

CONTROL COSTS ALL FOUR YEARS OF COLLEGE

By CollegiateParent



All families with students in college know that college is expensive. The price of housing, food, textbooks, clothing and entertainment keeps going up. This advice can help you save money and manage the cost of a college education.

Complete the FAFSA each year

First-year students who were awarded financial aid must reapply each year by completing the FAFSA and any other forms required by the college. If your student didn't apply last year, they should apply this year. Their academic record could qualify them for college scholarships and grants. Another reason to apply is if your family financial situation has changed: loss of job, care of an elderly parent, another family member in college, or a change in income. Even if your family doesn't qualify for government aid, colleges use the FAFSA when giving out their own merit aid.

Take advantage of scholarship opportunities

Your student should visit the financial aid/scholarship services office at their school — it maintains an extensive list of scholarships your student can apply for. Your student can also search online using social media, ask professors or friends about possible scholarships, or use scholarship search engines like:

- [Scholarships.com](#)
- [MyScholly.com](#)
- [Scholarships360.org](#)
- [Cappex.com](#)

Scholarships can help your student pay for their college education, but they must do the work to research and apply!

Graduate on time

Graduating in four years or less can save your student and your family tens of thousands of dollars. You would not only save on tuition, but room and board and other expenses as well. An on-time graduation also means your student will enter the workforce (and begin earning a salary) sooner rather than later. Help your student set a goal to graduate in four years and encourage them to work closely with their academic advisor to make sure they stay on track.

OTHER MONEY SAVING STRATEGIES

- If your student earned AP or IB credit in high school, or has community college course credits, make sure they do what's necessary to get those credits applied to their transcript. The academic advisor and Registrar's office can help.
- Students who live on campus can apply for a Resident Assistant (R.A.) position after freshman year. Colleges typically reduce the room and board bill or even offer free room and board to R.A.s.
- Reevaluate the student meal plan after freshman year. A partial meal plan should be sufficient.
- Take advantage of student discounts on food, entertainment and travel. Local businesses, restaurants and grocery stores usually accept a student ID card.
- Textbooks are expensive and your student can save hundreds each semester by not buying new books. They can purchase used textbooks at the college bookstore or through websites like Chegg, Barnes & Noble and Amazon where they may also search for textbook rentals. Your student might also explore textbook exchanges like Student2Student or share textbooks with a classmate.

