



WORKSHEET: MAKE YOUR DECISION

Use this worksheet to help you analyze your financial aid offers and choose the right college for you. A quick way to compare offers and determine your net price (overall cost) is to subtract all of your awarded grants and scholarships from your cost of attendance. Keep in mind that colleges have different ways of offering financial aid as well as different costs of attendance.¹

		ACADEMIC YEAR TOTAL COSTS						
		COLLEGE (FILL-IN)						
		Sample college						
COST OF ATTENDANCE ²	DIRECT COSTS	Tuition		\$10,000				
		Fees		\$1,000				
		Housing <i>(This is the average cost of housing. Once you have made your housing choice, an actual cost will be provided.)</i>		\$10,000				
		Food		\$2,000				
		Loan Fees		\$100				
	INDIRECT COSTS	Books and supplies		\$1,500				
		Transportation		\$1,500				
		Personal expenses		\$2,000				
	Total College Costs (A)³			\$28,100				
GRANT/SCHOLARSHIPS/WORK-STUDY		Scholarships and grants from institution		\$7,500				
		Federal Pell Grant		\$6,000				
		State/other grants		\$1,000				
		Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)		-				
		Scholarships		\$1,000				
		Total Grant/Scholarship Aid (B)			\$15,500			
		Your Net Price (Overall Cost) (A – B)			\$12,500			
	Work-Study (Work To Earn)			\$1,000				
LOANS			Offered	Accept/Decline \$	Offered	Accept/Decline \$	Offered	Accept/Decline \$
		Direct Subsidized Loan	\$3,500	Accept	\$3,500			
		Direct Unsubsidized Loan	\$2,000	Accept	\$2,000			
		Direct Parent PLUS Loan	\$6,000	Decline	-			
		Private loan	-	-	-			
		Total Loan Offer (C)			\$5,500			
SUMMARY		Total Financial Aid (B + C = D)		\$21,000				
		Your Net Cost (Immediate Cost) (A – D)⁴		\$7,100				

¹ Not all colleges participate in all of the financial aid programs listed above.

² To find the average estimated budgets for full-time undergraduate students, visit <https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing>.

³ For definitions of direct and indirect costs, go to page 11.

⁴ Loans, which are part of the net price, or overall cost, will need to be paid back at a later time. Net cost can be paid using family contributions, earnings and work-study income.



Make Your Decision worksheet is part of the 2025-2026 *Opportunities Preparing for College Guide and Workbook*. This free college planning publication provides students and families with important information and tools to guide their pursuit of postsecondary education. These books are available in English and Spanish. Full PDFs of each *Opportunities* booklet can be downloaded at www.ecmc.org/opportunities.