

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau



An official U.S. Government agency

# Student Loan Borrower Survey



**Questions?** If you have any technical difficulties, including problems with the website or any questions about the survey, please call 1-877-219-6416 M-F 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. CST. For TTY assistance, dial 711.

For more information about the CFPB, visit www.consumerfinance.gov.





# **Student Loan Borrower Survey**

cfpb	What is the CFPB?	The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is sponsoring this survey. The CFPB is a federal agency created in 2010 to make student loans, mortgages, credit cards, and other consumer loans work better and ensure that these markets are fair, transparent, and competitive.
alı	How will responses be used?	Your responses will be used by researchers at the CFPB and others to understand consumers' experiences with student loans. Your responses will be kept confidential. Participation in the survey will not affect your credit or credit score.
	Who should complete this?	It is important that this survey is only completed by the person named on the enclosed letter. The survey will take around 20 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. Please do not identify yourself in any way in your response.
	Why should I do this?	This survey will help us understand your experiences with student loans and paying for your or someone else's education. Because people's experiences can vary widely, please fill out the survey even if you do not have student loans. Learning about people's views and experiences is particularly important in developing policies to help consumers.

#### Privacy Act Statement: 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(3)

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Bureau) uses an outside firm to obtain the names and addresses of a national list of consumers to contact you for the purpose of participating in this survey. The information you provide through your responses will assist the Bureau in understanding people's experiences with student loans.

The Bureau will only receive de-identified information. Only your de-identified information will be combined with other data that the Bureau has collected in a way that you cannot be identified.

Information collected on behalf of the Bureau will be treated in accordance with the System of Records Notice ("SORN"), CFPB.022, Market and Consumer Research Records, https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/11/14/2012-27582/privacy-act-of-1974-as-amended. Although the Bureau does not anticipate further disclosing the information provided, it may be disclosed as indicated in the Routine Uses described in the SORN. Direct identifying information will be kept private except as required by law. The Bureau may make an anonymous version of the survey data publicly available.

This collection of information is authorized by Pub. L. No. 111-203, Title X, Sections 1013 and 1022, codified at 12 U.S.C. §§ 5493 and 5512.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw participation at any time.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3170-0078. It expires on 10/31/2026. Comments regarding this collection of information, including the estimated response time, suggestions for improving the usefulness of the information, or suggestions for reducing the burden to respond to this collection should be submitted to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Attention: PRA Office), 1700 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20552, or by email to PRA\_Comments@cfpb.gov.

#### **Borrowing for your and others'** education

- 1. Have you ever taken out a loan for your own education? Include loans which no longer have \$ a balance. Yes -No No Yes • 2. When you borrowed money for your education, did you expect to repay all your loans yourself, **No** some of the loans yourself, or that someone else would repay all your loans? I expected to fully repay all my loans myself I expected someone else would help repay some of my loans I expected someone else would fully repay all my loans Don't know 3. Have you ever taken out a loan or cosigned on a loan for someone else's education? Include loans which no longer have a balance. "Cosigning" is when you agree to be responsible for a loan jointly with the primary borrower, often a family member. Yes  $\square$  No  $\longrightarrow$  Skip to Question 7 in the next column education)? 4. Did you take out a loan or cosign a loan? Mark all that apply. Took out a loan Cosigned a loan 5. For whose education did you borrow? Mark all that apply. For my child For my grandchild For my spouse or partner For someone else not listed above No No 6. When you most recently borrowed for someone else's education (including as a cosigner), who did you expect would repay the loans? I expected to fully repay the loans myself I expected someone else would help repay some of the loans I expected someone else would fully repay the loans
- 7. In total, including loans for your own and others' education, about how much in student loans have you borrowed or cosigned for?

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- 8. Has someone else ever borrowed a student loan to help pay for your education? Do not include loans where someone cosigned on your loan.
  - 9. Considering all the times someone borrowed for your education, did you expect you would help to repay some or all the money?
    - I did not expect to help repay any of the money
    - I expected to help repay some of the money
    - I expected to repay all the money

#### **Repaying student loans**

- 10. Has anyone else ever made payments on the student loans you took out (for your own or someone else's
  - No, I have made all the payments
  - Yes, but I've made more than half of the payments
  - Yes, but I've made about half of the payments
  - Yes, but I've made less than half of the payments
  - Yes, and I have not made any payments
  - Not applicable, I have never had a student loan
- 11. Have you ever helped repay a student loan someone else took out for their education? Mark all that apply.
  - Yes, for a spouse or partner
  - Yes, for a child or grandchild
  - Yes, for someone else not listed above

If you have not borrowed or cosigned a loan for your education or someone else's education (that is, you answered "no" to both Questions 1 and 3), skip to Question 41 on page 6. Otherwise, continue to Question 12.

12.	What types of student loans have you taken out (as the only borrower or as a cosigner on the loan)? <i>Mark all that apply.</i>
	Stafford federal student loan (subsidized or unsubsidized)
	PLUS federal student loan for graduate students
	PLUS federal student loan for parents
	Perkins federal loan
	Federal consolidation loan
	Loan from my school
	Loan from a friend or family member
	Private student loan from a bank or other
	finance company
	Other
	Don't know

13. Thinking of all the student loans you've taken out, about what share of the total dollar amount were private loans?

100%
67-99%
34-66%
1-33%
0%

The next questions ask about your experience making payments on **student loans you took out or cosigned for**. Your student loan "servicer" is the company assigned by the Department of Education or your private lender to handle the billing and other details of your student loans.

- 14. Have you <u>ever</u> had difficulty making payments on your student loans, that is, loans you took out for your own or someone else's education?
  - → Yes → Skip to **Question 19** on page 3
- 15. Did you miss any required payments?



16.	Which of the following reasons best describes why
	you most recently had difficulty making payments?
	Mark all that apply.

I had unexpected expenses

- My income was less than my expenses
- I had an unexpected drop in income
- I didn't know how to make payments
- I didn't know I needed to make payments
- I didn't want to make payments
- None of the above
- 17. When you <u>most recently</u> had difficulty making student loan payments, did you do any of the following to get help?

	165	110
I contacted or talked to my servicer or lender		
I contacted the U.S. Department of Education		
I asked friends or family for financial assistance		
I paid a company to help (for example, with consolidating loans or lowering my student loan payments)		
I contacted some other company or organization		
I researched options online		

18. Did you <u>ever</u> experience any of the following to collect money owed on your student loans?

	Yes	No
My student loans were assigned to a debt collector or collection agency		
My federal income tax refund was withheld by the IRS		
My Social Security retirement or disability benefits were withheld		
My wages were garnished		



Voc No

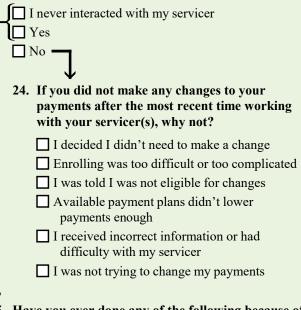
19. Have any of your federal student loans gone into default?	
Yes No	
20. Thinking of the <u>most recent</u> time you had a student loan in default, how did you get your loan out of default?	
☐ I haven't, my loan is still in default	
I voluntarily paid off my loan in full	
Rehabilitation or consolidation	
Through the Fresh Start program	
My loan was forgiven, cancelled, or discharged	
My loan was paid off through involuntary collections or garnishment	
I don't know	
$\downarrow$	
21. In the past year, have you done any of the following regarding your student loans?	

	Yes	No
Contacted my loan servicer		
Logged into my loan servicer's website		
Logged into Federal Student Aid's website		
Submitted a complaint about my servicer		
Made a student loan payment		

# 22. Have you <u>ever</u> contacted or talked to your student loan servicer(s) for any of the following reasons regarding your student loans?

	Yes	No
I was not able to make my monthly payment on time		
I wanted to lower my monthly payments or enroll in a different repayment plan		
I wanted to temporarily pause my payments (usually referred to as a forbearance or deferment)		
I wanted to dispute my debt		
I wanted information about my account, repayment options, or loan forgiveness		
I wanted to make some other change		

23. Thinking of the <u>most recent</u> time you interacted with your servicer(s), did you enroll in a new repayment plan, forbearance, or deferment to reduce your payments?



25. Have you <u>ever</u> done any of the following because of your or your household's student loan payments?

	Yes	No
Carried a balance on a credit card I otherwise would not have		
Went without food, medicine, or other necessities		
Borrowed from family or friends		
Deferred payments on bills, loans, or other financial obligations		
Delayed starting a family		
Delayed buying a home		



#### Your federal student loans

The next set of questions are about your federal student loans, including loans you borrowed for someone else and loans that no longer have a balance. If you have never had a federal student loan, skip to **Question 41** on page 6.

- 26. Were any of your student loan payments paused because of the federal student loan payment pause?
  - ☐ Yes
    ☐ No → Skip to Question 30 in the next column
- 27. Did the payment pause allow or cause you to do any of the following?

	Yes	No
Pay down other debt (credit cards, other loans, collections)		
Make a major purchase		
Save or invest money		
Delay consolidating or refinancing my student loans		
Start or expand my family		
Relocate to a new city		
Attend more school		
Change jobs or careers		

28. Over the next few months, will you have to do any of the following so that you can make your student loan payment(s)?

	Yes	No
Cut back on large purchases		
Cut back on food, medicine, or other necessities		
Save less		
Earn more income		

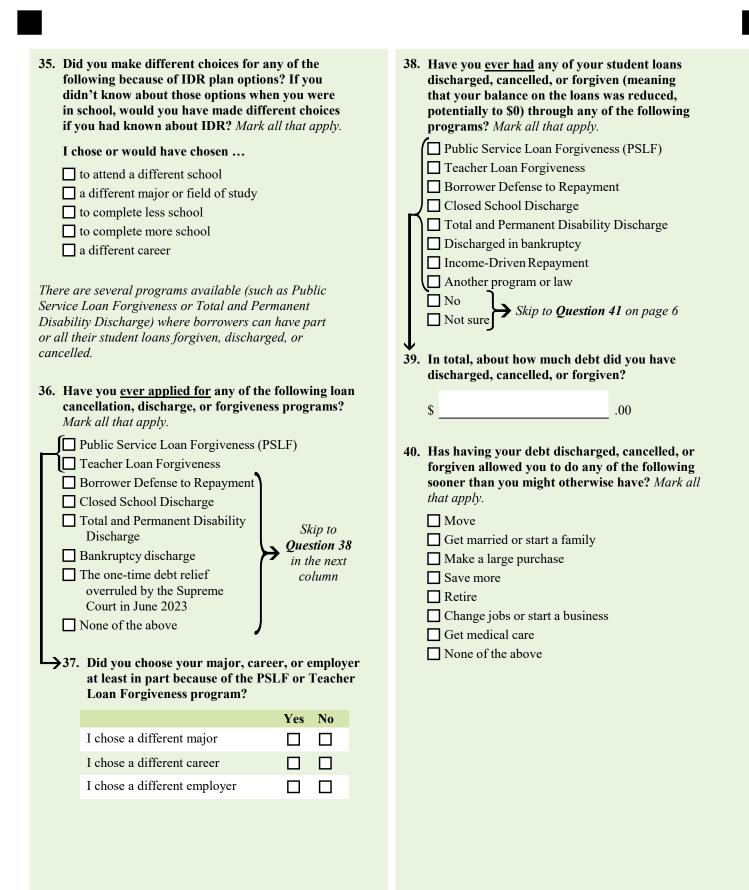
- 29. How confident are you that you can afford your student loan payments now that the payment pause has ended?
  - Very confident
  - Fairly confident
  - Somewhat confident
  - Slightly confident
  - Not confident at all

For federal student loans, borrowers can pick a repayment plan like extended repayment or a repayment plan (sometimes called income-based or income-driven repayment (IDR) plans) for which their monthly payment amount depends on their income and family size.

**30.** Have you <u>ever</u> chosen a repayment plan for your federal student loans, or have you only been on the standard repayment plan?

	Yes No, I've only been on the standard plan No, I've never been in repayment I don't know Why haven't you chosen a different repayment plan?
	<ul> <li>I prefer the standard repayment plan</li> <li>I didn't know I could choose my repayment plan</li> <li>I need help or more information to choose my plan</li> <li>I haven't given it serious thought</li> </ul>
rep	ve you <u>ever</u> enrolled in an income-driven payment (IDR) plan? Yes No → Skip to Question 35 on page 5 How long ago did you most recently choose an
	IDR plan?         Within the last year         1-2 years ago         3-5 years ago         More than 5 years ago
34.	<ul> <li>Have you ever had difficulty with any of the following when trying to enroll in or use IDR? <i>Mark all that apply.</i></li> <li>Difficulty certifying my income</li> <li>Difficulty completing my enrollment application</li> <li>Difficulty getting information from my servicer</li> </ul>
33.	How long ago did you most recently choose an IDR plan?         Within the last year         1-2 years ago         3-5 years ago         More than 5 years ago         Have you ever had difficulty with any of the following when trying to enroll in or use IDR?         Mark all that apply.         Difficulty certifying my income         Difficulty completing my enrollment application         Difficulty getting information from







#### Your household and its finances

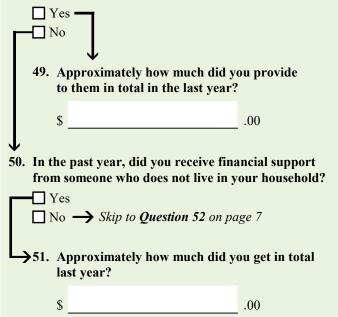
**41. What is your current work status?** *Mark all that apply including for your spouse or partner if you have one.* 

	You	Spouse/ Partner
Self-employed		
Work full time		
Work part time		
Retired		
Temporarily laid off or on leave		
Unemployed		
Not working for pay (homemaker, student, disabled, etc.)		

If you are not self-employed, working full time, or working part time, skip to **Question 45**.

- 42. Do you currently work mostly in-person, remotely, or about equally in-person and remotely?
  - Mostly in-person
  - Mostly remotely (such as from home)
  - About equally in-person and remotely
- 43. How much does your current work relate to your education?
  - ☐ It relates closely to my education
  - ☐ It relates somewhat to my education
  - ☐ It is unrelated to my education
- 44. How satisfied are you with your job or career path?
  - Very satisfied
  - Somewhat satisfied
  - Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
  - Somewhat unsatisfied
  - Very unsatisfied
- 45. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? My student loans were a good investment.
  - Strongly agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- 46. What was your household's annual income in 2022 from all sources (wages, tips, interest, child support, alimony, investment or rental income, retirement, Social Security, and government benefits such as food stamps)?
  - \$20,000 or less
    \$20,001 to \$35,000
    \$35,001 to \$50,000
    \$50,001 to \$65,000
    \$65,001 to \$80,000
    \$80,001 to \$100,000
    \$100,001 to \$125,000
    \$125,001 to \$175,000
    \$175,001 to \$250,000
    More than \$250,000
- 47. As best as you can remember, when you first started working after leaving school, what was your annual income from all sources?
  - **\$20,000** or less
  - \$20,001 to \$35,000
  - \$35,001 to \$50,000
  - \$50,001 to \$65,000
  - \$65,001 to \$80,000
  - \$80,001 to \$100,000
  - More than \$100,000
  - I don't know
  - I haven't worked after leaving school
- **48.** In the past year, did you provide financial support to family members who do not live in your household?





	52. About how much money does your household	You and your house
	currently have in IRA, 401(k), pension plans, or	
	other retirement savings accounts?	56. What sex were you assig
	Don't have a retirement savings account	☐ Male
	Less than \$10,000	Female
	□ \$10,000 to \$29,999	Don't know or prefer n
	□ \$30,000 to \$59,999	
	□ \$60,000 to \$99,999	57. What is your current gen
	\$100,000 to \$149,999	Mark all that apply.
	\$150,000 or more	☐ Male
		Female
4	53. About how much total money does your household	Transgender
	have in non-retirement savings and investment	I use a different term
	accounts?	Don't know or prefer n
	Don't have a non-retirement savings	
	or investment account	58. Are you of Hispanic, Lat
	Less than \$500	Tes Yes
	□ \$500 to \$999	🗖 No
	\$1,000 to \$2,999	
	\$3,000 to \$4,999	59. What is your race? Mark
	\$5,000 to \$9,999	☐ White
	□ \$10,000 to \$19,999	Black or African Amer
	□ \$20,000 or more	American Indian or Ala
		Asian
1	54. How much are your household's total expenses in a	Native Hawaiian or oth
	typical month, including all debt payments, housing payments, utilities, and daily living expenses?	_
	Less than \$250	60. How old are you?
	$\square$ Less than \$250 $\square$ \$250 to \$499	Less than 30 years
		$\square$ 30 to 49 years
	5500 to \$749	$\Box$ 50 to 61 years
	□ \$750 to \$999	$\Box$ 62 years or older
	□ \$1,000 to \$1,999	
	\$2,000 to \$4,999	61. Do you have any long-te
	□ \$5,000 or more	emotional conditions tha
	55 D'I	out your day-to-day acti
	55. Did you receive flexibility or assistance from any of the following coronavirus-specific programs?	Tes Yes
	Mark all that apply.	□ No
	Private student loan forbearance	
	Federal student loan forbearance	62. What is your current ma
	Other loan forbearance (such as mortgage,	Married
	auto, or credit card)	Living with a partner
	Rent payment deferment or flexibility	Never married
	Eviction protection	Previously married (for
	Additional child tax credit	or widowed)
	Additional clinic tax credit     Paycheck protection loan	
	Unemployment insurance payments	63. How many children und
	Stimulus or Economic Impact Payment	

#### hold

#### ned at birth?

not to answer

### nder identity?

not to answer

#### tino, or Spanish origin?

#### k all that apply.

- rican
- aska Native
- her Pacific Islander

rm physical, mental, or at make it difficult to carry ivities?

#### arital status?

- r example: divorced
- er 18 live in your household?

40967



<b>64. If you helped any of your children or younger relatives pay for college, how did you do so?</b> <i>Mark all that apply.</i>	69. For your highest level of education, which of the following <u>best</u> describes your major or field of study?
Paid money out of savings (including a	Liberal arts, humanities, law, social sciences
retirement account)	Biological sciences and health related programs
Took out or cosigned a student loan	Technical, vocational, or trade program
Used a home equity loan or refinanced	Business
a mortgage	Engineering, physical sciences, and mathematics
<ul> <li>Took out another loan</li> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>	General studies and multi/interdisciplinary studies
65. Did any of your parents attend college?	70. Have you <u>ever</u> received a Pell Grant for your education?
Yes	Yes
□ No	No No
	Not sure
66. Are you currently attending school?	
Yes No	71. Thinking of all the costs of your education after high school, have your parents or other family members paid for:
67. What year did you last attend school?	They paid most or all of the costs
or. What you and you have attend school.	They paid some of the costs
	They paid little or none of the costs
<ul> <li>What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?</li> </ul>	72. What is the name of the college or technical school you attended for the longest amount of time?
$\Box$ Less than a high school degree	
High school degree or GED Skip to Question 74	
<ul> <li>□ Less than a high school degree</li> <li>→ Skip to Question 74 on page 9</li> <li>□ Some college, but no degree or certificate</li> </ul>	
Some college, but no degree or certificate	
<ul> <li>Some college, but no degree or certificate</li> <li>Certificate program or vocational certificate</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Some college, but no degree or certificate</li> <li>Certificate program or vocational certificate</li> <li>Associate's degree (such as AA, AS)</li> </ul>	73 Overall how satisfied are you with the school(s)
<ul> <li>Some college, but no degree or certificate</li> <li>Certificate program or vocational certificate</li> </ul>	<ul><li>73. Overall, how satisfied are you with the school(s) and program(s) you attended for your college or other post-high school education?</li></ul>
<ul> <li>Some college, but no degree or certificate</li> <li>Certificate program or vocational certificate</li> <li>Associate's degree (such as AA, AS)</li> <li>Bachelor's degree (such as BA, BS)</li> <li>Postgraduate degree (such as Master's,</li> </ul>	and program(s) you attended for your college
<ul> <li>Some college, but no degree or certificate</li> <li>Certificate program or vocational certificate</li> <li>Associate's degree (such as AA, AS)</li> <li>Bachelor's degree (such as BA, BS)</li> <li>Postgraduate degree (such as Master's,</li> </ul>	and program(s) you attended for your college or other post-high school education?
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#### **Expectations for the future**

74. Over the next 12 months, do you expect your total household income to increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

	Increase
_	

- Decrease
- Stay about the same

#### 75. Over the next two years, how likely do you think it is that you will...?

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Equally likely as unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Return to school					
Move					
Buy a home					
Buy a car					
Have your student loans cancelled, discharged, or forgiven					
Pay off your student loans					

#### Your general financial situation

#### 76. How well do these statements describe you or your situation?

	Completely	Very well	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	
Because of my money situation, I feel like I will never have the things I want in life						
I am just getting by financially						
I am concerned that the money I have or will save won't last						
7. How often do these statements apply to you?						
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
I have money left over at the end of the month						

My finances control my life

7

# 78. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing how much you are willing to give up something today to get a bigger benefit in the future?

☐ Willing to give up a lot today to get more later

- ☐ Willing to give up some today to get more later
- Willing to give up a little today to get more later

Not willing to give up anything today to get more later



We have provided the space below if you wish to share additional comments or further explain any of your responses. *Please do not share any Personally Identifiable Information (PII), including, but not limited to, your name, address, phone number, email address, Social Security number, etc.* 

## Thank you for completing our survey!

Please use the enclosed business reply envelope to return your completed questionnaire to:

#### Consumer Financial Protection Bureau 1600 Research Blvd., RC B16

Rockville, MD 20850

## To take the survey online



Text your unique survey PIN number to 855-651-3643 to receive a link to directly connect to your survey.



Go to **www.CFPBStudentLoanBorrowerSurvey.com** and enter your unique survey PIN number and 5-digit zip code.

Español

Vaya a **www.CFPBStudentLoanBorrowerSurvey.com** e ingrese su número PIN único y su código postal de 5 dígitos.

**Questions?** If you have any technical difficulties, including problems with the website or any questions about the survey, please call 1-877-219-6416 M-F 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. CST. For TTY assistance, dial 711.

For more information about the CFPB, visit www.consumerfinance.gov.

