

Differing definitions and their implications

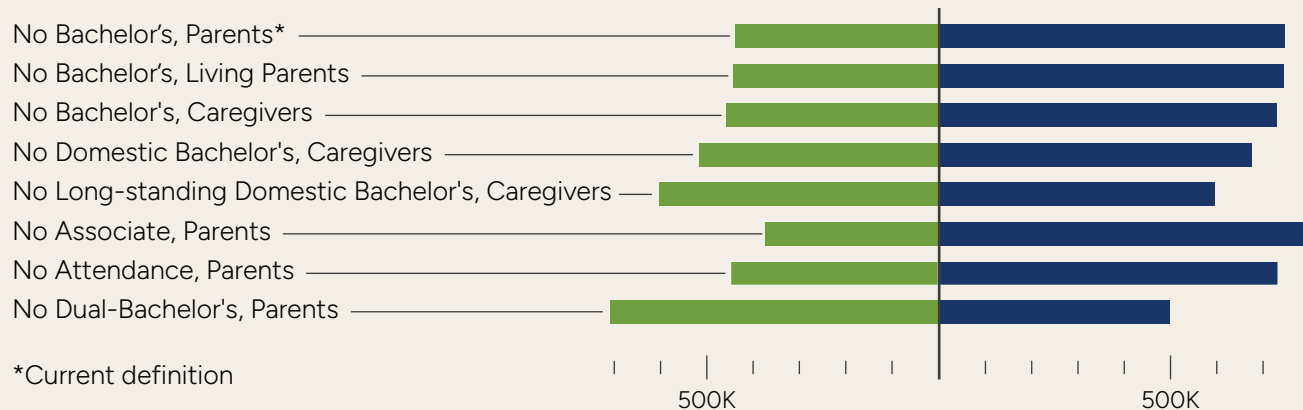
How do different definitions of first-generation change who is considered a part of this population?

There are over **100** distinct definitions of first-generation status that can be constructed based on different parental characteristics and details. Each definition creates a different number of first-generation students with different levels of college-readiness and application behaviors.

Depending on the exact definition for first-generation status used, the number of first-generation applicants on the Common App in 2022 can vary from 304,338 to 709,850.

How does the number of first-gen applicants change with the definition used?

● First-generation
● Continuing-generation



Student characteristics vary based on the chosen definition:

Living in a below-median income ZIP code: While 30% of all applicants are from below-median income ZIP codes, the percentage of continuing-gen students from those ZIP codes can range from 16% to 24%, and from 40% to 49% for first-gen students.

Fee-waiver eligibility: While 33% of all applicants are fee-waiver eligible, it can vary for continuing-gen students, ranging from 8% to 20% — more than doubling. For first-gen students, it swings between 48% and 66%.

Underrepresented Minority applicants (URM): While 29% of all applicants are URM, the percentage of continuing-gen students who are URM can range from 16% to 24%, and from 45% to 58% for first-gen students.