



## Funding Strategies

There are some useful ways of estimating college costs in advance. One way of doing so at a given college is to use what are known as a [Net Price Calculators](#). These are available on most college websites as well. NPCs allow prospective students to enter some basic financial information to determine what students similar to them paid to attend the institution the previous year (*after* taking grants and scholarships into account). Colleges also typically list their rates for tuition and room and board on their Admissions/ Financial Aid webpage. An additional resource is the [College Board NPC website](#) which can inform people on how to best interpret and compare the results from various net price calculators.

There are several other tools that can help families determine approximate costs of attending a particular school or conversely what colleges believe families might be expected to pay given their financial circumstances. One such tool is known as the [FAFSA4caster](#). By providing financial information the *FAFSA4caster* will estimate your eligibility for federal student aid and determine what is commonly known as your *Estimated Family Contribution* (EFC)

The US Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency Center offers a variety of very helpful tools and resources for determining costs and comparing colleges [USDOE College Affordability](#)

### Financial Safety Schools

It is highly recommended that all students apply to at least one Financial Safety School (FSS). A Financial Safety School is one that the student would be able to afford with relatively little need for financial aid, one at which the student is almost certain to be accepted, and one that the student is willing to attend.

A **Florida in-state public four year college or university** is often a good Financial Safety School, since in-state tuition is lower than tuition at a private college or out of state, non-resident, tuition at a public college or university in another state. Most Sagemont students are, as well, eligible for a full or partial [Bright Futures](#) award, covering nearly 50-100% of in-state tuition only. Students can also reduce college costs by avoiding the travel expenses inherent in attending an out-of-state school.

Private colleges and universities are generally most expensive, however, these institutions may be able to offer very competitive financial aid packages. Additionally, some very strong but lesser known colleges may be a better financial value than many highly selective institutions. These schools (both public and private) work hard to attract the best students to

strengthen their academic profiles. As a result many Sagemont students that might not otherwise qualify for financial aid may obtain considerable merit scholarships.

### **Applying for Financial Aid - The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

Students should apply as early as possible for Financial Aid from the colleges or universities to which they are applying. The [FAFSA](#) opens on October 1, 2018. Please apply so that you may be eligible for all applicable awards (need-based, merit, institutional grants, work study, etc.). Financial aid award letters are issued to those who complete the FAFSA first.

### **Merit Scholarships**

Students should apply for merit aid if eligible. Merit Aid may be based on academic merit, musical or athletic talent, demonstrated leadership, and/or a record of community service and is offered by the schools to which a student applies. Available merit opportunities that require an application can be found on College Admissions/Financial Aid websites

Students are more likely to receive merit aid from a school if they are at the top of the applicant pool and will raise the college or university's average SAT score, ACT score, and/or average GPA.

There are many private scholarships that are not associated with particular colleges or universities. The Scholarship List on the Sagemont *Naviance Student* webpage is an excellent place to start looking for these scholarships.

### **AP Credit**

It is possible to shorten the length of time as an undergraduate by attending schools that award credit to students who achieve high enough AP scores. This can significantly lessen the cost of college by reducing attendance by up to a full year. But note that many highly selective colleges grant little or no credit for AP scores. Most colleges list which tests and what scores qualify for credit on their website or refer to [AP Credit Policies](#). Many colleges now are stressing less AP work and more life experiences connected to passion.

### **Honors Programs**

If attending in-state, consider applying to an Honors Program or Honors College. Honors programs often provide a school within a school and offer smaller, more challenging classes. These programs are something to consider for students who are hoping to control costs but still experience a high quality, smaller program. Honors programs at public out-of-state schools sometimes offer scholarships to admitted out-of-state students.

### **SCF or Florida Community Colleges**

Starting at an in-state community college to fulfill general requirements, and transferring to a four-year, in-state public college or university for the final two years is a smart option for some

students. When applying make sure that courses meet the degree requirements of a particular four-year institution or major so that you will not lose any credits in the transfer.