

California's Financially Safer Colleges

What is a "financially safer" college?

A college that supports its students better than other similar colleges in terms of cost, graduation rate, debt burden, and mobility, based on our analysis of College Scorecard data. [Click here for a detailed explanation of the data](#) we use and how we analyze it.



Families with low to moderate income pay less out of pocket



Low-income and students of color graduate at similar rates as their counterparts



Low-income students leave with less debt and are better able to repay their loans



Low-income students recoup the costs of their degree faster

Should I only apply to financially safer colleges?

uAspire strongly recommends that every student apply to at least one financially safer college. We also encourage you to include a variety of different types of colleges on your list.

What's the difference between community colleges and the other colleges & universities on this list?

Community colleges are sometimes referred to as "2-year colleges". They offer Associates degrees ("2-year degree") along with certificates. Public and private colleges & universities are often referred to as "4-year schools". They offer Bachelor's degrees ("4-year degree") and also advanced degrees. Students pursuing a Bachelor's degree often begin at community college and then transfer to another college/university to complete their program.

What's the difference between public and private colleges & universities?

Public and private colleges & universities differ in many ways, but most notably in cost of attendance. Among private colleges, those that meet full financial need are more likely to be affordable, but more difficult to get into.

Public financially safer colleges & universities

Bay Area			
Canada College	Skyline College	City College of San Francisco	Los Medanos College
College of San Mateo	Contra Costa College	Santa Rosa Junior College	Diablo Valley College



Scan or [click](#) to view all financially safer colleges in the West on a map, along with their average net prices

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Public financially safer colleges & universities

Northern Coast & Inland	Feather River Community College
Shasta Community College	College of the Redwoods

Greater Sacramento & Gold Country	
Napa Valley College	Columbia College
Sacramento City College	San Joaquin Delta College
Woodland Community College	Cosumnes River College
Sierra College	Yuba College

South Central Coast	Ventura College
Antelope Valley Community College	College of the Canyons
Moorpark College	Oxnard College

San Joaquin Valley	
Clovis Community College	Merced College
College of the Sequoias	Porterville College
Fresno City College	Reedley College

San Diego & Imperial Valley	San Diego Miramar College
Imperial Valley College	Cuyamaca College
Grossmont College	MiraCosta College

Central Coast	
Chabot College	Las Positas College
De Anza College	Mission College
Hartnell College	Gavilan College
Foothill College	West Valley College

Los Angeles	El Camino Community College District
Glendale Community College	Los Angeles Valley College
Compton College	Los Angeles Southwest College
Santa Monica College	Pasadena City College

Orange County	Citrus College
Santiago Canyon College	Mt San Antonio College
Irvine Valley College	Cerritos College
Golden West College	Santa Ana College

Inland Empire	
Copper Mountain Community College	Riverside City College
Mt. San Jacinto Community College	Barstow Community College
Norco College	Moreno Valley College

California's financially safer colleges

Public financially safer colleges & universities

University of California		California State University		
UC Berkeley [^]	UC Davis	Cal Poly Pomona	Cal State Fullerton	CSU San Bernardino
UC Irvine [^]	UC Santa Barbara	Cal State LA	CSU Bakersfield	CSU Dominguez-Hills
UCLA [^]	UC San Diego [^]	CSU Long Beach	CSU Monterey Bay	CSU Northridge
				Stanislaus State

Private financially safer colleges & universities

College	City	College	City
University of San Diego	San Diego	California Institute of Technology ^{*^}	Pasadena
La Sierra University	Riverside	Claremont McKenna College ^{*^}	Claremont
University of the Pacific	Stockton	Harvey Mudd College ^{*^}	Claremont
California Lutheran University	Thousand Oaks	Occidental College [*]	Los Angeles
University of Redlands	Redlands	Pitzer College ^{*^}	Claremont
Whittier College	Whittier	Pomona College ^{*^}	Claremont
Thomas Aquinas College	Santa Paula	Scripps College [*]	Claremont
Soka University of America	Aliso Viejo	University of Southern California ^{*^}	Los Angeles
Vanguard University of Southern California	Costa Mesa	Santa Clara University	Santa Clara
		Stanford University ^{*^}	Stanford

What does it mean if a college has an asterisk (*) or a carat (^) next to it?

Asterisks indicate financially safer colleges that meet students' full financial need, which means they guarantee to provide the full amount of financial aid they determine a student needs. Carats indicate financially safer colleges that have an acceptance rate less than 25% and are highly selective.

Recommendations are current only for 2024-2025 academic year

Source: Based on uAspire's analysis of the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard data from Spring 2024 and Third Way's economic mobility index.