

Georgia

College Affordability Profile

The Southern Regional Education Board convened a Commission on College Affordability in the South and published a report in 2016 emphasizing that affordability is a critical factor in both access to and completion of postsecondary education. In this year's SREB College Affordability Profiles, SREB examined data for the 2021-22 academic year, the most recent year that student financial aid and net price data are available. The data shows both positive and challenging aspects of college affordability in Georgia. Students in Georgia spend a larger percentage of their family income to pay for college, particularly at four-year institutions. However, with strong overall state funding support for two-year institutions, Georgia continues to offer affordable degree programs.

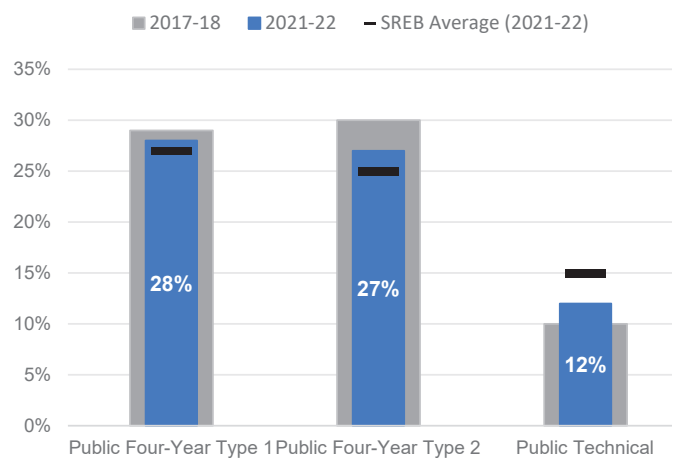
Family Income Needed for Net Price at Public Institutions

In 2020-21, the percentage of family income required to pay for full-time students at public institutions in Georgia was lower than 2017-18 for public four-year institutions.

Georgia shows improvements in four-year institutions but a slight increase in technical institution costs from 2017-18 to 2021-22.

The 16-percentage point gap between four-year Type 1 and technical institutions indicates variation in affordability across institution types.

While four-year institutions remain slightly above SREB averages, technical institutions maintain better affordability than regional peers.



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2018 and 2022, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2018 and 2022. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples 2018 and 2022. Institutional sectors based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

Key terms:

Four-Year Institution Type 1: Four-year institutions that awarded at least 30 doctoral degrees in five different areas.

Four-Year Institution Type 2: All other four-year institutions.

Net Price: Total cost of attendance (includes tuition, fees, room and board, and more) minus federal, state and local government, or institutional grant and scholarship aid.

Distribution of Average Family Income

In Georgia, students from families that made \$110,000 or more saw the most substantial increase from 2018 to 2022. The 15-percentage point gap between highest and lowest income groups indicates growing economic disparities among postsecondary students in Georgia.



Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2018 and 2022.

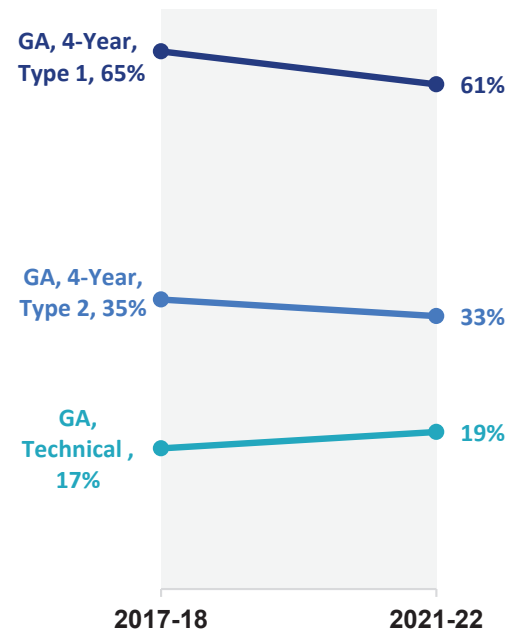
Income Required for Median Tuition and Fees at Public Institutions for Families Making Less Than \$30,000

For Georgia families making less than \$30,000, the percentage of income required for median tuition and fees at public institutions was higher at four-year institutions than technical institutions in 2017-18 and 2021-22.

In 2021-22, families earning less than \$30,000 needed 61% of their income to cover median tuition and fees at four-year Type 1 institutions, 33% at Type 2 institutions and 19% at technical institutions to cover the median tuition and fees.

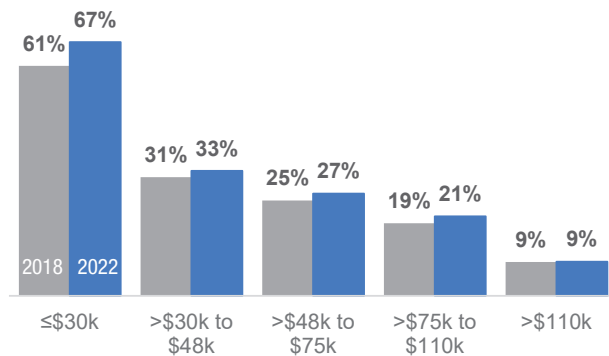
The 42-percentage point gap between four-year Type 1 and technical institutions indicates disparities in affordability.

The data indicates that technical colleges remain the most viable option for low-income families, requiring less than one-third of the income percentage needed for four-year Type 1 institutions.



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Charges Data Files and Directory Files 2018 and 2022, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Data Files 2018 and 2022. American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample Files 2018 and 2022.

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



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2018 and 2022, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2018 and 2022. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples, 2018 and 2022. Institutional types based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

The percentage of income that Georgia families needed to pay for educational expenses at four-year Type 1 institutions increased for most income categories from 2018 to 2022.

The 58-percentage point gap between the highest and lowest income groups in 2022 indicates inequity in affordability.

The pattern shows worsening conditions, with lower and middle-income families experiencing increase burdens while the highest income group remained stable.

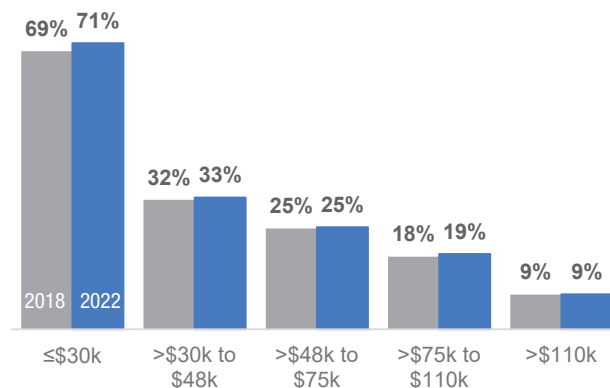
Net Price as a Percentage of Income for Public Four-Year Type 2 Institutions

The percentage of income that Georgia families needed to pay for educational expenses at four-year Type 2 institutions increased or remained stable from 2018 to 2022.

Families making less than \$30,000 in 2022 needed 71% of their income to pay educational expenses. Families making over \$110,000 needed 9% of their income in 2022 to cover expenses at four-year Type 2 institutions.

The 62-percentage point gap between highest and lowest income groups indicates inequity in affordability.

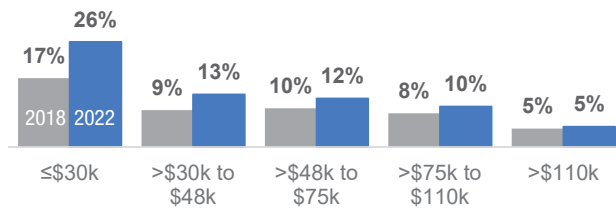
The pattern remains regressive, with lower-income families paying substantially higher percentages of their income compared to higher-income families.



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2018 and 2022, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2018 and 2022. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples, 2018 and 2022. Institutional types based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

Net Price as a Percentage of Income for Public Technical Institutions

Georgia’s technical institutions required a higher percentage of family income to pay for education expenses in 2022 than 2018.



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2018 and 2022, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2018 and 2022. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples, 2018 and 2022. Institutional types based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

The increase in the percentage of income needed to pay for technical institutions in Georgia was larger for the lowest income group.

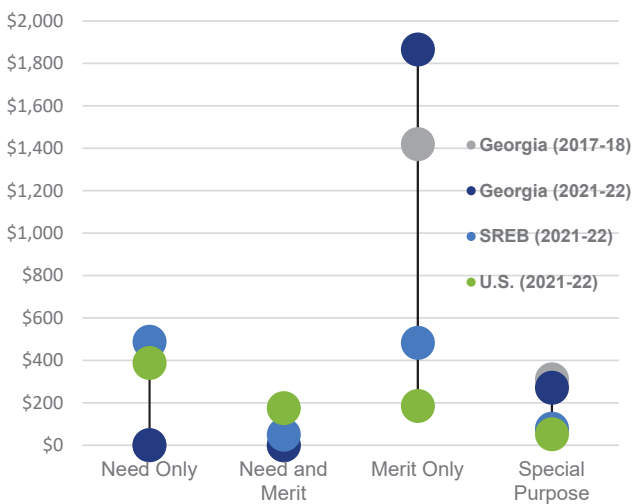
The 21-percentage point gap between the highest and lowest income groups in 2022 indicates inequity in affordability.

While technical institutions remain the most affordable option overall, the substantial increases for lower-income groups suggest growing challenges in accessibility.

State Financial Aid Per Student

Georgia awarded more merit-based aid in 2021-22 per full-time-equivalent student than the SREB and national averages. Merit-based aid also increased from 2017-18 to 2021-22.

| | Need Only | Need and Merit | Merit Only | Special Purpose |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Georgia (2017-18) | \$0 | NA | \$1,419 | \$311 |
| Georgia (2021-22) | \$0 | \$2 | \$1,865 | \$271 |
| SREB (2021-22) | \$488 | \$50 | \$483 | \$78 |
| U.S. (2021-22) | \$388 | \$175 | \$185 | \$51 |



Georgia shows a strong commitment to merit-based aid, with funding levels nearly four times the SREB average and ten times the national average.

A minimal need-based aid and need and merit combination aid suggests potential gaps in supporting low-income students.

Georgia spent \$271, on average, per FTE for special purpose financial aid in 2021-22, much more than the SREB average of \$78 and the national average of \$51.

National Association of State Student Grant & Aid Programs 2018 and 2022 annual survey (results for public institutions only). U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Instructional Activity File, 2018 and 2022, and Directory File, 2018 and 2022.

Student Borrowing at Public Institutions

In 2020-21, graduates borrowed less for education at four-year institutions while two-year and technical institutions saw an increase compared to 2015-16.

| | Georgia 2015-16 | Georgia 2020-21 | SREB Average 2020-21 | U.S. Average 2020-21 |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Four-Year Type 1 | \$22,083 | \$20,358 | \$20,710 | \$20,550 |
| Four-Year Type 2 | \$22,313 | \$21,696 | \$21,912 | \$20,758 |
| Two-Year | \$10,569 | \$12,343 | \$10,088 | \$10,653 |
| Technical | \$7,100 | \$8,688 | \$9,037 | \$10,088 |

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, College Scorecard, 2016-17 and 2021-22. U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Data Files 2018 and 2022 and Directory Files 2018 and 2022.

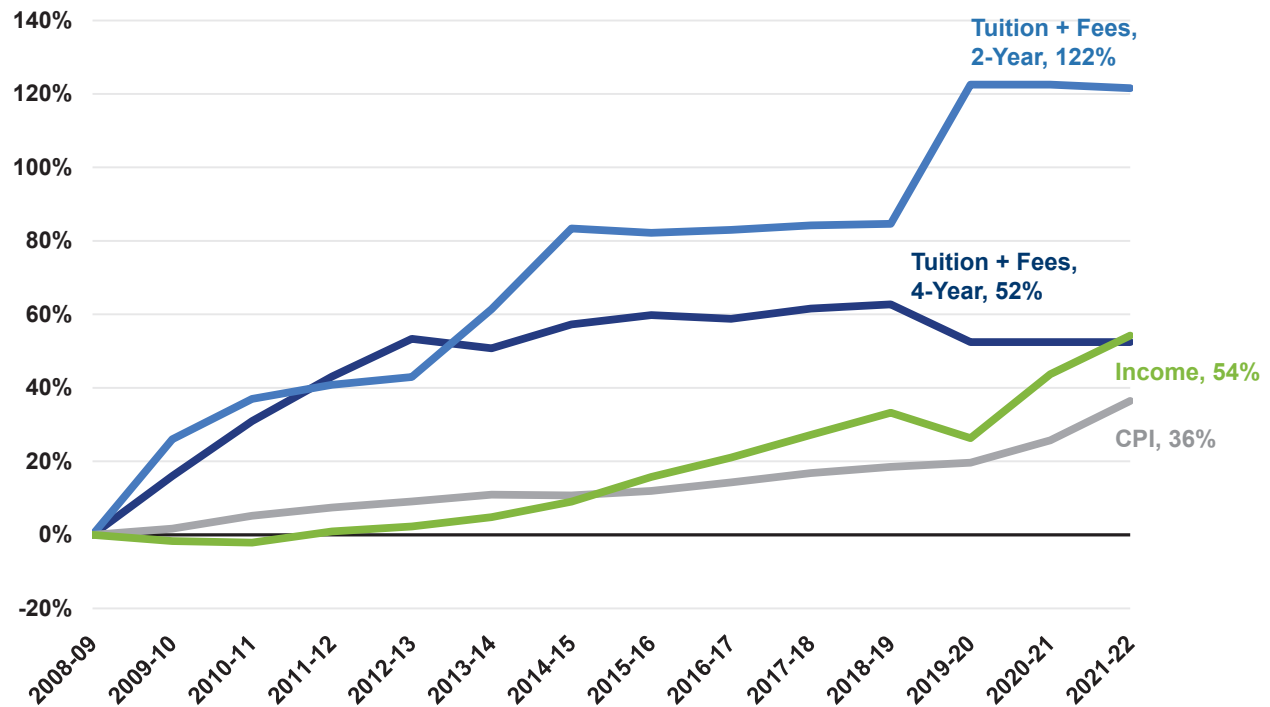
Graduates who sought a degree or certificate from four-year Type 1 universities in Georgia in 2020-21 borrowed, on average, \$20,358 and graduates of four-year Type 2 institutions borrowed \$21,696. These amounts were lower than average amounts borrowed in 2015-16 and the SREB and national averages for four-year Type 1 institutions in 2020-21.

Students at public two-year colleges borrowed, on average, \$12,343 in 2020-21, more than the average amount in 2015-16 and higher than the SREB and national averages in 2020-21. Despite an increase, student borrowing at technical institutions maintains below the SREB and national averages.

Changes in Tuition and Fees, CPI and Family Income

The gap between two-year tuition and fees, family income and the Consumer Price Index highlights declining affordability at two-year institutions between 2008-09 and 2021-22.

Tuition and fee growth at two-year institutions more than doubled that of four-year institutions, while family income growth kept pace with tuition and fees at four-year institutions. This pattern suggests worsening affordability at two-year institutions, whereas four-year institutions have maintained relatively better alignment with income growth.

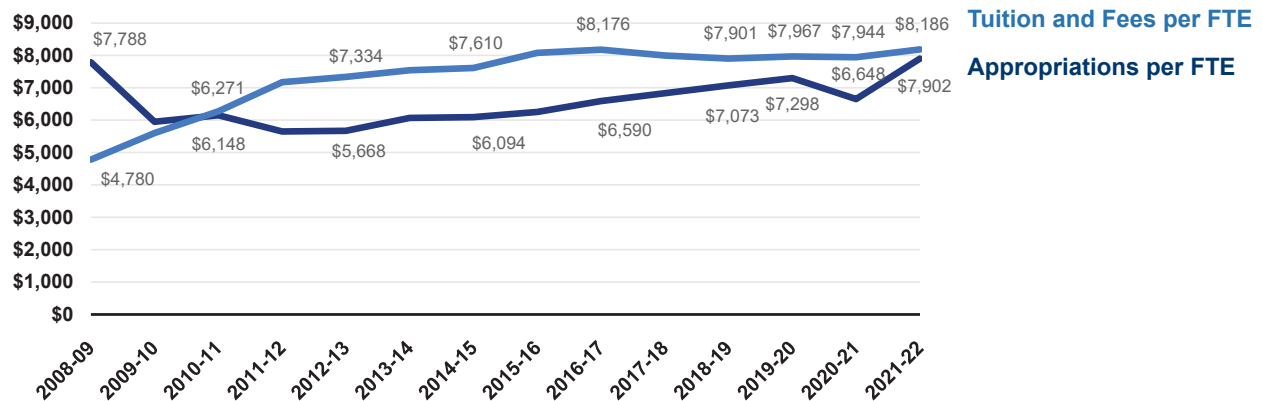


Consumer Price Index retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; Bureau of Labor Statistics, South urban area, 2021. Tuition and fees retrieved from the U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Institutional Characteristics Files, 2008 to 2021. Median family income retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B19113, 2023.

Dollars per FTE Student from State Appropriations and Tuition and Fees

Close to half of the operational funds per FTE consisted of state and state appropriations for Georgia's four-year institutions in 2021-22.

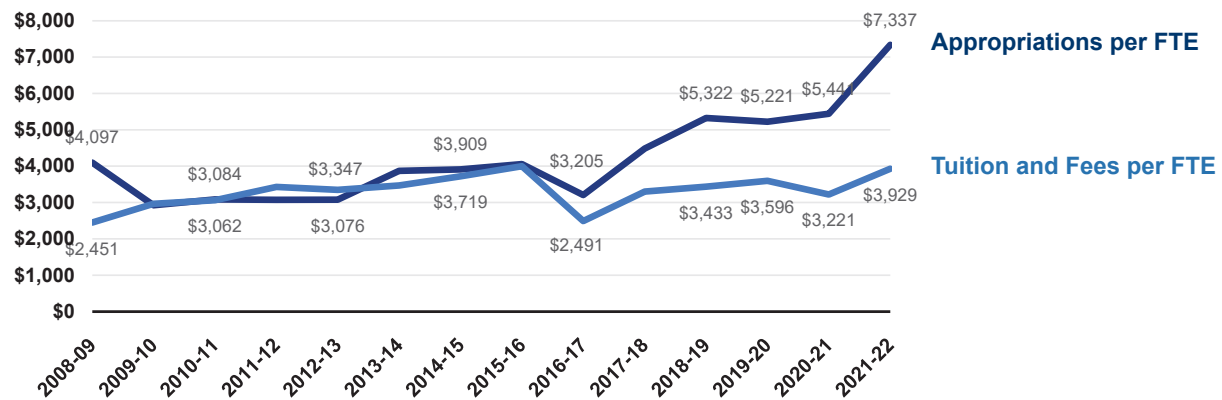
While tuition and fees increased by about 81% since 2008-09, state appropriations showed minimal growth of about 1.5%. The pattern shows fundamental change in funding structure over the period, though less severe than in many other states.



Source: SREB-State Data Exchange

State and local appropriations accounted for most of the operational funds per FTE at Georgia's public two-year institutions in 2021-22.

Georgia shows strong growth in state appropriations for two-year institutions, particularly after 2017. By 2021-22, state appropriations significantly exceeded tuition by \$3,408, indicating strong state support for two-year institutions. While tuition showed a sharp increase in 2014-15, it has since stabilized, while state support has continued to grow substantially.



Source: SREB-State Data Exchange

Georgia Fast Facts

Postsecondary Enrollment: According to 2021 fall enrollment, 22% of students in Georgia were enrolled in public four-year Type 1 institutions, 45% were enrolled at public four-year Type 2 institutions and 33% were enrolled in public two-year colleges.

FAFSA: As of July 5, 2024, Georgia's high school class of 2024 had a FAFSA completion rate of 52%, an 11% decrease from the rate on the same date in 2023.

Student Financial Aid: In 2021-22, 30% of students receiving any form of federal student aid were awarded Pell Grants, while 30% received federal student loans.

Education Attainment: In 2022, 52.8% of Georgia's working adult population (ages 25 to 64) held a postsecondary credential, placing the state 1.5 percentage points below the national average of 54.3%. This figure includes short-term credentials, which account for 7.3% of Georgia's credential attainment rate, including certificates and industry-recognized certifications.

Workforce Needs: By 2031, 66% of jobs in Georgia will require a postsecondary credential. Georgia ranks 32nd among states in the percentage of jobs projected to require such credentials.

Sources: Postsecondary Enrollment: U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems, 2022.

FAFSA: FAFSA Tracker – National, Retrieved November 2024. <https://national.fafsatracker.com/schoolView/10>.

Federal Student Aid: SREB analysis of National Center for Education Statistics student financial aid database, 2021-22.

Educational attainment: Lumina Foundation, A Stronger Nation, Retrieved November 2024.

<https://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/#/progress/state/GA>.

Workforce Needs: Georgetown University, After Everything: Projections of Jobs, Education, and Training Requirements through 2031, Retrieved November 2024. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/projections2031/>.

Georgia Institutions by Type

Public Four-Year Type 1

Georgia Gwinnett College

Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus

Georgia Southern University

Georgia Southwestern State University

Georgia State University

Gordon State College

Kennesaw State University

Middle Georgia State University

Savannah State University

University of Georgia

University of North Georgia

University of West Georgia

Valdosta State University

Public Four-Year Type 2

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Albany State University

Armstrong State University

Augusta University

Clayton State University

College of Coastal Georgia

Columbus State University

Dalton State College

Fort Valley State University

Georgia College & State University

Georgia Institutions by Type

Public Two-Year

Atlanta Metropolitan State College
East Georgia State College

Georgia Highlands College
South Georgia State College

Technical Colleges

Albany Technical College
Athens Technical College
Atlanta Technical College
Augusta Technical College
Central Georgia Technical College
Chattahoochee Technical College
Coastal Pines Technical College
Columbus Technical College
Georgia Northwestern Technical College
Georgia Piedmont Technical College
Gwinnett Technical College

Lanier Technical College
North Georgia Technical College
Oconee Fall Line Technical College
Ogeechee Technical College
Savannah Technical College
South Georgia Technical College
Southeastern Technical College
Southern Crescent Technical College
Southern Regional Technical College
West Georgia Technical College
Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

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 2021-22 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 2021-22 academic year. Some IPEDS surveys collect data for the prior academic year; for instance, the 2022-23 Student Financial Aid survey collected data for the 2021-22 academic year.

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 <https://www.sreb.org/state-affordability-profiles> for detailed sources and explanatory notes.

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 [SREB.org/Affordability](https://www.sreb.org/Affordability).