New Online Tool Makes Planning for College Easy

Saturday 24 January, 2026

When it comes to choosing a US College or university, it is important to consider the total financial burden involved, which means allowing for tuition, living expenses, and various other costs.

To assist with this complicated task, online file-editing platform PDF Guru late last year released its US College Net Price Calculator, a tool that highlights patterns in financial aid, enrollment, and admissions. Whether considering a public or private school, it's a one-stop shop for college financial planning.

"Getting a clear answer on the cost of attending college is not as easy as it should be," said Dmytro Kanievskyi, Head of Product at PDF Guru. "Universities publish tuition rates, yet few students actually pay that amount."

PDF Guru built the US College Net Price Calculator with official US Department of Education data to ensure that the results are trustworthy.

Here's how the calculator works:

1. Start by filtering schools by type (public or private), state, and size so you only see the kinds of colleges you're interested in.

2. Adjust filters such as tuition range, graduation rate, and acceptance rate to narrow your options further.

3. Select your family income range to see cost estimates that factor in the financial aid you'll likely qualify for.

4. Choose your residency, either in-state or out-of-state, as that can make a big difference in tuition.

5. Choose your living situation (on campus, off campus with or without family) to get a more accurate net price.

6. Use the search bar if you already have a college in mind and want to look it up directly.

7. Compare schools side by side to see how they stack up on cost, aid, graduation rate, and more.

8. See instant results from over 1,500 colleges.

For those who take screenshots to keep track of their research, the JPG-to-PDF tool can help save those images as clean, shareable documents.

For example, let's say a student wants to know which universities are the most affordable for low-income students. After the appropriate inputs are made, an infographic shows the top universities in the USA ranked by how affordable they are for students from families earning less than $30,000 a year. Topping the list as the best deal is St. Petersburg College in Florida.

"The net price shows the real cost after aid, which helps families spot schools that are actually affordable and give better support," said Kanievskyi.

What if that same student wants to know what universities have the largest gap between in-state and out-of-state prices? The resulting chart highlights public universities where out-of-state students living on campus pay significantly more than in-state residents. Some differences exceed $30,000 a year due to state policies that prioritize local students.

"If you're considering college out of state, this gap can dramatically increase your total cost. Even public schools can become expensive without in-state status," said Kanievskyi.

PDF Guru created the US College Net Price Calculator while knowing that college costs matter deeply to persons in all communities.

"Many of our users are young people weighing their education options, as well as families with children preparing for college enrollment," said Kanievskyi. "Because we share that journey with them, we recognize how critical this decision point can be."

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