



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.



Following the Great Recession, Colorado saw the eighth highest tuition hikes in the country. For many students, this means that working while in school is not negotiable in order to be able to afford their degrees. Balancing school, work, and family responsibilities isn't easy, and often requires making difficult choices about number of credits to enroll in, how to schedule courses, and whether to work extra hours to pay for critical expenses like textbooks.

### Number of Students that are Part-time Workers in Colorado



Out of the 300,000 college students in Colorado  
**230,000** work 20+ hours a week.

### Affordable Institutions in Colorado



Only **52%** of Colorado institutions are "affordable," with **12%** being affordable for students working 20+ hours per week. Under the Rule of 10, working students should save \$49,800 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)

<p>4-year public school <i>Colorado School of Mines</i></p> <p><b>\$25,097</b></p>	<p>4-year private nonprofit school <i>University of Denver</i></p> <p><b>\$32,940</b></p>
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<p>4-year public school <i>Colorado Mountain College</i></p> <p><b>\$3,297</b></p>	<p>4-year private nonprofit school <i>Johnson &amp; Wales University-Denver</i></p> <p><b>\$23,765</b></p>
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Most  
Affordable  
(net price)