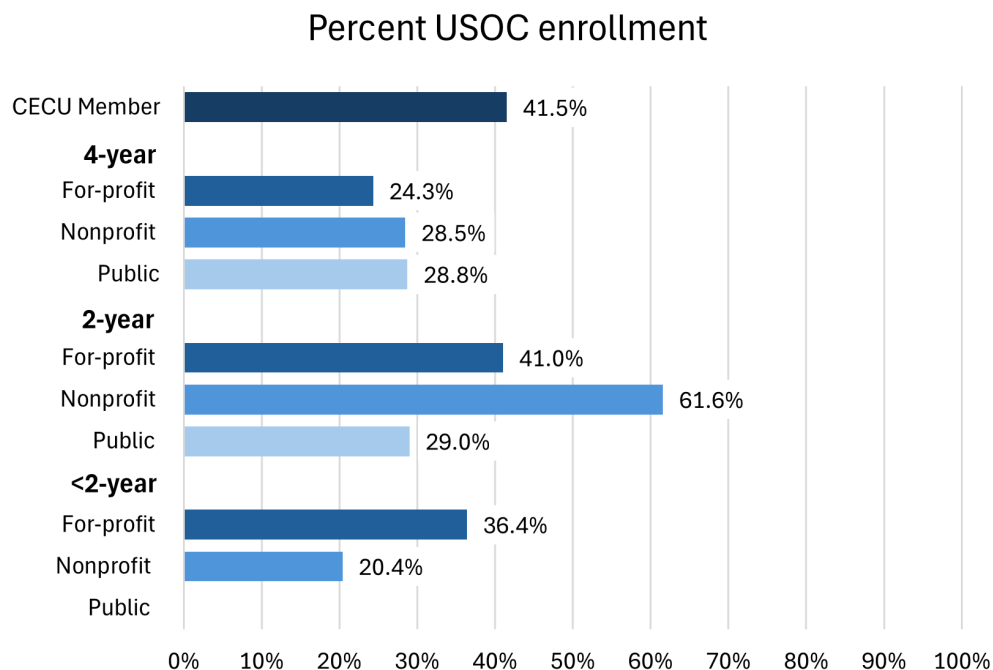
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Fall Enrollment component.

Underrepresented students of color

Fall 2023

Underrepresented students of color (USOC) include students that are American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian, and of Two or More Races. These students have traditionally been underrepresented and underserved by the higher education system, but for-profit colleges in Washington served the largest percentage of these students at the less-than-two-year level (36.4%).

Forty-two percent of students at CECU member schools are underrepresented students of color.



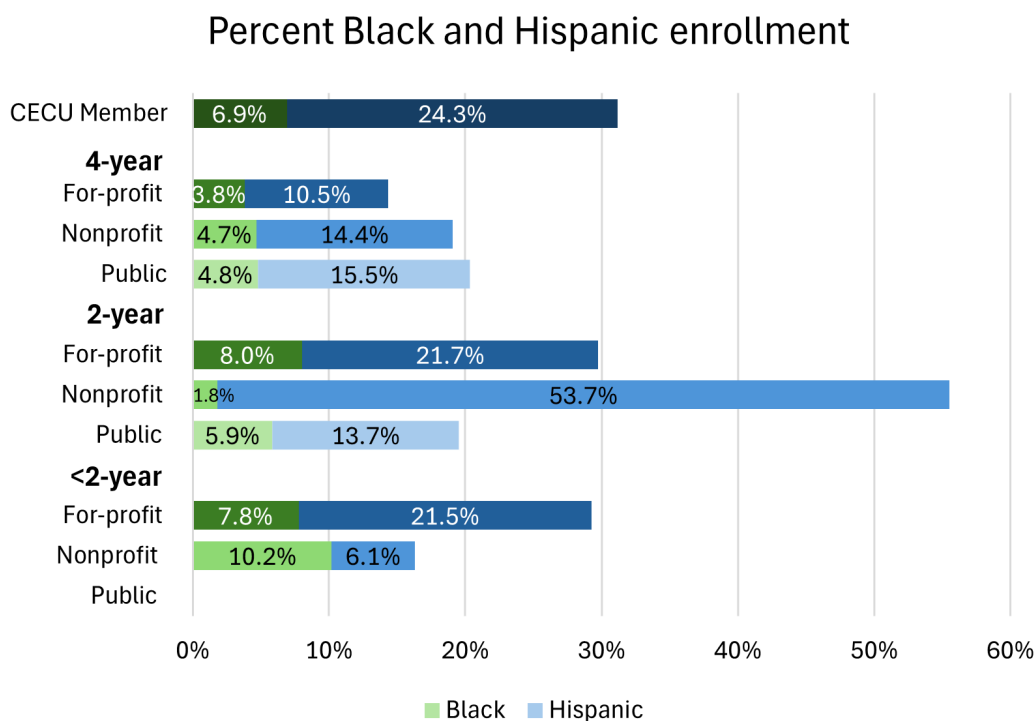
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Fall Enrollment component.

Black and Hispanic students

Fall 2023

For-profit colleges in Washington generally enroll a higher percentage of Black and Hispanic students compared to public institutions at the same level. Black enrollment at two-year for-profit colleges (8.0%) was higher than that of public (5.9%) and private nonprofit (1.8%) colleges. At the two-year level, Hispanic enrollment at for-profit colleges (21.7%) was higher than public college (13.7%).

Twenty-four percent of students at CECU member schools were Black and 32.1% of students were Hispanic.



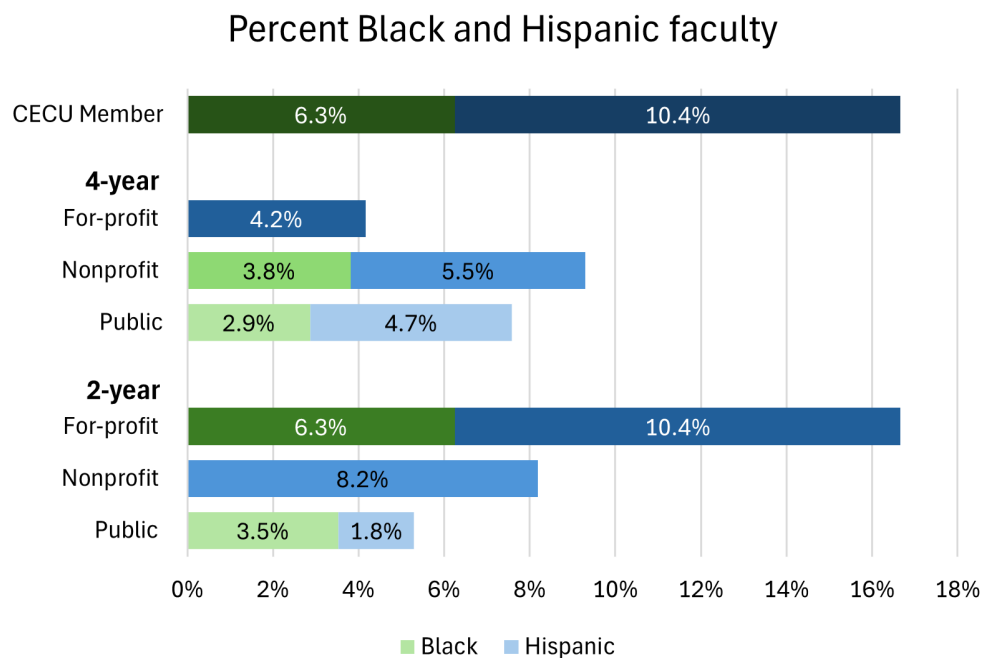
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Fall Enrollment component.

Black and Hispanic faculty

Fall 2023

The higher overall percentage of Black and Hispanic students at two-year for-profit colleges in Washington is well matched by a higher percentage of Black and Hispanic faculty at these colleges. Two-year for-profit colleges have the highest percentage of Black (6.3%) and Hispanic (10.4%) faculty.

CECU member schools employed 6.3% Black faculty and 10.4% Hispanic faculty.



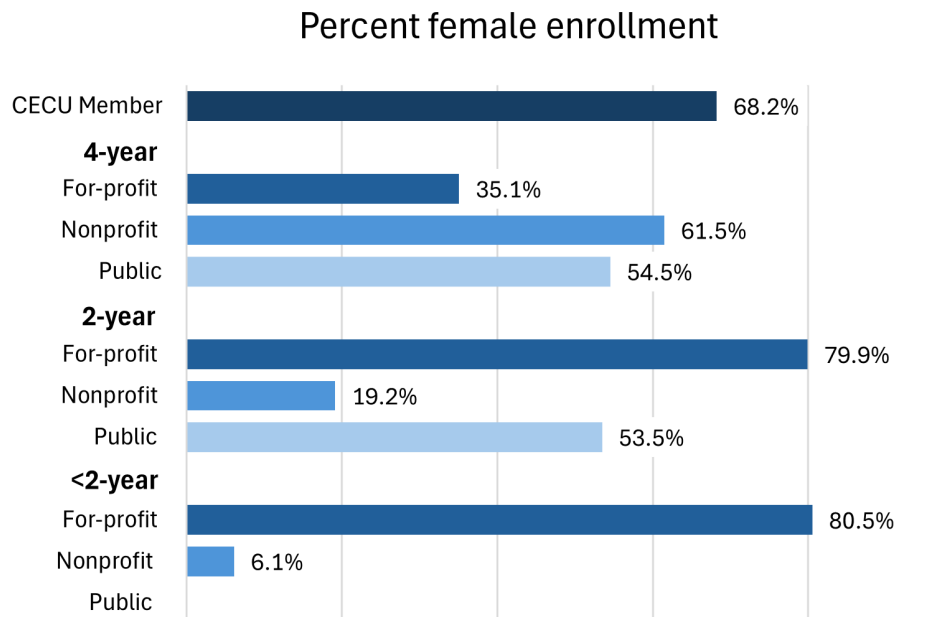
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Human Resources component.

Female enrollment

Fall 2023

At the two-year and less-than-two-year levels, for-profit colleges in Washington led the way in female enrollment with 79.9% and 80.5% female enrollment at each respective level.

CECU member schools averaged 68.4% female enrollment among all institutional sectors.



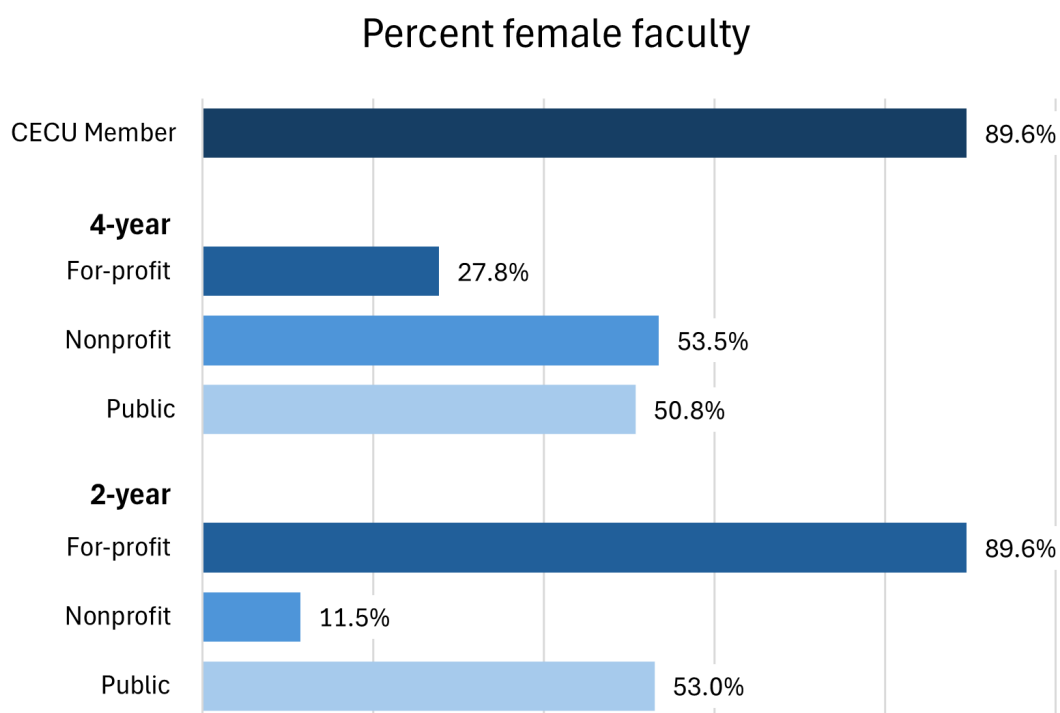
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Fall Enrollment component.

Female faculty

Fall 2023

The higher percentage of female students at for-profit colleges in Washington is well matched by high percentages of female faculty at these colleges. Two-year for-profit colleges have the highest percentage of female faculty with 89.6%.

CECU member schools also employ a high percentage of female faculty compared to individual sectors, employing 89.6% females.



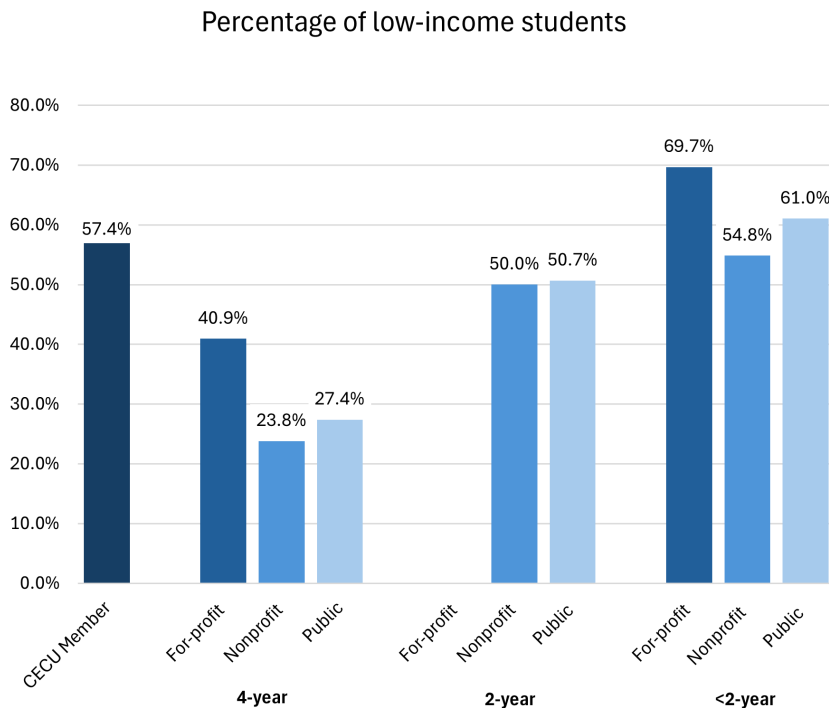
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Human Resources component.

Low-income students

Fall 2023

Low-income students (students with a family income below \$30,000) are another traditionally underserved population that finds educational opportunities at for-profit institutions. In the 2022-23 school year, for-profit colleges in Washington enrolled the highest percentage of low-income students (69.7%) among less-than-two-year colleges, followed by public (61.0%) and nonprofit (54.89%) colleges. For-profit colleges also enrolled the highest percentage of low-income students at the four-year (40.9%) level.

CECU member schools enrolled 57.4% low-income students.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, College Scorecard, Fall 2024.



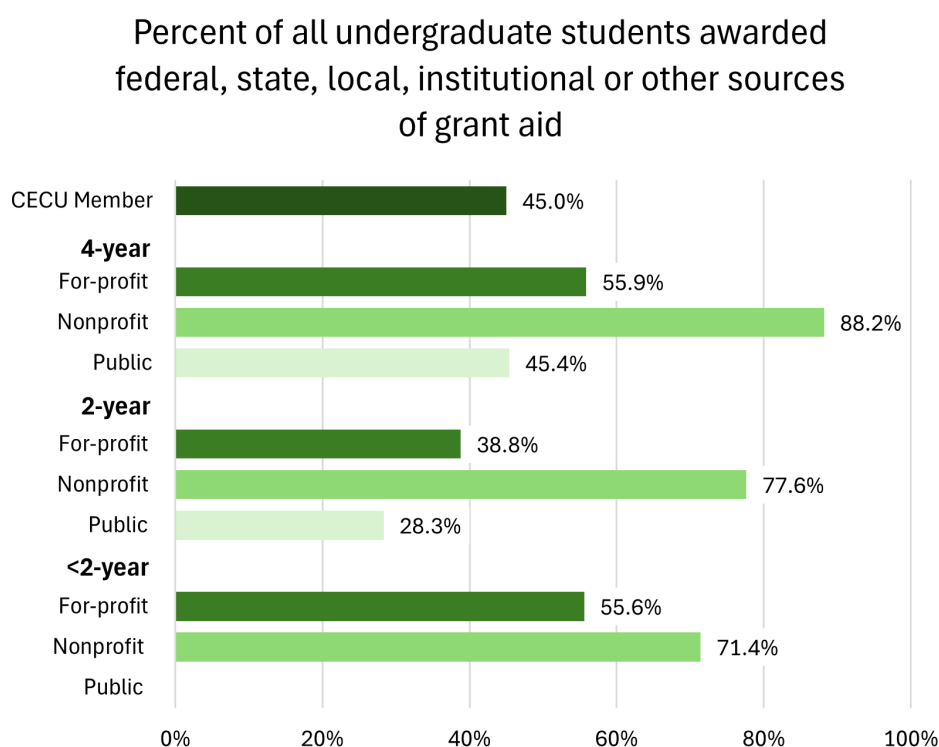
Financial Factors

Students awarded grant aid

2022 - 23 school year

Financial assistance is integral to the success of many students, particularly for those attending for-profit colleges as these students are more likely to come from low-income families. Students at for-profit colleges tended to receive grant aid at a higher rate than public colleges at the four-year and two-year levels, but at a lower rate than nonprofit colleges of the same level.

Fifty-six percent of students at less-than-two-year for-profit colleges were awarded some type of grant aid compared to 71.4% of students at private nonprofit colleges.



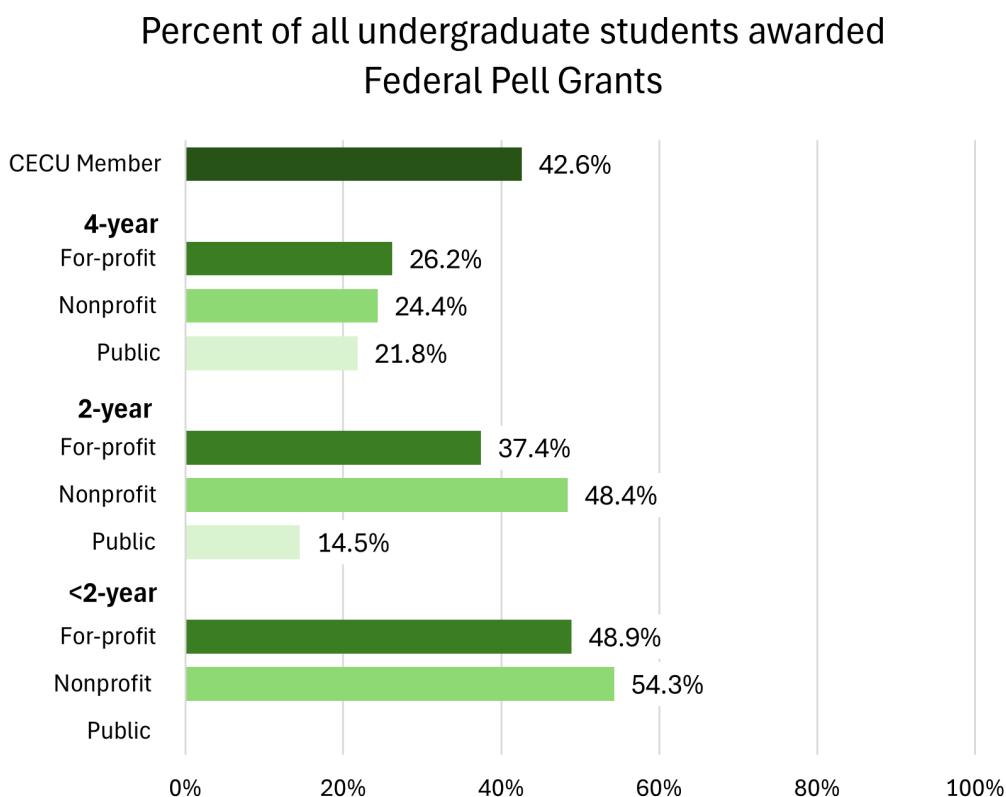
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Finance component.

Students awarded Pell Grants

2022 - 2023 school year

Pell Grants are essential to students with a high degree of unmet financial need. Students whose families have a total income of up to \$50,000 may be eligible for the need-based funding, however most Pell Grant money is given to students with a total family income below \$20,000. Students at CECU member schools are among the top Pell Grant recipients with 42.6% of students receiving Pell Grants in the 2022-23 school year.

For-profit colleges in Washington at the four-year level had the highest percentage of Pell recipients compared to their peer institutions with 26.2% of students receiving Federal Pell Grants. At the two-year level, 37.4% of students at for-profit colleges received Federal Pell Grants, and at the less-than-two-year level, 48.9% of students received Federal Pell Grants.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Finance component.

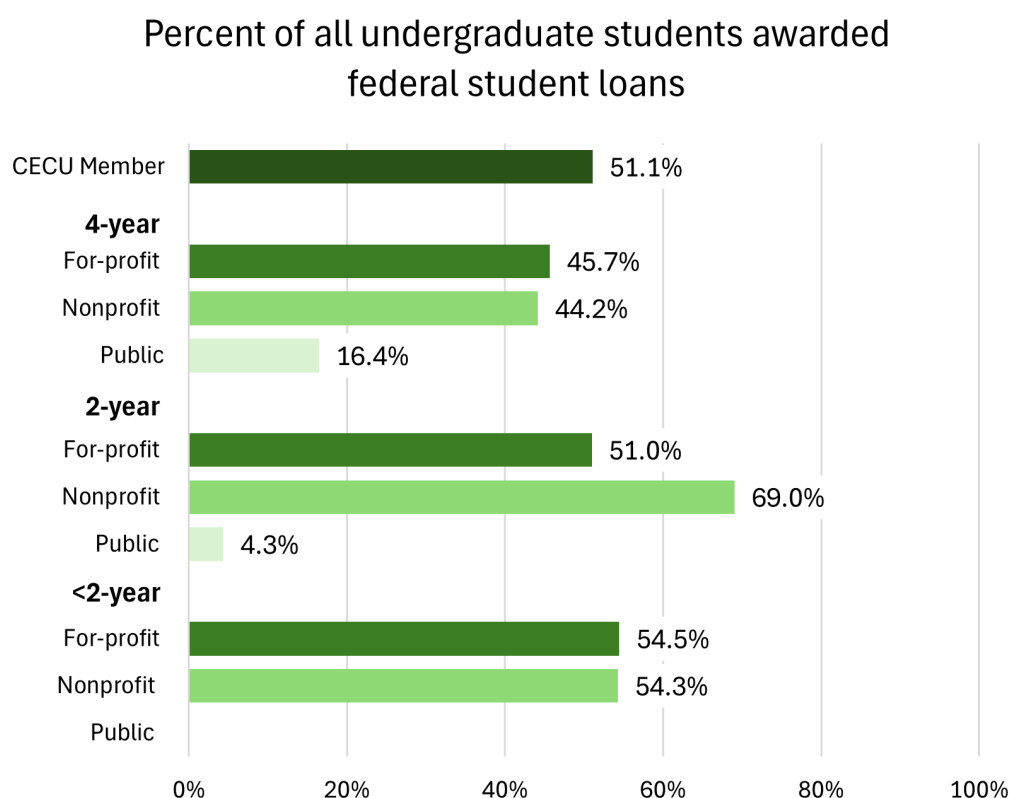
Students awarded federal student

2022 - 2023 school year

Federal student loans allow students to attend college even if they couldn't secure sufficient grant aid or personal funding to completely cover the cost of a college education. At the four-year and less-than-two-year levels, students at for-profit colleges were most likely to be awarded a student loan (45.7% and 54.5% respectively) compared to public and private nonprofit colleges, likely due to the higher concentration of low-income students at for-profit colleges.

At the two-year level, students at private nonprofit colleges were the most likely to receive federal student loans (69.0% of students).

Fifty-one percent of students at CECU member schools received federal student loans.



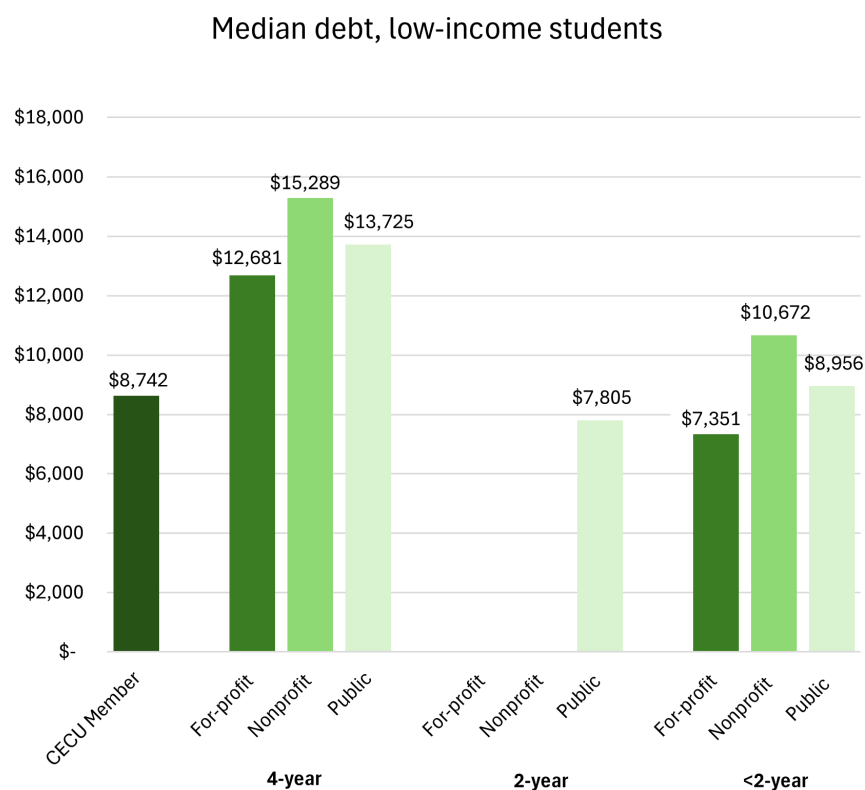
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2024 (provisional data), Finance component.

Median debt, low-income students

2022 - 2023 school year

Low-income students see a lower median debt than students of public and nonprofit colleges at the four-year and less-than-two-year level. At the four-year level, students at for-profit colleges show a median student debt of \$12,681 compared to \$15,289 for students at private nonprofit colleges and \$13,725 for students at public colleges. At less-than-two-year colleges, students of for-profit colleges have a median student debt of \$7,351 compared to students of private nonprofit colleges (\$10,672) and public colleges (\$8,956).

Students of CECU member schools generally have low average student debt among students that are low-income (\$8,742).



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, College Scorecard, Fall 2024.



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