



Building Pathways in Pennsylvania: Higher Ed Partnerships for Access, Childcare, and Workforce
Supporting Student Parents Benefits Pennsylvania

April 28, 2026



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www.urban.org

Show of hands

Who has been in school while parenting?

Who has known someone in school while parenting?

Supporting student parents can be a win all around

Good for students

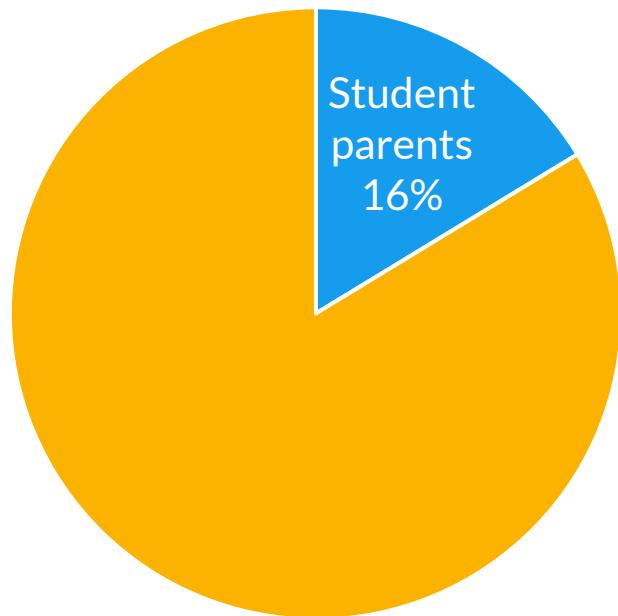
Good for children and families

Good for colleges

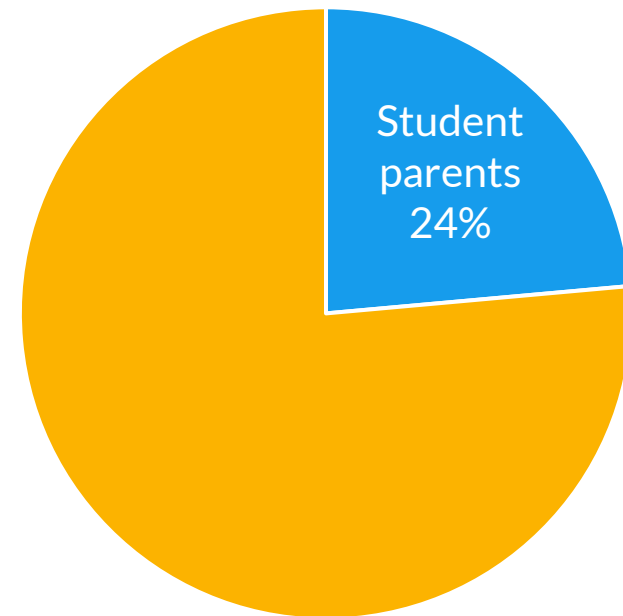
Good for Pennsylvania!

Who are student parents?

Undergrads at all public Pennsylvania colleges, 2020



Undergrads at Pennsylvania community colleges, 2020



53,000 public undergrads
+34,000 private undergrads
+41,000 graduate students

Pennsylvania's parenting students are diligent – and busy

- Have 2 children on average, and 44% have a child under age 6
- 79% have a job, working an average of 35 hours per week
- Often enrolled part-time, more often online
- Have the same GPAs as nonparenting students

Juggling three heavy balls!

There is a large overlap with other priority groups



18%
of undergraduate
students are
parents
3.14 million



22%
of undergraduates
at community and
technical colleges
are parents
1.57 million



28%
of first-gen
undergraduates
are parents
1.51 million



45%
of veteran
undergraduates
are parents
286,000

Also more likely to be adult learners

Basic needs barriers are acute

Recent surveys from Trellis Strategies and The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs show:

- **Over half** of student parents were food insecure
- **Nearly two thirds** were housing insecure
- **Over 10 percent** were homeless
- **1 in 5** missed three or more days of class due to child care gaps

Student parents are 55% less likely to complete a degree or credential in 6 years, even after controlling for demographics

17% complete a degree in 6 years, compared with 50% of nonparenting students

Supporting Student Parents Pays off

Payoffs for mothers



*Mothers
who
reenroll
in school*

+ \$2,900/year earnings gain



*Mothers
who
reenroll
and complete
a degree*

+ \$9,500/year earnings gain

Payoffs for children



*Children of
mothers
who
reenroll
and complete
a degree*

- +** Gains in reading and verbal scores
- +** 9% more likely to complete high school
- +** 21% more likely to enroll in college
- +** 38% more likely to get a college degree
- +** \$5,700 average earnings gain per year in early adulthood

Payoffs for colleges

In Pennsylvania, there are over **1 million** parents of minor children without a college degree who are not currently enrolled in school

- More than **1 in 3** have some college experience

This is an important recruitment population!

Payoffs for Pennsylvania



Investing in student parents pays off for taxpayers through higher taxes and lower benefit receipt

Specifically:

- **targeted supportive programming at public colleges** pays for itself **\$5.36 per \$1.00 spent**
- **a \$3000 annual scholarship for low-income parents** pays for itself **\$1.73 per \$1.00 spent**
- **affordable on-campus child care** pays for itself **\$1.24 per \$1.00 spent** (and yields the largest increase in graduates)

That doesn't even count all the personal benefits to students and families – or broader benefits to communities!

What else can we do?

Collect data!

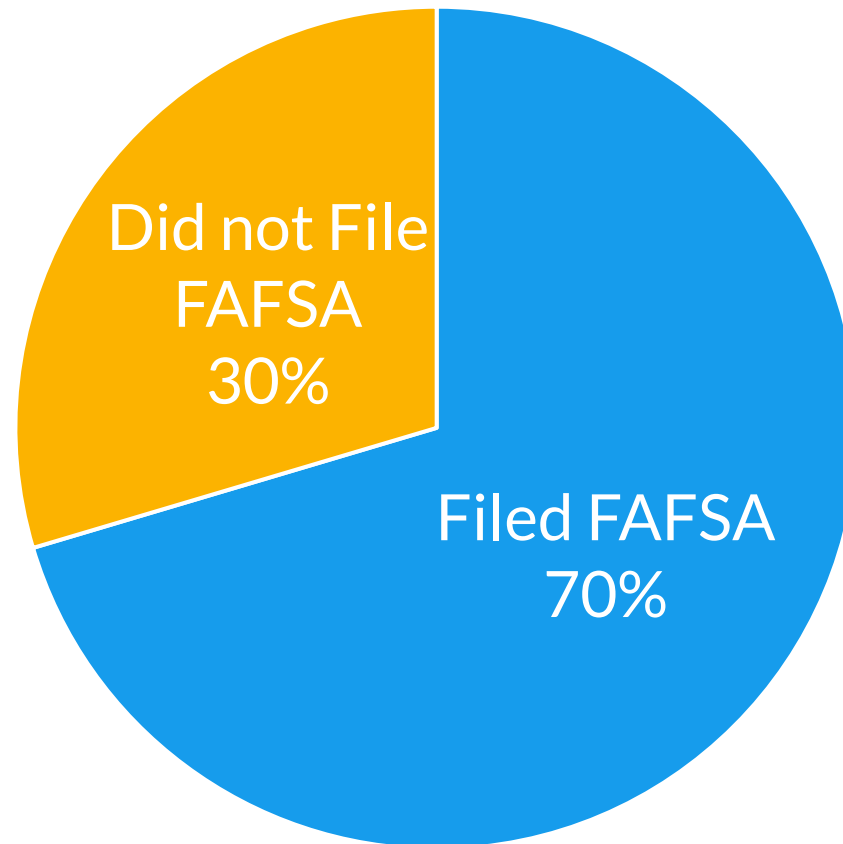
“When you are invisible, so are your problems.”

Knowing averages on the national, regional, or even state level is not enough.

- Colleges and college systems needs to be able to identify:
 - How many parenting students they are serving, and how many could they be serving
 - What their parenting students look like
 - What the trajectories are for their students

FAFSA is not enough

Undergrads at Pennsylvania public colleges, 2020



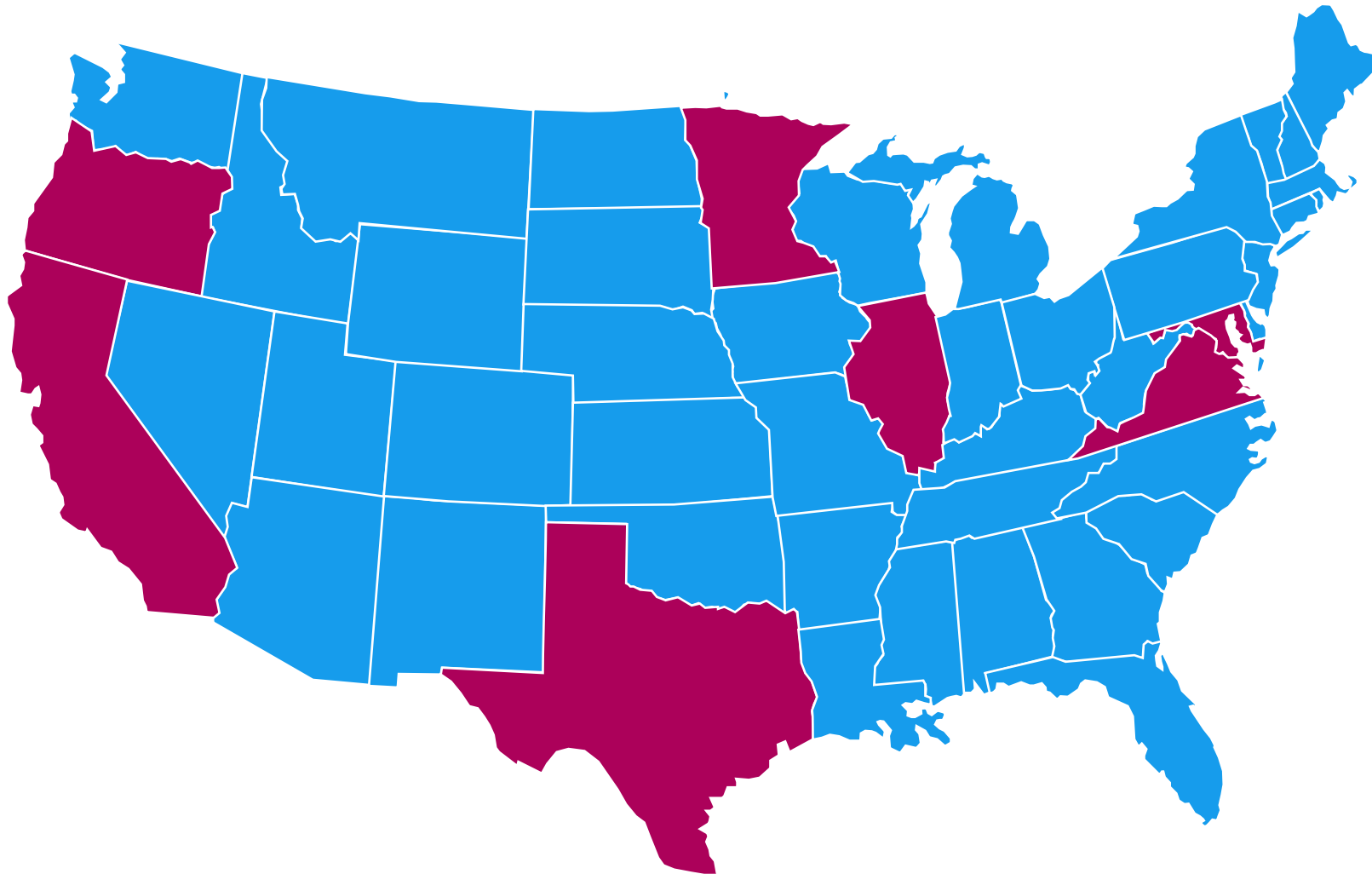
Colleges Will Need New Data Collection Efforts to Identify Parenting Students after Changes to Financial Aid Forms

Theresa Anderson

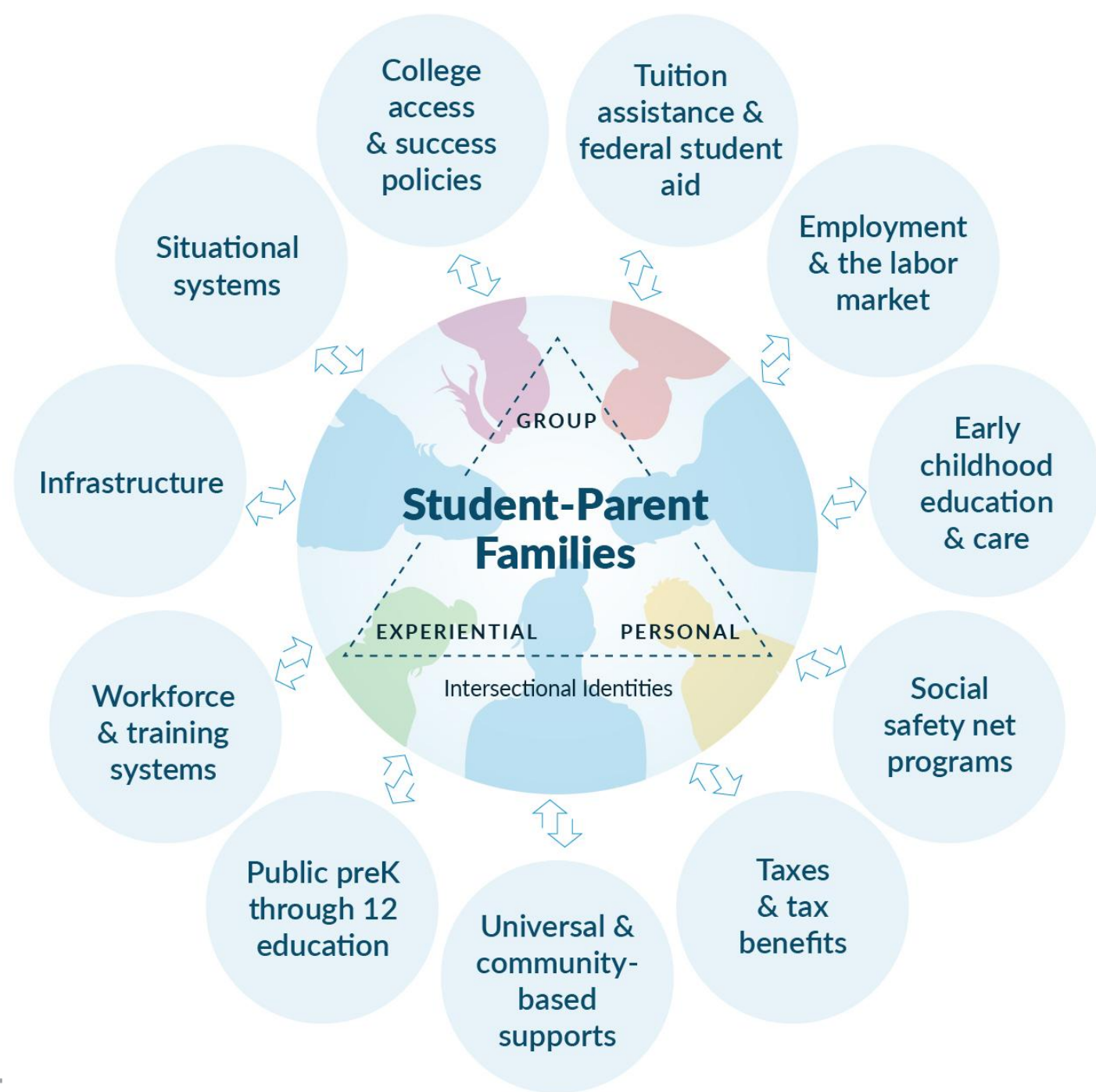
August 12, 2024



A growing number of states have student-parent data collection legislation



What else can we do?



College access & success policies

- Recruitment & outreach
- Orientation & registration
- Class scheduling
- Academic, basic needs, & legal supports
- Health & mental health services offered by colleges
- On-campus dining & college-provided food supports
- Student-parent data collection
- Title IX
- The Civil Rights Act
- ADA protections
- Family-friendly campuses
 - On-campus family housing
 - Inclusive classroom learning experiences
 - Student-parent-specific services, spaces, & policies
- Federal policies on minors on campus
- Higher education funding
- College accountability policies & practices
 - Accreditation bodies
 - Regulations on for-profit colleges

Situational systems

- Child welfare & foster care system
- Child support system
- Fatherhood programs
- Veterans' services/military (and spousal) benefits
- Immigration system & services
- Justice system
- Additional support for people with disabilities & neurodiversity
- Teen & young parent programs
- Tribal policies

Infrastructure

- Technology infrastructure & supports
- Transportation
- Housing & rental market
- Health infrastructure
- Mental health infrastructure
- Data systems (state or federal)

Workforce & training systems

- Individual Training Accounts
- American Job Centers/workforce development system
- SNAP E&T
- Non-credit-bearing job training

Public preK through 12 education

- Local & state preK & 3K policies
- Elementary & secondary education quality
- School logistics, including hours, location, & transportation
- School choice/out-of-district attendance policies
- School expectations of parent engagement/involvement
- Health & mental health services through schools/districts
- IEP & special needs policies
- After-school program offered through schools/districts
- Postsecondary education counseling/ navigation services
- Services for pregnant/parenting high school students

Universal & community-based basic need supports

- Stimulus payments
- CARES Act funding
- Private lending, credit, debt, & bankruptcy services
- Non-profit organization supports

Tuition assistance & federal student aid

- Pell Grants
- Scholarships
- FAFSA & EFC, including child care allowances
- Federally subsidized loans
- Private loans
- Work-study
- Cost of higher education and return-on-investment
- Student debt & loan cancellation or forgiveness
- College income share or outcome agreements

Employment & the labor market

- Nondiscrimination policies
- Minimum wage & wage equity
- Family leave
- Unemployment Insurance
- Employer tuition support or training
- Work-based learning (paid & unpaid)
- Predictable & flexible hours
- Remote work opportunities & policies

Early childhood education & care

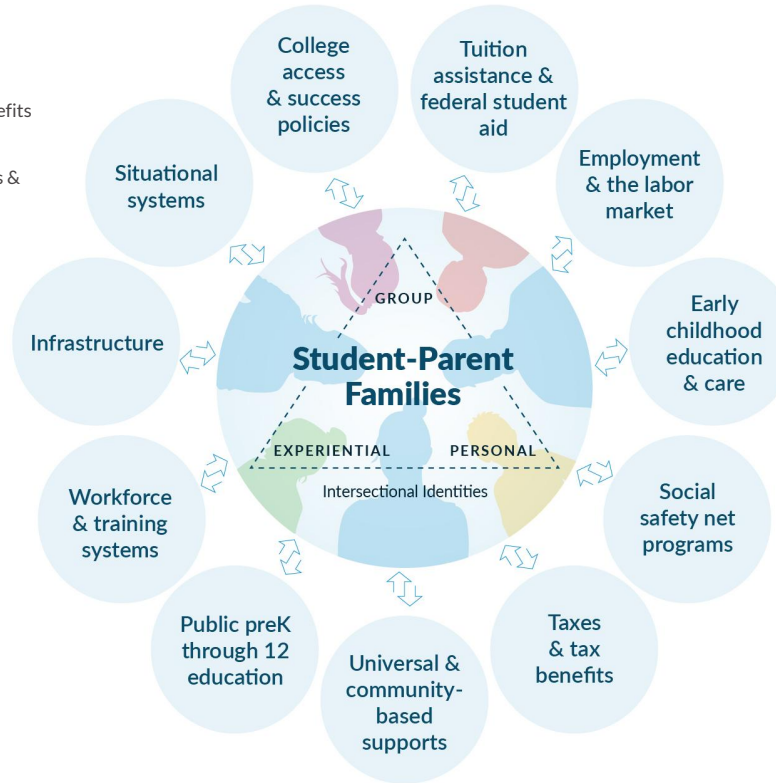
- CCDF subsidies
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- PreK & 3K education & care
- College/university child care (CCAMPIS)
- College/university child care (self-funded, private, & partnerships)
- After-school care
- Child care supply/availability
- Child care quality issues
- Child care on demand, drop-in, & back-up care
- Resource & referral centers

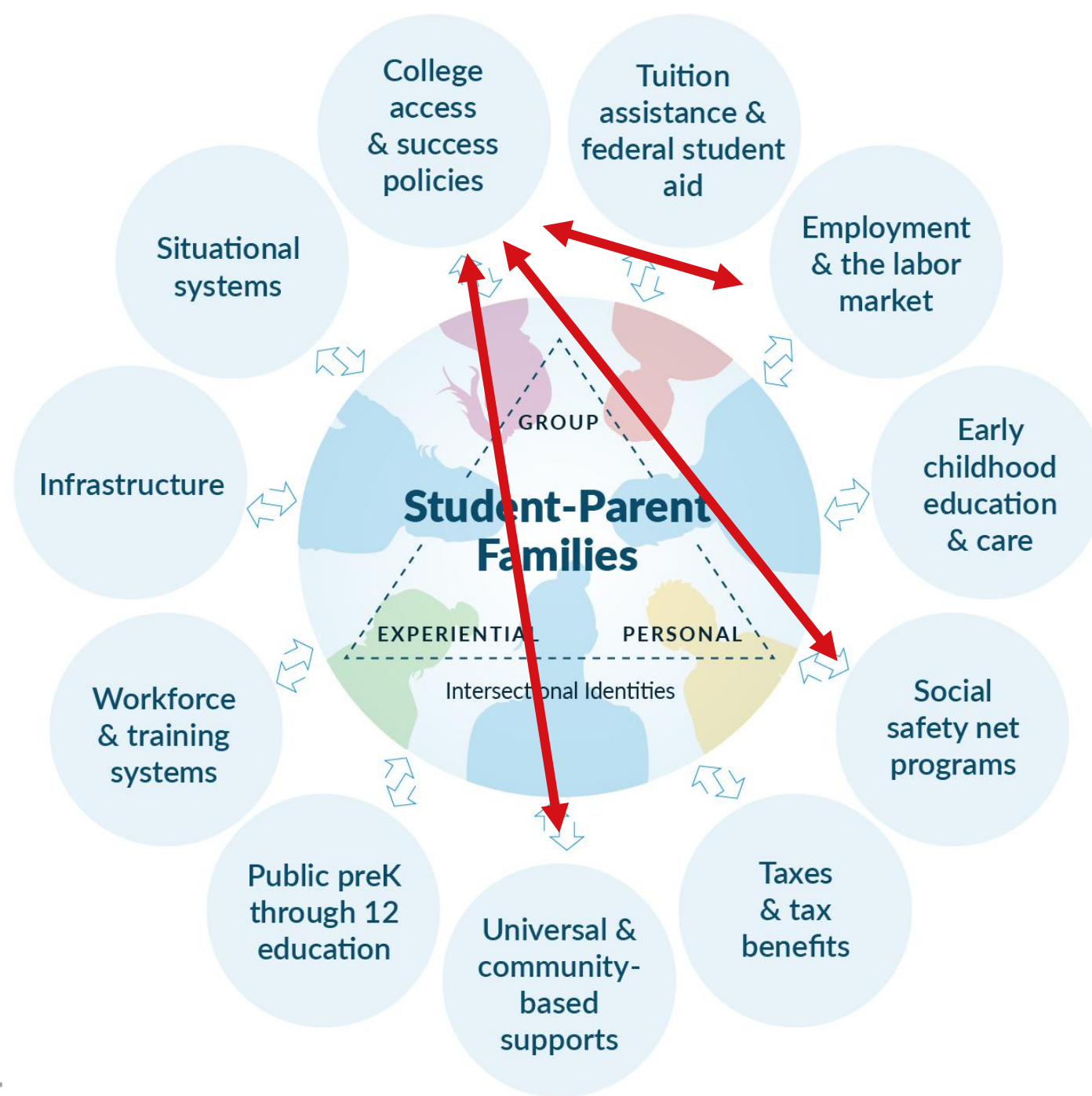
Social safety net programs

- TANF
- SNAP, WIC, & FRPL
- Public/Subsidized housing
- Medicaid & CHIP
- Heat & energy assistance
- SSI/SSDI (adult & child)

Taxes & tax benefits

- Income taxes
- Tax credits for families with children
- Higher education tax benefits for students
- Affordable tax software & preparation





Collaboration through responsible data sharing is an efficient way to make connections between higher education and partners, including public agencies and nonprofit organizations

Check out the briefs on the SPARK website

<https://studentparentaction.org/resources/student-parents-basic-needs>



Meeting Student Parents' Basic Needs

Partnerships between colleges and public agencies can help student parents meet their basic needs and achieve their education goals

- A collaborative project between the Urban Institute, Child Trends, Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield, and two STAR Fellows identifies:
- ▶ the motivation for supporting student parents' basic needs,
 - ▶ practical strategies to develop partnerships between colleges and public agencies, and
 - ▶ how student parents currently use public programs to help support their families while they pursue postsecondary degrees and credentials.



Thank you!

Questions?

Stay in touch!

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