

Press Release
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Texas Students and Families Struggle to Cover the Cost of College

Even after Texas college students receive their financial aid packages, about half of them cannot cover their total cost of college, according to a new report released today by the Center for Public Policy Priorities. The *Cost of College: How Texas Students and Families are Financing College Education* report takes a closer look at state financial aid programs and the problem of student loan dependence in Texas.

Texas college students are struggling to cover costs for their education, relying more on student loans and working during school. The report finds that the rising cost of college, coupled with declining investments in need-based aid, has shifted costs to students and families over the last 10 years, largely in the form of student loan debt. As a result, Texas students are borrowing more and defaulting at higher rates compared to their peers in other states.

“With Texas students depending more and more on loans to finance college, Texas policymakers should work to reduce student loan dependence,” said Leslie Helmcamp, a policy analyst at the Center for Public Policy Priorities. “In 2010, Texas’ public four-year college students left with an average debt of \$19,376, up 36 percent from a decade ago. This is problematic because our students are also defaulting on their loans at higher rates, diminishing their chances for financial success.”

For Texas, this challenge is especially important given the sharp rise in our child population over the last decade. And now nearly two-thirds of kids in Texas public schools are low-income or economically disadvantaged. Because these future college students will have fewer resources to pay for college, financial need will continue to grow. We need a more robust financial aid system to ensure that all Texans, especially those least able to afford college, have access to postsecondary education to prepare them for jobs that pay family-supporting wages and lead to a durable career.

“Our state financial aid programs are not reaching all students with financial need. As a result, we’ve seen college students financing total college costs, including tuition, fees, and room and board largely through loans and working during school,” Helmcamp said. “This trend contributes to lower student success.”

Other proposed solutions outlined in the report include promoting early financial preparation for college through financial education and encouraging students and families to save for college.

“Our state should be focusing on promoting college success not only through academic preparation for college, but also through enhanced financial aid investments, increasing financial education at Texas public schools and colleges, and getting young Texans to start preparing financially for postsecondary education well before their junior and senior year of high school,” Helmcamp said.

The center thanks [Educate Texas](#) and the Working Poor Families Project for their generous support of our work. The findings and conclusions presented in this report are solely those of the center, as are any errors or omissions.

For More Information

For more information or to request an interview, please contact Brian Stephens at stephens@cphp.org or 512.320.0222, ext. 112.

About the Center

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