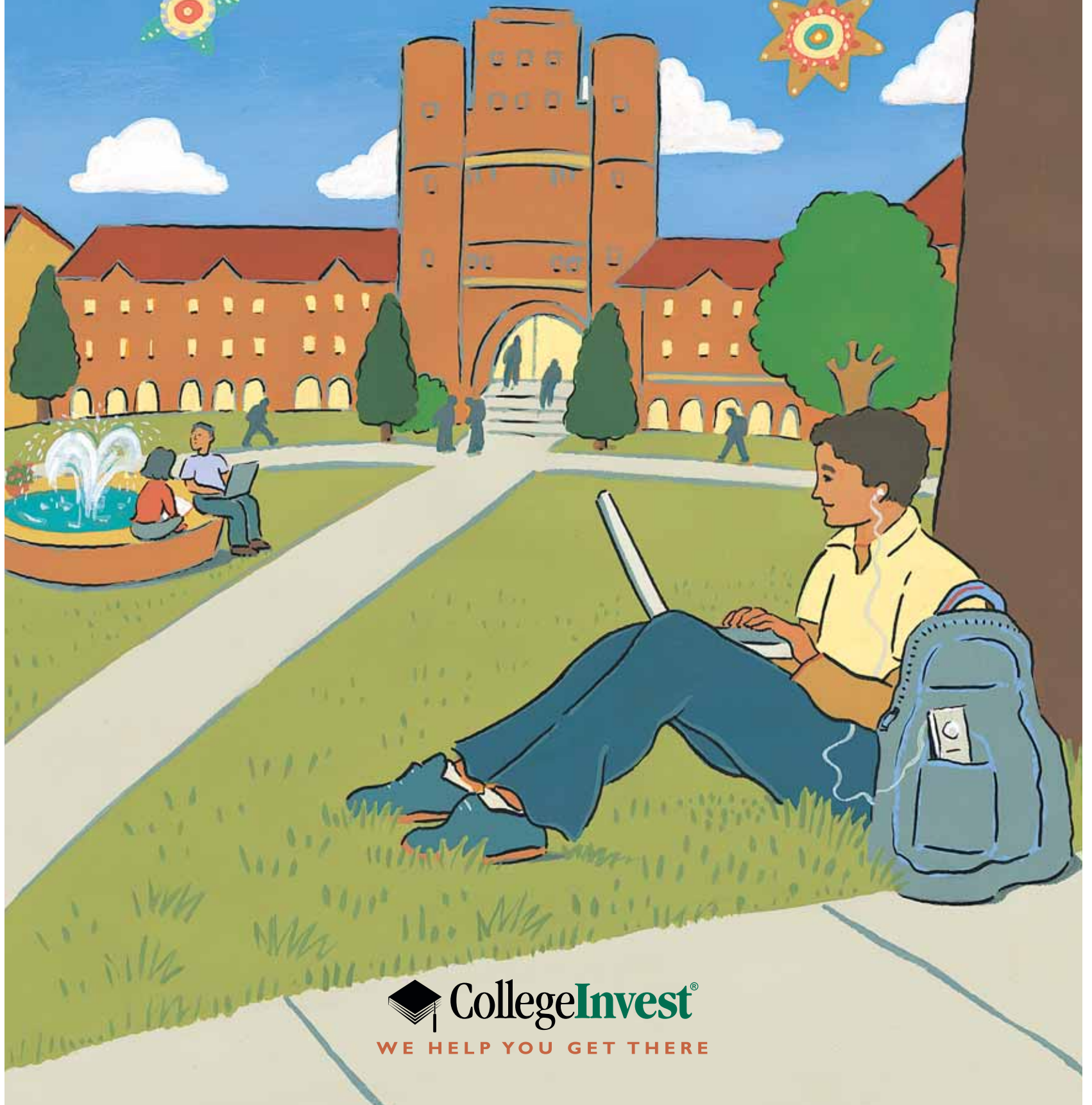


HOW TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

# The College Financial Planning Workbook



# Destination: higher education.

*When you decide to continue with your education, you're making a big decision about your future—one that will have a positive impact on the rest of your life. But, more decisions lie ahead, and the process of selecting a school, applying, getting in and paying for it can seem overwhelming at times. There are lots of variables, considerations and things you'll need to know. The first is this: CollegenInvest is here to help you.*

## Making the right financial plan

This workbook contains tips and ideas about choosing and applying to colleges, and a very helpful guide to working out the finances. No matter who you are, a big part of college is how to pay for it. At CollegenInvest, we can help you make a smart financial plan—one that's right for you, your family and your financial needs.

You should also visit our website, [www.collegeninvest.org](http://www.collegeninvest.org). It's packed with information and planning tools, and it's where you register for the CollegenInvest Scholarship Program. We give away more than \$400,000 each year, and it's easy to apply. No essays to write or GPA requirements.

## Who is CollegenInvest?

CollegenInvest is a not-for-profit division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. As such, our only goal is to help students get an education beyond high school. So, we work hard to provide expert information, simple planning tools, scholarships, 529 college savings plans, and low-cost student and parent loans, all to take your education dollars as far as they can go.

## ☆ Table of Contents ☆

1–2	Introduction
3–4	Choosing a College
5–6	Financial Aid Overview
7–8	Understanding the FAFSA
9–10	Comparing Award Letters
11–12	How CollegenInvest Can Help
13–14	Student Loan Overview
15–16	Worksheet Overview
17–18	Checklist & Financial Options
19–20	Personal Data Sheet





## What am I looking for? How do I choose?

*There's public or private, big or small, vocational, technical, professional or liberal arts, urban or rural, in the U.S. or outside of it, colleges, universities and community colleges to choose from. Whether you already know where you want to go or have no idea where to begin looking, the important thing is you get to decide what's right for you.*

### Do the legwork

Finding the right college takes some work. Consider all of your options, tap into your resources and set realistic expectations.

### Don't sell your dreams short

Don't just look at education costs, but give some serious thought to your dream school and find it. Sure, cost matters, but it need not drive your decision. And remember, you are selecting a college just as much as a college is selecting you.

### List five things you really want in a school

- ☆ Does it offer a major related to your interests?
- ☆ Is it a big campus? Or small?
- ☆ Is it close by? Or far, far away?

### ☆ What I Want My College to Be ☆

1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

### Compare, compare, compare

Check out the worksheet on the next page. It will help you budget for application costs and college visits and keep track of where you are in the process.

### Ask your counselor

Your high school guidance counselor is a great resource for up-to-date information on colleges and universities. Most high schools have college brochures available in their resource center. Or, you can find up-to-date information about Colorado schools at [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org). It's a great place to start your college search.

### Have You Covered the Basics?

- ☆ Don't fall prey to "senioritis"—keep your grades up and stay involved in extracurricular activities.
- ☆ Take a practice SAT or ACT test—this can really help you improve your scores.
- ☆ Plan some school trips. College visits are a great way to get a feel for different schools. Arrange through the admissions office to stay on campus—but call early! Spaces may fill up fast.
- ☆ Talk to older friends or siblings about their school—what do they like or dislike? How did they choose?



# ★ Comparing Colleges ★

## Key steps

	College Name	1	2	3
Website Address	<i>www.state.edu</i>			
Contact Financial Aid Office	<i>October 1</i>			
Admission Application Due Date	<i>December 1</i>			
Transcript Sent	<i>yes</i>			
Financial Aid Priority Deadline	<i>March 1</i>			

## Cost of applying

Admission Application Fee	<i>\$35</i>			
Estimated Cost to Visit Campus	<i>\$400</i>			
Total Application-Related Expenses	<i>\$435</i>			

## Cost of attendance

Tuition & Fees*	<i>\$5,500</i>			
Room & Board	<i>\$7,000</i>			
Books & Supplies	<i>\$1,400</i>			
Medical Expenses	<i>\$1,000</i>			
Transportation	<i>\$700</i>			
Personal Expenses	<i>\$2,500</i>			
Total Annual Cost of Attendance	<i>\$18,100</i>			

## My pros & cons for each college

	College Name	1	2	3
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>* Great program in my major</i></li> <li><i>* Close to the mountains</i></li> <li><i>* Has a varsity soccer team</i></li> </ul>			
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>* Far away from home</i></li> <li><i>* Have to do my own laundry</i></li> <li><i>* Expensive, but will wait for financial aid package</i></li> </ul>			

\*Fees as listed by the college are typically mandatory fees required for all students. Certain fields of study may have other fees (e.g., lab fees) not reflected in this amount.

## Where does the money come from?

*A college education is one of the best investments you'll ever make in yourself and your future. It opens doors to greater opportunities, boosts your earning potential and can be a stepping stone to help you achieve a lifelong dream. While there's no question you should go, a big question is how to pay for it all. For many families, that's the number one concern. Luckily, there are more options today than ever before.*

### It's a family matter

Open up a family dialogue. College money comes from many different sources: CollegeInvest 529 college savings plans, investments, retirement savings, financial aid, current earnings and the College Opportunity Fund (COF), to name a few.

### Look closely at the schools you like

Don't rule out a college just because it's expensive. Sometimes those schools have financial aid packages that make them as affordable as less expensive schools. (See page 10: Comparing Award Letters.)

### Don't be afraid to take out a loan

Student loans are an important part of financial aid and paying for college—and they help you build a credit history. Many have federally subsidized interest rates, and some interest may even be tax deductible. Because student loans are so affordable, they're a great alternative to using up retirement or family emergency funds.

### Most families receive financial aid

In fact, two-thirds of all full-time students receive some kind of financial aid. But, the key is, if you plan to go to college in the fall and want financial aid, you must apply early in the spring semester of your senior year of high school. Put it at the top of your to-do list. (See page 7–8: Understanding the FAFSA.)

### FAFSA for all!

Unless you fill out a **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**, your college can't award you any federal financial aid. Many people make the mistake of thinking they make too much money to qualify, but that's not always the case. Many families with higher income levels also receive aid. Just look at the chart below!

Family Income Level	Received Aid:	Received Grants:	Received Student Loans:
Less than \$32,000	78%	74%	34%
\$32,000 to 92,000	60%	46%	37%
More than \$92,000	49%	32%	28%

Source: Based on information on aid for dependent students, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-2004. Figures rounded.

# ★ Financial Aid Cheat Sheet ★

**COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY FUND (COF)** All Colorado residents who attend a public college or university are eligible for this stipend. But, you **must** register for it. For more info and to sign up, visit [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org).

**LOANS** There are federal as well as private loans, and both must be paid back, with interest. Not all loans are the same, so read the fine print!

**Federal Stafford Loans** Federal loans for students, made through one of two U.S. Department of Education programs: the William D. Ford Federal Direct Student Loan Program (Direct Loans) and the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL). Direct and FFEL loans can be either subsidized or unsubsidized. The government has set the interest rate at 6.8% and limits the amount students can borrow each year. For dependent students, the limits are: freshman, \$3,500; sophomore, \$4,500; junior/senior, \$5,500. Independent students and students whose parents do not qualify for a PLUS loan may be eligible to borrow more – up to \$4,000 for years 1-2 and \$5,000 for years 3+. (See page 18: Figuring Your Financial Options.)

**Federal PLUS Loans** Federal loans for parents of dependent undergraduate students enrolled at least half time and for graduate students. Like Federal Stafford loans, they're made through either the Direct Loan or the FFEL program. Federal PLUS loans are unsubsidized and the federal government has set the interest rate at 8.5% for the FFEL program. To get a Federal PLUS loan, you must qualify for credit. Parents or graduate students may borrow up to the cost of attendance, minus any other financial aid received.

**Federal Perkins Loans** These low-interest (5%) loans for students are awarded at participating schools based on financial need. Your school is your lender, and while the loan is made with federal funds, your school contributes a share and you repay your school. Depending on when you apply, your need and the funding level of your school, you can borrow up to \$4,000 each year as an undergrad and \$6,000 as a graduate or professional student. Repayment begins nine months after graduation, or nine months after your enrollment drops to less than half time.

**Alternative Loans** These credit-based loans can help cover the difference between other financial aid and the cost of education. Interest rates are variable and set by lenders. Generally, you are limited to borrowing up to the

cost of attendance minus any other financial aid, and most lenders offer several repayment options.

**GRANTS** Awarded based on need or merit, grants do not need to be repaid. Grants come from federal and state governments, colleges and even private companies or organizations.

**Federal Pell Grants** These make up the majority of federal student grants and are awarded based on need. To find out if you qualify for a Federal Pell Grant, visit [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org).

There are also many other grants available, such as the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), the Science & Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (SMART), and state grants awarded through your college. Check with your financial aid office for more information.

**WORK-STUDY** If your school participates in work-study, you may be awarded financial assistance in the form of part-time employment on campus or at designated off-campus sites.

**SCHOLARSHIPS** Awarded for a variety of reasons, scholarships do not need to be repaid. Make sure you apply for ours at [www.collegeinvest.org](http://www.collegeinvest.org). It's free money!

## Sub-sa-who?

### Subsidized vs. Unsubsidized

**A subsidized loan is based on financial need. You won't be charged interest while you're in school or during authorized periods of deferment. The federal government subsidizes the interest during these periods.**

**An unsubsidized loan is not based on need. You'll be charged interest from the time the loan is disbursed until it's paid in full. If you allow the interest to accrue while you're in school (or during other periods of nonpayment), it will be capitalized—that is, the interest will be added to the principal amount of your loan, and additional interest will be based on that higher amount.**

**You can receive both types of Federal Stafford loans in the same enrollment period.**

# The answers to your FAFSA questions.

*FAFSA stands for **Free Application for Federal Student Aid**, and it's the first step to getting financial assistance for college. While filling out the form is probably about as much fun as doing your taxes or a trip to the dentist, the FAFSA is the link between you and your financial aid. So, plan on filling it out this year, and every year you want to be considered for aid. While there are lots of acronyms and jargon around it, once you get the hang of it, you'll see it's not all **that** bad.*

## Filling out the application

You'll need to fill out the application together with your parents, unless you are independent. You can fill out an application on paper or online, but online is easiest—your application will be processed within two hours, and help is available, too. Go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). If you don't have a home computer, try your local library or even your high school. Your guidance counselor should also have paper copies available. Remember to save all your paperwork each and every time you fill out the form. This will make corrections easier. If you're filling out your form online, print a copy for your records.

## Apply **EARLY!**

FAFSA can be submitted anytime after January 1 of your senior year, and you want to do it as soon as you can. Here's why: some funds are limited and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. So, the earlier you apply, the better. Also, each college has an application priority deadline—your FAFSA needs to be in ahead of those dates. It's important to note that each year you request financial aid you will also need to submit your FAFSA—but don't worry, after the first year the process should get easier as much of your information is saved in the system.

## Tips for the FAFSA:

- ☆ Use estimated figures if you and your family have not completed your tax returns by mid-January.
- ☆ Do not use a service that requires you to pay a fee to submit your **free** application!
- ☆ Check with your college to make sure there are no additional applications you need to fill out for financial aid.
- ☆ Whether you are attending a two-year or four-year college, university or vocational school, to get the most financial aid, you must fill out your FAFSA.



# Working with the FAFSA on the web.

## 1. Before

You and your parents both need U.S. Department of Education Personal Identification Numbers (PINs). You can't complete the FAFSA online without one. Request one at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) before January of your senior year, as it can take up to two weeks to get a PIN.

### What can you do with your PIN?

- ☆ Electronically submit your FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). (Remember, you and your parents will need separate PINs.)
- ☆ Make corrections to your FAFSA.
- ☆ Check the status of your FAFSA.
- ☆ Renew your FAFSA each year.

REMINDER: You will need your PIN every time you reapply for financial aid, so keep track of it on your personal data sheet. (See page 19.)

## 2. During

Reference materials you will need to complete your FAFSA:

- Student's driver's license and social security numbers.
- Parents' social security numbers.
- W-2 forms and other earning records from last year.
- Last year's income tax returns (IRS Form 1040, 1040A, 1040 telefile, 1040EZ; Trust Territory tax return or foreign country tax return).
- Records of untaxed income, such as welfare, social security, Aid to Families with Dependent Children or Aid to Dependent Children, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, or veteran benefits.
- Current bank statements.
- Business and farm records.
- Records of stocks, bonds and other investments.

## 3. After

Within several weeks of submitting your FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) in the mail or online. Carefully review this information for accuracy. Even a small error can have a major impact.

If you find an error or if you are asked for more information, make a correction online or contact the financial aid office at each of the schools you've applied to.

Based on the financial information provided on your FAFSA, your SAR tells you your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), an eligibility index for financial aid. Don't worry if your EFC is high; your college does not expect you to have this amount in cash. The EFC can come from many sources, such as family savings, payment plans, and student and parent loans.

Retain the SAR for your records and be sure to check your EFC against your award letters as they come in.

# The wait is over. You're in!

*After all the questions schools have asked you, here's their answer, in a single envelope. College acceptance letters are really exciting and mark a turning point in your life. With each one, a new door to your future opens. The endless, hypothetical possibilities for next year become tangible and concrete. You can begin to picture yourself there—wherever there is—without worrying that you'll jinx yourself or be disappointed if you don't get in. Because now, you're in! Congratulations.*

## Welcome to the freshman class

Once you're in, you should receive an award letter or email from the colleges you listed on your FAFSA. If you have not received one, contact the college to inquire about the status. The award letter tells you what financial aid each college will offer you. Spend some time with it. You may need to agree to terms and conditions. For instance, with some grants, you might be asked to live on campus or maintain a certain grade point average. Your award letter also may tell you what student loans you qualify for and how much you are eligible to borrow.

## Side-by-side comparison

If you are awarded financial aid by more than one school, you should do a careful, side-by-side analysis of your award packages. The chart on the next page makes it easier to see what's really offered by each school and what the anticipated cost of attendance will be. While the worksheet on page 4 should have helped you get a good idea of the "real" cost of attending each school (including transportation, medical expenses and more)—a figure you'll need for comparing award letters—don't overlook the pros and cons you wrote down, too.

## Tips for Award Letters

- ☆ If your family situation has changed since last year, if you believe you might be eligible for more aid or if you think an error has been made, don't hesitate to contact the college's financial aid office.
- ☆ Check over the award letter carefully; many colleges ask you to sign and return your award notice to accept the aid.
- ☆ Awards are for specific periods of enrollment and enrollment status—for example, full time or half time. If you change enrollment plans, you should contact your financial aid office as your financial aid plan will likely need to be revised.
- ☆ Not all colleges automatically award student (Stafford) and/or parent (PLUS) loans. So, even if they are not listed in the award letter, you may still be eligible for them. But remember, only borrow what you really need, as all loans must be repaid. Check the college's website or call the financial aid office for more information. (See pages 6 and 13.)

# ★ Comparing Award Letters ★

## Award letters

	College Name	1	2	3
Total Scholarships		\$1,500		
Total Work-Study		\$3,000		
Total Grants		\$2,000		
Loans				
Federal Perkins Loan		\$1,500		
Federal Stafford Loan*		XXX		
Federal PLUS Loan*		XXX		
Total Aid		\$8,000		

## Calculating the amount you have to cover

	College Name	1	2	3
Cost of Attendance (See page 4.)		\$18,100		
Total Amount of Aid Awarded (See above.)	–	\$8,000	–	
Amount You Have to Cover†	=	\$10,100	=	

\*Some colleges automatically award Federal Stafford and PLUS loans, some do not. If you have not been awarded a loan and have unmet need, contact your school's financial aid office. † Typically, this amount could be met with a subsidized Federal Stafford loan, an unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan or a Federal PLUS loan. (If not already awarded, talk to your school's financial aid office about these.)

# CollegInvest, your college financing partner.

*You'll probably have lots of financial questions, and it might seem like everyone you ask has a different answer. Different institutions and companies have different goals, and helping to fund college is a big business. A little legwork and a little time spent asking the right questions now can save you a lot of money in the long run. College is expensive, so every penny counts! Choose your partner carefully.*

## A smart way to go

At CollegInvest, we're not like other lenders. We're a not-for-profit division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, here to help make college more affordable for everyone. Count on us for great savings plans, low-cost parent and student loans, and more than \$400,000 in scholarships.

## Help before you go to college

**SAVINGS PROGRAMS** CollegInvest offers great 529 college savings plans, and they're the only plans in Colorado that come with a Colorado State income tax deduction. It's never too late to open an account. Open one today and access those funds for college right away.

## Help while you're in school

**SCHOLARSHIPS** As part of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, we fund the CollegInvest Scholarship Program, offering more than \$400,000 in scholarships each year to Colorado students. If you're a Colorado student and you'll be in college next fall, you may be eligible.

To apply for scholarships visit [www.collegeinvest.org](http://www.collegeinvest.org).

**LOANS** CollegInvest offers some of the lowest-cost student and parent loans available anywhere, with some of the best borrower benefits and advantages. Not all loans are created equal, so before you sign with any lender, do your homework, and find out if their terms are as good as ours.

## Help after you graduate

**CONSOLIDATION** CollegInvest also offers some of the lowest-cost consolidation loans available anywhere. These fixed-rate loans let you combine all or some of your student loans into one loan with one lower monthly payment.

## Loan forgiveness programs

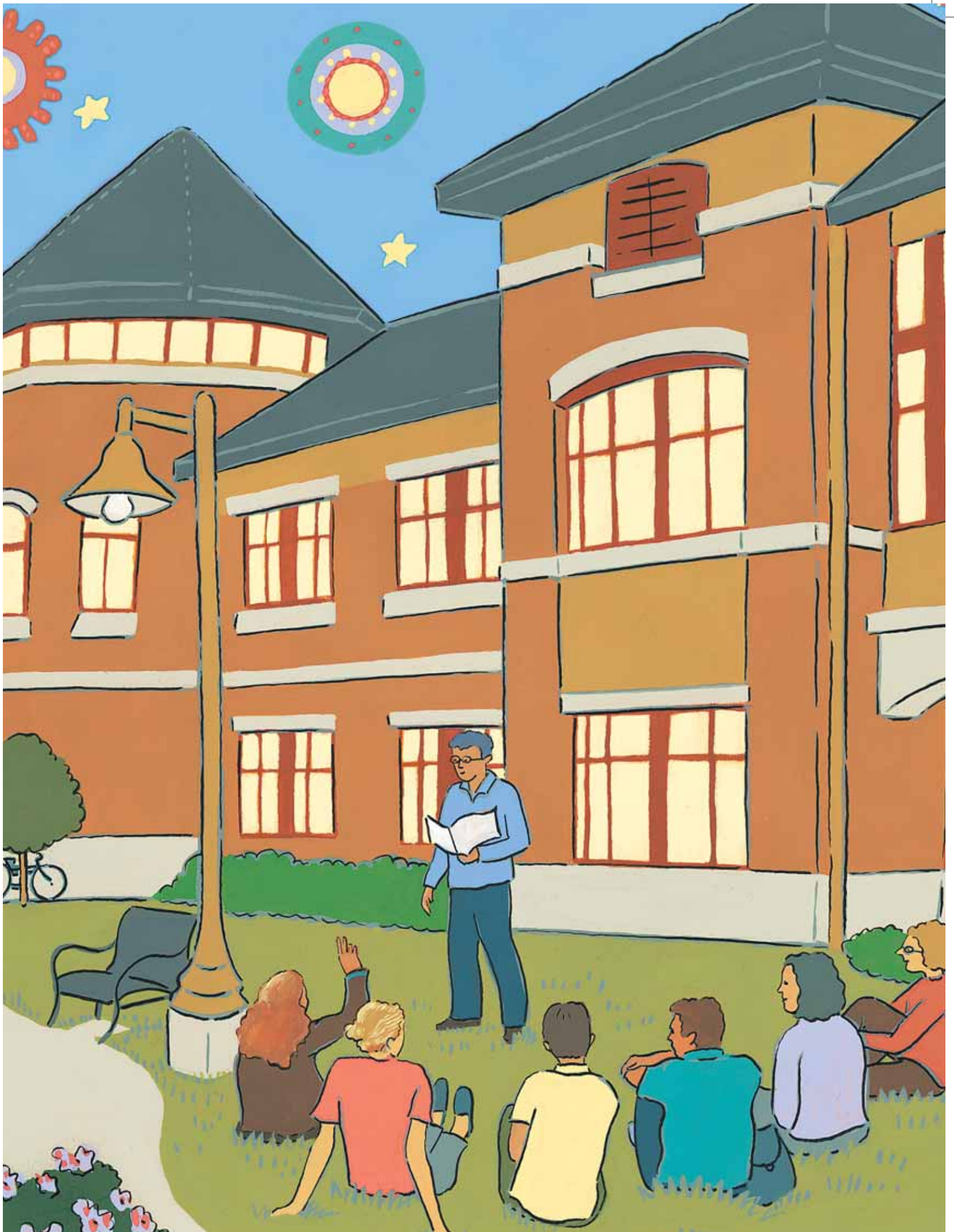
**The Denver GRADS** program is offered to Denver high school graduates and Denver residents who obtain a high school diploma from 2005–2009 and go on to college. The program offers CollegInvest Federal Stafford loan forgiveness of up to \$1,500 upon college graduation, and you can apply while still in high school.

**The El Paso County Graduation Rewards Program** is available to El Paso County high school students who graduated from El Paso County high schools between 2005–2008 and attend college in El Paso County. The program offers CollegInvest Federal Stafford loan forgiveness of up to \$1,500 upon college graduation, and you can apply while still in high school.

**The LIFT Program** helps teachers in high-demand disciplines repay their student loans. Qualified teachers can get up to \$2,000 a year toward loan repayment, for up to four years.

Visit [www.collegeinvest.org](http://www.collegeinvest.org) for more information or to apply.







## Not all loans are the same. So, choose your lender wisely!

*It's okay if you cannot cover the entire cost of college. Most families do borrow money to help pay for school, so you are not alone. In fact, getting the right student loan may be the best thing you can do for your family financially—yet many parents remortgage their houses or borrow from their retirement to avoid the dreaded “L” word. On the other hand, many students borrow more than they need and end up struggling with their debt once they've finished school. Whether you're a parent, a student or a parent who is a student, talk to us.*

### Understanding loans

There are two categories of loans available: federal and private. Your first choice should always be federal—these loans usually have better interest rates, and the government backs them. Once you've finished school, consolidation loans can help lower your payment and combine multiple payments into one.

Keep in mind, all loans are not the same. Check the borrower benefits and read the fine print to get the best deal.

### The CollegenInvest Federal Stafford Student Loan

Students of all income levels can qualify for these popular, low-interest loans. You make no payments until six months after you leave school or attend school less than half time. While the interest rate on Stafford loans is set by the government at 6.8%, CollegenInvest offers special borrower benefits\* that can save you money:

- ☆ No fees. We'll pay them on your behalf.
- ☆ 1% principal balance reduction upon disbursement.
- ☆ 1% interest rate reduction for automatic electronic payments.
- ☆ 1% interest rate reduction after the first 24 consecutive, on-time payments.
- ☆ 1% additional interest reduction after the first 48 consecutive, on-time payments.

### The CollegenInvest Federal Parent PLUS Loan

Parent PLUS loans are an affordable way to meet the family tuition obligation. They're easy to apply for—you fill out a simple application which includes a quick credit check. Payment usually begins sixty days after the loan is fully disbursed. While the government has set the interest rate at 8.5%, CollegenInvest offers special borrower benefits\* that can save you money:

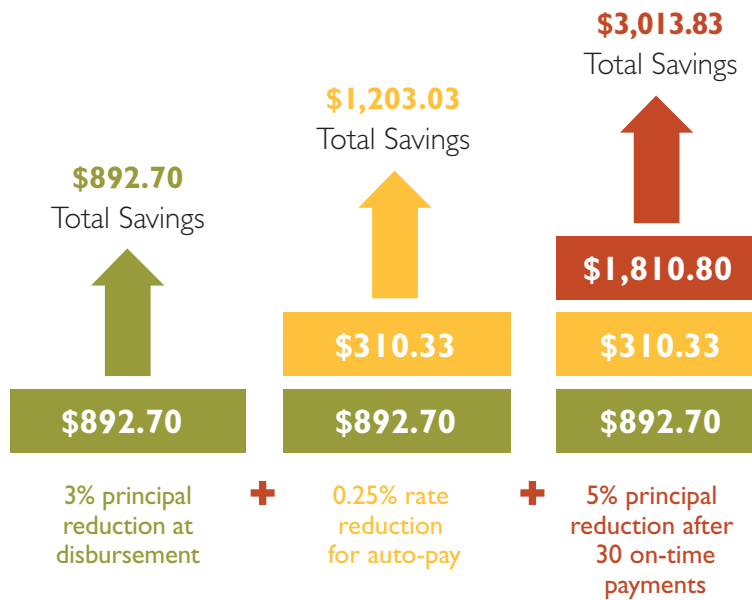
- ☆ 3% principal balance reduction upon disbursement.
- ☆ 0.25% interest rate reduction for automatic electronic payments.
- ☆ 5% additional principal balance reduction after the first 30 consecutive, on-time payments.
- ☆ Flexible repayment options.



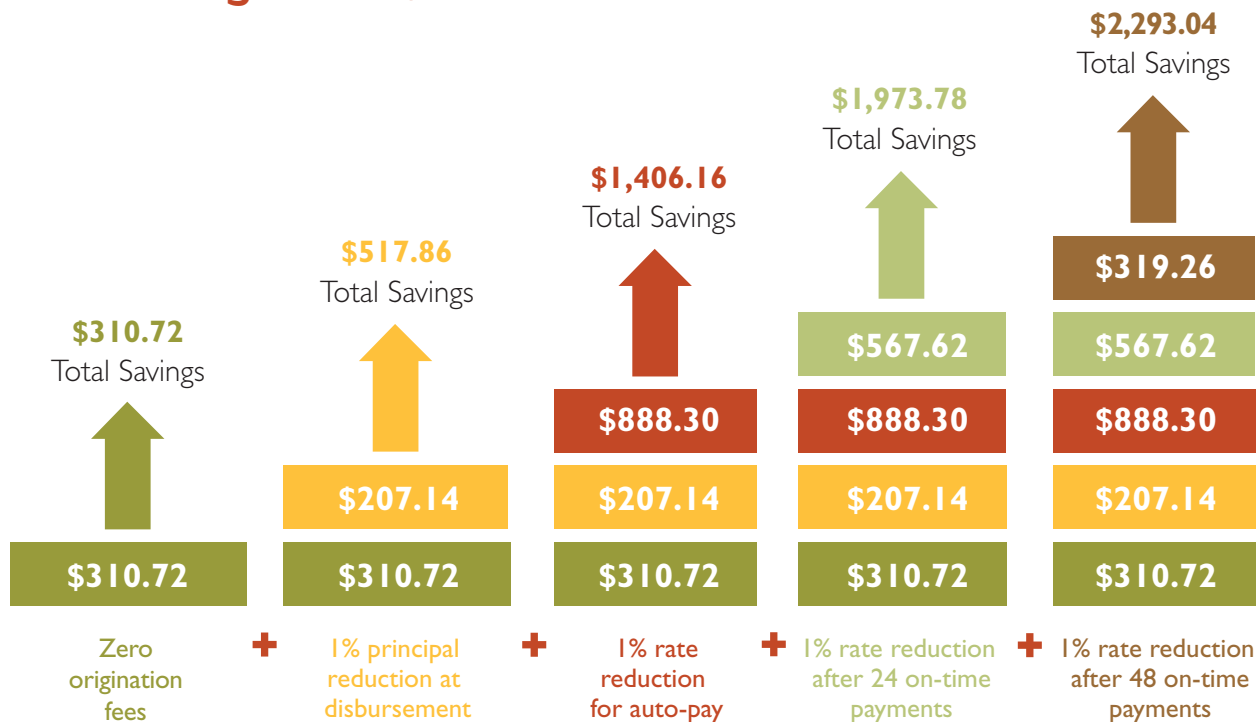
\*Borrower benefits on new loans disbursed on or after 7/1/07 and are subject to change without notice. Visit [www.collegeninvest.org](http://www.collegeninvest.org) for current benefits.

# ★ You Can Save With CollegeInvest ★

## Your savings on a \$20,000 Federal PLUS loan<sup>†</sup>



## Your savings on a \$15,000 Federal Stafford loan<sup>‡</sup>



<sup>†</sup> All PLUS loan calculations assume an 8.5% interest rate and a 10-year term. Each benefit savings amount includes the previous savings amount when calculated.  
<sup>‡</sup> All Stafford loan calculations assume a 6.8% interest rate and a 10-year term. Each benefit savings amount includes the previous savings amount when calculated.

## Map your future.

*The next section of this workbook houses some great worksheets. They are designed to help you see the big picture for the next school year, as well as the future implications of the financial decisions you might make. Grab a pencil and go! And remember, if you have questions there are lots of places to turn to for help. Call us, your college financial aid office, or your high school counselor.*

### **Senior year checklist (See page 17.)**

This will help you stay organized and on top of all the many things you need to do, so you don't overlook any deadlines—they're all critical. You may want to add your own items to this list of tasks, deadlines and important due dates, so we've left space for you to track those here, too.

While this checklist begins with the fall of your senior year in high school, if you're starting sooner, head to our website at [www.collegeinvest.org](http://www.collegeinvest.org) for our checklist for juniors.

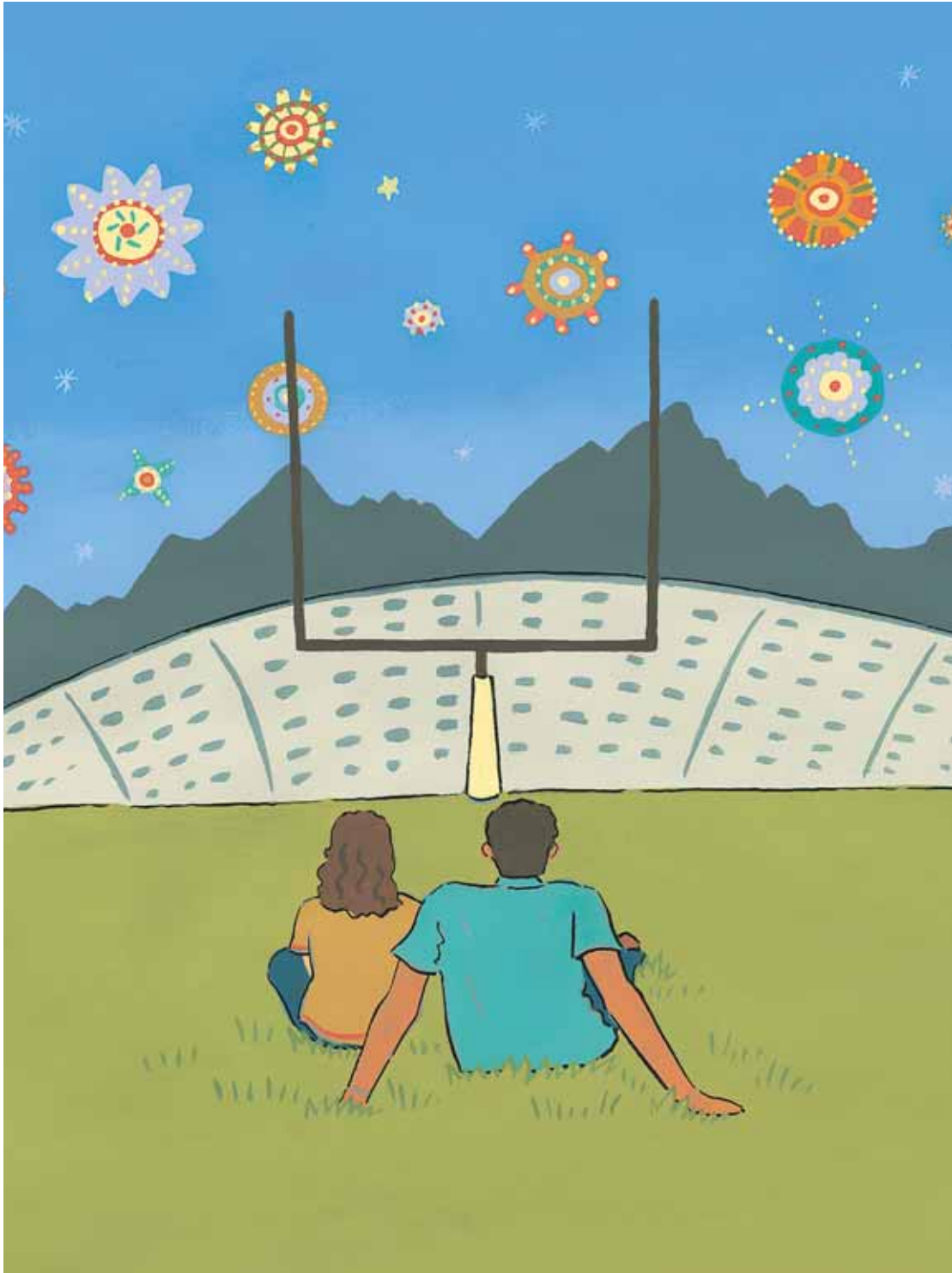
### **Figuring your financial options (See page 18.)**

There are many ways to pay for college, including some you may not have thought of. For most families, the money for college comes from several different places, including savings, current income, investments, home equity loans and

more. This worksheet looks at the pros and cons of each financing option and explains why you may or may not want to use each source. Better still, it's all condensed onto one page. Once you complete it, you'll have a top-line look at your financial situation as it relates to paying for college.

### **Personal data sheet (See page 19.)**

If you're applying to college, you will have lots of forms, facts and figures. This sheet allows you to put it all in one place and keep it handy. From your FAFSA PIN (which you will need every year you apply for aid) to information about your top college choices and websites to use in your scholarship search, it's all here. Save it—it will help in the years to come!



# ★ Senior Year Checklist ★

## June–August

- If your high school offers Advanced Placement (AP) classes, sign up! In the spring, you'll take an AP test. If you score well, you'll get college credit. This can save you money.
- Choose colleges with strong programs in the area of study you're likely to pick. Visit [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org) for help finding these schools!
- Request information from three or four of your chosen colleges.
- Visit college campuses. If you can, arrange to stay overnight in a dorm and attend a class or two while you're there.
- Take the SAT or the ACT at least six weeks before the deadline for scores to be submitted to colleges.
- If you haven't already, apply for the College Opportunity Fund. For more information about this stipend, visit [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org).
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## September

- If you haven't already, make time to visit your top college choices.
- Meet with your school counselor to make sure you're on track for the college of your choice.
- Meet with the admissions representatives of your top three schools.
- Make a list of due dates for forms completed and information sent.
- Begin asking for letters of recommendation from your teachers, guidance counselors and employers.
- Start your scholarship search—request a scholarship workbook from us at [www.collegeinvest.org](http://www.collegeinvest.org).
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## October

- Begin working on admission application essays.
- Attend special programs such as college fairs and financial aid workshops.
- Visit [www.collegeinvest.org](http://www.collegeinvest.org) to find out when we're in your area.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## November

- Obtain any additional financial aid applications required by your colleges.
- Begin all college applications.
- Check deadlines for when applications need to be postmarked.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## December

- Apply for your FAFSA PIN at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).
- Gather materials to fill out the FAFSA.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## January

- Submit your FAFSA. Use estimated figures if family tax returns are not yet completed.
- Keep copies of all forms you submit.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## February

- If they're required by your college, check to see if your mid-year high school transcripts have been sent.
- Look into taking AP or College-Level Examination Program Exams.
- Rank your finalized list of colleges.
- Look for your Student Aid Report (SAR) in the mail or electronically, depending on how you submitted your FAFSA.
- Submit your SAR to any colleges you did not mark on your FAFSA.
- If you have not received your SAR, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## March

- Start watching for college acceptance letters and financial aid award letters.
- Apply for a CollegeInvest scholarship at [www.collegeinvest.org](http://www.collegeinvest.org).
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## April

- Make your decisions and send in your deposit.
- Notify the other colleges you will not be attending.
- Watch for important deadlines (housing, financial aid and more) at your chosen college.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## May

- Take your AP exams, which are given in high schools nationwide.
- Finalize summer job plans.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_





# Figuring Your Financial Options



You and your parents should use this worksheet to check which sources of money you have and might use.

Amount you have to cover (See page 10.)

## Using Assets

### CollegInvest 529 College Savings Plans

The first place to look. If you've been saving money just for college, now's the time to use it.

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

### Income and Other Savings

You may have budgeted paying for part of college from your family income. Savings accounts and CDs may also be good sources, but consider whether it's better to keep the interest coming in on these accounts, using other resources like low-interest student or parent loans instead.

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

### Selling Assets

Selling stocks, bonds or other investments could have broad implications. You may be earning more on assets than you would spend on a loan. Selling assets may also create tax liabilities. The timing might be bad—is the market down? Also, selling assets may add to your income this year, which could reduce the amount of aid you are eligible for next year.

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

### IRA Withdrawals

When used to pay for college, withdrawals from a Roth IRA are tax-free. With a traditional IRA, withdrawals are taxable income, but no early withdrawal penalty is charged. On the other hand, this step reduces retirement funds and their earning power, and you cannot borrow for retirement when the time comes.

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

## Parent Borrowing

### Home Equity Loans or Additional Mortgages

Depending on market conditions, interest on these loans may be low—and may be tax deductible. These loans require credit approval and are likely to have closing costs. Some people are not comfortable using their home as collateral.

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

### 401(K) Loans

No credit check is required, and any interest goes back into your account. Typically, you must pay this loan back within five years or it's considered taxable income, subject to penalty and taxes. Also, if you leave your current employer, the loan may come due in full.

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

### CollegInvest Federal PLUS Loans

Federal PLUS loans may already be a part of the financial aid package. If not, you can still ask for them. They have a federally fixed interest rate of 8.5%, and are federally guaranteed, so no collateral is required. They do require a credit check, and repayment begins 60 days after full disbursement of the loan. (See page 13.)

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Borrowing

### CollegInvest Federal Stafford Loans

Usually offered as part of financial aid packages, these loans have a federally fixed 6.8% interest rate and require no credit check or collateral. Interest is paid by the government or deferred until six months after leaving college, at which time repayment begins. (See page 13.)

Dependent: Year 1 – \$3,500; Year 2 – \$4,500; Year 3 and after – \$5,500.  
Independent: Year 1 – Up to \$3,500 subsidized, plus \$4,000 unsubsidized; Year 2 – Up to \$4,500 subsidized, plus \$4,000 unsubsidized; Year 3 and after – Up to \$5,500 subsidized, plus \$5,000 unsubsidized; Graduate school – Up to \$8,500 subsidized, plus \$12,000 unsubsidized.

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

### CollegInvest Alternative Loans

No federal forms or collateral are required, though the borrower must credit qualify or have a qualified cosigner. Interest rates are dependent on your or your cosigner's credit evaluation, and repayment can be deferred until after leaving school.

How much is available in total? \_\_\_\_\_ How much am I comfortable using this year? \_\_\_\_\_

# ★ Personal Data Sheet ★

## Personal Information

Driver's License Number  
 FAFSA PIN (See pages 7-8.)  
 My Parents' FAFSA PIN


### Great websites to check out for scholarships:

1. *www.CollegeInvest.org*
2. *www.fastweb.com*
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## College Information

	School 1	School 2	School 3
Web Address			
Admission Counselor			
Admission Office Number			
Financial Aid Counselor			
Financial Aid Office Number			
College Financial Aid Priority Date			

## Key Financial Due Dates

Date FAFSA Submitted  
 Date SAR Received


I have checked with my colleges about any other forms I may need to complete.

## Scholarship Information

List of Scholarships to Apply For	Due Dates
<i>CollegeInvest Scholarship Program</i>	<i>April 6</i>

## My Student Loans

Lender	Lender Code
<i>CollegeInvest</i>	<i>827866</i>

# Working together.

*Remember, CollegenInvest is a not-for-profit division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, set up to help students get an education beyond high school. Take advantage of our expertise. Visit our website. Call with questions. That's what we're here for.*



## Here to help you

If you have any questions about student or parent loans or other college financing questions, we will gladly help. Just call us at [1-800-448-2424](tel:1-800-448-2424) or visit [www.collegeninvest.org](http://www.collegeninvest.org).

## Happy to work with you

Even if other lenders also seem to have great borrower benefits, check the fine print and ask the tough questions. How many days will a lender allow you to be late and still qualify for on-time repayment benefits? Most banks allow 10–15 days. At CollegenInvest, we give you 30 days. Can you lose benefits? Not with CollegenInvest. With us, once you earn a benefit, it's yours to keep. Unfortunately, this is not so with all lenders.

## Helping you stay on track

Sometimes things can get in the way of making an on-time payment. Don't just skip it. Call us. We'll help you navigate through the problem. Our record shows we're dedicated to helping people find ways to keep up their payments. After all, we're CollegenInvest—we help you get there.

## Get the best deal

We know you have a choice of lenders. Work with your financial aid office and do your own research to make sure you're getting the best deal on your student loans. Don't choose a lender just because you know their name. Know the terms before you sign. If you choose CollegenInvest, your loan paperwork may require our lender code, so keep it handy.

**Our lender code is 827866**

 **CollegeInvest**<sup>®</sup>  
WE HELP YOU GET THERE







**Our Partners  
in Education:**



**CollegeInColorado.org™**  
GO FURTHER  GO TO COLLEGE



CollegeInvest is a not-for-profit division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. As such, our only goal is to help students get an education beyond high school. We provide expert information, simple planning tools, scholarships, 529 college savings plans, and low-cost student and parent loans, all to take your education dollars as far as they can go.

A Division of



Department of Higher Education



**WE HELP YOU GET THERE**

**Lender Code: 827866**

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