American Talent Initiative: A Report on Fall 2024 Data

AMERICAN TALENT INITIATIVE

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The bottom line: At a time of great challenges in higher education, ATI schools have made real progress in increasing the number of high-achieving, lower-income students that they have enrolled.

The talents of tens of thousands more high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students at ATI member institutions have been activated, giving these students more opportunities to contribute to our nation's economy, democracy, scientific innovation, artistic expression, and more.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, the American Talent Initiative (ATI) launched with a singular overarching goal: to increase enrollment of talented, low- and middle-income students by 50,000 at the nation's colleges and universities with the highest graduation rates. By fall 2023, after a setback during Covid, the institutions that comprise the ATI membership regained momentum and had collectively enrolled 21,330 more Pell Grant students than when the initiative began, as outlined in last year's report.[1]

This year, as a result of nearly a decade of sustained institutional efforts and recent changes to federal Pell Grant policies (explained more in this report), the number of Pell Grant students ATI members have enrolled since the initiative's launch has increased by nearly 75,000. Some of that change is due to federal policy that expanded Pell Grant eligibility to lower-middle-income students. After removing the impact of those policy changes, we estimate that ATI members still added nearly 40,000 lower-income students since 2015.

[1] Tania LaViolet, Adam Rabinowitz, Emily Schwartz, Miriam Porras, Martin Kurzweil, Elizabeth Davidson Pisacreta, Josh Wyner, and Daniel Porterfield, *Five Strategies to Advance Progress*, 2023. https://americantalentinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ATIFiveStrategiesToAdvanceProgress.pdf.

On the institutional front, ATI members have expanded access for low- and middle-income students by deepening outreach, increasing need-based financial aid, and ensuring that all students receive the quality education and support needed to graduate. On the policy front, changes in federal Pell eligibility in 2024 substantially expanded federal financial aid for low- and moderate-income students and increased the number of lower-middle-income students receiving grants. These expansions were enacted independently of the initiative.

In light of these federal changes, ATI analyzed data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) in order to better understand how much these changes contributed to the growth in fall 2024. As described later in this report, the NSC data suggest that, even when accounting for changes in Pell eligibility rules, institutional commitments to access played a large role in expanding lower-income student enrollment. Based on NSC data, we estimate that approximately 40,000 lower-income students that have been added since the start of the initiative can be attributed to institutional efforts rather than the expansion of Pell eligibility.

Several member-driven strategies have likely contributed to this large increase in lower-income student enrollment in the last year. Many ATI institutions strengthened and scaled community college transfer pathways; increased investments in financial aid, including the continued expansion of "clear cost" programs that make college costs more transparent and affordable for families; and advanced student success through wraparound services and scaling the impact of cohort-based programs. (These strategies are included in greater detail later in this report.)

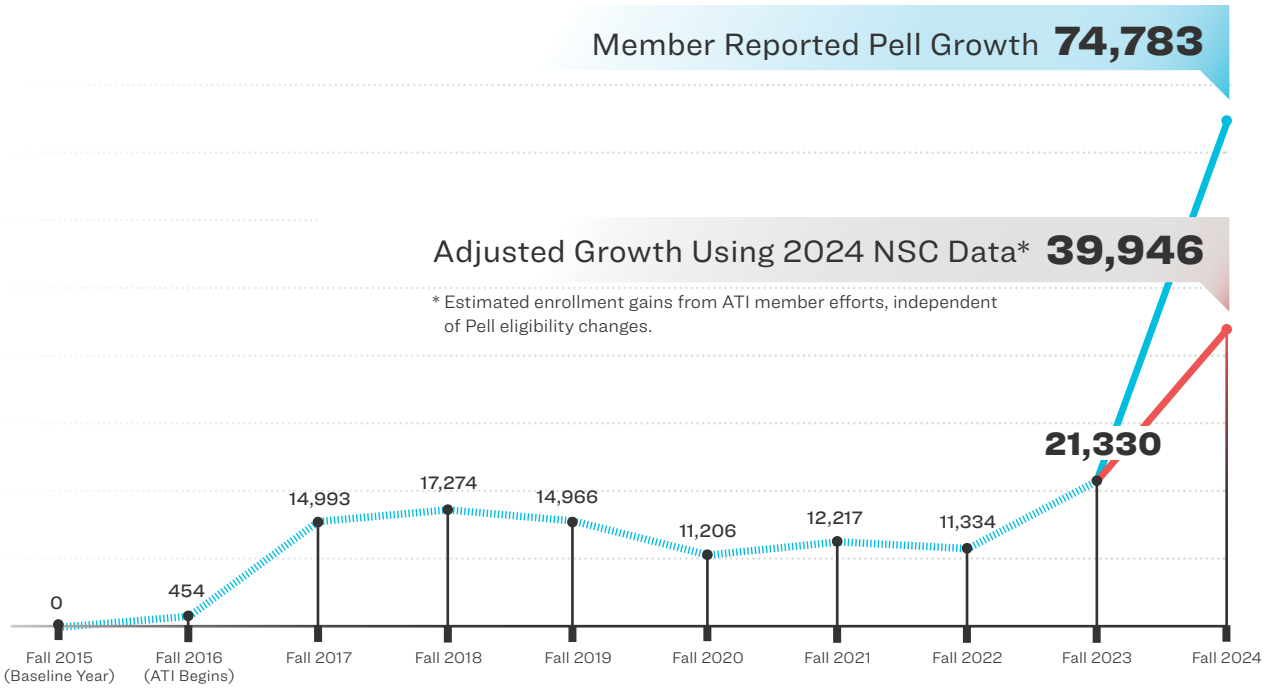
The bottom line: At a time of great challenges in higher education, ATI schools have made real progress in increasing the number of high-achieving, lower-income students that they have enrolled. The talents of tens of thousands more high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students at ATI member institutions have been activated, giving these students more opportunities to contribute to our nation's economy, democracy, scientific innovation, artistic expression, and more.

This increase in talent development and opportunity for thousands of talented students is a testament to what is possible when institutional actions advance the public good. But that momentum cannot be taken for granted. Full funding of Pell and other programs that serve low- and middle-income students will be critical to sustaining their investments in financial aid. While ATI's members are committed to increasing opportunity for talented students regardless of their ability to pay, sustaining and building on ATI's progress over the long term will require deep engagement with students and families, and continued investment in financial aid for low- and middle-income students from both institutions and government. It also remains the case that some ATI members have made substantially more progress than others. Thousands more students will benefit if ATI members continue to advance progress across the board.

Highlights from ATI's Fall 2024 Progress Report Include:

- ATI members now enroll nearly 75,000 more lower-income Pell Grant students than in 2015, thanks to years of institutional effort and a policy change that expanded Pell eligibility to tens of thousands more lower-middle-income students between 2023 and 2024.
- Using data from the National Student Clearinghouse to estimate how many of the 75,000 additional students receiving Pell Grants were supported by the policy changes that expanded Pell eligibility, we estimate that—even without those policy changes—ATI members added nearly 40,000 low- and middle-income students since 2015, including 18,616 students from low- and middle-income neighborhoods between 2023 and 2024.

Figure 1: ATI Member Growth in Lower-Income Student Enrollment Relative to 2015



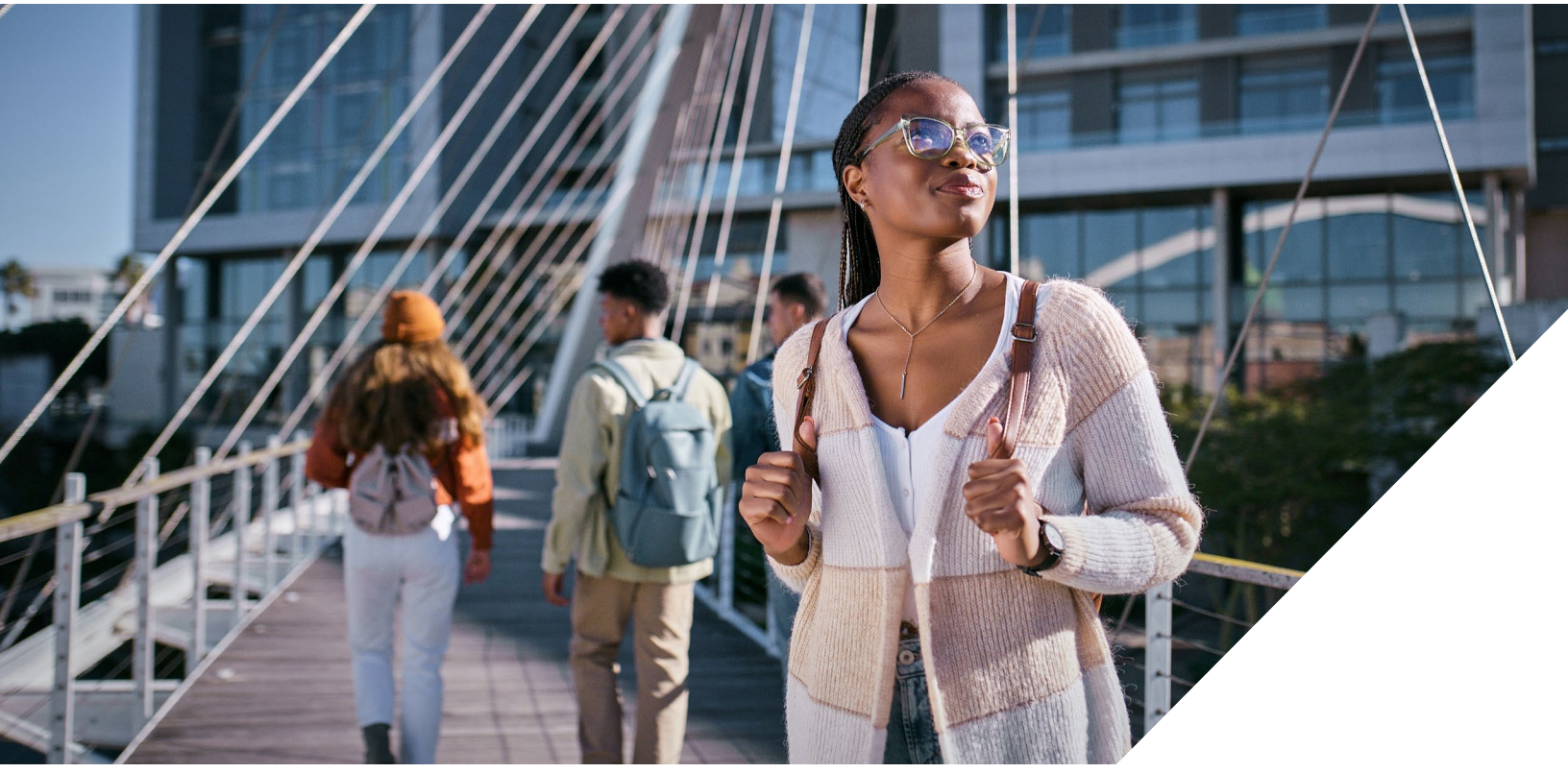
The American Talent Initiative (ATI) was launched in 2016 with 30 founding members committed to a shared goal: to expand access to higher education for highly talented low- and moderate-income students. Membership has since expanded to 138 institutions across 32 states, including private and public, small and large, and rural and urban institutions. All of these colleges and universities have consistently high graduation rates, with at least 70 percent of their students graduating within six years. Fifteen member institutions have left the group during this time and more than 200 eligible institutions have not joined.

In its early years, ATI achieved strong gains in access for lower-income students, with members enrolling more than 17,000 additional Pell students from fall 2015 to fall 2018. Following this initial momentum, ATI's progress stalled, seeing both pre-pandemic and pandemic-driven declines from fall 2019 to fall 2022.

As this trend emerged, ATI launched the Accelerating Opportunity Campaign in 2021, which asked members to set specific goals for increasing or maintaining high levels of low- and middle-income student enrollment, based on their population share of Pell students.[2]

We expected to see the effects of the campaign starting in fall 2023, and enrollment data show that members made progress and overcame pandemic declines. The remainder of this report will walk through the initiative's fall 2024 progress, some of the challenges ahead, and the continued importance of ATI's mission.

[2] For institutions with a Pell share **below 15 percent**, the goal is to reach between 15 percent and 20 percent by 2025, or to achieve an equally ambitious increase in the number of lower-income students by 2025. For institutions with a Pell share **between 15 percent and 20 percent**, the goal is to make measurable progress toward a 20 percent share of lower-income student enrollment or an equally ambitious increase by 2025. For institutions with a Pell share **above 20 percent**, the goal is to at least maintain current levels of lower-income student enrollment, if not expand them, by 2025.



Since 2015, ATI member institutions have added nearly 75,000 Pell students. Between 2023 and 2024, ATI members had their largest single-year increase to date, enrolling an additional 53,000 Pell Grant students. This rapid one-year increase reflects both years of sustained institutional effort and a recent boost from federal policy changes that expanded Pell Grant eligibility to tens of thousands more lower-middle-income students.

Given the changes to Pell Grant eligibility, we sought neighborhood income data from the National Student Clearinghouse to estimate how many of the 75,000 additional students were due to institutional efforts versus federal Pell expansion. We conducted this examination to ensure that the gain in Pell enrollment we are reporting is the result of institutional efforts alone, without including gains resulting from changes in federal law that are independent of ATI's activities. Those data suggest that, even without federal Pell expansion, ATI members would have made substantial progress, adding nearly 40,000 low- and middle-income students since 2015, including 18,616 students from low- and middle-income neighborhoods between 2023 and 2024.

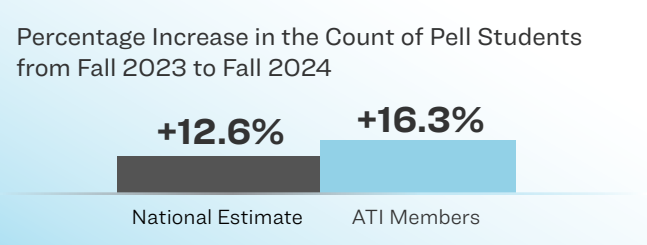
In the following sections, we provide more details on ATI's progress and data measuring low- and moderate-income student enrollment.

Measuring Progress Using Pell

ATI has historically relied on Pell data to measure progress in enrolling low- and middle-income students, specifically counts of students receiving Pell Grants at ATI member institutions. While the Pell metric has always had some limitations, it has provided a consistent and broadly understood benchmark for tracking progress. Our prior reporting discusses Pell enrollment from fall 2015 to fall 2023 in depth.[3]

Starting in fall 2024, the FAFSA Simplification Act changed the methodology for awarding Pell Grants, which resulted in an expansion of eligibility. These federal policy changes were developed and enacted independently of ATI. Preliminary analyses suggest that the share of students qualifying for Pell increased by 12.6 percent, or about 540,000 students.[4]

Under the new standard for awarding Pell Grants, ATI members enrolled 74,783 more Pell students in 2024 compared to 2015, with an increase of more than 53,000 students from fall 2023 to fall 2024 alone. This equates to a 16.3 percent single-year increase across ATI membership, outpacing national estimates. Nearly every single ATI member institution saw increased Pell enrollment in 2024, with year-over-year growth as high as 48 percent.



The more pronounced increase in Pell enrollment among ATI members can be attributed to two sources: 1) more new low- and middle-income students accessing ATI institutions than before, and 2) better accounting for lower-middle-income students who were already enrolled at member schools and are now eligible for Pell Grants. As a result of these changes, Pell is now a more inclusive and accurate proxy for low- and middle-income status than it was previously. Nevertheless, this change also introduces a break in longitudinal comparability in measuring ATI progress year to year. While the most recent Pell data still hold value, ATI explored additional data sources to better understand the reasons for Pell improvements among ATI members.

[3] American Talent Initiative, *Progress Toward Collective and Institutional Goals*, 2018-2023. https://americantalentinitiative.org/progress.

[4] Kristin Blagg, *How the New Federal Financial Aid Formula Affected Pell Grants*, Urban Institute, 2025. https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/how-new-federal-financial-aid-formula-affected-pell-grants#:~:text=the%20number%20of%20students%20receiving,as%20Pell%20grant%20recipients%20grew.

Measuring Progress Using National Student Clearinghouse's Neighborhood Income Metric

To verify the progress we were seeing in Pell, we turned to an alternative measure: the National Student Clearinghouse's (NSC) neighborhood income metric. The metric estimates a student's family income based on the median income of the Census tract of the student's permanent residence.[5] While this does not reflect individual or household income, it offers an externally consistent measure that avoids the eligibility-based fluctuations seen with Pell.[6]

This approach allows ATI to continue evaluating progress without the disruption caused by the FAFSA Simplification Act. While no metric is perfect, the NSC neighborhood income metric provides a stable, scalable way to examine collective enrollment pattern (See **Appendix A** for more on the NSC metric).

Using this NSC metric, ATI assessed member institutions' progress from fall 2023 to fall 2024 and found that 18,616 additional students from low- and middle-income neighborhoods enrolled at member institutions during this period.[7] This confirms ATI members' continued and substantial upward trajectory in lower-income student enrollment.[8] We added this count to the Pell progress data members submitted between fall 2015 and fall 2023 (+21,330). Doing that, we estimate that even without increases in federal Pell eligibility, ATI member institutions have enrolled nearly 40,000 additional low- and middle-income students since 2015.[9]

The 40,000 figure represents a conservative estimate of the progress ATI members have made due to their efforts (as opposed to changes in Pell eligibility). This is because the NSC data suggest that ATI members are enrolling many low- and middle-income students who reside in higher-income neighborhoods, and these students would not be included in the 40,000 estimate.[10]

Figure 2 on the next page highlights progress since 2015, reflecting both reporting methods.

Cohort, Sector, and Institution-Level Progress

The Pell data submitted as part of ATI's annual data collection allows ATI to look for enrollment patterns across sectors (public and private, nonprofit) and among three separate groups of students—first-time, full-time students; continuing/returning students; and entering transfer students.[11]

[5] For more information on NSC's metric, please visit their fall 2024 enrollment methodological notes. It is important to note that NSC includes part-time students in its analysis, while in ATI we only report on full-time, bachelor's degree-seeking students. It is also important to note that NSC's aggregate counts include data from two ATI member institutions not included in member-submitted Pell data, while ATI's member-submitted Pell data counts include data from one institution not included in NSC's counts.

[6] Due to federal regulations, institutions are not able to report, even in the aggregate, income data for their students. This is because, in addition to expanding eligibility, the FAFSA Simplification Act established a process by which a student's income data is pre-populated on the FAFSA from IRS tax records data. Therefore, this FAFSA income data becomes classified as Federal Tax Information (FTI), which is held to a higher degree of data-sharing restrictions.

[7] National Student Clearinghouse publishes national data for its neighborhood income metric, which reflect increasing enrollment across all neighborhood income quintiles between 2023 and 2024. ATI member increases in the bottom three income quintiles outpace the comparable increases for all four-year publics and private not-for-profit institutions.

[8] Based on validity tests using school and aggregate data in earlier years, we have identified the bottom three income quintiles in the NSC data as the best representation of low- and middle-income student enrollment.

[9] National Student Clearinghouse only began its neighborhood income metric in 2019, so it's not possible to look at progress in the neighborhood income metric back to 2015. When comparing the trend from 2019 to present, the neighborhood income trends similarly to the ATI Pell data through 2023.

[10] At many ATI member institutions, the number of students from low- and middle-income neighborhoods is less than the number of Pell students, even prior to 2024 Pell expansion. The likely explanation is that ATI members are enrolling a portion of their low- and middle-income students from higher-income neighborhoods.

[11] We also have typically used institution-level Pell enrollment to report on progress toward individual *Accelerating Opportunity* goals. Given that Pell was redefined in fall 2024 and other factors, including that we do not have institution-level income data, it is hard to meaningfully interpret progress toward Accelerating Opportunity goals this year. Due to data-sharing restrictions, the NSC data does not allow for institution-level analysis for all ATI members. That means the only institution-level data we have for all ATI members is Pell enrollment.

Breaking down trends by sector, we see that both ATI member public institutions and private institutions saw Pell increases in 2024. ATI member publics now have an average Pell share of 28 percent, and ATI member privates now have an average Pell share of 22 percent, compared to 25 percent and 18 percent in 2023, respectively.

Pell Share by Sector from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024

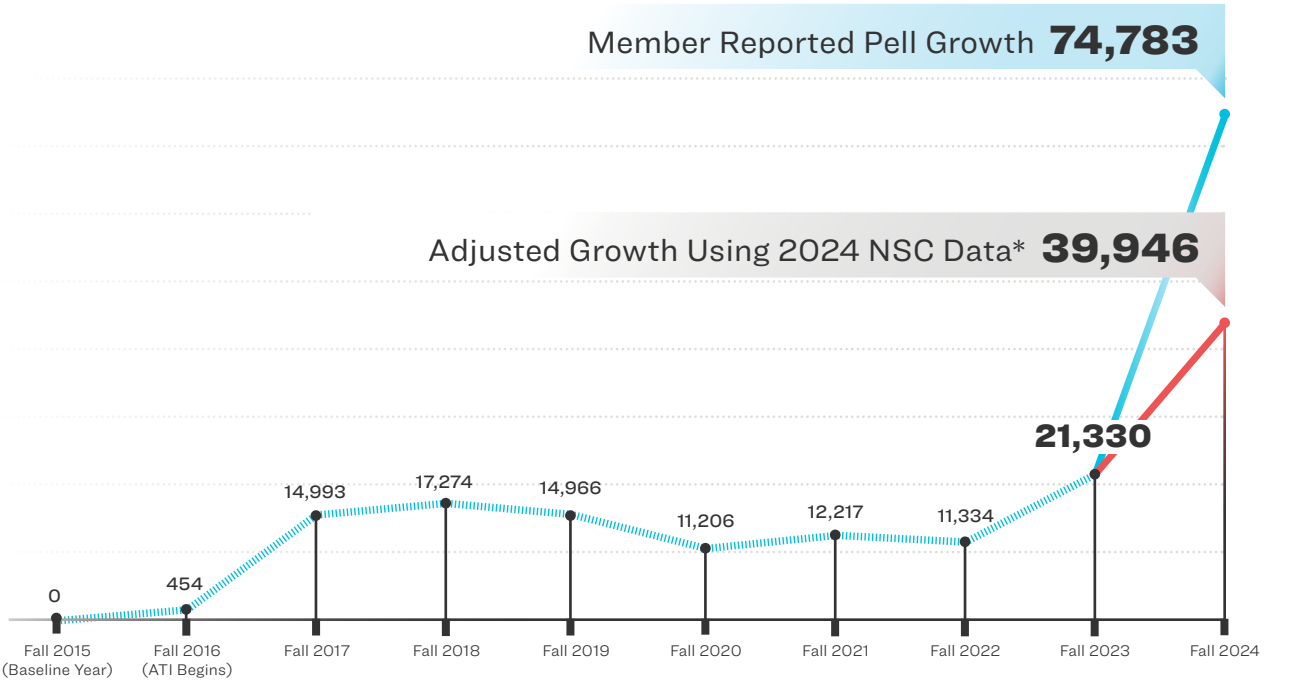
Sector	**Fall 2023** Pell Share	**Fall 2024** Pell Share
Public	**25%**	**28%**
Private	**18%**	**22%**

Looking at trends by student groups, we find universal increases across first-time, continuing/returning, and entering transfer Pell enrollment. The biggest increases were among transfer Pell enrollments (+20 percent).[12]

Given ATI's substantial efforts to improve community college transfer pathways within its membership, this is an encouraging trend (See **Appendix C** for more on cohort-level member enrollment).

The results this year signal a positive trend: Members have overcome pandemic-era declines and have made substantial progress for two years in a row. Tens of thousands of additional low- and middle-income students are likely to graduate with a degree that unlocks economic mobility and activates talent our nation needs to thrive. Yet, continued momentum is not guaranteed, especially given the financial uncertainty and pressures driven by changes in federal and state policy. Now, more than ever, it's important to ensure that members remain committed to this effort and maintain these hard-won increases in opportunity for low- and middle-income students.

Figure 2: ATI Member Growth in Lower-Income Student Enrollment Relative to 2015



[12] Notably, total enrollment—both Pell and non-Pell students—also increased across all three groups, although to a lesser degree, with transfer being the highest year-over-year increase.

* Estimated enrollment gains from ATI member efforts, independent of Pell eligibility changes.

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, AND SUCCESS FOR HIGH-ACHIEVING, LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME STUDENTS

Each ATI member institution identifies and advances a set of concrete strategies tailored to their campus's unique context and goals for low- and middle-income student access and success. Over the last nine years, ATI has identified some common areas of success, and we plan to continue working with institutions over the next year to research and understand the top strategies members are employing to advance access at their institutions. We detail below how many members have strengthened community college transfer pathways, expanded investments in financial aid and clear cost programs, and supported student success through cohort-based programs.

ATI research estimates that each year, 50,000 high-achieving, low- and middle-income community college students do not transfer to a four-year institution.[13] This evidence is one of the reasons why transfer is a key strategy to increase lower-income student opportunity at ATI member schools. For example, the 2024 ATI Fund supported 16 projects (see **Appendix B** for full grantee list), 11 of which are member institutions seeking to strengthen their college transfer pathways. This focus on transfer is associated with progress: Ninety-one ATI members increased their transfer Pell enrollment between fall 2023 and fall 2024, resulting in almost 5,000 additional transfer Pell students.

Members have also continued to invest more in financial aid and are using new strategies to make the cost of college more transparent. ATI members have steadily increased their investments in institutional grant aid awarded to first-time, full-time (FTFT) undergraduate students from $2.7 billion at the start of the initiative in fall 2015 to $4.0 billion in fall 2022 (most recent year of data available).[14,15] This growth reflects both 35,563 more students receiving institutional grant aid over this period, but also higher average awards. The average amount of institutional grant aid awarded to FTFT undergraduate students rose from $16,668 to $20,233 since the start of the initiative.[16] While these data do not distinguish between need-based and other types of aid, the expansion of clear cost programs across the membership suggests that institutions are increasingly directing aid toward low- and middle- income students.

Rising sticker prices can obscure the actual cost of attending institutions of higher education, deterring lower-income students. To address this, many members have invested in clear cost financial aid programs, which make explicit the amount that low- and middle-income students will pay to attend. For example, one common strategy is offering financial aid that covers the full cost of attendance for students whose families are below a certain income threshold, like $100,000 (so these families effectively pay nothing).

When robust investments in financial aid are paired with communications campaigns to expand opportunity, these clear cost programs can help increase application rates and enrollment, and boost retention rates among lower-income students.[17] For ATI, 65 member institutions—or roughly half of the membership—offer clear cost financial aid programs.[18] Of these 65 institutions, 25 ATI members have implemented new clear cost programs and 12 members have expanded their existing programs since fall 2023.

[13] Tania LaViolet, Benjamin Fresquez, McKenzie Maxson, and Joshua Wyner, *The Talent Blind Spot: The Case for Increasing Community College Transfer to High Graduation Rate Institutions*, American Talent Initiative, 2018. https://americantalentinitiative.org/resource/the-talent-blind-spot/.

[14] Note: this metric is from IPEDS (IPEDS Variable Name: Total amount of institutional grant aid awarded to full-time first-time undergraduates).

[15] IPEDS data, most recent data available is Fall 2022.

[16] This average is weighted based on the number of students receiving institutional aid.

[17] Doug Erickson, *Bucky's Tuition Promise boosts retention rate for lower-income students, long-term study finds*, University of Wisconsin-Madison News, 2025. https://news.wisc.edu/buckys-tuition-promise-boosts-retention-rate-for-lower-income-students-long-term-study-finds/.

Susan Dynarski, C.J. Labissi, Katherine Michelmore, and Stephanie Owen, *Closing the Gap: The Effect of Targeted, Tuition-Free Promise on College Choices of High-Achieving, Low-Income Students*, University of Michigan Education Policy Initiative, 2018. https://epistage.fordschool.umich.edu/sites/epi/files/2021-08/12-2018-closing-the-gap_0.pdf.

[18] ATI analysis of clear cost aid programs (2025).

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, AND SUCCESS FOR HIGH-ACHIEVING, LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME STUDENTS

Members continue to advance student success for low- and middle-income students through wraparound services and cohort programs. For example, 13 ATI institutions are Kessler Scholars Collaborative campuses. The Kessler Scholars Collaborative supports first-generation, limited-income student success, engagement, retention, completion, and professional development through mentoring, programming, and cohort-based activities. The success of these efforts is clear: The four-year graduation rate for Kessler Scholars is 74 percent compared to 27 percent for all first-generation students nationally. Members are exploring how to scale the benefits of these programs to more students.

Finally, many members are making more room for low- and middle-income students by growing their student bodies. Ninety-two ATI members have increased their total undergraduate enrollment numbers between fall 2023 and fall 2024.

The progress ATI members have made is the result of years of institutional efforts to increase opportunity, including through expanded outreach and enrollment strategies, need-based financial aid, and student success support systems. The FAFSA Simplification Act, which expanded Pell eligibility in 2024, accelerated these efforts. The Pell expansion is an investment that continues to enjoy broad, bipartisan support.[19] For example, when the future of the Pell expansion was at risk, Congress demonstrated its commitment to ensuring economic mobility and talent development among low- and middle-income Americans by addressing projected budgetary shortfalls in the short-term through a one-time appropriation.[20]

But just as federal policies can accelerate progress, they can also hamper it. Despite the one-time appropriation to protect Pell funding, the Pell Grant program still faces an estimated shortfall of $61 billion over the next 10 years at the time of this report.[21] Underfunding of the Pell program and reductions to programs that serve low- and middle-income students could all pose budgetary pressures that may make it more difficult for ATI members to sustain their investments in financial aid. For example, the most recent Fiscal Year 2026 (FY2026) budget proposal included a proposed decrease in Department of Education (ED) funding, including proposed cuts to the Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program and elimination of Federal TRIO Programs.[22] Whether or not these cuts ultimately pass, the financial uncertainty created by these proposals may make it more difficult for institutions to have the confidence to invest in substantially more financial aid.

While they are less well known than Pell, the FWS program, which provides part-time employment for students with financial need to help them pay for their education, and TRIO Programs, which funds federal outreach and student services programs that target low-income and first-generation students, have helped ensure higher education is accessible and affordable for low- and middle-income students.[23,24,25] While the exact status of FWS and TRIO funding for FY2026[26] is unclear at the time of this report, proposed decreases to the FWS program could mean that the more than 85,000 low- and middle-income FWS students at ATI member schools, and hundreds of thousands of students at all schools across the nation, would lose financial support. Proposals to eliminate TRIO Programs, which are already facing numerous program closures nationwide,[27] would mean that 31,000 low-income students enrolled across ATI member schools would lose access to services that have, for decades, supported their success.[28]

[19] Sophie Nguyen, Rachel Fishman, and Olivia Cheche, *Varying Degrees 2024: Funding*, New America, 2024. https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/varying-degrees-2024/funding/#americans-want-more-need-based-grant-aid-for-students.

[20] Jessica Blake, *Budgetary Watchdog Warns Pell Grant Still Projected to Face Shortfall*, Inside Higher Ed, 2025. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2025/12/09/budgetary-watchdog-warns-pell-grant-will-face-shortfall.

[21] Jessica Blake, *Budgetary Watchdog Warns Pell Grant Still Projected to Face Shortfall*, Inside Higher Ed, 2025. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2025/12/09/budgetary-watchdog-warns-pell-grant-will-face-shortfall.

[22] Kritika Agarwal, *White House Proposes Steep Cuts to Science and Education Funding*, Association of American Universities, 2025. https://www.aau.edu/newsroom/leading-research-universities-report/white-house-proposes-steep-cuts-science-and-education.

[23] *Federal Work-Study jobs help students earn money to pay for college or career school*, Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education. https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/work-study.

[24] *Federal Work-Study Program*, Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education, 2022-2023. https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/fsa-handbook/2022-2023/vol6/ch2-federal-work-study-program#:~:text=In%20general%2C%20the%20federal%20share,under%20the%20school's%20FWS%20Program.

[25] *Title IV Program Volume Reports*, Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education. https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/title-iv.

[26] ATI analysis of data from: *Appropriations Status Table: FY2025*, Congress.gov. https://www.congress.gov/crs-appropriations-status-table.

[27] Mark Lieberman, *Trump Admin. Cancels Dozens More Grants, Hitting Civics, Arts, and Higher Ed.*, Education Week, 2025. https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/trump-admin-cancels-dozens-more-grants-hitting-civics-arts-and-higher-ed/2025/09.

[28] *Trio Footprint Project Sites Map*, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 2021-2022. Source: ATI analysis of data from the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) at the U.S. Department of Education. https://ope.ed.gov/programs/trio/trioexplorer/?page=Page-2&views=Filter-4%2CMap-Layers-3&utm_.

Public Support for Our Mission

As members weigh the impact of these potential budget changes, they will need to make a strong case to their campus constituencies, alumni, trustees, and policymakers for continued investment in financial aid for low- and middle-income students. ATI's data make the impact of this investment abundantly clear: Every year that members sustain or increase Pell enrollment means thousands more graduates from low- and middle-income families are launched into fulfilling careers that offer economic mobility and security.

As noted above, this work enjoys broad public support from across the political spectrum.[29] So, sustaining investments in financial aid can bolster public trust in ATI member institutions. The opposite may also be true: Decisions to reduce access and affordability may compromise the missions of ATI institutions and diminish public confidence in higher education.

[29] ATI consulted with two private polling firms to field a joint, custom poll focused on public perception of higher education, and specifically, ATI's mission.

CONCLUSION

Despite significant headwinds and challenges, ATI members have made tremendous progress since 2015, yet work remains to ensure that every high-achieving student in our country has a chance to enroll in the colleges and universities with the highest graduation rates. To support members in fulfilling this goal, ATI will continue to identify effective strategies to maintain and advance progress, including in the areas of need-based financial aid, community college transfer, and improving student success through programs such as the Kessler Scholars Collaborative. ATI will seek grants aiming to jumpstart new and expanded programs at ATI member institutions, such as the 2024 ATI Fund, which supported 16 projects that advance innovation in community college transfer pathways, dual enrollment programs, and expanded outreach and early admissions. (See **Appendix B** for list of grantees). In these and other ways, ATI remains committed to recognizing and helping members replicate the kind of bold strategies proven to expand access for low- and middle-income students.

Just five years ago, the COVID pandemic reduced Pell enrollment nationwide—including at ATI schools—potentially setting back economic mobility and opportunity for tens of thousands of highly talented young people for years to come. In response, ATI member presidents prioritized lower-income students' access and success. Today, we see the highest level of low- and middle-income student enrollment across ATI members. This momentum is critical to sustain at a pivotal time in the history of our country. We are grateful for the ongoing efforts of ATI members and stand ready to support their work.

Appendix A: Additional Background on the National Student Clearinghouse's Neighborhood Income Measure

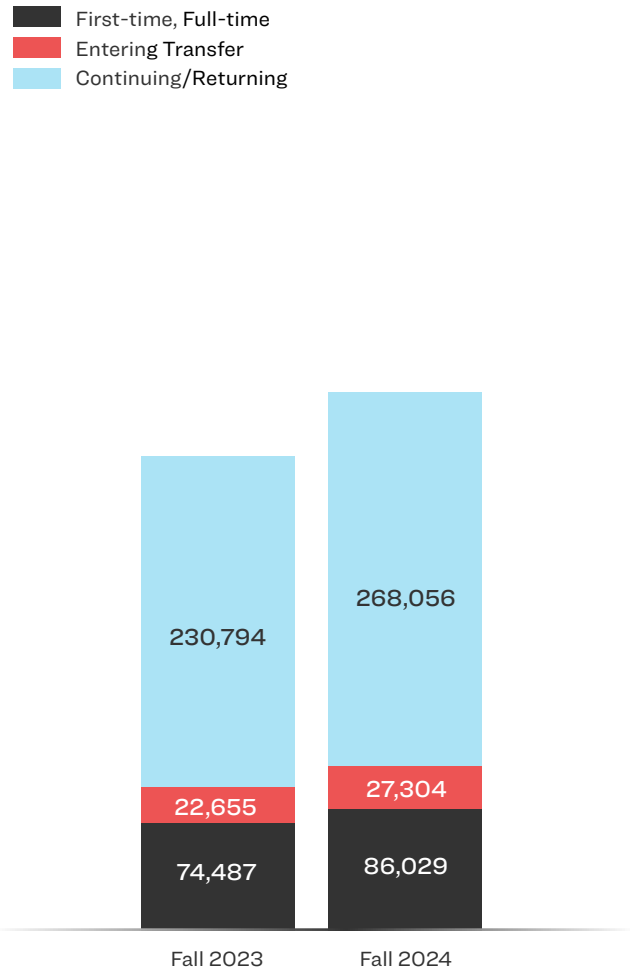
We used the National Student Clearinghouse's neighborhood income measure to assess lower-income student enrollment independent of Pell policy changes. NSC receives students' street addresses from institutions, and then matches those addresses to a Census tract. Household income data is then sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau for each tract and divided into quintiles. Each student's median household income for their Census tract is then adjusted using Regional Price Parity values from the Bureau of Economic Analysis to account for price level differences by state and metropolitan area. Students are then placed into quintiles. The bottom two quintiles are lower-income neighborhoods, the middle quintile represents middle-income neighborhoods, and the top two quintiles are high-income neighborhoods. In this report, we refer to the bottom three quintiles when assessing lower-income student enrollment, which aligns most closely with the magnitude of Pell enrollment at ATI member institutions. The metric is not perfect, as it reflects the neighborhoods that students come from rather than the family income of an individual student, but given restrictions on aggregate income data sharing and the lack of publicly available data, it is the most viable alternative.

Appendix B: List of 2024 ATI Fund Grantees

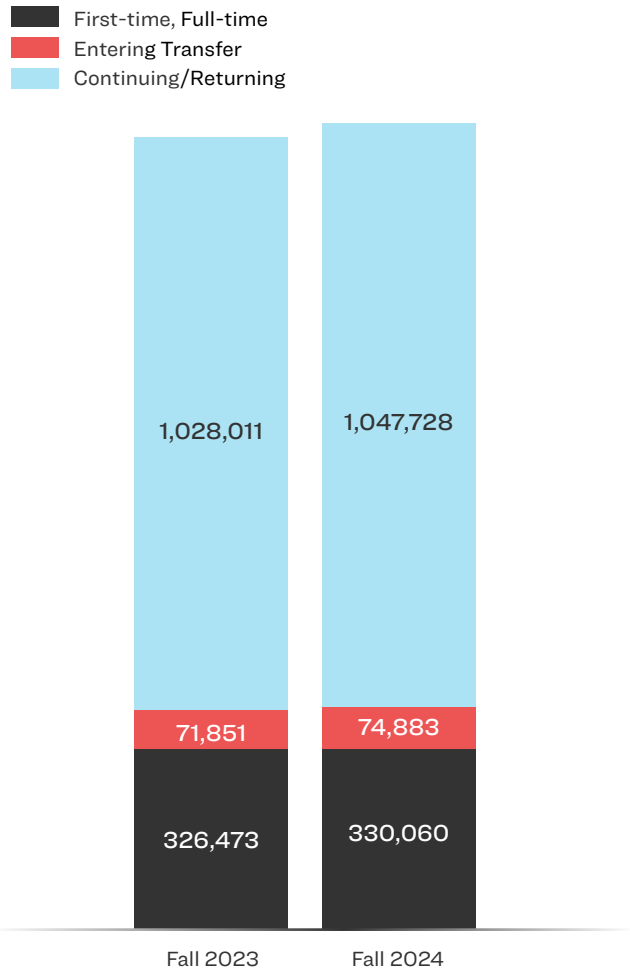
- Baruch College
- Colby College
- Colorado State University—Fort Collins
- Drexel University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Indiana University—Bloomington
- Juniata College
- Lebanon Valley College
- Muhlenberg College
- Stevens Institute of Technology
- Stony Brook University
- SUNY Oneonta
- Towson University
- University of California—Santa Cruz
- University of Dayton
- University of Illinois at Urbana—Champaign

Appendix C: Cohort-Level Member Enrollment

Pell Enrollment at ATI Members, Fall 2023 and Fall 2024



Total Enrollment at ATI Members, Fall 2023 and Fall 2024



Pell and Overall Enrollment Increases by Cohort at ATI Member Institutions from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024

	FTFT	Transfer	Continuing/Returning	Total
Pell	**15.50%**	**20.52%**	**16.15%**	**16.30%**
Overall	**1.10%**	**4.22%**	**1.92%**	**1.85%**

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