

PLANNING AND PAYING FOR COLLEGE

01 Check your aid eligibility

Before completing the FAFSA, use the Federal Student Aid Estimator to see what federal aid your student may qualify for. No account is required to complete.

You'll need:

- Tax filing status
- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
- Total assets
- Annual child support received

02 Calculate the total cost

Don't assume you'll pay full price. In many cases, the net price is much lower than the published cost.

Use each school's Net Price Calculator to estimate what families similar to yours actually paid after grants and scholarships.

03 Explore your opportunities

Every path offers different opportunities, costs, and outcomes. The best choice is the one that aligns with your student's interests, career goals, and your financial situation.

Use The College Scorecard to compare colleges by graduation rates, typical debt, and estimated earnings.

04 Begin building a plan

Create a financial plan that supports your student's goals and works for your family's budget.

- Create a My Scholarship Central account to begin applying for scholarships.
- Visit the financial aid and scholarship pages for each school you're considering to learn about grants, scholarships, and deadlines.
- Check whether schools on your list accept dual credit, AP, IB, or other college-level coursework, which can help reduce the cost of earning a degree.
- Complete the FAFSA beginning October 1 to apply for federal, state, and institutional financial aid.

05 Compare your offers and options

Once you begin receiving financial aid offers, compare the true cost of each option.

As you compare offers, consider:

- Cost of Attendance (tuition, housing, books, meals)
- Grants and Scholarships (doesn't have to be repaid)
- Student Loans (must be repaid)
- Net Price (out-of-pocket cost)

Comparison tools can help evaluate your options and determine which school offers the best overall value.

Comparison Tools:

- Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development College Cost Comparison
- uAspire College Cost Calculator