

## Beyond Homework: Supports Needed for Student Mothers

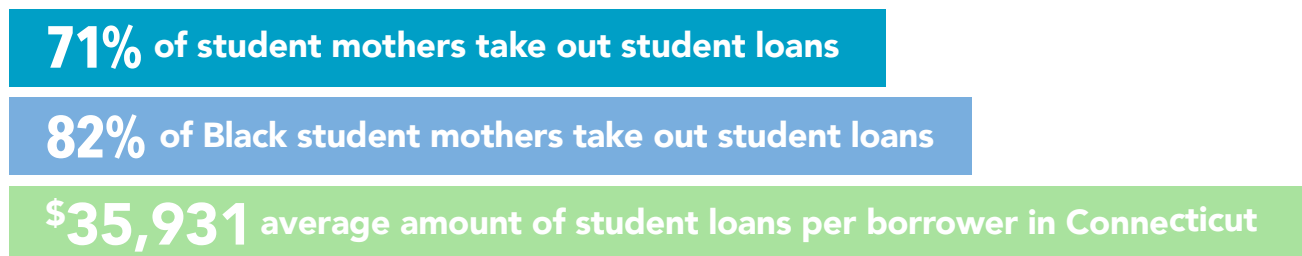
Among undergraduate students seeking postsecondary education in the U.S., about one-fifth are raising children while enrolled in college. While focusing on improving their children's futures as well as their own, student parents often face enormous financial barriers to academic success. For student mothers in Greater Hartford, supports are needed that address racial education disparities, student debt, and persistence and retention for adult learners. Aurora-funded College Success programs offer strategies and best practices to ensure more women students and more student mothers reach graduation.

## Mothers Seek Educational Opportunity



Institute for Women's Policy Research analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019-20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20)

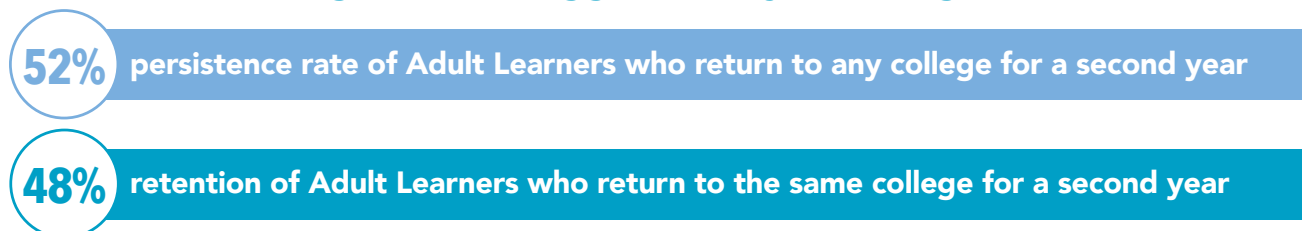
## Student Debt Overburdens Student Mothers



Dundar, Afet, Lauren A. Tighe, and Jennifer Turner. 2023. "Underwater: Student Mothers and Fathers Struggle to Support Their Families and Pay Off College Loans." Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

<https://www.ctdata.org/blog/student-debt>

## Adult Learners (age 25+) Struggle to Stay in College



Persistence and Retention Fall 2021 Beginning Postsecondary Student Cohort, (July 2023), Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

## Graduation Rates Continue to Show Racial Gaps in Connecticut

Low completion rates for 2-year degrees after six years suggests that students are left with student loan debt without the economic and career benefit of graduation.

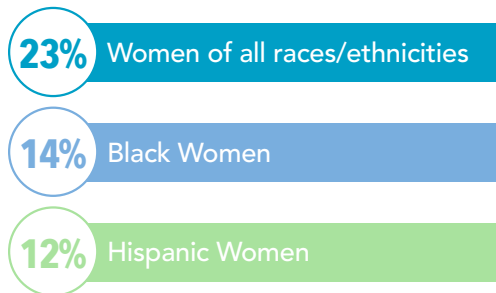
6-YEAR COMPLETION RATE	4-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTION	2-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTION
Asian	86%	45%
White	76%	40%
Hispanic	61%	23%
Black	55%	20%

Lee, S. & Shapiro, D. (November 2023), *Completing College: National and State Report with Longitudinal Data Dashboard on Six- and Eight-Year Completion Rates. (Signature Report 22)*, Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

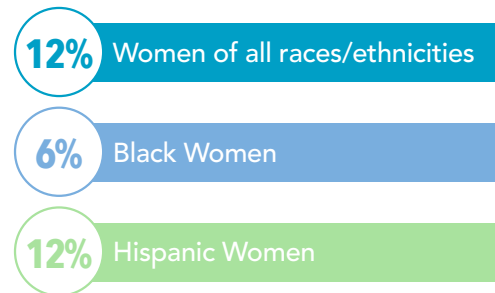
## Education Gap Persists for Women of Color

Percentage of Women with Bachelor's Degrees

### HARTFORD COUNTY



### CITY OF HARTFORD



[womenandgirls.ctdata.org/data.html](https://womenandgirls.ctdata.org/data.html)

## Aurora-Funded College Success Program Best Practices

- Identifying and addressing obstacles, such as food insecurity, high levels of stress, academic and occupational demands, lack of financial literacy and parenting responsibilities
- Increasing student exposure to new fields of study, career paths, and resources on and off campus
- Ensuring access to technology for remote learning
- Improving and promoting confidence, persistence, and self-advocacy
- Creating networks and supportive community environments with role models, mentors, and peers

## Aurora Funded Programs and Partner Institutions:

*Barriers Can't Stop Us: Building Immigrant Women's Success*, Hartford Public Library

*Center for Academic Excellence LEAP Program*, University of St. Joseph

*Free to Succeed*, Trinity College, Manchester Community College, Capital Community College, Community Partners in Action

*Inspiring College Readiness and Increasing College Retention for Minority Women in the Greater Hartford Area*, University of St. Joseph

*Latinas in Leadership Institute*, UConn Hartford

*Launch Your Leadership Journey*, Women's Leadership Institute, Asnuntuck Community College and Tunxis Community College

*Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD)*, Women's Advancement Initiative, The University of Hartford

*Pathways Through College*, Grace Academy

*Prison Seminar Series*, Trinity College and York Correctional Institution

*Success to Graduation*, The University of St. Joseph

*WelCorps Leaders Program*, University of Hartford

*Women Investing in Securing an Education*, Goodwin College

*Women in STEM (WiSTEM)*, Manchester Community College

*Women in Transition*, Charter Oak State College

YW Career Women, YWCA Greater Hartford

## Student Impact Story

"I am a single mother of twin almost eighteen-year-old boys. I had many nights doing homework with them at the kitchen table. I am a first-generation student and grew up in Stowe Village in Hartford's north end. I am a graduate of Weaver High School. I am the daughter of a single mother who had eight children, unfortunately she died of breast cancer in 2008 when my children were about 2.5 years old, and I was left to figure out how to navigate the world without her. I am proud to say that I graduated with my bachelor's in healthcare administration this past May (2022).

This journey has been amazing. The Program Director Wanda has been able to guide me through and has been a great support. I can count on her answering the phone even for the simplest things that I may need or a hurdle that I encounter. Every time that I would call her in the last two years with the same question "Am I done yet?" Her answer has always been, "You are almost there, you only have a couple more classes!" The Women in Transition Program has helped me to become a better me.

Recently, I was promoted to a Manager level position. I know that one of the reasons that I was given this opportunity is because I am currently in the process of getting my degree. This is my first management experience and I believe Charter Oak State College has equipped me with the skills I need to be a great leader. I am not only graduating with a bachelor's degree, but I am also going to be debt free because of the WIT generous scholarships!

My boys both graduated high school this past June and will be entering Capital Community College in the next couple of weeks!"

— *Anonymous, Women In Transition program at Charter Oak State College*

*Special thanks to the Richard P. Garmany Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for support of this research in honor of Lydia Garmany.*

***For more information, please visit [aurorafoundation.org/research](https://aurorafoundation.org/research) to access the Women and Girls Data Platform.***