

Arkansas

College Affordability Profile

College affordability continues to be a concern for students and their families in Arkansas, particularly those in lower income groups. This, along with declining birth rates and other factors, makes maintaining enrollment challenging for postsecondary institutions. Decreasing or stagnant enrollment will, in turn, make reaching state education attainment goals and improving students' employment outcomes more difficult. This 2019 college affordability profile provides updated data on how affordable different types of public institutions are for Arkansas families at various income levels.

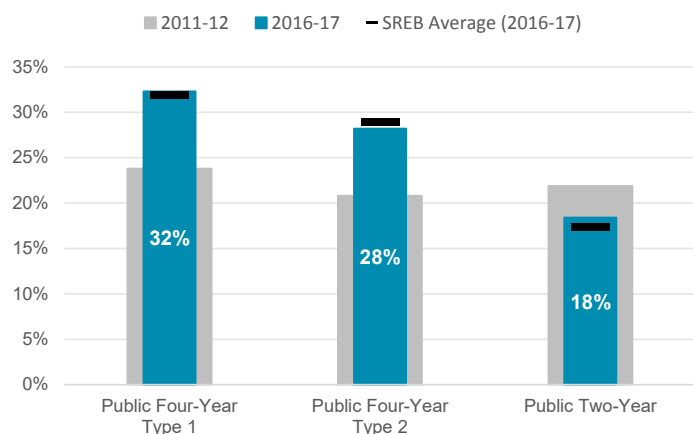
Percentage of Average Family Income Required to Attend College Full Time

In 2016-17, the percentage of family income required to pay for college in Arkansas was **lower than the SREB average** for **four-year Type 2 institutions**.

Families in Arkansas paid a higher percentage of their family income in 2016-17 for a full-time student to attend four-year institutions than in 2011-12.

Families in Arkansas needed, on average, 32% of their income in 2016-17 to pay for educational expenses for a full-time student at four-year Type 1 institutions and 28% at four-year Type 2 institutions.

In 2016-17 families in Arkansas needed to pay, on average, 18% of their income to cover educational expenses at two-year institutions.

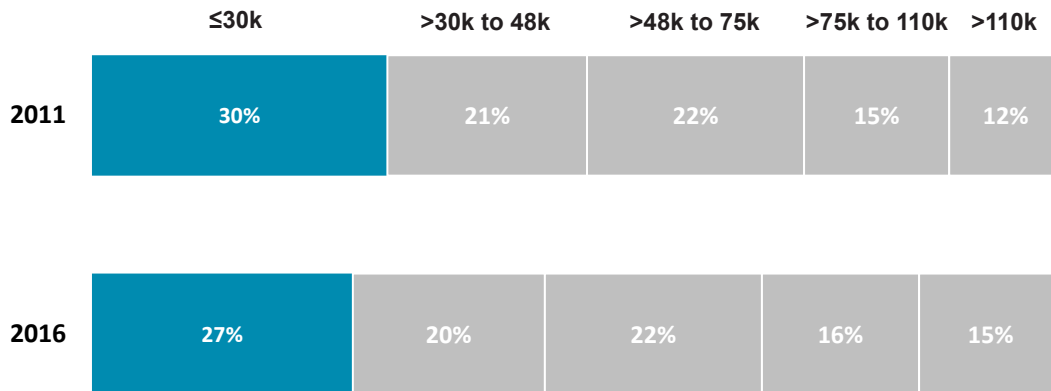


U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2011 and 2016, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2012 and 2017. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples 2011 and 2016. Institutional types based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

SREB College Affordability Profiles detail data and trends specific to each SREB state to assist policy-makers with decisions on postsecondary affordability and attainment. For additional resources, including recommendations of the Commission on College Affordability in the South and the SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, visit <https://www.sreb.org/AffordabilityProfiles>.

Distribution of Average Family Income

Data on cost of attendance are collected using five income categories. In Arkansas, students from families that **made less than \$30,000** accounted for **the largest percentage of families in 2011 and 2016**.



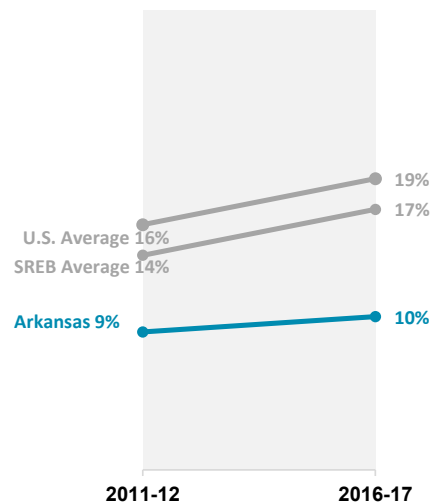
Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2011 and 2016.

Percentage of Income Required for Tuition at Lowest-Priced Colleges for Families Making Less Than \$30,000

The percentage of income required for tuition and fees at the lowest-priced public institutions **remained stable from 2011-12 to 2016-17** for Arkansas families making less than \$30,000.

For families making less than \$30,000, the cost of tuition and fees at the lowest-priced public institutions averaged 10% of income in 2016-17, compared to 9% in 2011-12.

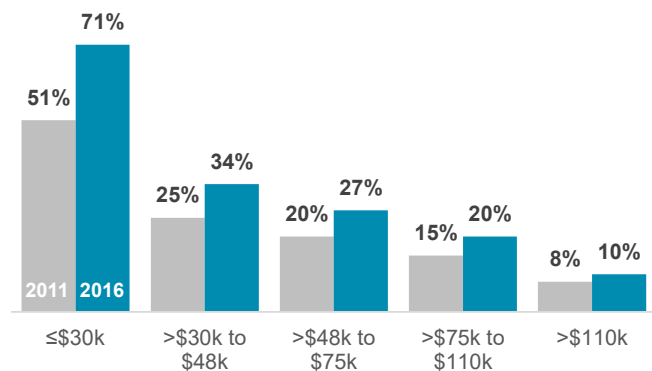
The percentage of income for Arkansas families making less than \$30,000 was lower than the SREB and national averages in 2011-12 and 2016-17.



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Charges Data Files and Directory Files 2010 and 2015, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Data Files 2012 and 2017. American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample Files 2011 and 2016.

Net Price as a Percentage of Income, Public Four-Year Type 1 Institutions

Arkansas families in the **lowest income category** were the **most affected** by the increase in net price.



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2011 and 2016, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2012 and 2017. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples, 2011 and 2016. Institutional types based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

The increase in the percentage of income needed to pay for four-year Type 1 institutions in Arkansas was disproportionately larger for families making less than \$30,000 than for any other income category.

Families making less than \$30,000 in 2011 needed 51% of their income to pay for educational expenses. In 2016 it was 71%.

Families making over \$110,000 only needed 8% of their income in 2011 and 10% in 2016 to cover expenses at these institutions.

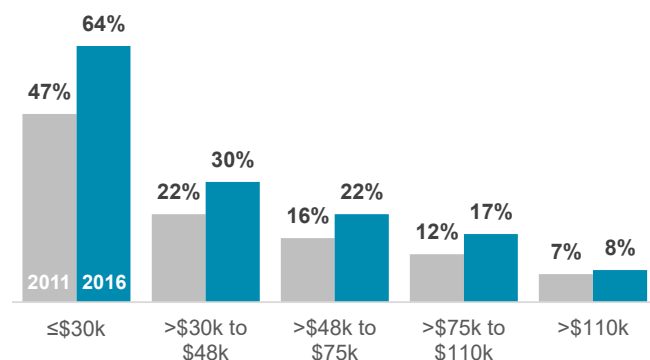
Net Price as a Percentage of Income, Public Four-Year Type 2 Institutions

Arkansas families making less than \$30,000 were the **most affected** by the rising cost of attendance at four-year Type 2 institutions.

The increase in the percentage of income needed to pay for four-year Type 2 institutions in Arkansas was substantially larger for families making less than \$30,000 than for any other income category.

Families making less than \$30,000 in 2011 needed 47% of their income to pay for educational expenses. In 2016 it was 64%.

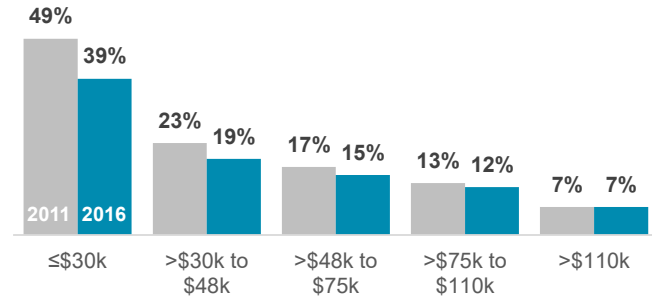
Families making over \$110,000 only needed 7% of their income in 2011 and 8% in 2016 to cover expenses at these institutions.



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2011 and 2016, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2012 and 2017. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples, 2011 and 2016. Institutional types based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

Net Price as a Percentage of Income, Public Two-Year Institutions

The **percentage of income** that Arkansas families needed to pay for educational expenses at two-year institutions **decreased** from 2011 to 2016.



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2011 and 2016, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2012 and 2017. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples, 2011 and 2016. Institutional types based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

The decrease in the percentage of income needed to pay for two-year institutions in Arkansas was larger for families making less than \$30,000 than for any other income category.

At Arkansas’s two-year institutions, families making less than \$30,000 in 2011 needed 49% of their income to pay for educational expenses. In 2016 it was 39%.

Families making over \$110,000 only needed 7% of their income in 2011 and 2016 to cover these expenses.

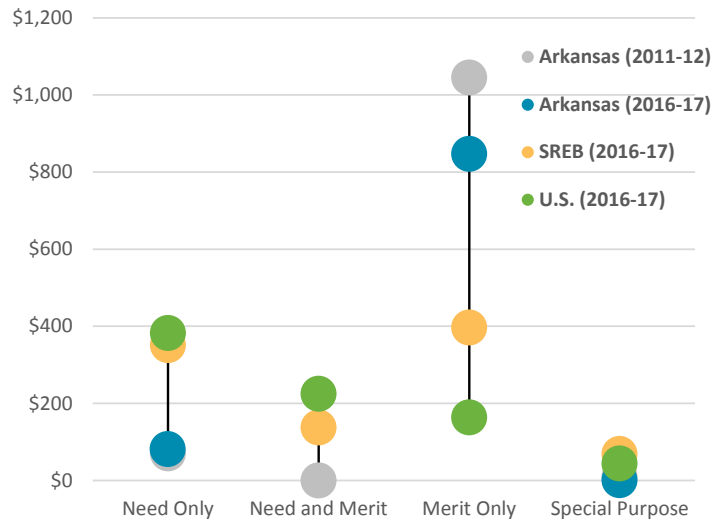
State Financial Aid Per Student

Arkansas awarded **more merit-based aid in 2016-17** per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student than the SREB and national averages. However, **merit-based aid decreased** from 2011-12 to 2016-17.

	Need Only	Need and Merit	Merit Only	Special Purpose
Arkansas (2011-12)	\$70	\$0	\$1,045	\$11
Arkansas (2016-17)	\$81	NA	\$847	\$1
SREB Average (2016-17)	\$351	\$137	\$397	\$69
U.S. Average (2016-17)	\$382	\$225	\$163	\$44

The state spent \$847 on average per undergraduate FTE student on merit-based aid in 2016-17, compared to \$1,045 in 2011-12. The SREB average in 2016-17 was \$397 and the national average was \$163.

Arkansas spent \$81, on average, per FTE for need-based financial aid in 2016-17, much less than the SREB average for need-based aid of \$351 and the national average of \$382.



National Association of State Student Grant & Aid Programs 2012 and 2017 annual survey (results for public institutions only). U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Instructional Activity File, 2012 and 2017, and Directory File, 2011 and 2016.

Student Borrowing at Public Institutions

In 2016-17, Arkansas graduates **borrowed less than the SREB and national averages to earn degrees at all public institutions.**

	Arkansas 2011-12	Arkansas 2016-17	SREB Average 2016-17	US Average 2016-17
Public Four-Year Type 1	\$18,765	\$21,067	\$21,546	\$21,139
Public Four-Year Type 2	\$16,611	\$18,717	\$22,198	\$19,115
Public Two-Year	\$10,631	\$9,100	\$9,693	\$9,356

U.S. Department of Education, College Scorecard, 2011 and 2016. U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Data Files 2012 and 2017 and Directory Files 2011 and 2016.

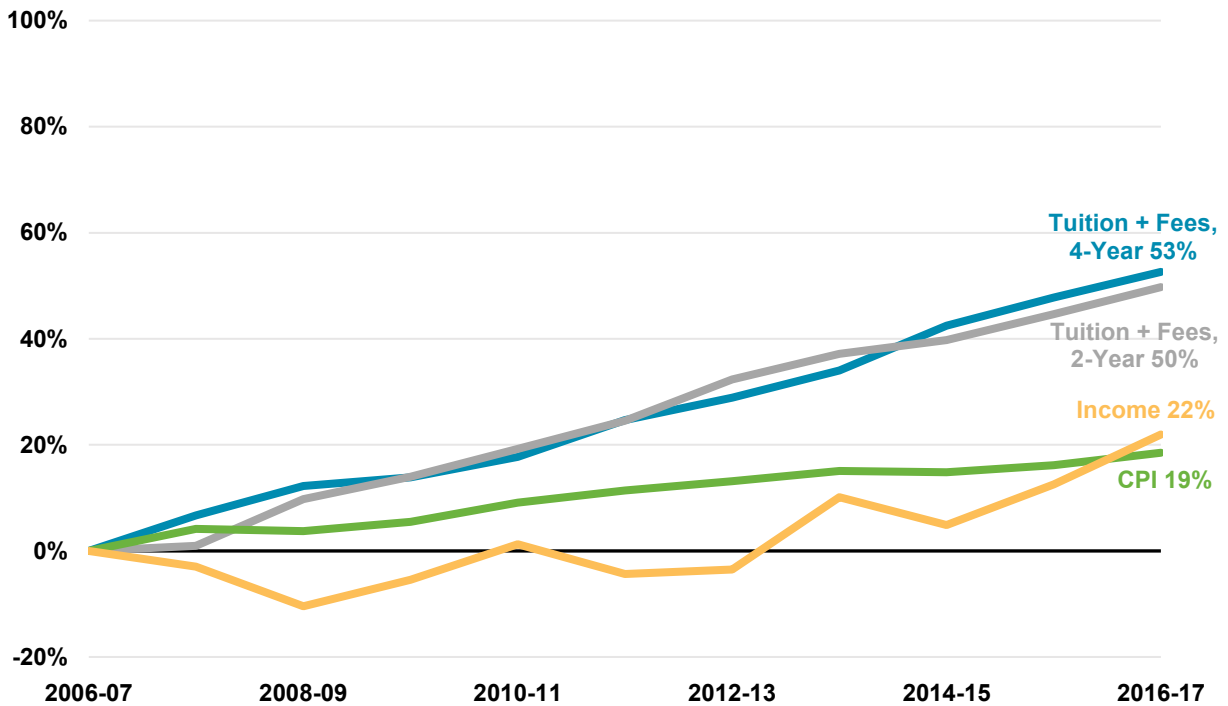
Graduates who sought a degree or certificate from four-year Type 1 universities in Arkansas in 2016-17 borrowed, on average, \$21,067 and graduates of four-year Type 2 institutions borrowed \$18,717. These amounts were higher than average amounts borrowed in 2011-12, but lower than the SREB averages in 2016-17.

Students at public two-year colleges borrowed, on average, \$9,100 in 2016-17, less than the average amount in 2011-12 but close to the SREB and national averages in 2016-17.

Changes in Tuition and Fees, CPI, and Household Income

Compared to the Consumer Price Index and household income, **tuition and fees** at Arkansas public colleges and universities **increased at a faster rate** between 2006-07 and 2016-17.

Over that decade, the CPI increased by 19% and median household income in Arkansas increased by 22%, while tuition and fees increased by 53% at four-year institutions and 50% at two-year institutions.

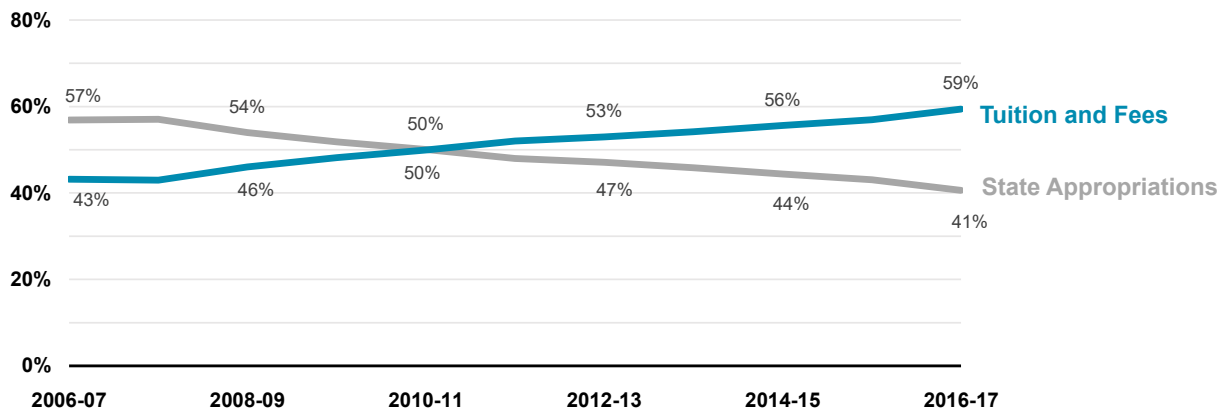


Sources: Consumer Price Index retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; Bureau of Labor Statistics, South urban area, 2017. Tuition and fees retrieved from the U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Institutional Characteristics Files, 2006 to 2016. Median household income in current dollars retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, South region, 2019.

State Appropriations vs. Tuition and Fees: Share of Funding

Operational funds consisted **mostly of tuition and fees** for Arkansas's **public four-year institutions** in 2016-17.

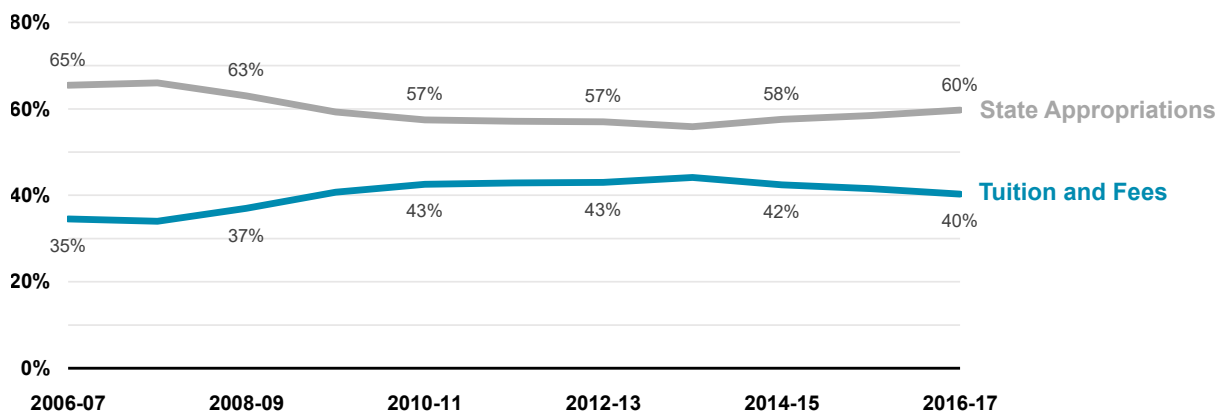
In 2016-17, net tuition and fees at Arkansas's four-year institutions made up 59% of total funds available for operations of the state's public institutions, while state appropriations supplied the remaining 41%. In comparison, state appropriations provided 57% in 2006-07. The shift in who pays for the majority of operating expenses at public four-year institutions occurred after 2010-11.



Source: SREB-State Data Exchange

Operational funds consisted **mostly of state appropriations** for Arkansas's **public two-year institutions** in 2016-17.

Although contributions from appropriations dropped from 65% of revenues in 2006-07 to 60% in 2016-17, that share has increased in recent years. Net tuition and fees made up 40% of revenues in 2016-17 compared to 35% in 2006-07.



Source: SREB-State Data Exchange

Additional State Context

Postsecondary Enrollment. In 2016-17, 27% of students in Arkansas were enrolled in public four-year Type 1 institutions, 41% were enrolled at public four-year Type 2 institutions and over 31% were enrolled in public two-year colleges.

First-Year Retention. For the fall 2016 cohort, 85% of students attending public four-year Type 1 institutions in Arkansas were still enrolled one year later, 77% were retained after the first year in public four-year Type 2 institutions, and 57% were retained at public two-year colleges.

Pell Grants. In 2016-17, 18% of the average cost of attendance in public four-year Type 1 institutions in Arkansas was covered by the average Pell Grant award. The average grant amount covered 21% of costs at public four-year Type 2 institutions and 29% of costs in public two-year colleges.

Education Attainment. In 2017, nearly 42% of Arkansas's working adult population between ages 25 and 64 had a postsecondary credential of value. The state's educational attainment goal is to reach 60% by 2025.

Student Debt. In Arkansas, 53% of the class of 2018 graduated with debt, owing an average of \$26,579.

Sources: Enrollment: U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems, 2016. Retention: SREB-State Data Exchange. Pell: U.S. Department of Education: 2016-2017 Award Year Grant Volume by School (2018) and SREB analysis of National Center for Education Statistics student financial aid survey, 2016-17. Educational attainment: State Higher Education Master Plans and Lumina Foundation, "A Stronger Nation," 2019. Student debt: The Institute for College Access & Success, "Student Debt and the Class of 2018" (2019).

Arkansas Institutions by Type

Public Four-Year Type 1

University of Arkansas at Little Rock
University of Arkansas

Public Four-Year Type 2

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Arkansas State University-Main Campus
Arkansas Tech University
University of Arkansas at Monticello
University of Central Arkansas
Henderson State University
Southern Arkansas University Main Campus
University of Arkansas-Fort Smith

Public Two-Year

Arkansas State University-Beeb
Black River Technical College
Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas

East Arkansas Community College
National Park College
University of Arkansas Community College-Batesville
Arkansas State University Mid-South
Arkansas Northeastern College
North Arkansas College
College of the Ouachitas
Ozarka College
University of Arkansas Community College-Morrilton
Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas
Southeast Arkansas College
Pulaski Technical College
University of Arkansas Community College-Hope
University of Arkansas Community College Rich Mountain

South Arkansas Community College
Southern Arkansas University Tech
NorthWest Arkansas Community College
Arkansas State University-Mountain Home
Arkansas State University-Newport

Notes

Type 1 four-year institutions award at least 30 doctoral degrees in five different areas. **Type 2** includes all other four-year institutions. The **public two-year category** includes institutions that primarily award associate degrees; the list may include two-year institutions that award bachelor's degrees. The **technical college category** includes postsecondary institutions that offer programs of less than two years duration below the baccalaureate level and occupational and vocational schools with programs that do not exceed 1800 contact hours. This profile does not report data for the technical college category if less than 3% of students are enrolled in this sector.

Institutions are listed as they were categorized in the 2016-17 Data Exchange Survey and if they submitted the data required for this profile.

This profile is based on data reported to IPEDS by institutions during the 2016-17 academic year. Some IPEDS surveys collect data for the prior academic year; for instance, the 2016-17 Student Financial Aid survey collected data for 2015-16.

Institutions or states may have updated data previously reported, or adjusted methodology to calculate a statistic. As a result, some data in the current profile may differ from data reported in past Affordability Profiles for the same time period.

See the technical guide at SREB.org/Affordability for detailed sources and explanatory notes.