



Financial Aid 101: How Do I Afford My College Choice?

Understanding college affordability starts with a little financial sleuthing. Separating out the expenses you can control and will pay as they are incurred

(books, transportation, personal expenses and potentially room and board if you have local off-campus options)

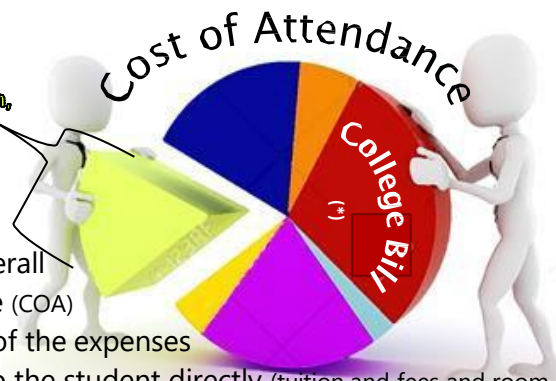
from the overall

Cost Of Attendance (COA) leaves the portion of the expenses that will be billed to the student directly (tuition and fees and room and board if you live on campus) less financial aid.

Your federal **Stafford loan** (student) and/or **PLUS loan** (parent) and any other **grants/scholarships** awarded will be subtracted from the amount the college bills the student. Any money you earn from **Work Study** can also be (but is not required to be – many college students use this money to pay for the expenses listed above that they control) deducted from your bill. The amount that remains, your **college bill** is payable in a lump sum amount, by semester, or in monthly installments (for an additional fee).

Ultimately, college affordability comes down to your answers to the following questions: **(1)** is your **college bill** affordable if paid over the course of the academic year (August-May)? **(2)** can my parent(s) (or private loan cosigner) afford to repay the **PLUS loan** (and/or private loan) over the next 10 years without my help? **(3)** will I earn enough between now and the end of my first year in college to pay the **expenses I control** and whatever portion of the **college bill** that I will be responsible for? **(4)** am I committed to completing my degree (which greatly increases my ability to repay my **Stafford loan**)? If you can answer yes to all four questions, great! Keep to your plan.

If you answer **NO** to any question, **contact your school's Financial Aid Office**. Ask for help. Submit your financial aid appeal documents ASAP! Be prepared to explain why your college choice is unaffordable. Did they meet your EFC? If no, why? If yes, what's changed in your financial picture? Arm yourself with the facts. If outside scholarships are your only option, it's never too late to start applying. [Click here for options](#). Finally, **it's your education**. Take responsibility for your share of college costs. Work as much as you can over the summer (and whatever is reasonable during the school year) and **save what you earn!**



Important information for college applications:

SPCPA School Code: 242 284

Counselor: Alison Green

School Information:
16 W 5th St
St Paul, MN 55102
(651) 290-2225

FAFSA Facts & Tips:

- Read the directions...if the question remains unclear click on the help link.
- Income questions...are based on 2020 federal income tax returns – parent(s) and student. (The IRS Retrieval Tool will populate these fields.)
- No blanks...enter "0" or not applicable.
- No commas or decimals...whole numbers only.
- No nicknames...FAFSA name, address and social security information must match IRS forms.
- Parent #1...is biological or adoptive parent student lives with 51% or more of the time.
- Parent #2...is parent #1's spouse.
- Students living with both biological or adoptive parents...decide who parent #1 is in advance and be consistent.
- Questions about students living with unmarried parents, a stepparent, or in a foster care/non-custodial adult situation...click [here](#) to learn more.
- Not living at home and other independent student questions...click [here](#) to learn more.
- Asset questions...are as of the FAFSA application date (not 2020 figures).
- Exclude...the value of primary residence and all retirement accounts (IRA, 401K, 403B, etc.) from the asset questions.
- DACA students...apply for financial aid via the Minnesota Dream Act not FAFSA. See Ms. Green for more details. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- Undocumented parents...use 000-00-0000 in the social security field. (Caution: It is unclear whether FAFSA information can be shared with I.C.E.)
- Male designation on birth certificate... means student must complete their Selective Service registration to be considered for federal student aid.
- Review the Student Aid Report (SAR)...once your FAFSA is submitted for important next steps!



may 2022

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31					

[Pureland Supply](#)
\$500
Vocational essay

[Dutchcrafters](#)
\$500
Heritage essay

[Rover](#)
\$2500
Pet essay

[RISE](#)
\$3000
2.5 min GPA

[Autistic Students](#)
\$3000
Essay

[Bower Youth Award](#)
\$3000
Environmental Challenge

June....

[Terry Bryant](#)
\$2500 (6/1)
Dangers of drunk driving essay/video

[Rock the Trades](#)
\$2500
Career focused

[Art & Design](#)
\$1000
Visual art, film, writing, song

[Parrish Law](#)
\$1000
Essay

[Covid-19 Impact](#)
\$1500 (6/19)
Interview

[Advocates Scholarship](#)
\$1000 (6/30)
Drunk Driving Essay

[Brown Girls Do College](#)
\$1000 (6/30)
Dance and/or 1st Gen

[Aging Matters](#)
\$1500
Essay

[Debt Relief](#)
\$2500
Essay

[Review It](#)
\$1000
Movie essay

[Trade Skills](#)
\$5000
Career focused

[Navistite's Next Stemist](#)
\$10,000
Female identifying STEM

[B.Davis](#)
\$1000
Leadership

[College is Power](#)
\$1000
College goals

[Ampronix](#)
\$1000
Community Service

[NetDocuments Work](#)
\$10,000
BIPOC, min 2.5 GPA

[TC Hope](#)
\$7500
Black/African 3.0 min GPA

[Barry Griswell](#)
\$25,000
2.0 min GPA

How do I decide between loan options?

For starters, it helps to understand the basic differences:

There are [two types of student loans: federal and private](#). Federal loans originate with the US Department of Education. This type of loan is fixed with a lower interest rate, which is why federal is the way to go for most students. These loans may also be subsidized, meaning the federal government aids in paying off the interest while the student is attending college. Private student loans are offered by private lenders, like a bank, credit union, or online provider. They have fixed or variable interest rates, which is determined by credit score and salary.

Depending on your private loan lender, the repayment period can differ. The most common *deadline is 20 years, but the lowest repayment time span could be as little as five years*. For this loan type, you must qualify and be approved for it, with or without a cosigner. When it comes to choosing a private loan lender, it's important to take the interest rate into consideration. Knowing the [difference between a fixed and variable rate](#) is imperative in determining whether or not your payments will change or stay the same over time.

Ready for some more specifics? Click [here](#) for an overview from College Investor, [here](#) for NerdWallet, [here](#) for Credible (a Kayak type site), and [here](#) for the SELF loan which is available only to Minnesota residents and has rates NOT based on credit scores (which most private lenders require). **Minimizing loan amounts as much as possible is nearly always the best strategy.**

