

National student debt has been clocked at \$1.5 trillion as of 2018, and is expected to increase absent radical steps to address the current debt held by 44 million Americans and improve college affordability for future students and borrowers. This level of student debt represents a growing financial crisis that is shaping up to be the defining electoral issue of our generation.

1. Student Debt Facts and Figures for Illinois

- Total student debt owed by all Illinois borrowers (federal and private loans): \$56.79 billion¹
- Number of federal student loan borrowers in Illinois (not including private loans): 1.5 million.²
- Federal student loan default rate for Illinoisans: 10%.³
- Average student debt of Illinois 4-year public and private non-profit college graduates: \$29,214.⁴ *
- Proportion of Illinois 4-year public and private non-profit college graduates with debt: 61%⁴ **

* This debt only reflects graduates from these institutions, and is not inclusive of those who did not complete their degree programs at these institutions. However, this debt amount is inclusive of both federal and private student loans held by these graduates.

** Note that, on average nationally, 83% of graduates from for-profit, 4-year postsecondary institutions left with debt.

2. Constituent Stories from Illinois

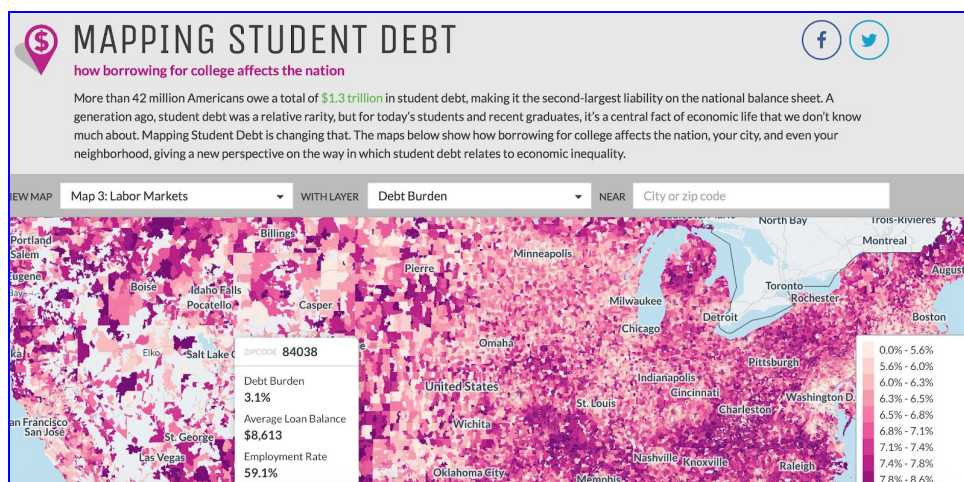
Generation Progress Action and Higher Ed, Not Debt manage a storybank of 70,000 stories from young people and those burdened by student debt. These stories illustrate the nuance of issues faced by borrowers.

- [In Their Own Words: Student Debt Stories from Illinoisans](#)

3. A Geographic and Interactive Look at the Distribution of Debt and Delinquency by Zip Code in Illinois

These interactive maps by Generation Progress Action and Higher Ed, Not Debt look at the distribution of debt and delinquency across race and zip code. These maps also analyze average debt burdens - or the percent of people's paycheck going towards servicing student debt - by zip code.

MappingStudentDebt.org



¹ "CFPB 50 State Snapshot of Student Debt - Consumer Financial" 16 Oct. 2017,

https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_student-loans_50-state-snapshot_complaints.pdf. Accessed 13 Sep. 2018.

² "Direct Loan Portfolio by Location - Federal Student Aid."

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/fsawq/datacenter/library/DLPortfolio-by-Location.xls>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2018.

³ "Default Rates by State." <https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/staterates.pdf>. Accessed 13 Sep. 2018.

⁴ "Student Debt and the Class of 2017." https://ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub_files/classof2017.pdf. Accessed 19 Sep. 2018

4. State-Level Policy Ideas for Student Debt Policy Reform and College Affordability

Under the Trump Administration and the deregulation regime being advanced under Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, there isn't much hope that national policy will work to reduce college costs and address the current debt held by borrowers. However, there is such hope at the state and local level.

In January 2016, Generation Progress released a report detailing a suite of policies that states and municipalities — in the face of congressional inaction — could adopt to help relieve people's student debt burden.

- [HEND 2016 Report: "We Can't Afford to Wait" paper on state-level policy that can help resolve student debt issues](#)

5. Tracking Student Debt Progress by State

Working with state and national partners, Higher Ed, Not Debt maintains a tracker of state legislation related to college affordability and student debt.

[Putting Student Debt Reform on the Map: HEND's Legislative Tracker](#)

