



POLICY PRIORITIES

Higher education has the potential to transform lives, strengthen communities, build a more robust workforce, spark economic mobility, and address persistent inequities in our society. At IHEP, we advocate for systemic change in higher education to advance equitable outcomes and generational impact for communities historically marginalized on the basis of race, ethnicity, or income. This is especially true for Black, Latinx, American Indian and Alaska Native, and underserved Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students and urban, rural, and suburban students from low-income backgrounds. These priorities guide our research, advocacy, policy reform, and field engagement efforts.

DATA & TRANSPARENCY

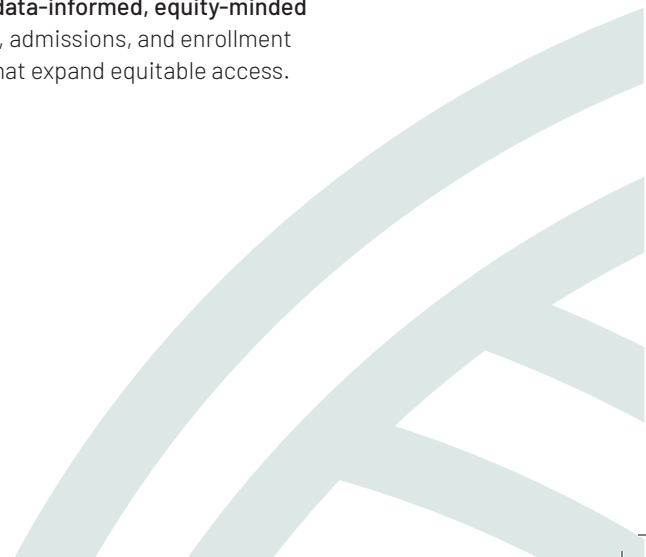
As leaders of the [Postsecondary Data Collaborative](#), we galvanize the field to advocate for data use at the federal, state, and institution levels to improve equitable college access and success and enhance transparency. We are committed to strengthening the availability, quality, and usability of data so students, policymakers, and institutions can access the data needed to make informed, evidence-based decisions. Through our research, advocacy and field engagement, we urge policymakers to:

- **Create a secure, privacy-protected student-level data network** to improve decision-making among students, policymakers, and institutions, as proposed in the bipartisan College Transparency Act.
- **Empower student choices** by improving consumer-facing tools, including net price calculators, financial aid award letters, the College Scorecard, and the forthcoming Financial Value Transparency tool.
- **Protect and improve federal data collections**, such as the U.S. Department of Education's postsecondary sample studies and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), to ensure data availability, quality, and usability.
- **Strengthen state and institutional capacity to use data** to inform policy and practice, including through federal investment in the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program.

EQUITABLE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Years of inequitable admissions policies have left Black, Latinx, and American Indian and Alaska Native students underrepresented at the nation's selective institutions, and the U.S. Supreme Court decisions make reversing those trends both more difficult and more critical than ever. Institutions must now reconsider how admissions and recruitment practices can increase diversity and equity in new ways. Research-driven policy solutions can improve institutional practices and open the door of opportunity for students historically underrepresented in postsecondary education. We urge policymakers, especially institutional leaders to:

- **Eliminate inequitable admissions policies** such as early decision, demonstrated interest, and the consideration of legacy or donor status.
- **Implement data-informed, equity-minded recruitment, admissions, and enrollment strategies** that expand equitable access.



NEED-BASED AID

Need-based financial aid makes college possible for millions of students but has not kept pace with rising college costs. We focus squarely on enhancing supports for students living with low and moderate incomes, including through Pell Grants, and funding to support non-tuition costs that include basic needs such as food and housing. Through our research, advocacy and field engagement, we urge policymakers to:

- **Double the maximum federal Pell Grant award amount**, permanently index the grant to inflation, and make program funding mandatory, not discretionary, to reduce annual uncertainty.
- **Increase and protect federal aid for students** with financial need through the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and Federal Work-Study program.
- **Advance front-end affordability solutions** at the federal, state and institutional levels and invest in financial aid covering students' non-tuition costs, including basic needs.

EVIDENCE-BASED COMPLETION

Completion is a fundamental lever in increasing postsecondary value for students. Students are significantly more likely to capture the benefits of their college experience when they earn a degree or credential. Policies and practices that have strong evidence-based foundations can increase the chances that students will graduate. We urge policymakers to:

- **Authorize and further invest in Postsecondary Student Success Grants** and other policies that support knowledge building and scaling of data-driven strategies to improve completion.
- **Implement evidence-based policies and practices** to promote retention and completion, such as removing financial and administrative barriers, providing wrap-around supports, and fostering campus environments that cultivate positive student experiences and increase students' sense of belonging.

STRONG OUTCOMES FOR ALL STUDENTS

All institutions and programs should deliver value to students. Drawing from our [Postsecondary Value Framework](#), we will evaluate novel approaches to assess the economic returns students receive for their postsecondary investment, consider impact with equity in mind, and cultivate support for comprehensive reform that incentivizes and supports improvement, especially among programs that persistently deliver a low return on investment. Through our research, advocacy and field engagement, we urge policymakers to:

- **Advance accountability policies for all institutions**, while accounting for structural inequities.
- **Integrate key equitable value concepts**, such as a [minimum economic return](#) (Threshold 0), into legislative and regulatory solutions.
- **Ensure policy also provides positive incentives for institutions**, such as targeted funding, to address historical funding inequities and support continuous improvements.



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