A Profile of the

Student Support Services Program

1997–98 and 1998-99,
with Select Data from 1999–2000

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Foreword

To help fulfill the goal of President Bush's education initiative, "No Child Left Behind," high-quality postsecondary educational opportunities and support services must be available to all students. In keeping with this goal, the Federal TRIO Programs provide outreach and support programs to assist low-income, first-generation college, and disabled students progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs.

On behalf of the Federal TRIO Programs, I am pleased to present this report, *A Profile of the Student Support Services Program: 1997–98 and 1998–99, with Select Data from 1999–2000.* The specific goal of the Student Support Services (SSS) Program is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

This report is the second in a series of reports presenting a national profile of the SSS Program. The annual performance reports for 1997–98 and 1998–99 submitted by the SSS projects were the primary data sources for this report.

I am pleased to share with you national statistical and demographic information on the Student Support Services Program and its participants. We hope that the collection and dissemination of this information will encourage responses that help us assess our mission and our performance. We look forward to continuing to work together to improve program services and postsecondary completion rates for low-income and first-generation college students and students with disabilities.

Larry Oxendine
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Acknowledgments

Highlights

This report summarizes data submitted by Student Support Services (SSS) projects for program years 1997–98 and 1998–99, with selected data from 1999–2000. In 1997–98 aggregate data on project participants and services were submitted by 98 percent of projects; individual participant records were submitted by 86 percent of projects in 1997–98 and by 96 percent of projects in 1998–99. The 1998–99 reports included more than 230,000 current and prior-year participant records.

Project Characteristics

- In 1997–98 there were 801 SSS projects.
- In 1997–98, 54 percent of the SSS projects were housed at four-year institutions and 46 percent were housed at two-year institutions.
- In 1999–2000, there were 796 projects; the average project received funding for 224 students at a cost of about $1,000 per participant.

Participant Characteristics—1997–98

- Women were more likely to participate in Student Support Services than men. About two-thirds (65 percent) of participants were women and 35 percent were men.
- The racial and ethnic backgrounds of SSS participants were: 45 percent white; 29 percent black or African American; 15 percent Hispanic or Latino; 5 percent Asian; 3 percent American Indian or Alaska Native; and 2 percent other.

Project Services and Activities—1997–98

- Math instruction was the most frequent type of academic instruction, with seven percent of SSS participants receiving instruction for credit in this area and nine percent receiving noncredit instruction.
- One-to-one peer tutoring was the most frequent form of tutoring used by SSS participants, with 30 percent receiving it in 1997–98. Professional one-to-one tutoring was received by 19 percent of SSS participants. Ten percent of participants received group tutoring from a peer, and 7 percent of participants received group tutoring from a professional.
- The most popular counseling service was academic advising, received by 80 percent of participants. This service was followed in popularity by financial aid counseling (48 percent) and personal counseling (41 percent).
- One-third of participants (33 percent) participated in project-sponsored cultural activities, 23 percent participated in information workshops, and 6 percent made campus visits to other colleges or universities.

Individual Participant Records—1998–99

- Just over one-third of the participant records submitted (36 percent) were for new participants, 39 percent were for continuing participants, and 25 percent were for prior-year participants.

- SSS participants, on average, were older than the traditional age of those attending college. The average age of new participants at the beginning of the reporting period was 24.6 years.

- Among all those included on the participant records, 63 percent were classified as full-time students.

- Two-thirds of SSS participants (66 percent) were awarded financial aid. The average amount of aid needed or requested was $8,482 and the average amount awarded was $6,932.

- The average GPA (grade point average) for all SSS students was 2.6 on a four-point scale (and 3.2 for the few projects at institutions on a five-point scale).

- Eighty-two percent of all participants were classified as in good academic standing.

Retention to the Second Year

- Sixty-seven percent of SSS participants who entered a project in 1997–98 remained enrolled in the same institution in 1998–99. This number is similar to the national retention rate for all students and is three percentage points higher than that for liberal academic institutions.

- Retention rates for SSS participants increased by almost two percentage points for 1998–99 and 1999–2000 (69 percent).

I. Introduction

This report is the second in a series on the Student Support Services (SSS) Program. Its purpose is to summarize and evaluate information from the annual performance reports that all SSS projects are required to submit. This report covers results from the aggregate portion of the performance reports and from the individual participant records, first included on the 1995-96 reporting form.[1] We hope that projects will use this report to improve services and educational opportunities for low-income and first-generation college students and students with disabilities.

This national report presents data by "institution sector." There are four such sectors: (1) public four-year (or more) institutions, (2) public two-year institutions, (3) private four-year (or more) institutions, and (4) private two-year institutions. We also present response information geographically, according to ten federal regions defined by the Department of Education (ED).

This report, the first one to use more than a single year of data, covers performance reports for 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000.[2] The information on participant demographics and project services comes from the 1997-98 performance reports. The individual participant records are those for 1998-99. The report also includes an analysis of participant records for all three years to estimate the percentage of students who continue participating in SSS after their first year, a topic not included in the first report. To help interpret project data, we have sometimes compared it with data for all U.S. institutions included in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Finally, an addendum presents some information on participant demographics from the 1999-2000 performance reports.

A. Background

The SSS Program began in 1970 with 121 projects serving about 30,000 students and funding of about $10 million ($42.9 million in constant 1999 dollars). By 1999 there were 796 projects serving 178,000 students with funding of $178.9 million.

The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of low-income, first-generation college students and students with disabilities and to facilitate their transition from one level of postsecondary education to the next. Table 1 contains the text of the authorizing legislation. Services provided by the program include:

- Instruction in basic skills.
- Tutoring.
- Academic, financial, personal, and career counseling.
- Assistance in securing admission to and financial aid for enrollment in four-year institutions and graduate and professional programs.
- Mentoring.
- Special services for students with limited English proficiency.

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[1] Prior to 1995–96, the annual performance report form requested only aggregate demographic information on project participants.
[2] Annual performance reports cover the 12-month grant (budget) period, typically September through August.

SSS is one of several direct service TRIO[3] programs, which include Upward Bound (UB), Upward Bound Math-Science (UBMS), Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs), Talent Search (TS), and the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair). Table 2 gives the funding information and participant numbers for each TRIO program for fiscal year 1999 (program year 1999-2000). SSS had the second largest yearly funding of any TRIO program; the average project served 224 participants at a cost of about $1,000 per person per year.

Table 1. U.S. legislation authorizing Student Support Services: Goals and services

(a) Program Authority—The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as student support services which shall be designed—
   (1) To increase college retention and graduation rates for eligible students;
   (2) To increase the transfer rates of eligible students from two-year to four-year institutions; and
   (3) To foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of low-income and first-generation college students and individuals with disabilities.
(b) Permissible Services—A student support services project assisted under this chapter may provide services such as—
   (1) Instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, and other subjects necessary for success beyond secondary school;
   (2) Personal counseling;
   (3) Academic advice and assistance in course selection;
   (4) Tutorial services and counseling and peer counseling;
   (5) Exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students;
   (6) Activities designed to acquaint students participating in the project with the range of career options available to them;
   (7) Activities designed to assist students participating in the project in securing admission and financial assistance for enrollment in graduate and professional programs;
   (8) Activities designed to assist students currently enrolled in two-year institutions in securing admission and financial assistance for enrollment in a four-year program of postsecondary education;
   (9) Mentoring programs involving faculty or upper-class students, or a combination thereof; and
   (10) Programs and activities as described in paragraphs (1) through (9) which are specially designed for students of limited English proficiency.

Higher Education Act of 1965 Sec. 402D.20 U.S.C. 1070a-14 Student Support Services.

Table 2. TRIO programs: 1999

1999	Program funding	Number of grants	Number served	Average grant award	Amount per person served	Average number served per grant
Educational Opportunity Centers	$29,794,380	82	158,063	$363,346	$188	1,928
McNair	$32,114,068	156	3,734	$205,859	$8,600	24
Student Support Services	$178,916,836	796	178,099	$224,770	$1,005	224
Talent Search	$98,450,697	361	323,541	$272,717	$304	896
Upward Bound	$220,500,637	772	52,960	$285,623	$4,164	69
Upward Bound Math-Science	$29,276,284	124	6,200	$236,099	$4,722	50

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, 2000.

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[3] Prior to 1992, the Federal TRIO Programs were officially known as Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds. The three original federal programs from which the "trio" programs derived their name were Upward Bound (1964), Talent Search (1965) and Student Support Services (1968). Though the term TRIO (in all caps) is not an acronym, it has been retained to avoid confusion. Educators began using the word TRIO to describe these student programs in 1968 with the passage of the Student Support Services legislation. Currently the TRIO programs are eight in number, since the 1998 amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965 added an eighth program, the TRIO Dissemination Partnership Program. In addition to these four already named programs, the other four TRIO programs are: Educational Opportunity Centers, Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement, Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs, and Upward Bound Math-Science.

Table 3 shows TRIO funding levels from 1967 to 1999 in constant 1999 dollars. Funding for SSS has increased more than fourfold since its inception in 1970.

B. Performance report response

Performance report response has increased every year since the new report form was introduced in 1995-96. In 1996-97, 92 percent of projects submitted aggregate data and 78 percent submitted individual participant records. By 1997-98, nearly all projects were submitting aggregate data (98 percent) and 86 percent of the projects provided participant records. In 1998-99, the response rate for participant records was 96 percent. Table 4 summarizes these response rates by sector.

Table 3. TRIO funding levels in constant 1999 dollars (millions)

Year	UB	TS	SSS	EOC	UBMS	McNair
1967	$139.7	$12.4				
1970	$127.1	$21.5	$42.9			
1975	$118.6	$18.6	$71.2	$9.3		
1980	$126.4	$30.9	$121.3	$15.6		
1985	$114.0	$32.1	$108.5	$14.2		
1990	$128.2	$34.5	$115.9	$15.2	$4.3	$3.8
1995	$208.3	$85.7	$156.9	$26.9	$20.8	$20.9
1999	$220.5	$98.5	$178.9	$29.8	$29.3	$32.1

Source: Calculated from information provided by U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs and the Consumer Price Index.

Table 4. Number and percent of SSS projects submitting performance reports and participant records, by sector: 1997-98 and 1998-99

Sector	Total projects in 1997-98	Submitted performance report (1997-98)		Submitted participant records	
	Number	Number	Percent	1997-98	1998-99*
Public four-year	297	289	97%	83%	96%
Private four-year	137	134	98%	88%	94%
Public two-year	353	348	99%	89%	97%
Private two-year	14	12	86%	79%	93%
All projects	801	783	98%	86%	96%

*Response rates were calculated on the796 projects receiving funding that year.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997-98 and 1998-99.

Table 5 and Figures 1 and 2 show, by region, the percentage of reporting projects. For 1997-98, the percentage of projects submitting participant records ranged from 78 percent in Region IX to 90 percent in several regions. In 1998-99, the percentages ranged from 93 percent in Regions II and IX to 100 percent in Regions I and X. Table 6 lists the states and territories included in each region.

Table 5. Number and percent of SSS projects submitting performance reports and participant records, by federal region: 1997-98 and 1998-99

Federal region	Number of projects		Percent reporting aggregate data	Percent reporting participant data	
	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1997-98	1998-99
Region I	40	40	100%	90%	100%
Region II	76	76	99%	82%	93%
Region III	68	67	96%	85%	96%
Region IV	166	165	99%	87%	96%
Region V	133	131	99%	89%	98%
Region VI	97	97	95%	90%	94%
Region VII	60	60	100%	90%	98%
Region VIII	54	52	94%	83%	98%
Region IX	76	77	97%	78%	93%
Region X	31	31	100%	90%	100%
All regions	801	796	98%	86%	96%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997-98 and 1998-99.

Figure 1. Percent of SSS projects submitting aggregate data, by federal region: 1997–98
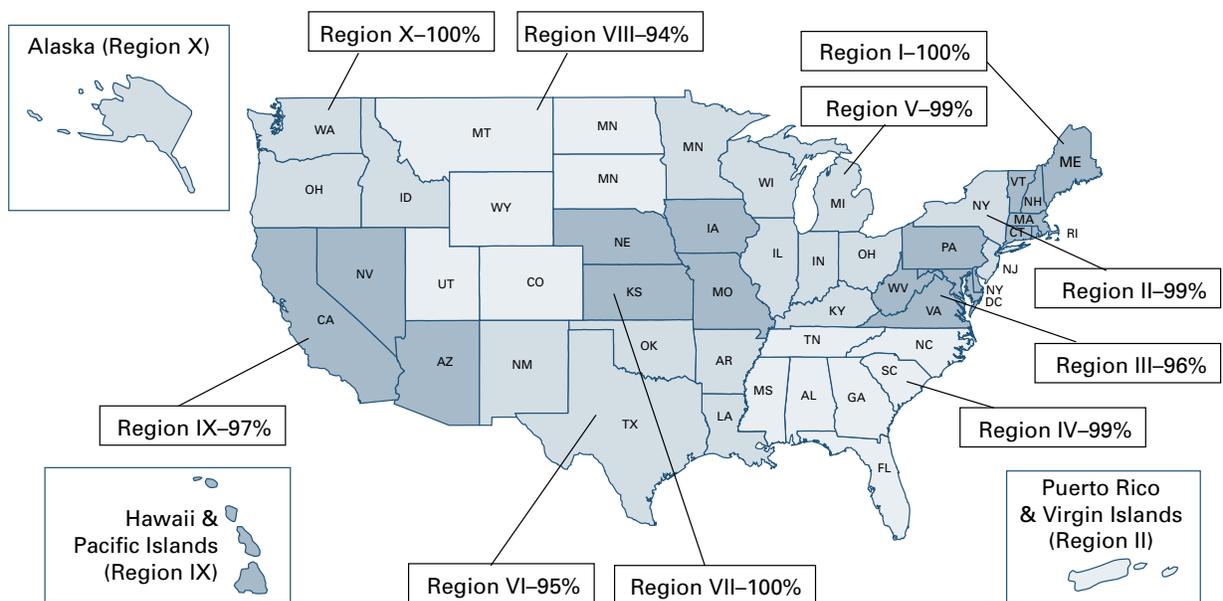
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98.

Figure 2. Percent of SSS projects submitting participant records, by federal region: 1998–99

Alaska (Region X)

Region X–100% Region VIII–98% Region I–100%

Region V–98%

WA MT MN

OH ID WY MN MN WI MI VT ME NH MA CT RI

NV UT CO NE IA IL IN OH NY PA NJ Region II–93%

CA AZ NM KS MO KY WV VA NY DC Region III–96%

OK AR TN NC

Region IX–93% MS AL GA SC Region IV–96%

TX LA FL

Hawaii & Pacific Islands (Region IX)

Region VI–94% Region VII–98%

Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands (Region II)

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998–99.

Table 6.   Department of Education federal regions

Federal region	Description
Region I	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont
Region II	New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands
Region III	Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.
Region IV	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee
Region V	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin
Region VI	Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas
Region VII	Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska
Region VIII	Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming
Region IX	Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam, The Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa
Region X	Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, 2002

C. Data issues

There was a high level of item response on the reports. For example, in the 1998–99 participant records, the completion rate for individual items ranged from 91 percent for end-of-year enrollment status to 100 percent for gender.

The quality of the data reported has also improved each year. With regard to participant records, the most serious inconsistency has been in the listing of "prior-year participants." The reporting form instructs projects to include in this category those students who did not receive services in the reporting period but who remained at the institution; some projects, however, did not follow this instruction.[4] There was also variation in the reporting of participants' end-of-year enrollment status. Some projects reported the status of participants as of the end of the spring term, while others reported their status as of the start of the next fall term. Not surprisingly, the fields for dates were sometimes problematic.

To increase the accuracy of the participant data, in the summer of 2000 projects were sent lists of 1997–98 participants who were not listed as participants in 1998–99 but who might still be enrolled at the institution and qualify as prior-year participants. Projects were asked to report whether or not listed students were actually enrolled at their institutions in 1998–99. This process was repeated during the spring of 2002 with the 1998–99 and 1999–2000 data files. This information was used to calculate the retention rates discussed in Section V of this report.

D. Distribution of projects and participants by sector and federal region

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the number of two-year colleges and the proportion of students who attend them nationally have increased since 1970. For example, in 1972, 48 percent of the total enrollment was at public four-year institutions, 29 percent at public two-year colleges, and 23 percent at private colleges. By 1999, public two-year colleges had 37 percent of enrollment and public four-year institutions' share of enrollment had declined to 41 percent. Private colleges have maintained about 23 percent of total college enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999).

The percentage of SSS projects in each postsecondary institution sector coincided with these national trends. In 1996–97, 40 percent of SSS projects were in two-year public

Table 7.   Distribution of SSS projects compared to all postsecondary institutions, by sector: 1996-97 and 1997-98

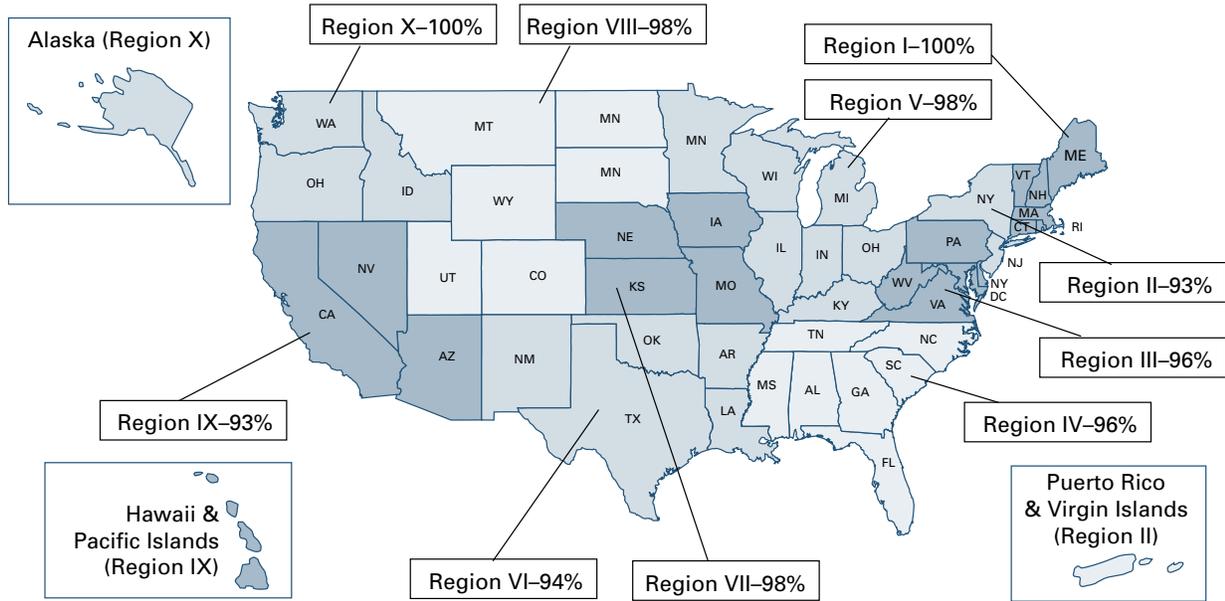| Sector	Number of projects		Percent of projects		Institutions in sector*	
	1996-97	1997-98	1996-97	1997-98	Number	Percent
Public four-year	276	297	39%	37%	615	15%
Private four-year	131	137	19%	17%	1,694	42%
Public two-year	284	353	40%	44%	1,092	27%
Private two-year	14	14	2%	2%	663	16%
All projects	705	801	100%	100%	4,064	100%

*From IPEDS, 1997-98.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1996-97 and 1997-98. National Center for Education Statistics, The Digest of Education Statistics: 2001.

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[4] Projects were instructed to include prior-year participants only in the electronic files of individual participant records. These students were not included in the aggregate reporting on project participants who received services during the reporting period.

institutions; in 1997–98, after a new grant competition, this increased to 44 percent (Table 7). In 1997–98, more than half (54 percent) of SSS projects were at four-year institutions, public and private combined, and 46 percent were at two-year institutions. Almost all of the SSS projects and participants at two-year institutions were at public institutions. Only 14 SSS projects (two percent of the total) were at private two-year institutions.

Table 8 shows the distribution of participants by sector in 1996–97 and, for comparison, 1998–99. Private institutions are typically smaller than public institutions and projects associated with them have fewer participants. In 1998–99,

projects at public four-year institutions had an average of 261 participants, compared with 197 for those at private four-year institutions and 219 for those at public two-year institutions. The 13 reporting projects at private two-year institutions had an average of 180 participants.

In general, the number of SSS participant records is greater than the number of students served, because the former category includes prior-year participants and the latter one does not. As with the number of students served, the number of records per project is larger at public institutions than at private ones. Table 9 shows that in 1998–99 the percentage of SSS participants in public institutions (as opposed to private

Table 8. Distribution of SSS students served, by sector: 1996-97 and 1998-99

Sector	Number of projects reporting participant data		Number of students served		Percent of total served		Students served per project	
	1996-97	1998-99	1996-97	1998-99	1996-97	1998-99	1996-97	1998-99
Public four-year	213	282	67,646	73,512	43%	42%	318	261
Private four-year	89	128	23,908	25,242	15%	14%	269	197
Public two-year	237	343	63,058	75,111	40%	43%	266	219
Private two-year	11	13	2,254	2,345	1%	1%	205	180
All sectors	550	766	156,866	176,210	100%	100%	285	231

Note: Percents may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1996-97 and 1998-99.

Table 9. Number of SSS projects and participant records, by sector: 1998-99

Sector	Number of projects		Participant records			IPEDS
	In sector	Reporting participant data	Number	Percent of total	Records per project	Percent of total enrollment*
Public four-year	294	282	110,850	47%	393	41%
Private four-year	136	128	32,795	14%	256	21%
Public two-year	352	343	90,075	38%	263	37%
Private two-year	14	13	2,483	1%	191	2%
All projects	796	766	236,203	100%	308	100%

*Reflects percent distribution of enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions.
Note: Participant records include prior-year participants, 25 percent of the total.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99; National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education, 1999, page 130 (based on Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall Enrollment Surveys).

institutions) was much higher than the overall U.S. total (85 percent versus 78 percent). The percentage of SSS participants in four-year institutions, however, was almost the same as for the nation as a whole (61 percent versus 62 percent).

Table 10 shows the distribution of projects over the 10 federal regions in 1996-97 and 1998-99. In 1998-99, the two regions with the greatest number of projects were Region IV with 21 percent of projects, and Region V with 16 percent. There was little change in the regional distribution of projects over the two years.

E. Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is divided into five sections. Section II presents aggregate demographic information on project participants submitted in the 1997–98 performance reports. Section III provides information on project services and activities included in these reports. Section IV summarizes information from the participant records in the 1998–99 reports. Section V presents a comparison of retention rates of first-year students from 1997–98 to 1998–99 and from 1998–99 to 1999–2000. Section VI discusses plans for future reports.

Table 10. Number and percent of SSS projects, by federal region: 1996-97 and 1998-99

	Number of projects		Percent of total	
Federal regions	1996-97	1998-99	1996-97	1998-99
Region I	39	40	6%	5%
Region II	72	76	10%	10%
Region III	67	67	10%	8%
Region IV	145	165	21%	21%
Region V	113	131	16%	16%
Region VI	80	97	11%	12%
Region VII	48	60	7%	8%
Region VIII	50	53	7%	7%
Region IX	64	76	9%	10%
Region X	27	31	4%	4%
All regions	705	796	100%	100%

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1996-97 and 1998-99.

II. Participant Characteristics

This section summarizes the aggregate demographic information on current project participants reported by the SSS projects in the 1997–98 annual performance reports. (Data collected from individual participant records for 1998–99 is presented in Section IV.)

A. Eligibility of participants

According to the 1997–98 performance reports, 783 SSS projects served 172,279 participants during that year. Sixty percent were both low-income[5] and first-generation college[6] students. Thirteen percent of the participants were disabled (seven percent disabled only and six percent both low-income and disabled). Nineteen percent were first-generation only and eight percent were low-income only (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Participant distribution by eligibility status: 1997–98

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98.

There was some variation by sector. For example, low-income disabled and disabled-only students made up a higher proportion of the total in public institutions than in private institutions. In public, four-year institutions, 15 percent of participants were disabled; in private, four-year institutions, 9 percent were disabled (Table 11).

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[5] A low-income participant is one whose family's taxable income is less than 150 percent of the poverty level. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, sets guidelines for determining the poverty level.

[6] A first-generation college student is one whose parents or guardians did not receive a baccalaureate degree.

Table 11.   Eligibility classification of SSS participants, by sector: 1997-98

Sector	Low-income and first-generation	Low-income only	First-generation only	Disabled only	Disabled and low-income
Public four-year	58%	8%	19%	8%	7%
Private four-year	63%	9%	19%	5%	4%
Public two-year	62%	6%	18%	6%	7%
Private two-year	68%	10%	16%	3%	2%
All projects	60%	8%	19%	7%	6%

NOTE: Row percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

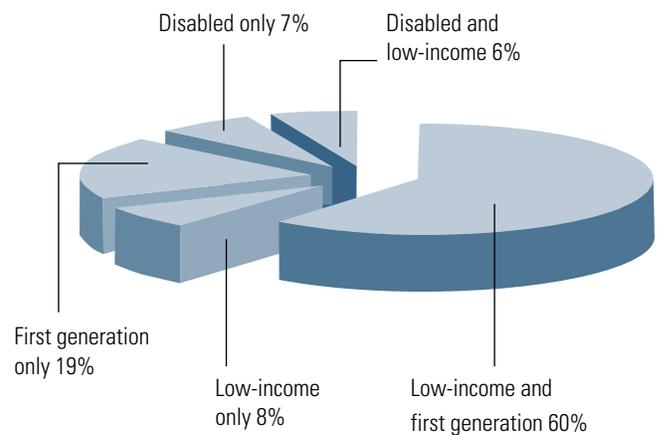*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997-98.*

B. Gender of participants

As is the case with other TRIO programs, participants in SSS were more likely to be women than men (65 percent versus 35 percent) (Figure 4). In addition, the proportion of women among SSS participants is higher than the proportion of women among all undergraduates (65 percent versus 56 percent) *(U.S. Department of Education, IPEDS, Fall Enrollment Survey, 1997)*. The difference in gender distribution is especially evident in two-year colleges, where 70 percent of participants were women and 30 percent were men (not shown in tables or figures).

Figure 4. Gender of SSS participants and of all undergraduate students: 1997–98
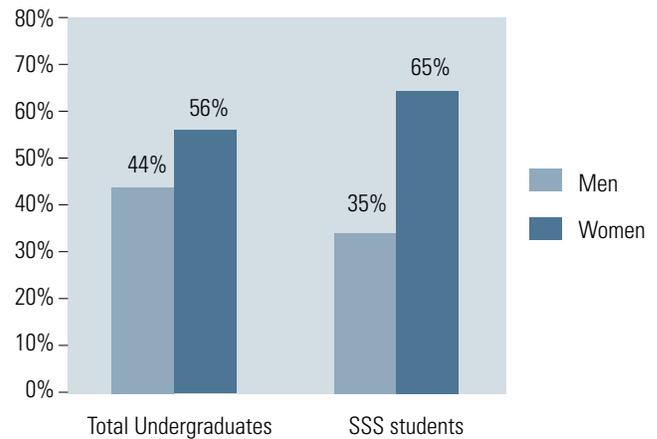
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98. National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall Enrollment Survey, 1997–98.

C. Racial and ethnic background of participants

Figure 5 shows the racial and ethnic background of SSS participants in 1997–98. For comparison, 1988 participants had the following distribution: 43 percent white; 32 percent black or African American; 16 percent Hispanic or Latino; 5 percent Asian; and 3 percent American Indian or Alaska Native (Cahalan and Muraskin 1994).

Figure 5. Racial and ethnic background of SSS participants: 1997–98
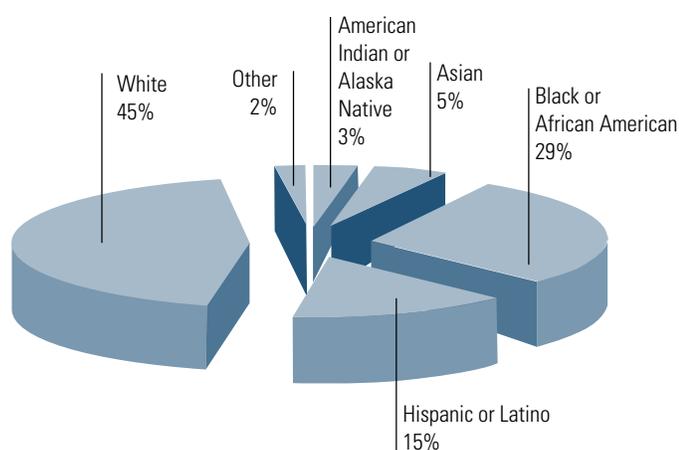
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98.

D. Grade level of participants

The year in which a student begins to participate in SSS is called the student's cohort. In 1997–98, new participants made up 48 percent of the total SSS population (Figure 6). Reflecting the addition of new projects in 1997–98, this is a somewhat higher percentage of new students than began in 1996–97 (44 percent).

Of the 1997–98 cohort, more than half of the participants (57 percent) were freshman when they entered the program and another 27 percent were sophomores. Among all SSS participants, 37 percent were freshmen, 33 percent sophomores, 12 percent juniors, 13 percent seniors and 5 percent "other" (Table 12).

Figure 6. Cohort year of SSS participants served: 1997–98

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98.

Table 12. Grade level of SSS participants: 1997-98

Sector	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Other
1997-98 cohort	57%	27%	7%	5%	3%
All cohorts combined	37%	33%	12%	13%	5%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997-98.

III. Project Services and Activities

In 1995–96, the SSS program began asking projects to include in their performance reports information on the intensity of their services, particularly the number of contact hours for academic support services and for counseling and mentoring services. The information presented in this section comes from the 1997–98 performance reports.

A. Academic Instruction

Projects reported the number of participants receiving SSS-supported formal academic instruction, either for credit or noncredit, in the following subjects: reading, writing, math, English, English for those with Limited Proficiency (LEP),[7] and "other" (Table 13). Overall, percentages ranged from one percent for credit instruction in English for LEP students to nine percent for noncredit instruction in math. Math instruction, for credit and noncredit, had the greatest number of students. In general, private institutions reported higher proportions of participants taking any kind of instruction than did public institutions.

Table 13.   Percent of participants receiving academic instruction supported by SSS project funds, by sector: 1997-98

|	All sectors		Public four-year		Private four-year		Public two-year		Private two-year	
	Credit	Non-credit	Credit	Non-credit	Credit	Non-credit	Credit	Non-credit	Credit	Non-credit
Reading	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%	12%	3%	3%	11%	6%
Writing	3%	6%	3%	5%	5%	10%	3%	6%	13%	6%
Math	7%	9%	8%	11%	7%	12%	6%	7%	19%	6%
English	4%	5%	4%	1%	5%	7%	4%	4%	12%	9%
English for LEP Students	1%	2%	1%	8%	1%	4%	2%	1%	2%	4%
Other	4%	8%	5%	8%	5%	9%	3%	7%	4%	4%

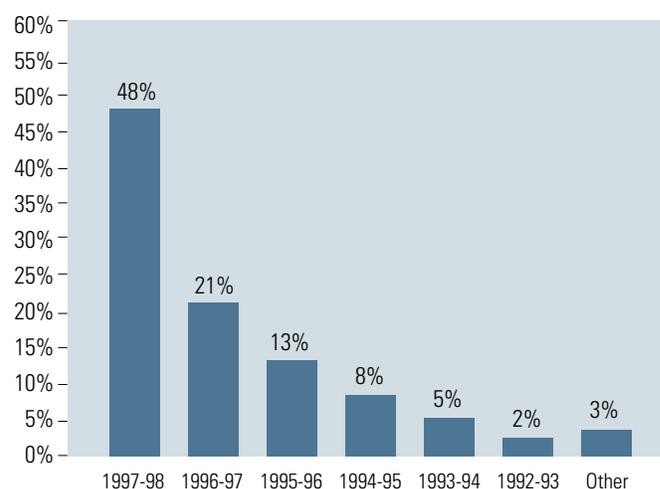*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997-98.*

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[7] Limited English Proficient (LEP) is a term defined in federal regulations to include students whose first language is not English and whose proficiency in English is currently at a level where they are not able to fully participate in an English-only instructional environment.

B. Academic support services

Academic support services, a major component of the SSS program since its inception, help participants both with specific courses and with their general academic progress. To give some indication of the intensity of services that participants receive, projects report the number of students receiving specified forms of academic support as well as the total number of contact hours. Academic support services include: peer tutoring, professional tutoring, supplemental instruction, assisted labs, computer-assisted instruction, study-skills classes or workshops, and orientation classes and workshops.

1. Tutoring

There are four different types of tutoring services:

- Individual (one-to-one) tutoring provided by a professional, usually a graduate student or professional staff person.
- Group tutoring provided by a professional.
- Individual (one-to-one) peer tutoring, usually provided by another undergraduate.
- Group peer tutoring.

Figure 7 shows the percentage of participants who received the different types of tutoring in 1997–98. One-to-one peer tutoring was the most frequent. Projects also reported the total number of contact hours delivered for each service.

Dividing the total contact hours by the number of participants receiving the service gives the average time per recipient, as shown in the boxes in Figure 7.

2. Other academic support services

In addition to tutoring, SSS projects provided academic support services described on the report form as follows:

- Supplemental instruction—organized tutoring sessions for specific courses that are tied directly to the instruction in the courses.
- Assisted labs—academic support or tutoring provided through a learning center or other formal means.
- Computer-assisted instruction—academic support or tutoring provided via computers or other formal means.
- Study skills classes and workshops—activities designed to help students gain the skills needed to succeed in the academic programs of the institution.
- Orientation classes and workshops—sessions or classes that help students adjust to the institution which may include help with registration for courses and understanding the academic requirements of the institution.

Figure 7. Percent of SSS participants receiving tutoring and average contact hours per participant: 1997-98
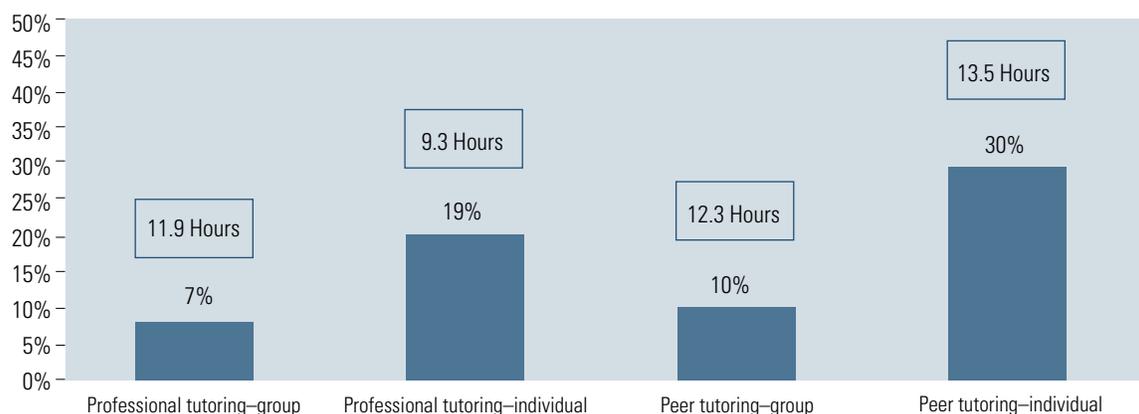
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98.

Figure 8 shows the percentage of students receiving these services. Orientation classes or workshops and study skills classes each involved about one-fifth of all participants. The average number of contact hours per participant ranged from 5.3 hours for orientation activities to 14.5 hours for supplemental instruction (Table 14).

Table 14 also shows the average total contact hours for service calculated for those projects that reported offering the service. This ranged from 429 hours for "other" to 1,155 hours for one-to-one peer tutoring.

Figure 8. Percent of SSS participants receiving academic support services other than tutoring: 1997–98

Service	Percent
Orientation classes and workshops	22%
Study skills classes and workshops	21%
Assisted labs	10%
Computer-assisted instruction	10%
Other	11%
Supplemental instruction	7%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98.

Table 14.   Academic support services: 1997-98

Service	Percentage of projects offering service*	Percentage of participants receiving service	Hours per participant receiving service	Average total hours perproject offering service
Peer tutoring, one-to-one	81%	30%	13.5	1,155
Peer tutoring, group	43%	10%	12.3	673
Professional tutoring, one-to-one	59%	19%	9.3	695
Professional tutoring, group	32%	7%	11.9	627
Supplemental Instruction	31%	7%	14.5	803
Assisted labs	29%	10%	12.4	986
Computer-assisted instruction	40%	10%	9.5	563
Study skills classes or workshops	72%	21%	7.7	516
Orientation classes or workshops	60%	22%	5.3	456
Other	34%	11%	5.8	429

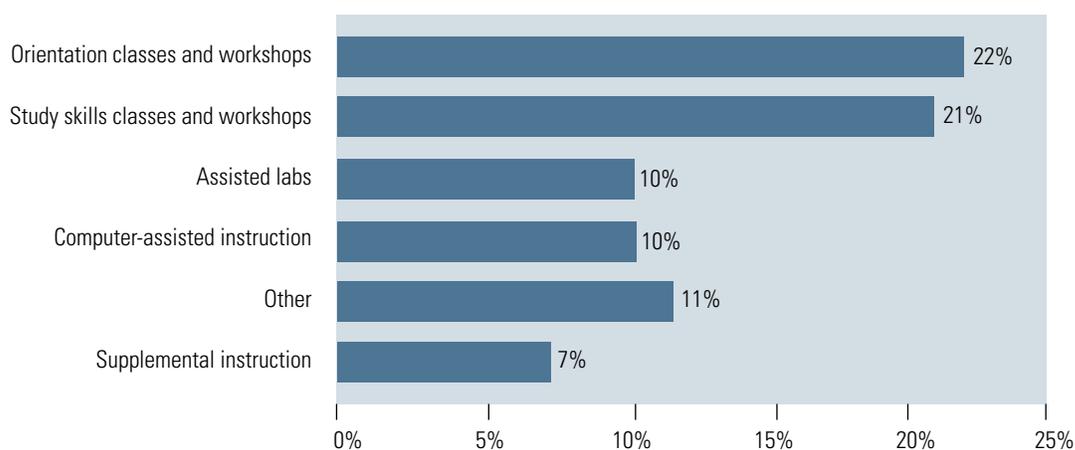*A project is counted as offering the service if at least one participant received it.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997-98.

C. Counseling and mentoring

The support services received by the largest number of SSS participants were counseling and mentoring, which are defined on the report form as follows:

- Personal counseling—crisis intervention and assistance with personal problems and decisions.
- Academic advising—assisting students in making educational plans, selecting appropriate courses, meeting academic requirements, and planning for graduation and further education.
- Financial aid counseling—assisting students individually or in small groups in completing financial aid applications or in working with the financial aid office to develop adequate aid packages.
- Career counseling and employment assistance—helping students learn about career opportunities through written and computerized information, assessing their career interests and capabilities, and making occupational plans.
- Transfer counseling—assisting students interested in four-year programs in meeting the academic requirements of those programs, choosing four-year institutions, and applying for admission and financial aid at those institutions.
- Graduate school counseling—assisting students in choosing graduate or professional programs and applying for admission and financial aid for those programs.

- Professional mentoring—professionals, other than project staff, working with project participants to expose them to career and other opportunities available to them.
- Peer counseling and mentoring—a variety of support, personal or academic, provided by other students and designed to help project participants adjust to the institution.

Over 90 percent of projects offered personal counseling, academic advising, financial aid advice, and career and employment counseling. Fewer projects offered professional mentoring (30 percent) or peer counseling and mentoring (45 percent) (Table 15). Counseling sessions frequently covered more than one of these areas. In these cases, projects prorated the number of contact hours among the different types of counseling.

The most popular counseling service was academic advising, used by 80 percent of participants, followed by financial aid counseling, career counseling, and personal counseling, at about half that level. The average number of hours per participant receiving the service ranged from 1.7 hours for financial aid counseling to 7.6 hours for peer counseling and mentoring. Hours per project ranged from 75 for graduate school counseling to 652 for academic advising.

Table 15. Counseling and mentoring services provided by SSS projects: 1997-1998

Service	Percentage of projects offering service*	Percentage of participants receiving service	Hours per participant receiving service	Hours per project offering service
Personal counseling	92%	41%	3.4	353
Academic advising	95%	80%	3.3	652
Financial aid counseling	91%	48%	1.7	206
Career and employment assistance	92%	39%	2.2	222
Transfer counseling	65%	15%	2.6	141
Graduate school counseling	45%	7%	2.1	75
Professional mentoring	30%	8%	4.5	268
Peer counseling and mentoring	45%	14%	7.6	557
Other	34%	12%	3.6	299

*A project is counted as offering the service if at least one participant received it.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997-98.

D. Cultural and enrichment activities

SSS projects reported the number of participants who engaged in cultural enrichment activities, but not the number of contact hours. These activities are defined on the report form as follows:

- Cultural activities—These include any project-sponsored activities, such as field trips, special lectures, and symposia, that foster academic progress and personal development.
- Campus visitations—These include project-sponsored trips to other postsecondary institutions to acquaint students with other institutions that the participants could attend to further their education (e.g., four-year institutions for students at two-year colleges or graduate or professional schools for students at four-year institutions).
- Information workshops—These include short workshops or seminars (usually a half day or less) on topics that may range from stress management and test-taking to drug and alcohol abuse.

Projects reported that 33 percent of participants attended project-sponsored cultural activities (Figure 9). Information workshops were attended by 23 percent of participants. Six percent of participants made campus visits. Campus visits were more frequent among participants in two-year than four-year institutions. Eleven percent of participants in two-year institutions were reported to have made such visits.

Figure 9. Percent of SSS participants engaging in cultural and enrichment activities: 1997–98
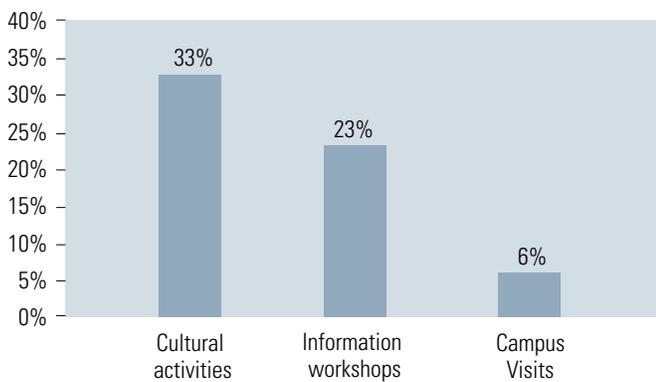
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98.

E. Distribution of contact hours by type of service

Figure 10 presents the distribution of contact hours by type of service—that is, the academic support services taken together and the counseling and mentoring services taken together—by institution sector. Across all sectors, between 62 and 68 percent of the contact hours were accounted for in academic support activities, and between 32 and 38 percent were devoted to counseling and mentoring services. As noted previously, tutoring in its various forms accounted for the largest percentage of the total contact hours. This pattern is similar for both four-year and two-year public institutions.

Figure 10. Contact hours by type of SSS service (counseling and mentoring activities and academic support services), by sector: 1997–98

NOTE: Academic support services include all forms of tutoring, supplemental instruction, assisted labs, computer labs, orientation, study skills, and other forms of support. Counseling and mentoring activities include personal, academic, financial aid, career and employment, graduate school, transfer, peer and professional, and any other forms of counseling.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997–98.

IV. Summary of Participant Records

This section summarizes information obtained from the individual participant records submitted in 1998–99, the fourth year that these data were reported by projects. For that reporting period, SSS projects submitted records for 236,203 students, including those identified as prior-year participants. (In 1997–98, participant records were submitted for 190,670 participants.)

For each participant record on the file, information was requested on the following characteristics:

- Date of birth.
- Gender.
- Race and ethnicity.
- Eligibility.
- Date of entrance into project.
- Date of enrollment into institution.
- Academic need criteria.
- Participant status.
- Enrollment status.
- College grade level when student became a participant in SSS.
- Current college grade level at end of reporting period.
- Amount of financial need needed.
- Amount of financial need awarded.

- Reasons full financial aid was not awarded.
- Grade point average (GPA).
- Academic standing.
- End-of-year enrollment status.
- Degree or certificate completed.

A. Participant characteristics

Section II summarized the gender, race and ethnicity, eligibility status, and current grade level of students receiving SSS services in 1997–98 and reported as aggregate data in the performance reports. This section focuses on information from the 1998–99 participant records not included in the aggregate reports, such as participant status, age, and financial aid.

1. Participant status

The status of a participant can be new, continuing, or prior-year:

- New participants are those who began to receive services in the reporting period.
- Continuing participants are those who had begun in a previous period and continued to receive program services in the reporting period.
- Prior-year participants are former participants still at the institution but not receiving services in the reporting period.

Figure 11 shows the status of participants in 1998–99.

Figure 11. Participant status: 1998–99

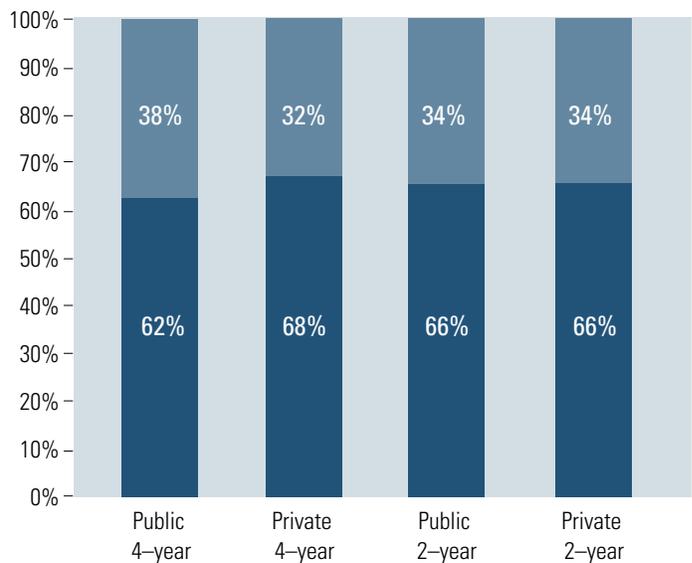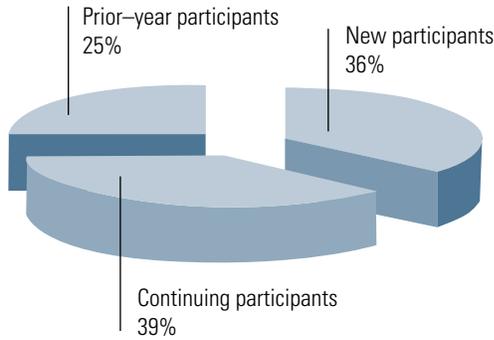Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998–99.

Table 16 shows participant status by institution sector. Because students spend a longer time at four-year institutions, SSS projects at four-year institutions, especially public institutions, had higher proportions of prior-year participants.

2. Participant age at entry

The calculation of participants' age at entry into SSS excludes prior-year participants. SSS participants, on average, were older than the traditional student attending college. The mean age of new participants entering the program during the reporting period was 24.6 years and the median age was 20. Among two-year public institutions, the mean age was 27.1 and the median was 22.8 (Table 17).

Table 16. Participant status, by sector: 1998-99

Sector	New participants	Continuing participants	Prior-year participants
Public four-year	30%	36%	33%
Private four-year	36%	41%	23%
Public two-year	42%	42%	16%
Private two-year	57%	38%	5%
All sectors	36%	39%	25%

NOTE: Row percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

Table 17. Age at entry and years of participation for new and continuing participants, by sector: 1998-99

	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
Mean age at entry into the program	24.6	23.1	21.3	27.1	24.7
Median age at entry into the program	20.0	19.3	18.9	22.8	20.8
Mean years of SSS participation at time of report	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.6	1.5
Median years of SSS participation at time of report	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.1	1.0

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

3. Length of time in Student Support Services

The calculation of participants' length of time in SSS also excludes prior-year participants. At the end of the reporting period, the mean amount of time that new and continuing participants had spent in SSS was 1.9 years, similar to the 1996–97 findings (1.8 years). As would be expected, projects at four-year institutions had longer periods of participation than those at two-year institutions (Table 17).

4. Grade at entry and current grade level

Over half (54 percent) of all SSS participants, including almost three-fourths of those at private institutions, were first-year students who had never attended college when they began to participate (Table 18). As to current grade, the largest group of participants was second-year students (31 percent).

IV

Table 18.	Grade level on entry and current grade level of participants, by sector: 1998-99				
	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
Grade level on entry					
First year, never attended	54%	54%	69%	49%	73%
First year, attended before	22%	14%	13%	34%	17%
Second year, sophomore	13%	12%	9%	15%	10%
Third year, junior	6%	11%	5%	0%	0%
Fourth year, senior	3%	5%	2%	0%	0%
Fifth year, other undergrad	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Missing or no response	2%	3%	1%	2%	0%
Current grade level					
First year, never attended	13%	10%	18%	16%	24%
First year, attended before	20%	13%	10%	32%	32%
Second year, sophomore	31%	20%	24%	48%	42%
Third year, junior	11%	17%	18%	1%	1%
Fourth year, senior	16%	26%	22%	1%	0%
Fifth year, other undergraduate	3%	5%	3%	0%	0%
First year, graduate or professional	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Second year, graduate or professional	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Third year, graduate or professional	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Beyond third year graduate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Missing or no response	4%	6%	4%	2%	1%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

5. Full-time and part-time enrollment status

Full-time students constituted 63 percent of SSS participants in 1998–99 (Figure 12). Another ten percent of participants were enrolled half-or three-quarters-time. Fifteen percent had an enrollment status of "varied," meaning that the status changed over the course of the year. The six percent of participants who were "not enrolled" were presumably students who dropped out during the year. Private four-year institutions had a substantially higher proportion of participants who were enrolled full-time (83 percent); public two-year institutions had the lowest percentage of full-time participants (48 percent) (Table 19).

Figure 12. Enrollment status of participants: 1998–99

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998–99.

Table 19.   Enrollment status of participants, by sector: 1998-99

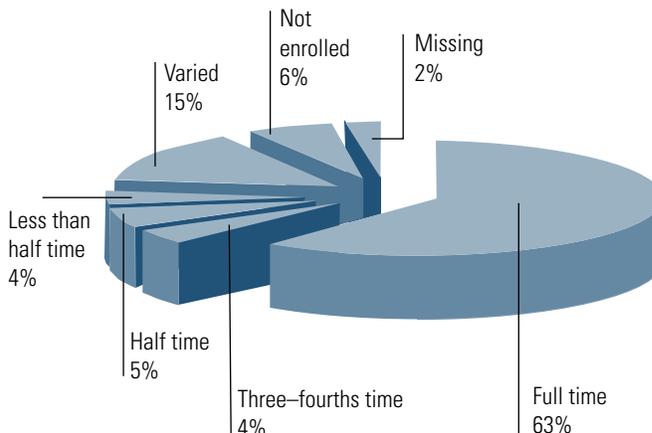|	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
Full time	63%	68%	83%	48%	67%
Three-fourths time	4%	3%	2%	7%	6%
Half-time	5%	4%	2%	8%	4%
Less than half-time	4%	2%	4%	6%	3%
Varied	15%	11%	5%	24%	12%
Not enrolled	6%	9%	3%	4%	0%
Missing	2%	2%	1%	3%	8%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

6. Academic need

Participant records indicated the methods that projects used to assess the participant's academic needs. The most frequent response was "multiple," meaning that more than one method was used (Table 20). "Diagnostic tests" were the most frequently used specific assessment tool, with 16 percent of all participant records reporting their use, and they were used more frequently in two-year than in four-year institutions.

7. Financial aid needed and awarded to participants

Projects offered financial aid to two-thirds (66 percent) of SSS participants in the 1998–99 reporting period (Table 21). Participants at private institutions were more likely to receive aid and more likely to receive an amount closer to the aid requested than those at public institutions.

The average amount of aid requested was $8,482 and the average amount awarded was $6,932 (Table 21). The amounts were lowest in SSS projects at public two-year institutions ($6,016 requested and $4,159 awarded) and highest in projects at private four-year institutions ($12,709 requested and $11,381 awarded).

Table 20. Methods used to assess academic needs, by sector: 1998-99

	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
High school GPA	2.4%	3.2%	3.9%	1.0%	2.3%
SAT scores-verbal	1.3%	1.7%	2.8%	0.2%	0.8%
SAT scores-math	0.7%	0.8%	1.7%	0.2%	1.3%
ACT scores	8.1%	12.5%	6.5%	3.4%	1.2%
Predictive indicator	7.3%	7.4%	5.7%	7.7%	10.8%
Diagnostic tests	16.4%	9.0%	14.8%	25.2%	48.5%
College GPA	3.9%	5.4%	3.5%	2.3%	1.1%
High school equivalency	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	1.2%	1.2%
Failing grades	2.0%	1.9%	1.2%	2.5%	0.9%
Out of academic pipeline	3.7%	2.7%	1.9%	5.6%	2.6%
Multiple needs	35.2%	33.2%	42.1%	36.0%	10.9%
Other	15.2%	18.3%	15.0%	11.3%	17.9%
Missing	3.0%	3.5%	0.5%	3.4%	0.6%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

Table 21. Financial aid, by sector: 1998-99

	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
Total number of students	236,203	110,850	32,795	90,075	2,483
Number requesting aid	163,694	73,214	25,235	63,140	2,105
Number offered aid	154,852	69,407	26,350	56,937	2,158
Percentage offered aid	66%	63%	80%	63%	87%
Mean aid requested	$8,482	$8,943	$12,709	$6,016	$8,969
Mean aid offered	$6,932	$7,578	$11,381	$4,159	$6,307

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

Table 22 shows the reasons that aid applicants did not receive the amounts requested. The most frequent reasons were that a loan was refused or that there was insufficient aid available.

B. Academic progress of participants

This section summarizes information about the academic progress of participant as reported on the 1998–99 participant records.

1. Grade point average (GPA) and academic standing

Almost all SSS projects (99 percent) were housed in institutions using a four-point grading scale (Table 23). (Only 836 participant records out of 236,203 reported GPAs using a five-point scale). The average GPA for all SSS students in 1998–99 was 2.6 on a four-point scale (3.2 for the few projects at institutions on a 5-point scale). This is similar to the results in the *National Study of Student Support Services,* which reported an average cumulative GPA of 2.6 for SSS students in their third year of school (Chaney, Muraskin, Cahalan, and Rak, 1997).

There was little variation between public and private institutions, but students at two-year institutions had somewhat higher average GPAs than students at four-year institutions.

Eighty-two percent of SSS current and prior-year participants in 1999 were in good academic standing at their institutions (often defined as a GPA of 2.0), 14 percent were not in good standing, and 4 percent had missing information.

2. End-of-year enrollment status

Table 24 shows the enrollment status of SSS students.[8] More than 61 percent were continuing students, 3 percent transferred, 14 percent graduated, 1 percent enrolled in graduate school, 10 percent withdrew (mostly for "personal reasons"), 2 percent were dismissed, and 9 percent had an unknown status.

Only two percent of participants received an academic dismissal at the end of the year. The highest occurrence was at public four-year institutions.

Table 22.   Reasons for deficient aid, by sector: 1998-99

	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
Loan refused	9.2%	8.3%	8.7%	10.6%	7.2%
Insufficient Federal grant aid	6.1%	6.2%	5.8%	6.2%	5.4%
Insufficient College Work Study aid	0.9%	1.1%	0.6%	0.9%	1.4%
Insufficient institution aid	4.6%	5.1%	5.3%	3.7%	9.6%
Inadequate academic progress	1.3%	1.3%	0.8%	1.4%	2.5%
Refused College Work study aid	2.3%	1.8%	1.8%	3.2%	0.5%
Not enrolled full-time	4.3%	2.6%	3.3%	6.9%	4.0%
Not eligible for financial aid	5.1%	3.8%	3.3%	7.3%	4.4%
Full amount awarded, or none requested	66.1%	69.8%	70.3%	59.8%	64.9%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

[8] There was some confusion about the meaning of "end of year." Some projects took this to mean June and others took it as fall enrollment (August or September).

Table 23. Average cumulative GPA and academic standing of participants, by sector: 1998-99

	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
Average cumulative GPA on 4-point scale	2.64	2.61	2.62	2.69	2.73
Academic standing					
Good	82.2%	82.5%	83.7%	81.4%	78.1%
Not in good standing	13.9%	14.4%	13.3%	13.7%	12.7%
Missing	3.9%	3.2%	3.0%	5.0%	9.3%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

Table 24. End-of-year enrollment status of current and prior-year participants, by sector: 1998-99

	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
Academic dismissal	2.3%	3.4%	1.4%	1.4%	2.8%
Dismissal for nonacademic reasons	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%	1.2%
Withdrew for financial reasons	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%
Withdrew for health reasons	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.9%	1.1%
Withdrew for academic reasons	1.9%	1.9%	1.5%	2.1%	3.4%
Withdrew for personal reasons	6.9%	5.3%	5.3%	9.5%	8.1%
Transferred	3.3%	2.1%	2.2%	5.2%	6.1%
Graduated	11.9%	13.9%	13.4%	9.0%	7.2%
Graduated and transferred	1.9%	0.2%	0.1%	4.6%	6.0%
Enrolled in graduate programs	0.7%	1.1%	0.7%	0.2%	0.2%
Continuing student	61.1%	62.8%	70.2%	55.8%	52.6%
No response	8.6%	8.4%	4.0%	10.5%	10.9%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

3. Degrees and certificates awarded

Almost 17 percent of SSS current and prior-year participants enrolled at the institution during the reporting year completed a degree or certificate in 1998–99 (Table 25).

Table 25.	Degrees or certificates awarded to current and prior-year participants, by sector: 1998-99				
	All	Public four-year	Private four-year	Public two-year	Private two-year
Certificate or diploma for less than two-year program	0.8%	0.1%	0.3%	1.7%	8.4%
Certificate or diploma for two-year program	0.9%	0.1%	1.4%	1.7%	0.5%
Associate's degree	5.5%	1.2%	2.0%	11.8%	16.9%
First bachelor's degree	8.9%	15.3%	11.3%	0.3%	*%
Second bachelor's degree	0.1%	.1%	*%	*%	*%
Teaching credential program	*%	.1%	*%	*%	*%
Graduate or professional degree	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	*%
No degree or certificate reported in period	83.5%	82.8%	84.6%	84.2%	74.1%

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Percent is less than .05 percent.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99.

V. Retention to the Second Year

This section provides estimates of the percentage of first-year SSS participants who returned to the same institution the following year. The estimates are based on participant records and on updates received from projects. We calculated retention rates between 1997–98 and 1998–99 and between 1998–99 and 1999–2000.

A. Procedure for updates

To increase the quality of the performance reports, in July 2000 we sent to 681 projects lists of participants who appeared on the files in 1997–98 but did not appear on the files in 1998–99. Participants whose records indicated that they were likely to graduate or that they had withdrawn were excluded from the lists. Projects were asked to review the lists and indicate whether any of the listed students were actually enrolled at their institution in 1998–99, regardless of whether they continued as SSS participants. By January 2001, we had received the updates from 496 projects (including nine with no changes).

We did not send lists to, or include in our calculations, projects that did not submit participant records for both years. We also excluded projects for which there remained unresolved problems with the data.

Similar procedures were repeated in January 2002 when we sent to 674 projects lists of participants who were included on the files in 1998–99 but did not appear on the files in 1999–2000. This time, project directors were also given instructions on how to submit their updated reports via the Web, and encouraged to do so as an alternative to returning paper reports in the mail. A total of 565 updated reports were returned (84 percent). Of those returned, 497 (88 percent) reports were submitted electronically. However, 47 of the Web returns were incomplete due to problems with transmission. A second request to these projects yielded a return of another 25 completed reports.

B. Retention rates

Table 26 shows the rates of retention at SSS institutions from 1997–98 to 1998–99. We have also included comparison numbers taken from *Postsecondary Education Opportunity (June 1997 and November 1999)*, which are based on ACT data. The overall retention rate for SSS students (67 percent) is virtually identical to the national average. It is three percentage points higher than that of "liberal admission" institutions (64 percent), a more appropriate comparison group for SSS.

Table 27 shows the retention rates from 1998–99 to 1999–2000. Retention of SSS participants for this time span was about two percentage points higher than for 1997–98 to 1998–99 (69 percent versus 67 percent). This is reflective of the increased number of first-year SSS students in 1998–99 (75,934) compared to 1997–98 (66,249). Additionally, a larger percentage of students were retained in private four-year institutions in 1999–2000 than in 1998–99 (75 percent versus 67 percent).

C. Limitations and discussion

SSS retention rates may be higher than calculated. Not all projects updated their records. Retention rates calculated using no updates are seven percent lower that the final figures.

Tables 26 and 27 include some national rates obtained from ACT data for comparison. The SSS rates are about the same as the national average for retention to the second year.

At public institutions, the SSS rates are higher than the national average; they are slightly lower at private institutions. This reflects the greater prevalence of SSS projects at institutions with more liberal or flexible entrance requirements. The *National Study of Student Support Services* found that about one-third of all open admission institutions have SSS projects, while only about 19 percent of highly selective institutions have SSS projects.

Table 26.   Retention rates: 1997-98 to 1998-99

Sector	Number of SSS projects included in calculation	Number of first-year students in 1997–98	Number of second year students in 1998–99 (including updates)	Percent of SSS students retained	Percent retained in liberal admission schools (ACT)	Percent retained in all U.S. schools (ACT)
Public four-year	235	21,014	15,357	73.1%	66.3%	71.9%
Private four-year	116	8,207	5,487	66.9%	65.6%	75.1%
Public two-year	304	35,713	22,601	63.3%	NA	52.5%
Private two-year	11	1,315	670	51.0%	NA	69.9%
All sectors	666	66,249	44,115	66.6%	63.8%	66.7%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1997-98 and 1998-99; Postsecondary Education Opportunity, June 1997 and November 1999.

Table 27. Retention rates: 1998-99 to 1999-2000

Sector	Number of SSS projects included in calculation	Number of first-year students in 1998–99	Number of second year students in 1999–2000 (including updates)	Percent of SSS students retained	Percent retained in liberal admission schools (ACT)	Percent retained in all U.S. schools (ACT)
Public four-year	273	24,698	18,295	74.1%	66.3%	71.9%
Private four-year	123	9,018	6,752	74.9%	65.6%	75.1%
Public two-year	334	40,892	26,549	64.9%	NA	52.5%
Private two-year	12	1,326	597	45.0%	NA	69.9%
Total	742	75,934	52,193	68.7%	63.8%	66.7%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1998-99 and 1999-2000; Postsecondary Education Opportunity, June 1997 and November 1999.

VI. Future Plans

As this report demonstrates, Student Support Services projects are submitting performance data of high internal consistency and validity. We commend SSS projects for their extensive and effective work in producing the performance reports.

Among issues that need to be clarified in future report cycles are the range of participants whose records should be submitted and consistency across projects in reporting some items.

Plans for improving and using this information include:

- Clarifying directions for completing performance reports.
- Analyzing data that cover longer time spans to understand student progress toward graduation.
- Establishing benchmarks for project planning and assessment in order to improve services.
- Linking SSS data with other federal databases.

The Department is confident that these efforts will give SSS projects more information to help them improve services and enhance the success of low-income and first-generation college students and students with disabilities in postsecondary education.

Appendix A: Participant Characteristics for 1999–2000

Table A1.   Eligibility classification of SSS participants, by sector: 1999-2000

| Sector	Low-income and first- generation	Low-income only	First- generation only	Disabled only	Disabled and low-income
Public four-year	58%	8%	19%	8%	7%
Private four-year	62%	9%	20%	5%	4%
Public two-year	61%	6%	19%	7%	7%
Private two-year	66%	9%	20%	4%	2%
All projects	60%	7%	19%	7%	6%

Note: Row percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1999-2000.

Figure A1. Participant distribution by eligibility status: 1999–2000
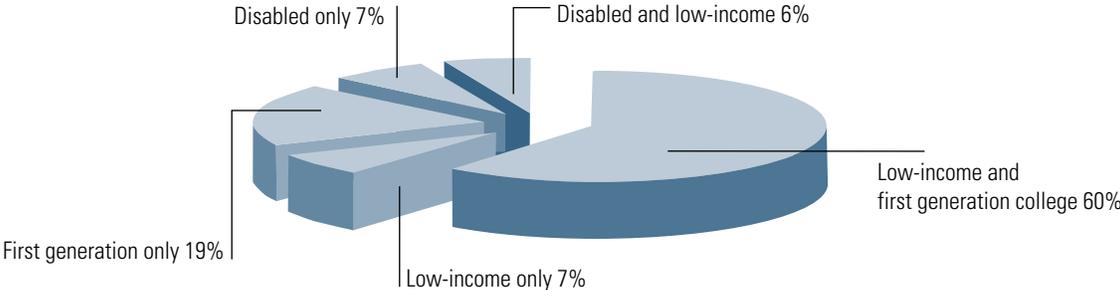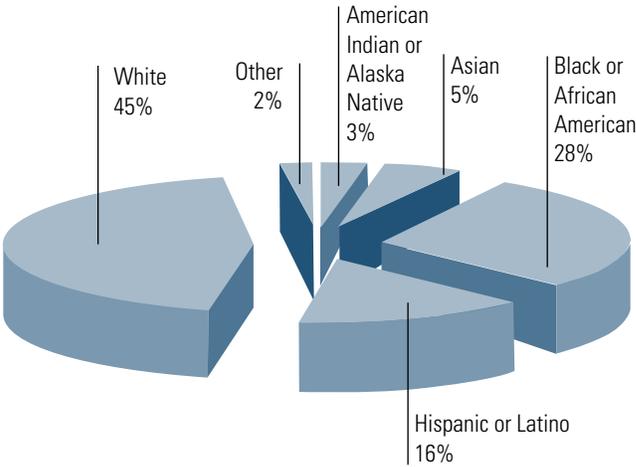

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1999–2000.

Figure A2. Gender of SSS participants and all undergraduate students: 1999–2000
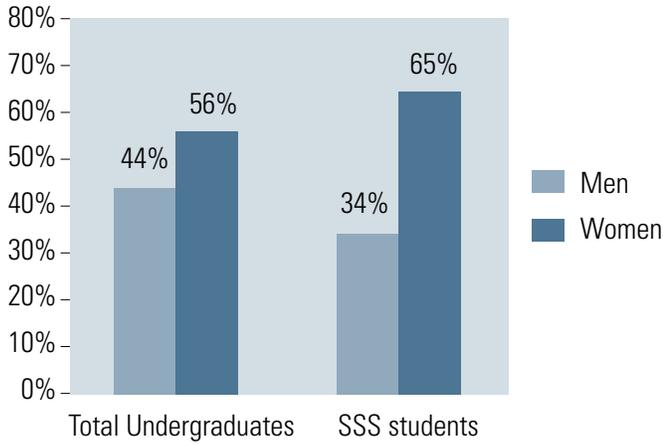
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Services Performance Reports, 1999–2000 and National Center for Education Statistics, Profile of Undergraduates in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions, 1999–2000.

Figure A3. Racial and ethnic background of SSS participants: 1999–2000

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Federal TRIO Programs, Student Support Service Performance Reports, 1999–2000.

References

Cahalan, Margaret. Lana Muraskin. *National Study of Student Services Interim Report: Vol. 1, Program Implementation,* U.S. Department of Education, 1994.

Chaney, Bradford. Lana Muraskin, Margaret Cahalan, Rebecca Rak. *National Study of Student Support Services. Third Year Longitudinal Study Results and Program Implementation Study Update.* U.S. Department of Education, February 1997.

No Child
LEFT BEHIND