

Closing the Equity Gap: The Ohio Story

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Presentation Objectives

Following this presentation, attendees will be able to:

- » Describe activities of Ohio's Adult Learner Working Group and the Closing the Equity Gap Subgroup
- » Explain the concept of "Equity"
- » Discuss how COVID-19 has impacted racial and ethnic minorities
- » Discuss recommendations of the Closing the Equity Gap Subgroup

Ohio's Adult Learner Working Group: Closing the Equity Gap Subgroup

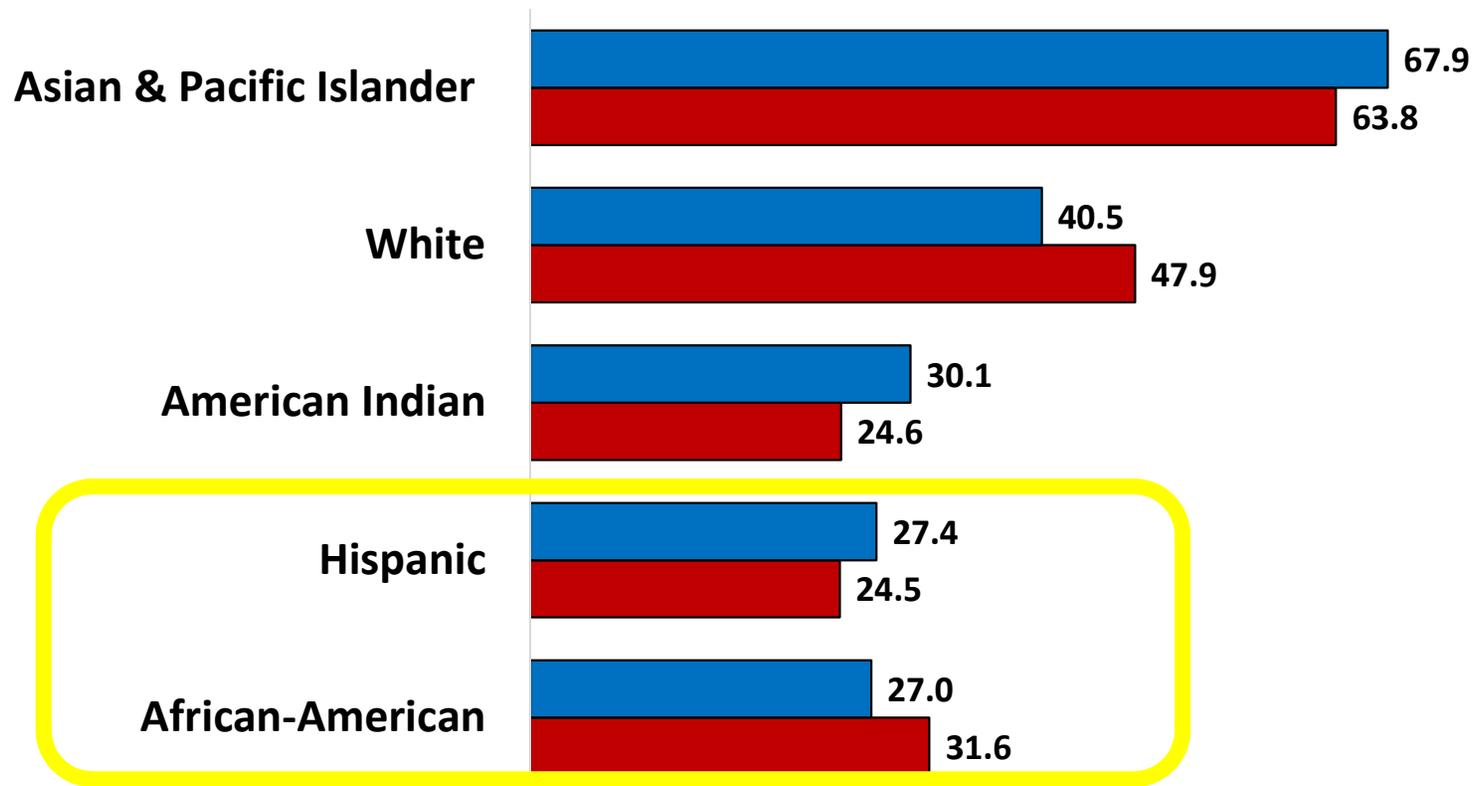
- » Ohio Department of Higher Education project funded by the Lumina Foundation
- » Ohio's attainment goal: 65% of adults aged 25 – 64 will have a recognized credential by 2025
- » Recommended strategies to advance improvement of adult learner completion and enrollment
- » Subgroup focused on strategies to close the equity gap for underrepresented minorities

Defining Equity: Achieving the Dream

- » “Achieving the Dream believes that access to a high-quality education in an inclusive environment is the right of all individuals and imperative for the continued advancement of a strong democracy and workforce. Achieving the Dream also believes higher education institutions have an obligation to work toward equity for their students. Equity is grounded in the principle of fairness. In higher education, equity refers to ensuring that each student receives what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience.”
- » ***An important aspect of achieving equity is the dismantling of barriers.***

Where Are We Currently?

Attainment of Associate's Degree or Higher by Race/Ethnicity: U.S. and Ohio, Ages 25 - 64 (percent)

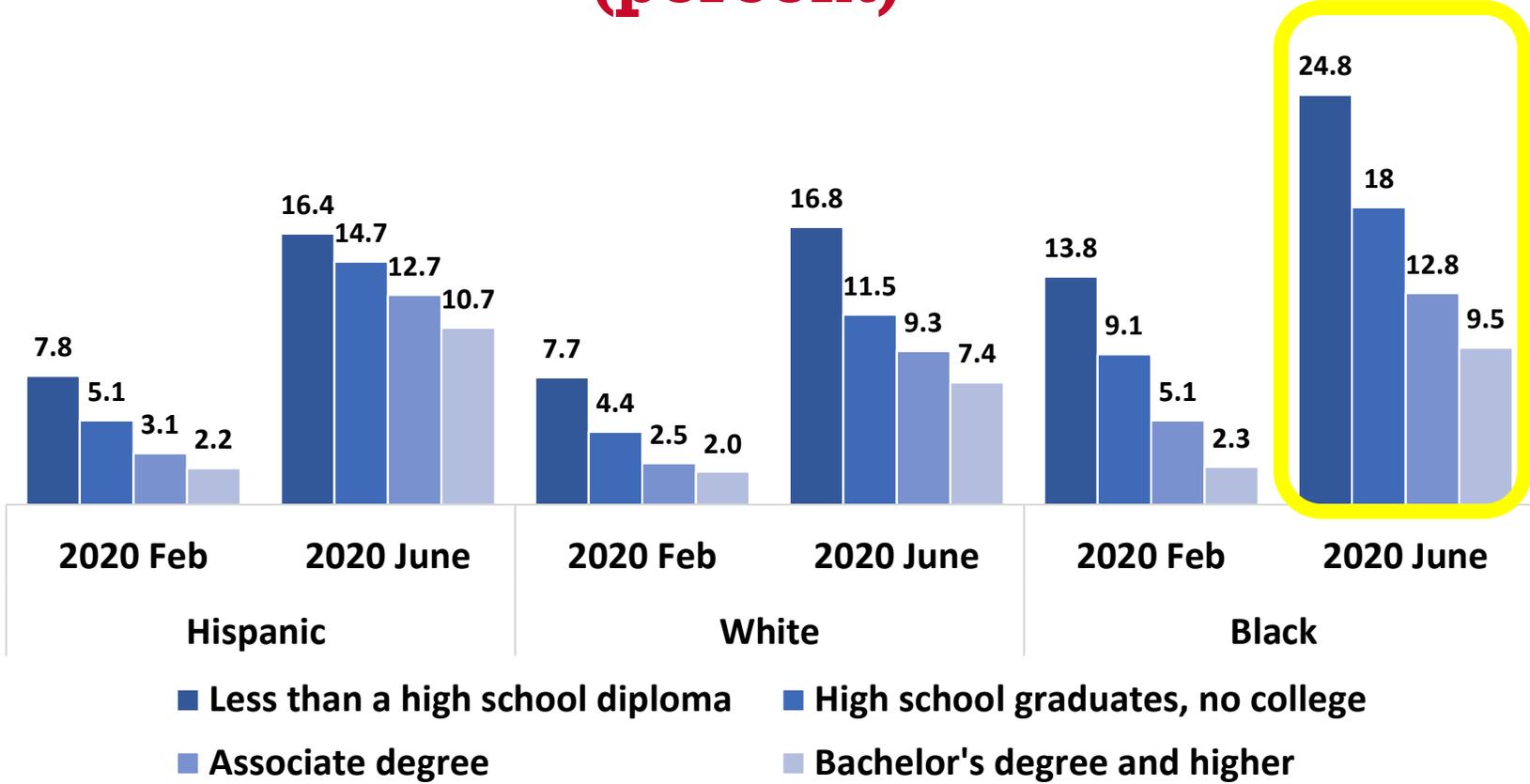


■ Associate's Degree or Higher Ohio ■ Associate's Degree or Higher U.S.

Literacy Skill Levels, 2012/14 PIAAC Data, Ages 25-65



Unemployment Rates Pre- and Post-COVID 19 by Race/Ethnicity and Education, Ages 25–64 (percent)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Poll Question # 1

Has enrollment in your institution been affected by COVID-19?

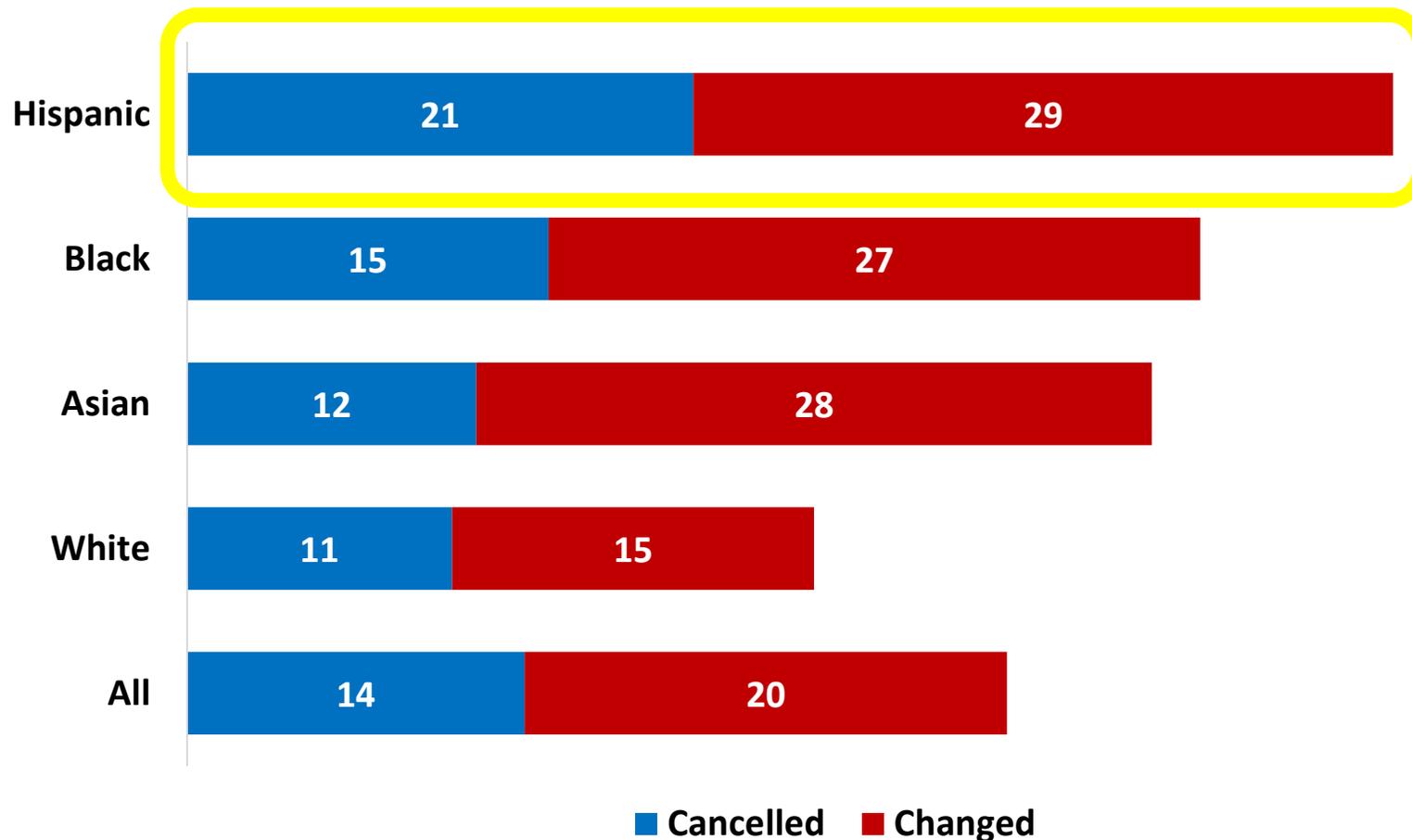
- » Yes; enrollment is down
- » Yes; enrollment is up
- » No; enrollment is the same

Poll Question # 2

If enrollment is down, what are the reasons for the decline in enrollment? (Select all that apply.)

- » Child care issues
- » Uncertainty about K-12 access for children
- » Lack of computer access
- » Lack of reliable internet access
- » Transportation
- » Lack of funding

Revised Education Plans as a Result of COVID-19, Ages 18-65 (percent)



Closing the Equity Gap: First Steps

- » Postsecondary institutions should develop a definition of equity and create a statement of commitment to equity-mindedness including definitions, a list of subpopulations, performance indicators, goals, and a data gathering and reporting schedule.
- » Postsecondary institutions should review and amend policies and practices that perpetuate inequities in order to impact the broad community of learners.

The Student Experience



Equity-mindedness can be infused into every aspect of the adult learner experience.

Connection and Recruitment: Highlights and Challenges

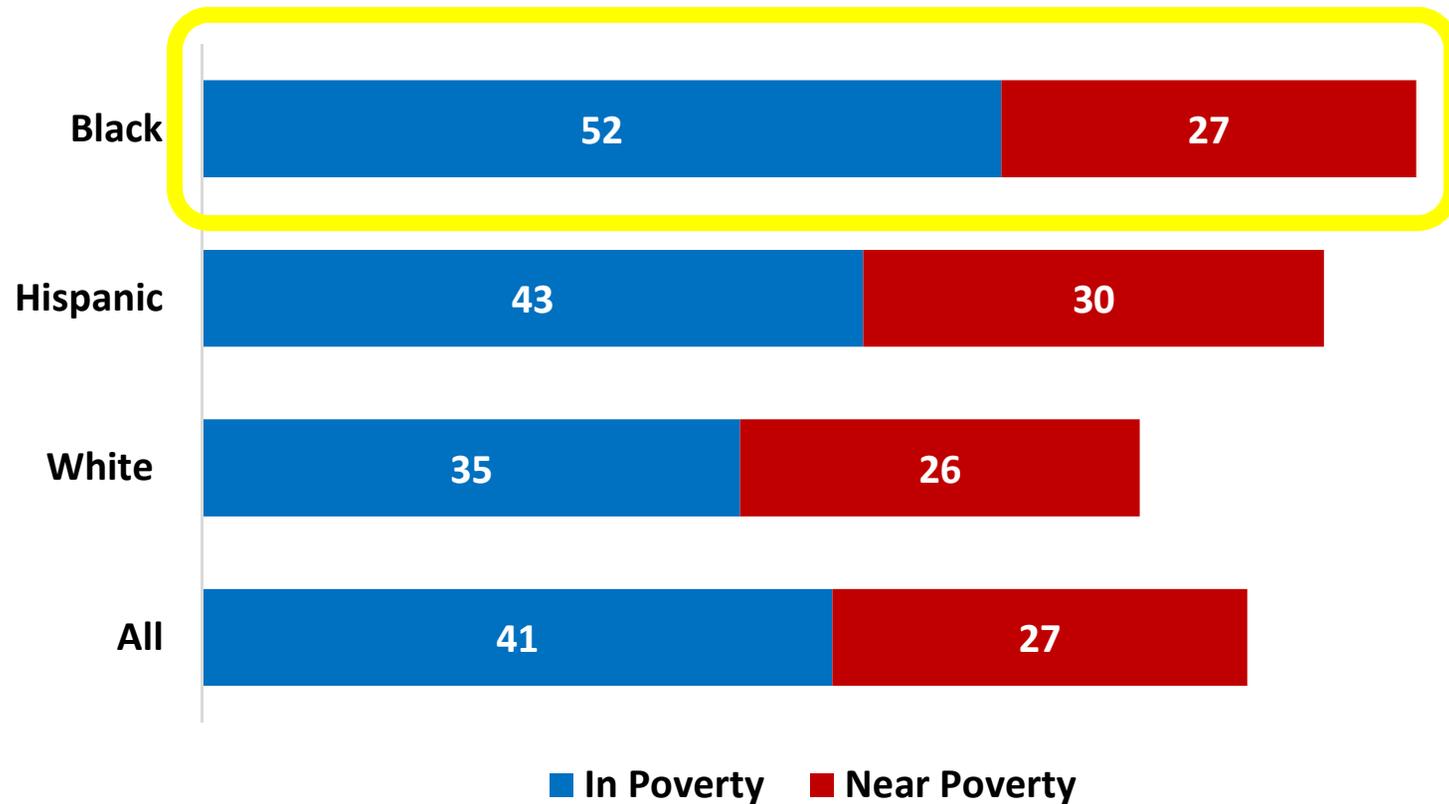
- » Often re-enroll after stopping out
- » Have dependents and caregiving responsibilities
 - » Single parents
 - » Aging parents
- » Work full-time, attend school part-time
- » Employees and family member first, students second
- » Financial insecurity
 - » About 60% of adults in the U.S. have thought about returning to college, but 70% don't believe they can afford it
- » Need flexible schedules, expanded financial aid, education and career bridging

Poll Question # 3

Approximately what percentage of your students are Pell eligible?

- » Less than 25%
- » 25% - 50%
- » 50% - 75%
- » Greater than 75%

Student Parents and Economic Insecurity (percent)



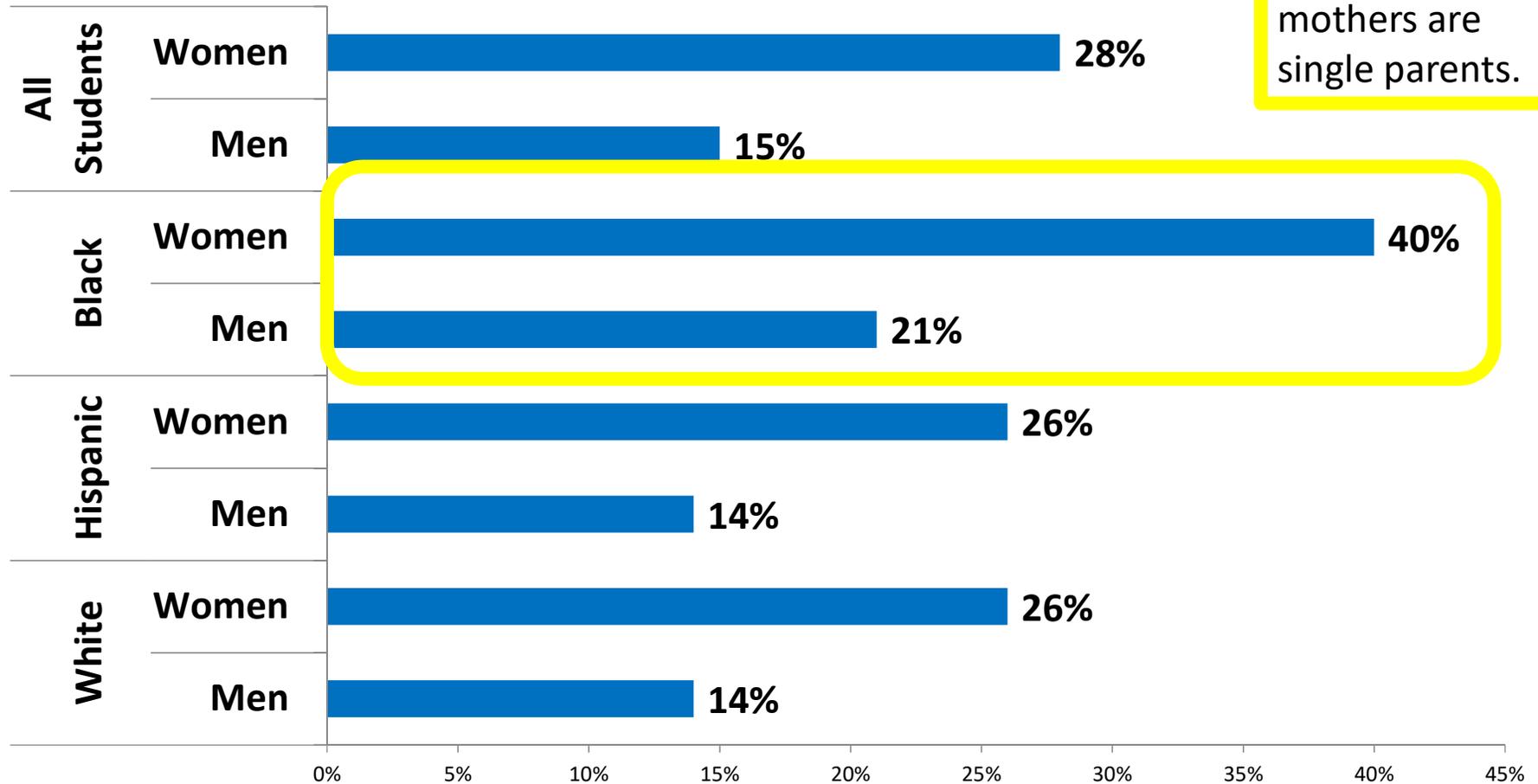
Poll Question # 4

Approximately what percentage of your students are parents?

- » Less than 10%
- » 10% - 20%
- » 20% - 30%
- » Greater than 30%

Share of Students who are Parents by Race/Ethnicity and Gender 2015-2016

More than two in five student mothers are single parents.



Connection and Recruitment: Recommendations

- » Operate in ways that attract and retain adults by validating their life and work experiences via adult-friendly strategies like offering **Prior Learning Assessment** and providing flexible course offerings.
- » Institutions and state officials should thoughtfully shape the expansion of PELL and other financial opportunities for subpopulations in response to recognition of longtime structures, policies, and practices that have led to inequitable outcomes for learners.

Entry and Enrollment: Highlights and Challenges

- » Over three-fourths of students ages 25 and older who attend a public community college do so on a part-time basis.
- » Traditional remedial courses (i.e. math and English) reduce the likelihood of student success.
- » Traditional, rigid course schedules are not adult-friendly.
- » Orienting adults to college as well as online learning is important.
- » Digital strategies for flexibility are needed.
- » Access to affordable childcare for parenting adult students is necessary.

Percent of Americans, by Race/Ethnicity who indicated it would be extremely/very challenging to secure reliable internet or computer access for the purpose of pursuing education and training.



Entry and Enrollment: Recommendations

- » Establish strategies to support the diverse needs presented by adult learners including building community partnerships to address social service needs.
- » Offer programs and courses with academic and non-academic support available beyond the hours of the traditional day.
- » Ask students about their needs and experiences to promote a culture of care and practice of continuous improvement.
- » Promote and expand PELL and other financial supports.

Poll Question # 5

What services and supports does your institution offer to assist the diverse needs of your students? Include services in which your institution has partnered with another organization to provide. (Select all that apply.)

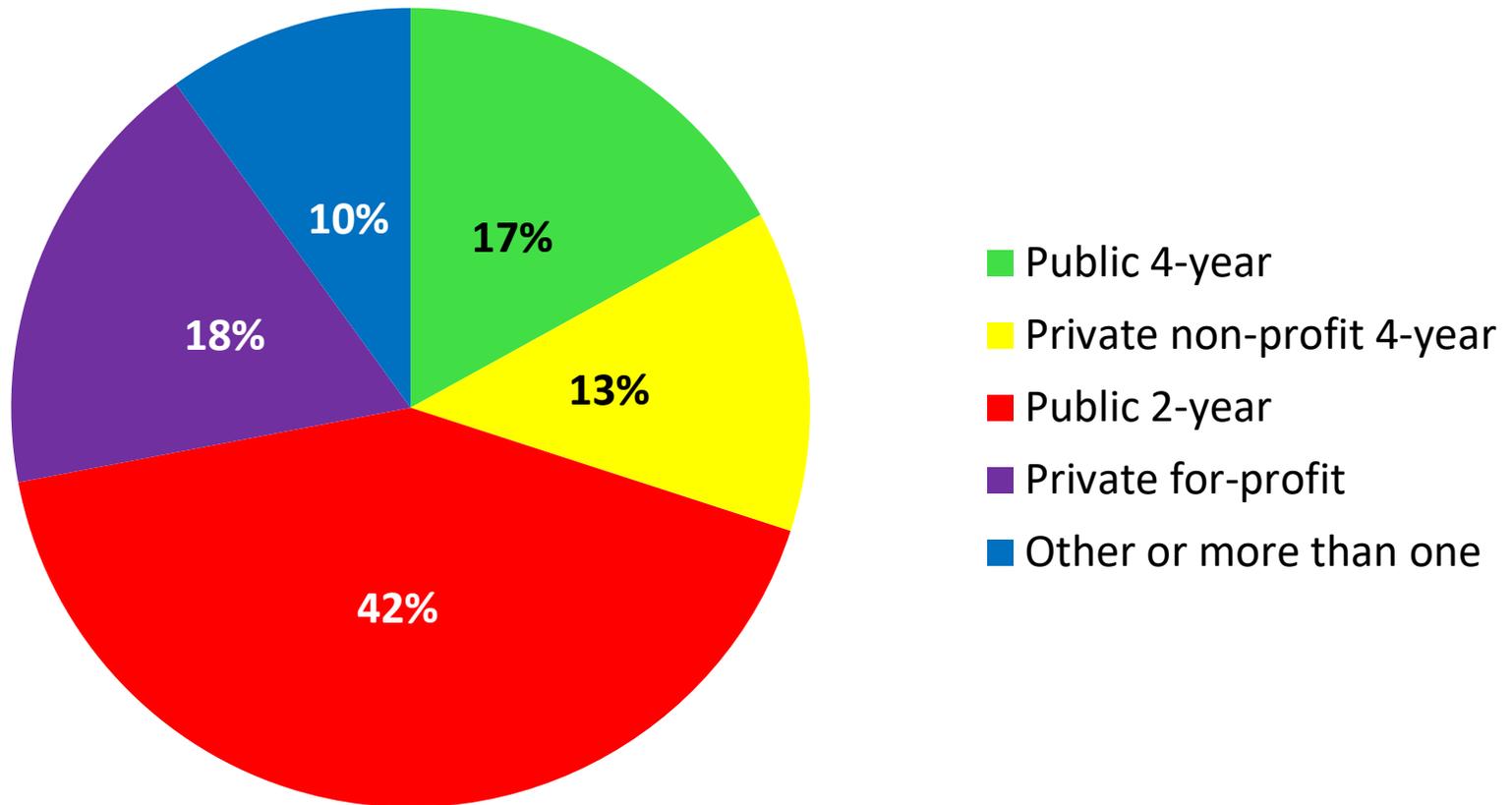
- » Transportation
- » Childcare
- » Help with utilities
- » After-hours administration and IT support
- » Health care
- » Mental health services
- » Housing
- » Tutoring
- » Emergency funds

Progress and Persistence: Highlights and Challenges

- » About 38% of students with outside financial, work, or family obligations leave within their first year.
- » Inclusive teaching practices and culturally relevant pedagogy are important so students feel valued.
- » Studies have indicated that the presence of faculty of color significantly influence the recruitment and retention of students of color.
- » Faculty are key contributors to students' perceptions of campus climate for diversity due to their role.

Distribution of All Student Parents by Institution Type, 2015-2016

The largest share, 42%, of student parents attends community colleges



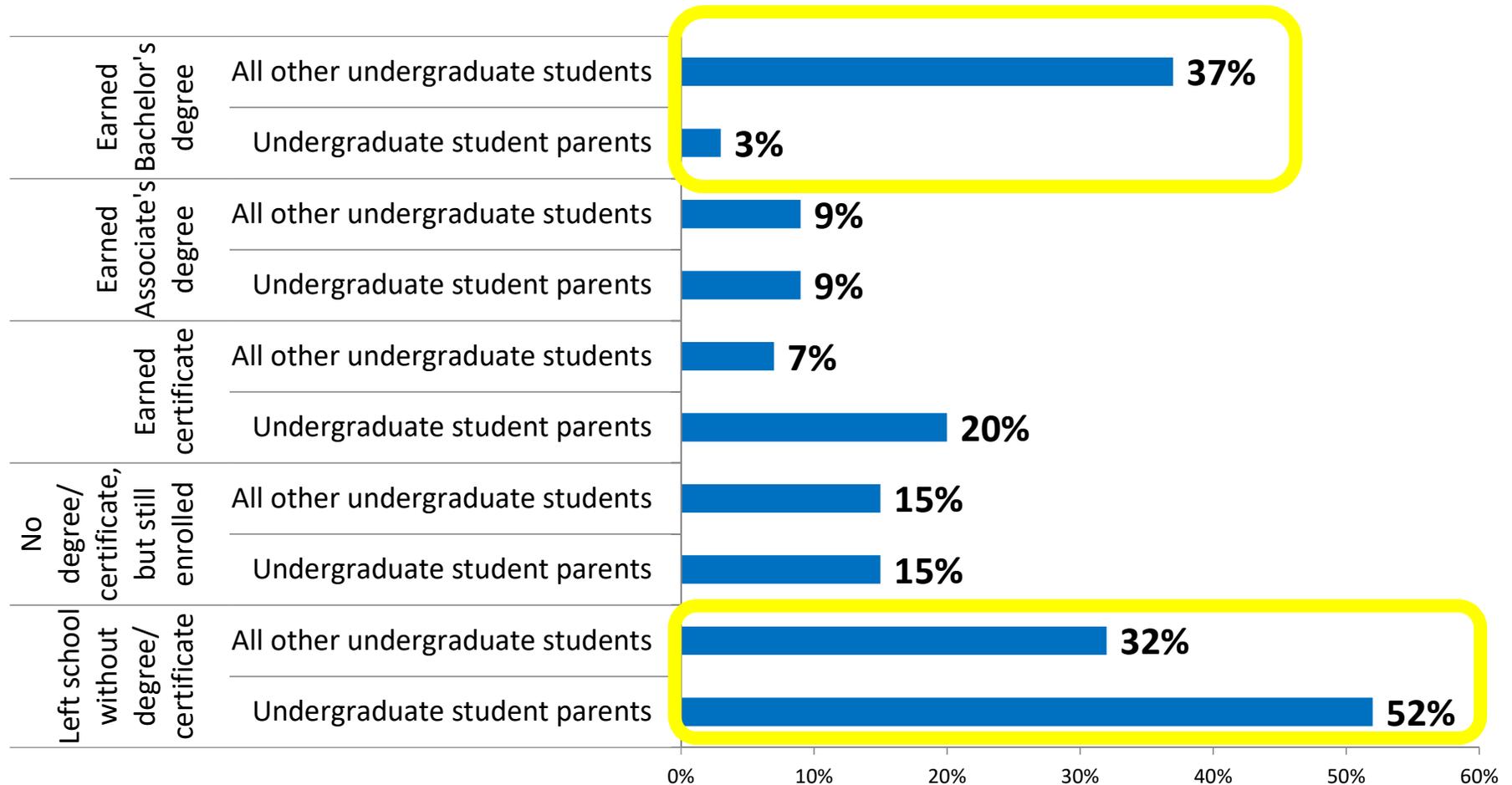
Progress and Persistence: Recommendations

- » Support faculty professional development around classroom best practices that support diverse and adult learners.
- » Review recruiting and hiring practices and implement strategies to employ a more diverse workforce using techniques such as implicit bias training for search committees.

Credential Completion: Highlights and Challenges

- » Momentum matters.
- » Regional collaboratives can address historical inequities.
- » Strategies include alignment between skills and industry, pre-employment and apprenticeships, equity and inclusion training, modifying recruiting practices, disaggregating data to address equity in hiring.

Estimated Percentage of Undergraduate Degree Completion within Six Years of First Enrollment in 2003-2004, for Student Parents and All Other Undergraduates, 2009



Credential Completion: Recommendation

- » Expand workforce consortiums to increase partnerships that support apprenticeships and other workforce opportunities for all adult students.

Transition: Highlights and Challenges

- » The transition can be to the workplace or to a 4-year institution.
- » Hiring biases, unemployment, geographic challenges, internet access, and wage stagnation exist.
- » In 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor released updated equal employment opportunity regulations for Registered Apprenticeship programs to encourage employers reach a more diverse pool of workers.

Transition: Recommendations

- » Engage business leaders and community members in conversations around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to build relationships and support for students and graduates.
- » Work in partnership with business and community to ensure workplace experiences are part of the education process and provide optimal hiring opportunities for graduates which include attention to equitable hiring practices.

Summary

- » As compared to Whites, Blacks and Hispanics have lower levels of educational attainment and literacy skills.
- » In order to close the equity gap, postsecondary institutions need to dismantle barriers that impede student success.
- » Availability of affordable childcare and computer access are barriers faced by many racial and ethnic minorities.
- » Equity-mindedness needs to be infused throughout the student experience: connection and recruitment; entry and enrollment, progress and persistence; completion; and transition.

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Questions?