



Financial Aid & Managing College Costs

Move the discussion of costs to the beginning of the college search, keeping options open

1. Know your starting point: **SAI Calculator**
<https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/>
2. Know the college starting point: Use net price calculators to research college costs versus “sticker price.”
<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>
3. Evaluate household future budget (child in college).
4. This is an ongoing conversation, so continue to connect about costs.

Strategies for lowering college costs

In high school:

1. Take Introduction to College & Career Studies (ICC) at CCV to prepare for college enrollment.
2. Find out what free college classes/credits are available at your high school.
3. Consider dual enrollment/early college programs.
4. Consider Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, which may earn college credit.

While creating your college list:

1. Consider the New England Regional Tuition Program: <https://nebhe.org/tuitionbreak/>
2. Check out work colleges and tuition-free colleges: workcolleges.org
3. Broaden your college list — in-state and out, public and private, Canada.
4. Find colleges where your stats fall in the top quarter of accepted students.
5. When applying for financial aid, communicate any special financial circumstances with financial aid offices and the Vermont Grant program.

Maximize payback for college costs

Over time, a college education has had a return average more than double that of the stock market, and—unlike a car—is an asset that appreciates over time. You can influence the strength of the return. To make the most of your investment, get connected on campus and take advantage of any opportunities you can—activities, study abroad, work–study, faculty talks, career counseling, etc.

In college:

1. Graduate on time or early. Be aware of how many credits you'll need to graduate; often it's more than the minimum number of credits to qualify as a full-time student.
2. Explore **Vermont Transfer Guarantee** to start at a less expensive college and transfer.
3. Utilize opportunities to make money while in school/lower costs such as paid internships, co-op work experiences, working as an RA/CA, etc.
4. Search for scholarships available at your college for upperclassmen.

Strategies to increase financial aid

1. Do well in school and challenge yourself.
2. Increase school and community involvement.
3. Research scholarship opportunities now and prepare for applications.
4. Go where you're wanted.
5. Ask for more money based on strong performance.

Strategies for paying for college costs

1. Past income: **savings** and/or **529 plans**
2. Current income: including **tuition payment plans, work–study**
3. Future income: **loan programs**
<https://www.calculator.net/student-loan-calculator.html>
 - What does repayment look like?
 - What income is needed to support loan repayment?
 - Should a parent take on debt?
4. Research **loan forgiveness programs**
 - <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation>
 - <https://www.vvac.org/workforce-development-funding>

TOLL FREE
800-642-3177

BURLINGTON AREA
802-655-9602

ONLINE
vsac.org

EMAIL
info@vsac.org

