

Elimination of Grad PLUS Dramatically Reduces Access to Key Workforce Areas

The Graduate PLUS (Grad PLUS) loan program, which provides graduate students access to federal borrowing beyond unsubsidized loan limits, will end for new borrowers on July 1, 2026. With the program's elimination, ICCU institutions face significant challenges sustaining student access to advanced degrees in critical workforce areas. These programs serve as essential pipelines to professions in primary care, mental and behavioral health, dentistry, allied health, education, and law.

35k grad students in the ICCU sector relied on Grad PLUS

in 2024-25, many of whom are pursuing degrees in high-need professional fields

68% of California's \$2B

in Grad PLUS borrowing comes from students enrolled in the ICCU sector

Who Is Impacted Most?

Grad PLUS borrowers at ICCU institutions are concentrated in high demand workforce areas. Based on institutional reporting of a 21,000+ student sample, 88% of those receiving these loans are pursuing degrees in five main workforce areas, accounting for \$674 million in borrowing, with nearly \$490 million combined in health fields.



\$167M
Psychology



\$112M
Medical & Allied
Health Fields



\$106M
Law



\$71M
Nursing



\$51M
Dentistry



\$42M
Educator
Programs



\$39M
Pharmacy



\$32M
Business

Risk to Access and Equity

The Grad PLUS Program provides a financing mechanism for students to pursue advanced degrees in high needs fields with strong consumer protections and greater flexibility than is offered with private lenders.

First Generation Students

4,000+ Grad PLUS borrowers identified as first generation, though status was unreported for an additional 12,000+ students

66% of reported first generation students are pursuing degrees in health fields

15% of reported first generation students are pursuing educator programs

Students from Historically Underrepresented Groups

40% of Grad PLUS borrowers, representing \$276 million in loans, are from historically underrepresented groups (HUGs), which include Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native students

61% of HUG borrowers are enrolled in health fields, totaling more than \$182 million in Grad PLUS borrowing

Note: Education, Law, Business, and Public Administration, make up additional, smaller but significant shares of HUG borrowing.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid Loan Volume and AICCU Graduate PLUS Data Collection 2025.

