



Community College Baccalaureate Tuition and Fees in 13 States

CCB DATA POINTS
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This brief examines the affordability of community college baccalaureate (CCB) programs, highlighting their lower tuition costs compared to four-year public and private universities, with significant variation across states.

The rising cost of college education has become a significant concern, with research showing that many students are actively avoiding higher education due to perceived unaffordability.¹ While intuitively CCB degrees have lower costs than those from four-year public universities or private for-profit institutions, research has not determined just how much less tuition and fees are for a CCB degree, especially compared to associate degrees or bachelor's degrees offered by other sectors. Tuition and fees are just one piece of the puzzle — the **cost of attendance**, sometimes also referred to as **sticker price**², may also include housing, food, transportation, books, and other related expenses. This is further complicated by **net price**, the amount a student actually pays after subtracting any scholarships and grants they receive from the total cost of attendance.

This brief focuses on published tuition and required fees, defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) as the tuition and fixed charges that most students at an institution are required to pay. We know that community college students consider these costs above others when making decisions about college enrollment.³

While 24 states currently authorize CCB degrees⁴, the analysis is limited to the states where at least two institutions currently offer a bachelor's degree in three or more CCB programs as of spring 2024, resulting in the inclusion of 13 states. Data is from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) as well as state and college websites in cases where IPEDS data was not available or consistent. To understand the full methodology, please see the complete paper.⁵

CCB Tuition and Fees

The median annual tuition and fees for CCB programs in the 13 states we studied was \$4,820, around \$500 a year more than the median tuition of an associate degree program at \$4,274. However, this varies widely, as some states allow colleges to charge more at the upper division than they do at the lower associate degree level. Texas colleges authorizing CCB degrees offered the lowest annual tuition and fees for the upper division, averaging \$2,957 per year. In all states in this study, the annual tuition and fees of a CCB was less than at a four-year public institution. In 5 of the 13 states, the annual cost of a CCB degree was less than half the average cost of a four-year public university in the state. Private for-profit colleges were more than three times the cost of CCB colleges in the 13 states studied. Nationwide, the annual median cost of tuition for a bachelor's degree at a CCB college was \$4,820, while the median cost of a public four-year institution was \$9,390, a difference of more than \$4,500 a year. The median tuition and fees at a four-year for-profit institution was \$19,097, nearly four times a CCB program.

Figure 1. Annual Tuition and Fees for In-state Students⁶

¹ Gallup & Lumina Foundation. (2024). *Cost of college: The price tag of higher education and its effect on enrollment*. https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Cost_of_College.pdf

² McKibben, B. (2024, December 17). *How colleges set their prices: The need for federal oversight of "cost of attendance" in higher education*. The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs. Temple University. https://hope.temple.edu/sites/hope/files/media/document/CostOfAttendance_2024.pdf

³ Somers, P., Haines, K., Keene, B., Bauer, J., Pfeiffer, M., McCluskey, J., Settle, J., & Sparks, B. (2006). Towards a theory of choice for community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30(1), 53–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668920500248886>

⁴ Community College Baccalaureate Association & Bragg & Associates. (2024). *Watch them grow: The evolution of community college baccalaureate degrees in the United States*. <https://www.accbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Watch-Them-Grow-4.22.24.pdf>

⁵ Meza, E., & Pawlicki, C. (2025). How much less? The sticker price of bachelor's degrees at community colleges. *University of Washington*.

⁶ Tuition and fees are adjusted to 2024 dollars for inflation.

State	Upper Division CCB	Lower Division Community College	Public Four-year	Private Four-year For-profit
Wyoming	\$4,820	Same as CCB	\$6,858	N/A
Colorado	\$4,274	Same as CCB	\$11,693	\$18,681
Ohio	\$4,937	Same as CCB	\$9,390	\$21,845
Oklahoma	\$5,893	Same as CCB	\$8,669	\$19,941
Texas ⁷	\$2,957	Same as CCB	\$10,235	\$19,512
Georgia	\$4,354	Same as CCB	\$7,534	\$17,537
California	\$3,366	\$1,627	\$10,287	\$21,053
Nevada	\$4,872	\$2,772	\$8,522	N/A
Washington	\$7,620	\$4,205	\$11,265	\$28,511
Michigan	\$10,630	\$5,176	\$16,081	N/A
Arizona	\$3,962	\$2,699	\$13,103	\$16,088
West Virginia	\$6,444	\$5,389	\$9,185	\$10,255
Florida	\$3,153	\$2,765	\$6,442	\$17,298
Median of CCB states	\$4,820	\$4,274	\$9,390	\$19,097
Average of CCB states	\$5,176	\$3,990	\$9,943	\$19,072

Conclusion

Community college baccalaureate (CCB) programs can be a more affordable path to a bachelor's degree, especially for lower-income, adult, and marginalized students who prioritize tuition costs when deciding where to enroll. There is significant variation in CCB tuition across states, with some states charging uniform tuition for both lower- and upper-division courses, while other states and institutions may impose higher fees for upper-division courses. On average, CCB programs are cheaper than public universities and private for-profit institutions, with tuition for CCB degrees sometimes less than half the cost of a university degree. Further, the tuition and fees for CCB degrees are often similar to associate degree tuition.

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⁷ Texas excludes Brazosport, Midland, and South Texas College. As pilot colleges in Texas, they are permitted to charge higher upper division tuition/fees.