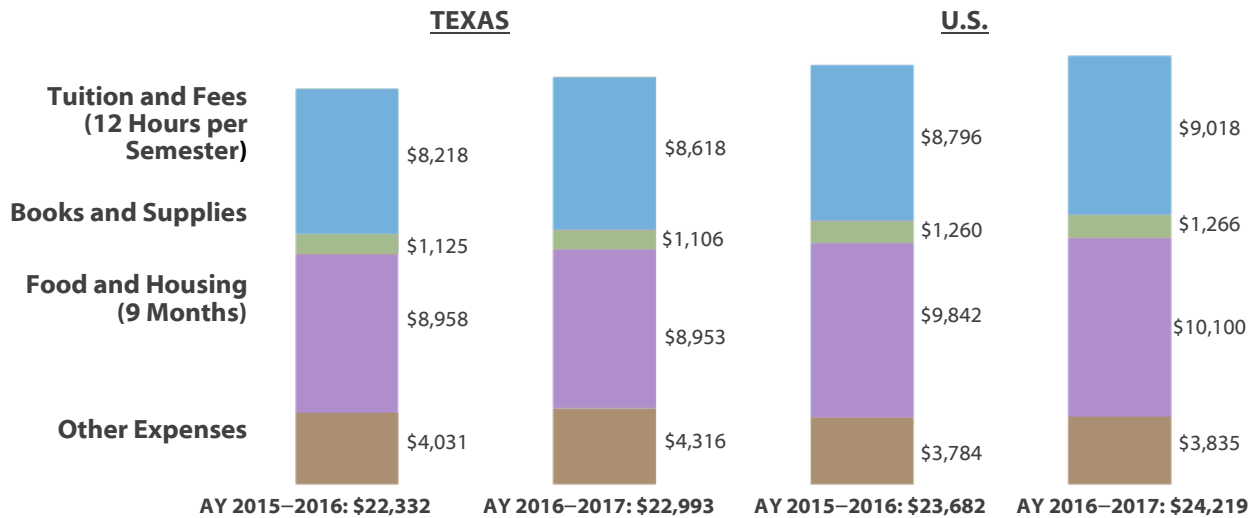


Texas Public Four-year University Cost of Attendance Below National Average

Weighted Average Public Four-year University Cost of Attendance for Two Semesters for Full-time Undergraduates Living Off Campus in Texas and the U.S. (AY 2015–2016 and AY 2016–2017)



The tuition and fees charged to students, along with living expenses, books and supplies, transportation, and other expenses, constitute a school’s cost of attendance. From 2016 to 2017, total costs increased by \$661 in Texas and \$537 nationally. Weighted for enrollment,* two semesters of full-time** undergraduate education at a Texas public four-year university averaged \$22,993 in Award Year (AY) 2016–2017. This amount was \$1,226 less than the national average. Total expenses in Texas have been below the national average for many years. With the exception of the “other expenses” category, all types of costs in Texas are lower than their corresponding national averages. The primary expenses facing students are not tuition and fees but food and housing, which make up nearly 40 percent of the cost of attendance. These costs are not discretionary: students must eat, and unless they live with parents — and 68 percent of U.S. public university undergraduates do not — they must pay rent. Together, food, housing, and other expenses comprise about 58 percent of the student budget, while tuition and fees make up 37 percent.

Cost of attendance is the starting point for determining financial aid. From the cost of attendance, the student’s expected family contribution (EFC)*** is subtracted to calculate the student’s financial need. Once financial need is determined, an aid package, consisting primarily of grants and loans, can be developed. What students actually pay for college depends on a number of factors, including the aid they receive and how frugally they live, as well as their enrollment patterns. To cut costs, many students enroll part time, work long hours, or both — but these strategies may increase their chance of dropping out of school without completing their program of study.

* An institution’s costs are multiplied by its enrollment. The sum of costs for all schools is then divided by full-time, undergraduate enrollment, such that schools with higher enrollments are given greater weight. See glossary for clarification.
 ** 12 semester hours or more.

*** EFC is determined through a federal formula that considers family income and size as well as the number of children in college, among other factors. The average amount that families actually contribute to educational expenses is unknown. In AY 2011–2012, 22 percent of dependent undergraduates enrolled at public four-year universities nationwide reported that they received no help from their parents in paying tuition and fees.

Sources: All Costs and Enrollments for 2016–2017: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2016 (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>); All Costs and Enrollments for 2015–2016: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2015 (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>); All other: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) 2012 (<http://www.nces.ed.gov/das>).

