

Postsecondary Institution Revenues

In the first full year of the coronavirus pandemic, increases in revenues from federal government sources at degree-granting postsecondary institutions were larger at public and private nonprofit institutions than at private for-profit institutions. Compared with 2019–20, revenues from federal government sources per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student in 2020–21 were 24 percent higher at public institutions, 15 percent higher at private nonprofit institutions, and 2 percent higher at private for-profit institutions.

In 2020–21, total revenues at degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States¹ were \$993 billion (in constant 2021–22 dollars).² Overall, total revenues for postsecondary institutions were 33 percent higher in 2020–21 than in 2019–20 (\$993 billion vs. \$745 billion). These data reflect any changes in revenues due to continuing responses to the coronavirus pandemic. In contrast, total revenues for postsecondary institutions in 2019–20 were relatively unchanged compared with those in 2018–19 (one-half of 1 percent lower in 2019–20).

In 2020–21, total revenues at degree-granting institutions were

- \$926 billion at 4-year institutions; and
- \$67 billion at 2-year institutions.

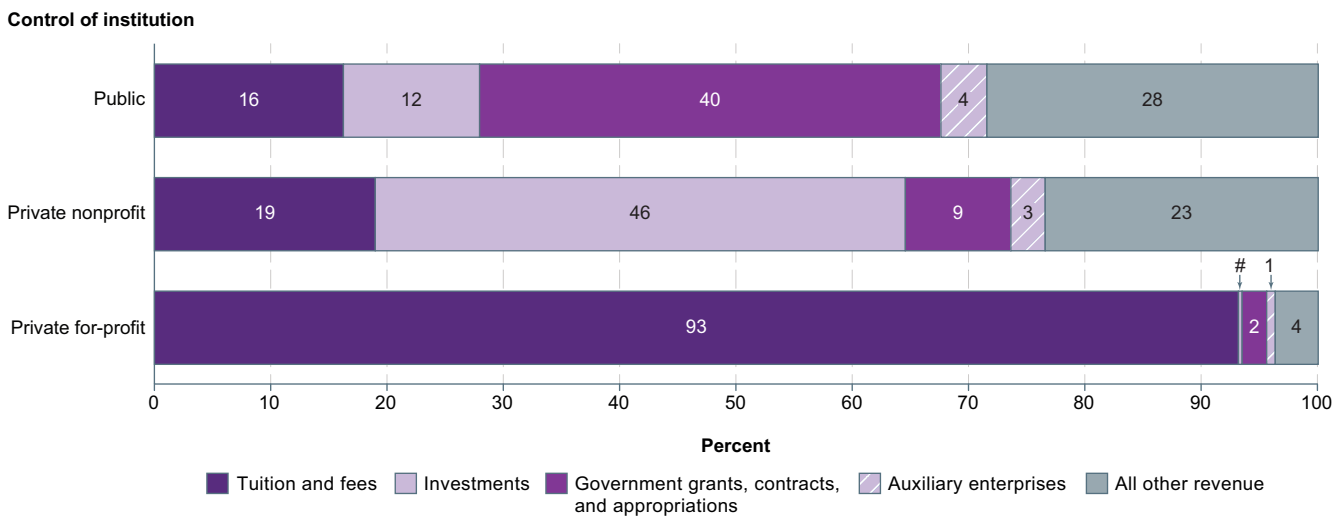
Total revenues were 36 percent higher at 4-year postsecondary institutions in 2020–21 than in 2019–20 (\$926 billion vs. \$680 billion) and 2 percent higher at 2-year postsecondary institutions (\$67 billion vs. \$65 billion).

This indicator focuses on differences in revenues by control of institution (i.e., public, private nonprofit, or private for-profit). In 2020–21, total revenues were

- \$539 billion at public institutions;
- \$438 billion at private nonprofit institutions; and
- \$16 billion at private for-profit institutions.

Revenue Sources

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of total revenues for degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution and source of funds: Fiscal year 2020–21



Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Revenues from tuition and fees are net of discounts and allowances. Government grants, contracts, and appropriations include revenues from federal, state, and local governments. Private grants and contracts are included in the local government revenue category at public institutions. Auxiliary enterprises, such as residence halls and food services, are essentially self-supporting operations of institutions that furnish a service to students, faculty, or staff. All other revenue and appropriations includes gifts, capital or private grants and contracts, hospital revenue, sales and services of educational activities, and other revenue. Revenue data are not directly comparable across institutions by control categories. For example, Pell Grants are included in the federal grant revenues at public institutions but tend to be included in revenues from tuition and fees and auxiliary enterprises at private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2022, Finance component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 333.10, 333.40, and 333.55.

The primary³ sources of revenue for degree-granting postsecondary institutions in 2020-21 were tuition and fees;⁴ investments;⁵ government grants, contracts, and appropriations, including the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) grants;⁶ and auxiliary enterprises.⁷ Despite the federal recovery spending from HEERF I and HEERF II, the largest increase in revenues from 2019-20 to 2020-21 was in investments, which were more than six times higher in 2020-21 (\$263 billion) than in 2019-20 (\$39 billion). This overall increase was driven by increases at private nonprofit (from \$26 to \$200 billion) and public (from \$13 to \$63 billion) institutions.

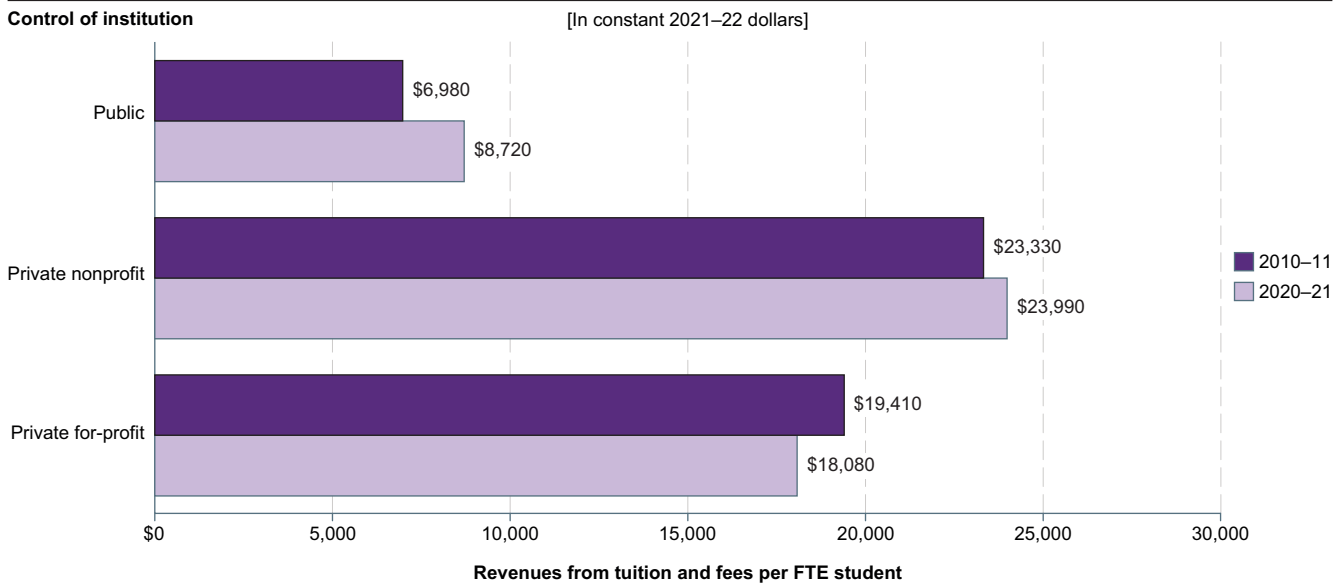
Data may not be comparable across institutions by control categories because of differences in accounting standards that pertain to the type of institution. For example, Pell Grants are included in revenues from federal grants at public institutions but tend to be included in revenues from tuition and fees and auxiliary enterprises at private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions. Thus, caution should be used when comparing revenues across public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit institutions.

The largest revenue sources varied by control of institution:

- At public institutions, 40 percent of revenues came from government sources (including federal, state, and local government⁸ grants, contracts, and appropriations).
- At private nonprofit institutions, 46 percent of revenues came from investments (reflecting an increase of 36 percentage points compared with 2019-20).
- At private for-profit institutions, 93 percent of revenues came from student tuition and fees.

Revenues From Tuition and Fees

Figure 2. Revenues from tuition and fees per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student for degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Fiscal years 2010–11 and 2020–21



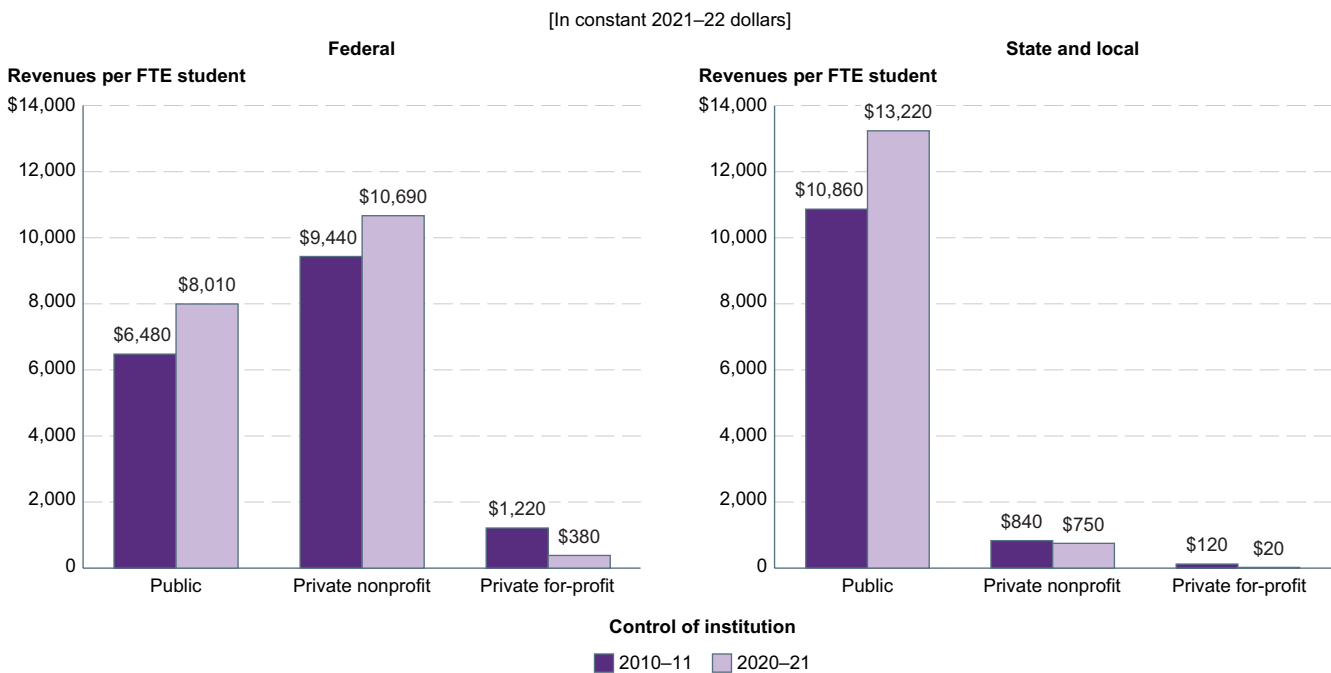
NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Full-time-equivalent (FTE) student enrollment includes full-time students plus the full-time equivalent of part-time students. Revenues per FTE student in this indicator are adjusted for inflation using constant 2021–22 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, adjusted to a school-year basis. Revenue data are not directly comparable across institutions by control categories. For example, Pell Grants are included in the federal grant revenues at public institutions but tend to be included in revenues from tuition and fees and auxiliary enterprises at private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions. Revenues from tuition and fees are net of discounts and allowances. Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2012 and Spring 2022, Finance component; and Spring 2011 and 2021, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 333.10, 333.40, and 333.55.

At degree-granting postsecondary institutions, the percentage change between 2010-11 and 2020-21 in revenues from tuition and fees per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student varied by control of institution. Revenues from tuition and fees per FTE student increased by 25 percent at public institutions (from \$6,980 to \$8,720) and by 3 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from \$23,330 to \$23,990). However, despite the general

increase over the period, revenues from tuition and fees per FTE student were 4 percent lower at private nonprofit institutions in 2020-21 than in 2019-20 (\$23,990 vs. \$24,870). At private for-profit institutions, revenues from tuition and fees per FTE student were 7 percent lower in 2020-21 than in 2010-11 (\$18,080 vs. \$19,410) but showed no consistent trend during this period.

Revenues From Government Sources

Figure 3. Revenues from government grants, contracts, and appropriations per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student for degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by source of funds and control of institution: Fiscal years 2010–11 and 2020–21



NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Full-time-equivalent (FTE) student enrollment includes full-time students plus the full-time equivalent of part-time students. Revenues per FTE student in this indicator are adjusted for inflation using constant 2021–22 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, adjusted to a school-year basis. Private grants and contracts are included in the local government revenue category at public institutions. Revenue data are not directly comparable across institutions by control categories. For example, Pell Grants are included in the federal grant revenues at public institutions but tend to be included in revenues from tuition and fees and auxiliary enterprises at private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions. Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2012 and Spring 2022, Finance component; and Spring 2011 and 2021, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 333.10, 333.40, and 333.55.

Between 2010-11 and 2020-21, total revenues from government sources per FTE student

- increased at public institutions (by 22 percent, from \$17,350 to \$21,230);
- decreased at private nonprofit institutions from 2010-11 to 2015-16 (by 14 percent, from \$10,290 to \$8,840) and then increased from 2015-16 to 2020-21 (by 29 percent, from \$8,840 to \$11,440); and
- decreased at private for-profit institutions (by 70 percent, from \$1,340 to \$410).

Between 2010-11 and 2020-21, the largest percentage change in revenues from federal government sources per FTE student was at private for-profit institutions, where revenues decreased by 69 percent (from \$1,220

to \$380). In contrast, revenues from federal government sources per FTE student at public institutions and private nonprofit institutions were higher in 2020-21 than in 2010-11 but showed no consistent trend during this period. In the first full year of the coronavirus pandemic (between 2019-20 and 2020-21), increases in revenues from federal government sources were larger at public and private nonprofit institutions than at private for-profit institutions. Compared with 2019-20, revenues from federal government sources per FTE student in 2020-21 were

- 24 percent higher at public institutions;
- 15 percent higher at private nonprofit institutions; and
- 2 percent higher at private for-profit institutions.

The percentage change in revenues from state and local government sources per FTE student between 2010-11 and 2020-21 also varied by control of institution. During this period, revenues from state and local government sources

- increased at public institutions (by 22 percent, from \$10,860 to \$13,220);
- decreased at private for-profit institutions (by 83 percent, from \$120 to \$20); and
- were lower at private nonprofit institutions in 2020-21 (\$750) than in 2010-11 (\$840), but showed no consistent trend throughout the period.

Endnotes:

¹ Data in this indicator represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

² Revenues in this indicator are adjusted for inflation using constant 2021-22 dollars, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, adjusted to a school-year basis.

³ For this indicator, revenues from all other sources are grouped into a broad “other” category.

⁴ Revenues from tuition and fees are net of discounts and allowances.

⁵ Investments/investment returns are aggregate amounts of dividends, interest, royalties, rent, and gains or losses from both fair-value adjustments and trades of institutions’ investments and/or endowments.

⁶ Under the iterations of the HEERF grant program that was initially established in March 2020 under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal student aid programs were eligible to receive funds to be allocated to students (student portion) and to be used for institutional efforts “to prepare, prevent, and respond” to the coronavirus pandemic (institutional portion). Institutional portions are reflected in revenues from federal government grants, contracts, and appropriations.

⁷ Auxiliary enterprises, such as residence halls and food services, are essentially self-supporting operations of institutions that furnish a service to students, faculty, or staff.

⁸ Private grants and contracts are included in local government revenues at public institutions.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 333.10, 333.40, and 333.55; *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, tables 333.10 and 333.55; *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 333.10 and 333.55; *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, tables 333.10 and 333.55; *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, tables 333.10 and 333.55; *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, tables 333.10 and 333.55

Related indicators and resources: [Postsecondary Institution Expenses](#)

Glossary: Constant dollars; Consumer Price Index (CPI); Control of institutions; Degree-granting institutions; Full-time-equivalent (FTE) enrollment; Private institution; Public school or institution; Revenue; Tuition and fees