

# First-year applications per applicant

Patterns of high-volume application activity at Common App

## Authors

### Data Analytics and Research

Brian Kim  
Mark Freeman\*  
Trent Kajikawa  
Honeiah Karimi  
Preston Magouirk

\*corresponding author

## Press inquiries

### Emma Steele

esteele@commonapp.org

## Introduction

Since 1998, the Common Application has limited the number of applications an individual applicant may submit in one season to 20. Below this limit, however, there is great variation across applicants and across members on the platform in the number of applications submitted.

Common App, now with over one million applicants annually and over 1,000 members, is uniquely positioned to explore this important element of the admissions process. This research brief examines two basic questions about the number of applications per applicant:

1. What types of applicants tend to submit the most applications?
2. What types of members are most likely to receive applications from these high-volume applicants?

From a variety of findings emerging from these analyses, one observation stands out in sharp relief: High-volume application behavior is first and foremost a phenomenon of selective college admissions.

That this is the case is likely not surprising for readers: Applicants who apply to highly selective institutions face very low acceptance rates, high costs of attendance, and uncertain financial aid awards.

**Note:** All analyses in this report are based on a dataset that excludes applicants who applied solely through early decision plans, which are by design intended encourage applicants to apply only once.

## Key findings

### **High-volume application behavior is a relatively isolated, but increasing phenomenon.**

More than half of applicants apply to five or fewer members on the Common App platform, and the modal applicant applies just once. However, and partly due to steady growth in the number of members on the platform, the average number of applications submitted has been steadily increasing, from 4.63 in 2013-14 to 6.22 in the 2021-22 season. The proportion of applicants applying to more than ten members has roughly doubled, from 8% to 17%, between 2014-15 and 2021-22.

### **High-volume applicants have a distinctive set of characteristics.**

As compared to the those applying to fewer than five members, high-volume applicants who apply to 15 or more members are:

- Reporting SAT / ACT scores that are over 130 points higher, on average
- More than six times as likely to have applied at least once via an early decision plan
- About eight times as likely to be applicants who selectively include test scores depending on where they are applying
- Roughly 2.5 times as likely to attend an independent (private) high school
- Almost three times as likely to be international (non-U.S. citizens)
- More than twice as likely apply for and receive a Common App fee waiver

### **High-volume applicants tend to apply to selective, private members.**

High-volume applicants appear much more commonly in the pools of our selective, private members. Members receiving the most applications from high-volume applicants – for whom the average applicant had applied to 12 or more members – had an average admit rate of 24%, and were 100% private. In contrast, members receiving applications lower-volume applicants – in which the average applicant had applied to fewer than 8 members – had an average admit rate of 75%, and just 45% were private.

## Trends in applications per applicant

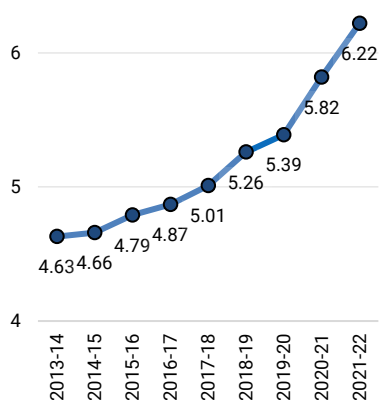
The Common Application platform is designed to simplify and streamline the process of applying to college, particularly for the majority of applicants who want to apply to more than one college or university. This is a valuable service for applicants: While the likelihood of admission to any single college or university is uncertain, the overall odds of admission to at least one can be improved by applying to more of them. Moreover, because financial aid awarding methodologies vary widely across colleges and universities,<sup>1</sup> and are not always clear to applicants, applying and gaining admission to multiple schools is the surest way for applicants to directly compare their actual out-of-pocket costs. The one-time costs of applying multiple times has also been declining

Knight and Schiff (2022) demonstrate in a recent paper that joining Common App is associated with a 12% increase in application volume for a typical member. From the member perspective as well, then, greater application activity per applicant increases exposure to more applicants and provides greater flexibility in shaping a “best fit” entering class.

Since the 1998-99 season, when the Common Application was first introduced online, Common App began limiting the number of applications per season to 20. At that time, Common App had just 188 members, and this limit was seen as an extreme that would fully accommodate all realistic possibilities.

**Figure 2. Trend in average submitted applications per applicant, 2013-14 to 2021-22 seasons.**

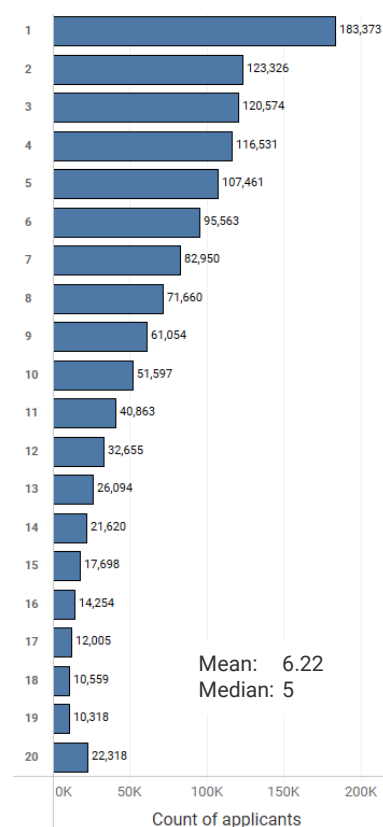
*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*



<sup>1</sup> Institutions vary in how they (1) utilize the standard federal or institutional methodology for calculating financial need, (2) meet the financial need of applicants as assessed, (3) meet financial need through allocation of loans or grants and, (4) elect to award grant aid on the basis of factors other than financial need (e.g., “merit aid”, “non-need-based”, “merit within need”).

**Figure 1. Distribution of applicants by applications per applicant, 2021-22 season.**

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*



By the 2021-22 season, with 978 members on the platform, this limit still accommodated all but a handful of applicants. The modal number of applications was still one, for example (15.0% of all applicants, excluding

applicants who only apply early decision), and a majority (53.3%) applied to five or fewer members (see Figure 1).

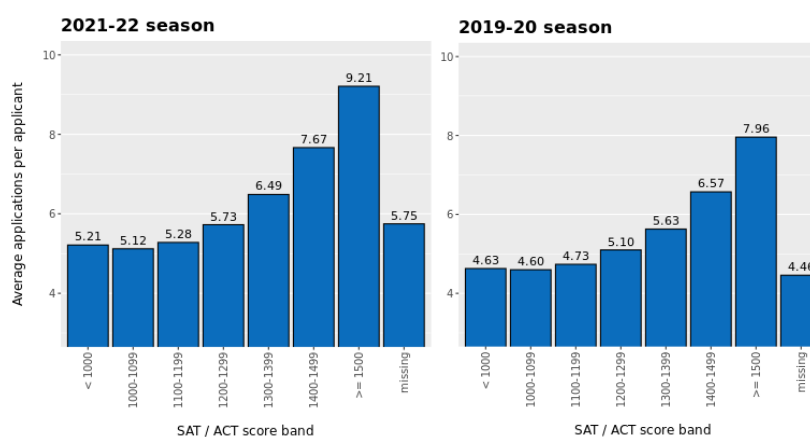
While high-volume application behavior is a relatively isolated phenomenon on the Common App platform, it also remains true that the average number of applications per applicant continues to grow over time (see Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> In 2013-14, just 0.4% of applicants applied 20 times, and only 7% applied more than ten times, while in 2021-22, these figures had increased to 1.8% and 17%, respectively.

In light of these trends, high-volume application behavior is worthy of closer examination: What can we learn about the minority of applicants engaging in this “high volume” pattern of application activity? How do they stand out from the majority (83% in 2021-22) that apply ten or fewer times? And to which of our members are they applying in this manner?

### Which applicants apply to multiple members?

After excluding applicants who applied only via early decision plans, the data contained application activity from 1,222,473 unique applicants during the 2021-22 season.

**Figure 3. Applications per applicant, by SAT / ACT score**  
*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*



### Finding #1: Applicants with high standardized test scores submit more applications

Applicant standardized test score is strongly associated with the number of applications submitted, as can be seen in Figure 3. Starting at a score of 1200 or above, applicants reporting

<sup>2</sup> It is not possible to reliably parse what portion of the observed increase in applications per applicant is due to the increasing number of members on the Common App platform over time. When Common App adds new members to the platform – as it has at a pace of about 60 annually in each of the last seven seasons – it alters both the choice set of institutions available to applicants and the composition of the applicants on the platform. IPEDS data do show that first-time, full-time applications to four-year institutions over the last two decades have increased nationally at a rate far greater than enrollment to these same institutions, suggestive of increasing applications per applicant nationally, which is at least to some extent independent of Common App membership. There is also evidence that membership on the Common App platform does drive application volume for members – and thus indirectly increases the number of applications per applicant for applicants using the platform – by “reducing friction” in multiple application behavior (Knight and Schiff, 2022). On the other hand, the applications per applicant metric calculated excluding applications to newer members has barely budged – but this may still be because the new members are bringing new (lower-volume) applicants to the platform. In short, it is not possible to estimate with any degree of confidence the relative magnitude of these influences with the data at hand, given the expanding composition of Common App membership and the changing composition of applicants using the platform each year.

higher test scores submit more applications, and this tendency increases up through applicants reporting scores of 1500 or higher (6.3% of applicants using the platform in 2021-22). This group of high-scoring applicants submits about four additional applications relative to those reporting scores below 1200.

Pre-pandemic trends for 2019-20, when 55% of our members always required standardized test scores, exhibit very similar patterns to the 2021-22 season, when just 5% of our members did, with two notable exceptions. As seen in Figure 4, the steady historical increase in applications per applicant since 2016-17 accelerated fastest in the new test-optional environment for those not reporting scores at all, as well as for those reporting the highest scores (1400 or above).

### Finding #2: “Tactical” applicants submit more applications

Apart from standardized test-score values themselves, the pattern of test score submission was also strongly related to the number of applications submitted. The population of those submitting test scores “tactically” – accompanying some but not all of their applications – was small in 2021-22, comprising just 3.4% of applicants in 2021-22.<sup>3</sup> But those who engaged in this pattern of test score submission submitted 3.2 more applications than did those submitting score with all or none or their applications.

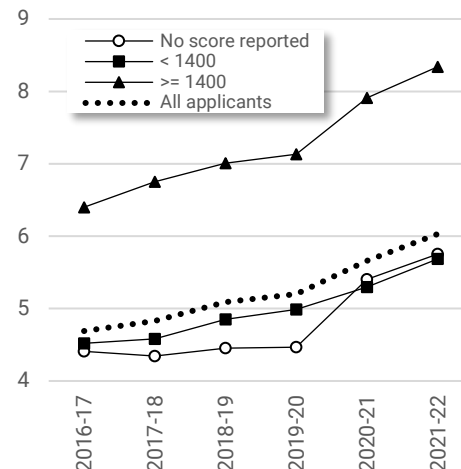
Another indicator of a “tactical” mindset among high-volume applicants is evident in Figure 5, in that applicants who applied early decision (11.6% of applicants) to at least one institution submitted 3.6 more applications than those never applying early decision<sup>4</sup>.

### Finding #3: Common App fee waiver recipients submit more applications

Those who received a Common App fee waiver as part of the application process submitted 1.5 more applications than those not receiving a Common App fee-waiver (see Figure 6). One hypothesis that could explain this observation is that removing the cost of an

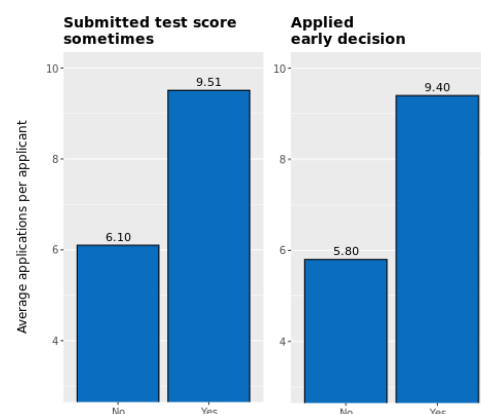
**Figure 4. Applications per applicant over time, by SAT / ACT score**

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*



**Figure 5. Applications per applicant, by applicant behaviors**

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*



<sup>3</sup> Only 5% of Common App members “always required” standardized tests in 2021-22, down from 55% in 2019-20, before the pandemic.

<sup>4</sup> Common App does not receive admission decision information for our users, and so we cannot determine to what extent their numerous regular or early-action applications were a response to a negative decision on their early decision / action application(s), or a pre-emptive hedging of bets against that possibility.

application fee – averaging around \$50 for those members that charge one – removes a financial disincentive to submitting more applications.

#### Finding #4: International applicants and private high school graduates submit more applications

Geography was an important factor, as well, in that multiple application activity tends to be concentrated in the Northeast regions, which have the highest geographic density of four-year colleges and Common App members (see Appendix A and more detail below). Proximity is a primary determinant of

where applicants are likely to apply, so it is expected that having fewer options within one’s geographic region would tend to predict less high-volume application activity, at least on the Common App platform.

However, international applicants are an exception to this rule (see Figure 6). Whether assessed by residence or citizenship, non-U.S. applicants applied 1.7 more times than did domestic applicants. In part this is an artifact of the higher standardized test scores of international applicants, which are 91 points higher than domestic applicants. But beyond this observation, international applicants do appear to cast a wider net in the admissions process.

In addition to submitting more applications than domestic students on average, international applicants are particularly well-represented among those applying twenty times on the platform (the maximum currently allowed on the platform). Fully one third (33.5%) of those applying twenty times are international applicants, as compared to representing just 10% of those applying fewer than twenty times.

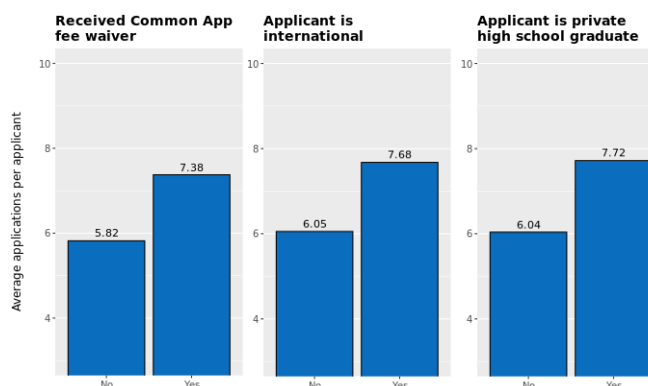
Finally, private school attendees submit almost 1.7 more applications than those graduating from other types of high school (see Figure 6).

#### Summary

Table 1 presents the summary data for the key attributes associated with high-volume application activity in a different manner. The contrast between the 7% of applicants applying 15 or more times with those applying fewer than five times is

#### Figure 6. Applications per applicant, by citizenship, high school type, and fee waiver receipt

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*



#### Table 1. Key applicant attributes by number of applications per applicant

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*

|                                      | Applications submitted |        |          |            |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|--------|----------|------------|
|                                      | Less than 5            | 5 to 9 | 10 to 14 | 15 or more |
| <i>Percent of applicants</i>         | 44%                    | 34%    | 14%      | 7%         |
| Average SAT / ACT 1600               | 1224                   | 1286   | 1335     | 1356       |
| SAT/ ACT score >= 1400               | 8%                     | 16%    | 24%      | 28%        |
| Test score submitted “sometimes”     | 1%                     | 4%     | 7%       | 8%         |
| Applied early decision at least once | 5%                     | 12%    | 21%      | 30%        |
| Received Common App fee waiver       | 22%                    | 24%    | 30%      | 47%        |
| Citizenship: International           | 9%                     | 9%     | 12%      | 23%        |
| High school: Independent             | 8%                     | 11%    | 15%      | 20%        |

striking. These highest-volume applicants are almost four times as likely to have SAT / ACT scores 1400 or above, eight times as likely to be “sometimes” standardized score submitters, six times as likely to have applied early decision, about 2.5 times as likely to be international, and more than twice as likely to attend a private high school and receive a Common App fee waiver.

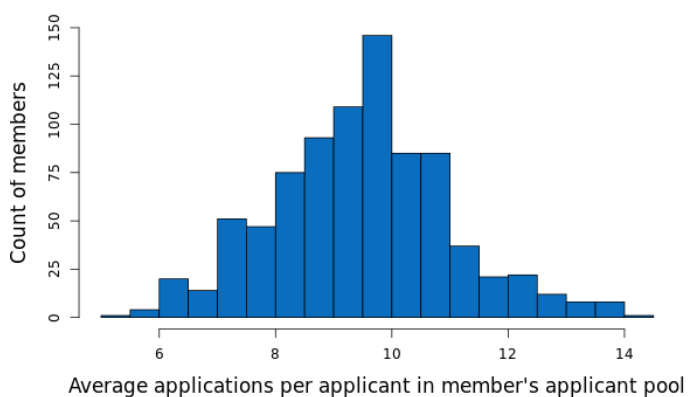
## Where are high-volume applicants applying?

How do these patterns appear from the member perspective? Because this analysis required completed member data sourced from IPEDS, we removed 165 members for which IPEDS was not available (many of these were international, as IPEDS is a US database). The resulting dataset contained 839 institutions (86% of the total 978 active members) accounting for 97% of all application activity on the Common App platform.

The average member in the resulting dataset saw an average of 9.48 applications per applicant in their application pools.<sup>5</sup> Figure 7 shows the distribution of the 839 members in this analysis according to average applications per applicant in their applicant pools.

### Figure 7. Average applications per applicant in member’s Common App applicant pools

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans, and members with incomplete data in IPEDS.*



### Finding #5: High-volume applicants apply to highly selective schools

The member attribute most strongly associated with high average applications per applicant is member selectivity. Whether measured in terms of admit rate (< 40% admitted) or average standardized test score median (median SAT / ACT score > 1400), institutions with these attributes (roughly 10% of the Common App membership) saw applicant pools with three more applications per applicant on average than members at the less selective end of the spectrum.

This finding reinforces the first finding from the applicant-level analysis concerning standardized test scores. As the chances of admission to any single institution are more uncertain, the overall odds of admission to at least one can be increased by submitting more

<sup>5</sup> One perhaps non-obvious fact about the applications per applicant metric is that fact that, even with the same population of applicants, the average for the metric appears quite different when aggregated to the applicant versus the member levels. In the analysis of applicants above, the average applicant applied to 6.22 members, whereas when the metric is aggregated to the member level, the average for each members applicant pool is 9.48. This is because high-volume applicants who apply to many members are more heavily weighted in the member-level calculation.



applications. Naturally, this effect would tend to result in a greater concentration of high-volume applicants in the pools of the most selective members.

### Finding #6: High-volume applicants apply to private members

Private member institutions on average observed 1.36 more applications per applicant than public members. Applicants hoping to benefit from in-state tuition subsidies are less likely to engage in a national search, while out-of-state applicants, not eligible for in-state subsidies, are less likely to apply to public institutions, so this makes sense.

This tendency toward a more targeted search is not limited to less-selective public institutions, either: State flagships – each state’s most prestigious public institution – also exhibit fewer applications per applicant than non-flagships (see Appendix B).

### Other findings: Geographic region

In both the applicant-level and member-level analyses geographic region accounted for a large portion of both applicant and member-level variation in high-volume application activity (see Appendices A and B). It is very likely that they are at least partially an artifact of where Common App members are most geographically concentrated.

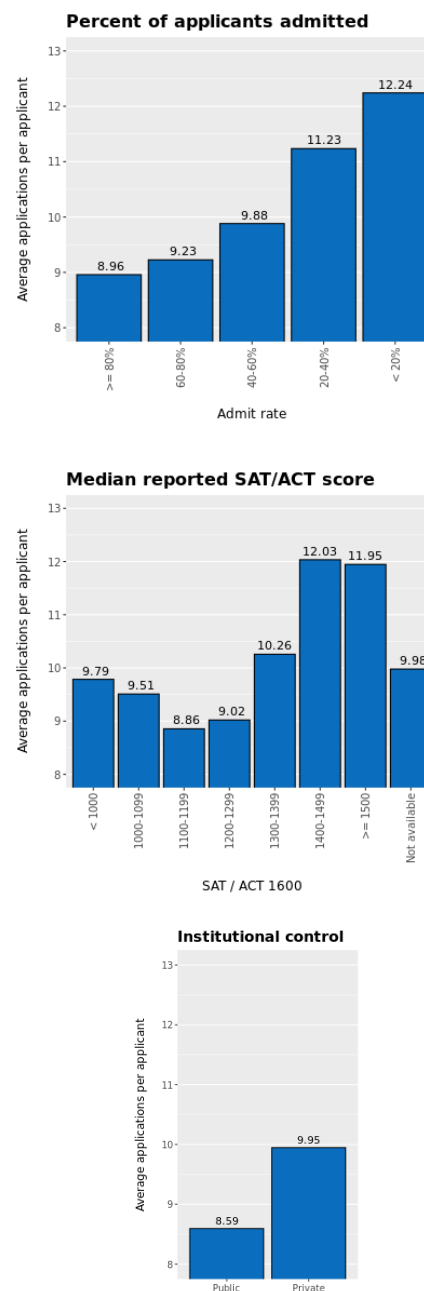
Figure 10 supports this assertion, in showing that (applicant-level) average applications per applicant are very strongly associated with the region’s percentage of four-year institutions on the Common App platform. For example, applicants from the New England region exhibit the highest average number of applications per applicant, but this is partly because this region also has the highest proportion of four-year colleges and universities on the Common App platform. The strong relationship displayed in Figure 10 holds true between member-level average applications per applicant and member region, as well (not shown).

### Other findings: Member-level application requirements

Appendix B also displays a counterintuitive finding such that members with certain application requirements (to submit a teacher or counselor recommendation, to submit a Common App essay) receive applications from applicants who submit substantially more applications per

### Figure 8. Average applications per applicant, by member admit rate, median reported SAT / ACT score, and institutional control

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*





applicant than those that do not have these requirements. Wouldn't one expect members with more requirements – that is, more barriers to entry – to receive fewer applications per applicant?

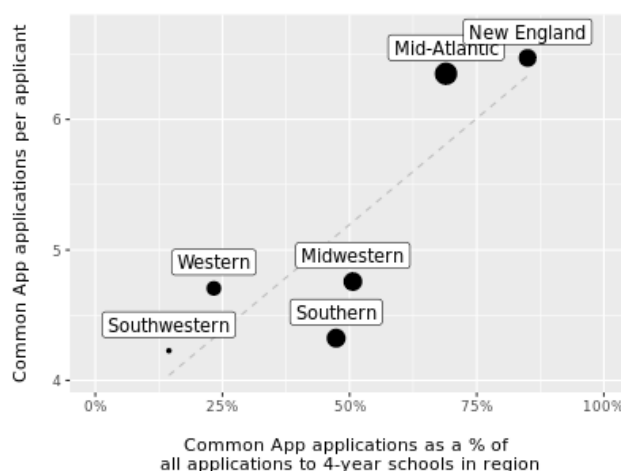
In fact, this surprising result appears to stem from the fact that selective members on the platform are the members most likely to include these requirements as part of their applications. Put another way, the selective members on the platform are most likely to attract high-volume applicants, and the extra requirements they impose do not appear to disrupt this pattern.<sup>6</sup>

One possible concern about the increase in applications per applicant through the last nine seasons (see Figure 2) is that, through application fees, they will impose a corresponding net cost on applicants. This does not appear to be occurring.

Due to a combination of factors (e.g., members eliminating application fees, increased use of fee waivers), the average application fee per submitted application on the platform has declined over the last eight applications seasons by 16%. It is likewise true that, due to the increase in applications per applicant, the nominal total aggregate application fees paid for by a typical applicant has increased by a nominal 12% over the same period. But this increase is less than half the increase in inflation over the eight-year period, which means that, in real terms, the average applicant is spending less on applications submitted through the Common App than they did eight seasons ago, even while they submit an average of 1.6 more applications.

**Figure 10. Regional variation in applications per applicant, by proportion of Common App members**

*Includes 4-yr public and private, not-for-profit bachelors, masters, and doctoral-granting institutions only.*



**Table 5. Application fees paid per applicant**

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*

|   | <i>Application season</i> |                |              |
|---|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
|   | <i>2013-14</i>            | <i>2021-22</i> | <i>% chg</i> |
| Average applications per applicant  | 4.63                      | 6.22           | +34%         |
| Average sum of fees paid per applicant  | \$181.24                  | \$203.47       | +12%         |
| Average percent of applications per applicant with fees waived or not charged | 37.0%                     | 46.9%          | +27%         |
| Effective average per-application fees paid                                   | \$39.14                   | \$32.72        | -16%         |
| CPI inflation 2013 to 2021  |                           |                | +27%         |

<sup>6</sup> A multiple regression analysis, including statistical controls for all factors listed in Figure 5, found that the apparent positive association between having teacher or counselor recommendation and requiring a Common App essay was not statistically significant.

## Summary

The conclusions for the member-level analysis are quite clear: Members with application pools that exhibit a relatively high average applications per applicant tend to be, (1) selective and, (2) private. Table 6 presents an alternative way of displaying this result.

**Table 6. Member attributes by average number of applications per applicant in applicant pool**

*Excludes applicants applying solely via early decision plans.*

|                                | Average applications per applicant |           |             |            |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
|                                | < 8.0                              | 8.0 – 9.9 | 10.0 – 11.9 | 12 or more |
| Percent of members             | 16%                                | 50%       | 27%         | 6%         |
| Percent of applications        | 14%                                | 44%       | 30%         | 12%        |
| Admit rate (%)                 | 75%                                | 72%       | 63%         | 24%        |
| SAT / ACT 1600 median          | 1160                               | 1147      | 1174        | 1412       |
| Institutional control: Private | 45%                                | 66%       | 89%         | 100%       |

## Conclusion

The Common App seeks to simplify and streamline the process of applying to college, particularly for those applicants who want to apply to more than one college or university. This basic value proposition of reducing friction in the application process has been strengthened since the application first went online in 1998, as institutional membership on the platform has increased more than five-fold. It is now easier than ever for applicants to apply to several institutions and maximize the choices available to them, and this is helpful in navigating uncertainties with respect to both admission to and financing for higher education.

Over the last eight application seasons, applicants using the platform are indeed taking advantage of this reduced friction in the process by submitting, on average, about 1.6 more applications. The primary conclusion of this report, however, is that this behavior is particularly evident among applicants with high test scores and GPAs applying to the most selective (mostly private) members on the platform. It is a well-publicized fact that more of these members exhibit rates of acceptance in the single digits every application season, and so this finding should not surprise readers.

What does the future hold in terms of the applications per applicant metric? At least on the Common App platform, it is likely that we will see more continuing growth in applications per applicant in the coming seasons, for at least the following reasons:

- Members joining the platform, whether on their own initiative or because of Common App's recruitment efforts, including those focused on adding minority-serving institutions.
- A clear trend toward our members eliminating application fees and other requirements for application such as essays, counselor evaluations, teacher evaluations, and especially standardized test scores.
- Common App reducing barriers to application with changes to the application form through the [Evolving the App](#) initiative.
- Common App's ongoing program of grant-funded and data-informed interventions with potential applicants to encourage application submission, particularly for underrepresented students (e.g., Direct Admission, Common Transfer Guarantee).

## Appendix A

### Applications per applicant by applicant attributes, 2021-22

Excluding applicants applying exclusively through early decision plans. This summary represents 7,601,189 applications from 1,222,473 applicants to 978 members on the Common App platform, with an overall average 6.22 applications per applicant.

|  | Count of applicants | % of applicants | Applications per applicant |                       |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
|  |                     |                 | Category avg               | Diff. from population |
| <b>Applicant SAT/ACT score<sup>1</sup></b>             |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| < 1000   | 40,483              | 3.3%            | 5.36                       | -0.86                 |
| 1000-1099  | 60,661              | 5.0%            | 5.24                       | -0.98                 |
| 1100-1199  | 89,990              | 7.4%            | 5.39                       | -0.83                 |
| 1200-1299  | 105,122             | 8.6%            | 5.84                       | -0.38                 |
| 1300-1399  | 105,009             | 8.6%            | 6.60                       | 0.38                  |
| 1400-1499  | 98,498              | 8.1%            | 7.78                       | 1.56                  |
| >= 1500  | 76,747              | 6.3%            | 9.30                       | 3.08                  |
| missing  | 645,963             | 52.8%           | 5.87                       | -0.34                 |
| <b>Applicant test score submitted<sup>2</sup></b>      |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| All applications                                       | 494,554             | 40.5%           | 6.35                       | 0.14                  |
| No applications  | 685,789             | 56.1%           | 5.92                       | -0.30                 |
| Some applications                                      | 42,130              | 3.4%            | 9.51                       | 3.29                  |
| <b>Applicant high school GPA<sup>3</sup></b>           |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| GPA < 0.60   | 24,855              | 2.0%            | 4.93                       | -1.29                 |
| GPA 0.60-0.70  | 53,984              | 4.4%            | 5.24                       | -0.98                 |
| GPA 0.70-0.80  | 125,079             | 10.2%           | 5.44                       | -0.78                 |
| GPA 0.80-0.90  | 264,235             | 21.6%           | 5.90                       | -0.32                 |
| GPA 0.90-1.0   | 391,384             | 32.0%           | 6.45                       | 0.24                  |
| GPA 1.0-1.1  | 144,159             | 11.8%           | 6.79                       | 0.57                  |
| GPA > 1.1  | 54,479              | 4.5%            | 7.57                       | 1.35                  |
| GPA missing  | 164,298             | 13.4%           | 6.32                       | 0.10                  |
| <b>Applicant fee waiver status</b>                     |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| No CA fee waiver                                       | 909,660             | 74.4%           | 5.82                       | -0.40                 |
| Received CA fee waiver                                 | 312,813             | 25.6%           | 7.38                       | 1.16                  |
| <b>Applicant household income quintile<sup>4</sup></b> |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| HH income bottom 20%                                   | 76,580              | 6.3%            | 6.18                       | -0.03                 |
| HH income 20-40th pcntile                              | 98,777              | 8.1%            | 5.45                       | -0.77                 |
| HH income 40-60th pcntile                              | 127,088             | 10.4%           | 5.48                       | -0.74                 |
| HH income 60-80th pcntile                              | 202,468             | 16.6%           | 5.52                       | -0.69                 |
| HH income top 20%                                      | 609,941             | 49.9%           | 6.50                       | 0.28                  |
| HH income missing                                      | 107,619             | 8.8%            | 7.53                       | 1.31                  |

<sup>1</sup> ACT scores converted to SAT 1600 scores using College Board concordance table.

<sup>2</sup> Flags whether submitted test scores with all, some, or none of their applications.

<sup>3</sup> GPAs are self-reported on multiple scales, which are here expressed as a percentage (0 - 1.0) of the maximum scale value. Some applicants have GPAs higher than the maximum scale value (commonly scores over 4.0 on a 4.0 scale due to grade weighting).

<sup>4</sup> Data from U.S. Census Community Survey

|  | Count of applicants | % of applicants | Applications per applicant |                       |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
|  |                     |                 | Category avg               | Diff. from population |
| <b>Applicant applied Early Decision</b>  |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| Applied ED at least once                 | 141,854             | 11.6%           | 9.40                       | 3.18                  |
| Did not apply ED                         | 1,080,619           | 88.4%           | 5.80                       | -0.42                 |
| <b>Applicant first-generation status</b> |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| First-generation                         | 415,064             | 34.0%           | 5.65                       | -0.56                 |
| Not first-generation                     | 807,409             | 66.0%           | 6.51                       | 0.29                  |
| <b>Applicant sex</b>                     |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| Female                                   | 679,790             | 55.6%           | 6.38                       | 0.16                  |
| Male                                     | 542,683             | 44.4%           | 6.02                       | -0.20                 |
| <b>Applicant international status</b>    |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| Domestic                                 | 1,098,745           | 89.9%           | 6.05                       | -0.16                 |
| International                            | 123,728             | 10.1%           | 7.68                       | 1.46                  |
| <b>Applicant race / ethnicity</b>        |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| Am. Ind. / Alaska Nat.                   | 2,717               | 0.2%            | 4.64                       | -1.58                 |
| Asian                                    | 114,307             | 9.4%            | 7.34                       | 1.12                  |
| Black or African American                | 138,758             | 11.4%           | 6.58                       | 0.37                  |
| Hispanic                                 | 192,143             | 15.7%           | 5.76                       | -0.46                 |
| Nat. Hawaii / Other Pac. Isl.            | 1,751               | 0.1%            | 4.88                       | -1.34                 |
| Nonresident Alien                        | 123,728             | 10.1%           | 7.68                       | 1.46                  |
| Two or More Races                        | 55,207              | 4.5%            | 5.98                       | -0.24                 |
| Unknown                                  | 33,362              | 2.7%            | 7.06                       | 0.84                  |
| White                                    | 560,500             | 45.8%           | 5.72                       | -0.50                 |
| <b>Applicant urbanicity</b>              |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| Not urban                                | 75,987              | 6.2%            | 4.84                       | -1.38                 |
| Urban                                    | 1,146,486           | 93.8%           | 6.31                       | 0.09                  |
| <b>Applicant state (region)</b>          |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| Mid-Atlantic                             | 278,281             | 22.8%           | 7.26                       | 1.04                  |
| Midwestern                               | 224,852             | 18.4%           | 5.76                       | -0.46                 |
| New England                              | 101,349             | 8.3%            | 7.34                       | 1.12                  |
| Other/Non-US                             | 124,715             | 10.2%           | 7.73                       | 1.51                  |
| Southern                                 | 248,941             | 20.4%           | 5.30                       | -0.92                 |
| Southwestern                             | 65,025              | 5.3%            | 4.79                       | -1.43                 |
| Western                                  | 179,310             | 14.7%           | 5.29                       | -0.93                 |
| <b>Applicant high school type</b>        |                     |                 |                            |                       |
| Charter                                  | 43,822              | 3.6%            | 6.44                       | 0.22                  |
| Home School                              | 7,487               | 0.6%            | 4.72                       | -1.50                 |
| Independent                              | 130,922             | 10.7%           | 7.72                       | 1.50                  |
| Public                                   | 908,248             | 74.3%           | 5.92                       | -0.30                 |
| Religious                                | 127,662             | 10.4%           | 6.80                       | 0.58                  |
| Unknown                                  | 4,332               | 0.4%            | 6.23                       | 0.01                  |

## Appendix B

### Average applications per applicant by member attributes, 2021-22

Excluding applicants applying exclusively through early decision plans. This summary represents 7,375,645 applications from 1,214,135 applicants to 839 members on the Common App platform.

|   | Count of members | Percent | Avg. applications per applicant |                       |
|---|------------------|---------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
|   |                  |         | Member avg.                     | Diff from member avg. |
| <b>Flagship status</b>                      |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| Flagship (public)                           | 42               | 5.0%    | 8.72                            | -0.75                 |
| Not flagship                                | 797              | 95.0%   | 9.51                            | 0.04                  |
| <b>Undergraduate admit rate</b>             |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| < 20%                                       | 41               | 4.9%    | 12.18                           | 2.70                  |
| 20-40%                                      | 54               | 6.4%    | 11.06                           | 1.58                  |
| 40-60%                                      | 137              | 16.3%   | 9.76                            | 0.28                  |
| 60-80%                                      | 379              | 45.2%   | 9.19                            | -0.29                 |
| >= 80%                                      | 228              | 27.2%   | 8.93                            | -0.55                 |
| <b>SAT/ACT median</b>                       |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| < 1000                                      | 36               | 4.3%    | 9.76                            | 0.29                  |
| 1000-1099                                   | 170              | 20.3%   | 9.47                            | 0.00                  |
| 1100-1199                                   | 246              | 29.3%   | 8.83                            | -0.65                 |
| 1200-1299                                   | 124              | 14.8%   | 9.01                            | -0.47                 |
| 1300-1399                                   | 69               | 8.2%    | 10.17                           | 0.70                  |
| 1400-1499                                   | 35               | 4.2%    | 11.96                           | 2.49                  |
| >= 1500                                     | 16               | 1.9%    | 11.95                           | 2.47                  |
| Not available                               | 143              | 17.0%   | 9.70                            | 0.23                  |
| <b>Domestic application fee requirement</b> |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| Has fee                                     | 411              | 49.0%   | 9.24                            | -0.24                 |
| No fee                                      | 428              | 51.0%   | 9.70                            | 0.23                  |
| <b>Int'l application fee requirement</b>    |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| Has fee                                     | 404              | 48.2%   | 9.18                            | -0.29                 |
| No fee                                      | 435              | 51.8%   | 9.75                            | 0.27                  |
| <b>Counselor evaluation requirement</b>     |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| Not required                                | 566              | 67.5%   | 9.10                            | -0.38                 |
| Required                                    | 273              | 32.5%   | 10.26                           | 0.78                  |
| <b>Teacher evaluation requirement</b>       |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| Not required                                | 619              | 73.8%   | 9.13                            | -0.34                 |
| Required                                    | 220              | 26.2%   | 10.43                           | 0.96                  |
| <b>Common App essay requirement</b>         |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| Not required                                | 427              | 50.9%   | 9.12                            | -0.35                 |
| Required                                    | 412              | 49.1%   | 9.84                            | 0.36                  |
| <b>Standardized test requirement</b>        |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| Not required                                | 802              | 95.6%   | 9.49                            | 0.02                  |
| Required                                    | 37               | 4.4%    | 9.05                            | -0.42                 |
| <b>Institutional control</b>                |                  |         |                                 |                       |
| Private                                     | 597              | 71.2%   | 9.86                            | 0.38                  |
| Public                                      | 242              | 28.8%   | 8.53                            | -0.94                 |

|                                   | Count of members | % of members | Avg. applications per applicant |                       |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                   |                  |              | Member avg.                     | Diff from member avg. |
| <b>Carnegie classification</b>    |                  |              |                                 |                       |
| Associates / other                | 71               | 8.5%         | 8.67                            | -0.81                 |
| Bachelors                         | 273              | 32.5%        | 10.06                           | 0.59                  |
| Masters                           | 304              | 36.2%        | 9.20                            | -0.28                 |
| Doctoral                          | 191              | 22.8%        | 9.38                            | -0.09                 |
| <b>State / region</b>             |                  |              |                                 |                       |
| New England                       | 111              | 13.2%        | 9.99                            | 0.51                  |
| Mid-Atlantic                      | 224              | 26.7%        | 9.97                            | 0.50                  |
| Midwestern                        | 237              | 28.2%        | 9.43                            | -0.05                 |
| Southern                          | 159              | 19.0%        | 9.25                            | -0.23                 |
| Southwestern                      | 25               | 3.0%         | 8.91                            | -0.56                 |
| Western                           | 82               | 9.8%         | 8.17                            | -1.30                 |
| NA                                | 1                | 0.1%         | 10.80                           | 1.32                  |
| <b>Urbanicity</b>                 |                  |              |                                 |                       |
| Large City                        | 191              | 22.8%        | 9.28                            | -0.19                 |
| Mid-Size/Small City               | 231              | 27.5%        | 9.45                            | -0.02                 |
| Suburb                            | 238              | 28.4%        | 9.60                            | 0.12                  |
| Town                              | 150              | 17.9%        | 9.62                            | 0.15                  |
| Rural                             | 29               | 3.5%         | 9.15                            | -0.32                 |
| <b>Undergraduate applications</b> |                  |              |                                 |                       |
| < 1,000                           | 50               | 6.0%         | 9.77                            | 0.29                  |
| 1,000-2,999                       | 211              | 25.1%        | 9.21                            | -0.27                 |
| 3,000-4,999                       | 173              | 20.6%        | 9.43                            | -0.04                 |
| 5,000-9,999                       | 184              | 21.9%        | 9.73                            | 0.26                  |
| 10,000-19,999                     | 121              | 14.4%        | 9.20                            | -0.27                 |
| 20,000 or more                    | 100              | 11.9%        | 9.83                            | 0.36                  |
| <b>Percent URM</b>                |                  |              |                                 |                       |
| < 10%                             | 100              | 11.9%        | 8.87                            | -0.60                 |
| 10-15%                            | 211              | 25.1%        | 9.70                            | 0.23                  |
| 15-20%                            | 183              | 21.8%        | 9.62                            | 0.15                  |
| 20-30%                            | 176              | 21.0%        | 9.44                            | -0.04                 |
| 30-50%                            | 111              | 13.2%        | 9.23                            | -0.25                 |
| >= 50%                            | 58               | 6.9%         | 9.80                            | 0.33                  |
| <b>Percent Pell-eligible</b>      |                  |              |                                 |                       |
| < 15%                             | 59               | 7.0%         | 10.62                           | 1.15                  |
| 15-25%                            | 181              | 21.6%        | 9.79                            | 0.32                  |
| 25-35%                            | 215              | 25.6%        | 9.06                            | -0.41                 |
| 35-45%                            | 184              | 21.9%        | 9.16                            | -0.32                 |
| 45-60%                            | 146              | 17.4%        | 9.41                            | -0.07                 |
| >= 60%                            | 54               | 6.4%         | 10.05                           | 0.57                  |
| <b>Percent first-generation</b>   |                  |              |                                 |                       |
| < 15%                             | 69               | 8.2%         | 10.58                           | 1.11                  |
| 15-25%                            | 262              | 31.2%        | 9.64                            | 0.17                  |
| 25-35%                            | 294              | 35.0%        | 9.16                            | -0.32                 |
| 35-45%                            | 178              | 21.2%        | 9.29                            | -0.18                 |
| >= 45%                            | 36               | 4.3%         | 9.64                            | 0.16                  |

## References

Knight, Brian, and Nathan Schiff. 2022. "Reducing Frictions in College Admissions: Evidence from the Common Application." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 14 (1): 179-206.