

# Commission on Higher Education Quality and Affordability (CHEQA) Background Materials<sup>1</sup>

October 30, 2024

# This set of background materials was developed to support the members of the task force in getting up to speed on key issues for discussion

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- **Enrollment<sup>1</sup>**

- There are ~575k students enrolled in an institution of higher education (IHE) in MA; **~40% (230k) attend a public IHE**
- **80-85%** of those who attend a public IHE are **undergrads**; **~50%** of undergrads are **full-time** students
- Most full-time students attend a four-year IHE, while **most part-time students attend community college**
- The **number of undergrads across the system has declined by ~20%** since 2014, driven by a mix of baseline demographic shifts, reductions in matriculation rates, and an increase in high school graduate ‘exports’ to other states

- **Student success**

- Public IHEs **graduate undergrads at a rate that is on par with the national average of 39%**; however, rates vary significantly across segments and populations (to be explored in coming meetings)

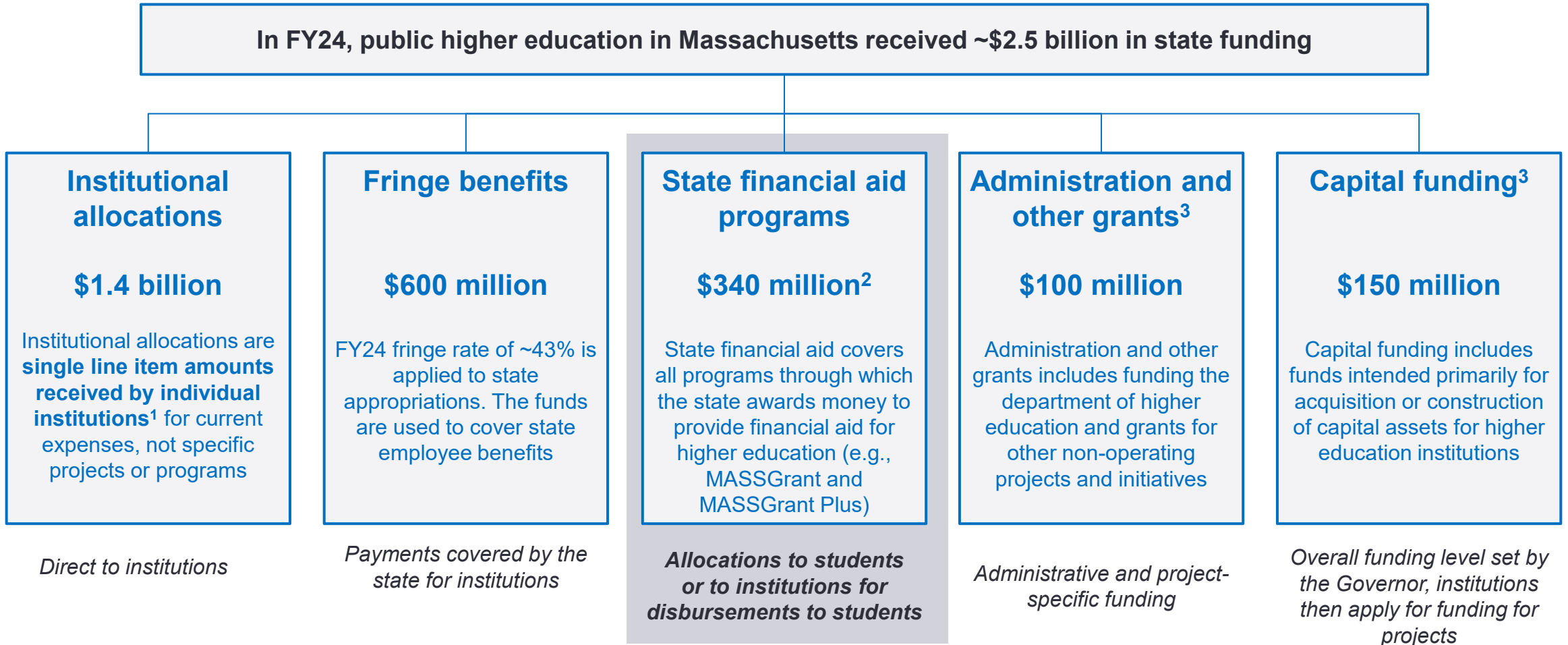
- **Access and affordability**

- According to local surveys, the **cost of college is a major concern** for the parents of school-aged children in MA; in addition to direct costs (tuition, fees, books), parents worry most about the cost of room & board
- Making college more affordable has been a focus area in the public IHE space; **MA has made significant strides the last few years, with major increases in state financial aid (+128% from FY23 to FY25) through funding of flagship programs (e.g., MassGrant Plus, Mass Reconnect, MassEducate)**

1. 12-month unduplicated headcount (full & part-time students); includes Title IV-participating, degree-granting institutions in MA

# MA currently spends over \$2B on higher education in the state, with the vast majority (\$1.4B) allocated to institutions rather than student financial aid or success programming

## Total state funding for public higher education, by category



1. Sum of enacted budget directed towards UMass, state universities, and community colleges. UMass receives one institutional allocation to fund all campuses; UMass Medical is excluded from this analysis

2. Portion of Department of Higher Education budget allocated specifically for financial aid programs. Specific budget lines include Financial Aid Expansion, Mass Reconnect, Targeted Scholarships, Nursing Programs, Department of Higher Education, Foster Care Financial Aid, Foster Care and Adopted Fee Waiver, and Massachusetts State Scholarship Program

3. Capital Funding is pulled directly from Line Item 1596-2417 from the Department of Higher Education enacted budget. Administration and other grants makes up the remainder of the \$490m set aside for the DHE.

Source: FY2024 Massachusetts Enacted Budget, MA Office of the Comptroller

# Enrollment snapshot<sup>1</sup>

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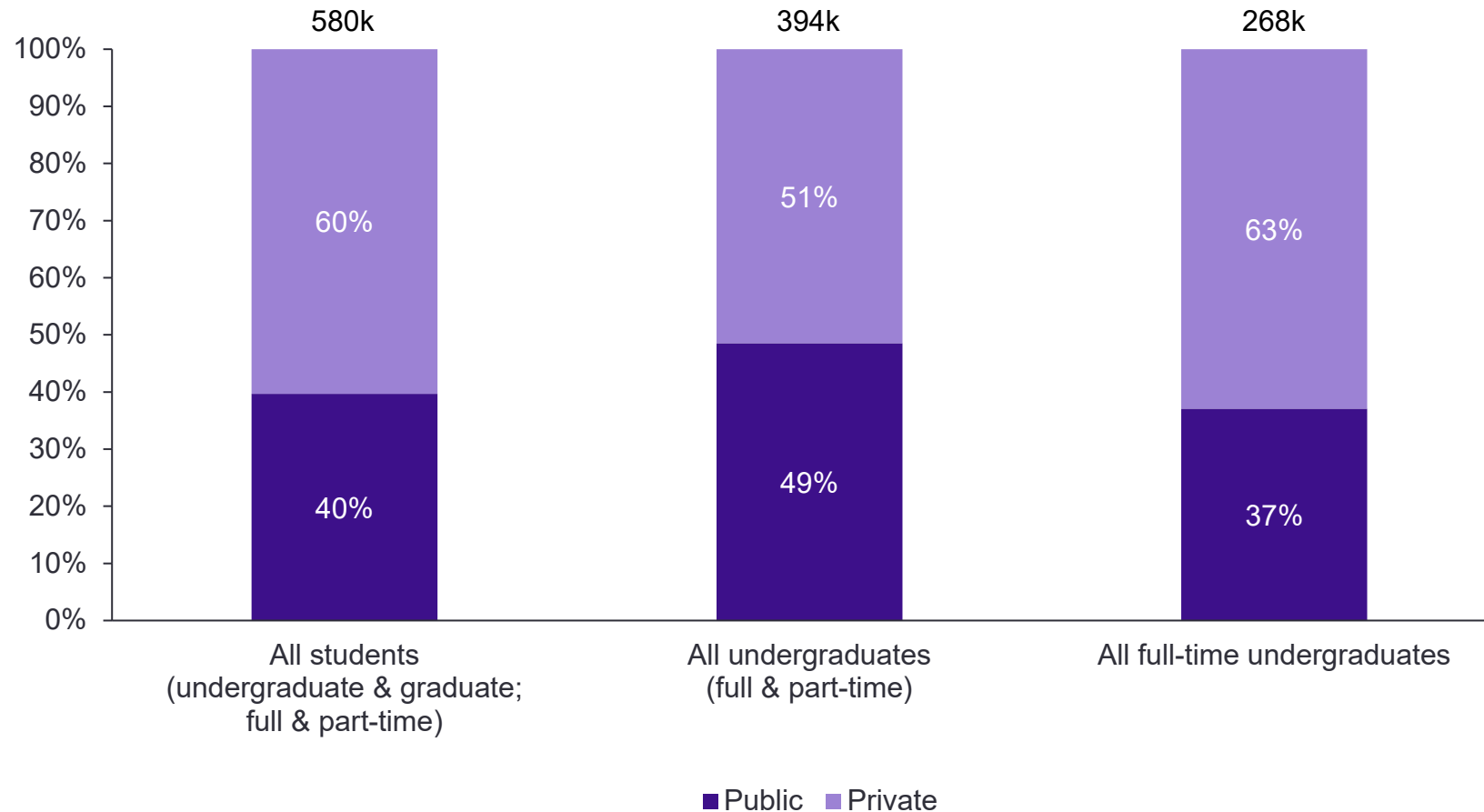
Student success

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Access and affordability

# 40% of all postsecondary students in Massachusetts attend a public institution; when considering only the undergraduate population, that number increases to ~50%

Enrollment<sup>1</sup> by institutional status, FY23



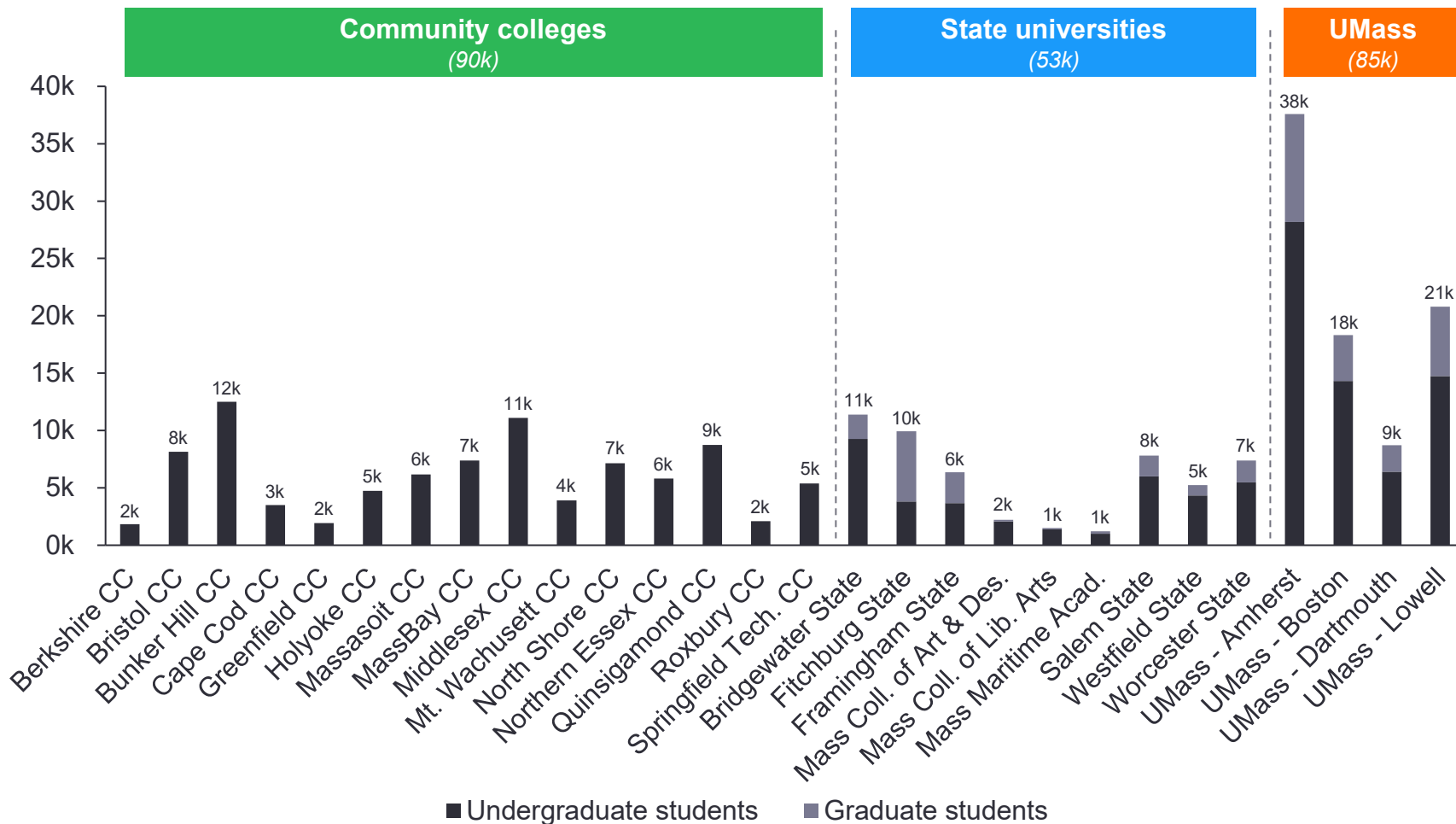
## Commentary

- Roughly 580k students attend college in MA, ~40% of which attend a public institution of higher education (IHE)
- Almost 400k of the students in the state are undergraduates, ~50% of which attend a public IHE
- <40% of full-time undergraduates attend a public IHE
- ~70% of undergraduates attend school full-time

1. 12-month unduplicated headcount (full & part-time students); includes Title IV-participating, degree-granting institutions in MA  
Source: IPEDS

There are ~230k postsecondary students across the MA public higher education space, ~80-85% of which are undergraduates

Enrollment<sup>1</sup> by public institution, FY23



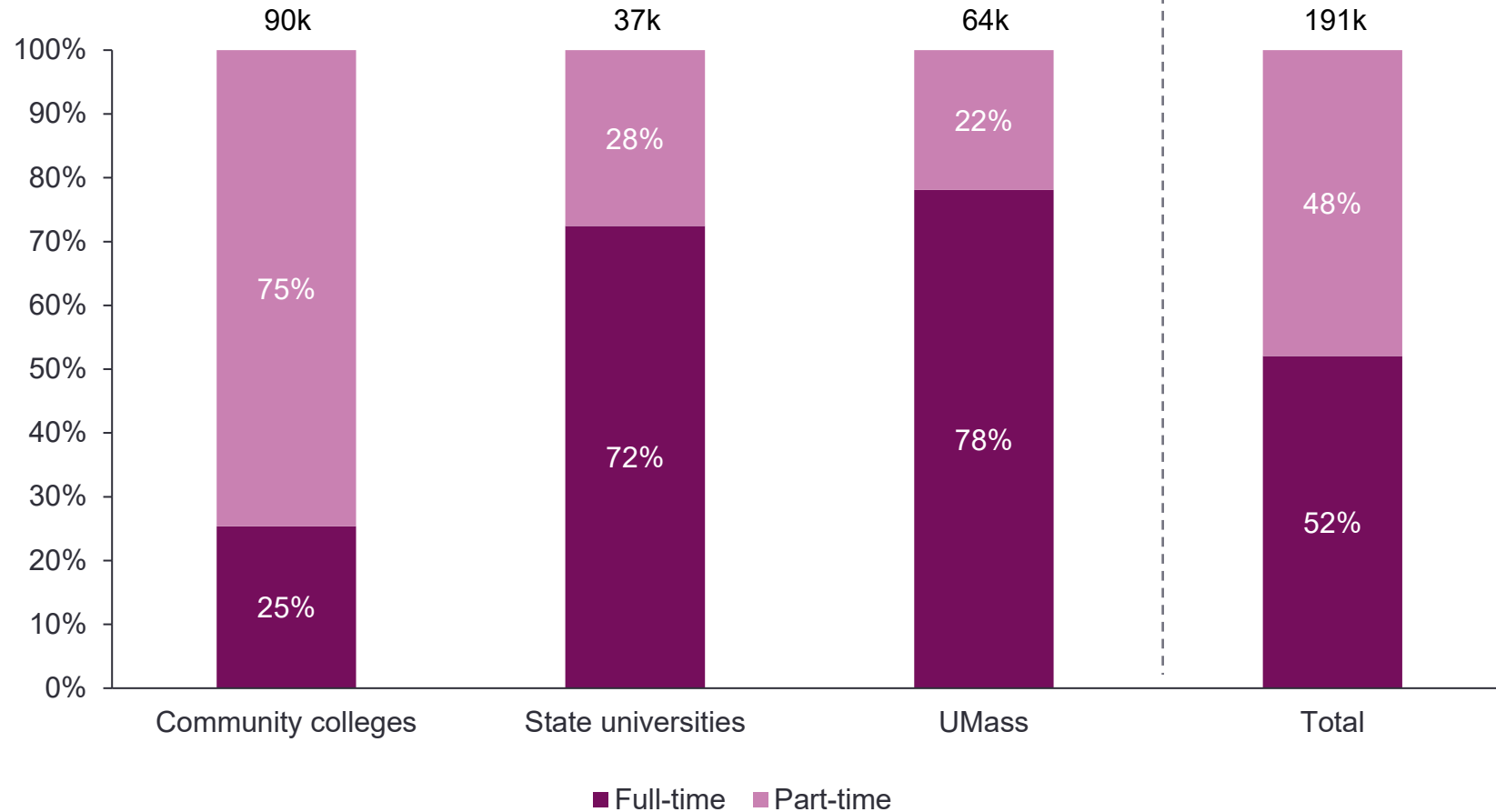
Commentary

- 28 public MA higher education institutions serving undergraduates
  - 15 community colleges
  - 9 state universities
  - 4 UMass campuses (does not include UMass Medical, serving only graduate students)
- ~230k total headcount
  - ~190k undergraduates
  - ~40k graduate students

1. 12-month unduplicated headcount (full & part-time students); includes Title IV-participating, degree-granting public institutions serving undergraduates in MA (excludes UMass Medical, which serves ~1300 graduate students)  
Source: IPEDS

# Of the undergraduate population, ~50% are full-time students; most full-time students attend four-year institutions

Undergraduate enrollment<sup>1</sup> by segment and status, FY23



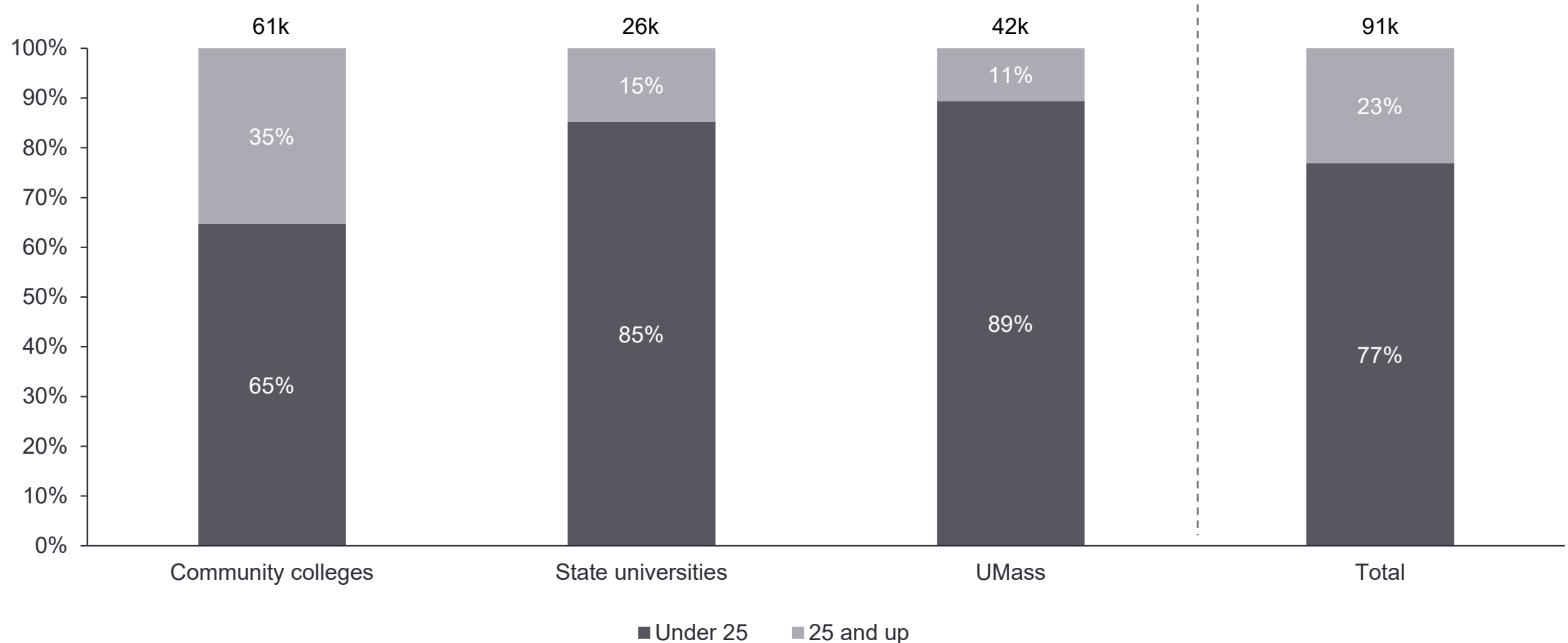
## Commentary

- Two-year: Only ~25% of community college students are full-time
- Four-year: Most four-year university attendees are full-time (~75%)
- Overall: ~75% of full-time students attend four-year institutions, while ~75% of part-time students attend community colleges

1. 12-month unduplicated headcount (full & part-time students); includes Title IV-participating, degree-granting public institutions serving undergraduates in MA (excludes UMass Medical, which serves ~1300 graduate students)  
Source: IPEDS

# Most undergraduates are <25 years old; of the ~20-25% of students who are not, the vast majority attend community college

Undergraduate enrollment<sup>1</sup> by segment and age group, FY23



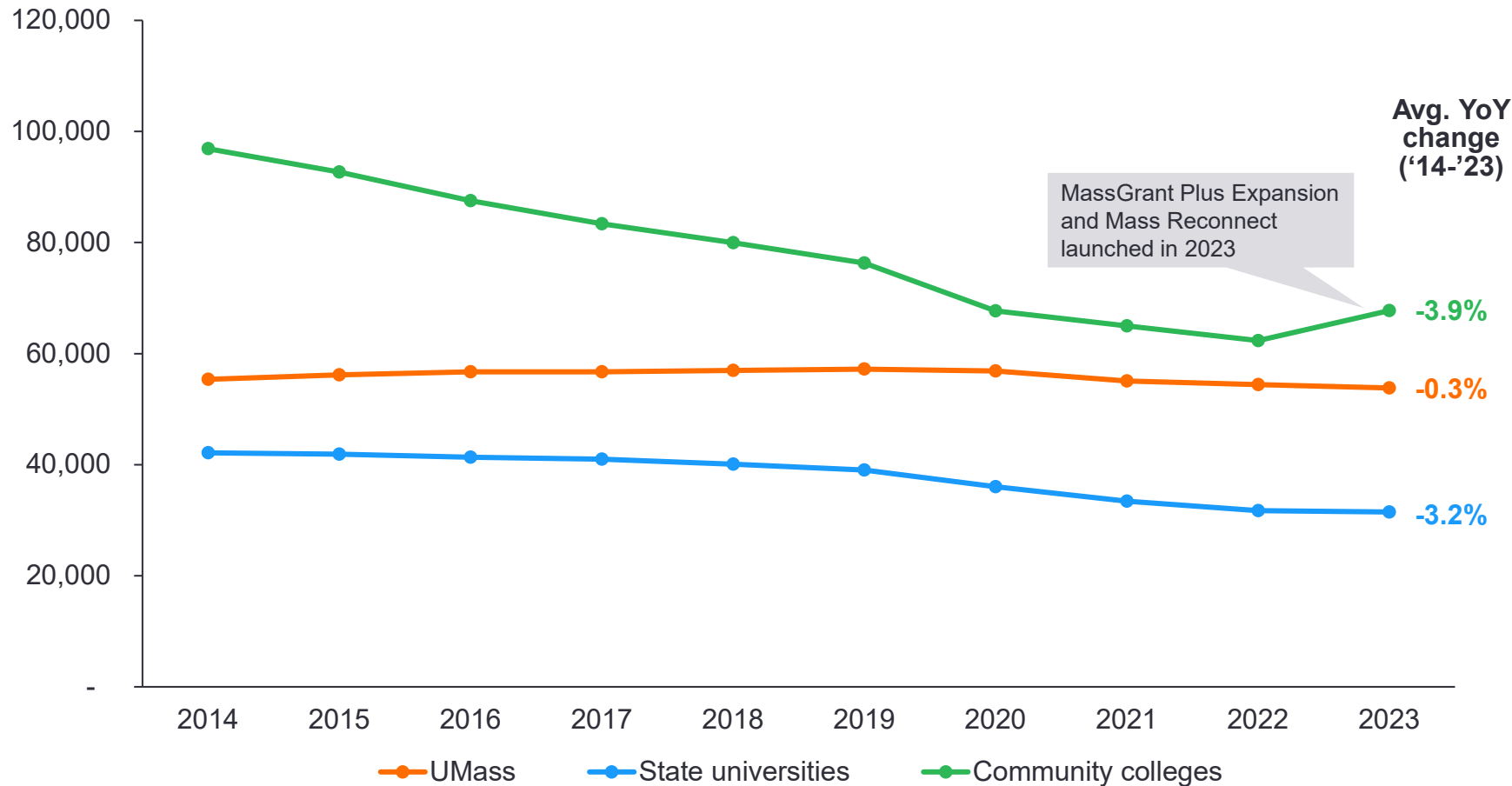
1. Fall 2022 enrollment; includes Title IV-participating, degree-granting public institutions serving undergraduates in MA (excludes UMass Medical, which serves ~1300 graduate students, as well as 4 schools who do not report age group demographics: Roxbury Community College, Mass Maritime Academy, Westfield State, and UMass Boston)

Source: IPEDS



# Undergraduate enrollment is down across all segments compared to mid-2010s; community colleges and state universities most impacted

Undergraduate enrollment<sup>1</sup> by segment, 2014-2023



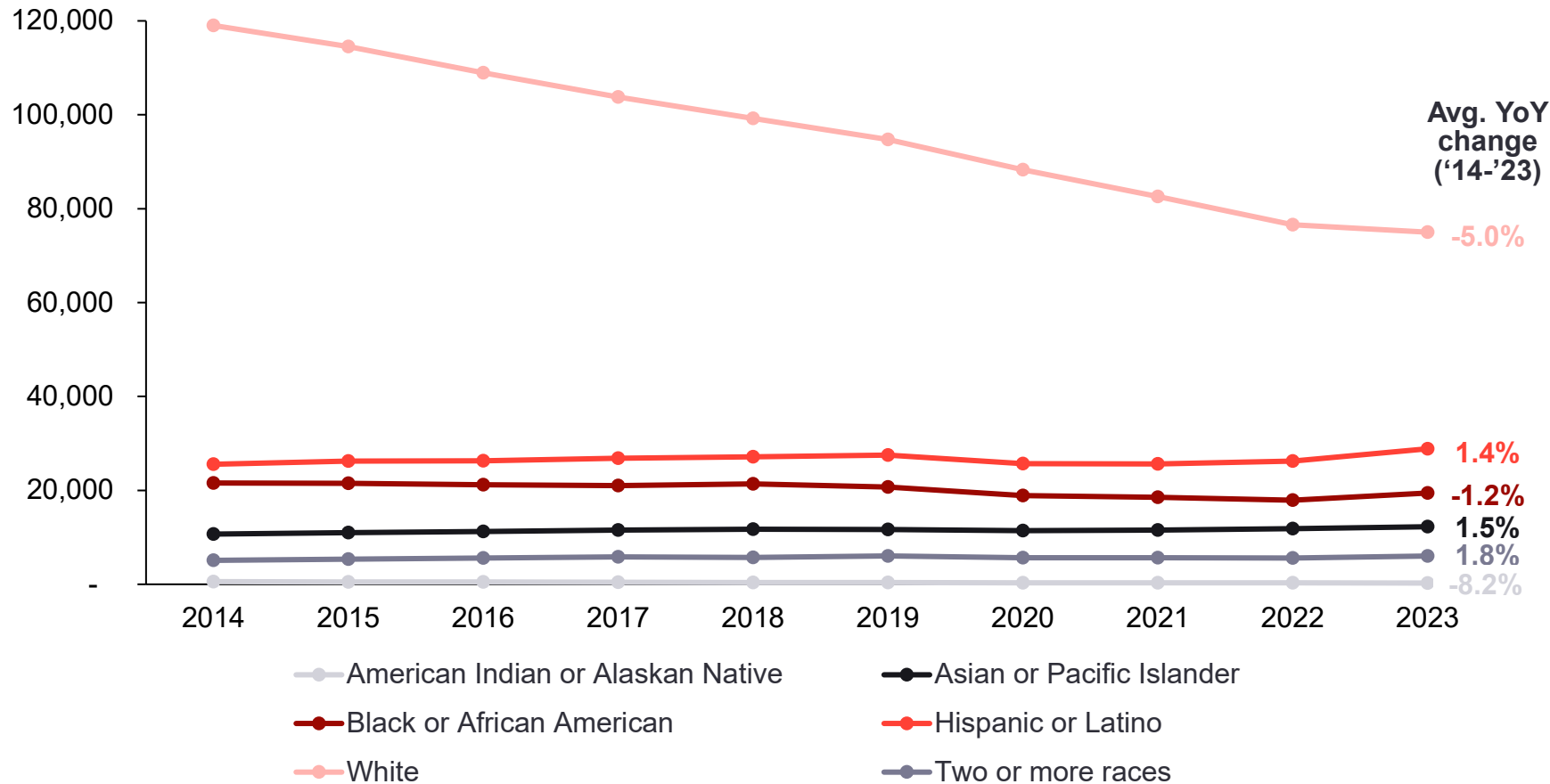
## Commentary

- Undergraduate enrollment is down across all segments compared to ~9 years ago
- Community college decline pre-dated Covid, whereas state university decline occurred primarily from 2020-2022
- Some evidence that recent state financial aid initiatives are boosting enrollment, e.g., the 2023 community college enrollment bump was likely a result of the MassGrant Plus Expansion and Mass Reconnect

1. Fall headcount (full & part-time students); includes Title IV-participating, degree-granting public institutions serving undergraduates in MA (excludes UMass Medical, which serves ~1300 graduate students)  
Source: HEIRS

# Decline in undergraduate enrollment is driven by blend of changing baseline demographics and shifting participation rates by race/ethnicity

Undergraduate Fall headcount by race/ethnicity, 2014-2023



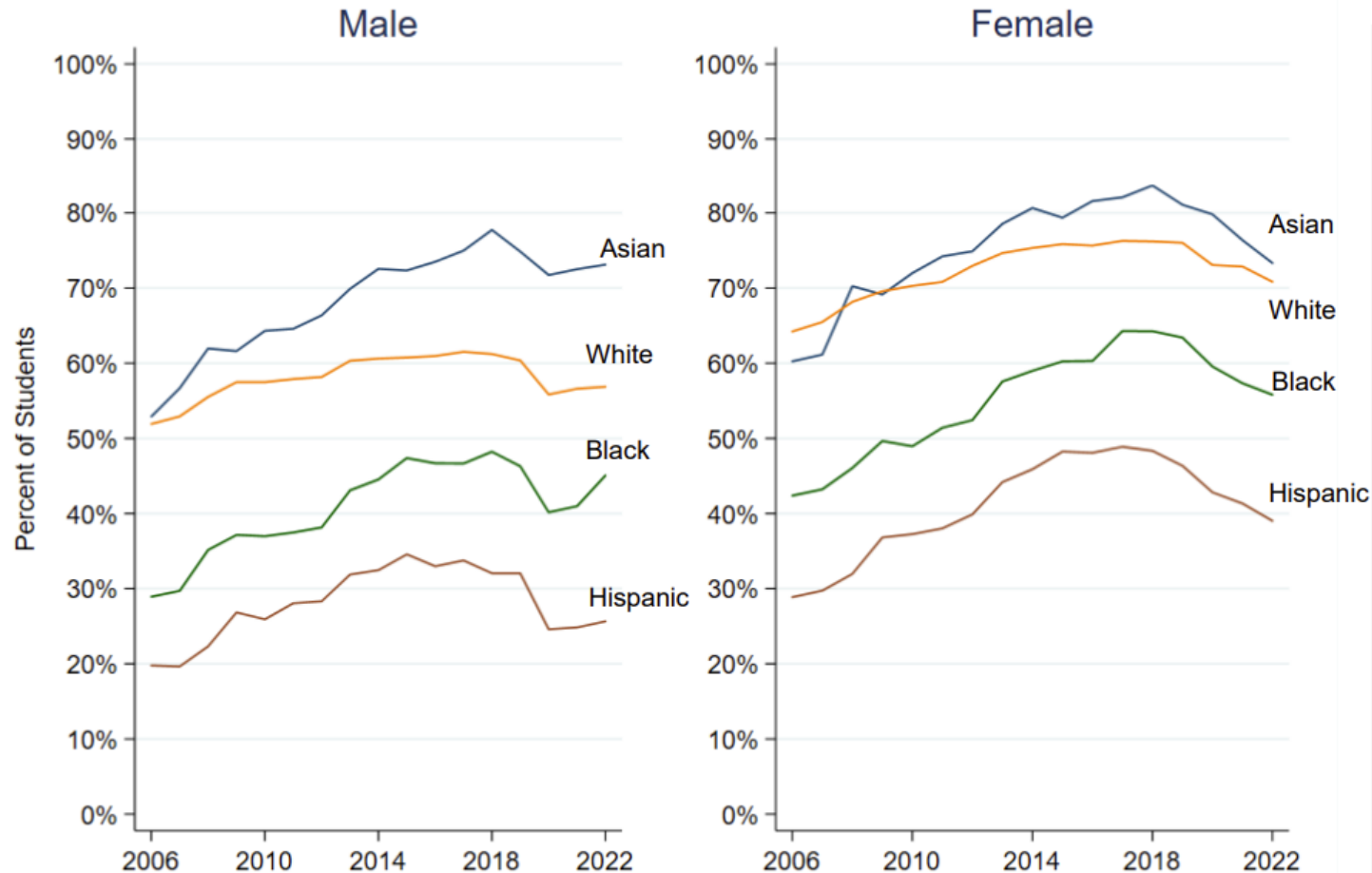
## Commentary

- Mixed trends in undergraduate enrollment over time by race/ethnicity
- Covid appeared to negatively impact college enrollment across the board – Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino populations particularly impacted
- Headcount grew in 2023 for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students – MassGrant Plus Expansion and Mass Reconnect may have supported increased enrollment

1. Fall headcount (full & part-time students); includes Title IV-participating, degree-granting public institutions serving undergraduates in MA (excludes UMass Medical, which serves ~1300 graduate students)  
Source: HEIRS

# Impact of Covid: Black and Hispanic students were particularly impacted by Covid, experiencing the steepest declines in college-going rates

College enrollment by Fall of the year after cohort graduation by race and gender



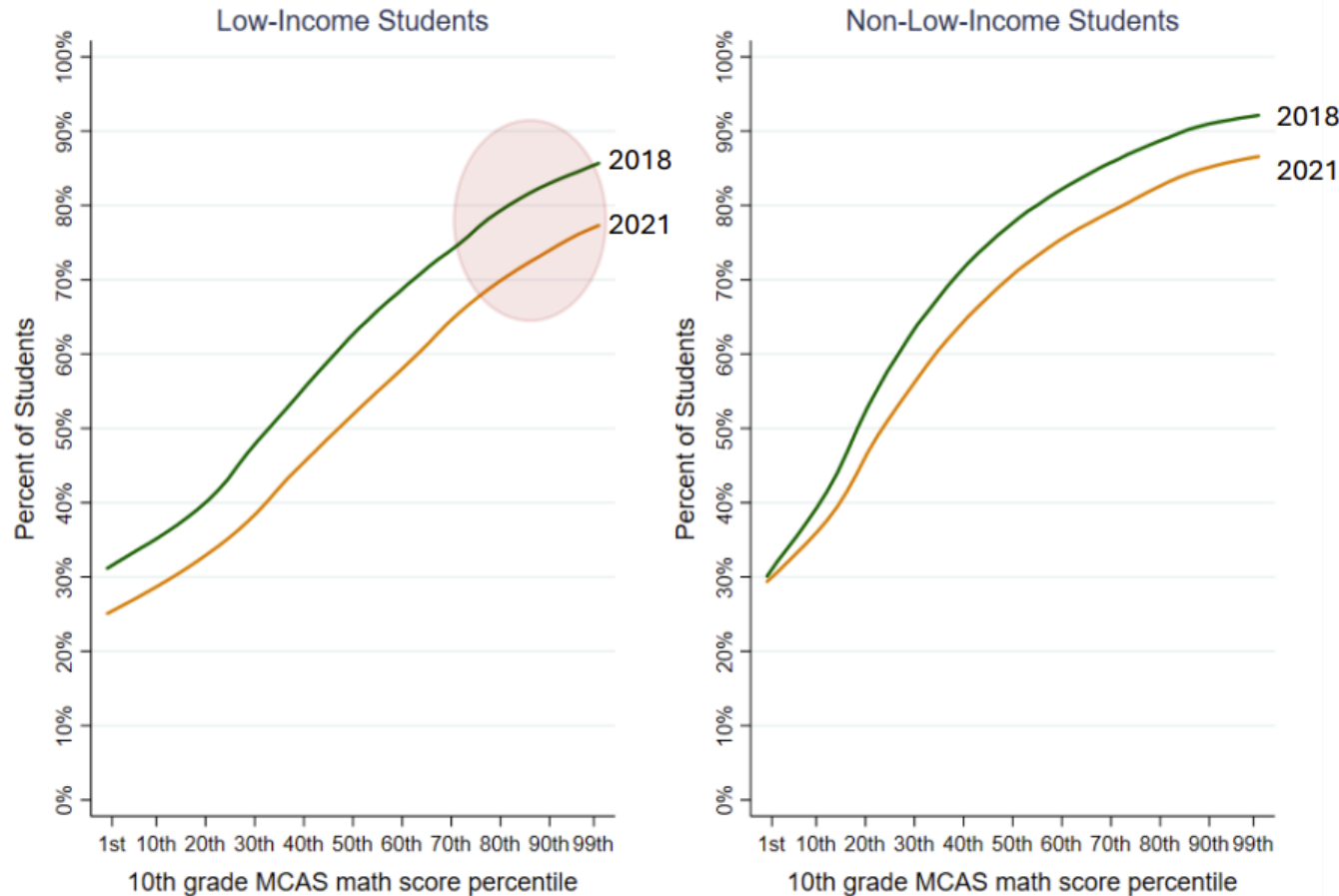
## Commentary

- Hispanic males are almost 50 percentage points less likely to attend college than Asian males
- Male college-going rates have started to recover, while female college-going rates lag on recovery

# Impact of Covid: College-going rates even declined for high-performing students; in fact, high-performing, low-income students appear most impacted

## College enrollment by Fall of the year after cohort graduation by MCAS performance & income (2018, 2021 cohorts)

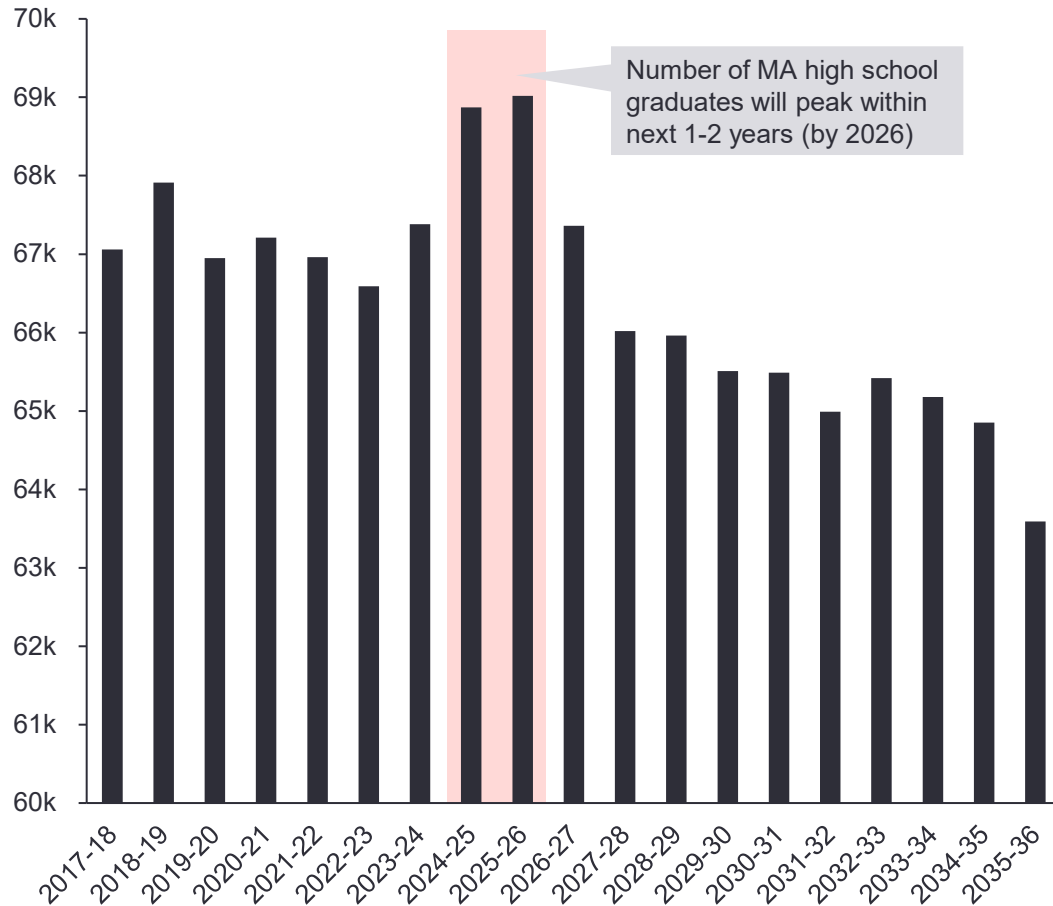
## Commentary



- Regardless of MCAS performance and income level, students who graduated in 2021 were less likely to enroll in college than students who graduated before Covid, in 2018
- The drop in college-going rates for low-income students was more pronounced than for non-low-income students, across MCAS performance levels
- High-performing, low-income students appear most impacted by Covid – they experienced the largest drop in college-going rates of any income/performance combination

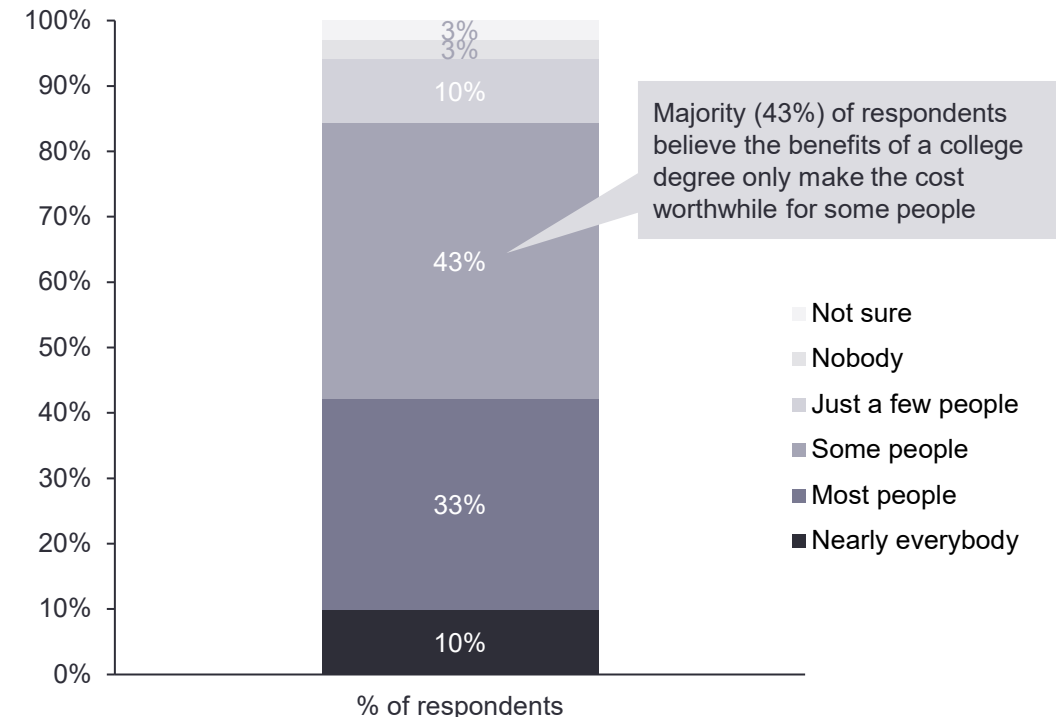
# However, the true college ‘enrollment cliff’ is yet to come; not only will the number of high school graduates soon peak, but confidence in the value of higher ed is somewhat low

MA public high school graduates, 2017-2036



Confidence in the value of higher education, Fall 2023

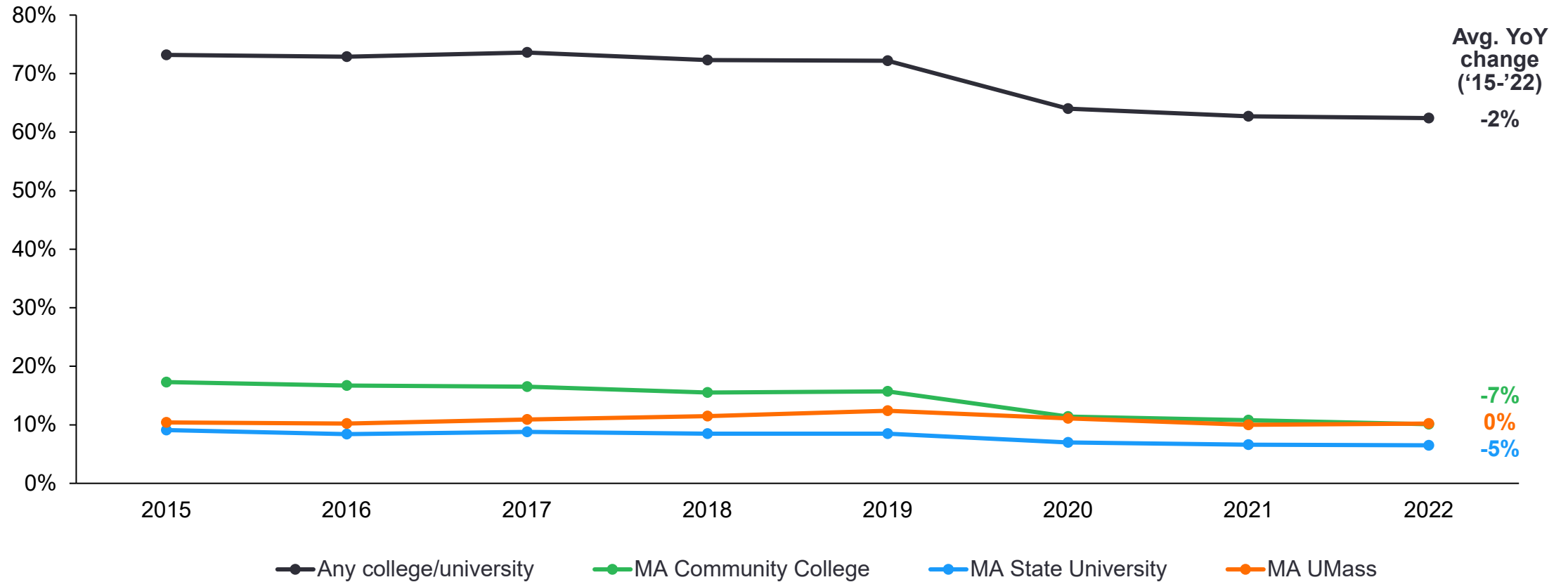
The following was asked to ~1,000 parents of children enrolled in grades 6-12 in MA:  
Do you believe the potential long-term benefits of a college-degree make the cost worthwhile for nearly everybody, most people, some people, just a few people, or nobody?



Source: WICHE's [Knocking at the College Door Report](#), MassINC Polling Group's Fall 2023 [Grade 6-12 Parents Survey](#) (N=1,018)

# The MA public higher ed space faces another challenge in that the immediate college-going rate of MA high school graduates is declining (overall and to MA public IHEs)

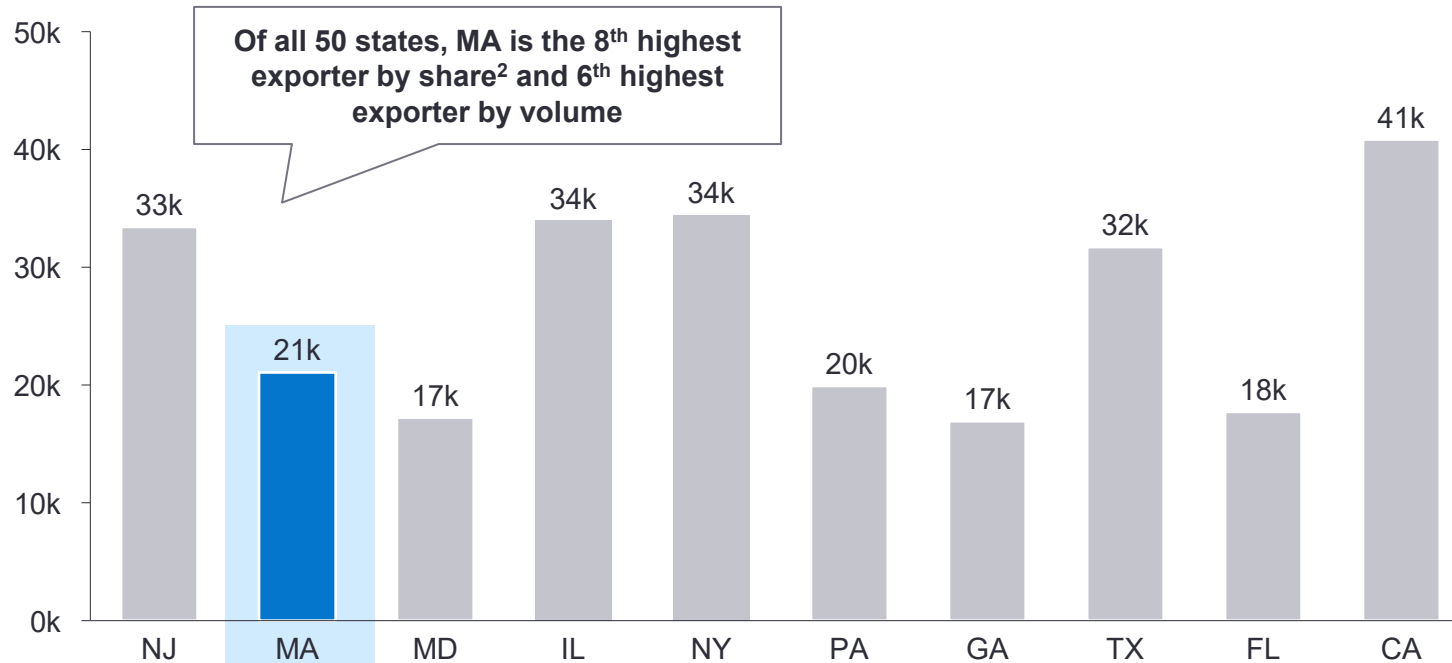
Percentage of MA high school graduates attending college<sup>1</sup>, 2015-2022



1. Percent of high school graduates from a given year who attend college by March of the following year  
Source: Massachusetts College and Career Outcomes Report (Dec 2023)

# Additionally, 37% (21k) of Massachusetts first-time first-year students enroll in an institution in another state, placing MA in the top 10 “export states” by volume

Out-of-state export total for top 10 states by volume<sup>1</sup>, FY23



**CAGR (FY19-23)**

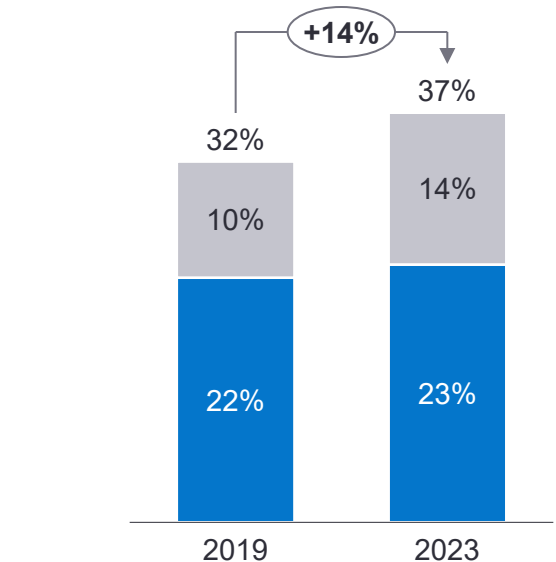
NJ	MA	MD	IL	NY	PA	GA	TX	FL	CA
+0.0%	+0.9%	+1.8%	-0.7%	+2.4%	+1.8%	+2.2%	+4.1%	-0.1%	+0.6%

**% OOS<sup>3</sup>**

NJ	MA	MD	IL	NY	PA	GA	TX	FL	CA
38%	37%	35%	32%	22%	22%	21%	13%	13%	12%

% of total Massachusetts students leaving for college OOS, FY19-23

■ % OOS in-region ■ % OOS out-of-region



**All FTFY students**

2019	2023
63.0k	57.6k

1. Excludes enrollments in institutions with 75%+ online students

2. When ranking largest exporters by share, the top 10 states are: DC (77%), VT (53%), NH (53%), AK (47%), CT (43%), HI (39%), NJ (38%), MA (37%), DE (36%), MD (35%)

3. Percent of FTFY degree-seeking undergraduate students whose destination institution is located out of their state of residence at enrollment

Source: IPEDS

Enrollment snapshot<sup>1</sup>

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**Student success**

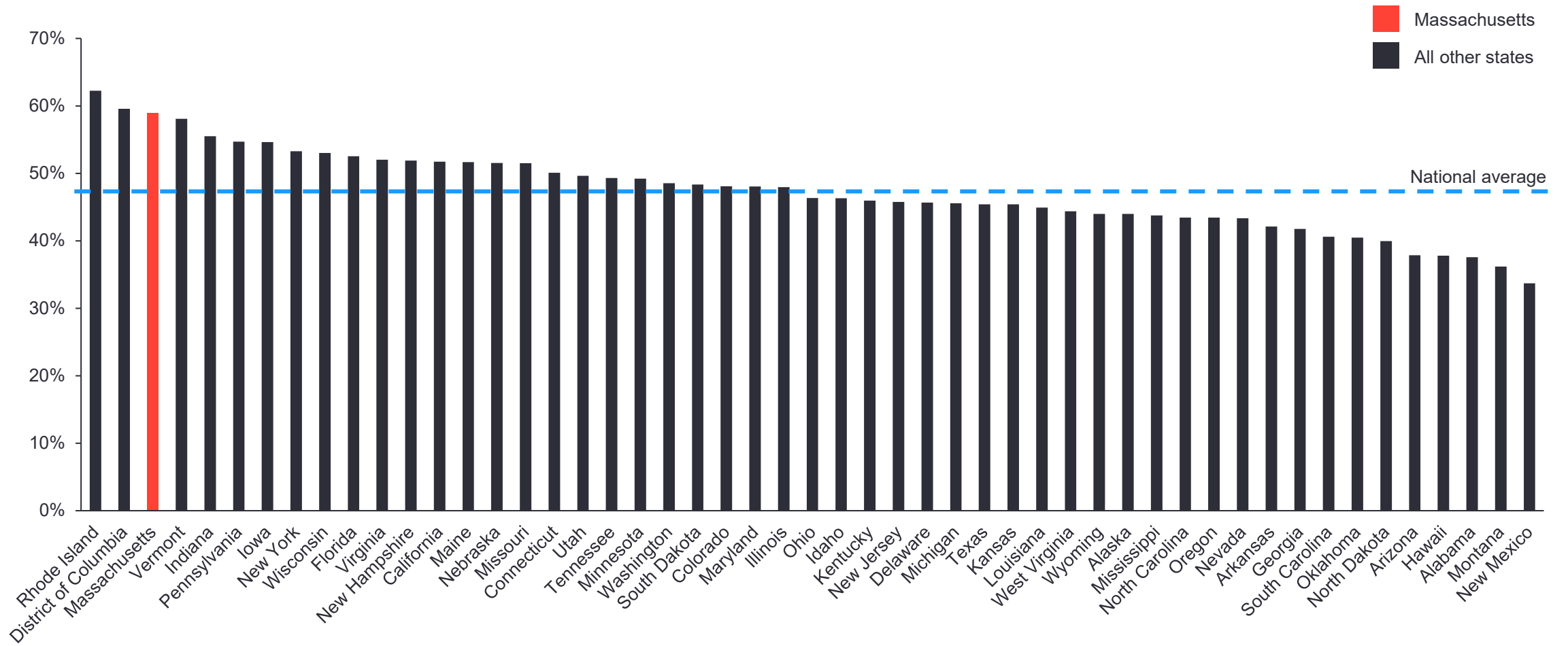
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Access and affordability



# Nationally, Massachusetts is a leader in degree attainment rates, with an average graduation rate of ~59% vs the national average of ~48% (public and private IHEs)

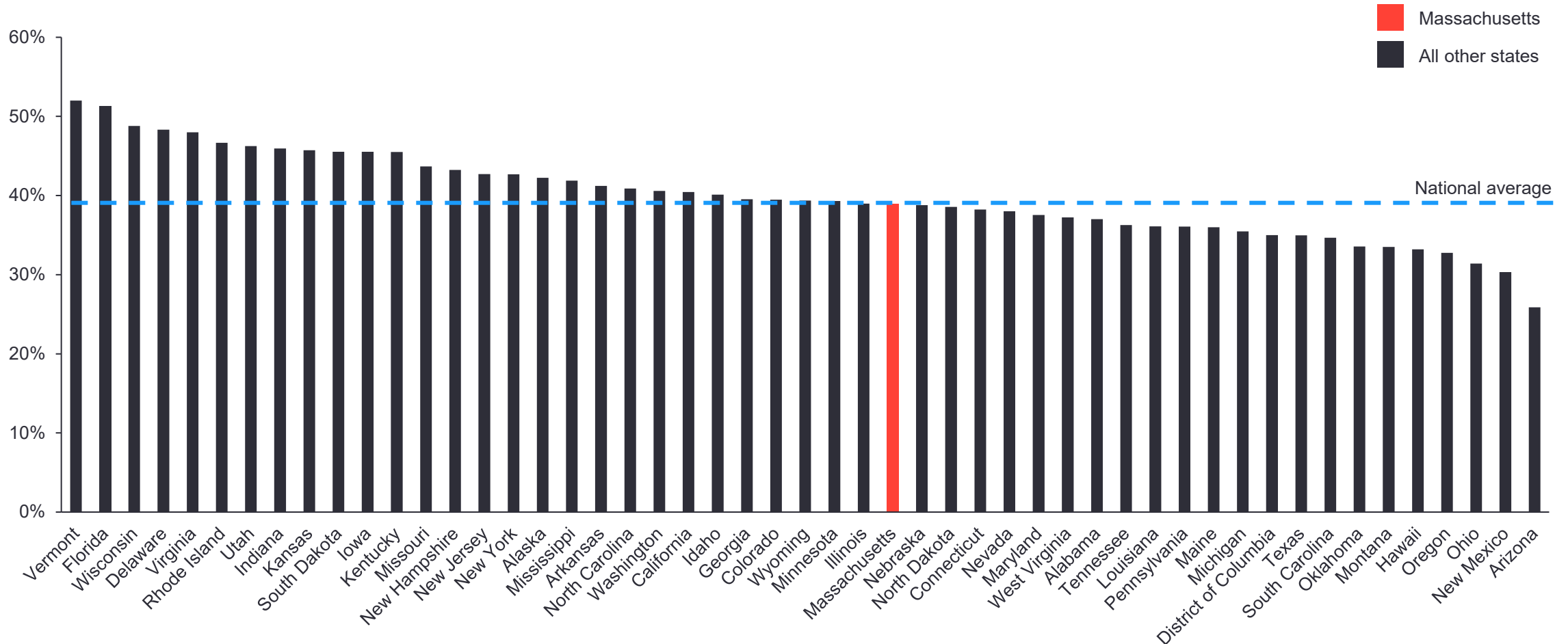
Average<sup>1</sup> percentage of students who graduate within 150% of expected time to credential (public and private 2-year and 4-year institutions)



1. Straight-line institutional average, not weighted by enrollment. Status for 2016 cohort (4-year institutions) and 2019 cohort (2-year institutions), as of 2022. Data includes Title IV participating, degree-granting institutions in the US. Source: IPEDS

# When considering only public IHEs, MA's average graduation rate drops to ~39%, on par with the national average

Average<sup>1</sup> percentage of students who graduate within 150% of expected time to credential (public 2-year and 4-year institutions only)



1. Straight-line institutional average, not weighted by enrollment. Status for 2016 cohort (4-year institutions) and 2019 cohort (2-year institutions), as of 2022. Data includes Title IV participating, degree-granting institutions in the US. Source: IPEDS

Enrollment snapshot<sup>1</sup>

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Student success

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**Access and affordability**

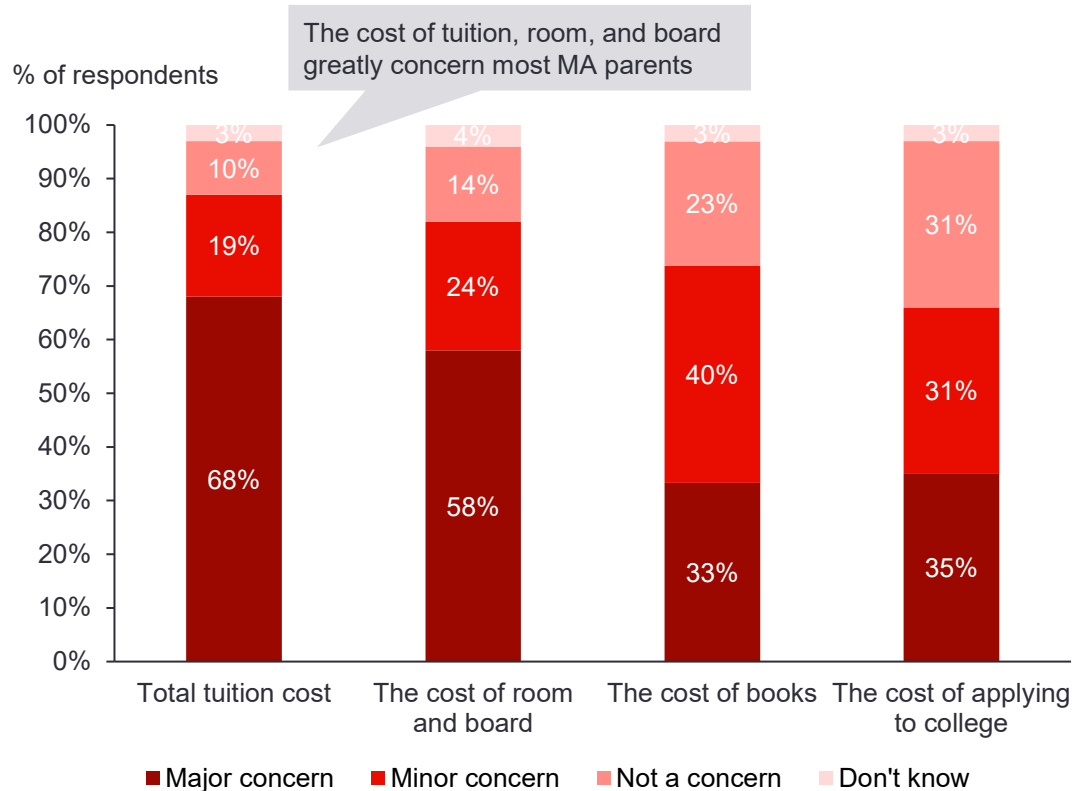
1. IPEDS released FY23 (2022-2023 academic year) data in Fall 2024; HEIRS will release Fall 2024 data after student enrollment data collection is completed (typically in early January)

# The cost of college is a major concern for the parents of school-aged children in Massachusetts

## Concerns about the cost of higher education, Fall 2023

The following was asked to ~1,000 parents of children enrolled in grades 6-12 in MA:

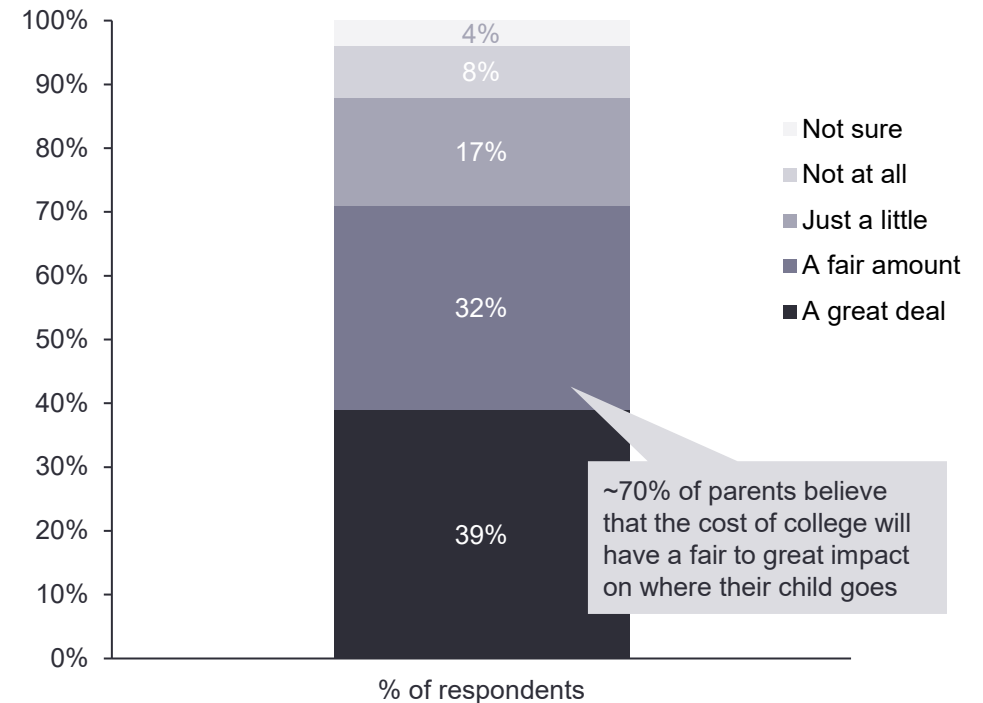
When thinking about the possibility of your child attending college, how much of a concern is each of the following?



## Impact of the cost of college on attendance, Fall 2023

The following was asked to ~1,000 parents of children enrolled in grades 6-12 in MA:

To what extent do you believe the cost of college might impact your child's choice of what college to attend?



# MA lags in four-year public IHE affordability; while two-year IHEs are positioned better nationally, more nuance is required to understand unmet need by income level

2024 Strada State Opportunity Index: Affordability of post-secondary education by state (drawn from 2022-2023 data)

**Affordability key**  
Students can afford school with:

**Leading**

<10 hours of work/week during school year<sup>1</sup>

**Advanced**

10-20 hours of work/week during school year<sup>1</sup>

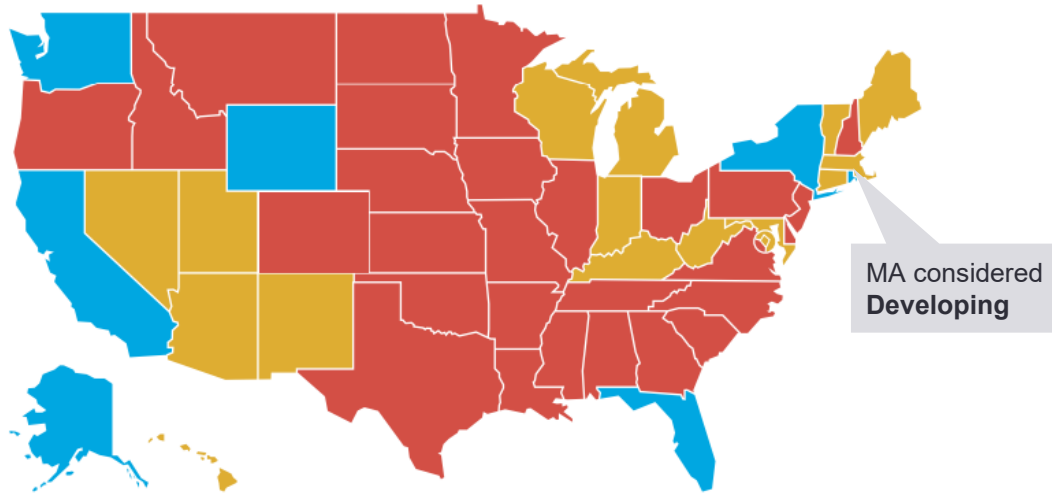
**Developing**

20-30 hours of work/week during school year<sup>1</sup>

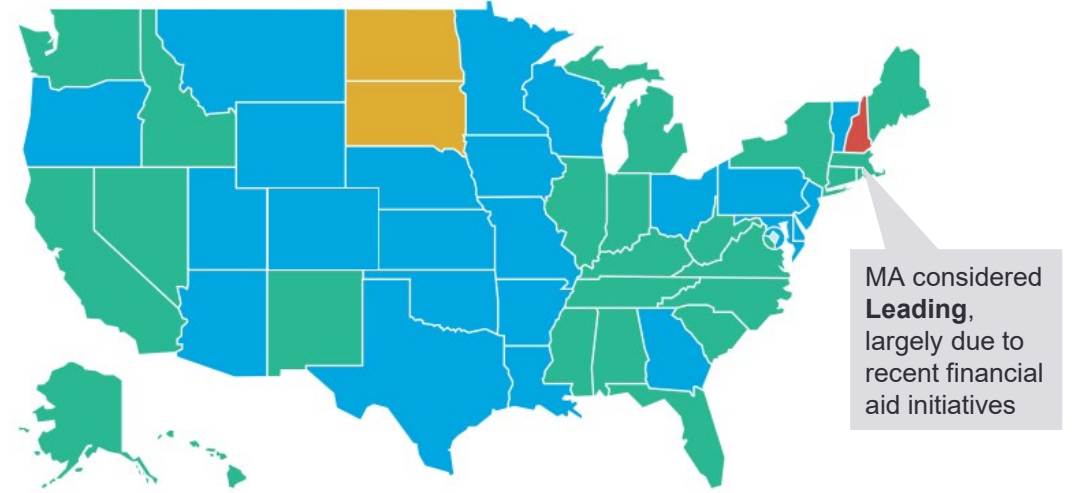
**Foundational**

>30 hours of work/week during school year<sup>1</sup>

Affordability of public four-year institutions by state:



Affordability of public two-year institutions by state:

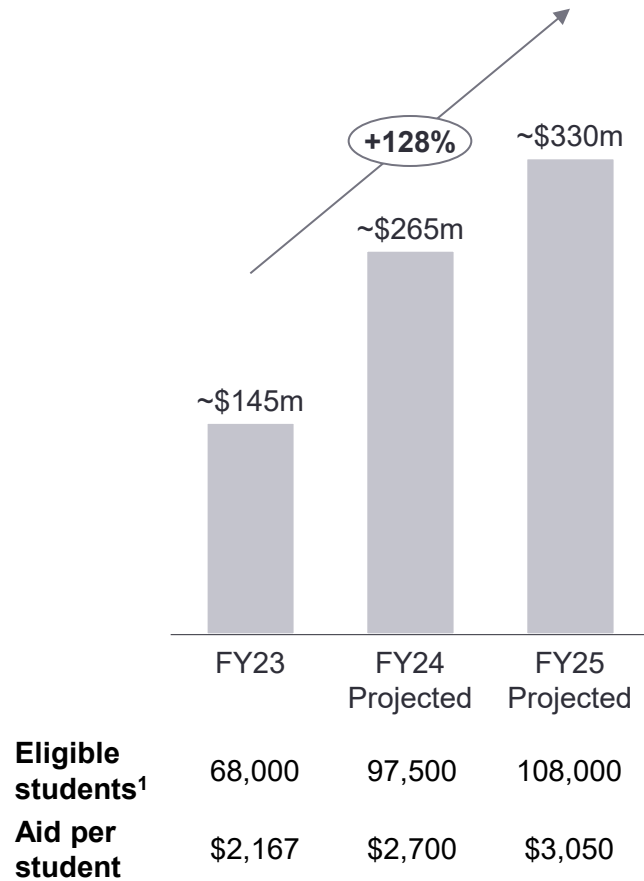


**More nuanced view of affordability and unmet need by income level to be explored in coming materials and discussions;** evidence suggests that unmet need for low-income (and to some extent, moderate-income) students still lags both leading states and overall MA public higher educational goals

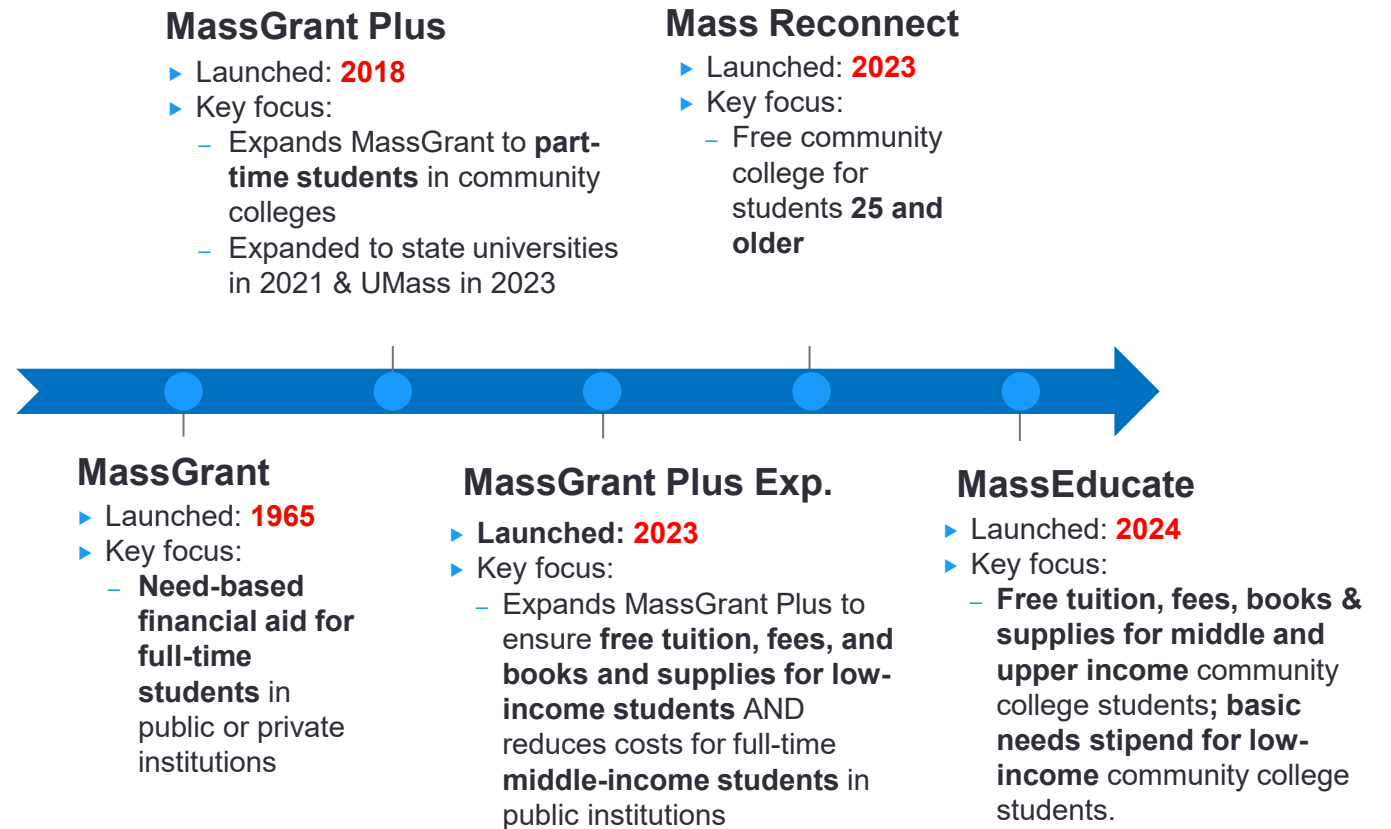
1. Hours of work per week during school year needed to pay net price of education (net price of education equates to the cost of attendance minus grants and scholarships), in addition to full-time summer work  
Source: Strada's *State Opportunity Index Report* (2024)

# Although there is room to grow, it is important to note that MA has made significant strides in state financial aid in recent years

## MA state financial aid, FY23-25



## Timeline and key focus area of major state financial aid programs



1. FY23 actual FAFSA filers and FY24-25 projected FAFSA filers  
 Source: FY23 student-level data; FY24 and FY25 simulated projections

Thank you!