



Regions Next Step Podcast

Insights for Students: Saving for College

In this podcast, Donna Medina, a Financial Wellness Relationship Manager for Regions Bank in Nashville, Tenn., discusses what to include in your college budget and tips for lightening your financial load.

Donna gives tips on the following:

- Costs to consider when applying to and identifying which schools are right for you, including tuition, college fees, room and board, and transportation costs
- Ways to save on books and other class supplies
- Budgeting for personal expenses – from shopping and dining out, to gym memberships and bills

Episode Transcript

Narrator:

You're listening to the Next Step Podcast "Saving for College" – part of our Insights for Students series presented by Regions Next Step – advice, tools and resources to help you get closer to reaching your unique financial goals.

Donna Medina:

My name is Donna Medina, and I'm a Financial Wellness Relationship Manager for Regions Bank in Nashville, Tennessee. Today, we're going to discuss saving for college and how much you need.

Whether you're heading to campus in two years or two months, there's never a bad time to start saving for college. You probably know your budget should include tuition, but the cost of college is more than just that. Here are some tips for what to include in your budget for college, plus ways to lighten your financial load.

Of course, the major item to start saving for is tuition and college fees. Unsure of the difference? Tuition covers the cost of taking classes at your college, while fees are the costs associated with things like activities, labs, and parking stickers. College tuition and fees vary greatly based on a number of factors, including whether you're an in-state or out-of-state student. According to The College Board, the average tuition and fees for attending a public four-year college amount to nearly \$23,000 for an out-of-state student and just over \$9,100 for an in-state student.



This is something to consider when applying and ultimately identifying what school is right for you, what may be in your budget, and what are you comfortable spending on your education.

When the time is right, it is possible to defray some of these costs by taking advantage of available scholarships, grants, and student loans.

Next up on the list is the cost of room and board. Colleges typically offer a range of dorm options and meal plan packages for students living on campus. Average room and board for on-campus housing at a public four-year college is about \$9,800 per year, according to The College Board.

If you attend school near home, living with your parents or other family is a great money-saving option. If you decide to live in an off-campus apartment, consider getting a roommate to reduce your rent.

You will also need to consider the costs of books and supplies. When it comes to supplies, you'll need the basics for class — such as notebooks, pens, pencils, and printer paper — in addition to textbooks, which can be pricey. The annual estimate for books and supplies for the average full-time student at a four-year public college is about \$1,200, according to The College Board.

Buying used textbooks or renting your textbooks are both good ways to cut costs. If these options aren't available at your campus bookstore, you can search websites for books, and either rent them or buy less expensive versions. Some sites even allow you to sell your books back at the end of the semester for additional cost savings.

Next up are transportation costs. Your transportation costs will vary based on how you travel and how often you travel. If you bring your car to school, count on paying for essentials like a parking permit, insurance, and, of course, gas. After looking at all these factors, you may find that it makes more sense to leave your car at home and take school transit, public transit or walk to and from classes.

And don't forget about holiday travel. If you'll have to book a flight or take a bus to go home for the holidays, look into student discounts on travel costs and book early when possible.

Last on the list is personal expenses. Personal expenses can run the gamut to include clothing, dining out, and more. These expenses are typically variable, which means they can change from month to month. In addition to your variable expenses, factor in your fixed expenses, such as a cell phone bill or gym membership.

Variable expenses are often more flexible than fixed ones, so look at variable expenses first when trying to cut costs. Assess where and how often you shop for clothing, and limit dining out, especially if you're on a meal plan at your college.

A lot of factors go into the cost of college but planning and saving early can help ensure you have what you need when you get there — so you can focus your time on learning and having fun.



Narrator:

And that concludes this Insights for Students podcast. You can find additional information about saving and more online at www.regions.com/nextstep. No matter your goals, Regions will help you with each step you want to take. Thank you for listening.

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