



Students' and families' difficulty affording college remains the most significant barrier in their pursuit of higher education. But affordability varies among different groups of students and institutions. Through this research we show the diversity of today's student population, and apply one definition of affordability to all institutions in the state, for different groups of students.



The combination of skyrocketing college tuition, increasing financial necessity of obtaining a college degree, and decreases in funding for public benefits has meant that it is increasingly critical for policymakers to pay attention to concerns about homelessness and housing insecurity for college students. With 21 percent of young Coloradans currently rent burdened, focusing on options to help support students' food and housing needs is more important than ever.

Number of Students that Face Housing Insecurity in Colorado



Out of the 300,000 college students in Colorado
64,000 experience housing insecurity.

Affordable Institutions in Colorado



Only **52%** of Colorado institutions are “affordable,” and **none** are affordable for students that face housing insecurity. Under the Rule of 10, students experiencing this should save \$20,400 to pay for college.

Lumina Foundation’s affordability benchmark, known as The Rule of 10, states that students should pay no more for college than 10% of their discretionary income for 10 years, and the earnings from working 10 hours a week while in school. Using the U.S. Census, we applied median incomes of different groups of students to test all of Colorado’s institutions’ net prices (cost of attendance minus grant aid, drawn from IPEDS) on the Rule of 10 to determine if they are affordable. For students who were heads of household, we counted only 10% of discretionary income over 10 years, and didn’t treat student worker earnings as a separate number. For each group we took a weighted average of affordability for students who are heads of household and dependent students.

Median Net Cost
\$18,831

10-Year Change in Education Appropriations
-\$402

State Minimum Wage
\$10.20

Least Affordable
(net price)

4-year public school <i>Colorado School of Mines</i>	4-year private nonprofit school <i>University of Denver</i>
\$25,097	\$32,940

4-year public school <i>Colorado Mountain College</i>	4-year private nonprofit school <i>Johnson & Wales University-Denver</i>
\$3,297	\$23,765

Most Affordable
(net price)