

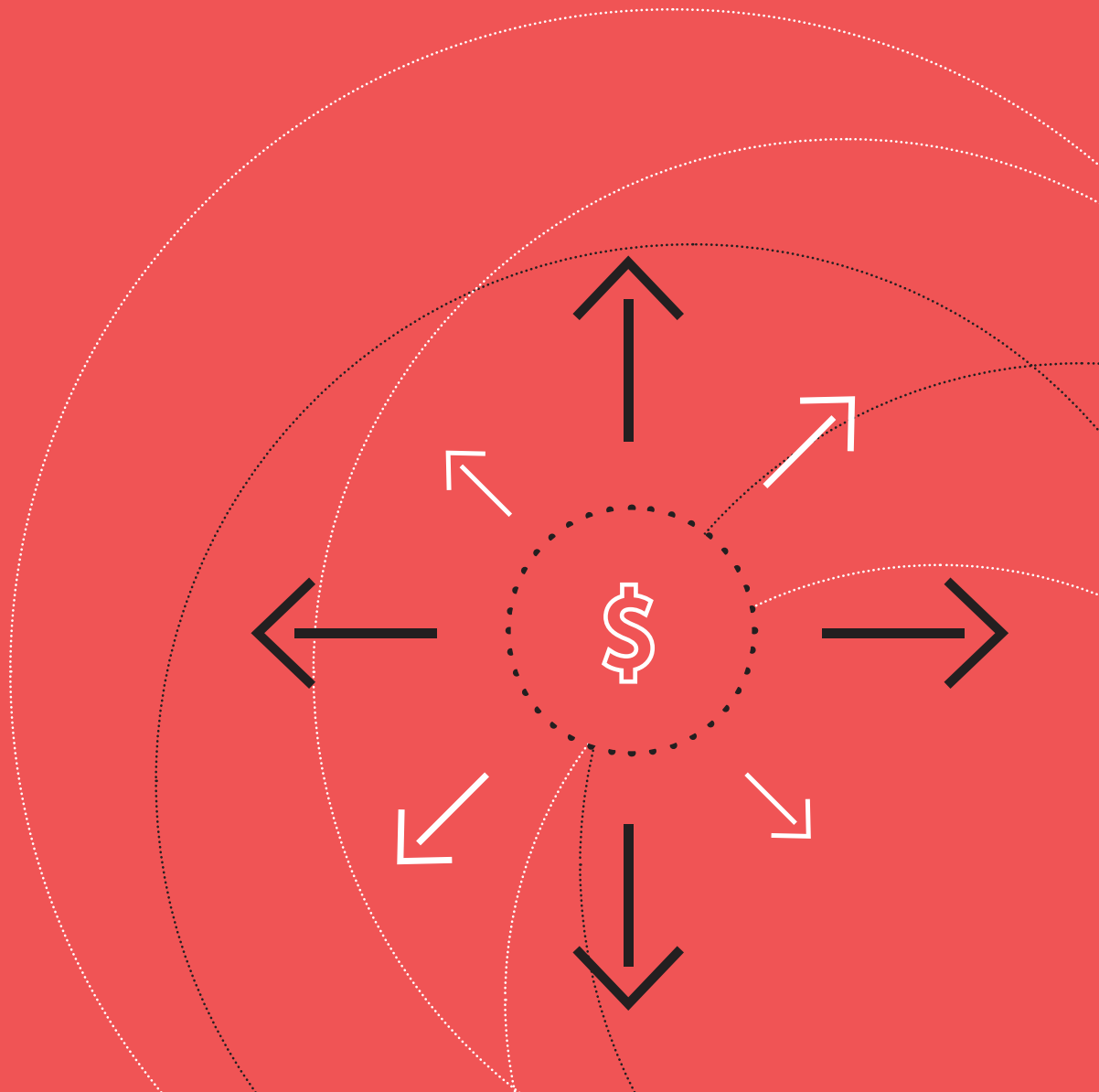
August 2021



Improving Clarity in Financial Aid Offers

Content and Design Recommendations
for Transparent Student Communications

By Gelsey Mehl and Tania LaViolet



Acknowledgments

The **American Talent Initiative (ATI)** is an alliance of four-year colleges and universities with graduation rates above 70 percent committed to attracting, enrolling, and graduating an additional 50,000 low- and moderate-income students by 2025.

Authors

Gelsey Mehl and Tania LaViolet

Thank you to the following individuals for supporting the creation of this brief:

- Dave Marcus and Josh Wyner of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program for their editorial direction.
- Elizabeth Davidson Pisacreta and Emily Schwartz of Ithaka S+R and Rachel Fishman and Sophie Nguyen of New America for reviewing this publication and informing our recommendations.
- Lindsay Ahlman of The Institute for College Access & Success, Ali Caccavella and Laura Keane of uAspire, Matt Sessa of the University of Pennsylvania, and Cindy Seyfer of the University of Iowa for sharing their expertise.
- The many CollegePoint advisors who provided feedback on the ATI financial aid offer.
- Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Aronson Family Foundation, and the Gray Foundation for supporting the work of ATI.



The Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices and leadership that significantly improve student learning, completion, and employment after college—especially for the growing population of students of color and low-income students on American campuses.



Ithaka S+R provides research and strategic guidance to help the academic and cultural communities serve the public good and navigate economic, demographic, and technological change. Ithaka S+R is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that works to advance and preserve knowledge and to improve teaching and learning through the use of digital technologies

Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies invests in 810 cities and 170 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: the Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's giving, including his foundation, corporate, and personal philanthropy as well as Bloomberg Associates, a pro bono consultancy that works in cities around the world. In 2020, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$1.6 billion. For more information, please visit bloomberg.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok

1. Introduction

Sometimes sensational headlines are true: College continues to get more expensive, far exceeding inflation. The average total cost of attendance—which includes tuition, fees, room and board, books, and other living expenses—has risen steadily for the past three decades. The net price—the amount students pay for college, calculated by subtracting scholarships and grants from the total cost of attendance—also has increased steadily.

The cost of college is now too high for many, especially low- and middle-income families. According to the Pell Institute, the average net price for a student from the lowest income quartile represents 94 percent of average family income in that quartile, an impossible expense. In comparison, the average net price for a student from the highest income quartile represents 14 percent of average family income.

The economic devastation of COVID-19 is exacerbating college affordability issues. Individuals from low-wage occupations are suffering the most pandemic-related job losses, so college may become even more out of reach.

Lower-income families must grapple with painstaking calculations to ensure that their investment in a college degree does not worsen their financial circumstances. The consequences of miscalculation are high: In the worst cases, students drop out with thousands of dollars lost, thousands more in debt, and no degree. Loan burdens can slow their economic mobility after graduation and affect other significant decisions, such as whether and when to attend graduate school, get married, have children, and buy a home.

Rising costs and high loan burdens disproportionately impact students of color, especially Black students, worsening the country's racial wealth gap. Black students borrow at higher rates than their white peers and, on average, take on higher amounts of debt. Even when they graduate with bachelor's degrees, Black borrowers are five times more likely than white borrowers to struggle to afford their loan payments—and more likely to default.



2. The Financial Aid Offer: A Tool to Clarify and Communicate Affordability

While many factors cause these persistent debt challenges and inequities, one is that students lack adequate information to make informed choices. Transparency about affordability, college costs, and financial aid is crucial to supporting students and their families in choosing the right college.

Financial aid offices across the country wield a powerful tool in shaping these decisions: the financial aid offer. In theory, it should reveal if students can afford to attend, but too often it leads to confusion. For instance, a [2018 report](#) from New America and uAspire analyzed over 11,000 financial aid offers from over 900 colleges and universities. The organizations took an in-depth look at offers from 515 institutions and found that 60 percent of them did not calculate what students would need to pay. Even years-long attempts by the federal government to promote transparency have, [according to consumer testing](#), fallen short of answering the main question of students and families: “How much is this going to cost me?”

60%

of financial aid offers do not calculate what students need to pay

25%

Less than 25% of families find all financial aid offer components easy to understand

What's in a Name?

About the Term “*Financial Aid Offer*”

This brief uses the term “financial aid offer” rather than “award,” “letter,” or “notification,” echoing recommendations from the consumer testing conducted by experts in financial aid communications. Consumer testing has found “offer” to be a more neutral term, while other commonly used terms may carry unintended meanings: Interpreting the term “award” to mean a prize, students might assume a financial aid award lists only free money. With institutions increasingly sending offers electronically and via web portals rather than through the mail, “letter” can feel old-fashioned. Finally, students might read “notification” as a warning or caution.

The American Talent Initiative (ATI) has made prioritizing robust need-based financial aid for low-income students central to our mission of enrolling and graduating 50,000 additional lower-income students by 2025. As ATI schools increase financial aid resources, shift more aid from merit- to need-based awards, and introduce scholarships, they also should aim to communicate their affordability more effectively. This communication, in turn, can encourage more low- and moderate-income students to enroll at colleges and universities from which they are highly likely to graduate.

When colleges put the student experience at the center of their financial aid communications, students benefit. ATI member institutions including the University of Iowa and the University of Pennsylvania redesigned their financial aid offers to more clearly communicate students' costs and options to cover their expenses. The improved clarity had immediate results: fewer questions from perplexed students and families trying to decode the contents of their financial aid offers.

To support this effort across the ATI membership and beyond, ATI researchers developed a financial aid offer exemplar with the singular goal to make clear to students and families how much they will have to pay for college. Our design process considered three factors:

1. Concisely Distilling Required Information

Designing financial aid offers is a difficult task, requiring a delicate balance of information, technical language, and space. These offers must communicate complex financial information to students and families without overwhelming or confusing them. Institutions have a limited amount of space to distill complicated information. Recipients may lack the financial literacy to interpret unfamiliar terminology without the addition of even more explanatory text.

2. Starting with Existing Recommendations:

Across the past few years, organizations such as [New America](#), [uAspire](#), and [The Institute for College Access & Success](#) have released reports with best practices from consumer testing and analysis of institutional offers. The U.S. Department of Education incorporated many of these recommendations into the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) guidance released in 2019. Also that year, the Department of Education released a revised [College Financing Plan](#) (formerly known as the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet). In 2021, Senators Joni Ernst, Chuck Grassley, and Tina Smith reintroduced the “Understanding the True Cost of College Act,” which would standardize financial terminology and financial aid offer format if enacted into law.

3. Incorporating the User Experience

To design the financial aid offer exemplar, the ATI team flipped the consumer testing process; we took best practices from literature and policy guidelines and built those recommendations into the design. We then took this draft to college advisors—who interact with the ultimate consumer, prospective college students—to see how our recommendations hold up when combined in one sample. We used their feedback to refine the draft even more. Ultimately, the ATI financial aid offer consolidates best practices in the field, policy recommendations, and students' needs.

In this brief, we share 10 recommendations for redesigning financial aid offers. These recommendations shaped the ATI team's design of the financial aid offer exemplar (which we share in full in the appendix on page A1). In the next section, we feature an implementation checklist with steps to consider before, during, and after redesigning a financial aid offer.

3. ATI’s Financial Aid Offer Design Principles

The ATI financial aid offer draws on 10 design principles that adhere to best practices and federal recommendations. The ATI offer aims to balance student and advisor needs with institutional needs. (View page 9 to see how the main page of the ATI offer illustrates these recommendations, or see the appendix on page A1 for the entire ATI offer.)

1. Emphasize and elevate how much students will owe (their net price)

ATI’s advisor reviewers noted that students are most concerned about how much they will owe after their scholarships and grants are applied. In other words, students worry the most about net price, the total cost of attendance less the scholarships and grants awarded to the student. The ATI offer highlights net price, following recommendations from the U.S. Department of Education and other policy organizations. In “Step 1” of the ATI offer, students and families can view the calculation that produces their net price in a prominent position at the top of the page.

2. Ensure students understand how much they can expect to pay to the university directly versus how much they will need for other expenses, such as books and transportation, throughout the academic year

One potential point of confusion for students and families is that net price is typically greater than the amount students will pay directly to the university. The charges that determine the total cost of attendance fall into two categories: “direct costs,” including tuition, fees, and on-campus room and board; and “indirect costs” or “indirect expenses,” including books, transportation, off-campus housing, and miscellaneous personal expenses. The university bill is calculated by subtracting scholarships and grants from direct costs only. Indirect costs are not paid to the university but can be covered by scholarships and grants. For instance, if awarded financial aid exceeds direct costs, students may receive a refund from the institution that they can use to cover indirect expenses.

Figure 1

Understanding the Net Price Calculation



Unlike some financial aid offers—including the federal College Financing Plan template—the ATI offer lists direct costs and indirect expenses separately under the “Annual Cost of Attendance” in “Step 1.” Similarly, under “Net Price,” students and families can identify how much they will owe the university and how much they can expect to pay in other indirect expenses.

3. Include itemizations

The ATI offer includes line items within all categories so that students and families can see the specific costs that the financial aid office used to arrive at the top-line financial calculations (annual cost of attendance, scholarships and grants, net price). For example, under the “Annual Cost of Attendance,” the ATI offer lists “Estimated Direct Costs,” which includes “Tuition and Fees” and “Housing and Meal Plan,” and “Estimated Indirect Expenses,” which includes “Books and Supplies,” “Transportation,” and “Miscellaneous Personal Expenses.”

4. Clearly explain options for covering the net price

Students should be able to easily understand how loans and other forms of aid cover their university bill and estimated indirect expenses—and if they will still have expenses left after that aid is applied. In “Step 2,” the ATI offer applies federal direct loans to the university bill. Similarly, “Step 3” offers work-study as an option for students to pay for their indirect expenses. (While the ATI offer displays work-study as an option for covering indirect expenses, some institutions may choose to list work-study as an option for paying for direct costs.) Finally, students should be clearly informed about other options, such as family income and savings, that they can consider using to pay remaining balances after loans and work-study.

5. Eliminate complex financial language and explain unfamiliar terms

Some technical terms may be unavoidable in a financial aid offer, but plain-language explanations of technical terms should always be included. The ATI offer places jargon-free explanations under potentially confusing terminology. The most technical language, such as eligibility requirements for loans and scholarships, are moved to a later page in the packet. A glossary provides definitions of potentially confusing terms.

6. Provide thorough explanations of student loans and work-study

ATI’s advisor reviewers consistently named these two types of aid as being the most confusing for students. Financial aid offers must explain that loans are not gift aid; they must be repaid. Students and families may be unfamiliar with the terms “subsidized” and “unsubsidized” and may benefit from explanations. To provide more details on loan options, including parent PLUS and private loans, the ATI offer contains a chart comparing interest rates and other key details of loans.

Advisors cited work-study as even more confusing. Students often expect they will receive work-study in the lump sum listed on their offers, rather than in smaller amounts through paychecks across many months. They also may not understand that they will have to secure a work-study eligible job to earn the listed award. The ATI offer includes explanations to communicate these important details and encourages students to connect with a financial aid counselor to discuss options.

7. Remember that it's more than a page; it's a package

In addition to explaining net price and awarded aid, financial aid offers might include a contact in the financial aid office, a list of next steps, and a glossary. Some institutions include a financial planning worksheet or cost calculator. These elements can be included in the financial aid offer or attached as separate documents or FAQs. The ATI offer takes several pages to display all the critical elements, but technology could streamline these components. (See the implementation checklist on page 10 for suggestions on integrating technology.)

If the offer is part of a larger package, a cover sheet can highlight the most important information or serve as a table of contents. The ATI offer begins with a cover letter that shares students' net price, university bill, and indirect expenses, as well as introducing them to their financial aid counselor.

8. Direct students to websites for more information

Not all information is vital to communicate in the initial offer. Instead of overwhelming readers with too much text, the ATI offer directs students to institutional, state, and the U.S. Department of Education websites for more information. Electronic offer notifications also might include custom URLs that direct students to webpages tailored to information collected throughout the application process, such as their intended majors and extracurricular interests.

9. Emphasize personal connections (in other words, make it human)

Financial aid offers can direct students to a university staff member to create a more personal, human connection. Listing the name and contact information for students' assigned counselors in the financial aid office (as the ATI offer does in the introductory cover letter) can make it easier and less daunting for students to reach out with questions.

10. Use color and other design features, and align the graphic design to other institutional communications

Financial aid offers are important administrative documents, but that's no reason to limit them to black and white. On the contrary, financial aid offers that are too graphically dissonant from other prospective student communications, including marketing materials and acceptance packets, may seem unwelcoming. Smart use of color and graphic design elements can enhance the explanation of the financial information. If using color or electronic features, financial aid teams should ensure the graphic elements are ADA compliant and check that the document will be legible if students print it out in black and white.

Some institutions include data points and other details about the undergraduate experience to communicate the value of attendance. These details put the offer in context, highlighting the outcomes the student will receive from this financial investment, while showing the institution's affordability. The ATI offer displays select College Scorecard data for the stand-in ATI University: graduation rates and average loan repayment rates.

4. The ATI Financial Aid Offer

This is the main page of the ATI financial aid offer, which displays the net price calculation and options for paying the university bill and indirect expenses. The rest of the ATI financial aid offer package shares important supporting information: a welcome letter; list of next steps; eligibility requirements and other details about scholarships, student loans and work-study; and a glossary. (View the full ATI offer in the appendix on page A1.)

This is the **net price calculation**, including itemizations for cost of attendance, scholarships and grants, and net price.

In an electronic format, these explanatory text boxes could be displayed in hover boxes or tooltips that “pop” open to display the additional details.

Check character limits and ensure that text will not be truncated in students’ offers. For example, confirm that “unsubsidized” will appear fully written out, rather than populating as “unsub.”

FINANCIAL AID OFFER | 2021-2022 | Student ID #123456789

ATI University

Step 1
Your Estimated Net Price for 2021-2022

Cost of Attendance	\$71,892	−	Scholarships/Grants	\$58,788	=	Net Price	\$13,104
Estimated Direct Costs	\$67,792		Pell Grant	\$5,745		Estimated ATI University Bill	\$9,004
Tuition and Fees	\$51,522		State Grant	\$3,742		Estimated Indirect Expenses	\$4,100
Housing and Meal Plan	\$16,270		University Scholarships	\$30,751			
Estimated Indirect Expenses	\$4,100		University Need Grant	\$18,550			
Books and Supplies	\$1,000						
Transportation	\$2,000						
Miscellaneous Personal Expenses	\$1,100						

This is the total cost before grants and scholarships are applied. Direct costs are paid to ATI University and will vary by choice of housing and meal plan. Indirect expenses are estimates of costs not paid to ATI University and may be lower or higher based on your budget.

This is money that does not need to be repaid or earned through work. See page A5 for requirements to maintain these scholarships and grants.

Net price is the total cost minus scholarships and grants. The estimated bill is what you will owe ATI University. See Step 2 and Step 3 below for how you can pay this balance.

Step 2
Paying Your ATI University Bill

Estimated ATI University Bill	\$9,004	−	Federal Student Loans	\$5,500	=	Remaining Bill	\$3,505
Tuition and Fees	\$0		Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	\$3,500		Tuition and Fees	\$0
Housing and Meal Plan	\$9,004		Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	\$2,000		Housing and Meal	\$3,505

Student loans are borrowed money that you must pay back, with interest. You can accept up to the listed amount of \$5,500 or any smaller amount. ATI University recommends you take out federal loans before taking out private loans. See pages A5-A6 for more information about loan eligibility, repayment, and an explanation of subsidized and unsubsidized loans.

You and your family will need to cover the remaining bill. See the options listed under “remaining indirect expenses” below. ATI University also offers a monthly payment plan if you need to divide up your total payment into smaller amounts.

Step 3
Paying for Your Indirect Expenses

Estimated Indirect Expenses	\$4,100	−	Federal Work-Study	\$3,000	=	Remaining Indirect Expenses	\$1,100
------------------------------------	----------------	---	---------------------------	----------------	---	------------------------------------	----------------

You may earn up to the listed amount from working. You are responsible for finding a work-study-eligible job on campus. Once employed, you will receive this money in biweekly paychecks based on your hourly wage. You must work at least 10 hours per week during the academic year to earn the listed amount. You will not earn the full amount listed above if you work less than 10 hours per week.

You and your family will need to cover the remaining expenses. You can use family income and savings, your summer earnings, and Parent PLUS and private loans. See page A5 for more information.

If the estimated bill is negative, include a disclaimer that the student will receive a refund to put toward their indirect expenses.

Smart documents can help with student-specific customizations. For example, a smart document might replace information about work-study with more general information about finding an on-campus job for students who did not qualify for work-study.

Work-study can be particularly confusing, and students may assume they’ll receive the listed amount as a lump sum. These details explain that Student X will earn the offered \$3,000 through biweekly paychecks, that she must find an eligible job, and that she must work 10 hours per week across the entire academic year to earn the full \$3,000.

5. Implementation Considerations for Redesigning Financial Aid Offers

Redesigning a financial aid offer can take time, requiring input and approval from various internal stakeholders. As financial aid offices embark on redesigns to apply the ten principles in this brief, they may want to take the following implementation steps.

Before Proceeding with a Redesign

- ☐ Secure the support of leaders in admissions and enrollment management, IT, communications/external relations, and all academic units whose students will be affected.
- ☐ If part of a university system or other network with shared policies and/or enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, work with counterparts at other campuses to agree on system-wide changes and ensure they are compatible with shared products.
- ☐ Ideally, secure time from a user experience (UX) design expert.
- ☐ As needed, secure time from graphic designers and IT staff on other teams.

During the Redesign

- ☐ Engage financial aid counselors throughout the process.
- ☐ Consider opportunities to incorporate electronic features, such as “smart” text, roll-over and click-down features, and embedded videos.
- ☐ Decide whether the financial aid offer will be an electronic-only notification or if a print copy will also be mailed to students’ homes.
- ☐ Ensure the electronic offer is mobile-friendly.
- ☐ Integrate any software used to produce the offer with other enrollment systems, such as Slate.
- ☐ Collect user feedback at least twice before finalizing the offer design. Consider workshopping the new offer in student focus groups, including at a feeder high school (where students may not yet be familiar with financial aid offers).
- ☐ Translate the offer into languages other than English as needed, based on applicants’ backgrounds.

After the Redesign

- ☐ Train admissions recruiters and financial aid counselors to use common language that matches the terminology in the financial aid offer.
- ☐ Incorporate the redesigned financial aid offer into financial literacy trainings, such as those conducted through college access programs and at FAFSA completion nights at local high schools.
- ☐ To assess the impact of the redesigned offer, compare call volume to the financial aid team before and after the implementation of the new offer.
- ☐ Decide on a regular cadence to reevaluate the financial aid offer design, including gathering student feedback.

6. Conclusion

As ATI institutions fulfill their commitment to enroll and graduate 50,000 more low- and moderate-income students, they should improve clarity in financial aid offers to help students and families genuinely understand whether the institution is their best financial fit. When institutions pair a strong commitment to need-based financial aid with clear financial aid offers, lower-income students can understand how attending an ATI school is an affordable option. Rather than merely a bureaucratic document, a clear financial aid offer is an important and early step in making students feel welcomed to the campus community.



INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Visit the American Talent Initiative's [website](#) for downloadable templates of the financial aid offer and checklist included in this report as well as other related resources.



References

- ASA Research, LLC. Starting with Students: Findings from NASFAA'S Consumer Testing Study of the U.S. Department of Education's College Financing Plan. NASFAA: Washington DC, March 2019.
- Burd, Stephen, Rachel Fishman, Laura Keane, and Julie Habbert. Decoding the Cost of College: The Case for Transparent Financial Aid Award Letters. New America and uAspire: Washington, DC, June 2018.
- Cahalan, Margaret W., et al. Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States: 2020 Historical Trend Report. The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, Council for Opportunity in Education (COE), and Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy of the University of Pennsylvania (PennaHEAD): Washington, DC, 2020.
- Center for Responsible Lending, The Leadership Conference Education Fund, NAACP, National Urban League, and UnidosUS. Borrowers of Color & the Student Debt Crisis. September 2019.
- Cheng, Diane, and Veronica Gonzalez. Cost in Translation: How Financial Aid Award Letters Fall Short. The Institute for College Access and Success: Washington, DC, December 2017.
- Creating an Effective Award Letter. NASFAA: Washington, DC, 2011.
- "Financial Aid Offer Examples." NASFAA. February 26, 2020.
- Fishman, Rachel, and Sophie Nguyen. Design Principles for Financial Aid Offers. New America. Last updated January 20, 2021.
- "Glossary of Terms for Financial Aid Offers." NASFAA. Last accessed February 2021.
- Gravely, Alex. "Promoting Financial Transparency for Students." Inside Higher Ed. May 6, 2021.
- "Issue Brief: Financial Aid Award Notifications." NASFAA. September 2018.
- JBL Associates, Inc. No Clear Winner: Consumer Testing of Financial Aid Award Letters. NASFAA: Washington, DC, 2013.
- Ma, Jennifer, Matea Pender, and CJ Libassi. Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2020. College Board: New York, 2020.
- Parker, Kim, Ruth Igielnik, and Rakesh Kochhar. "Unemployed Americans are feeling the emotional strain of job loss; most have considered changing occupations." Pew Research Center. February 10, 2021.
- "Recommendations: What Postsecondary Institutions Should Work to Avoid When Issuing Financial Aid Offers", Federal Student Aid. April 15, 2019.
- Salerno, Carlo, and Amy Glynn. Clear Disparity: New Data Adds Consumer Voices to Award Letter Confusion Debate. Campus Logic: Chandler, October 2019.

Improving Clarity in Financial Aid Offers

Appendix



Welcome to ATI University

Dear Student X,

Congratulations on your admissions to ATI University! We are excited to welcome you into our community. I am writing to share your financial aid offer from ATI University.

Please read through this document carefully. We've broken your financial aid offer into three key steps:

- 1. Understanding your net price of \$13,104.** This is the total amount you can expect to pay across the 2021-2022 academic year.
- 2. Paying your ATI University Bill of \$9,004.** Your choice of housing and meal plan may change this figure, as well as if you accept any federal student loans. ATI University also offers a monthly payment plan if you need to divide up your total payment into smaller amounts. For example, after accepting the maximum federal student loan of \$5,500, your ATI University bill would be \$350.40 per month for 10 months starting on August 1, 2021. (There is a \$35 fee to enroll in the monthly payment plan.)
- 3. Paying your indirect expenses, which we estimate will be \$4,100.** These are other expenses that you will not pay directly to ATI University, such as books and transportation to campus. Your indirect expenses may be lower or higher based on your budget.

Sincerely,
ATI University Director of Financial Aid

Contact Us



Based on your last name, we have assigned you a financial aid counselor, Ready Helper. **We encourage you to contact Ready Helper** at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or ready.helper@atiuniversity.com with any questions.

You can also visit financialaid.atiuniversity.edu for more information. You and your parents/guardians can contact the ATI University Office of Financial Aid at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or finaid@atiuniversity.edu.

Step 1

Your Estimated Net Price for 2021-2022

Cost of Attendance	\$71,892	—	Scholarships/Grants	\$58,788	=	Net Price	\$13,104
Estimated Direct Costs	\$67,792		Pell Grant	\$5,745		Estimated ATI University Bill	\$9,004
Tuition and Fees	\$51,522		State Grant	\$3,742			
Housing and Meal Plan	\$16,270		University Scholarships	\$30,751		Estimated Indirect Expenses	\$4,100
Estimated Indirect Expenses	\$4,100		University Need Grant	\$18,550			
Books and Supplies	\$1,000						
Transportation	\$2,000						
Miscellaneous Personal Expenses	\$1,100						
<p>This is the total cost before grants and scholarships are applied. Direct costs are paid to ATI University and will vary by choice of housing and meal plan. Indirect expenses are estimates of costs not paid to ATI University and may be lower or higher based on your budget.</p>			<p>This is money that does not need to be repaid or earned through work. See page A5 for requirements to maintain these scholarships and grants.</p>			<p>Net price is the total cost minus scholarships and grants. The estimated bill is what you will owe ATI University. See Step 2 and Step 3 below for how you can pay this balance.</p>	

Step 2

Paying Your ATI University Bill

Estimated ATI University Bill	\$9,004	—	Federal Student Loans	\$5,500	=	Remaining Bill	\$3,505
Tuition and Fees	\$0		Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	\$3,500		Tuition and Fees	\$0
Housing and Meal Plan	\$9,004		Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	\$2,000		Housing and Meal	\$3,505
<p>Student loans are borrowed money that you must pay back, with interest. You can accept up to the listed amount of \$5,500 or any smaller amount. ATI University recommends you take out federal loans before taking out private loans. See pages A5-A6 for more information about loan eligibility, repayment, and an explanation of subsidized and unsubsidized loans.</p>			<p>You and your family will need to cover the remaining bill. See the options listed under "remaining indirect expenses" below. ATI University also offers a monthly payment plan if you need to divide up your total payment into smaller amounts.</p>				

Step 3

Paying for Your Indirect Expenses

Estimated Indirect Expenses	\$4,100	—	Federal Work-Study	\$3,000	=	Remaining Indirect Expenses	\$1,100
<p>You may earn up to the listed amount from working. You are responsible for finding a work-study-eligible job on campus. Once employed, you will receive this money in biweekly paychecks based on your hourly wage. You must work at least 10 hours per week during the academic year to earn the listed amount. You will not earn the full amount listed above if you work less than 10 hours per week.</p>			<p>You and your family will need to cover the remaining expenses. You can use family income and savings, your summer earnings, and Parent PLUS and private loans. See page A5 for more information.</p>				

Next Steps

- ☐ Accept your ATI University admissions offer at myatiuniversity.edu by May 1.
- ☐ Log into ATI University's student portal with your student ID number at myatiuniversity.edu. Click on the "My ATI University Bill" tab.
 - ☐ Accept your financial aid offer.
 - ☐ Report any outside scholarships to ATI University.
 - ☐ Complete all listed paperwork.
 - ☐ If you are accepting federal student loans, sign your loan agreement and complete entrance counseling.
 - ☐ Grant billing and records access to your parents or guardians.
 - ☐ View and pay your ATI University bill by September 1. (You can also sign up for a monthly payment plan.)
- ☐ If your parents are applying for a Parent PLUS loan, one of your parents must complete a PLUS loan application at studentloans.gov.
- ☐ Schedule your orientation session at myatiuniversity.edu. Registration opens April 1.

About ATI University

STUDENT OUTCOMES

85%

Percent of ATI University students who **graduate in 6 years**

\$67,400

Median graduate earnings 10 years after entering school of ATI University for students who received financial aid while enrolled

DEBT & LOAN REPAYMENT

\$27,000

Median debt at graduation
(Federal student loans only, does not include Parent PLUS or private loans)

\$287

Median monthly loan payment
for graduates of ATI University

These data are from the College Scorecard. Visit collegescorecard.ed.gov for more information on ATI University and to view this information for other colleges and universities.

Eligibility Requirements and Disclosures

Your financial aid offer is based on full-time enrollment for the 2021-2022 academic year (fall 2021 to spring 2022).

Your financial aid offer for future academic years will vary based on changes to ATI University's tuition and fees, changes in your family's financial need, and if you no longer meet the eligibility requirements below.

General Eligibility Requirements

To maintain eligibility for all federal, state, and ATI University aid, you must be enrolled at ATI University or at another US university. You must meet the US Department of Education's basic eligibility requirements and maintain satisfactory academic progress. **To maintain satisfactory academic progress, ATI University requires a 2.0 GPA and that you complete at least 24 credits annually. We recommend you complete 30 credits annually to be on-track for graduation.** You will also have to resubmit the FAFSA every year to be eligible for federal, state, and ATI University financial aid.

- ▶ **FEDERAL GRANTS, LOANS, & WORK-STUDY:** studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/staying-eligible
- ▶ **STATE GRANTS:** education.stateofxx.gov/studentaid
- ▶ **ATI UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS:** financialaid.atiuniversity.edu

ATI University Scholarship and Grant Eligibility Requirements

Your total scholarship amount on page 1 includes the following ATI University scholarships. You also qualify for an ATI University grant based on your financial need. The chart below lists additional requirements to maintain these ATI University scholarships.

SCHOLARSHIP OR GRANT NAME	AMOUNT	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
ATI University First-Generation Student Scholarship	\$25,751	First-generation students receive a 50% discount on tuition and fees. You must earn a 2.0 GPA to maintain eligibility for this scholarship.
ATI University Donor B Scholarship	\$5,000	ATI University alumnus Donor B provides residents of City C with an annual scholarship of \$5,000. You must earn a 2.0 GPA to maintain eligibility for this scholarship.
Need Grant	\$18,550	You will have to fill out the FAFSA every year to receive this grant. This grant is subject to change based on any changes in your family's financial need.

Loan Eligibility Requirements and Disclosures

Interest rates and repayment information for federal and private loans are listed in the chart below.

ATI University recommends you take out federal loans before taking out private loans.

Visit studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans for more information on federal loans.

SCHOLARSHIP or GRANT NAME	AMOUNT	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	REPAYMENT
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	2.75%	Direct subsidized loans are federal loans available to students with financial need. The US Department of Education will pay the interest on subsidized loans while you are enrolled in school and for the first 6 months after you leave school.	You must begin repaying federal direct loans 6 months after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment. You may be eligible for repayment plans based on your income that will allow you to make lower monthly payments. Longer repayment terms may result in paying more interest in total over the life of the loan.
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	4.3%	Direct unsubsidized loans are federal loans available to all undergraduate students. Interest will add to unsubsidized loans while you are enrolled in school.	To learn more about your loan repayment options, visit studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/understand/plans .
Parent PLUS Loan	5.3%	Parent PLUS loans are federal loans taken out in your parents' names to help you pay for college. Your parents must pass a credit check to qualify for Parent PLUS loans.	Your parents must begin repaying Parent PLUS loans after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment.
Private Loans	Variable	Private loans are not federal loans. They may be offered by banks, credit unions, state agencies, or schools. Private loan interest rates vary and may be higher than federal loan rates.	Repayment for private loans varies. Many private student loans will require you to make payments while you are still in school.

Work-Study Eligibility Requirements and Disclosures

Work-study is a federal program that funds part-time student employment for students with financial need.

You are responsible for finding and applying for a work-study-eligible job to receive your work-study funds.

This offer does not guarantee you a work-study-eligible job. Visit careercenter.atiuniversity.edu for information on finding a work-study-eligible job.

Once employed, you will receive your work-study funds through biweekly paychecks based on your hourly wage. You will need to work at least 10 hours per week to earn the work-study amount listed on page 1. You will earn at least the federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour, though many on-campus jobs at ATI University offer higher salaries than the federal minimum wage.

Work-study funding varies year-to-year. Your work-study offer may not be renewed next year, even if you resubmit the FAFSA and meet all other eligibility requirements.

Glossary

Cost of Attendance: This is the estimated total cost to attend ATI University for one academic year (August 2021 to May 2022). It includes direct costs and indirect expenses.

Direct Costs: Direct costs are money paid to ATI University. This includes tuition and fees and, if you choose to live on-campus, your housing and meal plan costs. You will be billed by ATI University for your direct costs.

Indirect Expenses: Indirect expenses are money that you are estimated to spend while enrolled at ATI University, but that you do not pay to ATI University. This includes your books, transportation to and from campus, and any personal expenses. Your Indirect expenses will vary based on how you budget.

Scholarship: Scholarships are gift aid, or money that you do not need to repay or earn through work. Scholarships are based on merit, including your academic performance and interests.

Grant: Grants are gift aid, or money that you do not need to repay or earn through work. Grants are based on your financial need, as determined by the FAFSA.

Net Price: This is your total cost of attendance minus grants and scholarships. Your net price is the total amount you can expect to pay across one academic year.

Loan: A loan is borrowed money. You must pay back the full amount of the loan, plus interest.

Interest: Interest is a charge (calculated as a percentage) on borrowed money.

Subsidized Loan: This is one of two types of federal direct student loans. The US Department of Education will pay the interest on subsidized loans while you are enrolled in school and for the first 6 months after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment. This means the total amount you owe on this loan will not begin to increase until 6 months after you leave school.

Unsubsidized Loan: This is one of two types of federal direct student loans. Unsubsidized loans will immediately earn interest. This means the total amount you owe on this loan will begin to increase while you are in school. You can pay the interest while you are in school.

Parent PLUS Loan: Parent PLUS loans are federal loans taken out in your parents' names to help you pay for college. Your parents must pass a credit check to qualify for Parent PLUS loans.

Private Loan: Private loans are not federal loans. They may be offered by banks, credit unions, state agencies, or schools. Private loan interest rates vary and may be higher than federal loan rates.

Repayment: This is the process to pay back student loans (or other loans). Repayment for federal student loans begins 6 months after you graduate from ATI University, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment.

Work-Study: Work-study is a federal program that funds part-time student employment for students with financial need. You are responsible for finding a work-study-eligible job. Once employed, you will receive your work-study funds through paychecks based on your hourly wage. Work-study can help you pay for your indirect expenses.

Satisfactory Academic Progress: This is the minimum academic standing you must achieve to be eligible for federal, state, and ATI University financial aid. You must maintain a 2.0 GPA and make timely progress toward your degree. You must complete at least 24 credits annually, and we recommend you complete 30 credits annually to be on-track for graduation.