

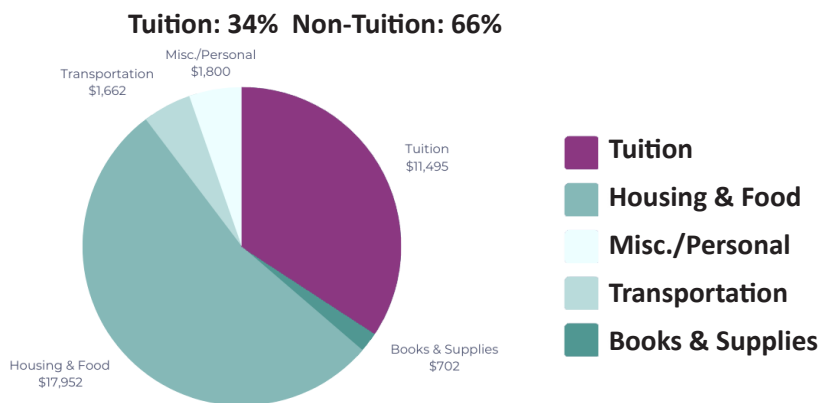
The Myth of “Full-Ride” Financial Aid

Because Washington is home to one of the most generous state financial aid programs in the country, you might think that students from low-income backgrounds are fully covered when it comes to paying for postsecondary education. But the current financial aid model has not kept pace with the rising cost of living, and as a result, fails to account for the true cost of attendance.

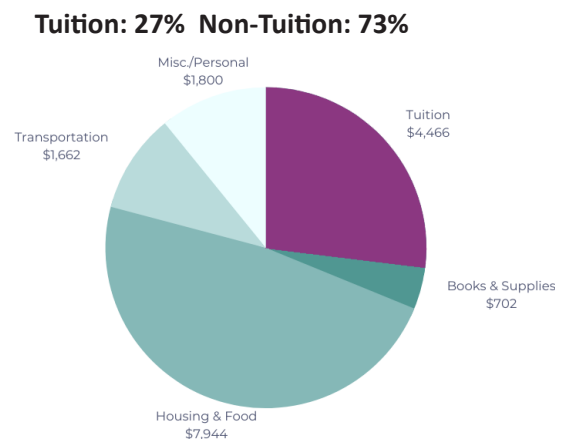
While the Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant) and the Washington College Grant (WA Grant) cover tuition and a portion of non-tuition costs, housing and other inflation-impacted costs can be double or triple the cost of tuition, leaving a large gap of unmet need.

The majority of attendance costs—housing, transportation, and food, among others—are not tuition

Cost breakdown: four-year research institute, living on campus



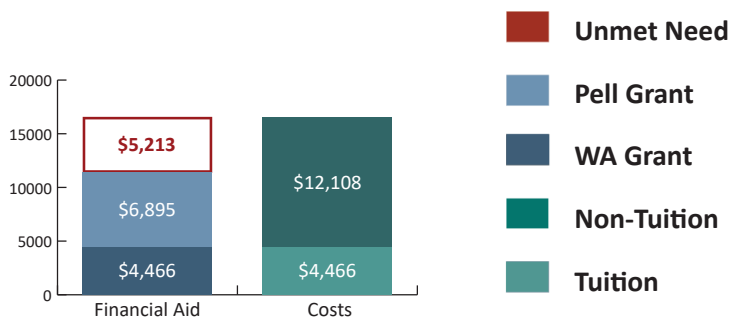
Cost breakdown: community or technical college, living with parents



At community and technical colleges, there is a large gap of unmet need for students from low-income backgrounds

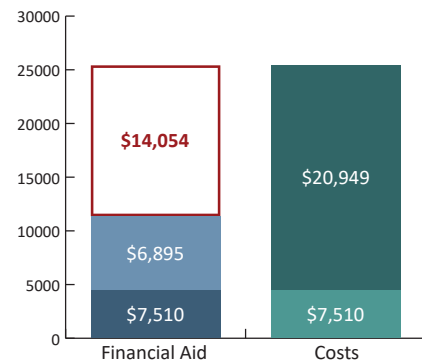
Community or technical college, living with parents

Unmet need: \$5,213 (31%)



Community or technical college, living independently

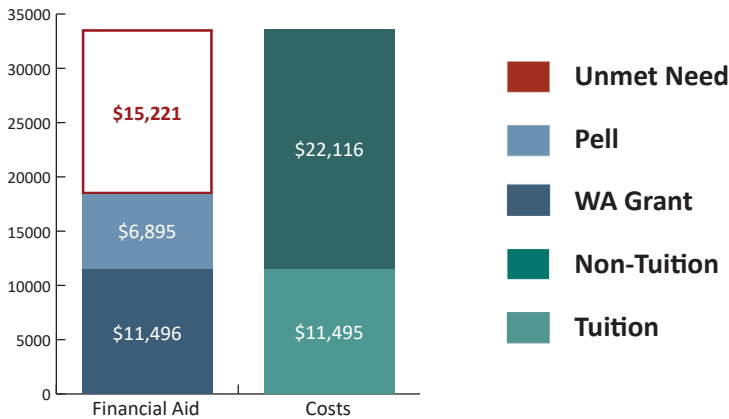
Unmet need: \$14,054 (55%)



There is also a significant gap of unmet need for students from low-income backgrounds at four-year institutions

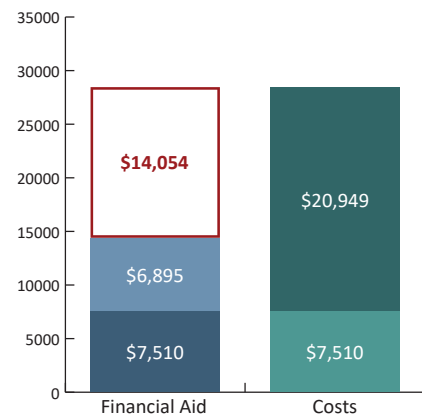
Four-year research institution, living on campus

Unmet need: \$15,221 (45%)



Four-year regional institution, living independently

Unmet need: \$14,054 (49%)



For many students the gap of unmet need is even greater

Estimated costs of attendance are likely lower than real costs due to rapid inflation. Not all WA Grant recipients receive a full award.

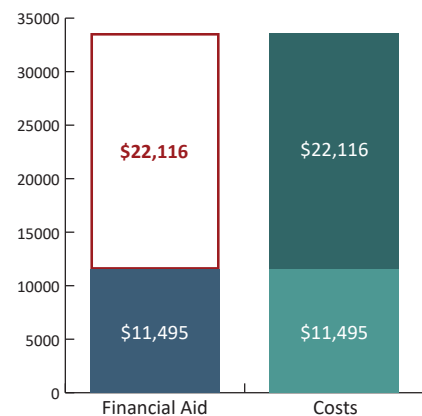
Many students receive a smaller portion of financial aid because:

- they have income from part-time work
- their parents' income decreases their eligibility—whether their parents contribute to their education or not
- they are not eligible for federal funding (undocumented students, for example)

Students' ability to fill this gap—with student loans, additional work, and other grant aid—is varied and limited, but rarely do these efforts fill the whole need.

Four-year research institution, no Pell Grant funding

Unmet need: \$22,116 (66%)



Large gaps remain in funding the full cost of attendance, making it incredibly difficult for students from low-income backgrounds to complete their degrees—even with the help of grants.

How do we tackle the gap of unmet need?

Cost numbers are for the 2022-23 academic year, as calculated by the [Washington Financial Aid Association](#). Financial Aid numbers show the maximum [Federal Pell Grant](#) and the maximum [Washington College Grant](#) for the 2022-23 academic year.