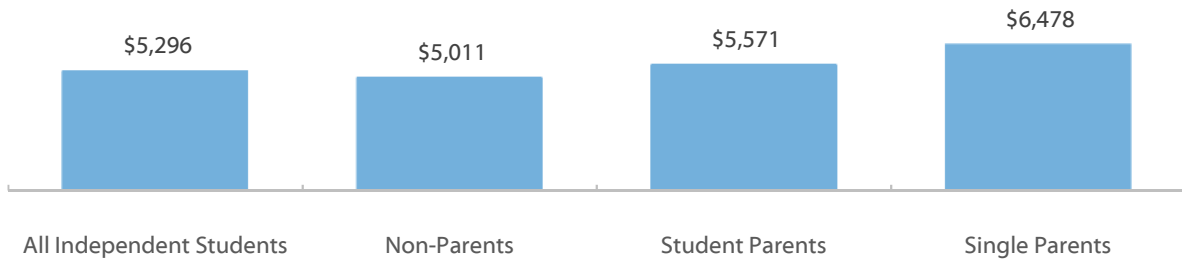
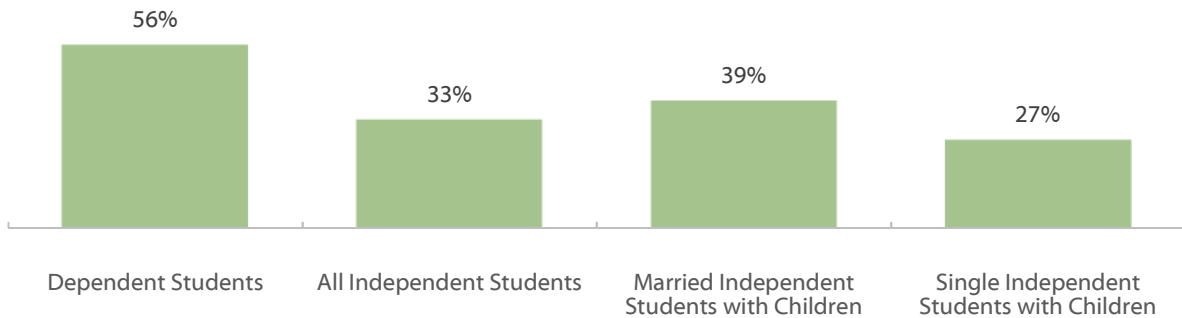


# A Quarter of Students Support a Family While in School

**Average Unmet Need\* For AY 2011-12 Among Independent College Students Nationally by Dependency, Parental, and Marital Status**



**Percent Completing a Degree or Certificate Within Six Years (2011-12)**



Taking care of children while trying to earn a degree can be challenging. According to an analysis of Academic Year (AY) 2011-12 U.S. Department of Education data by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, around 4.8 million students (26% of all students) are parents with dependent children. Students with children have, on average, around \$560 more in unmet need\* than other independent students, and single parents have almost \$1,500 more in unmet need.\* Students who are single parents have a lower six-year graduation rate (27%) than other independent students (33%), much lower than married students with children (39%). Nearly 8 in 10 single parents attending college are single mothers.

Most independent students worked while attending college in AY 2011-12 (more than two thirds), and 31 percent of independent students worked full time while enrolled. While working can help relieve financial stress, working an excessive number of hours while enrolled in college can hinder class attendance and studying, and can reduce the chances of graduating.

\* Unmet need is the gap that remains between a student’s resources and his/her total cost of attendance even after accounting for grants, federal loans, and expected family contribution (the formulaically-determined amount that the student can be expected to pay out of pocket).

Source: Understanding the New College Majority: The Demographic and Financial Characteristics of Independent Students. (February 2018). Institute for Women’s Policy. Retrieved at: [https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/C462\\_Understanding-the-New-College-Majority\\_final.pdf](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/C462_Understanding-the-New-College-Majority_final.pdf).

