

## Serving First-Generation College Students

- Median annual parental income of first-generation college students is \$41K, as compared to \$91K for students whose parents earned college degrees.
- First-gen students use financial aid services at their institutions in greater proportions, but other university services, such as counseling services, career services, and academic advising at lower rates than students whose parents have college degrees.
- First-gen students work far more hours on average than other students while in school.<sup>1</sup>

First-gen college students often have concerns that other students do not. For example, according to research by the National Association of Colleges and Employers ([NACE](#)), first-gen students are more likely to view college as a means to an upwardly mobile career, rather than a place to learn for learning's sake. Additionally, many first-gen students feel pressure to be breadwinners for their families during and/or after college.

Other cultural factors or identities could affect students' decision-making during the career coaching process, including their religion, race, ethnicity, gender, citizenship status, sexual orientation, etc. These social categories often overlap, a process known as [intersectionality](#).

As a career coach, we ask that you are aware and sensitive to the needs of our students. Instead of presuming to understand their concerns, ask open-ended questions that help explore their values and their career goals.

## Serving Students with Different Abilities

Navigating college and the job search while being differently abled can be difficult. The students you work with may be differently abled physically, living with chronic conditions, have learning differences, or be mentally neurodivergent which can affect their ability to work. The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as well as other federal and state laws, require that differently abled persons are afforded equal access to job opportunities and resources. If a student discloses this to you, reassure them that employers are obligated to make reasonable employment accommodations for an otherwise qualified employee. Normally, this is a process that occurs after a student has obtained employment.

For more information, please read the [Employees' Practical Guide to Requesting and Negotiating Reasonable Accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

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<sup>1</sup> [NASPA First-Generation Fact Sheets](#)



## Suggested Readings

[Career Development Needs of First-Generation Students](#)

[What is intersectionality, and what does it have to do with me?](#)

[A Career Road Map for First-Generation Professionals](#)

[Why Aren't College Students Using Career Services?](#)

[Culture Amp Workplace Diversity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality Report 2019](#)

[NASPA First-Generation Student Success Full Report](#)