



20+ Years of Trusted Federal Higher Education Policy Expertise

Who We Are

For 20+ years, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) has been a nonpartisan, trusted source of research, policy design and analysis for student-centered public policies that promote affordability, accountability, and equity in higher education. Our team of federal policy experts works alongside our state policy experts in California, Michigan, and New York.

Our federal policy team offers deep expertise across a broad range of higher education policy issues. We work to advance practical, evidence-based solutions, and we serve as an expert resource to policymakers, the media, and the public.

Our Vision

A higher education system where a college degree is an accessible, affordable, and reliable route to financial security for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or family wealth.

What's At Stake

Action is needed to protect our nation's greatest social mobility tool.



College graduates still earn substantially more income and face significantly lower unemployment rates than those with no education beyond high school. But federal policy shifts made in 2025 will put these benefits further out of reach for many.



Policymakers must act now to **lower college costs, reduce student debt burdens, and hold colleges accountable for providing a quality education.** Doing so guarantees a higher education system that can help more Americans secure a middle-class life and successfully adapt to evolving workforce needs.



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A PATHWAY TO PROGRESS



Protect and Strengthen the Pell Grant Program

The Pell Grant program, which helps more than seven million students each year, is the federal government's foundational investment in college affordability and enjoys strong, long-standing bipartisan support. But the share of costs covered by the grant is at an all-time low, and the program is at high risk of running out of funding. By shoring up program funding and increasing the Pell award, lawmakers can reduce costs—and debt burdens—for millions of students.



Ensure Borrowers Have Affordable Student Loan Repayment Options

Millions of student loan borrowers are behind on their payments, and looming changes to the repayment system will mean higher payments and fewer relief options. To prevent a wave of loan defaults, lawmakers must take additional steps to make payments truly affordable.



Hold Colleges Accountable for Providing a Quality Education

High-cost, low-quality college programs undermine students' ability to achieve the financial stability that a college degree can bring. Students deserve common-sense protections that prevent federal financial aid dollars from flowing to programs that prioritize profit over student success or fail to provide graduates with the earnings needed to repay their debt.



Help More Students Complete College

Evidence shows that sustained, targeted, and comprehensive approaches to student success improve enrollment and completion outcomes and improve students' chance at a meaningful career. Federal investments in these programs pay off, but too many students still do not have adequate access to the holistic support they need to reach their educational and professional goals.



Ensure Public Benefit Programs Support Postsecondary Education

Millions of students struggle to afford non-tuition costs such as food and child care and lack access to critical public assistance due to complex eligibility rules and administrative burdens. Federal basic needs programs must be modernized to support today's students to provide them a real pathway to economic self-sufficiency.



Improve Postsecondary Data and Consumer Information Tools

Paying for college is a major financial decision, but students and families still lack clear information about college costs and how to cover them. We urge Congress to enact common-sense reforms to ensure that colleges provide students and families with sufficient information on what they will pay and how they can access aid.

