

Deadline update: first-year application trends through November 1

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Introduction

Common App is committed to expanding access and opportunity for all students, particularly those historically underrepresented in higher education. By analyzing up-to-date application activity from our expansive data warehouse, we can uncover and bring attention to these trends as they emerge. Communicating these trends to our community is of the utmost importance as we strive to streamline and make more accessible the college admissions process.

This report represents the first release in the 2022–23 “Deadline Update” series at Common App – the largest, most comprehensive source of higher education application data available in the U.S. Each update in this series highlights year-over-year application activity for first-year applicants through a specific date (in this case, November 1. See last year’s November Deadline Update [here](#).) We will release these Deadline Updates monthly through March 2023, and a final season wrap up in August.

Note: Since Fall 2020 trends were anomalous due to the global pandemic, this year we provide an additional year of data for comparison in all displays. As the Common App membership has grown over this period, we restrict analyses to applicants and applications to those members that have been a part of the membership since 2019–20 (referred to hereafter as “returning members”) in an effort to provide a more direct year-over-year comparison. These analyses reflect trends for 841 returning members and associated applicants.

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Key findings

1. Through November 1, 2022, 727,047 distinct first-year applicants had applied to 841 returning members (an increase of 26% from 592,471 in 2019–20).
 - a. Total application volume through November 1 rose 41% from 2019–20 (2,030,120) to 2022–23 (2,764,654). Applicants were also applying to more members in 2022–23 than in 2019–20 (+12% from 3.4 to 3.8 applications per applicant on average).
2. Underrepresented minority (URM)¹ applicants increased by 32% over 2019–20, while first-generation (“first-gen”) applicants increased by 43%, more than twice the rate of continuing-generation applicants over the same period. Students reporting eligibility for a Common App fee waiver² increased at nearly three times the rate of students not reporting fee waiver eligibility (54% vs. 16%).
3. About 61% of domestic applicants at this point in the season resided in the most affluent quintile (i.e., top 20%) of ZIP codes nationwide, compared to just five percent from the bottom quintile. These trends were similar to those observed in prior years’ early applying periods.
4. The number of distinct international applicants through November 1 increased at over triple the rate of domestic applicants since 2019–20 (63% versus 20%). China, India, Nigeria, Ghana, and Canada were the leading countries for international applicants.
5. After a steep decline in standardized test score reporting rates from 2019–20 (78%) to 2020–21 (45%) and a slight rebound in 2021–22 (51%), early trends suggest another decrease in score reporting for 2022–23 (48% of applicants have reported a score in an application this season). The stark differences in test score reporting by student demographics (URM, first-gen, fee waiver recipient, and sex) reported in last season’s Deadline Updates persisted through November 1 of this season.
6. Applications to public members grew more than those to private members since 2019–20 (+44%, relative to +28% for private members). While applications to the most selective members (admit rates below 25%) grew at the highest rate since 2019–20 (+45%), applications to less selective members (admit rates 75% and above) grew at the second highest rate (38%).
 - a. *Finally, we observe that the vast majority of applications were submitted to less selective member institutions (with admit rates at or above 50%).*

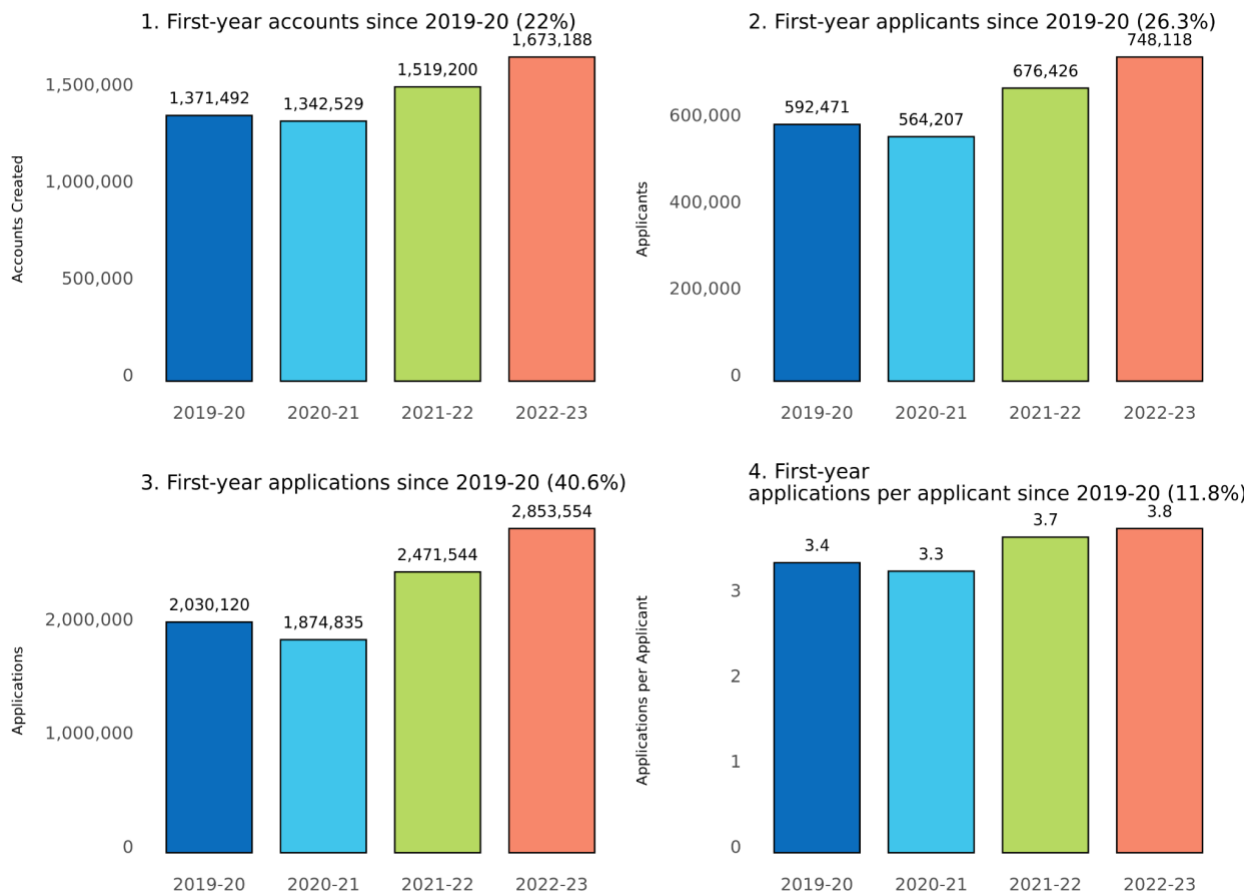
¹ We use the term underrepresented minority (URM) in alignment with conventions employed by the [National Science Foundation](#). In this report, applicants identifying as Black or African American, Latinx, Native American or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander are classified as URM applicants.

² See our [website](#) for a listing of eligibility criteria for Common App fee waiver eligibility.

Overall trends

Through November 1, the overall numbers of accounts created by high school seniors (+22%), applicant counts (+26.3%), total applications (+40.2%), and applications per applicant (+11.8%) each increased from 2019–20. **Figures 1–4** display year-over-year trends in each category across the three most recent seasons.

Figures 1–4. Accounts, applicants, applications, applications per applicant increased since 2019–20



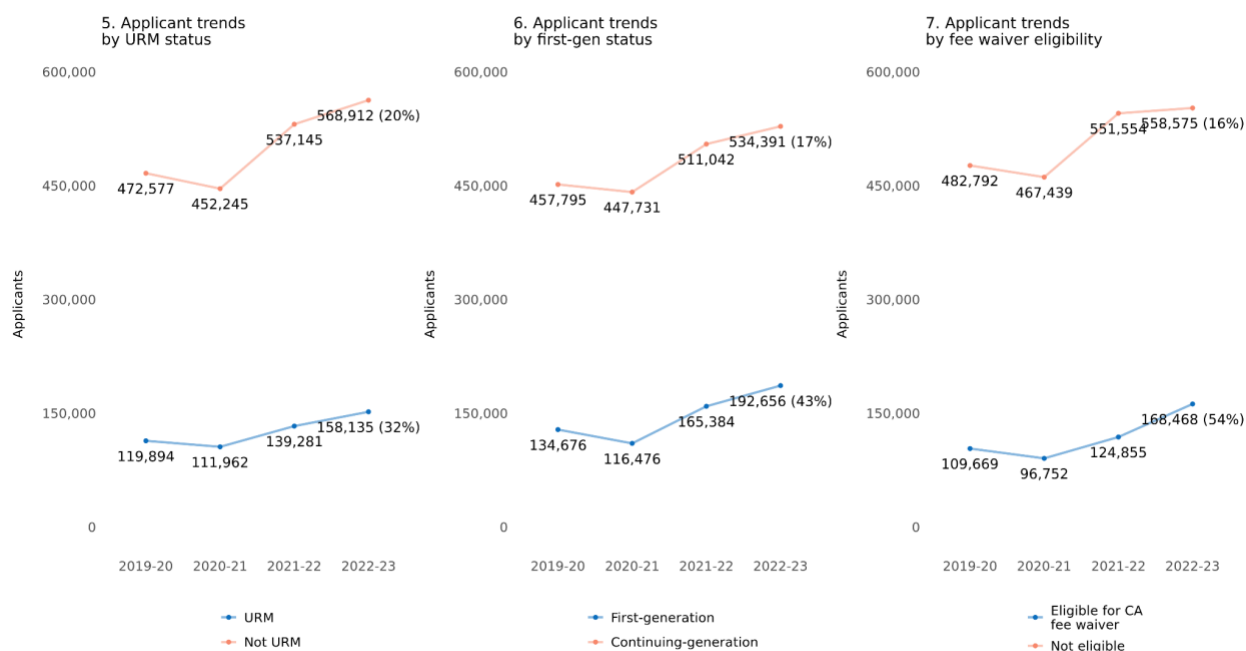
Applicant subgroup trends

Trends by demographic subgroup

Consistent with results from our previous reports, applicant growth among underrepresented subgroups has strengthened since 2020–21, when we first saw a concerning stagnation among URM, first-generation, and fee waiver applicants on the platform.

Figures 5–7 below showcase applicant trends over time by URM, first-generation, and Common App fee waiver recipient status.

Figures 5–7. Growth since 2019–20 was largest among underrepresented subgroups



We show in **Figure 5** that, after a small decrease from 2019–20 to 2020–21, the number of URM applicants continued on an upward path this season, to over 158,000. This marked a 32% increase over the 2019–20 (pre-pandemic) total through November 1. This increase was greater than that for non-URM applicants across the same time period (+20%), indicating growing diversification of our applicant pool along this dimension.

Figure 6 highlights a large increase in the number of first-generation applicants (+43%), which was more than double that for continuing-generation applicants (+17%) since 2019–20. This significant growth is well-aligned with Common App’s mission of promoting access for underrepresented students.

Finally, in **Figure 7** we observe an increase in the number of applicants reporting eligibility for a Common App fee waiver³ since 2019–20 (+54%) – over three times the increase observed in applicants not reporting eligibility (16%). This trend reflects growing socioeconomic diversity of the Common App applicant pool, as these are students demonstrating economic need through receipt of one or more of several public services.

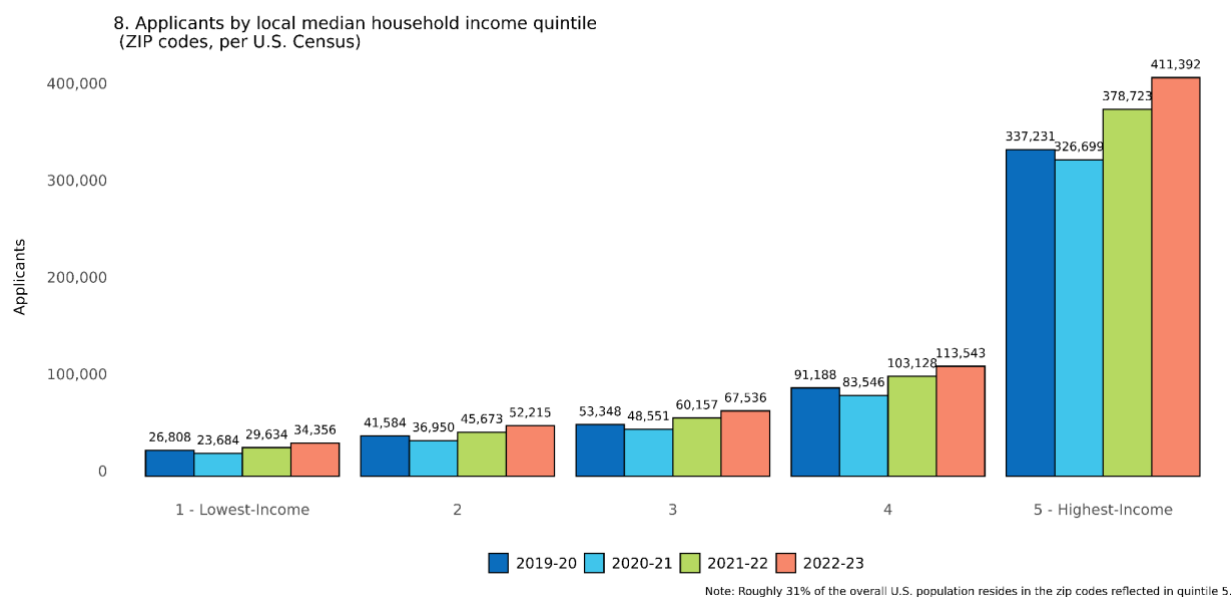
³ We previously reported trends by Common App fee waiver receipt, using receipt of this fee waiver as a proxy for low-income status. However, many members do not require fees in their applications, or offer member-specific fee waivers. As a result, many low-income students may not require a fee waiver to submit applications and may be undercounted. This season, we are reporting trends based on applicants’ demonstrated eligibility for a Common App fee waiver, based on criteria available [here](#).

Among URM and first-generation applicants, we observe smaller growth rates since last season (+14% for URM, +16% for first-generation applicants). For fee waiver-eligible students, by contrast, this one-year increase (+35%) marks the largest observed over this period.

Trends by community characteristics

To develop a clearer understanding of the socioeconomic characteristics of applicants applying to college through Common App, we linked ZIP code-level median household income data from the American Community Survey (5-year estimates, 2015–2019) to each applicant residing in the United States. We grouped communities (ZIP codes) into 5 quintiles, where quintile 1 comprised the 20% of ZIP codes with the lowest median household incomes, and quintile 5 represented the 20% of ZIP codes with the highest median household incomes in the United States. **Figure 8** presents domestic applicant counts by season and median household income quintile.

Figure 8. Growth was similar across quintiles of ZIP code-level median household income



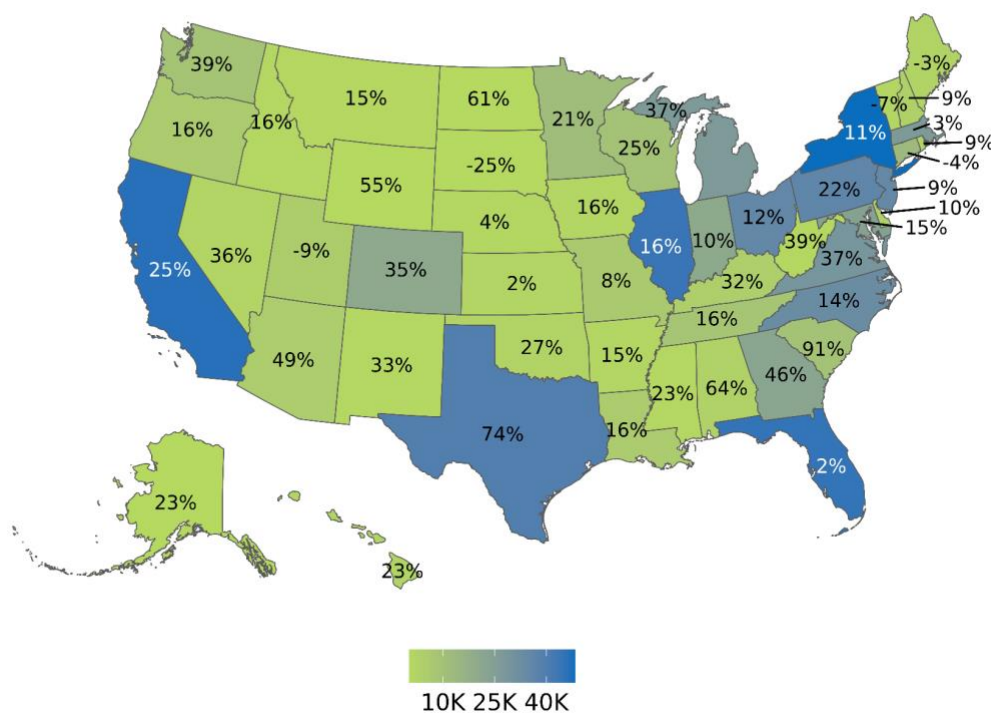
We reported in previous research that students applying to early deadlines (which comprises a large share of applications submitted through November 1) generally reside in more affluent communities than students who apply via regular and rolling deadlines. The results in Figure 8 reflect this trend, as a majority (61%) of applicants came from ZIP codes in the top income quintile (20%), and just 5% of the applicant pool came from ZIP codes in the bottom quintile. While growth in the lower two quintiles since 2019–20 (+22%) outpaced growth in the highest quintile (+19%), the overall composition of applicants in each quintile was similar across years. These findings reflect that, despite increased representation in recent Common App applicant pools for first-generation students, URM students, and fee waiver-eligible students (see above), we find that, in general, the profile of communities from which applicants are applying has not meaningfully changed. These trends reiterate the imperative that more work is necessary to effectively engage and support students from lower-income communities in the college admissions process.

Trends across U.S. states

We continue to observe meaningful variation in applicant trends across states. The map of the United States in **Figure 9** is colored to reflect overall (absolute) applicant totals in 2022–23, while the labels reflect percentage change in applicant counts since 2019–20. Overall, we observe applicant growth across much of the United States. Looking at state-by-state growth, we see that many states saw meaningful growth since 2019–20, with a few notable exceptions. South Carolina saw the greatest growth of 91% over 2019–20, followed by Alabama at 64%. South Dakota, a state with historically low applicant volume, demonstrated a meaningful decline in applicants (-25%), while Utah, Connecticut, Vermont, and Maine saw smaller declines (-9%, -4%, -7%, and -3%, respectively).

Figure 9. Applicants increased across the country since 2019–20

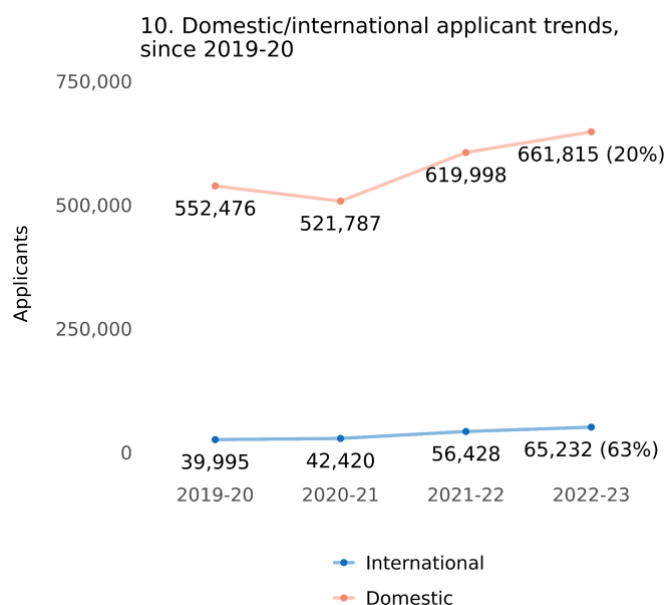
9. Applicant trends by U.S. state since 2019-20



Trends for international and domestic applicants

Figure 10 presents a graph of applicant totals, grouped by domestic/international residence and season. We observe that the number of applicants in both categories increased each year, though the rate of growth for international applicants since 2019–20 (63%) more than tripled that for domestic applicants (20%). The top five home countries, in descending order by applicant volume, were China, India, Nigeria, Ghana, and Canada.

Figure 10. International applicants increased 63% since 2019–20



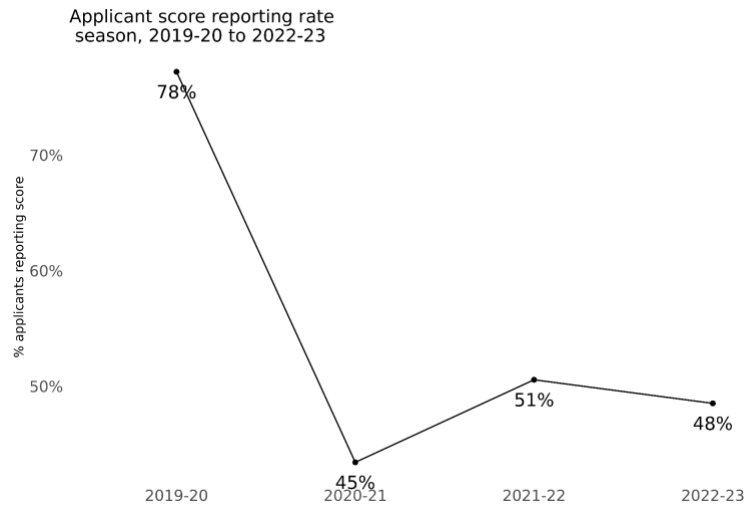
Trends in applicants' test score reporting behaviors

As reported in the past, the share of Common App members requiring standardized test scores since 2019–20 has changed dramatically — from about 55% to just 5% in 2021–22. This season, just 4% of members require a test score to submit an application.

In **Figure 11**, we show a slight shift from last season's trend in score reporting: we observe a slight decrease in student test score reporting, from 51% in 2021–22 to 48% in 2022–23. This decrease moves the current reporting rate closer to that observed in 2020–21, when test site access was restricted for many applicants and many members eliminated score reporting requirements (45%).

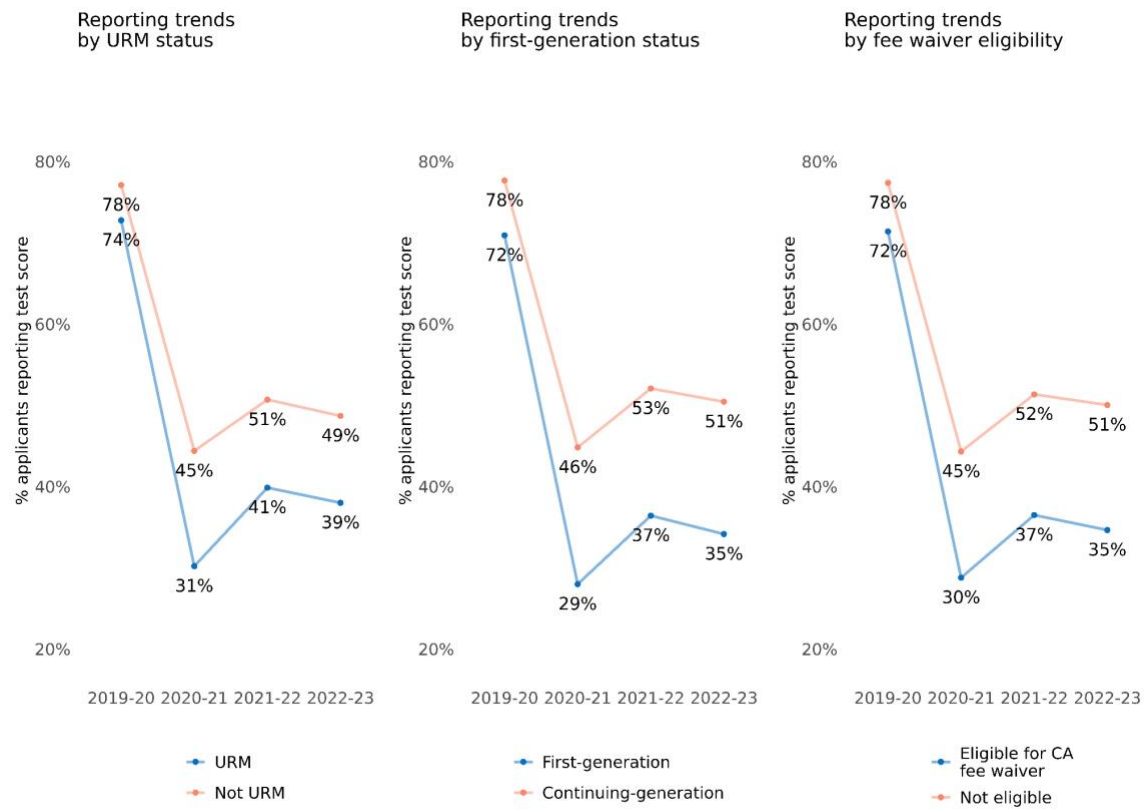
We will continue to monitor this trend throughout the application season.

Figure 11. Test score reporting is down as of November 1, still well below 2019–20



Since we first reported them in Deadline Updates during the 2020–21 season, disparities in test score reporting rates across student demographic groups were evident and roughly consistent with previous reporting. **Figures 12–14** show that the differences in test score reporting rates that emerged in 2020–21 across URM, first-gen, and fee waiver receipt status persisted through November 1 of the 2022–23 season. Smaller differences existed prior to the pandemic in 2019–20, but their magnitude grew in 2020–21 and has remained similar since. This trend is similar in gesture for other subgroups (see **Appendix Figures A1–A2**).

Figures 12–14. Test score reporting rates varied across applicant subgroups



Trends by member characteristics

Similar to [last November](#), we saw that the majority of early applications were submitted to public members. The rate of application growth for public members since 2019–20 (+44%) was still more than that for private members (+28%). **Figure 15** highlights year-over-year trends in applications by institutional type. These dynamics reflect application activity to larger members with earlier deadlines.

Figure 15. Applications to public and private members since 2019–20

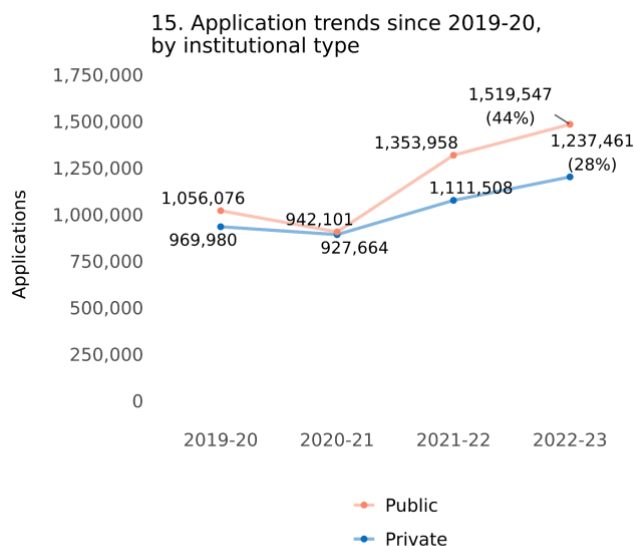
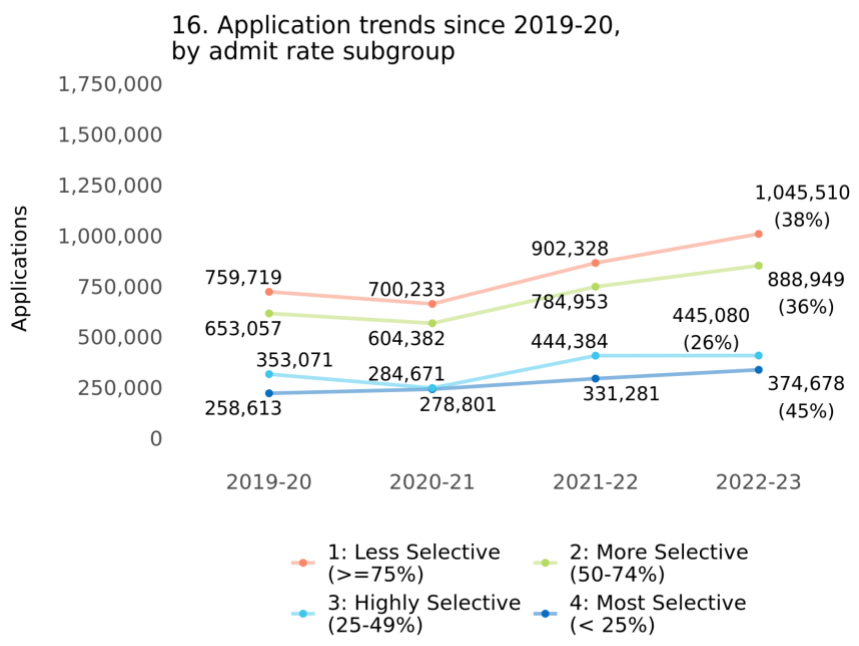


Figure 16 presents trends in application volume by member selectivity, as measured by undergraduate admit rates reported in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). As with previous updates, we note that applications to the most selective members (admit rates below 25%) increased more since 2019–20 (+45%) than applications to other members. The second highest growth rate was among less selective institutions (admit rates of 75% and above, +38% since 2019–20). *Finally, we observe that the vast majority of applications were submitted to member institutions with admit rates at or above 50%.* Note that members with no selectivity data were omitted from these analyses.

To support members' efforts to benchmark what they are observing individually against broader trends, we also provide tables of application trends by member characteristics in the Appendix (**Appendix Tables A1–A4**).

Figure 16. Application increases were largest for most selective members



Conclusion

When examining application trends through early deadlines in Fall 2022, we see tremendous growth in applicant and application totals over the past three years. The numbers of applicants, applications, and applications per applicant have meaningfully increased since 2019–20; URM and first-gen applicants are increasing at faster rates than their non-URM and continuing-gen counterparts; the majority of applicants continue to hail from the wealthiest ZIP codes; and test score reporting behaviors have fallen slightly from last season and still vary significantly across demographic subgroups.

Please stay tuned for additional Deadline Updates, which we will publish monthly through March 2023.

Appendix

Figure A1. Test score reporting rates varied by legal sex

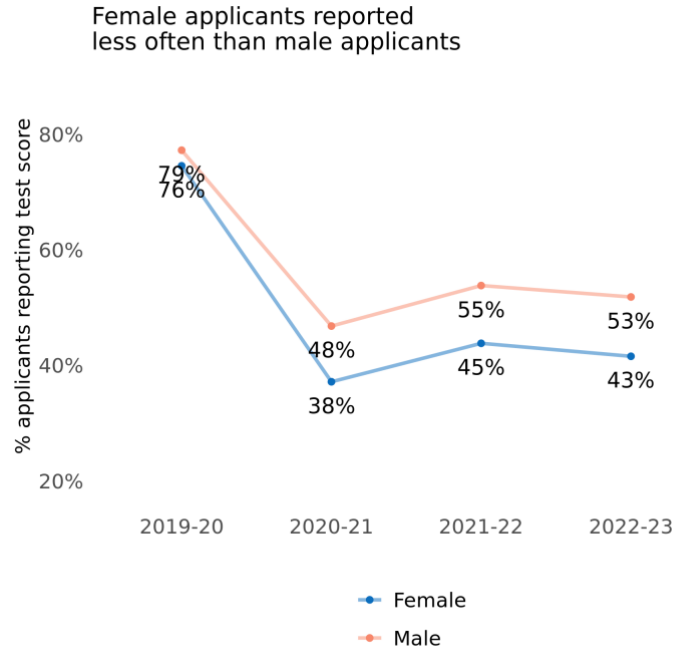


Figure A2. Test score reporting rates were higher in more affluent zip codes

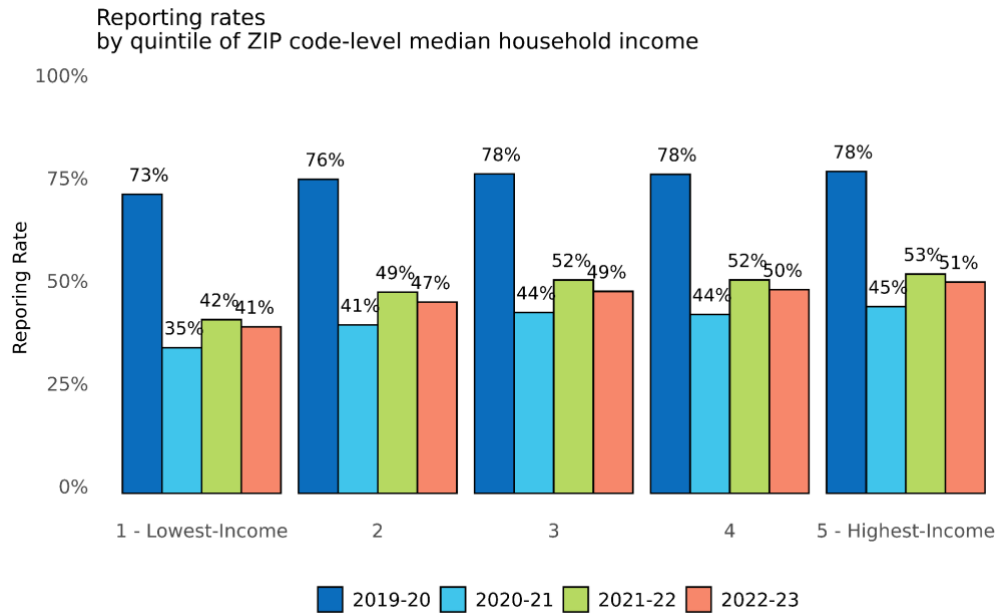


Table A1. Application trends varied by member region and institutional control

	Private				Public			
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Mid-Atlantic	277,557	245,098	299,787	333,087	168,340	136,113	204,319	255,756
Midwestern	211,981	197,209	238,739	256,819	349,334	288,624	441,187	489,019
New England	178,118	168,814	204,325	226,914	73,721	63,098	80,044	88,519
Southern	169,418	170,186	210,455	221,919	363,525	338,178	487,328	519,446
Southwestern	35,355	38,815	47,477	51,426	13,448	18,001	25,297	33,713
Western	97,551	107,542	110,725	147,296	87,708	98,087	115,783	133,094

Note:

Cells with fewer than five members are omitted.

Members without available IPEDS data are omitted.

Table A2. Application trends varied by member state and institutional control

	Private				Public			
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
California	62,208	67,549	67,274	102,647	NA	NA	NA	NA
Connecticut	34,660	30,818	33,477	38,647	13,688	10,459	12,027	13,768
District of Columbia	20,349	20,452	17,671	23,217	NA	NA	NA	NA
Florida	60,054	57,593	81,476	81,329	123,551	69,305	162,078	133,894
Georgia	20,127	20,530	24,748	26,959	NA	NA	NA	NA
Illinois	58,931	47,890	60,112	64,234	NA	NA	NA	NA
Indiana	37,567	36,491	40,405	41,440	74,458	75,632	88,045	93,752
Iowa	5,922	5,376	6,876	7,302	NA	NA	NA	NA
Kentucky	3,120	3,147	3,683	4,085	NA	NA	NA	NA
Louisiana	15,539	14,499	14,527	13,585	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maine	4,771	3,942	5,040	6,042	5,657	4,035	5,531	6,379
Maryland	14,598	13,117	14,202	16,147	13,119	11,929	12,316	14,228
Massachusetts	104,708	106,188	131,628	142,095	27,358	21,821	28,138	32,200
Michigan	12,019	12,387	16,285	17,837	81,295	58,579	118,804	127,986
Minnesota	10,914	13,529	16,532	17,989	18,242	16,847	19,768	21,490
Missouri	11,071	10,510	12,493	14,062	11,745	10,556	13,420	16,148
New Hampshire	6,205	5,967	6,625	7,450	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Jersey	20,749	13,354	21,942	26,674	14,702	10,079	13,012	17,369
New York	124,178	112,321	137,133	147,726	45,035	35,675	43,524	78,100
North Carolina	29,925	28,956	35,532	39,905	99,948	109,684	125,357	137,978
Ohio	55,460	51,877	63,428	68,902	94,973	62,589	114,754	134,848
Oregon	8,844	8,692	9,228	10,025	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pennsylvania	97,669	85,854	108,808	119,323	74,761	58,808	113,598	121,287
Rhode Island	23,916	19,029	23,643	27,558	NA	NA	NA	NA
South Carolina	4,088	5,898	7,347	8,113	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tennessee	17,164	17,566	18,975	19,819	NA	NA	NA	NA
Texas	33,170	36,907	44,967	48,286	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vermont	3,858	2,870	3,912	5,122	NA	NA	NA	NA
Virginia	16,585	19,377	21,054	24,446	51,358	57,735	64,055	76,946
Washington	7,368	9,351	9,458	9,747	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wisconsin	15,542	14,689	17,182	19,454	NA	NA	NA	NA

Note:

Cells with fewer than five members are omitted.

Members without available IPEDS data are omitted.

Table A3. Application trends varied by member region and selectivity group

	Less Selective (>=75%)				More Selective (50-74%)				Highly Selective (25-49%)				Most Selective (<=25%)			
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Mid-Atlantic	164,981	135,484	190,259	213,606	165,646	140,262	180,070	219,928	64,467	55,539	67,834	85,036	50,255	49,333	65,102	69,209
Midwestern	240,451	219,827	287,630	327,383	223,376	196,068	268,807	293,574	63,669	39,531	86,270	86,463	33,242	29,710	36,067	37,282
New England	81,314	58,657	73,933	86,110	73,609	65,004	80,961	91,595	21,501	20,946	24,739	27,641	75,040	87,023	104,295	109,600
Southern	153,250	150,660	189,377	231,786	117,113	125,429	167,483	187,473	185,053	148,584	243,560	220,692	77,527	83,691	97,363	101,414
Southwestern	12,169	15,318	21,824	27,754	21,867	24,583	32,170	36,493	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Western	107,554	120,287	139,305	158,871	51,446	53,036	55,462	59,886	6,557	6,978	7,252	8,576	19,638	25,252	24,420	53,009

Note:

Selectivity calculated as undergraduates admitted as a percent of applications

Cells with fewer than five members are omitted.

Members without available IPEDS data are omitted.

Table A4. Application trends by member state and selectivity group

	Less Selective (>=75%)				More Selective (50-74%)				Highly Selective (25-49%)				Most Selective (<=25%)			
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
California	2,857	2,606	3,252	4,538	37,027	37,989	37,831	42,084	5,732	6,047	5,934	6,909	16,528	20,831	20,188	49,068
Colorado	38,260	45,613	49,842	55,001	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Connecticut	15,591	10,012	10,954	12,862	24,408	20,685	23,880	28,288	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Florida	25,079	18,633	29,446	29,813	36,727	33,439	52,478	54,007	121,799	74,826	161,630	131,403	NA	NA	NA	NA
Georgia	14,789	15,397	17,348	23,255	8,383	8,117	10,399	10,533	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Illinois	7,515	5,684	7,648	9,284	41,783	32,229	42,010	46,303	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Indiana	58,928	58,062	62,880	64,896	45,426	45,726	54,944	58,493	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Iowa	12,768	11,903	18,484	21,130	3,747	3,394	4,369	4,338	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Kentucky	8,591	7,855	10,131	15,070	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maine	7,458	5,221	7,145	8,212	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maryland	13,958	11,443	12,084	14,138	9,849	9,530	9,728	11,245	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Massachusetts	31,008	22,291	29,204	34,027	26,384	22,310	27,728	32,446	19,640	19,256	22,573	24,839	55,012	64,130	80,248	82,957
Michigan	34,663	40,206	56,784	63,211	16,308	16,364	23,271	26,586	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Minnesota	6,789	6,514	7,553	8,115	21,546	20,256	24,625	27,234	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Missouri	10,672	10,058	12,778	15,489	8,288	7,241	9,021	10,629	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Hampshire	11,232	8,680	11,022	12,872	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Jersey	20,031	14,907	20,780	26,424	9,635	7,247	8,478	10,971	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New York	31,679	26,242	30,164	36,488	82,288	66,360	80,040	106,337	26,159	26,034	30,640	41,043	29,087	29,360	39,813	41,958
North Carolina	43,527	44,814	52,697	58,182	27,815	30,135	34,245	39,453	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ohio	80,782	60,131	88,854	108,161	49,252	33,561	63,800	69,296	20,067	20,522	25,218	25,937	NA	NA	NA	NA
Oregon	24,424	27,946	32,156	37,053	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pennsylvania	95,169	79,462	123,678	133,025	43,151	37,503	59,955	66,603	22,089	12,483	23,045	24,307	NA	NA	NA	NA
Rhode Island	13,811	10,950	13,541	15,757	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
South Carolina	NA	NA	NA	NA	23,223	31,855	45,079	52,766	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tennessee	NA	NA	NA	NA	6,426	6,205	6,428	7,560	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Texas	NA	NA	NA	NA	19,682	22,675	29,660	33,353	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Virginia	27,888	29,049	33,503	43,589	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Washington	5,254	6,935	6,726	7,059	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
West Virginia	5,631	5,238	6,784	8,701	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wisconsin	11,956	11,097	12,797	14,023	33,009	33,481	42,302	46,151	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Note:

Selectivity calculated as undergraduates admitted as a percent of applications

Cells with fewer than five members are omitted.

Members without available IPEDS data are omitted.