COLLEGE ENROLLMENT DURING COVID-19:
What Parents Think About Cost, Location, and Online Learning
College is in the plans this fall for 99% of families. But “safety school” is taking on a whole new meaning as parents look at options that will protect their children and their wallets.
Lipman Hearne surveyed 300 parents of college-bound high school students between April 24 and 25, 2020. This report takes a deeper look at the issues families are grappling with as they make their college enrollment decision.
The pandemic is causing a significant number of families to abandon their top choice.

38% of parents of color, and 32% of parents overall, are considering abandoning their top choice.
The 2+2 route is appealing to nearly one-in-five families.

42% believe their child will transfer to their top choice after a year or two, and

16% plan for their child to transfer to their top choice after attending a two-year college for a year or two.
The majority of parents seeking proximity are looking really close to home.
Parents of color are less sure about sending their child to a physical campus in Fall 2020.

When asked to assume Fall 2020 courses were offered both on-campus and online...

- 62% of Caucasian parents would encourage their child to enroll on-campus.
- 47% of parents of color would encourage their child to enroll on-campus.
If classes are online in the fall, many parents expect a tuition discount. **The size of that discount varies based on several factors.**
Over half expect a tuition discount if Fall classes are only offered online.
Parents sending their child to a private institution expect a higher discount than those sending their child to a public institution, whether in-state or out-of-state.
Expectations for a discount are fairly consistent across household incomes.

How large of a discount do you expect if classes are offered online for Fall 2020?

- **Under $75K**: 3% (50%+ discount), 23% (40-49% discount), 71% (0-9% discount)
- **$75K-$149K**: 3% (50%+ discount), 23% (40-49% discount), 69% (0-9% discount)
- **$150K+**: 4% (50%+ discount), 32% (40-49% discount), 61% (0-9% discount)
In general, parents expect a larger tuition discount for colleges with $20,000 + tuition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual tuition cost</th>
<th>0-9% discount</th>
<th>10-39% discount</th>
<th>40-49% discount</th>
<th>50% + discount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $5K</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5K-$9K</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10K-$19K</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20K-$39K</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$40K or more</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</table>
We can tailor a study of parents to the needs of your institution.

For previous insights from our national parent study, visit lipmanhearne.com.

About Lipman Hearne

Lipman Hearne works exclusively with mission-driven organizations, providing insights and creative solutions for brand development, fundraising, and enrollment/membership growth. Our clients know what's worth fighting for—and we know what it takes to help them succeed.

To continue the conversation, contact Peter Barber at 312.809.0070 or email Lipman Hearne at info@lipmanhearne.com.