

Financial Aid Cost of Attendance Budget



Here's an example...

A typical, in-state, undergraduate student living on campus and taking a full class load has the following estimated cost of attendance budget for the 2026/2027 school year.

Direct Costs	Tuition	\$1,000
	Fees	\$3,598
	Housing	\$7,233.74
	Food	\$5,799.40
	Subtotal	\$17,631.14
Indirect Costs	Books & Supplies	\$406.74
	Transportation Expenses	\$1,885.14
	Personal Expenses	\$1,686.90
	Average Loan Fees	\$77
	Computer Purchase	\$1,219.90
	Subtotal	\$5,275.68
Cost of Attendance Budget	\$22,906.82	

*Housing allowance is determined by on-campus housing costs. However, if you live off campus, you can request a review of your actual cost via a Cost of Attendance Adjustment form. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

What is a Cost of Attendance (COA) Budget?

A cost of attendance is a budget of reasonable costs and allowances associated with going to college. The cost of attendance is NOT your bill.

What's included in my COA?

Your cost of attendance budget is made up of two different types of costs: direct and indirect.

- Direct costs are items that will appear on your WCU bill, such as tuition, fees, housing, and food (if you live on campus).
- Indirect costs (will not appear on your bill) are estimated allowances associated with going to college and should be included in your budget. Allowances include books, transportation, and personal expenses.

Federal and State Grant Programs



Grant Programs

Grants are funds which do not have to be repaid

Program Details

Federal Pell Grant

- Awarded to undergraduate students who have exceptional financial need, as determined by the FAFSA, and who have not earned a bachelor's or graduate degree
 - Federal Pell Grant lifetime eligibility is limited to 12 full-time semesters or the equivalent
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WCU Grant

- Awarded to students based on need and availability of funds
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Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

- Awarded to undergraduate students, enrolled full-time, who have exceptional financial need, as determined by the FAFSA, and who have not earned a bachelor's or graduate degree
 - Award dependent on availability of funds
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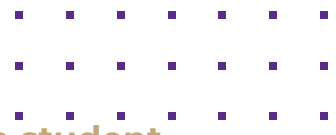
NC Tuition Grant

- Awarded to undergraduate students, enrolled full-time, who have exceptional financial need, as determined by the FAFSA, and who have not earned a bachelor's or graduate degree
 - Federal Pell Grant recipients receive priority
 - Awarded to NC Residents only
 - To establish and retain eligibility for North Carolina State grants, students must obtain and maintain North Carolina residency, as determined by the state of North Carolina
 - Award amount subject to change based on eligibility
 - Award dependent on availability of funds
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Next NC Scholarship

- Awarded to students with need
- Awarded to NC Residents attending an eligible North Carolina institution
- Award is based on FAFSA completion with an SAI of less than \$7,500 and AGI less than \$80,000
- Award dependent on availability of funds
- Lifetime eligibility is limited to 10 full-time semesters or the equivalent
- To establish and retain eligibility for North Carolina State grants, students must obtain and maintain North Carolina residency, as determined by the state of North Carolina
- Award amount subject to change based on eligibility

Federal Self-Help Aid



Self-Help Programs

Self-Help aid programs are funds that a student works to earn

Program Details

Federal Work Study

- Awarded to students with need
 - Provides students a valuable work experience around their class schedule
 - If a student is not awarded Federal Work Study in their financial aid offer, they can contact the Financial Aid Office to be placed on a waitlist
 - Award dependent on availability of funds
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Federal Student Loan Programs

Will you need a loan to attend college?

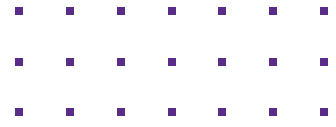
If so, think federal aid first. Federal student loans usually offer borrowers lower interest rates and have more flexible repayment terms and options than private student loans.



What is a federal student loan?

- Federal loans are borrowed funds that you must repay with interest.
 - A federal student loan allows students and their parents to borrow money to help pay for college through loan programs supported by the federal government.
 - They have low-interest rates and offer flexible repayment terms, benefits, and options.
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Federal Student Loan Programs



What is a private student loan?

- A private student loan is a nonfederal loan issued by a lender such as a bank or credit union.



Why are federal student loans a better option for paying for college?

Federal student loans offer borrowers many benefits not typically found in private loans. These include:

- Low fixed interest rates
- Income-based repayment plans
- Cancellation for certain employment
- Deferment (postponement) options, including deferment of loan
- Payments when a student returns to school
- Private loans usually require a credit check

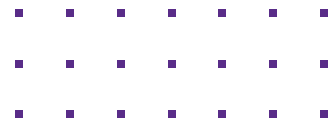
For these reasons, students and parents should always exhaust federal student loan options before considering a private loan.



How much should I borrow?

Consider the earnings potential in your chosen profession to determine how easily you can repay your debt. You can find career salary estimates in the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook at [bls.gov/ooh](https://www.bls.gov/ooh). Your student loan payments should only be a small percentage of your salary after you graduate, so it's important not to borrow more than you need for your school-related expenses.

Federal Student Loans



Federal Loan

Loan Details

Direct Subsidized Loan

- For undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need
- For loan interest rates go to <https://studentaid.gov>
- The U.S. Department of Education pays the interest on a Direct Subsidized Loan
 - while you're in school at least half-time,
 - for the first six months after you leave school (referred to as a grace period*), and
 - during a period of deferment (a postponement of loan payments)
- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is the lender; payment is owed to ED

Direct Unsubsidized Loan

- For undergraduate and graduate students; financial need is not required
- For loan interest rates go to <https://studentaid.gov>
- Student is responsible for interest during all periods
- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is the lender; payment is owed to ED

Direct Plus Loan

- For parents of dependent undergraduate students and for graduate or professional students; financial need is not required
- Student must be either a dependent undergraduate student for whom a parent is taking out a Direct PLUS Loan or a graduate or professional student who is receiving a Direct Graduate PLUS Loan
- For loan interest rates go to <https://studentaid.gov>
- A credit check is required and borrower must not have negative credit history
- Borrower is responsible for interest during all periods
- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is the lender; payment is owed to ED

