

# NET PRICE CALCULATORS (NPCs) CAN HELP PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS LEARN THE COSTS OF ATTENDING AN INSTITUTION

But more must be done to increase  
the usefulness and usability of NPCs.

Characteristics  
of useful and  
usable NPCs



## DISCLOSE FULL CURRENT COSTS

### Useful and usable NPCs:

1. **Are findable and working** on an institution's website.
2. **Prominently display** one net price that meets the federal definition.
3. **Include** all costs of attendance.
4. **Use** cost and aid data that can be reconciled with information on other institutional websites.
5. **Use** data from the current or previous academic year.
6. **Note** variation in costs based on meal plan, housing, major, and course load.
7. **Indicate** to whom the estimates do and do not apply.
8. **Provide** estimated costs for particular populations (e.g., financially independent students, non-US citizens, and part-time students).

## DEFINE AND DESCRIBE MECHANISMS TO PAY COSTS

### Useful and usable NPCs:

1. **Make clear** the difference between loans and grants.
2. **Specify** that loans are optional and must be repaid.
3. **Disaggregate** grants by federal, state, and institutional sources.
4. **Indicate** the eligibility and renewability requirements of all sources of aid.

## SHARE KEY INFORMATION

### Useful and usable NPCs:

1. **Encourage** students to complete the FAFSA.
2. **Disclose** deadlines.
3. **Encourage** students to contact the financial aid office to address questions.

To learn more about *Questioning the Calculations*, visit  
[www.ahead-penn.org/research-projects/questioning-net-price-calculators](http://www.ahead-penn.org/research-projects/questioning-net-price-calculators).

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