

STUDENT DEBT

KNOW THE FACTS

Seventh Edition

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THE COUNCIL OF
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

The Issue

With student loan debt reaching approximately \$1.5 trillion,¹ many are concerned that student loans may be the next financial bubble to burst. They cite students with loans of more than \$100,000 and ballooning loan default rates. They contend that borrowing for higher education may not be worth the financial risks. Some even argue that students should not incur debt to attend college.

What is the truth? This presentation presents the facts about college students' indebtedness, relying on the most recent data available.

1. Federal Reserve Bank of New York Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax, *Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit*, Q2 2019.

PERCEPTION

Many students owe more than \$100,000 when they graduate.

FACT

In 2019, only 7 percent of all borrowers owed \$100,000 or more in student debt.¹

Obtaining a college degree on average adds \$1,000,000 to lifetime income.²

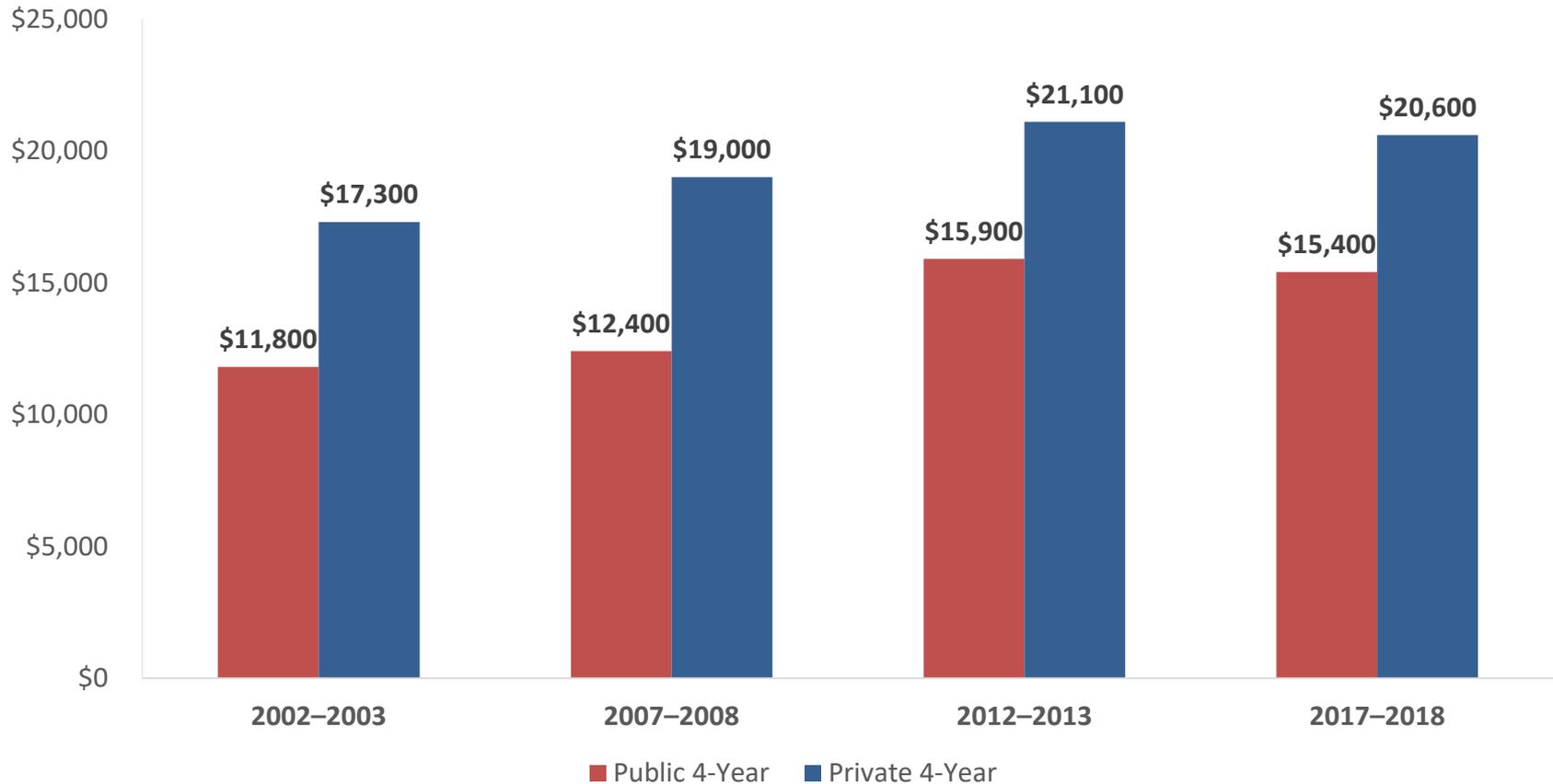
A private college graduate typically earns \$53,856 in the first year after graduation.

1. The College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2019*, Figure 10.

2. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *The College Payoff*, Executive Summary, p. 2.

3. The College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2019*, p. 21; NACE, *First Destinations for the Class of 2018*, p. 7.

Average Student Loan Debt per Bachelor's Degree Recipient



Source: The College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2019*, p.21. All totals are expressed in 2018 dollars.

PERCEPTION

Because private colleges are so expensive, students had to borrow an unrealistic amount to enroll in one.

FACT

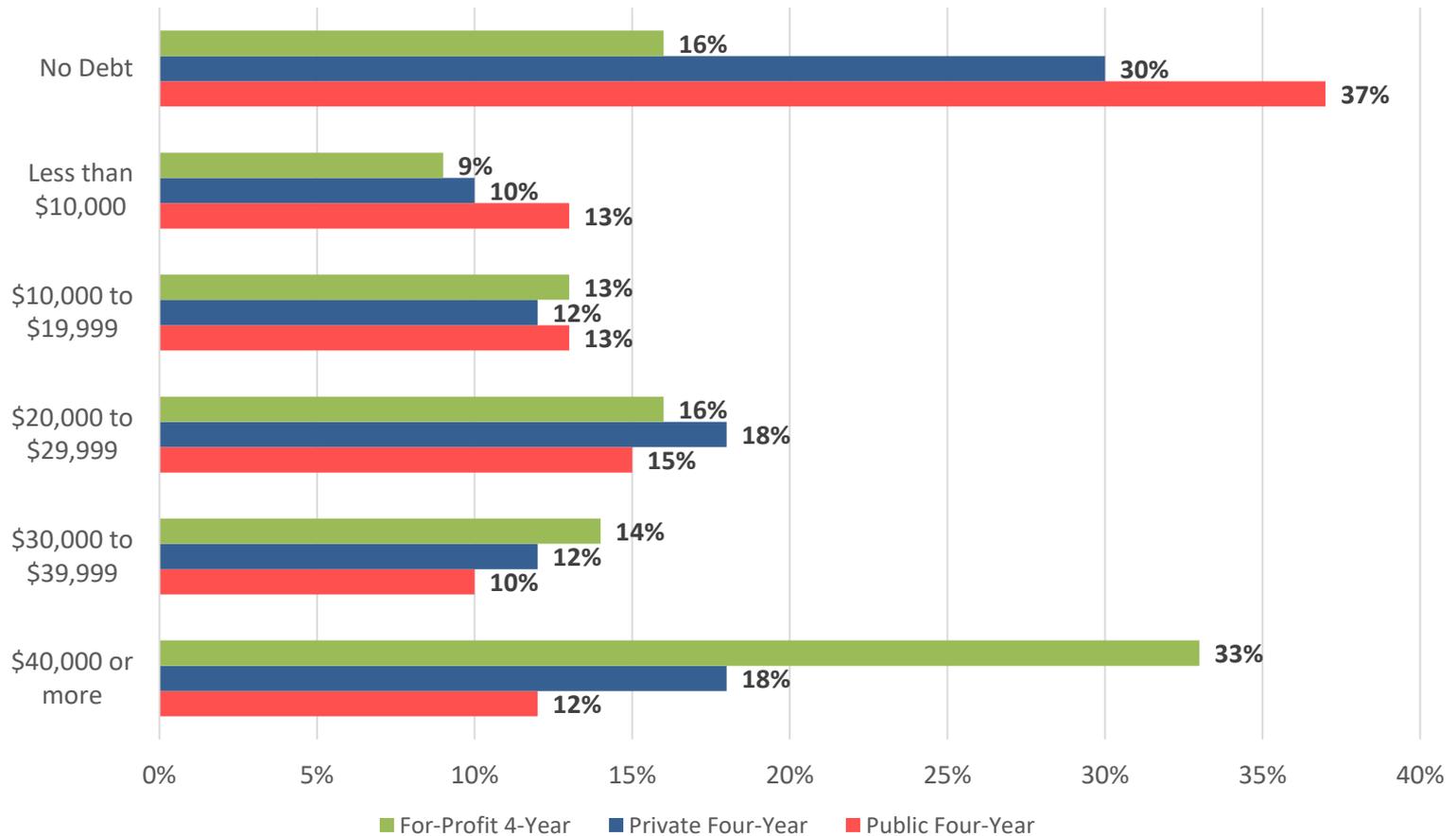
Nearly three out of ten students who recently graduated with a bachelor's degree from a four-year private college or university had no educational debt.

For those with debt, the difference between the average debt levels for graduates of public versus private institutions is \$5,200. Meanwhile the average private college graduate's starting salary is larger by \$4,038.¹

Also, 65 percent of private college graduates in 2015–2016 completed their degrees within 4 years or less; the average time to degree for private college graduates was 7 months faster than their peers at public institutions.²

1. The College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2019*, Figure 15 (2016–2017 bachelor's degree graduates); NACE, *First Destinations for the Class of 2018*, p. 7.
2. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B:16/17): A First Look at the Employment and Educational Experiences of College Graduates, 1 Year Later* (NCES 2019-241).

Distribution of Total Undergraduate Debt, Students Graduating in 2015–2016



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015–16 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:16). Analysis by the Council of Independent Colleges.

PERCEPTION

Most student loans are used to pay for undergraduate study.

FACT

Graduate students, who make up about 15 percent of all postsecondary students, accounted for 42 percent of federal loans in 2018–2019.¹

Since 2011–2012, the share of undergraduate students borrowing federal student loans has declined every year to a low of 28 percent in 2018–2019.²

Only 17 percent of federal student loan disbursements in the 2018–2019 academic year were to students enrolled at CIC member colleges and universities.³

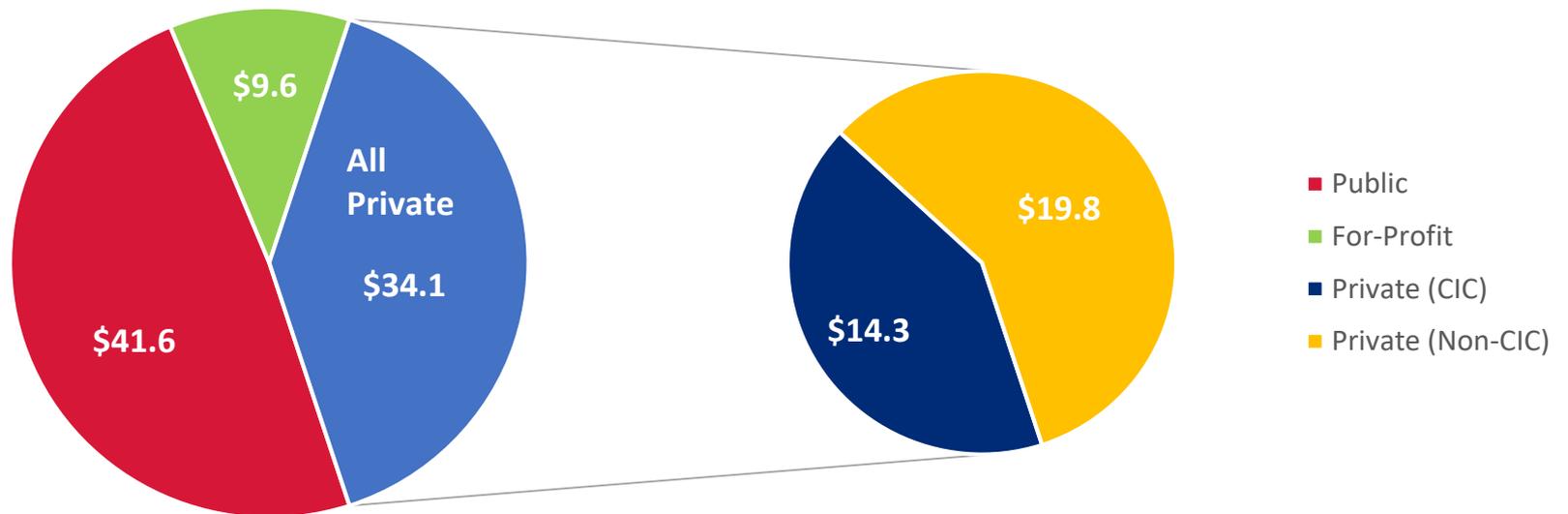
1. The College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2019*, p. 21.

2. The College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2019*, p. 19.

3. U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid (FSA) Data Center, “Federal Student Loan Portfolio by School Type, 2019 Q4.” Calculations by the Council of Independent Colleges.

Total Student Loan Disbursements by Sector AY 2018–2019 (in billions)*

Only 17 percent of loans went to CIC students.



*Includes both undergraduate and graduate loan disbursements.

PERCEPTION

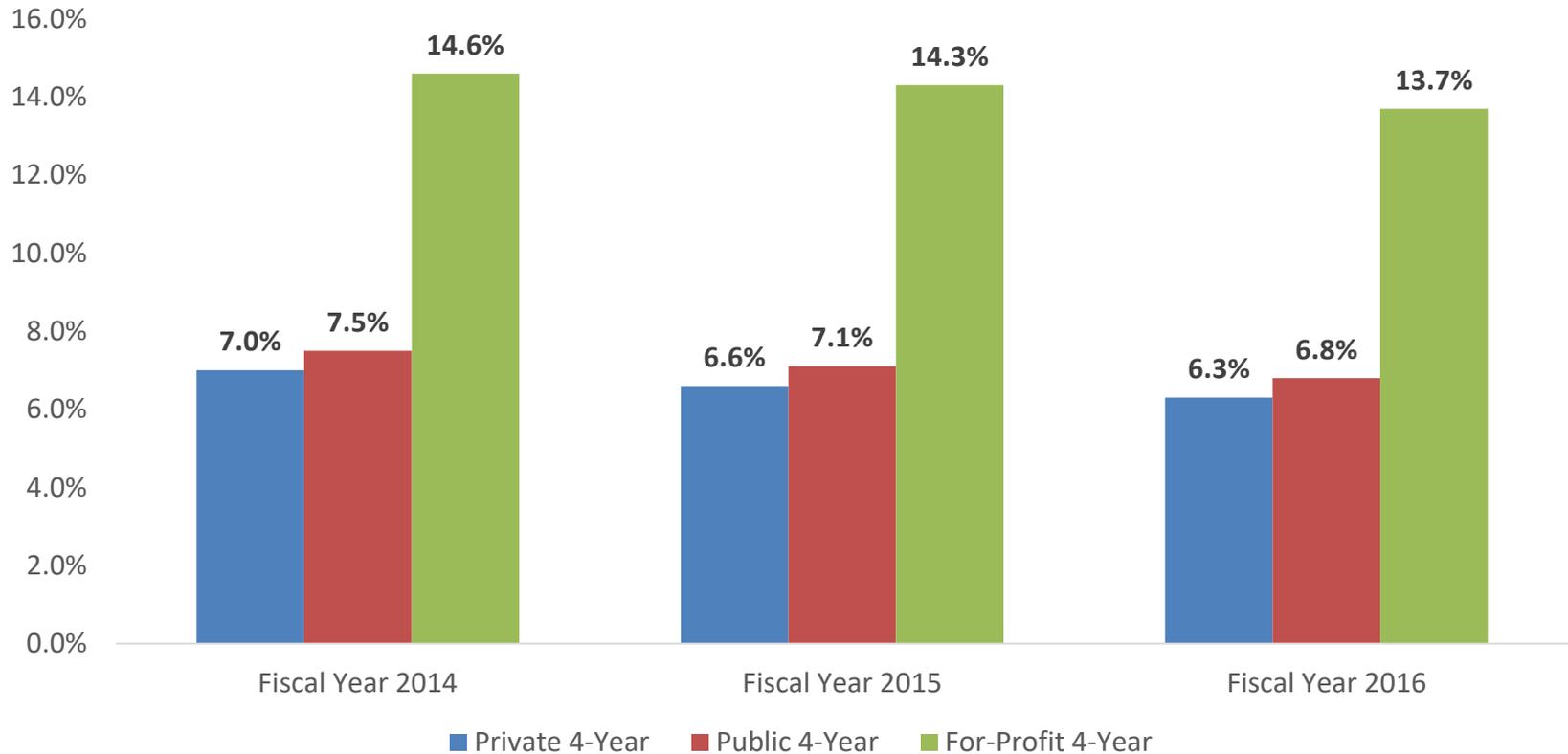
Student loans are so overwhelming that many borrowers default.

FACT

According to the most recent data, only 6.3 percent of private four-year college students defaulted on their loans compared with 13.7 percent of students at for-profit four-year institutions.¹

1. U.S. Department of Education Office of Federal Student Aid Programs, *Comparison of FY 2016 Official National Cohort Default Rates to Prior Two Official Cohort Default Rates* (Calculated August 4, 2019).

Three-Year Student Loan Cohort Default Rates (2014–2016)



Source: U.S. Department of Education Office of Federal Student Aid Programs, *Comparison of FY 2016 Official National Cohort Default Rates to Prior Two Official Cohort Default Rates* (Calculated August 4, 2019). Note: Default rates are for four-year institution attendees.

PERCEPTION

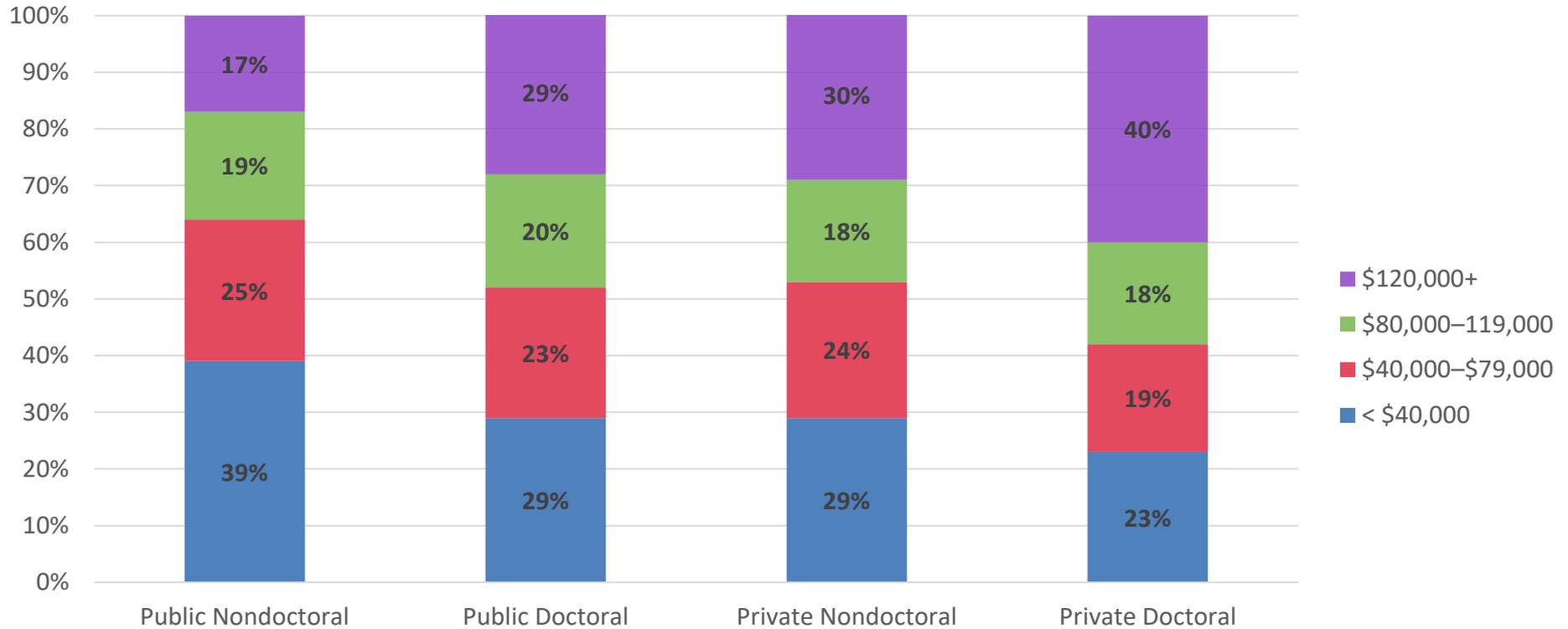
Private colleges cost too much for all but the wealthiest families.

FACT

Private colleges enroll students of all financial backgrounds. And 29 percent of undergraduates at private nondoctoral institutions are from families whose incomes were less than \$40,000.¹

1. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), 2016. Calculation by the Council of Independent Colleges.

Student Enrollment by Family Income Level at Four-Year Institutions, 2016



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), 2016. Calculation by the Council of Independent Colleges.

More Students Get More Aid

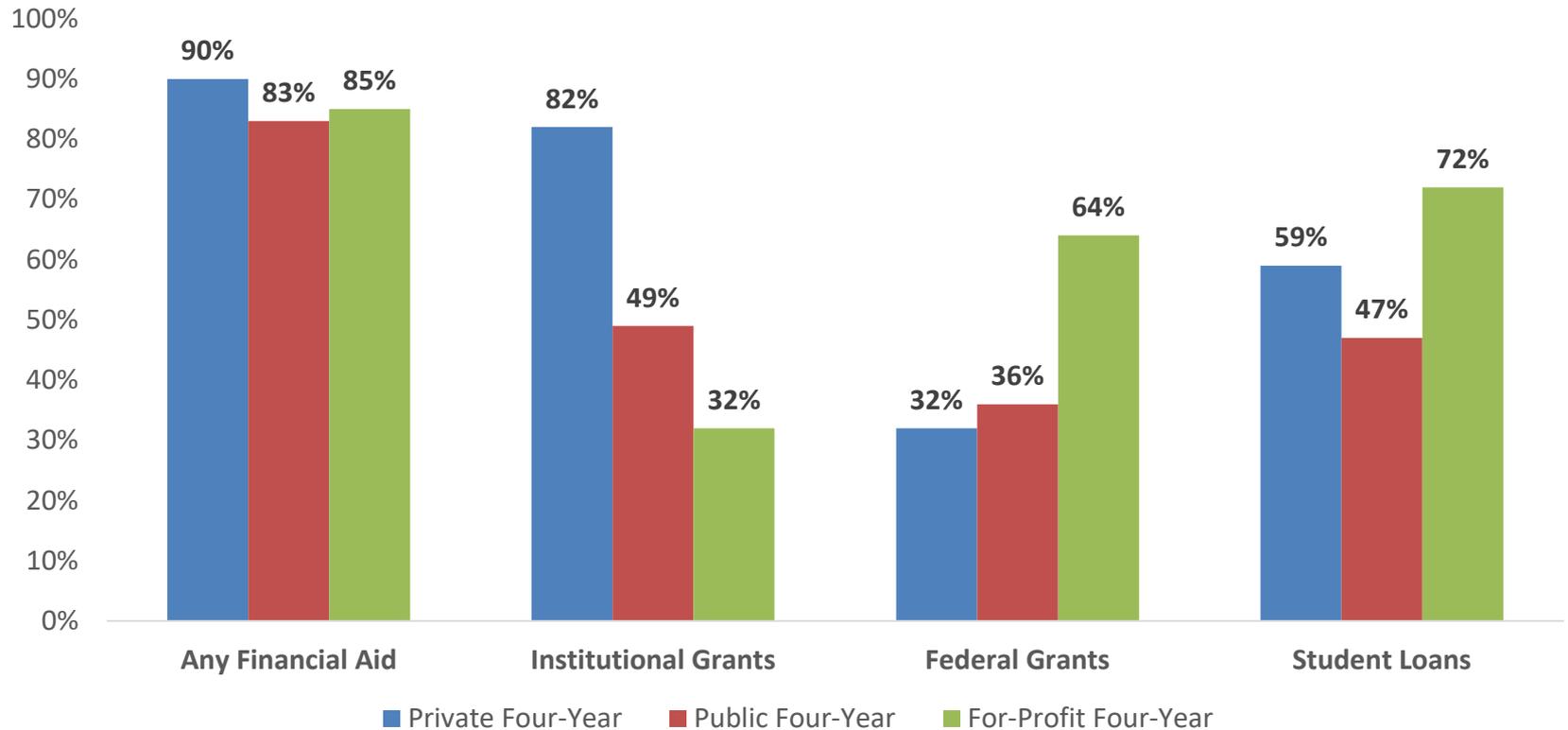
FACT

Eighty-two percent of students enrolled at private colleges receive scholarships or grants from their college.

FACT

Students at private colleges receive MORE grant aid than those at public universities: \$20,211 compared with \$6,132.

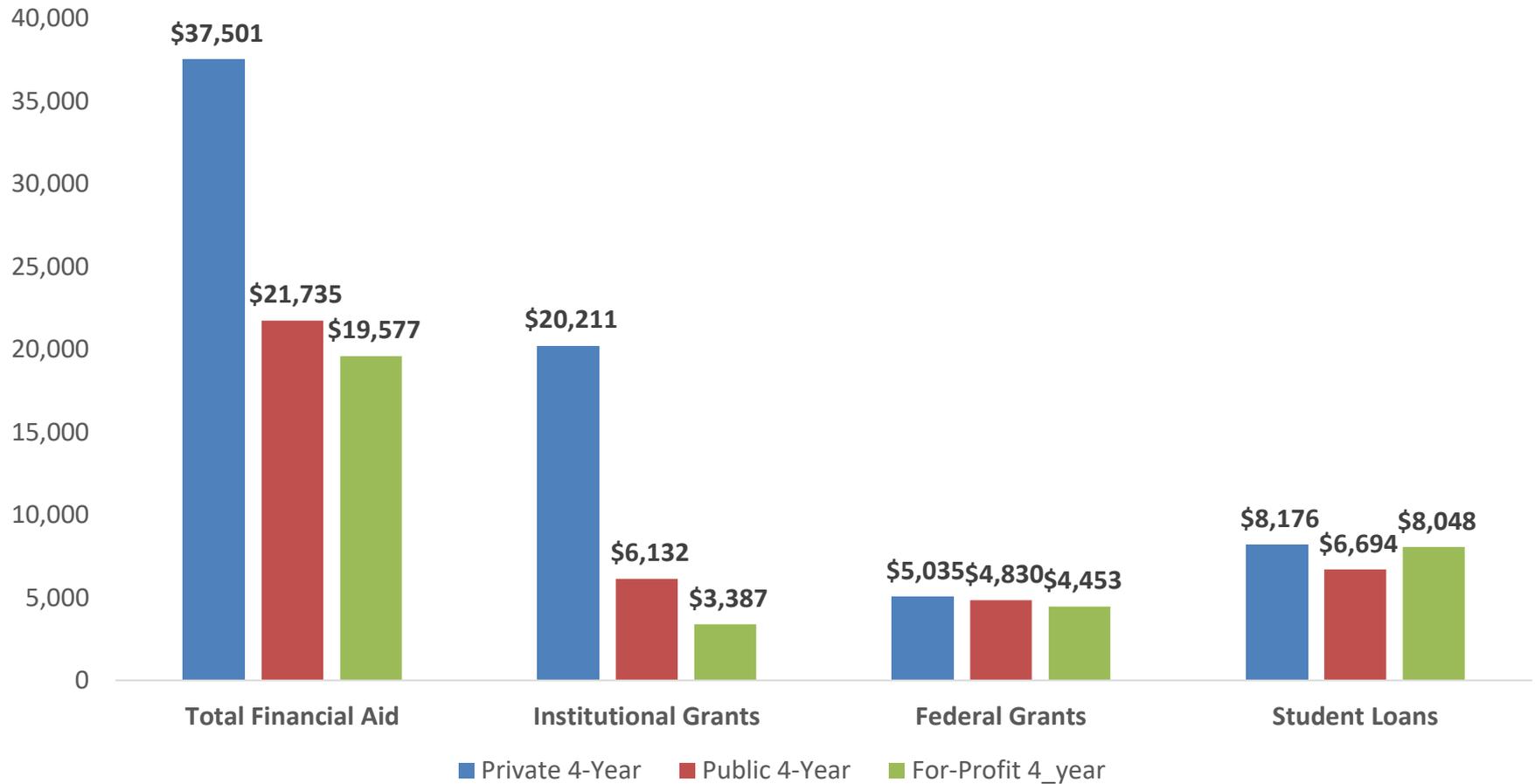
Percentage of Undergraduates Receiving Financial Aid by Sector in 2016–2017



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, Table 331.20.

Note: Percentages for first-time, full-time undergraduates during academic year 2016-2017. “Any Financial Aid” category includes aid listed as well as state and local grants.

Average Amount of Financial Aid



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, Table 331.20. Amounts are in 2017-18 constant dollars. "Total Financial Aid" category includes aid listed as well as state and local grants. Analysis by the Council of Independent Colleges.

PERCEPTION

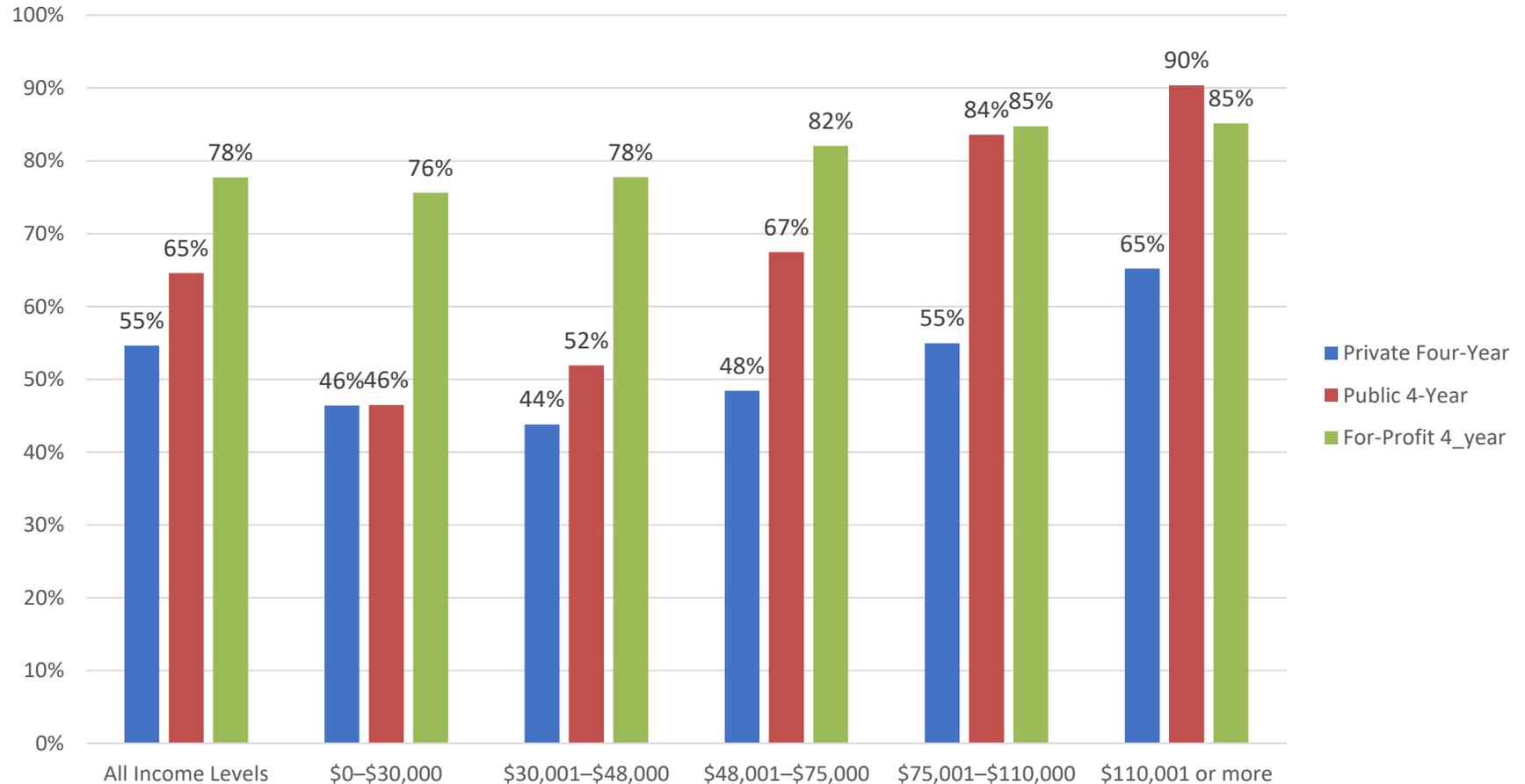
All students enrolled at private colleges pay the tuition price listed on the website.

FACT

On average, the actual amount students pay at private colleges is less than 60 percent of the published tuition price.

Students with lower family incomes pay a much lower percentage of the total costs.

Average Net Price as a Percentage of Total Costs by Family Income



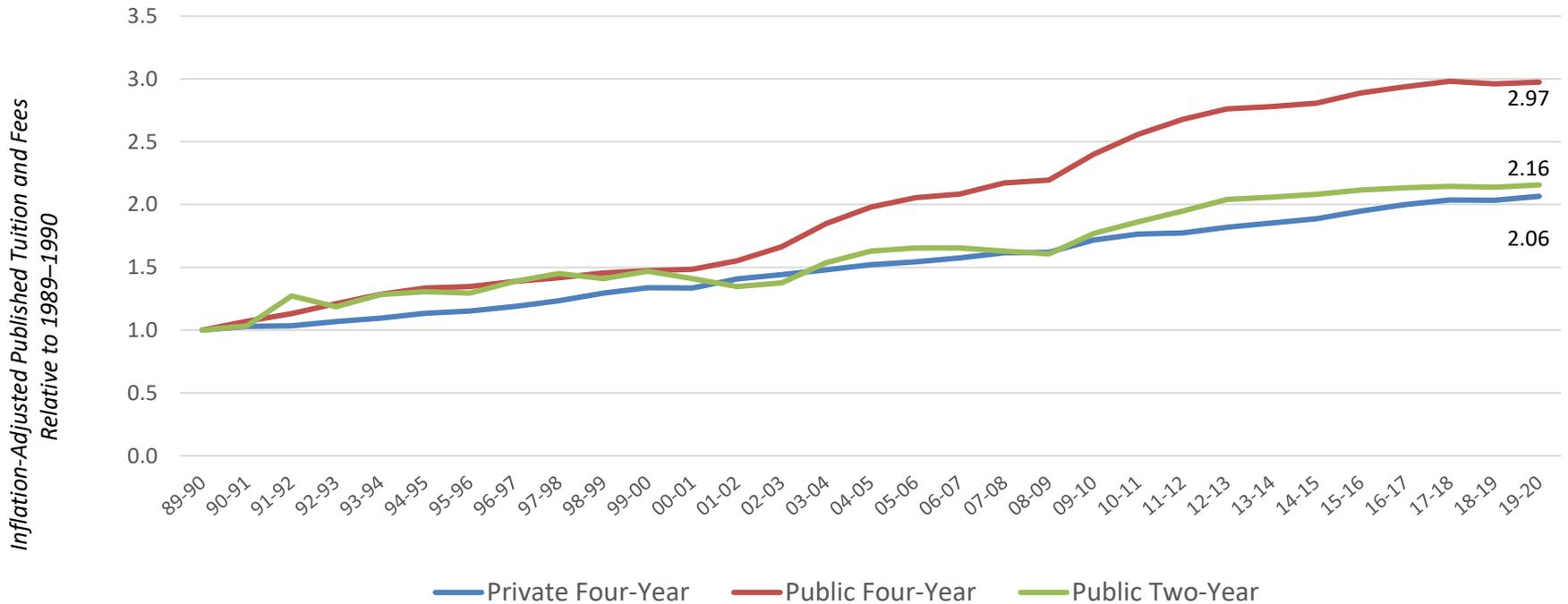
Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics*, Table 331.30, academic year 2016–2017; 2017–2018 constant dollars are represented. Note: Aid consists of federal Title IV grants and other federal, state, local, or institutional sources. Analysis by the Council of Independent Colleges.

Other Factors to Consider

- Over the past ten years, tuition at private colleges has risen more slowly than at public universities.¹
- The graduation rates at private colleges are higher than those at public and for-profit institutions overall and for low-income students as well as first-generation students.
- Students at private colleges graduate much sooner (about seven months earlier) than do their peers at public institutions—which means fewer years of paying tuition and a quicker start at earning a salary.

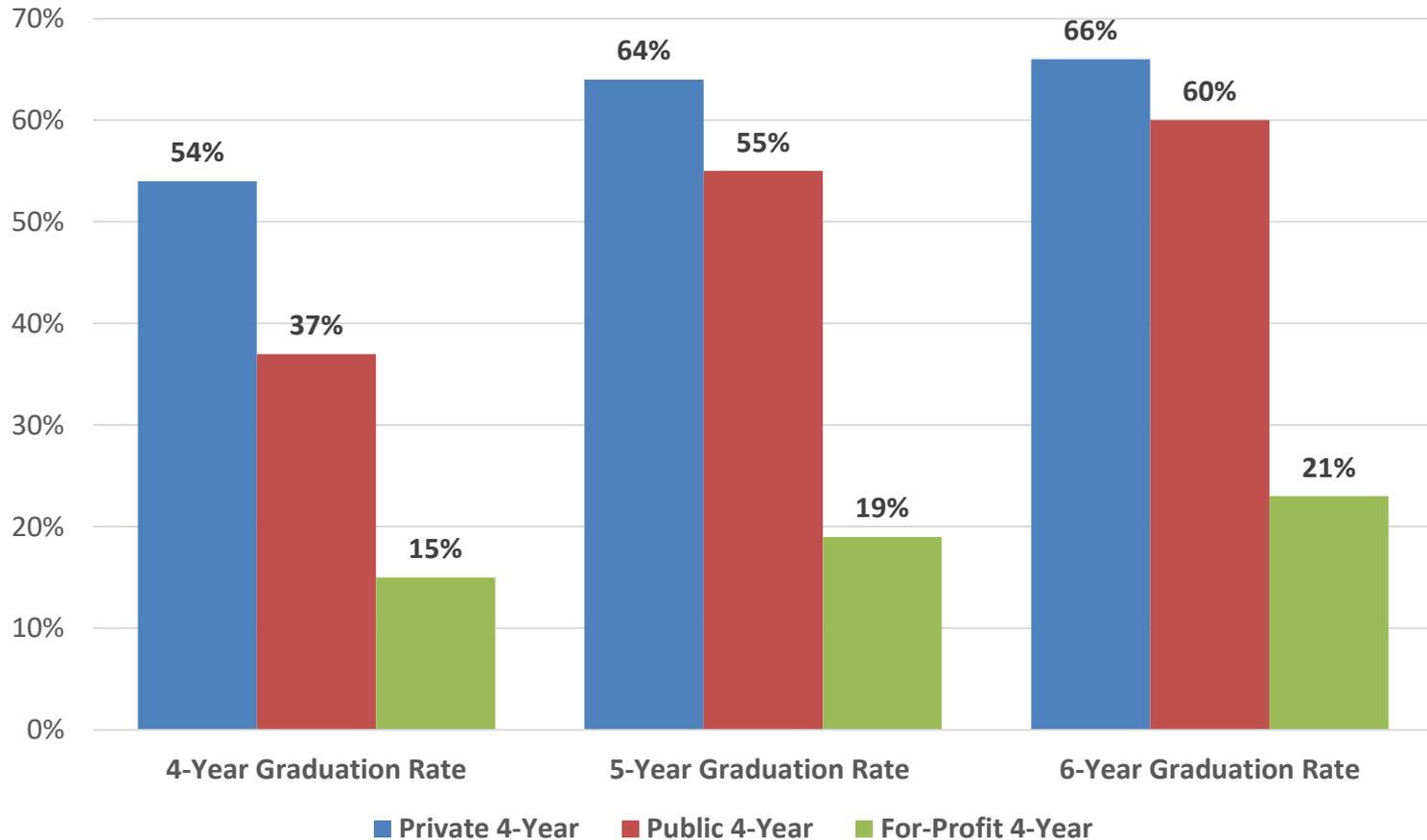
1. Source: The College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2019*, Figure 4B.

Change in Inflation-Adjusted Published Tuition 1989–1990 to 2019–2020



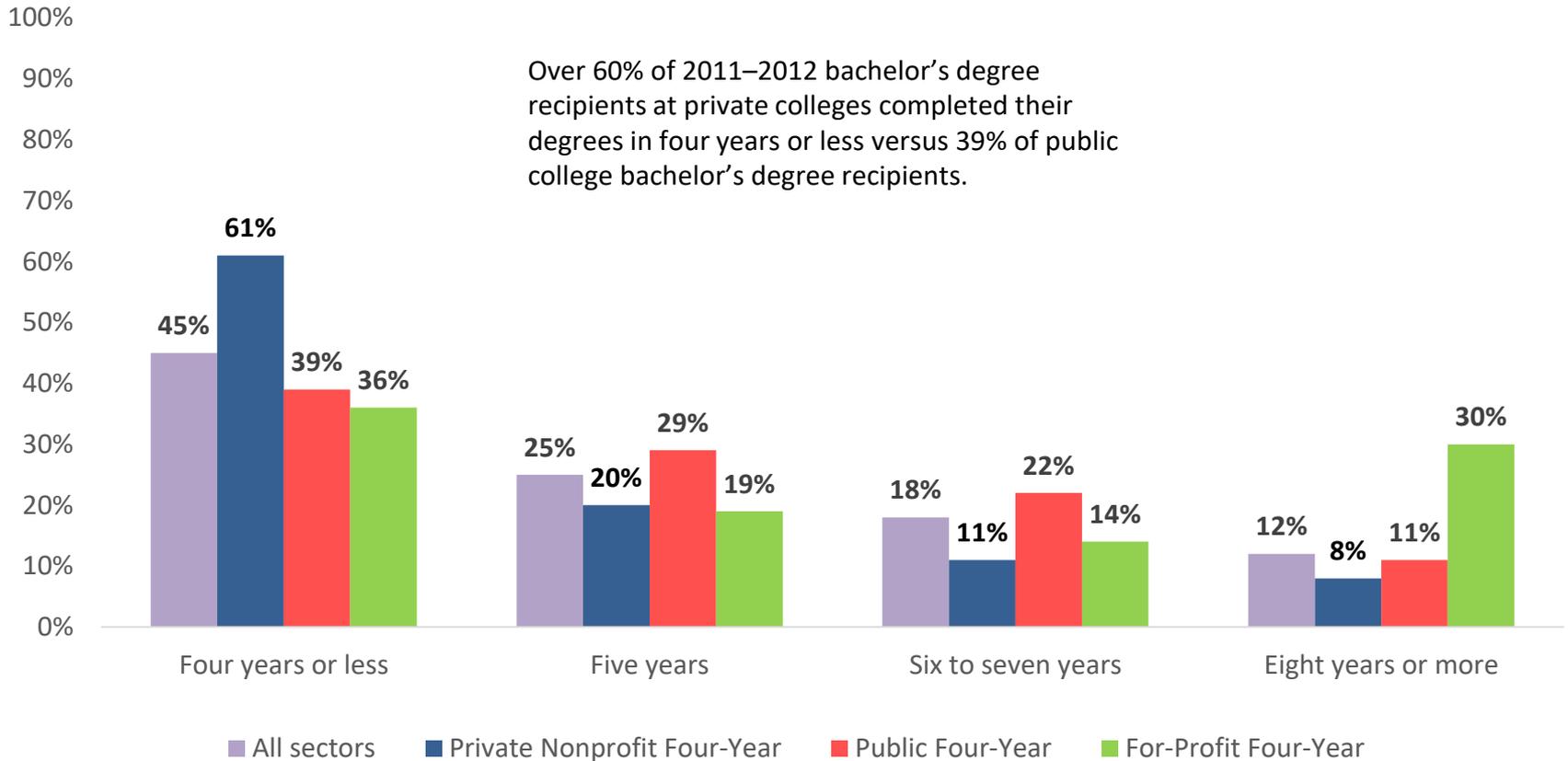
Source: The College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2019*. Note: Values for published tuition and fees by sector, adjusted for inflation, as a percentage of 1989–1990 published prices. For example, a value of 2.97 indicates that the tuition and fee price in the public four-year sector in 2019–20 is 2.97 times as high as it was in 1989–90, after adjusting for increases in the Consumer Price Index. Average tuition and fee prices reflect in-district charges for public two-year institutions and in-state charges for public four-year institutions.

Four-Year, Five-Year and Six-Year Graduation Rates by Institutional Type



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, Table 326.10. Note: Percentages are for entering cohort of 2011.

Time to Degree by Institutional Type



Source: Urban Institute, “Time between First Postsecondary Enrollment and Degree Completion, Among 2011–12 Bachelor’s Degree Recipients, by Sector,” calculated from National Postsecondary Aid Study (NPSAS), 2012. Presentation by Council of Independent Colleges.



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For additional information about these facts and others that describe the quality and affordability of independent colleges, please see:

www.cic.edu/resources-research/charts-data

For questions, please contact:

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