

Common App's Next Chapter

Impact report





Dear friends,

It's hard to believe it's been over a year since Common App launched its Next Chapter. We're recommitting to our mission to increase access for all students who want to pursue their postsecondary dreams. We've spent the past year working with members, counselors, and other key partners to start our trek to the moon and close our equity gap in students pursuing postsecondary opportunities.

We've learned so much over the past year. We've launched new initiatives centered around helping students afford college, expanded the number of opportunities available to students through our direct admissions offerings and community colleges, and used our unique data to provide insight into application trends across the applicant lifecycle, while identifying potential barriers and opportunities to improve college access. **All of this work yielded an increase of low- and middle-income students using the Common App, a positive sign that we're making progress toward our moonshot goal.**

This annual report provides a deeper look at our applicant pool and tracks our yearly progress. We'll continue to use this report to understand how much progress we're making together toward closing our equity gap by 2030.

Warmly,



Jenny Rickard
Chief Executive Officer
Common App

Applicants from
above-median ZIP codes

70%

GOAL

22–23

30%

Applicants from
below-median ZIP codes

THE CHALLENGE

We set our baseline for our moonshot goal during the 2022–2023 academic year. At the time:

30% of Common App applicants lived in ZIP codes below the national median household income.

70% lived in communities above it.

To close our equity gap, we're striving to have both percentages of applicants living in ZIP codes above and below the median income to be **equal**.

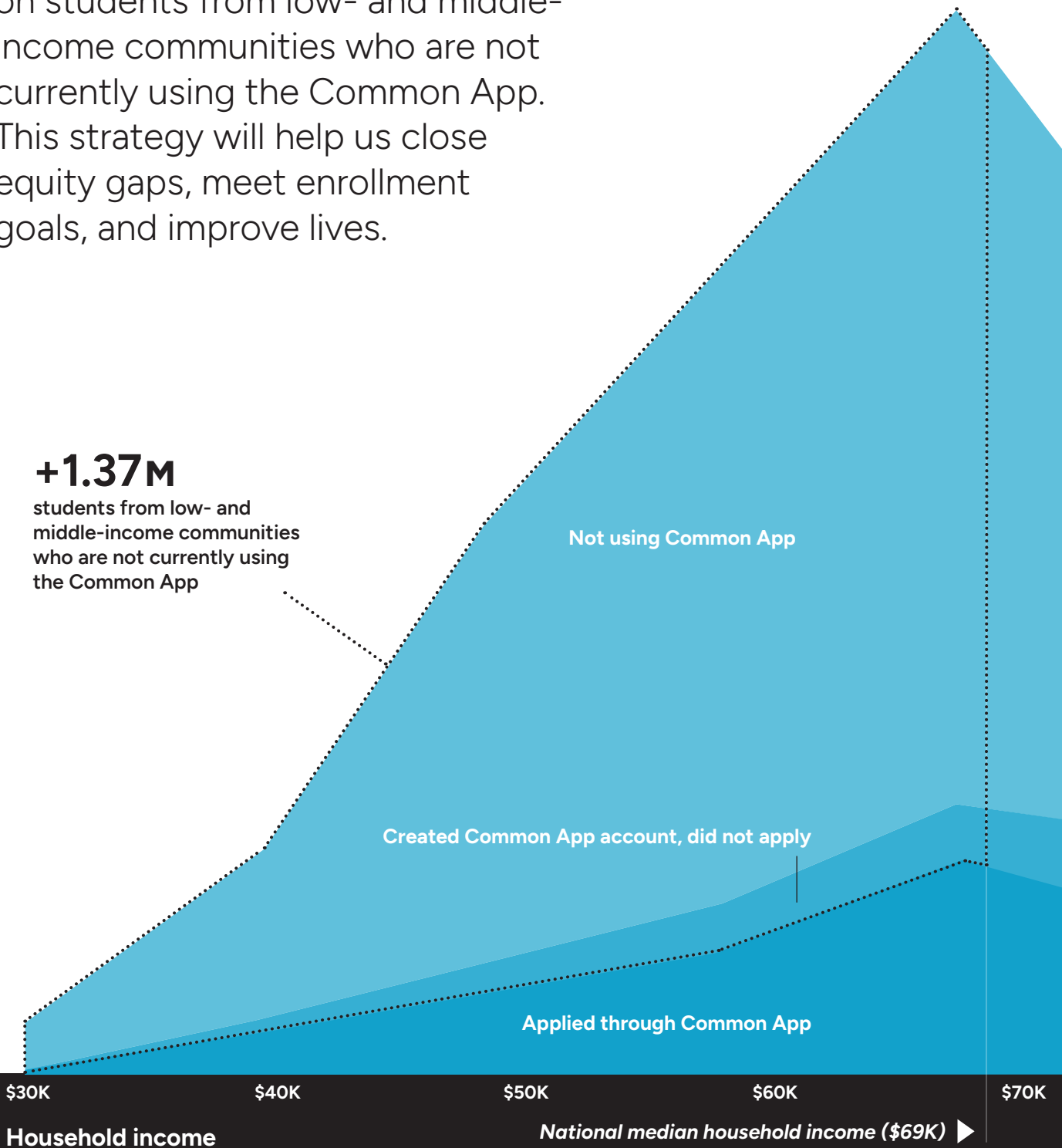


THE OPPORTUNITY

According to our data, there is a mountain of opportunity focusing on students from low- and middle-income communities who are not currently using the Common App. This strategy will help us close equity gaps, meet enrollment goals, and improve lives.

+1.37M

students from low- and middle-income communities who are not currently using the Common App



THE OPPORTUNITY

Our Next Chapter calls us to look beyond the high school population and serve new communities of students and new segments of higher education: **adult learners, community colleges and more transfer in applicants.**

Serving these communities and segments will result in accelerating our progress toward closing our equity gap by connecting more economically diverse students to broader postsecondary opportunities.

41.9M

transfer and
returning
students

3.7M
high school
graduates



Sources: WICHE;
National Student Clearinghouse

Applicants from
above-median ZIP codes

71% 70% 69%

GOAL

21-22

22-23

23-24

29% 30% 31%

Applicants from
below-median ZIP codes

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

Since the 2021–2022 application season, numbers show that the equity gap has been **steadily closing**.

In the 2023–2024 application season, we reached **422,893 low- and middle-income students**.

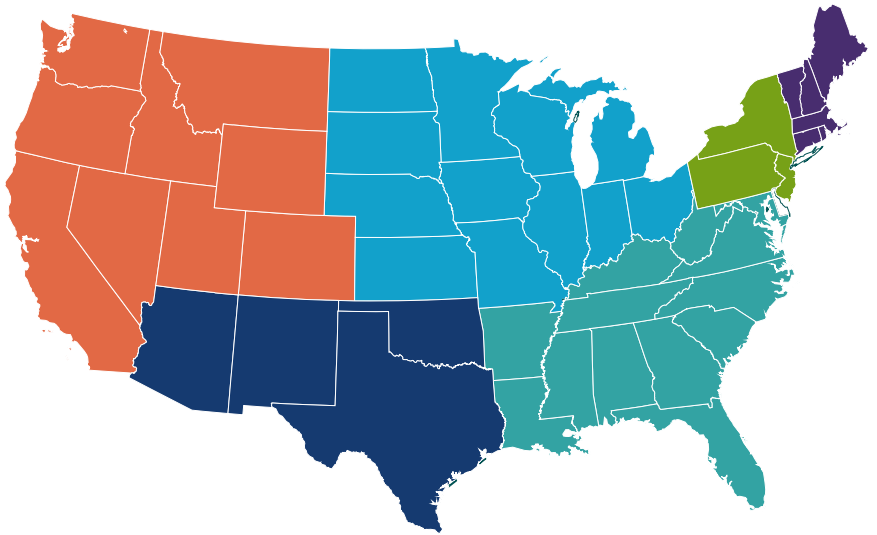
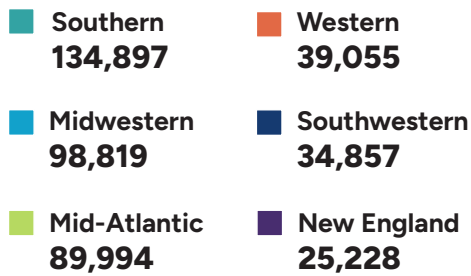


BREAKING DOWN OUR MOONSHOT GOAL

Who are these students?

Demographics of the **422,893** domestic students from low- and middle-income communities:

REGIONS



FIRST-YEAR

390,601



TRANSFER

32,292



FIRST-GEN

233,642

CONTINUING-GEN

189,251



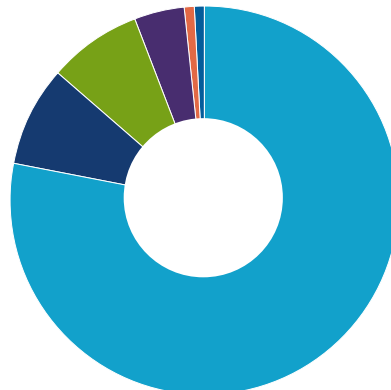
URM*

211,983

NON URM*

210,910

HIGH SCHOOL TYPE first-year students



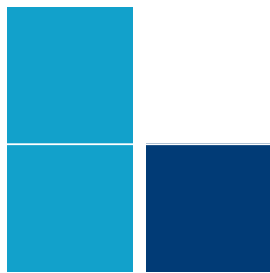
* underrepresented minority race/ethnicity

BREAKING DOWN OUR MOONSHOT GOAL

Who are these students?

In the 2023–2024 application season, out of the **1.5 million first-year and transfer students** who use Common App each year:

Applicants who came from **below-median income** communities were:



More than **2x** as likely to be **first-generation**



Nearly **2x** as likely to be **URM***



About **2.4x** as likely to be **eligible for a Common App fee waiver****



More than **2x** as likely to be **attending a Title I eligible high school****

than applicants who came from **above-median income** communities.

* *underrepresented minority race/ethnicity*
 ** *first-year applicants only*

LOOKING AHEAD

This is just the beginning.

We know we have a long way to go. Over the next few years we'll be expanding on our initiatives and coming up with new ways to help even more students from low- and middle-income communities with their postsecondary goals.



PROGRESSING TOWARDS OUR MOONSHOT IN 2025

We're encouraged about the progress we've made throughout the first year of our Next Chapter, but we need to accelerate our progress. That's why we're continuing to find ways to make the college application process more simple, logical, and joyful, including:

- An expanded direct admissions program
- A new scholarship matching partnership
- Including community colleges that primarily award Associate's degrees in our membership

In our upcoming **Next Chapter Innovations Guide**, we'll provide more updates on the progress of our key initiatives, and we'll also highlight promising pilots and practices happening at our member institutions, in high schools, and by partner organizations that help all students connect to postsecondary opportunities.