

Higher Education affordability Fiscal Policy

Issue:

Since the [1980s](#), the United States has struggled with the average cost of attendance at universities. This steadily evolving issue has only increased with the development of modern society, where obtaining a college degree is a necessity in obtaining a job that meets the [demands of the current costs-of-living](#). Incoming students are forced with the burden of exorbitant tuition prices, with many encouraged to obtain private loans, sending students into thousands of dollars into debt as young as 18. Along with the traditionally aged demographic, non-traditional college students face not only tuition costs, but also paying bills while in college like childcare and housing.

Policy solution:

Education is an important factor in an individual's economic success. However, the [rising cost of tuition](#) and fees make it increasingly difficult for students to afford a college education. Therefore, it is critical to remove obstacles preventing a broader student population from attending college while reducing student debt. In response, we recommend the following package of policies to reduce higher education costs, create more funding, and develop a sustainable plan for guaranteeing our future generations' education.

- Encourage partnerships between the university's education department and having an onsite daycare program within the university for non-traditional students (e.g., adult students with children). To increase the attendance of this [demographic of students](#), there should be scholarships specifically for those students, and for the education majors who help within the daycare.
 - The city of Radford already has a childcare facility, [the Radford Child Development Center](#), that serves the community of Radford as well as Radford University through free/reduced childcare and internships provided to students who attend. However, despite this program being introduced in 2013, it's particularly obscure to the public. Our solution is designed to improve upon the already financed and installed program, in order to spread awareness to its benefits, as well as encourage the population to get its money's-worth out of the assistance program. Using the town of Radford and Radford University, we can use this formula to encourage other schools around the nation to partner up with their local daycare centers, all without adding a bigger strain on the federal budget.
- Introducing programs funded by public-private partnerships - by agreeing to work in a certain position, a company helps with education (i.e., tuition) and other expenses. In exchange for a needed worker, the enterprise is helping people go back to school. ([Boeing](#), Walmart, Starbucks, etc. have [partnerships](#) this)
 - By doing this, it diminishes the reliance on loans (federal or otherwise), which lowers the number of borrowers of federal loans, and therefore reduces student debt. Through [the CARES Act](#), any payments related to employer student loan assistance are tax-free, both employer and employee aren't required to pay income taxes or payroll taxes as this is no longer considered a part of wages.
- Broadening the requirements for students who use [FAFSA and grants](#), allowing for students who are (on paper) above the threshold to borrow more; They cannot get much government assistance due to it seeming like they have enough money for tuition when that isn't the case for many.

Stakeholders in This Issue:

Colleges and Universities, Companies/donors/sponsors, Board of visitors, Board of Education, Appointed commissions, Federal government, State government, Academic researchers, Students

Conclusion:

The rising cost of higher education has been a major issue since the 1980s that needs to be addressed. This policy brief outlines several solutions for increasing affordability in higher education using fiscal policy. These solutions may help discover creative ways to decrease the burden of higher education affordability without increasing the federal debt through these programs. By appealing to the future economic benefits of investing in students, we hope that these solutions can acquire bipartisan support. These solutions could help to make college more affordable and accessible to all students.