

The following chart will help you estimate net cost for each college you are now considering. Much of the data for this chart will be available in college literature or on their Web sites, which often provide model budget and cost estimates. The key figure here is really line F, “Net Cost of Attendance,” which represents the overall costs of the college minus grants and scholarships you will receive there. That is the amount you will actually need to pay, now or later, to attend that institution. Line G is the next most important item. Here you also subtract loan and work-study amounts from the total college cost figure. This represents what you will pay out of pocket for the college. Remember that you will need to repay loans and that the amount you will need to pay for that money is higher than the loan figure, since you will need to pay a fair amount of interest for the privilege of using those funds. Line H, “Ratio of Grants and Scholarships to Loans,” will give you some idea of the relative amounts of debt you would be incurring at different institutions. It certainly is preferable to see a high ratio there, which indicates a college (and the government) is supporting you primarily with funds you do not need to repay.

### COLLEGE COST AND FINANCIAL AID COMPARISON

	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4
Tuition:				
Fees:				
Room and Board:				
Travel:				
Books and Supplies:				
Other:				

	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4
<b>A: Total Cost of Attendance</b>				
Federal Grants				
State Grants				
Institutional Grants				
Institutional Scholarships				
Noninstitutional Scholarships				
<b>B: Total Grants and Scholarships</b>				
Work-study				
Other Work Contributions				
<b>C: Total Work Contributions</b>				
Perkins Loans				
Federal Direct or FFEL				
Stafford Loans				
PLUS Loans				
Other Loans				
<b>D: Total Student/Parent Loans</b>				

	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4
<b>E: Total Financial Aid Package (B + C + D)</b>				
<b>F: Net Cost of Attendance (A – B)</b>				
<b>G: Total Out-of-pocket Cost of Attendance (A – E)</b>				
<b>H: Ratio of Grants and Scholarships to Loans (B/D)</b>				

## APPEALING YOUR AID PACKAGE

It is clear that students with something critical or attractive to offer an institution, whether an athletic talent, strong academic credentials relative to that university's incoming class, or some contribution to the overall diversity of the school, are more likely to be offered preferential aid packages. Students armed with information and a willingness to communicate with a college about their options and intentions will have a better chance of making sure they are receiving the best aid package available to them, given their college preferences. Financial aid officers tend to dislike the word *negotiate* when referring to families approaching them for more aid or a better aid package.

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