

Mississippi

College Affordability Profile

The Southern Regional Educational 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. Mississippi shows affordability challenges, particularly at four-year institutions, with heavy reliance on student tuition and limited financial aid options. While two-year institutions provide a more affordable pathway, the overall trend suggests increasing financial barriers to postsecondary education, especially for lower-income families.

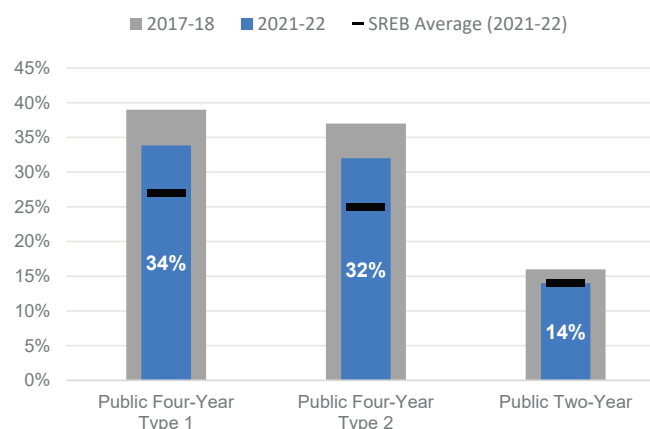
Family Income Needed for Net Price at Public Institutions

In 2021-22, the percentage of family income required to pay for full-time students at public institutions in Mississippi was lower than 2017-18 for public four-year Type 1, four-year Type 2 and two-year institutions.

In 2021-22, families in Mississippi needed 34% of their income to cover educational expenses for a full-time student at four-year Type 1 institutions, 32% at four-year Type 2 institutions, and 14% at two-year institutions.

The 20-percentage point gap between four-year Type 1 institutions and two-year institutions indicates variation in affordability across institutions.

Two-year institutions demonstrate the best affordability, matching SREB averages, while four-year institutions continue to require higher percentages of family income than SREB averages.



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:

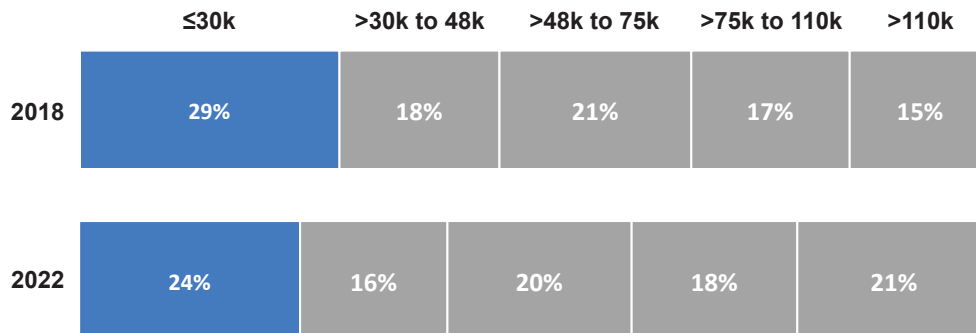
Four-Year Institution Type 1: Four-year institutions that awarded at least 30 doctoral degrees in five different areas.

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 Mississippi, students from families that made less than \$30,000 accounted for the largest percentage of families in 2018 and 2022. More balanced distribution in 2018 shifted toward greater concentration in higher income groups in 2022.



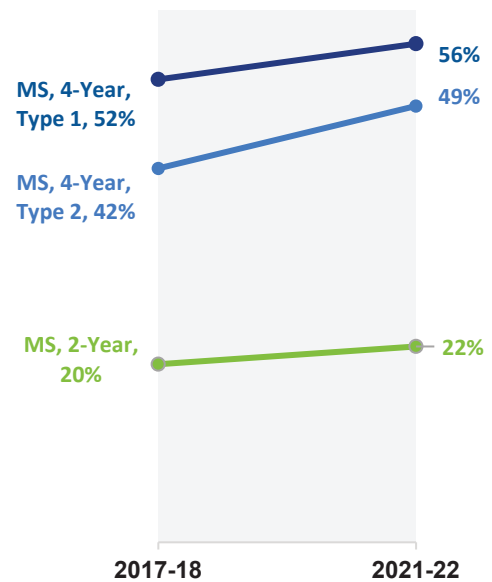
Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2018 and 2022.

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

The percentage of income required for median tuition and fees increased across all institution types for Mississippi families making less than \$30,000.

For families making less than \$30,000, the percentage of income required to cover median tuition and fees at four-year Type 1 institutions was 56%, 49% for four-year Type 2 institutions and 22% for two-year institutions. The most substantial increase occurred at four-year Type 2 institutions.

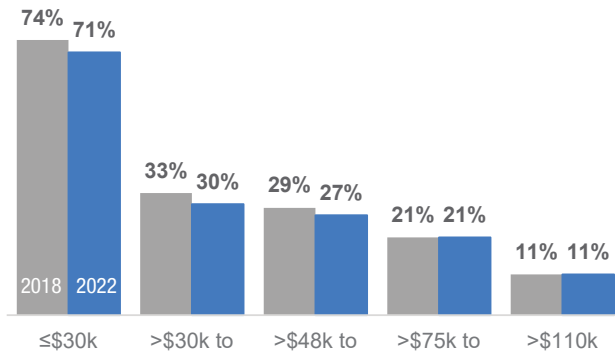
The 34-percentage point gap between four-year Type 1 and two-year institutions indicates significant disparities in accessibility. While two-year institutions remain relatively affordable, the universal increase in required income percentages suggests growing affordability challenges for families making less than \$30,000.



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

The percentage of income that Mississippi families needed to pay for educational expenses at four-year Type 1 institutions decreased or remained stable from 2018 to 2022.



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.

Families making less than \$30,000 needed 71% of their income while families making over \$110,000 needed 11% of their income in 2022 to cover expenses at these institutions.

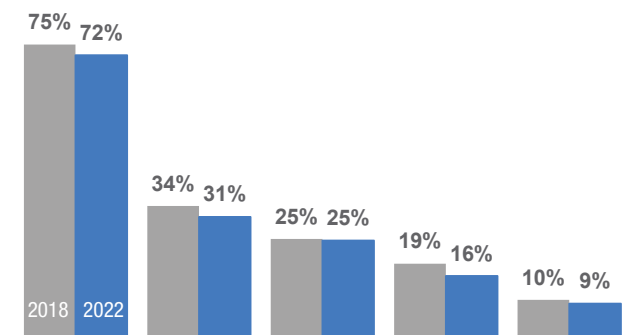
The 60-percentage point gap between highest and lowest income groups in 2022 indicates severe inequity in college affordability. While there are some improvements, the burden on lowest-income families remains particularly severe, requiring nearly three-quarters of their annual income.

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

The percentage of income that Mississippi families needed to pay for educational expenses at four-year Type 2 institutions decreased for most income categories from 2018 to 2022.

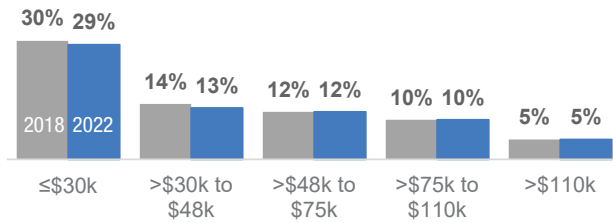
Families making less than \$30,000 needed 72% while families making over \$110,000 needed 9% of their income in 2022 to cover expenses at four-year Type 2 institutions.

The 63-percentage point gap between highest and lowest income groups in 2022 indicates inequity in affordability. While there are some improvements, the burden on lowest-income families remains particularly severe, requiring nearly three-quarters of their annual income.



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 Mississippi families needed to pay for educational expenses at two-year institutions minimally decreased or remained stable from 2018 to 2022.



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.

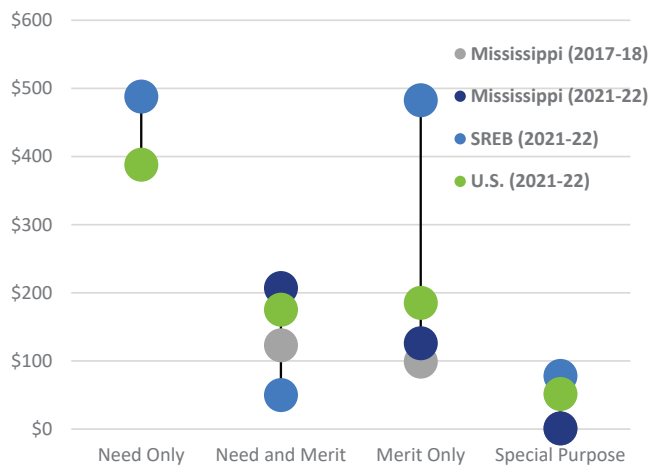
Families making less than \$30,000 in 2022 needed 29% of their income, while families making over \$110,000 needed 5% of their income in 2022 to cover expenses at two-year institutions.

The 24-percentage point gap between highest and lowest income groups indicates persistent inequity, though significantly less severe than at four-year institutions. Two-year institutions maintain their position as the most affordable option in Mississippi’s public higher education system.

State Financial Aid Per Student

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

	Need Only	Need and Merit	Merit Only	Special Purpose
Mississippi (2017-18)	NA	\$123	\$99	\$1
Mississippi (2021-22)	NA	\$207	\$126	\$1
SREB (2021-22)	\$488	\$50	\$483	\$78
U.S. (2021-22)	\$388	\$175	\$185	\$51



Mississippi shows a focus on combined need and merit aid programs, with no need-based aid. The state's total aid amounts are generally below regional and national averages, particularly in merit-only and special purpose categories.

The increase in need and merit combination aid suggests a strategic emphasis on supporting students who demonstrate both financial need and academic achievements.

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 2018-19, Mississippi graduates borrowed more than the SREB and national averages to earn degrees at four-year institutions.

	Mississippi 2015-16	Mississippi 2020-21	SREB Average 2020-21	U.S. Average 2020-21
Four-Year Type 1	\$24,013	\$23,778	\$20,710	\$20,550
Four-Year Type 2	\$22,473	\$22,701	\$21,912	\$20,758
Two-Year	\$6,332	\$8,000	\$10,088	\$10,653

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.

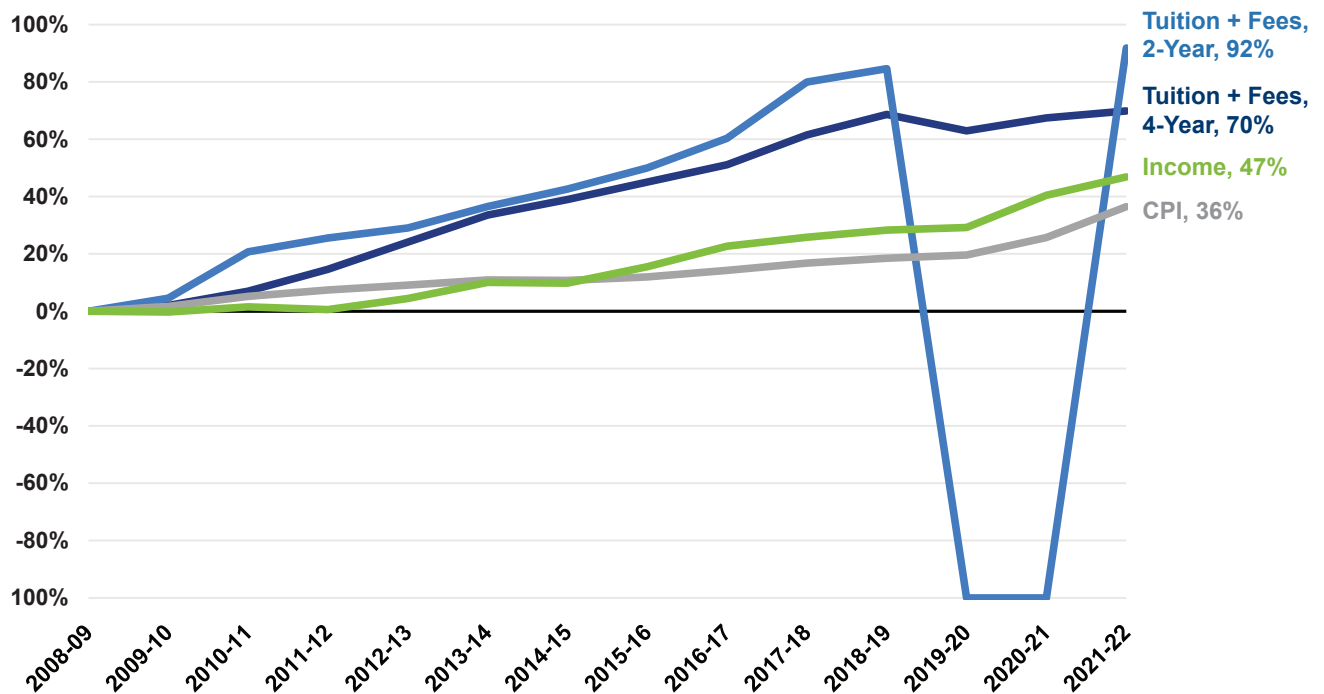
Despite the modest decrease at Type 1 institutions, borrowing levels remain significantly above both regional and national averages at four-year institutions. Graduates who sought a degree or certificate from four-year Type 1 universities in Mississippi in 2020-21 borrowed, on average, \$23,778 and graduates of four-year Type 2 institutions borrowed \$22,701.

Two-year institutions, despite showing the largest increase, maintain borrowing levels well below regional and national averages. Students at two-year colleges borrowed, on average, \$8,000 in 2020-21, more than the average amount in 2015-16 but less than the SREB and national averages in 2020-21.

Changes in Tuition and Fees, CPI and Family Income

With tuition and fees increases outpacing both income growth and inflation, particularly at two-year institutions, the data indicates decreasing college affordability in Mississippi between 2008-09 and 2021-22.

The growth rate of tuition and fees at two-year institutions exceeded that of four-year institutions, with a significant gap between the growth of tuition and fees compared to income and CPI growth. There was dramatic volatility during the pandemic years, though recent data shows a recovery to pre-pandemic growth trends. Data from the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years have not been reported.

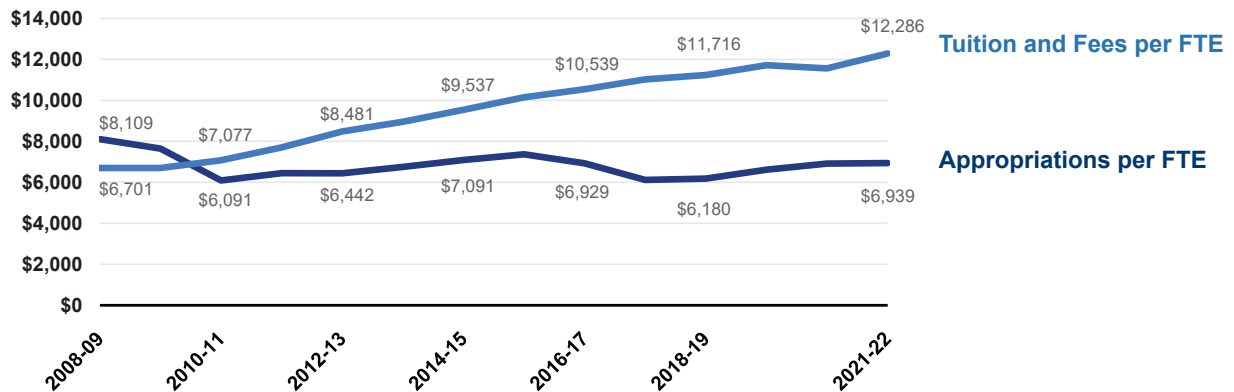


Consumer Price Index retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis: Bureau of Labor Statistics, South urban area, 2021. Tuition and fees retrieved from the U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Institutional Characteristics Files, 2008 to 2021. Median 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

Operational funds consisted mostly of tuition and fees for Mississippi’s public four-year institutions in 2021-22.

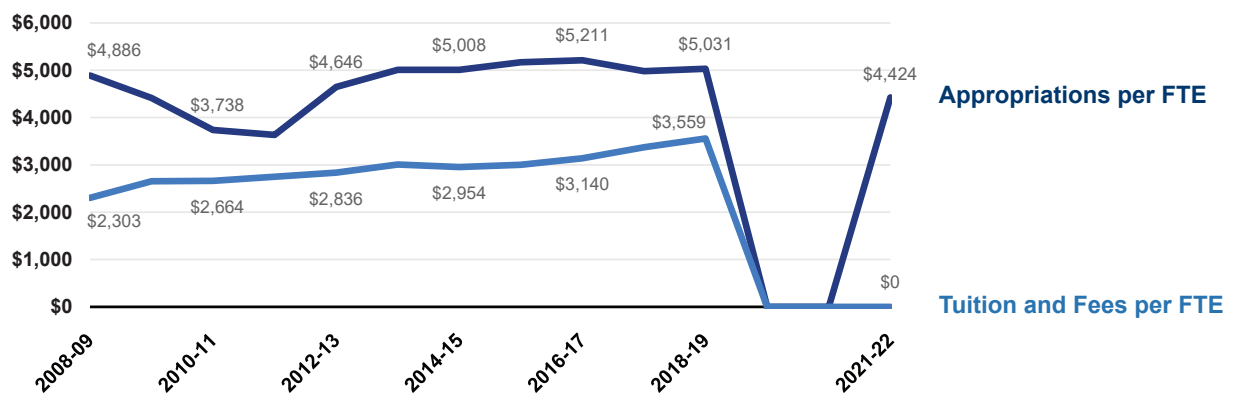
While tuition and fees increased by over 51% since 2008-09, state appropriations remained relatively flat with minimal growth. This shift indicates a significant transfer of higher education costs from state funding to student responsibility. By 2021-22, tuition and fees were nearly double state appropriations, suggesting decreased state support.



Source: SREB-State Data Exchange

Operational funds consisted mostly of state and local appropriations for Mississippi’s public two-year institutions in 2021-22.

While tuition and fees showed steady increases, state appropriations experienced significant fluctuations. Despite the volatility, state appropriations remained higher than tuition and fees throughout the period, suggesting continued state commitment to two-year institution affordability. Data from the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years have not been reported.



Source: SREB-State Data Exchange

Mississippi Fast Facts

Postsecondary Enrollment: According to 2021 fall enrollment, 37% of students in Mississippi were enrolled in public four-year Type 1 institutions, 11% were enrolled at public four-year Type 2 institutions and 52% were enrolled in public two-year colleges.

FAFSA: As of July 5, 2024, Mississippi's high school class of 2024 had a FAFSA completion rate of 52%, a 16% decrease from the rate on the same date in 2023.

Federal Student Aid: In 2021-22, 32% of students receiving any form of federal student aid were awarded Pell Grants, while 41% received federal student loans.

Education Attainment: In 2022, 47.6% of Mississippi's working adult population (ages 25 to 64) held a postsecondary credential, placing the state 6.7 percentage points below the national average of 54.3%. This figure includes short-term credentials, which account for 9.9% of Mississippi's credential attainment rate, including certificates and industry-recognized certifications.

Workforce Needs: By 2031, 63% of jobs in Mississippi will require a postsecondary credential. Mississippi ranks 43rd 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/24>.

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/MS>.

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/>.

Mississippi Institutions by Type

Public Four-Year Type 1

Jackson State University

Mississippi State University

University of Mississippi

University of Southern Mississippi

Public Four-Year Type 2

Alcorn State University

Delta State University

Mississippi University for Women

Mississippi Valley State University

Public Two-Year

Coahoma Community College

Copiah-Lincoln Community College

East Central Community College

East Mississippi Community College

Hinds Community College

Holmes Community College

Itawamba Community College

Jones County Junior College

Meridian Community College

Mississippi Delta Community College

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Northeast Mississippi Community College

Northwest Mississippi Community College

Pearl River Community College

Southwest Mississippi Community 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).