First-generation College Graduates’ Employment and Finances

One year after earning a bachelor’s degree in academic year 2015–16, 80% of both first-generation and continuing-generation graduates were employed, but fewer first-generation graduates had a job that requires a bachelor’s degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>First-generation College Graduates</th>
<th>Continuing-generation College Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job requires a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked at a for-profit company</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked for a nonprofit company or organization</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked for local, state, or federal government</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First-generation college graduates were less confident than continuing-generation graduates that they could come up with $2,000 if an unexpected need arose. Black or African American graduates were least confident.

Percentage who reported that they could come up with $2,000 if an unexpected need arose within the next month, by race/ethnicity

- Total: 70% (First), 91% (Continuing)
- AI, AN, NH, or PI: 62% (First), 81% (Continuing)
- Asian: 91% (First), 84% (Continuing)
- Black or African American: 79% (First), 84% (Continuing)
- Hispanic or Latix/a/o: 84% (First), 75% (Continuing)
- White: 81% (First), 85% (Continuing)

More first-generation college graduates than continuing-generation graduates took a job instead of enrolling in additional education for financial reasons, but this gap differed by race/ethnicity.

Percentage who took a job instead of enrolling in additional education due to the cost of undergraduate and graduate education, by race/ethnicity

- Total: 32% (First), 23% (Continuing)
- AI, AN, NH, or PI: 26% (First), 25% (Continuing)
- Asian: 29% (First), 29% (Continuing)
- Black or African American: 22% (First), 25% (Continuing)
- Hispanic or Latix/a/o: 39% (First), 36% (Continuing)
- White: 37% (First), 30% (Continuing)

"AI, AN, NH, or PI" refers to American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander. "I" means interpret the statistic with caution due to a large standard error. Fact sheet represents individuals who received a bachelor’s degree in academic year 2015-16 from a Title IV postsecondary institution. A first-generation college student/graduate is an individual whose parents do not have a bachelor’s or higher degree. A continuing-generation college student/graduate is an individual who has at least one parent with a bachelor’s or higher degree. Job characteristics statistics describe those who were employed a year after earning a bachelor’s degree. Financial status was measured as of June 2017. Percentages are rounded. Data source is U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2016-17 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B6 16/17). B&B6 16/17 was released in 2019 and is the most recent cohort of B&B6. Total sample size is 19,490. Weighted sample size (population size) is 2 million. Fact sheet produced by RTI International.