

Paying for College

College affordability is on the minds of undergraduate students, families, and policymakers. Understanding how students pay for college is useful for addressing barriers to financing higher education.

AVERAGE TUITION PRICES 2021–22¹

	Published Tuition + Fees	Net Tuition + Fees ³
4-year public ²	\$10,740	\$2,640
4-year private	\$38,070	\$14,990
2-year public	\$3,800	-\$600 ⁴

64% of undergraduate students received grant aid and did not pay published tuition and fees

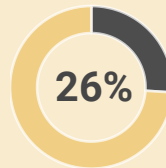
15% increase in the share of students receiving grant aid over the past decade⁵

33% of student aid is provided by colleges and universities through institutional grants

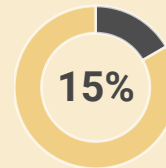
53%
of all undergraduate student aid is provided by the federal government

FEDERAL AID FOR UNDERGRADUATES IS COMPOSED OF⁶

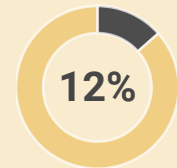
FEDERAL LOANS



PELL GRANTS

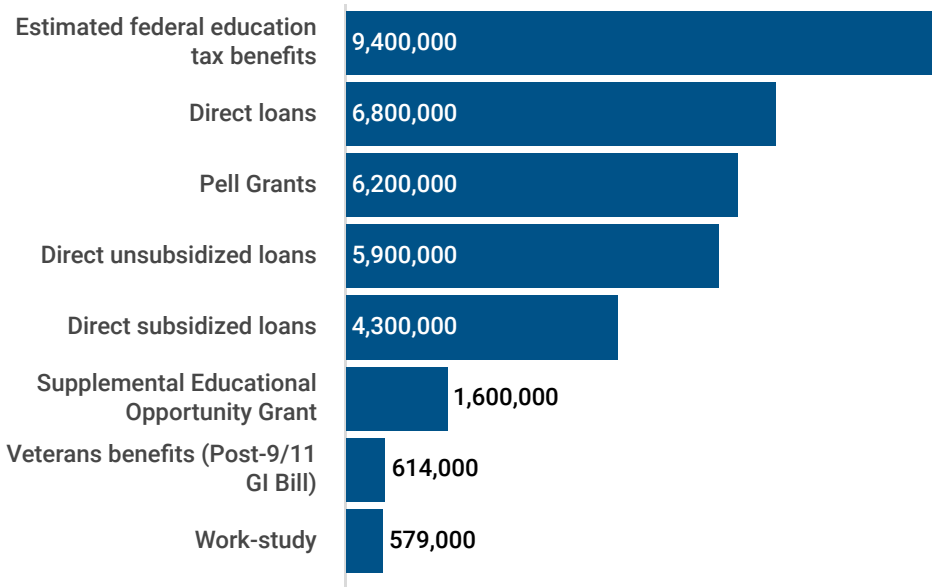


OTHER BENEFITS AND PROGRAMS

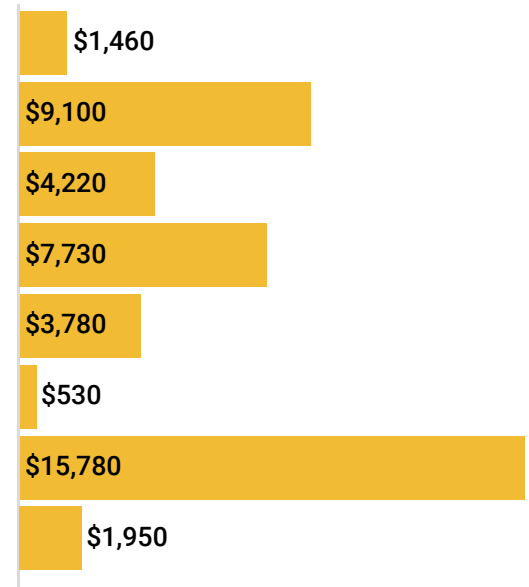


FEDERAL AID PER RECIPIENT, BY AID TYPE⁷

NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS



AVERAGE AID PER RECIPIENT



Note: All data are from the most recent publicly available data.

1 Jennifer Ma and Matea Pender, *Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2021* (New York: College Board, 2021), 17–19, figures CP-8, CP-9, and CP-10.

2 Reflects tuition and fees for in-state undergraduates.

3 Net tuition and fees reflects the average amount students pay after deducting grant aid and scholarships.

4 Net tuition and fees for public two-year institutions is negative because aid exceeds tuition and fees; students have additional expenses such as books and transportation.

5 Ma and Pender, *Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2021*, 32, figure SA-1.

6 Ma and Pender, *Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2021*, 31, table SA-1 (undergraduate).

7 Ma and Pender, *Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2021*, 38, figure SA-7.