

Emmett compares three financial aid offers

Emmett is a high school senior with good grades in challenging academic courses. He's been accepted to three of his top-pick colleges. All of them offered him financial aid.

The schools range from 30 minutes to an hour from his house. Emmett decides to do a detailed comparison of the college costs and financial aid offers for each school to see which choice would leave him in the best financial position when he graduates. (Note: The schools listed are fictional and used only as examples in this activity.)

Emmett's college finances:

- Emmett has completed the FAFSA. He's eligible for a \$4,400 Federal Pell Grant, \$5,500 federal student loans, and up to \$1,981 in work-study. (It's important to note that works-study isn't guaranteed and that the entire amount isn't paid upfront.)
- Each school has also given him a school-based scholarship for his good academic performance. The Small College on the Hill also awarded him their "Promising Scholar scholarship."
- His family has a combined gross income of \$75,000 - \$110,000 and can contribute \$3,500 a year to pay for college, and his parents are willing to take out enough in Parent PLUS loans to cover the rest of his costs.
- Emmett has saved \$500 to contribute to his college costs.

School name	Large University in the City	Mid-Sized University in the Country	Small College on the Hill
COST OF ATTENDANCE per year	\$26,240	\$31,358	\$51,554
Tuition and fees	\$7,796	\$13,538	\$35,350
Housing and meals	\$16,442	\$16,814	\$14,244
Books and supplies	\$2,002	\$1,006	\$1,960
Other education costs	\$0	\$0	\$0
MONEY FOR SCHOOL			
Grants and scholarships			
Federal Pell Grant	\$4,440	\$4,440	\$4,440
Scholarships	\$3,000	\$8,000	\$18,000
Contributions			
What Emmett can pay	\$500	\$500	\$500
What his family can pay	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500
Parent PLUS loans	\$9,500	\$8,000	\$14,500
Private student loans with a 10% interest rate and 5% fee	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Work-study	\$1,981	\$1,981	\$1,981
Federal student loans			
Direct Subsidized student loans	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500
Direct Unsubsidized student loans	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Emmett's estimated monthly student loan repayment (after graduation)	\$327	\$327	\$1,648

Before accepting a financial aid offer from a school, it's important to carefully review all of the details. Look closely at the amounts you or your Contributors (parents, guardians, stepparents) may be asked to borrow from each school. Take time to sit down and have a conversation about college costs and share data from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's "Your financial path to graduation" tool with each significant adult that will have a role in your final college decision.