West Virginia

College Affordability Profile

The effect of the pandemic on state budgets has not yet peaked, but it will likely affect college affordability for years to come. In this year’s SREB College Affordability Profiles, we examine data for the 2017-18 academic year, the most recent year that student financial aid and net price data are available. Although the data were collected prior to the pandemic, it shows that states continue to face challenges in making college affordable. In many states, students must spend a larger percentage of their family income to pay for college, particularly at four-year institutions. In most states, two-year institutions and technical colleges and institutes offer the most affordable degree programs.

Percentage of Average Family Income Required to Pay the Net Price for Full-Time Students at Public Institutions

In 2017-18, the percentage of family income required to pay for college in West Virginia was lower than SREB averages for four-year Type 1 and Type 2 institutions.

Families in West Virginia paid a higher percentage of their family income in 2017-18 for a full-time student to attend four-year and two-year institutions than in 2012-13.

Families in West Virginia needed, on average, 25% of their income in 2017-18 to pay educational expenses for a full-time student at four-year Type 1 institutions and 23% at four-year Type 2 institutions.

In 2017-18, families in West Virginia needed, on average, 18% of their income to cover educational expenses at two-year institutions.

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 & board, etc.) minus federal, state/local government, or institutional grant and scholarship aid.
Distribution of Average Family Income

Data on net price is collected using five income categories. In West Virginia, students from families that made less than $30,000 accounted for the largest percentage of families in 2012 and 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income Range</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤$30k</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;$30k to ≤$48k</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;$48k to ≤$75k</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;$75k to ≤$110k</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;$110k</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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

The increase in percentage of income required for median tuition and fees at public institutions was higher at four-year institutions than two-year institutions from 2012-13 to 2017-18 for West Virginia families making less than $30,000.

For families making less than $30,000, the cost of median tuition and fees at four-year institutions was 47% of income in 2017-18, compared to 35% in 2012-13.

Families needed 23% of their income in 2017-18 to cover the state’s median tuition at two-year institutions. In 2012-13 it was 17%.

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

West Virginia families in the lowest income category were the most affected by the increase in net price at four-year Type 1 institutions.

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

Families making less than $30,000 in 2012 needed 41% of their income to pay educational expenses. In 2017 it was 54%.

Families making over $110,000 only needed 8% of their income in 2012 and 9% in 2017 to cover expenses at these institutions.

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

West Virginia families making less than $30,000 were the most affected by the net price at four-year Type 2 institutions.

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

Families making less than $30,000 in 2012 needed 44% of their income to pay educational expenses. In 2017 it was 47%.

Families making over $110,000 only needed 8% of their income in 2012 and 9% in 2017 to cover expenses at these institutions.
**Net Price as a Percentage of Income, Public Two-Year Institutions**

The percentage of income that West Virginia families making less than $30,000 needed to pay for educational expenses at two-year institutions increased from 2012 to 2017.

![Graph showing percentage of income needed to pay for educational expenses at two-year institutions in West Virginia by income category from 2012 to 2017.]

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

Families making less than $30,000 in 2012 needed 35% of their income to pay educational expenses. In 2017 it was 40%.

Families making over $110,000 only needed 6% of their income in 2012 and 2017 to cover expenses at these institutions.

**State Financial Aid Per Student**

West Virginia awarded more need and merit-based aid in 2017-18 per full-time-equivalent student than the SREB and national averages. Need and merit-based aid also increased from 2012-13 to 2017-18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Need Only</th>
<th>Need and Merit</th>
<th>Merit Only</th>
<th>Special Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia (2012-13)</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$518</td>
<td>$611</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia (2017-18)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$565</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SREB Average (2017-18)</td>
<td>$389</td>
<td>$143</td>
<td>$476</td>
<td>$74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Average (2017-18)</td>
<td>$411</td>
<td>$241</td>
<td>$195</td>
<td>$53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The state spent $565 on average per undergraduate FTE student on financial aid that had need and merit criteria in 2017-18, compared to $518 in 2012-13. The SREB average in 2017-18 was $143 and the national average was $241.

West Virginia spent $5, on average, per FTE on special purpose aid in 2017-18, more than the average spent in 2012-13 but much less than the SREB average of $74 and the national average of $53.

Student Borrowing at Public Institutions

In 2017-18, West Virginia graduates borrowed more than the SREB and national averages to earn degrees at four-year Type 1 and two-year institutions.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year Type 1</td>
<td>$21,250</td>
<td>$23,872</td>
<td>$21,600</td>
<td>$21,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year Type 2</td>
<td>$20,777</td>
<td>$22,487</td>
<td>$22,677</td>
<td>$19,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year</td>
<td>$13,523</td>
<td>$11,465</td>
<td>$10,798</td>
<td>$10,171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduates who sought a degree or certificate from four-year Type 1 universities in West Virginia in 2017-18 borrowed, on average, $23,872 and graduates of four-year Type 2 institutions borrowed $22,487. These amounts were higher than average amounts borrowed in 2012-13 and the national average in 2017-18.

Students at public two-year colleges borrowed, on average, $11,465 in 2017-18, less than the average amount in 2012-13 but more than the SREB and national averages in 2017-18.
Changes in Tuition and Fees, CPI and Household Income

Compared to the CPI and household income, tuition and fees at West Virginia public colleges and universities increased at a faster rate between 2007-08 and 2017-18.

Over that decade, the CPI increased by 16% and median household income in West Virginia increased by 33%, while tuition and fees increased by 74% at four-year institutions and 63% at two-year institutions.

Dollars per FTE Student from State Appropriations and Tuition and Fees

Operational funds consisted mostly of tuition and fees for West Virginia’s public four-year institutions in 2017-18.

Net tuition and fees per FTE student at West Virginia’s four-year institutions increased from $6,847 in 2007-08 to $11,148 in 2017-18. In comparison, state appropriations per FTE student decreased from $4,241 in 2007-08 to $3,971 in 2017-18. Students and families continued paying a larger share of the total funding per student.

Operational funds consisted mostly of tuition and fees for West Virginia’s public two-year institutions in 2017-18.

Net tuition and fees per FTE student at West Virginia’s two-year institutions increased from $2,848 in 2007-08 to $4,336 in 2017-18. In comparison, state and local appropriations per FTE student decreased from $4,864 in 2007-08 to $3,845 in 2017-18. Students and families paid a larger share of the total funding per student.
**Additional State Context**

**Postsecondary Enrollment.** In 2017-18, 37% of students in West Virginia were enrolled in public four-year Type 1 institutions, 40% were enrolled at public four-year Type 2 institutions, and 21% were enrolled in public two-year colleges.

**First-Year Retention.** For the 2017 cohort, 77% of students attending public four-year Type 1 institutions in West Virginia were still enrolled one year later, 73% were retained after the first year in public four-year Type 2 institutions, and 53% were retained at public two-year colleges.

**Pell Grants.** In 2017-18, 20% of the average cost of attendance in public four-year Type 1 institutions in West Virginia was covered by the average Pell Grant award. The average grant amount covered 23% of costs in public four-year Type 2 institutions and 31% in public two-year colleges.

**Education Attainment.** In 2018, 42% of West Virginia’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 2030.

**Student Debt.** In West Virginia, 67% of the class of 2019 graduated from four-year colleges with debt, owing an average of $29,272.


**West Virginia Institutions by Type**

**Public Four-Year Type 1**
- West Virginia University

**Public Four-Year Type 2**
- Bluefield State College
- Concord University
- Fairmont State University
- Glenville State College
- Marshall University
- Shepherd University
- West Virginia State University
- West Liberty University
- West Virginia University Institute of Technology

**Public Two-Year**
- West Virginia University at Parkersburg
- Potomac State College of West Virginia University
- Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College
- West Virginia Northern Community College
- Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College
- Pierpont Community and Technical College
- Mountwest Community and Technical College
- Blue Ridge Community and Technical College
- New River Community and Technical College
- BridgeValley Community and 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 2017-18 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 2017-18 academic year. Some IPEDS surveys collect data for the prior academic year; for instance, the 2017-18 Student Financial Aid survey collected data for the 2016-17 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 SREB.org/Affordability for detailed sources and explanatory notes.

SREB College Affordability Profiles detail data and trends specific to each SREB state to assist policymakers 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/Affordability.