Sources of Grant Aid

Between 2013-14 and 2018-19, institutional grant aid rose by $12.5 billion (in 2018 dollars); federal grants declined by $6.3 billion. Total grant aid to postsecondary students increased by $9.2 billion (7%).

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCES: See page 34 for a list of sources for grants included in Figure 5.

- The total amount of grant aid supporting postsecondary students increased by 81% (after adjusting for inflation) between 1998-99 and 2008-09 and by another 56% between 2008-09 and 2018-19, reaching a total of $135.6 billion.

- Almost all of the growth in total grant aid over the last decade occurred between 2008-09 and 2013-14, during which full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment increased by 7%. Between 2013-14 and 2018-19, FTE enrollment declined by 5%.

- Federal grants fluctuated between 27% and 32% of all grant aid for undergraduate and graduate students between 1998-99 and 2008-09. This share rose to 44% in 2010-11 but declined to 30% in 2018-19.

- From 1998-99 to 2008-09, state grant aid was between 11% and 13% of all grant aid. From 2009-10 to 2018-19, it was between 8% and 9% of all grant aid. Total state grant aid grew by 72% (after adjusting for inflation) between 1998-99 and 2008-09 and by another 28% over the decade ending in 2018-19.

- Grants from employers and other private sources were between 12% and 17% of total grant aid to postsecondary students for the two decades from 1998-99 through 2018-19 and were 13% of the total in 2018-19.

ALSO IMPORTANT:

- Grant aid for veterans, which grew from $3.9 billion (in 2018 dollars) to $12.4 billion over the decade, increased from 15% of federal grant aid in 2008-09 to 30% in 2018-19. At the same time, Pell Grants, which rose from $21.0 billion to $28.2 billion, declined from 79% to 68% of the total. (Table 1)

- The composition of grant aid for graduate students is quite different from that for undergraduate students—and from the totals in Figure 5. In 2018-19, 10% of graduate student grant aid came from the federal government in the form of aid to veterans, 65% from institutions, 23% from employers and other private sources, and 2% from states. For undergraduate students, the percentages were 34% federal, 45% institutional, 11% private and employer, and 10% state. (Table 1 online)