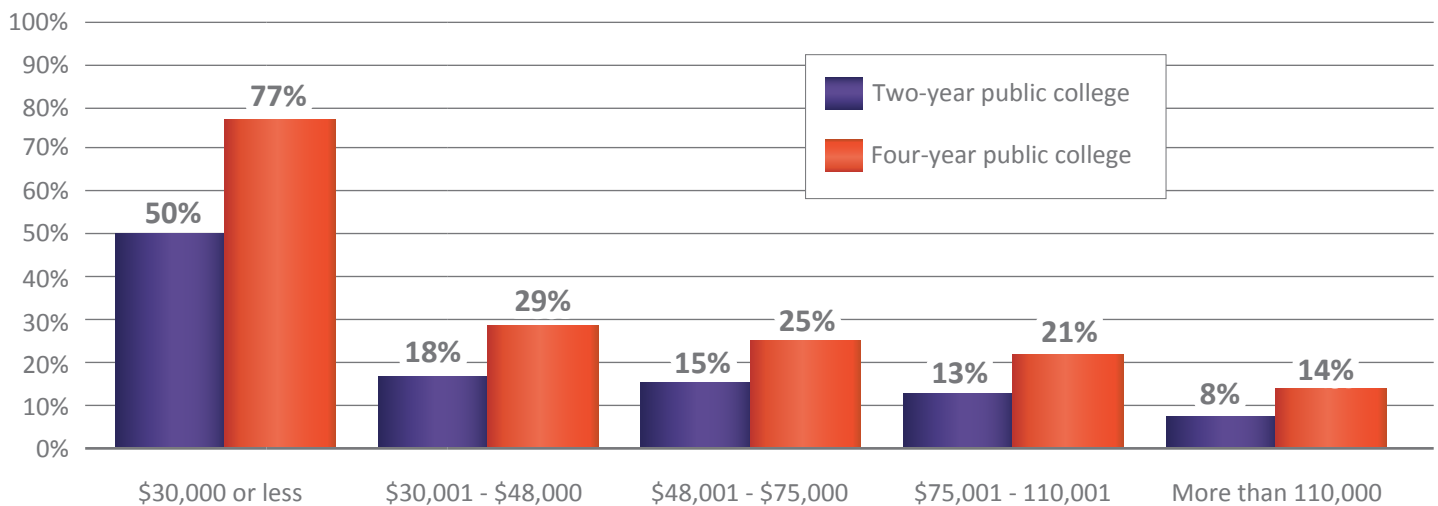


The relative cost of college

Paying to attend college is a significant challenge for low-income families, which can cost half of their annual income.

Share of total income needed to cover the national average cost of college, by family income



Source: The Institute for College Access and Success “College Costs in Context: A State-by-State Look At College (UN) Affordability,” April, 2017. [View document here.](#)



Students and families face significant challenges as the cost of attending college increases. A recent study compared the net price of college (tuition, fees, books, transportation and living expenses – minus all grants and scholarships) to family income. Data highlighted the disproportionately larger percent of family income needed to attend college for lower-income families. This was particularly true among low-income minority students at two-year and four-year institutions in most of the states. While there was much variation by state, students from families who earn \$30,000 or less a year used at least half of that income to cover the average net cost of a public two-year college and 77 percent for a public four-year college. About 64 percent of African-American, 59 percent of Native American and 52 percent of Latino undergraduate students fall within this income bracket. The data underscore the financial burden that low-income students face to stay enrolled in college and complete their credentials.

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